

Book Group Collection 2020

Acevedo, Elizabeth

The Poet X

A young girl in Harlem discovers slam poetry as a way to understand her mother's religion and her own relationship to the world. Debut novel of renowned slam poet Elizabeth Acevedo.

Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighbourhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking. Nevertheless, Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, who her family can never know about. With Mami's determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself.

Adler-Olsen, Jussi

Mercy

At first the prisoner scratches at the walls until her fingers bleed. But there is no escaping the room. With no way of measuring time, her days, weeks, months go unrecorded. She vows not to go mad. She will not give her captors the satisfaction. She will die first. Copenhagen detective Carl Mørck has been taken off homicide to run a newly created department for unsolved crimes. His first case concerns Merete Lynggaard, who vanished five years ago. Everyone says she's dead. Everyone says it's a waste of time. He thinks they're right. The voice in the dark is distorted, harsh and without mercy. It says the prisoner's torture will only end when she answers one simple question. It is one she has asked herself a million times: WHY is this happening?

Anthony, Lawrence

The Elephant Whisperer (NF)

When South African conservationist Lawrence Anthony was asked to accept a herd of 'rogue' elephants on his Thula Thula game reserve in South Africa, his common sense told him to refuse. Nevertheless, he was the herd's last chance of survival - notorious escape artists; they would all be killed if Lawrence wouldn't take them. He agreed, but before arrangements for the move could be completed, the animals broke out again and the matriarch and her baby were shot. The remaining elephants were traumatised, dangerous, and very angry. As soon as they arrived at Thula Thula they started planning their escape...As Lawrence battled to create a bond with the elephants and save them from execution, he came to realise that they had a lot to teach him about life, loyalty and freedom.

Braithwaite, Oyinkan

My sister the serial killer

When Korede's dinner is interrupted one night by a distress call from her sister, Ayoola, she knows what's expected of her: bleach, rubber gloves, nerves of steel and a strong stomach. This will be the third boyfriend Ayoola's dispatched in, quote, self-defence and the third mess that her lethal little sibling has left Korede to clear away. She should probably go to the police for the good of the menfolk of Nigeria, but she loves her sister and, as they say,

family always comes first. Until, that is, Ayoola starts dating the doctor where Korede works as a nurse. Korede's long been in love with him, and isn't prepared to see him wind up with a knife in his back: but to save one would mean sacrificing the other.

Cameron, Sharon

The light in hidden places

One knock at the door and Stefania has a choice to make... It is 1943, for four years, sixteen-year-old has been working for the Diamant family in their grocery store in Przemsyl, Poland, singing her way into their lives and hearts. She has even made a promise to one of their sons, Izio -- a betrothal they must keep secret since she is Catholic and the Diamants are Jewish. Nevertheless, everything changes when the German army invades Przemsyl. The Diamants are forced into the ghetto, and Stefania is alone in an occupied city, the only one left to care for Helena, her six-year-old sister. Then comes the knock at the door. Izio's brother Max has jumped from the train headed to a death camp. Stefania and Helena make the extraordinary decision to hide Max, and eventually twelve more Jews. Then they must wait, every day, for the next knock at the door, the one that will mean death. When the knock finally comes, it is two Nazi officers, requisitioning Stefania's house for the German army.

Carty-Williams, Candice

Queenie

Queenie Jenkins is a 25-year-old Jamaican British woman living in London, straddling two cultures and slotting neatly into neither. She works at a national newspaper, where she's constantly forced to compare herself to her white middle class peers. After a messy break up from her long-term white boyfriend, Queenie seeks comfort in all the wrong places...including several hazardous men who do a good job of occupying brain space and a bad job of affirming self-worth. As Queenie careens from one questionable decision to another, she finds herself wondering, "What are you doing? Why are you doing it? Who do you want to be?"—all of the questions today's woman must face in a world trying to answer them for her.

Child, Catriona

Swim until you can't see the land

Swim Until You Can't See Land tells the story of two women and takes place over two timeframes. Mariele was a secret agent in World War 2 and Hannah is an ex international swimmer trying to come to terms with a career-ending injury. At the very beginning of the story, there is a chance meeting between the two women, which leads Hannah to try to find out more about Mariele.

Approaching the end of her life, it appears that she has no one and I found that so sad. Hannah becomes determined to find out what she can about Mariele, and as she does, she becomes more accepting of her own dashed hopes.

Choo, Yangsze

The night tiger

A sweeping historical novel about a dancehall girl and an orphan boy whose fates entangle over an old Chinese superstition about men who turn into tigers.

When 11-year-old Ren's master dies, he makes one last request of his Chinese houseboy:

that Ren find his severed finger, lost years ago in an accident, and reunite it with his body. Ren has 49 days, or else his master's soul will roam the earth, unable to rest in peace. Ji Lin always wanted to be a doctor, but as a girl in 1930s Malaysia, apprentice dressmaker is a more suitable occupation. Secretly, though, Ji Lin also moonlights as a dancehall girl to help pay off her beloved mother's Mah-jong debts. One night, Ji Lin's dance partner leaves her with a gruesome souvenir: a severed finger. Convinced the finger is bad luck, Ji Lin enlists the help of her erstwhile stepbrother to return it to its rightful owner.

Collins, Sara

The confessions of Frannie Langton

All of London is abuzz with the scandalous case of Frannie Langton, accused of the brutal double murder of her employers, renowned scientist George Benham and his eccentric French wife, Marguerite. Crowds pack the courtroom, eagerly following every twist, while the newspapers print lurid theories about the killings and the mysterious woman being held in the Old Bailey.

The testimonies against Frannie are damning. She is a seductress, a witch, a master manipulator, a whore.

Nevertheless, Frannie claims she cannot recall what happened that fateful evening, even if remembering could save her life. She doesn't know how she came to be covered in the victims' blood. But she does have a tale to tell: a story of her childhood on a Jamaican plantation, her apprenticeship under a debauched scientist who stretched all bounds of ethics, and the events that brought her into the Benhams' London home—and into a passionate and forbidden relationship.

Though her testimony may seal her conviction, the truth will unmask the perpetrators of crimes far beyond murder and indict the whole of English society itself.

Dogar, Sharon

Monsters

1814: Mary Godwin, the sixteen-year-old daughter of radical socialist and feminist writers, runs away with a dangerously charming young poet - Percy Bysshe Shelley. From there, the two young lovers travel a Europe in the throes of revolutionary change, through high and low society, tragedy and passion, where they will be drawn into the orbit of the mad and bad Lord Byron. However, Mary and Percy are not alone: they bring Jane, Mary's young stepsister. Moreover, she knows the biggest secrets of them all . . .

Doughty, Louise

Platform Seven

Platform Seven at 4am: Peterborough Railway Station is deserted. The man crossing the covered walkway on this freezing November morning is confident he's alone. As he sits on the metal bench at the far end of the platform, it is clear his choice is strategic - he's as far away from the night staff as he can get.

What the man doesn't realize is that he has company. Lisa Evans knows what he has decided. She knows what he is about to do as she tries and fails to stop him walking to the platform edge.

Two deaths on Platform Seven. Two fatalities in eighteen months - surely they are connected?

No one is more desperate to understand what connects them than Lisa Evans herself. After all, she was the first of the two to die.

Driscoll, Teresa

I Am Watching you

When Ella Longfield overhears two attractive young men flirting with teenage girls on a train, she thinks nothing of it—until she realises they are fresh out of prison and her maternal instinct is put on high alert. But just as she's decided to call for help, something stops her. The next day, she wakes up to the news that one of the girls—beautiful, green-eyed Anna Ballard—has disappeared. A year later, Anna is still missing. Ella is wracked with guilt over what she failed to do, and she's not the only one who can't forget. Someone is sending her threatening letters—letters that make her fear for her life.

El-Mohtar, Amal

This is how you loose the time war

Among the ashes of a dying world, an agent of the Commandant finds a letter. It reads: Burn before reading.

Thus begins an unlikely correspondence between two rival agents hell bent on securing the best possible future for their warring factions. Now, what began as a taunt, a battlefield boast, grows into something more. Something epic. Something romantic. Something that could change the past and the future.

Except the discovery of their bond would mean death for each of them. There is still a war going on, after all. In addition, someone has to win that war. That's how war works. Right?

Frankl, Viktor

Man's Search for Meaning (NF)

Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's memoir has riveted generations of readers with its descriptions of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Based on his own experience and the stories of his patients, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose. At the heart of his theory, known as logotherapy, is a conviction that the primary human drive is not pleasure but the pursuit of what we find meaningful. *Man's Search for Meaning* has become one of the most influential books in America; it continues to inspire us all to find significance in the very act of living.

Hammad, Isabella

The Parisian

As the First World War shatters families, destroys friendships and kills lovers, a young Palestinian dreamer sets out to find himself.

Midhat Kamal picks his way across a fractured world, from the shifting politics of the Middle East to the dinner tables of Montpellier and a newly tumultuous Paris. He discovers that everything is fragile: love turns to loss, friends become enemies and everyone is looking for a place to belong.

Isabella Hammad delicately unpicks the tangled politics and personal tragedies of a turbulent era – the Palestinian struggle for independence from the British Mandate, the strife of the early twentieth century and the looming shadow of the Second World War. An

intensely human story amidst a global conflict, *The Parisian* is historical fiction with a remarkable contemporary voice.

Hannah, Kristin

The Nightingale

FRANCE, 1939. In the quiet village of Carriveau, Vianne Mauriac says goodbye to her husband, Antoine, as he heads for the Front. She doesn't believe that the Nazis will invade France...but invade they do, in droves of marching soldiers, in caravans of trucks and tanks, in planes that fill the skies and drop bombs upon the innocent. When a German captain requisitions Vianne's home, she and her daughter must live with the enemy or lose everything. Without food money or hope, as danger escalates all around them, she is forced to make one impossible choice after another to keep her family alive.

Harris, Eve

The Marrying of Chani Kaufman

19 year-old Chani lives in the ultra-orthodox Jewish community of North West London. She has never had physical contact with a man, but is bound to marry a stranger. The rabbi's wife teaches her what it means to be a Jewish wife, but Rivka has her own questions to answer. Soon buried secrets, fear and sexual desire bubble to the surface in a story of liberation and choice; not to mention what happens on the wedding night.

Johnstone, Douglas

A dark matter

Meet the Skelfs: well-known Edinburgh family, proprietors of a long-established funeral-home business, and private investigators. When patriarch Jim dies, it's left to his wife Dorothy, daughter Jenny and granddaughter Hannah to take charge of both businesses, kicking off an unexpected series of events. Dorothy discovers mysterious payments to another woman, suggesting that Jim wasn't the husband she thought he was. Hannah's best friend Mel has vanished from university, and the simple adultery case that Jenny takes on leads to something stranger and far darker than any of them could have imagined. As the women struggle to come to terms with their grief, and the demands of the business threaten to overwhelm them, secrets from the past emerge, which change everything. A compelling, tense and shocking thriller and a darkly funny and warm portrait of a family in turmoil, *A Dark Matter* introduces a cast of unforgettable characters, marking the start of an addictive new series.

Jones, Sadie

The Snakes

Bea and Dan, recently married, let out their tiny flat to escape London for a few precious months. Driving down through France, they visit Bea's dropout brother Alex at the hotel he runs in Burgundy. Disturbingly, they find him all alone and the ramshackle hotel deserted, apart from the nest of snakes in the attic. When Alex and Bea's parents make a surprise visit Dan can't understand why Bea is so appalled, or why she's never wanted him to know them; Liv and Griff Adamson are charming, and rich. They are the richest people he has ever met. Maybe Bea's ashamed of him, or maybe she regrets the secrets she's been keeping. Tragedy

strikes suddenly, brutally, and in its aftermath the family is stripped back to its heart, and then its rotten core, and even Bea with all her strength and goodness can't escape.

Kidd, Jess

Things In Jars

Bridie Devine—female detective extraordinaire—is confronted with the most baffling puzzle yet: the kidnapping of Christabel Berwick, secret daughter of Sir Edmund Athelstan Berwick, and a peculiar child whose reputed supernatural powers have captured the unwanted attention of collectors trading curiosities in this age of discovery. Winding her way through the labyrinthine, sooty streets of Victorian London, Bridie won't rest until she finds the young girl, even if it means unearthing a past that she'd rather keep buried. Luckily, her search is aided by an enchanting cast of characters, including a seven-foot tall housemaid; a melancholic, tattoo-covered ghost; and an avuncular apothecary. But secrets abound in this foggy underworld where spectacle is king and nothing is quite what it seems.

Kinsley, Erin

Found

When 11-year-old Evan vanishes without trace, his parents are plunged into their worst nightmare.

Especially as the police, under massive pressure, have no answers. But months later Evan is unexpectedly found, frightened and refusing to speak. His loving family realise life will never be the same again.

DI Naylor knows that unless those who took Evan are caught, other children are in danger. And with Evan silent, she must race against time to find those responsible.

Lalami, Laila

The other Americans

Late one spring night, as Driss Guerraoui is walking across a darkened intersection in California, he's killed by a speeding car. The repercussions of his death bring together a diverse cast of characters: Guerraoui's daughter Nora, a jazz composer who returns to the small town in the Mojave she thought she'd left for good; his widow, Maryam, who still pines after her life in the old country; Efraín, an undocumented witness whose fear of deportation prevents him from coming forward; Jeremy, an old friend of Nora's and an Iraqi War veteran; Coleman, a detective who is slowly discovering her son's secrets; Anderson, a neighbour trying to reconnect with his family; and the murdered man himself. As the characters—deeply divided by race, religion, and class—tell their stories, connections among them emerge, even as Driss's family confronts its secrets, a town faces its hypocrisies, and love—messy and unpredictable—is born.

McEwan, Ian

Machines like me

Machines Like Me occurs in an alternative 1980s London. Charlie, drifting through life and dodging full-time employment, is in love with Miranda, a bright student who lives with a terrible secret. When Charlie comes into money, he buys Adam, one of the first batch of synthetic humans. With Miranda's assistance, he co-designs Adam's personality. This near-perfect human is beautiful, strong and clever – a love triangle soon forms. These three beings will confront a profound moral dilemma. Ian McEwan's subversive and entertaining new novel poses fundamental questions: what makes us human? Our outward deeds or our

inner lives? Could a machine understand the human heart? This provocative and thrilling tale warns of the power to invent things beyond our control.

McKinty, Adrian

The Chain

You just dropped off your child at the bus stop. A panicked stranger calls your phone. Your child has been kidnapped, and the stranger explains that their child has also been kidnapped, by a completely different stranger. The only way to get your child back is to kidnap another child within 24 hours. Your child will be released only when the next victim's parents kidnap yet another child, and most importantly, the stranger explains, if you don't kidnap a child, or if the next parents don't kidnap a child, your child will be murdered. You are now part of The Chain.

Miller, Madeline

Circe

In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child—not powerful, like her father, nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power—the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves. Threatened, Zeus banishes her to a deserted island, where she hones her occult craft, tames wild beasts and crosses paths with many of the most famous figures in all of mythology, including the Minotaur, Daedalus and his doomed son Icarus, the murderous Medea, and, of course, wily Odysseus. But there is danger, too, for a woman who stands alone, and Circe unwittingly draws the wrath of both men and gods, ultimately finding herself pitted against one of the most terrifying and vengeful of the Olympians. To protect what she loves most, Circe must summon all her strength and choose, once and for all, whether she belongs with the gods she is born from, or the mortals she has come to love.

Mina, Denise

Conviction

The day Anna McDonald's quiet, respectable life explodes starts off like all the days before: packing up the kids for school, making breakfast, listening to yet another true crime podcast. Then her husband comes downstairs with an announcement, and Anna is suddenly, shockingly alone. Reeling and desperate for distraction, Anna returns to the podcast. Other people's problems are much better than one's own—a sunken yacht, a murdered family, a hint of international conspiracy, but this case actually *is* Anna's problem. She knows one of the victims from an earlier life, a life she's taken great pains to leave behind, and she is convinced that she knows what really happened. Then an unexpected visitor arrives on her front stoop; a meddling neighbour intervenes; and life as Anna knows it is well and truly over. The devils of her past are awakened—and in hot pursuit. Convinced she has no other options, she goes on the run, and in pursuit of the truth, with a washed-up musician at her side and the podcast as her guide.

Miyashita, Natsu

The forest of wool and steel

What he experienced that day wasn't life changing . . . It was life making.

Tomura is startled by the hypnotic sound of a piano being tuned in his school. It seeps into his soul and transports him to the forests, dark and gleaming, that surround his beloved mountain village. From that moment, he is determined to discover more.

Under the tutelage of three master piano-tuners – one humble, one cheery, one ill tempered – Tomura embarks on his training, never straying too far from a single, unfathomable question: do I have what it takes?

Myers, Benjamin

The Offing

One summer following the Second World War, Robert Appleyard sets out on foot from his Durham village. Sixteen and the son of a coal miner, he makes his way across the northern countryside until he reaches the former smuggling village of Robin Hood's Bay. There he meets Dulcie, an eccentric, worldly, older woman who lives in a ramshackle cottage facing out to sea. Staying with Dulcie, Robert's life opens into one of rich food, sea swimming, sunburn and poetry. The two come from different worlds, yet as the summer months pass, they form an unlikely friendship that will profoundly alter their futures.

Nell, Joanna

The Single ladies of Jacaranda Retirement Village

The life of 79-year-old pensioner Peggy Smart is as beige as the décor in her retirement village. Her week revolves around aqua aerobics and appointments with her doctor. The highlight of Peggy's day is watching her neighbour Brian head out for his morning swim. Peggy dreams of inviting the handsome widower - treasurer of the Residents' Committee and one of the few eligible men in the village - to an intimate dinner. But why would an educated man like Brian, a chartered accountant no less, look twice at Peggy? As a woman of a certain age, she fears she has become invisible, even to men in their eighties.

But a chance encounter with an old school friend she hasn't seen in five decades - the glamorous fashionista Angie Valentine - sets Peggy on an unexpected journey of self-discovery. Can she channel her 'inner Helen Mirren' and find love and friendship in her twilight years?

Nunn, Kayte

The forgotten letters of Esther Durant

1951. Esther Durrant, a young mother, is committed to an isolated mental asylum by her husband. Run by a pioneering psychiatrist, the hospital is at first Esther's prison but soon becomes her refuge. 2018. Free-spirited marine scientist Rachel Parker embarks on a research posting in the Isles of Scilly, off the Cornish coast. When a violent storm forces her to take shelter on a far-flung island, she discovers a collection of hidden love letters. Captivated by their passion and tenderness, Rachel determines to track down the intended recipient. Meanwhile, in London, Eve is helping her grandmother, a renowned mountaineer, write her memoirs. When she is contacted by Rachel, it sets in motion a chain of events that threatens to reveal secrets kept buried for more than sixty years.

Owens, Delia

Where the Crawdads Sing

For years, rumours of the “Marsh Girl” have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. However, Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life—until the unthinkable happens.

Rainsford, Sue

Follow me to ground

Ada and her father, touched by the power to heal illness, live on the edge of a village where they help sick locals—or “Cures”—by cracking open their damaged bodies or temporarily burying them in the reviving, dangerous Ground nearby. Ada, a being both more and less than human, is mostly uninterested in the Cures, until she meets a man named Samson. When they strike up an affair, to the displeasure of her father and Samson’s widowed, pregnant sister, Ada is torn between her old way of life and new possibilities with her lover—and eventually comes to a decision that will forever change Samson, the town, and the Ground itself.

Reynolds, Celia

Finding Henry Applebee

Eighty-five-year-old Henry Arthur Applebee has had a pretty good life. But one regret has haunted him for the last sixty-five years. And so, on an ordinary December morning, he boards a train from London to Edinburgh. His goal is simple: to find the woman who disappeared from his life decades earlier. But Henry isn’t the only person on a mission. Also bound for Edinburgh is troubled teen, Ariel. And when the two strangers collide, what began as one humble journey will catapult them both into a whole new world...

Simpson, Catherine

When I had a little sister (NF)

When I had, a Little Sister is a memoir about a Lancashire farming family, whose love of their land came hand in hand with the resilience to live off it. It’s a story of sisters and sacrifice, grief and reclamation, and of the need to speak the unspeakable.

On a cold December day in 2013, Catherine Simpson received the phone call she had feared for years. Her little sister Tricia had been found dead in the farmhouse where she, Catherine and their sister Elizabeth were born – and where their family had lived for generations. Tricia was 46 and had been stalked by depression all her life. Yet mental illness was a taboo subject within the family and although love was never lacking, there was a silence at its heart. After Tricia died, Catherine found she had kept a lifetime of diaries. The words in them took her back to a past they had shared, but experienced so differently, and offered a thread to help explore the labyrinth of her sister’s suicide.

Slepikas, Alvydas

In the shadow of wolves

The Second World War is drawing to a close, but the world is far from safe. Left to fend for themselves, women and children are forced out of their homes in East Prussia to make way for the advancing victors. As the Russian soldiers arrive, the women know that they are still

very much in danger, and that for them, the fight for survival is only just beginning. Facing critical food shortages and the onset of a bitter cold winter without heat, the women send their children into the nearby forests where they secretly cross the border into Lithuania, begging the local farmers for work or food to take back home to their waiting families. Along the way, the children find cruelty, hardship and violence, but also kindness, hope, and the promise of a new and better future.

Tyce, Harriet **Blood Orange**

Alison has it all. A doting husband, adorable daughter, and a career on the rise - she's just been given her first murder case to defend. But all is never as it seems...
"Just one more night. Then I'll end it". Alison drinks too much. She's neglecting her family, and she's having an affair with a colleague whose taste for pushing boundaries may be more than she can handle. "I did it". "I killed him". "I should be locked up".
Alison's client doesn't deny that she stabbed her husband - she wants to plead guilty. And, yet, something about her story is deeply amiss. Saving this woman may be the first step to Alison saving herself. "I'm watching you". "I know what you're doing". However, someone knows Alison's secrets. Someone who wants to make her pay for what she's done, and who won't stop until she's lost everything.

Urrea, Luis Alberta **The house of broken angels**

The House of Broken Angels is a sprawling and epic family saga helmed by patriarch Big Angel. The novel gathers together the entire De La Cruz clan, as they meet for the final birthday party Big Angel is throwing for himself, at home in San Diego, as he nears the end of his struggle with cancer and reflects on his long and full life.
But, when Big Angel's mother, Mama America, approaching one hundred, dies herself as the party nears, he must plan her funeral as well. There will be two family affairs in one weekend: a farewell double-header. Among the attendants is his half-brother and namesake, Little Angel, who comes face to face with the siblings with whom he shared a father but not, as the weekend proceeds to remind him, a life.
This story of the De La Cruzes is the story of what it means to be a Mexican in America, to have lived two lives across one border. It is a tale of the ravaging power of death to shore up the bits of life you have forgotten, whether by choice or not

Waal, Kit De **Leon**

It's 1981, a year of riots and royal weddings. The Dukes of Hazzard is on TV and Curly Wurlys are in the shops. Trying to find a place in it all is young Leon. Leon is nine, and has a perfect baby brother called Jake. They have gone to live with Maureen, who has fuzzy red hair like a halo, a belly like Father Christmas, and mutters swearwords under her breath when she thinks they can't hear. Maureen feeds and looks after them, and claims everything will be okay. But will they ever see their mother again? Who are the couple who secretly visit Jake? The adults are speaking in low voices, and wearing pretend faces. They are threatening to take Jake away and give him to strangers. Because Jake is white and Leon is not. As Leon struggles to cope with his anger, certain things can still make him smile – like Curly Wurlys, riding his bike fast downhill, burying his hands deep in the soil, hanging out with Tufty (who

reminds him of his dad), and stealing enough coins so that one day he can rescue Jake and his mum.

Walsh, Rosie

The man who didn't call

Imagine you meet a man, spend six glorious days together, and fall in love. In addition, it's mutual: you've never been so certain of anything. So when he leaves for a long-booked holiday and promises to call from the airport, you have no cause to doubt him. But he doesn't call. Your friends tell you to forget him, but you know they're wrong: something must have happened; there must be a reason for his silence. What do you do when you finally discover you're right? That there is a reason -- and that reason is the one thing you didn't share with each other - the truth.

Wiles, Will

Plume

Jack Bick is an interview journalist at a glossy lifestyle magazine. From his office window, he can see a black column of smoke in the sky, the result of an industrial accident on the edge of the city. When Bick goes from being a high-functioning alcoholic to being a non-functioning alcoholic, his life goes into freefall, the smoke a harbinger of truth, an omen of personal apocalypse. An unpromising interview with Oliver Pierce, a reclusive cult novelist, unexpectedly yields a huge story, one that could save his job. But, the novelist knows something about Bick, and the two men are drawn into a bizarre, violent partnership that is both an act of defiance against the changing city, and a surrender to its spreading darkness. With its rich emotional palette, *Plume* explores the relationship between truth and memory: personal truth, journalistic truth, novelistic truth. It is a surreal and mysterious exploration of the precariousness of life in modern London.

Winterson, Jeanette

Frankissstein: a love story

In Brexit Britain, a young transgender doctor called Ry is falling in love – against their better judgement – with Victor Stein, a celebrated professor leading the public debate around AI. Meanwhile, Ron Lord, just divorced and living with Mum again, is set to make his fortune launching a new generation of sex dolls for lonely men everywhere. Across the Atlantic, in Phoenix, Arizona, a cryogenics facility houses dozens of bodies of men and women who are medically and legally dead... but waiting to return to life. But, the scene is set in 1816, when nineteen-year-old Mary Shelley writes a story about creating a non-biological life form. 'Beware, for I am fearless and therefore powerful.'

What will happen when Homo Sapiens are no longer the smartest being on the planet? Jeanette Winterson shows us how much closer we are to that future than we realise.

Wood, Brian

Double crossed: a man under fire (NF)

At the age of 23, Brian Wood was thrust into the front line in Iraq, in the infamous Battle of Danny Boy. Ambushed, he led a charge across open ground with insurgents firing at just five soldiers. On his return, he was awarded the Military Cross. But Brian's story had only just begun. Struggling to re-integrate into family life, he suffered from PTSD. Then, five years later, a letter arrived: it summoned him to give evidence at the Al-Sweady Inquiry into allegations of war crimes by British soldiers during

the Iraq invasion of 2003. After years of public shame, Brian took the stand and delivered a powerful testimony, and following the tense inquiry room scenes, justice was finally served. Phil Shiner, the lawyer who made the false accusations, was struck off and stripped of an honorary doctorate. In this compelling memoir, Brian speaks powerfully and movingly about the three battles in his life, from being ambushed with no cover, to the mental battle to adjust at home, to being falsely accused of hideous war crimes. It's a remarkable and dark curve which ends with his honour restored but, as he says, it was too little, too late.