

# 2023 Reading List

as at September 2022

## \*Monday 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY (Contemporary Summer Reads)

*A selection of mixed contemporary stories for you to read over the holiday period. Read as many or as few as you like!*

*Suggested reading titles:*

- **'Boy Swallows Universe' by Trent Dalton, 2018. 464pp. 77 copies, ebook, audiobook, MP3.** Brisbane, 1983: A lost father, a mute brother, a mum in jail, a heroin dealer for a stepfather and a notorious crime for a babysitter. It's not as if Eli's life isn't complicated enough already. He's just trying to follow his heart, learning what it takes to be a good man, but life just keeps throwing obstacles in the way - not least of which is Tytus Broz, legendary Brisbane drug dealer. But if Eli's life is about to get a whole lot more serious. He's about to fall in love. And, oh yeah, he has to break into Boggo Road Gaol on Christmas Day, to save his mum. A story of brotherhood, true love and the most unlikely of friendships, Boy Swallows Universe will be the most heartbreaking, joyous and exhilarating novel you will read all year.
- **'Idol' by Louise O'Neill, 2022. 320 pp, 10 copies.** 'Follow your heart and speak your truth.' For Samantha Miller's young fans - her 'girls' - she's everything they want to be. She's an oracle, telling them how to live their lives, how to be happy, how to find and honour their 'truth'. And her career is booming: she's just hit three million followers, her new book Chaste has gone straight to the top of the bestseller lists and she's appearing at sell-out events. Determined to speak her truth and bare all to her adoring fans, she's written an essay about her sexual awakening as a teenager, with her female best friend, Lisa. She's never told a soul but now she's telling the world. The essay goes viral. But then - years since they last spoke - Lisa gets in touch to say that she doesn't remember it that way at all. Her memory of that night is far darker. It's Sam's word against Lisa's - so who gets to tell the story? Whose 'truth' is really a lie? 'You put yourself on that pedestal, Samantha. You only have yourself to blame.'
- **'The Boy With A Bird In His Chest' by Emme Lund, 2022. 308 pages, 5 copies.** 'Though Owen Tanner has never met anyone else who has a chatty bird in their chest, medical forums would call him a Terror. From the moment Gail emerged between Owen's ribs, his mother knew that she had to hide him away from the world. After a decade spent in hiding, Owen takes a brazen trip outdoors in the middle of a forest fire, and his life is upended forever. Suddenly, Owen is forced to flee the home that had once felt so confining and hide in plain sight with his uncle and cousin in Washington. There, he feels the joy of finding a family among friends; of sharing the bird in his chest and being embraced fully; of falling in love and feeling the devastating heartbreak of rejection before finding a spark of happiness in the most unexpected place; of living his truth regardless of how hard the thieves of joy may try to tear him down. But the threat of the Army of Acronyms is a constant, looming presence, making Owen wonder if he'll ever find a way out of the cycle of fear. A heartbreaking yet hopeful novel about the things that make us unique and lovable, The Boy with a Bird in His Chest grapples with the fear, depression, and feelings of isolation that come with believing that we will never be loved, let alone accepted, for who we truly are, and learning to live fully and openly regardless.
- **'London Calling' by Clare Lydon, 2014. 242pp, 4 copies.** A break-up. A mix-up. Will there be a make-up? Jess Sharp's life hasn't exactly gone according to plan. She's 32, unemployed, and single after a devastating breakup. She's also left Australia for London to live in her parents' spare room. Her chaotic life seems to be spiraling until she meets someone who could be a game-changer. She's optimistic after a wildly successful first date, but far too much tequila and the ghosts of girlfriends past may drag her far below her lowest point. Can she win the race for romance without tripping? London Calling is the first book in a series of lesbian romance novels. If you like punchy drama, wicked humor, and charming British characters, then you'll love Clare Lydon's hilarious debut novel.

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## \*Monday 20st FEBRUARY (LGBTQI+ Gender Identity Memoirs)

- **‘Caught In The Act: A Memoir’ by Shane Janek aka Courtney Act, 2021. 364 pp, 22 copies, MP3.** As Courtney Act, Shane Jenek has built a career as a drag queen, spokesperson, advocate, singer and all around performer with a strong (and beautiful) voice and advocate for change. Courtney uses her dazzling commercial profile to open up positive conversations about gender, sexuality, body image and identity. Since her original appearance on Australian Idol, her stint on Ru Paul's Drag Race, last year's appearance on Australian Dancing With the Stars and her yearly Mardi Gras involvement, she's well on her way to being a household name - certainly the biggest drag star we have grown locally, and this memoir will give a personal account of what it's been like to grow into a proud, passionate, politically aware genderfluid, queer Australian icon.

**‘About A Girl’ by Rebekah Robertson, 2019. 304 pp, 9 copies, MP3.** In 2000, Rebekah gave birth to twin boys, George and Harry. But as they grew older, their preferences began to show, and by the age of three it was clear Georgie was drawn to anything that was pretty or had a skirt that could swirl. Before long Georgie was insisting that she was a girl and became distressed that she had to hide who she really was when she began school. Soon the bullying started and she would come home in floods of tears, begging her mother to help her. Rebekah and her husband, conflicted about how to proceed and overwhelmed by fear, united in their determination to help her live freely and fearlessly. To ensure Georgie had access to medical support they sought permission for her to begin puberty-blocking medication. Their case was the start of the long road to justice for transgender children in Australia and became the basis of the 2013 landmark decision to remove the Family Court's jurisdiction. Georgie has gone on to become one of the brightest stars of the Australian youth leadership landscape through her advocacy work. And Rebekah founded Transcend, a support network for transgender kids and their families in Australia. Part memoir and part inspirational message of hope for those navigating a similar path, About a Girl is a thought-provoking and profoundly moving true story. Above all, it is a celebration of family and the values that unite us all.

**‘All About Yves: notes from a transition’ by Yves Rees, 2021. 320pp, 11 copies, ebook, audiobook.** Was I always trans, part boy beneath my skin, or was it that I landed in a place where ‘girl’ was a container so small it could break your bones? I learn that a ready smile and sympathetic ear are the only props required to impersonate a woman. The performance becomes so familiar I almost forget that it's staged. What happens when, aged 30, you understand you're transgender? This was the question that confronted Yves Rees, a historian whose life was upended by gender transition in 2018. Then known as a woman called Anne, Yves was forced to grapple with the sudden knowledge that they were not, in fact, female at all. But when you've lived a lie for so long, how do you discover who you really are? And how do you re-learn to live in the world as a different gender? All About Yves tells their moving journey of re-becoming, at the same time laying bare the messiness of bodies, gender and identity. It shares the challenges and joys of being transgender in Australia today, and reveals how trans experiences like Yves' can teach all of us about what it means to be man or woman.

## \*Monday 20st MARCH (Oh To Be Young Again: Young Adult)

- **‘Henry Hamlet’s Heart’ by Rhiannon Wilde, 2021. 328pp, 20 copies, ebook.** A sparkling queer YA romance set in Brisbane, Henry Hamlet’s Heart follows one guy and his sometimes hilarious, sometimes heartbreaking journey to love. Henry Hamlet doesn’t know what he wants after school ends. It’s his last semester of year twelve and all he’s sure of is his uncanny ability to make situations awkward. Luckily, he can always hide behind his enigmatic best friend, Len. They’ve been friends since forever, but where Len is mysterious, Henry is

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clumsy; where Len is a heart-throb, Henry is a neurotic mess. Somehow it's always worked. That is, until Henry falls. Hard. For the last person he imagined. From an exciting debut author comes this passionate story of growing up, letting go, and learning how to love

- **'Aristotle and Dante Dive into the Waters of the World' by Benjamin Alire Saenz, 2021. 368pp, 5 copies, ebook, audiobook.** The highly anticipated sequel to the critically acclaimed, multiple award-winning novel *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* is an achingly romantic, tender tale. In *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, two boys in a border town fell in love. Now, they must discover what it means to stay in love and build a relationship in a world that seems to challenge their very existence. Ari has spent all of high school burying who he really is, staying silent and invisible. He expected his senior year to be the same. But something in him cracked open when he fell in love with Dante, and he can't go back. Suddenly he finds himself reaching out to new friends, standing up to bullies of all kinds, and making his voice heard. And, always, there is Dante, dreamy, witty Dante, who can get on Ari's nerves and fill him with desire all at once. The boys are determined to forge a path for themselves in a world that doesn't understand them. But when Ari is faced with a shocking loss, he'll have to fight like never before to create a life that is truthfully, joyfully his own.
- **'Lies My Girlfriend Told Me' by Julie Anne Peters, 2014. 256pp, 6 copies.** When Alix's charismatic girlfriend, Swanee, dies from sudden cardiac arrest, Alix is overcome with despair. As she searches Swanee's room for mementos of their relationship, she finds Swanee's cell phone, pinging with dozens of texts sent from a mysterious contact, L.T. The most recent text reads: "Please tell me what I did. Please, Swan. Te amo. I love you." Shocked and betrayed, Alix learns that Swanee has been leading a double life--secretly dating a girl named Liana the entire time she's been with Alix. Alix texts Liana from Swanee's phone, pretending to be Swanee in order to gather information before finally meeting face-to-face to break the news. Brought together by Swanee's lies, Alix and Liana become closer than they'd thought possible. But Alix is still hiding the truth from Liana. Alix knows what it feels like to be lied to--but will coming clean to Liana mean losing her, too?

## \*Monday 17<sup>th</sup> APRIL (Down Under)

- **'The Brink' by Holden Sheppard, 2022. 352pp, 5 copies.** A group of school-leavers- free at last, ready to party, expectations high. And even though a remote island on the Western Australian coast wasn't exactly the plan, they're not going to let that hold them back. Leonardo, geeky, asthmatic, shy and prone to anxiety, has landed with them. He's terrified-he's definitely not part of this cool gang. Super high-achiever Kaiya is trying to forget her frustration with her drug-addicted sister as well as dealing with pressure from the popular girls to lose her virginity. Mason, footy jock with the physique to match, is coming to terms with his secret desire for his best mate, Jared. And Jared wants a week off from his relationship with Val so he can have sex with as many girls as possible. But the party takes a dangerous turn when Val is drugged and a man is found dead on the beach. Blame, fear, mistrust, coverups, power plays and dark secrets tear the group apart and expose the deadly tensions beneath the surface. And each teen is forced to confront demons that will lead them either to devastating tragedy or transformative triumph. Whoever survives the week will never be the same again. *The Brink* is a raw, powerful novel that pulls no punches in its authentic exploration of masculinity, sexuality, mental health, drug and alcohol use, relationships and sex. Holden Sheppard takes the teenage experience to the next level.
- **'Too Much Lip' by Melissa Lucashenko, 2018. 328pp. 32 copies, ebooks, audiobooks, MP3.** Wise-cracking Kerry Salter is part of an Aboriginal family living on the mid-north coast of New South Wales. She has spent a lifetime avoiding two things - her hometown and prison. But now her Pop is dying and she's an inch away from the lockup, so she heads south

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on a stolen Harley. Kerry plans to spend 24 hours, tops, over the border.

She quickly discovers, though, that Bundjalung country has a funny way of grabbing on to people. Old family wounds open as the Salters fight to stop the development of their beloved river. And the unexpected arrival on the scene of a good-looking dugai fella intent on loving her up only adds more trouble - but then trouble is Kerry's middle name. Gritty and darkly hilarious, *Too Much Lip* offers redemption and forgiveness where none seemed possible.

- **'Losing Face' by George Haddad, 2022. 271pp. 10 copies, ebook, audiobook.** A stunning, thought-provoking novel about facing up to your family and your future, *Losing Face* deals with timely issues around consent and inherited trauma. Joey is young, indifferent. He's drifting around Western Sydney unaware that his passivity is leading him astray. And then one day he is involved in a violent crime, one that threatens to upend his life entirely. Elaine, his grandmother, is a proud Lebanese woman with problems of her own. When Joey is arrested, she is desperate to save face and hold herself together. In her family, history repeats itself, vices come and go, and uncovering long-buried secrets isn't always cathartic. This gripping and hard-hitting novel reveals the richness and complexity of contemporary Australian life and tests the idea that facing consequences will make us better people.

## \*Monday 15th MAY (It's A Crime!)

- **'Last Call: A True Story of Love, Lust and Murder in Queer New York' by Elon Green, 2021. 258 pp, 5 copies.** The gripping true story, told here for the first time, of the Last Call Killer and the gay community of New York City that he preyed upon. The Townhouse Bar, midtown, July 1992: The piano player seems to know every song ever written, the crowd belts out the lyrics to their favorites, and a man standing nearby is drinking a Scotch and water. The man strikes the piano player as forgettable. He looks bland and inconspicuous. Not at all what you think a serial killer looks like. But that's what he is, and tonight, he has his sights set on a gray haired man. He will not be his first victim. Nor will he be his last. The Last Call Killer preyed upon gay men in New York in the '80s and '90s and had all the hallmarks of the most notorious serial killers. Yet because of the sexuality of his victims, the skyhigh murder rates, and the AIDS epidemic, his murders have been almost entirely forgotten. This gripping true-crime narrative tells the story of the Last Call Killer and the decades-long chase to find him. And at the same time, it paints a portrait of his victims and a vibrant community navigating threat and resilience
- **'The Boy In The Dress: Investigating a tragic unsolved murder in wartime Australia that echoes through the ages' by Jonathan Butler, 2022. 275pp. 5 copies.** ON A BALMY TOWNSVILLE NIGHT IN 1944, YOUNG SERVICEMAN WARWICK MEALE IS FOUND BEATEN TO DEATH UNDER A BRIDGE. The army and police do not, or will not, conduct a proper investigation and history forgets the killer – until now. Nearly eighty years on, Warwick's descendant Jonathan Butler dusts off the case and chases the leads that were there all along. *The Boy in the Dress* delicately exhumes secrets of life on the home front during World War II, where tensions between soldiers boiled over, new expressions of sexuality flourished and the threat of invasion catapulted the status quo into disarray. The truth of this family legend, and little-known chapter in Australian military history, is more complex and engrossing than anyone could have imagined.
- **'The Death of Dr Duncan' by Time Reeves, 2022. 240pp, 3 copies.** The drowning of Dr Duncan in the River Torrens in 1972 remains one of South Australia's most notorious unsolved murders. His death shocked the community and still reverberates 50 years later. Tim Reeves is an award-winning author and the acknowledged authority on the Duncan case. He

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pulls together the complex strands of a police investigation, coroner's inquest, New Scotland Yard enquiry and trial. He also examines the attempts at gay law reform in the state that were triggered by Duncan's killing. This meticulously researched and tautly written book tells a story that is disturbing yet captivating, distressing yet ultimately uplifting.

- For those interested in Jeffrey Dahmer and true crime, also check out 'Mindhunter' and 'The Killer Across The Table' by John Douglas (ebooks available in BCC)

## \*Monday 19th JUNE (Literature)

- **'Young Mungo' by Douglas Stewart, 2022. 390pp, 50 copies, ebook, audiobook.** Born under different stars, Protestant Mungo and Catholic James live in the hyper-masculine and violently sectarian world of Glasgow's housing estates. They should be sworn enemies if they're to be seen as men at all, and yet they become best friends as they find a sanctuary in the pigeon dovecote that James has built for his prize racing birds. As they find themselves falling in love, they dream of escaping the grey city, and Mungo works especially hard to hide his true self from all those around him, especially from his elder brother Hamish, a local gang leader with a brutal reputation to uphold. But the threat of discovery is constant and the punishment unspeakable. When Mungo's mother sends him on a fishing trip to a loch in Western Scotland with two strange men whose drunken banter belies murky pasts, he will need to summon all his inner strength and courage to get back to a place of safety, a place where he and James might still have a future. Imbuing the everyday world of its characters with rich lyricism and giving full voice to people rarely acknowledged in literary fiction, Douglas Stuart's Young Mungo is a gripping and revealing story about the bounds of masculinity, the push and pull of family, the violence faced by so many queer people, and the dangers of loving someone too much.
- **'Hot Stew' by Fiona Mozley, 2021. 320pp, 8 copies.** London has changed a lot over the years. The Soho that Precious and Tabitha live and work in is barely recognisable anymore. And now, the building they call their home is under threat; its billionaire-owner Agatha wants to kick the women out to build expensive restaurants and luxury flats. Men like Robert, who visit the brothel, will have to go elsewhere. The collection of vagabonds and strays in the basement will have to find somewhere else to live. But the women are not going to go quietly. They have plans to make things difficult for Agatha but she isn't taking no for an answer. Hot Stew is an insightful and ambitious novel about property, ownership, wealth and inheritance. It is about the place we occupy in society, especially women, and the importance placed on class and money. It doesn't shy away from asking difficult questions but does so with humour and intelligence.
- **'Damascus' by Christos Tsiolkas, 2019. 423pp, 41 copies, ebook, audiobook.** Tsiolkas' stunning new novel Damascus is a work of soaring ambition and achievement, of immense power and epic scope, taking as its subject nothing less than events surrounding the birth and establishment of the Christian church. Based around the gospels and letters of St Paul, and focusing on characters one and two generations on from the death of Christ, as well as Paul (Saul) himself, Damascus nevertheless explores the themes that have always obsessed Tsiolkas as a writer: class, religion, masculinity, patriarchy, colonisation, exile; the ways in which nations, societies, communities, families and individuals are united and divided, it's all here, the contemporary and urgent questions, perennial concerns made vivid and visceral. In Damascus, Tsiolkas has written a masterpiece of imagination and transformation: an historical novel of immense power and an unflinching dissection of doubt and faith, tyranny and revolution, and cruelty and sacrifice.



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## \*Monday 17<sup>th</sup> JULY (Author Meet- Neil Waldock & Alistair Sutton: After You Came)

- During the 1988 Bicentennial celebrations in Sydney, David Wyatt, a young gay man, is found murdered in an alleyway in Darlinghurst. Stuart Kingston, a local interior designer, is enlisted by his friend in the police, Inspector Carrington, to go undercover at Touchstone sauna, the last place that David was seen alive. Can Carrington catch the killer before more men are murdered? And can Stuart stop thinking about his former lover, the hunky carpenter Dexter, for long enough to be of any help?

In this sequel to *The Day Before You Came*, all the much-loved characters return, including Stuart's mother, Miriam, who has a new career on daytime TV, and his theatre friend, Winston, who meets a mysterious stranger.

So, strap in for another camp ride through the Eastern Suburbs, where anyone can be a murderer, and no-one is quite as they seem.

## \*Monday 21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST (What Happens Next? Sequels/ Authors we have read before)

- **'Less Is Lost' by Andrew Sean Greer, 2022. 272pp, 20 copies.**  
In the follow-up to the best-selling and Pulitzer Prize-winning *Less*, the awkward and lovable Arthur Less returns in an unforgettable road trip across America.  
"Go get lost somewhere, it always does you good."  
For Arthur Less, life is going surprisingly well: he is a moderately accomplished novelist in a steady relationship with his partner, Freddy Pelu. But nothing lasts: the death of an old lover and a sudden financial crisis has Less running away from his problems yet again as he accepts a series of literary gigs that send him on a zigzagging adventure across the US.  
Less roves across the "Mild Mild West," through the South and to his mid-Atlantic birthplace, with an ever-changing posse of writerly characters and his trusty duo – a human-like black pug, Dolly, and a rusty camper van nicknamed Rosina. He grows a handlebar mustache, ditches his signature gray suit, and disguises himself in the bolero-and-cowboy-hat costume of a true "Unitedstatesian"... with varying levels of success, as he continues to be mistaken for either a Dutchman, the wrong writer, or, worst of all, a "bad gay."  
We cannot, however, escape ourselves—even across deserts, bayous, and coastlines. From his estranged father and strained relationship with Freddy, to the reckoning he experiences in confronting his privilege, Arthur Less must eventually face his personal demons. With all of the irrepressible wit and musicality that made *Less* a bestselling, Pulitzer Prize-winning, must-read breakout book, *Less Is Lost* is a profound and joyous novel about the enigma of life in America, the riddle of love, and the stories we tell along the way.
- **'My Year of Living Vulnerably' by Rick Morton, 2021. 320pp, 45 copies, ebook, audiobook, MP3.** In early 2019, Rick Morton, author of acclaimed, bestselling memoir *One Hundred Years of Dirt*, was diagnosed with Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - which, as he says, is just a fancy way of saying that one of the people who should have loved him the most during childhood didn't. So, over the course of twelve months, he went on a journey to rediscover love. To get better. Not cured, not fixed. Just, better. This is a book about his journey to betterness, his year of living vulnerably. It's a book about love. What love is, how we see it, what forms it takes, how we practice it in our lives, what it means to us, and how we really, really can't live without it, even if, like Rick for many years, we think we can. As he says: 'People think they want cars, and they will, to get to jobs and appointments in cities and regions where public transport has failed them. But what gets them into those cars, out of the house, out of bed for God's sake, is love.'

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- **‘No Tomorrow: Killing Eve #2’ by Luke Jennings, 2018. 247pp, 5 copies.** In a hotel room in Venice, where she's just completed a routine assassination, Villanelle receives a late-night call. Eve Polastri has discovered that a senior MI5 officer is in the pay of the Twelve, and is about to debrief him. As Eve interrogates her subject, desperately trying to fit the pieces of the puzzle together, Villanelle moves in for the kill. The duel between the two women intensifies, as does their mutual obsession, and when the action moves from the high passes of the Tyrol to the heart of Russia, Eve finally begins to unwrap the enigma of her adversary's true identity.

## \*Monday 18th SEPTEMBER (Fantasy/ Magic Realism)

- **‘The Binding’ by Bridget Collins, 2019. 437pp, 19 copies, ebook, audiobook.** Books are dangerous things in Collins's alternate universe, a place vaguely reminiscent of 19th-century England. It's a world in which people visit book binders to rid themselves of painful or treacherous memories. Once their stories have been told and are bound between the pages of a book, the slate is wiped clean and their memories lose the power to hurt or haunt them. After having suffered some sort of mental collapse and no longer able to keep up with his farm chores, Emmett Farmer is sent to the workshop of one such binder to live and work as her apprentice. Leaving behind home and family, Emmett slowly regains his health while learning the binding trade. He is forbidden to enter the locked room where books are stored, so he spends many months marbling end pages, tooling leather book covers, and gilding edges. But his curiosity is piqued by the people who come and go from the inner sanctum, and the arrival of the lordly Lucian Darnay, with whom he senses a connection, changes everything.
- **‘The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue’ by V.E.Schwab, 2020. 444pp, 38 copies, ebook, audiobook.**  
France, 1714: in a moment of desperation, a young woman makes a Faustian bargain to live forever and is cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets.  
Thus begins the extraordinary life of Addie LaRue, and a dazzling adventure that will play out across centuries and continents, across history and art, as a young woman learns how far she will go to leave her mark on the world.  
But everything changes when, after nearly 300 years, Addie stumbles across a young man in a hidden bookstore and he remembers her name.
- **‘The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida’ by Shehan Karunatilaka, 2022. 386pp, 84 copies, ebook, audiobook, MP3.** Maali Almeida, war photographer, gambler and closet queen, has woken up dead in what seems like a celestial visa office. His dismembered body is sinking in the Beira Lake and he has no idea who killed him. At a time when scores are settled by death squads, suicide bombers and hired goons, the list of suspects is depressingly long, as the ghouls and ghosts who cluster around him can attest. But even in the afterlife, time is running out for Maali. He has seven moons to try and contact the man and woman he loves most and lead them to a cache of photos that will rock Sri Lanka.

## \*Monday 16th OCTOBER (Back In Time)

- **‘Deception Bay’ by J.P. Powell, 2022. 271pp, 10 copies.** American MP Joe Washington and Australian Rose McAlister are swept back together when she returns to join Central Bureau, General MacArthur's code-breaking group of eccentrics. Brisbane's Bletchley Park. Again and again, Joe is drawn to the Brisbane River. A man may have jumped into the river, a code breaker allegedly drowned by suicide, and an arm with an unrecognisable tattoo is pulled

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from the river at the submarine base. With Rose's help Joe follows the clues but he is quickly drawn into another confrontation with Frank Bischof and the Queensland Police.

- **‘The Intoxicating Mr Lavelle’ by Neil Blackmore, 2020. 320pp, 5 copies, ebook, audiobook.** When Benjamin and Edgar Bowen embark on a Grand Tour of Europe, they are ready to meet People of Quality. They have trunks full of powdered silver wigs and matching suits, a hunger to experience the architectural wonders of Ancient Rome and an ability to quote Voltaire (at length). They will make connections and establish themselves in high society, just as their mother has planned. But it soon becomes apparent that their outfits are not quite the right shade of grey, their smiles are too ready, their appreciation of the arts ridiculous. Class, they learn, is not something that can be studied. Benjamin’s true education begins when he meets Horace Lavelle. Beautiful, charismatic, seductive, Lavelle delights in skewering the pretensions and prejudices of their milieu. He consumes Benjamin’s every thought. Love can transform a person. Can it save them?
- **‘Mother’s Boy’ by Patrick Gale, 2022. 265pp, 10 copies, ebook, audiobook.** From the bestselling author of A PLACE CALLED WINTER comes MOTHER'S BOY, a superb historical novel of Cornwall, class, desire and two world wars. Laura, an impoverished Cornish girl, meets her husband when they are both in service in Teignmouth in 1916. They have a baby, Charles, but Laura's husband returns home from the trenches a damaged man, already ill with the tuberculosis that will soon leave her a widow. In a small, class-obsessed town she raises her boy alone, working as a laundress, and gradually becomes aware that he is some kind of genius. As an intensely private young man, Charles signs up for the navy with the new rank of coder. His escape from the tight, gossipy confines of Launceston to the colour and violence of war sees him blossom as he experiences not only the possibility of death, but the constant danger of a love that is as clandestine as his work. MOTHER'S BOY is the story of a man who is among, yet apart from his fellows, in thrall to, yet at a distance from his own mother; a man being shaped for a long, remarkable and revered life spent hiding in plain sight. But it is equally the story of the dauntless mother who will continue to shield him long after the dangers of war are past.

## \*Monday 20st NOVEMBER (Thriller/ Mystery)

- **‘These Violent Delights’ by Micah Nemerever, 2021. 460pp, 3 copies.** When Paul and Julian meet as university freshmen in early 1970s Pittsburgh, they are immediately drawn to one another. A talented artist, Paul is sensitive and agonizingly insecure, incomprehensible to his working-class family, and desolate with grief over his father’s recent death. Paul sees the wealthy, effortlessly charming Julian as his sole intellectual equal—an ally against the conventional world he finds so suffocating. He idolizes his friend for his magnetic confidence. But as charismatic as he can choose to be, Julian is also volatile and capriciously cruel. And admiration isn’t the same as trust. As their friendship spirals into an all-consuming intimacy, Paul is desperate to protect their precarious bond, even as it becomes clear that pressures from the outside world are nothing compared with the brutality they are capable of inflicting on one another. Separation is out of the question. But as their orbit compresses and their grip on one another tightens, they are drawn to an act of irrevocable violence that will force the young men to confront a shattering truth at the core of their relationship.
- **‘The Killing Code’ by Ellie Marney, 2022. 384pp, 5 copies.** A historical mystery about a girl who risks everything to track down a vicious serial killer, for fans of The Enigma Game and A Good Girl’s Guide to Murder. Virginia, 1943: World War II is raging in Europe and on the Pacific front when Kit Sutherland is recruited to help the war effort as a codebreaker at Arlington Hall, a former girls’ college now serving as the site of a secret US Signals Intelligence facility in Virginia. But Kit is soon involved in another kind of fight: Government



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girls are being brutally murdered in Washington DC, and when Kit stumbles onto a bloody homicide scene, she is drawn into the hunt for the killer. To find the man responsible for the gruesome murders and bring him to justice, Kit joins forces with other female codebreakers at Arlington Hall—gossip queen Dottie Crockford, sharp-tongued intelligence maven Moya Kershaw, and cleverly resourceful Violet DuLac from the segregated codebreaking unit. But as the girls begin to work together and develop friendships—and romance—that they never expected, two things begin to come clear: the murderer they're hunting is closing in on them...and Kit is hiding a dangerous secret.

- **'A Beautiful Crime: a novel' by Christopher Bollen, 2020. 416pp, 5 copies.** When Nick Brink and his boyfriend Clay Guillory meet up on the Grand Canal in Venice, they have a plan in mind—and it doesn't involve a vacation. Nick and Clay are running away from their turbulent lives in New York City, each desperate for a happier, freer future someplace else. Their method of escape? Selling a collection of counterfeit antiques to a brash, unsuspecting American living out his retirement years in a grand palazzo. With Clay's smarts and Nick's charm, their scheme is sure to succeed. As it turns out, tricking a millionaire out of money isn't as easy as it seems, especially when Clay and Nick let greed get the best of them. As Nick falls under the spell of the city's decrepit magic, Clay comes to terms with personal loss and the price of letting go of the past. Their future awaits, but it is built on disastrous deceptions, and more than one life stands in the way of their dreams. A Beautiful Crime is a twisty grifter novel with a thriller running through its veins. But it is also a meditation on love, class, race, sexuality, and the legacy of bohemian culture.

**\*Monday 18th DECEMBER Christmas Party. Details to be advised.**

Happy reading  
Bonnie

**2023/4 December- January Summer Reads: Film/ TV/ Streaming tie-ins**

- **'My Policeman' by Bethan Roberts, 2012. 352pp, 10 copies, ebook, Largeprint Amazon Prime**
- **'The Power Of The Dog' by Thomas Savage, 2006. 293pp, 4 copies, ebook, audiobook. Movie adaptation 2022.**
- **'Heartstopper' by Alice Oseman, 2018. 288pp, 27 copies. Series #1-4 available in BCC library. Netflix**
- **'This Is Going To Hurt: secret diaries of a junior doctor' by Adam Kay, 2017. 285pp, ebook, audiobook, 21 copies, MP3, 10 DVDs in BCC**

# *2023 Reading List*

*as at September 2022*

