



AUTUMN

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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss Henry



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2024 Booker Prize Shortlist Announced

This year's Booker Prize shortlist features the highest number of women in its 55-year history, with five women – Samantha Harvey, Rachel Kushner, Anne Michaels, Yael van der Wouden and Charlotte Wood—dominating the six-strong shortlist. The Booker Prize is the world's most significant award for the best-sustained work of fiction written in English and published in the UK or Ireland. One significant theme that unites all six authors this year is the gravitational forces exerted on us by the place we call home. This is a shortlist showing our essential human need to belong in a world that makes so many people feel lost and unwelcome. The list of books features stories that transport readers around the world and beyond Earth's atmosphere; from the battlefields of the First World War to a spiritual retreat in rural Australia; from America's Deep South in the 19th century to a remote Dutch house in the 1960s; from the International Space Station to a cave network beneath the French countryside. Among other things, the shortlisted books explore the gravitational pull of home and family; the contested nature of truth and history; and the extent to which we reveal ourselves to others. Below are some books previously shortlisted for the Booker Prize that we have in the library stock.

[Click here](#) to view this year's shortlist.

The Wilderness by Samantha Harvey

It's Jake's birthday. He is sitting in a small plane, being flown over the landscape that has been the backdrop to his life – his childhood, his marriage, his work, his passions. Now he is in his mid-sixties, and he isn't quite the man he used to be. He has lost his wife, his son is in prison, and he is about to lose his past. Jake has Alzheimer's. As the disease takes hold of him, Jake struggles to hold on to his personal story, to his memories and identity, but they become increasingly elusive and unreliable. What happened to his daughter? Is she alive, or long dead? And why exactly is his son in prison? What went so wrong in his life? There was a cherry tree once, and a yellow dress, but what exactly do they mean? As Jake fights the inevitable dying of the light, the key events of his life keep changing as he tries to grasp them, and what until recently seemed solid fact is melting into surreal dreams or nightmarish imaginings. Is there anything he'll be able to salvage from the wreckage? Beauty, perhaps, the memory of love, or nothing at all?

Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart

(Recommended for Older Readers)

It is 1981. Glasgow is dying and good families must grift to survive. Agnes Bain has always expected more from life, dreaming of greater things. But Agnes is abandoned by her philandering husband, and as she descends deeper into drink, her children try their best to save her, yet one by one they must abandon her to save themselves. It is her son Shuggie who holds out hope the longest. Shuggie is different, he is clearly not right. But Shuggie believes that if he tries his hardest, he can be normal like the other boys and help his mother escape this hopeless place.

Girl, Woman, Other by Bernadine Evaristo

(Recommended for Older Readers)

Teeming with life and crackling with energy – a love song to modern Britain and black womanhood. Girl, Woman, Other follows the lives and struggles of twelve very different characters. Mostly women, black and British, they tell the stories of their families, friends, and lovers, across the country and through the years. Joyfully polyphonic and vibrantly contemporary, this is a gloriously new kind of history, a novel of our times: celebratory, ever-dynamic and utterly irresistible.

Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

Saleem Sinai is born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947, the very moment of India's independence. Greeted by fireworks displays, cheering crowds, and Prime Minister Nehru himself, Saleem grows up to learn the ominous consequences of this coincidence. His very act is mirrored and magnified in events that sway the course of national affairs; his health and well-being are inextricably bound to those of his nation; his life is inseparable, at times indistinguishable, from the history of his country. Perhaps most remarkable are the telepathic powers linking him with India's 1,000 other "midnight's children," all born in that initial hour and endowed with magical gifts. This novel is at once a fascinating family saga and an astonishing evocation of a vast land and its people—a brilliant incarnation of the universal human comedy. Twenty-five years after its publication, *Midnight's Children* stands apart as both an epochal work of fiction and a brilliant performance by one of the great literary voices of our time.

Y7 External Competition: BBC 500 Words Competition

About the Competition:

The BBC's annual 500 Words Competition is now open for 2024 entries. The competition invites entrants to write an original story in 500 words or less. There are two age categories: 5-7 and 8-11-year-olds, so **only year 7s who haven't yet turned 12 will be eligible to enter**. 50 finalists will be invited to a grand final at Buckingham Palace in February 2025, where the bronze, silver, and gold winners will have their stories read out by celebrities. There are also lots of prizes to be won – each winner will take home a bundle of books, and the gold winners will win 500 books for their school library. In addition, winning stories will receive an original illustration from a renowned illustrator.

All stories must be submitted before **9pm on Friday 8th November 2024**.

Entry Criteria:

- You must be between the ages of **8-11** to enter.
- You can only submit one story to the competition.
- Stories must be 500 words or less, be an original idea, be written by an individual and not a group, and be prose rather than a poem or other format.
- Stories must not give any of your personal details (including your name), recount any historical event, or be created, developed, or written by AI.
- Stories will be judged on the following criteria: characterisation, plot, originality, language, and enjoyment.

Submit your entry [here](#).

"Poetry might be defined as the clear expression of mixed feelings." – W.H. Auden



Anne of Green Gables #2: Anne of Avonlea by L.M. Montgomery

When twelve-year-old Anne Shirley came to Avonlea, she quickly won everyone's heart. Now, she's five years older, almost a woman, and about to embark on a new adventure: becoming the teacher in her old Avonlea school. It's an exciting year as Anne struggles to win over all her students, welcomes two new members to her family, and feels the first stirrings of love.



Right Ho, Jeeves by P.G. Wodehouse

Gussie Fink-Nottle has locked himself away in the country studying news ever since he came into his estate. So it is a surprise when Bertie hears that Gussie is not only in London, but he is there to woo Madeline Bassett! At odds with Jeeves over the decorum of a white jacket, Bertie decides to take on Gussie's problem himself. Off to Brinkley Court, Bertie must deal with the prize-giving at Market Snodsbury Grammar School, the broken engagement of his cousin Angela, and the resignation of Anatole, his aunt's genius chef. Will Jeeves be able to sort out the mess?

A Good Girl's Guide to Murder #0.5: Kill Joy by Holly Jackson

Find out where it all started for Pip in this prequel novella to *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder*. Pippa Fitz-Amobi is not in the mood for her friend's murder mystery party. Especially one that involves 1920's fancy dress and pretending that their town, Little Kilton, is an island called Joy. But when the game begins, Pip finds herself drawn into the make-believe world of intrigue, deception and murder. But as Pip plays detective, teasing out the identity of the killer clue-by-clue, the murder of the fictional Reginald Remy isn't the only case on her mind



A Song of Wraiths and Ruin by Roseanne A. Brown

For Malik, the Solstasia festival is a chance to escape his war-stricken home and start a new life with his sisters in the prosperous desert city of Ziran. But when a vengeful spirit abducts Malik's younger sister, Nadia, as payment into the city, Malik strikes a fatal deal—kill Karina, Crown Princess of Ziran, for Nadia's freedom. But Karina has deadly aspirations of her own. Her mother, the Sultana, has been assassinated; her court threatens mutiny; and Solstasia looms like a knife over her neck. Grief-stricken, Karina decides to resurrect her mother through ancient magic... requiring the beating heart of a king. And she knows just how to obtain one: by offering her hand in marriage to the victor of the Solstasia competition. When Malik rigs his way into the contest, they are set on a course to destroy each other. But as attraction flares between them and ancient evils stir, will they be able to see their tasks to the death?



The Accusation: Forbidden Stories from Inside North Korea by Bandi (Recommended for Older Readers)

The Accusation is a deeply moving and eye-opening work of fiction that paints a powerful portrait of life under the North Korean regime. Set during the period of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il's leadership, the seven stories that make up The Accusation give voice to people living under this most bizarre and horrifying of dictatorships. The characters of these compelling stories come from a wide variety of backgrounds, from a young mother living among the elite in Pyongyang whose son misbehaves during a political rally, to a former Communist war hero who is deeply disillusioned with the intrusion of the Party into everything he holds dear, to a husband and father who is denied a travel permit and sneaks onto a train in order to visit his critically ill mother. Written with deep emotion and writing talent, The Accusation is a vivid depiction of life in a closed-off one-party state, and also a hopeful testament to the humanity and rich internal life that persists even in such inhumane conditions.

The Code of the Woosters by P.G. Wodehouse

Take Gussie Fink-Nottle, Madeline Bassett, old Pop Bassett, the unscrupulous Stiffy Byng, the Rev., an 18th-century cow-creamer, a small brown leather covered notebook and mix with a dose of the aged aunt Dahlia and one has a dangerous brew which spells toil and trouble for Bertie and Jeeves.



The New Silk Roads by Peter Frankopan

When The Silk Roads was published in 2015, it became an instant classic. A major reassessment of world history, it compelled us to look at the past from a different perspective. The New Silk Roads brings this story up to date, addressing the present and future of a world that is changing dramatically. Following the Silk Roads eastwards, from Europe through to China, by way of Russia and the Middle East, The New Silk Roads provides a timely reminder that we live in a world that is profoundly interconnected. In an age of Brexit and Trump, the themes of isolation and fragmentation permeating the Western world stand in sharp contrast to events along the Silk Roads since 2015, where ties have been strengthened and mutual cooperation established. With brilliant insight, Peter Frankopan takes a fresh look at the network of relationships being formed along the length and breadth of the Silk Roads today, assessing the global reverberations of these continual shifts in the centre of power - all too often absent from headlines in the West. This important - and ultimately hopeful - book asks us to reassess who we are and where we are in the world, illuminating the themes on which all our lives and livelihood depend.

New Oscar Wilde Statue Dubbed 'Absolutely Hideous' by Grandson



Merlin Holland, grandson of author and playwright Oscar Wilde, has condemned a statue of his grandfather as "absolutely hideous". Holland is an expert on Wilde's life and works and is therefore well-versed in the homophobic persecution Wilde suffered in his lifetime. The sculpture is of Wilde's head lying on its side, his face sliced into fragments leading Holland to express concerns that: "It seems to say, 'here is a monument to a man whom society decapitated'". How do we want to remember him? Amusing, -entertaining, engaging or carved up and beheaded for breaking the law of the time? I know which I prefer." The sculpture, created by the late sculptor Sir Edward Paolozzi, is due to be installed in Chelsea near Wilde's former home within the next few weeks. The Paolozzi Foundation said of Holland's condemnation: "The foundation takes the view that everyone is entitled to their opinion, including Oscar Wilde's grandson. We also note that the Oscar Wilde Society is fully supportive."

[Click here](#) to read the original BBC article by Dalya Alberge

A Woman of No Importance by Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde's audacious drama of social scandal centres around the revelation of Mrs Arbuthnot's long-concealed secret. A house party is in full swing at Lady Hunstanton's country home, when it is announced that Gerald Arbuthnot has been appointed secretary to the sophisticated, witty Lord Illingworth. Gerald's mother stands in the way of his appointment, but fears to tell him why, for who will believe Lord Illingworth to be a man of no importance?



The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde's only novel is the dreamlike story of a young man who sells his soul for eternal youth and beauty. In this celebrated work Wilde forged a devastating portrait of the effects of evil and debauchery on a young aesthete in late-19th-century England. Combining elements of the Gothic horror novel and decadent French fiction, the book centres on a striking premise: As Dorian Gray sinks into a life of crime and gross sensuality, his body retains perfect youth and vigour while his recently painted portrait grows day by day into a hideous record of evil, which he must keep hidden from the world.



The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde's madcap farce about mistaken identities, secret engagements, and lovers entanglements still delights readers more than a century after its 1895 publication and premiere performance. The rapid-fire wit and eccentric characters of *The Importance of Being Earnest* have made it a mainstay of the high school curriculum for decades. Cecily Cardew and Gwendolen Fairfax are both in love with the same mythical suitor. Jack Worthing has wooed Gwendolen as Ernest while Algernon has also posed as Ernest to win the heart of Jack's ward, Cecily. When all four arrive at Jack's country home on the same weekend the "rivals" to fight for Ernest's undivided attention and the "Ernests" to claim their beloveds pandemonium breaks loose. Only a senile nursemaid and an old, discarded handbag can save the day!

Black Speculative Fiction Month

You may be aware that October in the UK is Black History Month, but it is less-widely known that the month also plays host to Black Speculative Fiction Month. The purpose of the latter is to honour Black creators in the fields of science fiction, fantasy, and horror. This includes works in novels, comic books, film, and television. Speculative fiction is "fiction that encompasses works in which the setting is other than the real world, involving supernatural, futuristic, or other imagined elements." Black Speculative Fiction in particular can be defined as "texts that force readers to imagine possibilities that do not fit with their present understanding of the world, with a focus on the people and cultures of the African diaspora." (source) October was chosen as the month during which to celebrate Black Speculative Fiction as the annual Alien Encounters celebration (a celebration of Black speculative and imaginative arts) took place in October already, and it made sense to overlap the two. Below are some great Black Speculative Fiction books we have in the library stock.

A Phoenix First Must Burn by Patrice Caldwell

Sixteen tales by bestselling and award-winning authors that explore the Black experience through fantasy, science fiction, and magic. With stories by: Elizabeth Acevedo, Amerie, Patrice Caldwell, Dhonielle Clayton, J. Marcelle Corrie, Somaia Daud, Charlotte Nicole Davis, Justina Ireland, Alaya Dawn Johnson, Danny Lore, L. L. McKinney, Danielle Paige, Rebecca Roanhorse, Karen Strong, Ashley Woodfolk, and Ibi Zoboi. With fantasy, science fiction and magic at their core, the stories are sharp, atmospheric and visual explorations of histories, relationships and alternate universes that you can't help but to get lost in.



Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi

Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orisha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie's Reaper mother summoned forth souls. But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good. Danger lurks in Orisha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers and her growing feelings for an enemy.

The Gilded Ones by Namina Forna

Sixteen-year-old Deka lives in Otera, a deeply patriarchal ancient kingdom, where a woman's worth is tied to her purity, and she must bleed to prove it. But when Deka bleeds gold – the colour of impurity, of a demon – she faces a consequence worse than death. She is saved by a mysterious woman who tells Deka of her true nature: she is an Alaki, a near-immortal with exceptional gifts. The stranger offers her a choice: fight for the Emperor, with others just like her, or be destroyed...



Parable of the Sower by Octavia E Butler

In 2024, with the world descending into madness and anarchy, one woman begins a fateful journey toward a better future. Lauren Olamina and her family live in one of the only safe neighbourhoods remaining on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Behind the walls of their defended enclave, Lauren's father, a preacher, and a handful of other citizens try to salvage what remains of a culture that has been destroyed by drugs, disease, war, and chronic water shortages. While her father tries to lead people on the righteous path, Lauren struggles with hyperempathy, a condition that makes her extraordinarily sensitive to the pain of others. When fire destroys their compound, Lauren's family is killed and she is forced out into a world that is fraught with danger. With a handful of other refugees, Lauren must make her way north to safety, along the way conceiving a revolutionary idea that may mean salvation for all mankind.

On This Day in History... The Birth of F. Scott Fitzgerald, 24th September 1896



Jazz Age author Francis Scott Fitzgerald, best known for his novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925), wrote novels and short stories focusing on the Jazz New Age set in the 1920s. Fitzgerald had an intensely romantic imagination: what he once called a "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, [and] [he] charged into the experience determined to realise those promises." These promises represent the American Dream and the hope for a change in the lives of the American people who were looking towards happier and more promising times after World War II ended in 1918. This dream of "promises" flowed through Fitzgerald's later novels *All the Young Men* (1926), *Tender is the Night* (1934) and *The Last Tycoon* (1939). Fitzgerald tragically died of a heart attack at 44 years old.

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Jay Gatsby is the man who has everything. But one thing will always be out of his reach... Everybody who is anybody is seen at his glittering parties. Day and night his Long Island mansion buzzes with bright young things drinking, dancing and debating his mysterious character. For Gatsby - young, handsome, fabulously rich - always seems alone in the crowd, watching and waiting, though no one knows what for. Beneath the shimmering surface of his life he is hiding a secret: a silent longing that can never be fulfilled. And soon this destructive obsession will force his world to unravel.

Tender is the Night by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Set on the French Riviera in the late 1920s, *Tender is the Night* is the tragic romance of the young actress Rosemary Hoyt and the stylish American couple Dick and Nicole Diver. A brilliant young psychiatrist at the time of his marriage, Dick is both husband and doctor to Nicole, whose wealth goods him into a lifestyle not his own, and whose growing strength highlights Dick's harrowing demise. A profound study of the romantic concept of character, *Tender is the Night* is lyrical, expansive, and hauntingly evocative.



This Side of Paradise by F. Scott Fitzgerald

This Side of Paradise charts the life of Amory Blaine, an ambitious young man loosely based on Fitzgerald himself, as he moves from his well-heeled Midwest home to study at Princeton and then starts frequenting the circles of high society as an aspiring writer. Experiencing failure and frustration in love and in his career, Blaine finds his youthful enthusiasm gradually giving way to disillusionment, cynicism and a life of dissolution.



Flappers and Philosophers by F. Scott Fitzgerald

An outstanding collection of 8 American short stories first published in 1920. The stories are set in the world of New York high society and are concerned with the relationships between youth and age, love, and reality. Themes that recur throughout the collection, include the conflict between old money and new money, the difference between appearance and reality, and the shallow nature of social interactions. These themes are explored in depth, along with such topics as infidelity, alcoholism, and mental illness.