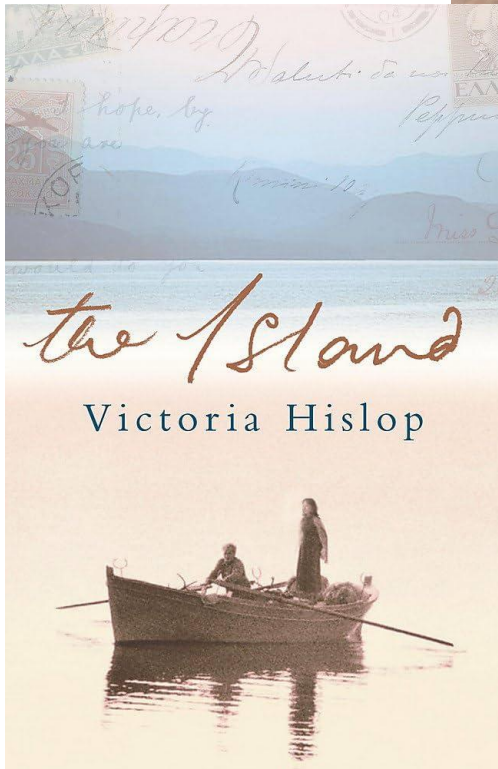
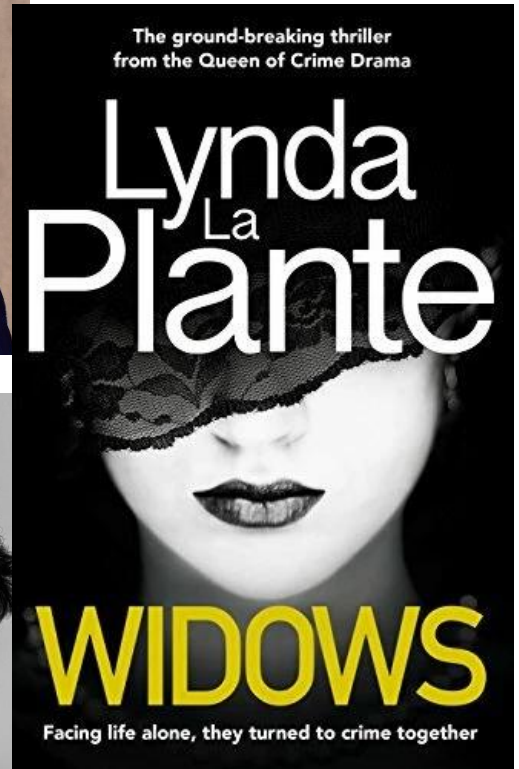


Newbury u3a 35th Anniversary

Maggie O'Farrell



Stephen King



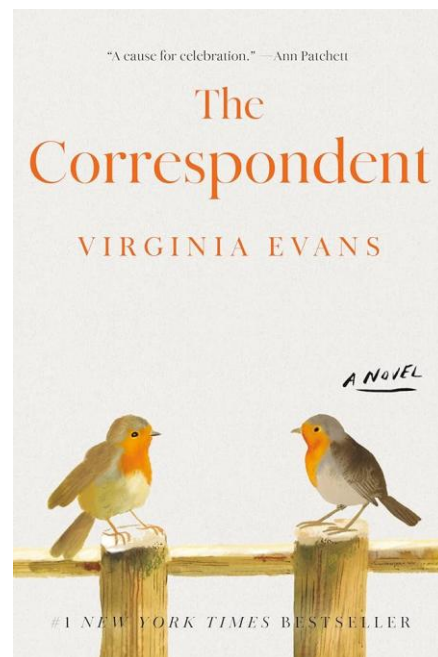
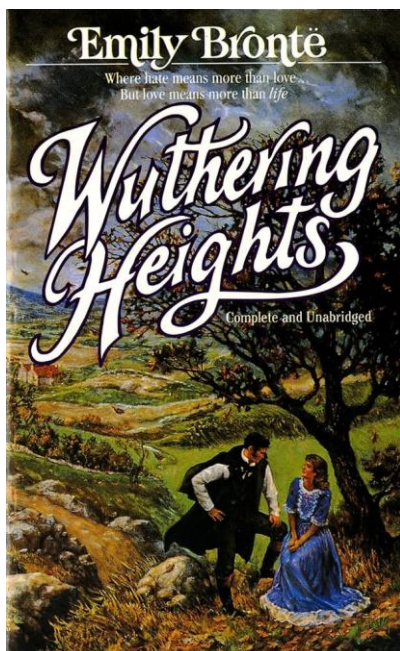
The Reading Matters group's views on authors and books

My favourite writer is Elizabeth Strout. She writes with great sensitivity and insight about family relationships in small-town America. Her two main characters (to date) are Lucy Barton and Olive Kitteridge, who are both remarkable and unforgettable in entirely different ways.

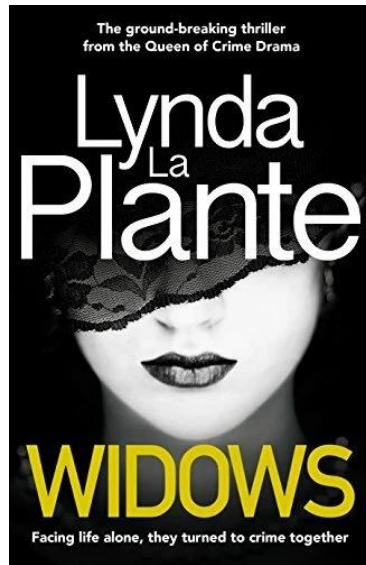


My most loved book is *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. I do not usually re-read a book but no matter how many times I return to this one, I always see something new in its narrative structure or its lyrical and atmospheric writing.

My favourite current bestseller is *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans. If you like an epistolary novel, this one explores themes of memory and regrets through an (initially) thoroughly unlikeable 70+ protagonist. By the end you'll be rooting for her!



Widows by Lynda La Plante - I found this sad, funny and hoped they would succeed, another book good from the start.

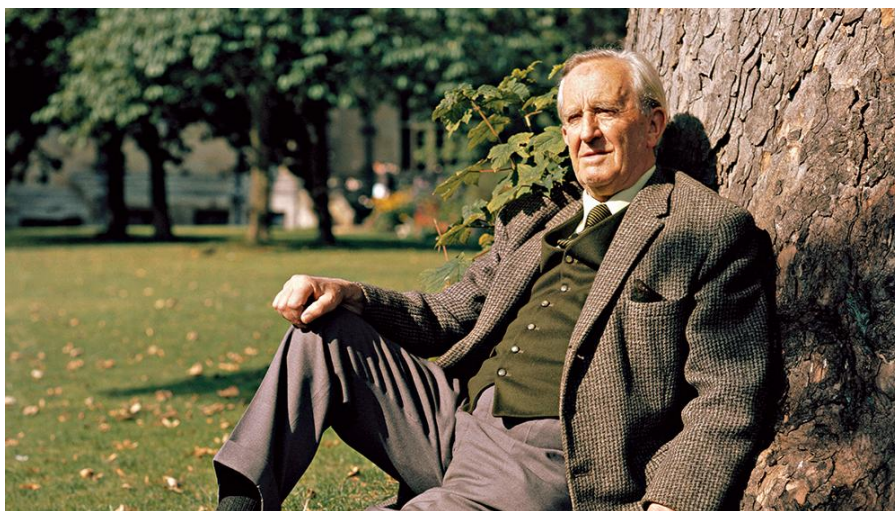


Clare Mackintosh - I've read a few of her books, I See You, I Let You Go and enjoy the crime mystery style that has you hooked from the start.



Stephen King, my all-time favourite, truly the master of suspense & mystery. King manages to draw you in from the first paragraph & hold you to the very end of the story. Stand outs for me It, The stand & the Gunslinger series.

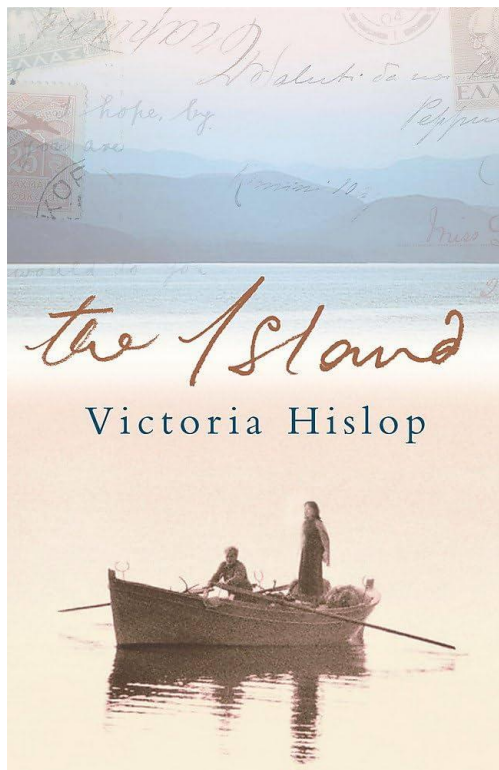
Ann Cleeves, very cleverly constructed characters & again good complex story lines. The fact that so many of her books have been made into popular TV series speaks for itself e.g. Matthew Venn, Shetland & of course Vera.



Tolkien, pure escapism in The Lord of the Rings & The Hobbit, or something a little deeper in The Silmarillion. All of his books contain for me an underlying spirituality.

The Island by Victoria Hislop

A wonderful poignant story of what happened to people who caught leprosy. What really impressed me was the wonderful description of the island of Spinalonga where the lepers from Crete were incarcerated. The story unfolds through the eyes of Alexis Fielding, who knew nothing of her family history. She explores the stigma attached to leprosy and discovers how even well-loved ancestors were shunned and sent away for life.

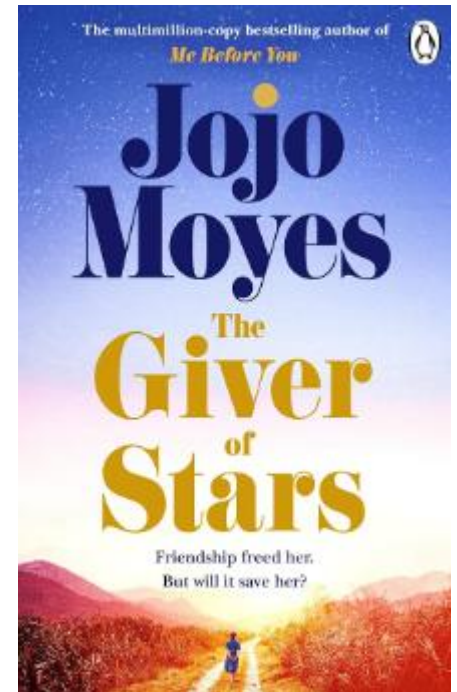
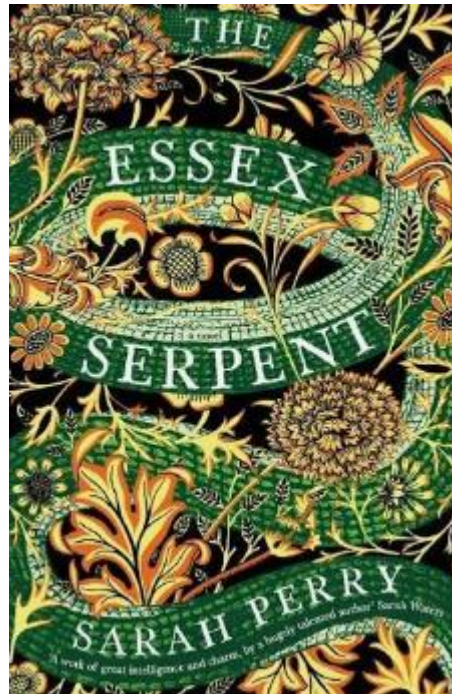
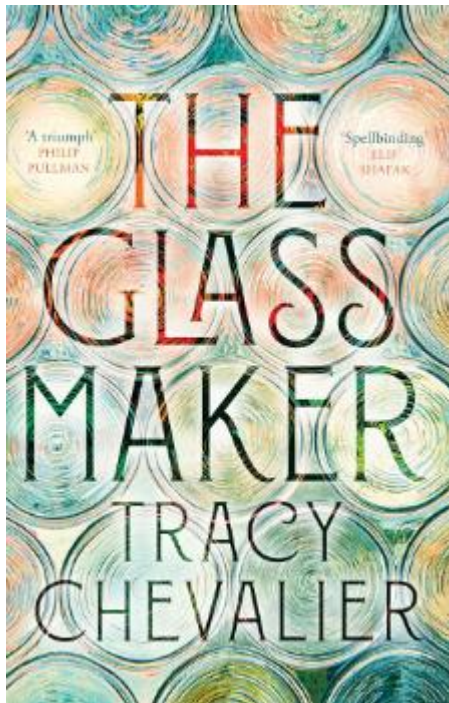


Becoming by Michelle Obama

A found this a deeply moving account of how Michelle Obama became the First Lady of the United States. She relates the difficulties of her early life through to becoming an icon for women and girls around the world. Her African/ American roots played such an important role in her life, as did juggling the demands of motherhood whilst also supporting her husband. Despite all of the pressures on her time, she emerges as a woman in her own right; not just the wife of a president.

Tracy Chevalier - The Glassmaker

Although the changing time line made it rather difficult to follow - this was a very good read.
Fascinating insight to the Murano glassmaking.



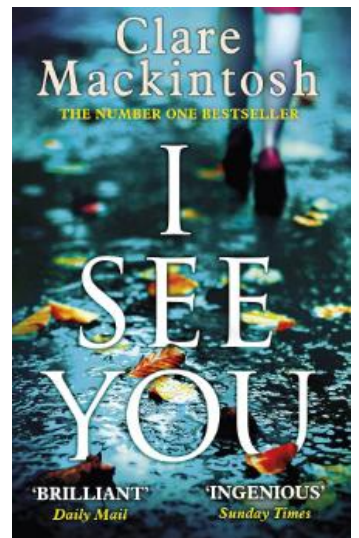
Sarah Perry - The Essex Serpent

Although many people do like this book, I found it rather dull and depressing.

Jojo Moyes - Giver of Stars

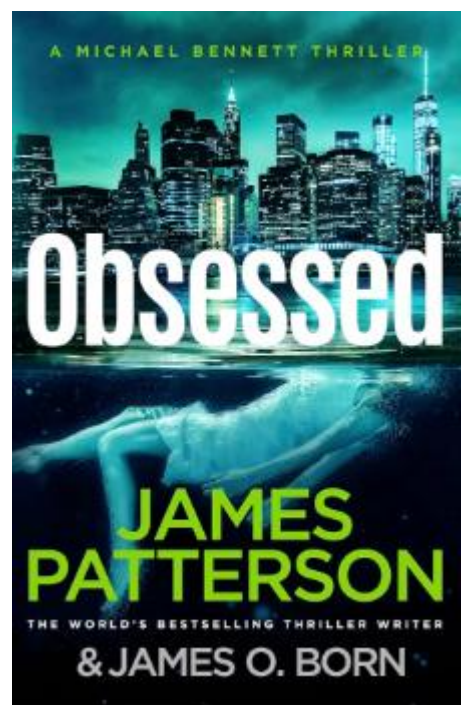
A wonderful read -so well written. Jojo did such extensive research which made the story compelling!

Clare Mackintosh - I've read a few of her books, I See You, I Let You Go and enjoy the crime mystery style that has you hooked from the start.



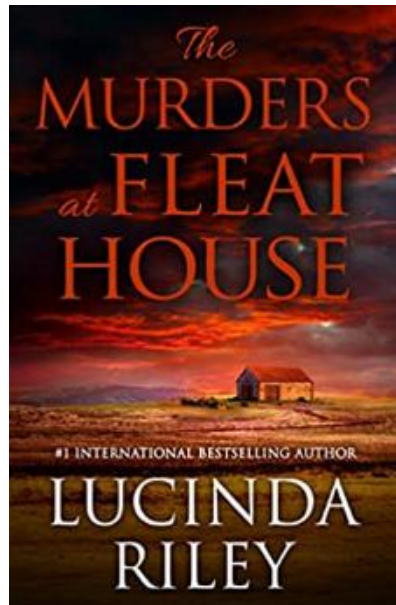
Widows by Lynda La Plante - I found this sad, funny and hoped they would succeed, another book good from the start.

James Patterson- Read a few Obsessed, 1st Case and like the hooked from the start books.



Lucinda Riley - The Murders at Fleat house

A really good gripping read. The high-quality plotline left one wondering how everything would piece together. Her Seven Sisters series were also extremely good. The story telling mingled with history made them compelling.

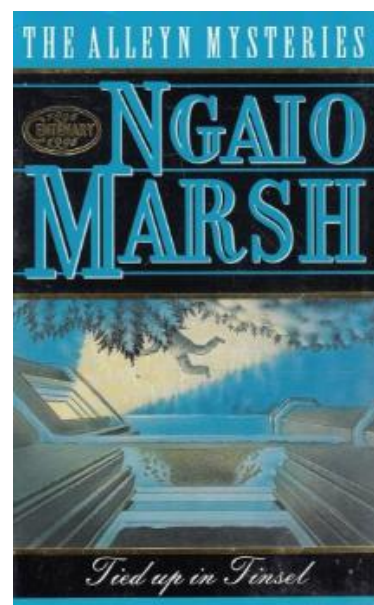
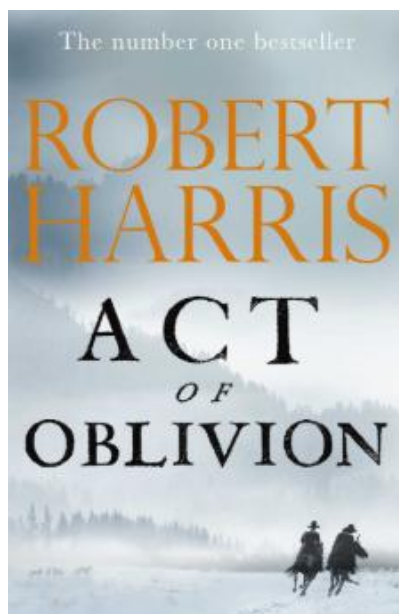


Robert Harris - Act of Oblivion

Robert always does extensive research and although this was a period I had studied, I did not know these details. A very absorbing read. Obviously Conclave was another good read and a great film!

Ngaio Marsh - Tied up with Tinsel

Not a fan. Just filled with superfluous detail and boring non-events! Characters totally unbelievable. A rather dull and strange book.

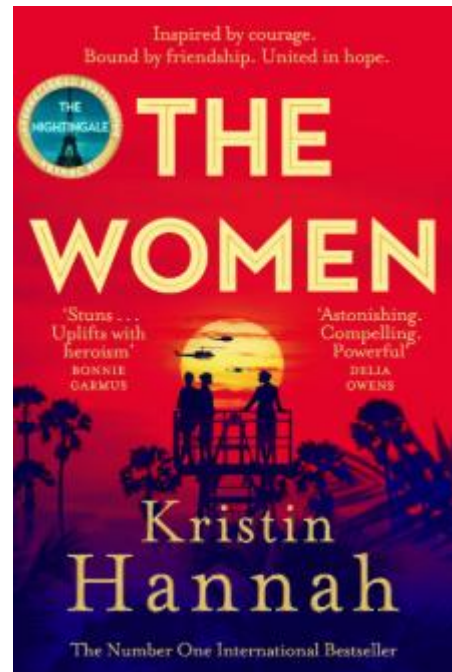
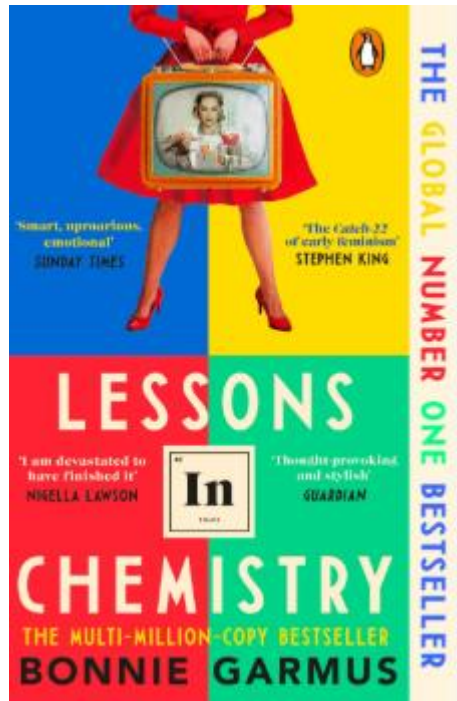


Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

A feminist, historical novel set in the 1950's and 60's. Follows a female research chemist in a male dominated world.

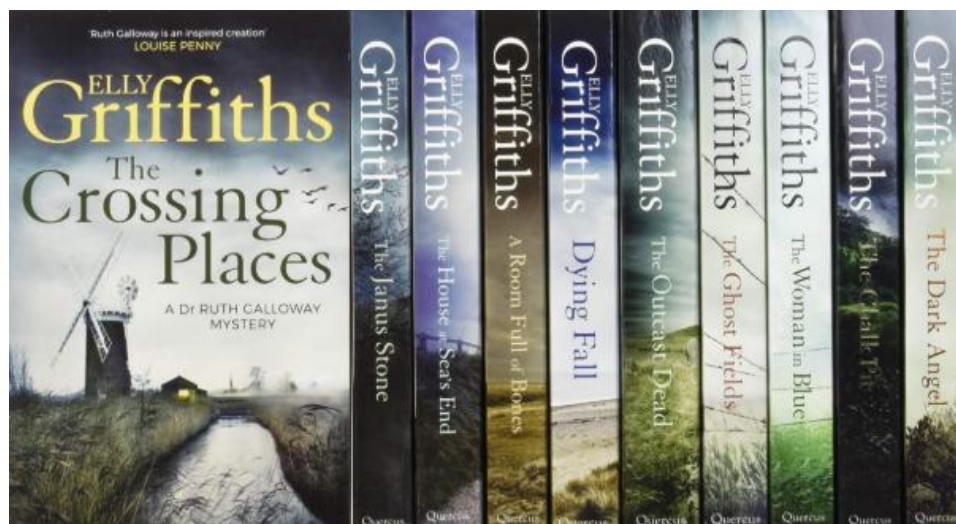
The Women by Kristin Hannah

Historical fiction. Highlights tens of thousands of women who served as nurses during the Vietnam war. 'Gripping!'



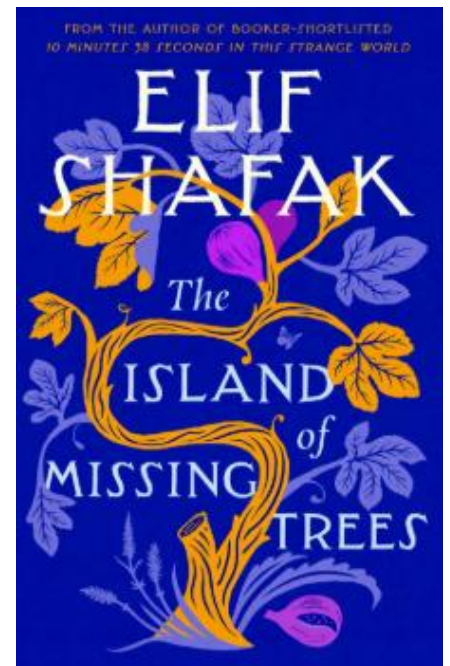
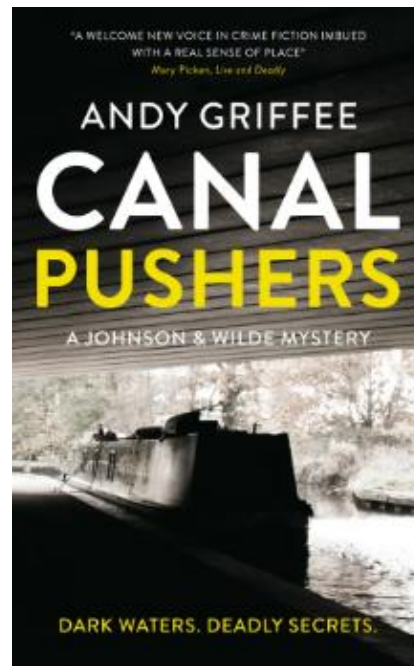
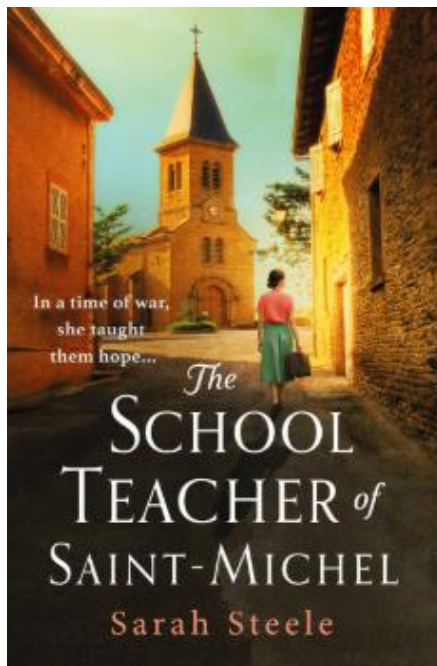
The Ruth Galloway Novels, e.g. The Crossing places Book 1

Follows a Forensic archaeologist who works with the police on solving cases. Folklore included!



The Teacher of San Michele by Sarah Steele

Interesting story well told, aspects of war time France under occupation.

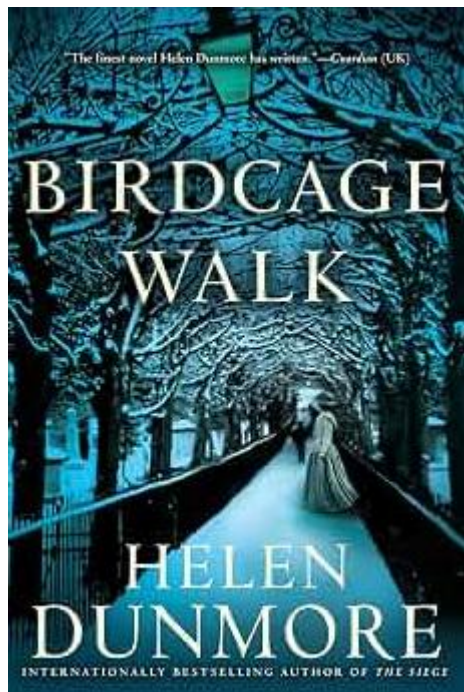


The Canal Pushers by Andrew Griffie

First book by new author - well written, novel setting.

The Island of Missing Trees by Elif Shafak

Told me about aspects of Cyprus that were new to me!

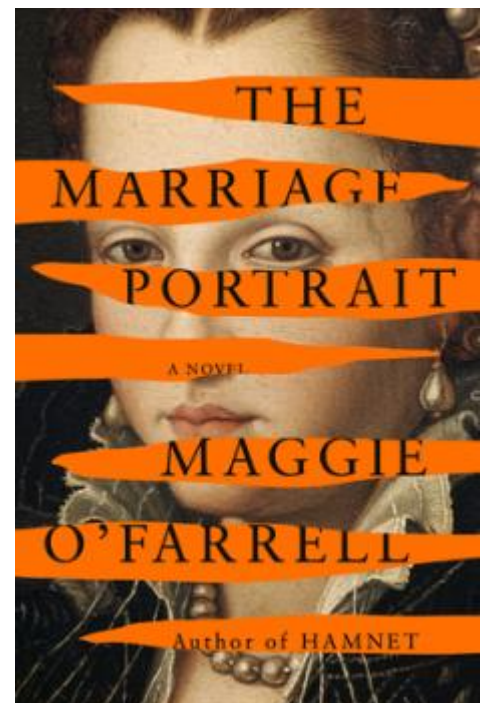


Birdcage walk by Helen Dunmore

This is a brilliant gothic thriller where revolutionary turmoil in France threatens to cross the English border and tear apart an increasingly tense marriage. The book explores romanticism and disillusionment terror and love and the dangerous lines between them.

The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O'Farrell

O'Farrell is an extraordinary talented writer. Her descriptions of location and clothing are beautiful; the novel has a very strong sense of place. O'Farrell goes beyond describing a location, she knows how to capture a scene's energy. Unfortunately, the Historical note in the front of the book spoils it! I won't elaborate!



Here are some more of our favourite authors-

- Bill Bryson
- Val McDermid
- Robert Galbraith
- David Baldacci
- Spike Milligan
- Dean Koontz
- John Grisham
- Zadie Smith