



BOOKS FOR EVERYONE

RGS Recommended reading for year 9

About this list

Most of the books on this list are recommended by students. Their English teachers and the RGS librarians have added to it.

We aim to provide you with a starting point with this list: when you find a book you like, you can branch out into other books by the same writer or in the same style or genre. There are plenty of recommendations for further reading, but we can't list them all here! Ask your English teacher or the librarian for further suggestions; there is also a new reading list for year 8, with plenty of advanced suggestions still relevant to your year, so you may wish to consider them too – just ask your teacher.

If you read something which should be on the list, please do let us know. And if any title has overstayed its welcome here, we want to know that too. **Use the Library, it's a wonderful resource** – these books (and very many more) are available through it.

Please make sure you keep a full list of the books you read this year – the last page of this booklet has been set aside for you to keep a record, so keep it up to date and enjoy your reading. After all, there are plenty of books here for everyone!

NEWCASTLE ROYAL GRAMMAR SCHOOL 2023-24

Year nine class readers

PLEASE NOTE: these books may be read in your English class.
Please check with your teacher before you start reading

Grenville, Kate *The Secret River*
 Blackman, Malorie *Noughts and Crosses, Checkmate, Double Cross, Boys Don't Cry, Crossfire*
 Bradbury, Ray *Fahrenheit 451*
 Golding, William *Lord of the Flies, The Inheritors*
 Lee, Harper *To Kill a Mockingbird*
 Orwell, George *Animal Farm, 1984*
 Steinbeck, John *Of Mice and Men, The Grapes of Wrath*

Plays

Shakespeare *Twelfth Night, The Comedy of Errors, Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing, Julius Caesar, The Merchant of Venice, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet*

Miller, Arthur *The Crucible*
 Priestley, J. B. *An Inspector Calls*

A selection of classics

Many students still make the strongest connections with established and well-loved classic novels, books which have been capturing the imagination of bright readers for many generations...

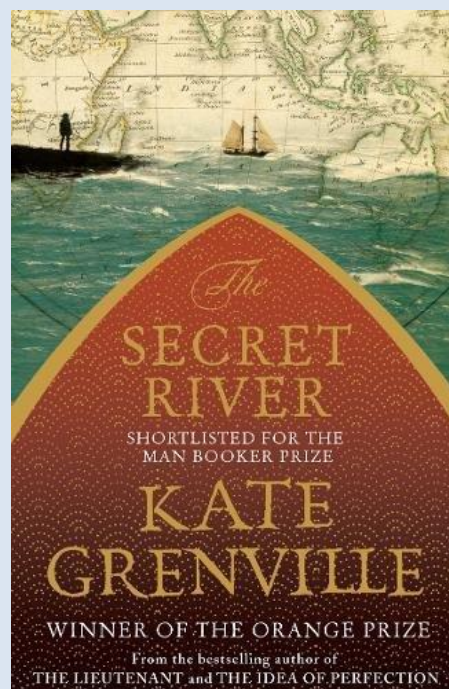
Angelou, Maya *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*
 Atwood, Margaret *The Handmaid's Tale*
 Austen, Jane *Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park*
 Brontë, Charlotte *Jane Eyre* (see also other Brontë sister novels)
 Burgess, Anthony *A Clockwork Orange*
 Carter, Angela *Wise Children*
 Dickens, Charles *Great Expectations, Oliver Twist, Hard Times*
 Du Maurier, Daphne *Jamaica Inn*
 Forster, E. M. *Howards End, A Room with a View*
 Greene, Graham *Brighton Rock*
 Hemingway, Ernest *A Farewell to Arms, The Old Man and the Sea*
 Heller, Joseph *Catch-22*
 Huxley, Aldous *Brave New World*
 James, Henry *The Turn of the Screw*
 Paton, Alan *Cry the beloved Country*
 Remarque, Erich Maria *All Quiet on the Western Front*
 Salinger, J.D. *The Catcher in the Rye*
 Solzhenitsyn, Alexander *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*
 Stoker, Bram *Dracula*
 Taylor, Mildred D. *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
 Walker, Alice *The Color Purple*
 Wyndham, John *The Day of the Triffids*

The Secret River

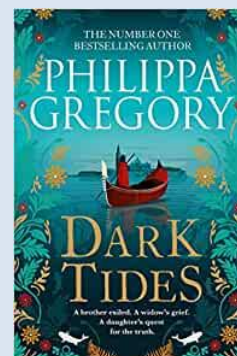
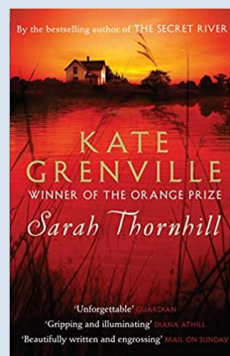
Kate Grenville

London, 1806. William Thornhill, happily wedded to his childhood sweetheart Sal, is a waterman on the River Thames. Life is tough but bearable until William makes a mistake, a bad mistake for which he and his family are made to pay dearly.

His sentence: to be transported to Australia for the term of his natural life. Soon his family contemplate a new life of opportunity and danger, one where he struggles to understand the lives of the indigenous people of the territory.

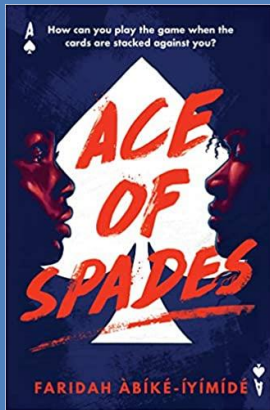


You may also enjoy Grenville's **Sarah Thornhill**, which continues the vivid story begun in *The Secret River*, and **Philippa Gregory's Dark Tides** is another epic historical tale that opens on the banks of the Thames, before taking the reader to Venice and early America.

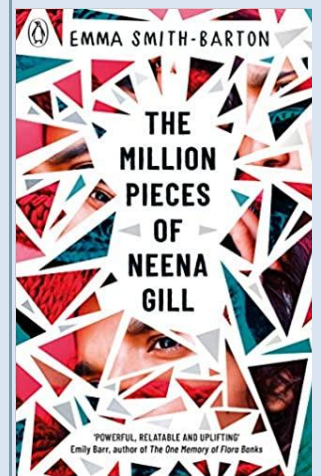


Ace of Spades by Faridah Ābíké-Íyímídé is an explosive debut novel. Welcome to Niveus Private Academy, where money paves the hallways, and the students are never less than perfect. Until now. Because anonymous texter, Aces, is revealing the darkest secrets of two students. Talented musician Devon buries himself in rehearsals, until his private photos go public and soon everyone will know the price head girl Chaimaka has paid for power. Someone is out to get them both. Someone who holds all the aces.

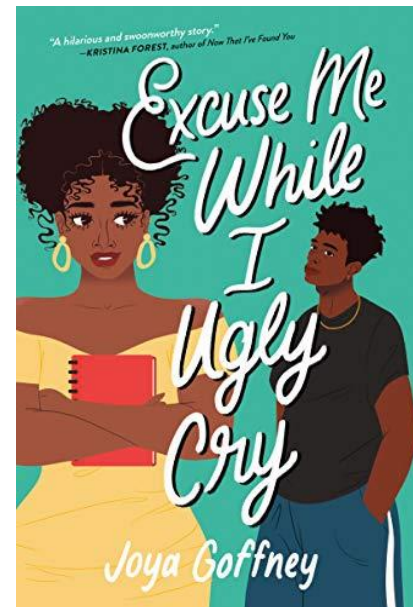
Try also **Muhammad Khan's *I Am Thunder***, another tale of school and secrets and being a modern urban teenager.



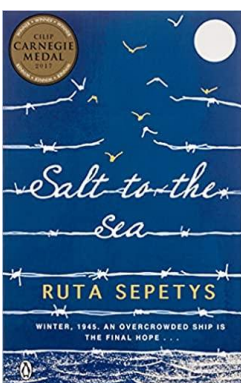
In **Emma Smith-Barton's *The Million Pieces of Neena Gill***, Neena's always been a good girl - great grades, parent-approved friends and absolutely no boyfriends. But ever since her brother Akash left, she's been slowly falling apart - and uncovering a new version of herself who is freer, but altogether more dangerous. As her wild behaviour spirals, Neena's grip on her wellbeing begins to weaken. And when her parents announce two life-changing bombshells, she finally reaches breaking point. But as Neena is about to discover, when your life falls apart, only love can piece you back together



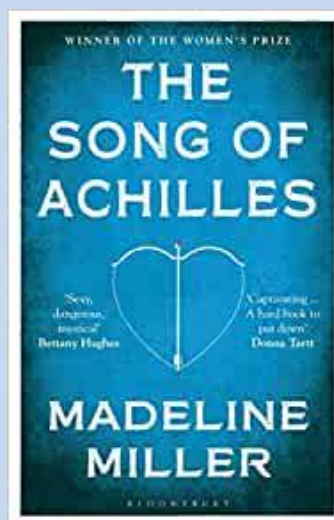
In **Joya Goffney's *Excuse Me While I Ugly Cry***, Quinn keeps lists of everything - from the days she's ugly cried, to all the boys she'd like to kiss. One day her journal goes missing... An anonymous account posts one of her lists on Instagram and blackmails her into facing seven of her greatest fears, or else her entire journal will go public. Desperate, she faces everything she's been too afraid to face, and along the way, she finds the courage to live in the moment, and to fall in love...



Toffee by Sarah Crossan is the remarkable story a Allison, a girl who runs away from home and is taken in by an old lady with dementia who mistakes her for an old friend. And so Toffee is who she becomes, as she discovers what home really means.

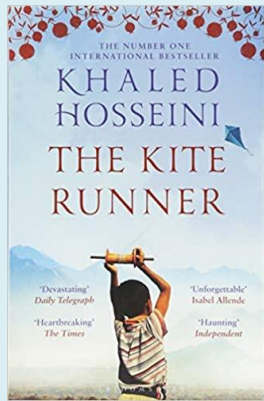
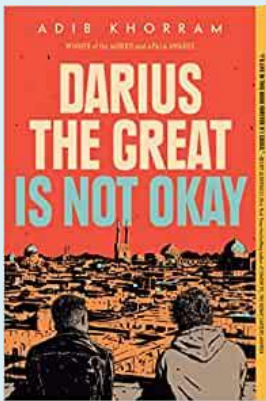


Based on a true story, **Ruth Sepetys' *Salt to the Sea*** is set in early 1945 and describes the journeys of four very different young people, each one of them carrying a dark secret and each trying to make their way out of Nazi Germany.



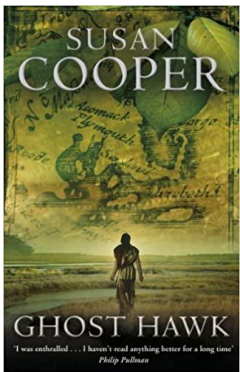
The Song of Achilles
Madeline Miller

Greece in the age of heroes: awkward young Prince Patroclus has been exiled to the court of King Peleus and his perfect son Achilles. Despite their differences, Achilles befriends the shamed prince, and as they grow into young soldiers and prepare for war in distant Troy, their bond blossoms into something deeper despite the displeasure of Achilles's mother. If you enjoy this, try **Benjamin Alire Sáenz's *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe***.

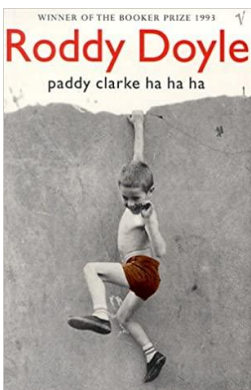


In *Darius the Great is Not Okay* by Adib Khorram, Darius Kellner speaks better Klingon than Farsi, and he knows more about Hobbit social cues than Persian ones. He's a Fractional Persian - half, his mum's side - and his first-ever trip to Iran is about to change his life. Darius has never really fit in at home, and he's sure things are going to be the same in Iran. His clinical depression doesn't exactly help matters, and trying to explain his medication to his grandparents only makes things harder. But then one day he finds a soul mate on the city's rooftops.

Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* is set in Afghanistan in 1975, as the lives of two boys playing are about to be forever changed by war.



Ghost Hawk by Susan Cooper is the lyrical story of a Native American boy, Little Hawk, who sets off on a test of solitude and survival that will turn him into a man. Meanwhile, English settlers are landing on the shores of the New World.



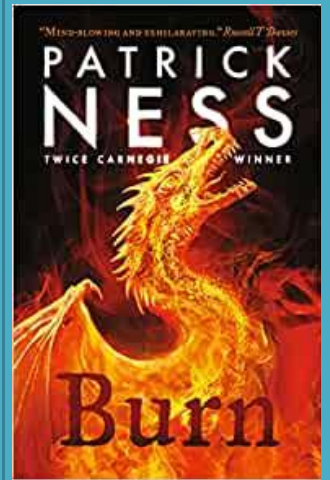
Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* describes the world of ten-year-old Paddy, growing up in Barrytown, north Dublin. From fun and adventure on the streets, boredom in the classroom to increasing isolation at home, this is the comic story of a boy who sees everything but understands less and less.

How does the world end? It ends in fire.

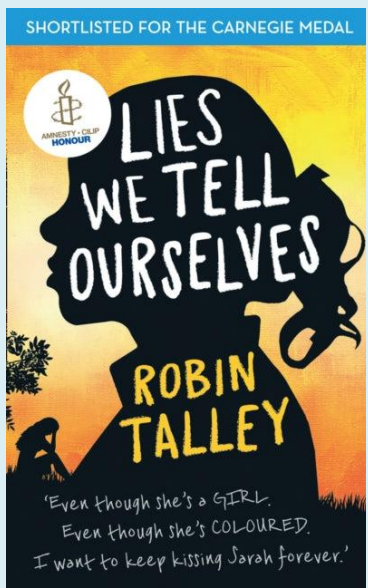
Patrick Ness' *Burn* is set in America during the Cold War, with the world on the brink of destruction. Kazimir has arrived at a farm because of a prophecy. A prophecy that involves a deadly assassin, a cult of dragon worshippers and two FBI agents.

"A clever, complex and completely engrossing story." *The Times*

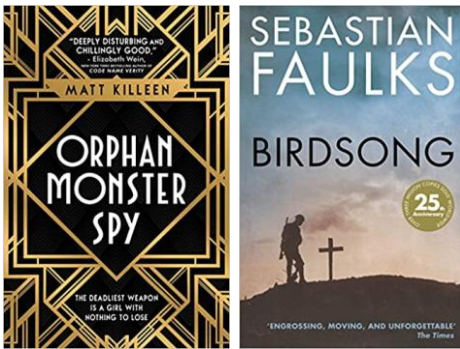
If you like this novel, you might also enjoy Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* and Stephen King's dystopian vision of the United States, *The Long Walk*.



Brian Conaghan's *The Bombs That Brought Us Together* is set in a war-torn place - fourteen-year-old Charlie Law has lived in Little Town, on the border with Old Country, all his life. He knows the rules: no going out after dark; no drinking; no litter; no fighting. You don't want to get on the wrong side of the people who run Little Town. When he meets Pavel Duda, a refugee from Old Country, the rules start to get broken. Then the bombs come, and the soldiers from Old Country, and Little Town changes for ever.



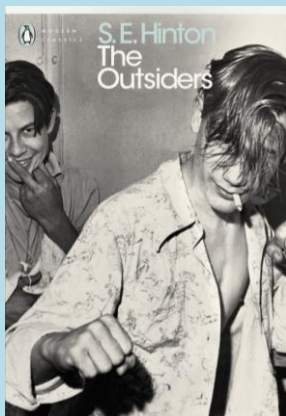
In Robin Talley's *Lies We Tell Ourselves*, it's 1959 and the battle for civil rights is raging. And it's Sarah's first day of school as one of the first black students at previously all-white Jefferson High. No one wants her there. Not the Governor. Not the teachers. And certainly not the students, especially Linda, daughter of the town's most ardent segregationist. Sarah and Linda are supposed to despise each other, but as they spend together, things change... If you like this, try *Buffalo Soldier* by Tanya Landman, telling of a girl's struggles at the end of American Civil War.



In **Matt Killeen's** dark and disturbing war-time adventure *Orphan Monster Spy*, Sarah realises that there's only one way for a teenage Jewish spy to survive undetected as a school for the Nazi elite. And that's to become a monster like them.

"This clever novel explores how unacceptable attitudes can take hold, which makes it timely as well as tense." --*The Sunday Times*

Birdsong by **Sebastian Faulks** begins before the start of the First World War, with Stephen Wraysford, a young Englishman, and his faltering love affair with a French woman. With the world in flux, he volunteers to fight on the Western Front and enters the unimaginable dark world beneath the trenches of No Man's Land.



The Outsiders by **S. E. Hinton** is a classic of teenage trouble and discontent. Teenagers in a small Oklahoma town have split into two gangs, The Socs' idea of having a good time is beating up Greasers like Ponyboy Curtis. Ponyboy knows what to expect until the night someone takes things too far, and life is changed forever.



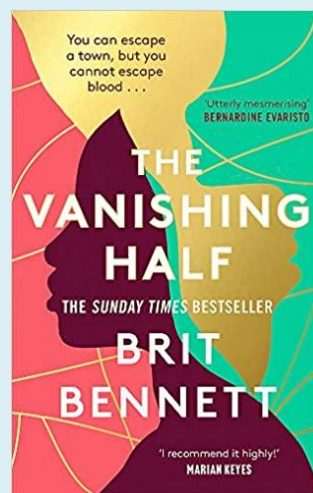
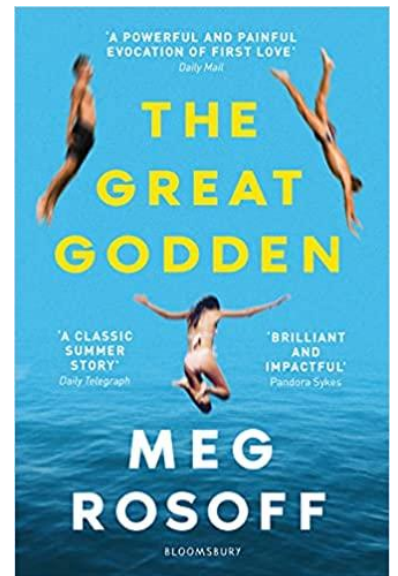
Bone Talk
Candy Gourlay

Little Luki and I were tossing pebbles into the eye socket of a water buffalo skull when Father came to fetch me. 'Samkad, the ancients want you', he murmured.

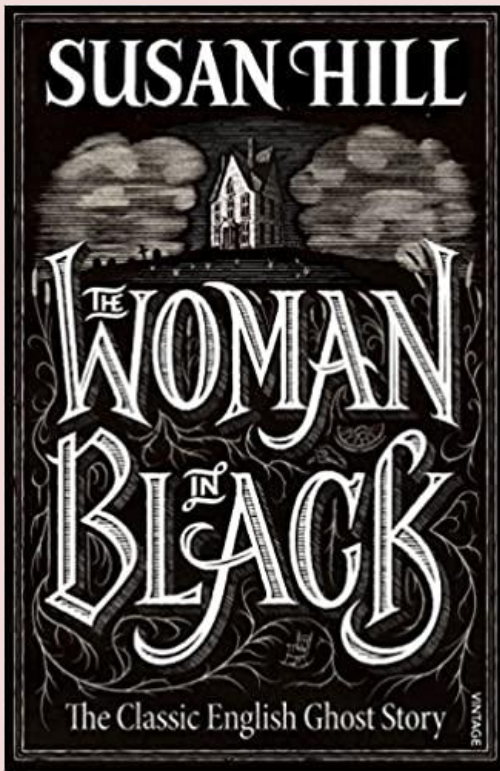
The Philippines, 100 years ago. A boy called Samkad wants to become a man. He is desperate to be given his own shield, spear and axe. His best friend, Luki, wants to be a warrior too - but she is a girl and that is forbidden. Then a new boy arrives in the village and everything changes. He brings news that a people called 'Americans' are bringing war right to his home...

Meg Rosoff's *The Great Godden* is the story of one family, one dreamy summer - the summer when everything changes. It all takes place around the holiday house by the sea, in a big, messy family, where one teenager watches as brothers and sisters, parents and older cousins fill hot days with wine and games and planning a wedding. Enter the Goddens - irresistible, charming Kit and the surly, silent Hugo. But suddenly there's a serpent in this paradise - and the consequences will be devastating for everyone.

If you enjoy this story, you should dig out **Dodie Smith's** *I Capture the Castle*.

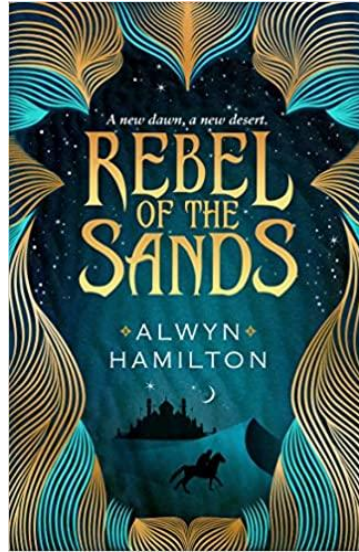


In **Britt Bennett's** *The Vanishing Half*, the Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything, as one sister has begun a new life, passing for white. Weaving together multiple strands and generations of this family, from the Deep South to California, from the 1950s to the 1990s, Brit Bennett produces a story that is at once a riveting, emotional family story. Try also **Elizabeth Acevedo's** novels written in verse, including *Clap When You Land*.



Made into a chilling film with Daniel Radcliffe, **Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black*** is a must-read for those who like atmospheric supernatural stories. Arthur Kipps, a junior solicitor, is summoned to attend the funeral of Mrs Alice Drablow, the sole inhabitant of Eel Marsh House. The house stands at the end of a causeway, wreathed in fog and mystery, but it is not until he glimpses a wasted young woman, dressed all in black, at the funeral, that a creeping sense of unease begins to take hold, a feeling deepened by the reluctance of the locals to talk of the woman and her terrible purpose.

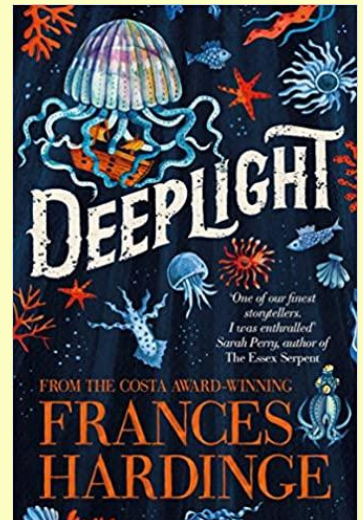
If you like horror stories like this, you should also try **M. R. James' *Ghost Stories***.



Set in the sweeping desert where a rebel prince seeks to overthrow a wicked sultan, **Alwyn Hamilton's *Rebel of the Sands*** is a rebel fantasy in the style of *Arabian Nights*.

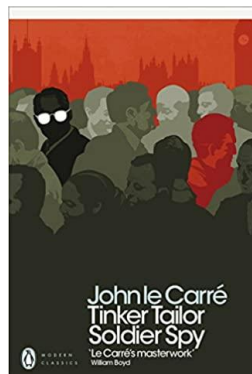
Frances Hardinge's *Deeplight* is set on the island of Lady's Crave where 14-year-old urchins Hark and his best friend Jelt live. They are scavengers: diving for relics of the gods, desperate for anything they can sell. But there is something dangerous in the deep waters of the undersea, calling to someone brave enough to retrieve it.

If you like Hardinge's wild, vivid fantasy, try also her novels ***A Skinful of Shadows*** and ***The Lie Tree*** as well as **Leigh Bardugo's *Shadow and Bone*** and ***Six of Crows***.

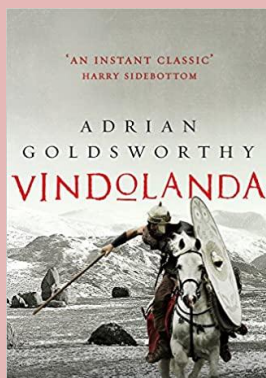
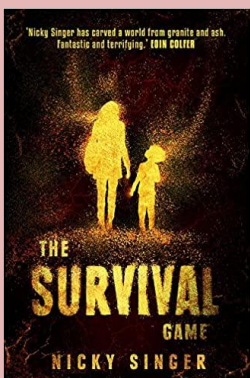


The world is overheated and scorched and your only hope is to journey north past the controls and checkpoints, Welcome to **Nicky Singer's *The Survival Game***.

Adrian Goldsworthy's *Vindolanda* is a powerful historical novel set in the army base at Vindolanda on the northern frontier of Britannia and the Roman empire. Here, one man tries to keep the peace.



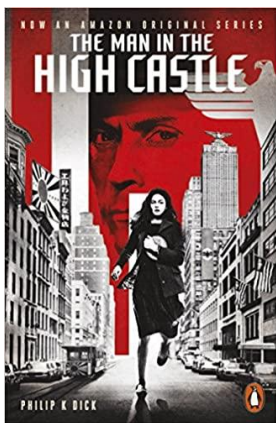
In **John le Carré's** riveting classic of Cold War espionage, ***Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy***. A mole, implanted by Moscow Centre, has infiltrated the highest ranks of the British Intelligence Service, almost destroying it in the process. Thus former spymaster George Smiley has been brought out of retirement in order to hunt down the traitor at the very heart of the Circus - even though it may be one of those closest to him.



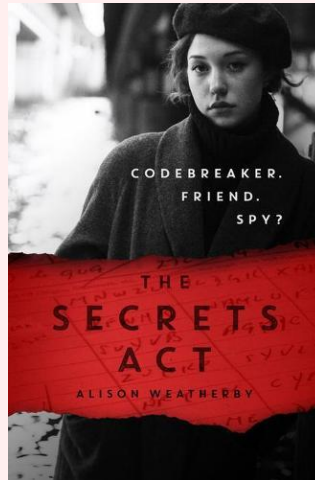
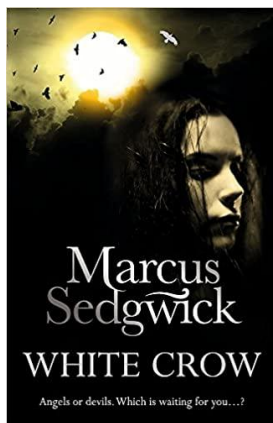
Scott Reintgen's *Nyxia* is the story of Emmett, a poor kid plucked from the streets of Detroit. But now he and nine teenagers like him are travelling to a distant planet. Before they get there, they are told, two of them will be eliminated. Those who survive will hunt for Nyxia, the most extraordinary substance in the universe. If you enjoy this, try the sequels and **Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama***.



The Man in the High Castle is a cult novel by the great science fiction writer **Philip K Dick** and it gives us a horrifying glimpse of an alternative reality - one where the Allies have lost the Second World War. In this nightmare dystopia the Nazis have taken over New York and every step involves risk.



In **Marcus Sedgwick's White Crow**, an eerie, modern gothic thriller about what awaits us after death - angels or the devil? – Rebecca is taken from London to become an unwilling visitor to a land called Winterfold. You may also enjoy Sedgwick's other darker tales, including **Witch Hill**.

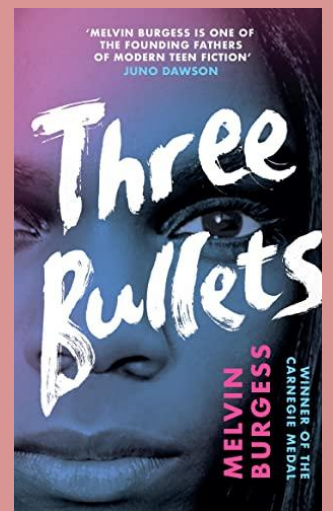


Alison Weatherby's The Secrets Act is set in wartime Britain. Pearl, a messenger, and Ellen, a codebreaker, work at top-secret HQ, Bletchley Park. But when tragedy strikes, their logical world is upended, with both friends caught in a spy plot that rocks the very heart of the war effort.

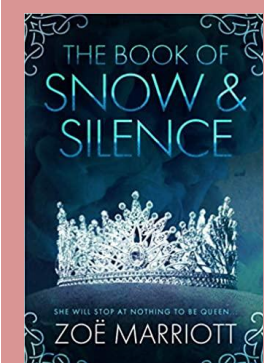
If you like fiction with wartime settings, you might also try **Theresa Breslin's** World War One-set novel **Remembrance**.

Three Bullets
Namina Forna

In a dystopian future Britain, the Bloods are in control and they're desperate to turn the country into the world they want to see: right, white, Christian supremacist. Anyone who they call abnormal is a target. Amidst the chaos of civil war the country is on the move as small militia groups fight each other and a sea of refugees escapes the cities and the pursuing Bloods. This is a novel that presents the raw reality of prejudice.

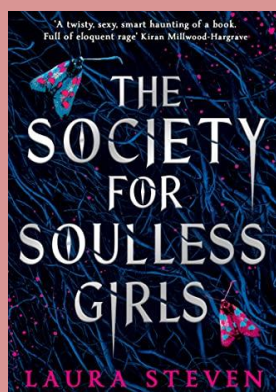


Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's **The Little Mermaid**, **Zoe Marriott's The Book fo Snow and Silence** is a different kind of fairy tale, in which Princess Theoai, exiled across the sea to wed a prince she has never met, is more interested in a local girl.

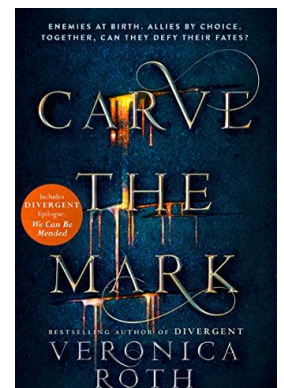


Laur Stevens' supernatural adventure The Society for Soulless Girls uncovers the truth about four students who lost their lives in the infamous North Tower murders.

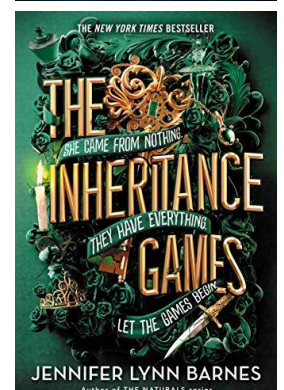
Try also **Kiran Millwood Hargrave's The Deathless Girls** the dark, gothic story of the brides of Dracula.

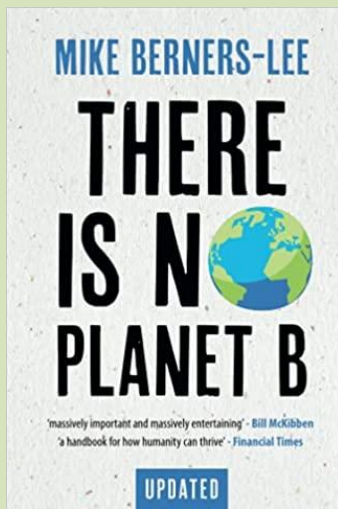


In **Carve the Mark**, **Veronica Roth** (author of the **Divergent** series) the power of friendship - and love – has to fight to survive on a planet where danger and vengeance rule. If you like your fantasy worlds to be dark and other-worldly, you should also read **Victoria Aveyard's Red Queen** or **Leigh Bardugo's Shadow and Bone** trilogy.

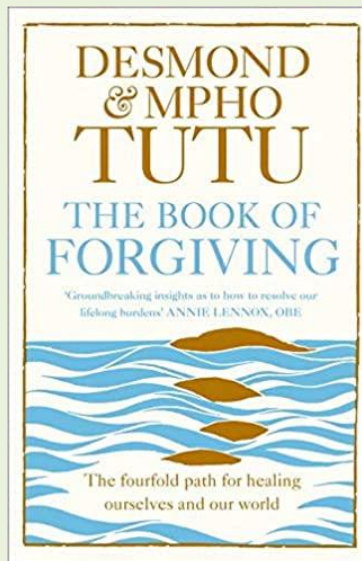


The Inheritance Games by **Jennifer Lynn Barnes** is an ingenious thriller about family secrets. Avery has a plan: keep her head down, work hard for a better future. Then an eccentric billionaire dies, leaving her almost his entire fortune. And no one, least of all Avery, knows why. Now she must move into the mansion she's inherited. It's filled with secrets and codes, and the old man's surviving relatives hell-bent on discovering why she got 'their' money.



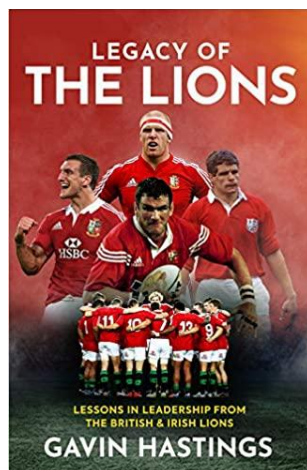


Mike Berners-Lee's *There Is No Planet B* is one of the vital books of our generation. Feeding the world, climate change, biodiversity, antibiotics, plastics, pandemics - the list of concerns seems endless. But what is most pressing, and what should we do first? And given the global nature of the challenges we now face, what on Earth can any of us do, as individuals?



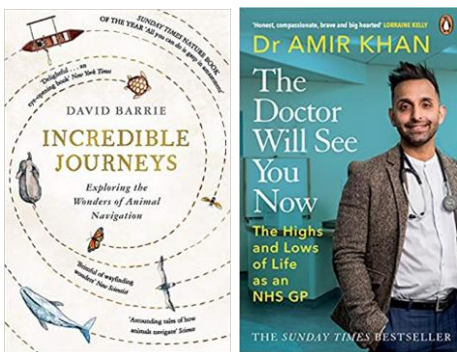
The Book of Forgiving by Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu and his daughter Mpho is written as a guide to help us to towards tolerance and mercy. How do we forgive? All of us have at times needed both to forgive and be forgiven – whether small, everyday harms or real traumas. But the path to forgiveness is not easy, and the process unclear.

You might also try *Failing Up: How to Take Risks, Aim Higher, and Never Stop Learning*, an inspirational book of life advice written by the *Hamilton* actor Leslie Odon Jr.



Rugby legend **Gavin Hastings** has collected together a fascinating collection of 'lessons in leadership' from captains of the British Lions in *Legacy of the Lions*. Inspiring, humorous and illuminating, the book casts a unique light on team-building and elite performance and reveals a new perspective on touring with – and playing against – The British & Irish Lions in the modern era.

If cricket is your game, you will enjoy **Ben Stokes'** *On Fire*, his thrilling description of his successes in the World Cup and the Ashes.



In *Incredible Journeys*, David Barrie explores the science of animal navigation, where breakthroughs are allowing scientists to unravel, for the first time, how creatures such as butterflies, birds, crustaceans, fish, reptiles and even people find their way.



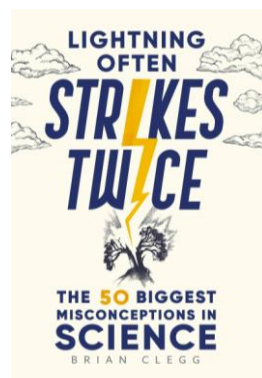
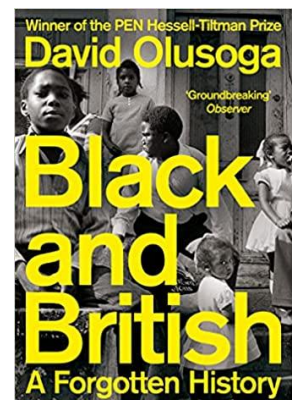
Dr Amir Khan gives a remarkable insight into the working life of an NHS GP in these difficult times in *The Doctor Will See You Now*.

You might also appreciate **Michael Sparrow's** *Country Doctor* and its true stories of rural medicine.

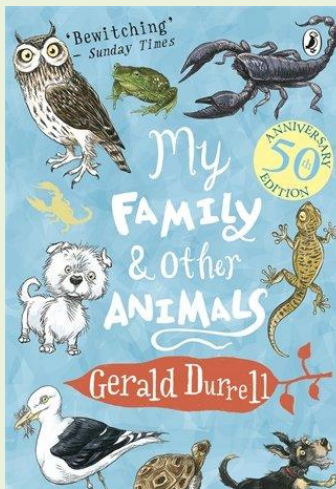
David Olusoga's *Black and British* tells the rich and revealing story of the relationship between the British Isles and the people of Africa and the Caribbean.

'[A] comprehensive and important history of black Britain . . . Written with a wonderful clarity of style and with great force and passion.' – Kwasi Kwarteng, *Sunday Times*

Another vital and urgent book is *Why We Kneel, How We Rise* by cricket legend **Michael Holding**.



Brian Clegg's *Lightning Often Strikes Twice: The 50 Biggest Misconceptions in Science* sets out to provide the facts to debunk the myths that have grown around science. From fears about the exponential growth of the human population to the embarrassment of always pointing out the north star as the brightest in the sky, this is the book to read if you want to separate the science fact from fiction

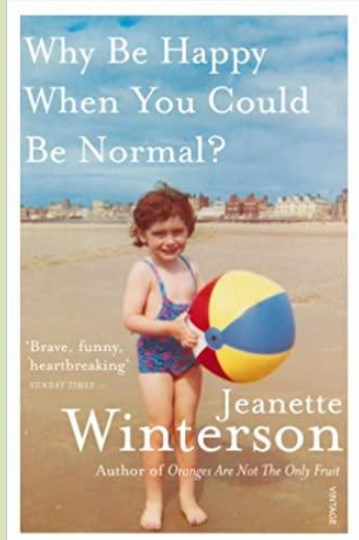


My Family and Other Animals

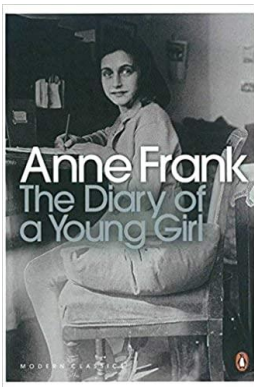
Gerald Durrell

Escaping the ills of the British climate, the Durrell family - acne-ridden Margo, gun-toting Leslie, bookworm Lawrence and budding naturalist Gerry, along with their long-suffering mother and Roger the dog - take off for the island of Corfu.

If you enjoy this, you may also like family-themed fiction including *The Darling Buds of May* by H.E. Bates. Very different depictions of the fabric of family life are found in **Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart***, set in 19th century Nigeria, and **Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn***.



In 1985 **Jeanette Winterson's** first novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, was a fictionalised version of her own Lancashire childhood, a girl with gay instincts adopted by strongly evangelical parents. In *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal* she tells the real story,

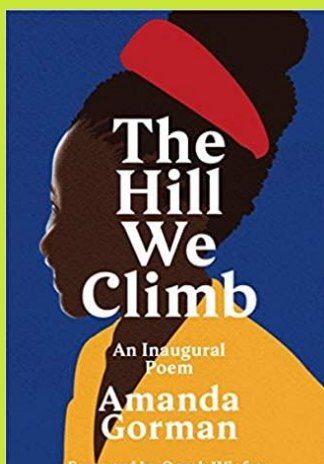


Anne Frank's *Diary* is the compelling account of a 13-year old girl living under Nazi occupation, and a testament to the abiding human spirit.

Set amid the civil rights movement, **Margot Lee Shetterly's *Hidden Figures*** tells of the African-American women who played such a crucial role in America's space programme.

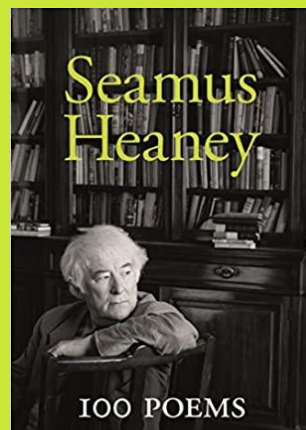


The Hill We Climb by **Amanda Gorman** is the remarkable poem read aloud at the 2021 Presidential Inauguration in America, offering us courage, consolation and the inspiration to make change. Ambitious readers might try **Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*** after this.



One of the most powerful poets of the last century, **Seamus Heaney** won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995 "for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past."

This selection of **100 Poems**, selected by Heaney's family, collects a treasury of his work.



Six Poets
Hardy to Larkin

An Anthology by **Alan Bennett**

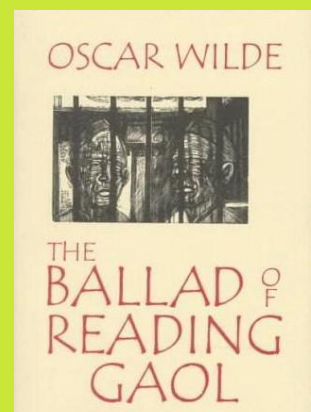


'Classic Bennett, full of wisdom and wit.'
Simon Armitage

In this personal anthology, **Alan Bennett** has chosen over seventy poems by six of Britain's best-loved poets, discussing the writers and their verse in his customary conversational style through anecdote and shrewd appraisal. You might also wish to try **John Betjeman's *Selected Poems***.

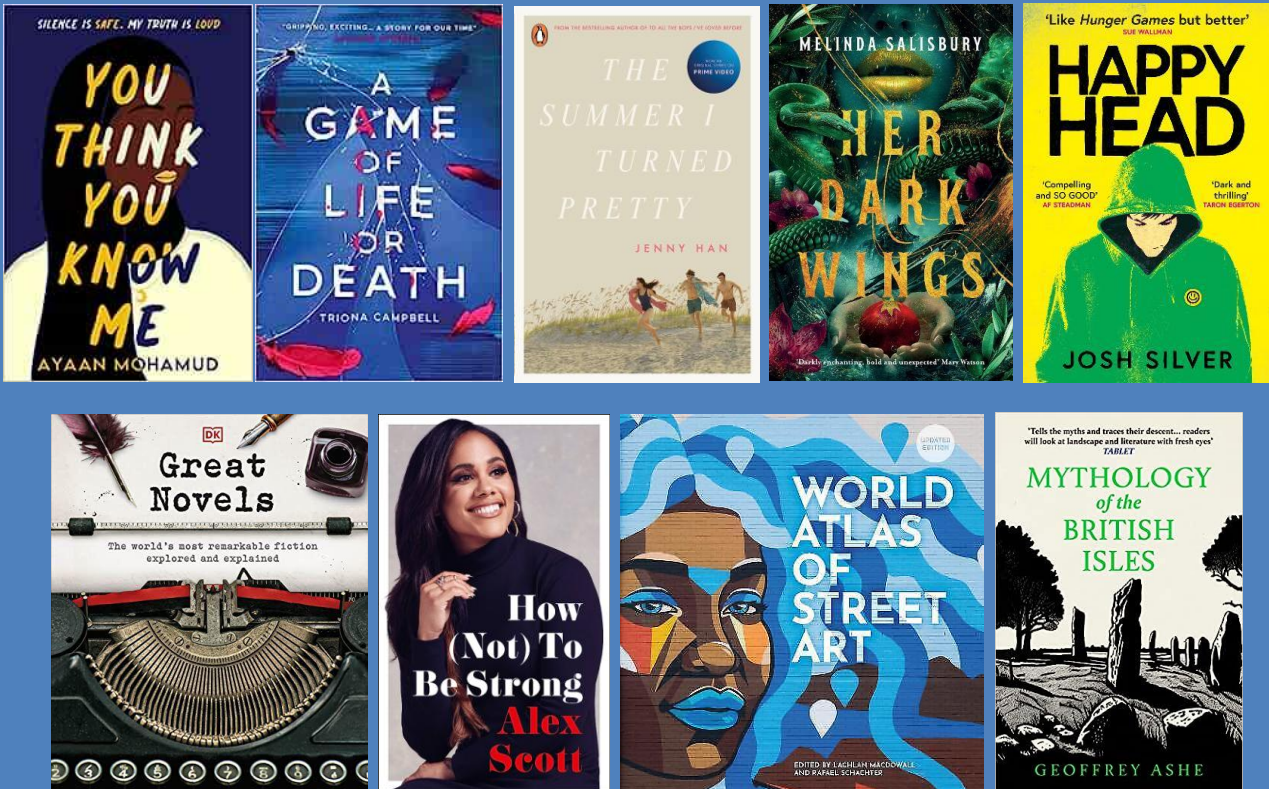
Some love too little, some too long.

Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* is a story poem about the brutality of imprisonment, written by a great Irish writer who went to jail in the 1890s for what was then the crime of loving another man. Try also **Federico García Lorca's *Selected Poems***.



New titles for 2023-24

The following is a selection of books published in the last twelve months



FICTION

Ayaan Mohamud *You Think You Know Me*

A hard-hitting account of a Muslim girl's battle to be heard as she grows up

Triona Campbell *A Game of Life or Death*

The far-reaching mystery of a girl's search to uncover the truth of her sister's death

Jenny Han *The Summer I Turned Pretty*

The story of the summer Isabel had to come to term with herself and with boys...

Melinda Salisbury *Her Dark Wings*

A modern-day take on the myth of Persephone, exploring friendship and betrayal

Josh Silver *Happy Head*

Seb joins a programme meant to tackle teenage unhappiness, but not all is as it seems

NON-FICTION

Dorling Kindersley books *Great Novels*

Alex Scott's autobiography *How (Not) To Be Strong*

Rafael Schacter *World Atlas of Street Art*

Geoffrey Ashe *Mythology of the British Isles*

My reading list

Use this space to keep a record of your own reading through the year...

	Title	Author	Date Finished	No. of Pages	Rating
1					☆☆☆☆☆
2					☆☆☆☆☆
3					☆☆☆☆☆
4					☆☆☆☆☆
5					☆☆☆☆☆
6					☆☆☆☆☆
7					☆☆☆☆☆
8					☆☆☆☆☆
9					☆☆☆☆☆
10					☆☆☆☆☆

Reward:

	Title	Author	Date Finished	No. of Pages	Rating
1					☆☆☆☆☆
2					☆☆☆☆☆
3					☆☆☆☆☆
4					☆☆☆☆☆
5					☆☆☆☆☆
6					☆☆☆☆☆
7					☆☆☆☆☆
8					☆☆☆☆☆
9					☆☆☆☆☆
10					☆☆☆☆☆

Reward:

My personal book notes