

English Extended Reading List

Achebe: Things Fall Apart



Tells two overlapping, intertwining stories, both of which centre around Okonkwo, a "strong man" of an Ibo village in Nigeria. The first of these stories traces Okonkwo's fall from grace with the tribal world in which he lives, and in its classical purity of line and economical beauty it provides us with a powerful fable about the immemorial conflict between the individual and society.

The second story, which is as modern as the first is ancient, and which elevates the book to a tragic plane, concerns the clash of cultures and the destruction of Okonkwo's world through the arrival of aggressive, proselytizing European missionaries. These twin dramas are perfectly harmonized, and they are modulated by an awareness capable of encompassing at once the life of nature, human history, and the mysterious compulsions of the soul. Things fall apart is the most illuminating and permanent monument we have to the modern African experience as seen from within.

Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale



Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offred and the other Handmaids are valued only if their ovaries are viable. Offred can remember the years before, when she lived and made love with her husband, Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now...

Austen: Pride and Prejudice



Love is in the air when five sisters discover that a wealthy and eligible bachelor is suddenly within reach. But it is his friend, the haughty Mr. Darcy, who becomes smitten. Unfortunately for him, the object of his affection is not so easily swayed.

One of the most popular characters in English literature, Elizabeth Bennet is intelligent, witty, well-spoken and ahead of her time. If the terrible rumours about Mr. Darcy are true, he doesn't stand a chance. Yet not all gossip is to be believed when marriage, money, and reputations are on the line. Will Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy circumvent her haste, his ego, and society's expectations to find love?

Austen: Sense and Sensibility



Marianne Dashwood wears her heart on her sleeve, and when she falls in love with the dashing but unsuitable John Willoughby she ignores her sister Elinor's warning that her impulsive behaviour leaves her open to gossip and innuendo. Meanwhile Elinor, always sensitive to social convention, is struggling to conceal her own romantic disappointment, even from those closest to her. Through their parallel experience of love—and its threatened loss—the sisters learn that sense must mix with sensibility if they are to find personal happiness in a society where status and money govern the rules of love.

Austen: Persuasion



Twenty-seven-year old Anne Elliot is Austen's most adult heroine. Eight years before the story proper begins, she is happily betrothed to a naval officer, Frederick Wentworth, but she precipitously breaks off the engagement when persuaded by her friend Lady Russell that such a match is unworthy. The breakup produces in Anne a deep and long-lasting regret. When later Wentworth returns from sea a rich and successful captain, he finds Anne's family on the brink of financial ruin and his own sister a tenant in Kellynch Hall, the Elliot estate. All the tension of the novel revolves around one question: Will Anne and Wentworth be reunited in their love?

Austen: Emma



Beautiful, clever, rich - and single - Emma Woodhouse is perfectly content with her life and sees no need for either love or marriage. Nothing, however, delights her more than interfering in the romantic lives of others. But when she ignores the warnings of her good friend Mr. Knightley and attempts to arrange a suitable match for her protegee Harriet Smith, her carefully laid plans soon unravel and have consequences that she never expected. With its imperfect but charming heroine and its witty and subtle exploration of relationships, Emma is often seen as Jane Austen's most flawless work.

English Extended Reading List

Austen: *Mansfield Park*



Taken from the poverty of her parents' home, Fanny Price is brought up with her rich cousins at Mansfield Park, acutely aware of her humble rank and with only her cousin Edmund as an ally. When Fanny's uncle is absent in Antigua, Mary Crawford and her brother Henry arrive in the neighbourhood, bringing with them London glamour and a reckless taste for flirtation. As her female cousins vie for Henry's attention, and even Edmund falls for Mary's dazzling charms, only Fanny remains doubtful about the Crawfords' influence and finds herself more isolated than ever. A subtle examination of social position and moral integrity, *Mansfield Park* is one of Jane Austen's most profound works.

De Bernieres: *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*



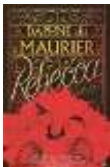
It is 1941 and Captain Antonio Corelli, a young Italian officer, is posted to the Greek island of Cephallonia as part of the occupying forces. At first he is ostracised by the locals, but as a conscientious but far from fanatical soldier, whose main aim is to have a peaceful war, he proves in time to be civilised, humorous - and a consummate musician. When the local doctor's daughter's letters to her fiancé - a member of the underground - go unanswered, the working of the eternal triangle seems inevitable. But can this fragile love survive as a war of bestial savagery gets closer and the lines are drawn between invader and defender?

De Bernieres: *Birds Without Wings*



In his first novel since *Corelli's Mandolin*, Louis de Bernières creates a world, populates it with characters as real as our best friends, and launches it into the maelstrom of twentieth-century history. The setting is a small village in southwestern Anatolia in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire. Everyone there speaks Turkish, though they write it in Greek letters. It's a place that has room for a professional blasphemer; where a brokenhearted aga finds solace in the arms of a Circassian courtesan who isn't Circassian at all; where a beautiful Christian girl named Philothei is engaged to a Muslim boy named Ibrahim. But all of this will change when Turkey enters the modern world.

De Maurier: *Rebecca*



The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where our heroine is swept off her feet by the dashing widower Maxim de Winter and his sudden proposal of marriage. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It is only when they arrive at his massive country estate that she realizes how large a shadow his late wife will cast over their lives--presenting her with a lingering evil that threatens to destroy their marriage from beyond the grave.

Desai: *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*



Sampath Chawla was born in a time of drought that ended with a vengeance the night of his birth. All signs being auspicious, the villagers triumphantly assured Sampath's proud parents that their son was destined for greatness. Twenty years of failure later, that unfortunately does not appear to be the case. A sullen government worker, Sampath is inspired only when in search of a quiet place to take his nap. "But the world is round," his grandmother says. "Wait and see! Even if it appears he is going downhill, he will come up the other side. Yes, on top of the world. He is just taking a longer route." No one believes her until, one day, Sampath climbs into a guava tree and becomes unintentionally famous as a holy man, setting off a series of events that spin increasingly out of control. A delightfully sweet comic novel that ends in a raucous bang, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is as surprising and entertaining as it is beautifully wrought.

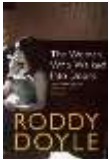
Dickens: *Great Expectations*



In what may be Dickens's best novel, humble, orphaned Pip is apprenticed to the dirty work of the forge but dares to dream of becoming a gentleman — and one day, under sudden and enigmatic circumstances, he finds himself in possession of "great expectations." In this gripping tale of crime and guilt, revenge and reward, the compelling characters include Magwitch, the fearful and fearsome convict; Estella, whose beauty is excelled only by her haughtiness; and the embittered Miss Havisham, an eccentric jilted bride.

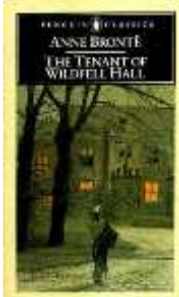
English Extended Reading List

Doyle: *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors*



Paula Spencer is a thirty-nine-year-old working-class woman struggling to reclaim her dignity after marriage to an abusive husband and a worsening drinking problem. Paula recalls her contented childhood, the audacity she learned as a teenager, the exhilaration of her romance with Charlo, and the marriage to him that left her feeling powerless. Capturing both her vulnerability and her strength, Roddy Doyle gives Paula a voice that is real and unforgettable.

Bronte, A: *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*



The *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is a powerful and sometimes violent novel of expectation, love, oppression, sin, religion and betrayal. It portrays the disintegration of the marriage of Helen Huntingdon, the mysterious tenant of the title, and her dissolute, alcoholic husband. Defying convention, Helen leaves her husband to protect their young son from his father's influence, and earns her own living as an artist. Whilst in hiding at Wildfell Hall, she encounters Gilbert Markham, who falls in love with her. On its first publication in 1848, Anne Brontë's second novel was criticised for being 'coarse' and 'brutal'. The *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* challenges the social conventions of the early nineteenth century in a strong defence of women's rights in the face of psychological abuse from their husbands. Anne Brontë's style is bold, naturalistic and passionate, and this novel, which her sister Charlotte considered 'an entire mistake', has earned her a position in English Literature in her own right.

Bronte, C: *Jane Eyre*



The orphaned Jane Eyre has emerged a fiercely independent young woman. As governess at Thornfield Hall, she's found her first real home—though it stands in the shadow of the estate's master, Mr. Rochester, and its haunted halls ring with maniacal laughter. For even the grandest houses have secrets. As much a story about defying convention as it is about coming-of-age, *Jane Eyre* remains one of the most beloved novels in the English language. Both Gothic and Victorian in its influence and scope, it captures one woman's determination to live life on her own terms—choosing courage over fear, while finding power in love and compassion.

Eliot: *Mill on the Floss*



Brought up at Dorlcote Mill, Maggie Tulliver worships her brother Tom and is desperate to win the approval of her parents, but her passionate, wayward nature and her fierce intelligence bring her into constant conflict with her family. As she reaches adulthood, the clash between their expectations and her desires is painfully played out as she finds herself torn between her relationships with three very different men: her proud and stubborn brother, a close friend who is also the son of her family's worst enemy, and a charismatic but dangerous suitor. With its poignant portrayal of sibling relationships, *The Mill on the Floss* is considered George Eliot's most autobiographical novel; it is also one of her most powerful and moving.

Faulks: *Bird Song*



A novel of overwhelming emotional power, *Birdsong* is a story of love, death, sex and survival. Stephen Wraysford, a young Englishman, arrives in Amiens in northern France in 1910 to stay with the Azaire family, and falls in love with unhappily married Isabelle. But, with the world on the brink of war, the relationship falters, and Stephen volunteers to fight on the Western Front. His love for Isabelle forever engraved on his heart, he experiences the unprecedented horrors of that conflict - from which neither he nor any reader of this book can emerge unchanged.

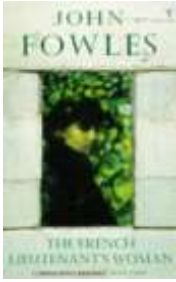
Forster: *Room with A View*



Lucy has her rigid, middle-class life mapped out for her until she visits Florence with her uptight cousin Charlotte, and finds her neatly ordered existence thrown off balance. Her eyes are opened by the unconventional characters she meets at the Pension Bertolini: flamboyant romantic novelist Eleanor Lavish, the Cockney Signora, curious Mr Emerson and, most of all, his passionate son George. Lucy finds herself torn between the intensity of life in Italy and the repressed morals of Edwardian England, personified in her terminally dull fiancé Cecil Vyse. Will she ever learn to follow her own heart?

English Extended Reading List

Fowles: French Lieutenant's Woman



The scene is the village of Lyme Regis on Dorset's Lyme Bay..."the largest bite from the underside of England's out-stretched southwestern leg." The major characters in the love-intrigue triangle are Charles Smithson, 32, a gentleman of independent means & vaguely scientific bent; his fiancée, Ernestina Freeman, a pretty heiress daughter of a wealthy & pompous dry goods merchant; & Sarah Woodruff, mysterious & fascinating...deserted after a brief affair with a French naval officer a short time before the story begins. Obsessed with an irresistible fascination for the enigmatic Sarah, Charles is hurtled by a moment of consummated lust to the brink of the existential void. Duty dictates that his engagement to Tina must be broken as he goes forth once again to seek the woman who has captured his Victorian soul & gentleman's heart.

Frazier: Cold Mountain



Based on local history & family stories passed down by Frazier's great-great-grandfather, *Cold Mountain* is the tale of a wounded Confederate soldier, Inman, who walks away from the ravages of the war & back home to his pre-war sweetheart, Ada. His odyssey thru the devastated landscape of the soon-to-be-defeated South interweaves with Ada's struggle to revive her father's farm, with the help of an intrepid young drifter named Ruby. As their long-separated lives begin to converge at the close of the war, Inman & Ada confront the vastly transformed world they've been delivered.

Gaskell: North and South

When her father leaves the Church in a crisis of conscience, Margaret Hale is uprooted from her comfortable home in Hampshire to move with her family to the north of England. Initially repulsed by the ugliness of her new surroundings in the industrial town of Milton, Margaret becomes aware of the poverty and suffering of the local mill workers and develops a passionate sense of social justice. This is intensified by her tempestuous relationship with the mill-owner and self-made man, John Thornton, as their fierce opposition over his treatment of his employees masks a deeper attraction.

Greene: Brighton Rock



A gang war is raging through the dark underworld of Brighton. Pinkie, malign and ruthless, has killed a man. Believing he can escape retribution, he is unprepared for the courageous Ida Arnold, who is determined to avenge a death.

Guterson: Snow Falling on Cedars



San Pedro Island, north of Puget Sound, is a place so isolated that no one who lives there can afford to make enemies. But in 1954 a local fisherman is found suspiciously drowned, and a Japanese American named Kabuo Miyamoto is charged with his murder. In the course of the ensuing trial, it becomes clear that what is at stake is more than a man's guilt. For on San Pedro, memory grows as thickly as cedar trees and the fields of ripe strawberries--memories of a charmed love affair between a white boy and the Japanese girl who grew up to become Kabuo's wife; memories of land desired, paid for, and lost. Above all, San Pedro is haunted by the memory of what happened to its Japanese residents during World War II, when an entire community was sent into exile while its neighbours watched. Gripping, tragic, and densely atmospheric, *Snow Falling on Cedars* is a masterpiece of suspense-- one that leaves us shaken and changed.

Hardy: Far From The Madding Crowd



Independent and spirited Bathsheba Everdene has come to Weatherbury to take up her position as a farmer on the largest estate in the area. Her bold presence draws three very different suitors: the gentleman-farmer Boldwood, soldier-seducer Sergeant Troy and the devoted shepherd Gabriel Oak. Each, in contrasting ways, unsettles her decisions and complicates her life, and tragedy ensues, threatening the stability of the whole community.

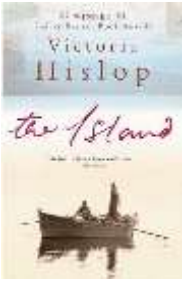
Hardy: Tess of the D'Urbervilles



When Tess Durbeyfield is driven by family poverty to claim kinship with the wealthy D'Urbervilles and seek a portion of their family fortune, meeting her 'cousin' Alec proves to be her downfall. A very different man, Angel Clare, seems to offer her love and salvation, but Tess must choose whether to reveal her past or remain silent in the hope of a peaceful future.

English Extended Reading List

Hislop: The Island



On the brink of a life-changing decision, Alexis Fielding longs to find out about her mother's past. But Sofia has never spoken of it. All she admits to is growing up in a small Cretan village before moving to London. When Alexis decides to visit Crete, however, Sofia gives her daughter a letter to take to an old friend, and promises that through her she will learn more.

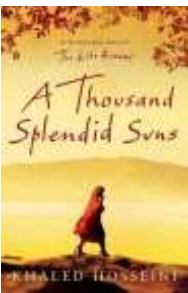
Arriving in Plaka, Alexis is astonished to see that it lies a stone's throw from the tiny, deserted island of Spinalonga - Greece's former leper colony. Then she finds Fotini, and at last hears the story that Sofia has buried all her life: the tale of her great-grandmother Eleni and her daughters and a family rent by tragedy, war and passion. She discovers how intimately she is connected with the island, and how secrecy holds them all in its powerful grip...

Hosseini: Kite Runner



Amir is the son of a wealthy Kabul merchant, a member of the ruling caste of Pashtuns. Hassan, his servant and constant companion, is a Hazara, a despised and impoverished caste. Their uncommon bond is torn by Amir's choice to abandon his friend amidst the increasing ethnic, religious, and political tensions of the dying years of the Afghan monarchy, wrenching them far apart. But so strong is the bond between the two boys that Amir journeys back to a distant world, to try to right past wrongs against the only true friend he ever had.

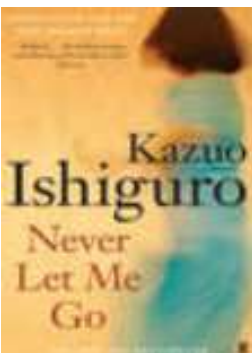
Hosseini: Thousand Splendid Suns



Propelled by the same superb instinct for storytelling that made *The Kite Runner* a beloved classic, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is at once an incredible chronicle of thirty years of Afghan history, and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith, and the salvation to be found in love.

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them—in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul—they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation.

Ishiguro: Never Let me Go



As a child, Kathy—now thirty-one years old—lived at Hailsham, a private school in the scenic English countryside where the children were sheltered from the outside world, brought up to believe that they were special and that their well-being was crucial not only for themselves but for the society they would eventually enter. Kathy had long ago put this idyllic past behind her, but when two of her Hailsham friends come back into her life, she stops resisting the pull of memory. And so, as her friendship with Ruth is rekindled, and as the feelings that long ago fueled her adolescent crush on Tommy begin to deepen into love, Kathy recalls their years at Hailsham. She describes happy scenes of boys and girls growing up together, unperturbed—even comforted—by their isolation. But she describes other scenes as well: of discord and misunderstanding that hint at a dark secret behind Hailsham's nurturing facade. With the dawning clarity of hindsight, the three friends are compelled to face the truth about their childhood—and about their lives now.

Ishiguro: Remains of the Day



In the summer of 1956, Stevens, a long-serving butler at Darlington Hall, decides to take a motoring trip through the West Country. The six-day excursion becomes a journey into the past of Stevens and England, a past that takes in fascism, two world wars, and an unrealised love between the butler and his housekeeper.

Lawrence: Sons and Lovers



The marriage of Gertrude and Walter Morel has become a battleground. Repelled by her uneducated and sometimes violent husband, delicate Gertrude devotes her life to her children, especially to her sons, William and Paul - determined they will not follow their father into working down the coal mines. But conflict is evitable when Paul seeks to escape his mother's suffocating grasp through relationships with women his own age. Set in Lawrence's native Nottinghamshire, *Sons and Lovers* is a highly autobiographical and compelling portrayal of childhood, adolescence and the clash of generations.

English Extended Reading List

Levy: *Small Island*



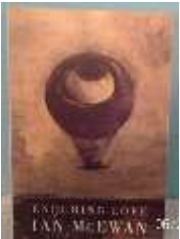
It is 1948, and England is recovering from a war. But at 21 Nevern Street, London, the conflict has only just begun. Queenie Bligh's neighbours don't approve when she agrees to take in Jamaican lodgers, but with her husband, Bernard, not back from the war, she has little choice in the matter. Gilbert Joseph was one of the many Jamaican men who joined the RAF to fight Hitler. But when he returns to England as a civilian he doesn't receive the welcome he was expecting, and it's desperation that drives him to knock at Queenie's door. Gilbert's wife Hortense, who for years has longer for a better life in England, soon joins him. But London is far from the golden city of her dreams, and even Gilbert is not the man she thought he was. *Small Island* explores a point in England's past when the country began to change. In this delicately wrought and profoundly moving novel, Andrea Levy handles the weighty themes of empire, prejudice, war and love, with a superb lightness of touch and generosity of spirit.

McEwan: *Atonement*



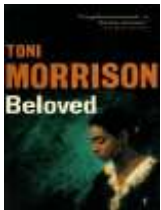
On the hottest day of the summer of 1935, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis sees her sister Cecilia strip off her clothes and plunge into the fountain in the garden of their country house. Watching her too is Robbie Turner who, like Cecilia, has recently come down from Cambridge. By the end of that day, the lives of all three will have been changed for ever, as Briony commits a crime for which she will spend the rest of her life trying to atone.

McEwan: *Enduring Love*



On a windy spring day in the Chilterns, the calm, organized life of science writer Joe Rose is shattered when he witnesses a tragic accident: a hot-air balloon with a boy trapped in its basket is being tossed by the wind, and in the attempt to save the child, a man is killed. A stranger named Jed Parry joins Rose in helping to bring the balloon to safety. But unknown to Rose, something passes between Parry and himself on that day--something that gives birth to an obsession in Parry so powerful that it will test the limits of Rose's beloved rationalism, threaten the love of his wife, Clarissa, and drive him to the brink of murder and madness. Brilliant and compassionate, this is a novel of love, faith, and suspense, and of how life can change in an instant.

Morrison: *Beloved*



In the troubled years following the Civil War, the spirit of a murdered child haunts the Ohio home of a former slave. This angry, destructive ghost breaks mirrors, leaves its fingerprints in cake icing, and generally makes life difficult for Sethe and her family; nevertheless, the woman finds the haunting oddly comforting for the spirit is that of her own dead baby, never named, thought of only as Beloved. A dead child, a runaway slave, a terrible secret--these are the central concerns of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Beloved*.

Niffenegger: *Time Traveller's Wife*



A funny, often poignant tale of boy meets girl with a twist: what if one of them couldn't stop slipping in and out of time? Highly original and imaginative, this debut novel raises questions about life, love, and the effects of time on relationships.

Orwell: *1984*



Published in 1949, the book offers political satirist George Orwell's nightmare vision of a totalitarian, bureaucratic world and one poor stiff's attempt to find individuality. The brilliance of the novel is Orwell's prescience of modern life--the ubiquity of television, the distortion of the language--and his ability to construct such a thorough version of hell. Required reading for students since it was published, it ranks among the most terrifying novels ever written.

Perkins Gilman: *Yellow Wallpaper*



A woman and her husband rent a summer house, but what should be a restful getaway turns into a suffocating psychological battle. This chilling account of postpartum depression and a husband's controlling behaviour in the guise of treatment will leave you breathless.

Proulx: *Brokeback Mountain*



'Brokeback Mountain' is set in the beautiful, wild landscape of Wyoming where cowboys live as they have done for generations. Hard, lonely lives in unforgiving country. Jack Twist and Ennis del Mar are two ranch hands, glad to have found each other's company where none had been expected. But companionship becomes something else on Brokeback Mountain, something not looked for - an intimacy neither can forget.

English Extended Reading List

Pierre: Vernon God Little



The riotous adventures of Vernon Gregory Little in small town Texas and beachfront Mexico mark one of the most spectacular, irreverent and bizarre debuts of the twenty-first century so far. Its depiction of innocence and simple humanity (all seasoned with a dash of dysfunctional profanity) in an evil world is never less than astonishing. The only novel to be set in the barbecue sauce capital of Central Texas, **Vernon God Little** suggests that desperate times throw up the most unlikely of heroes.

Roy: God of Small Things



The year is 1969. In the state of Kerala, on the southernmost tip of India, a skyblue Plymouth with chrome tailfins is stranded on the highway amid a Marxist workers' demonstration. Inside the car sit two-egg twins Rahel and Esthappen, and so begins their tale. . . .

Stoker: Dracula



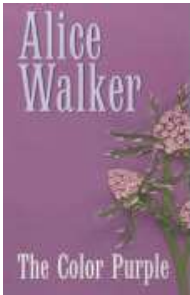
I am Dracula. And I bid you welcome to my house' He is deathly pale. His fingernails are cut to sharp points. His teeth protrude menacingly from his mouth in clouds of rancid breath... Yet even Count Dracula's unnerving appearance and the frightened reaction of the local peasants fail to warn Jonathan Harker, a young man from England, about his host. Little does Jonathan know that this is a land where babies are snatched for their blood and wolves howl menacingly from the forest, where reality is far more frightening than superstition. What's more, it's going to be up to him to stop the world's most bloodthirsty predator

Thackeray: Vanity Fair



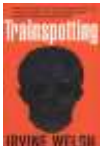
A novel that chronicles the lives of two women who could not be more different: Becky Sharp, an orphan whose only resources are her vast ambitions, her native wit, and her loose morals; and her schoolmate Amelia Sedley, a typically naive Victorian heroine, the pampered daughter of a wealthy family.

Walker: The Color Purple



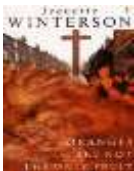
A powerful cultural touchstone of modern American literature, *The Color Purple* depicts the lives of African American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia. Separated as girls, sisters Celie and Nettie sustain their loyalty to and hope in each other across time, distance and silence. Through a series of letters spanning twenty years, first from Celie to God, then the sisters to each other despite the unknown, the novel draws readers into its rich and memorable portrayals of Celie, Nettie, Shug Avery and Sofia and their experience. *The Color Purple* broke the silence around domestic and sexual abuse, narrating the lives of women through their pain and struggle, companionship and growth, resilience and bravery. Deeply compassionate and beautifully imagined, Alice Walker's epic carries readers on a spirit-affirming journey towards redemption and love.

Welsh: Trainspotting



'An unremitting powerhouse of a novel that marks the arrival of a major new talent. Trainspotting is a loosely knotted string of jagged, dislocated tales that lay bare the hearts of darkness of the junkies, wide-boys and psychos who ride in the down escalator of opportunity in the nation's capital. Loud with laughter in the dark, this novel is the real McCoy. If you haven't heard of Irvine Welsh before-don't worry, you will' *The Herald*

Winterson: Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit



This is the story of Jeanette, adopted and brought up by her mother as one of God's elect. Zealous and passionate, she seems destined for life as a missionary, but then she falls for one of her converts. At sixteen, Jeanette decides to leave the church, her home and her family, for the young woman she loves. Innovative, punchy and tender, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is a few days ride into the bizarre outposts of religious excess and human obsession.