

BOOK CLUB TITLES 2024

Titles in bold are the titles new to the list for 2024

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

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

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

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

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

Walking Free is Munjed's extraordinary account of his journey from the brutality of Saddam Hussein's Iraq to a new life in Australia and a remarkable career at the forefront of medicine. 325 pages Biography

ALLENDE, Isabel. *Violeta*

Violeta comes into the world on a stormy day in 1920, the first girl in a family with five boisterous sons. From the start, her life is marked by extraordinary events, for the ripples of the Great War are still being felt, even as the Spanish flu arrives on the shores of her South American homeland almost at the moment of her birth.

Through her father's prescience, the family will come through that crisis unscathed, only to face a new one as the Great Depression transforms the genteel city life she has known. Her family loses everything and is forced to retreat to a wild and beautiful but remote part of the country. There, she will come of age, and her first suitor will come calling.

She tells her story in the form of a letter to someone she loves above all others, recounting times of devastating heartbreak and passionate affairs, poverty and wealth, terrible loss and immense joy. Her life is shaped by some of the most important events of history: the fight for women's rights, the rise and fall of tyrants, and ultimately not one, but two pandemics.

Through the eyes of a woman whose unforgettable passion, determination, and sense of humor carry her through a lifetime of upheaval, Isabel Allende once more brings us an epic that is both fiercely inspiring and deeply emotional. 317 pages Historical fiction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

314 pages Historical fiction

ALLENDE, Isabel. *Soul of a Woman*

"When I say I was a feminist in Kindergarten, I am not exaggerating"

As a child, Isabel Allende watched her mother, abandoned by her husband, provide for her three small children. As a young woman coming of age in the late 1960s, she rode in the first wave of feminism. She has seen what has been accomplished by the movement in her lifetime. And over the course of three marriages, she has learned how to grow as a woman while having a partner, when to step away, and the rewards of embracing one's sexuality.

So what do women want? To be safe, to be valued, to live in peace, to have their own resources, to be connected, to have control over their bodies and lives, and, above all, to be loved. On all these fronts, there is much work to be done, and this book, Allende hopes, will inspire others to see that work through.

169 pages Non fiction

ARNOTT, Robbie *Limberlost*

In the heat of a long summer Ned hunts rabbits in a river valley, hoping the pelts will earn him enough money to buy a small boat.

His two brothers are away at war, their whereabouts unknown. His father and older sister struggle to hold things together on the family orchard, Limberlost.

Desperate to ignore it all—to avoid the future rushing towards him—Ned dreams of open water.

As his story unfolds over the following decades, we see how Ned's choices that summer come to shape the course of his life, the fate of his family and the future of the valley, with its seasons of death and rebirth.

The third novel by the award-winning author of *Flames* and *The Rain Heron*, *Limberlost* is an extraordinary chronicle of life and land: of carnage and kindness, blood ties and love.

- *Winner, Fiction, Age Book of the Year, 2023*
- *Winner, Adult Fiction Book of the Year, BookPeople Book of the Year Awards, 2023*
- *Shortlisted, Miles Franklin Literary Award, 2023*
- *Shortlisted, Literary Fiction Book of the Year, Australian Book Industry Awards, 2023*
- *Shortlisted, Fiction, Indie Book Awards, 2023*
- *Shortlisted, Dylan Thomas Prize, United Kingdom, 2023*
- *Shortlisted, ALS Gold Medal, 2023*

226 pages Historical fiction

ARMSTRONG, Diane. *Dancing with the Enemy*

June 1940. 'It was a perfect June evening that began with hope and ended in despair.' So begins the journal of Hugh Jackson, a Jersey doctor, whose idyllic world is shattered when Britain abandons the Channel Islands which are invaded by the Germans. Forced to choose between conflicting loyalties, he sends his pregnant wife to England, believing their separation will be brief. It's a fateful decision that will affect every aspect of his life.

May 1942. Young Tom Gaskell fumes whenever he sees the hated swastika flying from Fort Regent. Humiliated by Jersey's surrender and ashamed of his mother's fraternisation with the occupiers, Tom forms an audacious plan, not suspecting that it will result in guilt and tragedy.

April 2019. Sydney doctor Xanthe Maxwell, traumatised by the suicide of her colleague and burnt out by the relentless pressure of her hospital work, travels to St Helier so she can figure out what to do with her life. But when she finds Hugh Jackson's World War II journal, she is plunged into a violent world of oppression and collusion, but also of passion and resistance. As she reads, she is mystified by her growing sense of connection to the past. Her deepening relationship with academic Daniel Miller helps her understand Jersey's wartime past and determine her own future.

By the time this novel reaches its moving climax, the connection between Tom, Xanthe and Hugh Jackson has been revealed in a way none of them could possibly have imagined.

469 pages Historical fiction

ATKINSON, Kate. *Transcription*

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

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

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

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

ATWOOD, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*

Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one function: to breed. If she deviates, she will, like dissenters, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire – neither Offred's nor that of the two men on which her future hangs.

Brilliantly conceived and executed, this powerful vision of the future gives full rein to Margaret Atwood's irony, wit and astute perception.
314 pages Dystopian fiction

ATWOOD, Margaret. *The Testaments*

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

Winner of The Booker Prize 2019

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

AUSTEN, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."

So begins *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's witty comedy of manners, a romance novel first published in 1813 and one of the most popular novels of all time. The story charts the emotional development of the protagonist, Elizabeth Bennet, who learns the error of making hasty judgements and comes to appreciate the difference between the superficial and the essential. The comedy of the writing lies in the depiction of manners, education, marriage and money in the British Regency.
382 pages Historical fiction

BACKMAN, Fredrick. *A Man Called Ove*

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

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

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

BEHRENDT, Larissa. *After Story*

When Indigenous lawyer Jasmine decides to take her mother, Della, on a tour of England's most revered literary sites, Jasmine hopes it will bring them closer together and help them reconcile the past.

Twenty-five years earlier the disappearance of Jasmine's older sister devastated their tight-knit community. This tragedy returns to haunt Jasmine and Della when another child mysteriously goes missing on Hampstead Heath. As Jasmine immerses herself in the world of her literary idols – including Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters and Virginia Woolf – Della is inspired to rediscover the wisdom of her own culture and storytelling. But sometimes the stories that are not told can become too great to bear.

After Story celebrates the extraordinary power of words and the quiet spaces between. We can be ready to listen, but are we ready to hear?
307 pages Contemporary fiction

BIGNELL, Meg Ashton. *Welcome to Nowhere River*

Long past its heyday and deep in drought, the riverside hamlet of Nowhere River is slowly fading into a ghost town. It's a place populated by those who are beholden to it, those who were born to it and those who took a wrong turn while trying to go somewhere else.

City-born Carra married into Nowhere River, Lucie was brought to it by tragedy, Josie is root-bound and Florence knows nowhere else. All of them, though familiar with every inch of their tiny hometown, are as lost as the place itself. The town's social cornerstone — St Margery's Ladies' Club — launches a rescue plan that turns everything around and upside down, then shakes it until all sorts of things come floating to the surface. And none of its inhabitants will ever be the same again.

This is the highly original and heartfelt story of a place where everybody knows everything, but no one really knows anyone at all. Brimming with heart and humour, this is a delightful novel that celebrates the country people and towns of Australia. 383 pages Australian fiction

BLANCHARD, Tania. *Suitcase of Dreams*

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

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

As the Vietnam War looms, an unexpected visitor forces Lotte to a turning point. Her decision will change her life forever... and will finally show her the true meaning of home. 420 pages Australian fiction

Discussion questions in the back of book.

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

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

For close to seventy years Professor Geoffrey Blainey has uncovered and chronicled our history and the world's. Now in his ninth decade and listed by the National Trust as a 'Living Treasure', Blainey turns to his own story, reflecting on the first forty years of his life, from his humble beginnings as the son of a Methodist minister and a country school teacher, to creating his career as historian and writer. 339 pages Biography

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

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

People would run to the mountains to escape the warplanes and found asylum within their chestnut forests... Do Kurds have any friends other than the mountains?

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

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

374 pages Biography

BRINSDEN, Anne. *Wearing Paper Dresses*

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

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

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

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

378 pages Historical fiction

BROOKS, Geraldine. *Horse*

A discarded painting in a junk pile, a skeleton in an attic, and the greatest racehorse in American history: from these strands, a Pulitzer Prize winner braids a sweeping story of art and science, love and obsession, the human-animal bond, the legacy of enslavement and the ongoing quest for racial justice.

Horse is set in three time periods. The historical spine of the book is based on the true story of the remarkable racehorse, Lexington, whose blistering speed drew crowds of more than twenty thousand to the track and riveted the attention of the nation, even as the country was sliding towards Civil War. Like most of the great horses of the period, Lexington's success relied on the skills of Black horsemen, many of whom were enslaved. Brooks vividly captures the growing risks faced by these men and the horses they cared for as war sweeps through the South.

Lexington was painted many times during his long career. One portrait wound up in a 1980s bequest to the Smithsonian from a radical art dealer named Martha Jackson, a champion of edgy contemporary painters such as Jackson Pollock. That painting and its mysterious provenance brings the novel to bohemian New York in the 1950s and an art world roiled by exciting new means of expression.

Meanwhile, in contemporary Washington DC, a scientist at the Smithsonian rediscovers the significance of a skeleton specimen simply labelled "Horse," while an art historian tries to learn more about the Black horsemen so vividly portrayed with their charges in nineteenth century American equestrian art. Even as they puzzle over these past mysteries, their legacy unexpectedly ensnares them.

390 pages Historical fiction

BROOKS, Geraldine. *People of the Book*

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

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

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

465 pages Historical fiction

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

BURDICK, Serena *The Stolen Book of Evelyn Aubrey*

What if you could write a new ending for yourself?

England, 1898: When Evelyn first married the famous novelist William Aubrey, she was dazzled by his brilliance. But their newlywed bliss is brief when William is gripped by writer's block, and he becomes jealous of Evelyn's writing talent. When he commits the ultimate betrayal — stealing a draft of her novel and passing it off as his own — Evelyn decides to write her way out of their unhappy marriage.

California, 2006: Abigail always wondered about her father, his identity forever lost when her mother unexpectedly died. Or so Abigail thought, until she stumbled upon his photo and a message that her great-great grandmother was the author, Evelyn Aubrey, leading Abigail on a journey to England in search for answers. There, she learns of Evelyn's shocking disappearance and how London society believed she was murdered. But from what she uncovers about Evelyn, Abigail believes her brilliant great-great grandmother had another plot up her sleeve.

Rich in atmosphere and emotion, *The Stolen Book of Evelyn Aubrey* tells the story of literary secrets, a family curse, and the lengths women will go to take charge of their future.

334 pages Historical fiction

BURKE, Peter

The Silk Merchant's Son

In 1845, carrying a quantity of silkworms and a huge donation from a wealthy benefactress, Fabrice Cleriquot is hastily dispatched to the Swan River Colony, an English Protestant outpost on the verge of financial collapse.

Joining Fabrice are twenty-eight mismatched Catholic missionaries. Bishop John Brady has a diocese half the size of Europe and not a penny left to run it; Dom Salvado wants a Spanish Benedictine monastery in the middle of nowhere; and the Irish Sisters of Mercy hope to 'rescue' little girls from the bush to raise as good Christians.

As Europe descends into turmoil and the new world stubbornly resists the missionary dream, the silk merchant's son is left wondering what remains for an atheist to believe in. 398 pages Historical fiction

BYRSKI, Liz.

A Month of Sundays

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

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

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

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

CARO, Jane.

The Mother

Recently widowed, Miriam Duffy is a respectable North Shore real estate agent and devoted mother and grandmother. She was thrilled when her younger daughter Ally married her true love, but as time goes by Miriam wonders whether all is well with Ally, as she moves to the country and gradually withdraws, finding excuses every time Miriam offers to visit. Their relationship has always had its ups and downs, and Miriam tries to give her daughter the distance she so clearly wants. But is all as it seems?

When the truth of her daughter's situation is revealed, Miriam watches in disbelief as Ally and her children find themselves increasingly vulnerable and cut off from the world. As the situation escalates and the law proves incapable of protecting them, Miriam is faced with an unthinkable decision. But she will do anything for the people she loves most in the world. Wouldn't you?

A stunning, gripping novel that goes to the heart of a mother's love and asks what any of us might do when faced with a threat to the people we hold most dear. 357 pages Thriller fiction

**CHALLEN, Craig and HARRIS, Richard
(with Ellis Henican). *Against All Odds***

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

In June 2018, for seventeen days, the world watched and held its breath as the boys from the Wild Boars soccer team were trapped deep in a cave in Thailand. Marooned beyond flooded cave passages after unexpected rains, they were finally rescued, one by one, against almost impossible odds, by an international cave-diving team which included Australians Dr Richard Harris and Dr Craig Challen.

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

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

CHATER, Lauren. *The Winter Dress*

Two women separated by centuries but connected by one beautiful silk dress. A captivating novel based on a real-life shipwreck discovered off Texel Island by the bestselling author of *Gulliver's Wife*, Lauren Chater.

Jo Baaker, a textiles historian and Dutch ex-pat is drawn back to the island where she was born to investigate the provenance of a 17th century silk dress. Retrieved by local divers from a sunken shipwreck, the dress offers tantalising clues about the way people lived and died during Holland's famous Golden Age.

Jo's research leads her to Anna Tesseltje, a poor Amsterdam laundress turned ladies' companion who served the enigmatic artist Catharina van Shurman. The two women were said to share a powerful bond, so why did Anna abandon Catharina at the height of her misfortune?

Jo is convinced the truth lies hidden between the folds of this extraordinary dress. But as she delves deeper into Anna's history, troubling details about her own past begin to emerge.

On the small Dutch island of Texel where fortunes are lost and secrets lie buried for centuries, Jo will finally discover the truth about herself and the woman who wore the Winter Dress.

344 pages Historical fiction

CHATER, Lauren. *Gulliver's Wife*

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

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

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

406 pages Historical fiction

Book discussion questions in back of book.

CHENG, Melanie. *Room for a Stranger*

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

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

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

271 pages Australian fiction

CHEVALIER, Tracy. *A Single Thread*

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

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

340 pages Historical fiction

CURRY, Lisa

(with WHINNETT, Ellen). Lisa

The long-awaited memoir of one of Australia's most enduring and inspiring sporting icons.

Triple Olympian and wellness entrepreneur Lisa Curry has lived her life in the public eye for four decades. In this very personal memoir, she shares the untold story of being Lisa.

A swimming protegee who became one of Australia's first fitness entrepreneurs, Lisa Curry swam to Olympic fame in the '80s and '90s. With celerity and celebrity, she became in equal parts the darling of women's magazines and tabloid fodder, until, at 58, a family tragedy nearly consumed her. From the golden girl of Australian swimming to a 'super mum' and now a proud grannie, Lisa Curry has a powerful story to tell of endurance and enduring.

In 1972, ten-year-old Lisa escaped the heat of a hot and muggy Brisbane day in the local pool when she was spotted by Dawn Fraser's legendary swim coach, Harry Gallagher. Within two years of joining his swim squad, Lisa would be one of the fastest swimmers of her age in the world. Over the next 23 years, Lisa honed her natural talent with a legendary work ethic and a punishing training ritual of 5am starts. Countless hours of long, unbroken swimming of up to 60km a week in solitary union with the black lines of the pool would take Lisa to three Olympic Games: Moscow 1980, Los Angeles 1984, and Barcelona 1992; three Commonwealth Games; and two World Championships.

By the time Lisa called time on her sporting career, she had become the only Australian to hold Commonwealth and Australian records in every stroke except backstroke, and from 50 to 400 metres, a feat that has not been repeated to this day.

In this funny, heartbreaking but always life-affirming memoir, Lisa Curry reflects on a life well lived and the experiences that shaped her: swimming, family, marriage, divorce, and love found again. It is a powerful story of resilience, of highs and lows, and of starting out and starting again.

341 pages Biography

DALTON, Trent. *All Our Shimmering Skies*

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

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

436 pages Magic realist fiction

DALTON, Trent. *Boy Swallows Universe*

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

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

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

474 pages Australian fiction

Winner Australian Book Industry, Book of the Year 2019

Winner Indie Book Award 2019

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

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

DALTON, Trent. *Love Stories*

Trent Dalton goes out into the world and asks a simple, direct question: 'Can you please tell me a love story?' A blind man yearns to see the face of his wife of thirty years. A divorced mother has a secret love affair with a priest. A geologist discovers a three-minute video recorded by his wife before she died. A tree lopper's heart falls in a forest. A working mum contemplates taking photographs of her late husband down from her fridge. A girl writes a last letter to the man she loves most, then sets it on fire. A palliative care nurse helps a dying woman converse with the angel at the end of her bed. A renowned 100-year-old scientist ponders the one great earthly puzzle he was never able to solve: 'What is love?' Endless stories. Human stories. Love stories.

Inspired by a personal moment of profound love and generosity, Trent Dalton, bestselling author and one of Australia's finest journalists, spent two months in 2021 speaking to people from all walks of life, asking them one simple and direct question: 'Can you please tell me a love story?' The result is an immensely warm, poignant, funny and moving book about love in all its guises, including observations, reflections and stories of people falling into love, falling out of love, and never letting go of the loved ones in their hearts. A heartfelt, deep, wise and tingly tribute to the greatest thing we will never understand and the only thing we will ever really need: love. 352 pages Non fiction

DAVE, Laura. *The Last Thing He Told Me*

Before Owen Michaels disappears, he smuggles a note to his beloved wife of one year: *Protect her*. Despite her confusion and fear, Hannah Hall knows exactly to whom the note refers—Owen's sixteen-year-old daughter, Bailey. Bailey, who lost her mother tragically as a child. Bailey, who wants absolutely nothing to do with her new stepmother.

As Hannah's increasingly desperate calls to Owen go unanswered, as the FBI arrests Owen's boss, as a US marshal and federal agents arrive at her Sausalito home unannounced, Hannah quickly realizes her husband isn't who he said he was. And that Bailey just may hold the key to figuring out Owen's true identity—and why he really disappeared.

Hannah and Bailey set out to discover the truth. But as they start putting together the pieces of Owen's past, they soon realize they're also building a new future—one neither of them could have anticipated.

With its breakneck pacing, dizzying plot twists, and evocative family drama, *The Last Thing He Told Me* is a riveting mystery, certain to shock you with its final, heartbreaking turn. 303 pages Thriller fiction

DISHER, Garry. *Peace*

Constable Paul Hirschhausen runs a one-man police station in the dry farming country south of the flinders Ranges. He's still new in town, but the community activities – welfare checks, working bees – are starting to pay off. Now Christmas is here. Apart from a grass fire, two boys stealing a ute and Brenda Flann entering the front bar of the pub without exiting her car, Hirsh's life has been peaceful. Until he's called to a strange, vicious incident in Kitchener Street. And Sydney police ask him to check on a family living on a forgotten back road outside town. Suddenly it doesn't look like a season of goodwill at all. 421 pages Thriller fiction

DOERR, Anthony. *Cloud Cuckoo Land*

Among the most celebrated and beloved novels of recent times, *Cloud Cuckoo Land* is a triumph of imagination and compassion, a soaring story about children on the cusp of adulthood in worlds in peril, who find resilience, hope, and a book.

In the 15th century, an orphan named Anna lives inside the formidable walls of Constantinople. She learns to read, and in this ancient city, famous for its libraries, she finds what might be the last copy of a centuries-old book, the story of Aethon, who longs to be turned into a bird so that he can fly to a utopian paradise in the sky. Outside the walls is Omeir, a village boy, conscripted with his beloved oxen into the army that will lay siege to the city. His path and Anna's will cross.

In the present day, in a library in Idaho, octogenarian Zeno rehearses children in a play adaptation of Aethon's story, preserved against all odds through centuries. Tucked among the library shelves is a bomb, planted by a troubled, idealistic teenager, Seymour. This is another siege.

And in a not-so-distant future, on the interstellar ship Argos, Konstance is alone in a vault, copying on scraps of sacking the story of Aethon, told to her by her father.

Anna, Omeir, Seymour, Zeno, and Konstance are dreamers and outsiders whose lives are gloriously intertwined. Doerr's dazzling imagination transports us to worlds so dramatic and immersive that we forget, for a time, our own.

Two month loan 622 pages Space and time fiction

EVARISTO, Bernardine.

Girl, Woman, Other

This is Britain as you've never read it. This is Britain as it has never been told. From the top of the country to the bottom, across more than a century of change and growth and struggle and life, *Girl, Woman, Other* follows twelve very different characters on an entwined journey of discovery. It is future, it is past. It is fiction, it is history. It is a novel about who we are now.

453 pages Women fiction

Winner of the Booker Prize 2019

FALKINER, Suzanne.

Rose: the Extraordinary Voyage of Rose de Freycinet, the

Stowaway Who Sailed Around the World For Love

The voyage of Rose de Freycinet, the stowaway who defied the French for love.

In 1814, in the aftermath of the French Revolution, nineteen-year-old Rose Pinon married handsome naval officer Louis de Freycinet, fifteen years her senior. Three years later, unable to bear parting from her husband, she dressed in men's clothing and slipped secretly aboard his ship the day before it sailed on a voyage of scientific discovery to the South Seas. Living for three years as the sole female among 120 men, Rose de Freycinet defied not only bourgeois society's expectations of a woman in 1817, but also a strict prohibition against women sailing on French naval ships. Whether dancing at governors' balls in distant colonies, or evading pirates and meeting armed Indigenous warriors on remote Australian shores, or surviving shipwreck in the wintry Falkland Islands, Rose used her quick pen to record her daily experiences, becoming the first woman to circumnavigate the world and leave a record of her journey.

Suzanne Falkiner tells this story of courage, enduring love, curiosity and a spirit of adventure - and of the pivotal voyages that led to it - while revealing a uniquely female view into the hitherto largely male world of 19th-century life at sea.

357 pages Biography

FIDLER, Richard

The Book of Roads and Kingdoms

A lost imperial city, full of wonder and marvels. An empire that was the largest the world had ever seen, established with astonishing speed. A people obsessed with travel, knowledge and adventure.

When Richard Fidler came across the account of Ibn Fadlan - a tenth-century Arab diplomat who travelled all the way from Baghdad to the cold riverlands of modern-day Russia - he was struck by how modern Fadlan's voice was, like that of a twenty-first century time-traveller dropped into a medieval wilderness. On further investigation, Fidler discovered this was just one of countless reports from Arab and Persian travellers of their adventures in medieval China, India, Africa and Byzantium. Put together, he saw these stories formed a crazy quilt picture of a lost world.

The Book of Roads & Kingdoms is the story of the medieval wanderers who travelled out to the edges of the known world during Islam's fabled Golden Age; an era when the caliphs of Baghdad presided over a dominion greater than the Roman Empire at its peak, stretching from North Africa to India. Imperial Baghdad, founded as the 'City of Peace', quickly became the biggest and richest metropolis in the world. Standing atop one of the city's four gates, its founder proclaimed: *Here is the Tigris River, and nothing stands between it and China.*

In a flourishing culture of science, literature and philosophy, the citizens of Baghdad were fascinated by the world and everything in it. Inspired by their Prophet's commandment to seek knowledge all over the world, these traders, diplomats, soldiers and scientists left behind the cosmopolitan pleasures of Baghdad to venture by camel, horse and boat into the unknown. Those who returned from these distant foreign lands wrote accounts of their adventures, both realistic and fantastical - tales of wonder and horror and delight.

Fidler expertly weaves together these beautiful and thrilling pictures of a dazzling lost world with the story of an empire's rise and utterly devastating fall.

430 pages Non fiction

Winner of the Indie Book Awards 2023 Non Fiction Book of the Year

Shortlisted for the BookPeople Non Fiction Book of the Year 2023

Two month loan

FLEMING, Leah.

The Olive Garden Choir

Santaniki, Greece. When retired bookseller Ariadne Blunt suggests the English residents on the island form a choir, there are groans of resistance. After a little persuasion, the group gather in Ariadne's olive garden to rehearse, but each member of this choir has their own struggles and secrets.

Ariadne's partner, Hebe, is in failing health. Clive struggles to accept the loss of his wife, while Delia, the Pilates teacher, drinks too much. Then there is Mel, the real songbird amongst them, English wife of a tavern owner, who hides her talent until the choir inspires her to raise her voice once more.

In this tiny community, the choir brings the residents together like never before in a bittersweet tale of love and loss - and how life can begin again when you let go of the past.

293 pages Contemporary fiction

FOWLER, Karen Joy. *We are all completely beside ourselves*

What if you grew up to realise that your father has used your childhood as an experiment?

Rosemary doesn't talk very much, and about certain things she is silent. She had a sister, Fern, her whirlwind other half, who vanished from her life in circumstances she wishes she could forget. And it has been ten years since she last saw her beloved older brother Lowell.

Now at college, Rosemary starts to see that she can't go forward without going back, back to the time when, aged five, she was sent away from home to her grandparents and returned to find Fern gone.

322 pages Psychological fiction

GARMUS, Bonnie. *Lessons in Chemistry*

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing.

But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute take a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans, the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with - of all things - her mind. True chemistry results.

Like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later, Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show, *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ('combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride') proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook.

She's daring them to change the status quo.

390 pages Historical fiction

GENTILL, Sulari. *The Woman in the Library*

In every person's story, there is something to hide...

The ornate reading room at the Boston Public Library is quiet, until the tranquility is shattered by a woman's terrified scream. Security guards take charge immediately, instructing everyone inside to stay put until the threat is identified and contained. While they wait for the all-clear, four strangers, who'd happened to sit at the same table, pass the time in conversation and friendships are struck. Each has his or her own reasons for being in the reading room that morning--it just happens that one is a murderer.

Award-winning author Sulari Gentill delivers a sharply thrilling read with *THE WOMAN IN THE LIBRARY*, an unexpectedly twisty literary adventure that examines the complicated nature of friendship and shows us that words can be the most treacherous weapons of all.

250 pages Mystery fiction

GOODMAN, Alison *The Benevolent Society of Ill-Mannered Ladies*

A high society amateur detective at the heart of Regency London uses her wits and invisibility as an 'old maid' to protect other women in a new and fiercely feminist historical mystery.

Welcome to the secret life of the Colebrook twins: unnoticed old maids to most, but unseen champions to those in need - society be damned.

Lady Augusta Colebrook, 'Gus', is determinedly unmarried, bored by society life, and tired of being dismissed at the age of forty-two. She and her twin sister, Julia, who is grieving her dead betrothed, need a distraction. One soon presents itself: to rescue their friend's goddaughter, Caroline, from her violent husband.

The sisters set out to Caroline's country estate with a plan, but their carriage is accosted by a highwayman. In the scuffle, Gus accidentally shoots the ruffian, only to discover he is Lord Evan Belford, an acquaintance from their past who was charged with murder and exiled to Australia twenty years ago. With Lord Evan injured and unconscious, the sisters have no choice but to bring him on their mission to save Caroline.

What follows is a high adventure full of danger, clever improvisation, heart-racing near misses, and a little help from a revived and rather charming Lord Evan. And so begin the beguiling adventures of the Colebrook twins ...

Discussion questions in back of book

452 pages Mystery fiction

GRENVILLE, Kate. *Restless Dolly Maunder*

Dolly Maunder was born at the end of the nineteenth century, when society's long-locked doors were starting to creak ajar for women. Growing up in a poor farming family in country New South Wales but clever, energetic and determined, Dolly spent her restless life pushing at those doors.

Most women like her have disappeared from view, remembered only in family photo albums as remote figures in impossible clothes, or maybe for a lemon-pudding recipe handed down through the generations. *Restless Dolly Maunder* brings one of these women to life as someone we can recognise and whose struggles we can empathise with.

In this compelling new novel, Kate Grenville uses family memories to imagine her way into the life of her grandmother. This is the story of a woman, working her way through a world of limits and obstacles, who was able—if at a cost—to make a life she could call her own. Her battles and triumphs helped to open doors for the women who came after.

242 pages, Historical fiction

GRENVILLE, Kate. *A Room Made of Leaves*

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

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

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

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

321 pages Historical fiction

GRENVILLE, Kate. *Sarah Thornhill*

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

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

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

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

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

307 pages Historical fiction

GRENVILLE, Kate. *The Secret River*

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

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

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

334 pages Historical fiction

Winner of the 2006 Commonwealth Writers' Prize.

Winner of the 2006 NSW Premier's Literary Award.

Shortlisted for the 2006 Man Booker Prize.

Discussion questions available.

HADLOW, Janice. *The Other Bennet Sister*

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

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

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

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

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

Two month loan

658 pages Historical fiction

HAM, Rosalie. *The Year of the Farmer*

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

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

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

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

336 pages Australian fiction

HAMMER, Chris. *Scrublands*

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

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

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

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

486 pages Mystery fiction

HAMMER, Chris. *Silver*

For half a lifetime, journalist Martin Scarsden has run from his past. But now there is no escaping.

He'd vowed never to return to his hometown, Port Silver, and its traumatic memories. But now his new partner, Mandy Blonde, has inherited an old house in the seaside town and Martin knows their chance for a new life together won't come again.

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

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

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

565 pages Mystery fiction

HAMMER, Chris *The Seven*

Yuwonderie's seven founding families have lorded it over their district for a century, growing ever more rich and powerful.

But now—in startling circumstances—one of their own is found dead in a ditch and homicide detectives Ivan Lucic and Nell Buchanan are sent to investigate.

Could the murder be connected to the execution of the victim's friend thirty years ago—another member of The Seven—or even to the long-forgotten story of a servant girl on the brink of the Great War?

What are the secrets The Seven are so desperate to keep hidden?

With the killer still on the loose and events spiralling out of control, the closer Ivan and Nell get to discovering the truth, the more dangerous their investigation becomes. Can they crack the case before more people die?

The Seven is a compelling thriller filled with intrigue, emotional depth and an evocative sense of place—where nothing is ever quite what it seems. 512 pages, Thriller fiction

HAMMER, Chris *The Tilt*

A man runs for his life in a forest.

A woman plans sabotage.

A body is unearthed.

Newly-minted homicide detective Nell Buchanan returns to her home town, annoyed at being assigned a decades-old murder - a 'file and forget'.

But this is no ordinary cold case, as the discovery of more bodies triggers a chain of escalating events in the present day. As Nell starts to join the pieces together, she begins to question how well she truly knows those closest to her.

Could her own family be implicated in the crimes?

The nearer Nell comes to uncovering the secrets of the past, the more dangerous the present becomes for her, as she battles shadowy assailants and sinister forces. Can she survive this harrowing investigation and what price will she have to pay for the truth?

Gripping and atmospheric, *The Tilt* is a stunning multi-layered novel.

473 pages, Thriller fiction

HAMMER, Chris. *Treasure & Dirt*

In the desolate outback town of Finnigans Gap, police struggle to maintain law and order. Thieves pillage opal mines, religious fanatics recruit vulnerable young people and billionaires do as they please.

Then an opal miner is found crucified and left to rot down his mine. Nothing about the miner's death is straightforward, not even who found the body. Sydney homicide detective Ivan Lucic is sent to investigate, assisted by inexperienced young investigator Nell Buchanan.

But Finnigans Gap has already ended one police career and damaged others, and soon both officers face damning allegations and internal investigations. Have Ivan and Nell been set up and, if so, by whom?

As time runs out, their only chance at redemption is to find the killer. But the more secrets they uncover, the more harrowing the mystery becomes, as events from years ago take on a startling new significance.

For in Finnigans Gap, opals, bodies and secrets don't stay buried forever.

496 pages Mystery fiction

HANNAH, Kristin. *The Great Alone*

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

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

At once an epic story of human survival and love, and an intimate portrait of a family tested beyond endurance, *The Great Alone* offers a glimpse into a vanishing way of life in America. 440 pages Domestic fiction

HARMEL, Kristin *The Book of Lost Names*

Throughout WW2, forgers helped thousands escape Nazi-occupied France. In 1942, Eva is forced to flee Paris after the arrest of her Jewish father. Finding refuge in a small mountain town, she begins forging identity documents for Jewish children escaping to neutral Switzerland. But erasing people comes with a price, and along with Remy, a mysterious forger, Eva realises she must find a way to preserve the identities of those too young to remember. When Remy disappears and the resistance cell they work for is betrayed, the records they keep become even more crucial to remembering the truth.

Decades later, the book is recovered, leaving researchers desperate to decipher its codes. Only Eva holds the answers, but will she have the strength to face old memories and help reunite those lost during the war?

An engaging and evocative novel, *The Book of Lost Names* is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of bravery and love in the face of evil. 453 pages, War fiction

HARPER, Jane *Exiles*

At a busy festival site on a warm spring night, a baby lies alone in her pram, her mother having vanished into the crowds.

A year on, Kim Gillespie's absence casts a long shadow as her friends and loved ones gather deep in the heart of South Australian wine country to welcome a new addition to the family.

Aaron Falk, federal investigator, is joining the celebrations. But as he soaks up life in the lush valley, he begins to suspect this tight-knit group may be more fractured than it seems. As hidden truths slowly emerge, Falk faces the darkest of questions.

Shortlisted for the Ned Kelly Award for Best Crime Fiction 2023

Shortlisted for the ABIA General Fiction Book of the Year 2023

Longlisted for the BookPeople Adult Fiction Book of the Year 2023

410 pages Mystery fiction

HARPER, Jane. *The Lost Man*

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

Two brothers meet at the border of their vast cattle properties under the unrelenting sun of the outback Queensland.

They are at the stockman's grave, a landmark so old, no one can remember who is buried there. But today, the scant shadow it casts was the last hope of their middle brother, Cameron.

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

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

366 pages Mystery fiction

HARPER, Jane. *The Survivors*

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

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

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

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

378 pages Mystery fiction

HARUF, Kent. *Our Souls at Night*

A spare yet eloquent, bittersweet yet inspiring story of a man and a woman who, in advanced age, come together to wrestle with the events of their lives and their hopes for the imminent future.

In the familiar setting of Holt, Colorado, home to all of Kent Haruf's inimitable fiction, Addie Moore pays an unexpected visit to a neighbor, Louis Waters. Her husband died years ago, as did his wife, and in such a small town they naturally have known of each other for decades; in fact, Addie was quite fond of Louis's wife. His daughter lives hours away in Colorado Springs, her son even farther away in Grand Junction, and Addie and Louis have long been living alone in houses now empty of family, the nights so terribly lonely, especially with no one to talk with.

Their brave adventures - their pleasures and their difficulties - are hugely involving and truly resonant, making *Our Souls at Night* the perfect final instalment to this beloved writer's enduring contribution to American literature.

179 pages Romance fiction

HAWKINS, Paula. *A Slow Fire Burning*

'What is wrong with you?'

Laura has spent most of her life being judged. She's seen as hot-tempered, troubled, a loner. Some even call her dangerous.

Miriam knows that just because Laura is witnessed leaving the scene of a horrific murder with blood on her clothes, that doesn't mean she's a killer. Bitter experience has taught her how easy it is to get caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Carla is reeling from the brutal murder of her nephew. She trusts no one: good people are capable of terrible deeds.

But how far will she go to find peace?

Innocent or guilty, everyone is damaged. Some are damaged enough to kill.

Look what you started.

297 pages Thriller fiction

HEISS, Anita.

Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray

Gundagai, 1852

The powerful Murrumbidgee River surges through town leaving death and destruction in its wake. It is a stark reminder that while the river can give life, it can just as easily take it away.

Wagadhaany is one of the lucky ones. She survives. But is her life now better than the fate she escaped? Forced to move away from her miyagan, she walks through each day with no trace of dance in her step, her broken heart forever calling her back home to Gundagai.

When she meets Wiradyuri stockman Yindyamarra, Wagadhaany's heart slowly begins to heal. But still, she dreams of a better life, away from the degradation of being owned. She longs to set out along the river of her ancestors, in search of lost family and country. Can she find the courage to defy the White man's law? And if she does, will it bring hope ... or heartache?

Set on timeless Wiradyuri country, where the life-giving waters of the rivers can make or break dreams, and based on devastating true events, Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhuray (River of Dreams) is an epic story of love, loss and belonging.

376 pages Historical fiction

HEPWORTH, Sally *The Good Sister*

Fern Castle works in her local library. She has dinner with her twin sister, Rose, three nights a week. And she avoids crowds, bright lights and loud noises as much as possible. Fern has a carefully structured life and disrupting her routine can be ... dangerous.

When Rose discovers that she cannot fall pregnant, Fern sees her chance to pay her sister back for everything Rose has done for her. Fern can have a baby for Rose. She just needs to find a father. Simple.

Fern's mission will shake the foundations of the life she has carefully built for herself and stir up dark secrets from the past, in this quirky, rich and shocking story of unexpected love.

Winner of the Davitt Award for Adult Fiction 2021

330 pages Mystery fiction

HICKEY, Margaret *Broken Bay*

Old loyalties and decades-long feuds rise to the surface in this stunning crime novel, set in an Australian landscape known for its jagged cliffs and hidden caves.

Detective Sergeant Mark Ariti has taken a few days' holiday in Broken Bay at precisely the wrong time. The small fishing town on South Australia's Limestone Coast is now the scene of a terrible tragedy.

Renowned cave diver Mya Rennik has drowned while exploring a sinkhole on the land of wealthy farmer Frank Doyle. As the press descends, Mark's boss orders him to stay put and assist the police operation.

But when they retrieve Mya's body, a whole new mystery is opened up, around the disappearance of a young local woman twenty years before . . .

Suddenly Mark is diving deep into the town's history - and in particular the simmering rivalry between its two most prominent families, the Doyles and Sinclairs.

Then a murder is committed at the Sinclairs' old home – and Mark is left wondering which is more dangerous - Broken Bay's hidden subterranean world or the secretive town above it . . .

377 pages Mystery fiction

HILL, Susan.

The Benefit of Hindsight

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

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

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

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

297 pages Mystery fiction

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

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

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

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

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

275 pages Holocaust survivors fiction
Romance fiction

HINTON, Hilde *A Solitary Walk on the Moon*

For Evelyn, mornings pass as mornings always do. She ticks off the jobs at the laundromat and gives welcoming smiles to those who come in. If they've earned one.

Evelyn knows what is going on in her community because she pays attention. She sees the weariness of the frazzled shop owners, the woman with the nasty boyfriend, the nice man with the curly-topped dog, the car parking war and the forgetful man in a crumpled beige suit. The community might not notice Evelyn, because it is easy to overlook the seemingly ordinary. But Evelyn is far from ordinary. She isn't afraid to put things right, and is always ready to find lost property or lost people – even if that means breaking the rules.

For a boy with a struggling mum, and a lonely man with a smile in his eyes, Evelyn is going to make a difference, whether they like it or not. She will teach them that you don't have to be blood to be a family. And they will remind her of what comes from loving someone. It is up to Evelyn if she can pay the price.

With a joyous and unique touch, Hilde Hinton's extraordinary novel *A Solitary Walk on the Moon* gives us an insight into the people we pass on the street. In detailing their rich lives, she breaks then mends our hearts with her wisdom, her empathy and her unforgettable characters, who remind us what can happen if we stop and say hello.

287 pages Contemporary fiction

HONEYMAN, Gail. *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely fine*

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

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

384 pages Contemporary fiction

Winner of the 2017 Costa Book Awards

Discussion questions in back of book

IRELAND, Lisa *The One and Only Dolly Jamieson*

A compelling feel-good novel featuring a proud and gutsy heroine with a truly unbreakable spirit.

Life is full of downs and ups . . .

Dolly Jamieson is not homeless, she's merely between permanent abodes. The 78-year-old spends her days keeping warm at the local library, and helping herself to the free morning tea. It's not so bad, really.

But it's certainly a far cry from the 1960s, when this humble girl from Geelong became an international star of the stage. As the acclaimed lead in the Broadway production of *The Rose of France*, all Dolly's dreams had come true.

So how, in her old age, did she end up here?

When Jane Leveson, a well-to-do newcomer to the library, shows an interest in Dolly, the pair strike up an unlikely friendship – and soon Jane is offering to help Dolly write her memoirs.

Yet Dolly can detect a deep sadness in the younger woman's eyes. Perhaps by working together to recount the glittering highs, devastating lows and tragic secrets of Dolly's life, both women can finally face their pasts and start to heal . . .

358 pages, Contemporary fiction

Discussion questions in back of book

JAFFE, Meredith. *The dressmakers of Yarrandarra Prison*

Can a wedding dress save a bunch of hardened crims? The Full Monty meets Orange is the New Black in a poignantly comic story about a men's prison sewing circle.

Derek's daughter, Debbie, is getting married. He's desperate to be there, but he's banged up in Yarrandarra Correctional Centre for embezzling funds from the golf club, and, thanks to his ex-wife, Lorraine, he hasn't spoken to Debbie in years. He wants to make a grand gesture - to show her how much he loves her. But what?

Inspiration strikes while he's embroidering a cushion at his weekly prison sewing circle - he'll make her a wedding dress. His fellow stitchers rally around and soon this motley gang of crims is immersed in a joyous whirl of silks, satins and covered buttons.

But as time runs out and tensions rise both inside and outside the prison, the wedding dress project takes on greater significance. With lives at stake, Derek feels his chance to reconcile with Debbie is slipping through his fingers ...

A funny, dark and moving novel about finding humanity, friendship and redemption in unexpected places.

368 pages Australian fiction

JOHNSON, Susan *From Where I Fell*

An anguished email from Pamela Robinson in Australia to her ex-husband in Paris accidentally ends up in the inbox of New York State teacher Chrisanthi Woods. Chrisanthi is sympathetic to Pamela's struggles and the women begin to tell each other the stories and secrets of their lives.

Pamela, responsible for raising her three sons, must re-invent the meaning of home following her divorce, and Chrisanthi, her dreams long dampened, must find home by leaving it. Temperamental opposites, their emails turn into an exhilarating and provocative exchange of love, loss and fresh beginnings, by turns amusing, frank and confronting.

338 pages, Contemporary fiction

JOYCE, Rachel.

Miss Benson's Beetle

It is 1950. In a devastating moment of clarity, Margery Benson abandons her dead-end job and advertises for an assistant to accompany her on an expedition. She is going to travel to the other side of the world to search for a beetle that may or may not exist.

Enid Pretty, in her unlikely pink travel suit, is not the companion Margery had in mind. And yet together they will be drawn into an adventure that will exceed every expectation. They will risk everything, break all the rules, and at the top of a red mountain, discover their best selves.

This is a story that is less about what can be found than the belief it might be found; it is an intoxicating adventure story but it is also about what it means to be a woman and a tender exploration of a friendship that defies all boundaries.

388 pages Adventure fiction

JOYCE, Rachel.

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

Meet Harold Fry, recently retired. He lives in a small English village with his wife, Maureen, who seems irritated by almost everything he does. Little differentiates one day from the next. Then one morning a letter arrives, addressed to Harold in a shaky scrawl, from a woman he hasn't heard from in twenty years. Queenie Hennessy is in a hospice and is writing to say goodbye. But before Harold mails off a quick reply, a chance encounter convinces him that he absolutely must deliver the message to Queenie in person. In his yachting shoes and light coat, Harold embarks on an urgent quest. Determined to walk six hundred miles to the hospice, Harold believes that as long as he walks, Queenie will live. A novel of charm, humour and profound insight into the thoughts and feelings we all bury within our hearts.

343 pages Contemporary fiction

KADOTA, Yumiko.

Emotional female

Yumiko Kadota was every Asian parent's dream: model student, top of her class in medical school and on track to becoming a surgeon. A self-confessed workaholic, she regularly put 'knife before life', knowing it was all going to be worth it because it would lead to her longed-for career.

But if the punishing hours in surgery weren't hard enough, she also faced challenges as a young female surgeon navigating a male-dominated specialty. She was regularly left to carry out complex procedures without senior surgeons' oversight; she was called all sorts of things, from 'emotional' to 'too confident'; and she was expected to work a relentless on-call roster – sometimes seventy hours a week or more – to prove herself.

Eventually it was too much and Yumiko quit.

Emotional Female is her account of what it was like to train in the Australian public hospital system, and what made her walk away.

Yumiko Kadota is a voice for her generation when it comes to burnout and finding the resilience to rebuild after suffering a physical, emotional and existential breakdown.

384 pages Biography

KEEGAN, Claire

Small Things Like These

It is 1985, in an Irish town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal and timber merchant, faces his busiest season. As he does the rounds, he feels the past rising up to meet him – and encounters the complicit silences of a people controlled by the Church.

Small Things Like These is an unforgettable story of hope, quiet heroism and tenderness.

116 pages, Historical fiction

KELLY, Cathy.

Other Women

Three women. Three secrets. Three tangled lives...

Sid wears her independence like armour. So when she strikes up a rare connection with unlucky-in-love Finn, they are both determined to prove that men and women can just be friends. Can't they?

Marin has the perfect home, attentive husband, two beloved children – and a secret addiction to designer clothes. She knows she has it all, so why can't she stop comparing herself to other women?

Bea believes that we all have one love story – and she's had hers. Now her life centres around her son, Luke, and her support group of fierce single women. But there's something that she can't tell anyone...

Because as every woman knows, in marriage, love and friendship there is always another side to the story...

356 pages Domestic fiction

KUANG, Rebecca F *Yellowface*

This is one hell of a story.

It's just not hers to tell.

Athena Liu is a literary darling and June Hayward is literally nobody.

White lies

When Athena dies in a freak accident, June steals her unpublished manuscript and publishes it as her own under the ambiguous name Juniper Song.

Dark humour

But as evidence threatens June's stolen success, she will discover exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves.

Deadly consequences...

What happens next is entirely everyone else's fault.

323 pages, Contemporary fiction

LAESTADIUS, Ann-Helen

Stolen

[Translated from the Swedish by Rachel Willson-Broyles].

Nine-year-old Elsa lives just north of the Arctic Circle. She and her family are Sami – Scandinavia's indigenous people – and make their living herding reindeer.

One morning when Elsa goes skiing alone, she witnesses a terrible crime. Elsa recognises the perpetrator but doesn't dare tell anyone – least of all the Swedish police – about what she saw. Instead, she carries her secret as a dark weight on her heart.

Ten years later, and Elsa is fighting two wars. One within her community, where male elders expect young women to know their place. And against the ever-escalating wave of prejudice and violence against the Sami. More reindeer are tortured and killed in Elsa's community. Reindeer are not just the Sami's livelihood, they also hold spiritual significance; attacking a reindeer is an attack on the culture itself. And there is the toll and the grief of suicide in the Sami community.

When Elsa finds herself the target of the man she encountered all those years ago, something inside of her finally breaks. The guilt, fear, and anger she's been carrying since childhood come crashing over her like an avalanche, and will lead Elsa to a final catastrophic confrontation.

Stolen is a powerful, propulsive and cinematic novel about a courageous young Sami woman struggling to defend her Indigenous heritage against the cruelty of the modern world – and fighting for the future of her people.

381 pages, Thriller fiction

LAVEAU-HARVIE, Vicki.

The Erratics

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

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

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

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

Winner of the 2019 The Stella Prize

217 pages Biography

Winner of the 2018 Finch Memoir Prize

Shortlisted for the 2019 NSW Premier's Literary Awards

LAWTON, Ariel. *Code Name Helene*

In 1936 intrepid young Australian journalist Nancy Wake is living in Paris after witnessing firsthand the terror of Hitler's rise in Europe, firing her resolve to join the fight to defeat the Nazis. When Nancy falls in love with a handsome French industrialist, no sooner has she become Mrs Henri Fiocca than the Germans invade and Nancy adopts another name, a codename – the first of many.

As the elusive Lucienne Carlier she smuggles people across borders and earns the nickname 'The White Mouse', along with a five million franc bounty on her head courtesy of the Gestapo. Forced to flee France for England, Nancy is trained by an elite espionage group under the codename H el ene. Finally, with mission in hand, she is airdropped back into France as the deadly Madame Andr ee.

But the closer to liberation France gets, the more exposed Nancy – and the people she loves – will become. Based on the true story of a woman who saved countless lives, Code Name H el ene is a thrilling tale of unfaltering courage, remarkable sacrifice – and love. 450 pages War fiction

LEE, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*

"Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird"

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

Winner of the 1961 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

LEFTERI, Christy. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*

The unforgettable love story of a mother blinded by loss and her husband who insists on their survival as they undertake the Syrian refugee trail to Europe.

Nuri is a beekeeper; his wife, Afra, an artist. They live a simple life, rich in family and friends, in the beautiful Syrian city of Aleppo--until the unthinkable happens. When all they care for is destroyed by war, they are forced to escape. But what Afra has seen is so terrible she has gone blind, and so they must embark on a perilous journey through Turkey and Greece towards an uncertain future in Britain. On the way, Nuri is sustained by the knowledge that waiting for them is Mustafa, his cousin and business partner, who has started an apiary and is teaching fellow refugees in Yorkshire to keep bees.

As Nuri and Afra travel through a broken world, they must confront not only the pain of their own unspeakable loss, but dangers that would overwhelm the bravest of souls. Above all, they must journey to find each other again.

Moving, powerful, compassionate, and beautifully written, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* is a testament to the triumph of the human spirit. It is the kind of book that reminds us of the power of storytelling. 360 pages Historical fiction

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

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

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

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

LLEWELLYN, Caro. *Diving into Glass*

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

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

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

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

LOCK, Kim. *The Other Side of Beautiful*

Meet Mercy Blain, whose house has just burnt down. Unfortunately for Mercy, this goes beyond the disaster it would be for most people: she hasn't been outside that house for two years now.

Flung out into the world she's been studiously ignoring, Mercy goes to the only place she can. Her not-quite-ex-husband Eugene's house. But it turns out she can't stay there, either.

And so begins Mercy's unwilling journey. After the chance purchase of a cult classic campervan (read tiny, old and smelly), with the company of her sausage dog, Wasabi, and a mysterious box of cremated remains, Mercy heads north from Adelaide to Darwin.

On the road, through badly timed breakdowns, gregarious troupes of grey nomads, and run-ins with a rogue adversary, Mercy's carefully constructed walls start crumbling. But what was Mercy hiding from in her house? And why is Eugene desperate to have her back in the city? They say you can't run forever...

Exquisite, tender and wry, this is a novel about facing anxiety and embracing life. 358 pages Domestic fiction

LOHREY, Amanda. *The Labyrinth*

'First the making – I recalled my father's words: the cure for many ills is to build something – and then the repitition, the going over and over so that time would rupture and be stopped in it's flow... Since my past and my future were hitched to my son's life sentence, I felt that if I stepped outside the present I risked being turned to stone.'

Erica Marsden's son, an artist, has been imprisoned for homicidal negligence. In a state of grief, Erica cuts off all ties to family and friends, and retreats to a quiet hamlet on the south-east coast near the prison where he is serving his sentence.

There, in a rundown shack, she obsesses over creating a labyrinth by the ocean. To build it—to find a way out of her quandary—Erica will need the help of strangers. And that will require her to trust, and to reckon with her past.

The Labyrinth is a story of guilt and denial, of the fraught relationship between parents and children. It is also a meditation on how art can both be destructive and restorative. 246 pages Australian fiction

Winner of the 2021 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

LOWE, Fiona. *A Home Like Ours*

When three women with wildly different loyalties come together, what secrets and lies will be revealed?

Tara Hooper is at breaking point. With two young children, a business in a town struggling under an unexpected crime wave, and her husband more interested in his cricket team than their marriage, life is a juggling act. Then, when new neighbours arrive and they are exactly the sort of people the town doesn't want or need, things get worse.

Life has taught Helen Demetriou two things: being homeless is terrifying and survival means keeping your cards close to your chest. Having clawed back some stability through her involvement in the community garden, she dares to relax. But as she uncovers some shady goings-on in the council, that stability turns to quicksand.

For teenage mother Jade Innes, life can be lonely among the judgement of the town and the frequent absences of her boyfriend. A chance encounter draws her into the endangered community garden where she makes friends for the first time. Glimpsing a different way of life is enticing but its demands are terrifying. Does she even deserve to try?

Can such disparate women unite to save the garden and ultimately stop the town from tearing itself apart? A timely novel exploring prejudice and privilege. 548 pages Australian fiction

LUCASHENKO, Melissa.

Too Much Lip

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

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

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

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

Shortlisted for the 2019 The Stella Prize

318 pages Australian fiction

MCCONAGHY, Charlotte.

Once There Were Wolves

Inti

Flynn arrives in Scotland with her twin sister, Aggie, to lead a team tasked with reintroducing fourteen grey wolves into the remote Highlands. She hopes to heal not only the dying landscape, but a broken Aggie, too. However, Inti is not the woman she once was, and may be in need of rewilding herself.

Despite fierce opposition from the locals, Inti's wolves surprise everyone by thriving, and she begins to let her guard down, even opening up to the possibility of love. But when a local farmer is found dead, Inti knows where the town will lay blame. Unable to accept her wolves could be responsible, she makes a reckless decision to protect them, testing every instinct she has.

But if her wolves didn't make the kill, then who did? And what will she do when the man she's been seeing becomes the main suspect?

258 pages Mystery fiction

Discussion questions in back of book.

MCGILL, Jeff.

Rachel

Rachel Kennedy stood out on a wild frontier dominated by men . . . her extraordinary and unputdownable pioneering story is told for the first time

'Just a girl, but when it came to chasing wild horses nobody questioned Rachel Kennedy's skill in a saddle. What raised eyebrows was the type of saddle she used: a man's.'

Rachel Kennedy was a colonial folk hero. Born in the wild and remote Warrumbungle mountains of western New South Wales in 1845, she was described by Duke Tritton of *The Bulletin* as Australia's greatest pioneer woman of them all.

Rachel caught brumbies, hid bushrangers, went to war with squatter kings, fed starving families during the shearing strikes, worked as a revered bush nurse and midwife, and fought for the underdog after observing the bitter experiences of the Chinese on the gold fields. She also built rare friendships with Aboriginal people, including a lifelong relationship with her 'sister' Mary Jane Cain, a proud campaigner for the rights of her people.

Meticulously researched and written with compelling energy, this is a vivid and at times heartbreaking story of a pioneering woman who left a legacy that went well beyond her lifetime.

287 pages Biography

MCINTOSH, Fiona.

The Pearl Thief

Severine Kassel is asked by the Louvre in 1963 to aid the British Museum with curating its antique jewellery, her specialty. Her London colleagues find her distant and mysterious, her cool beauty the topic of conversations around its quiet halls. No one could imagine that she is a desperately damaged woman, hiding her trauma behind her chic, French image.

It is only when some dramatic Byzantine pearls are loaned to the Museum that Severine's poise is dashed and the tightly controlled life she's built around herself is shattered. Her shocking revelation of their provenance sets off a frenzied hunt for Nazi Ruda Mayek.

Mossad's interest is triggered and one of its most skilled agents comes out of retirement to join the hunt, while the one person who can help Severine – the solicitor handling the pearls – is bound by client confidentiality. As she follows Mayek's trail, there is still one lifelong secret for her to reveal – and one for her to discover.

From the snowy woodlands outside Prague to the Tuileries of Paris and the heather-covered moors of Yorkshire comes a confronting and heart-stopping novel that explores whether love and hope can ever overpower atrocity in a time of war and hate.

500 pages Historical fiction

MCTIERNAN, Dervla. *The Murder Rule*

First Rule: Make them like you.

Second Rule: Make them need you.

Third Rule: Make them pay.

They think I'm a young, idealistic law student, that I'm passionate about reforming a corrupt and brutal system.

They think I'm working hard to impress them.

They think I'm here to save an innocent man on death row.

They're wrong. I'm going to bury him.

292 pages Thriller fiction

MCTIERNAN, Dervla. *The Good Turn*

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

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

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

386 pages Mystery fiction

MCTIERNAN, Dervla. *The Ruin*

A family secret is about to be exposed...

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

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

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

379 pages Mystery fiction

MATTERSON, Sophie *The Crossing*

In 2020, at the age of thirty-one, Sophie Matterson set out to walk her five camels from Shark Bay in Western Australia to Byron Bay on the east coast. At a time when most of her friends were getting engaged or starting families, Sophie longed for adventure, independence and purpose. She broke up with her long-term boyfriend, packed all her belongings into saddlebags and trained her wild camels to follow her lead.

Her thirteen-month solo crossing was the ultimate test of resilience and self-sufficiency - with each state in various forms of lockdowns, Sophie would often walk for weeks without seeing another soul. She crossed harsh, remote deserts, navigated treacherously beautiful salt lakes, and visited country towns and isolated cattle stations. Along the way she survived life-and-death situations, fell in love in the middle of the Outback, and slowly began to trust herself and her own abilities.

The Crossing is an empowering memoir about giving up a conventional life in the pursuit of something more.

320 pages Biography

MAYNE, Kerryn *Lenny Marks gets away with Murder*

Lenny Marks is good at not remembering.

She has spent the last twenty years not thinking about the day her mother left her when she was still a child. Her stepfather's parting words, however, remain annoyingly unforgettable: 'You did this.'

Now thirty-seven, Lenny prefers contentment and order over the unreliability of happiness and the messiness of relationships. She fills her days teaching at the local primary school, and her nights playing Scrabble with her pretend housemate, watching reruns of *Friends* and rearranging her thirty-six copies of *The Hobbit*.

Recently though, if only to appease her beloved foster-mum, Lenny has set herself the goal of 'getting a life'.

Then, out of the blue, a letter arrives from the Adult Parole Board. And when her desperate attempts to ignore it fail, Lenny starts to unravel.

Worse, she starts to remember . . .

341 pages Mystery fiction

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

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

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

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

Discussion questions available.

297 pages Biography

MOLNAR, Marta *The Secret Life of Sunflowers*

A gripping, inspiring novel based on the true story of Johanna Bongor, Vincent van Gogh's sister-in-law.

When Hollywood auctioneer Emsley Wilson finds her famous grandmother's diary while cleaning out her New York brownstone, the pages are full of surprises. The first surprise is, the diary isn't her grandmother's. It belongs to Johanna Bongor, Vincent van Gogh's sister-in-law.

Johanna inherited Vincent van Gogh's paintings. They were all she had, and they weren't worth anything. She was a 28 year old widow with a baby in the 1800s, without any means of supporting herself, living in Paris where she barely spoke the language. Yet she managed to introduce Vincent's legacy to the world.

The inspiration couldn't come at a better time for Emsley. With her business failing, an unexpected love turning up in her life, and family secrets unraveling, can she find answers in the past?

Discussion questions in back of book

399 pages Historical fiction

MORIARTY, Liane. *Apples Never Fall*

From the outside, the Delaneys appear to be an enviably contented family. Even after all these years, former tennis coaches Joy and Stan are still winning tournaments, and now that they've sold the family business they have all the time in the world to learn how to 'relax'. Their four adult children are busy living their own lives, and while it could be argued they never quite achieved their destinies, no-one ever says that out loud.

But now Joy Delaney has disappeared and her children are re-examining their parents' marriage and their family history with fresh, frightened eyes. Is her disappearance related to their mysterious house guest from last year? Or were things never as rosy as they seemed in the Delaney household?

487 pages Domestic fiction

MORRIS, Heather. *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*

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

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

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

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

277 pages Biographical fiction

MORTON, Kate. *The Clockmaker's Daughter*

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

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

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

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

Told by multiple voices across time, *The Clockmaker's Daughter* is a story of murder, mystery and thievery, of art, love and loss. And flowing through its pages like a river is the voice of a woman who stands outside time, whose name has been forgotten by history, but who has watched it all unfold: Birdie Bell, the clockmaker's daughter

585 pages Historical fiction

MORTON, Kate. *Homecoming*

Adelaide Hills, Christmas Eve, 1959: At the end of a scorching hot day, beside a creek in the grounds of a grand country house, a local man makes a terrible discovery. Police are called, and the small town of Tambilla becomes embroiled in one of the most baffling murder investigations in the history of South Australia.

Many years later and thousands of miles away, Jess is a journalist in search of a story. Having lived and worked in London for nearly two decades, she now finds herself unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. A phone call summons her back to Sydney, where her beloved grandmother, Nora, who raised Jess when her mother could not, has suffered a fall and is seriously ill in hospital.

At Nora's house, Jess discovers a true crime book chronicling a long-buried police case: the Turner Family Tragedy of 1959. It is only when Jess skims through its pages that she finds a shocking connection between her own family and this notorious event — a murder mystery that has never been satisfactorily resolved.

An epic story that spans continents and generations, *Homecoming* asks what we would do for those we love, how we protect the lies we tell, and what it means to come home. Above all, it is an intricate and spellbinding novel from one of the finest writers working today.

631 pages, Thriller fiction

MOSS, Tara *The War Widow*

Sydney, 1946. War correspondent Billie Walker is happy to finally be home, but is haunted by the disappearance of her husband, Jack, in Europe. Determined not to rely on any man for her future, she reopens her late father's detective agency. When a young man, the son of European immigrants, goes missing, Billie finds herself on a perilous trail that will lead up into the highest levels of Sydney society and down into its underworld. As the danger mounts and Billie realizes that much more than one young man's life is at stake, it becomes clear that though the war was won, it is far from over.

362 pages Mystery fiction

MURN, Molly. *Heart of the Grass Tree*

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

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

291 pages Domestic fiction

NEILL, Sam

Did I Ever Tell You This?

In this unexpected memoir, written in a creative burst of just a few months in 2022, Sam Neill tells the story of how he became one of the world's most celebrated actors, who has worked with everyone from Meryl Streep to Isabel Adjani, from Jeff Goldblum to Sean Connery, from Steven Spielberg to Jane Campion.

By his own account, his career has been a series of unpredictable turns of fortune. Born in 1947 in Northern Ireland, he emigrated to New Zealand at the age of seven. His family settled in Dunedin on the South Island, but young Sam was sent away to boarding school in Christchurch, where he was hopeless at sports and discovered he enjoyed acting.

But how did you become an actor in New Zealand in the 1960 and 1970s where there was no film industry? After university he made documentary films while also appearing in occasional amateur productions of Shakespeare. In 1977 he took the lead in *Sleeping Dogs*, the first feature made in New Zealand in more than a decade, a project that led to a major role in Gillian Armstrong's celebrated *My Brilliant Career*.

And after that Sam Neill found his way, sometimes by accident, into his own brilliant career. He has worked around the world, an actor who has moved effortlessly from blockbuster to art house to TV, from Dr Alan Grant in the *Jurassic Park* movies to *The Piano* and *Peaky Blinders*.

Did I Ever Tell You This? is a joy to read, a marvellous and often very funny book, the work of a natural storyteller who is a superb observer of other people, and who writes with love and warmth about his family. It is also his account of his life outside film, especially in Central Otago where he established Two Paddocks, his vineyard famous for its pinot noir. 398 pages Biography

NELL, Joanna.

The Last Voyage of Mrs Henry Parker

'If you don't mind me asking, how long has it been since you lost your husband, Mrs Parker?' 'Difficult to say exactly' As the wife of retired ship's doctor Dr Henry Parker, Evelyn is living out her twilight years aboard the *Golden Sunset*. Every night she dresses for dinner – gown, tiara, runners – and regales her fellow passengers with stories of a glamorous life travelling the world in luxury.

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

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

The Last Voyage of Mrs Henry Parker is a love letter to the memories we make over the course of a lifetime, and how the heart remembers what matters, even when the mind has long forgotten. 327 pages Domestic fiction

NGUYEN, Pahn Que Mai. ***The Mountains Sing***

With the epic sweep of Min Jin Lee's *Pachinko* or Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* and the lyrical beauty of Vaddey Ratner's *In the Shadow of the Banyan*, *The Mountains Sing* tells an enveloping, multigenerational tale of the Tran family, set against the backdrop of the Viet Nam War. Tran Dieu Lan, who was born in 1920, was forced to flee her family farm with her six children during the Land Reform as the Communist government rose in the North. Years later in Hà Noi, her young granddaughter, Hương, comes of age as her parents and uncles head off down the Ho Chí Minh Trail to fight in a conflict that will tear not just her beloved country but her family apart.

Vivid, gripping, and steeped in the language and traditions of Viet Nam, *The Mountains Sing* brings to life the human costs of this conflict from the point of view of the Vietnamese people themselves, while showing us the true power of kindness and hope. This is celebrated Vietnamese poet Nguyen Phan Que Mai's first novel in English

339 pages Historical fiction

NORTH, Anna.

Outlawed

In the year of our Lord 1894, I became an outlaw.

On the day of her wedding-dance, Ada feels lucky. She loves her broad-shouldered, bashful husband and her job as an apprentice midwife.

But her luck will not last. It is every woman's duty to have a child, to replace those that were lost in the Great Flu. And after a year of marriage and no pregnancy, in a town where barren women are hanged as witches, Ada's survival depends on leaving behind everything she knows.

She joins up with the notorious Hole in the Wall Gang. Its leader, a charismatic preacher-turned-robber, known to all as The Kid, wants to create a safe haven for women outcast from society. But to make this dream a reality, the Gang hatches a treacherous plan. And Ada must decide whether she's willing to risk her life for the possibility of a new kind of future for them all.

"A feminist western". *"The Handmaid's Tale* crossed with *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*"

261 pages Western fiction
Dystopian fiction

NUNEZ, Sigrid. *The Friend*

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

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

212 pages Contemporary fiction

NUNN, Kayte. *The Forgotten Letters of Esther Durrant*

A cache of unsent love letters from the 1950s is found in a suitcase on a remote island in this mysterious love story. 1951. Esther Durrant, a young mother, is committed to an island mental asylum by her husband. The hospital is at first Esther's prison but soon becomes her refuge.

2018. Free-spirited marine scientist Rachel Parker discovers a collection of hidden love letters, and is determined to track down the intended recipient.

2018. Meanwhile, Eve is helping her grandmother, a renowned mountaineer, write her memoirs. When Rachel contacts her, secrets kept buried for more than sixty years resurface...

The Forgotten Letters of Esther Durrant is a deeply atmospheric, resonant novel that charts the heart's wild places, choices and consequences.

375 pages Historical fiction

NUNN, Kayte. *The Last Reunion*

Five women come together at a New Year's Eve party after decades apart, in this thrilling story of desire, revenge and courage, based on a brave group of Australian and British WWII servicewomen

Burma, 1945. Bea, Plum, Bubbles, Joy and Lucy: in search of adventure, attached to the Fourteenth Army, fighting a forgotten war in the jungle. Assigned to run a mobile canteen, navigating treacherous roads and dodging hostile gunfire, they become embroiled in life-threatening battles of their own.

Oxford, 1976. A woman slips into a museum and steals several rare Japanese netsuke, including the famed fox-girl. Despite the offer of a considerable reward, these tiny, exquisitely detailed carvings are never seen again.

London and Galway, 1999. On the eve of the new millennium, Olivia, assistant to an art dealer, meets Beatrix, an elderly widow who wishes to sell her late husband's collection of Japanese art. Olivia travels with Beatrix to a New Year's Eve party, deep in the Irish countryside, where friendships will be tested as secrets kept for more than fifty years are spilled.

Inspired by the women who served in the 'forgotten war' in WWII Burma, *The Last Reunion* is a love story and mystery and a tribute to the enduring power of female friendship.

367 pages Historical fiction

OBAMA, Michelle. *Becoming*

An intimate, powerful, and inspiring memoir by the former first lady of the United States.

When she was a little girl, Michelle Robinson's world was the South Side of Chicago, where she and her brother, Craig, shared a bedroom in their family's upstairs apartment and played catch in the park, and where her parents, Fraser and Marian Robinson, raised her to be outspoken and unafraid. But life soon took her much further afield, from the halls of Princeton, where she learned for the first time what it felt like to be the only black woman in a room, to the glassy office tower where she worked as a high-powered corporate lawyer - and where, one summer morning, a law student named Barack Obama appeared in her office and upended all her carefully made plans.

426 pages Biography

O'BRIEN, Diane. *Daughter of the River Country*

From a victim of the 'stolen generations' comes a remarkable memoir of abuse, survival - and ultimately hope.

Born in country NSW in the 1940s, baby Dianne is immediately taken from her Aboriginal mother. Raised in the era of the White Australia policy, Dianne grows up believing her adoptive Irish mother, Val, is her birth mother. Val promises Dianne that one day they will take a trip and she will 'tell her a secret'. But before they get the chance, Val tragically dies.

Abandoned by her adoptive father, Dianne is raped at the age of 15, sentenced to Parramatta Girls Home and later forced to marry her rapist in order to keep her baby. She goes on to endure horrific domestic violence at the hands of different partners, alcohol addiction and cruel betrayal by those closest to her. But amazingly her fighting spirit is not extinguished.

At the age of 36, while raising six kids on her own, Dianne learns she is Aboriginal and that her great-grandfather was William Cooper, a famous Aboriginal activist. Miraculously she finds a way to forgive her traumatic past and becomes a leader in her own right, vowing to help other stolen people just like her.

266 pages Biography

O'FARRELL, Maggie. *Hamnet*

On a summer day in 1596, a young girl in Stratford-upon-Avon takes to her bed with a fever. Her twin brother, Hamnet, searches everywhere for help. Why is nobody at home?

Their mother, Agnes, is over a mile away, in the garden where she grows medicinal herbs. Their father is working in London.

Neither parent knows that one of the children will not survive the week.

Hamnet is a novel inspired by the son of a famous playwright. It is a story of the bond between twins, and of a marriage pushed to the brink by grief.

It is also the story of a kestrel and its mistress; a flea that boards a ship in Alexandria; and a glovemaker's son who flouts convention in pursuit of the woman he loves. Above all, it is a tender reimagining of a boy whose life has been all but forgotten, but whose name was given to one of the most celebrated plays ever written.

372 pages Historical fiction

OSMAN, Richard. *The Thursday Murder Club*

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved murders.

But when a brutal killing takes place on their very doorstep, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case.

Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron might be pushing eighty but they still have a few tricks up their sleeves.

Can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late?

380 pages Mystery fiction

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. But 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.

Where the Crawdads Sing is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.

370 pages Mystery fiction

PASCOE, Bruce. *Dark Emu: Aboriginal Australia and the Birth of Agriculture*

'If we look at the evidence presented to us by the explorers and explain to our children that Aboriginal people *did* build houses, *did* build dams, *did* sow, irrigate and till the land, *did* alter the course of rivers, *did* sew their clothes, and *did* construct a system of pan-continental government that generated peace and prosperity, then it is likely we will admire and love our land all the more'

Pascoe puts forward a compelling argument for a reconsideration of the hunter-gather label for pre-colonial Aboriginal Australians. The evidence insists that Aboriginal people right across the continent were using domesticated plants, sowing, harvesting and storing- all behaviours inconsistent with the hunter-gather tag.

277 pages Non fiction

PENDZIWOL, Jean. *The Lightkeeper's Daughters*

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

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

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

310 pages Mystery fiction

PETERS-LITTLE, Frances

Jimmy Little: A Yorta Yorta Man

'Music had always been part of Jimmy Little's life. It was his greatest love and influence. In his own words, he was not a political activist, nor a leader, and he never claimed to be a cultural Elder, but, in spite of himself, he became all three'.

Born in 1937 on the banks of the Murray River, Jimmy Little came from a family with a rich connection to music and advocacy. His father was a vaudevillian performer and musician, his mother a talented singer, and all three were present at the Cummeragunja Walk-Off, one of the first Aboriginal mass protests.

At just sixteen years of age, Jimmy travelled to Sydney to make his radio debut on *Australia's Amateur Hour*, and success soon followed. In the face of discrimination and racism, Jimmy went on to woo the nation with his immense talent, charm and heart. He consistently topped the music charts with music that crossed multiple genres: from pop to country, folk songs and bush ballads, Jimmy's voice has been enjoyed by generations of Australians.

And now, his daughter Frances Peters-Little shares the full story behind her father's ascent to stardom. Interwoven with Frances' account of her father's life are Jimmy's personal reflections on the moments that made him, taken from several extensive interviews the pair had before Jimmy's death in 2012.

Jimmy Little: a Yorta Yorta Man is a story of music, family and advocacy. It is a lyrical insight into the remarkable life of an Australian music legend.

258 pages Biography

PICK-GOSLAR, Hannah

My Friend Anne Frank

In this never-before-seen memoir, Bergen-Belsen survivor Hannah Pick-Goslar shares incredibly powerful words on the final untold portrait of her childhood friend, Anne Frank.

When five-year-old Hannah Pick-Goslar and her family fled Nazi Germany to live in Amsterdam, she soon struck up a friendship with a precocious, outspoken and fun-loving girl named Anne Frank. For several blissful years, the girls were inseparable, enjoying carefree childhood games and sleepovers in their neighbourhood of Rivierenbuurt.

Then, one day in 1942, two best friends' lives were about to change for ever. As the Nazi occupation intensified, Anne and the Frank family vanished. As Hannah puzzled over the fate of her friend, hoping she was safe, her own family's fate began to unfold: they were captured and taken to Westerbork transit camp, before being transported to Bergen-Belsen.

Amid horrific conditions and surrounded by death, Hannah heard astonishing news about her dear friend and risked her life to help her.

'As a girl I witnessed the world I loved crumble and vanish, destroyed by senseless hatred, and with it, my best friend Anne.'

In an incredible memoir of hope, strength and defiance, Hannah's story of survival is testament to the enduring power of friendship, love and remembering.

313 pages Biography

PITZORNO, Bianca. *The Seamstress of Sardinia*

The irresistible story of a young woman seeking freedom and happiness.

Born into poverty, the seamstress spends her days sewing in the houses of wealthy families. Her work is simple and honest; taught by her nonna, she skilfully prepares nightgowns, undergarments and children's clothes, leaving the finer work of dressmaking to the ateliers in Paris.

Her story weaves in and out of the lives of the people she works for, whose secrets and scandals she is privy to.

Some are kind and generous, others blinded by their desire to climb the social ladder. She dreams of freeing herself from the hardscrabble life she has inherited but can't help being pulled back in by the love of the people around her.

Set at the dawn of the twentieth century, *The Seamstress of Sardinia* follows the girl as she grows into a woman, strives to educate herself and falls in love—always fighting for her independence in a world dominated by men and old social conventions.

287 pages Domestic fiction

PROSE, Nita.

The Maid

I am your maid.

I know about your secrets. Your dirty laundry.

But what do you know about me?

Molly the maid is all alone in the world. A nobody. She's used to being invisible in her job at the Regency Grand Hotel, plumping pillows and wiping away the grime, dust and secrets of the guests passing through. She's just a maid – why should anyone take notice?

But Molly is thrown into the spotlight when she discovers an infamous guest, Mr Black, very dead in his bed. This isn't a mess that can be easily cleaned up. And as Molly becomes embroiled in the hunt for the truth, following the clues whispering in the hallways of the Regency Grand, she discovers a power she never knew was there. She's just a maid – but what can she see that others overlook?

Escapist, charming and introducing a truly original heroine, *The Maid* is a story about how the truth isn't always black and white – it's found in the dirtier, grey areas in between. 340 pages Mystery fiction

PURCELL, Leah.

The Drover's Wife

Deep in the heart of Australia's high country, along an ancient, hidden track, live Molly Johnson and her children.

Husband Joe is away droving, leaving his family in the bush to fend for itself. Molly's children are her world, and life is hard with only their dog, Alligator, and a shotgun for protection – but it can be harder when Joe's around.

Molly's eldest son Danny is the true man of the house, determined to see his mother and siblings safe – from raging floodwaters, hunger and intruders. Danny is mature, but there are some things no child should see. He knows more than most just what it takes to be a drover's wife.

One night, Molly has a visitor – a black 'story keeper', Yadaka. He's on the run from authorities, and exchanges kindness for shelter. Both know that justice in this nation caught between two worlds can be as brutal as its landscape. But in their short time together Yadaka shows Molly a secret truth, and the strength to imagine a different path.

In this brave reimagining of the Henry Lawson short story that has become an Australian classic, Purcell brings us a compelling thriller of our pioneering past that confronts head-on issues of today: race, gender, violence and inheritance. 278 pages Historical fiction

REID, Kiley.

Such a Fun Age

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

But Emira herself is aimless, broke and wary of Alix's desire to help. When a surprising connection emerges between the two women, it sends them on a crash course that will upend everything they think they know – about themselves, each other, and the messy dynamics of privilege. 310 pages Domestic fiction

REID, Taylor Jenkins. *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*

Aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown magazine reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now?

Monique is not exactly on top of the world. Her husband has left her, and her professional life is going nowhere. Regardless of why Evelyn has selected her to write her biography, Monique is determined to use this opportunity to jumpstart her career.

Summoned to Evelyn's luxurious apartment, Monique listens in fascination as the actress tells her story. From making her way to Los Angeles in the 1950s to her decision to leave show business in the '80s, and, of course, the seven husbands along the way, Evelyn unspools a tale of ruthless ambition, unexpected friendship, and a great forbidden love. Monique begins to feel a very real connection to the legendary star, but as Evelyn's story near its conclusion, it becomes clear that her life intersects with Monique's own in tragic and irreversible ways. 388 Pages Contemporary fiction

RIMMER, Kelly. *The German Wife*

Berlin, 1930—When a wave of change sweeps a radical political party to power, Sofie von Meyer Rhodes's academic husband benefits from the ambitions of its newly elected chancellor. Although Sofie and Jürgen do not share the social views growing popular in Hitler's Germany, Jürgen's position with its burgeoning rocket program changes their diminishing fortunes for the better. But as Sofie watches helplessly, her beloved Berlin begins to transform, forcing her to consider what they must sacrifice morally for their young family's security, and what the price for their neutrality will be.

Twenty years later, Jürgen is one of the many German scientists offered pardons for their part in the war, and taken to America to work for its fledgling space program. For Sofie, this is the chance to exorcise the ghosts that have followed her across the ocean, and make a fresh start in her adopted country. But her neighbors aren't as welcoming or as understanding as she had hoped. When scandalous rumors about the Rhodes family's affiliation with Hitler's regime spreads, idle gossip turns to bitter rage, and the act of violence that results will tear apart Sofie's community and her family before the truth is finally revealed.

441 pages Historical fiction

RINGLAND, Holly. *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*

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

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

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

388 pages Australian fiction

ROACH, Archie. *Tell Me Why: the Story of My Life My Music*

Not many have lived as many lives as Archie Roach – stolen child, seeker, teenage alcoholic, lover, father, musical and lyrical genius, and leader – but it took him almost a lifetime to find out who he really was.

Roach was only two years old when he was forcibly removed from his family. Brought up by a series of foster parents until his early teens, his world imploded when he received a letter that spoke of a life he had no memory of.

In this intimate, moving and often shocking memoir, Archie's story is an extraordinary odyssey through love and heartbreak, family and community, survival and renewal – and the healing power of music. Overcoming enormous odds to find his story and his people, Archie voices the joy, pain and hope he found on his path through song to become the legendary singer-songwriter and storyteller that he is today – beloved by fans worldwide.

Tell Me Why is a stunning account of resilience and the strength of spirit – and of a great love story.

Winner of the 2020 Indie Book of the Year Non-Fiction

378 pages Biography

Winner of the 2021 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Indigenous Writing

ROBOTHAM, Mandy. *The Girl Behind the Wall*

A city divided.

When the Berlin Wall goes up, Karin is on the wrong side of the city. Overnight, she's trapped under Soviet rule in unforgiving East Berlin and separated from her twin sister, Jutta.

Two sisters torn apart.

Karin and Jutta lead parallel lives for years, cut off by the Wall. But Karin finds one reason to keep going: Otto, the man who gives her hope, even amidst the brutal East German regime.

One impossible choice...

When Jutta finds a hidden way through the wall, the twins are reunited. But the Stasi have eyes everywhere, and soon Karin is faced with a terrible decision: to flee to the West and be with her sister, or sacrifice it all to follow her heart?

396 pages Historical fiction

ROONEY, Sally *Normal People*

Connell and Marianne grow up in the same small town in the west of Ireland, but the similarities end there. In school, Connell is popular and well-liked, while Marianne is a loner. But when the two strike up a conversation - awkward but electrifying - something life-changing begins.

Normal People is a story of mutual fascination, friendship and love. It takes us from that first conversation to the years beyond, in the company of two people who try to stay apart but find they can't.

Winner of the 2019 Novel of the Year and Book of the Year at the British Book Awards

Winner of the 2018 Costa Novel Award

Winner of Specsavers National Book Awards International Author of the Year

Longlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2018

Longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2019

266 pages Man-Woman relationship fiction

ROSE, Heather. *Bruny*

Why is a massive bridge being built to connect the sleepy island of Bruny with the mainland of Tasmania? And why have terrorists blown it up?

When the Bruny bridge is bombed, UN troubleshooter Astrid Coleman agrees to return home to help her brother before an upcoming election. But this is no simple task. Her brother and sister are on either side of politics, the community is full of conspiracy theories, her mother is fading and her father is quoting Shakespeare. Only on Bruny does the world seem sane. Until Astrid discovers how far the government is willing to go.

Bruny is a searing, subversive novel about family, love, loyalty and the new world order. It is a thriller with a twist, a love story, and a cry from the heart that asks the question: what would you do to protect the place you love?

409 pages Thriller fiction

SALES, Leigh. *Any Ordinary Day*

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

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

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

264 pages Non fiction

SCRIVENOR, Hayley. *Dirt Town*

My best friend wore her name, Esther, like a queen wearing her crown at a jaunty angle. We were twelve years old when she went missing.

On a sweltering Friday afternoon in Durton, best friends Ronnie and Esther leave school together. Esther never makes it home.

Ronnie's going to find her, she has a plan. Lewis will help. Their friend can't be gone, Ronnie won't believe it.

Detective Sergeant Sarah Michaels can believe it. She has seen what people are capable of. She knows more than anyone how, in a moment of weakness, a person can be driven to do something they never thought possible.

Lewis can believe it too. But he can't reveal what he saw that afternoon at the creek without exposing his own secret.

Five days later, Esther's buried body is discovered.

What do we owe the girl who isn't there?

Character-rich and propulsive, with a breathtakingly original use of voice and revolving points of view, Dirt Town delves under the surface, where no one can hide. With emotional depth and sensitivity, this stunning debut shows us how much each person matters in a community that is at once falling apart and coming together.

Esther will always be a Dirt Town child, as we are its children, still.

352 pages Mystery fiction

SEE, Lisa. *The Island of Sea Women*

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

374 pages Historical fiction

SEE, Lisa.

The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane

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

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

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

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

The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane is an unforgettable portrait of a little-known region and its people and a celebration of the bonds of family. 371 pages Mother daughter fiction

SEMPLE, Maria.

Where'd You Go, Bernadette

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

Then Bernadette disappears.

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

"Funny, witty, heart-warming"

Shortlisted for the 2013 Women's Prize for Fiction.

332 pages Contemporary fiction

Book discussion questions in back of book.

SHAFAK, Elif

The Island of Missing Trees

It is 1974 on the island of Cyprus. Two teenagers, from opposite sides of a divided land, meet at a tavern in the city they both call home. The tavern is the only place that Kostas, who is Greek and Christian, and Defne, who is Turkish and Muslim, can meet, in secret, hidden beneath the blackened beams from which hang garlands of garlic, chilli peppers and wild herbs. This is where one can find the best food in town, the best music, the best wine. But there is something else to the place: it makes one forget, even if for just a few hours, the world outside and its immoderate sorrows.

In the centre of the tavern, growing through a cavity in the roof, is a fig tree. This tree will witness their hushed, happy meetings, their silent, surreptitious departures; and the tree will be there when the war breaks out, when the capital is reduced to rubble, when the teenagers vanish and break apart.

Decades later in north London, sixteen-year-old Ada Kazantzakis has never visited the island where her parents were born. Desperate for answers, she seeks to untangle years of secrets, separation and silence. The only connection she has to the land of her ancestors is a Ficus Carica growing in the back garden of their home.

In *The Island of Missing Trees*, prizewinning author Elif Shafak brings us a rich, magical tale of belonging and identity, love and trauma, memory and amnesia, human-induced destruction of nature, and, finally, renewal.

Shortlisted for the 2022 Women's Prize for Fiction.

Discussion questions in back of book.

355 pages Domestic fiction

SHIPSTEAD, Maggie. *Great Circle*

'I was born to be a wanderer'.

From the night she is rescued as a baby out of the flames of a sinking ship; to the day she joins a pair of daredevil pilots looping and diving over the rugged forests of her childhood, to the thrill of flying Spitfires during the war, the life of Marian Graves has always been marked by a lust for freedom and danger.

In 1950, she embarks on the great circle flight, circumnavigating the globe. It is Marian's life dream and her final journey, before she disappears without a trace.

Half a century later, Hadley Baxter, a brilliant, troubled Hollywood starlet is irresistibly drawn to play Marian Graves, a role that will lead her to probe the deepest mysteries of the vanished pilot's life.

An journey over oceans and continents and a drama of power, *Great Circle* is a story of loss and obsession, sacrifice and survival, of the unknowable mysteries of freedom, love and life itself. 593 pages Historical fiction

Shortlisted for the Booker Prize 2021

SITTENFELD, Curtis. *Rodham*

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

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

With her sharp but always compassionate eye, Sittenfeld explores the loneliness, moral ambivalence and iron determination that characterizes the quest for high office, as well as the painful compromises demanded of female ambition in a world ruled by men. Uncannily astute and witty, *Rodham* is a brilliant reimagining and truly a novel of our times. 420 pages Historical fiction

SKESLIEN CHARLES, Janet

The Paris Library

Paris, 1939. Odile Souchet is obsessed with books, and her new job at the American Library in Paris - with its thriving community of students, writers and book lovers - is a dream come true. When war is declared, the Library is determined to remain open. But then the Nazis invade Paris, and everything changes.

In Occupied Paris, choices as black and white as the words on a page become a murky shade of grey - choices that will put many on the wrong side of history, and the consequences of which will echo for decades to come.

Montana, 1983

Lily is a lonely teenager desperate to escape small-town Montana. She grows close to her neighbour Odile, discovering they share the same love of language, the same longings. But as Lily uncovers more about Odile's mysterious past, she discovers a dark secret, closely guarded and long hidden.

Based on the true Second World War story of the heroic librarians at the American Library in Paris, this is a novel of romance, friendship, family, and of heroism found in the quietest of places. 423 pages War fiction

SMITH, Dominic *Return to Valetto*

A nearly abandoned Italian village, the family that stayed, and long-buried secrets from World War II.

On a hilltop in Umbria sits Valetto. Once a thriving village-and a hub of resistance and refuge during World War II-centuries of earthquakes, landslides and the lure of a better life have left it neglected. Only ten residents remain, including the widows Serafino - three eccentric sisters and their steely centenarian mother - who live quietly in their medieval villa. Then their nephew and grandson, Hugh, a historian, returns.

But someone else has arrived before him, laying claim to the cottage where Hugh spent his childhood summers. The unwelcome guest is the captivating and no-nonsense Elisa Tomassi, who asserts that the family patriarch, Aldo Serafino, a resistance fighter whom her own family harboured, gave the cottage to them in gratitude. Like so many threads of history, this revelation unravels a secret - a betrayal, a disappearance and an unspeakable act of violence - that has impacted Valetto across generations. Who will answer for the crimes of the past?

Dominic Smith's *Return to Valetto* is a page-turning excavation of the ruins of history, a riveting journey into one family's long-buried story, and a probing look at our commitment to justice.

358 pages Contemporary fiction

SOLLY, Kate *Tuesday Evenings with the Copeton Craft Resistance*

Meredith established the Copeton Crochet Collective (no knitters please) because it would be like having friends, only with her in charge, and because there would be no men. It comes as a nasty shock, then, when Luke, the handsome grandson of no-nonsense Edith, decides to stay and learn to crochet.

Claire has five children, which is why people sometimes look at her with mild concern. She longs for an Insta-perfect life like her online hero, Siobhan, but she's drowning in domestic failure. She joins the Copeton craft group in the hope of making some non-virtual friends.

Yasmin is Muslim and proud. But sometimes it would be great if people stopped asking her about her hijab and instead asked who she thought was going to win MasterChef. Pregnant with her first child, she should be elated. So why can't she stop panicking? Perhaps crocheting a set of baby clothes can get her in the right headspace.

With plans for a new mosque and the resettlement of refugees in the retirement village, Copeton becomes a breeding ground for Islamophobia. Together with the other members of the group, this small band of fibre-arts enthusiasts battle racism and bigotry with colour and creativity, but will the fragile threads of community be enough to bind them when more than one member has something to hide?

Discussion questions in back of book

316 pages Contemporary fiction

STEVENSON, Benjamin. *Everyone in My Family has Killed Someone*

I was dreading the Cunningham family reunion even before the first murder.

Before the storm stranded us at the mountain resort, snow and bodies piling up.

The thing is, us Cunninghams don't really get along. We've only got one thing in common- we've all killed someone.

My brother, My step-sister, My wife, My father, My mother, My sister-in-la, My uncle, My stepfather, My aunt

Me 366 pages Mystery fiction

STRAUB, Emma. *All Adults Here*

Coming of age isn't just for kids.

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

Elliot doesn't have any idea who he really is, or how to communicate with his sons. Porter is, at last, pregnant – but feels incapable of rising to the challenge. Nicky has fled to distant New Mexico, where he's living the bohemian dream.

And Astrid herself is up to things that would make her children's hair curl.

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

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

337 pages Domestic fiction

STROUT, Elizabeth. *Olive, Again*

Olive, Again follows the blunt, contradictory yet deeply loveable Olive Kitteridge as she grows older, navigating the second half of her life as she comes to terms with the changes - sometimes welcome, sometimes not - in her own existence and in those around her.

Olive adjusts to

her new life with her second husband, challenges her estranged son and his family to accept him, experiences loss and loneliness, witnesses the triumphs and heartbreaks of her friends and neighbours in the small coastal town of Crosby, Maine - and, finally, opens herself to new lessons about life.

289 pages Domestic fiction

STROUT, Elizabeth. *Olive Kitteridge*

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

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

270 pages Domestic fiction

Winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

TYLER, Anne. *French Braid*

When the kids are grown and Mercy Garrett gradually moves herself out of the family home, everyone is determined not to notice.

Over at her studio, she wants space and silence. She won't allow any family clutter. Not even their cat, Desmond.

Yet it is a clutter of untidy moments that forms the Garretts' family life over the decades, whether that's a painstaking Easter lunch or giving a child a ride, a fateful train journey or an unexpected homecoming.

And it all begins in 1959, with a family holiday to a cabin by a lake. It's the only one the Garretts will ever take, but its effects will ripple through the generations.

244 pages Domestic fiction

THOMAS, Claire. *The Performance*

The false cold of the theatre makes it hard to imagine the heavy wind outside in the real world, the ash air pressing onto the city from the nearby hills where bushfires are taking hold.

The house lights lower.

The auditorium feels hopeful in the darkness.

As bushfires rage outside the city, three women watch a performance of a Beckett play.

Margot is a successful professor, preoccupied by her fraught relationship with her ailing husband. Ivy is a

philanthropist with a troubled past, distracted by the snoring man beside her. Summer is a young theatre usher, anxious about the safety of her girlfriend in the fire zone.

As the performance unfolds, so does each woman's story. By the time the curtain falls, they will all have a new understanding of the world beyond the stage.

296 pages Australian fiction

THOMSON, Glenna. *Stella and Margie*

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

Stella is kind, compassionate and just a little bit chaotic. Margie is prickly, demanding and a stickler for convention. Stella has exciting dreams for the future. Margie has only bitter memories of the past.

When Margie needs help recovering from a major operation, Stella offers her a place to stay. With no other option, Margie returns to the family farm where for decades, until Stella's arrival, she was the one in charge.

Margie has never made life easy for her daughter-in-law, and that's not going to change now she's been made a guest in her former home.

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

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

292 pages Australian fiction

Discussion questions in back of book.

TOWLES, Amor. *The Lincoln Highway*

In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the work farm where he has just served a year for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother and head west where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future.

Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, Towles's third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes.

576 Pages Historical fiction

TOWLES, Amor. *Rules of Civility*

In a jazz bar on the last night of 1937, watching a quartet because she couldn't afford to see the whole ensemble, there were certain things Katey Kontent knew:

how to sneak into the cinema

and steal silk stockings from Bendel's;

how to type eighty words a minute, five thousand an hour, and nine million a year;

and that if you can still lose yourself in the first chapter of a Dickens novel then everything is probably going to be fine.

By the end of the year she'd learned:

how to live like a redhead and insist upon the very best, that riches can turn to rags in the trip of a heartbeat,

chance encounters can be fated, and the word 'yes' can be a poison.

That's how quickly New York City comes about, like a weathervane, or the head of a cobra. Time tells which.

335 pages Historical fiction

TROLLOPE, Joanna *Mum and Dad*

'What a mess, she thought now . . . what a bloody, unholy mess the whole family has got itself into.'

It's been twenty-five years since Gus and Monica left England to start a new life in Spain, building a vineyard and wine business from the ground up. However, when Gus suffers a stroke and their idyllic Mediterranean life is thrown into upheaval, it's left to their three grown-up children in London to step in . . .

Sebastian is busy running his company with his wife, Anna, who's never quite seen eye-to-eye with her mother-in-law. Katie, a successful solicitor in the City, is distracted by the problems with her long-term partner, Nic, and the secretive lives of their three daughters.

And Jake, ever the easy-going optimist, is determined to convince his new wife, Bella, that moving to Spain with their eighteen-month-old would be a good idea.

As the children descend on the vineyard, it becomes clear that each has their own idea of how best to handle their mum and dad, as well as the family business. But as long-simmering resentments rise to the surface and tensions reach breaking point, can the family ties prove strong enough to keep them together?

324 pages Contemporary fiction

WESTOVER, Tara. *Educated*

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

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

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

Educated is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty, and the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, from her singular experience Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes, and the will to change it. 385 pages Biography

WILKERSON, Charmaine. *Black Cake*

We can't choose what we inherit. But can we choose who we become?

In present-day California, Eleanor Bennett's death leaves behind a puzzling inheritance for her two children, Byron and Benny: a black cake, made from a family recipe with a long history, and a voice recording. In her message, Eleanor shares a tumultuous story about a headstrong young swimmer who escapes her island home under suspicion of murder. The heartbreaking tale Eleanor unfolds, the secrets she still holds back, and the mystery of a long-lost child challenge everything the siblings thought they knew about their lineage and themselves.

Can Byron and Benny reclaim their once-close relationship, piece together Eleanor's true history, and fulfill her final request to "share the black cake when the time is right"? Will their mother's revelations bring them back together or leave them feeling more lost than ever?

Charmaine Wilkerson's debut novel is a story of how the inheritance of betrayals, secrets, memories, and even names can shape relationships and history. Deeply evocative and beautifully written, *Black Cake* is an extraordinary journey through the life of a family changed forever by the choices of its matriarch 377 pages Domestic fiction

WILLIAMS, Pip. *The Bookbinder of Jericho*

What is lost when knowledge is withheld?

In 1914, when the war draws the young men of Britain away to fight, it is the women who must keep the nation running. Two of those women are Peggy and Maude, twin sisters who work in the bindery at Oxford University Press in Jericho. Peggy is intelligent, ambitious and dreams of going to Oxford University, but for most of her life she has been told her job is to bind the books, not read them. Maude, meanwhile, wants nothing more than what she has. She is extraordinary but vulnerable. Peggy needs to watch over her.

When refugees arrive from the devastated cities of Belgium, it sends ripples through the community and through the sisters' lives. Peggy begins to see the possibility of another future where she can use her intellect and not just her hands, but as war and illness reshape her world, it is love, and the responsibility that comes with it, that threaten to hold her back.

In this beautiful companion to the international bestseller *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, Pip Williams explores another little-known slice of history seen through women's eyes. Evocative, subversive and rich with unforgettable characters, *The Bookbinder of Jericho* is a story about knowledge - who gets to make it, who gets to access it, and what is lost when it is withheld. 438 pages Historical fiction

Discussion questions in back of book

WILLIAMS, Pip. *The Dictionary of Lost Words*

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

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

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

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

423 pages Historical fiction

WILSON, Ruth. *The Jane Austen Remedy*

An uplifting and delightfully bookish memoir about an 89-year-old woman who reclaims her life by re-reading each of Jane Austen's novels.

As she approached the age of seventy, Ruth Wilson began to have recurring dreams about losing her voice. Unable to dismiss her feelings of unexplainable sadness, she made the radical decision to retreat from her conventional life with her husband to a sunshine-yellow cottage in the Southern Highlands where she lived alone for the next decade.

Ruth had fostered a lifelong love of reading, and from the moment she first encountered *Pride and Prejudice* in the 1940s she had looked to Jane Austen's heroines as her models for the sort of woman she wanted to become.

As Ruth settled into her cottage, she resolved to re-read Austen's six novels and rediscover the heroines who had inspired her; to read between the lines of both the novels and her own life. And as she read, she began to reclaim her voice.

The Jane Austen Remedy is a beautiful, life-affirming memoir of love, self-acceptance and the curative power of reading. Published the year Ruth turns ninety, it is an inspirational account of the lessons learned from Jane Austen over nearly eight decades, as well as a timely reminder that it's never too late to seize a second chance

299 pages Biography

WINMAN, Sarah. *Still Life*

1944,

in the ruined wine cellar of a Tuscan villa, as bombs fall around them, two strangers meet and share an extraordinary evening.

Ulysses

Temper is a young British soldier, Evelyn Skinner is a sexagenarian art historian and possible spy. She has come to Italy to salvage paintings from the wreckage and relive memories of the time she encountered EM Forster and had her heart stolen by an Italian maid in a particular Florentine room with a view.

Evelyn's

talk of truth and beauty plants a seed in Ulysses' mind that will shape the trajectory of his life – and of those who love him – for the next four decades.

Moving from

the Tuscan Hills and piazzas of Florence, to the smog of London's East End, *Still Life* is a sweeping, joyful novel about beauty, love, family and fate.

438 pages Domestic fiction

WOOD, Catherine. *The Weekend*

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

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

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

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

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

259 pages Domestic fiction

YOUNGSON, Anne. *Three women and a Boat*

Meet Eve, who has departed from her thirty-year career to become a Free Spirit; Sally, who has waved goodbye to her indifferent husband and two grown-up children; and Anastasia, a defiantly independent narrowboat-dweller, suddenly vulnerable as she awaits a life-saving operation.

Inexperienced and ill-equipped, Sally and Eve embark upon a journey through the canals of England, guided by the remote and unsympathetic Anastasia. As they glide gently - and not so gently - through the countryside, the eccentricities and challenges of canal boat life draw them inexorably together, and a tender and unforgettable story unfolds.

Disarmingly truthful and narrated with a rare wit, *Three women and a boat* is a journey over the glorious waterways of England and into the unfathomable depths of the human heart by an inspirational new talent now in her seventies.

325 pages Contemporary fiction

YOUNGSON, Anne. *Meet Me at the Museum*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Can their unexpected friendship survive?

207 pages Contemporary fiction