



## Senior Recommended Reading List – Summer 2014

### **The Uncommon Reader**

**Alan Bennett**

A deliciously funny novella that celebrates the pleasure of reading.

When the Queen in pursuit of her wandering corgis stumbles upon a mobile library she feels duty bound to borrow a book. Aided by Norman, a young man from the palace kitchen who frequents the library, Bennett describes the Queen's transformation as she discovers the liberating pleasures of the written word.

### **New Town Soul**

**Dermot Bolger**

Joey thought he'd done all the research on his new classmates before he met Shane and Geraldine. They're both hiding something and the answer can only be found in the old house on Castledawson Avenue.

### **The Grass is Singing**

**Doris Lessing**

Set in South Africa under white rule, Doris Lessing's first novel is both a riveting chronicle of human disintegration and a beautifully understated social critique.

### **I Know why the Caged Bird Sings**

**Maya Angelou**

Maya Angelou beautifully evokes her childhood with her grandmother in the American south of the 1930s. She learns the power of the white folks at the other end of town and suffers the terrible trauma of rape by her mother's lover.

### **Foster**

**Claire Keegan**

A small girl is sent to live with foster parents on a farm in rural Ireland, without knowing when she will return home. In the strangers' house, she finds a warmth and affection she has not known before and slowly begins to blossom in their care. And then a secret is revealed and suddenly, she realizes how fragile her idyll is.

### **Dissolution**

**CJ Sansom**

Henry VIII has ordered the dissolution of the monasteries and England is full of informers. At the monastery of Scarnsea, events have spiralled out of control with the murder of Commissioner Robin Singleton. Matthew Shardlake, a lawyer, and his assistant are sent to investigate.

### **Why be happy when you could be normal**

**Jeanette Winterson**

Heartbreaking and funny: the true story behind Jeanette's bestselling and most beloved novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

In 1985, at twenty-five, Jeanette published *Oranges*, the story of a girl adopted by Pentecostal parents, supposed to grow up to be a missionary. Instead, she falls in love with a woman. Disaster.

### **Pride and Prejudice**

**Jane Austen**

Jane Austen's classic novel about the prejudice that occurred between the 19th century classes and the pride which would keep lovers apart.

**Circle of Friends****Maeve Binchy**

An enchanting novel of fierce loyalty and love in changing times.

**Jane Eyre****Charlotte Bronte**

This novel follows the emotions and experiences of eponymous Jane Eyre, her growth to adulthood, and her love for Mr. Rochester, the master of Thornfield Hall. The novel contains elements of social criticism with a strong sense of morality at its core.

**Wuthering Heights****Emily Bronte**

A classic tale of passion, obsession, cruelty and revenge.

**Room****Emma Donoghue**

Jack is five. He lives with his Ma. They live in a single, locked room. They don't have the key. Jack and Ma are prisoners.

**Rebecca****Daphne du Maurier**

"Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again . . ." Rebecca is the haunting story of a young girl consumed by love and the struggle to find her identity.

**The Great Gatsby****F. Scott Fitzgerald**

A consummate summary of the "roaring twenties", and a devastating expose of the "Jazz Age".

**The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time****Mark Haddon**

Christopher is an intelligent youth who lives in the functional hinterland of autism-- every day is an investigation for him because of all the aspects of human life that he does not quite get. When the dog next door is killed with a garden fork, Christopher becomes quietly persistent in his desire to find out what has happened and tugs away at the world around him until a lot of secrets unravel messily.

**The Reluctant Fundamentalist****Moshin Hamid**

At a café table in Lahore, a Pakistani man converses with a stranger. As dusk deepens to dark, he begins the tale that has brought him to this fateful meeting... The Reluctant Fundamentalist is a quietly told, cleverly constructed, fable of infatuation and disenchantment with America

**Tess of the d'Urbervilles****Thomas Hardy**

Set in Hardy's Wessex, *Tess* is a moving novel of hypocrisy and double standards. Its challenging sub-title, *A Pure Woman*, infuriated critics when the book was first published in 1891, and it was condemned as immoral and pessimistic.

**Pompeii****Robert Harris**

A sweltering week in late August. Where better to enjoy the last days of summer than on the beautiful Bay of Naples? But even as Rome's richest citizens relax in their villas around Pompeii and Herculaneum, there are ominous warnings that something is going wrong.

**The Kite Runner****Khaled Hosseini**

Afghanistan, 1975: Twelve-year-old Amir is desperate to win the local kite-fighting tournament and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what will happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that is to shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realises that one day he must return to Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.

**Red Dust Road****Jackie Kay**

From the moment when, as a little girl, she realizes that her skin is a different colour from that of her beloved mum and dad, to the tracing and finding of her birth parents, her Highland mother and Nigerian father, Jackie Kay's journey in *Red Dust Road* is one of unexpected twists, turns and deep emotions.

**Small Island****Andrea Levy**

This is a delicately wrought and profoundly moving novel of empire, prejudice, war and love. It has now been adapted into a major BBC TV drama.

**Ghost Light****Joseph O'Connor**

A story loosely based on the doomed relationship between the playwright J.M. Synge and the much younger actress Molly Allgood.

**Nineteen Eighty-four****George Orwell**

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* is George Orwell's terrifying vision of a totalitarian future in which everything and everyone is slave to a tyrannical regime.

**Brooklyn****Colm Toibin**

It is Ireland in the early 1950s and for Eilis Lacey, as for so many young Irish girls, opportunities are scarce. So when her sister arranges for her to emigrate to New York, Eilis knows she must go, leaving behind her family and her home for the first time.

**The Story of Lucy Gault****William Trevor**

Captain Gault has decided that his family must leave Lahardane. They are after all Protestants living in the big house in rural Cork, and the country is in turmoil. It is 1921. But 8-year-old Lucy can't bear to leave the seashore, the old house, the woods - so she hatches a plan. It is then that the calamity happens - an accident almost, but so vicious in its consequences that it blights the lives of the Gaults for years to come.

**This Boy's Life: A Memoir****Tobias Wolff**

The author recreates his boyhood experiences, relating how he and his mother travelled throughout the United States, and tracing his experiences and changes from young boy to manhood against the background of a violent and wildly optimistic America.

**The White Tiger****Aravind Adiga**

Balam Halwai is a complicated man. Servant. Philosopher. Entrepreneur. Murderer. Over the course of seven nights, by the scattered light of a preposterous chandelier, Balram tells us the terrible and transfixing story of how he came to be a success in life - having nothing but his own wits to help him along.

**Empire of the Sun****J.G. Ballard**

The classic, award-winning novel, made famous by Steven Spielberg's film, tells of a young boy's struggle to survive World War II in China. Jim is separated from his parents in a world at war. To survive, he must find a strength greater than all the events that surround him.

**The Sailor in the Wardrobe****Hugo Hamilton**

Hugo Hamilton's memoir recounts the summer he spent working at a local harbour in Ireland, at a time of tremendous fear and mistrust. Young Hugo longs to be released from the confused identity he has inherited from his German mother and Irish father, but the backdrop of his mother's shame at the hands of Allied soldiers in the aftermath of the Second World War, along with his German cousin's mysterious disappearance somewhere on the Irish West Coast and the spiralling troubles in the north, seems determined to trap him in history. In an attempt to break free of his past, Hugo rebels against his father's strict and crusading regime and turns to the exciting new world of rock and roll, still a taboo subject in the family home.

**The Old Man and the Sea****Ernest Hemingway**

Set in the Gulf Stream off the coast of Havana, Hemingway's magnificent fable is the story of an old man, a young boy and a giant fish. In a perfectly crafted story, which won for Hemingway the Nobel Prize for Literature, is a unique and timeless vision of the beauty and grief of man's challenge to the elements in which he lives.

**Never Let me go****Kazuo Ishiguro**

From the acclaimed author of *The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans*, a moving new novel that subtly reimagines our world and time in a haunting story of friendship and love.

**The Road****Cormac McCarthy**

A searing, post apocalyptic novel destined to become Cormac McCarthy's masterpiece. A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other.

## **Purple Hibiscus**

**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

The limits of fifteen-year-old Kambili's world are defined by the high walls of her family estate and the dictates of her fanatically religious father. Her life is regulated by schedules: prayer, sleep, study, prayer.

When Nigeria is shaken by a military coup, Kambili's father, involved mysteriously in the political crisis, sends her to live with her aunt. In this house, noisy and full of laughter, she discovers life and love – and a terrible, bruising secret deep within her family. This extraordinary debut novel from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is about the blurred lines between the old gods and the new, childhood and adulthood, love and hatred – the grey spaces in which truths are revealed and real life is lived.

## **The Catcher in the Rye**

**JD Salinger**

The hero-narrator is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, secondhand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days.

## **History Bookclub titles**

### **Pompeii**

**Robert Harris**

*Pompeii*, by Robert Harris, is a retelling of the volcanic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius from the perspective of an ancient aqueduct engineer.

It is a carefully researched modern thriller set in August A.D. 79 in Campania, where Pompeii is located. Robert Harris tells the story of corruption, politics, love, Roman superstition, slavery, and engineering, all set against the power of Mt. Vesuvius.

## **Physics Bookclub titles**

### **A Short History of Nearly Everything** by Bill Bryson

Showcases science's crowning achievements and presents them in readable fashion. With topics ranging from continental drift to the nature of time, Bryson, offers up clearly argued explanations able to reach even the least scientifically inclined. A New York Times Notable Book for 2003.

### **Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency** by Douglas Adams

What do a dead cat, a computer whiz-kid, an Electric Monk who believes the world is pink, quantum mechanics and pizza have in common? Apparently not much; until Dirk Gently, private investigator, sets out to prove the fundamental interconnectedness of all things by solving a mysterious murder, assisting a mysterious professor, unravelling a mysterious mystery, not to mention saving the human race from extinction along the way? From the author of the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy.

**Giant Leaps** published by London Science Museum and the Sun Newspaper

Giant Leaps is an often hilarious guide to some of the key discoveries, inventions and events in the history of science, technology and medicine. The right hand pages are written in the style of a sensational Sun front-page scoop, whilst the left hand pages give a more serious but nonetheless accessible account of the key event.

**On Giants' Shoulders: Great Scientists and Their Discoveries from Archimedes to DNA** by Melvyn Bragg

A collection of essays based on Bragg's Radio 4 show. The result is an easily accessible look at some of the founders of modern science, from Archimedes in the 3rd century BC to Marie Curie in the 19th century to present day scientists Francis Crick and James Watson. Each of the 11 essays are preceded by a chronological outline of the subject's life, and allows the reader to gain a helpful sense of perspective on the forthcoming narrative. Bragg's reflections on each of the subjects are aided and abetted by modern day science popularisers, such as Lewis Wolpert and Susan Greenfield.

**Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman! (Adventures of a Curious Character)** by Richard P Feynman

The outrageous exploits of one of this century's greatest scientific minds and a legendary American original. In this national bestseller, the Nobel Prizewinning physicist Richard P Feynman recounts in his inimitable voice his adventures trading ideas on atomic physics with Einstein and Bohr and ideas on gambling with Nick the Greek, painting a naked female toreador, accompanying a ballet on his bongo drums and much else of an eyebrow-raising and hilarious nature..

**Quantum Theory Cannot Hurt You: A Guide to the Universe** by Marcus Chown

The two towering achievements of modern physics are quantum theory and Einstein's general theory of relativity. But, almost a century after their advent, most people haven't the slightest clue what either is about. Did you know that there's so much empty space inside matter that the entire human race could be squeezed into the volume of a sugar cube? Or that you grow old more quickly on the top floor of a building than on the ground floor? Get set for the most entertaining science book of the year.

## Maths Bookclub Titles

**Alex's Adventures in Numberland**, by Alex Bellos.

The world of maths can seem mind-boggling, irrelevant and, let's face it, boring. This groundbreaking book reclaims maths from the geeks. Mathematical ideas underpin just about everything in our lives: from the surprising geometry of the 50p piece to how probability can help you win in any casino. In search of weird and wonderful mathematical phenomena, Alex Bellos travels across the globe and meets the world's fastest mental calculators in Germany and a startlingly numerate chimpanzee in Japan. Packed with fascinating, eye-opening anecdotes, "Alex's Adventures in Numberland" is an exhilarating cocktail of history, reportage and mathematical proofs that will leave you awestruck.

**Why do Buses come in threes? The hidden mathematics of Everyday Life.** By Rob Eastaway and Jeremy Syndham

Why do your chances of winning the lottery increase if you buy your ticket on Friday? Why do traffic lights always seem to be red when you're in a hurry? Is bad luck just chance, or can it be explained?

The intriguing answers to these and other questions about the curiosities of everyday life can be found in this delightfully irreverent and highly informative book. *Why Do Buses Come in Threes?* explains how math and the laws of probability are constantly at work in our lives, affecting everything we do, from getting a date to catching a bus to cooking dinner. With great humor and a genuine love for the subject, Rob Eastaway and Jeremy Wyndham present solutions to such conundrums as how fast one should run in the rain to stay dry and who was the greatest sportsman of all time. Discover the mathematical explanations for the strange coincidence of two.

**50 Mathematical Ideas you really need to know**, by Tony Crilly

Who invented zero? Why 60 seconds in a minute? How big is infinity? Where do parallel lines meet? And can a butterfly's wings really cause a storm on the far side of the world? This book explains in 50 clear and concise essays the mathematical concepts – ancient and modern, theoretical and practical, everyday and esoteric – that allow us to understand and shape the world around us.

## French Bookclub titles

**Mon Premier Weekend sans Parents** by Nathalie Charles

Inès est bien décidée à profiter de son premier week-end seule à la maison avec son frère Lucas et sa soeur Maud. Elle invite ses meilleures amies à passer une nuit blanche devant un film d'horreur. Mais après l'excitation du début surgissent les imprévus.

**Kmille fait son blog** by Cécile le Floch

Camille a treize ans. Après un accident, elle est gravement blessée. La moelle épinière touchée, les membres inférieurs paralysés, la jeune fille retourne à l'école, de longs mois après, en fauteuil roulant.

Camille a créé son blog qui lui sert de journal intime où, sous pseudo, elle crie son injustice, sa colère, son désespoir, ses accès de déprime, son incompréhension, sa révolte.

**Sacrées Sorcières** by Roald Dahl (The Witches)

Bruno a huit ans, ses parents sont morts. Maintenant, il vit avec sa grand-mère. Chaque soir, elle lui raconte une histoire. Mais cette fois, c'est différent, cette fois c'est une histoire de sorcières...

**Alice au Pays des Merveilles** by Lewis Carroll (Alice in Wonderland)

La jeune Alice s'ennuie pendant que sa soeur lit. Un lapin blanc pressé vient à passer : sans réfléchir, Alice le suit dans son terrier. La voici au pays des merveilles, où elle change de taille en mangeant un part de tarte, rencontre le chat du Cheshire, qui apparaît et disparaît à volonté, ne laissant derrière lui que son énigmatique sourire. Elle rencontre le lièvre de Mars avec qui elle prend le thé, puis participe à la partie de croquet de la Reine de Coeur... Quand les choses tournent mal et qu'Alice se fait attaquer par les cartes de jeu, elle se réveille auprès de sa soeur.