

Welcome to our Staff Picks newsletter where we will share with you what we are reading, listening to or watching.

While You Were in the Country

Author: Eva Scott

Format: eBook, Book



Ant Murphy has spent his life picking up after his AFL star brother. So when he gets a phone call telling him that Jed has ended up in hospital after a drink-driving incident, he's far from surprised. He's not even shocked by Jed's manager's wild scheme to have him spend the next six weeks living in the country with a girlfriend Ant didn't even know about. All par for the course in his brother's crazy life. In fact, Ant isn't thrown by anything... until he turns up at the new girlfriend's farmhouse and discovers that he already knows her. Intimately. Frankie Fox has dealt with a lot over the last few weeks. She's turned thirty, lost her roof in a storm, been ghosted by someone she thought could be The One, and is now somehow dating her longstanding celebrity crush, THE Jed Murphy. But none of these comes close to the blow of having the guy who ghosted her turn up on her doorstep after weeks of silence... and for him to turn out to be Jed's brother. With a secret she's forbidden from revealing, growing feelings for her boyfriend's brother, two Murphys living in her home and her future happiness on the line, Frankie must ask the most important question of all: is all this trouble really worth a new roof?

Birds, Beasts and Relatives

Author: Gerald Durrell

Format: Large Print

Gerald Durrell's second Corfu Trilogy book was a lot of fun. The Durrells lived on Corfu prior to the outbreak of WWII, and their youngest family member recorded his memories there as a boy. If you've seen the 4-season TV series The Durrells, you'll know you're in for a delightful, whole-hearted, funny adventure on Corfu when you read any of the books which inspired it. Eldest brother Lawrence, also wrote many books set in exotic locations, though his style is very different from Gerry's.



No Hard Feelings

Author: Genevieve Novak

Format: eBook, eAudiobook, Book

Penny can't help but compare herself to her friends. Annie is about to become a senior associate at her law firm, Bec has just got engaged, Leo is dating everyone this side of the Yarra, and Penny is just ... waiting. Waiting for Max, her on-again, off-again boyfriend, to allow her to spend the night, waiting for the promotion she was promised, waiting for her Valium to kick in. Waiting for her real life to start. Out of excuses and sick of falling behind, Penny is determined to turn things around. She's going to make it work with Max, impress her tyrannical boss, quit seeing her useless therapist, remember to water her plants, and stop having panic attacks in the work toilets. But soon she's back to doomscrolling on Instagram, necking bottles of Aldi's finest sauvignon blanc, and criticising herself with renewed vigour and loathing. As her goals seem further away than ever, she has to wonder: when bad habits feel so good, how do you trust what's right for you?



Barking Up the Right Tree

Author: Leigh Russell

Format: eAudiobook

When Emily's boyfriend walks out, she is devastated. As she is puzzling over what to do with the rest of her life, she is surprised to learn that her great aunt has died, leaving Emily her cottage in the picturesque Wiltshire village of Ashton Mead. This inheritance comes with a condition: Emily must take care of her great aunt's pet. Not knowing what to expect, Emily sets off for the village, hoping to make a new life for herself. In the village, she soon makes friends with Hannah who runs the Sunshine Tea Shoppe, and meets other residents of the village where she decides to settle. All is going well... until her unknown pet arrives. Then Emily's ex-boyfriend turns up and against the advice of her new friends, she takes him back. When her next-door neighbour's daughter disappears in mysterious circumstances, Emily decides to investigate, unwittingly putting her own life in danger...



The Pre-Loved Club

Author: Sue Teddern
Format: Book

Ned is in IKEA with his wife when she breaks the news that it's over. For Gemma, it happens on the way to get fish and chips, when she opens the glove compartment of her husband's car to find a pair of women's sunglasses that aren't hers. For both, it's a bolt from the blue that rocks their faith in the world, relationships, and themselves. But you can't sit around feeling sorry for yourself, especially when there are children involved, so both - for very different reasons - join a support group for single parents. It's fair to say they don't exactly hit it off. However, as Ned and Gemma know from bitter experience, life is full of surprises, and as they navigate their respective brave new worlds, it's possible they have more in common than either might have suspected, including - but not limited to - excess emotional baggage, low self-esteem, and the ability to take something promising and well and truly screw it up . . . A warm and witty look at the world of dating second time around, *The Pre-Loved Club* by Sue Teddern is for anyone who has ever dreamt of finding true love, only to realize life doesn't necessarily work that way.

The Tilt

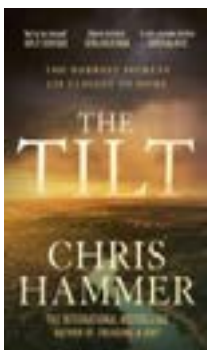
Author: Chris Hammer
Format: Book

A man runs for his life in a forest. A woman plans sabotage. A body is unearthed. Newly-minted homicide detective Nell Buchanan returns to her home town, annoyed at being assigned a decades-old murder - a 'file and forget'. But this is no ordinary cold case, as the discovery of more bodies triggers a chain of escalating events in the present day. As Nell starts to join the pieces together, she begins to question how well she truly knows those closest to her. Could her own family be implicated in the crimes? The nearer Nell comes to uncovering the secrets of the past, the more dangerous the present becomes for her, as she battles shadowy assailants and sinister forces. Can she survive this harrowing investigation and what price will she have to pay for the truth?

Ex Libris

Author: Anne Fadiman
Format: eBook, eAudiobook

Recommended as a companion read to *84 Charing Cross Road* by Helene Hanff, this more-modern collection of essays is an enjoyable look at the life and reading habits of a passionate book reader - one who, unlike Hanff, doesn't mind adding notations, turning down page corners, or laying a book opened out flat (please, never treat borrowed books this way!). Perhaps the most thought-provoking passage appears near the end, when Fadiman quotes a parent, "My daughter is seven, and some of the other second-grade parents complain that their children don't read for pleasure. When I visit their homes, the children's rooms are crammed with expensive books, but the parent's rooms are empty. Those children do not see their parents reading, as I did every day of my childhood. By contrast, when I walk into an apartment with books on the shelves, books on the bedside tables, books on the floor, and books on the toilet tank, then I know what I would see if I opened the door that says 'PRIVATE--GROWNUPS KEEP OUT': a child sprawled on the bed, reading." Note that this book was first published in 1998, before everyone was online, so this is not such a modern quandary.



The Murder Rule

Author: Dervla McTiernan
Format: eBook, eAudiobook, Book

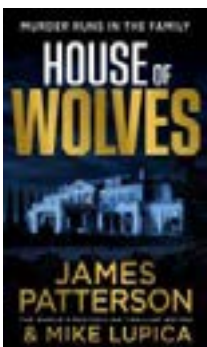
First Rule: Make them like you. Second Rule: Make them need you. Third Rule: Make them pay. They think I'm a young, idealistic law student, that I'm passionate about reforming a corrupt and brutal system. They think I'm working hard to impress them. They think I'm here to save an innocent man on death row. They're wrong. I'm going to bury him.



House of Wolves

Author: James Patterson
Format: eAudiobook, Book

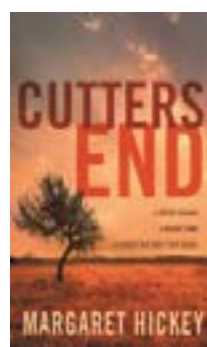
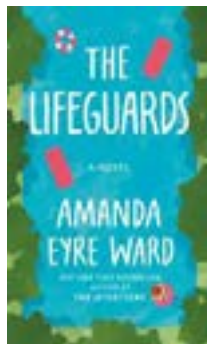
The Wolfs, the most powerful family in California, have a new head--thirty-six-year-old former high school teacher Jenny Wolf. That means Jenny now runs the prestigious San Francisco Tribune. She also controls the legendary pro football team, the Wolves. And she hopes to solve her father's murder. But her brothers, Danny, Jack, and Thomas, are coming for her.



The Lifeguards

Author: Amanda Eyre Ward
Format: Book

Austin's Zilker Park neighbourhood is a wonderland of greenbelt trails, live music, and moms who drink a few too many margaritas. Whitney, Annette, and Liza have grown thick as thieves as they have raised their children together for fifteen years. While each of them has their own set of values and backgrounds, they share the belief that they can shelter their children from an increasingly dangerous world. The women's three teenaged sons are about to begin a carefree summer as lifeguards. Whitney, Annette, and Liza's friendship is unbreakable - as safe as the neighbourhood where they've raised their sweet little boys. Or so they think. One night, the three women have been enjoying happy hour when their boys come back on bicycles from a late-night dip in their favourite swimming hole. The boys share a secret - news that will shatter the perfect world their mothers have so painstakingly created. Combining three mothers' points of view in a powerful narrative tale with commentary from entertaining neighbourhood listservs, secret text messages, and police reports, *The Lifeguards* is both a story about the secrets we tell to protect the ones we love and a riveting novel of suspense filled with half-truths and betrayals, fierce love and complicated friendships, and the loss of innocence on one hot summer night.



The Never Game

Author: Jeffrey Deaver
Format: eBook, Book

Nineteen-year-old Sophie disappears one summer afternoon. She wakes up to find herself locked inside a derelict warehouse, surrounded by five objects. If she uses them wisely, she will escape her prison. Otherwise she will die. Sophie's distraught father calls in the one man who can help find his daughter: unique investigator Colter Shaw. Raised in the wilderness by survivalist parents, he is an expert tracker with a forensic mind trained to solve the most challenging cases. But this will be a test even for him. Soon a blogger called Henry is abducted, left to die in the dark heart of a remote forest, and the whole case gets turned on its head. Because this killer isn't following the rules; he's changing them. One murder at a time...

The Guilty Couple

Author: C.L. Taylor
Format: Book

What would you do if your husband framed you for murder? Five years ago, Olivia Sutherland was wrongfully convicted of plotting to murder. Now she's finally free, Olivia has three goals. Repair her relationship with her daughter. Clear her name. And bring down her husband - the man who framed her. Just how far is she willing to go to get what she wants? And how far will her husband go to stop her? Because his lies run deeper than Olivia could ever have imagined - and this time it's not her freedom that's in jeopardy, but her life...

Desert Star

Author: Michael Connelly
Format: Book

A year has passed since LAPD detective Rene Ballard quit the force in the face of misogyny, demoralisation and endless red tape. Yet after the chief of police himself tells her she can write her ticket within the department, Ballard takes back her badge, leaving 'the Late Show' to rebuild the cold case unit at the elite Robbery-Homicide Division. For years, Harry Bosch has been working a case that haunts him but that he hasn't been able to crack - the murder of an entire family by a psychopath who still walks free. Ballard makes Bosch an offer: come work with her as a volunteer investigator in the new Open-Unsolved Unit, and he can pursue his 'white whale' with the resources of the LAPD behind him.

Cutters End

Author: Margaret Hickey
Format: eBook, Book

New Year's Eve, 1989. Eighteen-year-old Ingrid Mathers is hitchhiking her way to Alice Springs. Bored, hungover and separated from her friend Joanne, she accepts a lift to the remote town of Cutters End. July 2021. Detective Sergeant Mark Ariti is seconded to a recently reopened case, one in which he has a personal connection. Three decades ago, a burnt and broken body was discovered in scrub off the Stuart Highway, 300km south of Cutters End. Though ultimately ruled an accidental death, many people - including a high-profile celebrity - are convinced it was murder. When Mark's interviews with the witnesses in the old case files go nowhere, he has no choice but to make the long journey up the highway to Cutters End. And with the help of local Senior Constable Jagdeep Kaur, he soon learns that this death isn't the only unsolved case that hangs over the town.