

## Literature Group Book List 2021-2022

The Dig by John Preston.

27 Oct 2021

240 pages

Based on the true story of the dig at Sutton Hoo started in summer 1939 as Britain prepared for war, this book has love and rivalry with a dash of suspense. John Preston worked as the Arts Editor of The Evening Standard and The Sunday Telegraph and wrote this novelised account of the Sutton Hoo archaeological dig, after discovering that his aunt had been one of the key participants.

Where the Crawdads Sing by Deilia Owens

24 Nov 2021

384 pages

How long can you protect your heart? For years, rumours of the 'Marsh Girl' have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life - until the unthinkable happens.

Death Comes to Pemberley by P. D. James

26 Jan 2022

352 pages

P.D. James masterfully recreates the world of 'Pride and Prejudice', and combines it with the excitement and suspense of a brilliantly crafted detective story. The year is 1803, and Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet have been married for six years. There are now two handsome and healthy sons in the nursery, Elizabeth's beloved sister Jane and her husband Bingley live nearby and the orderly world of Pemberley seems unassailable. But all this is threatened when, on the eve of the annual autumn ball, the guests are preparing to retire for the night when a chaise appears, rocking down the path from Pemberley's wild woodland. As it pulls up, Lydia Wickham - Elizabeth Bennet's younger, unreliable sister - stumbles out screaming that her husband has been murdered.

The Lie by Helen Dunmore

23 Feb 2022

304 pages

Cornwall, 1920, early spring. A young man stands on a headland, looking out to sea. He is back from the war, homeless and without family. Behind him lie the mud, barbed-wire entanglements and terror of the trenches. Behind him is also the most intense relationship of his life. Daniel has survived, but the horror and passion of the past seem more real than the quiet fields around him. He is about to step into the unknown. But will he ever be able to escape the terrible, unforeseen consequences of a lie?

Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell

23 Mar 2022

384 pages

Hamnet is a novel inspired by the son of a famous playwright: a boy whose life has been all but forgotten, but whose name was given to one of the most celebrated plays ever written.

On a summer's day in 1596, a young girl in Stratford-upon-Avon takes to her bed with a fever. Her twin brother, Hamnet, searches everywhere for help. Why is nobody at home? Their mother, Agnes, is over a mile away, in the garden where she grows medicinal herbs. Their father is working in London. Neither parent knows that one of the children will not survive the week

Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton

27 Apr 2022 256 pages

Cry the Beloved Country is the deeply moving story of the Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son Absalom, set against the background of a land and a people riven by racial injustice. Remarkable for its contemporaneity, unforgettable for character and incident, Cry the Beloved Country is a classic work of love and hope, courage and endurance, born of the dignity of man.

## Rules for Visiting by Jessica Francis Kane

25 May 2022

304 pages

May is at a crossroads. Although her career as a gardener for the university is flourishing, the rest of her life has narrowed to a parched routine. Her father is elderly, her brother estranged, and she keeps her neighbours at arm's length. The missing element, she realises, might be friendship. As May sets off on a journey to visit four neglected friends one-by-one, she holds herself (and them) to humorously high standards, while at home she begins to confront the pain of her past and imagine for herself a different kind of future. May's quest becomes an exploration of the power, and perhaps limits, of modern friendship.

## The Salt Path by Raynor Winn

22 Jun 2022

288 pages

In one devastating week, Raynor and her husband Moth lost their home of 20 years, just as a terminal diagnosis took away their future together. With nowhere else to go, they decided to walk the South West Coast Path: a 630-mile sea-swept trail from Somerset to Dorset, via Devon and Cornwall. This ancient, wind-battered landscape strips them of every comfort they had previously known. With very little money for food or shelter, Raynor and Moth carry everything on their backs and wild camp on beaches and clifftops. But slowly, with every step, every encounter, and every test along the way, the walk sets them on a remarkable journey. They don't know how far they will travel, but - to their surprise - they find themselves on a path to freedom.

## Days Without End by Sebastian Barry

27 Jul 2022

336 pages

After signing up for the US army in the 1850s, aged barely seventeen, Thomas McNulty and his brother-in-arms, John Cole, fought in the Indian Wars and the Civil War. Having both fled terrible hardships, their days are now vivid and filled with wonder, despite the horrors they both see and are complicit in. Then when a young Indian girl crosses their path, the possibility of lasting happiness seems within reach, if only they can survive.

## The Carer by Deborah Moggach

28 Sep 2022

288 pages

James is getting on a bit and needs full-time help. So Phoebe and Robert, his middle-aged offspring, employ Mandy, who seems willing to take him off their hands. But as James regales his family with tales of Mandy's virtues, their shopping trips, and the shared pleasure of their journeys to garden centres, Phoebe and Robert sense something is amiss. Is this really their father, the distant figure who never once turned up for a sports day, now happily chortling over cuckoo clocks and television soaps? Then something happens that throws everything into new relief, and Phoebe and Robert discover that life most definitely does not stop for the elderly. It just moves onto a very different plane - changing all the stories they thought they knew so well.