

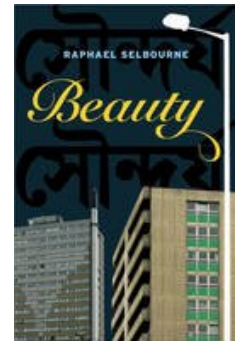
In this first volume of her six books of autobiography, Maya Angelou beautifully evokes her childhood with her grandmother in the American south of the 1930s. She learns the power of the white folks at the other end of town and suffers the terrible trauma of rape by her mother's lover. 'I write about being a Black American woman, however, I am always talking about what it's like to be a human being. This is how we are, what makes us laugh, and this is how we fall and how we somehow, amazingly, stand up again'

1

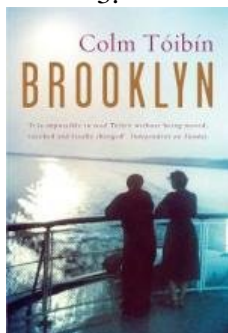
Beauty – in both name and appearance – is a twenty-year-old Bangladeshi, back in England having disgraced her family by fleeing an abusive arranged marriage. Placed on the jobseekers' treadmill, and under continuing domestic pressure, in desperation, she runs away.

Determined and spirited, yet tormented by doubts, Beauty is forced to examine her own beliefs and think seriously about her future. While her brothers search for her across the city, the conflict between her desire for personal freedom and her sense of family duty deepens. What will she do?

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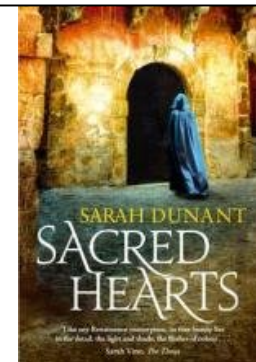


In a small town in the south-east of Ireland in the 1950s, Ellis Lacey is one among many of her generation who cannot find work at home. So when a job is offered in America, it is clear that she must go. Leaving her family and home, Ellis sets off to forge a new life for herself in Brooklyn. Young, homesick and alone, she gradually buries the pain of parting beneath the rhythms of a new life - days at the till in a large department store, night classes in Brooklyn College and Friday evenings on the dance floor of the parish hall - until she realizes that she has found a sort of happiness. But when tragic news summons her back to Ireland, and the constrictions of her old life unexpectedly give way to new possibilities, she finds herself facing a terrible choice: between love and happiness in the land where she belongs and the promises she must keep on the far side of the ocean.

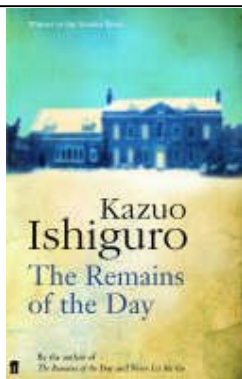
1570 in the Italian city of Ferrara, and the convent of Santa Caterina is filled with noble women who are married to Christ because many cannot find husbands outside. Enter sixteen-year-old Serafina, ripped by her family from an illicit love affair, howling with rage and hormones and determined to escape. While on the other side of the great walls, counter-reformation forces in the Church are pushing for change, inside, Serafina's spirit and defiance ignite a fire that threatens to engulf the whole convent.

SACRED HEARTS is a novel about power, creativity and passion - both of the body and of the soul. Hidden history brought alive by a wonderful storyteller, renowned for her Italian Renaissance novels.

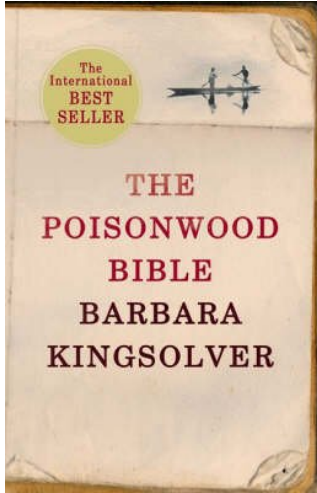
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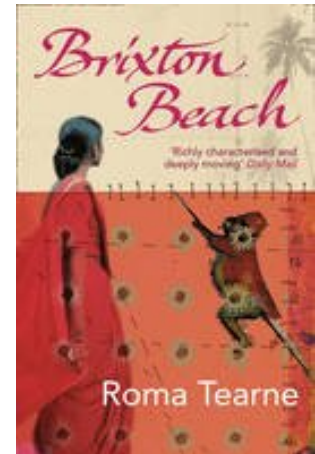
Told in the first person and set in the 1930s, this is the story of Stevens, a straight-laced and coldly inhuman butler who nevertheless convinces us he has a human side through his relationship with Miss Kenton, a housemaid in his employer's household. This is a novel about what might have been that will also appeal to anyone who is interested in England's history.



6.

The end of colonial rule in Africa is shown in microcosm through the tragicomic collapse of a Baptist missionary family. The mother and all four daughters take turns narrating and their distinctive voices are full of life. (The eldest daughter, a kind of Malaprop Barbie, is a hoot.) Arriving full of certainties in the Belgian Congo in 1959, they're in for a series of rude shocks. Father is a hellfire patriarch come to chastise the heathen natives; other members of the family, though cowed, are questioning and observant. The swell of events soon reaches their jungle outpost; and as the country evicts its exploitive Belgian rulers, the women in the family turn away from Father.
Shortlisted for the 1999 Orange Prize.

7.



Beginning with the July 2005 London bombings this fascinating and enthralling novel draws you in from the start. In the midst of the panic unravelling in London as a young doctor searches frantically for someone we are transported back to Sri Lanka some 30 years ago to where the story really begins. A beautifully written and eloquently told story of love, family and war.

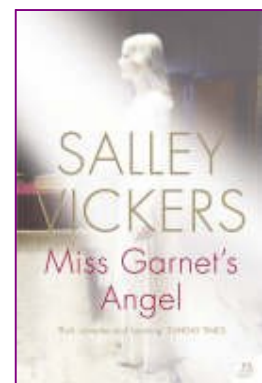


8.

Matilda, a young girl in Papua New Guinea during the civil war in the 1990s is taught in a semi-destroyed school by the only white man on the island. Popeye, as the children have named him, is old and stooped, and his only term of reference for teaching is a copy of Great Expectations. Told from Matilda's perspective, the prose is engagingly simple and affecting as she learns to love Dickens' Victorian England, and the book provides not only an escape for her, but brings its own danger crashing into their lives. Her relationship with her mother is a pendulum swing of bitter misunderstanding and fierce sacrificial love that literally took my breath away.

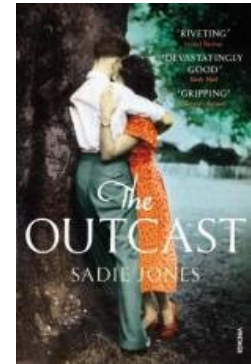
9.

A voyage of discovery; a novel about Venice but also the rich story of the explosive possibilities of change in all of us at any time. Julia Garnet is a teacher. Just retired, she is left a legacy which she uses by leaving her orderly life and going to live -- in winter -- in an apartment in Venice. Its beauty, its secret corners and treasures, and its people overwhelm a lifetime of reserve and caution. Above all, she's touched by the all-prevalent spirit of the Angel, Raphael. The ancient tale of Tobias, who travels to Media unaware he is accompanied by the Archangel Raphael, unfolds alongside Julia Garnet's contemporary journey. The two stories interweave with parents and landladies, restorers and priests, American tourists and ancient travellers abounding



10.

An incredibly moving story about a damaged son returning home from prison determined to make a better life for himself. However, some things may be too badly broken to fix. An enticing, emotional and thought provoking novel that will keep you engrossed until the final page.



11.

When Mattie Gokey is given a bundle of letters to burn she fully intends to execute the wishes of the giver, Grace Brown. When Grace Brown is found drowned the next day in Big Moose Lake, Mattie finds that it is not as easy to burn those letters as she had thought. And, as she reads, a riveting story emerges - not only Grace Brown's story but also Mattie's hopes and ambitions for the future and her relationships with her friends and family.

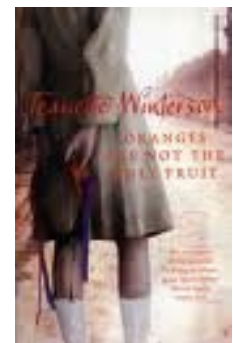
12.

This extraordinary, magical novel is the story of Clare and Henry who have known each other since Clare was six and Henry was thirty-six, and were married when Clare was twenty-two and Henry thirty. Impossible but true, because Henry is one of the first people diagnosed with Chrono-Displacement Disorder: periodically his genetic clock resets and he finds himself pulled suddenly into his past or future. His disappearances are spontaneous and his experiences are alternately harrowing and amusing. Their struggle to lead normal lives in the face of a force they can neither prevent nor control is intensely moving and entirely unforgettable.



13.

This is the story of Jeanette, adopted and brought up by her mother as one of God's elect. Zealous and passionate, she seems destined for life as a missionary, but then she falls for one of her converts. At sixteen, Jeanette decides to leave the church, her home and her family, for the young woman she loves. Innovative, punchy and tender, "Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit" is a few days ride into the bizarre outposts of religious excess and human obsession.

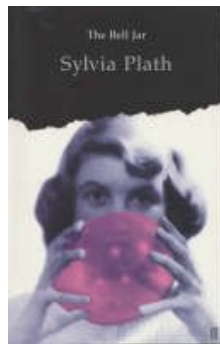


14.

Andrea Levy handles the weighty themes of empire, prejudice, war and love, with a lightness of touch and a generosity of spirit that challenges and uplifts the reader. It is 1948, and England is recovering from a war. But the conflict has only just begun for Queenie Bligh whose neighbours do not approve when she agrees to take in Jamaican lodgers.



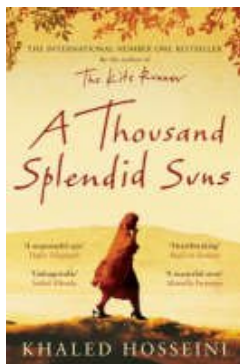
15.



A student from Boston wins a guest editorship on a national magazine, and finds a new world at her feet. Her New York life is crowded with possibilities, so the choice of future is overwhelming. She is faced with the perennial problems of morality, behaviour and identity

...Working as a lady's companion, the heroine of Rebecca learns her place. Life begins to look very bleak until, on a trip to the South of France, she meets Maxim de Winter, a handsome widower whose sudden proposal of marriage takes her by surprise. She accepts, but whisked from glamorous Monte Carlo to the ominous and brooding Manderley, the new Mrs de Winter finds Max a changed man. And the memory of his dead wife Rebecca is forever kept alive by the forbidding Mrs Danvers

16.



17.

Mariam is only fifteen when she is sent to Kabul to marry Rasheed. Nearly two decades later, a friendship grows between Mariam and a local teenager, Laila, as strong as the ties between mother and daughter. When the Taliban take over, life becomes a desperate struggle against starvation, brutality and fear. Yet love can move a person to act in unexpected ways, and lead them to overcome the most daunting obstacles with a startling heroism.

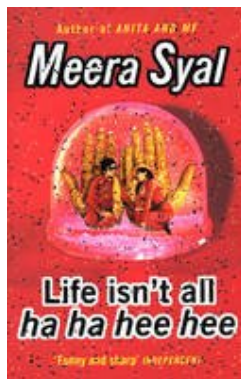
18.

Thirtysomething New Yorker Lucy Stark leads a quiet, solitary life working for a bestselling but remarkably untalented writer. When he dies at a villa in Tuscany, Lucy flies to Italy to settle his affairs. What begins as a grim chore soon threatens her self-reliance and her very sense of reality. In "Italian Fever", Valerie Martin evokes a modern woman's headlong tumble into a world where E.M. Forster's angels feared to tread. Smart and sophisticated, this novel takes us on a journey from which we return, like Lucy, utterly changed.



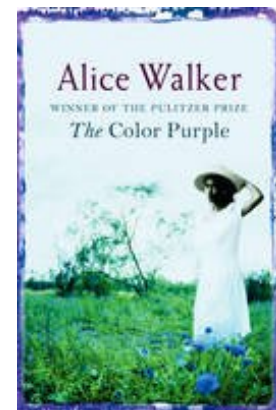
19.

The book (set in London's East End) has the urbane Deepak, a successful entrepreneur, about to marry Chila, a nice Punjabi girl. But he's worried: does this mean that he needs to become his father, take up religion, grow nostril hair, or wear pastel-coloured leisure wear? Syal is as penetrating and witty as one would expect in describing the life of Deepak, his bride, and their eccentric families and friends: apart from the childlike Chila, activist law student Sunita (now an overweight, depressed housewife and mother), and the chic and beautiful career woman Tania with her English boyfriend. The humour never undercuts the fact that this is a moving study of friendship.



Set in the deep American south between the wars, this is the classic tale of Celie, a young poor black girl. Raped repeatedly by her father, she loses two children and then is married off to a man who treats her no better than a slave. She is separated from her sister Nettie and dreams of becoming like the glamorous Shug Avery, a singer and rebellious black woman who has taken charge of her own destiny. Gradually Celie discovers the support of women that enables her to leave the past behind and begin a new life.

20.



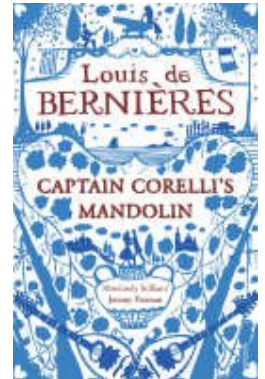


21.

The story grew from an incident in Morrison's own life when a friend told her she wanted blue eyes, which is the inspiration behind the story narrated by Claudia McTeer, from a poor but respectable family, who give a foster-home to a girl named Pecola Breedlove who is about twelve, the same age as the narrator's elder sister. Eventually it is revealed that Pecola's father, Cholly, has raped his daughter, leaving her pregnant. Throughout the narrative Morrison's use of language and incident highlights the unfair and arbitrary gap between the fortunes of black and white Americans.

It is 1941 and Captain Antonio Corelli, a young Italian officer, is posted to the Greek island of Cephallonia as part of the occupying forces. At first he is ostracised by the locals, but as a conscientious but far from fanatical soldier, whose main aim is to have a peaceful war, he proves in time to be civilised, humorous - and a consummate musician. When the local doctor's daughter's letters to her fiance go unanswered, the working of the eternal triangle seems inevitable. But can this fragile love survive as a war of bestial savagery gets closer and the lines are drawn between invader and defender.

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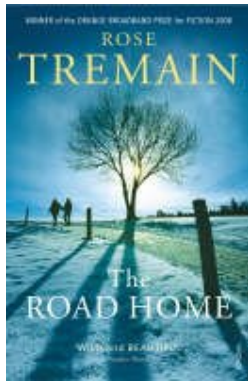


Late at night in a seedy hotel, Richard is drawn into a strange conversation with a fellow guest. Through a narrow strip of mosquito netting he hears for the first time of a secret beach, an island Garden of Eden, hidden somewhere in the scattered islands of a Thai marine park. The next morning, Richard finds a map pinned to his door, and the man who put it there has slashed his wrists. The challenge is irresistible, and Richard sets off on a perilous journey in search of Shangri-La.

24.

In a red brick mansion block off the Marylebone Road, Vivien, a sensitive, bookish girl grows up sealed off from both past and present by her timid refugee parents. Then one morning a glamorous uncle appears, dressed in a mohair suit, with a diamond watch on his wrist and a girl in a leopard-skin hat on his arm. Why is Uncle Sandor so violently unwelcome in her parents' home? This is a novel about survival - both banal and heroic - and a young woman who discovers the complications, even betrayals, that inevitably accompany the fierce desire to live. Set against the backdrop of a London from the 1950s to the present day, *The Clothes on Their Backs* is a wise and tender novel about the clothes we choose to wear, the personalities we dress ourselves in, and about how they define us all.



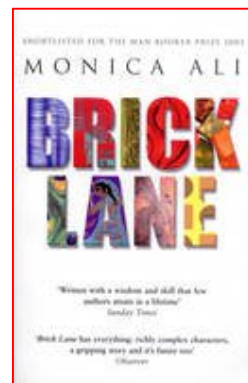


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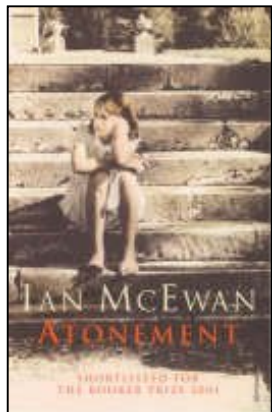
'On the coach, Lev chose a seat near the back and he sat huddled against the window, staring out at the land he was leaving ...' Lev is on his way to Britain to seek work, so that he can send money back to Eastern Europe to support his mother and little daughter. Readers will become totally involved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

Still in her teenage years, Nazneen finds herself in an arranged marriage with a disappointed man who is twenty years older. Away from the mud and heat of her Bangladeshi village, home is now a cramped flat in a high-rise block in London's East End. Nazneen knows not a word of English, and is forced to depend on her husband. But unlike him she is practical and wise, and befriends a fellow Asian girl Razia, who helps her understand the strange ways of her adopted new British home. Confined in her flat by tradition and family duty, Nazneen sews furiously for a living, shut away with her buttons and linings - until the radical Karim steps unexpectedly into her life. On a background of racial conflict and tension, they embark on a love affair that forces Nazneen finally to take control of her fate.

26.



27.



On the hottest day of the summer of 1934, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis sees her sister Cecilia strip off her clothes and plunge into the fountain in the garden of their country house. Watching her is Robbie Turner, her childhood friend who, like Cecilia, has recently come down from Cambridge. By the end of that day, the lives of all three will have been changed for ever. Robbie and Cecilia will have crossed a boundary they had not even imagined at its start, and will have become victims of the younger girl's imagination. Briony will have witnessed mysteries, and committed a crime for which she will spend the rest of her life trying to atone.

28.

The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one function: to breed. If she deviates, she will, like dissenters, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire - neither Offred's nor that of the two men on which her future hangs...

