



Page Turners

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“Lost in Translation”



Alameddine, Rabih **An Unnecessary Woman** (Lebanon)

Aaliya Sohbi lives alone in her Beirut apartment, surrounded by stockpiles of books. Godless, fatherless, divorced, and childless, Aaliya is her family's "unnecessary appendage." Every year, she translates a new favorite book into Arabic, then stows it away. The thirty-seven books that Aaliya has translated have never been read—by anyone. After overhearing her neighbors, "the three witches," discussing her too-white hair, Aaliya accidentally dyes her hair too blue.

In this breathtaking portrait of a reclusive woman's late-life crisis, readers follow Aaliya's digressive mind as it ricochets across visions of past and present Beirut. Insightful musings on literature, philosophy, and art are invaded by memories of the Lebanese Civil War and Aaliya's volatile past. As she tries to overcome her aging body and spontaneous emotional upwellings, Aaliya is faced with an unthinkable disaster that threatens to shatter the little life she has left.

A love letter to literature and its power to define who we are, the gifted Rabih Alameddine has given us a nuanced rendering of a single woman's reclusive life in the Middle East.

Adiga, Aravind **Last Man in Tower** (India)

A tale of one man refusing to leave his home in the face of property development. Tower A is a relic from a co-operative housing society established in the 1950s.

When a property developer offers to buy out the residents for eye-watering sums, the principled yet arrogant teacher is the only one to refuse the offer, determined not to surrender his sentimental attachment to his home and his right to live in it, in the name of greed.

His neighbors gradually relinquish any similar qualms they might have and, in a typically blunt satirical premise take matters into their own hands, determined to seize their slice of the new Mumbai as it transforms from stinky slum to silvery skyscrapers at dizzying speed.

Dennis-Benn, Nicole **Here Comes the Sun** (Jamaica)

Capturing the distinct rhythms of Jamaican life and dialect, Nicole Dennis-Benn pens a tender hymn to a world hidden among pristine beaches and the wide expanse of turquoise seas.

At an opulent resort in Montego Bay, Margot hustles to send her younger sister, Thandi, to school. Taught as a girl to trade her sexuality for survival, Margot is ruthlessly determined to shield Thandi from the same fate. When plans for a new hotel threaten their village, Margot sees not only an opportunity for her own financial independence but also a chance to admit a shocking secret: her forbidden love for another woman. As they face the impending destruction of their community, each woman fighting to balance the burdens she shoulders with the freedom she craves must confront long-hidden scars. From a much-heralded new writer, Here Comes the Sun offers a dramatic glimpse into a vibrant, passionate world most outsiders see simply as "paradise".

Edugyan, Esi **Washington Black** (Barbados—mostly)

Washington Black is an eleven-year-old field slave who knows no other life than the Barbados sugar plantation where he was born.

When his master's eccentric brother chooses him to be his manservant, Wash is terrified of the cruelties he is certain await him. But Christopher Wilde, or "Titch," is a naturalist, explorer, scientist, inventor, and abolitionist. He initiates Wash into a world where a flying machine can carry a man across the sky; where two people, separated by an impossible divide, might begin to see each other as human; and where a boy born in chains can embrace a life of dignity and meaning. But when a man is killed and a bounty is placed on Wash's head, Titch abandons everything to save him. From the sultry cane fields of the Caribbean to the frozen Far North, *Washington Black* tells a story of friendship and betrayal, love and redemption, of a world destroyed and made whole again--and asks the question, what is true freedom?

Feng, Linda Rui **Swimming Back to Trout River** (China)

How many times in life can we start over without losing ourselves?

In the summer of 1986, in a small Chinese village, ten-year-old Junie receives a momentous letter from her parents, who had left for America years ago: her father promises to return home and collect her by her twelfth birthday. But Junie's growing determination to stay put in the idyllic countryside with her beloved grandparents threatens to derail her family's shared future.

What Junie doesn't know is that her parents, Momo and Cassia, are newly estranged from one another in their adopted country, each holding close private tragedies and histories from the tumultuous years of their youth during China's Cultural Revolution. While Momo grapples anew with his deferred musical ambitions and dreams for Junie's future in America, Cassia finally begins to wrestle with a shocking act of brutality from years ago. In order for Momo to fulfill his promise, he must make one last desperate attempt to reunite all three members of the family before Junie's birthday—even if it means bringing painful family secrets to light.

Gowda, Shilpi Somaya **The Golden Son** (India)

The first of his family to go to college, Anil Patel, the golden son, carries the weight of tradition and his family's expectations when he leaves his tiny Indian village to begin a medical residency in Dallas, Texas, at one of the busiest and most competitive hospitals in America. When his father dies, Anil becomes the de facto head of the Patel household and inherits the mantle of arbiter for all of the village's disputes. But he is uneasy with the custom, uncertain that he has the wisdom and courage demonstrated by his father and grandfather. His doubts are compounded by the difficulties he discovers in adjusting to a new culture and a new job, challenges that will shake his confidence in himself and his abilities.

Back home in India, Anil's closest childhood friend, Leena, struggles to adapt to her demanding new husband and relatives. Arranged by her parents, the marriage shatters Leena's romantic hopes and eventually forces her to make a desperate choice that will hold drastic repercussions for herself and her family. Anil and Leena's lives eventually intersect once more—changing them both and the people they love forever.

Groen, Hendrik **The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83 1/4 Years Old** (The Netherlands)

Technically speaking, Hendrik Groen is....elderly. But at age 83 1/4, this feisty, indomitable curmudgeon has no plans to go out quietly. Bored of weak tea and potted geraniums, exasperated by the indignities of aging, Hendrik has decided to rebel--on his own terms. He begins writing an exposé: secretly recording the antics of day-to-day life in his retirement home, where he refuses to take himself, or his fellow "inmates," too seriously.

With an eccentric group of friends he founds the wickedly anarchic Old-But-Not-Dead Club--"Rule #3: No Whining Allowed"--and he and his best friend, Evert, gleefully stir up trouble, enraging the home's humorless director and turning themselves into unlikely heroes. And when a sweet and sassy widow moves in next door, he polishes his shoes, grooms what's left of his hair, and determines to savor every ounce of joy in the time he has left, with hilarious and tender consequences.

Hausmann, Romy **Dear Child** (Germany)

***Gone Girl* meets *Room* in this page-turning thriller from one of Germany's hottest new talents.**

In a windowless shack in the woods, Lena's life and that of her two children follows the rules set by their captor, the father: Meals, bathroom visits, study time are strictly scheduled and meticulously observed. He protects his family from the dangers lurking in the outside world and makes sure that his children will always have a mother to look after them.

One day Lena manages to flee--but the nightmare continues. It seems as if her tormentor wants to get back what belongs to him. And then there is the question whether she really is the woman called "Lena," who disappeared without a trace 14 years ago. The police and Lena's family are all desperately trying to piece together a puzzle which doesn't quite seem to fit.

Jones, Cherie **How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House** (Barbados)

A debut novel in the tradition of Zadie Smith and Marlon James, from a brilliant Caribbean writer, set in Barbados, about four people each desperate to escape their legacy of violence in a so-called "paradise."

In Baxter Beach, Barbados, moneyed ex-pats clash with the locals who often end up serving them: braiding their hair, minding their children, and selling them drugs. Lala lives on the beach with her husband, Adan, a petty criminal with endless charisma whose thwarted burglary of one of the Baxter Beach mansions sets off a chain of events with terrible consequences. A gunshot no one was meant to witness. A new mother whose baby is found lifeless on the beach. A woman torn between two worlds and incapacitated by grief. And two men driven by desperation and greed who attempt a crime that will risk their freedom -- and their lives.

Keegan, Claire **Small Things Like These** (Ireland)

It is 1985 in a small Irish town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal merchant and family man faces into his busiest season. Early one morning, while delivering an order to the local convent, Bill makes a discovery which forces him to confront both his past and the complicit silences of a town controlled by the church.

Already an international bestseller, Small Things Like These is a deeply affecting story of hope, quiet heroism, and empathy from one of our most critically lauded and iconic writers.

Medie, Peace Adzo **His Only Wife** (Ghana)

Afi Tekple is a young seamstress whose life is narrowing rapidly. She lives in a small town in Ghana with her widowed mother, spending much of her time in her uncle Pious's house with his many wives and children. Then one day she is offered a life-changing opportunity—a proposal of marriage from the wealthy family of Elikem Ganyo, a man she doesn't truly know. She acquiesces, but soon realizes that Elikem is not quite the catch he seemed. He sends a stand-in to his own wedding, and only weeks after Afi is married and installed in a plush apartment in the capital city of Accra does she meet her new husband. It turns out that he is in love with another woman, whom his family disapproves of; Afi is supposed to win him back on their behalf. But it is Accra that eventually wins Afi's heart and gives her a life of independence that she never could have imagined for herself.

Murata, Sayaka **Convenience Store Woman** (Japan)

Convenience Store Woman is the heartwarming and surprising story of thirty-six-year-old Tokyo resident Keiko Furukura. Keiko has never fit in, neither in her family, nor in school, but when at the age of eighteen she begins working at the Hiromachi branch of "Smile Mart," she finds peace and purpose in her life. In the store, unlike anywhere else, she understands the rules of social interaction — many are laid out line by line in the store's manual — and she does her best to copy the dress, mannerisms, and speech of her colleagues, playing the part of a "normal" person excellently, more or less. Managers come and go, but Keiko stays at the store for eighteen years. It's almost hard to tell where the store ends and she begins. Keiko is very happy, but the people close to her, from her family to her coworkers, increasingly pressure her to find a husband, and to start a proper career, prompting her to take desperate action...

A brilliant depiction of an unusual psyche and a world hidden from view, Convenience Store Woman is an ironic and sharp-eyed look at contemporary work culture and the pressures to conform, as well as a charming and completely fresh portrait of an unforgettable heroine.

Osman, Richard **The Thursday Murder Club** (England)

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet up once a week to investigate unsolved murders. But when a brutal killing takes place on their very doorstep, the Thursday Murder Club find themselves in the middle of their first live case. Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron might be pushing eighty but they still have a few tricks up their sleeves.

Can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late?

Shafak, Elif **The Bastard of Istanbul** (Turkey)

In her second novel written in English, Elif Shafak confronts her country's violent past in a vivid and colorful tale set in both Turkey and the United States. At its center is the "bastard" of the title, Asya, a nineteen-year-old woman who loves Johnny Cash and the French Existentialists, and the four sisters of the Kazanci family who all live together in an extended household in Istanbul: Zehila, the zestful, headstrong youngest sister who runs a tattoo parlor and is Asya's mother; Banu, who has newly discovered herself as a clairvoyant; Cevriye, a widowed high school teacher; and Feride, a hypochondriac obsessed with impending disaster. Their one estranged brother lives in Arizona with his wife and her Armenian daughter, Armanoush. When Armanoush secretly flies to Istanbul in search of her identity, she finds the Kazanci sisters and becomes fast friends with Asya. A secret is uncovered that links the two families and ties them to the 1915 Armenian deportations and massacres. Full of vigorous and unforgettable female characters.

Tan, Lucy **What We Were Promised** (China)

After years of chasing the American dream, the Zhen family has moved back to China. Settling into a luxurious serviced apartment in Shanghai, Wei, Lina, and their daughter, Karen, join an elite community of Chinese-born, Western-educated professionals who have returned to a radically transformed city.

One morning, in the eighth tower of Lanson Suites, Lina discovers that a childhood keepsake, an ivory bracelet, has gone missing. The incident contributes to a wave of unease that has begun to settle throughout the Zhen household. Wei, a marketing strategist, bows under the guilt of not having engaged in nobler work. Meanwhile, Lina, lonely in her new life of leisure, assumes the modern moniker taitai--a housewife who does no housework at all. She spends her days haunted by the circumstances surrounding her arranged marriage to Wei and her lingering feelings for his brother, Qiang. Lina and Wei take pains to hide their anxieties, but their housekeeper, Sunny, a hardworking girl with secrets of her own, bears witness to their struggles. When Qiang reappears in Shanghai after decades on the run with a local gang, the family must finally come to terms with the past. From a silk-producing village in rural China, up the corporate ladder in suburban America, and back again to the post-Maoist nouveau riche of modern Shanghai, What We Were Promised explores the question of what we owe to our country, our families, and ourselves.