



## ADVANCED HIGHER ENGLISH DISSERTATION TEXT SUGGESTIONS



# INTRO & CONTENTS

This booklet will give you some suggestions for your ADVANCED HIGHER ENGLISH dissertation choice.

Here you will find a selection of authors, books by theme, poetry, and non-fiction texts. This selection will hopefully help you to get started exploring literature that interests you.

Your teacher or librarian can always help get any books.

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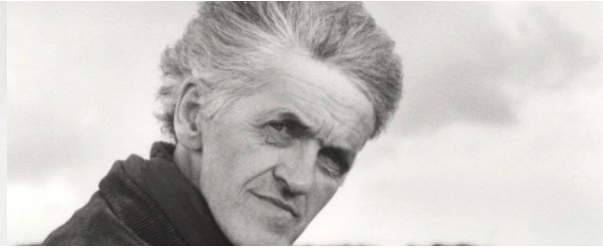
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# AUTHORS



**James Joyce** (1882 – 1941) was an Irish novelist, short story writer, poet, and literary critic. He contributed to the modernist avant-garde movement and is regarded as one of the most influential and important writers of the 20th century. Joyce's novel *Ulysses* (1922) is a landmark in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in a variety of literary styles, particularly stream of consciousness. Other well-known works are the short-story collection *Dubliners* (1914), and the novels *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). His other writings include three books of poetry, a play, letters, and occasional journalism.



**George Mackay Brown** was born in Stromness, Orkney, on 17 October 1921. He was educated at Stromness Academy, Newbattle Abbey College and Edinburgh University.

The youngest of six children of John Brown, tailor and postman, and Mhairi Mackay, a Gaelic speaker. He grew up in fairly straitened circumstances as his father was unable to work through illness. Mackay Brown himself suffered from tuberculosis as a young man. In his twenties he worked as a journalist on the *Orkney Herald*, but at the age of thirty left Orkney to study at Newbattle Abbey College, near Edinburgh.

His themes were 'mainly religious (birth, love, death, resurrection, ceremonies of fishing and agriculture)', Catholic rituals and ceremonies, island lore' – which meant he was basically opposed to modern life, to the values of capitalist materialism, to Progress, which he characterised as 'a rootless utilitarian faith, without beauty or mystery'.



**Susan Sontag** (1933 – 2004) was an American writer, philosopher, filmmaker, and political activist. She mostly wrote essays, but also published novels. Her best-known works include the critical works *Against Interpretation* (1966), *Styles of Radical Will* (1968), *On Photography* (1977), and *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), as well as the fictional works *The Way We Live Now* (1986), *The Volcano Lover* (1992), and *In America* (1999).

Sontag was active in writing and speaking about, or travelling to, areas of conflict, including during the Vietnam War and the Siege of Sarajevo. She wrote extensively about photography, culture and media, AIDS and illness, human rights, and leftist ideology. Her essays and speeches drew controversy, and she has been described as "one of the most influential critics of her generation."



**Alice Walker** is an American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. In 1982, she became the first African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, which she was awarded for her novel *The Color Purple*. Over the span of her career, Walker has published seventeen novels and short story collections, twelve non-fiction works, and collections of essays and poetry.

She focuses on the struggles of African Americans, particularly women, and they witness against societies that are racist, sexist, and violent. Her writings also focus on the role of women of colour in culture and history. Walker is a respected figure in the liberal political community for her support of unconventional and unpopular views as a matter of principle.

# AUTHORS



**Franz Kafka** was a German-speaking Bohemian novelist and short-story writer, widely regarded as one of the major figures of 20th-century literature. His work fuses elements of realism and the fantastic. It typically features isolated protagonists facing bizarre or surrealistic predicaments and incomprehensible socio-bureaucratic powers. It has been interpreted as exploring themes of alienation, existential anxiety, guilt, and absurdity. His best known works include the short story "The Metamorphosis" and novels *The Trial* and *The Castle*. The term *Kafkaesque* has entered English to describe situations like those found in his writing.



**Jeanette Winterson** is an English writer. Her first book, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, was a semi-autobiographical novel about a sensitive teenage girl rebelling against convention. Other novels explore gender polarities and sexual identity and later ones the relations between humans and technology.



**James Baldwin's** work fictionalizes fundamental personal questions and dilemmas amid complex social and psychological pressures. Themes of masculinity, sexuality, race, and class intertwine to create intricate narratives that run parallel with some of the major political movements toward social change in mid-twentieth century America, such as the civil rights movement and the gay liberation movement. Baldwin's protagonists are often but not exclusively African American, and gay and bisexual men frequently feature prominently in his literature. These characters often face internal and external obstacles in their search for social and self-acceptance. Such dynamics are prominent in Baldwin's second novel, *Giovanni's Room*, which was written in 1956, well before the gay liberation movement



**Joseph Conrad** was a Polish-British writer, regarded as one of the greatest novelists to write in the English language. Though he did not speak English fluently until his twenties, he came to be regarded a master prose stylist who brought a non-English sensibility into English literature. He wrote stories and novels, many with a nautical setting, that depict trials of the human spirit in the midst of what he saw as an impassive, inscrutable universe.

Writing near the peak of the British Empire, Conrad drew on the national experiences of his native Poland—during nearly all his life, parceled out among three occupying empires—and on his own experiences in the French and British merchant navies, to create short stories and novels that reflect aspects of a European-dominated world—including imperialism and colonialism—and that profoundly explore the human psyche.

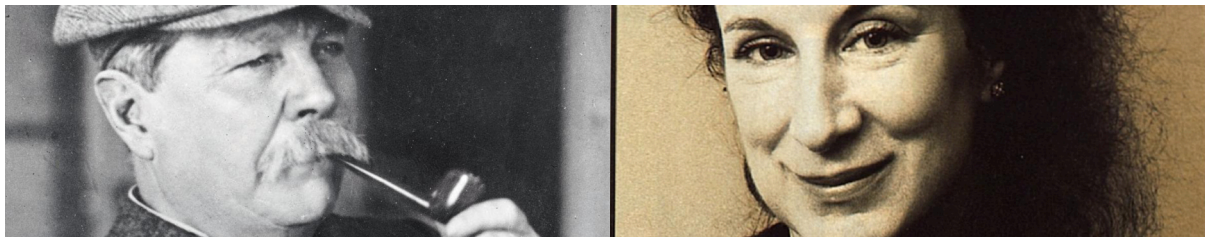


# AUTHORS



**Doris Lessing** was a British novelist. She was born to British parents in Iran, where she lived until 1925. Her family then moved to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where she remained until moving in 1949 to London, England. Her novels include *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), the sequence of five novels collectively called *Children of Violence*, *The Golden Notebook* (1962), *The Good Terrorist*.

Lessing was awarded the 2007 Nobel Prize in Literature. In awarding the prize, the Swedish Academy described her as "that epicist of the female experience, who with scepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilisation to scrutiny".[2] Lessing was the oldest person ever to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature.



**Arthur Conan Doyle** was a British writer and physician. He created the character Sherlock Holmes in 1887 for *A Study in Scarlet*, the first of four novels and fifty-six short stories about Holmes and Dr. Watson. The Sherlock Holmes stories are milestones in the field of crime fiction.

Doyle was a prolific writer; other than Holmes stories, his works include fantasy and science fiction stories about Professor Challenger and humorous stories about the Napoleonic soldier Brigadier Gerard, as well as plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction, and historical novels. One of Doyle's early short stories, "J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement" (1884), helped to popularise the mystery of the Mary Celeste.

**Fyodor Dostoyevsky** was a Russian novelist, short story writer, essayist, and journalist. Dostoyevsky's literary works explore the human condition in the troubled political, social, and spiritual atmospheres of 19th-century Russia, and engage with a variety of philosophical and religious themes. His most acclaimed novels include *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1869), *Demons* (1872), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). His 1864 novella *Notes from Underground* is considered to be one of the first works of existentialist literature.[4] Numerous literary critics rate him as one of the greatest novelists in all of world literature, as many of his works are considered highly influential masterpieces

**Margaret Atwood** is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, teacher, environmental activist, and inventor. Since 1961, she has published 18 books of poetry, 18 novels, 11 books of non-fiction, nine collections of short fiction, eight children's books, and two graphic novels, and a number of small press editions of both poetry and fiction. Atwood has won numerous awards and honors for her writing, including two Booker Prizes, the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the Governor General's Award, the Franz Kafka Prize, Princess of Asturias Awards, and the National Book Critics and PEN Center USA Lifetime Achievement Awards.[2] A number of her works have been adapted for film and television.

Atwood's works encompass a variety of themes including gender and identity, religion and myth, the power of language, climate change, and "power politics".[3] Many of her poems are inspired by myths and fairy tales which interested her from a very early age.

# AUTHORS

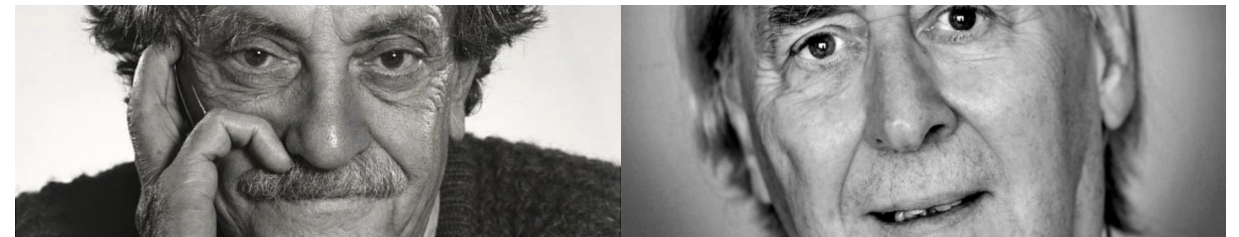


**Mark Twain** was an American humorist, journalist, lecturer, and novelist who acquired international fame for his travel narratives, especially *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), *Roughing It* (1872), and *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), and for his adventure stories of boyhood, especially *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885).

A gifted raconteur, distinctive humorist, and irascible moralist, he transcended the apparent limitations of his origins to become a popular public figure and one of America's best and most beloved writers.

**Graham Greene** Despite the downbeat tone of much of his subject matter, Greene was in fact one of the most widely read British novelists of the 20th century. His books' unusual popularity is partly due to his production of thrillers featuring crime and intrigue but more importantly to his superb gifts as a storyteller, especially his masterful selection of detail and his use of realistic dialogue in a fast-paced narrative.

The world Greene's characters inhabit is a fallen one, and the tone of his works emphasizes the presence of evil as a palpable force. His novels display a consistent preoccupation with sin and moral failure acted out in seedy locales characterized by danger, violence, and physical decay.



## Kurt Vonnegut

American writer noted for his wryly satirical novels who frequently used postmodern techniques as well as elements of fantasy and science fiction to highlight the horrors and ironies of 20th-century civilization. Much of Vonnegut's work is marked by an essentially fatalistic worldview that nonetheless embraces modern humanist beliefs.

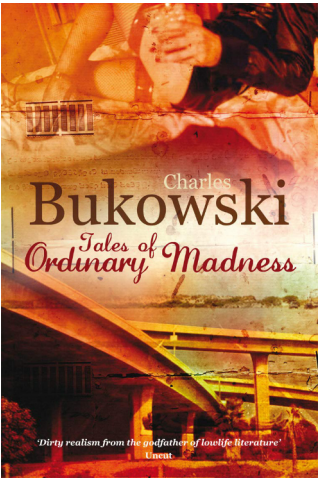
*Slaughterhouse-Five*; or, *The Children's Crusade* (1969) cemented his reputation. Explicitly drawing on his experience at the bombing of Dresden in World War 2, Vonnegut crafted an absurdist nonlinear narrative in which the bombing raid serves as a symbol of the cruelty and destructiveness of war through the centuries.

**JG Ballard** was a British author of science fiction set in ecologically unbalanced landscapes caused by decadent technological excess.

The son of a British business executive based in China, Ballard spent four years of his boyhood in a Japanese prison camp near Shanghai during World War II. This experience is recounted in his largely autobiographical novel *Empire of the Sun* (1984; film 1987). The devastated city and nearby countryside also provided settings for several of his apocalyptic novels. He attended King's College, Cambridge, but left without a degree. His first short stories appeared in the 1950s. Beginning in the 1960s, Ballard wrote longer works, including *The Drowned World* (1962), *The Wind from Nowhere* (1962), *The Burning World* (1964), and *The Crystal World* (1966).



# ADDICTION

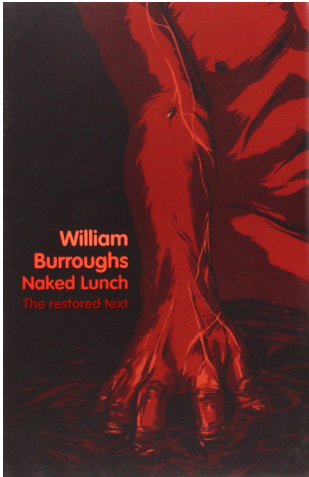
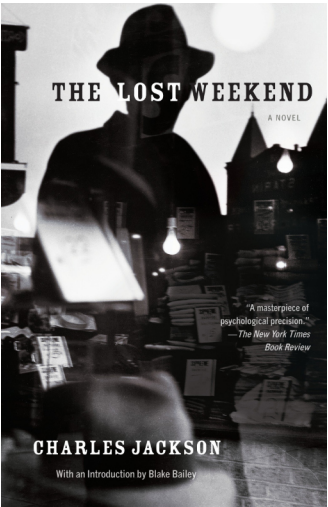


**Tales of Ordinary Madness:** Inspired by D.H. Lawrence, Chekhov and Hemingway, Bukowski's writing is passionate, extreme and has attracted a cult following, while his life was as weird and wild as the tales he wrote. This collection of short stories gives an insight into the dark, dangerous lowlife of Los Angeles that Bukowski inhabited.

From prostitutes to classical music, Bukowski ingeniously mixes high and low culture in his 'tales of ordinary madness'. These are angry yet tender, humorous and haunting portrayals of life in the underbelly of Los Angeles.

**The Lost Weekend:** Set in a rundown neighborhood of Manhattan in 1936, the novel explores a five-day alcoholic binge. Don Birnam, a binge drinker mostly of rye, fancies himself as a writer. He lapses into foreign phrases and quotes Shakespeare even while attempting to steal a woman's purse, trying to pawn a typewriter for drinking money, and smashing his face on a banister.

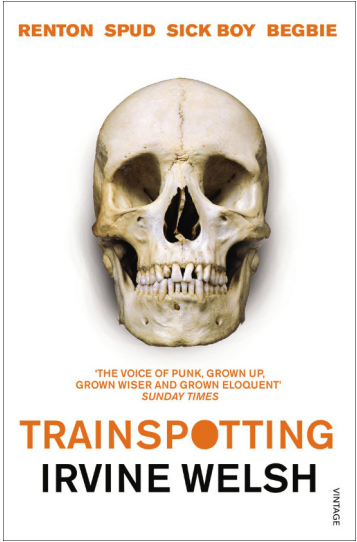
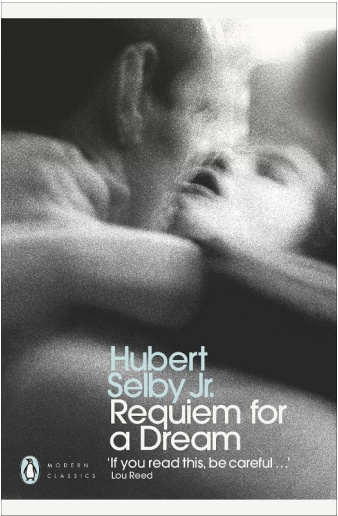
Perhaps the only thing keeping Birnam from drinking himself to death is his girlfriend Helen, a selfless and incorruptible woman who tolerates his behavior out of love.



**Naked Lunch** is a 1959 novel by American writer William S. Burroughs. The book is structured as a series of loosely connected vignettes, intended by Burroughs to be read in any order.[1] The reader follows the narration of junkie William Lee, who takes on various aliases, from the U.S. to Mexico, eventually to Tangier and the dreamlike Interzone.

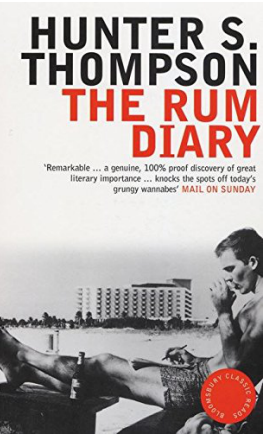
The vignettes (which Burroughs called "routines") are drawn from Burroughs' own experiences in these places and his addiction to drugs.

**Requiem for a Dream** follows the lives of Sara Goldfarb, her son Harry, his girlfriend Marion Silver, and his best friend Tyrone C. Love, who are all searching for the key to their dreams in their own ways. In the process, they fall into devastating lives of addiction. Harry and Marion are in love and want to open their own business; their friend Tyrone wants to escape life in the ghetto. To achieve these dreams, they buy a large amount of heroin, planning to get rich by selling it.



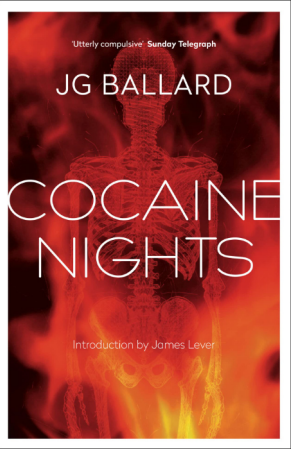
**Trainspotting** is the first novel by Scottish writer Irvine Welsh, first published in 1993. It takes the form of a collection of short stories, written in either Scots, Scottish English or British English, revolving around various residents of Leith, Edinburgh who either use heroin, are friends of the core group of heroin users, or engage in destructive activities that are effectively addictions. The novel is set in the late 1980s[1] and has been described by The Sunday Times as "the voice of punk, grown up, grown wiser and grown eloquent".[2]

The novel has since achieved a cult status and served as the basis for the film Trainspotting (1996), directed by Danny Boyle.[



Set in the late 1950s, **The Rum Diary** encompasses a tangled love story involving jealousy, treachery and violent alcoholic lust among the Americans who staff the newspaper. Thompson himself travelled from New York to San Juan in 1960 to write for an ill-fated sports newspaper on the island of Puerto Rico.

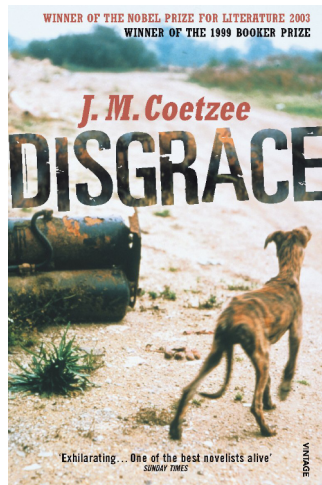
Although Thompson wrote his narrative at the age of 22,[4] it deals extensively with a fear of "going over the hill" and growing old. The prominent characters are typical of Thompson's work: violent, maniacal and alcoholic, stumbling through life. The narrative uses a highly paced and rather exciting style, also typical of Thompson's oeuvre. Thompson himself stated that he wanted to write the Great American Novel. "I still can't beat that goddamn Gatsby."



**Cocaine Nights:** The story's protagonist, Charles Prentice, ventures to Estrella de Mar in order to rescue his jailed brother, Frank who has been arrested for instigating an arson attack which killed 5 people.[1] Upon arriving and talking with his sibling, Charles finds to his horror that his brother has confessed to everything, and has no interest in trying to escape his plea. In a matter of days, Charles becomes immersed in the strange world of Estrella de Mar, learning more of its dark secrets, and spending less time worrying about his brother.

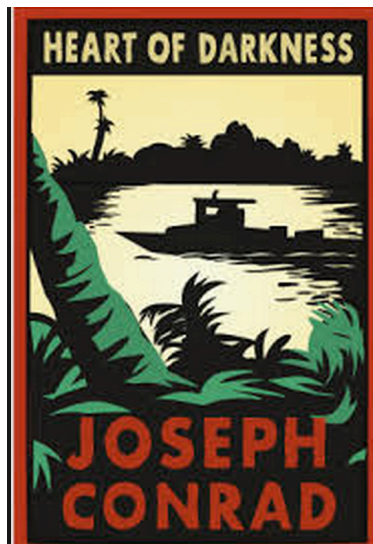


# AFRICA

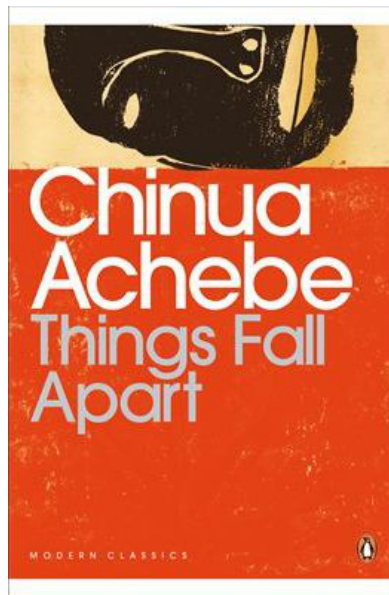


In **Disgrace**, David Lurie is a white South African professor of English who loses everything: his reputation, his job, his peace of mind, his dreams of artistic success, and finally even his ability to protect his own daughter. He is twice-divorced and dissatisfied with his job as a 'communications' lecturer, teaching a class in romantic literature at a technical university in Cape Town in post-apartheid South Africa.

**Heart of Darkness** (1899) is a novella by Polish-English novelist Joseph Conrad. It tells the story of Charles Marlow, a sailor who takes on an assignment from a Belgian trading company as a ferry-boat captain in the African interior. The novel is widely regarded as a critique of European colonial rule in Africa, whilst also examining the themes of power dynamics and morality. Although Conrad does not name the river where the narrative takes place, at the time of writing the Congo Free State, the location of the large and economically important Congo River, was a private colony of Belgium's King Leopold II. Marlow is given a text by Kurtz, an ivory trader working on a trading station far up the river, who has "gone native" and is the object of Marlow's expedition.



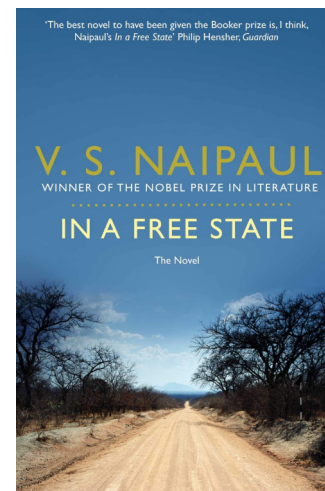
**Things Fall Apart** is the debut novel by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, first published in 1958. It depicts pre-colonial life in the southeastern part of Nigeria and the invasion by Europeans during the late 19th century. It is seen as the archetypal modern African novel in English, and one of the first to receive global critical acclaim. It is a staple book in schools throughout Africa and is widely read and studied in English-speaking countries around the world.



**The Last King of Scotland** is a novel by journalist Giles Foden, published by Faber and Faber in 1998. Focusing on the rise of Ugandan President Idi Amin and his reign as dictator from 1971 to 1979, the novel, which interweaves fiction and historical fact, is written as the memoir of a fictional Scottish doctor in Amin's employ. Foden's novel received critical acclaim and numerous awards when it was published.



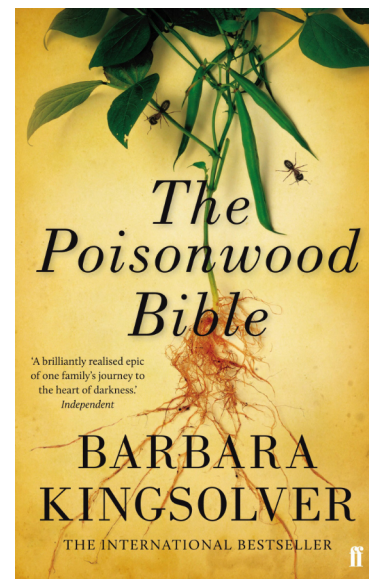
# AFRICA



**n a Free State** is a novel by V. S. Naipaul published in 1971 by Andre Deutsch. It won that year's Booker Prize. The plot consists of a framing narrative and three short stories – "One out of Many", "Tell Me Who to Kill", and the title story, "In a Free State". The work is symphonic, with different movements converging towards a common theme; although the theme is not spelled out, it evidently concerns the price of freedom, with analogies implicitly drawn between the three scenarios.

**The Catastrophist** is a novel of love, passion, violence, and desire, set in the Belgian Congo in 1959. While expatriates loll about their pools in a colonial paradise soon to erupt into chaos, huge crowds are drawn to the charismatic Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba - and his even more dangerous rivals.

One man sees the cracks appearing around him and struggles to hold on to his lover, his sanity, and ultimately his life. Gillespie, the outsider, a journalist, is in Leopoldville for the beautiful Italian, Ines. He is desperate for her love, while she is obsessed with the unfolding drama, caught up in history, ideology, hero worship.

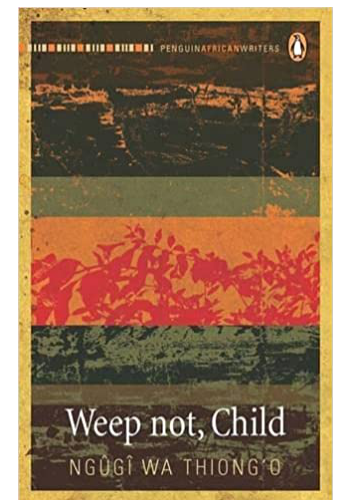
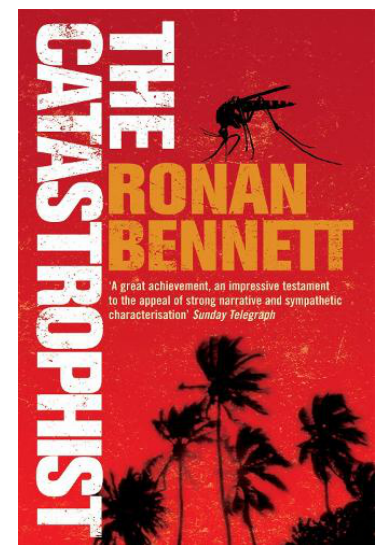


**The Poisonwood Bible** (1998), by Barbara Kingsolver, is a best-selling novel about a missionary family, the Prices, who in 1959 move from the U.S. state of Georgia to the village of Kilanga in the Belgian Congo, close to the Kwilu River.

The novel's title refers to Bible errata. The father of the family creates his own "misprint" of the Bible. He concludes his sermons with the Kikongo expression "Tata Jesus is bängala" with the intent of saying "Jesus is most precious". In his hurried mispronunciation, he actually says "Jesus is poisonwood".

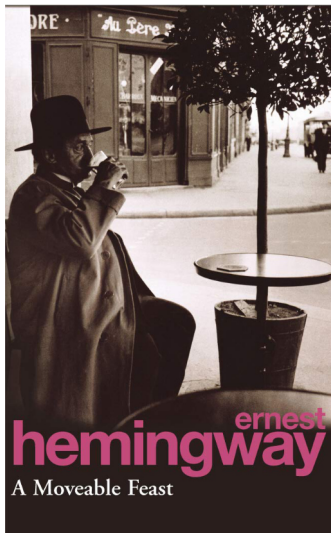
**Weep Not, Child** is a 1964 novel by Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. It was his first novel, published in 1964 under the name James Ngugi. It was among the African Writers Series. It was the first English novel to be published by an East African.[1][2][3] Thiong'o's works deal with the relationship between Africans and white settlers in colonial Kenya, and are heavily critical of colonial rule. Specifically, Weep Not, Child deals with the Mau Mau Uprising,[5] and "the bewildering dispossession of an entire people from their ancestral land." [Ngũgĩ wrote the novel while he was a student at Makerere University.

The book is divided into two parts and eighteen chapters. Part one deals mostly with the education of Njoroge, while part two deals with the rising Mau Mau movement.





# BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY

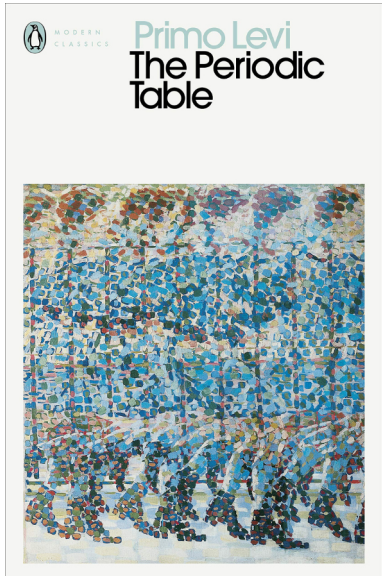
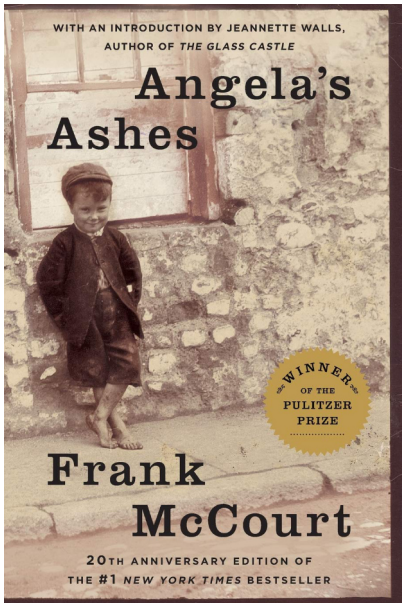


**A Moveable Feast** is a 1964 memoir belles-lettres by American author Ernest Hemingway about his years as a struggling expat journalist and writer in Paris during the 1920s. It was published posthumously.[1] The book details Hemingway's first marriage to Hadley Richardson and his associations with other cultural figures of the Lost Generation in Interwar France.

The memoir consists of various personal accounts by Hemingway and involves many notable figures of the time, such as Sylvia Beach, Hilaire Belloc, Bror von Blixen-Finecke, Aleister Crowley, John Dos Passos, F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, Pascin, Ezra Pound, Evan Shipman, Gertrude Stein, Alice B. Toklas and Hermann von Wedderkop. The work also references the addresses of specific locations such as bars, cafes, and hotels, many of which can still be found in Paris today.

**Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt:** Born in Brooklyn, New York, on 19 August 1930, Frank (Francis) McCourt is the oldest son of Malachy McCourt and Angela Sheehan McCourt. Both of his parents immigrated from Ireland and married in a shotgun wedding over Angela's pregnancy with Frankie. Angela is from Limerick, Ireland, and is fond of music, singing, and dancing. In Brooklyn, the McCourts live in modern tenement housing next to a park and share a floor, and an indoor lavatory, with other immigrant families.

The family's prospects, and Angela's spirits, lift whenever he finds a new job and brings home his wages, but soon he finds himself spending all of his pay packet in pubs, despite Angela's efforts to prevent him from doing so. He loses each job after a few weeks as a result of his heavy drinking.

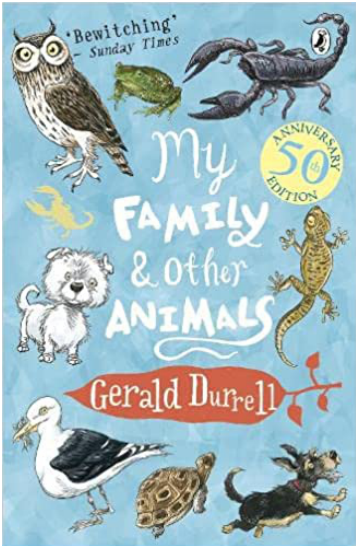
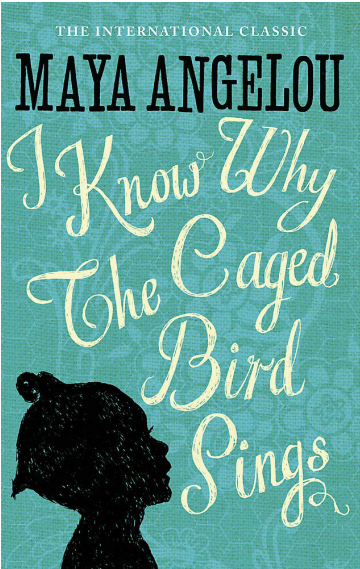


**The Periodic Table by Primo Levi:** The stories are autobiographical episodes based on the author's experiences as a Jewish-Italian doctoral-level chemist under the Fascist regime in Italy and afterwards. They include various themes that follow a chronological sequence: his ancestry, his study of chemistry and practising the profession in wartime Italy, a pair of imaginative tales he wrote at that time,[2] and his subsequent experiences as an anti-Fascist partisan, his arrest and imprisonment, interrogation, and internment in the Fossoli di Carpi and Auschwitz camps, and postwar life as an industrial chemist.

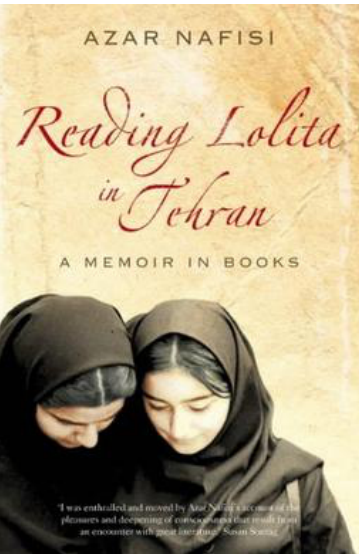
Each of the twenty-one stories in the book bears the name of a chemical element as its title and has a connection to the element in some way.

**I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings** is a 1969 autobiography describing the young and early years of American writer and poet Maya Angelou. The first in a seven-volume series, it is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma.

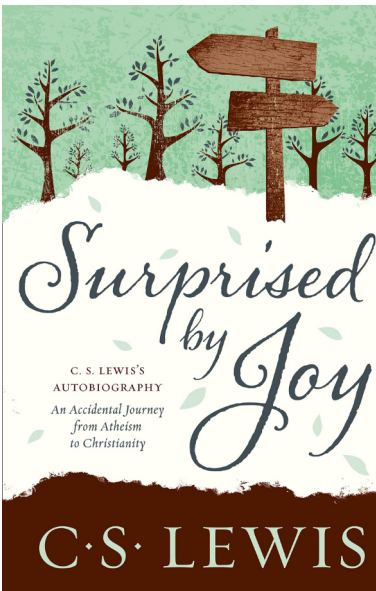
The book begins when three-year-old Maya and her older brother are sent to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their grandmother and ends when Maya becomes a mother at the age of 16. In the course of Caged Bird, Maya transforms from a victim of racism with an inferiority complex into a self-possessed, dignified young woman capable of responding to prejudice.



**Reading Lolita in Tahrn** consists of a memoir of the author's experiences about returning to Iran during the revolution (1978–1981) and living under the Islamic Republic of Iran government until her departure in 1997. It narrates her teaching at the University of Tehran after 1979, her refusal to submit to the rule to wear the veil and her subsequent expulsion from the University, life during the Iran–Iraq War, her return to teaching at the University of Allameh Tabatabaee (1981), her resignation (1987), the formation of her book club (1995–97), and her decision to emigrate. Events are interlaced with the stories of book club members consisting of seven of her female students who met weekly at Nafisi's house to discuss works of Western literature.[3] including the controversial Lolita, and the texts are interpreted through the books they read.



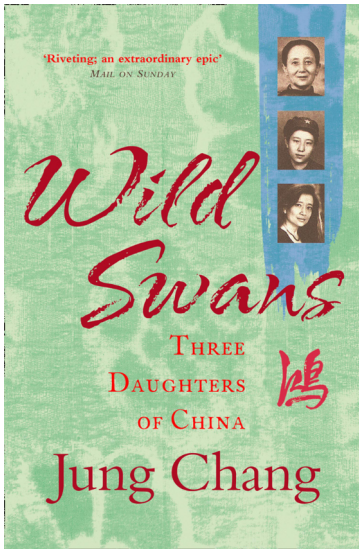
For many years an atheist, C. S. Lewis vividly describes the spiritual quest that convinced him of the truth and reality of Christianity, in his famous autobiography.



"In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God ... perhaps the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England." Thus Lewis describes memorably the crisis of his conversion.

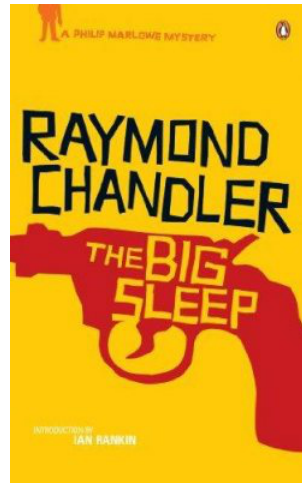
**'Surprised by Joy'** reveals both that crisis and its momentous conclusion that would determine the shape of Lewis's entire life.

**Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China** is a family history that spans a century, recounting the lives of three female generations in China, by Chinese writer Jung Chang. First published in 1991, Wild Swans contains the biographies of her grandmother and her mother, then finally her own autobiography. Her grandmother had bound feet and was married off at a young age as the concubine of a high-status warlord. Chang's mother rose in status as a member of the Communist Party. Chang took part in the Cultural Revolution as a member of the Red Guards, but eventually her father was tortured and she was sent to the countryside for thought reform. Later, she earned a scholarship to study in England, where she still lives.





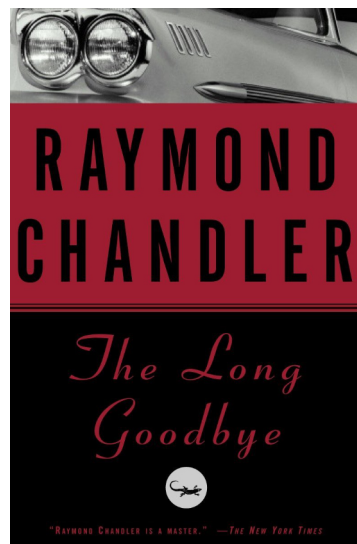
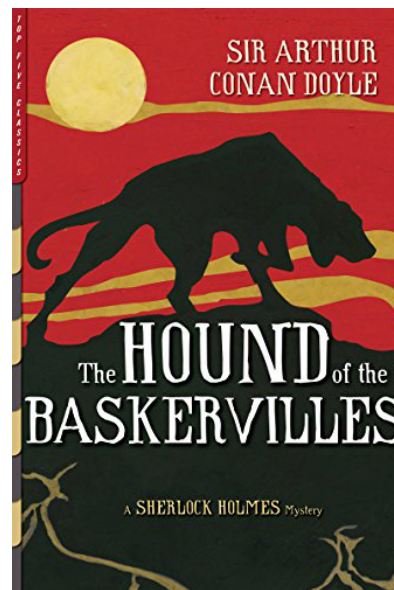
# CRIME



**The Big Sleep** (1939) is a hardboiled crime novel by American-British writer Raymond Chandler, the first to feature the detective Philip Marlowe. It has been adapted for film twice, in 1946 and again in 1978. The story is set in Los Angeles.

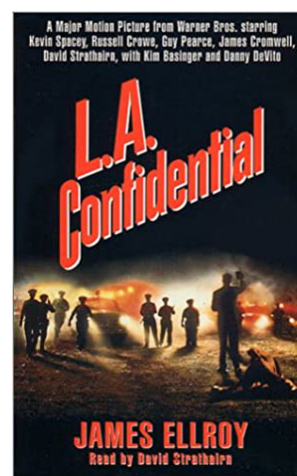
The story is noted for its complexity, with characters double-crossing one another and secrets being exposed throughout the narrative. The title is a euphemism for death; the final pages of the book refer to a rumination about "sleeping the big sleep".

**The Hound of the Baskervilles** is the third of the four crime novels by British writer Arthur Conan Doyle featuring the detective Sherlock Holmes. Originally serialised in The Strand Magazine from August 1901 to April 1902, it is set largely on Dartmoor in Devon in England's West Country and tells the story of an attempted murder inspired by the legend of a fearsome, diabolical hound of supernatural origin.



**The Long Goodbye** is a novel by Raymond Chandler, published in 1953, his sixth novel featuring the private investigator Philip Marlowe. The novel is notable for using hard-boiled detective fiction as a vehicle for social criticism and for including autobiographical elements from Chandler's life. In 1955, the novel received the Edgar Award for Best Novel.

**LA Confidential** is about several Los Angeles Police Department officers in the early 1950s who become embroiled in a mix of sex, corruption and murder following a massacre at the Nite Owl coffee shop. The story eventually encompasses organized crime, political corruption, heroin trafficking, pornography, prostitution and Hollywood. The title refers to the scandal magazine Confidential, which is fictionalized as Hush-Hush. It also deals with the real "Bloody Christmas" scandal.



# CRIME

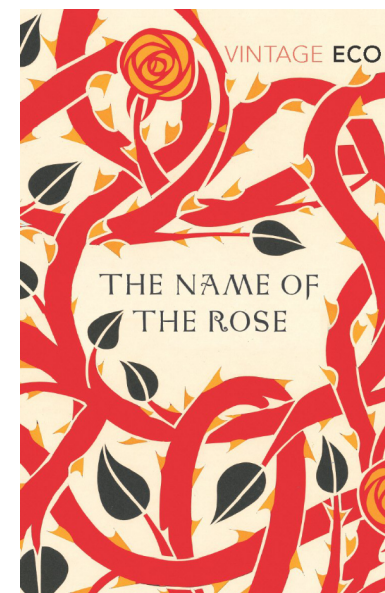


**The Moonstone** (1868) by Wilkie Collins is a 19th-century British epistolary novel. It is an early example of the modern detective novel, and established many of the ground rules of the modern genre. The story was serialised in Charles Dickens's magazine All the Year Round. Collins adapted The Moonstone for the stage in 1877.

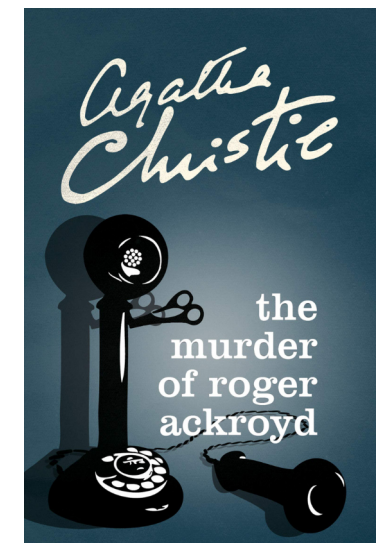
Told by a series of narratives from some of the main characters, the complex plot traces the subsequent efforts to explain the theft, identify the thief, trace the stone and recover it.

**The Murder of Roger Ackroyd** is a work of detective fiction by British writer Agatha Christie, first published in June 1926. It is the third novel to feature Hercule Poirot as the lead detective.

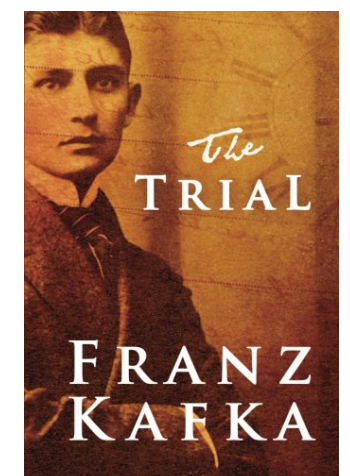
Poirot retires to a village near the home of a friend, Roger Ackroyd, to pursue a project to perfect vegetable marrows. Soon after, Ackroyd is murdered and Poirot must come out of retirement to solve the case.



**The Name of the Rose** is the 1980 debut novel by Italian author Umberto Eco. It is a historical murder mystery set in an Italian monastery in the year 1327, and an intellectual mystery combining semiotics in fiction, biblical analysis, medieval studies, and literary theory.

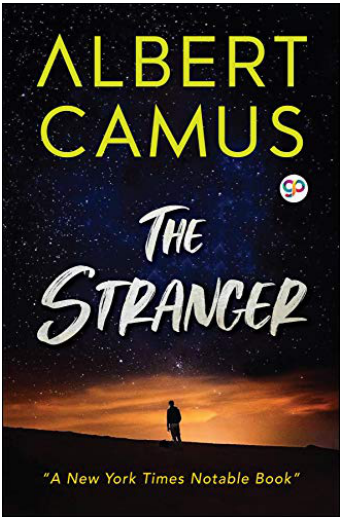


**The Trial** is a novel written by Franz Kafka in 1914 and 1915 and published posthumously on 26 April 1925. One of his best known works, it tells the story of Josef K., a man arrested and prosecuted by a remote, inaccessible authority, with the nature of his crime revealed neither to him nor to the reader. Heavily influenced by Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov, Kafka even went so far as to call Dostoevsky a blood relative.[2] Like Kafka's two other novels, The Trial was never completed, although it does include a chapter which appears to bring the story to an intentionally abrupt ending.



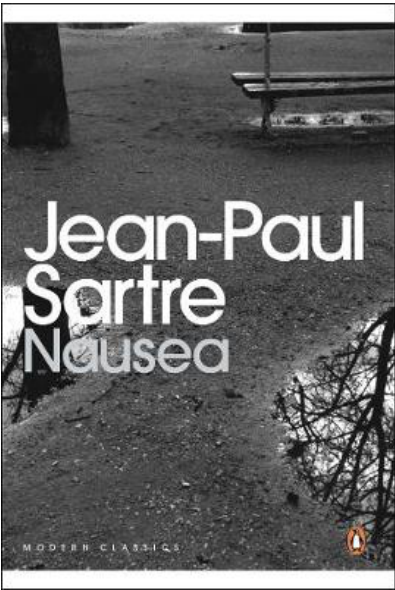


# EXISTENTIALISM

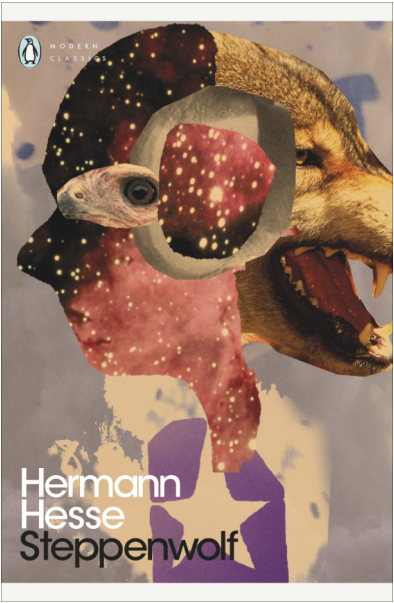


**The Stranger** , also published in English as *The Outsider*, is a 1942 novella by French author Albert Camus. Its theme and outlook are often cited as examples of Camus' philosophy, absurdism, coupled with existentialism; though Camus personally rejected the latter label.

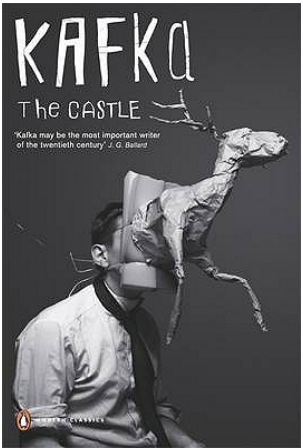
The title character is Meursault, an indifferent French settler in Algeria. Weeks after his mother's funeral, he kills an Arab man in French Algiers. Meursault is tried and sentenced to death. The story is divided into two parts, presenting Meursault's first-person narrative view before and after the murder,



**Nausea** takes place in 'Bouville' (homophone of Boue-ville, literally, 'Mud town') a town similar to Le Havre,[3] and it concerns a dejected historian, who becomes convinced that inanimate objects and situations encroach on his ability to define himself, on his intellectual and spiritual freedom, evoking in the protagonist a sense of nausea.

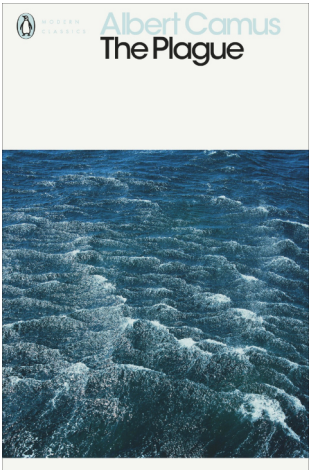


As **Steppenwolf** begins, the hero is beset by reflections on his being ill-suited for the world of everyday, regular people, specifically for frivolous bourgeois society. In his aimless wanderings about the city he encounters a person carrying an advertisement for a magic theatre who gives him a small book, *Treatise on the Steppenwolf*. This treatise, cited in full in the novel's text as Harry reads it, addresses Harry by name and strikes him as describing himself uncannily.



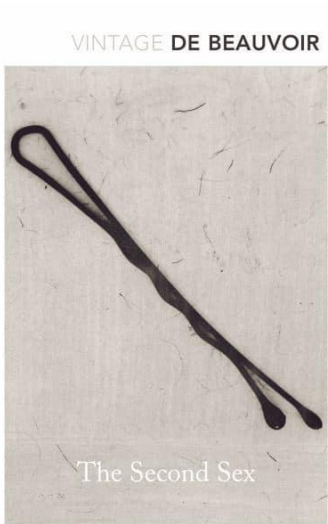
**The Castle** s the last novel by Franz Kafka. In it a protagonist known only as "K." arrives in a village and struggles to gain access to the mysterious authorities who govern it from a castle supposedly owned by Count Westwest.

# EXISTENTIALISM

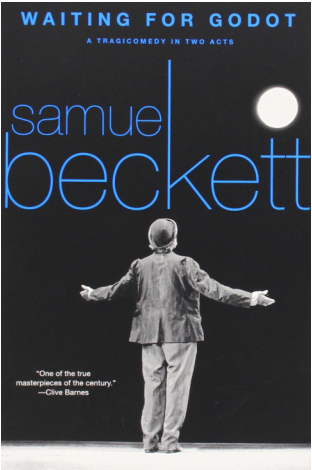


**The Plague** (French: *La Peste*) is a novel by Albert Camus. Published in 1947, it tells the story from the point of view of a narrator of a plague sweeping the French Algerian city of Oran. The narrator remains unknown until the start of the last chapter, chapter 5 of part 5. The novel presents a snapshot of life in Oran as seen through the author's distinctive absurdist point of view.[1]

**The Second Sex** (French: *Le Deuxième Sexe*) is a 1949 book by the French existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, in which the author discusses the treatment of women throughout history. Beauvoir researched and wrote the book in about 14 months between 1946 and 1949.[3] She published the work in two volumes: *Facts and Myths* (*Les faits et les mythes*), and *Lived Experience* (*L'expérience vécue*). Some chapters first appeared in the journal *Les Temps modernes*.[4][5] One of Beauvoir's best-known books, *The Second Sex* is often regarded as a major work of feminist philosophy, and as the starting inspiration point of second-wave feminism.[6]



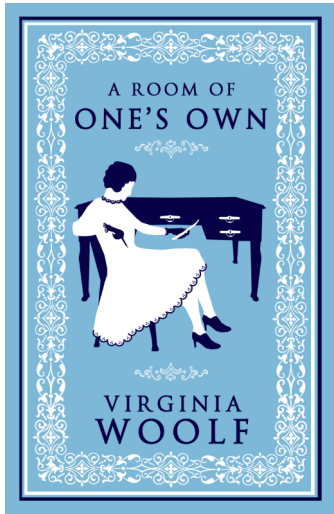
**Young Adam** is a 1954 novel by Alexander Trocchi which tells the story of Joe, a young man who labours on the river barges of Glasgow, and who discovers the body of a young woman floating in the canal. The novel focuses on the relationship between Joe and his companions on the barge – a husband, Les and his younger wife, Ella – and it becomes clearer as the novel progresses that Joe is connected to the dead woman he found.[1] From this comes the saying, "I've shed my own skin and merged into the fog".



**Waiting for Godot** is a play by Samuel Beckett in which two characters, Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo), engage in a variety of discussions and encounters while awaiting the titular Godot, who never arrives.



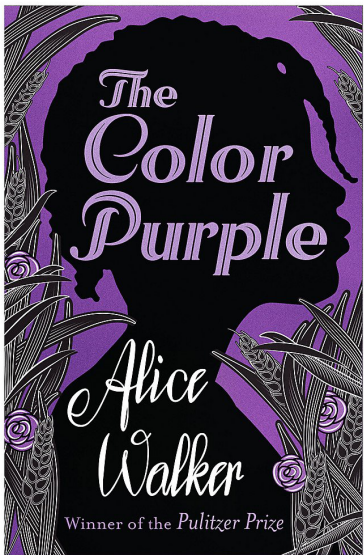
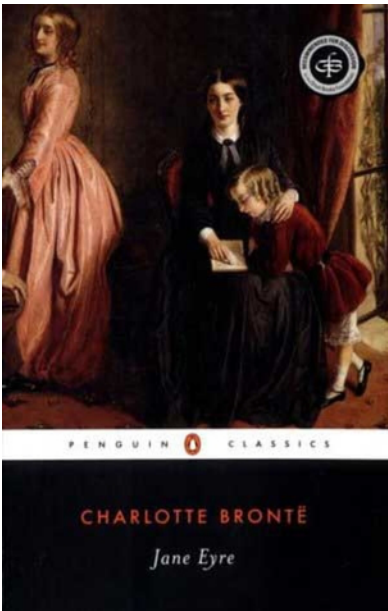
# FEMINISM



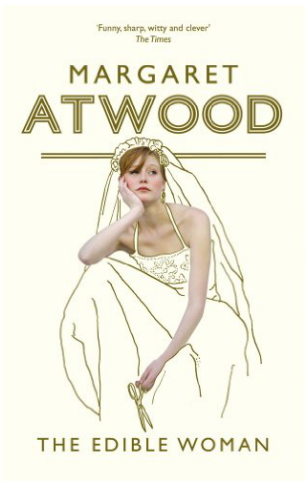
In **A Room of One's Own**, Woolf uses metaphors to explore social injustices and comments on women's lack of free expression. Her metaphor of a fish explains her most essential point, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction".[2] She writes of a woman whose thought had "let its line down into the stream".[4] As the woman starts to think of an idea, a guard enforces a rule whereby women are not allowed to walk on the grass. Abiding by the rule, the woman loses her idea. Here, Woolf describes the influence of women's social expectations as mere domestic child bearers, ignorant and chaste.

**Jane Eyre** revolutionised prose fiction by being the first to focus on its protagonist's moral and spiritual development through an intimate first-person narrative, where actions and events are coloured by a psychological intensity. Charlotte Brontë has been called the "first historian of the private consciousness".

The book contains elements of social criticism and it is considered by many to be ahead of its time because of Jane's individualistic character and how the novel approaches the topics of class, sexuality, religion, and feminism.

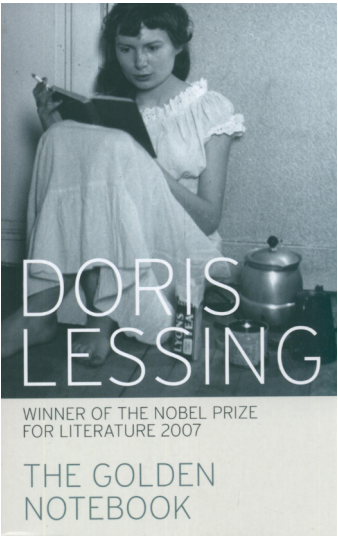


**The Color Purple** documents the traumas and gradual triumph of Celie, an African American teenager raised in rural isolation in Georgia, as she comes to resist the paralyzing self-concept forced on her by others. Celie narrates her life through painfully honest letters to God.



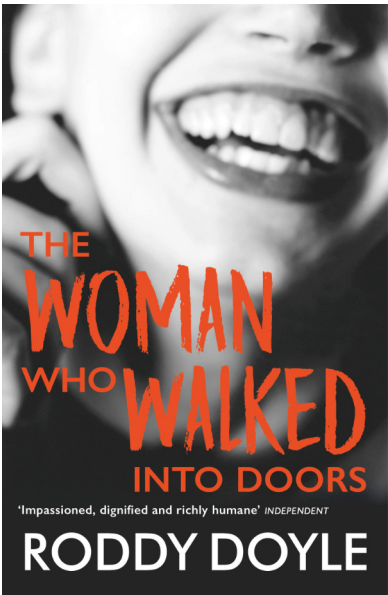
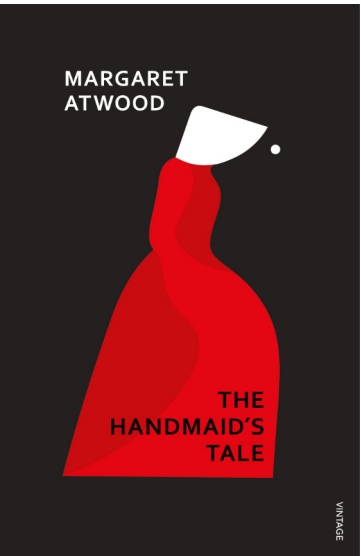
**The Edible Woman** is the story of a young woman, Marian, whose sane, structured, consumer-oriented world starts to slip out of focus. Following her engagement, Marian feels her body and her self are becoming separated. Marian begins endowing food with human qualities that cause her to identify with it, and finds herself unable to eat, repelled by metaphorical cannibalism.

# FEMINISM

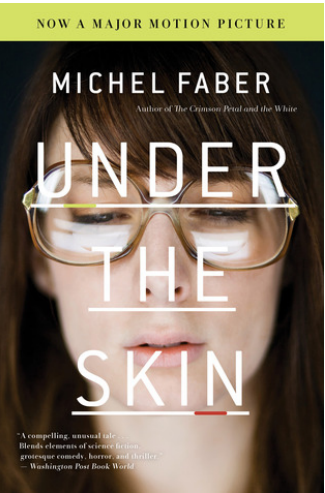


**The Golden Notebook** is a 1962 novel by the British writer Doris Lessing. It explores mental and societal breakdown. The novel contains anti-war and anti-Stalinist messages, an extended analysis of communism and the Communist Party in England from the 1930s to the 1950s, and an examination of the budding sexual revolution and women's liberation movements.

**The Handmaid's Tale** is set in a near-future New England, in a strongly patriarchal, totalitarian theonomic state, known as the Republic of Gilead, which has overthrown the United States government. The central character and narrator is a woman named Offred, one of the "handmaids" — a group of women who are forcibly assigned to produce children for the "commanders" — the ruling class of men in Gilead.



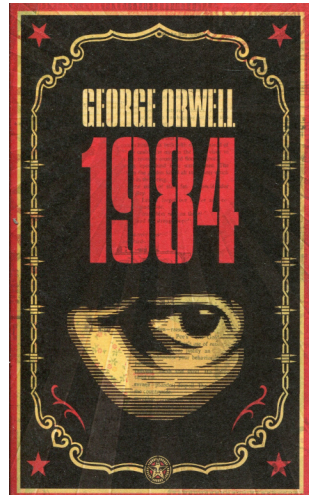
**The Woman Who Walked Into Doors** tells the struggle and survival of an abused wife named Paula Spencer. It is narrated by the victim. The title comes from an incident narrated in the book, where Paula's husband asks her how she received a bruise he was responsible for, and she replies that she "walked into a door." The narrative blends her recounting of the circumstances of her childhood, courtship and wedding day, with reflections on those events. The gathering drama is linked to the increasing awareness of moving towards a climax, which is on the one hand the outbreak of violence in her marriage, and on the other hand the violent death of her husband.



**Under the Skin** is a 2000 science fiction novel by Michel Faber.[1][2] Set on the east coast in northern Scotland, it traces an alien who, manifesting in human form, drives around the countryside picking up male hitchhikers whom she drugs and delivers to her home planet.

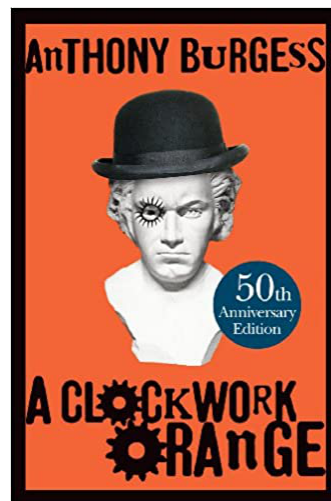


# FUTURE & DYSTOPIAN



**1984** takes place in an imagined future when much of the world has fallen victim to perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance, historical negationism, and propaganda. Great Britain, known as Airstrip One, has become a province of the totalitarian superstate Oceania, ruled by the Party, who employ the Thought Police to persecute individuality and independent thinking. Big Brother, the dictatorial leader of Oceania, enjoys an intense cult of personality, manufactured by the party's excessive brainwashing techniques. The protagonist, Winston Smith, is a diligent and skillful rank-and-file worker at the Ministry of Truth and Outer Party member who secretly hates the Party and dreams of rebellion. He expresses his dissent by writing in a diary and later enters into a forbidden relationship with his colleague Julia and starts to remember what life was like before the Party came to power.

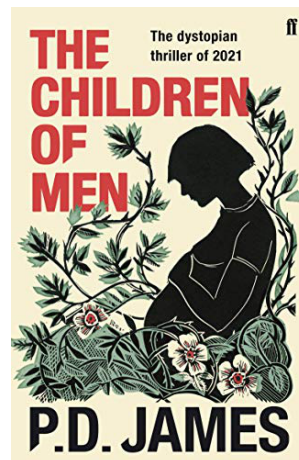
**A Clockwork Orange** is set in a near-future society that has a youth subculture of extreme violence. The teenage protagonist, Alex, narrates his violent exploits and his experiences with state authorities intent on reforming him.[1] The book is partially written in a Russian-influenced argot called "Nadsat", which takes its name from the Russian suffix that is equivalent to 'teen' in English



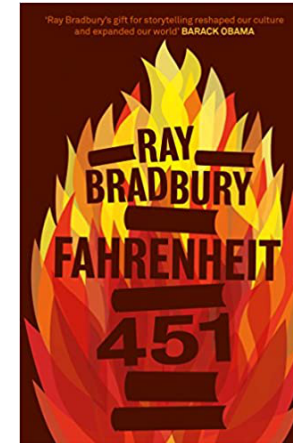
**Brave New World:** Largely set in a futuristic World State, whose citizens are environmentally engineered into an intelligence-based social hierarchy, the novel anticipates huge scientific advancements in reproductive technology, sleep-learning, psychological manipulation and classical conditioning that are combined to make a dystopian society which is challenged by only a single individual.



**The Children of Men** is a dystopian novel by English writer P. D. James, published in 1992. Set in England in 2021, it centres on the results of mass infertility. James describes a United Kingdom that is steadily depopulating and focuses on a small group of resisters who do not share the disillusionment of the masses.

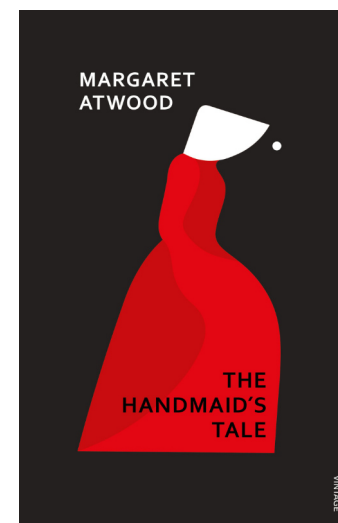
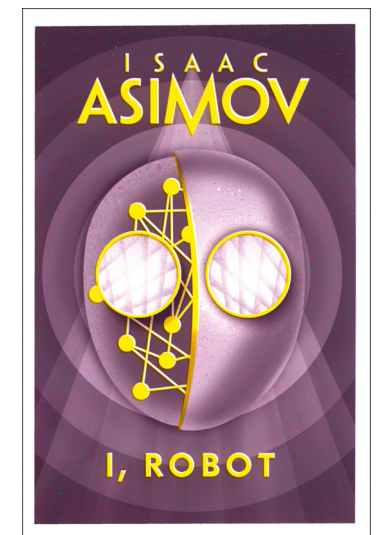


# FUTURE & DYSTOPIAN



**Fahrenheit 451** is a 1953 dystopian novel by American writer Ray Bradbury. The novel presents a future American society where books are outlawed and "firemen" burn any that are found.[5] The book's tagline explains the title as "the temperature at which book paper catches fire, and burns": the autoignition temperature of paper. The lead character, Guy Montag, is a fireman who becomes disillusioned with his role of censoring literature and destroying knowledge, eventually quitting his job and committing himself to the preservation of literary and cultural writings.

The stories in **I, Robot** are woven together by a framing narrative in which the fictional Dr. Susan Calvin tells each story to a reporter (who serves as the narrator) in the 21st century. Although the stories can be read separately, they share a theme of the interaction of humans, robots, and morality, and when combined they tell a larger story of Asimov's fictional history of robotics.



**The Handmaid's Tale** is set in a near-future New England, in a strongly patriarchal, totalitarian theonomic state, known as the Republic of Gilead, which has overthrown the United States government. The central character and narrator is a woman named Offred, one of the "handmaids" — a group of women who are forcibly assigned to produce children for the "commanders" — the ruling class of men in Gilead.

**The Man in the High Castle** (1962), by Philip K. Dick, is an alternative history novel wherein the Axis Powers won World War II. The story occurs in 1962, fifteen years after the end of the war in 1947, and depicts the political intrigues between Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany as they rule the partitioned United States.



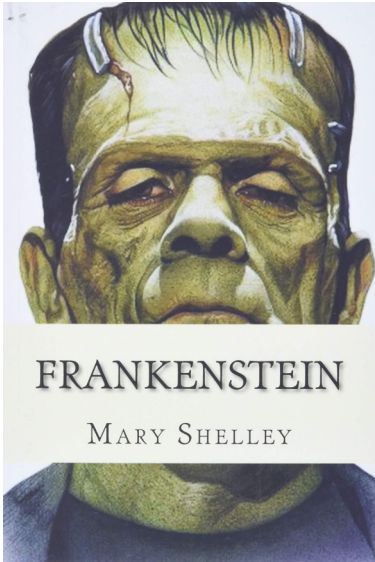


# HORROR

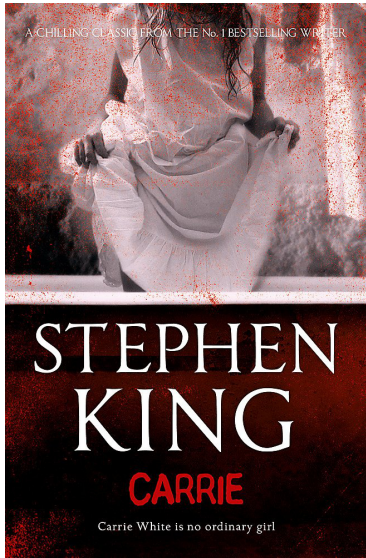


**Dracula** is a novel by Bram Stoker, published in 1897. As an epistolary novel, the narrative is related through letters, diary entries, and newspaper articles. It has no single protagonist, but opens with solicitor Jonathan Harker taking a business trip to stay at the castle of a Transylvanian noble, Count Dracula. Harker escapes the castle after discovering that Dracula is a vampire, and the Count moves to England and plagues the seaside town of Whitby. A small group, led by Abraham Van Helsing, hunt Dracula and, in the end, kill him.

**Frankenstein**; or, The Modern Prometheus is an 1818 novel written by English author Mary Shelley. Frankenstein tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist who creates a sapient creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment. Shelley started writing the story when she was 18, and the first edition was published anonymously in London on 1 January 1818, when she was 20.

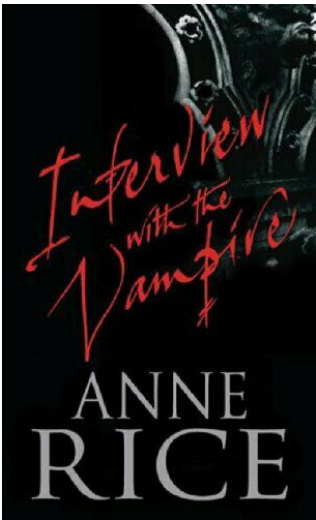


**Carrie** is set primarily in the then-future year of 1979, it revolves around the eponymous Carrie White, a friendless, bullied high-school girl from an abusive religious household who uses her newly discovered telekinetic powers to exact revenge on those who torment her. In the process, she causes one of the worst local disasters the town has ever had. King has commented that he finds the work to be "raw" and "with a surprising power to hurt and horrify." Much of the book uses newspaper clippings, magazine articles, letters, and excerpts from books to tell how Carrie destroyed the fictional town of Chamberlain, Maine while exacting revenge on her sadistic classmates and her own mother, Margaret.

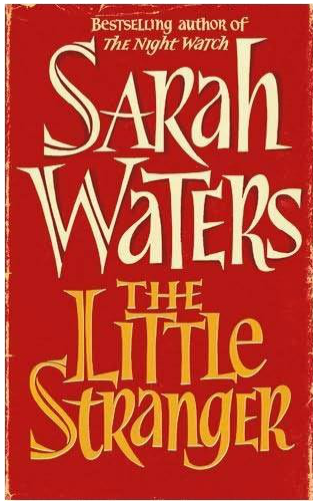


In **Interview With the Vampire**, a vampire named Louis de Pointe du Lac tells his 200-year-long life story to a reporter referred to simply as "the boy".

In 1791, Louis is a young indigo plantation owner living in Louisiana. Distraught by the death of his brother, he seeks death in any way possible. Louis is approached by a vampire named Lestat de Lioncourt, who desires Louis' company. Lestat turns Louis into a vampire and the two become immortal companions. Lestat spends time feeding off slaves while Louis, who finds it morally repugnant to murder humans to survive, feeds from animals. Louis and Lestat are forced to leave when Louis' slaves begin to fear the vampires and instigate an uprising.

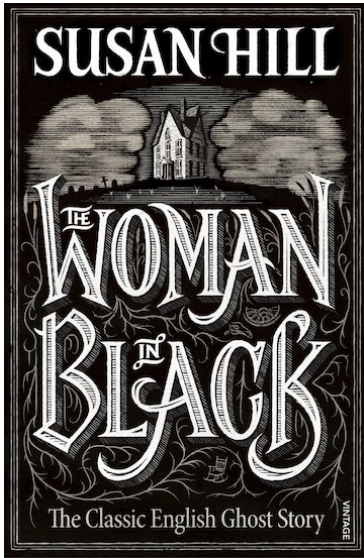
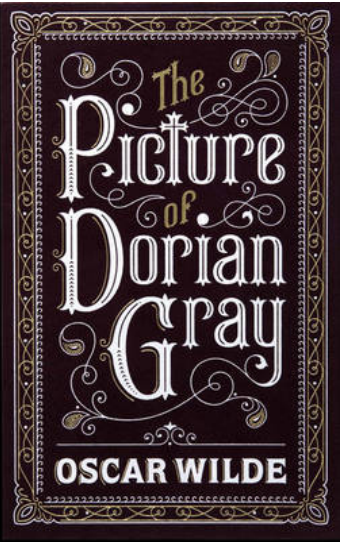


# HORROR



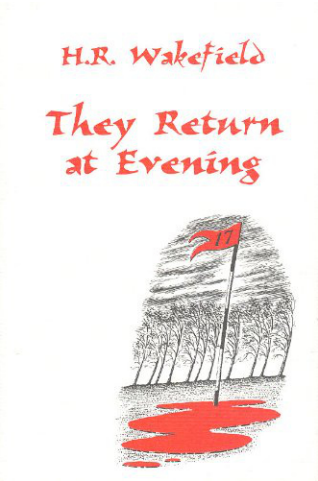
**The Little Stranger** is a 2009 gothic novel written by Sarah Waters. It is a ghost story set in a dilapidated mansion in Warwickshire, England in the 1940s. Departing from her earlier themes of lesbian and gay fiction, Waters' fifth novel features a male narrator, a country doctor who makes friends with an old gentry family of declining fortunes who own a very old estate that is crumbling around them. The stress of reconciling the state of their finances with the familial responsibility of keeping the estate coincides with perplexing events which may or may not be of supernatural origin, culminating in tragedy.

**The Picture of Dorian Gray** revolves around a portrait of Dorian Gray painted by Basil Hallward, a friend of Dorian's and an artist infatuated with Dorian's beauty. Through Basil, Dorian meets Lord Henry Wotton and is soon enthralled by the aristocrat's hedonistic worldview: that beauty and sensual fulfillment are the only things worth pursuing in life. Newly understanding that his beauty will fade, Dorian expresses the desire to sell his soul, to ensure that the picture, rather than he, will age and fade. The wish is granted, and Dorian pursues a libertine life of varied amoral experiences while staying young and beautiful; all the while, his portrait ages and visually records every one of Dorian's sins.



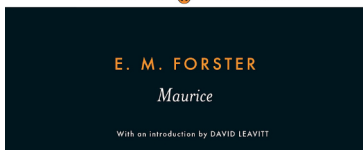
**The Woman in Black** is narrated by Arthur Kipps, the young lawyer who formerly worked for Mr. Bentley. One Christmas Eve he is at home with his second wife Esmé and four stepchildren, who are sharing ghost stories. When he is asked to tell a story, he becomes irritated and leaves the room, and decides to write his horrific experiences several years in the past in the hopes that doing so will exorcise them from his memory.

When Herbert Russell Wakefield's first collection of supernatural stories, **They Return at Evening**, was published in 1928, it would not have been apparent to contemporary readers that the book marked the start of a new era. Wakefield's appearance on the ghost story scene came at a time when many of the great names in the field were nearing the end of their careers as writers of supernatural fiction. M R James, E F Benson and Algernon Blackwood, who had dominated the field, had either published their last new stories or were within a few years of doing so.





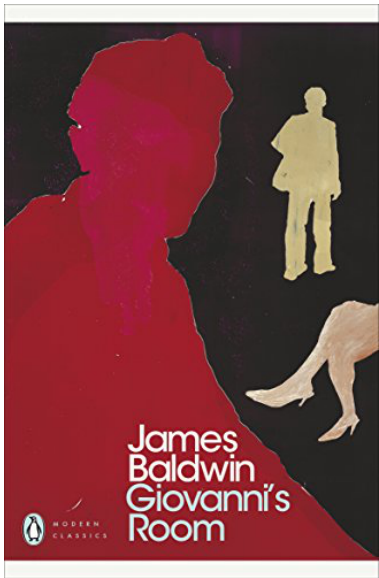
# LGBT



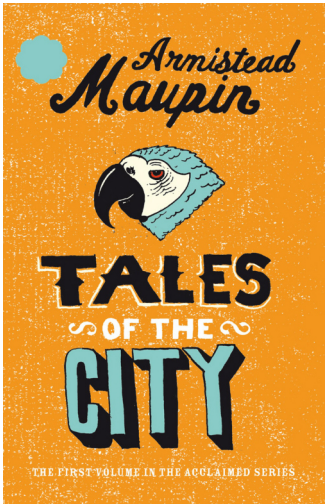
**Giovanni's Room** is a 1956 novel by James Baldwin.[1] The book focuses on the events in the life of an American man living in Paris and his feelings and frustrations with his relationships with other men in his life, particularly an Italian bartender named Giovanni whom he meets at a Parisian gay bar.



**Maurice** is a novel by E. M. Forster. A tale of homosexual love in early 20th-century England, it follows Maurice Hall from his schooldays through university and beyond. It was written in 1913–1914, and revised in 1932 and 1959–1960.[1][2] Forster was an admirer of the poet, philosopher, socialist and early gay activist Edward Carpenter, and following a visit to Carpenter's home at Millthorpe, Derbyshire in 1913, was inspired to write Maurice. The cross-class relationship between Carpenter and his working-class partner, George Merrill, presented a real-life model for that of Maurice and Alec Scudder.

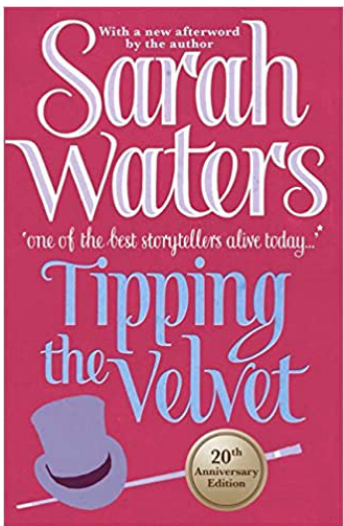


**Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit** is a novel by Jeanette Winterson published in 1985 by Pandora Press. It is a coming-of-age story about a lesbian girl who grows up in an English Pentecostal community. Key themes of the book include transition from youth to adulthood, complex family relationships, same-sex relationships, organised religion and the concept of faith.



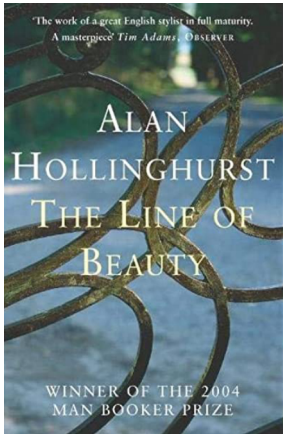
For almost four decades Armistead Maupin's **Tales of the City** has blazed its own trail through popular culture—from a groundbreaking newspaper serial to a classic novel, to a television event that entranced millions around the world. The first of nine novels about the denizens of the mythic apartment house at 28 Barbary Lane, Tales is both a sparkling comedy of manners and an indelible portrait of an era that forever changed the way we live.

# LGBT



**Tipping the Velvet** (1998) is a historical novel by Sarah Waters; it is her debut novel. Set in England during the 1890s, it tells a coming of age story about a young woman named Nan who falls in love with a male impersonator, follows her to London, and finds various ways to support herself as she journeys through the city. The picaresque plot elements have prompted scholars and reviewers to compare it to similar British urban adventure stories written by Charles Dickens and Daniel Defoe.

**Written on the Body** is a high-concept erotic novelette, a Vox for the postmarital crowd. The narrator, a lifelong philanderer ("I used to think marriage was a plate-glass window just begging for a brick"), has fallen in love with Louise, a pre-Raphaelite beauty. Louise is unhappily married to a workaholic cancer researcher, so the narrator leads her into a sexually combative affair. This scenario seems obvious enough, but Winterson never reveals whether the narrator is male or female.

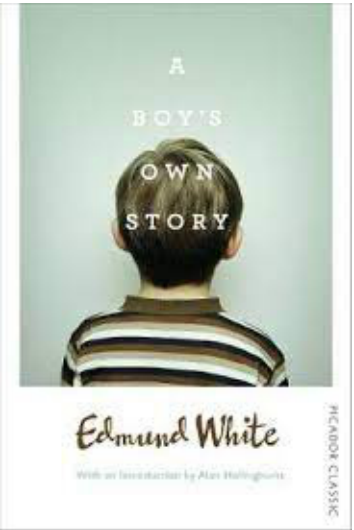


**The Line of Beauty** is set in Britain in three parts, taking place in 1983, 1986 and 1987. The story surrounds the young gay protagonist, Nick Guest. Nick is middle-class and from the fictional market town of Barwick in Northamptonshire; he has graduated from Worcester College, Oxford with a First in English and is to begin postgraduate studies at University College London.

The book explores the tension between Nick's intimate relationship with the Fedden family and the realities of his sexuality and gay life, which the Feddens accept only to the extent of never mentioning it.

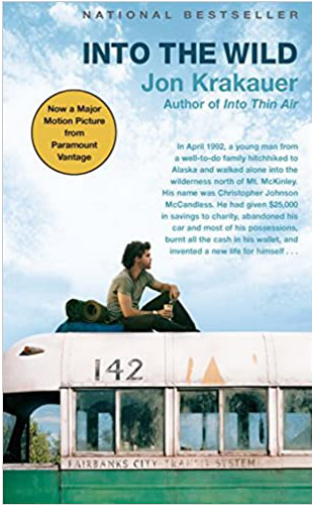


**A Boy's Own Story** is the first of a trilogy of novels, describing a boy's coming of age and documenting a young man's experience of homosexuality in the 1950s in Cincinnati, Chicago and Michigan. The trilogy continued with The Beautiful Room Is Empty (1988) and The Farewell Symphony (1997), which brought the setting up to the 1990s. Although all three share a number of themes and are frequently considered at least partly autobiographical, they do not tell a linear story in the manner of some trilogies, and can be read independently of one another.





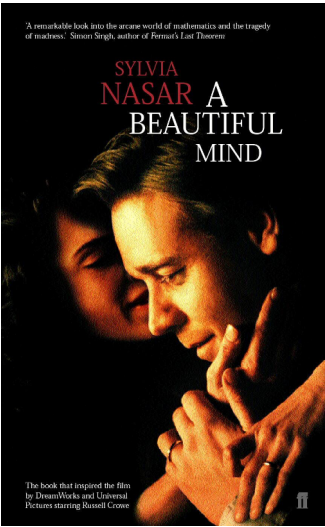
# MENTAL HEALTH



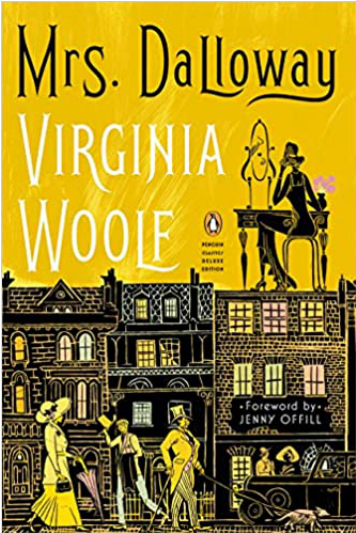
Jon Krakauer's **Into the Wild** examines the true story of Chris McCandless, a young man, who in 1992 walked deep into the Alaskan wilderness and whose SOS note and emaciated corpse were found four months later, internationally bestselling author Jon Krakauer explores the obsession which leads some people to explore the outer limits of self, leave civilization behind and seek enlightenment through solitude and contact with nature.

**A Beautiful Mind** covers Paul Nash's years at Princeton and MIT, his work for the RAND Corporation, his family and his struggle with schizophrenia.

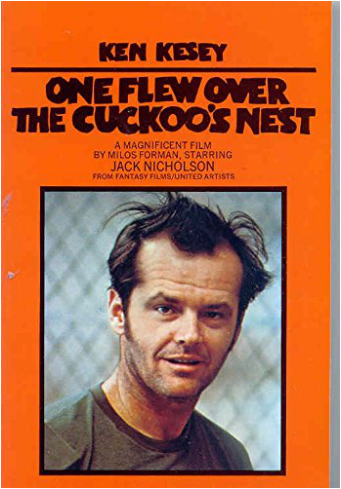
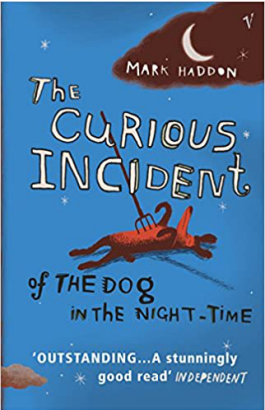
The book ends with Nash being awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1994. The book is a detailed description of many aspects of Nash's life, including the nature of his mathematical genius, and a close examination of his personality and motivations.



**Mrs Dalloway** is a novel that features two main characters and two different worldviews. On the one hand, there is Clarissa Dalloway, who being labelled as Mrs, symbolises her marital and social confinement. On the other, the readers meet Septimus Warren Smith, who is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The lack of conventionally linear narrative and the stream of consciousness embedded in the text represents the author's take on the complexities of human existence and the ambiguity of reality.

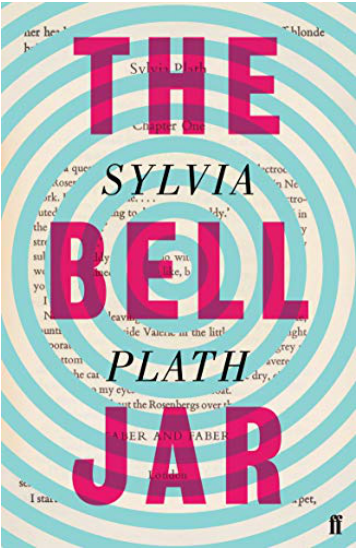


**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night** is narrated by Christopher John Francis Boone, a 15-year-old boy who is described as "a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties" living in Swindon, Wiltshire. Although Christopher's condition is not stated, the book's blurb refers to Asperger syndrome (which today would be described as an autism spectrum disorder), high-functioning autism, or savant syndrome. In July 2009, Haddon wrote on his blog that "if anything it's a novel about difference, about being an outsider, about seeing the world in a surprising and revealing way."



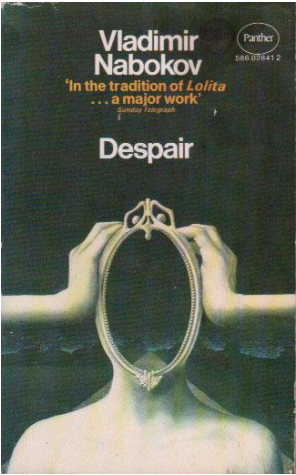
**One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** is a novel by Ken Kesey published in 1962. Set in an Oregon psychiatric hospital, the narrative serves as a study of institutional processes and the human mind, including a critique of psychiatry[3] and a tribute to individualistic principles.

**The Bell Jar** is the only novel written by the American writer and poet Sylvia Plath. The novel is semi-autobiographical with the names of places and people changed. The book is often regarded as a roman à clef because the protagonist's descent into mental illness parallels Plath's own experiences with what may have been clinical depression or bipolar II disorder. Plath committed suicide a month after its first United Kingdom publication.



**Girl, Interrupted** is a best-selling 1993 memoir by American author Susanna Kaysen, relating her experiences as a young woman in an American psychiatric hospital in the 1960s after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. The memoir chronicles her lived experience and how she developed the disorder through particular life circumstances rather than an innate, predetermined biological difference in brain chemistry. Susanna Kaysen opens up a conversation on how mental illness is generally perceived in society as a biological deficiency in brain chemicals, but could it be a natural response to societal pressure as a young teen?

The narrator and protagonist of **Despair**, Hermann Karlovich, a Russian of German descent and owner of a chocolate factory, meets a homeless man in the city of Prague, who he believes is his doppelgänger. Even though Felix, the supposed doppelgänger, is seemingly unaware of their resemblance, Hermann insists that their likeness is most striking.



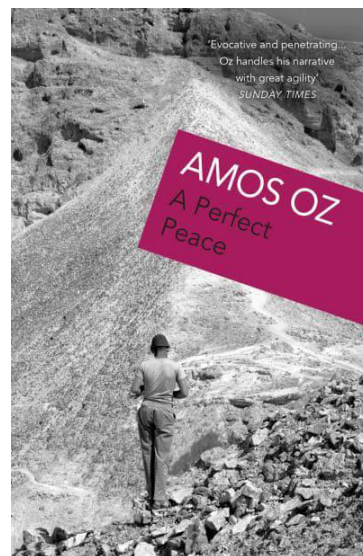


# POLITICS



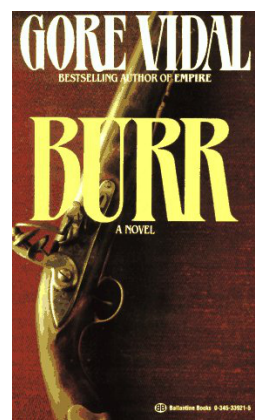
**Animal Farm** is a fable of a workers' revolution gone wrong has been recognized as a classic of modern political satire. Fuelled by Orwell's intense disillusionment with Soviet Communism, Animal Farm is a nearly perfect piece of writing--both an engaging story and an allegory that actually works. When the downtrodden beasts of Manor Farm oust their drunken human master and take over management of the land, all are awash in collectivist zeal.

**A Perfect Peace** is set in Israel during the eighteen months leading up to the Six-Day War, the novel portrays life on a fictional kibbutz, Granot, where the founding generation and their children struggle to come to terms with each other and the ideological tensions within Israeli society. Oz documents the gap between the socialist dream of the founders and the strained realities of Israeli life, but it is also, according to the author, a mystical tale about "the secret merger between six or seven very different human beings who become a family in the deepest sense of the term."

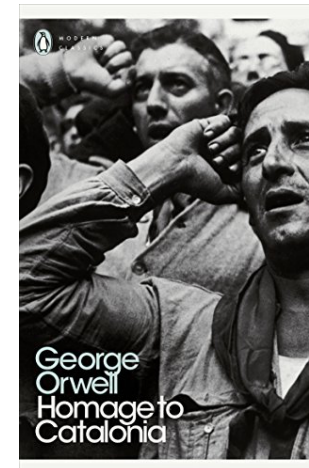


**All the King's Men** is a 1946 novel by Robert Penn Warren. The novel tells the story of charismatic populist governor Willie Stark and his political machinations in the Depression-era Deep South. It was inspired by the real-life story of U.S. Senator Huey P. Long, who was assassinated in 1935.

**Burr** is a 1973 historical novel by Gore Vidal that challenges the traditional Founding Fathers iconography of United States history, by means of a narrative that includes a fictional memoir by Aaron Burr, in representing the people, politics, and events of the U.S. in the early 19th century.



# POLITICS

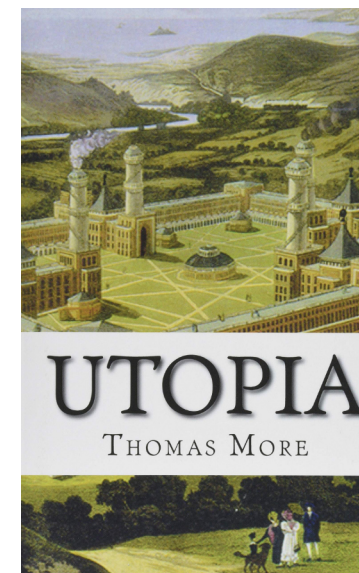
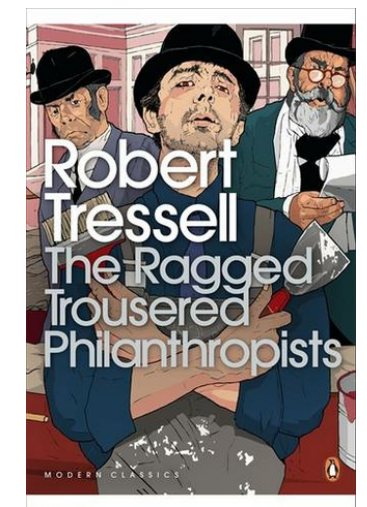


**Homage to Catalonia** is George Orwell's personal account of his experiences and observations fighting in the Spanish Civil War for the POUM militia of the Republican army.

Covering the period between December 1936 and June 1937, Orwell recounts Catalonia's revolutionary fervor during his training in Barcelona, his boredom on the front lines in Aragon, his involvement in the interfactional May Days conflict back in Barcelona on leave, his getting shot in the throat back on the front lines, and his escape to France after the POUM was declared an illegal organization.

**The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists** (1914) is a semi-autobiographical novel by Irish house painter and sign writer Robert Noonan, who wrote the book in his spare time under the pen name Robert Tressell. Published after Tressell's death from tuberculosis in the Liverpool Royal Infirmary in 1911, the novel follows a house painter's efforts to find work in the fictional English town of Mugsborough (based on the coastal town of Hastings) to stave off the workhouse for himself, his wife and his son.

An explicitly political work, the novel is widely regarded as a classic of working-class literature.



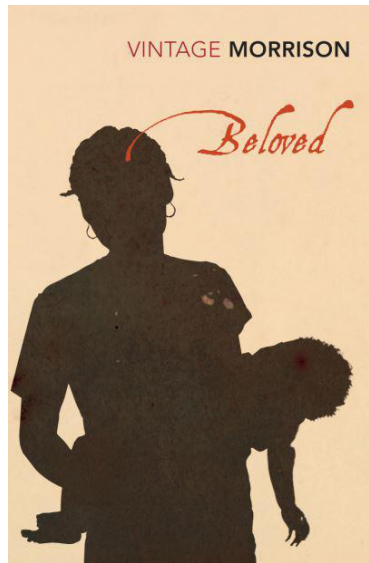
**Utopia** is a work of fiction and socio-political satire by Thomas More, written in Latin and published in 1516. The book is a frame narrative primarily depicting a fictional island society and its religious, social, and political customs. In part, Utopia was an attempt to cling to the medieval ideal of the contemplative life - an ideal that the Reformation, which privileged action and change, was 'disrupting', to use the modern coinage. Utopia presents many themes such as wealth, power, slavery, and causes of injustice. The overarching theme throughout the book is the ideal nature of a Utopian society.

**House of Cards** is a political thriller novel by British author Michael Dobbs. Published in 1989, it tells the story of Francis Urquhart, a fictional Chief Whip of the Conservative Party, and his amoral and manipulative scheme to become leader of the governing party and, thus, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.



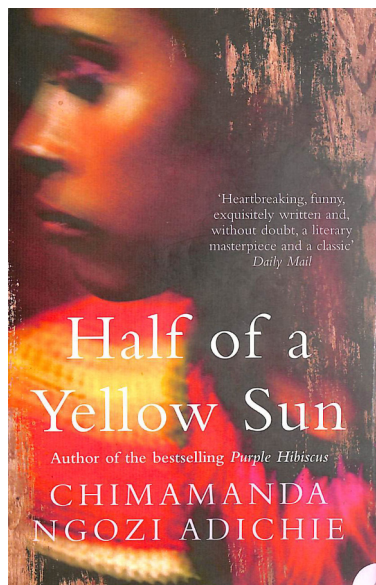


# RACISM



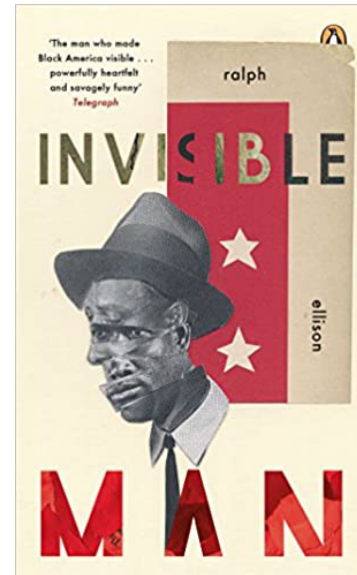
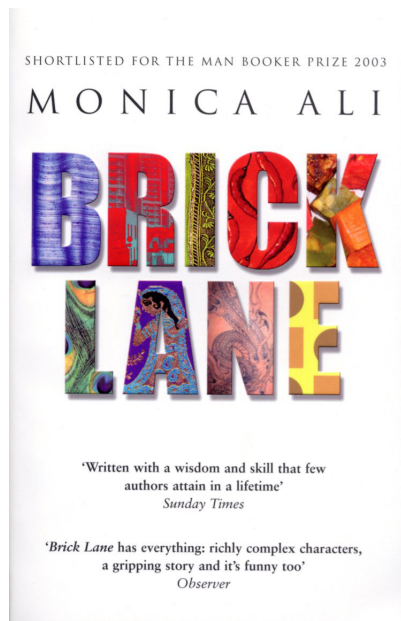
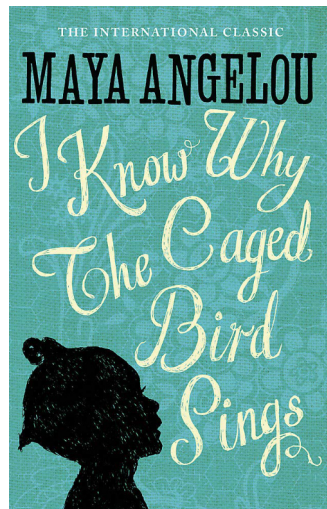
**Beloved** is a 1987 novel by the American writer Toni Morrison. Set after the American Civil War, it tells the story of a family of formerly enslaved people whose Cincinnati home is haunted by a malevolent spirit. Beloved is inspired by an event that actually happened: Margaret Garner, an enslaved person in Kentucky, who escaped and fled to the free state of Ohio in 1856. She was subject to capture in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850; when U.S. marshals burst into the cabin where Garner and her husband had barricaded themselves, she was attempting to kill her children, and had already killed her two-year-old daughter, to spare them from being returned to slavery.

**Brick Lane** is a street at the heart of London's Bangladeshi community. Ali's 2003 novel of the same name follows the life of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman who moves to London at the age of 18, to marry an older man, Chanu. They live in Tower Hamlets. At first her English consists only of "sorry" and "thank you," the novel explores her life and adaptations in the community, as well as the character of Chanu, and their larger ethnic community. An additional narrative strand covers the experiences of Nazneen's sister, Hasina through the device of her correspondence.

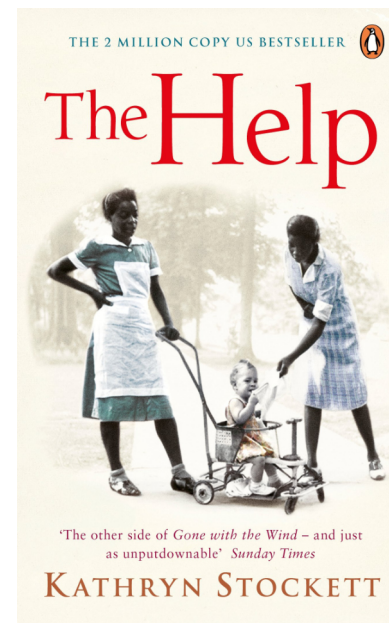


**Half of a Yellow Sun** takes place in Nigeria prior to and during the Nigerian Civil War (1967–70). The effect of the war is shown through the relationships of five people's lives including the twin daughters of an influential businessman, a professor, a British expat, and a Nigerian houseboy. After Biafra's declaration of secession, the lives of the main characters drastically change and are torn apart by the brutality of the civil war and decisions in their personal lives.

**I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings** is a 1969 autobiography describing the young and early years of American writer and poet Maya Angelou. The first in a seven-volume series, it is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma. The book begins when three-year-old Maya and her older brother are sent to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their grandmother and ends when Maya becomes a mother at the age of 16. In the course of Caged Bird, Maya transforms from a victim of racism with an inferiority complex into a self-possessed, dignified young woman capable of responding to prejudice.

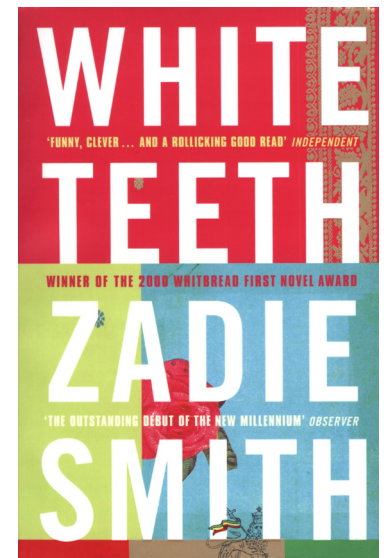
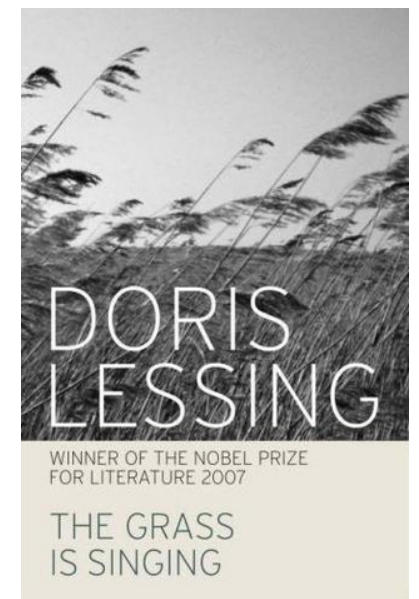


**The Grass is Singing** takes place in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), in southern Africa, during the 1940s and deals with the racial politics between whites and blacks in that country (which was then a British Colony). It follows an emotionally immature woman's hasty marriage to an unsuccessful farmer, and her ensuing mental deterioration, her murder, and the colonial British society's reactions to it. The novel created a sensation when it was first published and became an instant success in Europe and the United States.



**The Help** is set in the early 1960s in Jackson, Mississippi, and told primarily from the first-person perspectives of three women: Aibileen Clark, Minny Jackson, and Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan. Aibileen is a maid who takes care of children and cleans. Her own 24-year-old son, Trelore, died from an accident on his job. In the story, she is tending the Leefolt household and caring for their toddler, Mae Mobley. Minny is Aibileen's friend who frequently tells her employers what she thinks of them, resulting in her having been fired from nineteen jobs. Minny's most recent employer was Mrs. Walters, mother of Hilly Holbrook.

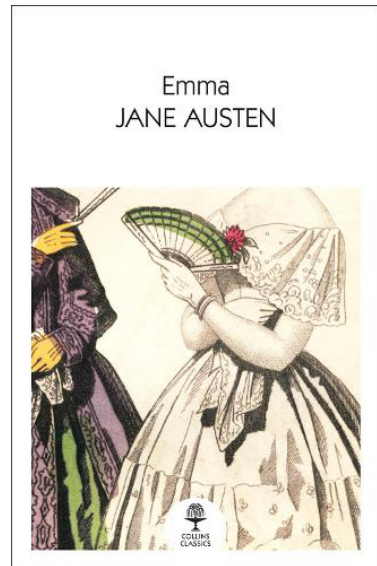
**White Teeth** is a 2000 novel by the British author Zadie Smith. It focuses on the later lives of two wartime friends—the Bangladeshi Samad Iqbal and the Englishman Archie Jones—and their families in London. The novel centres on Britain's relationship with immigrants from the British Commonwealth.[1]



# RACISM

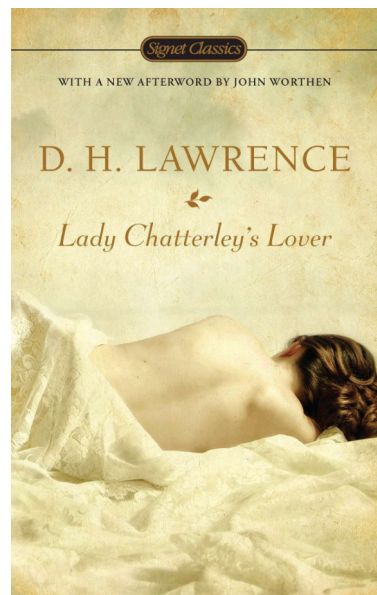


# ROMANCE



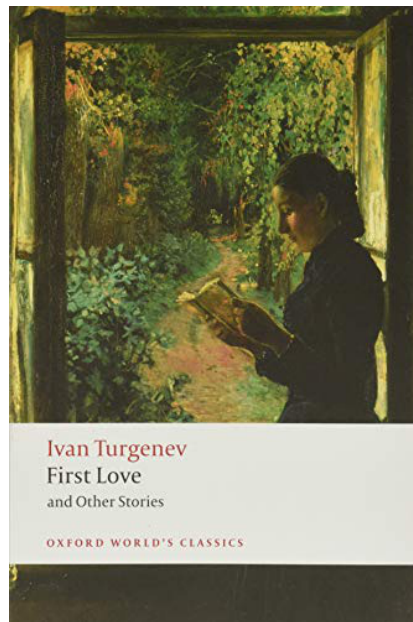
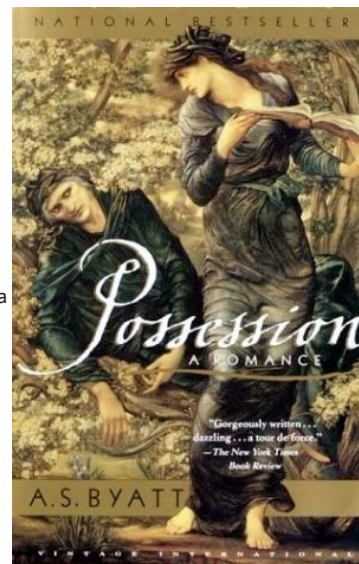
**Emma** Woodhouse is one of Austen's most captivating and vivid characters. Beautiful, spoilt, vain and irrepressibly witty, Emma organizes the lives of the inhabitants of her sleepy little village and plays matchmaker with devastating effect.

**First Love** is a vivid, sensitive tale of adolescent love follows a 16-year-old boy who falls in love with a beautiful, older woman and experiences a whirlwind of changing emotions, from exaltation and jealousy to despair and devotion.



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

**Possession** is an exhilarating novel of wit and romance, at once an intellectual mystery and a triumphant love story. It is the tale of a pair of young scholars researching the lives of two Victorian poets. As they uncover their letters, journals and poems, and track their movements from London to Yorkshire - from spiritualist séances to the fairy-haunted far west of Brittany - what emerges is an extraordinary counterpoint of passions and ideas.

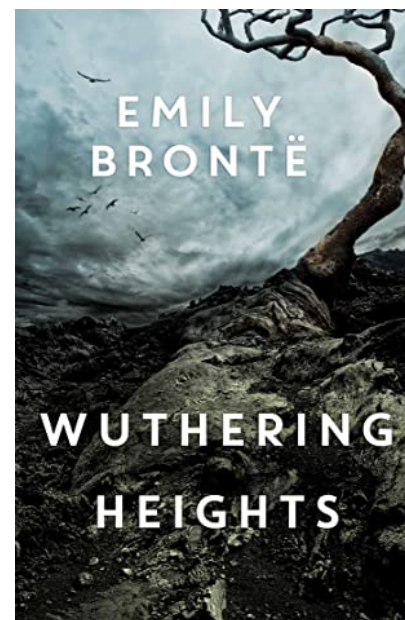
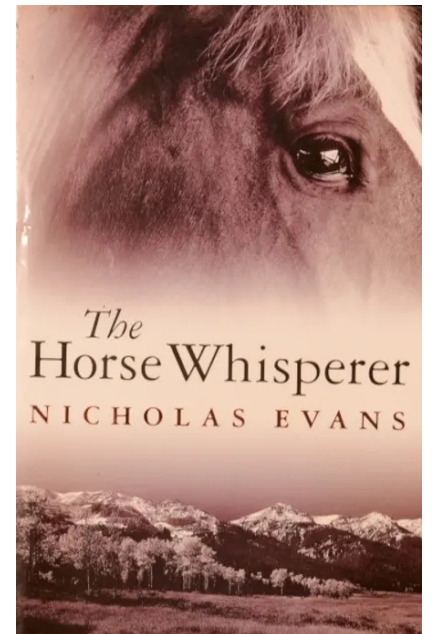


# ROMANCE



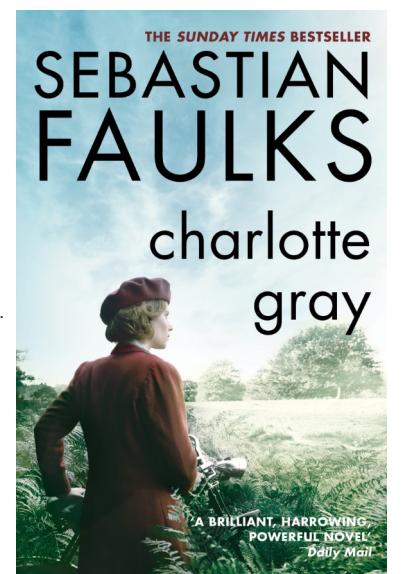
Written in diary form, it tells the tale of an unhappy, passionate young man hopelessly in love with Charlotte, the wife of a friend - a man who he alternately admires and detests.

Annie Graves has traveled across a continent with her daughter, Grace, and their wounded horse, Pilgrim, to the Booker ranch in Montana. Annie has risked everything - her career, her marriage, her comfortable life - in her desperate belief that the Whisperer can help them.



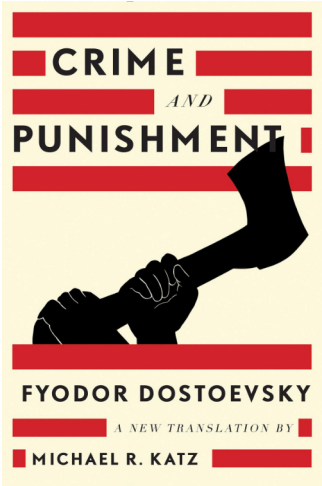
A man becomes obsessed with vengeance when his soul mate marries another man. Heathcliff is Cathy Earnshaw's foster brother; more than that, he is her other half. When forces within and without tear them apart, Heathcliff wreaks vengeance on those he holds responsible, even into a second generation.

**Charlotte Gray** is a drama set in Nazi-occupied France at the height of World War II. Charlotte Gray tells the compelling story of a young Scottish woman working with the French Resistance in the hope of rescuing her lover, a missing RAF pilot.



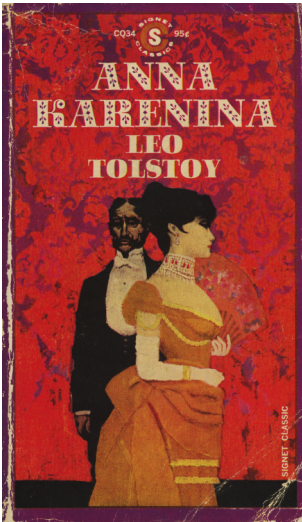
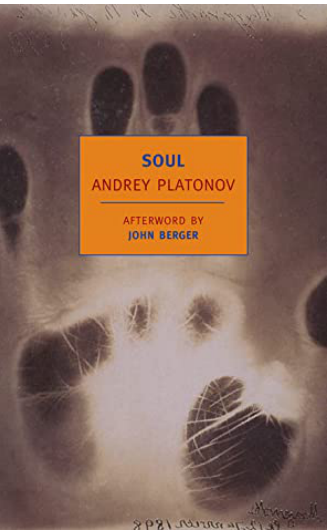


# RUSSIA



In **Crime and Punishment**, Raskolnikov, a destitute and desperate former student, wanders through the slums of St Petersburg and commits a random murder without remorse or regret. He imagines himself to be a great man, a Napoleon: acting for a higher purpose beyond conventional moral law. But as he embarks on a dangerous game of cat and mouse with a suspicious police investigator, Raskolnikov is pursued by the growing voice of his conscience and finds the noose of his own guilt tightening around his neck. Only Sonya, a downtrodden sex worker, can offer the chance of redemption.

The author of **Soul**, Andrey Platonov, saw much of his work suppressed or censored in his lifetime. In recent decades, however, these lost works have reemerged, and the eerie poetry and poignant humanity of Platonov's vision have become ever more clear. Depicting a devastated world that is both terrifying and sublime, Platonov is, without doubt, a universal writer who is as solitary and haunting as Kafka.



Acclaimed by many as the world's greatest novel, **Anna Karenina** provides a vast panorama of contemporary life in Russia and of humanity in general. In it Tolstoy uses his intense imaginative insight to create some of the most memorable characters in all of literature. Anna is a sophisticated woman who abandons her empty existence as the wife of Karenin and turns to Count Vronsky to fulfil her passionate nature - with tragic consequences. Levin is a reflection of Tolstoy himself, often expressing the author's own views and convictions.

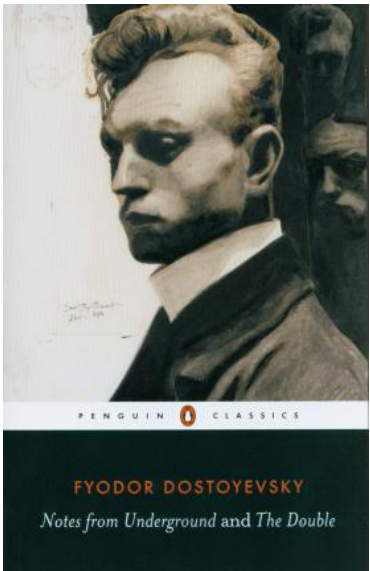
**Dr. Zhivago**, Pasternak's alter ego, is a poet, philosopher, and physician whose life is disrupted by the war and by his love for Lara, the wife of a revolutionary. His artistic nature makes him vulnerable to the brutality and harshness of the Bolsheviks. The poems he writes constitute some of the most beautiful writing featured in the novel.



**First Love** is a vivid, sensitive tale of adolescent love follows a 16-year-old boy who falls in love with a beautiful, older woman and experiences a whirlwind of changing emotions, from exaltation and jealousy to despair and devotion.

**Life and Fate** is an epic tale of a country told through the fate of a single family, the Shaposhnikovs. As the battle of Stalingrad looms, Grossman's characters must work out their destinies in a world torn apart by ideological tyranny and war.

Completed in 1960 and then confiscated by the KGB, this sweeping panorama of Soviet society remained unpublished until it was smuggled into the West in 1980, where it was hailed as a masterpiece.



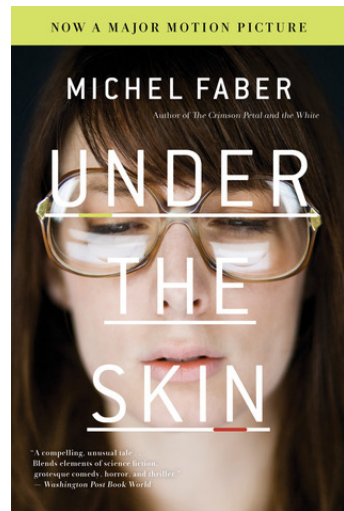
Dostoevsky's most revolutionary novel, **Notes from Underground** marks the dividing line between nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction, and between the visions of self each century embodied. One of the most remarkable characters in literature, the unnamed narrator is a former official who has defiantly withdrawn into an underground existence. In complete retreat from society, he scrawls a passionate, obsessive, self-contradictory narrative that serves as a devastating attack on social utopianism and an assertion of man's essentially irrational nature.

In **Dead Souls**, Chichikov, an enigmatic stranger and conniving schemer, buys deceased serfs' names from their landlords' poll tax lists hoping to mortgage them for profit and to reinvent himself as a likeable gentleman. Dead Souls is eloquent on some occasions, lyrical on others, and pious and reverent elsewhere. Nicolai Gogol was a master of the spoof.





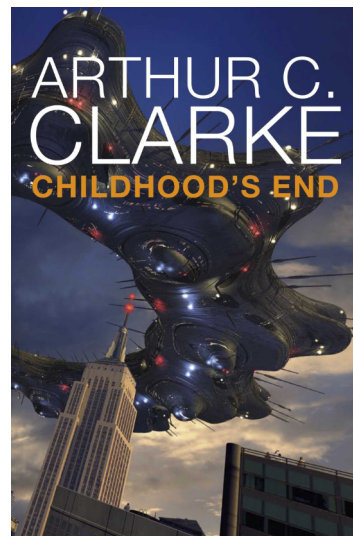
# SCIENCE FICTION



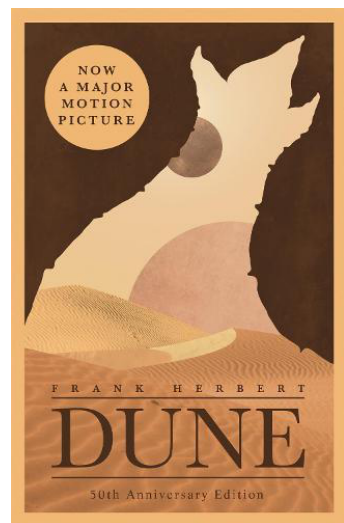
In **Under the Skin**, Isserley picks up hitchhikers with big muscles. She, herself, is tiny—like a kid peering up over the steering wheel. She has a remarkable face and wears the thickest corrective lenses anyone has ever seen. Her posture is suggestive of some spinal problem. Her breasts are perfect; perhaps implants. She is strangely erotic yet somehow grotesque, vulnerable yet threatening. Her hitchhikers are a mixed bunch of men—trailer trash and travelling postgrads, thugs and philosophers. But Isserley is only interested in whether they have families and whether they have muscles. Then, it's only a question of how long she can endure her pain—physical and spiritual—and their conversation. Michel Faber's work has been described as a combination of Roald Dahl and Franz Kafka, as Somerset Maugham shacking up with Ian McEwan. At once humane and horrifying,

In **Childhood's End**, the Overlords appear suddenly over every city--intellectually, technologically, and militarily superior to humankind. Benevolent, they made few demands: unify earth, eliminate poverty, and end war. With little rebellion, humankind agreed, and a golden age began.

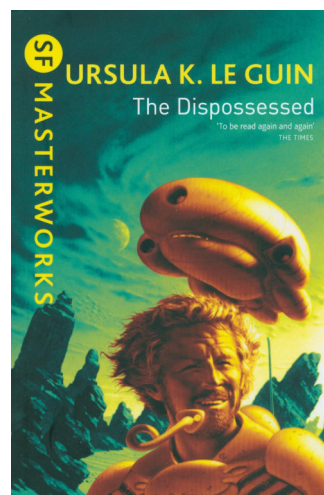
But at what cost? With the advent of peace, man ceases to strive for creative greatness, and a malaise settles over the human race. To those who resist, it becomes evident that the Overlords have an agenda of their own. As civilization approaches the crossroads, will the Overlords spell the end for humankind . . . or the beginning?



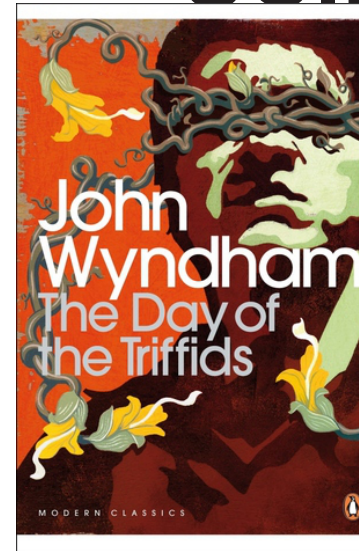
Set on the desert planet Arrakis, **Dune** is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, heir to a noble family tasked with ruling an inhospitable world where the only thing of value is the "spice" melange, a drug capable of extending life and enhancing consciousness. Coveted across the known universe, melange is a prize worth killing for...



In **The Dispossessed**, Shevek, a brilliant physicist, decides to take action. He will seek answers, question the unquestionable, and attempt to tear down the walls of hatred that have isolated his planet of anarchists from the rest of the civilized universe. To do this dangerous task will mean giving up his family and possibly his life—Shevek must make the unprecedented journey to the utopian mother planet, Urras, to challenge the complex structures of life and living, and ignite the fires of change.

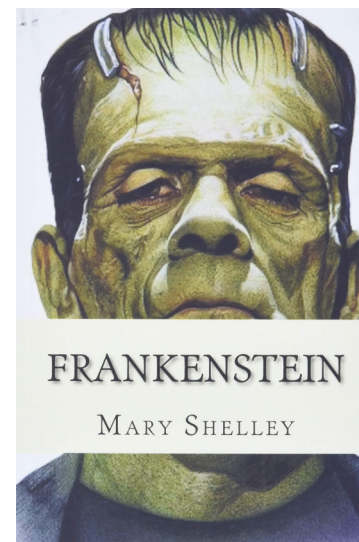


# SCIENCE FICTION



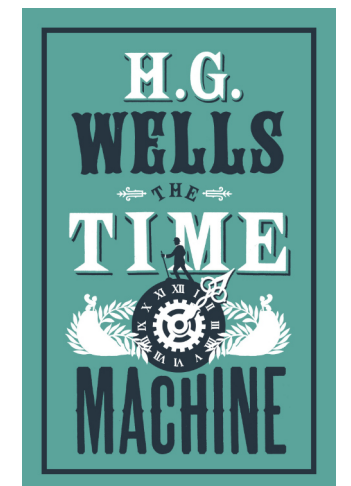
In **The Day of the Triffids**, Bill Masen, bandages over his wounded eyes, misses the most spectacular meteorite shower England has ever seen. Removing his bandages the next morning, he finds masses of sightless people wandering the city. He soon meets Josella, another lucky person who has retained her sight, and together they leave the city, aware that the safe, familiar world they knew a mere twenty-four hours before is gone forever.

**Neuromancer** is a cyberpunk novel about a group of mercenary criminals who secretly work for an artificial intelligence that's trying to break free. Cyberpunk is a genre that focuses on future societies where technology has advanced, but crime and corruption have as well.



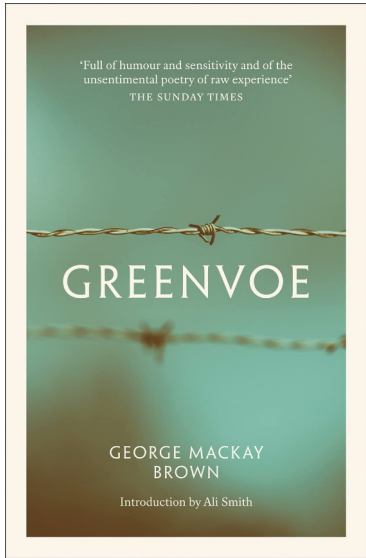
**Frankenstein** tells the story of gifted scientist Victor Frankenstein who succeeds in giving life to a being of his own creation. However, this is not the perfect specimen he imagines that it will be, but rather a hideous creature who is rejected by Victor and mankind in general.

H.G. Wells's **The Time Machine** offers a dystopian vision of humanity's future. A scientist builds a time machine and travels to future. He finds that humanity has devolved into two races: the childlike Eloi and the monstrous Morlocks. His machine disappears, so he explores the future world.



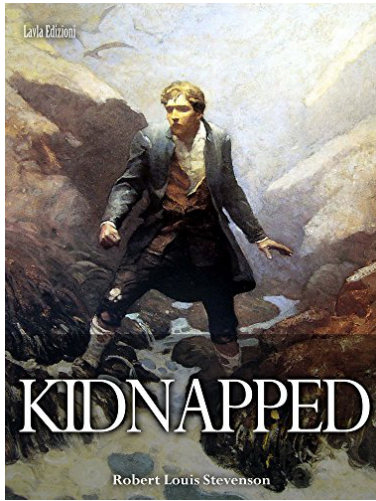
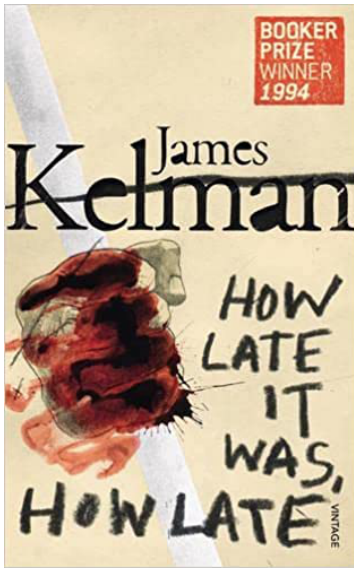


# SCOTLAND

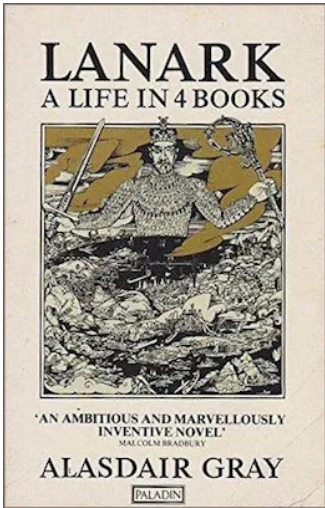


**Greenvoe**, the tight-knit community on the Orcadian island of Hellya, has existed unchanged for generations. However, a sinister military/industrial project, Operation Black Star, requires the island for unspecified purposes and threatens the islanders' way of life. In this, his first novel (1972), George Mackay Brown recreates a week in the life of the island community as they come to terms with the destructiveness of Operation Black Star.

One Sunday morning in Glasgow, shoplifting ex-con Sammy awakens in an alley, wearing another man's shoes and trying to remember his two-day drinking binge. He gets in a scrap with some soldiers and revives in a jail cell, badly beaten and, he slowly discovers, completely blind. And things get worse: his girlfriend disappears, the police question him for a crime they won't name, and his stab at disability compensation embroils him in the Kafkaesque red tape of the welfare bureaucracy. Told in the utterly uncensored language of the Scottish working class, this is a dark and subtly political parable of struggle and survival, rich with irony and black humor.

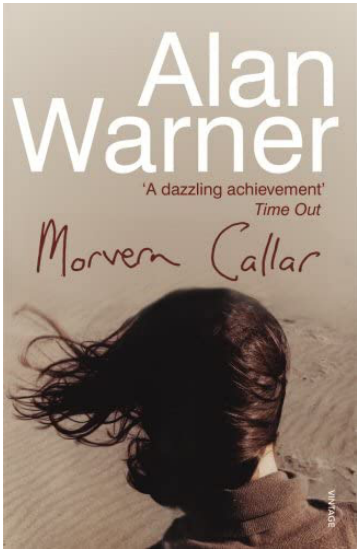


Tricked by the uncle who has stolen his inheritance, young David Balfour is **kidnapped** and bound for America. Or at least that was the plan, until the ship runs into trouble and David is rescued by Alan Breck Stewart, fugitive Jacobite and, by his own admission, a 'bonny fighter'. Balfour, a canny lowlander, finds an echo of some wilder and more romantic self in the wilful and courageous Highland spirit of Alan Breck. A strange and difficult friendship is born, as their adventures begin.



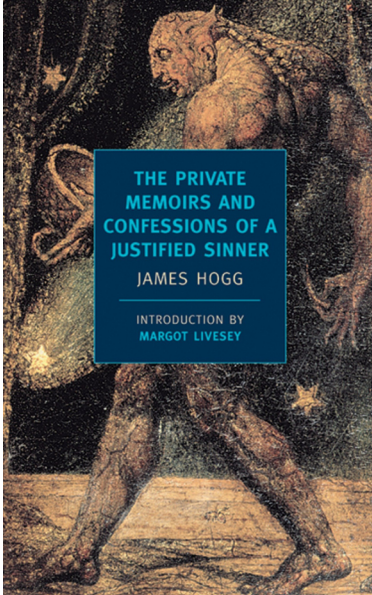
**Lanark**, originally published in 1981, has been hailed as the most influential Scottish novel of the second half of the 20th century. Its playful narrative techniques convey a profound message, personal and political, about humankind's inability to love and yet our compulsion to go on trying.

# SCOTLAND



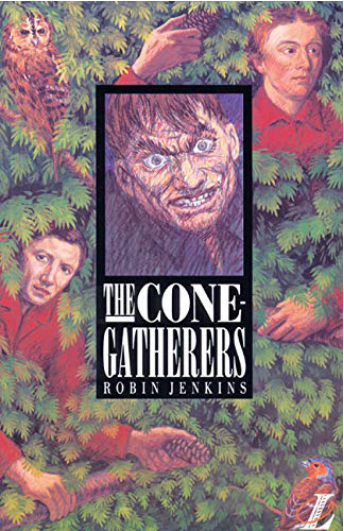
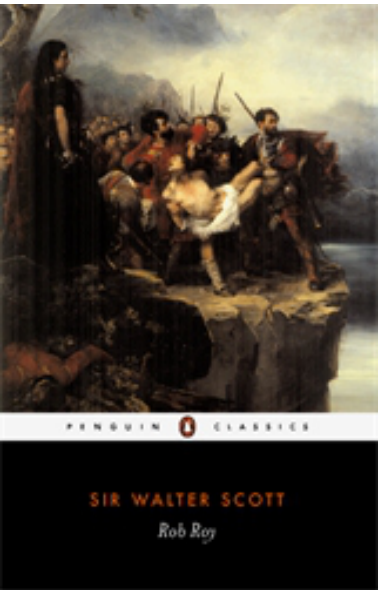
**Morvern Callar**, a low-paid employee in the local supermarket in a desolate and beautiful port town in the west of Scotland, wakes one morning in late December to find her strange boyfriend has committed suicide and is dead on the kitchen floor. Morvern's reaction is both intriguing and immoral. What she does next is even more appalling. Moving across a blurred European landscape-from rural poverty and drunken mayhem of the port to the Mediterranean rave scene-we experience everything from Morvern's stark, unflinching perspective.

**Rob Roy** is set against the backdrop of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715, which aimed to restore the Stuart monarchy in the person of James Edward, the 'Old Pretender', son of the deposed James II. The tale is told in the first person by a young Englishman, Francis ('Frank') Osbaldistone.



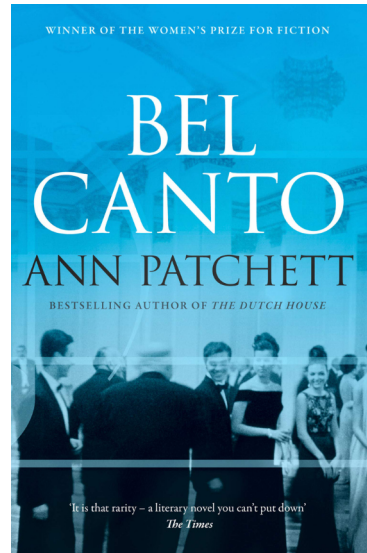
Set in early eighteenth-century Scotland, **The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner** recounts the corruption of a boy of strict Calvinist parentage by a mysterious stranger under whose influence he commits a series of murders. The stranger assures the boy that no sin can affect the salvation of an elect person. The reader, while recognizing the stranger as Satan, is prevented by the subtlety of the novel's structure from finally deciding whether, for all his vividness and wit, he is more than a figment of the boy's imagination.

Set on an estate in Scotland, **The Cone Gathereres** is about a gamekeeper's descent into madness and two cone gatherers in the forest. It is about class issues, unexplained goodness and badness.



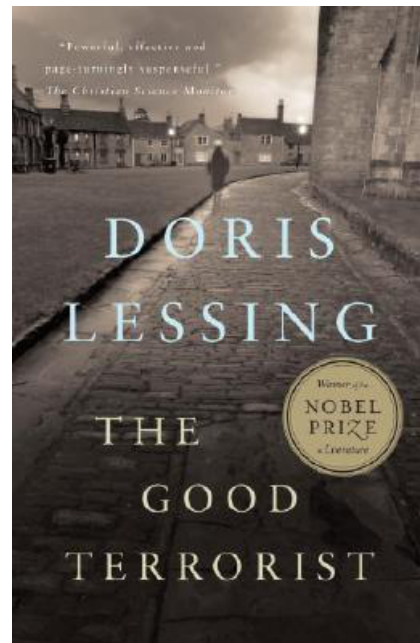


# TERRORISM

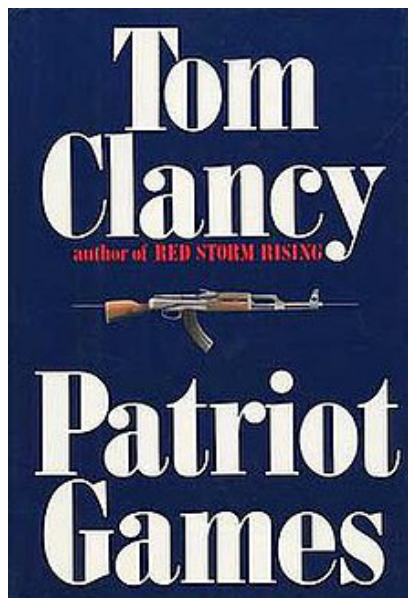


Based on the Japanese embassy hostage crisis (also called the Lima Crisis) of 1996–1997 in Lima, Peru, **Bel Canto** follows the relationships among a group of young terrorists and their hostages, who are mostly high-profile executives and politicians, over several months.

**The Good Terrorist** follows Alice Mellings, a woman who transforms her home into a headquarters for a group of radicals who plan to join the IRA.



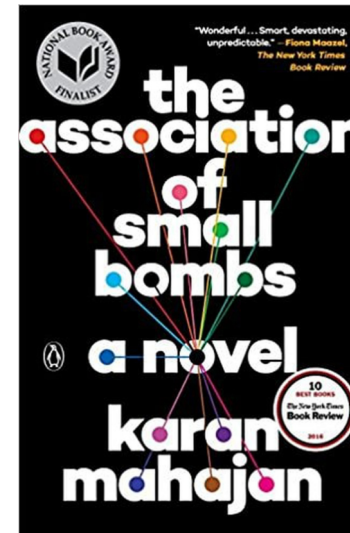
**Patriot Games** focuses on Ryan being the target of Irish terrorist group Ulster Liberation Army for thwarting their kidnapping attempt on the Prince and Princess of Wales in London.



**Falling Man** is a magnificent, essential novel about the event that defines turn-of-the-century America. It begins in the smoke and ash of the burning towers and tracks the aftermath of this global tremor in the intimate lives of a few people.

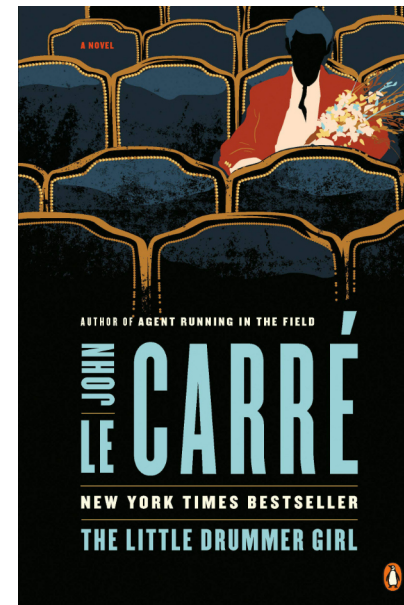


# TERRORISM

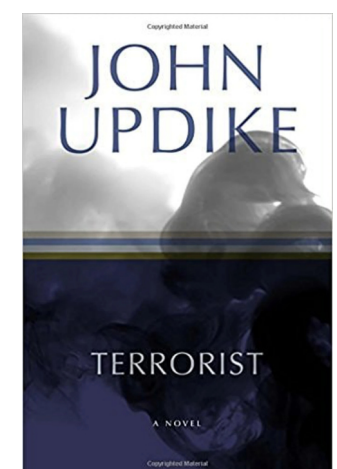


**The Association of Small Bombs** is a brilliant study of the aftershocks of terrorism and the imprint it leaves on the lives of survivors. Beginning with a bomb that claims the life of two Delhi schoolboys, we then follow their friend Mansoor, the boys' parents, a devoted bomb maker from Kashmir, and a radical activist with whom Mansoor becomes entangled. With its shifting perspective, the novel manages to tell the whole truth about terrorism and how it is perpetuated.

**The Secret Agent** is Joseph Conrad's prescient novel of terror and counter-terror in London. A web of intrigue centered around the proposed bombing of the Greenwich Conservatory, the novel features some of the most memorable characters in western literature: the double agent Verloc, the cunning foreign Secretary Mr. Vladimir, and the menacing Professor, who carries a bomb in his coat at all times.



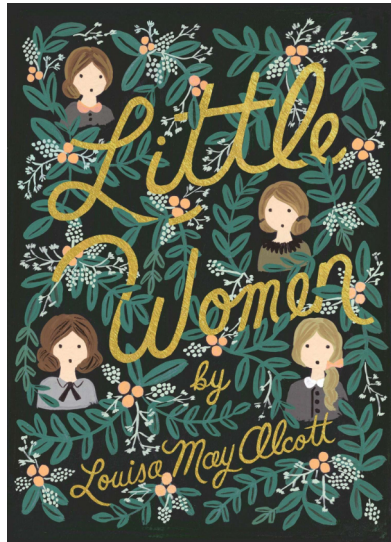
One of John le Carré's greatest and most underrated books, **The Little Drummer Girl** follows a cadre of Israeli intelligent agents trying to foil a Palestinian terror plot in the wake of a wave of bombings. To that end, they recruit the unsuspecting Charlie, in the middle of a long beach vacation, and train her to infiltrate the enemy by seducing its leader.



A late, ahead-of-its-time novel by the legendary John Updike, **Terrorist** enters the mind of eighteen-year-old Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, a young Muslim in New Jersey. Everyone around Mulloy tries to reach him – his guidance counselor, his imam, his maybe-girlfriend – but he nevertheless finds himself drawn toward an extremist plot to blow up the Lincoln Tunnel.

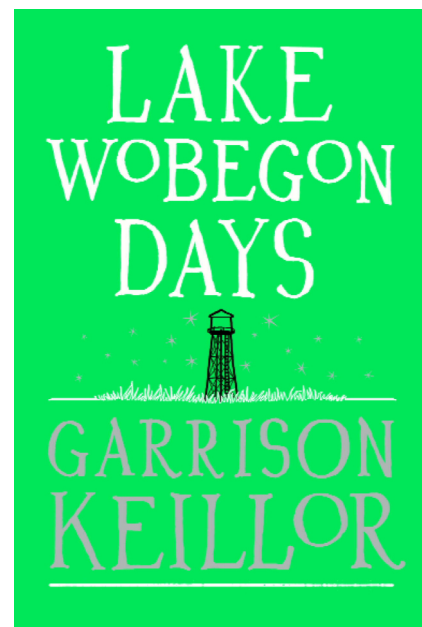
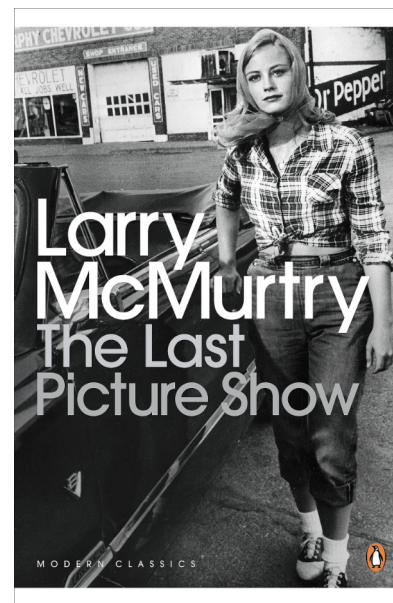


# USA



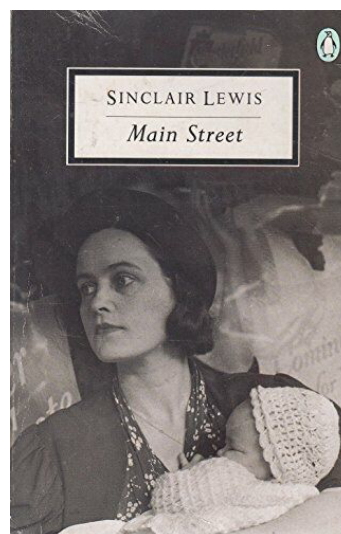
Generations of readers young and old, male and female, have fallen in love with the March sisters of Louisa May Alcott's most popular and enduring novel, **Little Women**. Here are talented tomboy and author-to-be Jo, tragically frail Beth, beautiful Meg, and romantic, spoiled Amy, united in their devotion to each other and their struggles to survive in New England during the Civil War.

Set in a small, dusty Texas town, **The Last Picture Show** introduces Jacy, Duane and Sonny, teenagers stumbling towards adulthood, discovering the beguiling mysteries of sex and the even more baffling mysteries of love.

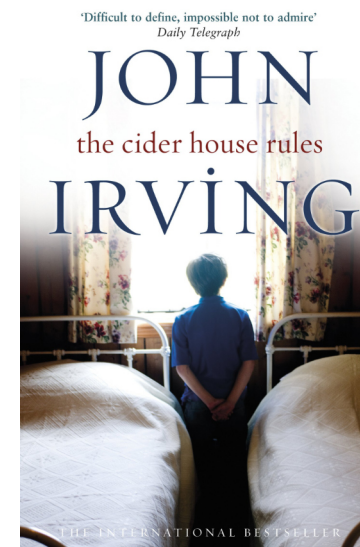


**Lake Wobegon Days** is essentially a series of vignettes about life in Lake Wobegon, taking place primarily—but not exclusively—in the 1950s, with bold leaps—sometimes without warning—into the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Satirizing small-town life, **Main Street** is perhaps Sinclair Lewis's most famous book, and led in part to his eventual 1930 Nobel Prize for Literature. It relates the life and struggles of Carol Milford Kennicott as she comes into conflict with the small-town mentality of the residents of Gopher Prairie.

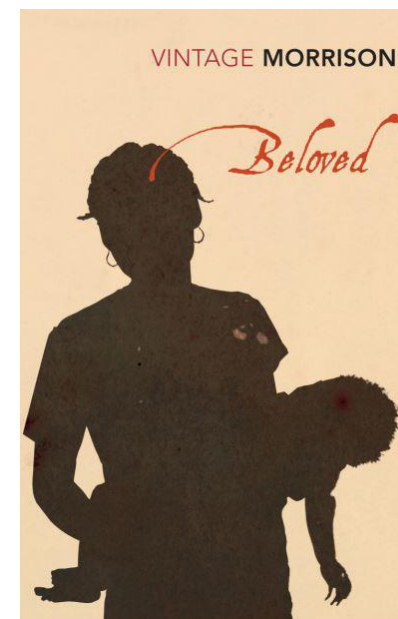


# USA



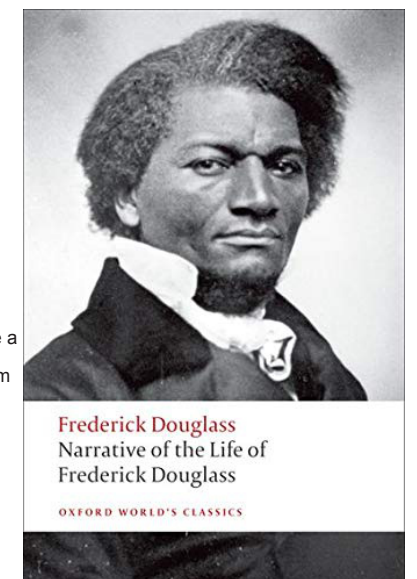
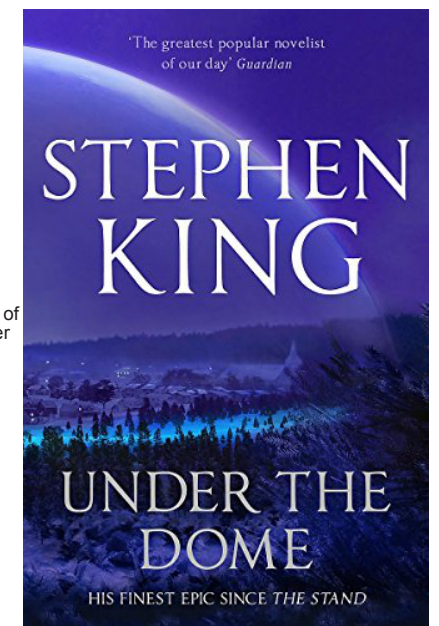
**The Cider House Rules** (1985), a historical novel by John Irving, centers on a young man who grows up in an orphanage and helps unwed mothers with unwanted pregnancies. One of Irving's most controversial and political novels, critics praise Irving for his honest look at racism, abortion, and addiction.

**Under the Dome** focuses on a small Maine town, and tells an intricate, multi-character, alternating perspective story of how the town's inhabitants contend with the calamity of being suddenly cut off from the outside world by an impassable, invisible glass dome-like barrier that seemingly falls out of the sky, transforming ...



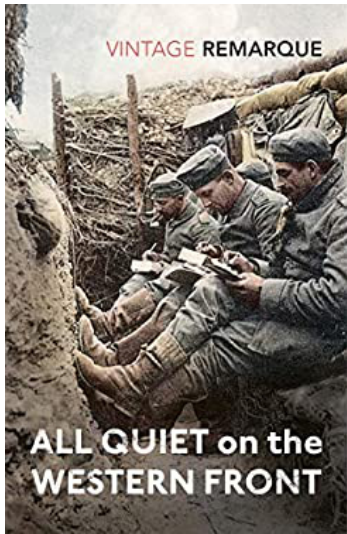
**Beloved** examines the destructive legacy of slavery as it chronicles the life of a Black woman named Sethe, from her pre-Civil War days as a slave in Kentucky to her time in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1873. Although Sethe lives there as a free woman, she is held prisoner by memories of the trauma of her life as a slave.

Douglass's **Narrative of the Life of an American Slave** is like a highway map, showing us the road from slavery to freedom. At the beginning of the book, Douglass is a slave in both body and mind. When the book ends, he gets both his legal freedom and frees his mind.



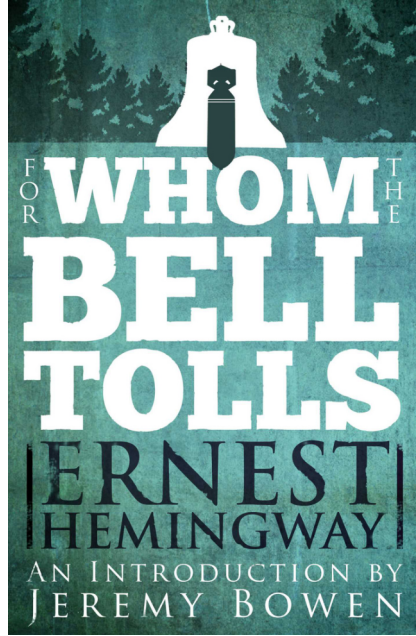
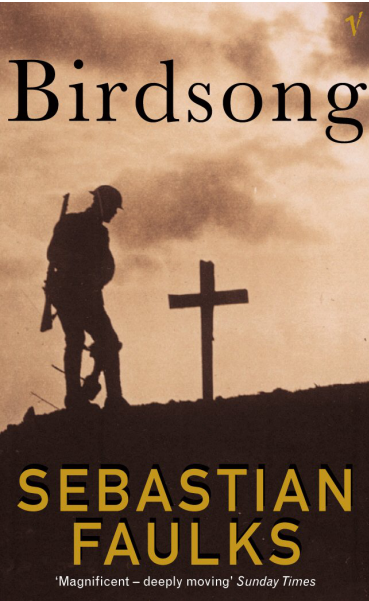


# WAR



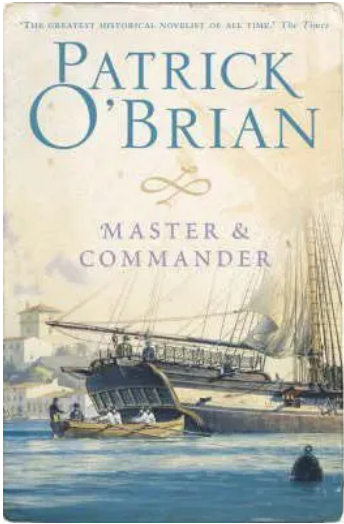
**All Quiet on the Western Front** describes the German soldiers' extreme physical and mental stress during the war, and the detachment from civilian life felt by many of these soldiers upon returning home from the front.

**Birdsong** follows two main characters living at different times: the first is Stephen Wraysford, a British soldier on the front line in Amiens during the First World War, and the second is his granddaughter, Elizabeth Benson, whose 1970s plotline follows her attempts to recover an understanding of Stephen's experience of the war.

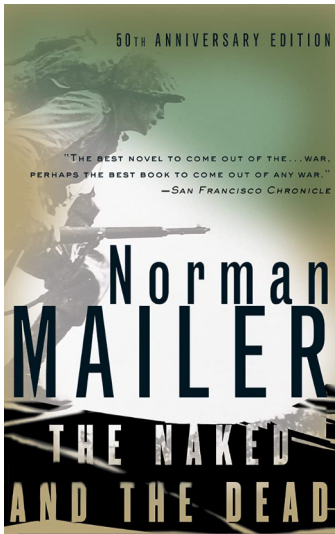


**For Whom the Bell Tolls** is a novel by Ernest Hemingway published in 1940. It tells the story of Robert Jordan, a young American volunteer attached to a Republican guerrilla unit during the Spanish Civil War. As a dynamiter, he is assigned to blow up a bridge during an attack on the city of Segovia.

**Master and Commander** is set at the turn of the 19th century. It follows the young Jack Aubrey, a Royal Navy captain who has just been promoted to the rank of Master and Commander, and Stephen Maturin, a destitute physician and naturalist whom Aubrey appoints as his naval surgeon. They sail in HM sloop-of-war Sophie with first lieutenant James Dillon, a wealthy and aristocratic Irishman. The naval action in the Mediterranean is closely based on the real-life exploits of Lord Cochrane, including a battle modelled after Cochrane's spectacular victory in the brig HMS Speedy over the vastly superior Spanish frigate El Gamo.

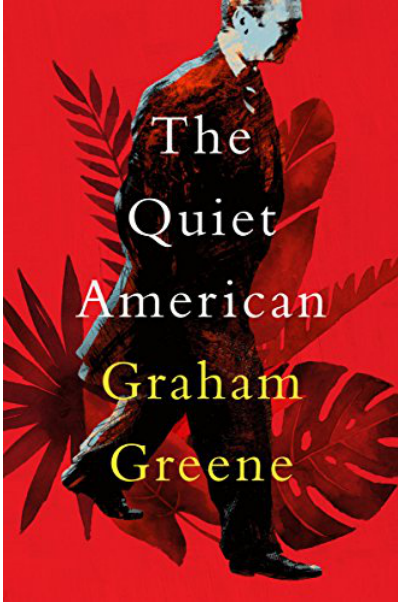


# WAR

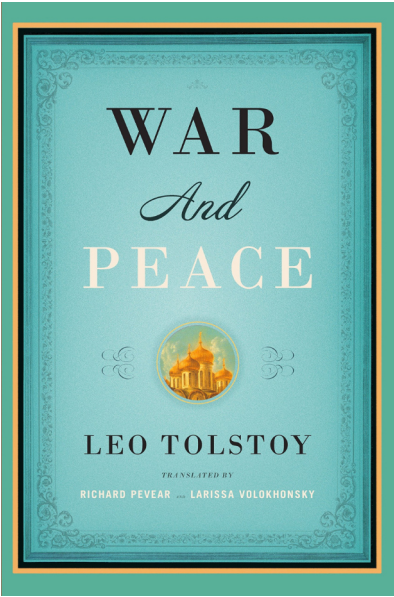
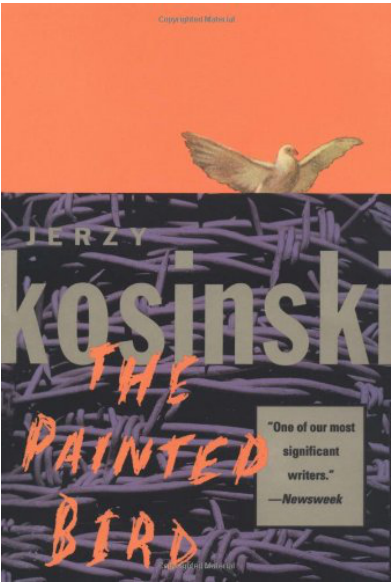


Written in gritty, journalistic detail, **The Naked and the Dead** follows a platoon of Marines who are stationed on the Japanese-held island of Anopopei. Composed in 1948 with the wisdom of a man twice Mailer's age and the raw courage of the young man he was, The Naked and the Dead is representative of the best in twentieth-century American writing.

A harrowing story that follows the wanderings of a boy abandoned by his parents during World War II, **The Painted Bird** is a dark novel that examines the proximity of terror and savagery to innocence and love.



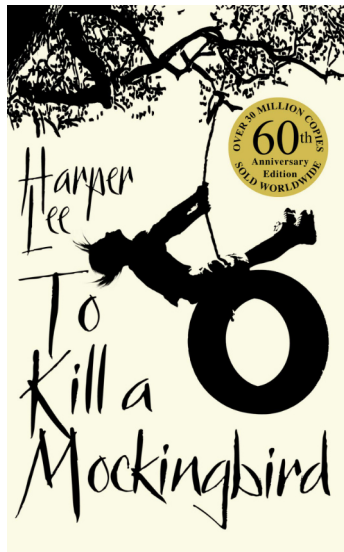
"I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused," Graham Greene's narrator Fowler remarks of Alden Pyle, the eponymous **"Quiet American"** of what is perhaps the most controversial novel of his career. Pyle is the brash young idealist sent out by Washington on a mysterious mission to Saigon, where the French Army struggles against the Vietminh guerrillas. As young Pyle's well-intentioned policies blunder into bloodshed, Fowler, a seasoned and cynical British reporter, finds it impossible to stand safely aside as an observer.



In Russia's struggle with Napoleon, Tolstoy saw a tragedy that involved all mankind. Greater than a historical chronicle, **War and Peace** is an affirmation of life itself, 'a complete picture', as a contemporary reviewer put it, 'of everything in which people find their happiness and greatness, their grief and humiliation'.



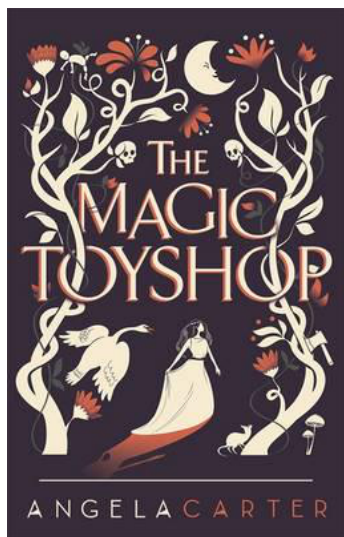
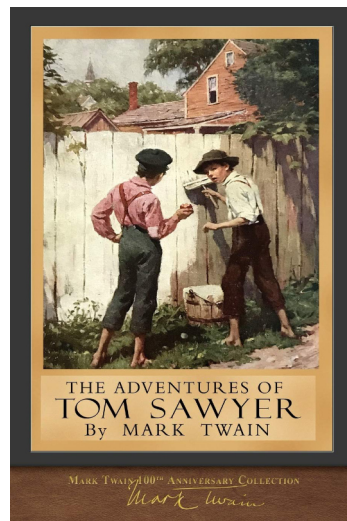
# YOUTH



**To Kill a Mockingbird** deals with racial inequality and justice in small town America during the great drpression as seen through the eyes of Scout as a six year old and as a grown woman.

Despite dealing with the serious issues of rape and racial inequality, the novel is renowned for its warmth and humor. Atticus Finch, the narrator's father, has served as a moral hero for many readers and as a model of integrity for lawyers. The historian Joseph Crespino explains, "In the twentieth century, To Kill a Mockingbird is probably the most widely read book dealing with race in America, and its main character, Atticus Finch, the most enduring fictional image of racial heroism."

**The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** charts the escapades of a thirteen-year-old boy growing up on the banks of the Mississippi. Testing the patience of his aunt Polly, the bold and sharp-witted Tom Sawyer frequently skips school in search of excitement, and the scrapes he gets into with his friend Huckleberry Finn range from innocent japes to more serious events such as the witnessing of a murder. One of the most popular and influential American novels, Mark Twain's masterpiece is at the same time a highly entertaining romp which celebrates youth and freedom and a more profound investigation of his times, touching on themes such as race, revenge and slavery.



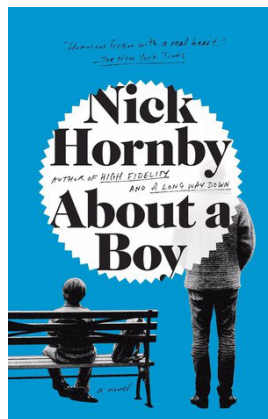
This crazy world whirled around her, men and women dwarfed by toys and puppets, where even the birds are mechanical and the few human figures went masked... She was in the night once again, and the doll was herself.

Melanie walks in the midnight garden, wearing her mother's wedding dress; naked she climbs the apple tree in the black of the moon. Omens of disaster, swiftly following, transport Melanie from rural comfort to London, to **The Magic Toyshop**.

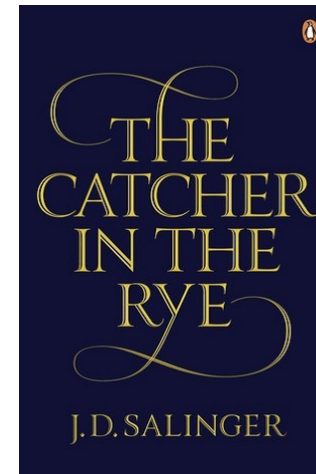
**About a Boy.** Thirty-six-year-old Londoner Will loves his life. Living carefree off the royalties of his dad's Christmas song, he's rich, unattached and has zero responsibilities - just the way he likes it.

But when Will meets Marcus, an awkward twelve-year-old who listens to Joni Mitchell and accidentally kills ducks with loaves of bread, an unlikely friendship starts to bloom.

Can this odd duo teach each another how to finally act their age?



# YOUTH

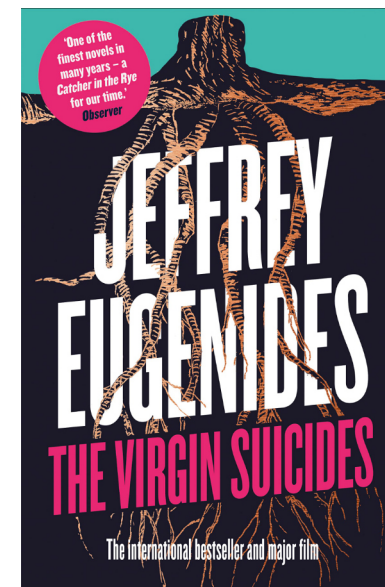


In an effort to escape the hypocrisies of life at his boarding school, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield seeks refuge in New York City.

**The Catcher in the Rye** also deals with complex issues of innocence, identity, belonging, loss, connection, sex, and depression.

No one ever said life was easy. But Ponyboy is pretty sure that he's got things figured out. He knows that he can count on his brothers, Darry and Sodapop. And he knows that he can count on his friends-true friends who would do anything for him, like Johnny and Two-Bit. But not on much else besides trouble with the Socs, a vicious gang of rich kids whose idea of a good time is beating up on "greasers" like Ponyboy. At least he knows what to expect-until the night someone takes things too far.

**The Outsiders** is a dramatic and enduring work of fiction that laid the groundwork for the YA genre. S. E. Hinton's classic story of a boy who finds himself on the outskirts of regular society remains as powerful today as it was the day it was first published.



**The Virgin Suicides** is the story of the five Lisbon sisters - beautiful, eccentric, and obsessively watched by the entire neighbourhood.

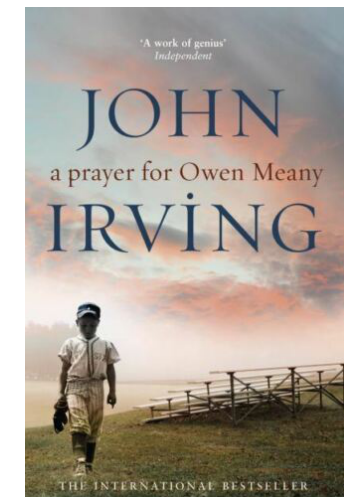
The boys that once loved them from afar are now grown men, determined to understand a tragedy that has always defied explanation. For still, the question remains - why did all five of the Lisbon girls take their own lives?

This hypnotic and unforgettable novel treats adolescent love and death with haunting sensitivity and dark humour, and creates a coming-of-age story unlike any of our time.



**A Prayer for Owen Meany.** Summer, 1953. In the small town of Gravesend, New Hampshire, eleven-year-old John Wheelwright and his best friend Owen Meany are playing in a Little League baseball game. When Owen hits a foul ball which kills John's mother, their lives are changed in an instant.

It is dismissed as a tragic accident but Owen disagrees. He believes that he is God's instrument, put on Earth for a higher purpose. And as the boys come into adulthood to the background of the Vietnam War, a series of remarkable events show that perhaps Owen's divine plan was not imagined after all.



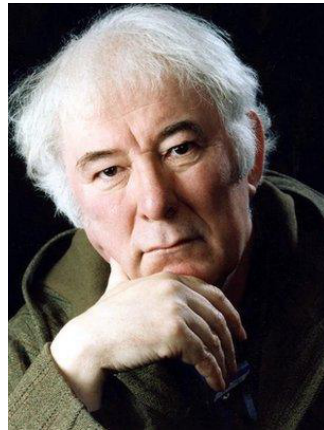


# POETRY



**Sylvia Plath** was one of the most dynamic and admired poets of the 20th century. By the time she took her life at the age of 30, Plath already had a following in the literary community. In the ensuing years her work attracted the attention of a multitude of readers, who saw in her singular verse an attempt to catalogue despair, violent emotion, and obsession with death.

**Seamus Heaney** is widely recognized as one of the major poets of the 20th century. A native of Northern Ireland, Heaney was raised in County Derry, and later lived for many years in Dublin. He was the author of over 20 volumes of poetry and criticism, and edited several widely used anthologies. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995 "for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth, which exalt everyday miracles and the living past."

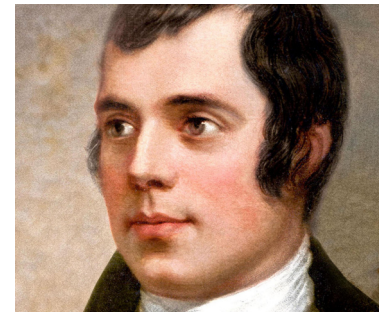


Known for his deadpan delivery, **Simon Armitage's** formally assured, often darkly comic poetry is influenced by the work of Ted Hughes, W.H. Auden, and Philip Larkin. As a reviewer for the PoetryArchive.org observed, "With his acute eye for modern life, Armitage is an updated version of Wordsworth's 'man talking to men.'"

**Emily Dickinson** is one of America's greatest and most original poets of all time. Like writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, she experimented with expression in order to free it from conventional restraints. Like writers such as Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, she crafted a new type of persona for the first person. The speakers in Dickinson's poetry, like those in Brontë's and Browning's works, are sharp-sighted observers who see the inescapable limitations of their societies as well as their imagined and imaginable escapes.

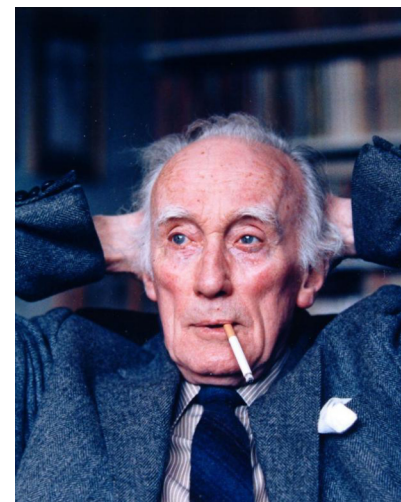


# POETRY



**Robert Burns** was born in 1759, in Alloway, Scotland, to William and Agnes Brown Burnes. Like his father, Burns was a tenant farmer. However, toward the end of his life he became an excise collector in Dumfries, where he died in 1796; throughout his life he was also a practicing poet. His poetry recorded and celebrated aspects of farm life, regional experience, traditional culture, class culture and distinctions, and religious practice. He is considered the national poet of Scotland.

**Jen Hadfield** is concerned with capturing the spirit of the Shetlands and of Canada in a celebration of landscape and dialect. As Frances Leviston notes, "This is a dialect with a global dimension" reminding us that, "Scottish settlers left deep marks on the New World." Jen Hadfield inhabits the music of language and is drawn to liturgy and litany. Her poetry is found where the secular and non-secular converge



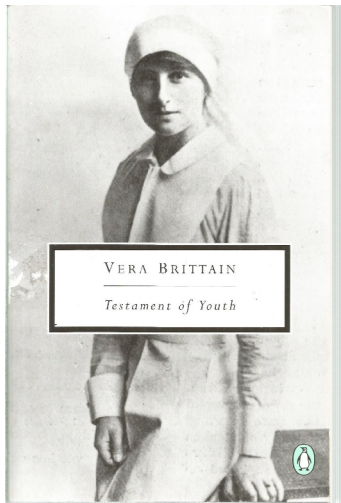
Though he spent much of his life and career in Edinburgh, **Norman MacCaig's** mother's Highland ancestry was an important part of his identity, and he spent his summers in Assynt, Scotland, in the northwest Highlands. MacCaig's poetry bears the influence of his dual upbringing: though he wrote only in English—something of an anomaly for a Scottish poet of his generation—his poetry frequently drew on the Highland landscape and Gaelic culture which he loved.

As one of the most innovative poets of his time, **EE Cummings** experimented with poetic form and language to create a distinct personal style. A typical Cummings poem is spare and precise, employing a few key words eccentrically placed on the page. Some of these words were invented by Cummings, often by combining two common words into a new synthesis. He also revised grammatical and linguistic rules to suit his own purposes, using such words as "if," "am," and "because" as nouns, for example, or assigning his own private meanings to words. Despite their nontraditional form, Cummings' poems came to be popular with many readers. "No one else," Randall Jarrell claimed, "has ever made avant-garde, experimental poems so attractive to the general and the special reader."





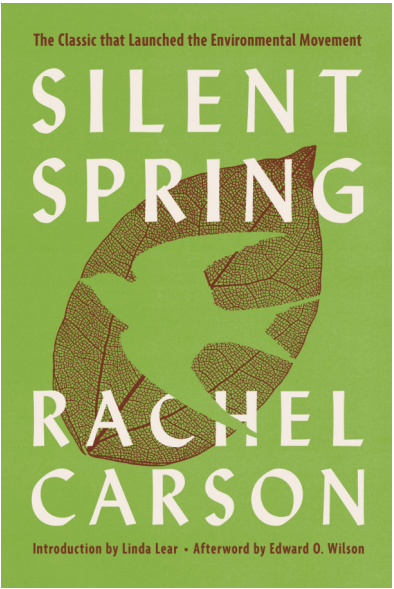
# NON-FICTION



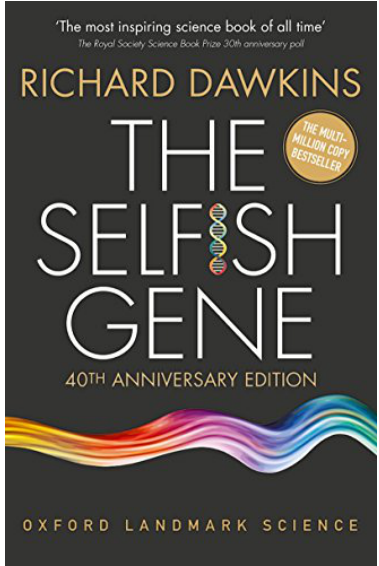
Much of what we know and feel about the First World War we owe to Vera Brittain's elegiac yet unsparing book, which set a standard for memoirists from Martha Gellhorn to Lillian Hellman. Abandoning her studies at Oxford in 1915 to enlist as a nurse in the armed services, Brittain served in London, in Malta, and on the Western Front. By war's end she had lost virtually everyone she loved. **Testament of Youth** is both a record of what she lived through and an elegy for a vanished generation.

**Silent Spring** is an environmental science book. The book documents the adverse environmental effects caused by the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Carson accused the chemical industry of spreading disinformation, and public officials of accepting the industry's marketing claims unquestioningly.

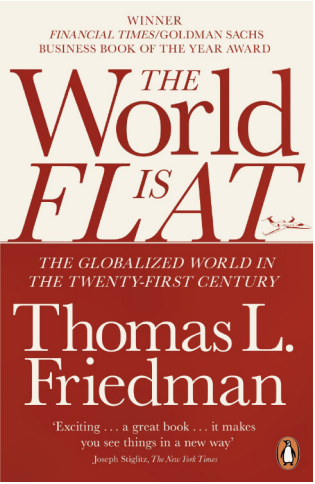
The book appeared in September 1962 and the outcry that followed its publication forced the banning of DDT and spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water. Carson's book was instrumental in launching the environmental movement.



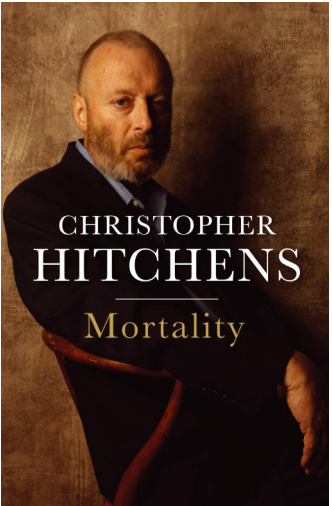
**"The Selfish Gene"** caused a wave of excitement among biologists and the general public when it was first published in 1976. Its vivid rendering of a gene's eye view of life, in lucid prose, gathered together the strands of thought about the nature of natural selection into a conceptual framework with far-reaching implications for our understanding of evolution. Time has confirmed its significance. Intellectually rigorous, yet written in non-technical language, "The Selfish Gene" is widely regarded as a masterpiece of science writing, and its insights remain as relevant today as on the day it was published.



When scholars write the history of the world twenty years from now, and they come to the chapter Y2K to March 2004, what will they say was the most crucial development? The attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11 and the Iraq war? Or the convergence of technology and events that allowed India, China, and so many other countries to become part of the global supply chain for services and manufacturing, creating an explosion of wealth in the middle classes of the world's two biggest nations, giving them a huge new stake in the success of globalisation? And with this flattening' of the globe, which requires us to run faster in order to stay in one place, has the world got too small and too fast for human beings and their political systems to adjust in a stable manner?

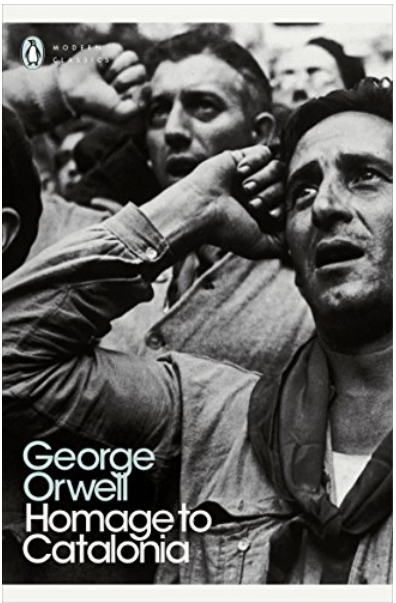


# NON-FICTION



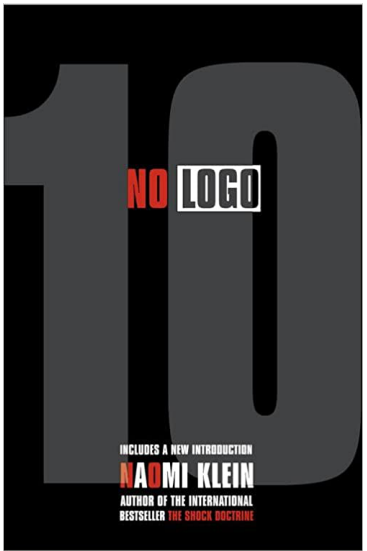
On June 8, 2010, while on a book tour for his bestselling memoir, Hitch-22, **Christopher Hitchens** was stricken in his New York hotel room with excruciating pain in his chest and thorax. As he would later write in the first of a series of award-winning columns for "Vanity Fair," he suddenly found himself being deported "from the country of the well across the stark frontier that marks off the land of malady." Over the next eighteen months, until his death in Houston on December 15, 2011, he wrote constantly and brilliantly on politics and culture, astonishing readers with his capacity for superior work even in extremis.

**No Logo** employs journalistic savvy and personal testament to detail the insidious practices and far-reaching effects of corporate marketing—and the powerful potential of a growing activist sect that will surely alter the course of the 21st century. First published before the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, this is an infuriating, inspiring, and altogether pioneering work of cultural criticism that investigates money, marketing, and the anti-corporate movement.



**Homage to Catalonia** is George Orwell's personal account of his experiences and observations fighting in the Spanish Civil War for the POUM militia of the Republican army.

Covering the period between December 1936 and June 1937, Orwell recounts Catalonia's revolutionary fervor during his training in Barcelona, his boredom on the front lines in Aragon, his involvement in the interfacional May Days conflict back in Barcelona on leave, his getting shot in the throat back on the front lines, and his escape to France after the POUM was declared an illegal organization.



CONSIDER  
THE  
LOBSTER

And Other Essays  
**David Foster Wallace**

'The heir apparent to Thomas Pynchon'  
Douglas Kennedy, *The Times*

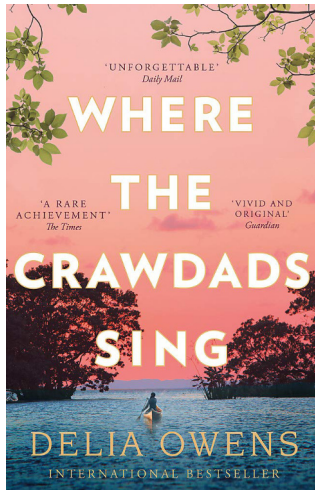


Do lobsters feel pain? Did Franz Kafka have a funny bone? What is John Updike's deal, anyway?

And what happens when adult video starlets meet their fans in person? **David Foster Wallace** answers these questions and more in essays that are also enthralling narrative adventures. Whether covering the three-ring circus of a vicious presidential race, plunging into the wars between dictionary writers, or confronting the World's Largest Lobster Cooker at the annual Maine Lobster Festival, Wallace projects a quality of thought that is uniquely his and a voice as powerful and distinct as any in American letters.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



MRS THOMPSON RECOMMENDS...

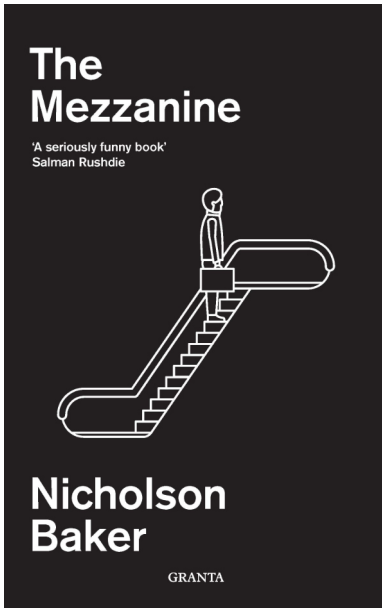
WHERE THE CRAWDADS SING BY DELIA OWENS

This is an achingly beautiful story about a girl with a traumatic childhood, abandoned by her family and left to raise herself in the marshlands of North Carolina. This is a coming-of-age story about the pain and heartbreak of relationships. And it is a story about the landscape, with its poetic, lyrical nature writing.

MR MCCALL RECOMMENDS...

SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE BY KURT VONNEGUT

Selected by the Modern Library as one of the 100 best novels of all time, Slaughterhouse-Five, an American classic, is one of the world's great antiwar books. Centering on the infamous firebombing of Dresden, Billy Pilgrim's odyssey through time reflects the mythic journey of our own fractured lives as we search for meaning in what we fear most.



MR STANLEY RECOMMENDS...

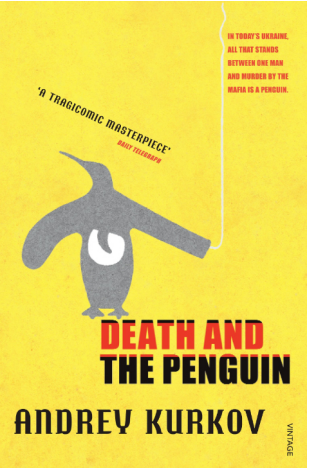
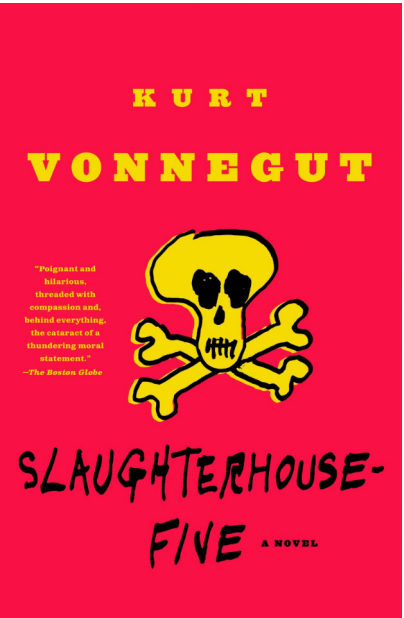
THE MEZZANINE BY NICHOLSON BAKER

Although most of the action of The Mezzanine occurs on the escalator of an office building, where its narrator is returning to work after buying shoelaces, this startlingly inventive and witty novel takes us farther than most fiction written today. It lends to milk cartons the associative richness of Marcel Proust's madeleines. It names the eight most significant advances in a human life—beginning with shoe-tying. It asks whether the hot air blowers in bathrooms really are more sanitary than towels. And it casts a dazzling light on our relations with the objects and people we usually take for granted.

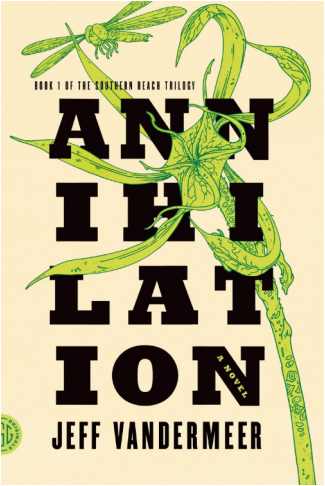
MR STANLEY RECOMMENDS...

DEATH AND THE PENGUIN BY ANDREY KURKOV

Viktor is an aspiring writer with only Misha, his pet penguin, for company. Although he would prefer to write short stories, he earns a living composing obituaries for a newspaper. He longs to see his work published, yet the subjects of his obituaries continue to cling to life. But when he opens the newspaper to see his work in print for the first time, his pride swiftly turns to terror. He and Misha have been drawn into a trap from which there appears to be no escape.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



MR WOODROW RECOMMENDS...

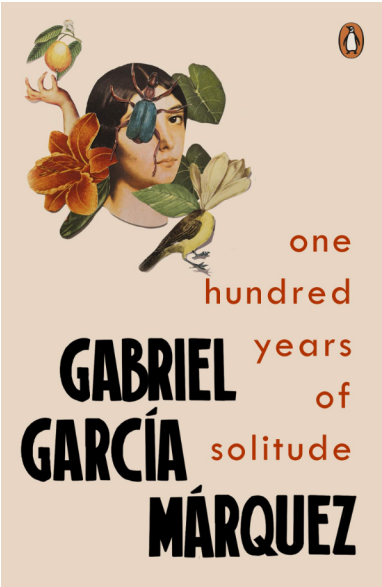
ANNIHILATION BY JEFF VANDERMEER

Area X has been cut off from the rest of the world for decades. Nature has reclaimed the last vestiges of human civilization. The first expedition returned with reports of a pristine, Edenic landscape; the second expedition ended in mass suicide, the third in a hail of gunfire as its members turned on one another. The members of the eleventh expedition returned as shadows of their former selves, and within weeks, all had died of cancer. In Annihilation, the first volume of Jeff VanderMeer's Southern Reach Trilogy, we join the twelfth expedition.

MR BELL RECOMMENDS...

THE NINE TAILORS BY DOROTHY L SAYERS

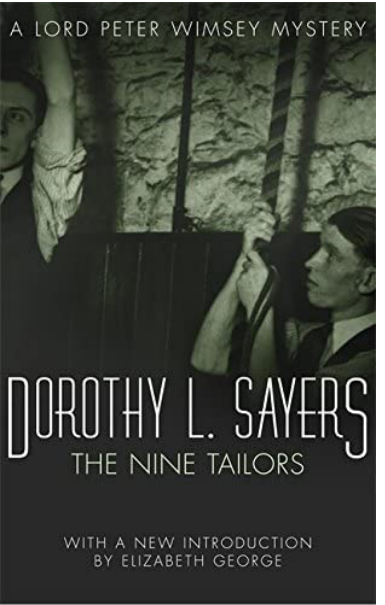
When a disfigured corpse is discovered in a country parish, the local rector pleads with Lord Peter to take on what will become one of his most brilliant and complicated cases.



MRS THOMPSON RECOMMENDS...

SHUGGIE BAIN BY DOUGLAS STUART

Set in working-class Glasgow in the 1960s and 1980s, this is a novel about family, poverty, addiction, and homophobia. This novel broke my heart. But the beautiful, lyrical writing style; the humour; and the wonderfully vivid characterisation throughout, made this one of the best novels I've ever read. The character of Shuggie has stayed with me.



MRS LAWTIE RECOMMENDS...

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE BY GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

The brilliant, bestselling, landmark novel that tells the story of the Buendia family, and chronicles the irreconcilable conflict between the desire for solitude and the need for love—in rich, imaginative prose that has come to define an entire genre known as "magical realism."

