

NANOOSE LIBRARY - JUNE 2021 NEW BOOK SYNOPSES

FICTION

Rumaan Alam

Leave the world behind

Amanda and Clay head out to a remote corner of Long Island expecting a vacation with their teenage son and daughter, and a taste of the good life in the luxurious home they've rented for the week. But a late-night knock on the door breaks the spell. Ruth and G. H. are an older black couple—it's their house, and they've arrived in a panic. They bring the news that a sudden blackout has swept the city. But in this rural area with the TV and internet now down, and no cell phone service, it's hard to know what to believe.

Linwood Barclay

Find you first

Tech millionaire Miles Cookson has more money than he can ever spend, and everything he could dream of, except time. He has recently been diagnosed with a terminal illness, and there is a fifty percent chance that it can be passed on to the next generation. For Miles, this means taking a long hard look at his past. Two decades ago, a young, struggling Miles was a sperm donor. Somewhere out there, he has kids, nine of them. And they might be about to inherit both the good and the bad from him, maybe his fortune, or maybe something much worse.

Shirley Dickson

The orphan sisters

In 1929, four-year-old Etty and eight-year-old Dorothy are abandoned by their beloved mother at the Blakely Hall orphanage. They are finally released from the orphanage in 1940 when the country is in the grip of War. The sisters are desperate to put their broken childhoods behind them, but trouble lies ahead. Dorothy must bid goodbye to her beloved husband when he's sent to war and Etty must nurse a broken heart as she falls in love with the one man she can never be with.

Kazuo Ishiguro

Klara and the sun

The story of Klara, an Artificial Friend with outstanding observational qualities, who, from her place in the store, watches carefully the behaviour of those who come in to browse, and of those who pass on the street outside. She remains hopeful that a customer will soon choose her.

Daniel Kalla

Lost immunity

Seattle is stunned when a deadly bacteria tears through a nearby Bible camp. Early tests reveal the illness is a form of meningitis. Facing a rapidly rising death rate, Seattle's chief public health officer, Lisa Dyer, and her team quickly take all steps necessary to contain the outbreak. And when further testing reveals that the strain of the bacteria is one that caused catastrophic losses in Iceland six months before, Lisa decides to take a drastic step: she contacts Nathan Hull, vice president of a pharmaceutical company that is doing final-phase trials on a viable vaccine, and asks him to release it early for use on the city's population.

Jane Johnson

The sea gate

After Rebecca's mother dies, she must sort through her empty flat and come to terms with her loss. When Olivia, her mother's elderly cousin, needs help to save her beloved home. Rebecca immediately goes to visit her in Cornwall only to find a house full of secrets and Olivia, nowhere to be found. As it turns out, the old woman is in hospital with no hope of being discharged until her house is made habitable again. Rebecca sets to work restoring the home, but as she peels back the layers of paint and grime, she uncovers even more buried secrets.

Mary Lawson

A town called Solace

North Ontario, 1972. Seven-year-old Clara's teenage sister Rose has just run away from home. At the same time, a strange man, Liam, drives up to the house next door, which he has just inherited from Mrs Orchard, an old woman he hasn't seen since he was five. The book follows Mrs Orchard's final days in hospital, as her memories spiral back to the real mystery - what happened between her and Liam so many years ago.

Jenny Lecoat

The girl from the Channel Islands

June, 1940. Hitler's army captures the Channel Islands, the only part of Great Britain occupied by German forces. Abandoned by the Allies, the Islands' situation is increasingly desperate. Hedy Bercu is a young Jewish girl who fled Vienna for the island of Jersey two years earlier, only to find herself trapped by the Nazis once more, this time with no escape. Her only hope is to make herself invaluable to the Germans by working as a translator, hiding in plain sight with the help of her friends and community.

Donna Leon

Trace elements

When a dying patient at the hospice wants to speak to the police, Commissario Guido Brunetti and his colleague, Claudia Griffoni, waste no time in responding. "They killed him. It was bad money. I told him no," Benedetta Toso gasps the words about her recently-deceased husband, Vittorio Fadalto. They discover that he worked in the field collecting samples of contamination for a company that measures the cleanliness of Venice's water supply and that he had died in a mysterious motorcycle accident.

Peter May

A silent death

Spain, 2020. When ex-pat fugitive Jack Cleland watches his girlfriend die, gunned down in a pursuit involving officer Cristina Sanchez Pradell, he promises to exact his revenge by destroying the policewoman. Cristina's aunt Ana has been deaf-blind for the entirety of her adult life: the victim of a rare condition named Usher Syndrome. Ana is the centre of Cristina's world - and of Cleland's cruel plan.

Richard Osman

The Thursday murder club

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet weekly in the Jigsaw Room to discuss unsolved crimes; together they call themselves The Thursday Murder Club. Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron might be pushing eighty but they still have a few tricks up their sleeves. When a local developer is found dead with a mysterious photograph left next to the body, the Club members suddenly find themselves in the middle of their first live case.

(Priya Parmar

Exit the actress

While selling oranges in the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, Ellen "Nell" Gwyn impresses the theatre's proprietors and quickly earns a place in the company, narrowly avoiding the life of prostitution to which her sister has already succumbed. As her roles evolve from supporting to starring, the scope of her life broadens as well. Ellen grows up on the stage, experiencing first love and heartbreak and eventually becoming the mistress of Charles II.

Andy Weir

Project Hail Mary

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it. All he

knows is that he's been asleep for a very, very long time. And he's just been awakened to find himself millions of miles from home, with nothing but two corpses for company.

Chris Whitaker ***We begin at the end***

Walk has never left the coastal California town where he grew up. He may have become the chief of police, but he's still trying to heal the old wound of having given the testimony that sent his best friend, Vincent King, to prison decades before. Now, thirty years later, Vincent is being released.

Jacqueline Winspear ***The consequences of fear***

The latest book in the Masie Dobbs' series. As Europe buckles under Nazi occupation, she investigates a possible murder that threatens devastating repercussions for Britain's war efforts.

NON-FICTION

Judy Batalion ***The light of days: the untold story of women resistance fighters in Hitler's ghettos***

The story of brave Jewish women who became resistance fighters. Witnesses to the brutal murder of their families and neighbours and the violent destruction of their communities, a cadre of Jewish women in Poland, some still in their teens, helped transform the Jewish youth groups into resistance cells to fight the Nazis. With courage, guile, and nerves of steel, these "ghetto girls" paid off Gestapo guards, hid revolvers in loaves of bread and jars of marmalade, and helped build systems of underground bunkers. They bombed German train lines and blew up a town's water supply. They also nursed the sick and taught children.

Tim Brady ***Three ordinary girls: the remarkable story of three Dutch teenagers who became spies, saboteurs, Nazi assassins—and WWII heroes***

May 17, 1940. The Netherlands is occupied by Nazi Germany. Joining a small resistance cell in the Dutch city of Haarlem were three teenage girls: Hannie Schaft, and sisters Truus and Freddie Oversteegen who would soon band together to form a singular female underground squad. They sheltered fleeing Jews, political dissidents and Dutch resisters. They sabotaged bridges and railways and led children from probable internment in concentration camps to safe houses. They covertly transported weapons and set military facilities ablaze. And they carried out the assassinations of German soldiers and traitors with the courage of veteran guerrilla fighters and the cunning of seasoned spies.

Patrick Radden Keefe ***Empire of pain: the secret history of the Sackler dynasty***

The Sackler name adorns the walls of many storied institutions: Harvard, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Oxford, the Louvre. They are one of the richest families in the world, known for their lavish donations to the arts and sciences. The source of the family fortune was vague, however, until it emerged that the Sacklers were responsible for making and marketing OxyContin, a blockbuster painkiller that was a catalyst for the opioid crisis.

Shar Mitchell ***The bridegroom from Baghdad***

A story of a woman's journey that took her from the Canadian prairies to Europe and North Africa. Shar Mitchell's search for meaning and purpose in her life ultimately led her to embrace the Bahá'í Faith. Her first marriage ended in divorce. Later she met and married her "bridegroom from Baghdad," Redwan Moqbel. Born to a poor Bahá'í family in a border town between Iran and Iraq, Redwan was an internationally renowned medical scientist by the time

he and Shar married. That relationship led to her quest to learn more about her new relatives in Iraq, a country that persecuted its Bahá'i minority, sentenced Redwan to life in prison in absentia and jailed his mother for many years. Shar's dream of meeting Redwan's courageous family would finally come true because of Redwan's health crisis.

Julia Zarankin

Field notes from an unintentional birder: a memoir

When Julia Zarankin saw her first red-winged blackbird at the age of thirty-five, she didn't expect that it would change her life. Recently divorced and auditioning hobbies during a stressful career transition, she stumbled on birdwatching, initially out of curiosity for the strange breed of humans who wear multi-pocketed vests, carry spotting scopes and discuss the finer points of optics with disturbing fervour. What she never could have predicted was that she would become one of them. Not only would she come to identify proudly as a birder, but birding would ultimately lead her to find love, uncover a new language and lay down her roots.