

TOP READS FOR 2022



THE IT GIRL: RUTH WARE

For mystery and suspense fans. This has modern Agatha Christie vibes and it's the best psychological suspense I've read in a while. A group of uni students' lives are torn apart when a popular girl is killed by one of the university porters – or did the authorities get that conviction horribly wrong? The twist is excellent!

BEFORE YOU KNEW MY NAME: JACQUELINE BUBLITZ

For literary thriller lovers. The way this story is told reminded me of Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*. Bublitz writes out of her skin in this daring and original female-focused mystery, which centres the victim rather than her killer. Gripping, and deserving of all the accolades.

THE MURDER RULE: DERVLA MCTIERNAN

For crime fiction lovers. Set in Maine, USA, young law student Hannah Rokeby joins the Innocence Project. Their usual manifesto is to overturn wrongful convictions and free the innocent, but Hannah is on a secret mission to make sure someone stays locked up forever. Strong Grisham vibes, a compelling read, and *NYT* thriller of the year!

THE SAWDUST HOUSE: DAVID WHISH-WILSON

For literary and historical fiction lovers. David Whish-Wilson is an incredible writer: he can get me absorbed in any subject he turns his hand to. This exquisitely crafted book, based on the life of nineteenth-century bare-knuckle boxer James 'Yankee' Sullivan, is a fascinating read and a lesson in history and creativity.

THE GOOD MOTHER: RAE CAIRNS

For thoughtful thriller lovers. This pacy novel is about a mother forced to return to Belfast to testify in a murder trial, who will stop at nothing to protect her children from a dangerous IRA executioner. Brilliantly told.

A CARAVAN LIKE A CANARY: SASHA WASLEY

For family mystery and road-trip-story lovers. A road trip with her brother and a friend brings back long-buried family memories for Tara Button, forcing her to reconsider her past and family relationships. Perfect for summer reading Down Under.

THE THREE LIVES OF ALIX ST PIERRE: NATASHA LESTER

For historical fiction, fashion and romance lovers. You know you're always in safe hands with Natasha's sumptuous, heartfelt, romantic tales that move seamlessly between the worlds of twentieth-century fashion icons and the devastations, turbulence and intrigue of wartime Europe - and this one comes with a daring dose of espionage. Be prepared to lose a day once you start!

PROJECT HAIL MARY: ANDY WEIR

For those who like offbeat sci-fi. My favourite audiobook of the year, this story about saving the planet and meeting an alien is charming and offbeat and totally brilliant. Narrated superbly on audio by Ray Porter.

GREENLIGHTS: MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY

For those who love films and self-help/motivational books. I think to fully appreciate this book you need to listen to Matthew 'perform' it on audio. MM's life has been crazy at times, but his resolve and attitude are inspiring, and I could listen to his southern drawl all day!

DYING OF POLITENESS: GEENA DAVIS

For film buffs and feminists. I loved Geena's story - it brought back lots of happy film memories, and I empathised with her 'politeness' problems and her desire to be authentic rather than just a 'good girl'. And then came Chapter 12, which is called 'The Mother Gets Killed Gruesomely in the First Five Minutes', and which parallels my PhD subject! Now I'm following her gender parity work at the Geena Davis Institute. Bravo Geena!

TERMS OF INHERITANCE: MICHELLE UPTON

For Liane Moriarty fans. This book is fun with lots of heart. A terminally ill, extremely rich mother sets her daughters individual challenges they must all complete successfully in order for any of them to gain their inheritance. What ensues is an endearing family story.

THE PUSH: AUDREY AUDRAIN

For those who like unsettling psychological thrillers. This creepy little thriller had me absorbed all the way through. Is the mother monstrous for considering her young daughter is capable of evil behaviour, or is there something sinister about Violet? A disturbing meditation on motherhood.

THE MOTHER: JANE CARO

For crime and family fiction lovers. Jane Caro's story is about a thoroughly relatable mother-next-door character, whose life is upended when her daughter marries a possessive, controlling man.

THE BRINK: HOLDEN SHEPPARD

For those who enjoy unflinching YA coming-of-age stories. *The Brink* is the story of a leavers trip gone horribly wrong. Holden doesn't just write from the heart, he knows how to get right into the minds, secrets and anxieties of young adults, and his work is raw, real and amazing.

THE GRANDEST BOOKSHOP IN THE WORLD: AMELIA MELLOR [NOT PICTURED]

For the whole family. This slightly creepy yet charming tale focuses on the Cole family, whose bookshop is a marvel of sometimes otherworldly delights. When a family tragedy occurs, it invites the attention of the Obscurosmith, who offers the family what they most want: to be reunited with a lost loved one. But this comes at a terrible price, Willy Wonka-style challenges ensue, where the kids must outwit, outplay and outlast in order to save their father and their beloved shop.

BRILLIANT MINDS: SHANNON MEYERKORT

For dyslexic readers and everyone who loves to be inspired. This collection of dyslexic champions has been lovingly and meticulously compiled by Shannon Meyerkort. The project was conceived to inspire Shannon's dyslexic daughter Mia-Rose, and now it's bringing hope and inspiration to so many more children and families, including me and my own dyslexic girls. Thank you, Shannon!