

1984 - George Orwell - 328 pages

The year 1984 has come and gone, but George Orwell's prophetic, nightmarish vision in 1949 of the world we were becoming is timelier than ever. 1984 is still the great modern classic of "negative utopia" -a startlingly original and haunting novel that creates an imaginary world that is completely convincing, from the first sentence to the last four words. No one can deny the novel's hold on the imaginations of whole generations, or the power of its admonitions -a power that seems to grow, not lessen, with the passage of time.

A Clockwork Orange - Anthony Burgess - 212 pages

A vicious fifteen-year-old "droog" is the central character of this 1963 classic, whose stark terror was captured in Stanley Kubrick's magnificent film of the same title.

In Anthony Burgess's nightmare vision of the future, where criminals take over after dark, the story is told by the central character, Alex, who talks in a brutal invented slang that brilliantly renders his and his friends' social pathology. A Clockwork Orange is a frightening fable about good and evil, and the meaning of human freedom. When the state undertakes to reform Alex—to "redeem" him—the novel asks, "At what cost?"

A Confession - Leo Tolstoy - 108 pages

A Confession -- an essay by Leo Tolstoy on his religious thoughts -- shows the great author in process of looking for answers to profound questions that trouble all who take them on: "What will come of my life?" and "What is the meaning of life?" these are questions whose answers were an absolute requirement for Tolstoy. In the course of the essay, Tolstoy shows different attempts to find answers on the examples of science, philosophy, eastern wisdom and the opinions of his fellow novelists. . . . finding no workable solution in any of these, Tolstoy recognizes the deep religious convictions of ordinary people as containing the key to true answers. The first attempt at its publication took place in 1882 (Russkaya Mysl, No 5), but Tolstoy's work was removed virtually from the whole edition of the journal by Orthodox Church censorship. The text was later published in Geneva (1884), in Russia as late as 1906 (Vsemirnyj Vestnik, No 1)

A dangerous Crossing - Rachel Rhys - 364 pages

'Thrilling, seductive, utterly absorbing.' PAULA HAWKINS, author of The Girl on The Train

'A gorgeously atmospheric read, prepare to be transported . . .' RUTH WARE, author of The Woman in Cabin 10

'A sumptuous and thrilling read which reminded me of Daphne du Maurier. It captivates you in its spell right until the end. I loved it.' KATE HAMER, author of The Girl in the Red Coat

Absolute Power - David Baldacci - 550 pages

A grizzled professional cat burglar gets trapped inside the bedroom closet of one of the world's richest men, only to witness, through a one-way mirror, two Secret Service agents kill the billionaire's trampy young wife as she tries to fight off the drunken sexual advances of the nation's chief executive. Running for his life, but not before he picks up a bloodstained letter opener that puts the president at the scene of the crime, the burglar becomes the target of a clandestine manhunt orchestrated by leading members of the executive branch.

After - Nikki Gemmell - 208 pages

Australia's bravest and most honest writer explores the devastating aftermath of her elderly mother's decision to end her own life.

Nikki Gemmell's world changed forever in October 2015 when the body of her elderly mother was found and it became clear she had decided to end her own life. After the immediate shock and devastation came the guilt and the horror, for Nikki, her family, relatives and friends. No note was left, so the questions that Elayn's death raised were endless. Was the decision an act of independence or the very opposite? Was it a desperate act driven by hopelessness and anger, or was her euthanasia a reasoned act of empowerment?

Beloved - Toni Morrison - 324 pages

Staring unflinchingly into the abyss of slavery, this spellbinding novel transforms history into a story as powerful as Exodus and as intimate as a lullaby.

Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has too many memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. Her new home is haunted by the ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: Beloved.

Black Rock White City - AS Patric 246 pages

Black Rock White City is a novel about the damages of war, the limits of choice, and the hope of love.

During a hot Melbourne summer Jovan's cleaning work at a bayside hospital is disrupted by acts of graffiti and violence becoming increasingly malevolent. For Jovan the mysterious words that must be cleaned away dislodge the poetry of the past. He and his wife Suzana were forced to flee Sarajevo and the death of their children.

Brideshead Revisited - Evelyn Waugh - 351 pages

The most nostalgic and reflective of Evelyn Waugh's novels, Brideshead Revisited looks back to the golden age before the Second World War. It tells the story of Charles Ryder's infatuation with the Marchmains and the rapidly-disappearing world of privilege they inhabit. Enchanted first by Sebastian at Oxford, then by his doomed Catholic family, in particular his remote sister, Julia, Charles comes finally to recognize only his spiritual and social distance from them.

Charlie M - Brian Freemantle - 207 pages

One of the best spy novels ever written. Charlie Muffin, a British spy, finds himself shot at and missed and then shot at and hit by his own employers in this truly excellent novel of double crosses in the spy game. A "must read" for fans of le Carre or Deighton.

China Baby love - Jane Hutcheon - 320 pages

How one woman turned her life upside down to help those who needed it most - half a world away. Every orphan comes with a story. Every journalist has a story that stays with them. And everyone has the power to make a difference. From rural Queensland to rural China, China Baby Love is the story of moving mountains, one shovel at a time.

Commonwealth - Ann Patchett - 322 pages

One Sunday afternoon in Southern California, Bert Cousins shows up at Franny Keating's christening party uninvited. Before evening falls, he has kissed Franny's mother, Beverly—thus setting in motion the dissolution of their marriages and the joining of two families.

Lady Chatterley's Lover - DH Lawrence - 376 pages

Lawrence's frank portrayal of an extramarital affair and the explicit sexual explorations of the central characters caused this controversial book, now considered a masterpiece, to be banned as pornography until 1960.

Last Chance to See - Douglas Adams - 256 pages

Join bestselling author Douglas Adams and zoologist Mark Carwardine as they take off around the world in search of exotic, endangered creatures. Hilarious and poignant--as only Douglas Adams can be--LAST CHANCE TO SEE is an entertaining and arresting odyssey through the Earth's magnificent wildlife galaxy.

Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day - Winifred Watson - 234 pages

Miss Pettigrew, an approaching-middle-age governess, was accustomed to a household of unruly English children. When her employment agency sends her to the wrong address, her life takes an unexpected turn. The alluring nightclub singer, Delysia LaFosse, becomes her new employer, and Miss Pettigrew encounters a kind of glamour that she had only met before at the movies. Over the course of a single day, both women are changed forever.

Never Let Me Go - Kazuo Ishiguro - 288 pages

As children, Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy were students at Hailsham, an exclusive boarding school secluded in the English countryside. It was a place of mercurial cliques and mysterious rules where teachers were constantly reminding their charges of how special they were. Now, years later, Kathy is a young woman. Ruth and Tommy have reentered her life, and for the first time she is beginning to look back at their shared past and understand just what it is that makes them special—and how that gift will shape the rest of their time together.

Norse Mythology - Neil Gaiman - 304 pages

Neil Gaiman has long been inspired by ancient mythology in creating the fantastical realms of his fiction. Now he turns his attention back to the source, presenting a bravura rendition of the great northern tales. In Norse Mythology, Gaiman fashions primeval stories into a novelistic arc that begins with the genesis of the legendary nine worlds; delves into the exploits of the deities, dwarves, and giants; and culminates in Ragnarok, the twilight of the

gods and the rebirth of a new time and people. Gaiman stays true to the myths while vividly reincarnating Odin, the highest of the high, wise, daring, and cunning; Thor, Odin's son, incredibly strong yet not the wisest of gods; and Loki, the son of giants, a trickster and unsurpassable manipulator. From Gaiman's deft and witty prose emerges the gods with their fiercely competitive natures, their susceptibility to being duped and to dupe others, and their tendency to let passion ignite their actions, making these long-ago myths breathe pungent life again.

Once were Warriors - Alan Duff - 208 pages

Once Were Warriors is Alan Duff's harrowing vision of his country's indigenous people two hundred years after the English conquest. In prose that is both raw and compelling, it tells the story of Beth Heke, a Maori woman struggling to keep her family from falling apart, despite the squalor and violence of the housing projects in which they live.

The Incarnations - Susan Barker - 371 pages

So begins the first letter that falls into Wang's lap as he flips down the visor in his taxi. The letters that follow are filled with the stories of Wang's previous lives—from escaping a marriage to a spirit bride, to being a slave on the run from Genghis Khan, to living as a fisherman during the Opium Wars, and being a teenager on the Red Guard during the cultural revolution—bound to his mysterious “soulmate,” spanning one thousand years of betrayal and intrigue.

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid - Bill Bryson - 288 pages

Bill Bryson was born in the middle of the American century—1951—in the middle of the United States—Des Moines, Iowa—in the middle of the largest generation in American history—the baby boomers. As one of the best and funniest writers alive, he is perfectly positioned to mine his memories of a totally all-American childhood for 24-carat memoir gold. Like millions of his generational peers, Bill Bryson grew up with a rich fantasy life as a superhero. In his case, he ran around his house and neighborhood with an old football jersey with a thunderbolt on it and a towel about his neck that served as his cape, leaping tall buildings in a single bound and vanquishing awful evildoers (and morons)—in his head—as “The Thunderbolt Kid.”

The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon - David Grann - 351 pages

A grand mystery reaching back centuries. A sensational disappearance that made headlines around the world. A quest for truth that leads to death, madness or disappearance for those who seek to solve it. The Lost City of Z is a blockbuster adventure narrative about what lies beneath the impenetrable jungle canopy of the Amazon.

After stumbling upon a hidden trove of diaries, New Yorker writer David Grann set out to solve “the greatest exploration mystery of the 20th century”: What happened to the British explorer Percy Fawcett & his quest for the Lost City of Z?

The North Water - Ian McGuire - 272 pages

A nineteenth-century whaling ship sets sail for the Arctic with a killer aboard in this dark, sharp, and highly original tale that grips like a thriller.

Behold the man: stinking, drunk, and brutal. Henry Drax is a harpooner on the Volunteer, a Yorkshire whaler bound for the rich hunting waters of the arctic circle. Also aboard for the first time is Patrick Sumner, an ex-army surgeon with a shattered reputation, no money, and no better option than to sail as the ship's medic on this violent, filthy, and ill-fated voyage.

The Rules of Backyard Cricket - Jock Serong - 304 pages

It starts in a suburban backyard with Darren Keefe and his older brother, sons of a fierce and gutsy single mother. The endless glow of summer, the bottomless fury of contest. All the love and hatred in two small bodies poured into the rules of a made-up game.

The Snow Child - Eowyn Ivey - 386 pages

Alaska, 1920: a brutal place to homestead and especially tough for recent arrivals Jack and Mabel. Childless, they are drifting apart—he breaking under the weight of the work of the farm, she crumbling from loneliness and despair. In a moment of levity during the season's first snowfall, they build a child out of snow. The next morning, the snow child is gone—but they glimpse a young, blonde-haired girl running through the trees. This little girl, who calls herself Faina, seems to be a child of the woods. She hunts with a red fox at her side, skims lightly across the snow, and somehow survives alone in the Alaskan wilderness. As Jack and Mabel struggle to understand this child who could have stepped from the pages of a fairy tale, they come to love her as their own daughter. But in this beautiful, violent place things

are rarely as they appear, and what they eventually learn about Faina will transform all of them.

The True History of the Kelly Gang - Peter Carey - 384 pages

“I lost my own father at 12 yr. of age and know what it is to be raised on lies and silences my dear daughter you are presently too young to understand a word I write but this history is for you and will contain no single lie may I burn in Hell if I speak false.”

In True History of the Kelly Gang, the legendary Ned Kelly speaks for himself, scribbling his narrative on errant scraps of paper in semiliterate but magically descriptive prose as he flees from the police. To his pursuers, Kelly is nothing but a monstrous criminal, a thief and a murderer. To his own people, the lowly class of ordinary Australians, the bushranger is a hero, defying the authority of the English to direct their lives. Indentured by his bootlegger mother to a famous horse thief (who was also her lover), Ned saw his first prison cell at 15 and by the age of 26 had become the most wanted man in the wild colony of Victoria, taking over whole towns and defying the law until he was finally captured and hanged. Here is a classic outlaw tale, made alive by the skill of a great novelist.

Three Men in a Boat - Jerome K. Jerome - 184 pages

Martyrs to hypochondria and general seediness, J. and his friends George and Harris decide that a jaunt up the Thames would suit them to a ‘T’. But when they set off, they can hardly predict the troubles that lie ahead with tow-ropes, unreliable weather forecasts and tins of pineapple chunks—not to mention the devastation left in the wake of J.’s small fox-terrier Montmorency.

White Teeth - Zadie Smith - 448 pages

On New Year’s morning, 1975, Archie Jones sits in his car on a London road and waits for the exhaust fumes to fill his Cavalier Musketeer station wagon. Archie—working-class, ordinary, a failed marriage under his belt—is calling it quits, the deciding factor being the flip of a 20-pence coin. When the owner of a nearby halal butcher shop (annoyed that Archie’s car is blocking his delivery area) comes out and bangs on the window, he gives Archie another chance at life and sets in motion this richly imagined, uproariously funny novel.

Year of Wonder - Geraldine Brooks - 308 pages

When an infected bolt of cloth carries plague from London to an isolated village, a housemaid named Anna Frith emerges as an unlikely heroine and healer. Through Anna’s eyes we follow the story of the fateful year of 1666, as she and her fellow villagers confront the spread of disease and superstition. As death reaches into every household and villagers turn from prayers to murderous witch-hunting, Anna must find the strength to confront the disintegration of her community and the lure of illicit love. As she struggles to survive and grow, a year of catastrophe becomes instead annus mirabilis, a “year of wonders.”