



CHRISTMAS BOOKCASE

Staff Recommended Reading

December 2014

*Full details can be found on
www.millhill.org.uk*



Americanah
The New York Trilogy
A Testament Of Youth
Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee
An Unexpected Professor: An Oxford Life In Books
The Luminaries
The Other Hand
Harvest
The Iron King
Schroder
We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be
Killed With Our Families
Mud,Sweat and Tears
Hanns and Rudolf: The German Jew and the Hunt
for Kommandant of Auschwitz
An Officer and a Spy
The Devotion of Suspect X
Strange Meeting
Arguably
The Grass Is Singing
Two Caravans
Sister
Eastern Approaches
Wolf Hall
What Is Normal?
Wonder
People Who Eat Darkness
Lifemanship
The Rosie Project
The Help
Goldfinch
Stoner
The Beauty Myth
The Book Thief

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Paul Auster
Vera Brittain
Dee Brown
John Carey
Eleanor Catton
Chris Cleave
Jim Crace
Maurice Druon
Amity Gaige

Philip Gourevitch
Bear Grylls

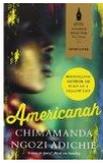
Thomas Harding
Robert Harris
Keigo Higashino
Susan Hill
Christopher Hitchens
Doris Lessing
Marina Lewycka
Rosamund Lupton
Fitzroy Maclean
Hilary Mantel
Francesca Martinez
R.J.Palacio
Richard Lloyd Parry
Stephen Potter
Graeme Simsion
Katherine Stockett
Donna Tart
John Williams
Naomi Wolf
M. Zusak

Americanah

Recommended By:-

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Mr D.T.Bingham



Another fabulous offering from the brilliant Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. As ever, she offers a superb insight into a her protagonist's head and heart, tackling issues surrounding race, love and - above all - belonging. From the heat and dust of Lagos, to the grime and darkness of London, Adichie evokes sense of place with skill and conviction. Although a lengthy read, the pages fly by and the end comes all too soon; an important work by an ever more important writer.

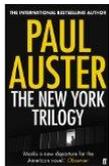
Synopsis: As teenagers in Lagos, Ifemelu and Obinze fall in love. Their Nigeria is under military dictatorship, and people are fleeing the country if they can. The self-assured Ifemelu departs for America. There she suffers defeats and triumphs, finds and loses relationships, all the while feeling the weight of something she never thought of back home: race. Obinze had hoped to join her, but post-9/11 America will not let him in, and he plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Thirteen years later, Obinze is a wealthy man in a newly democratic Nigeria, while Ifemelu has achieved success as a blogger. But after so long apart and so many changes, will they find the courage to meet again, face to face?

The New York Trilogy

Recommended By:-

Paul Auster

Ms S. Iaacs



I am Pligrim-Terry Hayes - Pilgrim is the codename for a man who doesn't exist. The adopted son of a wealthy American family, he once headed up a secret espionage unit for US intelligence. Before he disappeared into anonymous retirement, he wrote the definitive book on forensic criminal investigation. To read I Am Pilgrim is to go on an adventure, and by the time you reach the last page you won't know if you are more exhausted or exhilarated. An international spy thriller right up there with the best.

Synopsis: *The New York Trilogy* is an astonishing and original book: three cleverly interconnected novels that exploit the elements of standard detective fiction and achieve a new genre that is all the more gripping for its starkness. In each story the search for clues leads to remarkable coincidences in the universe as the simple act of trailing a man ultimately becomes a startling investigation of what it means to be human.

A Testament Of Youth

Recommended By:-

Vera Brittain

Clare Hutton



A wonderful autobiographical novel telling the story of a young middle-class woman, who becomes a VAD nurse during the Great War. The enormous contrast between her upbringing and expectations, and how the war changes that entirely is staggering. Also, stunning is the differences in social behaviour 100 years ago and what we accept today. I did find the start of the story to be rather slow, but I persevered and was rewarded.

Synopsis: *Testament of Youth*, one of the most famous autobiographies of the First World War, is Brittain's account of how she survived the period; how she lost the man she loved; how she nursed the wounded and how she emerged into an altered world. A passionate record of a lost generation, it made Vera Brittain one of the best-loved writers of her time.

Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee

Recommended By:-

Dee Brown

Clare Adams



I found this book powerful because it brought to life a dark period in American history and gave an insight into the extent of the suffering of Native American peoples.

Synopsis: The American West, 1860-1890: years of broken promises, disillusionment, war and massacre. Beginning with the Long Walk of the Navajos and ending with the massacre of Sioux at Wounded Knee, this extraordinary book tells how the American Indians lost their land, lives and liberty to white settlers pushing westward. Woven into an engrossing saga of cruelty, treachery and violence are the fascinating stories of such legendary figures as Sitting Bull, Cochise, Crazy Horse and Geronimo. First published in 1970, Dee Brown's brutal and compelling narrative changed the way people thought about the original inhabitants of America, and focused attention on a national disgrace.

An Unexpected Professor: An Oxford Life In Books

Recommended By:-

By John Carey

Mr A. Walker



Autobiography interwoven with his gentle political and educational philosophies but not affecting his quest for scholarship and learned criticism. Re-minds you of the many books you should (re-) read...

Synopsis: This is a book about the joys of reading - in effect, an informal introduction to the great works of English literature. But it is also about war and family, and how an unexpected background can give you the insight and the courage to say the unexpected thing.

The Luminaries

Recommended By:-

By Elanor Catton

Mr G. Saint



A super turn of the century murder-mystery set in the Gold fields of New Zealand.

Synopsis: It is 1866, and Walter Moody has come to make his fortune upon the New Zealand goldfields. On arrival, he stumbles across a tense gathering of twelve local men, who have met in secret to discuss a series of unsolved crimes. A wealthy man has vanished, a whore has tried to end her life, and an enormous fortune has been discovered in the home of a luckless drunk. Moody is soon drawn into the mystery: a network of fates and fortunes that is as complex and exquisitely patterned as the night sky.

The Other Hand

Recommended By:-

By Chris Cleave

Mrs S. Sofroniou



This book tells the story of how a Nigerian orphan on the run from ruthless killers crosses the path of a middle aged magazine editor from London and how events in their lives affect each other's destiny. This is one of those books that took me completely out of my comfort zone and beyond my knowledge of the world, like 'Wild Swans' or 'A Suitable Boy'. Not only was I shocked and horrified by some of the events related in the novel, but also educated about life in another world with a completely different set of rules and customs. While I was reading this, I couldn't put it down and, when I wasn't reading it, I couldn't stop thinking about it! If there is one book you read this year, make it this one.

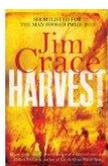
Synopsis: Shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and Costa Novel of the Year, this international bestseller has become a reading group classic. We don't want to tell you too much about this book. It is a truly special story and we don't want to spoil it. Nevertheless, you need to know something, so we will just say this: It is extremely funny, but the African beach scene is horrific. The story starts there, but the book doesn't. And it's what happens afterwards that is most important. Once you have read it, you'll want to tell everyone about it. When you do, please don't tell them what happens either. The magic is in how it unfolds.

Harvest

Recommended By:-

By Jim Crace

Mr D.T.Bingham



Shortlisted for last year's Man Booker Prize, 'Harvest' is an unsettling and thought-provoking novel. It is set in a medieval village on the brink of huge, social change. The arrival of three strangers adds to the mood of suspicion and the fear of villagers is captured by Crace's mesmerizing prose. The surprise is that the novel serves as a chilling allegory for our times.

Synopsis: As late summer steals in and the final pearls of barley are gleaned, a village comes under threat. A trio of outsiders - two men and a dangerously magnetic woman - arrives on the woodland borders triggering a series of events that will see Walter Thirsk's village unmade in just seven days: the harvest blackened by smoke and fear, cruel punishment meted out to the innocent, and allegations of witchcraft.

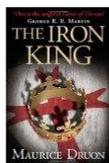
But something even darker is at the heart of Walter's story, and he will be the only man left to tell it . . .

The Iron King

Recommended By:-

Maurice Druon

Mr Karl P. Bulman



Easy to read and an amazing story - all the more amazing since it is all based on historical facts. This is the first of 7 books detailing the scandal, intrigue, betrayals and murder around the time of the Plantagenets rule in England but focussed on Philip the Fair of France. There's family rivalry, babies switched at birth, strangled queens and the curse of the Knights Templar. The series is known as The Accursed Kings and chronicles the downfall of the Capetian kings and the beginnings of the Hundred Years War and you'll want to read on in this series after completing this first book.

Synopsis: *The Iron King* – Philip the Fair – is as cold and silent, as handsome and unblinking as a statue. He governs his realm with an iron hand, but he cannot rule his own family: his sons are weak and their wives adulterous, while his red-blooded daughter Isabella is unhappily married to an English king who prefers the company of men. A web of scandal, murder and intrigue is weaving itself around the Iron King; but his downfall will come from an unexpected quarter. Bent on the persecution of the rich and powerful Knights Templar, Philip sentences Grand Master Jacques Molay to be burned at the stake, thus drawing down upon himself a curse that will destroy his entire dynasty...

Birdsong

Recommended By:-

By Sebastien Faulkes

Clare Hutton



I really enjoyed this book and found it completely gripping in its depictions of the underground warfare that took place beneath the trenches. There are many stories running through the plot (which made the recent TV adaptation far inferior to the book as it was impossible to dramatise in the same detail). After the slower beginning (pre-war) I found this book compelling.

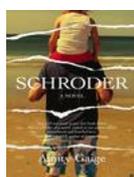
Synopsis: A novel of overwhelming emotional power, *Birdsong* is a story of love, death, sex and survival. Stephen Wraysford, a young Englishman, arrives in Amiens in northern France in 1910 to stay with the Azaire family, and falls in love with unhappily married Isabelle. But, with the world on the brink of war, the relationship falters, and Stephen volunteers to fight on the Western Front. His love for Isabelle forever engraved on his heart, he experiences the unprecedented horrors of that conflict - from which neither he nor any reader of this book can emerge unchanged.

Schroder

Recommended By:-

By Amity Gaige

Mrs S. Sofroniou



This is the story of a road trip as narrated by an estranged husband and father who decides to take his 6 year old daughter without permission through upstate New York. It is told as a sort of apology or mitigation for his behaviour, which he did not see as unacceptable at the time, addressed to his former wife from behind bars.

Although I did not expect to enjoy this novel, lent to me by a friend, I could hardly put it down till I had finished it. I found myself feeling empathy for this man who had no one to blame but himself for the predicament in which he found himself. He knew that what he was doing was wrong in the eyes of the law but did not give proper thought to the inevitable distress of the child's mother. Yet the storyteller guided me to see his side of the story against my instincts as a mother. A very compelling read, quite different from anything else I have read and highly recommended.

Synopsis: Attending a New England summer camp as an adolescent, young Erik Schroder - a first generation East German immigrant - adopts a new name and a new persona - Eric Kennedy - in the hopes that it will help him fit in. This fateful white lie will set him on an improbable and ultimately tragic course. *Schroder* relates the story of Eric's urgent escape years later through the New England countryside with his six-year-old daughter, Meadow, in an attempt to outrun the authorities amidst a heated custody battle with his wife, who will soon discover that her husband is not who he says he is. From a correctional facility, Eric surveys the course of his life in order to understand - and maybe even explain - his behaviour; the painful separation from his mother in childhood; a harrowing escape to America with his taciturn father; a romance that withered under a shadow of lies, and his proudest moments and greatest regrets as a flawed, but loving, father.

We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families
By Philip Gourevitch

Recommended By:-

Mrs O.Logan



This is a very sad but also hopeful book. It made me cry!

Synopsis:

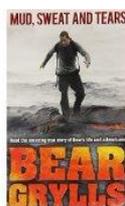
"Hutus kill Tutsis, then Tutsis kill Hutus--if that's really all there is to it, then no wonder we can't be bothered with it," Philip Gourevitch writes, imagining the response of somebody in a country far from the ethnic strife and mass killings of Rwanda. But the situation is not so simple, and in this complex and wrenching book, he explains why the Rwandan genocide should not be written off as just another tribal dispute.

Mud, Sweat and Tears

Recommended By:-

By Bear Grylls

Mrs E.A.Grainger



Once a Scout, always a Scout, as the saying goes! As Bear Grylls is The Chief Scout of the Scouting Movement, I thought his book would be an interesting read and I wasn't disappointed, I read it in a few hours. It was inspirational, reading what he has achieved and how he has dived with death so many times. He is an ideal figure head for youngsters all over the world. Follow your heart and with determination you can succeed.

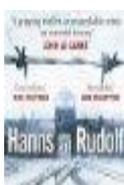
Synopsis: This is the thrilling story of everyone's favourite real-life man. From secret childhood missions to climb the town's school buildings and steeples, to starring in his own global TV series and becoming Chief Scout. Known and admired by millions, Bear Grylls has survived in dangerous environments few would dare to visit. Find out what it's like to take on mountaineering, martial arts, parachuting, life in the SAS- and all that nature can throw at you!

**Hanns and Rudolf: the German Jew and the Hunt for Kommandant of
Auschwitz**

By Thomas Harding

Recommended By:-

Dr. D Lockett



A very personal but meticulously researched account of the search for, and capture of, one of the most evil figures in Nazi Germany.

Recommended By:-

Annie Whatford

The true story of a German Jewish family who moved to England in the 1930's and the parallel life of an ardent Nazi who worked his way up through the hierarchy of the concentration and extermination camps. It tells how an honourable and caring man, the Hanns of the title, joined the British army, became part of the war crimes investigation team and then tracked down and brought to justice an amoral mass murderer, Rudolf Hoss. I found it enthralling, particularly because of the comparison of the two extremes of human behaviour.

Synopsis: The extraordinary true story of the Jewish investigator who pursued and captured one of Nazi Germany's most notorious war criminals.

An Officer And A Spy

By Robert Harris

Recommended By:-

Mr M. Bardou



This novel explores how Georges Picquart, a high-flying colonel in the French army exposed the truth behind the Dreyfus affair: the greatest political scandal in history, a miscarriage of justice that riveted the attention of the world at the end of the 19th Century and humiliated France. Picquart was initially implicated in sentencing Alfred Dreyfus (a Jewish officer, also in the French army) to life imprisonment on a remote island in the Atlantic Ocean for handing over secret military intelligence to Germany. However, he discovered evidence which proved that Dreyfus was in fact innocent. Picquart's passionate quest for justice-to get Dreyfus released and the real traitor arrested forms the essence of the novel and proves to be a fascinating battle between one man's principles and the power of the state.

Synopsis: Paris, 1895: an army officer, Georges Picquart, watches a convicted spy, Alfred Dreyfus, being publicly humiliated in front of a baying crowd. Dreyfus is exiled for life to Devil's Island; Picquart is promoted to run the intelligence unit that tracked him down. But when Picquart discovers that secrets are still being handed over to the Germans, he is drawn into a dangerous labyrinth of deceit and corruption that threatens not just his honour but his life...

The Devotion of Suspect X

Recommended By:-

By Keigo Higashino

Mrs K. Nainani



Thrilling, exciting, pushes you to read more. Tokyo setting. Ending is a killer twist.

Synopsis: Yasuko lives a quiet life, a good mother to her only child. But when her ex-husband appears at their door without warning one evening, her comfortable world is shattered. When Detective Kusanagi of the Tokyo Police tries to piece together the events of that night, he finds himself confronted by the most puzzling, mysterious circumstances he has ever investigated. Nothing quite makes sense...

Strange Meeting

Recommended By:-

By Susan Hill

Mrs E.A. Grainger



Over the last few months I have read many fiction books on World War I, this is a very moving story about love and friendship in circumstances surrounded by death and destruction. They are approaching the front line, facing separation not knowing whether they will meet again.

Synopsis: Young officer John Hilliard returns to his battalion in France following a period of sick leave in England. Despite having trouble adjusting to all the new faces, the stiff and reserved Hilliard forms a friendship with David Barton, an open and cheerful new recruit who has still to be bloodied in battle. As the pair approach the front line, to the proximity of death and destruction, their strange friendship deepens. But each knows that soon they will be separated . . .

Les Miserables

Recommended By:-

Victor Hugo

Clare Adams



This book is quite hard going in places but there were moments when it moved me to tears. It is a beautifully crafted story about love and redemption set against the background of a turbulent period in French history. Much of it is utterly compelling.

Synopsis: Victor Hugo's *Les Miserable* is one of the great works of western literature. Now in a new translation from the French by Christine Donougher, *Les Miserables* is at once a thrilling narrative - part comedy, mystery, romance and tragedy - and a social document of France's turbulent revolutionary history. Victor Hugo's tale of injustice, heroism and love follows the fortunes of Jean Valjean, an escaped convict determined to put his criminal past behind him. But his attempts to become a respected member of the community are constantly put under threat: by his own conscience, when, owing to a case of mistaken identity, another man is arrested in his place; and by the relentless investigations of the dogged Inspector Javert. It is not simply for himself that Valjean must stay free, however, for he has sworn to protect the baby daughter of Fantine, driven to prostitution by poverty. Victor Hugo (1802-85) wrote volumes of criticism, Romantic costume dramas, satirical verse and political journalism but is best remembered for his novels.

The Grass Is Singing

Recommended By:-

By Doris Lessing

Mrs E.A.Grainger



This is the first novel I have read by Doris Lessing, which is set in Rhodesia where the author once lived. I especially enjoy reading African books on Slavery, Apartheid and Racism, so this novel appealed to me, as it portrayed a woman who is trapped in a disastrous marriage to a White farmer, having to over-come this life in an unforgiving land of heat and poverty where she is desperately

lonely.

Synopsis: Doris Lessing brought the manuscript of *The Grass is Singing*, her classic first novel, with her when she left Southern Rhodesia and came to England in 1950. When it was first published it created an impact whose reverberations we are still feeling, and immediately established itself as a landmark in twentieth-century literature. Set in Rhodesia, it tells the story of Dick Turner, a failed white farmer and his wife, Mary, a town girl who hates the bush. Trapped by poverty, sapped by the heat of their tiny brick and iron house, Mary, lonely and frightened, turns to Moses, the black cook, for kindness and understanding.

Two Caravans

Recommended By:-

By Marina Lewycka

Mrs S. Sofroniou



This is the story of a group of migrant workers who are forced, by a series of bizarre and hilarious events, to relocate from their strawberry picking jobs in rural England (Norfolk I think) and pursue their dream life that they have read about when learning English back in their own countries. The plot is narrated in sections by each of the main characters in turn, including a dog!

I laughed through most of this book which is so well told, just like the author's previous novels. It was also very interesting to learn a little about the plight of migrant workers in this country who are often lured to Britain on a false promise. It also taught me a little about the opposing factions in Ukraine and the grudges which have kept their anger simmering ever since the breakup of the USSR. Quite a quick read, really compelling. My 13 year old daughter also really enjoyed this book. Highly recommended!

Synopsis: *Two Caravans* is the hilarious and engaging second novel from bestselling author Marina Lewycka. A field of strawberries in Kent...And sitting in it are two caravans - one for the men and one for the women. The residents are from all over: miner's son Andriy is from the old Ukraine, while sexy young Irina is from the new: they each other warily. There are the Poles, Tomasz and Yola; two Chinese girls; and Emauel from Malawi. They're all here to pick strawberries in England's green and pleasant land. But these days England's not so pleasant for immigrants. Not with Russian gangster-wannabes like Vulk, who's taken a shine to Irina and thinks kidnapping is a wooing strategy. And so Andriy - who really doesn't fancy Irina, honest - must set off in search of that girl he's not in love with.

Sister

Recommended By:-

By Rosamund Lupton

Mrs Diane Mills



It is a compulsive read, gripping and one that keeps the reader guessing from beginning to end.

Synopsis: Nothing can break the bond between sisters ...When Beatrice gets a frantic call in the middle of Sunday lunch to say that her younger sister, Tess, is missing, she boards the first flight home to London. But as she learns about the circumstances surrounding her sister's disappearance, she is stunned to discover how little she actually knows of her sister's life - and unprepared for the terrifying truths she must now face. The police, Beatrice's fiance and even their mother accept they have lost Tess but Beatrice refuses to give up on her. So she embarks on a dangerous journey to discover the truth, no matter the cost.

Eastern Approaches

Recommended By:-

Fitzroy Maclean

Mr Adam Morton



Fitzroy Maclean is thought to have been the real life inspiration for Fleming's James Bond and reading this book you can understand why. Part political memoir from his time as a diplomat in Moscow during Stalin's 'Purges', it turns to travelogue and then war diary as he joins the S.A.S. and fights in Northern Africa before, at Churchill's personal request, parachuting into Yugoslavia to support Tito's partisans. The fascinating true story of a quite incredible man.

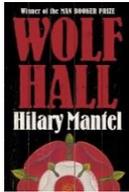
Synopsis: Fitzroy Maclean was one of the real-life inspirations for super-spy James Bond. After adventures in Soviet Russia before the war, Maclean fought with the SAS in North Africa in 1942. There he specialised in hair-raising commando raids behind enemy lines, including the daring and outrageous kidnapping of the German Consul in Axis-controlled Iraq. Maclean's extraordinary adventures in the Western Desert and later fighting alongside Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia are blistering reading and show what it took to be a British hero who broke the mould . . .

Wolf Hall

Recommended By:-

By Hilary Mantell

Mr P. Thonemann



It kept me turning the pages (on my Kindle...) but it also gave me a remarkable insight into how life felt all those centuries ago.

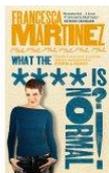
Synopsis: England, the 1520s. Henry VIII is on the throne, but has no heir. Cardinal Wolsey is his chief advisor, charged with securing the divorce the pope refuses to grant. Into this atmosphere of distrust and need comes Thomas Cromwell, first as Wolsey's clerk, and later his successor. Cromwell is a wholly original man: the son of a brutal blacksmith, a political genius, a briber, a charmer, a bully, a man with a delicate and deadly expertise in manipulating people and events. Ruthless in pursuit of his own interests, he is as ambitious in his wider politics as he is for himself. His reforming agenda is carried out in the grip of a self-interested parliament and a king who fluctuates between romantic passions and murderous rages. From one of our finest living writers, *Wolf Hall* is that very rare thing: a truly great English novel, one that explores the intersection of individual psychology and wider politics. With a vast array of characters, and richly overflowing with incident, it peels back history to show us Tudor England as a half-made society, moulding itself with great passion, suffering and courage.

What Is Normal

Recommended By:-

By Francesca Martinez

Ms S. Martinez



Based on her highly successful stand-up show, Francesca cleverly challenges stereotypes surrounding 'normality'. By recounting her highly personal story of her life so far we realise that no-one is normal and that labels can be damaging and problematic. Francesca tells us about living with cerebral palsy but through the trials and tribulations she faces on her journey growing up, we realise that awkwardness, fitting in and finding yourself is a universal human experience and that disability or any other perceived 'difference' doesn't make someone 'abnormal'. A hugely funny and heart-warming read; this book will change your life.

Synopsis: What do you do when you're labelled abnormal in a world obsessed with normality? In a world where wrinkles are practically illegal, going bald is cause for mental breakdown, and women over size ten are encouraged to shoot themselves, what the do you do if you're, gasp... disabled?

Francesca was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when she was two years old and her parents were gravely told that she would never lead a 'normal' life. After a happy childhood filled with tree climbing, mischief and little regard for her bit of palsy, Francesca arrived at high school with a confidence verging on indestructible, only to be turned into a miserable and insecure wreck. Luckily for her, salvation came from Grange Hill, a stand-up comedy workshop, and a passionate love affair replete with

scintillating conversation. After one particularly mind-blowing chat, Francesca realised she had the power to stop judging herself by society's unhealthy standards and create her own. So she did. This powerful new perspective changed her entire life forever. Whatever body you're born into, the pressure to be 'NORMAL' is everywhere. But have you ever met a normal person? What do they look like? Where do they live? What do they eat for breakfast? And what does normal mean anyway?

Wonder

Recommended By:-

By R.J.Palacio

Ms S. Bull



A thought-provoking, funny and engaging book which is accessible to all age ranges. The main character is entering the world of 'school' for the first time, having been home-schooled for many years. The book explores the reaction of his peers, and how Auggie deals with new friendships and unwanted attention. A real page-turner...

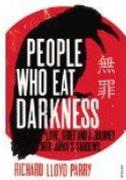
Synopsis: The unforgettable, life-affirming and internationally bestselling story of August Pullman - a boy who's desperate to blend in, but is destined to stand out because of the way he looks.

People Who Eat Darkness

Recommended By:-

By Richard Lloyd Parry

Natasha Anders



Excellent book about the Lucie Blackman case and an exposure of the Japanese justice / police system.

Synopsis: In the summer of 2000, Jane Steare received the phone call every mother dreads. Her daughter Lucie Blackman - tall, blonde, and twenty-one years old - had stepped into the vastness of a Tokyo summer and disappeared forever. That winter, her dismembered remains were found buried in a desolate seaside cave.

Her disappearance was mystifying. Had Lucie been abducted by a religious cult? Who was the mysterious man she had gone to meet? What did her work, as a 'hostess' in the notorious Roppongi district of Tokyo, really involve? And could Lucie's fate be linked to the disappearance of another girl some ten years earlier?

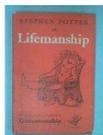
Over the course of a decade, Richard Lloyd Parry has travelled to four continents to interview those caught up in the story and been given unprecedented access to Lucie's bitterly divided family to reveal the astonishing truth about Lucie and her fate.

Lifemanship

Recommended By

By Stephen Potter

Dr. D.Luckett



So funny I have read it dozens of times over many years. Written with donnish wit, this compendium of small, infallible strategies will, if carefully studied, ensure you get ahead in life.

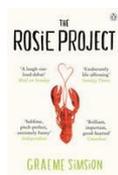
Synopsis: Written half a century ago but eerily relevant today, this tongue-in-cheek parody of How to Win Friends and Influence People defines *Lifemanship* as: how to live; how to be one up; how to make the other man feel that something has gone wrong, however slightly.

The Rosie Project

Recommended By:-

Graeme Simson

Mrs. S. Sofroniou



This is the tales of Don Tillman, a genetics professor in Melbourne whose life is ruled by a strict routine and who shies away from spontaneity. He decides to find a wife and embarks on this project in the same way as he would tackle any task, with a set of rigid rules. The story tells of his disastrous attempts at dating and how he falls for the most unlikely candidate in his list, against his instincts and better judgement. I laughed until I cried at this book, especially the first half. As the story developed, although the romantic ending was signalling to me as the inevitable resolution of Don's tricky problem, it was a pleasure to read the ridiculous and far-fetched details of Don's and Rosie's attraction and aversion to each other, in equal measures. I love this book. I texted loads of friends after finishing it to make sure they beg, borrow or steal a copy. If you don't read it, you will miss out!

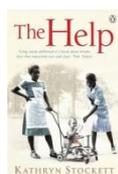
Synopsis: 'The Rosie Project' by Graeme Simson is a story about love, life and lobster every Tuesday 'I'm not good at understanding what other people want.' 'Tell me something I don't know...' Love isn't an exact science - but no one told Don Tillman. A thirty-nine-year-old geneticist, Don's never had a second date. So he devises the Wife Project, a scientific test to find the perfect partner. Enter Rosie - 'the world's most incompatible woman' - throwing Don's safe, ordered life into chaos. But what is this unsettling, alien emotion he's feeling.

The Help

Recommended By

By Kathryn Stockett

Ms S. Bain



Although the book is very funny in places, It is a serious subject and really makes you think about the horror of racial injustice. You really grow to like the characters and how they stood together and bravely started their own dignified crusade to bring about change.

Synopsis: Enter a vanished world: Jackson, Mississippi, 1962. Where black maids raise white children, but aren't trusted not to steal the silver... There's Aibileen, raising her seventeenth white child and nursing the hurt caused by her own son's

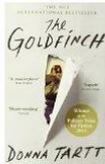
tragic death; Minny, whose cooking is nearly as sassy as her tongue; and white Miss Skeeter, home from college, who wants to know why her beloved maid has disappeared. Skeeter, Aibileen and Minny, no one would believe they'd be friends; fewer still would tolerate it. But as each woman finds the courage to cross boundaries, they come to depend and rely upon one another. Each is in search of a truth. And together they have an extraordinary story to tell...

Goldfinch

Recommended By:-

By Donna Tart

Mr G. Saint



An excellent gripping story that I couldn't put down.

Synopsis: Aged thirteen, Theo Decker, son of a devoted mother and a reckless, largely absent father, survives an accident that otherwise tears his life apart. Alone and rudderless in New York, he is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. He is tormented by an unbearable longing for his mother, and down the years clings to the thing that most reminds him of her: a small, strangely captivating painting that ultimately draws him into the criminal underworld. As he grows up, Theo learns to glide between the drawing rooms of the rich and the dusty antiques store where he works. He is alienated and in love - and his talisman, the painting, places him at the centre of a narrowing, ever more dangerous circle.

The Goldfinch is a haunted odyssey through present-day America and a drama of enthralling power. Combining unforgettably vivid characters and thrilling suspense, it is a beautiful, addictive triumph - a sweeping story of loss and obsession, of survival and self-invention, of the deepest mysteries of love, identity and fate.

Stoner

Recommended By:-

John Williams

Mr R.W.Searby



'Stoner' covers the very ordinary and yet extraordinary life of William Stoner. His childhood is unpromising helping his parents to survive by farming a pitifully barren and windswept plot in Missouri. But then his father makes what turns out to be a life changing decision for Stoner and sends him to college to study agriculture, his simple ambition being that his son should benefit from some education where he had none. One of the subsidiary courses at the college is English Literature, and Stoner enrolls for this option. Soon he finds his true academic passion and he eventually secures a degree in the subject. He is kept on to teach, first as a postgraduate and eventually a full-time reader. He stays in post for the rest of his life but his ambitions are badly thwarted by the appointment of a new head of department who comes to loathe Stoner and does his best over many years, unsuccessfully, to have him sacked. Stoner marries Edith and the relationship never works properly either with his wife, not later with his daughter Grace; later he has a short-lived, passionate affair with one of his postgraduate students, Katherine Driscoll. Cancer gets Stoner in the end, removing him finally from his

university post. The novel concludes with Stoner's anguished final days of critical illness as his life slips ever away.

Sometimes the most powerful stories can be about people who are seemingly unremarkable and dull. But even these lives can be endlessly fascinating, if only because so often we see ourselves in our anti-heroes. 'Stoner' is not a cheerful read, but it is authentic and gripping, helped so much by Williams' brisk narrative as well as its beautiful, yet brutal observations about what it is to be an ordinary human being.

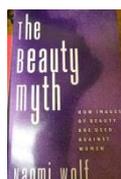
Synopsis: William Stoner enters the University of Missouri at nineteen to study agriculture. A seminar on English literature changes his life, and he never returns to work on his father's farm. Stoner becomes a teacher. He marries the wrong woman. His life is quiet, and after his death his colleagues remember him rarely. Yet with truthfulness, compassion and intense power, this novel uncovers a story of universal value. *Stoner* tells of the conflicts, defeats and victories of the human race that pass unrecorded by history, and reclaims the significance of an individual life. A reading experience like no other, itself a paean to the power of literature, it is a novel to be savoured.

The Beauty Myth

Recommended By:-

By Naomi Wolf

Ms K. Ferson



Synopsis: In the struggle for women's equality, there is one subject still shrouded in silence - women's compulsive pursuit of beauty. The myth of female beauty challenges every woman, every day of her life.

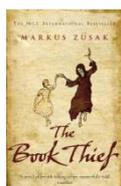
Naomi Wolf exposes the tyranny of the beauty myth through the ages and its oppressive function today, in the home and at work, in literature and the media, in relationships between men and women, between women and women. With pertinent and intelligent examples, she confronts the beauty industry and its advertising and uncovers the reasons why women are consumed by this destructive obsession.

The Book Thief

Recommended By:-

By Markus Zusak

Ms K. Ferson



It has an unusual narrator - death, and it is about war from a child's perspective. It shows the daily lives of people not directly participating in the war so it is not full of guns, heroes and participants divided into good guys and bad ones but fear, anger, compassion, division and of course words. The Book Thief evokes a range of emotions - I was smiling through tears though somehow by the end you feel up-lifted.

Synopsis: 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier. Liesel, a nine-year-old girl, is living with a foster family on Himmel Street. Her parents have been taken away to a concentration camp. Liesel steals books. This is her story and the story of the inhabitants of her secret when the bombs begin to fall.

Thank you to all members of staff who contributed to this reading list.

*Wishing You All A Very Merry Christmas
And A Happy New Year*

**Mrs Elizabeth A. Grainger
Piper Library Librarian**

