

Reading Groups Collection

Sets of the following titles are available for loan to Reading Groups in Warwickshire. They may be borrowed as a set on a special group ticket - please ask staff for details.

\$ Titles new Sept 2006, + Titles new for 2006
SP = spoken word version, LP = large print version

\$ Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi – Purple Hibiscus (set of 16)

Kambili lives in fear of her father, a charismatic yet violent Catholic patriarch. Escape and the discovery of a new, liberated way of life come when Nigeria is shaken by a military coup forcing Kambili and her brother to live at their aunt's home, a noisy place full of laughter. The visit will lift the silence from her world and, in time, reveal a terrible, bruising secret at the heart of her family life.

+ Albom, Mitch - Five people you meet in heaven (Set of 20, plus LP, SP)

Eddie is a grizzled war veteran who dies in a tragic accident, trying to save a little girl from a falling cart. He awakens in the afterlife, where he learns that heaven is not a lush Garden of Eden, but a place where your earthly life is explained to you by five people who were in it.

\$ Alexander, Alma – The Secrets of Jin-Shei (set of 17)

In medieval China the Jin-Shei sisterhood, a unique secret society of woman bound together by a declaration of loyalty, transcends class and custom. Their vow to each other is more powerful than any other, even those made to the gods. But when one of their number becomes Dragon Empress they are dragged into a dangerous world of court intrigue, deadly plotting and desperate conflict.

Ali, Monica – Brick Lane (Set of 15)

At the tender age of eighteen, Nazneen's life is turned upside down. After an arranged marriage to a man twenty years her elder she exchanges her Bangladeshi village for a block of flats in London's East End. A wonderful first novel.

Arnott, Jake - The long firm (Set of 10)

A gangster novel set mainly in 60s London – smart, funny and original.

+ Asimov, Isaac - Foundation (Set of 20)

The first volume of Asimov's science fiction saga, which won the Hugo Award for Best All-Time Novel Series.

Auster, Paul - Timbuktoo (Set of 10)

The author tackles homelessness in America using a dog as his point of view. Timbuktoo remains tightly focused on two characters, Mr Bones "A mutt of no particular worth or distinction", and his master, Willy G Christmas, a middle aged schizophrenic living on the streets. A fine book, well written with richly drawn characters.

Bainbridge, Beryl – According to Queeney (Set of 10)

The world of Dr. Samuel Johnson is lovingly reconstructed in this beautifully crafted novel. The ambiguous relationship between Johnson and his patroness, Mrs Thrale, is seen through the eyes of her eldest daughter Queeney, who is slowly becoming aware of the dark emotions and sexual tensions that lurk behind the masks the adults around her show to the world.

Banerji, Sara – Shining hero (Set of 15)

This rich and moving novel set in India follows Karna in his search for fame, fortune and the mother who abandoned him at birth.

+ Banks, Iain M- The Algebraist (Set of 20, SP)

In *The Algebraist*, Iain Banks returns to spectacular space opera but not to his familiar Culture universe. His new setting is a complex, war-torn galaxy with an entirely different history going back almost to the Big Bang...

Barrett, Andrea - The voyage of the Narwhal (Set of 10)

This is a novel of Arctic exploration set in 1855/6. It tells the tale of a fictitious expedition to search for evidence of the fate of the real "Franklin Expedition" which disappeared in 1845 whilst searching for the Northwest Passage, leaving no trace of its 2 ships and 139 men.

Bedford, Martin – Houdini Girl (Set of 15)

A contemporary novel which defies genre – it is a murder mystery and also a tragic love story which explores the uses and abuses of magic. Magician Fletcher Brandon attempts to uncover the truth about his once lover, the beautiful but foul mouthed Rosa Kelly, who managed to fool everyone about who she was – including the master illusionist himself.

Blunt, Giles – Forty words for sorrow (Set of 15)

This intelligent psychological thriller set in the frozen Canadian North follows the hunt for a serial killer of children. Full of twists and turns and intriguing characters this book is a compelling and spine chilling read!

Boetius, Henning – The Phoenix (Set of 15)

A survivor of the horrific *Hindenburg* disaster sets out to discover the truth behind the crash - an accident or something much more sinister? This historical thriller is given an added dimension through the authors personal connection the tragedy - his father was the last surviving member of the *Hindenburg* crew.

Bolger, Dermot -The Valparaiso Voyage (Set of 15)

A fast tightly knit literary thriller from a master storyteller. This novel, an exploration of father and son relationships is set in rapidly changing Ireland

Botton, Alain de - The Art of Travel (non-fiction) (set of 15)

Why do we have the urge to be somewhere else? And why are we so often dissatisfied when we get there? De Botton takes us on a philosophical journey with famous travellers such as Gustave Flaubert, Edward Hopper, Baudelaire, Wordsworth, and Van Gogh.

+ Briggs, Raymond – Ethel and Ernest (Set of 20)

The story of Raymond Briggs's parents' marriage, from their first, chance encounter to their deaths. Told in Briggs's familiar strip-cartoon format, with nothing embroidered or altered, the book is also a social history of a kind, embracing such events as World War II and the advent of television.

Brown, Clare -The Creation Myths (Set of 15)

Cressida seems to have it all; a great job, an affluent lifestyle, two adorable children and a wonderful husband. So why has she been having an affair with the selfish, serial philanderer Tom? This funny and provocative novel explores family, fertility and the unexpected consequences of desire.

Brown, Dan – The Da Vinci Code (Set of 15)

Can Harvard Professor Robert Langdon and French cryptologist Sophie Neveu decipher the labyrinthine code and reveal a stunning historical secret? Find out why this fast moving, intelligent thriller has topped bestseller lists around the world.

+ Byrne, Paula - Perdita: the life of Mary Robinson (Set of 12)

Sex, fame and scandal in the theatrical, literary and social circles of late-eighteenth century England. A brilliant popular history in the tradition of Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire.

Cartwright, Justin – Leading the Cheers (Set of 15)

Dan Silas returns to Hollybush Michigan for his high school reunion and finds life in his old American hometown has taken some unforeseeable turns. The fate of Dan's classmates triggers a turbulent journey into his past and leads him to realise that many of his memories and assumptions about his earlier life are false.

Chevalier, Tracy – Girl with a pearl earring (Set of 15, plus SP)

This story centres on the prosperous Delft household of the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer during the 1660s. When Griet, the novel's quietly perceptive heroine, is hired as a servant, turmoil follows. She becomes increasingly intimate with her master who employs her first as an assistant and then as a model in a tale with a final delicious twist.

\$ Clarke, Lindsay – The War at Troy (set of 14)

In this retelling of the myths of the Trojan War, Peleus and Thetis, Paris and Helen, Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra, Achilles, Odysseus and Hector, are all given vigorous new life in a version of their stories which remains faithful to the mythic form in which they first appeared yet engages the reader in a startlingly contemporary drama of the passions.

\$ Collins, Phillip – Bobby Dazzler (set of 16)

Georgie Lees, almost professional actress, has three touchstones in her life. Mary, her mother, is beginning to worry Georgie with her erratic behaviour; her ten-year old son is struggling at school; and his father, spends more time talking to his plants than to any of them. It is a death that changes their lives and asks the question lying behind all their choices - what is the best way to play one's life off stage?

Collins, Richard - The Land as Viewed from the Sea (Set Of 15)

The line between fiction and reality becomes blurred for two friends working on a smallholding in remote west Wales. Writer John allows Julian to read parts of the book he is writing about his relationship with his ex-girlfriend. Things begin to get complicated when Julian begins to have a relationship with her too. A lyrical novel about love and alienation.

Cope, Wendy - If I Don't Know (Set Of 10)

This could be the book for people who think poetry is not for them. Lots of poems that readers will identify with and wonderful humour on a whole host of subjects. Do not miss SONG which describes in detail just what can happen with a banana and a bag of crisps.

Crace, Jim - Being Dead (Set of 10)

From a simple plot line comes a deep and disturbing work. Two people are murdered on a beach and the story goes back to look at their lives. The author explores the transience of our corporal time on earth and encourages a celebration of what life is. Original, intriguing and intelligent.

+ Cusk, Rachel – The Lucky Ones (Set of 15)

In this study of human relationships, five overlapping narratives of love and detachment merge to form a powerful evocation of family identity. A young pregnant woman's misfortune; a new father's disaffection; a daughter's search for lost childhood; a mother's antagonism; a wife's secret suffering -- through it all runs the story of Victor Porter, and his wife Serena, in whose relationship the conflict between the public and the personal, between love and morality, is played out.

Dalrymple, William - From the Holy Mountain (Set of 10)

In the spring of 587AD two monks set off on an extraordinary journey that would take them across the entire Byzantine world. Staying in caves, monasteries and remote hermitages they collected the wisdom of the stylites and desert fathers before their world was shattered under the great eruption of Islam. More than 1,000 years later William Dalrymple set off to retrace their footsteps.

Dis, Adriaan van - My Father's War (set of 15)

A boy grows up an outsider in the midst of his part-Indonesian family. They are mocked for their "yellow skin", and he has to endure his father's brutality. Years later, he discovers that his father's cruelty stems from the experience of torture in a concentration camp, and begins to accept him.

Diski, Jenny - Stranger On A Train (non-fiction) (set of 15)

Jenny Diski explores America and her own past in this thoughtful and moving combination of travelogue and memoir.

Donovan, Anne - Budda Da (Set of 15)

Glaswegian painter and decorator Jimmy McKenna goes in search of his spiritual side and takes up meditation at the Buddhist Centre. At first no one takes him seriously - especially not his wife and daughter. But as he becomes more committed his new belief system begins to change his life and his relationships those around him.

Duffy, Carol Ann - The world's wife – Poems (non-fiction) (Set of 10)

Each poem is a monologue in the persona of a woman married to a more famous, often mythical, man (e.g. Mrs Lazarus, Mrs Quasimodo). The women express contempt, irritation, resentment and sorrow for the foolishness and egotism of their partners. Only occasionally (as with Anne Hathaway) does the wife feel real love for her husband. These poems are entertaining, very likeable and funny.

Dunant, Sarah – The Birth of Venus (Set of 15)

This novel follows the fate of 14-year-old Alessandra Cecchi, growing up in Renaissance Florence during a time when the city is gripped by the religious fundamentalism of monk Savonarola. When her father employs a young painter to decorate the family chapel she feels drawn to him through the intoxicating and erotic power of his art.

Dunmore, Helen – Talking to the dead (Set of 15)

Long buried secrets and resentments bubble to the surface over a few short weeks when Nina, a London photographer and artist, goes to the countryside to help her outwardly perfect older sister Isabel who has just suffered through a difficult birth.

Edric, Robert – Peacetime (set of 15)

The Second World War is over and army engineer James Mercer is sent to destroy the gun platforms on the Fenland coast. This bleak and powerful novel explores the consequences of conflict.

Erdrich, Louise – The Antelope wife (Set of 15)

The haunting story of three generations of one family who are more closely linked than they can ever imagine. Erdrich draws on her own Native American ancestry to weave a rich tapestry of myth and culture, humour and tragedy.

Fforde, Jasper - The Eyre Affair (Set of 15)

Someone is holding the plot of Jane Eyre to ransom and literary detective Thursday Next is the only one who can stop them. This clever and quirky first novel has been described as a detective story in the style of Lewis Carroll!

+ Fletcher, Susan - Eve Green (Set of 20)

With the death of a mother and the abduction of a young girl, Susan Fletcher has written a vividly beautiful novel about the innocence and terror of childhood.

Frayn, Michael – Spies (Set of 15)

As an old man, Steven returns to the streets of his childhood and a story of childish games colliding harshly with adult realities slowly unfolds. During the war Steven and his friend Keith suspected Keith's mum of being a German spy and kept watch on her, following her to the shops and reading her diary. Steven begins to realise that she does have secrets to conceal, but not the one the boys suspect...

Freed, Lynn – House of Women (set of 15)

Seventeen-year-old Thea lives a strange and sheltered life with her obsessive mother. When she escapes to a remote exotic island with a mysterious and suave friend of her father's, she discovers herself a prisoner once more.

+ Funder, Anna - Stasiland (NF) (Set of 20)

Anna Funder tells extraordinary tales from the underbelly of the former East Germany - she meets Miriam, who as a 16-year-old might have started World War III, visits the man who painted the line which became the Berlin Wall and gets drunk with the legendary "Mik Jegger" of the East, once declared by the authorities to his face to "no longer to exist."

Garcia Marquez, Gabriel - Love in the time of Cholera (set of 15)

The language in this modern classic is as beautiful as the love story it describes. Try this book from master writer Marquez and find out what all the fuss is about!

Gee, Maggie – The ice people (Set of 15)

Saul recalls the fate of the earth and of mankind when, in the 21st Century, a new Ice Age arrives. Saul kidnaps his son from his political activist mother and heads for Africa where it may just be warm enough to sustain life.

George, Sara - The Beekeeper's Pupil (set of 15)

It's 1766 and although fifteen-year-old Francois Huber has discovered that he is slowly going blind he vows to continue his scientific studies into the life of bees. Set against the backdrop of the scientific and intellectual idealism of the Enlightenment, this is a novel of discovery, passion and friendship.

Ghosh, Amitav- The Glass Palace-(Set of 15)

A novel of love, loyalty war and family. Set in Burma, Malaya and India the characters are spread across three generations.

Goldberg, Myla-Bee Season (Set of 15)

Myla Goldberg's first novel examines the unravelling fabric of one family. The outcome of the novel is as startling and unconventional as the prose

Graham, Laurie – The future homemakers of America (Set of 15)

Five American air force wives with little in common are thrown together when their husbands are stationed in Norfolk in 1952. A story that takes us to the heart of female friendship - and reveals the secret of perfect Three Colour Refrigerator Cake.

Guevara, Ernesto 'Che' - The Motorcycle Diaries (non-fiction) (set of 15)

In 1952 Che Guevara set out to explore South America on a 500cc Norton. The diaries he kept of his adventures became this fascinating cult bestseller.

Haddon, Mark – The curious incident of the dog in the night-time (Set of 10)

Written from the point of view of a 15 year old with Asperger's Syndrome. Murder mystery but also an insight into the stresses and strains put on a family living with an Aspergers child. Funny, sad and moving.

Hall, Sarah - The Electric Michelangelo (Set of 15)

Tattooist Cy Parks plies his trade among the unusual characters who populate the seaside resorts of Morecambe Bay and Coney Island. This beautifully written novel explores themes of love and loss and the philosophy of tattooing.

+ Hancock, Sheila - The two of us (NF) (Set of 20)

When John Thaw, died from cancer in 2002, a nation lost one of its finest actors and Sheila Hancock lost a beloved husband. In this unique double biography she chronicles their lives - personal and professional, together and apart.

Hensher, Phillip – The Mulberry Empire (Set of 15)

An ambitious historical epic following the activities of the British in Afghanistan in the 1830s. A moving and illuminating story with parallels to more recent events.

\$ Hill, Reginald – Good Morning, Midnight (set of 16)

Pal Maciver has committed suicide in a manner similar to that of his father several years ago: the death happening in the classic locked room. When a key witness, seductive provider of sexual services Madame Dolores, vanishes, things become very complicated for the detectives--particularly as Pal Maciver's death appears to have many international complications. Will the squabbling detectives Dalziel and Pascoe be able to come to a compromise before further deaths occur?

+ Hill, Susan- The Woman in Black (Set of 20, plus SP)

A traditional ghost story that builds to a terrifying crescendo. When Arthur Kipps attends the funeral of Alice Drablow he is unaware of the tragic secrets that lie hidden behind her house. It is not until he glimpses a woman dressed all in black at the funeral that a creeping sense of unease begins to take hold.

Horton, Lesley - On Dangerous Ground (set of 15)

This gritty crime novel is set in Bradford against a background of urban and racial tensions. Detective Inspector Handford and Sergeant Khalid Ali need to put aside their differences and save children from the horrors of the criminal underworld, especially with a serial killer on the loose...

+ Hosseini, Khaled - The kite runner (Set of 20, plus SP)

In this, apparently the first Afghan novel to be written in English, two motherless boys who learn to crawl and walk side by side, are destined to destroy each other across the gulf of their tribal differences.

+ Howard, Elizabeth Jane - Falling (Set of 20, plus SP)

Henry, in late middle age, is living without means on a dank houseboat. Getting by on his charm is no longer feasible and when writer Daisy Langrish buys a cottage close by, he sets his sights on her. But those around Daisy--her agent, her daughter--begin to ask questions about him. And the revelations they uncover have them very worried indeed.

Hughes, Ted - Birthday letters (Set of 10 plus LP)

The book comes like a thunderbolt from the blue. And reading it is like being hit by a thunderbolt. Its power is sometimes tender, sometimes funny, sometimes anguished and always springing from a burning, continuous present. This is a book written by someone obsessed, stricken and deeply loving. There is nothing like it in literature. – Andrew Motion

Huston, Nancy – The mark of the angel (Set of 15)

A poignant story of two shell shocked World War II survivors coming together in Paris in the late 1950s.

+ Huth, Angela - Of love and slaughter (Set of 20, plus SP)

Angela Huth's novel of farming in the 21st century tells of a of traditional country life slowly ebbing away.

+ Itani, Frances – Deafening (Set of 20)

When the deaf Grania O' Neill meets Jim Lloyd - a hearing man - the two create a new emotional vocabulary of sound and silence. Meanwhile, a war is raging on the other side of the world, and Jim and Grania are pulled to the centre of cataclysmic events that will alter civilization.

+ Judd, Alan – The Kaiser's Last Kiss (Set of 15)

A fictionalised account of the Kaiser Wilhelm's last years in Nazi-occupied Holland. It is 1940 and, the old German king spends his days chopping logs and musing on what might have been. When the Nazis invade Holland, the Kaiser's Dutch staff are replaced by SS guards, led by young, eager Untersturmfuhrer Krebbs, and an unlikely relationship develops between the king and his keeper.

Karnezis, Panos - The Maze (set of 15)

It's 1922 and a band of Greek soldiers are wandering lost in the Anatolian desert after fleeing from the Turks. Their commander can only cope by resorting to morphine and a fantasy world of mythology. But will this Greek drama be a comedy or a tragedy?

Kay, Jackie – Trumpet (Set of 15)

A haunting story about a mixed race jazz trumpeter, Joss Moody who turns out on his death to have been a woman all along.

+ Khadra, Yasmina - Swallows of Kabul (Set of 20)

The Swallows of Kabul is an astounding and elegiac novel of four people struggling to hold on to their humanity in Afghanistan, a place where pleasure is a deadly sin and death has become routine.

+ Kimmel, Haven – The Solace of Leaving Early (Set of 15)

A heart-rending story of the lives of a few inhabitants of a small American town. It is a novel of people and ideas, of family ties, and of how those ties endure for better or worse, of grief and love, of leaving home and returning, of the overwhelming secrets that rest quietly within us.

Kingsolver, Barbara - Poisonwood bible (Set of 10)

The story begins with the arrival in the Belgian Congo of Nathan Price, fire and brimstone Baptist preacher, and his reluctant family. The family's story is told by his wife, Orleanna and their five daughters. The author addresses the theme of survival in each of her characters, as each one chooses a different way of surviving, and their lives show the consequences of their choices.

Kneale, Matthew - English Passengers (Set of 10 plus SP)

The story of Captain Illiam Quillian Kewley, a genial smuggler from the Isle of Man, in the mid 1800's.

\$ Krauss, Nicole – The History of Love (set of 20)

Leo Gursky is just about surviving life in America. But life wasn't always like this: sixty years ago in the Polish village where he was born Leo fell in love and wrote a book in honour of his love. Meanwhile, a young girl, hoping to find a cure for her mother's loneliness, stumbles across a book that changed her mother's life and she goes in search of the author.

Landvik, Lorna - Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons (set of 15)

The AHEB of the title are a group of women who meet regularly to share their passions for reading books and eating sweet things. These 5 women are very different and each have a story of their own to tell...

Le Carre, John - Absolute friends (set of 15)

Le Carre moves from the world of Cold War Espionage to this new era of technology and terrorism in this epic thriller. Trust nobody in this story of love and lies.

+ Levi, Primo - If this is a man, and, The truce (NF) (Set of 20)

Two works of autobiography. "If This is a Man" tells of Levi's experiences as a victim of the Holocaust, from his arrest by the Fascists in 1943 to the liberation of Auschwitz by the Russians. "The Truce" is the story of his eight-month journey back to Italy after he was liberated.

Levy, Angela - Small Island (Set Of 15)

It is 1948, and England is recovering from a war, but at 21 Nevern Street, London, the conflict has only just begun. Queenie Bligh has given up waiting for her husband to come back from the war so takes in Jamaican lodgers, Gilbert Joseph and his wife Hortense. Unfortunately her neighbours do not approve...

Lippi, Rosina – Homestead (set of 15)

The loves and lives of generations of women living in a remote Alpine village are revealed through their intertwined stories.

Longworth, Gay – Dead alone (set of 16)

A vicious serial killer is targeting B-list celebrities, but sexy motorbike-riding cop, Jessie Driver, is on the case. A fresh and streetwise crime thriller about our obsession with celebrity.

Maas, Sharon – Peacocks dancing (set of 16)

This novel follows three young people growing up in Guyana and India, struggling to find their place in the world. This magical story is full of beauty but does not shy away from some of the harsh realities of life.

Mackay, Sheena – An advent calendar (Set of 15)

Like an advent calendar, this story opens mysterious doors on the bizarre lives of John Wood and his family who have moved into the decrepit North London house of an infirm uncle. All are facing Christmas with problems of poverty, impossible love, and loneliness.

Mankell, Henning - Faceless Killers (set of 15)

Was racial hatred the motive for a horrific murder at an isolated farmhouse in Ystad, a small town in the wind-lashed Swedish province of Skane? Inspector Kurt Wallander hunts for answers and faces his own personal demons in this engrossing crime thriller.

\$ Mantel, Hilary – Beyond Black (set of 20 plus SP)

Alison Hart is a medium by trade, touring the dormitory towns of London's orbital road, passing on messages from dead ancestors. But behind her plump, smiling and bland public persona is a desperate woman. Her days and nights are haunted by the men she knew in her childhood, they infiltrate her house, her body and her soul; the more she tries to be rid of them, the stronger and nastier they become.

+ Marshall, Michael – The Straw Men (Set of 20)

Fourteen year old Sarah Becker has been abducted, snatched from a busy shopping precinct in downtown LA. Former detective John Zandt has an inside track on the perpetrator – his own daughter was a victim two years previously. The race is on to find her; she may only have a week to live.

Martel, Yann - Life of Pi (Set of 10 plus SP)

The story of a sixteen-year-old boy adrift at sea for 227 days, with only a dangerous Bengal tiger called Richard Parker, for company.

+ Martin, Valerie -Italian Fever (Set of 20, plus LP, SP)

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.

McCullough, Colleen – The Touch (Set of 15)

Sixteen year old Elizabeth Drummond is sent off to Australia to marry her cousin, Alexander Kinross, a man she has never met. A compelling, passionate and gritty saga about life and love in late 19th century Australia.

+ McDermid, Val –The Distant Echo (Set of 20)

Four a. m. on a freezing Fife morning and four drunken students stumble upon the body of a woman lying in the snow. Rosie has been stabbed and left for dead in an ancient Pictish cemetery. And the only suspects are the four young men now stained with her blood. Twenty-five years later the police mount a 'cold case' review of Rosie's unsolved murder and the four are still suspects. But when one of them dies in a suspicious house fire and another in a burglary gone bad, it seems that someone is pursuing their own brand of justice.

McEwan, Ian - Atonement (Set of 10)

The lives of thirteen year old Briony, her sister and a family friend Robbie are changed forever by the events of a hot summer's day in 1935.

McEwan, Ian - Enduring love (Set of 10 plus SP)

A single glance at a stranger turns into a nightmare for Joe Rose as he becomes the subject of the former's obsession. While the stalker wreaks havoc with Joe's life and his marriage, the tables are turned when Joe unconsciously becomes obsessed by the stalker's psychological condition.

\$ Mills, Mark – The Whaleboat House (set of 17)

In the small town of Amagansett, perched on Long Island's windswept coast, little has changed in centuries. But this stability is shattered when a beautiful New York socialite turns up dead in their nets. In unravelling the mystery, this haunting and evocative novel captures a community whose way of life is disappearing, its demise hastened by World War II and the incursions of wealthy city dwellers in search of a playground.

Mitchard, Jacquelyn – A theory of relativity (set of 18)

After one year old Keefer's parents are killed in a car crash the remaining members of his family enter a horrific legal battle for custody. This heartrending novel explores the capacity and limitations of family love.

Mitchell, David - Ghostwritten – a Novel in Nine Parts (Set of 10)

Ghostwritten mixes myth, fairytale, thriller, science fiction, end of the world doom, financial chicanery and love stories in a series of gripping interconnecting tales told in many voices.

Moggach, Deborah – Tulip fever (Set of 15)

A story of love and speculation on tulip bulbs set in Amsterdam in the 1630s.

Moorehead, Caroline - Martha Gellhorn: A Life (biography) (set of 15)

This excellent biography explores the life of war correspondent, Martha Gellhorn, who juggled a magnificent career with a tumultuous private life, including a marriage to Ernest Hemmingway.

+ Morrall, Claire- Astonishing Splashes of Colour (Set of 20, plus LP)

The title of the novel is taken from Peter Pan and the narrator, Kitty, is a lost girl in her early thirties whose life has been twisted out of shape by grief and bumping along the bottom of life, trying to find her way upwards and out.

Moxham, Roy - Great Hedge of India (Set of 10 plus LP)

This is the story of the author's quest for a legendary hedge planted across the Indian sub-continent in the Victorian era and cared for by 12,000 men. Although it is one of the largest man-made constructions in human history, the hedge does not appear in the history books, and remains forgotten in both Britain and India.

+ Murakami, Haruki - Kafta on the Shore (Set of 15)

Murakami's new novel is at once a classic tale of quest, but it is also a bold exploration of mythic and contemporary taboos, of patricide, of mother-love, of sister-love.

\$ Newland, Bénédicte and Smets, Pascale – And God created the Au Pair (set of 20)

Picture the perfect family! Now forget it & read this. An achingly funny novel on modern motherhood and married life, as told through the e-mail correspondence of two sisters. Charlotte and Nell are separated by continents but united in tales of over-busy lives and family as well as coming to terms with the fact that they are no longer the youthful free spirits they once were.

Nicholls, David – Starter for ten (Set of 15)

First year student and Kate Bush fan Brian falls for University Challenge queen in a brilliant comedy of love, class and growing up. Richard and Judy would recommend it to anyone!

O'Brian, Patrick - Post Captain (Set of 15)

England is at peace so Captain Jack Aubrey has been living it up as country gentleman. However, unexpected circumstances lead him into huge debts and he is forced to flee to France to escape prison. The unlucky Jack then becomes hunted fugitive when Napoleon once again declares war and orders the internment of all Englishmen in France. This excellent novel also explores Jack's friendship with surgeon and spy Stephen Maturin.

O'Connor, Joseph - The star of the sea (Set of 10)

Personal dramas of the most distressing kind – starvation, adultery, disease and incest – play themselves out against a background of the Irish potato famine, and the almost equal nightmare of mass emigration that it caused.

+ Pamuk, Orhan - My name is Red (Set of 20)

In Istanbul, in the late 1590s, the Sultan secretly commissions a great book: a celebration of his life and his empire, to be illuminated by the best artists of the day - in the European manner. But when one of the miniaturists goes missing and is feared murdered, their master seeks outside help.

\$ Parker, Jefferson – Cold Pursuit (set of 14)

Feuding families and a murdered millionaire. A potentially explosive case. Especially when the cop investigating belongs to one of the families... Homicide cop Tom McMichael must put aside the feud and find the killer. But the investigation is to unfold like a bloody bloom, encompassing Braga's business and family, the Catholic diocese, a multi-million dollar Indian casino, a prostitute, a cop, and, of course, McMichael's own family...

Pattison, Eliot - The Skull Mantra (set of 15)

Shan Tao Yun has no idea why he has been imprisoned by the Chinese government in Tibet, and spends his days breaking rocks with the Buddhist monks who are his fellow inmates. But then a dead man's head turns up in a famous shrine and Shan is ordered to help with the investigation...

Pears, Iain – Instance of fingerpost (Set of 15 plus SP)

The year is 1663, and the setting is Oxford at the height of the Restoration. A literary thriller for the reader who likes to be teased, and who likes plots as baroque and ingenious as possible.

+ Preston, Marcia -The Butterfly House (Set of 15)

A decade after a fire that destroyed her friend's home of Rockhaven and claimed her own alcoholic mother's life, Roberta continues to be haunted by the tragedy and struggles to come to terms with the secret she possesses about the event.

Proulx, Annie- Close range: Wyoming stories (Set of 10)

A collection of short stories inspired by the harsh and unforgiving landscape of Wyoming. Here are men and women struggling to make a life and a living against the backdrop of 'dangerous and indifferent ground' that seems to confound them at every turn. Full of intelligence and black humour.

Pullman, Philip - Northern Lights (Set of 10)

The first book in the 'His Dark Materials' trilogy by acclaimed writer Philip Pullman. The story of twelve year old Lyra Belacqua who lives unparented and half wild among the scholars of Jordan College. Lyra is drawn into a savage struggle amongst the armoured bears and witch-clans of the Arctic. In order to survive she must leave her childhood behind and venture beyond the Northern Lights.

Rai, Bali - Rani & Sukh (Set of 20)

In 1950s Punjab, a secret affair goes terribly wrong and the bride commits suicide after her lover is attacked by her family. The two families part in violence and conflict. In Leicester in 2004, Rani and Sukh fall in love, unaware of the terrible legacy of the past and the conflict between their families.

+ Rankin, Ian - Fleshmarket Close (Set of 20, plus LP, SP)

An illegal immigrant is found murdered in an Edinburgh housing scheme: a racist attack, or something else entirely? Rebus is drawn into the case, but has other problems: his old police station has closed for business, and his masters would rather he retire than stick around. But Rebus is the most stubborn of creatures...

Robinson, Peter - Aftermath (Set of 15)

The case of serial killer, the Chameleon appears to be over when two police officers stumble onto his identity during a routine call out. He is captured during the horrific events that follow and Inspector Alan Banks is called in to tie up loose ends. However this is only the beginning of a more shocking investigation...

Roy, Arundhati – The god of small things (Set of 10 plus LP)

The God of Small Things explores the tragic fate of a family which "tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how." Set in Kerala in 1969, this brilliantly plotted story uncoils with an agonising sense of foreboding and inevitability.

Runcie, James – The discovery of chocolate (set of 18)

A journey of self-discovery through love, time and the history of chocolate. Enjoy reading the novel – and then try out the chocolate recipes!

Sanders, Annie - Goodbye, Jimmy Choo (Set of 15)

Two very different women are thrown together when their husband's careers transport them from London to the English countryside. Bohemian Izzie and Gucci-clad Maddy form an unlikely friendship that is tested to its limits when tragedy strikes and Maddy's world falls apart. A funny and moving story of female friendship.

Schlink, Bernhard – The reader (Set of 15 plus SP, LP)

This short novel by a professor of law at Berlin University, the author of several thrillers, is surprisingly affecting. In it a schoolboy in post-war Germany has an affair with an older woman then discovers to his horror that she is guilty of an unspeakable crime – he struggles with the question of what his generation should do with the knowledge of the Holocaust.

Seierstad, Asne – The Bookseller of Kabul (Set of 15)

The stunning result of the four months Norwegian journalist Asne Seierstad spent living with Sultan Kahn, his two wives, five children and many relatives in a four roomed apartment in a war-ravaged city. A unique portrait of a family, a city and Islamic culture.

Shreve, Anita – The pilot's wife (Set of 15)

News of Jack Lyons fatal air crash sends his wife into shock. When he is blamed for the accident, Kathryn tries to clear his name but all the clues lead her to discover that she didn't know her husband at all.

+ Shriver, Lionel - We need to talk about Kevin (Set of 20)

This novel explores what may be American motherhood's greatest nightmare: a son who senses his mother's rejection, and takes out his despair, a la Columbine, on his fellow high school students.

Simpson, Joe - Touching the Void (non-fiction) (set of 15)

In June 1985 Joe Simpson and his climbing partner Simon Yates had reached the summit of the remote 21,000 ft Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes when disaster struck. A gripping true story of survival and terror.

Slater, Nigel – Toast: the story of a boy's hunger (Set of 15)

The story of a childhood remembered through food. From his mother's ritual burning of the toast to the culinary delights of Grilled Grapefruit (then considered something of a status symbol in Wolverhampton) this remarkable memoir vividly recreates sixties life in suburban England.

\$ Smith, Ali – The Accidental (set of 20 plus LP)

The Smart family's lacklustre holiday in Norwich is turned upside down when a beguiling stranger called Amber appears, bringing with her love, joy, pain and upheaval. *The Accidental* is at once a mysterious web of secret identities and a ruthlessly honest look at the silent cracks that can develop unnoticed in relationships over time.

\$ Smith, Zadie – On Beauty (set of 16 plus LP)

Set partly in London and mainly in New England, *On Beauty* concerns a pair of feuding families and clutch of doomed affairs. It puts low morals among high ideals and asks some searching questions about what life does to love. For the Belseys and the Kipps, the confusions – both personal and political – of our uncertain age are about to be brought close to home: right to the heart of family.

Smith, Zadie - White teeth (Set of 10 plus SP)

One of the most hearted novel adored by critics and readers alike. Dealing, among many other things, with friendship, love, war, three cultures and three families over three generations and the tricky way the past has of coming back and biting you on the ankle. A life affirming, riotous, must read book.

Souef, Adhaf - Map of love (Set of 10)

This novel tells the story of two cross-cultural romances, a century apart. The first at the turn of the century between Lady Anna Winterbourne and a high profile Egyptian nationalist Sharif al-Baroudi. The second between Lady Anna's great-granddaughter and the great nephew of Sharif. A subtle and reflective tale, rich in historical detail.

Stephen, Martin - The Desperate Remedy (Set of 15)

A thrilling blend of fact and fiction set in Jacobean London. Follow Henry Gresham as he unravels a dangerous trail of intrigue and conspiracy all the way to the gunpowder plot.

Suskind, Patrick – Perfume (Set of 15)

A surreal novel of murder, scent manufacture and 18th Century French life, this is a terrifying examination of what happens when one man's indulgence in his greatest passion – his sense of smell – leads to murder.

Syal, Meera – Anita and me (Set of 15 plus SP)

A comedy about the clash of two cultures told by Meena Kumar who is the only Punjabi girl in a small English village in the 1970s.

Szpilman, Wladyslaw - The pianist – The extraordinary true story of one man's survival in Warsaw, 1939-45 (Set of 10)

Powerful bestselling memoir of a Jewish pianist who survived the war in Warsaw against all odds, alongside moving extracts from the diary of the German officer who saved his life.

Tan, Amy - A hundred secret senses (Set of 10)

This book deals with the lives and experiences of contemporary Chinese-American women as they struggle to come to terms with their Chinese heritage. The themes of reconciliation with one's past and the need to accept the strengths and weaknesses of both cultures are played out against the backdrop of the developing relationship between two very different women.

The Weekenders: adventures in Calcutta (non-fiction) (set of 15)

Eleven writers including Monica Ali, Irvine Welsh and Tony Hawks take a trip through a city of contradictions and extremes. This blend of travel writing and short stories takes you to the heart of Calcutta.

\$ Tiffany, Carrie – Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living (set of 20)

In 1934 Australia, the government 'better farming train' brings city experts and advice to those already living on the land. Amongst the swaying cars an unlikely seduction occurs. But after seasons of failing crops and with the threat of a new world war, Robert and Jean are forced to confront each other, and the impact of their actions on the ancient and fragile landscape.

Toibin, Colm - The Master (set of 15)

Colm Toibin explores the life and mind of Henry James while he was recovering from the failure of his play, Guy Domville and writing some of his most well know books. This beautiful and thoughtful piece of writing was nominated for the Booker prize.

Trapido, Barbara – Frankie and Stankie (Set of 15)

Dinah de Bondt the weedy, arty child of liberal parents grows up in a South Africa increasingly politicised by draconian race laws. Trapido returns to her roots in this highly autobiographical novel that tackles one of the most important issues of the last century.

Trapido, Barbara - The travelling hornplayer (Set of 10)

With tenderness and wit, Trapido weaves together a huge cast of characters in contemporary England and tells a story of family love and grief, passionate sex and betrayal and bleak coincidence.

Tremain, Rose – Music and silence (Set of 15 plus SP)

A 17th Century Danish king summons from Ireland a young lutenist to play in the royal orchestra. He becomes the observer and victim of a court filled with domestic intrigue.

Tremain, Rose – The Colour (Set of 15)

Joseph and Harriet Blackstone emigrate from Norfolk to New Zealand in search of new beginnings and prosperity. When Joseph finds gold in the creek he is seized by an obsession with the riches awaiting him deep in the earth. Abandoning his farm and his family, he sets off alone for the new gold-fields over the Southern Alps, a moral wilderness where many others, under the seductive dreams of 'the colour' are violently rushing towards their destinies.

Trigiani, Adriana - Queen of the Big Time (Set of 15)

Fourteen-year-old Nella Castellucia dreams of escaping farm life in 1920's small town America but her priorities shift when she falls in love. She is heartbroken when her lover disappears but rebuilds her life only to have it shattered again when he returns, a week before her wedding to another man.

Tyler, Anne - Back when we were grown ups (Set of 10)

In middle age Rebecca loses her husband in a car accident and she begins to wonder if she is an impostor in her own life. Is she the outgoing and dynamic person her family think? Would her life have been different if she had married her college sweetheart? And should she try to find him now?

Vickers, Sally - Miss Garnet's Angel (Set of 10)

Teacher Julia has just retired and with a recently received legacy goes to live in Venice. While exploring the city and its treasures she is very touched by Gaurdis painting of Tobias and the Angel. The ancient story of Tobias and his journey to Media with the Guardian Angel Raphael is told alongside Julia's current journey. Unexpectedly haunting.

Walker, Stephen – Mr Landen has no brain (set of 17)

This laugh-out-loud novel follows the surreal goings on in Wyndham-on-Sea's largest caravan park. Featuring a giant talking rabbit, floating cows, a man with a tub of margarine for a brain and a girl who is 148.7% too beautiful...

Williams, Darren – Angel Rock (set of 17)

Australia 1969: Two boys disappear into the outback and only one returns – with no memory of what happened to his younger brother. This engrossing read is a mixture of detective story and coming-of-age drama and keeps up the suspense right to the end.

Wilson, Francis - The Courtesan's Revenge (biography) (set of 15)

Harriette Wilson blackmailed her famous lovers (including the king), when she published her memoirs by instalments. This fascinating biography is a glimpse into the life of the most despised woman in regency London.

\$ Winterson, Jeanette – Lighthousekeeping (set of 17)

The orphan Silver is taken in by the timeless Mr. Pew, keeper of the Cape Wrath lighthouse, who reveals to her a world of myth and mystery through the art of storytelling. A story of mutability, talking birds and stolen books, of Darwin and Stevenson and of the Jekyll and Hyde in all of us, Lighthousekeeping is a way into the most secret recesses of our own hearts and minds.

+ Winterson, Jeanette- Sexing the cherry (Set of 20)

A novel about love and sex; lies and truths; and 12 dancing princesses who lived happily ever after, but not with their husbands.

+ Woodruff, William -The road to Nab End (NF) (Set of 20, plus SP)

Extraordinarily well written and vividly told, William Woodruff's autobiography is rich in characters, facts, atmosphere, and indomitable spirit of family life in 1920's Blackburn.

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