

ERL BOOKCLUB TITLES Q-T

RABALAIS, Kevin

Landscape of desire

280 pages

Set in rapidly changing yet still unknown Australia, this novel is loosely based on the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition and slowing reveals its own secrets about love and identity, desire and death.

RANKIN, Ian

The falls

496 pages

A student has gone missing in Edinburgh - completely out of character. She's not just any student, though, but the daughter of extremely well-to-do and influential bankers. There's almost nothing to go on until Detective Inspector John Rebus gets an unmistakable gut feeling that there's more to this than just another runaway spaced out on unaccustomed freedom. Two leads emerge: a carved wooden doll in a toy coffin, found in the student's home village, and an Internet role-playing game. The ancient and the modern, brought together by uncomfortable circumstance.

REICHL, Ruth

Tender at the bone

300 pages

At an early age, Ruth Reichl discovered that "food could be a way of making sense of the world. . . . If you watched people as they ate, you could find out who they were." Her deliciously crafted memoir, *Tender at the Bone*, is the story of a life determined, enhanced, and defined in equal measure by a passion for food, unforgettable people, and the love of tales well told. Beginning with Reichl's mother, the notorious food-poisoner known as the Queen of Mold, Reichl introduces us to the fascinating characters who shaped her world and her tastes, from the gourmand Monsieur du Croix, who served Reichl her first soufflé, to those at her politically correct table in Berkeley who championed the organic food revolution in the 1970s. Spiced with Reichl's infectious humor and sprinkled with her favorite recipes, *Tender at the Bone* is a witty and compelling chronicle of a culinary sensualist's coming-of-age.

RIOTTA, Gianni

The prince of clouds

304 pages

Colonel Carlo Terzo is a military historian. He has spent the bulk of his army life studying the battles of history, and he believes that the appropriate strategy is not only the best way to win battles but the secret to a successful life. Colonel Terzo is sure of himself but is not an arrogant man. A single fact tempers his self-confidence: he has never fought in a battle himself. He knows that without such an experience he can never convince others of the correctness of his strategic approach. When World War II draws to an end and he retires from the Army without having fired a shot in combat, Terzo despairs of ever having seen the kind of service he has so desired. Though Italy is no longer at war, however, neither is it at peace. The landowners and peasants are in open conflict; Italy threatens to dissolve back into the feudal states of the time before unification. Terzo finds himself in Sicily with his Russian ex-princess wife Emma, teaching military strategy to a local youth, Salvatore. Here slowly, almost imperceptibly, he is drawn into a series of events that will lead him to a surprising fate.

RITCHIE, Ruth

Waterlemon

294 pages

Waterlemon is the true story of a sudden unwelcome interruption to an ordinary happy life. One perfect spring day, when newspaper columnist Ruth Ritchie was playing at home with her three-month-old baby, she received the call that her husband had been in a road accident, and was being airlifted to hospital. Waterlemon charts the days, months and years that follow in a narrative about trauma that is dark, subversively funny and totally different to anything you may have read before. As we follow her husband and her family struggle to return to an elusive normality, we witness the astonishing amount of love, courage, anger, good cooking and black humour that comes out of surviving, coping and living with brain injury.

ROBERTSON, Deborah

Careless

304 pages

Eight-year-old Pearl tries very hard to get things right. In their cramped apartment, she watches over her small brother and manages her mother's happiness, while carefully guarding her private passions. But the events of a summer's day are about to change Pearl's world, and nothing may ever be right again. In a cooler, greener suburb Sonia is learning to live alone after the death of her husband, and at the edge of the city, close to the beaches, the young artist Adam Logan is hoping that his controversial exhibit will improve his fortunes. In unforeseen ways, Pearl's tragedy will draw the threads of all their lives together.

ROBINSON, Marilynne

Gilead

282 pages

In 1956, toward the end of Reverend John Ames's life, he begins a letter to his young son, a kind of last testament to his remarkable forebears. 'It is a book of such meditative calm, such spiritual intensity that it seems miraculous that her silence was only for 23 years; such measure of wisdom is the fruit of a lifetime. Robinson's prose, aligned with the sublime simplicity of the language of the bible, is nothing short of a benediction. You might not share its faith, but it is difficult not to be awed moved and ultimately humbled by the spiritual effulgence that lights up the novel from within' Neel Mukherjee, The Times

RODRIGUEZ, Deborah

The Kabul beauty school

348 pages

KABUL BEAUTY SCHOOL is a remarkable tale of an extraordinary community of women, all of whom have stories to tell, who come together and learn the arts of perms, friendship, and freedom. Arriving in Afghanistan in 2002 with nothing more than a beauty degree and a desire to help, Deborah Rodriguez set out on a course of action that would change her life and those of many Afghan women. The once proud tradition of beauty schools had been all but destroyed and with it Afghani women's ability to support themselves. As one of the founders of the Kabul Beauty School she set about training women and helping them rebuild their lives.

ROSE, Heather

The butterfly man

317 pages

If Lord Lucan escaped his past, what was his future? On 7th November, 1974 a young English nanny named Sandra Rivett was murdered in London's West End. Her employer, Lord Lucan, was named as her

attacker. It was widely assumed he had mistaken her for his wife. Lord Lucan disappeared the night Sandra Rivett died and has never been seen since. Henry Kennedy lives on a mountain on the other side of the world. He is not who he says he is. Is he a murderer or a man who can never clear his name? And is he the only one with something to hide? Set in Tasmania, Africa and London's Belgravia, *The Butterfly Man* is an absorbing novel about transformation and deception, and the lengths to which we will go to protect the ones we love.

ROSE, Peter

Rose boys

289 pages

A family. Two brothers. And a moment which robbed one of his future and changed forever the lives of those around him. This is the story of two men - profoundly different yet linked by blood, the famous sporting family they belonged to, and the immense misfortune that befell one of them.

RUBENFELD, Jed

The interpretation of murder

367 pages

An inventive "tour de force" inspired by Sigmund Freud's 1909 visit to America, accompanied by protégé and rival Carl Jung. When a wealthy young debutante is discovered bound, whipped and strangled in a luxurious apartment overlooking the city, and another society beauty narrowly escapes the same fate, the mayor of New York calls upon Freud to use his revolutionary new ideas to help the surviving victim recover her memory of the attack, and solve the crime. But nothing about the attacks - or about the surviving victim, Nora - is quite as it seems. And there are those in very high places determined to stop the truth coming out, and Freud's startling theories taking root on American soil.

RUIZ ZAFON, Carlos

The shadow of the wind

521 pages

Hidden in the heart of the old city of Barcelona is the 'cemetery of lost books', a labyrinthine library of obscure and forgotten titles that have long gone out of print. To this library, a man brings his 10-year-old son Daniel one cold morning in 1945. Daniel is allowed to choose one book from the shelves and pulls out 'La Sombra del Viento' by Julian Carax. But as he grows up, several people seem inordinately interested in his find. Then, one night, as he is wandering the old streets once more, Daniel is approached by a figure who reminds him of a character from *La Sombra del Viento*, a character who turns out to be the devil. This man is tracking down every last copy of Carax's work in order to burn them. What begins as a case of literary curiosity turns into a race to find out the truth behind the life and death of Julian Carax and to save those he left behind.

RUSHDIE, Salman

The Moor's last sigh

448 pages

The book is narrated by Moraes Zogoiby, aka Moor, who speaks to us from a gravestone in Spain. He finds himself at crisis point. After a tragic love affair, he plunges into a life of depravity in Bombay before leaving for involvement in financial scandal in London and, ultimately, violence in Spain. Moor's story of travail encompasses a grand struggle between good and evil while Moor himself stands as an allegory for Rushdie's home country of India.

SACKS, Oliver

The man who mistook his wife for a hat 243 pages

The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" is populated by a cast as strange as that of the most fantastic fiction. The subject of this strange and wonderful book is what happens when things go wrong with parts of the brain most of us don't know exist ...Dr Sacks shows the awesome powers of our mind and just how delicately balanced they have to be.

SAGE, Lorna

Bad blood

288 pages

Set in a village on the Welsh borders in the 1940's and 50's, this astonishing memoir is the story of a girlhood among eccentrics. Lorna's grandfather is a womanizing cleric, her grandmother a bitter woman who longs to return to her family. Lorna escapes into books and finds it difficult to interact with others in the real world.

SALINGER, J D

The catcher in the rye

192 pages

Since his debut in 1951 as *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield has been synonymous with "cynical adolescent". Holden narrates the story of a couple of days in his 16-year-old life, just after he's been expelled from prep school, in a slang that sounds edgy even today and keeps this novel on banned book lists. His constant wry observations about what he encounters, from teachers to phonies (the two of course are not mutually exclusive), capture the essence of the eternal teenage experience of alienation.

SAYER, Mandy

Velocity

301 pages

Tells the moving, painful but often hilarious story of Mandy Sayer's childhood and adolescence, a life lived on the edges of society. A life of poverty, certainty and love.

SCHLINK, Bernhard

The reader

240 pages

The Reader is a brief tale about sex, love, reading and shame in post-war Germany. Michael Berg is 15 when he begins a long, obsessive affair with Hanna, an enigmatic older woman. He never learns very much about her and when she disappears one day, he expects never to see her again. But, to his horror, he does. Hanna is a defendant in a trial related to Germany's Nazi past and it soon becomes clear that she is guilty of an unspeakable crime. As Michael follows the trial, he struggles with an overwhelming question: what should his generation do with its knowledge of the Holocaust?

SCHWARTZ, Christina

Drowning Ruth

352 pages

Drowning Ruth opens in 1919, on the heels of the influenza epidemic that followed the First World War. Although there were telephones and motor cars and dance halls in the small towns of Wisconsin in those years, the townspeople remained rigid and forbidding. As a young woman, Amanda Starkey, a Lutheran farmer's daughter, had been firmly discouraged from an inappropriate marriage with a neighboring Catholic boy. A few years later, as a nurse in Milwaukee, she is seduced by a dishonorable man. Her

shame sends her into a nervous breakdown, and she returns to the family farm. Within a year, though, her beloved sister Mathilde drowns under mysterious circumstances. And when Mathilde's husband, Carl, returns from the war, he finds his small daughter, Ruth, in Amanda's tenacious grip, and she will tell him nothing about the night his wife drowned. Amanda's parents, too, are long gone. "I killed my parents. Had I mentioned that?" muses Amanda.

SEBOLD, Alice

The lovely bones

336 pages

On her way home from school on a snowy December day, 14-year-old Susie Salmon is lured into a cornfield and brutally raped and murdered, the latest victim of a serial killer. *The Lovely Bones*, Alice Sebold's haunting and heartbreaking debut novel, unfolds from heaven, where "life is a perpetual yesterday" and where Susie narrates and keeps watch over her grieving family and friends, as well as her brazen killer and the sad detective working on her case. *The Lovely Bones* works as an odd yet affecting coming-of-age story. Susie struggles to accept her death while still clinging to the lost world of the living, following her family's dramas over the years. Her family disintegrates in their grief. Random acts and missed opportunities run throughout the book--Susie recalls her sole kiss with a boy on earth as "like an accident--a beautiful gasoline rainbow".

SEDARIS, David

Naked

341 pages

A riotous collection of memoirs which explores the absurd hilarity of modern life and creates a wickedly incisive portrait of an all-too-familiar world. It takes Sedaris from his humiliating bout with obsessive behaviour in 'A Plague of Tics' to the title story, where he is finally forced to face his naked self in the company of lunatics.

SEIERSTAD, Asne

The bookseller of Kabul

288 pages

Two weeks after September 11th, award-winning journalist Asne Seierstad went to Afghanistan to report on the conflict. In the following spring she returned to live with a bookseller and his family for several months. *The Bookseller of Kabul* is the fascinating account of her time spent living with the family of thirteen in their four-roomed home. Bookseller Sultan Khan defied the authorities for twenty years to supply books to the people of Kabul. He was arrested, interrogated and imprisoned by the communists and watched illiterate Taliban soldiers burn piles of his books in the street. He even resorted to hiding most of his stock in attics all over Kabul. But while Khan is passionate in his love of books and hatred of censorship, he is also a committed Muslim with strict views on family life. As an outsider, Seierstad is able to move between the private world of the women - including Khan's two wives - and the more public lives of the men. The result is an intimate and fascinating portrait of a family which also offers a unique perspective on a troubled country.

SETTERFIELD, Diane

The thirteenth tale

480 pages

Angelfield House stands abandoned and forgotten. It was once home to the March family - fascinating, manipulative Isabelle, brutal, dangerous Charlie, and the wild, untamed twins, Emmeline and Adeline. But Angelfield House hides a chilling secret which strikes at the very heart of each of them, tearing their lives apart... Now Margaret Lea is investigating Angelfield's past - and the mystery of the March family starts to unravel. What has Angelfield been hiding? What is its connection with the enigmatic writer Vida Winter?

And what is the secret that strikes at the heart of Margaret's own, troubled life? As Margaret digs deeper, two parallel stories unfold, and the tale she uncovers sheds a disturbing light on her own life...

SHAFFER, Mary Ann

The Guernsey literary...

256 pages

It's 1946 and author Juliet Ashton can't think what to write next. Out of the blue, she receives a letter from Dawsey Adams of Guernsey - by chance, he's acquired a book that once belonged to her - and, spurred on by their mutual love of reading, they begin a correspondence. When Dawsey reveals that he is a member of the Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, her curiosity is piqued and it's not long before she begins to hear from other members. As letters fly back and forth with stories of life in Guernsey under the German Occupation, Juliet soon realizes that the society is every bit as extraordinary as its name.

SHAW, Janet

Beyond the red door

288 pages

Janet Shaw was adopted as a baby. At thirteen months, she was diagnosed as having an inherited condition - a malignant cancer called retinoblastom. While she was still a baby, she had one eye removed and had radiotherapy to her other eye. There was very little expectation that she would survive or ever lead a normal life. But the young girl never regarded herself as a blind person. She had partial sight and supportive parents so when the authorities insisted she go to Blind School (the Red Door of the title), she was plunged into despair. Against all the odds, Janet has led a full and active life, even travelling to Europe on her own. But at the back of her mind was the knowledge that she had been handed a genetic time-bomb from her biological parents. She needed to know who they were so, in her early twenties, she began to search for her birth parents. Rejected by her mother, she has since met and maintained contact with her father - a member of a prominent political and media family.

SHAW, Patricia

The dream seekers

534 pages

Hans-Albert Ritter is looking forward to his duties as Pastor for a settlement of German emigrants in the Queensland coastal port of Bundaberg. But by the time Ritter arrives, the community is in jeopardy - the land that was bought to be turned into a co-operative farm is nothing but jungle. Ritter throws himself into his role, beginning with the essential foundation of a church, staunchly supported by the Meissner family. But it's not long before an Aboriginal Elder sees trouble brewing. Personal relationships within the group deteriorate as the Pastor's strict regulations divide the community. Can this be the end of their dreams so soon?

SHEERS, Owen

Resistance

289 pages

The women of a remote Welsh valley wake up one morning in 1944 and discover that their husbands have left their farms in the night. The German Army has invaded Britain and the men have been recruited for a guerilla resistance force to impede the enemy's progress. A German patrol, led by Albrecht Wolfram, is sent to the valley by the SS to retrieve an ancient map hidden there. The soldiers are exhausted, and, when the tide of war moves on, and they are forgotten, they are content to wait for further instructions. Gradually, the women, led by Sarah Lewis and Maggie Jones, come to an accommodation with the

Germans. They work together over a harsh winter to keep the farms going, and become wary friends. But the outside world must intrude and the idyll will end.

SHIELDS, Carol

Unless

336 pages

Towards the end of *Unless* its central character, fortysomething Reta Winters--wife, mother, editor, translator and recent novelist--takes issue with how an eminent critic has belatedly bestowed status on her first novel, *My Thyme is Up*. What had been judged until then as her "fresh, bright springtime piece of fiction" has become... 'a brilliant tour de force', says Professor Casey, and this quote will, of course, appear on the jacket of the sequel...in the same size type as the name Reta Winters, but I am trying not to think what that means." This is just one of countless delicious asides (yet none of Shields' asides are ever throwaway) which Reta makes in her light, self-mocking tone; indeed, she sees herself as a woman for whom "tragedy was someone not liking my book". But into her happy family comes a situation which overshadows all else: the eldest of Reta's three daughters becomes a bag lady on a Toronto street corner, obsessed by goodness, but refusing to speak or be spoken to.

SHREVE, Anita

All he ever wanted

336 pages

A man escaping from a hotel fire sees a woman standing beneath a tree. He approaches her and sets in motion a series of events that will change his life forever. Years later, travelling from New England to Florida by train, he reflects back on his obsession with this unknown and ultimately unknowable woman - his courtship of her, his marriage to her, and the unforgivable act that ripped their family apart. Spanning three decades from 1899 to 1933, *All He Ever Wanted* gives us a tale of marriage, betrayal and the search for redemption.

SHREVE, Anita

A wedding in December

336 pages

At an inn in the Berkshire Mountains of western Massachusetts, seven former schoolmates gather for a wedding. Nora, the owner of the inn, has recently had to reinvent her life following the death of her husband. Avery, who still hears echoes from a horrific event at Kidd Academy twenty-six years ago, has made a life for himself in Toronto with his wife and two sons. Agnes, now a history teacher at Kidd is a woman who longs to tell a secret she cannot reveal to the others, a secret that would stun them all. Bridget, the mother of a fifteen-year-old boy, has agreed to marry Bill, an old high school lover whom she has recently remet, despite uncertainties about her health and future. Indeed, it is Bill who passionately wants this wedding and who has brought everyone together for an astonishing weekend of revelation and recrimination, forgiveness and redemption.

SHRIVER, Lionel

We need to talk about Kevin

436 pages

Two years ago, Eva Khatchadourian's son, Kevin, murdered seven of his fellow high-school students, a cafeteria worker, and a popular algebra teacher. Because he was only fifteen at the time of the killings, he received a lenient sentence and is now in a prison for young offenders in upstate New York. Telling the story of Kevin's upbringing, Eva addresses herself to her estranged husband through a series of letters. Fearing that her own shortcomings may have shaped what her son has become, she confesses to a deep, long-standing ambivalence about both, motherhood in general, and Kevin in particular. How much is her fault?

SHUTE, Nevil

A town like Alice

359 pages

Jean Paget is just twenty years old and working in Malaya when the Japanese invasion begins. When she is captured she joins a group of other European women and children whom the Japanese force to march for miles through the jungle - an experience that leads to the deaths of many. Due to her courageous spirit and ability to speak Malay, Jean takes on the role of leader of the sorry gaggle of prisoners and many end up owing their lives to her indomitable spirit. While on the march, the group run into some Australian prisoners, one of whom, Joe Harman, helps them steal some food, and is horrifically punished by the Japanese as a result. After the war, Jean tracks Joe down in Australia and together they begin to dream of surmounting the past and transforming his one-horse outback town into a thriving community like Alice Springs.

SILVESTER, John

Underbelly : the gangland war

423 pages

They called Carl Williams 'The Truth' but the truth was he was just a fat kid with a pill press and a taste for fast food, fast women and fast bucks. He got lucky the day Jason Moran shot him in the belly instead of in the head. Carl didn't return the favour: one by one, Moran and his brother and father and their mates were shot dead during an underworld war that was really an extermination program.

SILVEY, Craig

Rhubarb

288 pages

With his sublime and playful use of language and his uncanny ability to reveal the human condition in all its vulnerability and fragility, Craig Silvey has created an extraordinary contemporary Australian story. It is a poignant and tender sort-of-love story about two damaged people tenuously connecting. Eleanor is blind and lives with her reclusive mother. Ewan is a cello player with agoraphobia. She is drawn to him through his music but cannot understand the difficulty he faces in forming a friendship. He does not understand her past or the impact his music has on her. Amidst the heat of a Fremantle summer they stumble towards each other.

SIMONS, Paulina

The girl in Times Square

601 pages

Lily's life is turned upside down with the disappearance of her flat mate, incredible revelations about her family and a personal discovery, all of which will affect her forever! What if everything you believed about your life was a lie? Meet Lily Quinn. She is broke, struggling to finish college, pay her rent, find love. Adrift in bustling New York City, the most interesting things in Lily's life happen to the people around her. But Lily loves her aimless life until her best friend and roommate Amy disappears. That's when Spencer Patrick O'Malley, a cynical, past his prime NYPD detective with demons of his own, enters Lily's world. And a sudden financial windfall which should bring Lily joy instead becomes an ominous portent of the dark forces gathering around her. But fate isn't finished with Lily. She finds herself fighting for her life as Spencer's search for the missing Amy intensifies, leading Lily to question everything she knew about her friend and family. Startling revelations about the people she loves force her to confront truths that will leave her changed forever.

SIMONS, Paulina

Red leaves

354 pages

When beautiful, star basketball player Kristina Kim is found murdered in the snow, Spencer O'Malley, the young detective who had fallen in love with her, has to investigate the crime. What he finds is a life more mysterious than her death.

SIMONS, Paulina

The road to Paradise

544 pages

Two girls, an open road and a shiny yellow Mustang; it could have been the trip of a lifetime. But when Shelby and Gina pick up hitchhiker Candy Cane, their troubles have only just started. Inked with flowers and covered in piercings, they soon find out pink-haired Candy is on the run - for reasons so appalling they're almost unspeakable. They should have stuck to their no hitchhiker rule, but it's too late - and Gina and Shelby are drawn into a terrifying game of cat and mouse with no way out. As everything familiar is stripped away and morals are turned upside down, the question is this: how far will they go for a stranger?

SIMPSON, Joe

Touching the void

216 pages

Joe Simpson and his climbing partner, Simon Yates, had just reached the top of a 21,000-foot peak in the Andes when disaster struck. Simpson plunged off the vertical face of an ice ledge, breaking his leg. In the hours that followed, darkness fell and a blizzard raged as Yates tried to lower his friend to safety. Finally, Yates was forced to cut the rope, moments before he would have been pulled to his own death. The next three days were an impossibly grueling ordeal for both men. Yates, certain that Simpson was dead, returned to base camp consumed with grief and guilt over abandoning him. Miraculously, Simpson had survived the fall, but crippled, starving, and severely frostbitten was trapped in a deep crevasse. Summoning vast reserves of physical and spiritual strength, Simpson crawled over the cliffs and canyons of the Andes, reaching base camp hours before Yates had planned to leave. How both men overcame the torments of those harrowing days is an epic tale of fear, suffering, and survival, and a poignant testament to unshakable courage and friendship.

SLATER, Nigel

Toast

256 pages

This is Nigel Slater's truly extraordinary story of a childhood remembered through food. Whether relating his mother's ritual burning of the toast, his father's dreaded Boxing Day stew or such culinary highlights of the day as Arctic Roll and Grilled Grapefruit (then considered something of a status symbol in Wolverhampton) this remarkable memoir vividly recreates daily life in sixties suburban England. His mother was a chops-and-peas sort of cook, exasperated by the highs and lows of a temperamental AGA, a finicky little son and the asthma that was to prove fatal. His father was a honey-and-crumpets man who could occasionally go off 'crack' like a gun. When Nigel's widowed father takes on a housekeeper with social aspirations and a talent in the kitchen, the following years become a heartbreaking cooking contest for his father's affections.

SMILEY, Jane

Good faith

428 pages

Joe Stratford, who sells nice houses in a beautiful place, and whose not very amicable divorce is over, is ready for his life to begin again. It is 1982, morning in America, and temptation is everywhere. And, as Marcus Burns (Joe's new friend from New York) says, the old rules are ready to be broken. Marcus should know: he's just quit his job with the tax man. But are his ideas about how to get rich - really rich - too big and risky for Joe? And what about the real estate development at Salt Key Farm: why is the local savings and loan so eager to lend Marcus and Joe the money for its asking price? And there's Felicity - the daughter of Joe's business partner - who has finally confessed how fond she is of Joe. But, Joe wonders, is this winning, free-spirited (already married) woman really the one he's been waiting for?

STEINBACH, Alice

Without reservations

278 pages

A travel journal following a woman's year long journey from the daily obligations of her family as she explores new horizons and rediscovers herself in places such as Paris, Oxford and Milan. A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist with The Baltimore Sun newspaper, Steinbach writes of the year she left her daily routines behind and traveled to Europe. No agenda, no plans, no real reservations. Interspersed with postcards the author wrote to herself (to remind her of the revelations and experiences), the author writes of a type of spiritual as well as professional journey.

STEINBECK, John

The grapes of wrath

399 pages

Set against the background of dust bowl Oklahoma and Californian migrant life, it tells of the Joad family, who, like thousands of others, are forced to travel West in search of the promised land. Their story is one of false hopes, thwarted desires and broken dreams, yet out of their suffering Steinbeck created a drama that is intensely human, yet majestic in its scale and moral vision; an eloquent tribute to the endurance and dignity of the human spirit.

STEPHENSON, Pamela

Billy

304 pages

Billy Connolly is loud, hilarious and contradictory. His biography, written by his wife, former comedian and practicing psychotherapist Pamela Stephenson, is pretty much the same. Over the years Connolly has grown from Glasgow shipyard welder to folk-singing bearded hard man (yes there is such a thing) to darling of the good and great (or at least famous) around the world. That he is so many things to so many people while in no way compromising his core self can only be good. Anecdotes which Connolly uses in his live shows pepper the text and laughs are raised as he tells of the time he was mistaken as a drug dealer on Speyside, the difficulty of balancing an almost manic humour with a troubled life.

STEWART, Mary

The moonspinners

256 pages

A quiet holiday in Crete turns into an action packed adventure. Nicola Ferris, on leave from her job as a secretary in Athens, faces, for the first time in her life, a man and a situation she cannot deal with . . . She stumbles upon a scene of private vengeance - a ruthless vendetta involving two young Englishmen and a group of people tied together by blood, and the bonds of greed. So much for a quiet week's holiday, enjoying the wild flowers and the company of Frances, Nicola's cousin.

STONICH, Sarah

These granite islands

288 pages

Isobel – wife, mother, hatmaker – lies on her deathbed, recalling the fateful summer of 1936, when a passionate & dangerous love affair tested her loyalty, challenged her sense of propriety, & dissolved in a haunting tragedy.

STOUT, Mira

One thousand chestnut trees

352 pages

Uncle Hong-do arrives in Vermont from Korea to turn his niece's world upside-down by bringing the tang of her ancestral homeland into her understanding of herself. When his niece later finds herself hemmed in by drink, debt and suitors, she too leaves for Korea to find the unknown part of herself.

STRANI-POTTS, Maria

The cat of Portovecchio

276 pages

Exploring how characters' lives intersect, these tales, narrated by a cat, focus on passion, lost love, a missing child, a priest with bad intentions, and families suffering. An insider's view of Corfu society in a time of a great political upheaval in the 1950s is offered, while a picture is painted of life in a Greek fishing village post-World War II, rich in insights into traditions, customs, history, daily life, and local idiosyncrasies. With a distinctive voice that is both worldly and amused, these tales have a warm and witty understanding of the unique people.

SWARUP, Vikas

Q&A

384 pages

Eighteen-year-old Ram Mohammad Thomas is in prison after answering twelve questions correctly on a TV quiz show to win one billion rupees. The producers have arrested him, convinced that he has cheated his way to victory. Twelve extraordinary events in street-kid Ram's life - how he was found in a dustbin by a priest; came to have three names; fooled a professional hitman; even fell in love - give him the crucial answers. In his warm-hearted tale lie all the comedy, tragedy, joy and pathos of modern India.

SWIFT, Graham

Last orders

352 pages

Last Orders is a quiet but dazzling novel about a group of men, friends since the Second World War, whose lives revolve around work, family, the racetrack and their favourite pub. When one of them dies, the survivors drive his ashes from London to a seaside town where they will be scattered, compelling them to take stock of who they are today, who they were before and the shifting relationships in between

SWIFT, Graham

The light of day

256 pages

Sarah is in prison. Every fortnight she is visited by George, the private eye she employed to observe the final stage of her husband's affair. The visits - and the days between - lead George back into Sarah's past and into events he can picture only too well, while bringing him ever closer to a time he can't quite imagine - when she will once again step out into the clear light of day...

SZPILMAN, Wladyslaw

The pianist

224 pages

The Pianist is the haunting memoir of a young Jew's incarceration and later escape from the Warsaw Ghetto during the Second World War. In his own words it is the true story of the famous Polish pianist, Wladyslaw Szpilman, with extracts from the diary of the German officer who saved him towards the end of the Nazi occupation of Warsaw. The book was originally printed in 1946, making it all the more poignant and tells from first-hand experience the atrocities that Jews suffered at the hands of the Nazis. Szpilman and his family are taken into the Ghetto and forced to live in deprivation and horrendous circumstances with the Nazi's cold-blooded murder tactics gradually diminishing the Jewish occupants, eventually by more than three million. In February 1943 Szpilman manages to escape the Ghetto and his story becomes one of survival in almost complete seclusion until the end of the war.

TARTT, Donna

The secret history

672 pages

Richard Papen arrived at Hampden College in New England and was quickly seduced by an elite group of five students, all Greek scholars, all worldly, self-assured, and, at first glance, all highly unapproachable. As Richard is drawn into their inner circle, he learns a terrifying secret that binds them to one another...a secret about an incident in the woods in the dead of night where an ancient rite was brought to brutal life...and led to a gruesome death. And that was just the beginning.

TAYLOR, Roberta

Too many mothers

245 pages

Too Many Mothers is the remarkable story of Roberta Taylor's early life and the extended family that brought her up. Nanny Mary was the wily matriarch, who would do almost anything to survive, including stealing from her seven children. Her nerve, humour and sheer determination were also the glue that held the family together. Roberta was born to a father Roberta's mother adored, but who she herself would never know. In this memoir, Roberta Taylor travels to the emotional heart of her childhood to reveal the lives led by the men and women who influenced her most in her formative years. Too Many Mothers is a portrait of an embattled family at war with itself and the outside world. From petty crime to pet monkeys, tender romance to emotional blackmail, illegitimacy, adoption and even murder, Roberta Taylor has written a bittersweet and ultimately unforgettable memoir of her early life

TEMBY, Susan

The bread with seven crusts

464 pages

It is the summer of 1941 and three Italian prisoners of war are taken first to a foreign country and then to a remote farm in Western Australia. The country is hostile, the landscape is foreign, and so are the people, but this is where they are to serve their time, working as free farm labour. To Max and his mother, these bedraggled figures are welcome hands on a farm that barely keeps them in food. The foreign becomes familiar as they work side by side during the day and eat together in the kitchen at night. It is an uneasy peace, but it works; that is, until Eddy comes home. Eddy is a nurse who's been posted to Allied theatres of war, stitching up soldiers ripped apart by the enemy's guns and shells. When she returns home to find respite, she instead finds that the enemy has been sleeping in her room and is eating at the family table

TEMPLE, Peter

The broken shore

352 pages

Before Rai Sarris, Cashin was different. He moved more quickly then, he was less thoughtful, less easily spooked. But there are consequences when you've come that close to dying. For Cashin, they include a posting away from the world of murderers, of Homicide, to the quiet place on the coast where he grew up. Here all he has to do is play the country cop and walk the dogs. And sometimes think about how he was before Sarris. Then rich Charles Bourgoyne, the local benefactor, is bashed and everything seems to point to three boys from the nearby Aboriginal community. Cashin is unconvinced and as tragedy unfolds relentlessly into tragedy, he finds himself holding onto something that might be better let go.

TEMPLEMAN, Tiana

Absolutely faking it

321 pages

For Tiana Templeman, travel has always meant hiking boots and hostels, so when she wins a trip for two to stay at thirteen of the world's most exclusive five-star hotels, it sounds like the chance of a lifetime, an opportunity to see how the other half lives. But with a travel budget stretched tighter than the straps on their bulging backpacks, Tiana and her man have no room for diamonds and designer clothing (if they actually owned any in the first place). From the Ritz in Paris to the Dorchester in London and the Peninsula in Hong Kong, Tiana is faced with questions of etiquette she never thought she'd have to answer: is it all right to cook instant noodles beside the Chanel toiletries in the bathroom? How do you deal with tipping when you can't even afford a bottle of water from the mini-bar? And what on earth are you meant to do with a private butler? Through fourteen countries, over five months and with countless hilarious and mortifying adventures, Tiana learns that in establishments catering for those with champagne tastes, when you're on a beer budget life can be harder than it looks.

THEROUX, Paul

Dark star safari

512 pages

Paul Theroux sets off for Cape Town from Cairo - the hard way. Travelling across bush and desert, down rivers and across lakes, and through country after country, he visits some of the most beautiful and dangerous landscapes on earth. It is a journey of discovery and of rediscovery - of the unknown and the unexpected - charting places unknown and those known as a young teacher 40 years before. In the Swahili language, the word "safari" simply means "journey", and this - to Theroux - is the ultimate journey.

TIFFANY, Carrie

Everyman's rules for scientific living

256 pages

It is 1934, the Great War is long over and the next is yet to come. It is a brief time of optimism and advancement. Billowing dust and information, the government 'Better Farming Train' slides through the wheat fields and small towns of Australia, bringing city experts and advice to those already living on the land. The train is on a crusade to persuade the country that science holds the answers and that productivity is patriotic. Amongst the swaying cars full of cows, pigs and wheat, an unlikely seduction occurs between Robert Pettergree, a man with an unusual taste for soil, and Jean Finnegan, a talented young seamstress with a hunger for knowledge. In an atmosphere of heady scientific idealism they settle in the impoverished Mallee with the ambition of proving that science can transform the land. With failing crops and the threat of a new World War looming, Robert and Jean are forced to confront each other, the community they have destroyed, and the impact of progress on an ancient and fragile landscape.

TINGWELL, Charles

Bud : a life

356 pages

Charles 'Bud' Tingwell is one of Australia's best-loved actors. His career has spanned over fifty years, from glamorous post-war Hollywood, to London in the swinging sixties, to some of Australia's favourite film and stage productions. Yet there is much more to Bud than his long list of acting credits. Before becoming an actor, he served in Europe and North Africa in World War II as a fighter pilot with the RAAF. He has worked in film, theatre and television as a distinguished director, producer and writer. And, above all, he is Bud the family man, a loving husband and father, while working in an industry notorious for broken marriages and shattered homes. He writes frankly of coping with the death of his beloved wife, Audrey, and of how he was to find a measure of comfort in his work.

TOIBIM, Colm

The master

359 pages

It is January 1895 and Henry James's play, *Guy Domville*, from which he hoped to make his fortune, has failed on the London stage. Opening with this disaster, *The Master* spans the next five years of James's life, during which time he moves to Rye in Sussex, having found his dream retreat. There he writes his short masterpiece *The Turn Of The Screw*, a tale in which he incorporates many details from his own life, including his experiences as a member of one of the great eccentric American families and, later, an exile in England. Impelled by the need to work and haunted by his past - including his failure to fight in the American Civil War, and the golden summer of 1865, and the death of his sister Alice - James is watchful and witty, relishing the England in which he has come to live and regretting the New England he has left.

TOMLINS, Jacqueline

A girl's own adventure

352 pages

In a not quite mid-life crisis, Jacquie and Sarah - fancying themselves a bit rugged - head off to Africa in search of the deepest, darkest bits they'd seen on Sunday evening documentaries on the telly. Tear-gas riots, cholera, spider bites, rifle-toting rangers, overzealous marriage proposals and more bed bugs than you could poke a stick at, were not, however, quite what they'd been promised in those National Geographic specials.

TOREY, Zoltan

Out of darkness

264 pages

To lose one's sight is a tremendous blow, yet not the end of the world. Untapped resources can be mobilised, new ways can be learnt to cope and to regain control. The brain is on constant call to compensate for the missing input, to make sense of what there is, to boost morale, to stay in focus and to uphold one's humanity. In June 1951, Hungarian-born Zoltan Torey met with an industrial accident in Sydney that was forever to change his life. While attending to his night-shift job in a factory, the plug exploded from the vat carrying battery acid above him, showering him. The acid tore at his eyes and throat, eating away his corneas and fusing his vocal cords. This once energetic, vibrant, 21-year-old was left almost alone in a foreign land, blinded and unable to speak above a whisper. No one thought he would survive. But Zoltan did survive, and he responded to this tragedy in an unusual way - he decided to devote himself to helping solve the riddle of human consciousness. This would give him back his life, as through mental techniques he learned to 'see' again, and so could psychologically return to the world of light.

TOWNSEND, Sue

Number Ten

336 pages

Prime Minister Edward Clare and his wife Adele Floret-Clare live at Number 10 Downing Street. PC Jack Sprat is the policeman who stands outside on the door. Five years ago, Edward Clare was voted into Number 10 after a landslide election result. But now, things are starting to go wrong. The love has gone. The people are turning. In short, it's a very real problem. Edward worries about this. All he wants is for the people of Clare's Britain to like him, and for them to be happy. He enlists the help of Jack Sprat and together they travel round the country incognito, ending up at Jack's childhood home. His mother Norma lives in Leicester, and her address is Number 10 too, but that's where the similarity ends.

TREMAIN, Rose

Music and silence

453 pages

King Christian IV of Denmark is, in the year of 1630, living in a limbo of fear and rage for his life, his country's ruin, and his wife's not-so-secret adultery. He consoles himself with the weaving of impossible dreams and with music--played by his Royal Orchestra in the freezing cellar at Rosenborg while he listens in his cosy *Vinterstue* above. Music, he hopes, will create the sublime order he craves. Kirsten, his devious wife, is a continual maker of Beautiful Plans to outwit, avenge, feed her greed. And she detests music. The awkward duty of assuaging the King's miseries falls to his English lutenist, Peter Claire, his "Angel", whilst Emilia Tilsen must bend to Kirsten's every whim. Yet what Peter and Emilia seek is each other, largely in silence both necessary and cruelly imposed.

TREMAIN, Rose

Restoration

384 pages

Robert Merivel, who has studied to be a physician, is appointed, ironically, to be veterinarian for the spaniels of King Charles II, who has recently been restored to the throne following the death of Oliver Cromwell. Merivel enjoys the gaiety and frivolity of court life, and, a bit of a fool, he entertains the king. The king's decision to placate one of his lovers by marrying off his favorite mistress to Robert Merivel, spells the beginning of the end for Merivel's tenuous fortunes. Warned not to fall in love with his wife, Celia Clemence, since the king intends to continue seeing her, Merivel cannot help himself, and he is cast out, losing not only the king's affection, but also his house and, of course his wife.

TREMAIN, Rose

The road home

320 pages

'On the coach, Lev chose a seat near the back and he sat huddled against the window, staring out at the land he was leaving ...' Lev is on his way to Britain to seek work, so that he can send money back to Eastern Europe to support his mother and little daughter. Readers will become totally involved with his story, as he struggles with the mysterious rituals of 'Englishness', and the fashions and fads of the London scene. We see the road Lev travels through Lev's eyes, and we share his dilemmas: the intimacy of his friendships, old and new; his joys and sufferings; his aspirations and his hopes of finding his way home, wherever home may be.

TRIGIANI, Adriana

Lucia, Lucia

368 pages

Lucia Sartori is the beautiful twenty-five-year-old daughter of a fine Italian immigrant family in Greenwich Village, New York, in 1950. Fuelled by the post-war boom, in which talented girls with ambition are encouraged to follow their dreams, Lucia becomes an apprentice for a made-to-wear clothing designer at a chic department store on Fifth Avenue. Though she is sought after as a potential wife by the best Italian families, Lucia stays her course and works hard, determined to have a career. She juggles the roles of dutiful daughter and ambitious working girl perfectly. When a handsome stranger comes to the store and catches her eye, it is love at first sight for both of them. In order to win Lucia's hand, he must first win over her traditional family and make the proper offer of marriage. Their love affair takes an unexpected turn as secrets are revealed, Lucia's family honour is tested, and her own reputation becomes the centre of a sizzling scandal.

TROLLOPE, Joanna

The girl from the South

352 pages

Gillon - red-haired, intelligent, vulnerable - comes to London to escape from the demands of her wealthy, conventional, socially superior family in Charleston, South Carolina. An art historian, she has a chance meeting with Tilly, whose long-term boyfriend Henry is a wildlife photographer who is finding it hard to commit. Before long Gillon has moved into their flat, replacing Henry's old mate William, William's on-off-girlfriend Susie, and a lot of mess and disorganisation. Things are changing, and Tilly finds it difficult to accept that her dreams of settling down with Henry are receding further into the distance, especially when Henry announces that he is going to South Carolina to photograph the abundant wildlife of the area. There, Henry is wholly seduced by the charms of Charleston, by Gillon's family, and by the old patrician way of life which presents itself. The rules seem to be changing, the time passing by, and the future is becoming less and less certain...

TROLLOPE, Joanna

Second honeymoon

336 pages

Ben is, at last, leaving home. At twenty-two, he's the youngest of the family. His mother Edie, an actress, is distraught. His father Russell, a theatrical agent, is rather hoping to get his wife back, after decades of family life. His brother, Matthew, is wrestling with a relationship in which he achieves and earns less than his girlfriend. His sister Rosa is wrestling with debt, and the end of a turbulent love affair. Meet the Boyd family and the empty nest, twenty-first-century style.

TURNBULL, Sarah

Almost French

309 pages

As a student at University, Sarah Turnbull dropped French after failing the subject during her first year. Then, during a career break from journalism to travel the world, she finds herself changing her plans to settle permanently in Paris. *Almost French* is the witty account of her new life in Paris and the difficulties she faces in trying to integrate fully into Parisian culture while trying to establish herself as a freelance journalist. Sarah gives the reader a fascinating insight into her love/hate relationship with the French through humorous examples of run-ins with her new countrymen. Everything from using the correct language and etiquette to address everyone from the local baker to a senior figure in the French Ministry of Defence, from how you laugh and what you serve on your dinner table, to what you wear, all prove vital to being accepted as one of them.

TYLER, Anne

The amateur marriage

317 pages

A rich and compelling novel, spanning three generations, about a mismatched marriage - and its consequences. Michael and Pauline seemed like the perfect couple - young, good-looking, made for each other. The moment she walked into his mother's grocery store in Baltimore, he was smitten, and in the heat of World War II fervour, they marry in haste. From the sound of the cash register in the old grocery to the counterculture jargon of the sixties, from the miniskirts to the multilayers of later years, Anne Tyler captures the nuances of everyday life with telling precision and sly humour.

TYLER, Anne

Back when we were grownups

288 pages

When Joe Davitch first saw Rebecca, it was at a party at the Davitch home - a crumbling nineteenth-century house in Baltimore where giving parties was the family business. Young Rebecca looked to Joe like the girl having more fun than anyone in the room and he wanted some of that happiness to spill over onto him, a 33-year-old divorcee with three little girls. Swept away, Rebecca soon found herself mistress of 'The Open Arms', embracing not only this large spirited man and his extended family but expertly hosting endless parties in the ornate, high-ceilinged rooms where people pay to have family celebrations in style. But now, years after she has lost her husband in a car accident, Beck (as she is known to the Davitch clan) asks herself whether she is an impostor in her own life.

TYLER, Anne

Digging to America

336 pages

Friday August 15th, 1997 - The night the girls arrived, two tiny Korean babies are delivered to Baltimore to two families who have no more in common than this. First there are the Donaldsons, decent Brad and homespun, tenacious Bitsy (with her 'more organic than thou' airs, who believes fervently that life can always be improved), two full sets of grandparents and a host of big-boned, confident relatives, taking delivery with characteristic American razzmatazz. Then there are the Yazdans, pretty, nervous Ziba (her family 'only one generation removed from the bazaar') and carefully assimilated Sami, with his elegant, elusive Iranian-born widowed mother Maryam, the grandmother-to-be, receiving their little bundle with wondering discretion. Every year, on the anniversary of 'Arrival Day' their two extended families celebrate together, with more and more elaborately competitive parties, as tiny, delicate Susan, wholesome, stocky Jin-ho and, later, her new little sister Xiu-Mei, take roots, become American. While Maryam, the optimistic pessimist, confident that if things go wrong - as well they may - she will manage as she has before, contrarily preserves her 'outsider' status, as if to prove that, despite her passport, she is only a guest in this bewildering country.

TYLER, Anne

A patchwork planet

304 pages

Barnaby Gaitlin is a loser - just short of 30, he's the black sheep of a philanthropic Baltimore family. He has an almost pathological curiosity about other people's lives, and a hopeless charm which attracts the kind of angelic woman who wants to save him from himself.