

NANOOSE LIBRARY - SEPTEMBER 2024 NEW BOOK SYNOPSES

FICTION

Kelly Armstrong

The boy who cried bear

Haven's Rock is a well-hidden town. And it's supposed to be, as it's a refuge for those who need to disappear. Detective Casey Duncan and her husband, Sheriff Eric Dalton, already feel at home in their new town. While they know how to navigate the woods and its various dangers, other residents don't. When Max, the town's youngest resident, taught to track animals by Eric, fears a bear is stalking a hiking party, alarms are raised. Even stranger, the ten-year-old swears the bear had human eyes.

Ally Condie

The unwedding

Ellery Wainwright and her husband, Luke, were supposed to spend their twentieth wedding anniversary at the luxurious Resort at Broken Point in Big Sur, California. But now, she's traveling solo. To add insult to injury, there's a wedding at Broken Point scheduled during her stay. Ellery remembers how it felt to be on the cusp of everything new and wonderful, with a loved and certain future glimmering just ahead. When Ellery discovers the body of the groom floating in the pool in the rain, she realizes that she is not the only one whose future is no longer guaranteed. Before the police can reach Broken Point, a mudslide takes out the road to the resort, leaving the guests trapped. When another guest dies, it's clear something horrible is brewing.

Amber Cowie

The off season

While recovering from a professional setback, documentary filmmaker Jane Duvall stays at a remote hotel during the off season with her new contractor husband, Dom, and his daughter, Sienna. Surrounded by forests and the Fraser River, Jane wants nothing more than to bond with her new family. But she's unsettled by the cold, quiet presence of the hotel's owner, Peter, who is overseeing Dom's renovations. When she starts asking questions, Dom grows distant and Sienna becomes belligerent. Undeterred, Jane uncovers secrets that make her question exactly who she married, including a series of strange disappearances at the hotel in previous seasons. When a rainstorm of epic proportions threatens to flood the banks of the river and claim the Venatura Hotel, Jane must solve these mysteries if she's to survive the off season.

Barbara Davis

The keeper of happy endings

Soline Roussel is well schooled in the business of happy endings. For generations her family has kept an exclusive bridal salon in Paris, where magic is worked with needle and thread. It's said that the bride who wears a Roussel gown is guaranteed a lifetime of joy. But devastating losses during World War II leave Soline's world and heart in ruins and her faith in love shaken. She boxes up her memories, stowing them away, along with her broken dreams, determined to forget.

Decades later, while coping with her own tragic loss, aspiring gallery owner Rory Grant leases Soline's old property and discovers a box containing letters and a vintage wedding dress, never worn. When Rory returns the mementos, an unlikely friendship develops, and eerie parallels in Rory's and Soline's lives begin to surface.

William Deverell

The long-shot trial

Arthur Beauchamp takes a break from the courtroom to write a memoir so he can set the record straight about a headline murder case he fought as a young lawyer in 1966. The trial would either mark him as a pathetic loser or thrust him into the top ranks of criminal counsel.

1966, a young housemaid was raped by her employer, a callous and vindictive millionaire. She shot him point blank, so it seemed an open-and-shut case of first-degree murder. Enter Arthur Beauchamp, a young lawyer haunted by having bungled his only previous murder case. He is now called upon to defend a case that he is almost certain can't be won.

In the present time, Arthur learns that writing about his social gaffes, booze, and sex is not easy, especially as his efforts are regularly interrupted by the quirky characters who inhabit his supposedly idyllic Garibaldi Island.

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Paul Doiron

Pitch dark

Another in the Game Warden Mike Bowditch series. Legendary bush pilot Josie Jonson can't believe her luck when a skilled builder just happens to show up after she purchases land near Prentiss Pond. All Mark Redmond asks in return for building Josie's dream cabin is that he be left alone to homeschool his 12-year-old daughter, Cady.

For Mike Bowditch, the intensity of Redmond's secretiveness is troubling, especially in light of suspicious criminal activity being reported around the area. Josie, though hesitant to violate the trust of her prized builder, eventually agrees to fly Mike and his father-in-law Charley Stevens to the secluded pond in an attempt to protect Redmond and Cady. But hours after landing, the trip takes a dark turn when they witness a horrific murder and are taken captive themselves. Freeing himself, Mike is forced to set off through the impenetrable Maine forest towards Canada, alone and unarmed in pursuit of a mysterious fugitive.

Elisabeth Eaves

Outlier

Thirty-four year old Cate Winter is a successful neuroscientist and entrepreneur who has invented a cure for Alzheimer's. On the verge of selling her biotech company, she is also about to become very rich. But Cate has a secret that makes her deeply uneasy about everything she is. She grew up at the Cleckley Institute, a treatment facility for the rehabilitation of psychopathic children. And, as far as she knows, she is the institute's only success. All of her peers have become thwarted, maladjusted or even criminal adults. Then Cate discovers the existence of another ex-patient and outlier who might prove that her success isn't a fluke.

Percival Everett

James

When the enslaved Jim overhears that he is about to be sold to a man in New Orleans, separated from his wife and daughter, he decides to hide on nearby Jackson Island until he can formulate a plan. Meanwhile, Huck Finn has faked his own death to escape his violent father, recently returned to town. As all readers of American literature know, thus begins the dangerous and transcendent journey by raft down the Mississippi River toward the elusive and too-often-unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond. However, Jim's agency, intelligence and compassion are shown in a radically new light.

Donna Everhart

The saints of Swallow Hill

In the dense pine forests of North Carolina, turpentiners hack into tree trunks to draw out the sticky sap that gives the Tar Heel State its nickname, and hauling the resin to stills to be refined. Among them is Rae Lynn Cobb and her husband, Warren, who run a small turpentine farm together. Though the work is hard and often dangerous, Rae Lynn, who spent her childhood in an orphanage, is thankful for it and for her kind if careless husband. When Warren falls victim to his own negligence, Rae Lynn undertakes a desperate act of mercy. To keep herself from jail, she disguises herself as a man named "Ray" and heads to the only place she can think of that might offer anonymity—a turpentine camp in Georgia named Swallow Hill.

Sarah Ferguson

Her heart for a compass

Queen Victoria's close friend, the Scottish Duke of Buccleuch's daughter, Lady Margaret Montagu Scott is expected to make an advantageous marriage. But Margaret is an impulsive and outspoken girl in a repressive society. When Lady Margaret's parents arrange a society marriage for her, she tries to reconcile herself to the match. But shortly before her betrothal is announced, Margaret flees, leaving her parents to explain her sudden absence to an opulent ballroom stuffed with two hundred distinguished guests. Banished from polite society, Margaret throws herself into charitable work and finds strength in a circle of female friends like herself—women intent on breaking the mold, including Queen Victoria's daughter Princess Louise.

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Emily Giffin

The summer pact

Four freshmen, Lainey, Tyson, Summer, and Hannah, arrive at college from different worlds. Soon after moving into their shared dorm, they strike up a conversation in a study lounge, and the seeds of friendship are planted. As their college years fly by, their bond intensifies and the four become inseparable. But as graduation nears, their lives are forever changed after a desperate act leads to tragic consequences. Stunned and heartbroken, a pact is made to be there for each other in their time of need, no matter how separated they are by circumstances or distance.

Ten years later, Hannah is anticipating what should be one of the happiest moments of her life when everything is suddenly turned upside down. Calling on her closest friends, it soon becomes clear that they are facing their own crossroads.

Robyn Harding

The haters

Camryn Lane is living her dream. After years of struggle and rejection, her first novel has finally been published. Her editor is happy; her teenage daughter is proud; and her boyfriend and friends are all excited for her. She's on top of the world until she receives a disturbing message from an unknown sender. Rattled by the accusations she finds there, Camryn swallows the sick feeling in her stomach and resolves to put the missive out of her mind. But when she checks her ratings on a popular book site, she finds a scathing one-star review. The reviewer is so articulate and convincing that soon, Camryn's book is flooded with bad reviews. Could the reviewer be the same person who sent the ugly email? And why do they want to ruin her?

Peter James

They thought I was dead

My name is Sandy. My husband is Detective Superintendent Roy Grace. But when I disappeared, even he couldn't find me. This is my story. There's more to Sandy than meets the eye. A woman with a dubious past, a complicated present and an uncertain future. Then she was gone. Some will think they know how it ends. Her disappearance caused a nationwide search. Even the best detective on the force couldn't find her. They thought she was dead. But nobody knows this. Where did she go? Why did she run? What would cause a woman to leave her whole life behind and simply vanish?

Emiko Jean

The return of Ellie Black

Detective Chelsey Calhoun's life is turned upside down when she gets the call that Ellie Black, a girl who disappeared years earlier, has resurfaced in the woods of Washington state. Ellie's reappearance leaves Chelsey with more questions than answers. It's been twenty years since her sister vanished when they were teenagers, and ever since she's been searching; for signs, for closure, for other missing girls. But happy endings are rare in Chelsey's line of work. Then a glimmer: local teenager Ellie Black, who disappeared without a trace two years earlier, has been found alive in the woods of Washington State. But something is not right with Ellie. She won't say where she's been, or who she's protecting, and it's up to Chelsey to find the answers.

Marjan Kamali

The Lion Women of Tehran

In 1950s Tehran, seven-year-old Ellie lives in comfort until the untimely death of her father, forcing Ellie and her mother to move to a tiny home downtown. Lonely and bearing the brunt of her mother's endless grievances, Ellie dreams of a friend to alleviate her isolation. Luckily, on the first day of school, she meets Homa, a kind, passionate girl with a brave and irrepressible spirit. Together, the two girls play games, learn to cook in the stone kitchen of Homa's warm home, wander through the colourful stalls of the Grand Bazaar, and share their ambitions for becoming "lion women."

But their happiness is disrupted when Ellie and her mother are afforded the opportunity to return to their previous bourgeois life. Now a popular student at the best girls' high school in Iran, Ellie's memories of Homa begin to fade. Years later, however, her sudden reappearance in Ellie's privileged world alters the course of both of their lives.

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Claire Keegan

Small things like these

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.

Camilla Lackberg

The Cuckoo

Another in the Detective Patrik Hedström series. As a heavy mist rolls into the Swedish coastal town of Fjällbacka, violence shakes the small community to its core. Rolf Stenklo, a famous photographer, is found murdered in his gallery. Two days later, a brutal tragedy on a private island leaves the prestigious Bauer family devastated. With his boss acting strangely, Detective Patrik Hedström is left to lead the investigation. Tensions rise threatening cracks in the team of officers at Tanumshede police station and pressure mounts as the press demand answers.

Donna Leon

Transient desires

Another in the Commissario, Guido Brunetti series. Commissario, Guido Brunetti is drawn in innocently as two young American women have been badly injured in a boating accident, joy riding in the Laguna with two young Italians. However, Brunetti's curiosity is aroused by the behaviour of the young men, who abandoned the victims after taking them to the hospital. As Brunetti and his colleague, Claudia Griffoni, investigate the incident, they discover that one of the young men works for a man rumoured to be involved in more sinister nighttime activities in the Laguna. To get to the bottom of the case, Brunetti needs to enlist the help of both the Carabinieri and the Guardia di Costiera. Determining how much trust he and Griffoni can put in these unfamiliar colleagues adds to the difficulty of solving a particularly horrible crime.

Kirsten Miller

Lula Dean's little library of banned books

Beverly Underwood and her arch enemy, Lula Dean, live in the tiny town of Troy, Georgia, where they were born and raised. Now Beverly is on the school board, and Lula has become a local celebrity by embarking on a mission to rid the public libraries of all inappropriate books, none of which she's actually read. To replace the "pornographic" books she's challenged at the local public library, Lula starts her own lending library in front of her home: a cute wooden hutch with glass doors and neat rows of the worthy literature that she's sure the town's readers need. But Beverly's daughter Lindsay sneaks in by night and secretly fills Lula Dean's little free library with banned books wrapped in "wholesome" dust jackets. One by one, neighbours who borrow books from Lula Dean's library find their lives changed in unexpected ways. Finally, one of Lula Dean's enemies discovers the library and decides to turn the tables on her, just as Lula and Beverly are running against each other to replace the town's disgraced mayor.

Roz Nay

The offing

Ivy is in trouble. A recent break-up has left her humiliated and raw, so when her best friend, Regan, offers her a month-long escape in the form of a trip to Australia, it feels like a lifeline, one that Ivy grabs with both hands. Regan is everything Ivy's not—confident, free-spirited, charismatic—and a natural at backpacker fun. But Ivy is drawn to a calmer type of holiday, so when she spots an ad for crew members on a small yacht, the girls decide to take the job. Together with a handsome third crew member, they set off north into tropical heat, but it's not long before doubts start to creep in. Are the girls simply claustrophobic on the boat, or have they stumbled into something they don't understand?

Catherine Newman

We all want impossible things

Edi and Ash have been best friends for over forty years. Since childhood they have seen each other through life's milestones: stealing vodka from their parents, the Madonna phase, REM concerts, unexpected wakes, marriages, infertility, children. As Ash notes, 'Edi's memory is like the back-up hard drive for mine.' So when Edi is diagnosed with terminal cancer, Ash's world reshapes around the rhythms of Edi's care, from chipped ice and watermelon cubes to music therapy; from snack smuggling to impromptu excursions into the frozen winter night. Because life is about squeezing the joy out of

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every moment, about building a powerhouse of memories, about learning when to hold on, and when to let go.

David Nicholls

You are here

Michael is coming undone. Adrift after his wife's departure, he has begun taking himself on long, solitary walks across the English countryside. Becoming ever more reclusive, he'll do anything to avoid his empty house. Marnie, on the other hand, is stuck. Hiding alone in her London flat, she avoids old friends and any reminders of her rotten, selfish ex-husband. Curled up with a good book, she's battling the long afternoons of a life that feels like it's passing her by.

When a persistent mutual friend and some very unpredictable weather conspire to toss Michael and Marnie together on the most epic of ten-day hikes, neither of them can think of anything worse. Until, of course, they discover exactly what they've been looking for.

Angela Petch

The Tuscan secret

Inspired by true events. Anna is distraught when her beloved mother, Ines, passes away. She inherits a box of papers, handwritten in Italian and yellowed with age, and a promise that the truth about what happened during the war lies within. The diaries lead Anna to the small village of Rofelle, where she slowly starts to heal as she explores sun-kissed olive groves, and pieces together her mother's past: happy days spent herding sheep across Tuscan meadows cruelly interrupted when WWII erupted and the Nazis arrived; fleeing her home to join the Resistenza; and risking everything to protect an injured British soldier who captured her heart. But Anna is no closer to learning the truth: what sent Ines running from her adored homeland? When she meets an elderly Italian gentleman living in a deserted hamlet, who flinches at her mother's name and refuses to speak English, Anna is sure he knows more about the devastating secret that tore apart her mother's family.

Heather Redmond

Death and the sisters

London, 1814: Mary Godwin and her stepsister Jane Clairmont, both sixteen, possess quick minds bolstered by an unconventional upbringing, and have little regard for the rules that other young ladies follow. Mary, whose mother famously advocated for women's rights, rejects the two paths that seem open to her—that of an assistant in her father's bookshop, or an ordinary wife. Though quieter and more reserved than the boisterous Jane, Mary's imagination is keen, and she longs for real-world adventures. One evening, an opportunity arrives in the form of a dinner guest, Percy Bysshe Shelley. At twenty-one, Shelley is already a renowned poet and radical. Mary finds their visitor handsome and compelling. When Mary comes downstairs in search of a book, she finds instead a man face down on the floor—with a knife in his back. The dead man, it seems, was a former classmate of Shelley's, and had lately become a personal and professional rival. Mary, Jane, and Shelley are all drawn to learn the truth behind the tragedy, especially as each discovery seems to hint at a tangled web that includes many in Shelley's closest circle.

Kathy Reichs

Fire and bones

Another in the Temperance Brennan series. Called to Washington, DC to analyze the victims of a mysterious arson attack, Tempe quickly finds her misgivings justified. The fire site is in Foggy Bottom, a neighbourhood with a colourful history, and as the pieces start falling into place, the property's ownership becomes more and more suspicious. Sensing a good story, Tempe teams up with a new ally, telejournalist Ivy Doyle. Delving into the past, the duo learns that back in the Thirties and Forties the home was the hangout of a group of bootleggers and racketeers known as the Foggy Bottom Gang. Though interesting, this fact seems irrelevant – until the son of one of the gang members is shot dead at his farm in Virginia.

J.D. Robb

Vendetta in death

She calls herself Lady Justice and once she has chosen a man as her target, she turns herself into a tall blonde or a curvaceous redhead, makes herself as alluring and seductive as possible to them. Once they are in her grasp, they are powerless. The first victim is wealthy businessman Nigel McEnroy. His

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company's human resources department has already paid out settlements to a couple of his young victims—but they don't know that his crimes go far beyond workplace harassment. Lady Justice knows and in one shocking night of brutality, she makes him pay a much steeper price.

Now Eve Dallas and her husband, Roarke, are combing through the evidence of McEnroy's secret life. His compulsive need to record his misdeeds provides them with a wide range of suspects, but the true identity of Lady Justice remains elusive.

James Rollins **Arkangel**

Another in the Sigma Force series. The execution of a Vatican archivist within the shadow of the Kremlin exposes a conspiracy going back three centuries. Before his murder, he manages to dispatch a coded message, a warning of a terrifying threat, one tied to a secret buried within the Golden Library of Tsars, a vast and treasured archive that had vanished into history. As combative forces race for the truth behind this death and alarming discovery, Sigma Force is summoned to aid in the search—not only for this missing trove of ancient books, but to follow a trail far into the Arctic, to search for the truth about a lost continent and a revelation that could ignite a global war.

Noelle Salazar **Angels of the resistance**

Netherlands, 1940. As bombs fall across Europe, fourteen-year-old Lien Vinke fears that the reality of war is inescapable. Though she lives a quiet life with her mother and older sister, Elif, in their small town of Haarlem, they are no strangers to heartache, having recently suffered an immeasurable loss. And when the Nazis invade the Netherlands, joining the Dutch resistance with Elif offers just the atonement Lien craves. Trained to shoot by their late father, the sisters are deadly wolves in sheep's clothing. They soon find themselves entrenched in the underground movement, forging friendships with the other young recruits, and Lien even discovers a kindred spirit in a boy named Charlie. But in wartime, emotional attachments are a liability she can't afford, especially when a deeply personal mission jeopardizes everything she holds dear.

Jessica Shattuck **The last house**

It's 1953, and for Nick Taylor, WWII veteran turned company lawyer, oil is the key to the future. He takes the train into the city for work and returns to the peaceful streets of the suburbs and to his wife, Bet, former codebreaker now housewife, and their two children, Katherine and Harry. Nick comes from humble origins but thanks to his work for American Oil, he can provide every comfort for his family, including Last House, a secluded country escape.

1968, and America is on the brink of change. As Katherine makes her first forays into adult life, she's caught up in the current of the time and struggles to reconcile her ideals with the stable and privileged childhood her parents worked so hard to provide.

Amanda Skenandore **The nurse's secret**

Based on Florence Nightingale's nursing principles, Bellevue is the first school of its kind in the country. Where once nurses were assumed to be ignorant and unskilled, Bellevue prizes discipline, intellect, and moral character, and only young women of good breeding need apply. At first, Una balks at her prim classmates and the doctors' endless commands. Yet life on the streets has prepared her for the horrors of injury and disease found on the wards, and she slowly gains friendship and self-respect. Just as she finds her footing, Una's suspicions about a patient's death put her at risk of exposure, and will force her to choose between her instinct for self-preservation, and exposing her identity in order to save others.

Karen Swan **The stolen hours**

It's the summer of 1929 and Mhairi MacKinnon is in need of a husband. As the eldest girl among nine children, her father has made it clear he can't support her past the coming winter. On the small, Scottish island of St. Kilda, her options are limited. But the MacKinnons' neighbour, Donald, has a business acquaintance on distant Harris also in need of a spouse. A plan is hatched for Donald to chaperone Mhairi and make the introduction on his final crossing of the year, before the autumn seas close them off

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to the outside world. Mhairi returns as an engaged woman who has lost her heart – but not to her fiancé. In love with the wrong man yet knowing he can never be hers, she awaits the spring with growing dread, for the onset of calm waters will see her sent from home to become a stranger's wife.

Willy Vlautin

The horse

Al Ward lives on an isolated mining claim in the high desert of central Nevada fifty miles from the nearest town. A grizzled man in his sixties, he survives on canned soup, instant coffee, and memories of his ex-wife, friends and family he's lost, and his life as a touring musician. Hampered by insomnia, bouts of anxiety, and a chronic lethargy that keeps him from moving back to town, Al finds himself teetering on the edge of madness and running out of reasons to go on until a horse arrives on his doorstep: nameless, blind, and utterly helpless.

Emily Watson/Homer

The Iliad

Emily Wilson's translation of *The Odyssey* in 2017 revealed the ancient poem in a contemporary idiom that would forever change how Homer is read in English. Now Wilson has returned with an equally revelatory translation of Homer's other great epic, *The Iliad*. In Wilson's hands, this thrilling, magical and often horrifying tale now gallops at a pace befitting its legendary battle scenes, in crisp but resonant language that evokes the poem's deep pathos and reveals palpably real, even "complicated," characters—both human and divine.

Jacqueline Winspear

The Comfort of Ghosts

Maisie Dobbs takes her final bow. London, 1945: Four adolescent orphans with a dark wartime history are squatting in a vacant Belgravia mansion, the owners having fled London under heavy Luftwaffe bombing. Soon after a demobilized British soldier, ill and reeling from his experiences overseas, takes shelter with the group, Maisie Dobbs visits the mansion on behalf of the owners. Maisie is deeply puzzled by the children's reticence. Their stories are evasive and, more mysteriously, they appear to possess self-defence skills one might expect of trained adults in wartime. Her quest to bring comfort and the promise of a future to the youngsters and to the ailing soldier brings to light a decades-old mystery concerning Maisie's first husband, James Compton, who was killed while piloting an experimental aircraft. As Maisie picks apart the threads of her dead husband's life, she is forced to examine her own painful past and question beliefs she has always accepted as true.

NONFICTION

Zoe Schlanger

The light eaters: how the unseen world of plant intelligence offers a new understanding of life on Earth

Award-winning environment and science reporter Zoë Schlanger delivers a groundbreaking work of popular science that probes the hidden world of the plant kingdom and reveals the astonishing capabilities of the green life all around us. It takes tremendous biological creativity to be a plant. To survive and thrive while rooted in a single spot, plants have adapted ingenious methods of survival. In recent years, scientists have learned about their ability to communicate, recognize their kin and behave socially, hear sounds, morph their bodies to blend into their surroundings, store useful memories that inform their life cycle, and trick animals into behaving to their benefit, to name just a few remarkable talents.

We need plants to survive. But what do they need us for—if at all? An eye-opening and informative look at the ecosystem we live in, this book challenges us to rethink the role of plants—and our own place—in the natural world.