

BOOK CLUB TITLES 2021

Titles in bold are the titles new to the list for 2021

ACKLAND, Jenny. *The Secret Son*

An old woman sits waiting in a village that clings to a Turkish mountainside, where the women weave rugs, make tea and keep blood secrets that span generations. Berna can see what others cannot, so her secrets are deeper and darker than most. It is time for her to tell her story, even though the man for whom her words are meant won't hear them. It is time for the truth to be told.

Nearly a hundred years before, her father James had arrived at the village, gravely ill, rescued from the abandoned trenches of Gallipoli by a Turkish boy whose life he had earlier spared. James made his life there, never returning to Australia and never realising that his own father was indeed the near-mythical bushranger that the gossips had hinted at when he'd been growing up in Beechworth.

Now, as Berna waits a young man from Melbourne approaches to visit his parent's village, against the vehement opposition of his cursed, tight-lipped grandfather. What is the astonishing story behind the dark deeds that connect the two men, unknown to each other and living almost a century apart?

Discussion questions available.

ALBOM, Mitch. *The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto*

At nine years old, Frankie Presto is sent to America in the bottom of a boat. His only possession is an old guitar and six precious strings.

But Frankie's talent is unique, and his amazing journey weaves him through the musical landscape of the twentieth century, from classical to jazz to rock and roll, with his stunning talent impacting upon numerous stars along the way, including Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Carole King and even KISS.

Frankie becomes a pop star himself. He makes records. He is adored. But his gift is also his burden, as he realises: through his music, he can actually affect people's futures – with one string turning blue whenever a life is altered.

Then, at the height of his popularity, Frankie Presto vanishes and his legend grows. Only decades later does he reappear to change one last life...

489 pages

AL MUDERIS, Munjed. *Walking Free* (with Patrick Weaver).

In 1999, Munjed Al Muderis was a young surgical resident working in Baghdad when a squad of Military Police marched into the operating theatre and ordered the surgical team to mutilate the ears of three busloads of army deserters. When the head of surgery refused, he was executed in front of his staff. Munjed's choices were stark – comply and breach the medical oath "do no harm", or refuse and face certain death, or flee.

That day, Munjed's life changed forever. He escaped to Indonesia, where he boarded a filthy, overcrowded refugee boat, bound for Australia.

Like his fellow passengers, he hoped for a new life, free from fear and oppression, but for ten months he was incarcerated in what became known as the worst of the refugee camps, in Curtain Detention Centre in Western Australia. There he was known only by a number, locked in solitary confinement and repeatedly told to go back to Iraq.

On 26 August 2000, Munjed was finally freed. Now, fourteen years later, he is one of the world's leading osseointegration surgeons, transforming the lives of amputees with a pioneering technique that allows them to walk again.

Walking Free is Munjed's extraordinary account of his journey from the brutality of Saddam Hussein's Iraq to a new life in Australia and a remarkable career at the forefront of medicine.

325 pages

ALLENDE, Isabel. *In the Midst of Winter: a novel* (Translated by Nick Caistor and Amanda Hopkinson).

New York Times bestselling author Isabel Allende returns with a sweeping novel about three very different people who are brought together in a mesmerizing story that journeys from present day Brooklyn to Guatemala in the recent past to 1970s Chile and Brazil.

Amid the biggest snowstorm in living memory, Richard Bowmaster, a lonely university professor in his sixties, hits the car of Evelyn Orrega, a young undocumented immigrant from Guatemala, and what at first seems an inconvenience takes a more serious turn when Evelyn comes to his house, seeking help. At a loss, the professor asks his tenant, Lucia Maraz, a fellow academic from Chile, for her advice.

As these three lives intertwine. Each will discover truths about how they have been shaped by the tragedies they witnessed, and Richard and Lucia will find an unexpected, long overdue love.

Allende, who has been called “one of the greatest writers of our times” (*Washington Post*), returns here to themes that have propelled some of her finest work: political injustice, the art of survival, and the essential nature of – and need for – love. 342 pages

ALLENDE, Isabel. *A Long Petal of the Sea*
(Translated by Nick Caistor and Amanda Hopkinson).

September 3, 1939, the day of the Spanish exiles’ splendid arrival in Chile, the Second World War broke out in Europe.

Victor Dalmau is a young doctor when he is caught up in the Spanish Civil War, a tragedy that leaves his life – and the fate of his country – forever changed. Together with his sister-in-law, the pianist Roser, he is forced out of his beloved Barcelona and into exile.

When the opportunity to seek refuge arises, they board a ship chartered by the poet Pablo Neruda to Chile, the promised ‘long petal of sea and wine and snow’. There, they find themselves enmeshed in a rich web of characters who have come together in love and tragedy over the course of four generations, destined to witness the battle for freedom and repression as it plays out across the world.

A work of historical fiction that soars from the Spanish Civil War, to the rise and fall of Pinochet. 314 pages

ANDERSSON, Per J. *The Amazing Story of the Man who Cycled from India to Europe for Love*

The story begins in a public square in New Delhi. On a cold December evening a young European woman of noble descent appears before an Indian street artist known locally as PK and asks him to paint her portrait – it is an encounter that will change their lives irrevocably.

PK was not born in the city. He grew up in a small remote village on the edge of the jungle in east India, and his childhood as an untouchable was one of crushing hardship. He was forced to sit outside the classroom during school, would watch his classmates wash themselves if they came into contact with him, and had stones thrown at him when he approached the village temple. According to the priests, PK dirtied everything that was pure and holy. But had PK not been an untouchable, his life would have turned out very differently.

This is the remarkable story of how love and courage led PK to overcome extreme poverty, caste prejudice and adversity – as well as a 7,000-mile, adventure-filled journey across continents and cultures – to be with the woman he loved. 281 pages

ASHLEY, Melissa. *The Birdman’s Wife*

Artist Elizabeth Gould spent her life capturing the sublime beauty of birds the world had never seen before. But her legacy was eclipsed by the fame of her husband, John Gould. *The Birdman’s Wife* at last gives voice to a passionate and adventurous spirit who was so much more than the woman behind the man.

Elizabeth was a woman ahead of her time, juggling the demands of her artistic life with her roles as wife, lover, helpmate, and mother to an ever growing brood of children. In a golden age of discovery, her artistry breathed wondrous life into hundreds of exotic new species, including Charles Darwin’s famous Galapagos finches.

In *The Birdman’s Wife*, the naïve young girl who falls in love with a demanding and ambitious genius comes into her own as a woman, an artist and a bold adventurer who defies convention by embarking on a trailblazing expedition to collect and illustrate Australia’s ‘curious’ birdlife. In this indelible portrait, an extraordinary woman overshadowed by history, steps back into the light where she belongs. 389 pages

ATKINSON, Kate. *Transcription*

Think of it as an adventure, Perry has said right at the beginning of all this. And it had seemed like one. A bit of a lark, she had thought. A *Girl’s Own* adventure.

In 1940, eighteen-year-old Juliet Armstrong is reluctantly recruited into the world of espionage. Sent to an obscure department of M15 tasked with monitoring the comings and goings of British Fascist sympathizers, she discovers the work to be by turns both tedious and terrifying. But after the war has ended, she presumes the events of those years have been relegated to the past for ever.

Ten years later, now a producer at the BBC, Juliet is unexpectedly confronted by figures from her past. A different war is being fought now, on a different battleground, but Juliet finds herself once more under threat. A bill of reckoning is due, and she finally begins to realize that there is no action without consequence.

Transcription is a work of rare depth and texture, a bravura modern novel of extraordinary power, wit and empathy. 336 pages

ATWOOD, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one function: to breed. If she deviates, she will, like dissenters, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire – neither Offred's nor that of the two men on which her future hangs. Brilliantly conceived and executed, this powerful vision of the future gives full rein to Margaret Atwood's irony, wit and astute perception.

314 pages

ATWOOD, Margaret. *The Testaments*

The sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. More than fifteen years after the events of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the theocratic regime of the Republic of Gilead maintains its grip on power, but there are signs it is beginning to rot from within. At this crucial moment, two girls with radically different experiences of the regime come face to face with the legendary, ruthless Aunt Lydia. But how far will each go for what she believes?

419 pages

Winner of *The Booker Prize 2019*

[Readers may need to be familiar with *The Handmaid's Tale* to understand the world of *The Testaments*].

AUSTEN, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." So begins *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's witty comedy of manners, a romance novel first published in 1813 and one of the most popular novels of all time. The story charts the emotional development of the protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, who learns the error of making hasty judgements and comes to appreciate the difference between the superficial and the essential. The comedy of the writing lies in the depiction of manners, education, marriage and money in the British Regency.

382 pages

AWAD, Amal. *Beyond Veiled Clichés*

"Arab women, like people everywhere, are full of hopes and ideals... Seekers, change-makers, ground-shapers. The future is in our hands."

As someone who has a foot in both the Western and Arab worlds, Amal Awad set out to explore the lives of Arab women, in Australia and the Middle East, travelling to the region and interviewing more than sixty women about feminism, intimacy, love, sex and shame, trauma, war, religion and culture.

Beyond Veiled Clichés explores the similarities and differences experienced by these women in their daily lives – work, relationships, home and family life, friendships, the communities they live in, and more. Arab-Australian women are at the intersection – between Western ideals and Arab tradition. It can get messy, but there is also great beauty in the layers.

In a time of racial tension and rising global fear around terrorism, there is a renewed fear of "the other". At its heart this fascinating book normalizes people and their experiences. The breath, variety and beauty of what Amal has discovered will enthrall and surprise you.

289 pages

BACKMAN, Fredrick. *A Man Called Ove*

There is something about Ove. At first sight, he is almost certainly the grumpiest man you will ever meet. He thinks himself surrounded by idiots - neighbours who can't reverse a trailer properly, joggers, shop assistants who talk in code, and the perpetrators of the vicious *coup d'état* that ousted him as Chairman of the Residents' Association. He will persist in making his daily inspection rounds of the local streets.

But isn't it rare, these days, to find such old-fashioned clarity of belief and deed? Such unswerving conviction about what the world should be, and a lifelong dedication to making it just so?

In the end, you will see, there is something about Ove that is quite irresistible...

BACKMAN, Fredrik. *The Scandal (now published as Beartown)*

"One evening towards the end of March, a teenager picked up a double-barrelled shotgun, walked into the forest, put the gun to someone else's forehead and pulled the trigger.

This is the story of how we got there."

Beartown is a small town in a large Swedish forest.

For most of the year it is under a thick blanket of snow, experiencing the kind of cold and dark that brings people closer together- or pulls them apart.

Its isolation means that Beartown has been slowly shrinking with each passing year. But now the town is on the verge of an astonishing revival. Change is in the air and a bright new future is just around the corner.

Until the day it is all pulled apart by a single, brutal act. It divides the town into those who think it should be hushed up and forgotten and those who'll risk the future to see justice done. At last, it falls to one young man to find the courage to speak the truth that it seems no one else wants to hear.

With the town's future at stake, no one can stand by or stay silent. Which side would you be on?

"A story about families, about friendship and loyalty, inequality, and parenthood...A novel with a big heart."

415 pages

BENNETT, Alan. *The Lady in the Van*

In 1974, the homeless Miss Shepherd moved her broken-down van into Alan Bennett's garden. Deeply eccentric and stubborn to her bones, Miss Shepherd was not an easy tenant. And Bennett, despite inviting her in the first place, was a reluctant landlord. And yet she lived there for fifteen years.

BIRCH, Tony. *The White Girl*

"Odette, be sensible. Sissy cannot leave this town.' Shea threw his hands in the air. 'Listen to me, please, Odette. It's not as if your Sissy is a white girl."

Odette Brown has lived her whole life on the fringes of a small country town. Raising her granddaughter Sissy on her own, Odette has managed to stay under the radar of the welfare authorities who are removing Aboriginal children from their communities. When the menacing Sergeant Lowe arrives in town, determined to fully enforce the law, any freedom that Odette and Sissy enjoy comes under grave threat. Odette must make an impossible choice to protect her family.

In *The White Girl*, Tony Birch has created memorable characters whose capacity for love and courage are a timely reminder of the endurance of the human spirit.

265 pages

BLANCHARD, Tania. *Suitcase of Dreams*

After enduring the horror of Nazi Germany and the chaos of postwar occupation, Lotte Drescher and her family arrive in Australia in 1956 full of hope for a new life. It's a land of opportunity, where Lotte and her husband Erich dream of giving their children the future they have always wanted.

After years of struggling to find their feet as New Australians, Erich turns his skill as a wood carver into a successful business and Lotte makes a career out of her lifelong passion, photography. The sacrifices they have made finally seem worth it until Erich's role in the trade union movement threatens to have him branded a communist and endanger their family. Then darker shadows reach out to them from Germany, a world and a lifetime away.

As the Vietnam War looms, an unexpected visitor forces Lotte to a turning point. Her decision will change her life forever... and will finally show her the true meaning of home.

420 pages

Discussion questions in the back of book.

BLAINEY, Geoffrey. *Before I Forget: an Early Memoir*

"At home, encircled by books, I assumed that my writing career, so precarious, would flourish..."

For close to seventy years Professor Geoffrey Blainey has uncovered and chronicled our history and the world's. Now in his ninth decade and listed by the National Trust as a 'Living Treasure', Blainey turns to his own story, reflecting on the first forty years of his life, from his humble beginnings as the son of a Methodist minister and a country school teacher, to creating his career as historian and writer.

339 pages

BOO, Katherine. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*

Annawadi is a makeshift settlement in the shadow of luxury hotels near the Mumbai airport, and as India starts to prosper, Annawadians are electric with hope. But then terror and a global recession rock the city and suppressed tensions over religion, caste, sex, power and economic envy turn brutal. As the tenderest individual hopes intersect with the greatest global truths, the true contours of a competitive age are revealed. And so, too, are the imaginations and courage of the people of Annawadi. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* carries the reader into a hidden world and into the lives of people impossible to forget.

Winner of the 2012 National Book Award Non-fiction.

BOOCHANI, Behrouz. *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*
(Translated by Omid Tofghian)

Where do I come from? From the land of rivers, the land of waterfalls. The land of ancient chants, the land of mountains...

People would run to the mountains to escape the warplanes and found asylum within their chestnut forests...

Do Kurds have any friends other than the mountains?

In 2013, Kurdish journalist Behrouz Boochani was illegally detained on Manus Island. He has been there ever since. This book is the result. Laboriously tapped out on a mobile phone and translated from the Farsi. It is a voice of witness, an act of survival. A lyric first-hand account. A cry of resistance. A vivid portrait through five years of incarceration and exile.

374 pages

Winner of the 2019 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards Victorian Prize for Literature, and the 2019 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards Prize for Non-Fiction

BRANDI, Mark. *Wimmera*

In the long, hot summer of 1989, Ben and Fab were best friends. Growing up in a small town, they spent their days playing cricket, yabbing in local dams, wanting a pair of Nike Air Maxes and not talking about how Fab's dad hit him or how much the sudden death of Ben's neighbor unsettles him. Almost teenagers, they already knew that some things were better left unsaid.

Then a newcomer arrived in Wimmera. Fab reckoned the man was a secret agent, and he and Ben staked him out. Up close, his shoulders were wide and the veins in his arms stuck out, blue and green.

His hands were enormous, red and knotty. He looked strong. Maybe even stronger than Fab's dad. Neither realized the shadow this man would cast over both their lives.

Ten years later, Fab is stuck in the same town, going nowhere but hoping for somewhere better. Then a body is found in the river, and Fab can't ignore the past any more.

An unforgettable story that brings the darkness that hides in a country town vividly to life, as it slowly reveals its devastating secrets.

263 pages

Winner of the 2016 Crime Writers' Association Debut Dagger Award (UK).

BRINDEN, Anne. *Wearing Paper Dresses*

You can talk about living in the Mallee. And you can talk about a Mallee tree. And you can talk about the Mallee itself; a land and a place full of red sand and short stubby trees. Silent skies. The undulating scorch of summer plains. Quiet, on the surface of things.

But Elise wasn't from the Mallee, and she knew nothing of its ways.

Discover the world of a small homestead perched on the sunburnt farmland of northern Victoria. Meet Elise, whose urban 1950s glamour is rudely transplanted to the pragmatic red soil of the Mallee when her husband returns to work the family farm. But you cannot uproot a plant and expect it to thrive. And so it is with Elise. Her meringues don't impress the shearers, the locals scoff at her Paris fashions, her husband works all day in the back paddock, and the drought kills everything but the geraniums she despises.

As their mother withdraws into herself, her spirited, tearaway daughters, Marjorie and Ruby, wild as weeds, are left to raise themselves as best they can. Until tragedy strikes, and Marjorie flees to the city determined to leave her family behind. And there she stays, leading a very different life, until the boy she loves draws her back to the land she can't forget...

378 pages

BROOKS, Geraldine. *The People of the Book*

When Hanna Heath gets a call in the middle of the night in her Sydney home about a precious medieval manuscript that has been recovered from the smouldering ruins of war-torn Sarajevo, she knows she is on the brink of the experience of a lifetime.

A renowned book conservator, she must now make her way to Bosnia to start work on restoring the Sarajevo Haggadah – a Jewish prayer book – to discover its secrets and piece together the story of its miraculous survival. But the trip will set in motion a series of events that threaten to rock Hanna's orderly life, including her encounter with Ozren Karamen, the young librarian who risked his life to save the book.

As meticulously researched as all of Brooks' previous work, *The People of the Book* is a gripping and moving novel about war, art, love and survival.

465 pages

Winner of the Australian Book Industry Awards, Book of the Year 2009.

BROOKS, Geraldine. *Year of Wonders: a Novel of the Plague*

When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated mountain village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer. Through Anna's eyes we follow the story of the plague year, 1666, as her fellow villagers make an extraordinary choice: convinced by a visionary young minister, they elect to quarantine themselves within the village boundaries to arrest the spread of the disease. But as death reached into every household, faith frays. When the villagers turn from prayers to murderous witch-hunting, Anna must confront the deaths of family members, the disintegration of her community, and the lure of illicit love. As she struggles to survive, a year of plague becomes instead an annus mirabilis, a "year of wonders".

Discussion questions in back of book.

BYRSKI, Liz.

A Month of Sundays

For over ten years, Ros, Adele, Judy and Simone have been in an online book club, but they have never met face to face. Until now...

Determined to enjoy her imminent retirement, Adele invites her fellow bibliophiles to help her house-sit in the Blue Mountains. It's a tantalising opportunity to spend a month walking in the fresh air, napping by the fire and, of course, reading and talking about books.

But these aren't just any books: each member has been asked to choose a book which will teach the others more about her. And with each woman facing a crossroads in her life, it turns out there's a lot for them to learn, not just about fellow book-clubbers, but also about themselves.

A Month of Sundays reminds us of the joy, the comfort and the occasional challenge we can find in the pages of a book. 343 pages

CAMERON, Anson.

Boyhoodlum: Memoirs of a Devious Childhood

"You know those childhood memoirs that tell of the innocence of youth, of a gentle past when boys and girls were adorable and agreeable, respectful of their elders, and spoke only when spoken to? This isn't one of those."

Boyhoodlum is the hilarious confession of an ingeniously devious and destructive boy. In the late 1960s and early '70s, Anson Cameron waged guerrilla war on his hometown in country Victoria. When he wasn't blowing his family TV to smithereens, he was electrocuting a friend's mother; when he wasn't raining expletives on a genial deaf neighbour, he was raining missiles on classical music fans. And in his leisure hours, he found time to join a Wee Club, stockpiling an ocean of urine for future use.

Knowing he was destined for greatness, young Anson saw no reason to keep his self-importance to Napoleonic levels. At high school, a posse of hirsute male teachers attempted to put the errant lad in his place. But would the 'wonderbeards' be able to quell a born entertainer and agitator?

Brilliantly evoking an era in which the Cisco Kid, Valiant Chargers and the lethal powers of a home-made shanghai reigned supreme, Anson Cameron's riotous memoir is a crash-investigator's report on how not to be a boy.

CAMERON, Anson.

The Last Pulse

A blackly funny novel about an unlikely hero, and his misadventures on the flood he has created.

In the drought-stricken Riverland town of Bartel in South Australia, after the suicide of his wife, Merv Rossiter has an epiphany. He trucks north with his eight-year-old-daughter, Em, into Queensland. There he blows the dam at Karoo Station sky high, releasing a surging torrent through outback New South Wales into South Australia.

As the authorities frantically search for the culprits, Merv and Em ride the flood south in their stolen boat, rescuing a bedraggled Queensland Minister from her floating portaloo, and an indignant young blackfella who fancies he sang the river to life all by himself.

Meanwhile, in Canberra, the political flotsam carried by Merv's renegade ocean brings the Federal Government to its knees.

CAREY, Peter.

A Long Way from Home

Irene Bobs loves fast driving. Her husband is the best car salesman in Western Victoria. Together they enter the Redex Trial, a brutal race around the ancient continent over roads no car will ever survive.

With them is their lanky, fair-haired navigator, Willie Bachhuber, a quiz show champion and failed schoolteacher whose job it is to call out the turns, the grids, the creek crossings on a map that will finally remove them, without warning, from the lily-white Australia they know so well.

This thrilling, high-speed story starts in one way and then takes you someplace else. It is often funny, the more so as the world gets stranger. And always a page-turner, even as you learn the history these characters never knew themselves.

Set in the 1950s amid the consequences of the age of empires, this brilliantly vivid and lively novel reminds us how Europeans took possession of a timeless culture – the high purpose they invented and the crimes they committed along the way. 359 pages

CHALLEN, Craig and HARRIS, Richard

(with Ellis Henican). *Against All Odds*

'I just want to warn you. You're going to dive to the end of the cave. You're going to see these kids. They're looking healthy and happy and smiley. Then you're going to swim away and they're probably all going to die.'

In June 2018, for seventeen days, the world watched and held its breath as the boys from the Wild Boars soccer team were trapped deep in a cave in Thailand. Marooned beyond flooded cave passages after unexpected rains, they were

finally rescued, one by one, against almost impossible odds, by an international cave-diving team which included Australians Dr Richard Harris and Dr Craig Challen.

These two men were chosen for their medical expertise and cave-diving knowledge, but this dangerous rescue asked so much more of them. They had to remain calm under extreme pressure and intense scrutiny, adapt to constantly changing circumstances and, importantly, build trust among the rescue team, the young boys and their coach, whose lives were in their hands.

Here is the story of these two Australian men who became international heroes – it is a story of determination, cunning and triumph that will long be remembered. 320 pages

CHATER, Lauren. *Gulliver's Wife*

London, 1702. When her husband is lost at sea, Mary Barton Gulliver, midwife and herbalist, is forced to rebuild her life without him. But three years later when Lemuel Gulliver is brought home, fevered and communicating only in riddles, her ordered world is turned upside down.

In a climate of desperate poverty and violence, Mary is caught in a crossfire of suspicion and fear driven by her husband's outlandish claims, and it is up to her to navigate a passage to safety for herself and her daughter, and the vulnerable women in her care.

When a fellow sailor, a dangerous man with nothing to lose, appears to hold sway over her husband, Mary's world descends deeper into chaos, and she must set out on her own journey to discover the truth of Gulliver's travels...and the landscape of her own heart. 406 pages

Book discussion questions in back of book.

CHENG, Melanie. *Room for a Stranger*

Meg had hoped for somebody quiet, somebody who kept to himself. But now she wondered if perhaps she wanted more than that – some company, a snippet of conversation, some remedy for the loneliness she'd felt since Helen had passed away. And while she'd slept more soundly these past few nights knowing Andy was in the next room, now she found herself scrutinizing their interactions. Why didn't he make eye contact? What did he do for all those hours, locked away in his room?

At seventy-five, Meg Hughes finds herself living alone, with only her African grey parrot, Atticus, for company. Andy Chan is in his second year of university and buckling under the pressure. Through circumstances largely outside their control, they find themselves living together in Meg's family home.

Room for a Stranger is the story of an unlikely friendship – a unique and powerful bond between two very different people that will ultimately prove lifesaving. 271 pages

CHEVALIER, Tracy. *The Last Runaway*

When modest Quaker Honor Bright sails from Bristol with her sister, she is fleeing heartache for a new life in America, far from home. But tragedy leaves her alone and vulnerable, torn between two worlds and dependent on the kindness of strangers.

Life in 1850s Ohio is precarious and unsentimental. The sun is too hot, the thunderstorms too violent, the snow too deep. The roads are splattered with mud and spit. The woods are home to skunks and porcupines and raccoons.

They also shelter slaves escaping north to freedom.

Should Honor Bright hide runaways from the ruthless men who hunt them down? The Quaker community she has joined may oppose slavery in principle, but does it have the courage to help her defy the law? As she struggles to find her place and her voice, Honor must decide what she is willing to risk for her beliefs.

Set in the tangled forests and sunlight cornfields of Ohio, Tracy Chevalier's vivid novel is the story of bad men and spirited women, surprising marriages and unlikely friendships, and the remarkable power of defiance.

Discussion questions available.

CHEVALIER, Tracy. *A Single Thread*

It is 1932, and the losses of the First World War are still keenly felt. Violet Speedwell, mourning for both her fiancé and her brother and regarded as by society as a 'surplus woman' unlikely to marry, resolves to escape her suffocating mother and strike out alone.

A new life awaits her in Winchester. Yes, it is one of draughty boarding-houses and sidelong glances at her naked ring finger from younger colleagues; but it is also a life gleaming with independence and opportunity. Violet falls in with the broderers, a disparate group of women charged with embroidering kneelers for the Cathedral, and is soon entwined in their lives and secrets. As the almost unthinkable threat of a second Great War appears on the horizon, Violet collects a few secrets of her own that could just change everything. 340 pages

DALTON, Trent. *All Our Shimmering Skies*

Darwin, 1942. As Japanese bombs rain down, motherless Molly Hook, the gravedigger's daughter, is looking to the skies and running for her life. Inside a duffel bag she carries a stone heart, alongside a map to lead her to Longcoat Bob, the deep-country sorcerer who she believes put a curse on her family. By her side are the most unlikely travelling companions: Greta, a razor-tongued actress, and Yukio, a fallen Japanese fighter pilot. The treasure lies before them, but close behind them trails the dark. And above them, always, are the shimmering skies.

A story about gifts that fall from the sky, curses we dig from the earth and the secrets we bury inside ourselves, *All Our Shimmering Skies* is an odyssey of true love and grave danger, of darkness and light, of bones and blue skies. It is a love letter to Australia and an ode to the art of looking up – a buoyant, beautiful and magical novel, abrim with warmth, wit and wonder. 436 pages

DALTON, Trent. *Boy Swallows Universe*

Brisbane, 1985: A lost father, a mute brother, a junkie mum, a heroin dealer for a stepfather and a notorious crim for a babysitter. It's not as if Eli Bell's life isn't complicated enough already. He's just trying to follow his heart and understand what it means to be a good man, but fate keeps throwing obstacles in his way – not least of which is Tytus Broz, legendary Brisbane drug dealer.

But now Eli's life is going to get a whole lot more serious: he's about to meet the father he doesn't remember, break into Boggo Road on Christmas Day to rescue his mum, come face to face with the criminals who tore his world apart, and fall in love with the girl of his dreams.

A story of brotherhood, true love and the most unlikely of friendships, *Boy Swallows Universe* is heartbreaking, joyous and exhilarating. 474 pages

Winner Australian Book Industry, Book of the Year 2019

Winner Indie Book Award 2019

Winner People's Choice Awards, NSW Premier's Literary Awards 2019

Winner Australian Book Industry, Literary Fiction Book of the Year 2019

And other Awards.

DE KRETSE, Michelle. *The Life to Come*

Set in Sydney, Paris and Sri Lanka, *The Life to Come* is a mesmerizing novel about the stories we tell and don't tell ourselves as individuals, as societies, and as nations. It feels at once firmly classic and exhilaratingly contemporary. Pippa is a writer who longs for success. Celeste tries to convince herself that her feelings for her married lover are reciprocated. Ash makes strategic use of his childhood in Sri Lanka but blots out the memory of a tragedy from that time. Driven by the riveting stories and unforgettable characters, here is a dazzling meditation on intimacy, loneliness and our flawed perception of other people.

Profoundly moving as well as wickedly funny, *The Life to Come* reveals how the shadows cast by both the past and the future can transform, distort and undo the present. This extraordinary novel by Miles Franklin-winning author Michelle de Kretser will strike to your soul. 375 pages

Winner of the 2018 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

DIAMANT, Anita. *The Red Tent*

"My name means nothing to you. My memory is dust. This is not your fault, or mine. The chain connecting mother to daughter was broken and the word passed to the keeping of men, who had no way of knowing. That is why I became a footnote, my story a brief detour between the well-known story of my father, Jacob, and the celebrated chronicle of my brother, Joseph."

Lost to history by the chronicles of men, here at last is the dazzling story of Dinah, Jacob's only daughter in the Book of Genesis.

Moving panoramically from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt, *The Red Tent* is robustly narrated by Dinah, from her upbringing by the four wives of Jacob, to her growth into one of the most influential women of her time. In seeking to preserve her own remarkable experiences, as well as those of a long-ago era of womanhood, Dinah tells her story in the beautiful, thought-provoking novel. 418 pages

DIFFENBAUGH, Vanessa. *The Language of Flowers*

"I used the same flowers again and again: a bouquet of marigold, grief; a bucket of thistle, misanthropy; a pinch of dried basil; hatred. Only occasionally did my communication vary.

I placed a rhododendron on the plywood counter. The cluster of purple blossoms was not yet open and the buds pointed in his direction, tightly coiled and toxic. Beware."

The Victorian language of flowers was used to convey what words could not, from declarations of admiration to confessions of betrayal.

For Victoria Jones, alone after a childhood in foster care, it is her way of expressing a legacy of grief and guilt. Believing she is damaged beyond hope, she trusts nobody, connecting through the world only through message-laden bouquets.

But when a mysterious man at the flower market responds in kind, Victoria is caught between fascination and fear, and must decide whether she can open herself to the possibilities of happiness...and forgiveness.

Discussion questions available.

322 pages

DISHER, Garry. *Peace*

Constable Paul Hirschhausen runs a one-man police station in the dry farming country south of the flinders Ranges. He's still new in town, but the community activities – welfare checks, working bees – are starting to pay off.

Now Christmas is here. Apart from a grass fire, two boys stealing a ute and Brenda Flann entering the front bar of the pub without exiting her car, Hirsh's life has been peaceful.

Until he's called to a strange, vicious incident in Kitchener Street. And Sydney police ask him to check on a family living on a forgotten back road outside town.

Suddenly it doesn't look like a season of goodwill at all.

421 pages

EVANS, Tess. *Mercy Street*

Mercy Street tells the heart-warming story of curmudgeonly pensioner George, who, since his wife's death three years ago, is living a life that is no more than the sum of his 'worn-out, washed-out days'. While his marriage to Pen was a happy one, they never had children, so his life has narrowed to trips to the shop, occasional visits from his bossy sister Shirl and afternoons in the pub with his old mate Redgum.

But one day everything changes when Angie, a nineteen-year-old single mother, unexpectedly saves his life. George grudgingly acknowledges his debt to her, and later, when Angie asks for a favour, he has no choice but to agree.

Gradually, George's life begins to blossom, until Angie's fecklessness unexpectedly sets him on the wrong side of the law. It takes all of his love and courage, and friends both old and new, for George to deal with a very unexpected turn of events.

Delightfully sweet and funny, *Mercy Street* is a novel about mistakes, accidental families, and the transformative power of love.

FERRANTE, Elena. *My Brilliant Friend*

(Book One of the Neapolitan Novels. Translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein).

My Brilliant Friend is a rich and generous-hearted story about Elena and Lila, who grow up together in the 1950s in a poor neighbourhood on the outskirts of Naples. They learn to rely on each other and discover that their destinies are bound up in the intensity of their relationship.

Elena's Ferrante's piercingly honest portrait of two girls' path into womanhood is also the story of a nation and a meditation on the nature of friendship itself.

My Brilliant Friend is a modern masterpiece, the work of one of Italy's great storytellers.

Discussion questions available.

FINN, A.J. *The Woman in the Window*

What did she see?

It's been ten long months since Anna Fox left her home. Ten months during which she has haunted the rooms of her old New York house like a ghost, lost in her memories, too terrified to step outside.

Anna's lifeline to the real world is her window, where she sits day after day, watching her neighbours. When the Russells move in, Anna is instantly drawn to them. A picture-perfect family of three, they are an echo of the life that was once hers.

But one evening, a frenzied scream rips the silence, and Anna witnesses something no one was supposed to see.

Now she must do everything she can to unearth the truth about what really happened. But even if she does, will anyone believe her? And can she even trust herself?

427 pages

GARNER, Helen. *Everywhere I Look*

Everywhere I Look is a collection of essays, diary entries and true stories spanning more than fifteen years of the work of one of Australia's greatest writers. Helen Garner takes us from backstage at the ballet to the trial of a woman for infanticide, from the significance of moving house to the pleasures of re-reading *Pride and Prejudice*. The collection includes her famous and controversial essay on the insults of age, her deeply moving tribute to her mother, and the

story of her joy in discovering the ukulele. *Everywhere I Look* is a multifaceted, profound portrait of life. It glows with insight and wisdom. 227 pages

GILBERT, Elizabeth. *City of Girls*

Life is both fleeting and dangerous, and there is no point in denying yourself pleasure, or being anything other than what you are.

It is the summer of 1940. Nineteen-year-old Vivian Morris arrives in New York with her suitcase and sewing machine, exiled by her despairing parents. Although her quicksilver talents with a needle have been deemed insufficient for her to pass into her sophomore year in Vassar, she soon finds gainful employment as the self-appointed seamstress at the Lily Playhouse, her Aunt Peg's charmingly disreputable revue theatre. There, Vivian quickly becomes the toast of the showgirls, transforming the trash and tinsel only fit for the cheap seats into creations for goddesses. Here in this strange wartime city of girls, Vivian and her girlfriends mean to drink the heady highball of life itself to the last drop. But there are hard lessons to be learned, and bitterly regrettable mistakes to be made. Vivian sees that to live the life she wants, she must live many lives, ceaselessly and ingeniously making them new.

470 pages

GOWDA, SHILPI SOMAYA.

The Golden Son

Anil is the cherished eldest son of a large family from an Indian village, expected to inherit the role of leader of his clan and arbiter of its disputes. Leena is his closest companion, a fiercely brave girl who loves nothing more than the wild terrain they inhabit and her dear parents. As childhood friends, they are inseparable, with one of those rare relationships that transcends circumstances and the inequalities of life. But with the pressures and complications of adulthood, their paths begin to diverge. Anil journeys to America, to pursue his dream of becoming a medical doctor, finding both temptation and trial at a gritty urban hospital in Dallas, Texas. In India, Leena leaves her beloved home to join her new husband in a distant village, to discover her new family has unexpected complications.

Anil and Leena struggle to come to terms with their new identities thousands of miles apart. Many years later, their lives intersect once again. Altered by their choices and experiences, these two old friends are reunited when they need each other most. A tender and bittersweet story of friendship and family, *The Golden Son* illuminates the decisions we must make to find our true selves.

391 pages

Discussion questions in back of book

GREEN, Sophie. *The Inaugural Meeting of the Fairvale Ladies Book Club*

It's 1978 in Australia's vast Northern Territory.

Cyclone Tracy is a recent memory. Life is hard and people are isolated. But they find ways to connect.

Sybil is the matriarch of Fairvale Station, run by her husband, Joe. Their eldest son, Lachie, has left the Territory and their second son, Ben, must take his brother's place.

With her oldest friend, Rita, working for the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Alice Springs, and Ben's English wife, Kate, finding it difficult to adjust to life a Fairvale, Sybil devises a way to give them companionship and purpose: they all love to read, and she forms a book club.

Mother-of-three Sallyanne, from the dusty town of Katherine, is invited to join them, and completing the group is Della, who left Texas looking for adventure and work on the land.

These women are united by one need: to overcome the vast distances of Australia's Top End with friendship, tears, laughter, books and love. Books bring them together – but friendship will transform all of their lives.

425 pages

GREEN, Sophie. *The Shelly Bay Ladies Swimming Circle*

It is 1982 in Australia. *The Man from Snowy River* is a box-office hit and Paul Hogan is on the TV.

In a seaside suburb, housewife Theresa takes up swimming. She wants to get fit; she also wants a few precious minutes to herself. So at sunrise each day she strikes out past the waves.

From the same beach, the widowed Marie swims. With her husband gone, bathing is the one constant in her new life. After finding herself in a desperate situation, 25-year-old Leanne only has herself to rely on. She becomes a nurse to help others, even as she resists help herself.

Elaine has recently moved from England. Far from home and without her adult sons, her closest friend is a gin bottle. In the waters of Shelly Bay, these four women find each other. They will survive bluebottle stings and heartbreak; they will laugh so hard they will swallow water, and they will plunge their tears into the ocean's salt. They will find solace and companionship, and learn that love takes many forms.

Most of all, together they will cherish their friendship, each and every day.

427 pages

GREGORY, Philippa. *The King's Curse*

The riveting story of Margaret Poole, cousin of Elizabeth of York, and her unique view of Henry VIII's terrifying rise to power in Tudor England.

As an heir to the Plantagenets, Margaret is seen by the King's mother (The Red Queen) as a rival for the Tudor claim to the throne. She is buried in marriage to a Tudor supporter – Sir Richard Poole, governor of Wales – and becomes guardian to Arthur, the young Prince of Wales, and his beautiful bride, Katherine of Aragon.

But Margaret's destiny, as cousin to the queen (The White Queen), is not for a life in the shadows. Tragedy throws her into poverty and only a royal death restores her to her place at young Henry VIII's court where she becomes chief lady-in-waiting to Queen Katherine. There she watches the dominance of the Spanish queen over her husband and her tragic decline.

Amid the rapid deterioration of the Tudor court, Margaret must choose whether her allegiance is to the increasingly tyrannical Henry VIII or to her beloved queen. Caught between the old and the new, Margaret must find her own way, concealing her knowledge that an old curse cast upon all the Tudors is slowly coming true... 592 pages

GRENVILLE, Kate. *One Life: My Mother's Story*

When Kate Grenville's mother died she left behind many fragments of memoir. These were the starting point for *One Life*, the story of Nancy Russell, a woman whose life spanned a century of tumult and change.

In some ways Nancy's story echoes that of countless mothers and grandmothers, for whom the spectacular shifts of the twentieth century offered a path to new freedoms and choices. In other ways Nancy was exceptional. In an era when women were expected to have no ambitions beyond the domestic, she ran successful businesses as a registered pharmacist, laid the bricks for the family home, and discovered her husband's secret life as a revolutionary. *One Life* is an act of great imaginative sympathy, a daughter's intimate account of the patterns in her mother's life. It is a deeply moving homage by one of Australia's finest writers.

GRENVILLE, Kate. *A Room Made of Leaves*

What if Elizabeth Macarthur – wife of the notorious John Macarthur, wool baron in the earliest days of Sydney – had written a shockingly frank secret memoir? And what if novelist Kate Grenville has miraculously found and published it? That's the starting point for *A Room Made of Leaves*, a playful dance of possibilities between the real and the invented.

Marriage to a ruthless bully, the impulses of her heart, the search for power in a society that gave women none: this Elizabeth Macarthur manages her complicated life with spirit and passion, cunning and sly wit. Her memoir lets us hear – at last! – what one of these seemingly demure women from history might really have thought.

At the centre of *A Room Made of Leaves* is one of the most toxic issues of our own age: the seductive appeal of false stories. This book may be set in the past, but it's just as much about the present, where secrets and lies have the dangerous power to shape reality.

Kate Grenville's return to the territory of *The Secret River* is historical fiction turned inside out, a stunning sleight of hand. 321 pages

GRENVILLE, Kate. *Sarah Thornhill*

This is the story of Sarah Thornhill, youngest child of the family at the heart of Kate Grenville's multi-award winning novel *The Secret River*.

Her stepmother calls her willful, but handsome Jack Langland loves her and she loves him. Me and Jack, she thinks, what could go wrong?

But there's ugly secrets in Sarah's family.

That secret takes her into the darkness of the past, and across the ocean to the wild coasts of New Zealand. Among the strangers of that other place, she can begin to understand.

Sarah Thornhill, a novel by one of our greatest writers, is about love lost and found, tangled histories, and how it matters to keep stories alive. 307 pages

GRENVILLE, Kate. *The Secret River*

In 1806 London, thief William Thornhill is transported to Australia. Once there he earns his freedom and settles on what looks like empty land.

But the land belongs to the Darug people, and they're prepared to defend it. He can't go back, but how can he go forward?

The choice Thornhill makes will haunt him for the rest of his life.

Winner of the 2006 Commonwealth Writers' Prize.

Winner of the 2006 NSW Premier's Literary Award.

GROEN, Hendrik. *The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83¼ Years Old*

“Tuesday 1 January

Another year, and I still don't like old people. Their Zimmer-frame shuffle, their endless complaints, their tea and biscuits, their bellyaching. Me? I'm eighty-three...”

Meet Hendrik Groen. An octogenarian in a care home who has no intention of doing what he's told, or dying quietly. To that end, he creates the Old-But-Not-Dead Club and with his fellow members sets about living his final years with careless abandon. Such anarchism infuriates the care home director but pleases Eefje, the woman who makes Hendrik's frail heart palpitate. If it's never too late to have fun, then can it ever be too late to meet the love of your life?

394 pages

HADLOW, Janice. *The Other Bennet Sister*

It is a sad fact of life that if a young woman is unlucky enough to come into the world without expectations, she had better do all she can to ensure she is born beautiful. To be poor and handsome is misfortune enough; but to be penniless and plain is a hard fate indeed.

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Mary is the middle of the five Bennet girls and the plainest of them all, so what hope does she have?

An introvert in a family of extroverts; a constant disappointment to her mother; fearful of her father's sharp tongue; with little in common with her siblings – is it any wonder she turns to books for both company and guidance?

The Other Bennet Sister, though, shows another side to Mary.

Simultaneously a wonderfully warm homage to Jane Austen and a delightful new story in its own right, *The Other Bennet Sister* is, at its heart, a life-affirming tale of a young woman finding her place in the world. Witty and uplifting, it will make you feel – and cheer – for Mary as you have never done before.

658 pages

HAM, Rosalie. *The Dressmaker*

Dungatar is a small town like any other in the Victorian wheatlands – except that the women dress like Paris models. This is the story of the exotic Tilly, a talented and beautiful misfit, who returns from Europe to Dungatar to nurse her mad old mother. Her reappearance after twenty years is met with suspicion and malice from the eccentric locals until they discover her dress making skills. Among the most appreciative is the policeman, an enthusiastic seamstress himself. Gradually she wins over the town with her fabulous creations.

HAM, Rosalie. *The Year of the Farmer*

In a quiet farming town somewhere in country New South Wales, war is brewing.

The last few years have been punishingly dry, especially for the farmers, but otherwise, it's all Neralie Mackintosh's fault. If she'd never left town then her ex, the hapless but extremely eligible Mitchell Bishop, would never have fallen into the clutches of the truly awful Mandy, who now lords it over everyone as if she owns the place.

So, now that Neralie has returned to run the local pub, the whole town is determined to reinstate her to her rightful position in the social order. But Mandy Bishop has other ideas. Meanwhile the head of the local water board – Glenys “Gravedigger” Dingle – is looking for a way to line her pockets at the expense of the hardworking farmers already up to their eyes in debt. And Mandy and Neralie's war may be just the chance she was looking for...

A darkly satirical novel of a small town battling the elements and one another.

336 pages

HAMMER, Chris. *Scrublands*

In an isolated country town brought to its knees by endless drought, a charismatic and dedicated young priest calmly opens fire on his congregation, killing five parishioners before being shot dead himself.

A year later, troubled journalist Martin Scarsden arrives in Riversend to write a feature on the anniversary of the tragedy. But the stories he hears from the locals about the priest and the incidents leading up to the shooting don't fit with the accepted version of events his own newspaper reported in an award-winning investigation. Martin can't ignore his doubts, nor the urgings of some locals to unearth the real reason behind the priest's deadly rampage.

Just as Martin believes he is making headway, a shocking new development rocks the town, which becomes the biggest story in Australia. The media descends on Riversend, and Martin is now the one in the spotlight. His reasons for investigating the shooting have suddenly become very personal.

Wrestling with his own demons, Martin finds himself risking everything to discover a truth that becomes darker and more complex with every twist. But there are powerful forces determined to stop him, and he has no idea how far they will go to make sure the town's secrets stay buried.

486 pages

HAMMER, Chris. *Silver*

For half a lifetime, journalist Martin Scarsden has run from his past. But now there is no escaping. He'd vowed never to return to his hometown, Port Silver, and its traumatic memories. But now his new partner, Mandy Blonde, has inherited an old house in the seaside town and Martin knows their chance for a new life together won't come again.

Martin arrives to find his old friend from school days has been brutally murdered, and Mandy is the chief suspect. With the police curiously reluctant to pursue other suspects, Martin goes searching for the killer. And he finds the past waiting for him.

He's making little progress when a terrible new crime starts to reveal the truth. The media descend on Port Silver, attracted by a story that has it all: sex, drugs, celebrity and religion. Once again, Martin finds himself in the front line of reporting.

Yet the demands of deadlines and his desire to clear Mandy are not enough: the past is ever present.

565 pages

HANNAH, Kristin. *The Great Alone*

Alaska, 1974. Untamed. Unpredictable. A story of a family in crisis struggling to survive at the edge of the world, it is also a story of young and enduring love.

Cora Allbright and her husband, Ernt – a recently returned Vietnam veteran scarred by war – uproot their thirteen-year-old daughter, Leni, to start a new life in Alaska. Utterly unprepared for the weather and the isolation, but welcomed by the close-knit community, they fight to build a home in this harsh, beautiful wilderness.

At once an epic story of human survival and love, and an intimate portrait of a family tested beyond endurance, *The Great Alone* offers a glimpse into a vanishing way of life in America.

440 pages

HARPER, Jane. *The Dry*

Who really killed the Hadler family?

Luke Hadler turns a gun on his wife and child, then himself. The farming community of Kiewarra is facing life and death choices daily. If one of their own broke under the strain, well...

When Federal Police investigator Aaron Falk returns to Kiewarra for the funerals, he is loath to confront the people who rejected him twenty years earlier. But when his investigative skills are called on, the facts of the Hadler case start to make him doubt this murder-suicide charge.

And as Falk probes deeper into the killings, old wounds are reopened. For Falk and his childhood friend Luke shared a secret... A secret Falk thought long-buried... A secret which Luke's death starts to bring to the surface...

Winner of the 2015 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for an Unpublished Manuscript.

Discussion questions available.

HARPER, Jane. *Force of Nature*

What has happened to Alice Russell?

Five women reluctantly pick up their backpacks and start walking along the muddy track. Only four come out the other side.

The hike through the rugged Giralang Ranges is meant to take the office colleagues out of their air-conditioned comfort zone and teach them resilience and team building. At least this is what the corporate retreat website advertises.

Federal Police Agent Aaron Falk has a keen interest in the whereabouts of the missing bushwalker. Alice Russell is the whistleblower in his latest case. She knows all the secrets: about the company she works for and the people she works with.

Far from encouraging teamwork, Falk is told a tale of violence and disintegrating trust. And as he delves into the disappearance, it seems some dangers run far deeper than anyone knew.

380 pages

HARPER, Jane. *The Lost Man*

Three brothers, one death, a fence line stretching to the horizon.

Two brothers meet at the border of their vast cattle properties under the unrelenting sun of the outback Queensland. They are at the stockman's grave, a landmark so old, no one can remember who is buried there. But today, the scant shadow it casts was the last hope of their middle brother, Cameron.

The Bright family's quiet existence is thrown into grief and anguish.

Something had been troubling Cam. Did he lose hope and walk to his death? Because if he didn't, the isolation of the outback leaves few suspects...

366 pages

HARPER, Jane. *The Survivors*

Kieran Elliott's life changes forever on the day a reckless mistake led to devastating consequences.

The guilt that still haunts him resurfaces during a visit with his young family to the small coastal community he once called home.

Kieran's parents are struggling in a town where fortunes are forged by the sea. Between them all is his absent brother, Finn.

When a body is discovered on the beach, long-held secrets threaten to emerge. A sunken wreck, a missing girl, and questions that have never washed away... 378 pages

HAWKINS, Paula. *The Girl on the Train*

"To everyone else in this carriage I must look normal; I'm doing exactly what they do: commuting to work, making appointments, ticking things off lists. Just goes to show."

Rachel catches the same commuter train every morning. She knows it will wait at the same signal each time, overlooking a row of back gardens. She's even started to feel like she knows the people who live in one of the houses. 'Jess and Jason', she calls them. Their life – as she sees it – is perfect. If only Rachel could be that happy.

And then she sees something shocking. It's only a minute until the train moves on, but it's enough.

Now everything's changed. Now Rachel has a chance to become a part of the lives she's only watched from afar.

Now they'll see; she's much more than just the girl on the train...

HAWKINS, Paula. *Into the Water*

"Julia, it's me. In need you to call me back. Please, Julia. It's important..."

In the last days before her death, Nel Abbott called her sister.

Jules didn't pick up the phone, ignoring her plea for help.

Now Nel is dead. They say she jumped. And Jules has been dragged back to the one place she hoped she had escaped for good, to care for the teenage girl her sister left behind.

For Jules is afraid. So afraid. Of her long-buried memories, of the old Mill House, of knowing that Nel would never have jumped.

And most of all she'd afraid of the water, and the place they call the Drowning pool...

356 pages

Discussion questions available.

HILL, Susan. *The Benefit of Hindsight*

On the face of it, DC Simon Serrailer has had time to recuperate after the violet incident that cost him his arm, and nearly his life. He is back in harness at Lafferton CID, but is also spending time high up in the cathedral roof, making drawings of medieval angels which are being restored.

Lafferton is going through a quiet patch, so far as crime is concerned, until one rainy night two local men open their front door to a couple seeking shelter. A serious error of judgement puts Simon's reputation on the line and calls into question how full his recovery has really been.

In her new role as a GP, Simon's sister Cat's medical and counselling skills are tested by terrible and unexpected events at the homes of two very different Lafferton women. Simon and Cat's unreliable father, Richard, has returned to live nearby, in a luxury apartment for the well-heeled over-60s. He's soon up to his usual tricks.

In this, the tenth Serrailer crime novel, Simon must battle his own demons as Lafferton struggles to cope with a series of crimes that threaten the very sanctity of hearth and home. 297 pages

HILLMAN, Robert. *The Bookshop of the Broken Hearted*

Tom Hope is a humble man. Not much of a farmer – too soft-hearted to even butcher his own sheep. Not much of a husband either, judging by the sudden departure of his adored wife. But he turns out to have a gift for fatherhood. Until he loses the child, and his heart breaks all over again.

Then he meets Hannah Babel, quixotic small-town bookseller: the second Jew – and the most vivid person – Tom has ever known. He dares to believe they could make each other happy.

But it is 1969. Twenty-five years ago, Hannah arrived at Auschwitz with her own little boy.

And now Tom Hope is taking on a battle with heartbreak he can barely begin to imagine.

275 pages

HOGAN, Ruth. *The Keeper of Lost Things*

Once a celebrated author of short stories now in his twilight years, Anthony Peardew has spent half his life lovingly collecting lost objects, trying to atone for a promise broken many years before.

Realising that he is running out of time, he leaves his house and all its lost treasures to his assistant Laura, the one person he can trust to fulfil his legacy and reunite the thousands of objects with their rightful owners.

But the final wishes of the “Keeper of Lost Things” have unforeseen repercussions which trigger a most serendipitous series of encounters. 308 pages

HONEYMAN, Gail. *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely fine*

Eleanor Oliphant leads a simple life. She wears the same clothes to work every day, eats the same meal deal for lunch every day and buys the same two bottles of vodka to drink every weekend.

Eleanor Oliphant is happy. Nothing is missing from her carefully timetabled existence. Except, sometimes, everything... 384 pages

Winner of the 2017 Costa Book Awards

Discussion questions in back of book

HOOPER, Chloe. *The Arsonist: a Mind on Fire*

What kind of person would deliberately set a firestorm? What kind of mind?

On the scorching February day in 2009 that became known as Black Saturday, a man lit two fires in Victoria's Latrobe Valley, then sat on the roof of his house to watch the inferno. In the Valley, where the rates of crime were the highest in the state, more than thirty people were known to police as firebugs. But the detectives soon found themselves on the trail of a man they didn't know.

The Arsonist takes readers on the hunt for this man, and inside the strange puzzle of his mind. This book is also the story of fire in Australia, and of a community that owed its existence to that very element. The command of fire has defined and sustained us as a species – understanding its abuse will shape our future.

A powerful real-life thriller written with Hooper's trademark lyric detail and nuance, *The Arsonist* is a reminder that in an age of fire, all of us are gatekeepers. 253 pages

HOOPER, Joan Artherton.

Nothing to Cry About

Today I see his face for the first time. It is not the face I expect. His eyes are gentle... All these years I have wondered about this face, these eyes... This young man murdered my father.

Nothing to Cry About begins in 1938 when author Joan Artherton Hooper, age two, [is] placed in an orphanage with her two sisters. Joan's story, which swings between fantasies of Hollywood and restraints from the Vatican, is a test of everything she believes in.

When unworthiness is bred into you, it is difficult to think you can be as good as anyone else.

Growing up in Colac as award of the state, to deserted wife in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, to mother of daughters struggling with drug, alcohol and mental health issues, Joan shows an astonishing sense of humour and an iron-clad will to “rise above her station” and turn her life into a success.

“This is no ordinary story. Nor is it a larger than life story. It is a story of extraordinary resilience, humanity and – against all odds – both innocence and a capacity for laughter. It should be read by everyone who thinks they are a hard luck story and everyone else to remind them how lucky they are” 353 pages

JOEL, Alexandra. *Rosetta: a Scandalous True Story*

Headstrong and beautiful, in 1905 Rosetta escaped her safe Melbourne life, deserting her respectable husband and five-year-old daughter to run away with Zeno the Magnificent, a half-Chinese fortune teller and seducer of souls.

The pair reinvented themselves in London, where they beguiled European society and risked everything for a life of glamour and desire. Rosetta said she was American; Zeno claimed to be a brilliant Japanese professor. Together they attracted the patronage of famous writers, inventors and scientists, lords and ladies, dukes and duchesses.

Rosetta reveled in a life few women of her time would have dared to embrace, yet all the while she hid her secret shame: the daughter she had left behind.

This is the compelling story of Alexandra Joel's quest to uncover the truth about her scandalous great-grandmother, and the shocking century-old secret she would discover at the heart of her family.

JOYCE, Rachel. *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*

Meet Harold Fry, recently retired. He lives in a small English village with his wife, Maureen, who seems irritated by almost everything he does. Little differentiates one day from the next. Then one morning a letter arrives, addressed to Harold in a shaky scrawl, from a woman he hasn't heard from in twenty years. Queenie Hennessy is in a hospice and is writing to say goodbye. But before Harold mails off a quick reply, a chance encounter convinces him that he absolutely must deliver the message to Queenie in person. In his yachting shoes and light coat, Harold embarks on an

urgent quest. Determined to walk six hundred miles to the hospice, Harold believes that as long as he walks, Queenie will live. A novel of charm, humour and profound insight into the thoughts and feelings we all bury within our hearts.
343 pages

KALANITHI, Paul. *When Breath Becomes Air*

What do you do when a life is catastrophically interrupted? What does it mean to have a child as your own life fades away? What makes life worth living in the face of death?

At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade's training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, the next he was a patient struggling to live.

When Breath Becomes Air chronicles Kalanithi's transformation from medical student in search of what makes a virtuous and meaningful life into a neurosurgeon working in the core of human identity – the brain – and finally into patient and new father.
228 pages

KAMINSKY, Leah. *The Waiting Room*

The Waiting Room captures the sights, sounds, accents and animosities of a country overflowing with stories.

Dina is a family doctor living in the melting-pot city of Haifa, Israel. Born in Australia in a Jewish enclave of Melbourne to Holocaust survivors, Dina has left behind a childhood marred by misery and the tragedies of the past to build a new life for herself in the Promised Land.

After starting a family of her own, she finds her life falling apart beneath the demands of her eccentric patients, a marriage starting to fray, the ever-present threat of terrorist attack and the ghost of her mother, haunting her with memories that Dina would prefer to leave on the other side of the world.

Leah Kaminsky plumbs the depths of her characters' lives, both the sweet and the heart-wrenching, reaching back in a single climatic day through six decades and across three continents to uncover a truth that could save Dina's sanity – and her life.
286 pages

KELLY, Cathy. *The Year That Changed Everything*

Three women celebrate their birthdays...30, 40, 50.

But their milestone birthdays mark the start of a year that will change everything...

Ginger isn't spending her thirtieth the way she would have planned. Tonight might be the first night of the rest of her life – or a total disaster.

Sam is finally pregnant after years of trying. When her waters break on the morning of her fortieth birthday, she panics: forget the labour, how is she going to be a mother?

Callie is celebrating her fiftieth at a big party in her Dublin home. Then a knock on the door mid-party turns her perfect life upside down...

Full of warmth and wisdom, this is a story about finding happiness on your own terms.

394 pages

Discussion questions available.

KELLY, Martha Hall. *Lilac Girls*

Inspired by the life of a real World War II heroine, this powerful debut novel reveals an incredible story of love, redemption, and terrible secrets that were hidden for decades.

Caroline Ferriday is a New York socialite and liaison to the French Consulate whose life is forever changed when Hitler's army invades Poland in September 1939 – and then sets its sights on France.

An ocean away from Caroline, Kasia Kuzmerick, a Polish teenager, sinks deeper into her role as a courier for the underground movement.

In Germany, Herta Oberheuser, a young and ambitious dermatologist, answers an ad for a government medical position – only to find herself trapped in a male-dominated realm of Nazi secrets and power.

The lives of these three women are set on a collision course when the unthinkable happens and Kasia is sent to Ravensbruck, the notorious female-only Nazi concentration camp.

The tragedy and the triumph of their stories cross continents. Capturing the indomitable pull of compassion to bring justice to those whom history has forgotten.

487 pages

Discussion questions in back of book.

KENEALLY, Tom. *Napoleon's Last Island*

When Tom Keneally discovered by chance at the National Gallery of Victoria that Betsy Balcombe, a young girl living on St Helena while the Emperor Napoleon was exiled there, had become the Emperor's 'intimate friend and annoyer',

and had then emigrated with her family to Australia, he was impelled to begin another extraordinary novel, exploring the intersection between the ordinary people of the world and those we deem exceptional.

Betsy Balcombe moved as a child with her family to St Helena, 'that high mid-Atlantic rock of exile'. Ten years later her family befriended, served and were ruined by their relationship with Napoleon. To redeem their fortunes William Balcombe, Betsy's father, betrayed the Emperor and accepted a job as the colonial treasurer of New South Wales, taking his family with him. After enduring a profound tragedy on the voyage out, and never quite recovering from the results of his association with Napoleon, William's life deteriorated; however, his family struggled and survived in Australia.

Tom Keneally recreates Betsy's friendship with The Great Ogre, her enmities and alliances with his court, and her dramatic coming of age during her years on the island. With his ability for bringing historical stories to life in the most brilliant and surprising ways, Keneally vividly share this remarkable tale and the beginning of an Australian dynasty.

425 pages

KENT, Hannah. *The Good People*

In the year 1825, in a remote valley lying between the mountains of south-west Ireland, near the Flesk river of Killarney, three women are brought together by strange and troubling events.

Nora Leahy has lost her daughter and her husband in the same year, and is now burdened with the care of her four-year-old grandson, Micheal. The boy cannot walk, or speak, and Nora, mistrustful of the tongues of gossips, has kept the child hidden from those who might see in his deformity evidence of otherworldly interference.

Unable to care for the child alone, Nora hires a fourteen-year-old servant girl, Mary, who soon hears the whispers in the valley about the blasted creature causing grief to fall upon the widow's house.

Alone, hedged in by rumour, Mary and her mistress seek out the only person in the valley who might be able to help Micheal. For although her neighbours are wary of her, it is said old Nance Roche has the knowledge. That she consorts with Them, the Good People. And that only she can return those whom they have taken...

Discussion questions available.

386 pages

KIDD, Sue Monk. *The Invention of Wings*

Sarah Grimke is the middle daughter. The one her mother calls difficult and her father calls remarkable. On Sarah's eleventh birthday, Hetty 'Handful' Grimke is taken from the slave quarters she shares with her mother, wrapped in lavender ribbons, and presented to Sarah as a gift. Sarah knows what she does next will unleash a world of trouble. She also knows she cannot accept. And so, indeed, the trouble begins...

A powerful and sweeping novel, inspired by real events, *The Invention of Wings* is a haunting evocation of the American Deep South in the nineteenth century, where the evils of slavery were all but invisible to those who saw it as essential to their way of life. It is also the story of an impossible friendship, and sisterhood against the odds, told with warmth, humour and insight.

KIEZA, Grantlee. *Mrs Kelly*

When Ned Kelly's mother, Ellen, arrived in Melbourne in 1841 aged nine, British convict ships were still dumping their unhappy cargo in what was then known as the colony of New South Wales. By the time she died aged ninety-one in 1923, having outlived seven of her twelve children, motor cars plied the highway near her bush home north of Melbourne, and Australia was a modern, sovereign nation.

Like so many pioneering women, Elle, the wife of a convict, led a life of great hardship. Born on Ireland during a time of entrenched poverty and sectarian violence, she was a mother of seven when her husband dies after months in a police lock-up. She lived through famine and drought, watched her babies die, listened through the prison wall while her eldest son was hanged, and saw the charred remains of another of her children, who'd died in a shoot-out with police.

One son became Australia's most infamous outlaw (and ultimately most celebrated) outlaw,; another became a highly decorated policeman, an honorary member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and a worldwide star on the rodeo circuit. Through it all, "the notorious Mrs Kelly", as she was dubbed by Victoria's Assistant Police Commissioner, survived as best she could.

By bestselling biographer Grantlee Kieza, *Mrs Kelly* is the astonishing story of one of Australia's most notorious women and her wild family, but it's also the story of the making of Australia, from struggling colony to modern nation.

616 pages

KOVAL, Ramona. *Bloodhound: Searching for My Father*

Ramona Koval's parents were Holocaust survivors who fled their homeland and settled in Melbourne. As a child, Koval learned little about their lives—only snippets from traumatic tales of destruction and escape. But she always suspected that the man who raised her was not her biological father.

One day in the 1990s, long after her mother's death, she decides she must know the truth. A phone call leads to a photograph in the mail, then tea with strangers. Before long Koval is interrogating a nursing-home patient, meeting a

horse whisperer in tropical Queensland, journeying to rural Poland, learning other languages and dealing with Kafkaesque bureaucracy, all in the hope of finding an answer. A quest for identity recounted with Koval's customary humour, *Bloodhound* takes hold of the reader and never lets go. It is a moving story of the terrible cost of war and of family secrets.

KWAN, Kevin. *Crazy Rich Asians*

Crazy Rich Asians is the outrageously funny debut novel about three super-rich, pedigreed Chinese families and the gossip, backbiting and scheming that occurs when the heir to one of the most massive fortunes in Asia brings home his ABC (American-born Chinese) girlfriend to the wedding of the season.

When Rachel Chu agrees to spend the summer in Singapore with her boyfriend, Nicholas Young, she envisions a humble family home, long drives to explore the island, and quality time with the man she might one day marry. What she doesn't know is that Nick's family home happens to look like a palace, that she'll ride in more private planes than cars, and that with one of Asia's most eligible bachelors on her arm, Rachel may as well have a target on her back. Initiated into a world of dynastic splendor beyond imagining, Rachel meets Astrid, the It Girl of Singapore society; Eddie, whose family practically lives in the pages of the Hong Kong socialite magazines; and Eleanor, Nick's formidable mother, a woman who has very strong feelings about who her son should – and should not – marry. Uproarious, addictive and filled with jaw-dropping opulence, *Crazy Rich Asians* is an insider's look at the Asian jetset, a perfect depiction of the clash between old money and new money, and between Overseas Chinese and Mainland Chinese, and a fabulous novel about what it means to be young, in love and gloriously, crazily rich.

403 pages

LAGUNA, Sophie. *The Choke*

"I never had words to ask the questions, so I never had the answers"

Abandoned by her mother and only occasionally visited by her secretive father, Justine is raised by her pop, a man tormented by visions of the Burma Railway. Justine finds sanctuary in Pop's chooks and The Choke, where the banks of the Murray River are so narrow it seems they might touch – a place of staggering natural beauty. But the river can't protect Justine from danger. Her father is a criminal, and the world he exposes her to can be lethal.

Justine is overlooked and underestimated, a shy and often silent observer of her chaotic world. She learns that she has to make sense of it on her own. She has to find ways to survive so much neglect. She must hang on to a friendship when it comes, she must hide when she has to, and ultimately she must fight back.

The Choke is a brilliant, haunting novel about a child navigating an often dark and uncaring world of male power and violence, in which grown-ups can't be trusted and comfort can only be found in nature. This compassionate and claustrophobic vision of a child in danger and a society in trouble celebrates above all the indomitable nature of the human spirit.

371 pages

LAVEAU-HARVIE, Vicki.

The Erratics

We've been disowned and disinherited: there's no changing it, I say. When something bad happens to them, we'll know soon enough and we'll deal with it together. I don't realise it at the time, but when I say that, I imply I care. I imply there may be something to be salvaged. I misspeak. But I'm flying out anyway. Blood calls to blood; what can I tell you.

When Vicki Laveau-Harvie's elderly mother is hospitalised unexpectedly, Vicki and her sister travel to her parents' isolated ranch home in Alberta, Canada, to help their father. Estranged from their parents for many years, Vicki and her sister are horrified by what they discover on their arrival.

For years, Vicki's mother has camouflaged her maniac delusions and savage unpredictability, and over the decades she has managed to shut herself and her husband away from the outside world, systematically starving him and making him a virtual prisoner in his own home. Vicki and her sister have a lot to do, in very little time. At every step they have to contend with their mother, whose favourite phrase during their childhood was: 'I'll get you and you won't even know I'm doing it'.

A ferocious, sharp, darkly funny and wholly compelling memoir of families, the pain they can inflict and the legacy they leave, *The Erratics* has the tightly coiled, compressed energy of an explosive device – it will take your breath away.

Winner of the 2019 The Stella Prize

217 pages

Winner of the 2018 Finch Memoir Prize

Shortlisted for the 2019 NSW Premier's Literary Awards

LEE, Harper. *Go Set a Watchman*

Maycomb, Alabama. Twenty-six-year-old Jean Louise Finch – 'Scout' – returns home from New York City to visit her ageing father, Atticus. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights tensions and political turmoil that were transforming

the South, Jean Louise's homecoming turns bittersweet when she learns disturbing truths about her close-knit family, the town and the people dearest to her. Memories from her childhood flood back, and her values and assumptions are thrown into doubt. Featuring many of the iconic characters from *To Kill A Mockingbird*, *Go Set a Watchman* perfectly captures a young woman, and a world, in painful yet necessary transition out of the illusions of the past – a journey that can be guided only by one's own conscience.

LEE, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*

“Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit ‘em, but remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird”

A lawyer's advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic novel – a black man charged with the rape of a white girl. Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with the exuberant humour the irrationality of adult attitudes to race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina of one man's struggle for justice. But the Wright of history will only tolerate so much. 309 pages

Winner of the 1961 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

LEE, Min Jin. *Pachinko*

Yeongdo, Korea 1911.

A club-footed, cleft-lipped man marries a fifteen-year-old girl. The couple have one child, their beloved daughter Sunja. When Sunja falls pregnant by a married yakuza, the family face ruin. But then a Christian minister offers a chance of salvation: a new life in Japan as his wife.

Following a man she hardly knows to a hostile country where she has no friends and no home, Sunja's salvation is just the beginning of her story. 537 pages

LINDSEY, Kiera. *The Convict's Daughter: the Scandal that Shocked a Colony*

One wet autumn evening in 1848, a fifteen-year-old Mary Ann Gill stole out of a bedroom window in her father's Sydney hotel and took a coach to a local racecourse. There she was to elope with James Butler Kinchela, wayward son of the former Attorney-General. Her enraged father pursued them on horseback and fired two pistols at his daughter's suitor, narrowly avoiding killing him.

What followed was Australia's most scandalous abduction trial of the era, as well as an extraordinary story of adventure and misadventure, both in Australia and abroad. Through humiliation, heartache, bankruptcy and betrayal, Mary Ann hung onto James' promise to marry her.

This is a compelling biography of a currency lass born when convicts were still working the streets of Sydney. Starting with just a newspaper clipping, historian Kiera Lindsey has uncovered the world of her feisty great, great, great aunt, who lived and loved during a period of dramatic social and political change. 322 pages

LLEWELLYN, Caro. *Diving into Glass*

Caro Llewellyn was living her dream life in her adopted home of New York. Directing an international literary festival. Then one day, running in Central Park, she lost all sensation in her legs. Two days later she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

Caro was no stranger to tragedy. Her father Richard contracted polio at the age of twenty and spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Dignified, undaunted and ingenious, he was determined to make every day count, not least seducing his nurse while still confined in an iron lung, then marrying her.

But when Caro was herself blindsided by illness, cut loose from everything she depended on, she couldn't summon any of the grace and courage she'd witnessed growing up. She was furious, toxic, humiliated. Only by looking back at her father's extraordinary example was she able to rediscover her own grit and find a way forward, rebuilding her life shard by shard.

An emotionally brutal memoir of family, vulnerability and purpose, *Diving into Glass* is a searing, often funny portrait of the realities of disability and an intimate account of two lives filled with vigour and audacity. 321 pages

LONDON, Joan. *The Golden Age*

“He felt like a pirate landing on an island of little maimed animals. A great wave had swept them up and duped them here. All of them, like him, stranded, wanting to go home”

It is 1954 and thirteen-year-old Frank Gould, refugee from wartime Hungary, is learning to walk again after contracting polio in Australia. At the Golden Age Children's Polio Convalescent Home in Perth, he sees Elsa, a fellow patient, and they form a passionate, forbidden bond.

The Golden Age becomes the little world that reflects the larger one, where everything occurs: love and desire, music, death, and poetry. It is a place where children must learn that they are alone, even within their families. Written with Joan London's customary clear-eyed prose, *The Golden Age* evokes a time past and a yearning for deep connection. Iris a rare and precious gem of a book from one of Australia's finest novelists. 242 pages

LOVITT, Zane. *Black Teeth*

Jason Ginaff vets job candidates. He dredges up that angry tweet you thought you had deleted; that pic on Facebook, the one where you're drunk. But he's also been searching for someone on his own time. A man who casts a shadow across all of Jason's life. And today he's found him.

Rudy Alamein has been searching too. But with another purpose in mind: revenge.

Black Teeth is a biting original and darkly funny: a witty, dynamic contemporary thriller by an emerging master of the form.

LUCASHENKO, Melissa.

Too Much Lip

Too much lip, her old problem from way back. And the older she got, the harder it seemed to get to swallow her opinions. The avalanche of bullshit in the world would drown her if she let it; the least she could do was raise her voice in anger.

Wise-cracking Kerry Salter has spent a life-time avoiding two things – her hometown and prison. But now her Pop is dying and she's an inch away from the lock-up, so she heads south on a stolen Harley.

Kerry plans to spend twenty-four hours, *tops*, over the border. She quickly discovers, though, that Bundjalung country has a funny way of grabbing onto people. Old family wounds open as the Salters fight to stop the development of their beloved river. And the unexpected arrival on the scene of a good-looking dungai fella intent on loving her up only adds more trouble – but then trouble is Kerry's middle name.

Gritty and darkly hilarious, *Too Much Lip* offers redemption and forgiveness where none seems possible.

Shortlisted for the 2019 The Stella Prize

318 pages

MCINERNEY, Monica. *The Trip of a Lifetime*

"I always thought memories were unchangeable. Set in stone, shaped by the years. But there are always others too, ones you haven't let yourself remember..."

The willful and eccentric Lola Quinlan is off on the trip of a lifetime, taking her beloved granddaughter a great granddaughter with her. More than sixty years after emigrating to Australia, she'd keeping a secret promise to return to her Irish homeland.

But as she embarks on her journey, the flamboyant Lola is still hiding the hurtful reasons she left Ireland in the first place. What- and who – will be waiting for her on the other side of the world?

The Trip of a Lifetime is a big, bold, beautiful book about the light and dark times of life, and all the wonders in between. Moving from the Clare Valley of South Australia to the lush Irish countryside, this is a delightful, emotional story about a colourful and huge-hearted family that you'll want to call your own. 451 pages

Discussion questions in back of book.

MCTIERNAN, Dervla. *The Good Turn*

Police corruption, an investigation that ends in tragedy and the mystery of a little girl's silence – three unconnected events that will prove to be linked by one small town.

While Detective Cormac Reilly faces enemies at work and trouble in his personal life, Garda Peter Fisher is relocated out of Galway with the treat of prosecution hanging over his head. But even that is not as terrible as having to work for his overbearing father, the local copper for the pretty seaside town of Roundstone.

For some, like Anna and her young daughter, Tilly, Roundstone is a refuge from trauma. But even this village on the edge of the sea isn't far enough to escape from the shadows of evil men. 386 pages

MCTIERNAN, Dervla. *The Ruin*

A family secret is about to be exposed...

Galway 1993: Young Garda Cormac Reilly is called to a scene he will never forget. Two silent, neglected children – fifteen-year-old Maude and five-year-old Jack – are waiting for him at a crumbling country house. Upstairs, their mother lies dead.

Twenty years later, a body surfaces in the icy black waters of the River Corrib. At first it looks like an open-and-shut case, but then doubt is cast on the investigation's findings – and the integrity of the police. Cormac is thrown back into the cold case that has haunted him his entire career – what links the two deaths, two decades apart? As he navigates his way through police politics and the ghosts of the past, Detective Reilly uncovers shocking secrets and finds himself questioning who among his colleagues he can trust.

What really happened in that house where he first met Maude and Jack? *The Ruin* draws us deeper into the dark heart of Ireland and asks who will protect you when the authorities can't – or won't. 379 pages

MITCHELL, Wendy *Somebody I Used to Know* (with Anna Wharton).

What do you lose when you lose your memories? What do you value when this loss reframes how you've lived, and how you will live in the future? How do you conceive of love when you can no longer recognise those who are supposed to mean most to you?

When she was diagnosed with dementia at the age of fifty-eight, Wendy Mitchell was confronted with the most profound questions about life and identity. All at once, she had to say goodbye to the woman she used to be. Her demanding career in the NHS, her ability to drive, cook and run – the various shades of her independence – were suddenly gone.

Philosophical, profoundly moving, insightful and ultimately full of hope, *Somebody I Used to Know* gets to the heart of what it means to be human. A phenomenal memoir – the first of its kind – it is both a heart-rending tribute to the woman Wendy once was, and a brave affirmation of the woman dementia has seen her become.

Discussion questions available.

297 pages

MOGGACH, Deborah. *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*

Enticed by advertisements for a newly restored palatial hotel, and filled with visions of a life of leisure, good weather and mango juice in their gin, a group of very different pensioners leave England to begin a new life in India. On arrival, they are dismayed to find the palace is a shell of its former self, the staff more than a little eccentric, and the days of the Raj long gone. But, as they soon discover, life and love can begin again, even in the most unexpected circumstances.

Discussion questions available.

DVD available. Film differs to book.

MOGGACH, Deborah. *Something to Hide*

Petra's romantic life has always been a car-crash, and even in her sixties she's still capable of getting it disastrously wrong. But then she falls in love with Jeremy, an old chum, visiting from abroad. The fatal catch? Jeremy is her best friend's husband.

But just as Petra is beginning to relax into her happy ever after, she finds herself catapulted to West Africa, and to Bev, her best friend who she's been betraying so spectacularly. Meanwhile, on opposite sides of the world, two other women are also struggling with the weight of betrayal: Texan Lorrie is about embark on the biggest deception of her life, and in China Li-Jing is trying to understand exactly what it is her husband does on his West African business trips. It turns out that no matter where you are in the world, everyone has something to hide. Can Bev – can anyone – be trusted?

MOON, Josephine. *The Chocolate Promise*

Christmas Livingstone has ten rules for happiness, the most important of which is 'absolutely no romantic relationships'. In *The Chocolate Apothecary*, her enchanting artisan store in Tasmania, she tempers chocolate and creates handmade delicacies. Surrounded by gifts for the senses, in this shop chocolate isn't just good for you, it's medicine.

And then one day a stranger arrives at her front door - a disheveled botanist seeking her help. She really doesn't need Lincoln van Luc to walk into her life, even if he does have the nicest blue eyes, the loveliest meddling grandmother and a gorgeous newly rescued dog. She really doesn't need any of it. Or does she?

Set across Tasmania, Paris and Provence, this is a glorious novel of a creative woman about to find out how far in life a list of rules will take her, with an enticing tangle of freshly picked herbs, pots of flowers and lashings of chocolate scenting the air.

MORAIS, Richard C. *The Hundred-Foot Journey*

Born above his grandfather's modest restaurant in Mumbai, Hassan Haji first experienced life through the intoxicating whiffs of spicy fish curry, trips to the local markets and gourmet outings with his mother. But when tragedy strikes, the Hajis leave India and embark on a journey around the world, eventually opening an Indian restaurant in Lumiere, a small town in the French mountains.

The family takes the village by storm, provoking the ire of their neighbor – Madame Mallory, the proprietress of an esteemed French *relais*. Only after waging culinary war with the migrant family does Madame Mallory agree to mentor young Hassan, leading him to Paris and a host of new adventures.

A testament to the inevitability of destiny, this is a fable for the ages: charming, endearing and compulsively readable. *Discussion questions available.*

MORIARTY, Liane. *Big Little Lies*

"I guess it started with the mothers." "It was all a terrible misunderstanding." "I'll tell you exactly what happened." Pirriwee Public's annual school Trivia night has ended in a shocking riot. A parent is dead. Was it murder, a tragic accident... or something else entirely?

Big Little Lies is a funny, heartbreaking, challenging story of ex-husbands and second wives, new friendships, old betrayals and schoolyard politics.

No. 1 *New York Times* bestselling author Liane Moriarty turns her unique gaze on the dangerous little lies we tell ourselves everyday and what really goes on behind closed suburban doors.

"Let me be clear. This is not a circus. This is a murder investigation."

Discussion questions available.

MORIARTY, Liane. *Truly Madly Guilty*

If only they'd said no...

Clementine is haunted by regret. It was just a barbeque. They didn't even know their hosts that well, they were friends of friends. They could easily have said no.

But she and her husband said yes, and now they can never change what they did and didn't do that Sunday afternoon.

Six responsible adults. Three cute kids. What could possibly go wrong?

Marriage, sex, parenthood and friendship: Liane takes these elements of our lives and shows us how guilt can expose the fault lines in any relationship, and it is not until we appreciate the fragility of life that we can truly value what we have.

Discussion questions available.

MORRIS, Heather. *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*

The incredible story of the Auschwitz-Birkenau tattooist and the woman he loved.

Lale Sokolov is well-dressed, a ladies' man. He is also a Jew. On the first transport from Slovakia to Auschwitz in 1942, Lale immediately stands out to his fellow prisoners. In the camp, he is looked up to, looked out for, and put to work in the privileged position of *Tatowierer* – the tattooist – to mark his fellow prisoners, forever. One of them is a young woman, Gita, who steals his heart at first glance.

His life given new purpose, Lale does his best through the struggle and suffering to use his position for good.

This story, full of beauty and hope, is based on years of interviews author Heather Morris conducted with real-life Holocaust survivor and Auschwitz-Birkenau tattooist Ludwig (Lale) Sokolov. It is heart-wrenching, illuminating, and unforgettable.

277 pages

MORTON, Kate. *The Clockmaker's Daughter*

My real name, no one remembers. The truth about that summer, no one else knows.

In the summer of 1862, a group of young artists led by the passionate and talented Edward Radcliffe descends upon Birchwood Manor on the banks of the upper Thames. Their plan: to spend a secluded summer month in a haze of inspiration and creativity. But by the time their stay is over, one woman has been shot dead while another has disappeared; a priceless heirloom is missing; and Edward Radcliffe's life is in ruins.

Over one hundred and fifty years later, Elodie Winslow, a young archivist in London, uncovers a letter satchel containing two seemingly unrelated items: a sepia photograph of an arresting-looking woman in Victorian clothing, and an artist's sketchbook containing the drawing of a twin-gabled house on the bend of a river.

Why does Birchwood Manor feel so familiar to Elodie? And who is the beautiful woman in the photograph? Will she ever give up her secrets?

Told by multiple voices across time, *The Clockmaker's Daughter* is a story of murder, mystery and thievery, of art, love and loss. And flowing through its pages like a river is the voice of a woman who stands outside time, whose name has

been forgotten by history, but who has watched it all unfold: Birdie Bell, the clockmaker's daughter.

585 pages

MORTON, Kate. *The Shifting Fog*

(Also published as: *The House at Riverton*)

Summer 1924. On the evening of a glittering Society party, by the lake of a grand English country house, a young poet takes his life. The only witnesses, sisters Hannah and Emmeline Hartford, will never speak to each other again.

Winter 1999. Grace Bradley, 98, one-time housemaid of Riverton Manor, is visited by a young director making a film about the poet's suicide. Ghosts awaken, and memories long consigned to the dark reaches of Grace's mind begin to sneak back through the cracks. A shocking secret threatens to emerge; something history has forgotten but Grace never could.

Set as the war-shattered Edwardian summer surrenders to the decadent twenties, *The Shifting Fog* is a thrilling mystery and a compelling love story.

MURN, Molly. *Heart of the Grass Tree*

When Pearl's grandmother dies unexpectedly, Pearl and her family – mother Diana, sister Lucy – return to Kangaroo Island to mourn and farewell her. Each of them knew Nell intimately but differently, and each woman must reckon with Nell's passing in her own way. But Nell had secrets too, and as Pearl, Diana and Lucy interrogate their feelings about the island, Pearl starts to pull together the scraps Nell left behind – her stories, poems and paintings – and unearths a connection to the island's early history, of the European sealers and their first contact with the Ngarrindjeri people.

As the three women are in grief pulled apart from each other, Pearl's deepening connection to their history, the island's history, grounds her, and will ultimately bring the women back to each other.

Heart of the Grass Tree is an exquisite, searing and hope-filled debut about mothers and daughters and family stories, about country and its living history.

291 pages

NELL, Joanna. *The Last Voyage of Mrs Henry Parker*

'If you don't mind me asking, how long has it been since you lost your husband, Mrs Parker?' 'Difficult to say exactly' As the wife of retired ship's doctor Dr Henry Parker, Evelyn is living out her twilight years aboard the *Golden Sunset*.

Every night she dresses for dinner – gown, tiara, runners – and regales her fellow passengers with stories of a glamorous life travelling the world in luxury.

But now Henry is missing, and it is up to Evelyn to find him. Donning her 'Finding Henry' shoes and armed with a pocket map, she embarks on an odyssey, searching every part of the grand ocean liner. Misadventures are had, new friends made, scandalous behavior noted – all news to Evelyn.

If only she could remember the events of the night before as clearly as she can recall the first time she met Henry on a passage from England to Australia in 1953 and fell in love – and the long-ago painful events that left her all at sea.

The Last Voyage of Mrs Henry Parker is a love letter to the memories we make over the course of a lifetime, and how the heart remembers what matters, even when the mind has long forgotten.

327 pages

NG, Celeste. *Little Fires Everywhere*

In the placid, progressive suburb of Shaker Heights everything is meticulously planned, from the colours of the houses, to the successful lives its residents will go on to lead. And no one embodies this spirit more than Elena Richardson.

Mia Warren, an enigmatic artist and single mother, arrives in this idyllic bubble with her teenage daughter Pearl, and rents a house from the Richardsons. Soon Mia and Pearl become more than just tenants: all four Richardson children are drawn to the alluring mother-daughter pair. But Mia carries with her a disregard for the rules that threatens to upend this carefully ordered community.

When the Richardsons' friends attempt to adopt a Chinese-American baby, a custody battle erupts that dramatically divides the town and puts Mia and Mrs Richardson on opposing sides. Mrs Richardson is determined to uncover the secrets in Mia's past. But her obsession will come at an unexpected and devastating cost to her own family – and Mia's.

388 pages

NUNEZ, Sigrid. *The Friend*

When a woman unexpectedly loses a lifelong friend and mentor to suicide, she finds herself burdened with the unwanted dog he has left behind. Her own battle against grief is intensified by the mute suffering of the dog, a huge Great Dane that had been devoted to its suddenly vanished master, and by the threat of eviction: dogs are prohibited in her apartment building. *The Friend* is both a meditation on friendship, loss and bereavement, and a celebration of the wonder and healing power of the human-canine bond.

Winner of the 2018 National Book Award for Fiction (USA)

212 pages

PENDZIWOL, Jean. *The Lightkeeper's Daughters*

Elizabeth eyes have failed. She can no longer read the books she loves or see the paintings that move her, but her mind remains sharp and music fills the vacancy left by her blindness.

When her father's journals are discovered on a shipwrecked boat, she enlists the help of a delinquent teen, Morgan, to read to her. As an unlikely friendship grows between them, Elizabeth is carried back to her childhood home – the lighthouse on Porphyry Island, Lake Superior – and to the memory of her enigmatic twin sister Emily.

But for Elizabeth, the faded pages of her father's journals reveal more secrets than she anticipates...

310 pages

POWERS, Richard. *The Overstory*

An artist inherits a hundred years of photographic portraits, all of the same doomed American chestnut tree. A hard-partying undergraduate in the late 1980s electrocutes herself, dies, and is sent back to life by creatures of air and light. A hearing-and-speech-impaired scientist discovers that trees are communicating with one another. An Air Force loadmaster in the Vietnam War is shot out of the sky, then saved by falling into a banyan.

This is the story of these and five other strangers, each summoned in different ways by the natural world, who are brought together in a last stand to save it from catastrophe.

625 pages

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction 2019

Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2018

PRESCOTT, Susi. *Where hummingbirds dance*

Susi Prescott had it all. A large, busy family, a school teaching job she loved, a home on Sydney's leafy north shore. But with the sudden demise of her thirty-year marriage, her world crumbles.

To the surprise of everyone, especially herself, Susi makes a momentous decision. She packs up her former life and moves to the city of Arequipa in Peru, where she starts working at Colegio Elohim, a struggling school at the foot of the Andes. She plans to reinvent herself, to do some good, to heal.

Arequipa teases and contrasts: colonial elegance ringed by sprawling slums; worldly affluence alongside grinding poverty; intellectuals decrying corruption and sexism; while the joy of song and dance transcends all barriers. Susi learns valuable lessons about hardship and injustice; about turning disaster into opportunity; about the nature of conflict and forgiveness. She may even learn how to fall in love again...

319 pages

PULLMAN, Philip. *La Belle Sauvage (The Book of Dust, Volume One)*

Malcolm was the landlord's son, and an only child... he has friends enough, but he was happiest on his own playing with his daemon Asta in their canoe, which was called La Belle Sauvage.

Malcolm Polstead's life in the pub beside the Thames is safe and happy enough, if uneventful. But during a winter of unceasing rain the forces of science, religion and politics begin to clash, and as the weather rises to a pitch of ferocity, all of Malcolm's certainties are torn asunder.

Finding himself linked to a baby by the name of Lyra, Malcolm is forced to undertake the challenge of his life and to make a dangerous journey that will change him and Lyra for ever...

545 pages

RAMOS, Joanne. *The Farm*

Life is a lucrative business, as long as you play by the rules.

Ambitious businesswoman Mae Yu runs Golden Oaks, a luxury retreat transforming the fertility industry. There, women get the very best of everything; organic meals, fitness trainers, daily massages and big money. Provided they dedicate themselves to producing the perfect baby. For someone else.

Jane is a young immigrant in search of a better future. Living in a cramped dorm with her baby daughter and her shrewd aunt Ate, she sees an unmissable chance to change her life. But at what cost?

The Farm is an unforgettable story about how we live and who truly holds power.

326 pages

REBANKS, James. *The Shepherd's Life: a Tale of the Lake District*

These modern dispatches from an ancient landscape tell the story of deep-rooted attachment to place, describing a way of life that is little noticed and yet has profoundly shaped history. In evocative and lucid prose, James Rebanks takes us through a shepherd's year, offering a unique account of rural life and a fundamental connection with the land that most of us have lost. It is the story of working lives, the people around him, his childhood, his parents and grandparents, a people who exist and endure even as the world changes around them.

Discussion questions available.

REID, Kiley.

Such a Fun Age

When Emira is apprehended at a supermarket for 'kidnapping' the white child she is actually babysitting, it sets off an explosive chain of events. Her employer Alix, a feminist blogger with the best of intentions, resolves to make things right.

But Emira herself is aimless, broke and wary of Alix's desire to help. When a surprising connection emerges between the two women, it sends them on a crash course that will upend everything they think they know – about themselves, each other, and the messy dynamics of privilege.

310 pages

RINGLAND, Holly.

The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart

A captivating story about how our untold stories haunt us – and the stories we tell ourselves in order to survive.

Nine-year-old Alice Hart grows up in an isolated, idyllic home between sugar cane fields and the sea, where her mother's enchanting flowers and their hidden messages shelter her from the dark moods of her father. When tragedy irrevocably changes her life, Alice goes to live with the grandmother she never knew existed, on an Australian native flower farm that gives refuge to women who, like Alice, are lost or broken.

In the Victorian tradition, every flower has a meaning and, as she settles into her new life, Alice uses this language of native flowers to say things that are too hard to speak.

As she grows older, family secrecy, a devastating betrayal and a man who's not all he seems combine to make Alice realise there are some stories that flowers alone cannot tell. If she is to have the freedom she craves, she must find the courage to possess the most powerful story she knows: her own.

388 pages

RODRIGUEZ, Deborah. *Return to the Little Coffee Shop of Kabul*

Six women, on opposite sides of the earth, yet forever joined by a café in Kabul.

Sunny, its former proprietor and the new owner of the Screaming Peacock Vineyard in the Pacific Northwest. But can she handle the challenges of life on her own?

Yazmina, the young mother who now runs the café, until a terrifying event strikes at the heart of her family, and business...

Layla and Kat, two Afghan teenagers in America, both at war with the cultures that shaped them...

Zara, a young woman about to be forced into marriage with a man she despises, with devastating consequences for all...

These five women are about to learn what Halajan, Yazmina's rebellious mother-in-law, has known all along: that when the world as you know it disappears, you find a new way to survive...

Reuniting us with many of the compelling characters of the international bestseller *The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul*, Deborah Rodriguez offers up another spellbinding story of strength and courage in a world where happily-ever-afters aren't as simple as they seem.

Discussion questions available.

SALES, Leigh.

Any Ordinary Day

As a journalist, Leigh Sales often encounters people experiencing the worst moments of their lives in the full glare of the media. But one particular string of bad news stories – and a terrifying brush with her own mortality – sent her looking for answers about how vulnerable each of us is to a life-changing event. What are our chances of actually being struck by one? What do we fear most and why? And when the worst does happen, what comes next?

In this profound and layered book, Sales talks intimately with people who've faced the unimaginable, from terrorism to natural disasters to simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Expecting broken lives, she instead finds strength, hope, even humour. Sales brilliantly condenses the latest research on the way the human brain processes fear and grief, and poses the questions we too often ignore out of awkwardness. Along the way, she offers an unguarded account of her own challenges and what she's learned about coping with life's unexpected blows.

Heartfelt, candid and empathetic, *Any Ordinary Day* is about what happens when ordinary people, on ordinary days, are forced to suddenly find the resilience most of us don't know we have.

264 pages

SEE, Lisa.

The Island of Sea Women

Set on the island of Jeju, *The Island of Sea Women* follows Mi-ja and Young-sook, two girls from very different backgrounds, as they begin working in the sea with their village's all-female diving collective. Over many decades – through the Japanese colonialism of the 1930s and 1940s, World War II, the Korean War, and the era of cellphones and wet suits for the women divers – Mi-ja and Young-sook develop the closest bonds. But after hundreds of dives and years of friendship, forces outside their control will push their relationship to the breaking point.

374 pages

SEE, Lisa.

The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane

A powerful story about two women separated by circumstances, culture, and distance – and the enduring connection between mothers and daughters.

In their remote Chinese village, Li-yan and her family align their lives around the seasons and the farming of tea. For the Akha people, ensconced in ritual and routine, life goes on as it has for generations – until a stranger appears at the village gate in a jeep, and the first automobile any of the villages has ever seen.

The stranger's arrival marks the entrance of the modern world in the lives of the Akha people. Slowly, Li-yan, one of the few educated girls on her mountain, begins to reject the customs that shaped her early life. When she has a baby out of wedlock – conceived with a man her parents consider a bad match – she rejects the tradition that would compel her to give the child over to be killed, and instead leaves her, wrapped in a blanket with a tea cake tucked in its folds, near an orphanage in a neighbouring city.

As Li-yan comes into herself, leaving her insular village for an education, a business, a city life, her daughter, Haley, is raised in California by her loving adoptive parents. Despite her privileged childhood, Haley wonders about her origins, and across the ocean, Li-yan longs for her lost daughter. Over the course of years, each searches for meaning in the study of the Pu'er, the tea that has shaped their family's destiny for centuries.

The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane is an unforgettable portrait of a little-known region and its people and a celebration of the bonds of family.

371 pages

SEMPLE, Maria.

Where'd You Go, Bernadette

Bernadette Fox is notorious. To Elgie Branch, a Microsoft wunderkind, she's his hilarious, volatile, talented, troubled wife. To fellow mothers at the school gate, she's a menace. To design experts, she's a revolutionary architect. And to 15-year-old Bee, she's a best friend and, quite simply, mum.

Then Bernadette disappears.

And Bee's search for her mother reveals an extraordinary woman trying to find her place in an absurd world.

"Funny, witty, heart-warming"

Shortlisted for the 2013 Women's Prize for Fiction.

332 pages

Book discussion questions in back of book.

SERONG, Jock.

The Rules of Backyard Cricket

It starts in a suburban backyard. Darren Keefe and his older brother, sons of a fierce, gutsy single mother. The endless glow of summer, the bottomless fury of contest. All the love and hatred in two small bodies poured into the rules of a made-up game.

A boy with a freakish talent, Darren becomes a man with almost no sense of consequence. An Australian sporting star of the bad-boy variety – one of those men who gets away with things.

Until the day we meet him, middle-aged, in the boot of a car. Gagged, cable-tied, a bullet in his knee. Everything pointing towards a shallow grave.

Discussion questions available.

SHAFFER, Mary Ann

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

It's 1946, and as Juliet Ashton sits at her desk in her Chelsea flat, she is stumped. A writer of witty newspaper columns during the war, she can't think of what to write next. Out of the blue, she receives a letter from one Dawsey Adams of Guernsey – by chance he's acquired a book Juliet once owned – and they begin a correspondence.

Dawsey is a member of the Guernsey literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, and it's not long before the rest of the members write to Juliet... As the letters fly back and forth, Juliet comes to know the extraordinary personalities of the society and their lives under the German occupation. Entranced by their stories, Juliet decides to visit the island to meet them properly – and unwittingly turns her life upside down.

Discussion questions available.

SIMSION, Graeme.

The Best of Adam Sharp

On the cusp of fifty, Adam Sharp has a loyal partner; earns a good living as an IT contractor and is the music-trivia expert at quiz nights. It's the lifestyle he wanted, but something is missing.

Two decades ago, on the other side of the world, his part-time piano playing led him into a passionate relationship with Angelina Brown, who'd abandoned law studies to pursue her acting dream. She gave Adam the chance to make it something more than an affair – but he didn't take it. And now he can't shake off the nostalgia for what might have been.

Then, out of nowhere, Angelina gets in touch. What does she want? Does Adam dare to live dangerously? How far will he go for a second chance?

Discussion questions available.

SIMSION, Graeme. *The Rosie Project*

Don Tillman is getting married. He just doesn't know who to yet.

The Wife Project will solve that problem. He has designed a sixteen-page questionnaire to help him find the perfect partner. She will most definitely not be a barmaid, a drinker or a late-arriver.

Rosie Jarman is all those things. She is also fiery and intelligent and beautiful. And on a quest of her own to find her biological father – a search that Don, a professor of genetics, just might be able to help her with.

The Wife Project teaches Don some unexpected things. Why earlobe length is an inadequate predictor of sexual attraction. Why ice-cream tastes different in New York. Why he's never been on a second date. And why, despite the best scientific efforts, you don't find love; love finds you.

SIMSION, Graeme. *The Rosie Result*

"I was standing on one leg shucking oysters when the problems began..."

Don Tillman and Rosie Jarman are back in Australia after a decade in New York, and they're about to face their most important challenge.

Their son, Hudson, is struggling at school: he's socially awkward and not fitting in. Don's spent a lifetime trying to fit in – so who better to teach Hudson the skills he needs?

The Hudson Project will require the help of friends old and new, force Don to decide how much to guide Hudson and how much to let him be himself, and raise some significant questions about his own identity.

Meanwhile, there are multiple distractions to deal with: the Genetics Lecture Outrage, Rosie's troubles at work, estrangement from his best friend Gene...

And opening the world's best cocktail bar.

Hilarious and thought-provoking, with a brilliant cast of characters, *The Rosie Result* is the triumphant final instalment of the much-loved and internationally bestselling Rosie trilogy.

378 pages

SIMSION, Graeme and BUIST, Anne.

Two Steps Forward

A long walk can change everything.

Zoe, a sometime artist, is from California. Martin, an engineer, is from Yorkshire. Both have ended up in the picturesque Cluny, in central France. Both are struggling to come to terms with their recent past – for Zoe, the death of her husband; for Martin, a messy divorce.

Looking to make a new start, each sets out alone to walk two thousand kilometres from Cluny to Santiago, in northwestern Spain, in the footsteps of pilgrims who have walked the Camino – the Way – for centuries.

The Camino changes you, it's said. It's a chance to find a new version of yourself. But can these two very different people find each other?

Two Steps Forward is about renewal – physical, psychological and spiritual. It's about what you decide to keep, what you choose to leave behind and what you discover.

356 pages

SITTENFELD, Curtis. *Rodham*

'Awfully opinionated for a girl' is what they call Hillary as she grows up in her Chicago suburb. Smart, diligent and a bit plain, that's the general consensus. Then Hillary goes to college, and her star rises. At Yale Law School she continues to be a leader – and catches the eye of driven, handsome and charismatic Bill. But when he asks her to marry him, Hillary gives him a firm No.

The rest, as they say, isn't history. How might things have turned out for them, for America, for the world itself, if Hillary Rodham had really turned down Bill Clinton?

With her sharp but always compassionate eye, Sittenfeld explores the loneliness, moral ambivalence and iron determination that characterizes the quest for high office, as well as the painful compromises demanded of female ambition in a world ruled by men. Uncannily astute and witty, *Rodham* is a brilliant reimaging and truly a novel of our times.

420 pages

SMITH, Dominic. *The Last Painting of Sara de Vos*

In 1631, Sara de Vos is admitted to the guild of St. Luke in Holland as a master painter, the first woman to be so honoured. Three hundred years later, only one work attributed to de Vos is known to remain: a haunting winter scene, *At the Edge of the Wood*, which hangs over the Manhattan bed of a wealthy descendant of the original owner. An Australian grad student, Ellie Shipley, struggling to stay afloat in New York, agrees to paint a forgery of the landscape, a decision that will haunt her. Because now, half a century later, she's curating an exhibition of female Dutch painters, and both versions threaten to arrive.

As the three threads intersect with increasing and exquisite suspense, *The Last painting of Sara de Vos* mesmerizes while it grapples with the demands of artistic life, showing how the deceits of the past can forge the present.
Discussion questions available.

STEDMAN, M. L. *The Light Between Oceans*

They break the rules and follow their hearts. What happens next will break yours.

1926. Tom Sherbourne is a young lighthouse keeper on a remote island in Western Australia. The only inhabitants of Janus Rock, he and his wife Isabel, live a quiet life, cocooned from the rest of the world.

Then one April morning a boat washes ashore carrying a dead man and a crying infant – and the path of the couple's lives hits an unthinkable crossroads.

Only years later do they discover the devastating consequences of the decision they made that day – as the baby's real story unfolds...

Discussion questions available.

STRAUB, Emma. *All Adults Here*

Coming of age isn't just for kids.

Astrid Strick has always tried to do her best for her three children. Now, they're finally grown up – but you could be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

Elliot doesn't have any idea who he really is, or how to communicate with his sons. Porter is, at last, pregnant – but feels incapable of rising to the challenge. Nicky has fled to distant New Mexico, where he's living the bohemian dream. And Astrid herself is up to things that would make her children's hair curl.

Until now, the family have managed to hide their true selves from each other. But when Nicky's incorrigibly curious daughter Cecelia comes to stay, her arrival threatens to upturn everything...

Witty and irresistibly readable, *All Adults Here* is an unforgettable novel about how to survive inside a modern family.

337 pages

STROUT, Elizabeth. *Olive Kitteridge*

Olive Kitteridge: indomitable, compassionate and often unpredictable. A retired schoolteacher in a small coastal town in Maine, as she grows older she struggles to make sense of the changes in her life. She is a woman who sees into the hearts of those around her, observes their triumphs and tragedies.

We meet her stoic husband, bound to her in a marriage both broken and strong, and a young man who aches for the mother he lost – and whom Olive comforts by her mere presence, while her own son feels overwhelmed by her complex sensitivities. A penetrating, vibrant exploration of the human soul, the story of Olive Kitteridge will make you laugh, nod in recognition, wince in pain, and shed a tear or two.

270 pages

Winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

SZUBANSKI, Magda. *Reckoning*

"If you had met my father you would never, not for an instant, have thought he was an assassin. He was warmhearted, friendly, engaging, intelligent, generous, humourous, honourable, affectionate, arrogant, blunt and loyal. He was a family man. He was handsome, although he did not have heroic stature. He was five foot four. He was stylish, fashion-conscious; a dandy even. He looked incredibly young for his age. In his seventies he took to wearing his baseball cap backwards and, believe it or not, he carried it off.

He loved tennis, he loved ballet, he loved good conversation. Out there in the Melbourne suburbs – mowing the lawn in his terry-towelling hat and his Bombay bloomers; in the lounge room doing the samba at cocktail parties; late at night playing his harmonica in the laundry – you would never have guessed that he was capable of killing in cold blood. But he was. Poor bastard.

He was born in 1924. He was a boy of fifteen when Hitler invaded his homeland and the war began. All through our growing up he would say, 'I was judge, jury and executioner.' And I could never imagine – cannot imagine even now – what it feels like to have that responsibility, that guilt. To be a little god with a gun, and the power over life and death. He spent the rest of his life trying to come to terms with what he had done. I grew up in the shadow of that reckoning".

Winner of the 2016 NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

Winner 2016 Australian Book Industry Awards Book of the Year.

Discussion questions available.

THOMSON, Glenna. *Stella and Margie*

Stella and her mother-in-law, Margie, are two very different women.

Stella is kind, compassionate and just a little bit chaotic. Margie is prickly, demanding and a stickler for convention.

Stella has exciting dreams for the future. Margie has only bitter memories of the past. When Margie needs help recovering from a major operation, Stella offers her a place to stay. With no other option, Margie returns to the family farm where for decades, until Stella's arrival, she was the one in charge. Margie has never made life easy for her daughter-in-law, and that's not going to change now she's been made a guest in her former home.

But as the dry summer turns to a beautiful autumn, the two women form an unlikely bond, as the ambitions, secrets and tragedies that have shaped their lives are slowly uncovered...

Stella and Margie is a piercingly insightful novel about love and duty, acceptance and reconciliation, and a touching friendship that crosses generations.

292 pages

Discussion questions in back of book.

TOIBIN, Colm. *Brooklyn*

In a small Irish town in the 1950s, Eilis Lacey is one among many of her generation who cannot find work. So when she is offered a job in America, it is clear she must go. Leaving her family, she forges a life in Brooklyn – days at the till of a large department store, night classes in Brooklyn College and Friday evenings dancing at the Parish Hall – until she realises she has found a kind of happiness. But when tragic news summons her back to Ireland, she must choose between the opportunities of the new world and the security of the old.

Brooklyn is a tender story of great love and loss, and of the heartbreaking choice between personal freedom and duty. In the character of Eilis Lacey, Colm Toibin has created a remarkable heroine and in *Brooklyn* a novel of devastating emotional power.

Winner of the 2009 Costa Novel Award.

Longlisted for the 2009 Man Booker Prize.

Discussion questions available.

TOWLES, Amor. *A Gentleman in Moscow*

On 21 June 1922, Count Alexander Rostov – recipient of the Order of St Andrew, member of the Jockey Club, Master of the Hunt – is escorted out of the Kremlin, across Red Square and through the elegant revolving doors of the Hotel Metropol.

But instead of his usual suite, he must now live in an attic room with a window the size of a chessboard. Deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, the Count has been sentenced to house arrest indefinitely.

While Russia undergoes decades of tumultuous upheaval, the Count, stripped of the trappings that define his life, is forced to question what makes us who we are. And with the assistance of a glamorous actress, a cantankerous chef and a very serious child, Rostov unexpectedly discovers a new understanding of both pleasure and purpose.

Can a life without luxury be the richest of all?

462 pages

WATSON, S. J. *Before I go to Sleep*

'Who are you' I say.

'I'm your husband Ben,' he says. 'You had accident a long time ago. You have trouble remembering things'

'What things?'

'Everything'

'I'm scared'

'Don't worry. I'll look after you. I'll always look after you.'

After a bad accident, Christine Lucas has amnesia and cannot remember years of her life or anything that has happened day to day. But is everything really as it seems?

WESTOVER, Tara. *Educated*

Tara Westover grew up preparing for the End of Days, watching for the sun to darken, for the moon to drip as if with blood. She spent her summers bottling peaches and her winters rotating emergency supplies, hoping that when the World of Men failed, her family would continue, unaffected.

She hadn't been registered for a birth certificate. She had no school records because she'd never set foot in a classroom, and no medical records either because her father didn't believe in doctors and hospitals. According to the state and federal government, she didn't exist.

As she grew older, her father became more radical, and her brother, more violent. At sixteen Tara decided to educate herself. Her struggle for knowledge would take her far from her Idaho mountains, over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd travelled too far. If there was still a way home.

Educated is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty, and the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, from her singular experience

Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes, and the will to change it. 385 pages

WILLIAMS, Pip. *The Dictionary of Lost Words*

In 1901, the word *bondmaid* was discovered missing from the Oxford English Dictionary. This is the story of the girl who stole it.

Motherless and irrepressibly curious, Esme spends her childhood in the Scriptorium, a garden shed in Oxford where her father and a team of lexicographers are gathering the words for the very first Oxford English Dictionary. Esme's place is beneath the sorting table, unseen and unheard. One day, she sees a slip containing the word *bondmaid* flutter to the floor unclaimed. Esme seizes the word and hides it in an old wooden trunk that belongs to her friend, Lizzie, a young servant in the big house. Esme begins to collect other words from the Scriptorium that are misplaced, discarded or have been neglected by the dictionary men. They help her make sense of the world.

Over time, Esme realizes that some words are considered more important than others, and that the words and meanings relating to women's experiences often go unrecorded. She begins to collect words for another dictionary: *The Dictionary of Lost Words*.

Set when the women's suffrage movement was at its height and the Great War loomed, *The Dictionary of Lost Words* reveals a lost narrative, hidden between the lines of a history written by men. It's a delightful, lyrical and deeply thought-provoking celebration of words, and the power of language to shape our experience of the world.

423 pages

WILSON, Josephine. *Extinctions*

He hated the word "retirement", but not as much as he hated the word "village", as if aging made you a peasant or a fool.

Professor Frederick Lothian, retired engineer, world expert on concrete and connoisseur of modern design, has quarantined himself from life by moving to a retirement village. His wife, Martha, is dead and his two adult children are lost to him in their own ways. Surrounded and obstructed by the debris of his life – objects he has collected over many years and tells himself he is keeping for his daughter – he is determined to be miserable, but is tired of his existence and of the life he has chosen.

When a series of unfortunate incidents forces him and his neighbor, Jan, together, he begins to realise the damage done by the accumulation of a lifetime's secrets and lies, and to comprehend his own shortcomings. Finally, Frederick Lothian has the opportunity to build something meaningful for the ones he loves.

286 pages

Winner of the 2017 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

WINTON, Tim. *The Shepherd's Hut*

"For the first time in my life I know what I want and I have what it takes to get me there. If you never experienced that I feel sorry for you.

But it wasn't always like this. I been through fire to get here. So be happy for me. And for fucksake, don't get in my way"

Jaxie dreads going home. His mum's dead. The old man bashes him without mercy, and he wishes he was an orphan. But no one's ever told Jaxie Clackton to be careful what he wishes for.

In one terrible moment his life is stripped to little more than he can carry and how can he keep himself alive. There's just one person left in the world who understands him and what he still dares to hope for. But to reach her he'll have to cross the vast saltlands on a trek that only a dreamer or fugitive would attempt.

This urgent masterpiece is a rifle shot of a novel – crisp, fast, shocking – about solitude and unlikely friendship, about the raw business of survival, but most of all about what it takes to keep love and hope alive in a parched and brutal world.

266 pages

WOOD, Charlotte. *The Natural Way of Things*

Two women wake from a drugged sleep to find themselves imprisoned in a broken-down property in the middle of nowhere. Strangers to each other, they have no idea where they are or how they came to be there with eight other girls, forced to wear strange uniforms, their heads shaved, guarded by two inept yet vicious armed jailers and a 'nurse'. The girls all have something in common, but what is it? What crime has bought them here from the city? Who is the mysterious security company responsible for this desolate place with its brutal rules, its total isolation from the contemporary world? Doing hard labour under a sweltering sun, the prisoners learn what links them: in each girl's past is a sexual scandal with a powerful man. They pray for rescue – but when the food starts running out it becomes clear that the jailers have also become the jailed. The girls can only save themselves.

The Natural Way of Things is a gripping, starkly imaginative exploration of contemporary misogyny and corporate control, and of what it means to hunt and be hunted. Most of all, it is the story of two friends, their sisterly love and courage.

With extraordinary echoes of *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Lord of the Flies*, *The Natural Way of Things* is a compulsively readable, scarifying and deeply moving contemporary novel. It confirms Charlotte Wood's position as one of our most thoughtful, provocative and fearless truth-tellers, as she unflinchingly reveals us and our world to ourselves.

Winner of the 2016 The Stella Prize.

Winner 2016 Indie Book of the Year Award.

Winner 2016 Reader's Choice Australian Book Industry Awards Literary Fiction Book of the Year.

Shortlisted for the 2016 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards

Shortlisted for the 2016 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

WOOD, Catherine. *The Weekend*

People went on about death bringing friends together, but it wasn't true. The graveyard, the stony dirt – that's what it was like now... Despite the three women knowing each other better than their own siblings, Sylvie's death had opened up strange caverns of distance between them.

Four older women have a lifelong friendship of the best kind: loving, practical, frank and steadfast. But when Sylvie dies, the ground shifts dangerously for the remaining three. Can they survive together without her?

They are Jude, a once-famous restaurateur, Wendy, an acclaimed public intellectual, and Adele, a renowned actress now mostly out of work. Struggling to recall exactly why they've remained close all these years, the grieving women gather for Christmas at Sylvie's old beach house – not for festivities, but to clean the place out before it is sold.

Without Sylvie to maintain the group's equilibrium, frustrations build and painful memories press in. Fraying tempers, an elderly dog, unwelcome guests and too much wine collide in a storm that brings long buried hurts to the surface – and threatens to sweep away their friendship for good.

The Weekend explores growing old and growing up, and what happens when we're forced to uncover the lies we tell ourselves. A celebration of tenderness and friendship.

259 pages

WRIGHT, Lawrence. *The End of October*

A race-against-time thriller, as one man must find the origin and cure for a new killer virus that has brought the world to its knees.

At an international camp in Indonesia, forty-seven people are pronounced dead with a mysterious fever. When Dr Henry Parsons – microbiologist and epidemiologist – travels there on behalf of the World Health Organization to investigate, what he finds will soon have staggering repercussions across the globe: an infected man is on his way to join the millions of worshippers in the annual Hajj to Mecca.

As international tensions rise and governments enforce unprecedented measures, Henry finds himself in a race against time to track the source and find a cure – before it's too late...

380 pages

[*The End of October* was written before the COVID-19 pandemic].

YOUNGSON, Anne. *Meet Me at the Museum*

Sometimes it takes a stranger to know who you really are.

When Tina Hopgood writes a letter of regret to a man she has never met, she doesn't expect a reply.

When Anders Larsen, a lonely museum curator, answers it, neither does he.

They're both searching for something – they just don't know it yet.

Anders has lost his wife, along with his hopes and dreams for the future. Tina is trapped in a life she doesn't remember choosing.

Slowly their correspondence blossoms as they bare their souls to each other with stories of joy, anguish and discovery. Then Tina's letters suddenly cease, and Anders is thrown into despair.

Can their unexpected friendship survive?

207 pages