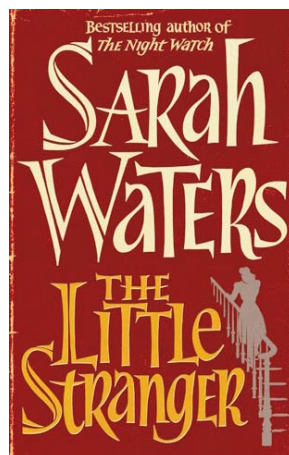
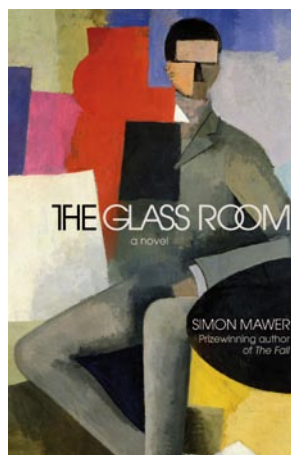
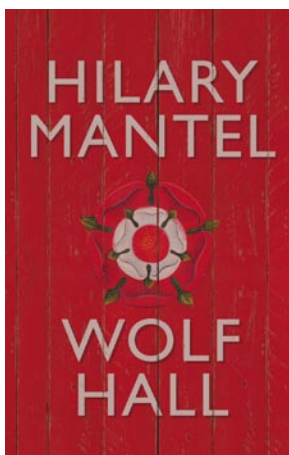
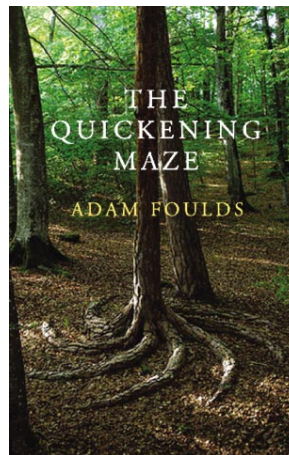
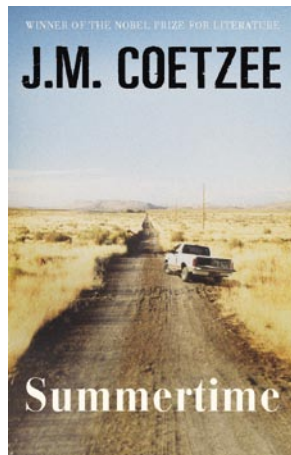


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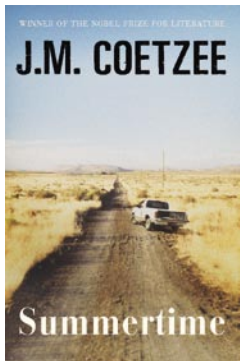
The Children's Book by A. S. Byatt

Olive Wellwood is a famous writer. For each of her children she writes a separate private book, bound in different colours and placed on a shelf. In their rambling house near Romney Marsh they play in a storybook world – but their lives, and those of their rich cousins and their friends, are already inscribed with mystery. Each family carries their own secrets.

This vivid, rich and moving saga is played out against the great, rippling tides of the day, taking us from the Kent marshes to Paris and Munich and the trenches of the Somme. Born at the end of the Victorian era, growing up in the golden summers of Edwardian times, a whole generation grew up unaware of the darkness ahead. In their innocence, they were betrayed unintentionally by the adults who loved them. In a profound sense, this novel is indeed the children's book.

About the author

A.S. Byatt was born in Yorkshire in 1936. She attended a Quaker school in York, and went on to study at Cambridge. She taught at the Central School of Art & Design, and was Senior Lecturer in English at University College, London, before returning to full-time writing in 1983. In 1990 her novel *Possession: A Romance* won the Booker Prize and the *Irish Times/Aer Lingus International Fiction Prize*. A.S. Byatt was appointed CBE in 1990 and DBE in 1999.



Summertime by J.M. Coetzee

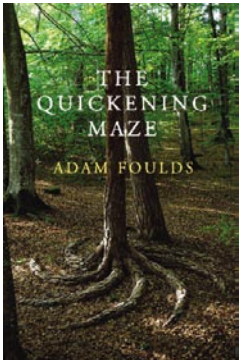
A young English biographer is working on a book about the late writer, John Coetzee. He plans to focus on the years from 1972–1977 when Coetzee, in his thirties, is sharing a run-down cottage in the suburbs of Cape Town with his widowed father. This, the biographer senses, is the period when he was 'finding his feet as a writer'.

Never having met Coetzee, he embarks on a series of interviews with people who were important to him – a married woman with whom he had an affair, his favourite cousin Margot, a Brazilian dancer whose daughter had English lessons with him, former friends and colleagues. From their testimony emerges a portrait of the young Coetzee as an awkward, bookish individual with little talent for opening himself to others. Sometimes heartbreaking, often very funny, *Summertime* shows us a great writer as he limbers up for his task.

About the author

J.M. Coetzee was born in South Africa in 1940. He won the 1983 Booker Prize with *Life & Times of Michael K* and then again with *Disgrace* in 1999. His novels include *Waiting for the Barbarians* (awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1980) and *The Master of Petersburg* (awarded the Irish Times International Fiction Prize in 1995). In 2003 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. JM Coetzee lives in Australia.





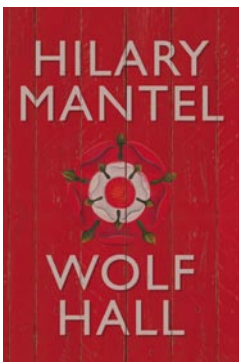
The Quickening Maze by Adam Foulds

The Quickening Maze is based on real events and is set in and around the High Beach Asylum in 1840. The asylum, built within Epping Forest, is a place of disorder and unpredictable dramas. Foulds' tale centres on the life of the great nature poet John Clare. After years struggling with alcohol, critical neglect and depression, Clare finds himself in High Beach Asylum. At the same time another poet, the young Alfred Tennyson, moves nearby and becomes entangled in the life and catastrophic schemes of the asylum's owner, the peculiar, charismatic Dr Matthew Allen.

Historically accurate, but brilliantly imagined, the closed world of High Beach and its various inmates – the doctor, his lonely daughter, the brutish staff and John Clare himself – are brought vividly to life. Foulds also exquisitely depicts life outside the walls; nature and Clare's paradise – the birds and animals, the gypsies living in the forest; his dream of home, of redemption, of escape.

About the author

Adam Foulds was born in 1974, took a Creative Writing MA at the University of East Anglia and now lives in South London. His first novel, *The Truth About These Strange Times*, was published in 2007 and his book-length narrative poem, *The Broken Word*, the following year. He was named the *Sunday Times* Young Writer of the Year in 2008.



Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel

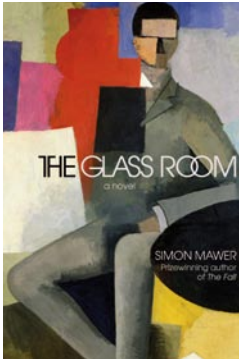
Set in England in the 1520s, when Henry VIII is on the throne, but has no heir. Cardinal Wolsey is his chief advisor, charged with securing the divorce the Pope refuses to grant. Into this atmosphere of distrust and need comes Thomas Cromwell, first as Wolsey's clerk, and later his successor.

Cromwell is a wholly original man: the son of a brutal blacksmith, a political genius, a briber, a charmer, a bully, a man with a delicate and deadly expertise in manipulating people and events. Ruthless in pursuit of his own interests, he is as ambitious in his wider politics as he is for himself. With a vast array of characters, and richly overflowing with incident, *Wolf Hall* peels back history to show us Tudor England as a half-made society, moulding itself with great passion and suffering and courage.

About the author

Hilary Mantel was born in Glossop, Derbyshire, England in 1952. She studied Law at the London School of Economics and Sheffield University. She was employed as a social worker, and lived in Botswana for five years, followed by four years in Saudi Arabia, before returning to Britain in the mid-1980s. In 1987 she was awarded the Shiva Naipaul Memorial Prize for an article about Jeddah, and she was film critic for *The Spectator* from 1987 to 1991.





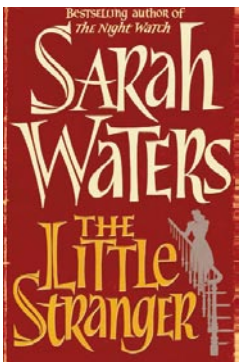
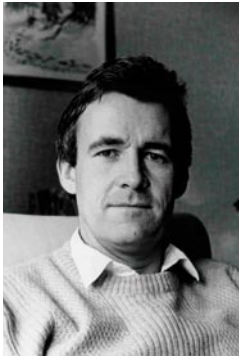
The Glass Room by Simon Mawer

High on a Czechoslovak hill, the Landauer House shines as a marvel of steel, glass and onyx. Built specially for newlyweds Viktor and Liesel Landauer it is one of the wonders of modernist architecture. But the radiant honesty and idealism of 1930 that the house seems to engender quickly tarnishes as the storm clouds of World War Two gather. Eventually, as Nazi troops enter the country, the family, accompanied by Viktor's lover Kata and her child Marika, must flee.

The house slips from hand to hand, from Czech to Nazi to Soviet and finally back to the Czechoslovak state, the crystalline perfection of the Glass Room always exerting a gravitational pull on those who know it. It becomes a laboratory, a shelter from the storm of war, and a place where the broken and the ruined find some kind of comfort, until with the collapse of Communism, the Landauers are finally drawn back to where their story began.

About the author

Simon Mawer was born in 1948 in England, and spent his childhood there, in Cyprus and in Malta. He now lives with his wife and two children in Italy, and teaches at the English School in Rome. *Mendel's Dwarf* was unofficially longlisted for the Booker Prize in 1998 and he is also the author of *The Fall* for which he won The Boardman Tasker Award.



The Little Stranger by Sarah Waters

When Dr Faraday is urgently called to Hundreds Hall, he is both curious and nostalgic. Nearly thirty years before, he had visited the house with his mother, who had once worked there as a maid. As a ten-year-old boy, he had been deeply impressed by the grandness of the house and of the Ayres family. But as he approaches the in 1947, Dr Faraday immediately recognises that much has changed there, as it has virtually everywhere in post war Britain. The crumbling house and its overgrown gardens are badly in need of maintenance, and the Ayres family is clearly struggling to maintain some semblance of their former way of life as well respected country gentry.

So begins Dr Faraday's friendship with the remaining Ayres family a relationship complicated by his lingering class resentments, by his growing attraction to Caroline and more importantly, by the oddness and drama of events that begin to occur in the house as the hot summer gives way to a dark and gloomy winter.

About the author

Sarah Waters was born in July 1966 in Neyland, Pembrokeshire and went to the University of Kent. Her first book, *Tipping the Velvet* won a Betty Trask Award in 1999 and was adapted into a three part television serial, taking the same title, on BBC2 in 2002. *Fingersmith*, published in 2002 was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize as well as the Orange Prize. This was also televised as a serial on BBC1 in 2005. Sarah Waters lives in London.

