

Book Club 2019 Suggested Titles

NON-FICTION

Lincoln's Last Trial: The Murder Case That Propelled Him to Presidency—Dan Abrams, 287 p.

At the end of the summer of 1859, twenty-two-year-old Peachy Quinn Harrison went on trial for murder in Springfield, Illinois. Abraham Lincoln, who had been involved in more than three thousand cases--including more than twenty-five murder trials--during his two-decades-long career, was hired to defend him. This was to be his last great case as a lawyer. What normally would have been a local case took on momentous meaning. Lincoln's debates with Senator Stephen Douglas the previous fall had gained him a national following, transforming the little-known, self-taught lawyer into a respected politician. He was being urged to make a dark-horse run for the presidency in 1860. Taking this case involved great risk. His reputation was untarnished, but should he lose this trial, should Harrison be convicted of murder, the spotlight now focused so brightly on him might be dimmed. He had won his most recent murder trial with a daring and dramatic maneuver that had become a local legend, but another had ended with his client dangling from the end of a rope. The case posed painful personal challenges for Lincoln. The murder victim had trained for the law in his office, and Lincoln had been his friend and his mentor. His accused killer, the young man Lincoln would defend, was the son of a close friend and loyal supporter. And to win this trial he would have to form an unholy allegiance with a longtime enemy, a revivalist preacher he had twice run against for political office--and who had bitterly slandered Lincoln as an "infidel...too lacking in faith" to be elected. Lincoln's Last Trial captures the presidential hopeful's dramatic courtroom confrontations in vivid detail as he fights for his client--but also for his own blossoming political future. It is a moment in history that shines a light on our legal system, as in this case Lincoln fought a legal battle that remains incredibly relevant today.

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil: A Savannah Story—John Berendt, 388 p.

Shots rang out in Savannah's grandest mansion in the misty, early morning hours of May 2, 1981. Was it murder or self-defense? For nearly a decade, the shooting and its aftermath reverberated throughout this hauntingly beautiful city of moss-hung oaks and shaded squares. John Berendt's sharply observed, suspenseful, and witty narrative reads like a thoroughly engrossing novel, and yet it is a work of nonfiction. Berendt skillfully interweaves a hugely entertaining first-person account of life in this isolated remnant of the Old South with the unpredictable twists and turns of a landmark murder case. It is a spellbinding story peopled by a gallery of remarkable characters: the well-bred society ladies of the Married Woman's Card Club; the turbulent young redneck gigolo; the hapless recluse who owns a bottle of poison so powerful it could kill every man, woman, and child in Savannah; the aging and profane Southern belle who is the "soul of pampered self-absorption"; the uproariously funny black drag queen; the acerbic and arrogant antiques dealer; the sweet-talking, piano-playing con artist; young blacks dancing the minuet at the black debutante ball; and Minerva, the voodoo priestess who works her magic in the graveyard at midnight. These and other Savannahians act as a Greek chorus, with Berendt revealing the alliances, hostilities, and intrigues that thrive in a town where everyone knows everyone else.

The Monk of Mokha—Dave Eggers, 327 p.

Mokhtar Alkhanshali grew up in San Francisco, one of seven siblings brought up by Yemeni immigrants in a tiny apartment. At age twenty-four, unable to pay for college, he works as a doorman, until a chance encounter awakens his interest in coffee and its rich history in Yemen. Reinventing himself, he sets out to learn about coffee cultivation, roasting and importing. He travels to Yemen and visits farms in every corner of the country, collecting samples, eager to improve cultivation methods and help Yemeni farmers bring their coffee back to its former glory. And he is on the verge of success when civil war engulfs Yemen in 2015. The U.S. embassy closes, Saudi bombs begin to rain down on the country and Mokhtar is trapped in Yemen.

Victoria & Albert: A Royal Love Affair—Daisy Goodwin, 303 p.

More than 16 million viewers watched the first season of the Masterpiece presentation of Victoria, created and written by Daisy Goodwin. But what happened after the Queen married her handsome prince? Did they live happily ever after, or did their marriage, like so many royal marriages past and present, fizzle into a loveless round of duty? This all-new companion book by Daisy Goodwin and Sara Sheridan transports us to the private world of Victoria and Albert. Though first cousins, they could not have been more different: Victoria was impulsive, emotional, and capricious, Albert cautious, self-controlled, and logical. But together they forged a bond with each other and with their people that would change the world. Drawing on letters and diaries and fresh insights into royal history, this book charts the constant ebb and flow of power within the couple's surprisingly ardent and modern marriage.

Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith—Jon Krakauer, 372 p.

Krakauer takes readers inside isolated communities in the American West, Canada, and Mexico, where some forty-thousand Mormon Fundamentalists believe the mainstream Mormon Church went unforgivably astray when it renounced polygamy. Defying both civil authorities and the Mormon establishment in Salt Lake City, the leaders of these outlaw sects are zealots who answer only to God. Marrying prodigiously and with virtual impunity (the leader of the largest fundamentalist church took seventy-five "plural wives," several of whom were wed to him when they were fourteen or fifteen and he was in his eighties), fundamentalist prophets exercise absolute control over the lives of their followers, and preach that any day now the world will be swept clean in a hurricane of fire, sparing only their most obedient adherents. Krakauer examines the underbelly of the most successful homegrown faith in the United States, and finds a distinctly American brand of religious extremism.

The Devil in the White City—Erik Larson, 447 p.

Two men, each handsome and unusually adept at his chosen work, embodied an element of the great dynamic that characterized America's rush toward the twentieth century. The architect was Daniel Hudson Burnham, the fair's brilliant director of works and the builder of many of the country's most important structures, including the Flatiron Building in New York and Union Station in Washington, D.C. The murderer was Henry H. Holmes, a young doctor who, in a malign parody of the White City, built his "World's Fair Hotel" just west of the fairgrounds—a torture palace complete with dissection table, gas chamber, and 3,000-degree crematorium. Burnham overcame tremendous obstacles and tragedies as he organized the talents of Frederick Law Olmsted, Charles McKim, Louis Sullivan, and others to transform swampy Jackson Park into the White City, while Holmes used the attraction of the great fair and his own satanic charms to lure scores of young women to their deaths. What makes the story all the

more chilling is that Holmes really lived, walking the grounds of that dream city by the lake. *The Devil in the White City* draws the reader into a time of magic and majesty, made all the more appealing by a supporting cast of real-life characters, including Buffalo Bill, Theodore Dreiser, Susan B. Anthony, Thomas Edison, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and others. In this book the smoke, romance, and mystery of the Gilded Age come alive as never before.

If I Am Missing or Dead—Janine Latus, 309 p.

In April 2002, Janine Latus's youngest sister, Amy, wrote a note and taped it to the inside of her desk drawer. Today Ron Ball and I are romantically involved, it read, but I fear I have placed myself at risk in a variety of ways. Based on his criminal past, writing this out just seems like the smart thing to do. If I am missing or dead this obviously has not protected me...

That same spring Janine Latus was struggling to leave her marriage -- a marriage to a handsome and successful man. A marriage others emulated. A marriage in which she felt she could do nothing right and everything wrong. A marriage in which she felt afraid, controlled, inadequate, and trapped.

Ten weeks later, Janine Latus had left her marriage. She was on a business trip to the East Coast, savoring her freedom, attending a work conference, when she received a call from her sister Jane asking if she'd heard from Amy. Immediately, Janine's blood ran cold. Amy was missing.

If I Am Missing or Dead is a heart-wrenching journey of discovery as Janine Latus traces the roots of her own -- and her sister's -- victimization with unflinching candor. At once a confession, a call to break the cycle of abuse, and a deeply felt love letter to her baby sister, Amy Lynne Latus, *If I Am Missing or Dead* is an unforgettable read.

I'll Be Gone in the Dark—Michelle McNamara, 328 p.

A masterful true crime account of the Golden State Killer—the elusive serial rapist turned murderer who terrorized California for over a decade—from Michelle McNamara, the gifted journalist who died tragically while investigating the case.

"You'll be silent forever, and I'll be gone in the dark."

For more than ten years, a mysterious and violent predator committed fifty sexual assaults in Northern California before moving south, where he perpetrated ten sadistic murders. Then he disappeared, eluding capture by multiple police forces and some of the best detectives in the area.

Three decades later, Michelle McNamara, a true crime journalist who created the popular website *TrueCrimeDiary.com*, was determined to find the violent psychopath she called "the Golden State Killer." Michelle pored over police reports, interviewed victims, and embedded herself in the online communities that were as obsessed with the case as she was.

At the time of the crimes, the Golden State Killer was between the ages of eighteen and thirty, Caucasian, and athletic—capable of vaulting tall fences. He always wore a mask. After choosing a victim—he favored suburban couples—he often entered their home when no one was there, studying family pictures, mastering the layout. He attacked while they slept, using a flashlight to awaken and blind them. Though they could not recognize him, his victims recalled his voice: a guttural whisper through clenched teeth, abrupt and threatening.

I'll Be Gone in the Dark—the masterpiece McNamara was writing at the time of her sudden death—offers an atmospheric snapshot of a moment in American history and a chilling account of a criminal mastermind and the wreckage he left behind. It is also a portrait of a woman's obsession and her

unflagging pursuit of the truth. Framed by an introduction by Gillian Flynn and an afterword by her husband, Patton Oswalt, the book was completed by Michelle's lead researcher and a close colleague. Utterly original and compelling, it is destined to become a true crime classic—and may at last unmask the Golden State Killer.

Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer—James L. Swanson, 448 p.

The murder of Abraham Lincoln set off the greatest manhunt in American history -- the pursuit and capture of John Wilkes Booth. From April 14 to April 26, 1865, the assassin led Union cavalry and detectives on a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia, while the nation, still reeling from the just-ended Civil War, watched in horror and sadness.

At the very center of this story is John Wilkes Booth, America's notorious villain. A Confederate sympathizer and a member of a celebrated acting family, Booth threw away his fame and wealth for a chance to avenge the South's defeat. For almost two weeks, he confounded the manhunters, slipping away from their every move and denying them the justice they sought.

Based on rare archival materials, obscure trial transcripts, and Lincoln's own blood relics, *Manhunt* is a fully documented work, but it is also a fascinating tale of murder, intrigue, and betrayal. A gripping hour-by-hour account told through the eyes of the hunted and the hunters, this is history as you've never read it before.

Educated: A Memoir—Tara Westover, 334 p.

Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag". In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard.

Her father forbade hospitals, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent.

Then, lacking any formal education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University, where she studied history, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

FICTION

Transcription—Kate Atkinson, 343 p.

In 1940, eighteen-year old Juliet Armstrong is reluctantly recruited into the world of espionage. Sent to an obscure department of MI5 tasked with monitoring the comings and goings of British Fascist sympathizers, she discovers the work to be by turns both tedious and terrifying. But after the war has ended, she presumes the events of those years have been relegated to the past forever.

Ten years later, now a radio producer at the BBC, Juliet is unexpectedly confronted by figures from her

past. A different war is being fought now, on a different battleground, but Juliet finds herself once more under threat. A bill of reckoning is due, and she finally begins to realize that there is no action without consequence.

The Girls in the Picture—Melanie Benjamin, 422 p.

It is 1914, and twenty-five-year-old Frances Marion has left her (second) husband and her Northern California home for the lure of Los Angeles, where she is determined to live independently as an artist. But the word on everyone's lips these days is "flickers" - the silent moving pictures enthralling theatergoers. Turn any corner in this burgeoning town and you'll find made-up actors running around, as a movie camera captures it all.

In this fledgling industry, Frances finds her true calling: writing stories for this wondrous new medium. She also makes the acquaintance of actress Mary Pickford, whose signature golden curls and lively spirit have earned her the title "America's Sweetheart." The two ambitious young women hit it off instantly, their kinship fomented by their mutual fever to create, to move audiences to a frenzy, to start a revolution.

But their ambitions are challenged by both the men around them and the limitations imposed on their gender - and their astronomical success could come at a price. As Mary, the world's highest paid and most beloved actress, struggles to live her life under the spotlight, she also wonders if it is possible to find love, even with the dashing actor Douglas Fairbanks. Frances, too, longs to share her life with someone. As in any good Hollywood story, dramas will play out, personalities will clash, and even the deepest friendships might be shattered.

With cameos from such notables as Charlie Chaplin, Louis B. Mayer, Rudolph Valentino, and Lillian Gish, *The Girls in the Picture* is, at its heart, a story of friendship and forgiveness. Melanie Benjamin perfectly captures the dawn of a glittering new era - its myths and icons, its possibilities and potential, and its seduction and heartbreak.

Prisoner of Night & Fog—Anne Blankman, 401 p.

In 1930s Munich, the favorite niece of rising political leader Adolph Hitler is torn between duty and love after meeting a fearless and handsome young Jewish reporter.

The Language of Flowers—Vanessa Diffenbaugh, 322 p.

The Victorian language of flowers was used to convey romantic expressions: honeysuckle for devotion, asters for patience, and red roses for love. But for Victoria Jones, it's been more useful in communicating grief, mistrust, and solitude. After a childhood spent in the foster-care system, she is unable to get close to anybody, and her only connection to the world is through flowers and their meanings.

Now eighteen and emancipated from the system, Victoria has nowhere to go and sleeps in a public park, where she plants a small garden of her own. Soon a local florist discovers her talents, and Victoria realizes she has a gift for helping others through the flowers she chooses for them. But a mysterious vendor at the flower market has her questioning what's been missing in her life, and when she's forced to confront a painful secret from her past, she must decide whether it's worth risking everything for a second chance at happiness.

Memoirs of a Geisha—Arthur Golden, 434 p.

A literary sensation and runaway bestseller, this brilliant debut novel presents with seamless authenticity and exquisite lyricism the true confessions of one of Japan's most celebrated geisha. In *Memoirs of a Geisha*, we enter a world where appearances are paramount; where a girl's virginity is auctioned to the highest bidder; where women are trained to beguile the most powerful men; and where love is scorned as illusion. It is a unique and triumphant work of fiction - at once romantic, erotic, suspenseful - and completely unforgettable.

The Music Shop—Rachel Joyce, 306 p.

It is 1988. On a dead-end street in a run-down suburb there is a music shop that stands small and brightly lit, jam-packed with records of every kind. Like a beacon, the shop attracts the lonely, the sleepless, and the adrift; Frank, the shop's owner, has a way of connecting his customers with just the piece of music they need. Then, one day, into his shop comes a beautiful young woman, Ilse Brauchmann, who asks Frank to teach her about music. Terrified of real closeness, Frank feels compelled to turn and run, yet he is drawn to this strangely still, mysterious woman with eyes as black as vinyl. But Ilse is not what she seems, and Frank has old wounds that threaten to reopen, as well as a past it seems he will never leave behind. Can a man who is so in tune with other people's needs be so incapable of connecting with the one person who might save him?

The journey that these two quirky, wonderful characters make in order to overcome their emotional baggage speaks to the healing power of music—and love—in this poignant, ultimately joyful work of fiction.

The Baker's Secret—Stephen Kiernan, 309 p.

After her kind mentor is arrested because of his Jewish heritage, a young baker's apprentice in Normandy engages in discreet resistance activities, baking contraband loaves of bread for the hungry using surplus ingredients taken from occupying forces.

All Our Wrong Todays—Elan Mastai, 373 p.

You know the future that people in the 1950s imagined we'd have? Well, it happened. In Tom Barren's 2016, humanity thrives in a techno-utopian paradise of flying cars, moving sidewalks, and moon bases, where avocados never go bad and punk rock never existed ... because it wasn't necessary. Except Tom just can't seem to find his place in this dazzling, idealistic world, and that's before his life gets turned upside down. Utterly blindsided by an accident of fate, Tom makes a rash decision that drastically changes not only his own life but the very fabric of the universe itself. In a time-travel mishap, Tom finds himself stranded in our 2016, what we think of as the real world. For Tom, our normal reality seems like a dystopian wasteland.

But when he discovers wonderfully unexpected versions of his family, his career, and - maybe, just maybe - his soul mate, Tom has a decision to make. Does he fix the flow of history, bringing his utopian universe back into existence, or does he try to forge a new life in our messy, unpredictable reality? Tom's search for the answer takes him across countries, continents, and timelines in a quest to figure out, finally, who he really is and what his future - our future - is supposed to be.

All Our Wrong Todays is about the versions of ourselves that we shed and grow into over time. It is a story of friendship and family, of unexpected journeys and alternate paths, and of love in its multitude of forms.

The Clockmaker's Daughter—Kate Morton, 485 p.

In the summer of 1862, a group of young artists led by the passionate and talented Edward Radcliffe descends upon Birchwood Manor on the banks of the Upper Thames. Their plan: to spend a secluded summer month in a haze of inspiration and creativity. But by the time their stay is over, one woman has been shot dead while another has disappeared; a priceless heirloom is missing; and Edward Radcliffe's life is in ruins.

Over one hundred and fifty years later, Elodie Winslow, a young archivist in London, uncovers a leather satchel containing two seemingly unrelated items: a sepia photograph of an arresting-looking woman in Victorian clothing, and an artist's sketchbook containing the drawing of a twin-gabled house on the bend of a river.

Why does Birchwood Manor feel so familiar to Elodie? And who is the beautiful woman in the photograph? Will she ever give up her secrets?

Told by multiple voices across time, *The Clockmaker's Daughter* is a story of murder, mystery, and thievery, of art, love and loss. And flowing through its pages like a river, is the voice of a woman who stands outside time, whose name has been forgotten by history, but who has watched it all unfold: Birdie Bell, the clockmaker's daughter.

Girls Burn Brighter—Shobha Rao, 307 p.

A searing, electrifying debut novel set in India and America, about a once-in-a-lifetime friendship between two girls who are driven apart but never stop trying to find one another again.

When Poornima first meets Savitha, she feels something she thought she lost for good when her mother died: hope. Poornima's father hires Savitha to work one of their sari looms, and the two girls are quickly drawn to one another. Savitha is even more impoverished than Poornima, but she is full of passion and energy. She shows Poornima how to find beauty in a bolt of indigo cloth, a bowl of yogurt rice and bananas, the warmth of friendship. Suddenly their Indian village doesn't feel quite so claustrophobic, and Poornima begins to imagine a life beyond the arranged marriage her father is desperate to lock down for her. But when a devastating act of cruelty drives Savitha away, Poornima leaves behind everything she has ever known to find her friend again. Her journey takes her into the darkest corners of India's underworld, on a harrowing cross-continental journey, and eventually to an apartment complex in Seattle. Alternating between the girls' perspectives as they face relentless obstacles, *Girls Burn Brighter* introduces two heroines who never lose the hope that burns within them.

Sarah's Key—Tatiana de Rosnay, 294 p.

Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours.

Paris, May 2002: On Vel' d'Hiv's 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl's ordeal, from that terrible term in the Vel d'Hiv', to the camps, and beyond. As she probes into Sarah's past, she begins to question her own place in France, and to reevaluate her marriage and her life.

I, Eliza Hamilton—Susan Holloway Scott, 444 p.

Daughter of a respected general, Elizabeth Schuyler was captivated by Alexander Hamilton, a charismatic, ambitious aide to George Washington. They marry and despite the tumult of the American Revolution, Eliza is confident in her brilliant husband and in her role as his helpmate. Publicly Eliza becomes an adored member of society, respected for her fierce devotion to Hamilton as well as her grace. Behind closed doors, she manages their household and assists her husband with his political writings. Through public scandal, betrayal, personal heartbreak, and tragedy, she is tested again and again.

The Book of M—Peng Shepherd, 485 p.

One afternoon at an outdoor market in India, a man's shadow disappears—an occurrence science cannot explain. He is only the first. The phenomenon spreads like a plague, and while those afflicted gain a strange new power, it comes at a horrible price: the loss of all their memories. Ory and his wife Max have escaped the Forgetting so far by hiding in an abandoned hotel deep in the woods. Their new life feels almost normal, until one day Max's shadow disappears too. Knowing that the more she forgets, the more dangerous she will become to Ory, Max runs away. But Ory refuses to give up the time they have left together. Desperate to find Max before her memory disappears completely, he follows her trail across a perilous, unrecognizable world, braving the threat of roaming bandits, the call to a new war being waged on the ruins of the capital, and the rise of a sinister cult that worships the shadowless. As they journey, each searches for answers: for Ory, about love, about survival, about hope; and for Max, about a new force growing in the south that may hold the cure.

All the Ever Afters—Danielle Teller, 376 p.

We all know the story of Cinderella. Or do we? As rumors about the cruel upbringing of beautiful newlywed Princess Cinderella roil the kingdom, her stepmother, Agnes, who knows all too well about hardship, privately records the true story. A peasant born into serfdom, Agnes is separated from her family and forced into servitude as a laundress's apprentice when she is only ten years old. Using her wits and ingenuity, she escapes her tyrannical matron and makes her way toward a hopeful future. When teenaged Agnes is seduced by an older man and becomes pregnant, she is transformed by love for her child. Once again left penniless, Agnes has no choice but to return to servitude at the manor she thought she had left behind. Her new position is nursemaid to Ella, an otherworldly infant. She struggles to love the child who in time becomes her stepdaughter and, eventually, the celebrated princess who embodies everyone's unattainable fantasies. The story of their relationship reveals that nothing is what it seems, that beauty is not always desirable, and that love can take on many guises. Lyrically told, emotionally evocative, and brilliantly perceptive, *All the Ever Afters* explores the hidden complexities that lie beneath classic tales of good and evil, all the while showing us that how we confront adversity reveals a more profound, and ultimately more important, truth than the ideal of "happily ever after."

YOUNG ADULT

A Land of Permanent Goodbyes—Atia Abawi, 279 p.

In a country ripped apart by war, Tareq lives with his big and loving family ... until the bombs strike. His city is in ruins. His life is destroyed. And those who have survived are left to figure out their uncertain future.

In the wake of destruction, he's threatened by Daesh fighters and witnesses a public beheading. Tareq's family knows that to continue to stay alive, they must leave. As they travel as refugees from Syria to Turkey to Greece, facing danger at every turn, Tareq must find the resilience and courage to complete his harrowing journey.

But while this is one family's story, it is also the timeless tale of all wars, of all tragedy, and of all strife. When you are a refugee, success is outliving your loss.

Destiny narrates this heartbreaking story of the consequences of war, showing the Syrian conflict as part of a long chain of struggles spanning through time.

An award-winning author and journalist - and a refugee herself - Atia Abawi captures the hope that spurs people forward against all odds and the love that makes that hope grow.

Landscape with Invisible Hand—M.T. Anderson, 149 p.

When the vuvv first landed, it came as a surprise to aspiring artist Adam and the rest of planet Earth - but not necessarily an unwelcome one. Can it really be called an invasion when the vuvv generously offered free advanced technology and cures for every illness imaginable? As it turns out, yes. With his parents' jobs replaced by alien tech and no money for food, clean water, or the vuvv's miraculous medicine, Adam and his girlfriend, Chloe, have to get creative to survive. And since the vuvv crave anything they deem "classic" Earth culture (doo-wop music, still-life paintings of fruit, true love), recording 1950s-style dates for the vuvv to watch in a pay-per-minute format seems like a brilliant idea. But it's hard for Adam and Chloe to sell true love when they hate each other more with every passing episode. Soon enough, Adam must decide how far he's willing to go - and what he's willing to sacrifice - to give the vuvv what they want.

A Monster Calls—Patrick Ness, 204 p.

At seven minutes past midnight, thirteen-year-old Conor wakes to find a monster outside his bedroom window. But it isn't the monster Conor's been expecting - he's been expecting the one from his nightmare, the nightmare he's had nearly every night since his mother started her treatments. The monster in his backyard is different. It's ancient. And wild. And it wants something from Conor. Something terrible and dangerous. It wants the truth. From the final idea of award-winning author Siobhan Dowd - whose premature death from cancer prevented her from writing it herself - Patrick Ness has spun a haunting and darkly funny novel of mischief, loss, and monsters both real and imagined.

Life: An Exploded Diagram—Mal Peet, 385 p.

Can love survive a lifetime? When working-class Clem Ackroyd falls for Frankie Mortimer, the gorgeous daughter of a wealthy local landowner, he has no hope that it can. After all, the world teeters on the brink of war, and bombs could rain down any minute over the bleak English countryside - just as they did seventeen years ago as his mother, pregnant with him, tended her garden. This time, Clem may not survive. Told in cinematic style by acclaimed writer Mal Peet, this brilliant coming-of-age novel is a gripping family portrait that interweaves the stories of three generations and the terrifying crises that define them. With its urgent sense of history, sweeping emotion, and winning young narrator, Mal Peet's latest is an unforgettable, timely exploration of life during wartime.

You Bring the Distant Near—Mitali Perkins, 303 p.

Told in alternating teen voices across three generations, *You Bring the Distant Near* explores sisterhood, first loves, friendship, and the inheritance of culture - for better or worse.

From a grandmother worried that her children are losing their Indian identity to a daughter wrapped up in a forbidden biracial love affair to a granddaughter social-activist fighting to preserve Bengali tigers, award-winning author Mitali Perkins weaves together the threads of a family growing into an American identity.

History Is All You Left Me—Adam Silvera, 294 p.

When Griffin's first love and ex-boyfriend, Theo, dies in a drowning accident, his universe implodes. Even though Theo had moved to California for college and started seeing Jackson, Griffin never doubted Theo would come back to him when the time was right. But now, the future he's been imagining for himself has gone far off course.

To make things worse, the only person who truly understands his heartache is Jackson. But no matter how much they open up to each other, Griffin's downward spiral continues. He's losing himself in his obsessive compulsions and destructive choices, and the secrets he's been keeping are tearing him apart.

If Griffin is ever to rebuild his future, he must first confront his history, every last heartbreaking piece in the puzzle of his life.

The Memory of Light—Francisco X. Stork, 325 p.

When Vicky Cruz wakes up in the Lakeview Hospital Mental Disorders ward, she knows one thing: After her suicide attempt, she shouldn't be alive. But then she meets Mona, the live wire; Gabriel, the saint; E.M., always angry; and Dr. Desai, a quiet force. With stories and honesty, kindness and hard work, they push her to reconsider her life before Lakeview, and offer her an acceptance she's never had.

But Vicky's newfound peace is as fragile as the roses that grow around the hospital. And when a crisis forces the group to split up, sending Vick back to the life that drove her to suicide, she must try to find her own courage and strength. She may not have them. She doesn't know.

Inspired in part by the author's own experience with depression, *The Memory of Light* is the rare young adult novel that focuses not on the events leading up to a suicide attempt, but the recovery from one - about living when life doesn't seem worth it, and how we go on anyway.

Between Shades of Gray—Ruta Supetys, 344 p.

Lina is just like any other fifteen-year-old Lithuanian girl in 1941. She paints, she draws, she gets crushes on boys. Until one night when Soviet officers barge into her home, tearing her family from the comfortable life they've known. Separated from her father, forced onto a crowded and dirty train car, Lina, her mother, and her young brother slowly make their way north, crossing the Arctic Circle, to a work camp in the coldest reaches of Siberia. Here they are forced, under Stalin's orders, to dig for beets and fight for their lives under the cruelest of conditions.

Lina finds solace in her art, meticulously--and at great risk--documenting events by drawing, hoping these messages will make their way to her father's prison camp to let him know they are still alive. It is a long and harrowing journey, spanning years and covering 6,500 miles, but it is through incredible strength, love, and hope that Lina ultimately survives.

Piecing Me Together—Renee Watson, 264 p.

Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And she has. She accepted a scholarship to a mostly-white private school and even Saturday morning test prep opportunities. But some opportunities feel more demeaning than helpful. Like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Except really, it's for black girls. From "bad" neighborhoods. And just because Maxine, her college-graduate mentor, is black doesn't mean she understands Jade. And maybe there are some things Jade could show these successful women about the real world and finding ways to make a real difference.

The Chosen One—Carol Lynch Williams, 234 p.

Thirteen-year-old Kyra has grown up in an isolated community without questioning the fact that her father has three wives and she has twenty brothers and sisters. That is, without questioning it much - if you don't count her visits to the Ironton County Mobile Library on Wheels to read forbidden books, or her secret meetings with Joshua, the boy she hopes to choose for herself instead of having a man chosen for her.

But when the Prophet decrees that Kyra must marry her sixty-year-old uncle - who already has six wives - she must make a desperate choice in the face of violence and her own fears of losing her family forever.