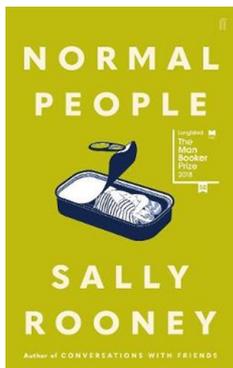


READING GROUPS FOR EVERYONE

Books of the Year 2018

In case you hadn't noticed, it's almost Christmas! That means it's also time for us to pick out our favourite books of 2018. Our staff have chosen a huge variety of titles, from love stories to Brexit satires to a graphic novel. We hope there's something that will interest you on our list, and let us know your favourites online using #BooksOfTheYear.



[Normal People](#) by Sally Rooney

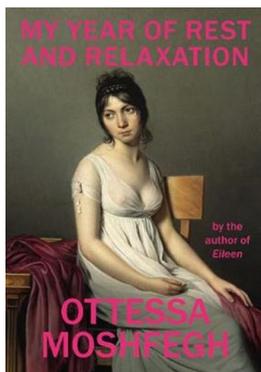
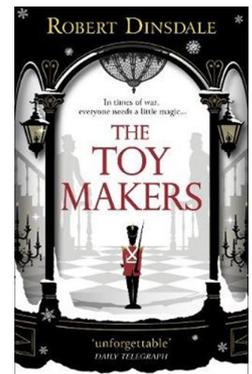
The love story of two people from very different worlds that shows how people can change others' lives. Sally Rooney writes with a rare quality and *Normal People* is one of finest depictions of character in modern literature.

Recommended by Jack Phillips, Executive Assistant to the CEO

[The Toymakers](#) by Robert Dinsdale

This is an enchanting book about the magical Papa Jack's Toy Emporium, with the seam of a darker tale running through it, set in the last few months of World War One. It's not the sort of book I'd normally choose, but I was swept along by the magic of the story.

Recommended by Louisa Steel, Reader Development and Access Manager, Essex Libraries

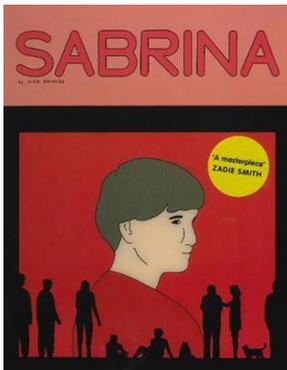


[My Year of Rest and Relaxation](#) by Ottessa Moshfegh

A funny, vulgar and deeply strange novel following a twentysomething Manhattanite anti-hero as she decides to embark on a drug-educed hibernation in the months leading up to 9/11.

Recommended by Annie Robinson, Programme Manager, Reading and Health

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[Sabrina](#) by Nick Drnaso

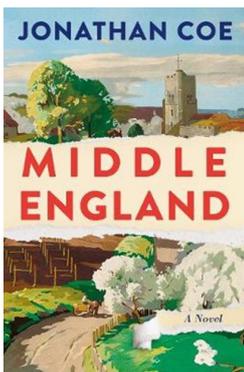
An unnerving, beautifully illustrated book that explores trauma and truth in the digital age.

Recommended by Sam Cox, Communications, Marketing and Brand Manager

[Convenience Store Woman](#) by Sayaka Murata

The quirky story of a woman whose life has been defined by her job in a Japanese convenience store. Simple yet powerful, it makes you think about how we are affected by our surroundings.

Recommended by Kathryn Rose, Promotions Coordinator

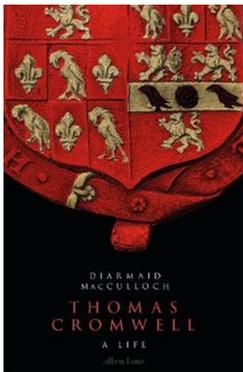


[Middle England](#) by Jonathan Coe

This laugh out loud novel will make you draw sharp intakes of breath and shake your head in sorrow along the way. *Middle England* follows Benjamin Trotter, a yet-to-be published writer and dreamer, and his family. From the General Election of 2010, through the 2011 riots, the heart-swelling 2012 Olympics all the way to September 2018 and the repercussions of Brexit, the book reflects a divided England that seems to have lost its way.

Recommended by Sharon Hardwick, Production Manager

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[Thomas Cromwell: A Life](#) by Diarmaid MacCulloch

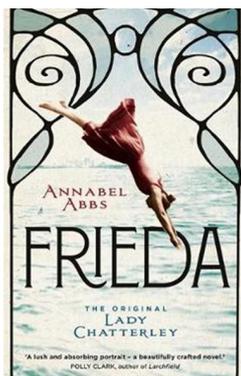
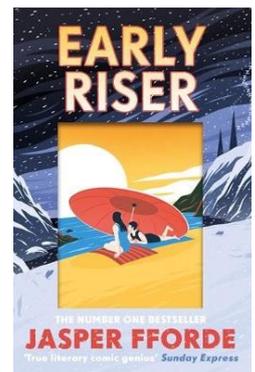
This biography immerses you in a wonderfully detailed account not just of Cromwell's life, but his world. If you loved Hilary Mantel's books, read this.

Recommended by Sue Wilkinson, Chief Executive

[Early Riser](#) by Jasper Fforde

Funny, clever, and unmistakably Fforde, this brilliant new stand-alone novel is the perfect Christmas read, especially as the weather turns colder. I would recommend for people new to Fforde, as well as to his die-hard fans

Recommended by Karen McPherson, Publisher Relations Manager

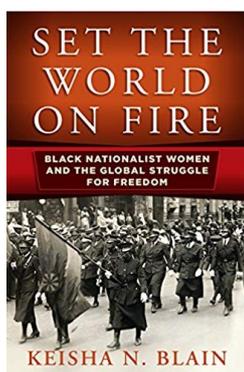


[Frieda](#) by Annabel Abbs

An enticing and well-constructed story that is also a fine study of Edwardian social mores, female sexuality and political awakening. Frieda's struggle to find her place in the world — balancing the love for her children with wanting to break free of stifling social constructs — is utterly compelling and also feels relevant to a modern audience. Glorious!

Recommended by Emma Braithwaite, Programme Manager, Children's Reading

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[*Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom*](#) by Keisha N. Blain

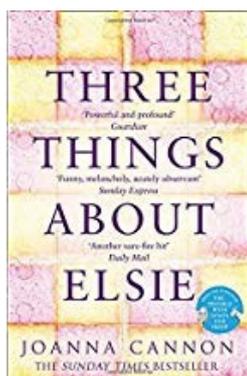
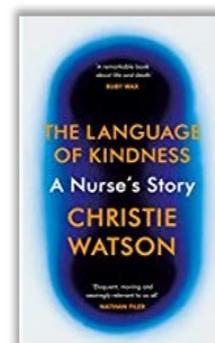
In this fascinating book, Blain provides an account of a group of women across the U.S., Europe and the Caribbean and their vital role in shaping black nationalist politics. Blain's work is both painstakingly researched and highly readable, offering an eye-opening perspective on black resistance in the early to mid-twentieth century.

Recommended by Carina Spaulding, Research and Evaluation Manager

[*The Language of Kindness: A Nurse's Story*](#) by Christie Watson

The Language of Kindness reminded me how interdependent we all are, and how this vulnerability is what makes us human. Nurses accept us, respect us and care for us, warts and all.

Recommended by Georgia Newman, Programme Assistant, Reading & Health

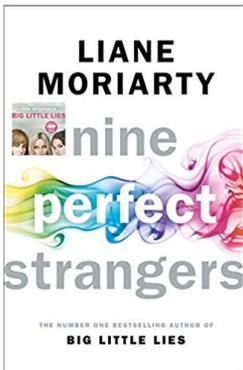


[*Three Things About Elsie*](#) by Joanna Cannon

Definitely my book of the year- a really touching story about old age and friendship told with humour and a touch of almost magical realism that made it absolutely compelling story telling and unputdownable! A new author discovery for me too which is always exciting.

Recommended by Debbie Hicks, Creative Director

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[*Nine Perfect Strangers*](#) by Liane Moriarty

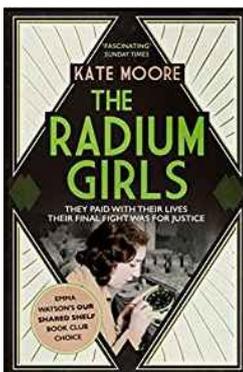
Nine stressed city dwellers attend the health-and-wellness resort Tranquillum House— miles from anywhere, without cars or phones, it seems like the perfect escape. But there's something sinister lying underneath—such a fun read, I loved it!

Recommended by Lindsey Prestage, Business Development Officer, Kent Libraries

[*Slay In Your Lane*](#) by Yomi Adegoke & Elizabeth Uviebinené

This book is a brilliant starting point to understand what it's like to be woman, black and a Londoner in 2018. It ultimately left me feeling hopeful about the future for women and empowered — which has been a nice change compared to the rest of the year!

Recommended by Kimberley Sheehan, Children's Reading Partners



[*The Radium Girls*](#) by Kate Moore

This fascinating and shocking account of the suffering and struggle for justice is an absolute must for readers interested in social history. I would recommend this to anyone.

Recommended by Kathleen Ktorides, Adult Reading Partners