

## Book Group Collection 2021

### **Adiga, Aravind**

#### **Amnesty**

A riveting, suspenseful, and exuberant novel from the bestselling, Man Booker Prize–winning author of *The White Tiger* and *Selection Day* about a young illegal immigrant who must decide whether to report crucial information about a murder—and thereby risk deportation.

Danny—formerly Dhananjaya Rajaratnam—is an illegal immigrant in Sydney, Australia, denied refugee status after he fled from Sri Lanka. Working as a cleaner, living out of a grocery storeroom, for three years he’s been trying to create a new identity for himself. And now, with his beloved vegan girlfriend, Sonja, with his hidden accent and highlights in his hair, he is as close as he has ever come to living a normal life.

But then one morning, Danny learns a female client of his has been murdered. The deed was done with a knife, at a creek he’d been to with her before; and a jacket was left at the scene, which he believes belongs to another of his clients—a doctor with whom Danny knows the woman was having an affair. Suddenly Danny is confronted with a choice: Come forward with his knowledge about the crime and risk being deported? Or say nothing, and let justice go undone? Over the course of this day, evaluating the weight of his past, his dreams for the future, and the unpredictable, often absurd reality of living invisibly and undocumented, he must wrestle with his conscience and decide if a person without rights still has responsibilities.

Propulsive, insightful, and full of Aravind Adiga’s signature wit and magic, *Amnesty* is both a timeless moral struggle and a universal story with particular urgency today.

### **Allende, Isabel**

#### **A long petal of the sea**

In the late 1930s, civil war grips Spain. When General Franco and his Fascists succeed in overthrowing the government, hundreds of thousands are forced to flee in a treacherous journey over the mountains to the French border. Among them is Roser, a pregnant young widow, who finds her life intertwined with that of Victor Dalmau, an army doctor and the brother of her deceased love. In order to survive, the two must unite in a marriage neither of them desires.

Together with two thousand other refugees, they embark on the SS *Winnipeg*, a ship chartered by the poet Pablo Neruda, to Chile: “the long petal of sea and wine and snow.” As unlikely partners, they embrace exile as the rest of Europe erupts in world war. Starting over on a new continent, their trials are just beginning, and over the course of their lives, they will face trial after trial. But they will also find joy as they patiently await the day when they will be exiles no more. Through it all, their hope of returning to Spain keeps them going. Destined to witness the battle between freedom and repression as it plays out across the world, Roser and Victor will find that home might have been closer than they thought all along.

### **Booth, Naomi**

#### **Exit Management**

"At minus five degrees, even the densest blood materials start to turn: the beginnings of a human heart will still into black ice." Callum has been given an opportunity: Jozsef's house is

the perfect place to live - plenty of room, a sought-after London location and filled with priceless works of art. All that Jozsef asks in return is for some company while he's ill and the promise that if it all gets too much, someone will be there to help him at the end. It's fortunate then, when Callum meets Lauren who works in Human Resources and specialises in getting rid of people. Jozsef welcomes them both inside, and so begins a deadly spiral of violence. Pushed ever onwards by the poison of ambition, and haunted by losses from the past, these characters are drawn together in a catastrophe of endings. Naomi Booth's second novel is a ground breaking dissection of class, xenophobia and compassion. Exit Management will seize you in its cold hands and show you the dark heart within us all.

### **Bond, Caroline**

#### **One split second**

When a car carrying five teenagers home from a party crashes into a brick wall, the consequences are devastating - not just for the young people directly involved, but also for their families, their friends and the wider community.

No one escapes unscathed, but some are more deeply scarred than others and one of the group will not survive. In their grief and confusion, those left behind question who was to blame for the accident, and what price they will pay.

A haunting and emotionally affecting novel of love and loyalty, grief and forgiveness.

### **Bullock, Emily**

#### **Inside the beautiful inside**

Startlingly original and poetic-Bullock combines horror and brutality with unexpected moments of tenderness. The voice she gives to Norris as memories and delusions meld in his disintegrating mind is a haunting one. Madness, freedom, love, rebellion and compassion in c18th Bedlam, post Mutiny on the Bounty. A turbulent and thrilling voyage on the high seas of madness. Hurls us headlong through a swirling maze of madness that leads us to the very heart of James Norris.

### **Candlish, Louise**

#### **The other passenger**

You're feeling pretty smug about your commute to work by riverboat. No more traffic gridlock or getting stuck on the tube in tunnels (you're claustrophobic); now you've got an iconic Thames view, fresh air — a whole lifestyle upgrade. You've made new friends on board — led by your hedonistic young neighbour, Kit, and just had your first 'water rats' Christmas drinks.

But the first day back after Christmas, Kit isn't on the morning boat. The river landmarks are all the same, but something's off. You disembark to find the police waiting. Kit's wife, Melia, has reported him missing and another passenger witnessed the two of you arguing on the last boat home after your drinks. Police say you had a reason to lash out at him. To kill him. You protest. You and Kit are friends ask Melia, she'll vouch for you. And who exactly is this other passenger pointing the finger? What do they know about your private lives? No, whatever coincidences might have occurred that night, you are innocent, totally innocent.

### **Chamberlain, Diane**

#### **Brass Ring**

Claire Harte-Mathias is an infinitely capable solver of other people's problems. Along with her husband, she has established a prestigious foundation to aid in the rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injuries. Training therapists, counselling patients, and conducting workshops keeps Claire busy, fulfilled, and happy. It is a life she wouldn't trade for anything...and one that is about to fall apart. One snowy night, Claire tries and fails to prevent a tragedy from occurring. The incident at first obsesses her, then seems to trigger something deep in her soul. Soon she is haunted by momentary disturbing visions - terrifying images that are vaguely familiar, yet unexplainable. Slowly Claire comes to realize that the pictures are in fact fragmented and forgotten memories of her childhood - a childhood she has always remembered as close to perfect. While part of her wants to see where these memories will lead her another part wants only to run from them, to bury them once again. Confused and frightened, Claire is caught up in a complex and devastating struggle between yesterday and today; between the man who wants to help her and the husband who cannot; between terrible secrets and life-altering revelations. In her fight to uncover and accept the truth, Claire discovers that the past, present, and future are intertwined in a way she can never change...or forget. Written with sensitivity, *Brass Ring* is a heartfelt and mesmerizing novel of great loss and even greater courage.

### **Chen, Quifan**

#### **Waste tide**

Mimi is a 'waste girl', a member of the lowest caste on Silicon Isle.

Located off China's south eastern coast, Silicon Isle is the global capital for electronic waste recycling, where thousands like Mimi toil day and night, hoping one day they too will enjoy the wealth they've created for their employers, the three clans who have ruled the isle for generations.

Luo Jincheng is the head of one of these clans, a role passed down from his father and grandfather before him. As the government enforces tighter restrictions, Luo in turn tightens the reins on the waste workers in his employ. Ruthlessness is his means of survival. Scott Brandle has come to Silicon Isle representing Terra Green Recycling, an American corporation that stands to earn ungodly sums if they can reach a deal to modernize the island's recycling process.

Chen Kaizong, a Chinese American, travels to Silicon Isle as Scott's interpreter. There, Kaizong is hoping to find his heritage, but finds more questions instead. The home he longs for may not exist.

As these forces collide, a dark futuristic virus is unleashed on the island, and war erupts between the rich and the poor; between Chinese tradition and American ambition; between humanity's past and its future.

### **Chevalier, Tracy**

#### **A single thread**

1932. After the Great War took both her beloved brother and her fiancé, Violet Speedwell has become a "surplus woman," one of a generation doomed to a life of spinsterhood after the war killed so many young men. Yet Violet cannot reconcile herself to a life spent caring for her grieving, embittered mother. After countless meals of boiled eggs and dry toast, she saves enough to move out of her mother's place and into the town of Winchester, home to one of England's grandest cathedrals. There, Violet is drawn into a society of broderers-- women who embroider kneelers for the Cathedral, carrying on a centuries-long tradition of

bringing comfort to worshippers.

Violet finds support and community in the group, fulfilment in the work they create, and even a growing friendship with the vivacious Gilda. But when forces threaten her new independence and another war appears on the horizon, Violet must fight to put down roots in a place where women aren't expected to grow. Told in Chevalier's glorious prose, *A Single Thread* is a timeless story of friendship, love, and a woman crafting her own life.

### **Chiang, Ted**

#### **Exhalation**

This much-anticipated second collection of stories is signature Ted Chiang, full of revelatory ideas and deeply sympathetic characters. In *The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate*, a portal through time forces a fabric seller in ancient Baghdad to grapple with past mistakes and the temptation of second chances. In the epistolary *Exhalation*, an alien scientist makes a shocking discovery with ramifications not just for his own people, but for all of reality. And in *The Lifecycle of Software Objects*, a woman cares for an artificial intelligence over twenty years, elevating a faddish digital pet into what might be a true living being. Also included are two brand-new stories: *Omphalos* and *Anxiety Is the Dizziness of Freedom*.

In this fantastical and elegant collection, Ted Chiang wrestles with the oldest questions on earth—what, is the nature of the universe? What does it mean to be human?—and ones that no one else has even imagined. And, each in its own way, the stories prove that complex and thoughtful science fiction can rise to new heights of beauty, meaning, and compassion.

### **Clark, Polly**

#### **Tiger**

*Tiger* is a bewitching novel that brings together three humans and a tiger in the wilds of Siberia.

Frieda is a primatologist, sensitively attuned to her research. When a terrible attack shatters her world, she becomes familiar with violence and competition. It is in her new role as a zookeeper that these brutal attributes will be sharpened. And here that she confronts her new ward: an untamed Siberian tiger.

The forest that the cub came from is home to humans on the very edge of wilderness. Tomas, a Russian conservationist, fears that the natural order has toppled. The King tiger has been killed by poachers, and a spectacular tigress now patrols his vast territory as her own.

In the perilous, freezing winter, when all living things compete ruthlessly for survival, her path crosses with a mother and daughter who take an unthinkable risk. Vengeance must follow; and in the terrible clash between human and tiger, the cub will be captured.

When Frieda learns of her cub's past, it brings with it the chance for freedom. Faced with the forces of nature and savage femininity, Frieda must trust to her instinct and, like the tiger, find a way to live in the world.

A sweeping story of survival and redeeming love, *Tiger* plunges the reader into one of the world's last surviving wildernesses with blistering authenticity. Readers of Stef Penney's *The Tenderness of Wolves* and Eowyn Ivey's *The Bright Edge of the World* will love this magnificent second novel by Polly Clark, the prizewinning author of *Larchfield*.

## **Coates, Ta-Nehisi**

### **The water dancer**

Young Hiram Walker was born into bondage. When his mother was sold away, Hiram was robbed of all memory of her — but was gifted with a mysterious power. Years later, when Hiram almost drowns in a river, that same power saves his life. This brush with death births an urgency in Hiram and a daring scheme: to escape from the only home he's ever known. So begins an unexpected journey that takes Hiram from the corrupt grandeur of Virginia's proud plantations to desperate guerrilla cells in the wilderness, from the coffin of the deep South to dangerously utopic movements in the North. Even as he's enlisted in the underground war between slavers and the enslaved, Hiram's resolve to rescue the family he left behind endures.

## **Crummy, Michael**

### **The innocents**

From prizewinning author Michael Crummey comes a spellbinding story of survival in which a brother and sister confront the limits of human endurance and their own capacity for loyalty and forgiveness.

A brother and sister are orphaned in an isolated cove on Newfoundland's northern coastline. Their home is a stretch of rocky shore governed by the feral ocean, by a relentless pendulum of abundance and murderous scarcity. Still children with only the barest notion of the outside world, they have nothing but the family's boat and the little knowledge passed on haphazardly by their mother and father to keep them.

Muddling through the severe round of the seasons, through years of meagre catches and storms and ravaging illness, it is their fierce loyalty to each other that motivates and sustains them. But as seasons pass and they wade deeper into the mystery of their own natures, even that loyalty will be tested.

*The Innocents* is richly imagined and compulsively readable, a riveting story of hardship and survival, and an unflinching exploration of the bond between brother and sister. By turns electrifying and heart breaking, it is a testament to the bounty and barbarity of the world, to the wonders and strangeness of our individual selves.

## **Cummins, Jeanine**

### **American dirt**

On this side, too, there are dreams.

Lydia Quixano Pérez lives in the Mexican city of Acapulco. She runs a bookstore. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while there are cracks beginning to show in Acapulco because of the drug cartels, her life is, by and large, fairly comfortable.

Even though she knows they'll never sell, Lydia stocks some of her all-time favourite books in her store. And then one day a man enters the shop to browse and comes up to the register with a few books he would like to buy—two of them her favourites. Javier is erudite. He is charming. And, unbeknownst to Lydia, he is the jefe of the newest drug cartel that has gruesomely taken over the city. When Lydia's husband's tell-all profile of Javier is published, none of their lives will ever be the same.

Forced to flee, Lydia and eight-year-old Luca soon find themselves miles and worlds away from their comfortable middle-class existence. Instantly transformed into migrants, Lydia and Luca ride la bestia—trains that make their way north toward the United States, which is

the only place Javier's reach doesn't extend. As they join the countless people trying to reach el norte, Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to?

### **Dare, Abi**

#### **The girl with the louding voice**

The unforgettable, inspiring story of a teenage girl growing up in a rural Nigerian village who longs to get an education so that she can find her "louding voice" and speak up for herself, *The Girl with the Louding Voice* is a simultaneously heartbreaking and triumphant tale about the power of fighting for your dreams.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles in her path, Adunni never loses sight of her goal of escaping the life of poverty she was born into so that she can build the future she chooses for herself - and help other girls like her do the same.

Her spirited determination to find joy and hope in even the most difficult circumstances imaginable will "break your heart and then put it back together again" (Jenna Bush Hager on *The Today Show*) even as Adunni shows us how one courageous young girl can inspire us all to reach for our dreams...and maybe even change the world.

### **Durand, Jacky**

#### **The little French recipe book**

For thirty years, Julien has lived with the question as to why his mother, Helene, suddenly walked out on him and his father - and why his father Henri refused to ever speak of her again.

Now, as he sits by his father's bedside preparing to say goodbye, Julien remembers his father's long-lost notebook: a gift from Helene in which he jealously kept the recipes that made him the renowned chef of the *Relais Fleuri* restaurant.

Julien is determined to find this last link to the father he so fiercely loves, and the mother he has never forgotten. But can the secrets to his father's cooking finally help him understand the other secrets Henri has kept all these years?

### **Ebner, Julia**

#### **Going dark**

By day, Julia Ebner works at a counter-extremism think tank, monitoring radical groups from the outside, but two years ago, she began to feel that she was only seeing half the picture. She needed to get inside the groups to truly understand them. So she decided to go undercover in her spare hours - late nights, holidays, weekends - adopting five different identities, and joining a dozen extremist groups from across the ideological spectrum.

Her journey would take her from a Generation Identity global strategy meeting in a pub in Mayfair, to a Neo-Nazi Music Festival on the border of Germany and Poland. She would get relationship advice from 'Trad Wives' and Jihadi Brides and hacking lessons from ISIS. She was in the channels when the alt-right began planning the lethal Charlottesville rally, and spent time in the networks that would radicalise the Christchurch terrorist.

In *Going Dark*, Ebner takes the reader on a deeply compulsive, terrifying, illuminating journey into the darkest recesses of extremist thinking, exposing how closely we are surrounded by their fanatical ideology every day, the changing nature and practice of these groups, and what is being done to counter them.

## **Evanisto, Bernardine**

### **Girl, woman, other**

Teeming with life and crackling with energy — a love song to modern Britain and black womanhood

Girl, Woman, Other follows the lives and struggles of twelve very different characters. Mostly women, black and British, they tell the stories of their families, friends and lovers, across the country and through the years.

Joyfully polyphonic and vibrantly contemporary, this is a gloriously new kind of history, a novel of our times: celebratory, ever-dynamic and utterly irresistible.

## **Fein, Louise**

### **People like us**

As the dutiful daughter of a high-ranking Nazi officer, Hetty Heinrich is keen to play her part in the glorious new Thousand Year Reich. But she never imagines that all she believes and knows about her world will come into stark conflict when she encounters Walter, a Jewish friend from the past, who stirs dangerous feelings in her. Confused and conflicted, Hetty doesn't know whom she can trust and where she can turn to, especially when she discovers that someone has been watching her.

Realizing she is taking a huge risk—but unable to resist the intense attraction she has for Walter—she embarks on a secret love affair with him. Together, they dream about when the war will be over and plan for their future. But as the rising tide of anti-Semitism threatens to engulf them, Hetty and Walter will be forced to take extreme measures.

Will the steady march of dark forces destroy Hetty's universe—or can love ultimately triumph...?

Propulsive, deeply affecting, and inspired by the author's family history, *Daughter of the Reich* is a mesmerizing page-turner filled with vivid characters and a meticulously researched portrait of Nazi Germany. In this riveting story of passion, courage and morality, Louise Fein introduces a bold young woman determined to tread the treacherous path of survival and freedom, showing readers the strength in the power of love and reminding us that the past must never be forgotten.

## **Foley, Lucy**

### **The guest list**

On an island off the coast of Ireland, guests gather to celebrate two people joining their lives together as one. The groom: handsome and charming, a rising television star. The bride: smart and ambitious, a magazine publisher. It's a wedding for a magazine, or for a celebrity: the designer dress, the remote location, the luxe party favors, the boutique whiskey. The cell phone service may be spotty and the waves may be rough, but every detail has been expertly planned and will be expertly executed.

But perfection is for plans, and people are all too human. As the champagne is popped and the festivities begin, resentments and petty jealousies begin to mingle with the reminiscences and well wishes. The groomsmen begin the drinking game from their school days. The bridesmaid not-so-accidentally ruins her dress. The bride's oldest (male) friend gives an uncomfortably caring toast.

And then someone turns up dead. Who didn't wish the happy couple well? And perhaps more important, why?

## **Furst, Alan**

### **Under occupation**

Occupied Paris in 1942, a dark, treacherous city now ruled by the German security services, where French resistance networks are working secretly to defeat Hitler. Just before he dies, a man being chased by the Gestapo hands off to Paul Ricard a strange looking drawing. It looks like a part for a military weapon; Ricard realizes it must be an important document smuggled out of Germany to aid the resistance. As Ricard is drawn deeper and deeper into the French resistance network, his increasingly dangerous assignments lead him to travel to Germany, and along the underground safe houses of the resistance--and to meet the mysterious and beautiful Leila, a professional spy.

## **Gallen, Michelle**

### **Big girl, small town**

Majella is happiest out of the spotlight, away from her neighbours' stares and the gossips of the small town in Northern Ireland where she grew up just after the Troubles. She lives a quiet life caring for her alcoholic mother, working in the local chip shop, watching the regular customers come and go. She wears the same clothes each day (overalls, too small), has the same dinner each night (fish and chips, microwaved at home after her shift ends), and binge-watches old DVDs of the same show (*Dallas*, best show on TV) from the comfort of her bed.

But underneath Majella's seemingly ordinary life are the facts that she doesn't know where her father is and that every person in her town has been changed by the lingering divide between Protestants and Catholics. When Majella's predictable existence is upended by the death of her granny, she comes to realize there may be more to life than the gossips of Aghybogey, the pub, and the chip shop. In fact, there just may be a whole big world outside her small town.

## **Gilbert, Lisa**

### **City of girls**

In 1940, nineteen-year-old Vivian Morris has just been kicked out of Vassar College, owing to her lackluster freshman-year performance. Her affluent parents send her to Manhattan to live with her Aunt Peg, who owns a flamboyant, crumbling midtown theater called the Lily Playhouse. There Vivian is introduced to an entire cosmos of unconventional and charismatic characters, from the fun-chasing showgirls to a sexy male actor, a grand-dame actress, a lady-killer writer, and no-nonsense stage manager. But when Vivian makes a personal mistake that results in professional scandal, it turns her new world upside down in ways that it will take her years to fully understand. Ultimately, though, it leads her to a new understanding of the kind of life she craves - and the kind of freedom it takes to pursue it. It will also lead to the love of her life, a love that stands out from all the rest.

Now ninety-five years old and telling her story at last, Vivian recalls how the events of those years altered the course of her life - and the gusto and autonomy with which she approached it. "At some point in a woman's life, she just gets tired of being ashamed all the time," she muses. "After that, she is free to become whoever she truly is." Written with a powerful wisdom about human desire and connection, *City of Girls* is a love story like no other.

### **Goldin, Megan**

#### **The night swim**

After the first season of her true crime podcast became an overnight sensation and set an innocent man free, Rachel Krall is now a household name—and the last hope for thousands of people seeking justice. But she's used to being recognized for her voice, not her face. Which makes it all the more unsettling when she finds a note on her car windshield, addressed to her, begging for help.

The small town of Neapolis is being torn apart by a devastating rape trial. The town's golden boy, a swimmer destined for Olympic greatness, has been accused of raping a high school student, the beloved granddaughter of the police chief. Under pressure to make Season Three a success, Rachel throws herself into interviewing and investigating—but the mysterious letters keep showing up in unexpected places. Someone is following her, and she won't stop until Rachel finds out what happened to her sister twenty-five years ago. Officially, Jenny Stills tragically drowned, but the letters insist she was murdered—and when Rachel starts asking questions, nobody seems to want to answer. The past and present start to collide as Rachel uncovers startling connections between the two cases that will change the course of the trial and the lives of everyone involved

### **Grant, Colin**

#### **Homecoming: voices of Windrush (NF)**

Homecoming draws on over a hundred first-hand interviews, archival recordings and memoirs by the women and men who came to Britain from the West Indies between the late 1940s and the early 1960s. In their own words, we witness the transition from the optimism of the first post-war arrivals to the race riots of the late 1950s. We hear from nurses in Manchester; bus drivers in Bristol; seamstresses in Birmingham; teachers in Croydon; dockers in Cardiff; inter-racial lovers in High Wycombe, and Carnival Queens in Leeds. These are stories of hope and regret, of triumphs and challenges, brimming with humour, anger and wisdom. Together, they reveal a rich tapestry of Caribbean British lives

### **Haig, Matt**

#### **The midnight library**

Between life and death there is a library, and within that library, the shelves go on forever. Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived. To see how things would be if you had made other choices . . . Would you have done anything different, if you had the chance to undo your regrets?"

A dazzling novel about all the choices that go into a life well lived, from the internationally bestselling author of *Reasons to Stay Alive* and *How To Stop Time*.

Somewhere out beyond the edge of the universe there is a library that contains an infinite number of books, each one the story of another reality. One tells the story of your life as it is, along with another book for the other life you could have lived if you had made a different choice at any point in your life. While we all wonder how our lives might have been, what if you had the chance to go to the library and see for yourself? Would any of these other lives truly be better?

In *The Midnight Library*, Matt Haig's enchanting new novel, Nora Seed finds herself faced with this decision. Faced with the possibility of changing her life for a new one, following a different career, undoing old breakups, realizing her dreams of becoming a glaciologist; she

must search within herself as she travels through the Midnight Library to decide what is truly fulfilling in life, and what makes it worth living in the first place.

### **Hurley, Andrew Michael**

#### **Starve acre**

The worst thing possible has happened. Richard and Juliette Willoughby's son, Ewan, has died suddenly at the age of five. Starve Acre, their house by the moors, was to be full of life, but is now a haunted place.

Juliette, convinced Ewan still lives there in some form, seeks the help of the Beacons, a seemingly benevolent group of occultists. Richard, to try and keep the boy out of his mind, has turned his attention to the field opposite the house, where he patiently digs the barren dirt in search of a legendary oak tree.

Starve Acre is a devastating new novel by the author of the prize-winning bestseller *The Loney*. It is a novel about the way in which grief splits the world in two and how, in searching for hope, we can so easily unearth horror.

### **Kay, Elizabeth**

#### **Seven lies**

It all started with just one little lie. But we all know that it never ends there. Because, of course, one lie leads to another...

Growing up, Jane and Marnie shared everything. They knew the other's deep-est secrets. They wouldn't have had it any other way. But when Marnie falls in love, things begin to change.

Because Jane has a secret: she loathes Marnie's wealthy, priggish husband. So when Marnie asks if she likes him, Jane tells her first lie. After all, even best friends keep some things to themselves. If she had been honest, then perhaps her best friend's husband might still be alive today...

For, of course, it's not the last lie. In fact, it's only the beginning...

Seven Lies is Jane's confession of the truth—her truth. Compelling, sophisticated, chilling, it's a seductive, hypnotic page-turner about the tangled, toxic friendships between women, the dark underbelly of obsession and what we stand to lose in the name of love.

### **Kealey, Imogen**

#### **Liberation**

Hero. Soldier. Spy. Leader. Her name is Nancy Wake.

To the Allies, she was a fearless freedom fighter, a special operations legend, a woman ahead of her time. To the Gestapo, she was a ghost, a shadow, the most wanted person in the world.

But at first, Nancy Wake was just another young woman living in Marseilles and recently engaged to a man she loved. Then France fell to the Nazi blitzkrieg. With her appetite for danger, Nancy quickly finds herself drawn into the underground Resistance standing up to Nazi rule. Gaining notoriety as the White Mouse, with a 5-million-franc bounty hanging over her head, Wake rises to the top of the Nazi's Most Wanted list--only to find her husband arrested for treasonous activity under suspicion of being the White Mouse himself.

Narrowly escaping to Britain, Wake joins the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and parachutes into the Auvergne, where she must fight for the respect of some of the toughest

Resistance fighters in France. As she and her maquisards battle the Nazis, their every engagement brings the end of the war closer—but also places her husband in deeper peril.

### **Laurain, Antoine**

#### **The reader's room**

When the manuscript of a debut crime novel arrives at a Parisian publishing house, everyone in the readers' room is convinced it's something special. And the committee for France's highest literary honour, the Prix Goncourt, agrees.

But when the shortlist is announced, there's a problem for editor, Violaine Lepage: she has no idea of the author's identity. As the police begin to investigate a series of murders strangely reminiscent of those recounted in the book, Violaine is not the only one looking for answers. And, suffering memory blanks following an aeroplane accident, she's beginning to wonder what role she might play in the story ...

### **Lundberg, Sofia**

#### **The red address book**

Meet Doris, a 96-year-old woman living alone in her Stockholm apartment. She has few visitors, but her weekly Skype calls with Jenny—her American grandniece, and her only relative—give her great joy and remind her of her own youth.

When Doris was a girl, she was given an address book by her father, and ever since she has carefully documented everyone she met and loved throughout the years. Looking through the little book now, Doris sees the many crossed-out names of people long gone and is struck by the urge to put pen to paper. In writing down the stories of her colourful past—working as a maid in Sweden, modelling in Paris during the 30s, fleeing to Manhattan at the dawn of the Second World War—can she help Jenny, haunted by a difficult childhood, unlock the secrets of their family and finally look to the future? And whatever became of Allan, the love of Doris's life?

### **Lupton, Rosamund**

#### **Three hours**

In rural Somerset in the middle of a blizzard, the unthinkable happens: a school is under siege. Told from the point of view of the people at the heart of it, from the wounded headmaster in the library, unable to help his trapped pupils and staff, to teenage Hannah in love for the first time, to the parents gathering desperate for news, to the 16 year old Syrian refugee trying to rescue his little brother, to the police psychologist who must identify the gunmen, to the students taking refuge in the school theatre, all experience the most intense hours of their lives, where evil and terror are met by courage, love and redemption.

### **MacFarlane, Robert**

#### **Underland**

In Underland, Robert Macfarlane delivers an epic exploration of the Earth's underworlds as they exist in myth, literature, memory, and the land itself. Traveling through the dizzying expanse of geologic time—from prehistoric art in Norwegian sea caves, to the blue depths of the Greenland ice cap, to a deep-sunk "hiding place" where nuclear waste will be stored for 100,000 years to come—Underland takes us on an extraordinary journey into our relationship with darkness, burial, and what lies beneath the surface of both place and mind.

## **Major, Cesca**

### **The other girl**

1942, New Zealand. Edith's been locked away for a long time. She was just five years old when she was sent to Seacliff Lunatic Asylum. Fifteen years later, she has few memories of her life before the asylum, but longs for one beyond it.

When she survives a devastating fire that destroys her ward, Edith is questioned by the police and a young doctor, Declan Harris. Intrigued by his beautiful patient, Declan begins to doubt the official reasons for her incarceration. Is she truly mad—or could the impossible stories she told as a child actually be true?

Time is running out. With Edie awaiting a new and permanent treatment, soon there will be little of her left to save. Meanwhile intrigue has tipped into obsession—Declan needs to uncover the truth, but in doing so he will risk losing everything. As he sets out to save her mind, will he lose his own?

## **May, Peter**

### **Lockdown**

#### **A CITY IN QUARANTINE**

London, the epicentre of a global pandemic, is a city in lockdown. Violence and civil disorder simmer. Martial law has been imposed. No-one is safe from the deadly virus that has already claimed thousands of victims. Health and emergency services are overwhelmed.

#### **A MURDERED CHILD**

At a building site for a temporary hospital, construction workers find a bag containing the rendered bones of a murdered child. A remorseless killer has been unleashed on the city; his mission is to take all measures necessary to prevent the bones from being identified.

#### **A POWERFUL CONSPIRACY**

D.I. Jack MacNeil, counting down the hours on his final day with the Met, is sent to investigate. His career is in ruins, his marriage over and his own family touched by the virus. Sinister forces are tracking his every move, prepared to kill again to conceal the truth. Which will stop him first - the virus or the killers?

## **Mengiste, Maaza**

### **The shadow king**

With the threat of Mussolini's army looming, recently orphaned Hirut struggles to adapt to her new life as a maid in Kidane and his wife Aster's household. Kidane, an officer in Emperor Haile Selassie's army, rushes to mobilize his strongest men before the Italians invade. His initial kindness to Hirut shifts into a flinty cruelty when she resists his advances, and Hirut finds herself tumbling into a new world of thefts and violations, of betrayals and overwhelming rage. Meanwhile, Mussolini's technologically advanced army prepares for an easy victory. Hundreds of thousands of Italians—Jewish photographer Ettore among them—march on Ethiopia seeking adventure.

As the war begins in earnest, Hirut, Aster, and the other women long to do more than care for the wounded and bury the dead. When Emperor Haile Selassie goes into exile and Ethiopia quickly loses hope, it is Hirut who offers a plan to maintain morale. She helps disguise a gentle peasant as the emperor and soon becomes his guard, inspiring other women to take up arms against the Italians. But how could she have predicted her own personal war as a prisoner of one of Italy's most vicious officers, who will force her to pose before Ettore's camera?

**Messina, Laura Imai**

**The phone box at the edge of the world**

When Yui loses her mother and daughter in the tsunami, she wonders how she will ever carry on. Yet, in the face of this unthinkable loss, life must somehow continue.

Then one day she hears about a man who has an old disused telephone box in his garden. There, those who have lost loved ones find the strength to speak to them and begin to come to terms with their grief. As news of the phone box spreads, people will travel there from miles around.

Soon Yui will make her own pilgrimage to the phone box, too. But once there she cannot bring herself to speak into the receiver. Then she finds Takeshi, a bereaved husband whose own daughter has stopped talking in the wake of their loss.

**Moggach, Deborah**

**The carer**

James is getting on a bit and needs full-time help. So Phoebe and Robert, his middle-aged offspring, employ Mandy, who seems willing to take him off their hands. But as James regales his family with tales of Mandy's virtues, their shopping trips, and the shared pleasure of their journeys to garden centres, Phoebe and Robert sense something is amiss. Is this really their father, the distant figure who never once turned up for a sports day, now happily chortling over cuckoo clocks and television soaps? Then something happens that throws everything into new relief, and Phoebe and Robert discover that life most definitely does not stop for the elderly. It just moves onto a very different plane - changing all the stories they thought they knew so well.

**Montimore, Margarita**

**The re-arranged life of Oona Lockhart**

Brooklyn, 1982. Oona Lockhart is about to celebrate her 19th birthday and ring in the New Year. But at the stroke of midnight, she is torn from her friends and boyfriend, finding herself in her fifty-one-year-old body, thirty-two years into the future.

Greeted by a friendly stranger, Oona learns that on every birthday she will enter a different year of her adult life at random. Still a young woman on the inside, but ever changing on the outside, who will she be next year? Wealthy philanthropist? Nineties Club Kid? World traveller? Wife to a man she's never met?

While Oona gets glimpses of the future and thinks she knows what's to come, living a normal life is challenging. As she struggles between fighting her fate and accepting it, Oona must learn to navigate a life that's out of order - but is it broken?

**Moriarty, Jaclyn**

**Gravity is the thing**

Twenty years ago, Abigail Sorenson's brother Robert went missing one day before her sixteenth birthday, never to be seen again. That same year, she began receiving scattered chapters in the mail of a self-help manual, the Guidebook, whose anonymous author promised to make her life soar to heights beyond her wildest dreams.

The Guidebook's missives have remained a constant in Abi's life—a befuddling yet oddly comforting voice through her family's grief over her brother's disappearance, a move across continents, the devastating dissolution of her marriage, and the new beginning as a single mother and café owner in Sydney.

Now, two decades after receiving those first pages, Abi is invited to an all-expenses paid weekend retreat to learn “the truth” about the Guidebook. It’s an opportunity too intriguing to refuse. If everything is Connected, then surely the twin mysteries of the Guidebook and a missing brother must be linked?

### **Morrey, Beth**

#### **Saving Missy**

Missy Carmichael’s life has become small.

Grieving for a family she has lost or lost touch with, she’s haunted by the echoes of her footsteps in her empty home; the sound of the radio in the dark; the tick-tick-tick of the watching clock.

Spiky and defensive, Missy knows that her loneliness is all her own fault. She deserves no more than this; not after what she’s done. But a chance encounter in the park with two very different women opens the door to something new.

Another life beckons for Missy, if only she can be brave enough to grasp the opportunity. But seventy-nine is too late for a second chance. Isn’t it?

### **Murata, Sayaka**

#### **Convenience store woman**

Convenience Store Woman is the heart warming and surprising story of thirty-six-year-old Tokyo resident Keiko Furukura. Keiko has never fit in, neither in her family, nor in school, but when at the age of eighteen she begins working at the Hiromachi branch of “Smile Mart,” she finds peace and purpose in her life. In the store, unlike anywhere else, she understands the rules of social interaction — many are laid out line by line in the store’s manual — and she does her best to copy the dress, mannerisms, and speech of her colleagues, playing the part of a “normal” person excellently, more or less. Managers come and go, but Keiko stays at the store for eighteen years. It’s almost hard to tell where the store ends and she begins. Keiko is very happy, but the people close to her, from her family to her co-workers, increasingly pressure her to find a husband, and to start a proper career, prompting her to take desperate action...

A brilliant depiction of an unusual psyche and a world hidden from view, Convenience Store Woman is an ironic and sharp-eyed look at contemporary work culture and the pressures to conform, as well as a charming and completely fresh portrait of an unforgettable heroine.

### **Nam-Joo, Cho**

#### **Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982**

In a small, tidy apartment on the outskirts of the frenzied metropolis of Seoul lives Kim Jiyoung. A thirtysomething-year-old “millennial everywoman,” she has recently left her white-collar desk job—in order to care for her new born daughter full-time—as so many Korean women are expected to do. But she quickly begins to exhibit strange symptoms that alarm her husband, parents, and in-laws: Jiyoung impersonates the voices of other women—alive and even dead, both known and unknown to her. As she plunges deeper into this psychosis, her discomfited husband sends her to a male psychiatrist.

In a chilling, eerily truncated third-person voice, Jiyoung’s entire life is recounted to the psychiatrist—a narrative infused with disparate elements of frustration, perseverance, and submission. Born in 1982 and given the most common name for Korean baby girls, Jiyoung

quickly becomes the un-favoured sister to her princeling little brother. Always, her behaviour is policed by the male figures around her—from the elementary school teachers who enforce strict uniforms for girls, to the co-workers who install a hidden camera in the women's restroom and post their photos online. In her father's eyes, it is Jiyoung's fault that men harass her late at night; in her husband's eyes, it is Jiyoung's duty to forsake her career to take care of him and their child—to put them first.

Jiyoung's painfully common life is juxtaposed against a backdrop of an advancing Korea, as it abandons "family planning" birth control policies and passes new legislation against gender discrimination. But can her doctor flawlessly, completely cure her, or even discover what truly ails her?

### **Napolitano, Ann**

#### **Dear Edward**

One summer morning, twelve-year-old Edward Adler, his beloved older brother, his parents, and 183 other passengers board a flight in Newark headed for Los Angeles. Among them is a Wall Street wunderkind, a young woman coming to terms with an unexpected pregnancy, an injured vet returning from Afghanistan, a septuagenarian business tycoon, and a free-spirited woman running away from her controlling husband. And then, tragically, the plane crashes. Edward is the sole survivor.

Edward's story captures the attention of the nation, but he struggles to find a place for himself in a world without his family. He continues to feel that a piece of him has been left in the sky, forever tied to the plane and all of his fellow passengers. But then he makes an unexpected discovery--one that will lead him to the answers of some of life's most profound questions: When you've lost everything, how do you find yourself? How do you discover your purpose? What does it mean not just to survive, but to truly live?

### **O'Connor, Joseph**

#### **Shadowplay**

1878- The Lyceum Theatre, London. Three extraordinary people begin their life together, a life that will be full of drama, transformation, passionate and painful devotion to art and to one another. Henry Irving, the Chief, is the volcanic leading man and impresario; Ellen Terry is the most lauded and desired actress of her generation, outspoken and generous of heart; and ever following along behind them in the shadows is the unremarkable theatre manager, Bram Stoker. Fresh from life in Dublin as a clerk, Bram may seem the least colourful of the trio but he is wrestling with dark demons in a new city, in a new marriage, and with his own literary aspirations. As he walks the London streets at night, streets haunted by the Ripper and the gossip which swirls around his friend Oscar Wilde, he finds new inspiration. But the Chief is determined that nothing will get in the way of his managers devotion to the Lyceum and to himself. And both men are enchanted by the beauty and boldness of the elusive Ellen. This exceptional novel explores the complexities of love that stands dangerously outside social convention, the restlessness of creativity, and the experiences that led to Dracula, the most iconic supernatural tale of all time.

### **Orr, Deborah**

#### **Motherwell**

Just shy of 18, Deborah Orr left Motherwell - the town she both loved and hated - to go to university. It was a decision her mother railed against from the moment the idea was raised.

Win had very little agency in the world, every choice was determined by the men in her life. And strangely, she wanted the same for her daughter. Attending university wasn't for the likes of the Orr family. Worse still, it would mean leaving Win behind - and Win wanted Deborah with her at all times, rather like she wanted her arm with her at all times. But while she managed to escape, Deborah's severing from her family was only superficial. She continued to travel back to Motherwell, fantasizing about the day that Win might come to accept her as good enough. Though of course it was never meant to be.

**Penner, Sarah**

### **The lost apothecary**

A female apothecary secretly dispenses poisons to liberate women from the men who have wronged them—setting three lives across centuries on a dangerous collision course.

Rule #1: The poison must never be used to harm another woman.

Rule #2: The names of the murderer and her victim must be recorded in the apothecary's register.

One cold February evening in 1791, at the back of a dark London alley in a hidden apothecary shop, Nella awaits her newest customer. Once a respected healer, Nella now uses her knowledge for a darker purpose—selling well-disguised poisons to desperate women who would kill to be free of the men in their lives. But when her new patron turns out to be a precocious twelve-year-old named Eliza Fanning, an unexpected friendship sets in motion a string of events that jeopardizes Nella's world and threatens to expose the many women whose names are written in her register.

In present-day London, aspiring historian Caroline Parcewell spends her tenth wedding anniversary alone, reeling from the discovery of her husband's infidelity. When she finds an old apothecary vial near the river Thames, she can't resist investigating, only to realize she's found a link to the unsolved "apothecary murders" that haunted London over two centuries ago. As she deepens her search, Caroline's life collides with Nella's and Eliza's in a stunning twist of fate—and not everyone will survive.

**Preston, John**

### **The dig**

In the long hot summer of 1939 Britain is preparing for war. But on a riverside farm in Suffolk there is excitement of another kind: Mrs Pretty, the widowed farmer, has had her hunch proved correct that the strange mounds on her land hold buried treasure. As the dig proceeds against a background of mounting national anxiety, it becomes clear though that this is no ordinary find ... and soon the discovery leads to all kinds of jealousies and tensions. John Preston's recreation of the Sutton Hoo dig - the greatest Anglo-Saxon discovery ever in Britain - brilliantly and comically dramatizes three months of intense activity when locals fought outsiders, professionals thwarted amateurs, and love and rivalry flourished in equal measure.

**Roper, Richard**

### **Something to live for**

All Andrew wants is to be normal. That's why his co-workers believe he has the perfect wife and two children waiting at home for him after a long day. But the truth is, his life isn't exactly as people think . . . and his little white lie is about to catch up with him. Because in

all of Andrew's efforts to fit in, he's forgotten one important thing: how to really live. And maybe, it's finally time for him to start

### **Rutledge, Lynda**

#### **West with giraffes**

Woodrow Wilson Nickel, age 105, feels his life ebbing away. But when he learns giraffes are going extinct, he finds himself recalling the unforgettable experience he cannot take to his grave.

It's 1938. The Great Depression lingers. Hitler is threatening Europe, and world-weary Americans long for wonder. They find it in two giraffes who miraculously survive a hurricane while crossing the Atlantic. What follows is a twelve-day road trip in a custom truck to deliver Southern California's first giraffes to the San Diego Zoo. Behind the wheel is the young Dust Bowl rowdy Woodrow. Inspired by true events, the tale weaves real-life figures with fictional ones, including the world's first female zoo director, a crusty old man with a past, a young female photographer with a secret, and assorted reprobates as spotty as the giraffes.

Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming-of-age love story, *West with Giraffes* explores what it means to be changed by the grace of animals, the kindness of strangers, the passing of time, and a story told before it's too late.

### **Rutt, Stephen**

#### **Wintering: a season with geese (NF)**

The arrival of huge flocks of geese in the UK is one of the most evocative and powerful harbingers of winter; a vast natural phenomenon to capture the imagination. So Stephen Rutt found when he moved to Dumfries in the autumn of 2018, coinciding with the migration of thousands of pink-footed geese who spend their winter in the Firth.

Thus begins an extraordinary odyssey. From his new surroundings in the north to the wide open spaces of his childhood home in the south, Stephen traces the lives and habits of the most common species of goose in the UK and explores the place they have in our culture, our history and, occasionally, on our festive table.

*Wintering* takes you on a vivid tour of the in-between landscapes the geese inhabit, celebrating the short days, varied weathers and long nights of the season during which we share our home with these large, startling, garrulous and cooperative birds.

### **Shafak, Elif**

#### **10 minutes 38 seconds in this strange world**

For Leila, each minute after her death brings a sensuous memory: the taste of spiced goat stew, sacrificed by her father to celebrate the long-awaited birth of a son; the sight of bubbling vats of lemon and sugar which the women use to wax their legs while the men attend mosque; the scent of cardamom coffee that Leila shares with a handsome student in the brothel where she works. Each memory, too, recalls the friends she made at each key moment in her life - friends who are now desperately trying to find her.

### **Taddeo, Lisa**

#### **Three women**

In suburban Indiana we meet Lina, a homemaker and mother of two whose marriage, after a decade, has lost its passion. Starved for affection, Lina battles daily panic attacks and, after

reconnecting with an old flame through social media, embarks on an affair that quickly becomes all-consuming. In North Dakota we meet Maggie, a seventeen-year-old high school student who allegedly has a clandestine physical relationship with her handsome, married English teacher; the ensuing criminal trial will turn their quiet community upside down. Finally, in an exclusive enclave of the Northeast, we meet Sloane—a gorgeous, successful, and refined restaurant owner—who is happily married to a man who likes to watch her have sex with other men and women.

### **Toon, Francine**

#### **Pine**

They are driving home from the search party when they see her.

The trees are coarse and tall in the winter light, standing like men. Lauren and her father Niall live alone in the Highlands, in a small village surrounded by pine forest. When a woman stumbles out onto the road one Halloween night, Niall drives her back to their house in his pickup. In the morning, she's gone.

In a community where daughters rebel, men quietly rage, and drinking is a means of forgetting, mysteries like these are not out of the ordinary. The trapper found hanging with the dead animals for two weeks. Locked doors and stone circles. The disappearance of Lauren's mother a decade ago.

Lauren looks for answers in her tarot cards, hoping she might one day be able to read her father's turbulent mind. Neighbours know more than they let on, but when local teenager Ann-Marie goes missing it's no longer clear who she can trust.

### **Tressel, Robert**

#### **The ragged trousered philanthropist**

*The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* tells the story of a group of working men who are joined one day by Owen, a journeyman-prophet with a vision of a just society. Owen's spirited attacks on the greed and dishonesty of the capitalist system rouse his fellow men from their political quietism. *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* is both a masterpiece of wit and political passion and one of the most authentic novels of English working class life ever written.

### **Turton, Stuary**

#### **The 71/2 deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle**

Aiden Bishop knows the rules. Evelyn Hardcastle will die every day until he can identify her killer and break the cycle. But every time the day begins again, Aiden wakes up in the body of a different guest at Blackheath Manor. And some of his hosts are more helpful than others. With a locked room mystery that Agatha Christie would envy, Stuart Turton unfurls a breakneck novel of intrigue and suspense.

For fans of Claire North, and Kate Atkinson, *The 7½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle* is a breathlessly addictive mystery that follows one man's race against time to find a killer, with an astonishing time-turning twist that means nothing and no one are quite what they seem.

### **Vijay, Madhuri**

#### **The far field**

In the wake of her mother's death, Shalini, a privileged and restless young woman from Bangalore, sets out for a remote Himalayan village in the troubled northern region of

Kashmir. Certain that the loss of her mother is somehow connected to the decade-old disappearance of Bashir Ahmed, a charming Kashmiri salesman who frequented her childhood home, she is determined to confront him. But upon her arrival, Shalini is brought face to face with Kashmir's politics, as well as the tangled history of the local family that takes her in. And when life in the village turns volatile and old hatreds threaten to erupt into violence, Shalini finds herself forced to make a series of choices that could hold dangerous repercussions for the very people she has come to love.

### **Vuong, Ocean**

#### **On earth we're briefly gorgeous**

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is a letter from a son to a mother who cannot read. Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family's history that began before he was born — a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam — and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity. Asking questions central to our American moment, immersed as we are in addiction, violence, and trauma, but undergirded by compassion and tenderness, On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous is as much about the power of telling one's own story as it is about the obliterating silence of not being heard.

### **Wark, Kirsty**

#### **The house by the loch**

Scotland 1950s

Walter MacMillan is bewitched by the clever, glamorous Jean Thompson and can't believe his luck when she agrees to marry him. Neither can she, for Walter represents a strong and steady and loving man who can perhaps quiet the demons inside her. Yet their home on remote Loch Doon soon becomes a prison for Jean and neither a young family, nor Walter's care, can seem to save her.

Many years later Walter is with his adult children and adored grandchildren on the shores of Loch Doon where the family has been holidaying for two generations. But the shadows of the past stretch over them and will turn all their lives upside down on one fateful weekend.

### **Wrobel, Stephanie**

#### **The recovery of Rose Gold**

The story of a young woman being slowly poisoned by her mother for 18 years who makes a calculated decision to take her in after her prison sentence, an exploration of the aftermath of Munchausen syndrome by proxy, to Amanda Bergeron at Berkley, in a pre-empt, in a two-book deal, for publication in 2020.