

Annotated AP List

1984—by George Orwell.

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell, is a dystopian novel about Oceania, a society ruled by the oligarchical dictatorship of the Party.[1] Life in the Oceanian province of Airstrip One is a world of perpetual war, pervasive government surveillance, and incessant public mind control, accomplished with a political system euphemistically named English Socialism (Ingsoc), which is administrated by a privileged Inner Party élite.[2] Yet they too are subordinated to the totalitarian cult of personality of Big Brother, the deified Party leader who rules with a philosophy that decries individuality and reason as thoughtcrimes; thus the people of Oceania are subordinated to a supposed collective greater good.[3] The protagonist, Winston Smith, is a member of the Outer Party who works for the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue), which is responsible for propaganda and historical revisionism. His job is to re-write past newspaper articles so that the historical record is congruent with the current party doctrine.[4] Because of the childhood trauma of the destruction of his family — the disappearances of his parents and sister — Winston Smith secretly hates the Party, and dreams of rebellion against Big Brother.

As literary political fiction and as dystopian science-fiction, Nineteen Eighty-Four is a classic novel in content, plot, and style, because many of its terms and concepts, such as Big Brother, doublethink, thoughtcrime, Newspeak, and memory hole, have become contemporary vernacular since its publication in 1949. Moreover, Nineteen Eighty-Four popularised the adjective Orwellian, which refers to official deception, secret surveillance, and manipulation of the past in service to a totalitarian political agenda. [5] In 1998, the Modern Library ranked Nineteen Eighty-Four in 13th place on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

A Separate Peace—by John Knowles.

Gene Forrester, the protagonist, returns to his old prep school, Devon (a thinly-veiled portrayal of Knowles' own alma mater, [Phillips Exeter Academy](#)), fourteen years after he graduated to visit two places he regards as "fearful sites:" a flight of marble stairs and a tree by the river. First, he examines the stairs and notices that they are made of very hard marble. He then trudges through the mud to the tree. The tree brings back memories of Gene's time as a student at Devon. From this point, the plot follows Gene's description of the time span from the summer of 1942 to the summer of 1943. In 1942, he was 16 years old and living at Devon with his best friend and roommate, Phineas (nicknamed Finny). At the time, [World War II](#) is taking place, and has a prominent effect on the story.

Gene and Finny, despite being polar opposites in personality, become fast friends at Devon: Gene's quiet, introverted intellectual personality complements Finny's more extroverted, carefree, athletic demeanor. During the time at Devon, Gene goes through a period of intense friendship with Finny. One of Finny's ideas during Gene's "Sarcastic Summer of 1942" is to create a "Super Suicide Society of the Summer Session," with Gene and himself as charter members. Finny creates a rite of initiation by having members jump into the Devon River from a large, high tree. He also creates a game called "blitzball" (from the German [blitzkrieg](#)) in which there is no winner.

Following their period of intense friendship was a period of intense one-sided rivalry during which Gene strives to out-do Finny academically, since he believes Finny is trying to out-do him. This rivalry culminates (and is ended) when, as Finny and Gene are about to jump off the tree, Finny falls out of the tree and shatters his leg when Gene purposely jounces the branch they were both

standing on. Because of his "accident", Finny learns from the doctor that he will never again be able to compete in sports that are most dear to him. The remainder of the story revolves around Gene's attempts to come to grips with who he is, why he shook the branch, and with human nature. Gene tells Finny that he caused Finny's fall. At first Finny does not believe him and afterward feels extremely hurt.

During a meeting of the Golden Fleece Debating Society, a debate/trial organization that Brinker Hadley set up, Gene is confronted about the "accident" by Brinker, who accuses Gene of trying to kill Finny. Faced with the evidence, Finny leaves shamefully before Gene's deed is confirmed. On the way out, Finny falls down a flight of stairs (the ones Gene visits at the beginning of the novel), and again breaks the leg he had shattered before. Finny dismisses any of Gene's attempts to apologize at first, but he soon realizes that the "accident" was impulsive and anger-based. The two forgive each other.

The next day, Finny dies during the operation to set the bone. The doctor surmises that Finny died when bone marrow entered the blood stream, and stopped his heart during the surgery. Gene does not cry over Finny, but learns much from how he lived his life, stating that when Finny died, he took his (Gene's) anger with him. In Finny's death, Gene could finally come to terms with himself.

Absalom, Absalom!—by William Faulkner

Absalom, Absalom! details the rise and fall of [Thomas Sutpen](#), a white man born into poverty in western Virginia who comes to Mississippi with the complementary aims of becoming rich and a powerful family patriarch. The story is told entirely in flashbacks narrated mostly by [Quentin Compson](#) and his roommate at [Harvard University](#), Shreve. The narration of Rosa Coldfield, and Quentin's father and grandfather, are also included and re-interpreted by Shreve and Quentin, with the total events of the story unfolding in non-chronological order and often with differing details, resulting in a peeling-back-the-onion way of revealing the true story of the Sutpens to the reader. Rosa initially narrates the story, with long digressions and a biased memory, to Quentin Compson, whose grandfather was a friend of Sutpen's. Quentin's father then fills in some of the details to Quentin, as well. Finally, Quentin relates the story to his roommate Shreve, and in each retelling, the reader receives more details as the parties flesh out the story by adding layers. The final effect leaves the reader more certain about the attitudes and biases of the characters than about the facts of Sutpen's story.

Thomas Sutpen arrives in [Jefferson, Mississippi](#), with some [slaves](#) and a French [architect](#) who has been somehow forced into working for him. Sutpen obtains one hundred square miles of land from a local [Native American](#) tribe and immediately begins building a large plantation called Sutpen's Hundred, including an ostentatious mansion. All he needs to complete his plan is a wife to bear him a few children (particularly a son to be his heir), so he ingratiates himself with a local merchant and marries the man's daughter, [Ellen Coldfield](#). Ellen bears Sutpen two children, a son named Henry and a daughter named Judith, both of whom are destined for tragedy.

Henry goes to the [University of Mississippi](#) and meets a fellow student named Charles Bon, who is ten years his senior. Henry brings Bon home for Christmas, where he and Judith begin a quiet romance that leads to a presumed engagement. However, Sutpen realizes that Charles Bon is his son from an earlier marriage and moves to stop the proposed union.

Sutpen had worked on a plantation in [Haiti](#) as the overseer and, after subduing a slave uprising, was offered the hand of the plantation owner's daughter, Eulalia Bon, who bore him a son, Charles. Sutpen had not known that Eulalia was of mixed race until after the marriage and birth of Charles, but when he found out he had been deceived, he renounced the marriage as void and left his wife and child (though leaving them his fortune as part of his own moral recompense). The reader also later learns of Sutpen's childhood, where young Thomas learned that society could

base human worth on material worth. It is this episode that sets into motion Thomas' plan to start a dynasty.

Henry, possibly because of his own potentially (and mutually) incestuous feelings for his sister, as well as quasi-romantic feelings for Charles himself, is keen to see the two wed (allowing him to imagine himself as surrogate for both). When Sutpen tells Henry that Charles is his half-brother and that Judith must not be allowed to marry him, Henry refuses to believe, repudiates his birthright, and accompanies Charles to his home in [New Orleans](#). They then return to Mississippi to enlist in their University company where they join the [Confederate Army](#) and fight in the [Civil War](#). During the war, Henry wrestles with his conscience until he presumably resolves to allow the marriage of half-brother and sister; this resolution changes, however, when Sutpen reveals to Henry that Charles is part black. At the conclusion of the war, Henry enacts his father's interdiction of marriage between Charles and Judith, killing Charles at the gates to the mansion and then fleeing into self-exile.

Thomas Sutpen returns from the war and begins to repair his home, whose hundred square miles have been reduced by carpetbaggers and punitive northern action to one, and dynasty. He proposes to Rosa Coldfield, his dead wife's younger sister, and she accepts. However, Sutpen insults Rosa by demanding that she bear him a son before the wedding takes place prompting her to leave Sutpen's Hundred. Sutpen then begins an affair with Milly, the fifteen-year-old granddaughter of Wash Jones, a squatter who lives on the Sutpen property. The affair continues until Milly becomes pregnant and gives birth to a daughter. Sutpen is terribly disappointed, because the last hope of repairing his Sutpen dynasty rested on whether Milly gave birth to a son. Sutpen casts Milly and the child aside, telling them that they are not worthy of sleeping in the stables with his horse, who had just sired a male. An enraged Wash Jones kills Sutpen, his own granddaughter and Sutpen's newborn daughter, and is in turn killed by the posse that arrives to arrest him.

The story of Thomas Sutpen's legacy ends with Quentin taking Rosa back to the seemingly abandoned Sutpen's Hundred plantation, where they find Henry Sutpen and [Clytie](#), herself the daughter of Thomas Sutpen by a slave woman. Henry has returned to the estate to die. Three months later, when Rosa returns with medical help for Henry, Clytie starts a fire that consumes the plantation and kills Henry and herself. The only remaining Sutpen is Jim Bond, Charles Bon's Black grandson, a young man with severe mental handicaps, who remains on Sutpen's Hundred.

Adam Bede—by George Eliot.

According to [The Oxford Companion to English Literature](#) (1967), "the plot is founded on a story told to George Eliot by her aunt Elizabeth Evans, a [Methodist](#) preacher, and the original of [Dinah Morris](#) of the novel, of a confession of child-murder, made to her by a girl in prison."

The story's plot follows four characters' rural lives in the fictional community of Hayslope—a rural, pastoral and close-knit community in 1799. The novel revolves around a love "rectangle" between beautiful but self-absorbed [Hetty Sorrel](#), Captain [Arthur Donnithorne](#), the young squire who seduces her, [Adam Bede](#), her unacknowledged suitor, and [Dinah Morris](#), Hetty's cousin, a fervent, virtuous and beautiful [Methodist](#) lay preacher.

Adam is a local carpenter much admired for his integrity and intelligence, in love with Hetty. She is attracted to Arthur, the charming local squire's grandson and heir, and falls in love with him. When [Adam](#) interrupts a tryst between them, [Adam](#) and Arthur fight. Arthur agrees to give up Hetty and leaves Hayslope to return to his militia. After he leaves, Hetty Sorrel agrees to marry Adam but shortly before their marriage, discovers she is pregnant. In desperation, she leaves in search of Arthur. She cannot find him; unwilling to return to the village on account of the shame and ostracism she would have to endure, she delivers her baby with the assistance of a friendly woman she encounters. Later, the child is killed when she abandons it in a field. Not being able to

bear the child's cries she tries to come back but she is too late when she finds out that it dies of exposure.

Hetty is caught and tried for child murder. She is found guilty and sentenced to hang. Dinah enters the prison and pledges to stay with Hetty until the end. Her compassion brings about Hetty's contrite confession. When Arthur Donnithorne, on leave from the militia for his grandfather's funeral, hears of her impending execution, he races to the court and has the sentence commuted to [transportation](#).

Ultimately, [Adam](#) and Dinah, who gradually become aware of their mutual love, marry and live peacefully with his family.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (The)—by Mark Twain.

The story begins in fictional St. Petersburg, Missouri, on the shores of the [Mississippi River](#), sometime between 1835 (when the first steamboat sailed down the Mississippi^[11]) and 1845. Two young boys, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, have each come into a considerable sum of money as a result of their earlier adventures (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*). Huck has been placed under the [guardianship](#) of the Widow Douglas, who, together with her sister, Miss Watson, are attempting to civilize him. Huck appreciates their efforts, but finds civilized life confining. In the beginning of the story, Tom Sawyer appears briefly, helping Huck escape at night from the house, past Miss Watson's slave, [Jim](#). They meet up with Tom Sawyer's self-proclaimed gang, who plot to carry out adventurous crimes. Life is changed by the sudden appearance of Huck's shiftless father "Pap", an abusive parent and drunkard. Although Huck is successful in preventing his Pap from acquiring his fortune, Pap forcibly gains custody of Huck and the two move to the backwoods where Huck is kept locked inside his father's cabin. Equally dissatisfied with life with his father, Huck escapes from the cabin, elaborately fakes his own death, and sets off down the Mississippi River, where he meets Jim.

While living quite comfortably in the wilderness along the Mississippi, Huck happily encounters Miss Watson's slave Jim on an island called Jackson's Island, and Huck learns that he has also run away, after he overheard Miss Watson acknowledging that she intended to sell Jim downriver, where conditions for slaves were even harsher, because he would bring a price of \$800.

Jim is trying to make his way to [Cairo](#), Illinois and then to Ohio, a free state, so he can buy his family's freedom. At first, Huck is conflicted over whether to tell someone about Jim's running away, but as they travel together and talk in depth, Huck begins to know more about Jim's past and his difficult life. As these talks continue, Huck begins to change his opinion about people, slavery, and life in general. This continues throughout the rest of the novel.

Huck and Jim take up in a cavern on a hill on Jackson's Island to wait out a storm. When they can, they scrounge around the river looking for food, wood, and other items. One night, they find a raft they will eventually use to travel down the Mississippi. Later, they find an entire house floating down the river and enter it to grab what they can. Entering one room, Jim finds a man lying dead on the floor, shot in the back while apparently trying to ransack the house. It is revealed later in the book to be the brother of Injun Joe. Jim refuses to let Huck see the man's face.

To find out the latest news in the area, Huck dresses as a girl and goes into town. He enters the house of a woman new to the area, thinking she won't recognize him. As they talk, she tells Huck there is a \$300 reward for Jim, who is accused of killing Huck. She first becomes suspicious when he threads a needle incorrectly. Her suspicions are confirmed after she puts Huck through a series of tests. She cleverly tricks him into revealing he is a boy, but allows him to run off. He returns to the island and tells Jim of the manhunt, and the two load up the raft and leave the island.

Huck and Jim's raft is swamped by a passing steamship, separating the two. Huck is given shelter by the Grangerfords, a prosperous local family. He becomes friends with Buck Grangerford, a boy about his age, and learns that the Grangerfords are engaged in a 30-year blood feud against another family, the Shepherdsons. The Grangerfords and Shepherdsons go to church. Both families bring guns to continue the feud, despite the church's preachings on brotherly love.

The vendetta comes to a head when Buck's sister, Sophia Grangerford, elopes with Harney Shepherdson. In the resulting conflict, all the Grangerford males from this branch of the family are shot and killed, although Grangerfords elsewhere survive to carry on the feud. Upon seeing Buck's corpse, Huck is too devastated to write about everything that happened. However, Huck does describe how he narrowly avoids his own death in the gunfight, later reuniting with Jim and the raft and together fleeing farther south on the Mississippi River.

Further down the river, Jim and Huck rescue two cunning [grifters](#), who join Huck and Jim on the raft. The younger of the two swindlers, a man of about thirty, introduces himself as a son of an English [duke](#) (the [Duke of Bridgewater](#)) and his father's rightful successor. The older one, about seventy, then trumps the Duke's claim by alleging that he is actually the [Lost Dauphin](#), the son of [Louis XVI](#) and rightful King of France. He continually [mispronounces the duke's title as "Bilgewater"](#) in conversation.

The Duke and the King then join Jim and Huck on the raft, committing a series of [confidence](#) schemes on the way south. To allow for Jim's presence, they print fake bills for an escaped slave; and later they paint him up entirely in blue and call him the "Sick Arab". On one occasion they arrive in a town and advertise a three-night engagement of a play which they call "The Royal Nonesuch". The play turns out to be only a couple of minutes of hysterical cavorting, not worth anywhere near the 50 cents the townsmen were charged to see it.

On the afternoon of the first performance, a drunk called Boggs arrives in town and makes a nuisance of himself by going around threatening a southern gentleman by the name of Colonel Sherburn. Sherburn comes out and warns Boggs that he can continue threatening him up until exactly one o'clock. At one o'clock, Boggs continues and Colonel Sherburn kills him. Somebody in the crowd, whom Sherburn later identifies as Buck Harkness, cries out that Sherburn should be [lynched](#). They all head up to Colonel Sherburn's gate, where they are met by Sherburn, who is standing on his porch carrying a loaded rifle. He causes them to back down, by making a defiant speech telling them about the essential cowardice of "Southern justice". The only lynching to be done here, says Sherburn, will be in the dark, by men wearing masks.

By the third night of "The Royal Nonesuch", the townspeople are ready to take their revenge; but the Duke and the King have already skipped town, and together with Huck and Jim, they continue down the river. Once they are far enough away, the two grifters test the next town, and decide to impersonate two brothers of Peter Wilks, a recently deceased man of property. Using an absurd English accent, the King manages to convince nearly all the townspeople that he is one of the brothers, a preacher just arrived from England, while the Duke pretends to be a deaf-mute to match accounts of the other brother. One man in town is certain that they are a fraud and confronts them on the matter, but the crowd refuse to support him. Afterwards, the Duke, out of fear, suggests to the King that they should cut and run. The King boldly states his intention to continue to liquidate Wilks' estate, saying, "Hain't we got all the fools in town on our side? And ain't that a big enough majority in any town?"

Huck likes Wilks' daughters, who treat him with kindness and courtesy, so he tries to thwart the grifters' plans by stealing back the inheritance money. However, when he is in danger of being discovered, he has to hide it in Wilks' coffin, which is buried the next morning without Huck knowing whether the money has been found or not. The arrival of two new men who seem to be the real brothers throws everything into confusion when none of their signatures match the one on record. (The deaf-mute brother, who is said to do the correspondence, has his arm in a sling and

cannot currently write.) The townspeople devise a test, which requires digging up the coffin to check. When the money is found in Wilks' coffin, the Duke and the King are able to escape in the confusion. They manage to rejoin Huck and Jim on the raft to Huck's utter despair, since he had thought he had escaped them.

After the four fugitives have drifted far enough from the town, the King takes advantage of Huck's temporary absence to sell his interest in the "escaped" slave Jim for forty dollars. Outraged by this betrayal, Huck rejects the advice of his "conscience", which continues to tell him that in helping Jim escape to freedom, he is stealing Miss Watson's property. Accepting that "All right, then, I'll go to hell!", Huck resolves to free Jim.

Jim is being held at the plantation of Silas and Sally Phelps, Tom's aunt and uncle. Since Tom is expected for a visit, Huck is mistaken for Tom. He plays along, hoping to find Jim's location and free him. When Huck intercepts Tom on the road and tells him everything, Tom decides to join Huck's scheme, pretending to be his younger half-brother Sid. Jim has also told the household about the two grifters and the new plan for "The Royal Nonesuch", so this time the townspeople are ready for them. The Duke and King are captured by the townspeople, and are [tarred and feathered](#) and [ridden out of town on a rail](#).

Rather than simply sneaking Jim out of the shed where he is being held, Tom develops an elaborate plan to free him, involving secret messages, hidden tunnels, a rope ladder sent in Jim's food, and other elements from popular novels,^[12] including a note to the Phelps warning them of a gang planning to steal their runaway slave. During the resulting pursuit, Tom is shot in the leg. Jim remains with him rather than completing his escape, risking recapture. Huck has long known Jim was "white on the inside". Although the doctor admires Jim's decency, he betrays him to a passing skiff, and Jim is captured while sleeping and returned to the Phelps.

After Jim's recapture, events quickly resolve themselves. Tom's Aunt Polly arrives and reveals Huck's and Tom's true identities. Tom announces that Jim is a free man: Miss Watson died two months earlier and freed Jim in her will, but Tom chose not to reveal Jim's freedom so he could come up with an elaborate plan to rescue Jim. Jim tells Huck that Huck's father has been dead for some time (he was the dead man they found in the floating house) and that Huck may return safely to St. Petersburg. In the final narrative, Huck declares that he is quite glad to be done writing his story, and despite Sally's plans to adopt and "sivilize" him, Huck intends to flee west to [Indian Territory](#).

Aeneid (The)—by Vergil.

The *Aeneid* can be divided into two halves based on the disparate subject matter of Books 1–6 (Aeneas' journey to Latium in Italy) and Books 7–12 (the war in Latium). These two halves are commonly regarded as reflecting Virgil's ambition to rival [Homer](#) by treating both the *Odyssey's* wandering theme and the *Iliad's* warfare themes.^[11] This is, however, a rough correspondence, the limitations of which should be borne in mind.^[2]

Virgil begins his poem with a statement of his theme (*Arma virumque cano...*, "I sing of arms and of a man...") and an invocation to the [Muse](#), falling some seven lines after the poem's inception: (*Musa, mihi causas memora...*, "O Muse, recount to me the causes..."). He then explains the reason for the principal conflict in the story: the resentment held by the goddess [Juno](#) against the [Trojan](#) people. This is consistent with her role throughout the [Homeric epics](#).

Boxing scene from the *Aeneid* (book 5), mosaic floor from a Gallo-Roman villa in [Villedaure](#) (France), ca. 175 AD, [Getty Villa](#) (71.AH.106)

Also in the manner of Homer, the story proper begins [in medias res](#), with the Trojan fleet in the eastern [Mediterranean](#), heading in the direction of [Italy](#). The fleet, led by Aeneas, is on a voyage to find a second home. It has been foretold that in Italy, he will give rise to a race both noble and courageous, a race which will become known to all nations. Juno is wrathful, because she had not been chosen in the [judgment of Paris](#), and because her favorite city, [Carthage](#), will be destroyed by Aeneas' descendants. Also, Ganymede, a Trojan prince, was chosen to be her husband Jupiter's cup bearer—replacing Juno's daughter Hebe. Juno proceeds to [Aeolus](#), King of the Winds, and asks that he release the winds to stir up a storm in exchange for a bribe ([Deiopea](#), the loveliest of all her sea nymphs, as a wife). Despite refusing her bribe, he agrees, and the storm devastates the fleet.

[Neptune](#) takes notice: although he himself is no friend of the Trojans, he is infuriated by Juno's intrusion into his domain, and stills the winds and calms the waters. The fleet takes shelter on the coast of Africa. There, Aeneas's mother, Venus, in the form of a hunting woman very similar to the goddess [Diana](#), encourages him and tells him the history of the city. Eventually, Aeneas ventures in, and in the temple of Juno, seeks and gains the favor of [Dido](#), Queen of Carthage, the city which has only recently been founded by refugees from [Tyre](#) and which will later become one of Rome's greatest imperial rivals and enemies.

At a banquet given in the honour of the Trojans, Aeneas recounts sadly the events which occasioned the Trojans' fortuitous arrival. He begins the tale shortly after the events described in the [Iliad](#). Crafty [Ulysses](#) devised a way for Greek warriors to gain entry into Troy by hiding in a large [wooden horse](#). The Greeks pretended to sail away, leaving a man, [Sinon](#), to tell the Trojans that the horse was an offering and that if it were taken into the city, the Trojans would be able to conquer Greece. The Trojan priest [Laocoön](#), who had seen through the Greek plot and urged the horse's destruction, hurled his spear at the wooden horse. Just after, in what would be seen by the Trojans as punishment from the gods, Laocoön was suddenly grabbed and eaten, along with his two sons, by two giant sea snakes. So the [Trojans](#) brought the horse inside the fortified walls, and after nightfall the armed [Greeks](#) emerged and began to slaughter the city's inhabitants.

Aeneas woke up and saw with horror what was happening to his beloved city. At first he tried to fight against the enemy, but soon he lost his comrades and was left alone to fend off tens of Greeks. [Hector](#), the fallen Trojan prince, told him in a dream to flee with his family. Aeneas tells of his escape with his son [Ascanius](#) and father [Anchises](#) after various omens, his wife [Creusa](#) having been separated from the others and subsequently killed in the general catastrophe. After getting outside Troy, he goes back for his wife. Creusa having been killed, her ghost appears before him and tells him his destiny.

He tells of how, rallying the other survivors, he built a fleet of ships and made landfall at various locations in the Mediterranean: [Thrace](#), where they find the last remains of a fellow Trojan, [Polydorus](#); The [Strophades](#), where they encounter the Harpy [Celaeno](#); [Crete](#), which they believe to be the land where they are to build their city (but they are set straight by [Apollo](#)); and [Buthrotum](#). This last city had been built in an attempt to replicate Troy. In Buthrotum, Aeneas met [Andromache](#), the widow of [Hector](#). She still laments for the loss of her valiant husband and beloved child. There, too, Aeneas saw and met Helenus, one of [Priam](#)'s sons, who had the gift of prophecy. Through him, Aeneas learned the destiny laid out for him: he was divinely advised to seek out the land of Italy (also known as *Ausonia* or *Hesperia*), where his descendants would not only prosper, but in time rule the entire known world. In addition, Helenus also bade him go to the [Sibyl](#) in [Cumae](#).

Heading out into the open sea, Aeneas left Buthrotum, rounding Italy's cape and making his way towards [Sicily](#) (Trinacria). There, they are caught in the whirlpool of [Charybdis](#) and driven out to sea. Soon they come ashore at the land of the [Cyclops](#). There they meet a Greek, [Achaemenides](#), one of Odysseus' men, who had been left behind when his comrades escaped the cave of

[Polyphemus](#). They take Achaemenides onboard and narrowly escape Polyphemus. Shortly after these events, Anchises dies peacefully of old age.

Meanwhile, [Venus](#) has her own plans. She goes to her son, Aeneas' half-brother [Cupid](#), and tells him to imitate [Ascanius](#). Disguised as such, he goes to Dido, and offers the gifts expected from a guest. With her motherly love revived in the sight of the boy, her heart is pierced and she falls in love with the boy and his father. During the banquet, Dido realizes that she has fallen madly in love with Aeneas, although she had previously sworn fidelity to the soul of her late husband, [Sychaeus](#), who had been murdered by her cupidinous brother [Pygmalion](#).

Juno seizes upon this opportunity to make a deal with Venus, Aeneas' mother, with the intention of distracting him from his destiny of founding a city in Italy. Aeneas is inclined to return Dido's love, and during a hunting expedition, a storm drives them into a cave in which Aeneas and Dido presumably have sex, an event that Dido takes to indicate a marriage between them. But when [Jupiter](#) sends [Mercury](#) to remind Aeneas of his duty, he has no choice but to part. Her heart broken, Dido commits suicide by stabbing herself upon a [pyre](#) with Aeneas' sword. Before dying, she predicts eternal strife between Aeneas's people and hers; "rise up from my bones, avenging spirit" (4.625, trans. Fitzgerald) is an obvious invocation to [Hannibal](#). Looking back from the deck of his ship, Aeneas sees Dido's funeral pyre's smoke and knows its meaning only too clearly. However, destiny calls and the Trojan fleet sails on to Italy.

Roman bas-relief, 2nd century: Aeneas lands in [Latium](#), leading [Ascanius](#); the sow identifies the place to found his city (Book 8)

The Trojans returned to the island of Sicily, where Aeneas's father [Anchises](#) had been hastily interred during the fleet's previous landfall there, to hold funeral games in his honour. Afterwards, Aeneas, with the guidance of the [Cumaean Sibyl](#), descends into the [underworld](#) through an opening at [Cumae](#); there he speaks with the spirit of his father and has a prophetic vision of the destiny of Rome.

Upon returning to the land of the living, Aeneas leads the Trojans to settle in the land of [Latium](#), where he courts [Lavinia](#), the daughter of king [Latinus](#). Although Aeneas would have wished to avoid it, war eventually breaks out. Juno is heavily involved in causing this war—she convinces the Queen of Latium to demand that Lavinia be married to [Turnus](#), the king of a local people, the [Rutuli](#). Juno continues to stir up trouble, even summoning the [Fury Alecto](#) to ensure that a war takes place.

Seeing the masses of Italians that Turnus has brought against him, Aeneas seeks help from the Tuscans, enemies of Turnus. He meets King Evander from [Arcadia](#), whose son [Pallas](#) agrees to lead troops against the other Italians. Meanwhile, the Trojan camp is being attacked, and a midnight raid leads to the deaths of [Nisus and his companion Euryalus](#), in one of the most emotional passages in the book. The gates, however, are defended until Aeneas returns with his Tuscan and Arcadian reinforcements.

In the battling that follows, many heroes are killed, notably Pallas, who is killed by Turnus, and [Mezentius](#), Turnus' close associate who inadvertently allows his son to be killed while he himself flees; he reproaches himself and faces Aeneas in single combat—an honourable but essentially futile pursuit. Another notable hero, [Camilla](#), a sort of [Amazon](#) character, fights bravely but is eventually killed. Camilla had been a virgin devoted to [Diana](#) and to her nation; the man who killed her was struck dead by Diana's sentinel Opis after doing so, even though he tried to escape.

After this, single combat is proposed between Aeneas and Turnus, but Aeneas was so obviously superior that the Italians, urged on by Turnus's divine sister, [Juturna](#), break the truce. Aeneas is injured, but returns to the battle shortly afterwards. Turnus and Aeneas dominate the battle on

opposite wings, but when Aeneas makes a daring attack at the city of Latium (causing the queen of Latium to hang herself in despair), he forces Turnus into single combat once more. In a dramatic scene, Turnus's strength deserts him as he tries to hurl a rock, and he is struck by Aeneas's spear in the leg. As Turnus is begging on his knees for his life, the poem ends with Aeneas killing him in rage when he sees that Turnus is wearing the belt of his friend Pallas as a trophy.

Age of Innocence (The)—by Edith Wharton.

Newland Archer, gentleman lawyer and heir to one of New York City's best families, is happily anticipating a highly desirable marriage to the sheltered and beautiful May Welland. Yet he finds reason to doubt his choice of bride after the appearance of Countess Ellen Olenska, May's exotic, beautiful thirty-year-old cousin, who has been living in Europe. Ellen has returned to New York after scandalously separating herself (per rumor) from a bad marriage to a Polish count. At first, Ellen's arrival and its potential taint to his bride-to-be's family disturbs him, but he becomes intrigued by the worldly Ellen who flouts New York society's fastidious rules. As Newland's admiration for the countess grows, so does his doubt about marrying May, a perfect product of Old New York society; his match with May no longer seems the ideal fate he had imagined.

Ellen's decision to divorce Count Olenski is a social crisis for the other members of her family, who are terrified of scandal and disgrace. Living apart can be tolerated, but divorce is unacceptable. To save the Welland family's reputation, a law partner of Newland asks him to dissuade Countess Olenska from divorcing the count. He succeeds, but in the process comes to care for her; afraid of falling in love with Ellen, Newland begs May to accelerate their wedding date; May refuses.

Newland tells Ellen he loves her; Ellen corresponds, but is horrified that their love will aggrieve May. She agrees to remain in America, separated but still married, only if they do not sexually consummate their love. Newland receives May's telegram agreeing to wed sooner.

Newland and May marry. He tries forgetting Ellen but fails. His society marriage is loveless, and the social life he once found absorbing has become empty and joyless. Though Ellen lives in Washington and has remained distant, he is unable to cease loving her. Their paths cross while he and May are in [Newport, Rhode Island](#). Newland discovers that Count Olenski wishes Ellen to return to him, but she has refused, despite her family pushing her to reconcile with her husband and return to Europe. Frustrated by her independence, the family has cut off her money, as the count had already done.

Newland desperately seeks a way to leave May and be with Ellen, obsessed with how to finally possess her. Despairing of ever making Ellen his wife, he attempts to have her agree to be his mistress. Then Ellen is recalled to New York City to care for her sick grandmother, who accepts her decision to remain separated and agrees to reinstate her allowance.

Back in New York and under renewed pressure from Newland, Ellen relents and agrees to consummate their relationship. However, Newland then discovers that Ellen has decided to return to Europe. Newland makes up his mind to abandon May and follow Ellen to Europe when May announces that she and Newland are throwing a farewell party for Ellen. That night, after the party, Newland resolves to tell May he is leaving her for Ellen. She interrupts him to tell him that she learned that morning that she is pregnant; she reveals that she had told Ellen of her pregnancy two weeks earlier, despite not being sure of it at the time. The implication is that she did it because she suspected the affair. Newland guesses that this is Ellen's reason for returning to Europe. Hopelessly trapped, Newland decides not to follow Ellen, surrendering his love for the sake of his children, remaining in a loveless marriage to May.

Twenty-six years later, after May's death, Newland and his son are in Paris. The son, learning that his mother's cousin lives there, has arranged to visit Ellen in her Paris apartment. Newland is stunned at the prospect of seeing Ellen again. On arriving outside the apartment building, Newland sends up his son alone to meet Ellen, while he waits outside, watching the balcony of her apartment. Newland considers going up, but in the end decides not to; he walks back to his hotel without seeing her.

Agnes of God—by John Pielmeier.

Agnes of God is a [play](#) by [John Pielmeier](#) which tells the story of a [novice nun](#) who gives birth and insists that the dead child was the result of a [virgin](#) conception. A psychiatrist and the mother superior of the [convent](#) clash during the resulting investigation. The title is a pun on the Latin phrase [Agnus Dei](#) (Lamb of God).

The play was adapted for [a movie](#) in 1985, starring [Jane Fonda](#), [Anne Bancroft](#) and [Meg Tilly](#).

The stage play contains a great deal more dialogue than the film and relies solely on the three main characters: Martha, the [Psychiatrist](#); the [Mother Superior](#); and Agnes, the Novice. There are no other characters on stage.

All three roles are considered demanding for the actors playing them.^[1] Martha covers the full gamut of emotion during the play, from nurturer to antagonist, from hard nosed court psychiatrist and atheist to faith-searching healer. She is always on stage and has only three small respites from monologues or dialogue while Agnes and the Mother Superior enact flashbacks to events at the convent.

The Mother Superior must expound the possibilities of miracles while recognizing the realities of today's world, of which she is painfully aware. Agnes is a beautiful but tormented soul whose abusive upbringing has affected her ability to think rationally.

The play has enjoyed a revival among Catholic women's groups, who believe it examines important moral and spiritual issues that Catholic women must face.^[citation needed] The issues raised by the real-life incident are just as compelling, though less dramatic.

Alias Grace—by Margaret Atwood.

Alias Grace is a [historical fiction](#) novel by [Canadian](#) writer [Margaret Atwood](#). First published in 1996 by [McClelland & Stewart](#), it won the Canadian [Giller Prize](#) and was shortlisted for the [Booker Prize](#).

The story is about the notorious 1843 murders of Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery in [Upper Canada](#). Two servants of the Kinnear household, [Grace Marks](#) and James McDermott, were convicted of the crime. McDermott was hanged and Marks was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Although the novel is based on factual events, Atwood constructs a [narrative](#) with a fictional [doctor](#), Simon Jordan, who researches the case. Although ostensibly conducting research into criminal behaviour, he slowly becomes personally involved in the story of Grace Marks and seeks to reconcile the mild mannered woman he sees with the murder of which she has been convicted.

Atwood also wrote an earlier work, the [1974 CBC Television](#) film *The Servant Girl*, about Marks. However, in *Alias Grace* Atwood says that she has changed her opinion on the question of Marks' culpability.^[citation needed]

The novel is written from various points of view, told mostly through the eyes of Grace Marks and her "alienist" doctor, Doctor Jordan (employing first and third person respectively). The shifting point of view makes the text appear disjointed and adds to the effect of uncertainty in the narrative. When written from Grace's point of view, the reader is never sure if Grace is speaking or thinking as Atwood refuses to use punctuation to indicate either.

The use of "could" is prevalent in Grace's point of view narrative, allowing us to wonder if she is making the story up, or if she is telling the truth.

All My Sons—by Arthur Miller.

Miller wrote All My Sons after his first play *The Man Who Had All the Luck* failed on [Broadway](#), lasting only four performances. Miller wrote All My Sons as a final attempt at writing a commercially successful play; he vowed to "find some other line of work"^[1] if the play did not find an audience.

All My Sons is based upon a true story, which Arthur Miller's then mother-in-law pointed out in an Ohio newspaper. The story described how a woman [informed](#) on her father who had sold faulty parts to the U.S. military during [World War II](#).

[Henrik Ibsen](#)'s influence on Miller is evidenced from the Ibsen play *The Wild Duck*, where Miller took the idea of two partners in a business where one is forced to take moral and legal responsibility for the other. This is mirrored in All My Sons. He also borrowed the idea of a character's idealism being the source of a problem.^[3]

The criticism of the [American Dream](#), which lies at the heart of All My Sons, was one reason why Arthur Miller was called to appear before the [House Un-American Activities Committee](#) during the 1950s, when America was gripped by anti-communist hysteria. Miller sent a copy of the play to [Elia Kazan](#) who directed the original stage version of All My Sons. Kazan was a former member of the Communist Party who shared Miller's left-wing views. However, their relationship was destroyed when Kazan gave names of suspected Communists to the House Un-American Activities Committee during the [Red Scare](#).

All the King's Men—by Robert Penn Warren.

All the King's Men portrays the dramatic political ascent and governorship of Willie Stark, a driven, cynical [populist](#) in the [American South](#) during the 1930s. The novel is narrated by Jack Burden, a political reporter who comes to work as Governor Stark's right-hand man. The trajectory of Stark's career is interwoven with Jack Burden's life story and philosophical reflections: "the story of Willie Stark and the story of Jack Burden are, in one sense, one story."^[3]

The novel evolved from a [verse play](#) that Warren began writing in 1936 entitled *Proud Flesh*. One of the characters in *Proud Flesh* was named Willie Talos, in reference to the brutal character Talus in [Edmund Spenser](#)'s late 16th century work *The Faerie Queene*.^[4]

The version of *All the King's Men* edited by Noel Polk ([ISBN 0-15-100610-5](#)) uses the name "Willie Talos" for the Boss as originally written in Warren's manuscript, and is known as the "restored version" for using this name as well as printing several passages removed from the original edit.

Warren claimed that *All the King's Men* was "never intended to be a book about politics."^[5]

All the King's Men is narrated by Jack Burden, a young political muckraker for Willie Stark, governor of an unnamed Southern state in the 1930s. At its base, the novel is about Willie's rise to prominence and metamorphosis from a humble country lawyer to a fiery demagogue who uses corrupt means in order to do good for the poor masses of his state. It is also the complex story of Willie's downfall and the inextricable personal tale of Jack as the latter comes to realize his responsibility for the world around him.

The basic events of the novel are related with several flashback episodes, and all but the end of the last chapter is in the past tense, with the narrative being delivered from the perspective of Jack a few years after these events.

Willie, his wife Lucy Stark, his son Tom Stark, his bodyguard Sugar-Boy O'Sheehan, his secretary and mistress Sadie Burke, his Lieutenant-Governor Tiny Duffy, and Jack travel to Willie's hometown of Mason City with a press junket in summer 1936, during Willie's second term as governor. That evening, Willie and Jack drive to Burden's Landing, Jack's hometown, where they visit Judge Montague Irwin, a childhood father-figure of Jack's. Irwin has defied Willie politically, and Willie threatens to blackmail him. Jack receives the assignment to dig up dirt on the Judge.

In 1922, Jack, working as a journalist, is sent to cover Willie Stark, the Mason County Treasurer, who is being libeled out of office for defying local corruption. Stark loses his reelection race, but he is vindicated when a schoolhouse built by a corrupt contractor falls down, killing several children. Willie becomes a local hero in the countryside. Sadie Burke and Tiny Duffy, agents of a gubernatorial candidate trying to split the country vote, trick Willie into running for governor, and Jack is sent to cover Willie's campaign. Willie finds out about the ruse and reacts with defiance. He drops out of that race but begins to make fiery speeches, rallying the people of the countryside. In 1930, he runs for governor as a populist and wins. Meanwhile, Jack leaves his job and falls into a period of idleness he calls a "Great Sleep." He is awoken by Governor Stark, who hires him.

One chapter takes place sometime in 1933, during Willie's first term as governor. A corrupt member of Willie's cabinet is caught in a scandal, and Willie decides to protect him. The state legislature, enflamed by Willie's underhandedness and opposed to his wealth-sharing programs, begins impeachment proceedings, which Willie destroys by having Jack dig up dirt on individual lawmakers. During this period, Willie and his wife separate, Willie begins an extramarital affair with Sadie, and Jack grows closer to the governor and farther from his family and his concerned friends, Adam and Anne Stanton.

This chapter is primarily composed of a story within a story, the tale of Jack's Civil War-era ancestor Cass Mastern. The story is framed by Jack's experiences in graduate school, when he set out to write his thesis based on Cass's diary. Jack is unable to understand the motivations of his ancestor, and he abandons the project, consequently falling into his first Great Sleep.

Another chapter resumes where the story left off at the end of Chapter One--with Willie's instruction to Jack to dig up dirt on Judge Irwin. Jack, using his considerable skill as an historical researcher, discovers that Judge Irwin had taken a bribe when he was the state Attorney General. This corruption resulted in a man's suicide. In addition, former governor Joel Stanton, father to Anne and Adam, had protected the Judge.

Willie moves forward with his plan to build a massive free hospital in the state, and he has Jack convince his childhood friend Adam Stanton to run it. Adam initially refuses on ethical grounds, but he relents when Jack shows him and his sister the evidence that their father committed an impropriety. Tiny Duffy tries to get Willie to give businessman Gummy Larson the contract to build the hospital (so that he can receive a kickback), but Willie balks. At last, Jack is told by an enraged Sadie that Willie and Anne were having an affair.

Jack is emotionally crippled by the revelation of the affair. He flees to the West Coast, where he divulges the story of his own love life, which began with his serious relationship with Anne back when he was in college, roughly 1920. The relationship ends as Anne realizes that the cynical and aimless Jack is still immature and unable to take responsibility in the real world. Afterwards, Jack drops out of graduate school and takes a job at a newspaper. Jack has one failed marriage that results in another Great Sleep. Back in the present, Jack theorizes that all humans are controlled by random impulses and that nobody has any responsibility for anything.

Cynical and numb, Jack returns to the capital, where a series of events threatens Willie's administration. First, Adam is bribed by an agent of Gummy Larson and then nearly quits. Second, Tom is accused of being the father of a child out of wedlock, and the issue is being used by his rival Sam MacMurfee. Willie has Jack use the dirt on Judge Irwin to force him to convince MacMurfee to back off. Jack visits the Judge, who refuses to be blackmailed. Shortly afterwards, the Judge kills himself, and Jack's mother reveals that Judge Irwin was his real father.

Because of the issue with his son, Willie begrudgingly gives the hospital contract to Gummy Larson. Shortly afterwards, Tom is rendered comatose by a football injury. After surgery is unable to relieve his son's condition, Willie has a change of heart and revokes the contract. Tiny Duffy, angered by this change, anonymously lets Adam know about the relationship between Willie and his sister. Adam assassinates Willie in the state capitol and is killed at the scene by Willie's security force.

Sadie tells Jack that she was the one who let Tiny Duffy know about Willie's and Anne's affair. Jack threatens Tiny Duffy, who has become governor, to go public with what he knows, but instead he decides to drop the matter. Tom has died, and Lucy has adopted the out-of-wedlock baby, whom she has named Willie. Jack's mother has divorced because of the death of her true love, Judge Irwin.

The end of the chapter is told in the present tense, from the year 1939. Jack is now married to Anne, has quit politics, and finally is completing his book about Cass Mastern

All the Pretty Horses—by Cormac McCarthy.

The novel tells of John Grady Cole, a sixteen year old [cowboy](#) who grew up on his grandfather's ranch in [San Angelo, Texas](#). The story begins in 1949, soon after the death of John Grady's grandfather, when Grady learns that the ranch is to be sold. Faced with the prospect of moving into town, Grady instead chooses to leave, persuading his best friend, Lacey Rawlins, to accompany him. Traveling by horseback, the pair travel Southward into [Mexico](#), where they hope to find work as cowboys.

Shortly before they cross the Mexican border, they encounter a young man, who says he is named Jimmy Blevins and seems to be aged about thirteen, but claims to be older. Blevins' origins and the authenticity of his name are never quite clarified. Blevins rides a huge [bay horse](#) that is far too fine a specimen to be the property of a runaway boy, but Blevins insists it is his. As they travel south, Blevins' horse and pistol are found and taken by a Mexican after his horse runs off while Blevins had been hiding during a thunderstorm.

Blevins persuades John Grady and Rawlins to go to the nearest town to find the horse and pistol. They find the horse, and Blevins takes it back. As the three are riding away from the town, they are pursued, and Blevins separates from Rawlins and John Grady. The pursuers follow Blevins, and Rawlins and Grady escape.

Rawlins and John Grady travel farther south. In the fertile oasis region of [Coahuila](#) state known as the Bolsón de [Cuatro Ciénegas](#), they find employment at a large ranch. There John Grady first

encounters the ranch owner's beautiful daughter, Alejandra. As Rawlins pursues work with the ranch hands, John Grady catches the eye of the owner, who brings him into the ranch house and promotes him to a more responsible position. At this time John Grady begins an affair with Alejandra.

In the meantime, Blevins works for a short time and then returns to the village where he retrieved his horse, this time to also retrieve the [Colt](#) pistol. In the process of getting the pistol, he shoots and kills a man. The Mexican authorities catch Blevins and then find Rawlins and John Grady at the other ranch. At first, the ranch owner protects Rawlins and John Grady; but when he finds out about the affair with his daughter, he turns them over to the authorities.

Blevins is executed by a group of rogue police led by a captain and then Rawlins and John Grady are placed in a Mexican prison. The prison mafia first test the two boys: Grady is wounded while defending himself from a cuchillero, whom he manages to kill. Alejandra's aunt is contacted by the prison thugs who manage to negotiate with her his ransom. The condition set by the aunt is that her niece Alejandra undertake never to see John Grady again. The boys are released. Rawlins goes back to the United States and John Grady tries to see Alejandra again. In the end, after a brief encounter, Alejandra decides that she must keep her promise to her family and refuses John Grady's marriage proposal. John Grady, on his way back to the Texas, kidnaps the captain at gunpoint, forces him to recover the stolen horses and guns, and flees across country. He considers killing the captain, but a group of Mexicans find John Grady and the captain and take the captain as a prisoner. John Grady eventually returns to Texas and attempts to find the owner of Blevins' horse.

America is in the Heart—by Carlos Bulosan.

Born in 1913,^[5] Bulosan recounts his boyhood in the [Philippines](#).^{[1][6]} The early chapters describe his life as a Filipino farmer "plowing with a [carabao](#)".^[5] Bulosan was the fourth oldest son of the family. As a young [Filipino](#), he once lived in the farm tended by his father, while his mother was separately living in a barrio in [Binalonan](#), [Pangasinan](#), together with Bulosan's brother and sister. Their hardship included [pawning](#) their land and had to sell items in order to finish Bulosan's schooling. Their hope at the time was his brother Macario.^[6] He had another brother named Leon, a soldier who came back after fighting in [Europe](#).^[6]

Bulosan's narration about his life in the Philippines was followed by his journey to the [United States](#).^[1] He recounted how he immigrated to America in 1930.^[2] He retells the struggles, prejudice, and injustice he and other Filipinos had endured in the United States, first while in the Northwestern fisheries then later in California.^[5] These included his experiences as a migrant and laborer in the rural [West](#).

American (The)—by Henry James.

On a lovely day in May, 1868, Christopher Newman, a wealthy American businessman, sits down in the Louvre with an aesthetic headache, having seen too many paintings. A young Parisian copyist, Noémie Nioche, catches his eye, and he agrees to buy the painting she is working on for the extravagant price of 2,000 francs. Shortly thereafter, Newman recognizes Tom Tristram, an old friend from the Civil War, wandering the gallery. Newman explains that he has made quite a fortune and now, having realized the inanity of seeking competitive revenge on his fellow businessmen, has decided to move to Europe to enjoy his wealth. Over dinner, Newman admits to the Tristrams that he has come to Europe to find a wife to complete his fortune. Mrs. Tristram suggests Claire de Cintré, the beautiful and widowed daughter of an impossibly aristocratic family, the Bellegardes. Several days later, Newman stops by the Tristram house only to find the visiting Claire, who politely invites him to call on her. When Newman stops by the Bellegarde home, a pleasant young man promises to go get Claire, but is checked by an imposing older figure who claims she is not at home.

Shortly thereafter, M. Nioche, Noémie's father, appears at Newman's hotel with his daughter's heavily varnished and framed picture. When the timid, bankrupt Nioche admits his fear that his beautiful daughter will come to a bad end, Newman offers to let her earn a modest dowry by painting. When he meets Noémie in the Louvre to commission the paintings, however, she tells him bluntly that she cannot paint and will only marry if she can do so very well. Mrs. Tristram encourages Newman to spend the summer traveling, promising that Claire will wait for his return. Newman spends a wonderful summer exploring ruins, monuments, cathedrals, and the countryside with his usual enthusiasm. On his return to Paris in the fall, Newman calls on Claire and finds her at home with her brother Valentin, the pleasant young man he met on the first visit. Newman is deeply drawn to Claire's presence, her peace, and her intense yet mild eyes. About a week later, Valentin calls on Newman at home. The two talk late into the night and soon become fast friends. Valentin explains to Newman that Claire was married at eighteen, against her will, to the disagreeable old Count de Cintré. Valentin tried to stop the wedding, but his mother, the Marquise and his brother, Urbain—the imposing older figure who barred Newman's first visit—coveted the Count's pedigree and fortune. When the Count died and his questionable business practices were exposed, Claire was so horrified that she withdrew her claim to his money. The Marquise and Urbain allowed this withdrawal on the condition that Claire obey them completely for ten years on every issue but marriage.

Newman tells Valentin that he would like to marry Claire. Valentin promises to help Newman's cause, out of both friendship and a spirit of mischief. The following day, Newman calls on Claire and finds her alone. He frankly details his love, his assets, and his desire to marry her. Fascinated but hesitant, Claire tells him she has decided not to marry, but agrees to get to know him if he promises not to speak of marriage for six months. Delighted by Newman's success, Valentin arranges an audience with the heads of the family—the forbidding Marquise and Urbain—later that week. On the appointed evening, after some painful small talk, Newman horrifies the assembled company with a long and candid speech about his poor adolescence and the makings of his fortune. When the others have left for a ball, Newman bluntly tells the Marquise that he would like to marry her daughter. After inquiring with equal frankness about his wealth, the Marquise grudgingly agrees to consider his proposal. Several days later, M. Nioche unexpectedly appears at Newman's hotel room, clearly worried about Noémie's antics. Newman decides to visit Noémie at the Louvre to discern the trouble. He encounters Valentin en route and brings him along. Valentin, completely charmed by Noémie and her ruthless, sublime ambition, resolves to pursue her. Shortly thereafter, Newman receives an invitation to dinner at the Bellegarde house. After dinner, Urbain confirms that the family has decided to accept Newman as a candidate for Claire's hand.

Over the next six weeks Newman comes often to the Bellegarde house, more than content to haunt Claire's rooms and attend her parties. One afternoon as he awaits Claire, Newman is approached by Mrs. Bread, the Bellegardes' old English maid, who secretly encourages him in his courtship. Meanwhile, the Bellegardes' long-lost cousin Lord Deepmere arrives in Paris. Upon the expiration of the six-month period of silence about marriage, Newman proposes to Claire again, and she accepts. The next day, Mrs. Bread warns Newman to lose no time in getting married. The Marquise is evidently displeased by the engagement, but agrees to throw an engagement ball. The following few days are the happiest in Newman's life, as he sees Claire every day, exchanging longing glances and tender words. Meanwhile, the Marquise and Urbain are away, taking Deepmere on a tour of Paris. On the night of the Bellegarde ball, Newman suffers endless introductions gladly and feels elated. He surprises first the Marquis and then Claire in heated discussions with Lord Deepmere, but thinks little of it. Afterwards, he and Claire exchange declarations of happiness. Shortly thereafter, Newman attends a performance of the opera *Don Giovanni*, and sees that several of his acquaintances are also there. During the second act, Valentin and Stanislas Kapp, who have both been sitting in Noémie's box, exchange insults and agree to a duel as a point of honor. Noémie is thrilled, knowing that being dueled over will do wonders for her social standing. Against Newman's protests, Valentin leaves for the duel, which is held just over the Swiss border.

The next morning, Newman arrives at the Bellegardes' to find Claire's carriage packed. In great distress, Claire confesses that she can no longer marry him. The Marquise and Urbain admit that they have interfered, unable to accept the idea that a commercial person should marry into their family. Newman visits Mrs. Tristram, who guesses that the Bellegardes want Claire to marry the rich Lord Deepmere instead, though the honest Deepmere ruined things by telling Claire everything at the ball. Returning home to a note that Valentin has been mortally wounded in the duel, Newman packs his bags and heads for the Swiss border. Newman arrives in Geneva to find Valentin near death. When Newman reluctantly recounts the broken engagement with Claire, Valentin formally apologizes for his family and tells Newman to ask Mrs. Bread about a skeleton in the Bellegarde family closet that Newman can use to get revenge. Newman attends Valentin's funeral, but cannot bear to watch the actual burial and leaves. Three days later, he calls on Claire at the family château in Fleurières, hoping to extract a rational justification for her rejection. But she hides behind dark hints of a curse on the family, ruining her own vain attempts at happiness and declaring her intention to become a Carmelite nun. Newman threatens the Bellegardes with his superficial knowledge of their secret, but they refuse to budge. That night, Newman secretly meets Mrs. Bread, who tells him the full secret—the Marquise and Urbain killed the Marquis, Claire's father, at the family's country home because he opposed Claire's first marriage to the Comte de Cintré. Mrs. Bread gives Newman a secret testament to these circumstances that the Marquis wrote just before he died.

The next week in Paris, Mrs. Bread comes to work for Newman as his housekeeper. Newman goes to mass at the Carmelite convent, but, horrified by the nuns' joyless chanting, he leaves. After the service, he confronts the Marquise and Urbain with the details of their crime and a copy of the Marquis' letter. The Bellegardes are clearly stunned, but regain their composure and leave. The next morning, Urbain visits Newman to ask his price for destroying the note. Newman wants Claire, but Urbain refuses to give her. The two part in stalemate. Newman decides to ruin the Bellegardes by telling all their friends about the murder. But when Newman calls on a rich Duchess, the first person he intends to tell, he is overwhelmed by the folly of his errand. Instead, he leaves for London to think. One day in Hyde Park, Newman sees Noémie on Lord Deepmere's arm, attended by her miserable father. After several months in London, Newman returns to the States. He makes it to San Francisco before the weight of his unfinished business in France becomes unbearable. Returning to Paris, Newman walks to Claire's convent and finds only a high, blank wall. Realizing that Claire is completely lost to him, Newman destroys the Marquis' incriminatory note in Mrs. Tristram's fireplace and packs his bags for America.

American Pastoral—by Philip Roth.

Seymour Levov is born and raised in the [Weequahic](#) section of Newark as the son of a successful [Jewish-American](#) glove manufacturer. Called "the Swede" because of his anomalous blond hair, blue eyes and Nordic good looks, he is a star athlete in three sports and narrator Nathan Zuckerman's idol and hero. The Swede eventually takes over his father's glove factory, Newark Maid, and marries Dawn Dwyer, an Irish-American [Miss New Jersey](#) 1949 winner (the actual winner that year was [Betty Jane Crowley](#)).

Levov establishes what he believes to be a perfect American life with a beloved family, a satisfying business life, and a beautiful old home in rural Old Rimrock, New Jersey. Yet as the [Vietnam War](#) and [racial unrest](#) wrack the country and destroy inner-city Newark, Seymour's teenage daughter Merry, outraged at the United States' conduct in Vietnam, becomes more radical in her beliefs and in 1968 commits an act of political terrorism. In protest against the Vietnam War and the "system", she plants a bomb in a local post office and the resulting explosion kills a bystander. In this singular act, Levov is cast out of the seemingly perfect life he has built and thrown instead into a world of chaos and dysfunction. Like a number of real-life members of the [Weather Underground](#), Seymour's daughter goes permanently into hiding. In Zuckerman's narration, a secret reunion of father and daughter takes place in 1973 in Newark's ruined inner city, where Merry is living in abysmal conditions. During this reunion, she claims that since the

first bombing she has set off several other bombs resulting in more deaths and that she has been repeatedly raped while living in hiding.

American Tragedy (An)—by Theodore Dreiser.

The ambitious but immature Clyde Griffiths, raised by poor and devoutly religious parents who force him to participate in their street missionary work, is anxious to achieve better things. His troubles begin when he takes a job as a [bellboy](#) at a local hotel. The boys he meets are much more sophisticated than he, and they introduce Clyde to the world of alcohol and prostitution. Clyde enjoys his new lifestyle and does everything in his power to win the affections of the flirtatious Hortense Briggs. But Clyde's life is forever changed when a stolen car in which he's traveling kills a young child. Clyde flees [Kansas City](#), and after a brief stay in [Chicago](#), he reestablishes himself as a foreman at the shirt-collar factory of his wealthy long-lost uncle in Lycurgus, New York, who meets Clyde through a stroke of fortune. While remaining aloof from him as a kinsman and doing nothing to embrace him personally or advance him socially, the uncle does give Clyde a job and ultimately advances him to a position of relative importance within the factory.

Although Clyde vows not to consort with women in the way that caused his Kansas City downfall, he is swiftly attracted to Roberta Alden, a poor and innocent farm girl working under his supervision at the factory. Roberta falls in love with him. Clyde initially enjoys the secretive relationship (forbidden by factory rules) and ultimately persuades Roberta to have sex with him rather than lose him, but Clyde's ambition precludes marriage to the penniless Roberta. He dreams instead of the elegant Sondra Finchley, the daughter of a wealthy Lycurgus man and a family friend of his uncle's.

Having unsuccessfully attempted to procure an abortion for Roberta, who expects him to marry her, Clyde procrastinates while his relationship with Sondra continues to mature. When he realizes that he has a genuine chance to marry Sondra, and after Roberta threatens to reveal their relationship unless he marries her, Clyde hatches a plan to murder Roberta in a fashion that will seem accidental.

Clyde takes Roberta on a row boat on [Big Bittern Lake](#) in upstate [New York](#) and rows to a remote area. As he speaks to her regarding the end of their relationship, Roberta moves towards him, and he strikes her in the face with his camera, stunning her and capsizing the boat. Unable to swim, Roberta drowns while Clyde, who is unwilling to save her, swims to shore. The narrative is deliberately unclear as to whether he acted with malice and intent to murder, or if he struck her merely instinctively. However, the trail of circumstantial evidence points to murder, and the local authorities are only too eager to convict Clyde, to the point of manufacturing additional evidence against him. Following a sensational trial before an unsympathetic audience, and despite a vigorous defense mounted by two lawyers hired by his uncle, Clyde is convicted, sentenced to death, and [executed](#). The jailhouse scenes and the correspondence between Clyde and his mother stand out as exemplars of [pathos](#) in modern literature.

An Enemy of the People—by Henrik Ibsen.

Dr. Thomas Stockmann is a popular citizen of a small coastal town in [Norway](#). The town has recently invested a large amount of public and private money towards the development of baths, a project led by Dr. Stockmann and his brother, Peter Stockmann, the Mayor. The town is expecting a surge in tourism and prosperity from the new baths, said to be of great medicinal value, and as such, the baths are a source of great local pride. However, just as the baths are proving successful, Dr. Stockmann discovers that waste products from the town's tannery are [contaminating](#) the waters, causing serious illness amongst the tourists. He expects this important discovery to be his greatest achievement, and promptly sends a detailed report to the Mayor, which includes a proposed solution which would come at a considerable cost to the town.

To his surprise, Dr. Stockmann finds it difficult to get through to the authorities. They seem unable to appreciate the seriousness of the issue and unwilling to publicly acknowledge and address the problem because it could mean financial ruin for the town. As the conflict develops, the Mayor warns his brother that he should "acquiesce in subordinating himself to the community." Dr. Stockmann refuses to accept this, and holds a town meeting at Captain Horster's house in order to persuade people that the baths must be closed.

The townspeople - eagerly anticipating the prosperity that the baths will bring - refuse to accept Dr. Stockmann's claims, and his friends and allies, who had explicitly given support for his campaign, turn against him [en masse](#). He is taunted and denounced as a lunatic, an "[Enemy of the People](#)." In a scathing rebuttal of both the [Victorian](#) notion of community and the principles of [democracy](#), Dr. Stockmann proclaims that in matters of right and wrong, the individual is superior to the multitude, which is easily led by self-advancing [demagogues](#). Dr. Stockmann sums up Ibsen's denunciation of the masses, with the memorable quote "...the strongest man in the world is the man who stands most alone." He also says: "A minority may be right; a majority is always wrong."

Angels in America—by Tony Kushner.

Set in New York City in the 1985, Act One of *Millennium Approaches* introduces us to the central [characters](#). As the play opens, Louis Ironson, a [neurotic, gay Jew](#) learns his lover, [WASP](#) Prior Walter, has [AIDS](#). As the play and Prior's illness progress, Louis becomes unable to cope and moves out. Meanwhile, [closeted](#) homosexual [Mormon](#) and [Republican law clerk](#) Joe Pitt is offered a major promotion by his [mentor](#), the [McCarthyist](#) lawyer [Roy Cohn](#). Joe doesn't immediately take the job because he feels he has to check with his [Valium](#)-addicted, [agoraphobic](#) wife, Harper, who is unwilling to move. Roy is himself deeply [closeted](#), and soon discovers that he has [AIDS](#).

As the seven-hour play progresses, Prior is visited by [ghosts](#) and an [angel](#) who proclaim him to be a [prophet](#); Joe finds himself struggling to reconcile his [religion](#) with his [sexuality](#); Louis struggles with his guilt about leaving Prior and begins a relationship with Joe; Harper's mental health deteriorates as she realizes that Joe is gay; Joe's mother, Hannah, moves to [New York](#) to attempt to look after Harper and meets Prior after a failed attempt by Prior to confront Hannah's son; Harper begins to separate from Joe whom she has depended upon and finds strength she was unaware of; and Roy finds himself in the hospital, reduced to the companionship of the [ghost](#) of [Ethel Rosenberg](#) and his nurse, Belize, a former [drag queen](#) and Prior's best friend, who meanwhile has to deal with Louis's constant demands for updates on Prior's health.

The subplot involving Cohn is the most political aspect of the play. Portrayed as a self-loathing, power-hungry hypocrite, he prides himself on his political connections and influence, which he has amassed through decades of corruption. In the play, he recollects with pride his role in having [Ethel Rosenberg](#) executed for [treason](#). As he lies alone in the hospital, dying of AIDS, the ghost of Rosenberg sings him a [Yiddish](#) lullaby and then brings him the news that the New York State Bar Association has just [disbarred](#) him, destroying his final hope of dying as a lawyer.

The play ends on a note of optimism. After his friends procure for him a stash of [AZT](#), in 1990 Prior is still alive and is managing to live with AIDS. With his friends, he looks at the statue of an angel in [Bethesda Fountain](#) and talks of the legend of the original fountain, and how it will flow again some day.

The play is deliberately performed so that the moments requiring [special effects](#) often show their theatricality. Most of the actors play multiple characters (e.g., the actor playing Prior's [nurse](#) also appears as the Angel). There are heavy [Biblical](#) references and references to American [society](#), as well as some fantastical scenes including voyages to [Antarctica](#) and [Heaven](#), as well as key events happening in [San Francisco](#) and at Bethesda Fountain in [Central Park](#).

Angle of Repose—by Wallace Stegner.

The title is [an engineering term](#) for the angle at which soil finally settles after, for example, being dumped from a mine as tailings. It seems to describe the loose wandering of the Ward family as they try to carve out a civilized existence in the West and, Susan hopes, to return to the East as successes. The story details Oliver's struggles on various mining, hydrology, and construction engineering jobs, and Susan's adaptation to a hard life.

Lyman Ward narrates a century after the fact. Lyman interprets the story at times and leaves gaps that he points out at other times. Some of the disappointments of his life, including his divorce, color his interpretation of his grandparents' story. Toward the end of the novel, he gives up on his original ambition of writing a complete biography of his grandmother.

Stegner's use of [Mary Hallock Foote's](#) historical letters gives the novel's locations—[Leadville](#), [New Almaden](#), [Idaho](#), and [Mexico](#)—an authentic feel; the letters also add vividness to the Wards' struggles with the environment, shady businessmen, and politicians. Lyman's position in the contemporary culture of the late sixties provides another historical dimension to the story. Foils for this plot line include Lyman's adult son, a Berkeley-trained sociologist who sees little value in history, and a neighbor's daughter who helps transcribe Lyman's tape-recorded notes while she is home on summer break from UC Berkeley, where she has been active in the "hippie" counterculture movement.

Anna Karenina—by Leo Tolstoy.

The novel opens with a scene introducing Prince Stepan Arkadyevitch Oblonsky, "Stiva", a [Moscow](#) aristocrat and civil servant who has been unfaithful to his wife Darya Alexandrovna, nicknamed "Dolly". Dolly has discovered his affair—with the family's governess—and the house and family are in turmoil. Stiva's affair and his reaction to his wife's distress show an amorous personality that he cannot seem to suppress.

In the midst of the turmoil, Stiva reminds the household that his married sister, Anna Arkadyevna Karenina is coming to visit from [Saint Petersburg](#).

Meanwhile, Stiva's childhood friend Konstantin Dmitrievich Levin ("Kostya") arrives in Moscow with the aim of proposing to Dolly's youngest sister Princess Katerina Alexandrovna Shcherbatskaya, "Kitty". Levin is a passionate, restless, but shy aristocratic landowner who, unlike his Moscow friends, chooses to live in the country on his large estate. He discovers that Kitty is also being pursued by Count Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky, an army officer.

At the railway station to meet Anna, Stiva bumps into Vronsky. Vronsky is there to meet his mother, the Countess Vronskaya. Anna and Vronskaya have traveled together in the same carriage and talked together. As the family members are reunited, and Vronsky sees Anna for the first time, a railway worker accidentally falls in front of a train and is killed. Anna interprets this as an "evil omen." Vronsky is infatuated with Anna. Anna, who is uneasy about leaving her young son, Seryozha, alone for the first time, talks openly and emotionally to Dolly about Stiva's affair and convinces Dolly that her husband still loves her, despite his infidelity. Dolly is moved by Anna's speeches and decides to forgive Stiva.

Dolly's youngest sister, Kitty, comes to visit her sister and Anna. Kitty, just 18, is in her first season as a [debutante](#) and is expected to make an excellent match with a man of her social standing. Vronsky has been paying her considerable attention, and she expects to dance with him at a ball that evening. Kitty is very struck by Anna's beauty and personality and is infatuated with her. When Levin proposes to Kitty at her home, she clumsily turns him down, because she believes she is in love with Vronsky and that he will propose to her.

At the ball, Vronsky pays Anna considerable attention, and dances with her, choosing her as a partner instead of Kitty, who is shocked and heartbroken. Kitty realises that Vronsky has fallen in love with Anna, and that despite his overt flirtations with her he has no intention of marrying her and in fact views his attentions to her as mere amusement, believing that she does the same.

Anna, shaken by her emotional and physical response to Vronsky, returns at once to Saint Petersburg. Vronsky travels on the same train. During the overnight journey, the two meet and Vronsky confesses his love. Anna refuses him, although she is deeply affected by his attentions to her.

Levin, crushed by Kitty's refusal, returns to his estate farm, abandoning any hope of marriage, and Anna returns to her husband Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin, a senior government official, and their son Sergei ("Seryozha") in Saint Petersburg.

On seeing her husband for the first time since her encounter with Vronsky, Anna realises that she finds him repulsive, noting the odd way that his ears press against his hat.

The Shcherbatskys consult doctors over Kitty's health, which has been failing since her realization that Vronsky does not love her and that he did not intend to propose marriage to her - and that she refused and hurt Levin, whom she cares for, in vain. A specialist doctor advises that Kitty should go abroad to a health [spa](#) to recover. Dolly speaks to Kitty and understands that she is suffering because of Vronsky and Levin. Kitty, humiliated by Vronsky and tormented by her rejection of Levin, upsets her sister by referring to Stiva's infidelity and says she could never love a man who betrayed her.

Stiva stays with Levin on his country estate when he makes a sale of a plot of land, to provide funds for his expensive city lifestyle. Levin is upset at the poor deal he makes with the buyer and his lack of understanding of the rural lifestyle.

In Saint Petersburg, Anna begins to spend more time with the fashionable socialite and gossip Princess Betsy and her circle, in order to meet Vronsky, Betsy's cousin. Vronsky continues to pursue Anna. Although Anna initially tries to reject him, she eventually succumbs to his attentions.

Karenin warns Anna of the impropriety of paying too much attention to Vronsky in public, which is becoming a subject of society gossip. He is concerned about his and his wife's public image, although he believes that Anna is above suspicion.

Vronsky, a keen horseman, takes part in a [steeplechase](#) event, during which he rides his [mare](#) Frou-Frou too hard and she falls and breaks her back. Vronsky escapes with minimal injuries but is devastated that his mare must be shot. Anna tells him that she is pregnant with his child, and is unable to hide her distress when Vronsky falls from the racehorse. Karenin is also present at the races and remarks to her that her behaviour is improper. Anna, in a state of extreme distress and emotion, confesses her affair to her husband. Karenin asks her to break off the affair to avoid society gossip and believes that their relationship can then continue as previously.

Kitty goes with her mother to a resort at a German [spa](#) to recover from her ill health. There they meet the [Pietist](#) Madame Stahl and the saintly Varenka, her adopted daughter. Influenced by Varenka, Kitty becomes extremely pious, but is disillusioned by her father's criticism. She then returns to Moscow.

Levin continues his work on his large country estate, a setting closely tied to his spiritual thoughts and struggles. Levin wrestles with the idea of falseness, wondering how he should go about ridding himself of it, and criticising what he feels is falseness in others. He develops ideas relating to agriculture and the unique relationship between the agricultural labourer and his native land and culture. He believes that the agricultural reforms of Europe will not work in Russia because of the unique culture and personality of the Russian peasant.

Levin pays Dolly a visit, and she attempts to understand what happened between him and Kitty and to explain Kitty's behaviour to him. Levin is very agitated by Dolly's talk about Kitty, and he begins to feel distant from her as he perceives her behaviour towards her children as false. Levin resolves to forget Kitty and contemplates the possibility of marriage to a [peasant](#) woman. However, a chance sighting of Kitty in her carriage as she travels to Dolly's house makes Levin realise he still loves her.

In St. Petersburg, Karenin crushes Anna by refusing to separate from her. He insists that their relationship remain as it was and threatens to take away their son Seryozha if she continues to pursue her affair with Vronsky.

Anna continues to pursue her affair with Vronsky. Karenin begins to find the situation intolerable. He talks with a lawyer about obtaining a divorce. In Russia at that time, divorce could only be requested by the innocent party in an affair, and required either that the guilty party confessed (which would ruin Anna's position in society) or that the guilty party be discovered in the act. Karenin forces Anna to give him some letters written to her by Vronsky as proof of the affair. However, Anna's brother Stiva argues against it and persuades Karenin to speak with Dolly first.

Dolly broaches the subject with Karenin and asks him to reconsider his plans to divorce Anna. She seems to be unsuccessful, but Karenin changes his plans after hearing that Anna is dying after a difficult [childbirth](#). At her bedside, Karenin forgives Vronsky. Vronsky, embarrassed by Karenin's magnanimity, attempts suicide by shooting himself. He fails in his attempt but wounds himself badly.

Anna recovers, having given birth to a daughter, Anna ("Annie"). Although her husband has forgiven her, and has become attached to the new baby, Anna cannot bear living with him. She hears that Vronsky is about to leave for a military posting in [Tashkent](#) and becomes desperate. Stiva finds himself pleading to Karenin on her behalf to free her by giving her a divorce. Vronsky is intent on leaving for [Tashkent](#), but changes his mind after seeing Anna.

The couple leave for Europe - leaving behind Anna's son Seryozha - without accepting Karenin's offer of divorce.

Much more straightforward is Stiva's matchmaking with Levin: he arranges a meeting between Levin and Kitty which results in their reconciliation and betrothal.

Levin and Kitty marry and immediately go to start their new life together on Levin's country estate. The couple are happy but do not have a very smooth start to their married life and take some time to get used to each other. Levin feels some dissatisfaction at the amount of time Kitty wants to spend with him and is slightly scornful of her preoccupation with domestic matters, which he feels are too prosaic and not compatible with his romantic ideas of love.

A few months later, Levin learns that his brother Nikolai is dying of consumption. Levin wants to go to him, and is initially angry and put out that Kitty wishes to accompany him. Levin feels that Kitty, whom he has placed on a pedestal, should not come down to earth and should not mix with people from a lower class. Levin assumes her insistence on coming must relate to a fear of boredom from being left alone, despite her true desire to support her husband in a difficult time. Kitty persuades him to take her with him after much discussion, where she proves a great help nursing Nikolai for weeks during his slow dying. She also discovers she is pregnant.

In Europe, Vronsky and Anna struggle to find friends who will accept their situation. Whilst Anna is happy to be finally alone with Vronsky, he feels suffocated. They cannot socialize with Russians of their own social set and find it difficult to amuse themselves. Vronsky, who believed that being with Anna in freedom was the key to his happiness, finds himself increasingly bored and unsatisfied. He takes up painting, and makes an attempt to patronize an émigré Russian artist of genius. Vronsky cannot see that his own art lacks talent and passion, and that his clever conversation about art is really pretentious. Bored and restless, Anna and Vronsky decide to return to Russia.

In St. Petersburg, Anna and Vronsky stay in one of the best hotels but take separate suites. It becomes clear that whilst Vronsky is able to move in Society, Anna is barred from it. Even her old friend, Princess Betsy - who has had affairs herself - evades her company. Anna starts to become very jealous and anxious that Vronsky no longer loves her.

Karenin is comforted – and influenced – by the strong-willed Countess Lidia Ivanovna, an enthusiast of religious and mystic ideas fashionable with the upper classes. She counsels him to keep Seryozha away from Anna and to make him believe that his mother is dead. However, Seryozha refuses to believe that this is true. Anna manages to visit Seryozha unannounced and uninvited on his ninth birthday, but is discovered by Karenin.

Anna, desperate to resume at least in part her former position in Society, attends a show at the [theatre](#) at which all of Petersburg's high society are present. Vronsky begs her not to go, but is unable to bring himself to explain to her why she cannot go. At the theatre, Anna is openly snubbed by her former friends, one of whom makes a deliberate scene and leaves the theatre. Anna is devastated.

Unable to find a place for themselves in Petersburg, Anna and Vronsky leave for Vronsky's country estate.

Dolly, her mother the Princess Scherbatskaya, and Dolly's children spend the summer with Levin and Kitty on the Levins' country estate. The Levins' life is simple and unaffected, although Levin is uneasy at the "invasion" of so many Scherbatskys. He is able to cope until he is consumed with an intense jealousy when one of the visitors, Veslovsky, flirts openly with the pregnant Kitty. Levin tries to overcome his jealousy but eventually succumbs to it and in an embarrassing scene makes Veslovsky leave his house. Veslovsky immediately goes to stay with Anna and Vronsky at their nearby estate.

Dolly also pays a short visit to Anna at Vronsky's estate. The difference between the Levins' aristocratic but simple home life and Vronsky's overtly luxurious and lavish country estate strikes Dolly, who is unable to keep pace with Anna's fashionable dresses or Vronsky's extravagant spending on the [hospital](#) he is building. In addition, all is not quite well with Anna and Vronsky. Dolly notices Anna's anxious behaviour and new habit of half closing her eyes when she alludes to her difficult position. When Veslovsky flirts openly with Anna, she plays along with him even though she clearly feels uncomfortable. Vronsky makes an emotional request to Dolly, asking her to convince Anna to divorce her husband so that the two might marry and live normally. Dolly broaches the subject with Anna, who appears not to be convinced. However, Anna has become intensely jealous of Vronsky, and cannot bear it when he leaves her for short excursions. The two have started to quarrel about this and when Vronsky leaves for several days of provincial elections, a combination of boredom and suspicion convinces Anna she must marry him in order to prevent him from leaving her. She writes to Karenin, and she and Vronsky leave the countryside for Moscow.

The Levins are in Moscow for Kitty's confinement. Despite initial reservations, Levin quickly gets used to the fast-paced, expensive and frivolous Moscow society life. He starts to accompany Stiva to his Moscow gentleman's club, where drinking and gambling are popular pastimes. At the club, Levin meets Vronsky and Stiva introduces them. Levin and Stiva pay a visit to Anna, who is occupying her empty days by being a patroness to an orphaned English girl. Levin is uneasy about the visit and not sure it is the proper thing to do, but Anna easily puts Levin under her spell. When he confesses to Kitty where he has been, she accuses him falsely of falling in love with Anna. The couple are reconciled, realising that Moscow society life has had a negative, corrupting effect on Levin.

Anna, who has made a habit of inducing the young men who visit her to fall in love with her, cannot understand why she can attract a man like Levin, who has a young and beautiful new wife, but cannot attract Vronsky in the way she wants to. Anna's relationship with Vronsky is under increasing strain, as whilst he can move freely in Society - and continues to spend

considerable time doing so to stress to Anna his independence as a man - she is excluded from all her previous social connections. Her increasing bitterness, boredom, jealousy and emotional strain cause the couple to argue. Anna uses [morphine](#) to help her sleep, a habit we learned she had begun during her time living with Vronsky at his country estate. Now she has become dependent on it.

After a long and difficult labour, Kitty gives birth to a son, Dmitri, nicknamed Mitya. Levin is both horrified and profoundly moved by the sight of the tiny, helpless baby.

Stiva visits Karenin to encourage his commendation for a new post he is seeking. During the visit he asks him to grant Anna a divorce, but Karenin's decisions are now governed by a French "clairvoyant" – recommended by Lidia Ivanovna – who apparently has a vision in his sleep during Stiva's visit, and gives Karenin a cryptic message that is interpreted as meaning that he must decline the request for divorce.

Anna becomes increasingly jealous and irrational towards Vronsky, whom she suspects of having love affairs with other women, and of giving in to his mother's plans to marry him off to a rich Society woman. There is a bitter row, and Anna believes that the relationship is over. She starts to think of suicide as an escape from her torments. In her mental and emotional confusion, she sends a telegram to Vronsky asking him to come home to her, and pays a visit to Dolly and Kitty. Anna's confusion and vengeful anger overcomes her, and in a parallel to the railway worker's accidental death in part 1, she commits suicide by throwing herself in the path of a train.

Stiva gets the job he desired so much, and Karenin takes custody of baby Annie. A group of Russian volunteers, including the suicidal Vronsky, depart from Russia to fight in the Orthodox [Serbian](#) revolt that has broken out against the [Turks](#). Meanwhile, a lightning storm occurs at Levin's estate while his wife and newborn son are outside, causing him to fear for the safety of both of them, and to realize that he does indeed love his son similarly to how he loves Kitty. Also, Kitty's family concerns, namely, that a man as altruistic as her husband does not consider himself to be a Christian, are also addressed when Levin decides after talking to a peasant that devotion to living righteously is the only justifiable reason for living. After coming to this decision, but unable to tell anyone about it, he is initially displeased that this change of thought does not bring with it a complete transformation of his behavior to be more righteous. However, at the end of the book he comes to the conclusion that this fact, and the fact that there are other religions with similar views on goodness that are not Christian, are acceptable and that neither of these things diminish the fact that now his life can be meaningfully oriented toward goodness

Another Country—by James Baldwin.

The first fifth of *Another Country* tells of the downfall of [jazz](#) drummer Rufus Scott. Rufus begins a relationship with Leona, a white woman from the [South](#) and introduces her to his friends, including the struggling novelist Vivaldo, his more successful mentor Richard and Richard's wife Cass. Although the relationship is initially frivolous, it becomes serious and the two leave town for several weeks. Rufus is abusive towards Leona and she is eventually committed to a mental hospital and Rufus returns to Harlem in a deep [depression](#). He commits [suicide](#) by jumping off the [George Washington Bridge](#).

Rufus' friends cannot understand his suicide, but afterwards they become closer and Vivaldo begins a relationship with Rufus' sister Ida, which is strained by racial tension and Ida's bitterness after her brother's death.

Eric, Rufus's first male lover and an actor, returns to [New York](#) after a stay in France where he met his longtime lover Yves. Eric returns to the novel's social circle but is more calm and composed than most of the clique. He also begins an affair with Cass, who has become lonely due to Richard's dedication to writing.

Antigone—by Sophocles.

Before the beginning of the story, two brothers leading opposite sides in Thebes' civil war died fighting each other for the throne. Creon, the new ruler of Thebes, has decided that Eteocles will be honored and Polyneices will be in public shame. The rebel brother's body will not be sanctified by holy rites, and will lie unburied on the battlefield, prey for carrion animals like worms and vultures, the harshest punishment at the time. [Antigone](#) and [Ismene](#) are the sisters of the dead Polyneices and Eteocles. In the opening of the play, Antigone brings Ismene outside the palace gates late at night for a secret meeting: Antigone wants to bury Polyneices' body, in defiance of Creon's edict. Ismene refuses to help her, fearing the death penalty, but she is unable to stop Antigone from going to bury her brother herself, causing Antigone to disown her.

Creon enters, along with the [Chorus](#) of Theban Elders. He seeks their support in the days to come, and in particular wants them to back his edict regarding the disposal of Polyneices' body. The Chorus of Elders pledges their support. A Sentry enters, fearfully reporting that the body has been buried. A furious Creon orders the Sentry to find the culprit or face death himself. The Sentry leaves and the Chorus sings about honouring the Gods, but after a short absence he returns, bringing Antigone with him. Creon questions her after sending the Sentry off, and she does not deny what she has done. She argues unflinchingly with Creon about the morality of the edict and the morality of her actions. Creon becomes furious, and, thinking Ismene must have helped her as he saw her upset, summons the girl. Ismene tries to confess falsely to the crime, wishing to die alongside her sister, but Antigone would not have it. Creon orders that the two women be temporarily imprisoned. Haemon enters to pledge allegiance to his father. He initially seems willing to join Creon, but when Haemon gently tries to persuade his father to spare Antigone, claiming that 'under cover of darkness the city mourns for the girl', the discussion deteriorates and the two men are soon bitterly insulting each other. Haemon leaves, vowing never to see Creon again.

Creon decides to spare Ismene and to bury Antigone alive in a cave. She is brought out of the house, and she bewails her fate and defends her actions one last time. She is taken away to her living tomb, with the Chorus expressing great sorrow for what is going to happen to her.

[Tiresias](#), the blind prophet, enters. He warns Creon that Polyneices should now be urgently buried. Creon accuses Tiresias of being corrupt. Tiresias responds that because of Creon's mistakes, he will lose "a son of [his] own loins"^[2] for the crimes of leaving Polyneices unburied and putting Antigone into the earth (he does not say that Antigone should not be condemned to death, only that it is improper to keep a living body underneath the earth). All of Greece will despise him, and the sacrificial offerings of Thebes will not be accepted by the gods. The Chorus, terrified, asks Creon to take their advice. He assents, and they tell him that he should free Antigone and bury Polyneices. Creon, shaken, agrees to do it. He leaves with a retinue of men to help him right his previous mistakes. The Chorus delivers a choral ode to the god [Dionysus](#) (god of wine), and then a Messenger enters to tell them that Haemon has killed himself. [Eurydice](#), Creon's wife and Haemon's mother, enters and asks the Messenger to tell her everything. The Messenger reports that Haemon and Antigone have both taken their own lives, Antigone by hanging herself, and

Haemon by stabbing himself after finding the body, just after Polyneices was buried. Eurydice disappears into the palace.

Creon enters, carrying Haemon's body. He understands that his own actions have caused these events. A Second Messenger arrives to tell Creon and the Chorus that Eurydice has killed herself. With her last breath, she cursed her husband. Creon blames himself for everything that has happened, and, a broken man, he asks his servants to help him inside. The order he valued so much has been protected, and he is still the king, but he has acted against the gods and lost his child and his wife as a result. The Chorus closes by saying that although the gods punish the proud, punishment brings wisdom.

Antony and Cleopatra—by William Shakespeare.

Mark Antony – one of the Triumvirs of Rome along with [Octavian](#) and [Marcus Aemilius Lepidus](#) – has neglected his soldierly duties after being beguiled by Egypt's Queen, [Cleopatra VII](#). He ignores Rome's domestic problems, including the fact that his third wife [Fulvia rebelled against Octavian](#) and then died.

Octavian calls Antony back to Rome from [Alexandria](#) in order to help him fight against [Sextus Pompey](#), [Menecrates](#), and [Menas](#), three notorious pirates of the [Mediterranean](#). At Alexandria, Cleopatra begs Antony not to go, and though he repeatedly affirms his love for her, he eventually leaves.

Back in Rome, [Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa](#) brings forward the idea that Antony should marry Octavian's sister, [Octavia the Younger](#), in order to cement the bond between the two men. Antony's lieutenant [Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus](#), though, knows that Octavia can never satisfy him after Cleopatra. In a famous passage, he delineates Cleopatra's charms in paradoxical terms (rhetorical antithesis): "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety: other women cloy / The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry / Where most she satisfies."

A soothsayer warns Antony that he is sure to lose if he ever tries to fight Octavian.

In Egypt, Cleopatra learns of Antony's marriage to Octavia and takes furious revenge upon the messenger that brings her the news. She grows content only when her courtiers assure her that Octavia is homely by Elizabethan standards: short, low-browed, round-faced and with bad hair.

At a confrontation, the triumvirs parley with [Sextus Pompey](#), and offer him a truce. He can retain [Sicily](#) and [Sardinia](#), but he must help them "rid the sea of pirates" and send them tributes. After some hesitation Pompey accedes. They engage in a drunken celebration on Pompey's galley. Menas suggests to Pompey that he kill the three triumvirs and make himself ruler of Rome, but he refuses, finding it dishonorable. Later, Octavian and Lepidus break their truce with Pompey and war against him. This is unapproved by Antony, and he is furious.

Antony returns to Alexandria, Egypt, and crowns Cleopatra and himself as rulers of Egypt and the eastern third of the Roman Empire (which was Antony's share as one of the triumvirs). He accuses Octavian of not giving him his fair share of Pompey's lands, and is angry that Lepidus, whom Octavian has imprisoned, is out of the triumvirate. Octavian agrees to the former demand, but otherwise is very displeased with what Antony has done.

In this [Baroque](#) vision, *Battle of Actium* by [Lorenzo A. Castro](#) (1672), Cleopatra flees, lower left, in a barge with a figurehead of [Fortuna](#).

Antony prepares to battle Octavian. Ahenobarbus urges Antony to fight on land, where he has the advantage, instead of by sea, where the navy of Octavius is lighter, more mobile and better manned. Antony refuses, since Octavian has dared him to fight at sea. Cleopatra pledges her fleet to aid Antony. However, in the middle of the [Battle of Actium](#), Cleopatra flees with her sixty ships, and Antony follows her, leaving his army to ruin. Ashamed of what he has done for the love of Cleopatra, Antony reproaches her for making him a coward, but also sets this love above all else, saying "Give me a kiss; even this repays me."

Octavian sends a messenger to ask Cleopatra to give up Antony and come over to his side. She hesitates, and flirts with the messenger, when Antony walks in and angrily denounces her behaviour. He sends the messenger to be whipped. Eventually, he forgives Cleopatra and pledges to fight another battle for her, this time on land.

On the eve of the battle, Antony's soldiers hear strange portents, which they interpret as the god [Hercules](#) abandoning his protection of Antony. Furthermore, Ahenobarbus, Antony's long-serving lieutenant, deserts him and goes over to Octavian's side. Rather than confiscating Ahenobarbus's goods, which he did not take with him when he fled to Octavian, Antony orders them to be sent to Ahenobarbus. Ahenobarbus is so overwhelmed by Antony's generosity, and so ashamed of his own disloyalty, that he dies from a broken heart.

The battle goes well for Antony, until Octavian shifts it to a sea-fight. Once again, Antony loses when Cleopatra's ships break off action and flee – his own fleet surrenders, and he denounces Cleopatra: "This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me." He resolves to kill her for the treachery. Cleopatra decides that the only way to win back Antony's love is to send him word that she killed herself, dying with his name on her lips. She locks herself in her monument, and awaits Antony's return.

Her plan fails: rather than rushing back in remorse to see the "dead" Cleopatra, Antony decides that his own life is no longer worth living. He begs one of his aides, Eros, to run him through with a sword, but Eros cannot bear to do it, and kills himself. Antony admires Eros' courage and attempts to do the same, but only succeeds in wounding himself. In great pain, he learns that Cleopatra is indeed alive. He is hoisted up to her in her monument, and dies in her arms.

Octavian goes to Cleopatra, trying to persuade her to surrender. She angrily refuses, since she can imagine nothing worse than being led in triumph through the streets of Rome, proclaimed a villain for the ages. She imagines that "the quick comedians / Extemporally will stage us, and present / Our Alexandrian revels: Antony / Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see / Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness / 'I th' posture of a whore." This speech is full of [dramatic irony](#), because in Shakespeare's time Cleopatra really was played by a "squeaking boy", and Shakespeare's play does depict Antony's drunken revels.

Cleopatra is betrayed and taken into custody by the Romans. She gives Octavian what she claims is a complete account of her wealth, but is betrayed by her treasurer, who claims she is holding treasure back. Octavian reassures her that he is not interested in her wealth, but Dolabella warns her that he intends to parade her at his triumph.

Cleopatra resolves to kill herself, using the poison of an [asp](#). She dies calmly and ecstatically, imagining how she will meet Antony again in the afterlife. Her serving maids, Iras and Charmian, also kill themselves. Octavian discovers the dead bodies and experiences conflicting emotions. Antony's and Cleopatra's deaths leave him free to become the first [Roman Emperor](#), but he also feels some kind of sympathy for them: "She shall be buried by her Antony. / No grave upon the earth shall clip in it / A pair so famous..." He orders a public military funeral

Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz (The)—Mordecai Richler.

The novel is set mostly in [Montreal](#), during the 1940s. The city is old, dirty, crowded and divided into sections based on ethnicity and religion. There are poor districts, like St. Urbain Street, and there are wealthy districts, like [Westmount](#) and [Outremont](#). Parts of the story also take place in the [Laurentian mountains](#), in the resort town of Ste. Agathe and surrounding areas.

The novel focuses on the young life of Duddy Kravitz, a poor Jewish boy raised in Montreal, Quebec. Family, friends, lovers and teachers all contribute to Duddy's burgeoning obsession with power and money — desires embodied in the possession of land. As a child, Duddy learns from his grandfather that "a man without land is nobody," and Duddy comes to believe land ownership to be life's ultimate goal and the means by which a man is made into a somebody.

Duddy begins to move towards this goal by working for his Uncle Benjy. Their relationship is strained: Uncle Benjy, a wealthy clothing manufacturer with socialist sympathies, has always favored Duddy's brother Lennie, who wants to become a doctor. Uncle Benjy takes a dim view of Duddy's commercial ambitions, seeing them as avaricious and crass. During the summer after high school, Duddy takes a job as a waiter at a hotel in Ste. Agathe. He stumbles upon a beautiful and secluded lake while out with his soon-to-be lover and "[Girl Friday](#)" Yvette. A born entrepreneur, Duddy immediately sees that the lake has tremendous potential as the future site of a summer resort. Duddy returns to Montreal and starts a company to produce bar-mitzvah films. To this end he hires Friar, a [blacklisted](#), alcoholic, avant-garde filmmaker. Since Duddy's childhood, his father, Max, had told him stories about Jerry Dingleman, the local "boy wonder" whose [rags-to-riches](#) story is canonical among the residents of St. Urbain Street. Looking for help with his film company, Duddy attempts to engage Dingleman. The two travel to New York, but Duddy fails to secure any assistance from the boy wonder who sees Duddy as a naive upstart and uses him to ferry a package of heroin across the Canada-U.S. border. On the way back from New York he does, however, meet Virgil, an amicable and trusting American with a consignment of pinball machines for sale. Back in Montreal, Duddy rents an apartment and an office for himself and Yvette and, as the plots of land around Lac St. Pierre go up for sale, his Laurentian land empire grows.

After Mr. Friar tries unsuccessfully to seduce the comely Yvette he wordlessly and suddenly abandons his work with Duddy. Duddy rebounds by starting a new movie distribution business and hires Virgil as a travelling projectionist. A few months later, Virgil, an [epileptic](#) (a fact known to Duddy when given the job), experiences a [seizure](#) while driving and is paralyzed from the waist down. Yvette, blaming Duddy for the accident, takes Virgil to Ste. Agathe where she cares for him as he recovers. Duddy is left to show the movies seven days a week while still trying to oversee movie production at the same time. Meanwhile, Uncle Benjy finds he has a terminal illness. He tries to mend fences with Duddy, but Duddy rebuffs his uncle's request that the two see each other more frequently during his final days. Uncle Benjy's death acts as a trigger for Duddy who then experiences a nervous breakdown and refuses to leave his room for a week. Having no communication with the outside world, Duddy loses his clients, and is thus forced to declare bankruptcy and to give all his possessions over to the state (except for the land, which was all in Yvette's name due to Duddy being considered a minor).

After Duddy recovers from his nervous breakdown, he invites Yvette and Virgil to move with him into his uncle's mansion, which was left to Duddy as an inheritance on the condition that the house not be rented out or sold. When Duddy hears of the last bit of land around Lac St. Pierre going up for sale, he exhausts his few remaining contacts for money but still comes up short. Pressed for time and desperate to claim the last piece of his empire, especially knowing Dingleman has expressed interest in the land and has the money for it, Duddy resorts to forging a cheque from Virgil's chequebook to acquire the outstanding money. Yvette finds out and tells Duddy's grandfather, who is embarrassed and unhappy with the way Duddy has obtained the land. This theft also prompts Yvette and Virgil to move out of the mansion and forbid Duddy to ever see them again. The ending of the novel is ambiguous: Duddy's selfishness and ruthless materialism, which supersede his love for Yvette, are obviously negative qualities. On the other hand, Duddy's

youth, impatience with snobbery, and [underdog](#) status are ameliorating factors, and his gutsy entrepreneurial creativity is admirable.

An older Duddy makes brief, comic appearances in Richler's later novels. Duddy never loses his drive to make money.

Armies of the Night—by Norman Mailer.

The book deals ostensibly with the [March on the Pentagon](#) (the October 1967 anti-[Vietnam War](#) rally in [Washington DC](#)). While Mailer dips into familiar territory in his fiction—self-portrait—the outlandish, third person account of himself along with self-descriptions such as a Novelist/Historian, anti-star/hero are made far more complex by the narrative's overall generic identification as a [nonfiction novel](#). Two years before *Armies* was published *In Cold Blood* by [Truman Capote](#), who had just been called by [George Plimpton](#) (among others) the "inventor" of the [nonfiction novel](#), claimed that the genre should exclude any mention of its subjectivity and refrain from the first person. While to some extent satirizing Capote's model, Mailer's role in center stage is hardly self-glamorizing as the narrative recounts the events leading up to the March as well as his subsequent arrest and night in jail. The first section, "History as a Novel," begins "From the outset, let us bring you news of your protagonist," with an account made by [Time](#) about: "Washington's scruffy [Ambassador Theater](#), normally a pad for psychedelic frolics, was the scene of an unscheduled scatological solo last week in support of the peace demonstrations. Its anti-star was author Norman Mailer, who proved even less prepared to explain Why Are We In Vietnam? than his current novel bearing that title." After citing the entire article, Mailer then closes "1: Pen Pals" with "Now we may leave *Time* in order to find out what happened." What creates the difference between Mailer's example and Capote's is not only the autobiography of *Armies*, but the irony which guides the narrator towards the same objective of empiricism as that of *In Cold Blood*. The non-conformity which Mailer exhibits to Capote's criterion was the beginning of a feud that never resolved between the authors, and was ended with Capote's death in 1984. Ultimately, *Armies* was a unique contribution to the newly founded genre, which was otherwise somewhat preoccupied by Tom Wolfe's theories of the [new journalism](#). A departure from Capote's more journalistic example of the form, *Armies* suggests the historical value of a more contemporary mode of literature.

The year of its publication, 1968, Mailer would begin work on another project, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, after witnessing the [Republican](#) and [Democratic National Conventions](#) that year. Mailer's recounting, though quite different in terms of his self-portrait, takes on a comparable rhetorical approach to evoking what he saw as historical underpinnings.

As I Lay Dying—by William Faulkner.

The book is narrated by 15 different characters over 59 chapters. It is the story of the death of Addie Bundren and her family's quest and motivations—noble or selfish—to honor her wish to be buried in the town of [Jefferson](#).

As is the case in much of Faulkner's work, the story is set in [Yoknapatawpha County](#), [Mississippi](#), which Faulkner referred to as "my apocryphal county," a fictional rendition of the writer's home of [Lafayette County](#) in that same state.

Addie Bundren, the wife of Anse Bundren and the matriarch of a poor southern family, is very ill, and is expected to die soon. Her oldest son, Cash, puts all of his carpentry skills into preparing her coffin, which he builds right in front of Addie's bedroom window. Although Addie's health is failing rapidly, two of her other sons, Darl and Jewel, leave town to make a delivery for the Bundrens' neighbor, Vernon Tull, whose wife and two daughters have been tending to Addie. Shortly after Darl and Jewel leave, Addie dies. The youngest Bundren child, Vardaman, associates

his mother's death with that of a fish he caught and cleaned earlier that day. With some help, Cash completes the coffin just before dawn. Vardaman is troubled by the fact that his mother is nailed shut inside a box, and while the others sleep, he bores holes in the lid, two of which go through his mother's face. Addie and Anse's daughter, Dewey Dell, whose recent sexual liaisons with a local farmhand named Lefe have left her pregnant, is so overwhelmed by anxiety over her condition that she barely mourns her mother's death. A funeral service is held on the following day, where the women sing songs inside the Bundren house while the men stand outside on the porch talking to each other.

Darl, who narrates much of this first section, returns with Jewel a few days later, and the presence of buzzards over their house lets them know their mother is dead. On seeing this sign, Darl sardonically reassures Jewel, who is widely perceived as ungrateful and uncaring, that he can be sure his beloved horse is not dead. Addie has made Anse promise that she will be buried in the town of Jefferson, and though this request is a far more complicated proposition than burying her at home, Anse's sense of obligation, combined with his desire to buy a set of false teeth, compels him to fulfill Addie's dying wish. Cash, who has broken his leg on a job site, helps the family lift the unbalanced coffin, but it is Jewel who ends up manhandling it, almost single-handedly, into the wagon. Jewel refuses, however, to actually come in the wagon, and follows the rest of the family riding on his horse, which he bought when he was young by secretly working nights on a neighbor's land.

On the first night of their journey, the Bundrens stay at the home of a generous local family, who regards the Bundrens' mission with skepticism. Due to severe flooding, the main bridges leading over the local river have been flooded or washed away, and the Bundrens are forced to turn around and attempt a river-crossing over a makeshift ford. When a stray log upsets the wagon, the coffin is knocked out, Cash's broken leg is reinjured, and the team of mules drowns. Vernon Tull sees the wreck, and helps Jewel rescue the coffin and the wagon from the river. Together, the family members and Tull search the riverbed for Cash's tools.

Cora, Tull's wife, remembers Addie's unchristian inclination to respect her son Jewel more than God. Addie herself, speaking either from her coffin or in a leap back in time to her deathbed, recalls events from her life: her loveless marriage to Anse; her affair with the local minister, Whitfield, which led to Jewel's conception; and the birth of her various children. Whitfield recalls traveling to the Bundrens' house to confess the affair to Anse, and his eventual decision not to say anything after all.

A horse doctor sets Cash's broken leg, while Cash faints from the pain without ever complaining. Anse is able to purchase a new team of mules by mortgaging his farm equipment, using money that he was saving for his false teeth and money that Cash was saving for a new gramophone, and trading in Jewel's horse. The family continues on its way. In the town of Mottson, residents react with horror to the stench coming from the Bundren wagon. While the family is in town, Dewey Dell tries to buy a drug that will abort her unwanted pregnancy, but the pharmacist refuses to sell it to her, and advises marriage instead. With cement the family has purchased in town, Darl creates a makeshift cast for Cash's broken leg, which fits poorly and only increases Cash's pain. The Bundrens then spend the night at a local farm owned by a man named Gillespie. Darl, who has been skeptical of their mission for some time, burns down the Gillespie barn with the intention of incinerating the coffin and Addie's rotting corpse. Jewel rescues the animals in the barn, then risks his life to drag out Addie's coffin. Darl lies on his mother's coffin and cries.

The next day, the Bundrens arrive in Jefferson and bury Addie. Rather than face a lawsuit for Darl's criminal barn burning, the Bundrens claim that Darl is insane, and give him to a pair of men who commit him to a Jackson mental institution. Dewey Dell tries again to buy an abortion drug at the local pharmacy, where a boy working behind the counter claims to be a doctor and tricks her into exchanging sexual services for what she soon realizes is not an actual abortion drug. The

following morning, the children are greeted by their father, who sports a new set of false teeth and, with a mixture of shame and pride, introduces them to his new bride, a local woman he meets while borrowing shovels with which to bury Addie.

As You Like It—by William Shakespeare.

The play is set in a [duchy](#) in France, but most of the action takes place in a location called the '[Forest of Arden](#)'.

Frederick has usurped the Duchy and [exiled](#) his older brother, Duke Senior. The Duke's daughter Rosalind has been permitted to remain at court because she is the closest friend and cousin of Frederick's only child, Celia. Orlando, a young gentleman of the kingdom who has fallen in love at first sight of Rosalind, is forced to flee his home after being persecuted by his older brother, Oliver. Frederick becomes angry and banishes Rosalind from court. Celia and Rosalind decide to flee together accompanied by the jester Touchstone, with Rosalind disguised as a young man and Celia disguised as a poor lady.

Rosalind, now disguised as [Ganymede](#) ("[Jove's own page](#)"), and Celia, now disguised as Aliena ([Latin](#) for "stranger"), arrive in the [Arcadian Forest of Arden](#), where the [exiled](#) Duke now lives with some supporters, including "the [melancholy](#) Jaques," who is introduced to us weeping over the slaughter of a [deer](#). "Ganymede" and "Aliena" do not immediately encounter the Duke and his companions, as they meet up with Corin, an impoverished [tenant](#), and offer to buy his master's rude cottage.

Orlando and his servant Adam (a role possibly played by Shakespeare himself, though this story is apocryphal),^[1] meanwhile, find the Duke and his men and are soon living with them and posting simplistic [love poems](#) for Rosalind on the trees. Rosalind, also in love with Orlando, meets him as Ganymede and pretends to counsel him to cure him of being in love. Ganymede says "he" will take Rosalind's place and "he" and Orlando can act out their relationship.

The shepherdess Phebe, with whom Silvius is in love, has fallen in love with Ganymede (actually Rosalind), though "Ganymede" continually shows that "he" is not interested in Phebe. Touchstone, meanwhile, has fallen in love with the dull-witted shepherdess Audrey, and tries to woo her, but eventually is forced to be married first. William, another shepherd, attempts to marry Audrey as well, but is stopped by Touchstone, who threatens to kill him "a hundred and fifty ways".

Finally, Silvius, Phebe, Ganymede, and Orlando are brought together in an argument with each other over who will get whom. Ganymede says he will solve the problem, having Orlando promise to marry Rosalind, and Phebe promise to marry Silvius if she cannot marry Ganymede.

Orlando sees Oliver in the forest and rescues him from a lioness, causing Oliver to repent for mistreating Orlando (some directors treat this as a tale, rather than reality). Oliver meets Aliena (Celia's false identity) and falls in love with her, and they agree to marry. Orlando and Rosalind, Oliver and Celia, Silvius and Phebe, and Touchstone and Audrey all are married in the final [scene](#), after which they discover that Frederick has also repented his faults, deciding to restore his legitimate brother to the [dukedom](#) and adopt a religious life. Jaques, ever melancholy, declines their invitation to return to the court preferring to stay in the forest and to adopt a religious life. Rosalind speaks an epilogue to the audience, commending the play to both men and women in the audience.

Atonement—by Ian McEwan.

In the summer of 1935, Briony Tallis, an upper-class English girl with a talent for writing, is living at her family's country estate with her older sister Cecilia, and their cousins Jackson and Pierrot, who are twins, and Lola. One day, Briony witnesses a moment of sexual tension between Cecilia and Robbie Turner, the son of the Tallis family housekeeper and a childhood friend of Cecilia's. Robbie realizes he is attracted to Cecilia, whom he has not seen in some time, and writes several drafts of a love letter to her, enlisting Briony to deliver it. By accident he gives her a version he had meant to discard, which contains lewd and vulgar references ("[Cunt](#)"). Briony reads the letter and becomes disturbed as to Robbie's intentions. Later she walks in on Robbie and Cecilia making love in the library. Briony misinterprets the sexual act as rape and believes Robbie to be a "sex maniac."

Later, at a dinner party attended by the family as well as Briony's brother Leon and his friend Paul Marshall, it is discovered that the twins have run away and the dinner party breaks into teams to search for them. In the darkness, Briony discovers her cousin Lola, apparently being raped by an assailant she cannot clearly see. Lola is unable or unwilling to identify the attacker, but Briony thinks it was Robbie and identifies him to the police as the attacker. Robbie is taken away to prison, with only Cecilia and his mother believing in his innocence.

By the time [World War II](#) has started, Robbie has spent three years in prison. He is released on the condition of enlistment in the army. Cecilia has become a nurse. She cuts off all contact with her family because of the part they took in sending Robbie to jail. Robbie and Cecilia have only been in contact by letter, since she was not allowed to visit him in prison. Before Robbie has to go to war in [France](#), they meet once for half an hour during Cecilia's lunch break. Their reunion starts awkwardly, but they share a kiss before leaving each other.

In France, the war is going badly and the army is [retreating](#) to [Dunkirk](#). As the injured Robbie goes to the safe haven, he thinks about Cecilia and past events like teaching Briony how to swim and reflecting on Briony's possible reasons for accusing him. His single meeting with Cecilia is the memory that keeps him walking, his only aim is seeing her again. At the end of part two, Robbie falls asleep in Dunkirk, one day before the evacuation.

Remorseful Briony has refused her place at Cambridge and instead is a trainee nurse in [London](#). She has realized the full extent of her mistake, and realizes it was Paul Marshall, Leon's friend, whom she saw raping Lola. Briony still writes, although she does not pursue it with the same recklessness as she did as a child.

Briony is called to the bedside of Luc, a young, fatally wounded [French](#) soldier. She consoles him in his last moments by speaking with him in her school [French](#), and he mistakes her for an English girl whom his mother wanted him to marry. Just before his death, Luc asks "Do you love me?", to which Briony answers "Yes," not only because "no other answer was possible" but also because "for the moment, she did. He was a lovely boy far away from his family and about to die." Afterward, Briony daydreams about the life she might have had if she had married Luc and gone to live with him and his family.

Briony attends the wedding of her cousin Lola and Paul Marshall before finally visiting Cecilia. Robbie is on leave from the army and Briony meets him unexpectedly at her sister's. They both refuse to forgive Briony, who nonetheless tells them she will try and put things right. She promises to begin the legal procedures needed to exonerate Robbie, even though Paul Marshall will never be held responsible for his crime because of his marriage to Lola, the victim.

The fourth section, titled "London 1999", is written from Briony's perspective. She is a successful novelist at the age of 77 and dying of [vascular dementia](#).

It is revealed that Briony is the author of the preceding sections of the novel. Although Cecilia and Robbie are reunited in Briony's novel, they were not in reality. It is suggested that Robbie Turner may have died of [septicaemia](#), caused by his injury, on the beaches of Dunkirk and Cecilia may have been killed by the bomb that destroyed the gas and water mains above [Balham Underground station](#). Cecilia and Robbie may have never seen each other again. Although the detail concerning Lola's marriage to Paul Marshall is true, Briony never visited Cecilia to make amends.

Briony explains why she decided to change real events and unite Cecilia and Robbie in her novel, although it was not her intention in her many previous drafts. She did not see what purpose it would serve if she gave the readers a pitiless ending. She reasons that they could not draw any sense of hope or satisfaction from it. But above all, she wanted to give Robbie and Cecilia their happiness by being together. Since they could not have the time together they so much longed for in reality, Briony wanted to give it to them at least in her novel.

Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man (The)—by James Weldon Johnson

The Ex-Colored Man's mother protected him as a child and teenager. Because of the money provided by his father, she had the means to raise him in a different environment than most other blacks. He was exposed to only upper-class blacks and mostly benevolent whites. After his mother's death, his poor orphan status exposed him to a part of black life unknown to him while living a sheltered life with his mother. He adapted very well to life with lower-class blacks, and was able to move easily between the classes of black society. During this carefree period of his life, he was still able to teach music and attend church, where he came in contact with the upper class blacks. The Ex-Colored man living in an all black community discovered three classes of blacks; the desperate class, the domestic service class, and the independent workman. The Ex-Colored Man believed the desperate class consists of poor blacks that loathe the whites. The domestic service, domestic worker class consists of blacks that work as servants to the whites. The third class consists of well-to-do blacks that had no interaction with the whites. Many white readers, who viewed all blacks as a stereotype of a single class, are unfamiliar with the narrator's description of class distinctions among blacks. Johnson's description of the black classes also serves to show that blacks and whites also have the same human tendencies to seek social status.

While playing [ragtime](#) at one of the late night hot spots in New York, the Ex-Colored Man caught the attention of a rich white gentleman. The gentleman had a particular liking to the Ex-Colored Man's music which evolved into a particular liking of the Ex-Colored Man himself. The white gentleman hired him to play ragtime piano for guests at parties. Soon the Ex-Colored Man spent most of his time working for the white gentleman, who would have him play ragtime music for hours at a time. He would play until the white gentleman would say "that will do." The Ex-Colored man would tire after the long hours, but would continue playing as he saw the joy and serenity he brought the white gentleman.

The white gentleman frequently "loaned" the Ex-Colored Man out to other people to play at their parties. The gentleman was not exactly "loaning" him out as a piece of property, but simply giving the narrator a broader palette to display his talents. The Ex-Colored man saw how the rich lived; he was thrilled to live in this life style. The Rich White Gentleman absolutely influenced the Ex-Colored Man more than any one else he met. The relationship towards the Rich White Man was not only on a [slave/master](#) basis, but also one of friendship. While he was with the white gentleman, the Ex-Colored Man decided he would use his skills to aid in [Abolitionism](#). Even though life was pleasant, it was void of substance; using his music to aid impoverished African Americans he felt would be a better use of his talents. The Ex-Colored Man continued to show devotion to the white gentleman, as the white gentleman treated him with kindness, which eventually led to the forming of a friendship while in [Paris](#).

However, the Ex-Colored Man's devotion to the white gentleman also portrays the relationship that some slaves had with their masters, showing devotion to the slave-owner. This shows that even though the Ex-Colored Man had "freedom", but he was still suffering from the effects of slavery. After playing for the white gentleman while touring Europe, the Ex-Colored Man decided to leave the white gentleman and go back to the South so that he could study Negro spirituals. He planned to use his knowledge of classical and ragtime music to create a new Black American musical genre. He wanted to "bring glory and honor to the Negro race". He wanted to return to his [heritage](#) and make it a proud and self-righteous race.

Just as the Ex-Colored Man began to work on his music, he witnessed the [lynching](#) of a black man. The crowd originally wanted to hang the man, but decided to burn him instead. The Ex-Colored Man narrates in detail of what he saw, "He squirmed, he withered, strained at his chains, then gave out cries and groans that I shall always hear." The incident at the town square opens his eyes to a [racism](#) he has never seen before. He continues, "The cries and groans were choked off by the fire and smoke; but his eyes, bulging from their sockets, rolled from side to side, appealing in vain for help." The scene that day stuck vividly in his mind. It burned a sour image in his brain. He finishes with, "Some of the crowd yelled and cheered, others seemed appalled at what they had done, and there were those who turned away sickened at the sight. I was fixed to the spot where I stood powerless to take my eyes from what I did not want to see."

This scene describes the horror of lynching, and the power it had over the mob of people in the deep south. It should also be noted that many critics believe that James Weldon Johnson wrote this scene about the lynchings to dissuade people from lynchings. [Michael Berube](#) writes, "there is no question that Johnson wrote the book, in large part, to try to stem the tide of lynchings sweeping the nation." After witnessing this event, the Ex-Colored Man decided to "pass" as white. He gave up his dream of making music that would glorify his race. He stated that he did not want to be "identified with a people that could with impunity be treated worse than animals," or with a people who could treat other humans that way. He simply wishes to remain neutral. The Ex-Colored Man declares that he "would neither disclaim the black race nor claim the white race."

The world accepted The Ex-Colored Man to be white. Our narrator is "passing" as a white man his whole life and never truly reveals himself as black to the world. This fact is what gives the narrative its title of "Ex-Colored Man". He later married a white woman, had two children, and lived out his life a successful yet mediocre business man. The only true acceptance the Ex-Colored Man experienced in his life was from his wife, who loved him and agreed to marry him after he revealed his secret to her. His wife dies during their second child's birth, leaving him alone to raise his two children. At the end of the book, the Ex-colored Man said, "My love for my children makes me glad that I am what I am, and keeps me from desiring to be otherwise; and yet, when I sometimes open a little box in which I still keep my fast yellowing manuscripts, the only tangible remnants of a vanished dream, a dead ambition, a sacrificed talent, I cannot repress the thought, that after all I have chosen the lesser part, that I have sold my birthright for a [mess of pottage](#)." "Passing" could be interpreted as a decision to avoid the black race. He states that he "regrets holding himself back." He may have been implying that if he had he embraced the [Negro](#) community and let the community embrace him, that he could have made a difference.

The Ex-Colored Man was one of the few people who was not held back by being black. He had a strong education, smart wits, and light colored skin. The masses all assumed he was white. However, his talent was in [black music](#). Because of his fear of being a Negro, he threw away his talent as a musician to "become" a white man. This act depicts how society was during the 1910s and how terrible it was of this society to force him between his love of music and the safety and convenience of being white. The white gentleman accepted the Ex-Colored Man for who he was, but most people were not like that. He did not go back and play his music for the world after his wife died because of his children. He could not have his white children grow up on the black side of a segregated world. He wanted to give them every advantage he could.

Awakening (The)—by Kate Chopin.

The novel opens with the Pontellier family vacationing on [Grand Isle](#) at a resort on the [Gulf of Mexico](#) managed by Madame Lebrun and her two sons, Robert and Victor. The Pontellier family is composed of Léonce Pontellier, a businessman of [Louisiana Creole](#) heritage, and Edna, his twenty-eight year old wife. They have two sons, Etienne and Raoul who do not feature prominently in the plot and who are largely symbols of Edna's proscribed existence.

Edna spends most of her time with her close friend Adèle Ratignolle. In a boisterous and cheery manner, Adèle reminds Edna of her duties as a wife and mother. At Grand Isle, Edna eventually forms a connection with Robert Lebrun, a charming and earnest young man who actively seeks Edna's attention and affections. They start to fall deeply in love, but Robert, sensing the doomed nature of any relationship that would develop between them, flees to Mexico under the guise of pursuing a nameless business venture.

At this point in the novel, the narrative focus shifts to Edna's complex and shifting emotions as she reconciles her maternal duties with her desire to be with Robert and her desire for social freedom.

The summer vacation over, Edna and the family return to New Orleans. Gradually, Edna begins to take an active role in her own happiness and reassesses her personal priorities. She starts to isolate herself from New Orleans society and withdraw from some of the duties traditionally associated with motherhood. Léonce eventually calls in a doctor to diagnose her, fearing she is losing her mental faculties. The doctor advises Léonce to let her be.

Léonce decides to leave Edna home as he travels to New York City on business. The children are sent to stay with his mother, leaving Edna alone at the house for an extended period. This gives Edna physical and emotional room to breathe and think over various aspects of her life. While her husband is still in New York, Edna decides to move out of her house and into a small bungalow nearby. During this period of transition she begins an abortive affair with Alcée Arobin, a persistent suitor with a reputation for being free with his affections. It's the first time in the novel Edna is shown as a sexual being, but the affair proves awkward and emotionally fraught.

The other person to whom Edna reaches out during this period of solitude is Mademoiselle Reisz, a gifted recitalist whose playing is renowned throughout New Orleans but who maintains a generally hermetic existence. At a party earlier in the novel, Edna is profoundly moved by Mlle Reisz's playing. Mlle Reisz is in contact with Robert while he is in Mexico, receiving letters from him regularly. Edna begs her to reveal their contents, which she does, proving to Edna that Robert is thinking about her.

Eventually Robert returns to New Orleans. At first aloof (and finding excuses not to be near Edna), he eventually confesses his passionate love for her. He admits that the business trip to Mexico was an excuse to get away from a relationship that would never work.

Edna is called away to help Adèle with a difficult childbirth. Adèle pleads with Edna to think of what she would be turning her back on if she did not behave appropriately. When Edna returns home, she finds a note from Robert stating that he has left and will not be returning.

Edna is devastated. She goes immediately back to Grand Isle, where she first met Robert Lebrun. It is also where she learned to swim earlier in the novel, an episode that was both exhilarating and terrifying, and an episode that perfectly encapsulated the conflicting emotions she wrestled with during the course of the novel. The novel ends with Edna allowing herself to be overtaken by the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.¹

Bear (The)—by Anton Chekhov.

The play takes place in the [drawing room](#) of Elena Ivanovna Popova's [estate](#) on the seven month anniversary of her husband's death. Since her husband died, Popova has locked herself in the house in [mourning](#). Her footman, Luka, begins the play by begging Popova to stop mourning and step outside the estate. She ignores him, saying that she made a promise to her husband to remain forever faithful to his memory. Their conversation is interrupted when Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov arrives and wishes to see the Elena Popova.

Although Luka tells Grigory Smirnov to leave, he ignores Luka's requests and barges into the [dining room](#). Popova agrees to meet with him and Smirnov explains to her that her late husband owes him a sum of 1,200 [roubles](#). Because he is a landowner, Smirnov explains that he needs the sum paid to him on that same day to pay for the [mortgage](#) of a house due the next day. Popova explains that she has no money with her and that she will settle her husband's debts when her [steward](#) arrives the day after tomorrow. Smirnov gets angered by her refusal to pay him back and mocks the supposed 'mourning' of her husband, saying:

Well, there! "A state of mind."... "Husband died seven months ago!" Must I pay the interest, or mustn't I? I ask you: Must I pay, or must I not? Suppose your husband is dead, and you've got a state of mind, and nonsense of that sort.... And your steward's gone away somewhere, devil take him, what do you want me to do? Do you think I can fly away from my creditors in a balloon, or what? Or do you expect me to go and run my head into a brick wall?

Smirnov decides that he will not leave the estate until his debts are paid off, even if that means waiting until the day after tomorrow. He and Popova get into another argument when he starts yelling at the footman to bring him [kvass](#) or any alcoholic beverage. The argument turns into a debate about true love according to the different genders. Smirnov argues that women are incapable of loving "anybody except a lapdog," to which Popova argues that she wholeheartedly loved her husband although he cheated on her and disrespected her. The argument deteriorates into another shouting match about paying back the debt. During this argument Popova insults Smirnov by calling him a [bear](#), amongst other names, saying, "You're a [boor](#)! A coarse bear! A Bourbon! A [monster](#)!"

Smirnov, insulted, calls for a [duel](#), not caring that Popova is a woman. Popova, in turn, enthusiastically agrees and goes off to get a pair of guns her husband owned. Luka overhears their conversation, gets frightened for his mistress, and goes off to find someone to help put an end to their feud before anyone gets hurt. Meanwhile, Smirnov says to himself how impressed he is by Popova's audacity and slowly realizes that he has actually fallen in love with her and her [dimpled cheeks](#). When Popova returns with the [pistols](#), Smirnov makes his love confession. Popova oscillates between refusing him and ordering him to leave and telling him to stay. Eventually, the two get close and kiss each other just as Luka returns with the gardener and coachman.

Beloved—by Toni Morrison.

The book follows the story of Sethe and her daughter Denver as they try to rebuild their lives after having escaped from slavery. Their home, 124 Bluestone Road, Cincinnati, is haunted by a [revenant](#), who turns out to be the ghost of Sethe's daughter. Because of the haunting—which often involves things being thrown around the room—Sethe's youngest daughter, Denver, is shy, friendless, and housebound, and her sons, Howard and Buglar, have run away from home by the time they are thirteen. Shortly afterward, Baby Suggs, the mother of Sethe's husband Halle, dies in her bed.

Paul D, one of the slaves from Sweet Home, the plantation where Baby Suggs, Sethe, Halle, he, and many other slaves had worked, arrives at 124. He tries to bring a sense of reality into the

house. He also tries to make the family move forward and leave the past behind. In doing so, he forces out the ghost of Beloved. At first, he seems to be successful, because he leads the family to a carnival, out of the house for the first time in years. However, on their way back, they encounter a young woman sitting in front of the house. She has the distinct features of a baby and calls herself Beloved. Denver recognizes right away that she must be a reincarnation of her sister Beloved. Paul D, suspicious, warns Sethe, but charmed by the young woman, Sethe ignores him. Paul D is gradually forced out of Sethe's home by a supernatural presence.

When made to sleep outside in a shed, he is cornered by Beloved, who has put a spell on him. She burrows into his mind and heart, forcing him to have sex with her, while flooding his mind with horrific memories from his past. Overwhelmed with guilt, Paul D tries to tell Sethe about it but cannot and instead says he wants her pregnant. Sethe is elated, and Paul D resists Beloved and her influence over him. But, when he tells friends at work about his plans to start a new family, they react fearfully. Stamp Paid reveals the reason for the community's rejection of Sethe.

When Paul D asks Sethe about it, she tells him what happened. After escaping from Sweet Home and making it to her mother-in-law's home where her children were waiting, Sethe was found by her master, who attempted to reclaim Sethe and her children. Sethe grabbed her children, ran into the tool shed and tried to kill them all, succeeding only with her oldest daughter. Sethe explains to Paul D, saying she was "trying to put my babies where they would be safe." The revelation is too much for him, and he leaves for good. Without Paul D, the sense of reality and time moving forward disappears.

Sethe comes to believe that the girl, Beloved, is the daughter she murdered when the girl was only two years old; her tombstone reads only "Beloved". Sethe begins to spend carelessly and spoil Beloved out of guilt. Beloved becomes angry and more demanding, throwing hellish tantrums when she doesn't get her way. Beloved's presence consumes Sethe's life to the point where she becomes depleted and sacrifices her own need for eating, while Beloved grows bigger and bigger. In the climax of the novel, Denver, the youngest daughter, reaches out and searches for help from the black community. People arrive at 124 to exorcise Beloved, and it is revealed that Beloved was not getting fat, as previously alluded, but is in fact pregnant from her encounters with Paul D. While Sethe is confused and has a "rememory" of her master coming again, Beloved disappears.

At the outset, the reader is led to assume Beloved is a supernatural, incarnate form of Sethe's murdered daughter. Later, Stamp Paid reveals the story of "a girl locked up by a white man over by Deer Creek. Found him dead last summer and the girl gone. Maybe that's her". Both are supportable by the text. Beloved sings a song known only to Sethe and her children; elsewhere, she speaks of Sethe's earrings without having seen them.

Bend in the River (A)—by Nobel laureate V. S. Naipaul.

Set in an unnamed [African](#) country after independence, the book is narrated by Salim, an ethnically [Indian Muslim](#) and a shopkeeper in a small, growing city in the country's remote interior. Though born and raised in another country in a more cosmopolitan city on the coast during the colonial period, as neither [European](#) nor fully African, Salim observes the rapid changes in his homeland with an outsider's distance.

Benito Cereno—by Herman Melville.

The novella centers on a [slave rebellion](#) on board a Spanish merchant ship in 1799 and because of its ambiguity has been read by some as racist and pro-slavery and by others as anti-racist and [abolitionist](#) text (Newman 1986). Earlier critics, however, had seen *Benito Cereno* as a tale that primarily explores human depravity and does not reflect upon [race](#) at all (for example Feltenstein 1947). Melville's most recent biographer, [Andrew Delbanco](#), emphasizes the topicality of "Benito Cereno" in a post-[September 11th](#) world: "In our own time of terror and torture, Benito Cereno has

emerged as the most salient of Melville's works: a tale of desperate men in the grip of a vengeful fury that those whom they hate cannot begin to understand".^[1]

There are three narratives in this book: the narrative of Cap. Delano, Melville's depiction of the scenario and the concluding legal documents from the Amistad rebellion.

The primary source for the plot, as well as some of the text, was Amasa Delano's *Narrative of Voyages and Travels, in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres*, chapter 18 (1817),^[2] though *Benito Cereno* contains crucial changes and expansions that make it a very different text. The most transformative change lies in the [narrator](#), or rather in the way in which the tale is told: The crucial information that in the slave rebellion, all the senior Spanish seamen bar the captain Don Benito Cereno have been murdered, is withheld from the reader. The Spanish sailors, and specifically Cereno, are forced to play along in a theatrical performance for the benefit of the American Amasa Delano who initially approaches the dilapidated Spanish ship to offer his assistance. Though written in the third person, the narrative emerges largely through the point of view of Delano throughout the first and longest part of the [narrative](#) and therefore remains limited to what Delano sees (or thinks he sees). Delano represents a version of [New England](#) innocence, which has also been read as strategy to ensure colonial power over both Spain and Africans in the "New World" (cf. Sundquist 1993). Babo, who plays the faithful body servant to the Spanish captain (representing European aristocracy), is the master-mind behind both the revolt and the subsequent subterfuge. The enslaved Africans have ruthlessly killed their "owner", Alexandro Aranda, and other key officers on the ship to force the captain and the remaining crew to take them back to Africa. To some earlier critics, Babo represented evil, but more recent criticism has moved to reading Babo as the heroic leader of a slave rebellion, whose tragic failure does not diminish the genius of the rebels. In an inversion of contemporary racial stereotypes, Babo is portrayed as a physically weak man of great intellect, his head (impaled on a spike at the end of the story) a "hive of subtlety".^[3] In contrast, the supposedly civilized American Delano is duped by Babo and his comrades for the duration of the novella, only ultimately defeating him and rescuing the distraught Cereno through brute strength.

Billy Budd—by Herman Melville.

The plot follows Billy Budd, a seaman [impressed](#) into service aboard HMS *Bellipotent* in the year 1797, when the [Royal Navy](#) was reeling from two [major mutinies](#) and was threatened by the Revolutionary French Republic's military ambitions. He is impressed from another ship, *The Rights of Man* (named after the very topical book by [Thomas Paine](#) of that period, leading Budd to shout as it leaves "good-by to you too, old *Rights-of-Man*" clearly intended to have a double meaning, and considered so by the crew who hear it).

Billy, an orphaned illegitimate child suffused with innocence, openness and natural charisma, is adored by the crew, but for unexplained reasons arouses the antagonism of the ship's [Master-at-Arms](#), John Claggart, who falsely accuses Billy of conspiracy to mutiny. When Claggart brings his charges to the Captain, the Hon. Edward Fairfax "Starry" Vere, Vere summons both Claggart and Billy to his cabin for a private confrontation. When, in Billy's and Vere's presence, Claggart makes his false charges, Billy is unable to find the words to respond owing to a speech impediment. Unable to express himself verbally, he strikes and accidentally kills Claggart.

Vere, an eminently thoughtful man whose name recalls the Latin words "veritas" (truth) and "vir" (man) as well as the English word "veer," then convenes a [drumhead court-martial](#). He acts as [convening authority](#), prosecutor, defense counsel and sole witness (except for Billy himself). He then intervenes in the deliberations of the court-martial panel to argue them into convicting Billy, despite their and his belief in Billy's innocence before God. (As Vere says in the moments

following Claggart's death, "Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!") Vere claims to be following the letter of the [Mutiny Act](#) and the [Articles of War](#).

Having started the process, Vere and the other officers find that their own opinion matters little. "We are not talking about justice, we are talking about the law", that is, the law dictates what must ensue, whether or not it is just. The law states that an enlisted man killing an officer during wartime (accidentally or not) must hang. Vere spells out the awful truth and explains their inability to mete out leniency.

At his insistence, the court-martial convicts Billy; Vere argues that any appearance of weakness in the officers and failure to enforce discipline could stir the already turbulent waters of mutiny throughout the British fleet. Condemned to be hanged from the ship's [yardarm](#) at dawn the morning after the killing, Billy's final words are, "God bless Captain Vere!", which is then repeated by the gathered crew in a "resonant and sympathetic echo." The story may have been based on events onboard [USS Somers](#), an American naval vessel; one of the defendants in the later investigation was a first cousin of Melville, Lt. [Guert Gansevoort](#).

The novel closes with three chapters that cloak the story with further ambiguity:

Chapter 28 describes the death of Captain Vere. In a naval action with a French vessel named the *Athée* (the *Atheist*), [Captain Vere is mortally wounded and carried below](#). His last words are "Billy Budd, Billy Budd."

Chapter 29 presents an extract from an official naval gazette purporting to give the facts of the fates of John Claggart and Billy Budd aboard HMS *Bellipotent* — but the "facts" offered turn the facts that the reader learned from the story upside down. In the gazette article, William Budd is a seaman but a conspiring mutineer probably of foreign birth and mysterious antecedents who, when confronted by the honest John Claggart, the master-at-arms loyally enforcing the law on board one of His Majesty's ships, stabs Claggart to the heart, killing him. The gazette concludes that the manner of the crime, and the weapon used, both point to Budd's foreign birth and subversive character; it then reports that the mutineer has paid the price of his crime and nothing more is amiss aboard HMS *Bellipotent*.

Chapter 30 reprints a cheaply printed ballad written by one of Billy's shipmates as a kind of elegy for the Handsome Sailor. And yet the adult, experienced man depicted by the poem is not at all the young innocent whom the reader has met in the preceding chapters.

Birthday Party (The)—by Harold Pinter.

While Meg prepares to serve her husband Petey breakfast, Stanley, described as a man "*in his late thirties*" (23), who is disheveled and unshaven, enters from upstairs. Alternating between maternal and flirtatious affectation toward Stanley, Meg tells him that "two gentlemen", two new "visitors", will be arriving (30–31). At this information, Stanley appears concerned, suspicious, and disbelieving; there is "*A sudden knock on the front door*" and Meg goes offstage, while Stanley "*listens*" at a voice coming "*through the letter box*," but it is just Lulu carrying in a package delivered for Meg. Right after Meg and Lulu exit, Goldberg and McCann arrive, but Stanley immediately "*sidles through the kitchen door and out of the back door*" before they can see him to eavesdrop (38), but they speak only vaguely about "this job" they have to do with bureaucratic clichés (41), nevertheless rendering McCann "satisfied" (41). After Meg's new "guests" go up to their room, Stanley enters, and Meg gives him the package brought by Lulu containing his birthday present, which he opens, revealing, inappropriately for a man his age, a toy drum.

McCann and Stanley bicker, with Stanley acting erratically and denying that it is his birthday and that Meg is "round the bend." Goldberg sends McCann out to buy alcohol for the party that Meg

has informed them that she has planned to celebrate Stanley's "birthday", which he denies having. McCann eventually confronts Stanley by asking "Why did you leave the organization?" and "Why did you betray us?", telling him "You betrayed our land [...] you betray our breed [...] you're dead." Meg comes down in her dress, and they begin the party, all except Stanley drinking and becoming drunk. Lulu enters and they decide to play the children's game [blind man's buff](#).

Paralleling the first scene of the play, Petey is having breakfast, and Meg asks him innocuous questions, with important differences revealing the aftermath of the party. They exit and McCann brings in Stanley, with his broken glasses; overpowered by their rhetorical prowess, Stanley goes catatonic and does not respond. They begin to lead him out of the house toward the car waiting to take him to "Monty". Petey confronts them one last time but passively backs down as they take Stanley away, "*broken*", calling out "Stan, don't let them tell you what to do!" (101). After Meg returns from shopping, she notices that "The car's gone" and as Petey remains silent, he continues to withhold his knowledge of Stanley's departure, allowing her to end the play without knowing the truth about Stanley.

Black Boy—by Richard Wright.

Black Boy (American Hunger) is a memoir of [Richard Wright's](#) childhood and young adulthood. It is split into two sections, "Southern Night" (concerning his childhood in the south) and "The Horror and the Glory" (concerning his early adult years in Chicago).

The book begins with a mischievous, four-year-old Wright setting fire to his house, and continues in that vein. Wright is a curious child living in a household of strict, religious women and violent, irresponsible men. He quickly chafes against his surroundings, reading instead of playing with other children, and rejecting the church in favor of [agnostic atheism](#) at a young age. He feels even more out of place as he grows older and comes in contact with the rampant racism of the 1920s south. Not only does he find it generally unjust, but he is especially bothered by whites' (and other blacks') desire to squash his intellectual curiosity and potential. His father deserts the family, and he is shuffled back and forth between his sick mother, his fanatically religious grandmother and various aunts and uncles. As he ventures into the white world to find jobs, he encounters extreme racism and brutal violence, which stays with him the rest of his life. The family is starving to death. They have always viewed the north as a place of opportunity, and so as soon as they can scrape together enough money, Richard and his aunt go to [Chicago](#), promising to send for his mother and brother.

He finds the north less racist than the south, and begins forming concrete ideas about American race relations. He holds many jobs, most of them menial. He washes floors during the day and reads [Proust](#) and medical journals by night. His family is still very poor, and his mother is crippled by a stroke, and his relatives continue to annoy him about his atheism and his reading. They don't see the point of it. He finds a job at the post office and meets some white men who share his cynical view of the world, and religion in particular. They invite him to the [John Reed Club](#), an organization that promotes the arts and social change. He becomes involved with a magazine called [Left Front](#). He slowly becomes immersed in the Communist party, organizing its writers and artists.

At first he thinks he will find friends within the party, especially among its black members, but he finds them to be just as afraid of change as the southern whites he had left behind. The Communists fear anyone who disagrees with their ideas, and Wright, who has always been inclined to question and speak his mind, is quickly branded a "counter-revolutionary." When he tries to leave the party, he is accused of trying to lead others away from it. After witnessing the trial of another black Communist for counter-revolutionary activity, Wright decides to abandon the party. Still, he remains branded an "enemy" of Communism, and party members threaten him away from various jobs and gatherings. Nevertheless, he does not fight them because he believes

they are clumsily groping toward ideas that he agrees with: unity, tolerance, and equality. He ends the book by resolving to use his writing to search for a way to start a revolution: he thinks that everyone has a "hunger" for life that needs to be filled, and for him, writing is his way to the human heart.

Bleak House—by Charles Dickens.

Sir Leicester Dedlock and Honoria, Lady Dedlock (his junior by more than 20 years) live at his estate of Chesney Wold. Unbeknownst to Sir Leicester, Lady Dedlock had a lover, Captain Hawdon, before her marriage to Sir Leicester — and had a child by him, Esther Summerson. Lady Dedlock, believing her daughter to be dead, has chosen to live out her days 'bored to death' as a fashionable lady of the world.

Esther is raised by Miss Barbary, Lady Dedlock's spartan sister, who instills a sense of worthlessness in her that Esther will battle throughout the novel. Esther does not realize that Miss Barbary is her aunt, thinking of her only as her godmother. When Miss Barbary dies, the Chancery lawyer "Conversation" Kenge takes charge of Esther's future on the instruction of his client, John Jarndyce. Jarndyce becomes Esther's guardian, and after attending school in Reading for six years, she goes to live with him at Bleak House, along with his wards, Richard Carstone and Ada Clare. Esther is to be Ada's companion.

Esther soon befriends both Ada and Richard, who are cousins. They are named beneficiaries in one of the wills at issue in Jarndyce and Jarndyce; their guardian is a beneficiary under another will, and in some undefined way the two wills conflict. Richard and Ada soon fall in love, but though Mr. Jarndyce does not oppose the match, he does stipulate that Richard (who suffers from inconstancy of character) must first choose a profession. When Richard mentions the prospect of benefiting from the resolution of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, John Jarndyce beseeches him never to put faith in what he calls "the family curse".

Meanwhile, Lady Dedlock is also a beneficiary under one of the wills in Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Early in the book, while listening to her solicitor, the close-mouthed but shrewd Mr. Tulkinghorn, read an affidavit aloud, she recognizes the handwriting on the copy. The sight affects her so much that she almost faints, which Tulkinghorn notes and thinks important enough to investigate. He recognizes that Lady Dedlock has focused on the affidavit's handwriting, and seeks to trace the copyist. He discovers that the copyist was a pauper known only as "Nemo" and that he has recently died. The only person to identify him is a street-sweeper, a poor homeless boy named Jo.

Lady Dedlock also investigates the matter, disguising herself as her French maid, Mademoiselle Hortense. In disguise, she pays Jo to take her to Nemo's grave. Meanwhile, convinced that Lady Dedlock's secret might be a threat to the interests of his client, Sir Leicester Dedlock, Tulkinghorn begins to watch her every move, even enlisting the aid of the maid, who detests her.

Esther happens to meet her mother unwittingly at a church service and has a conversation with her afterwards at Chesney Wold - though, at first, neither woman recognizes the tie that binds them. Later, Lady Dedlock realises that her abandoned child is not dead, but is, in fact, Esther. She waits to confront Esther with this knowledge until Esther has survived a bout with an unidentified disease (possibly smallpox, as it permanently disfigures her), which she contracted from her maid Charley (whom she devotedly nursed back to health). Though they are happy at being reunited, Lady Dedlock tells Esther that they must never recognize their connection again.

Meanwhile, Esther has recovered her health, but her beauty is supposedly ruined. She finds that Richard, having tried and failed at several professions, has ignored his guardian's advice and is wasting all his resources in trying to push Jarndyce and Jarndyce to a conclusion (in his and Ada's favour). Further, he has broken with his guardian, under the influence of his lawyer, the odious

and crafty Mr. Vholes. In the process of becoming an active litigant, Richard has lost all his money and is breaking his health. In further defiance of John Jarndyce, he and Ada have secretly married, and Ada is carrying Richard's child. Esther experiences her own romance when Dr. Woodcourt, who knew her before her illness, returns from his mission and continues to seek her company despite her disfigurement. Unfortunately, Esther has already agreed to marry her guardian, John Jarndyce.

Hortense and Tulkinghorn discover the truth about Lady Dedlock's past. After a quiet but desperate confrontation with the lawyer, Lady Dedlock flees her home, leaving a note apologizing for her conduct. Tulkinghorn dismisses Hortense, no longer any use to him. Feeling abandoned and betrayed by Lady Dedlock and Tulkinghorn, Hortense kills Tulkinghorn and seeks to frame Lady Dedlock for his murder. On discovering his lawyer's death and his wife's flight, Sir Leicester suffers a catastrophic stroke but manages to communicate that he forgives his wife and wants her to return to him.

Inspector Bucket, who up to now has investigated several matters on the periphery of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, accepts the commission of the stricken Sir Leicester to find Lady Dedlock. He suspects Lady Dedlock, even after he arrests George Rouncewell (the only other person known to be with Tulkinghorn on the night of the murder, and known to have quarrelled with the lawyer repeatedly). Bucket pursues the charge given to him by Sir Leicester and ultimately calls on Esther to assist in the search for Lady Dedlock. By this point, Bucket has cleared Lady Dedlock's name by discovering Hortense's guilt, but she has no way to know this, and, wandering the country and London in cold and bitter weather, she ultimately dies at the cemetery where her former lover Captain Hawdon (Nemo) is buried. Esther and Bucket find her there.

Developments in Jarndyce and Jarndyce seem to take a turn for the better when a later will is discovered which revokes all previous wills and leaves the bulk of the estate to Richard and Ada. At the same time, John Jarndyce releases Esther from their engagement and she and Dr. Woodcourt become engaged. They go to Chancery to find Richard and to discover what news there might be of the lawsuit's resolution. To their horror, they discover that the new will is given no chance to resolve Jarndyce and Jarndyce, for the costs of litigation have consumed the estate, and as there is nothing left to litigate, the case melts away. After hearing this, Richard collapses, and Dr Woodcourt determines that he is in the last stages of [consumption](#). Richard apologizes to John Jarndyce and succumbs, leaving Ada alone with their child, a boy whom she names Richard. Jarndyce takes in Ada and the child. Esther and Woodcourt marry and live in Yorkshire, in a house which Jarndyce gives to them. In time, they have two daughters.

Many of this intricate novel's subplots deal with the minor characters and their diverse ties to the main plot. One of these subplots is the hard life and happy though difficult marriage of Caddy Jellyby and Prince Turveydrop. Another focuses on George Rouncewell's rediscovery of his family at Chesney Wold and his reunion with his mother and brother.

Bless Me, Ultima—by Rudolfo Anaya

Set in the small town of Guadalupe, [New Mexico](#) during [World War II](#), this novel follows the story of Antonio Márez who has a [curandera](#) named Ultima come live with his family when he was 7. The main plot line involves Ultima's struggle to stop the [witchcraft](#) of the three [bruja](#) daughters of Tenorio Trementina, the main villain. In the story Antonio, who is witness to several deaths, is forced to deal with religious and moral issues.

As Antonio grows up, he finds that he must choose between the two opposing families from which he came: the Márez—wild and untamed [vaqueros](#) from Antonio's father's side—and the Lunas—quiet, religious farmers from whom his mother descended. His father wants to help Antonio make his own choice about his future. His mother's dream is for him to become a [Roman Catholic](#) priest,

but over the course of the novel Antonio becomes disillusioned with the faith and through Ultima learns of the broad awareness and possibilities of other Gods. Much of the novel is spent with Antonio trying to reconcile both [Native American religion](#) with traditional Catholicism and the Lunas with the Márez.

In this story Antonio asks questions concerning evil, justice and the nature of God. He witnesses many violent deaths, which force him to mature and face the reality of life. Ultimately, the Catholic Church, dominated by female imagery and concentrated on the Virgin Mary and a vengeful Father God, on ritual and superficiality, is unable to answer Antonio's questions. At the same time, realizing that the Church represents the female values of his mother, Antonio cannot bring himself to accept the lawlessness, violence and unthinking sensuality which his father and older brothers symbolize. Instead through his relationship with Ultima, he discovers a oneness with nature.

Blind Assassin (The)—Margaret Atwood.

The novel centres on the [protagonist](#), Iris Chase, and her sister Laura, who committed [suicide](#) shortly after the [Second World War](#) ended. Iris, now an old woman, recalls the events and relationships of her childhood, youth and middle age, as well as her unhappy marriage to Richard Griffen, a rival of her [industrialist](#) father. Interwoven into the novel is a [story within a story](#), a [roman à clef](#) attributed to Laura and published by Iris about Alex Thomas, a politically radical author of [pulp science fiction](#) who has an ambiguous relationship with the sisters. That novel itself contains a story within a story, the [eponymous](#) *Blind Assassin*, a science fiction story told by Alex's fictional counterpart to that novel's protagonist, believed to be Laura's fictional counterpart.

The novel takes the form of a gradual revelation, illuminating both Iris' youth and her old age before coming to the pivotal events of her and Laura's lives around the time of the Second World War. As the novel unfolds, and the novel-within-a-novel becomes ever more obviously inspired by real events, it is revealed that Iris, not Laura, is the novel-within-a-novel's true author and protagonist. Though the novel-within-a-novel had long been believed to be inspired by Laura's romance with Alex, it is revealed that *The Blind Assassin* was written by Iris based on her [extramarital affair](#) with Alex. She later published the work in Laura's name after Laura committed suicide upon learning of their affair. The novel ends with Iris posthumously leaving the truth to be discovered in the form of an unpublished autobiography left to her sole surviving granddaughter.

The book is set in the fictional [Ontario](#) town of Port Ticonderoga and in the [Toronto](#) of the 1930s and 1940s. It is a work of [historical fiction](#) with the major events of Canadian history forming an important backdrop to the novel. Greater verisimilitude is given through a series of newspaper articles that comment on events and on the novel's characters from a distance.

Bluest Eye (The)—by Toni Morrison.

Claudia and Frieda MacTeer live in Ohio with their parents. The MacTeer family takes two other people into their home, Mr. Henry and Pecola. Pecola is a troubled young girl with a hard life. Her parents are constantly fighting, both physically and verbally. Pecola is continually being told and reminded of what an “ugly” girl she is, thus fueling her desire to be [caucasian](#) with [blue eyes](#). Throughout the novel, it is revealed that not only has Pecola had a life full of hatred and hardships, but her parents have as well. Pecola's mother, Pauline, only feels alive and happy when she is working for a rich, white family. Her father, Cholly, is a drunk who was left with his aunt when he was young and ran away to find his father, who wanted nothing to do with him. Both Pauline and Cholly eventually lost the love they once had for one another. While Pecola is doing dishes, her intoxicated father rapes her. His motives are unclear and confusing, seemingly a combination of

both love and hate. Cholly flees after the second time he rapes Pecola, leaving her pregnant. In the end, Pecola's child is born prematurely and dies. Claudia and Frieda give up the money they had been saving and plant flower seeds in hopes that if the flowers bloom, Pecola's baby will live; the marigolds never bloom.

In the afterword, Morrison explains that she had met a man named Terry Owens from a down south area. Morrison knew this man while he had children of his own. He was a very nice but harmful man and didn't take nonsense from anyone. Morrison explains in a later book that Terry Owens was a veteran from the Vietnam war. "I was a very strong minded man coming from a home where I hadn't learn to read or working for a man that paid nothing much than a dollar."

Ideas of beauty, particularly those that relate to racial and class characteristics, are a major theme in this book. The title refers to Pecola's wish that her eyes would turn blue. Claudia is given a white baby doll to play with and is constantly told how lovely it is. Insults to physical appearance are often given in racial terms; a light-skinned student named Maureen is shown favoritism at school. There is a contrast between the world shown in the cinema and the one in which Pauline is a servant, as well as the [WASP](#) society and the existence the main characters live in. Most chapters' titles are extracts from a [Dick and Jane](#) reading book, presenting a happy, white family. This family is contrasted with Pecola's existence.

Bone—by Fae Myenne Ng.

Fae Ng's novel *Bone* chronicles the fictional history of a family of Chinese immigrants living in San Francisco's Chinatown from the 1960's to the 1990's. The main characters are three sisters, American by birth and environment, struggling to make their ways to peace as persons, women, and Chinese Americans. The central event of the story is the death of the second daughter, Ona, who has recently killed herself by jumping from the thirteenth floor of a building while on drugs.

The novel itself is divided into fourteen chapters

Bonesetter's Daughter (The)—by Amy Tan.

Ruth is a self-sufficient woman who makes her living as a [ghostwriter](#) for [self-help books](#). She lives with her long-term boyfriend, Art Kamen, and acts as a stepmother to Art's two teenage daughters from a previous marriage, Dory and Fia. Meanwhile, as LuLing is showing signs of [dementia](#), Ruth struggles to juggle her mother's illness, her job, and her relationship. As an adult, Ruth struggles to understand her mother and her strange behavior during Ruth's childhood. Although she loves her mother, she also resents her for having criticized her harshly when she was young and forcing her to obey strict rules. LuLing believed that young Ruth had the ability to communicate with the [spirit world](#), and often expected her to produce messages from the ghost of LuLing's long-dead [nursemaid](#), Precious Auntie, by writing on a sand tray.

LuLing's autobiography makes up the middle section of the book. This story within a story describes LuLing's early life in a small Chinese village called Immortal Heart. LuLing is raised by a [mute](#), burned nursemaid called "Precious Auntie." It is later revealed that Precious Auntie sustained her injuries by swallowing burning ink resin. Although the oldest daughter in her family, LuLing is ignored by her mother in favor of her younger sister GaoLing. However, Precious Auntie was entirely devoted to caring for LuLing.

LuLing's story goes further back, describing Precious Auntie's childhood as the daughter of a local [bonesetter](#). The teen-aged Precious Auntie is the only person who knows the location of a hidden cave where many ancient "[dragon bones](#)" can be found, knowledge that she retains even after being burned and coming to live with LuLing's family. After the discovery of the [Peking Man](#),

fossilized bones and information about where they might be found becomes extremely valuable. A local family, the Changs, wish to arrange a marriage between LuLing and their son Fu Nan because they believe that LuLing can lead them to the fossil cave. LuLing's family approves of the marriage, but Precious Auntie violently opposes it. Unable to speak in detail, she writes LuLing a long letter explaining her reasons, but LuLing does not read it to its end.

Only after Precious Auntie's death does LuLing learn that her nursemaid was actually her mother, and that the woman she had thought to be her mother is actually her father's sister. After Precious Auntie's death, GaoLing marries Fu Nan and LuLing is sent away to a Christian orphanage where she completes her education, grows up and becomes a teacher. Here, she meets her first husband, Pan Kai Jing. LuLing lives in the orphanage as a teacher through [World War II](#), often going to extreme lengths to protect the students from the Japanese soldiers and other dangers. A few years later she is reunited with GaoLing. The two "sisters" immigrate to [America](#) separately and marry a pair of brothers, Edmund and Edwin. LuLing's second husband dies from a [hit and run](#) accident when Ruth was two years old.

Ruth struggles growing up as the child of a single parent who believes in curses. Once Ruth learns the details of her mother's past, she gains a new understanding of her and her seemingly erratic behavior. Answers to both women's problems unfold as LuLing's story is finally revealed in its entirety.

Brave New World—by Aldous Huxley.

The novel opens in London in 632 (AD 2540 in the [Gregorian Calendar](#)). The vast majority of the population is unified under [The World State](#), an eternally peaceful, stable global society in which goods and resources are plentiful (because the population is [permanently limited](#) to no more than two billion people) and everyone is happy. Natural reproduction has been done away with and children are created, 'decanted' and raised in Hatcheries and Conditioning Centres, where they are divided into five [castes](#) (which are further split into 'Plus' and 'Minus' members) and designed to fulfill predetermined positions within the social and economic strata of the World State. Fetuses chosen to become members of the highest caste, 'Alpha', are allowed to develop naturally while maturing to term in "decanting bottles", while fetuses chosen to become members of the lower castes ('Beta', 'Gamma', 'Delta', 'Epsilon') are subjected to [in situ](#) chemical interference to cause [arrested development](#) in intelligence or physical growth. Each 'Alpha' or 'Beta' is the product of one unique fertilized egg developing into one unique [fetus](#). Members of lower castes are not unique but are instead created using the [Bokanovsky process](#) which enables a single egg to spawn (at the point of the story being told) up to 96 children and one ovary to produce thousands of children. To further increase the birthrate of Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons, [Podsnap's Technique](#) causes all the eggs in the ovary to mature simultaneously, allowing the hatchery to get full use of the ovary in two years' time. People of these castes make up the majority of human society, and the production of such specialized children bolsters the efficiency and harmony of society, since these people are deliberately limited in their cognitive and physical abilities, as well as the scope of their ambitions and the complexity of their desires, thus rendering them easier to control. All children are educated via the hypnopaedic process, which provides each child with caste-appropriate subconscious messages to mold the child's life-long self-image and social outlook to that chosen by the leaders and their predetermined plans for producing future adult generations.

To maintain the World State's [Command Economy](#) for the indefinite future, all citizens are conditioned from birth to value consumption with such platitudes as "spending is better than mending," i.e., buy a new one instead of fixing the old one, because constant consumption, and near-universal employment to meet society's material demands, is the bedrock of economic and social stability for the World State. Beyond providing social engagement and distraction in the material realm of work or play, the need for [transcendence](#), [solitude](#) and spiritual [communion](#) is addressed with the ubiquitous availability and universally endorsed consumption of the drug [soma](#). Soma is an allusion to a [mythical drink of the same name](#) consumed by ancient [Indo-Aryans](#). In

the book, soma is a [hallucinogen](#) that takes users on enjoyable, hangover-free "holidays". It was developed by the World State to provide these inner-directed personal experiences within a socially managed context of State-run 'religious' organizations; social clubs. The hypnopaedically inculcated affinity for the State-produced drug, as a self-medicating comfort mechanism in the face of stress or discomfort, thereby eliminates the need for religion or other personal allegiances outside or beyond the World State.

[Recreational sex](#) is an integral part of society. According to The World State, sex is a social activity, rather than a means of reproduction (sex is encouraged from early childhood). The few women who can reproduce are conditioned to use birth control (a "[Malthusian belt](#)", resembling a cartridge belt holding "the regulation supply of [contraceptives](#)", is a popular fashion accessory). The maxim "everyone belongs to everyone else" is repeated often, and the idea of a "family" is considered pornographic; sexual competition and emotional, romantic relationships are rendered obsolete because they are no longer needed. Marriage, natural birth, parenthood, and pregnancy are considered too obscene to be mentioned in casual conversation. Thus, society has developed a new idea of reproductive comprehension.

Spending time alone is considered an outrageous waste of time and money. Wanting to be an individual is horrifying. This is why John, a character in the book, is later afforded celebrity-like status. Conditioning trains people to consume and never to enjoy being alone, so by spending an afternoon not playing "Obstacle Golf," or not in bed with a friend, one is forfeiting acceptance.

In The World State, people typically die at age 60^[10] having maintained good health and youthfulness their whole life. Death isn't feared; anyone reflecting upon it is reassured by the knowledge that everyone is happy, and that society goes on. Since no one has family, they have no ties to mourn.

The conditioning system eliminates the need for professional competitiveness; people are literally bred to do their jobs and cannot desire another. There is no competition within castes; each caste member receives the same food, housing, and soma rationing as every other member of that caste. There is no desire to change one's caste, largely because a person's sleep-conditioning teaches that his or her caste is superior to the other four. To grow closer with members of the same class, citizens participate in mock religious services called Solidarity Services, in which twelve people consume large quantities of soma and sing hymns. The ritual progresses through group hypnosis and climaxes in an [orgy](#).

In geographic areas nonconducive to easy living and consumption, securely contained groups of "savages" are left to their own devices.

In its first chapters, the novel describes life in The World State as wonderful and introduces Lenina and Bernard. Lenina is a socially accepted woman, normal for her society, while Bernard, a psychologist, is an outcast. Although an Alpha Plus, Bernard is shorter in stature than the average of his caste—a quality shared by the lower castes, which gives him an inferiority complex. His work with sleep-teaching has led him to realize that what others believe to be their own deeply held beliefs are merely phrases repeated to children while they are asleep. Still, he recognizes the necessity of such programming as the reason why his society meets the emotional needs of its citizens. Courting disaster, he is vocal about being different, once stating he dislikes soma because he'd "rather be himself." Bernard's differences fuel rumors that he was accidentally administered alcohol while incubated, a method used to keep Epsilons short.

Lenina, a woman who seldom questions her own motivations, is reprimanded by her friends because she is not promiscuous enough. However, she is still highly content in her role as a woman. Both fascinated and disturbed by Bernard, she responds to Bernard's advances to dispel her reputation for being too selective.

Bernard's only friend is Helmholtz Watson, an Alpha Plus lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering (Department of Writing). The friendship is based on their similar experiences as misfits, but unlike Bernard, Watson's sense of loneliness stems from being too gifted, too handsome, and too physically strong. Helmholtz is drawn to Bernard as a confidant: he can talk to Bernard about his desire to write poetry.

Bernard, desperately wanting Lenina's attention, tries to impress her by taking her on holiday to a Savage Reservation. The reservation, located in New Mexico, consists of a community named Malpais. From afar, Lenina thinks it will be exciting. In person, she finds the aged, toothless natives who mend their clothes rather than throw them away repugnant, and the situation is made worse when she discovers that she has left her soma tablets at the resort hotel. Bernard is fascinated, although he realizes his seduction plans have failed.

In typical tourist fashion, Bernard and Lenina watch what at first appears to be a quaint native ceremony. The village folk, whose culture resemble the contemporary Indian groups of the region, descendants of the Anasazi, including the Puebloan peoples of Acoma, Laguna, and Zuni, and the Ramah Navajo, begin by singing, but the ritual quickly becomes a passion play where a village boy is whipped to unconsciousness.

Soon after, the couple encounters Linda, a woman formerly of The World State who has been living in Malpais since she came on a trip and became separated from her group and her date, to whom she refers as "Tomakin" but who is revealed to be Bernard's boss, the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, Thomas. She became pregnant because she mistimed her "Malthusian Drill" and there were no facilities for an abortion. Linda gave birth to a son, John (later referred to as John the Savage) who is now eighteen.

Conversations with Linda and John reveal that their life has been hard. For eighteen years, they have been treated as outsiders: the natives hate Linda for sleeping with all the men of the village, as she was conditioned to do, and John was mistreated and excluded for his mother's actions, not to mention the role of racism. John's one joy was that his mother had taught him to read, although he only had two books: a scientific manual from his mother's job, which he called a "beastly, beastly book," and a collection of the works of Shakespeare (a work banned in The World State). John has been denied the religious rituals of the village, although he has watched them and even has had some of his own religious experiences in the desert.

Old, weathered and tired, Linda wants to return to her familiar world in London; she is tired of a life without soma. John wants to see the "brave new world" his mother has told him so much about. Bernard wants to take them back as revenge against Thomas, who had just threatened to reassign Bernard to Iceland as punishment for his antisocial beliefs. Bernard arranges permission for Linda and John to leave the reservation.

Upon his return to London, Bernard is confronted by Thomas Tomakin, the Director of the Hatchery and Conditioning Centre who, in front of an audience of higher-caste Centre workers, denounces Bernard for his antisocial behaviour. Bernard, thinking that for the first time in his life he has the upper hand, defends himself by presenting the Director with his long lost lover and unknown son, Linda and John. John falls to his knees and calls Thomas his father, which causes an uproar of laughter. The humiliated Director resigns in shame.

Spared from reassignment, Bernard makes John the toast of London. Pursued by the highest members of society, able to bed any woman he fancies, Bernard revels in attention he once scorned. The victory, however, is short lived. Linda, decrepit, toothless, friendless, goes on a permanent soma holiday while John, appalled by what he perceives to be an empty society, refuses to attend Bernard's parties. Society drops Bernard as swiftly as it had taken him. Bernard turns to the person he'd believed to be his one true friend, only to see Helmholtz fall into a quick, easy

camaraderie with John. Bernard is left an outcast yet again as he watches the only two men with whom he ever connected find more of interest in each other than they ever did in him.

John and Helmholtz's island of peace is brief. John grows frustrated by a society he finds wicked and debased. He is moved by Lenina, but also loathes her sexual advances, which revolt and shame him. He is heartbroken when his mother succumbs to soma and dies in a hospital. John's grief bewilders and revolts the hospital workers, and their lack of reaction to Linda's death prompts John to try to force humanity from the workers by throwing their soma rations out a window. The ensuing riot brings the police, who soma-gas the crowd. Bernard and Helmholtz arrive to help John, but only Helmholtz helps him, while Bernard stands to the side, torn between risking involvement by helping or escaping the scene.

Following the riot, Bernard, Helmholtz and John are brought before Mustapha Mond, the Resident World Controller for Western Europe. Bernard and Helmholtz are told they will be exiled to islands of their choice. Mond explains that this exile is not so much a threat to force freethinkers to reform and rejoin society, as it is a chance for them to act as they please because they will not be able to influence the population. He also divulges that he too once risked banishment to an island because of some scientific experiments that were deemed controversial by the state, giving insight into his sympathetic tone. Helmholtz chooses the [Falkland Islands](#), believing that their terrible weather will inspire his writing, but Bernard simply does not want to leave London; he struggles with Mond and is thrown out of the office. After Bernard and Helmholtz have left, Mustapha and John engage in a philosophical argument on the morals behind the godless society and then John is told the "experiment" will continue and he will not be sent to an island.

In the final chapter, John isolates himself from society in a lighthouse outside London where he finds his hermit life interrupted from mourning his mother by the more bitter memories of civilization. To atone, John brutally whips himself in the open, a ritual the Indians in his own village had denied him. His self-flagellation, caught on film and shown publicly, destroys his hermit life. Hundreds of gawking sightseers, intrigued by John's violent behavior, fly out to watch the savage in person. Even Lenina comes to watch, crying a tear John does not see. The sight of the woman whom he both adores and blames is too much for him; John attacks and whips her. This sight of genuine, unbridled emotion drives the crowd wild with excitement, and—handling it as they are conditioned to—they turn on each other, in a frenzy of beating and chanting that devolves into a mass orgy of *soma* and sex. In the morning, John, hopeless, alone, horrified by his drug use and the orgy in which he participated that countered his beliefs, makes one last attempt to escape civilization and atone. When thousands of gawking sightseers arrive that morning, frenzied at the prospect of seeing the savage perform again, they find that John has hanged himself.

Brighton Rock—by Graham Greene.

Charles "Fred" Hale comes to Brighton on assignment to anonymously distribute cards for a newspaper competition (this is a variant of "[Lobby Lud](#)" in which the name of the person to be spotted is "[Kolley Kibber](#)"). The [antihero](#) of the novel, [Pinkie Brown](#), is a teenage [sociopath](#) and up-and-coming gangster. Hale had betrayed the former leader of the gang Pinkie now controls. Ida Arnold, a plump, kind-hearted and decent woman, is drawn into the action by a chance meeting with the terrified Hale, whom Pinkie murders in obscure circumstances shortly afterwards. Pinkie's attempts to cover his tracks lead to a chain of fresh crimes and to an ill-fated marriage to Rose, a waitress who has the power to destroy his [alibi](#). Ida pursues Pinkie relentlessly, in part to protect Rose from the deeply disturbed boy she has married.

Although ostensibly an underworld thriller, the book is also a challenge to [Roman Catholic](#) doctrine concerning the nature of [sin](#) and the basis of [morality](#). Pinkie and Rose are Catholics, as was Greene, and their beliefs are contrasted with Ida's strong but non-religious moral sensibility.

Main Characters

Pinkie: The anti-hero of the story, merciless to his victims, simultaneously obsessed and repulsed by sex and human connection. He is the leader of 'the mob' despite being the youngest at 17.

Dallow: Pinkie's second in command - the only member of the mob Pinkie feels he can confide in.

Cubitt Another mob member who lives at 'Frank's' with Pinkie and Dallow. He leaves the gang through the course of the novel when Pinkie reveals that he killed Spicer.

Spicer: An aging mob member resident at Franks. From the beginning he expresses discomfort with the gang's increasing violence. Pinkie's mistrust of him leads to him being murdered by Pinkie for fear of him being 'milky' and leaking incriminating information to Ida Arnold or the Police.

Rose: Pinkie's girlfriend and later wife. The very poor, modest girl who works in Snow's Cafe. She is also a Roman Catholic like Pinkie and falls in love with him despite his advances on her being purely to keep her from giving incriminating evidence. Pinkie is usually repulsed by her but later has the occasional feeling of tenderness towards her.

Ida Arnold: Ida takes up the role of the detective, hunting down Pinkie to bring justice to Hale. Although this is her original motive, when she finds out that Pinkie is marrying Rose she does so to save the girl. Ida represents the force of justice in this novel, and in contrast to Pinkie and Rose is on the side of 'Right and Wrong'. She acquires information from Cubitt once he is cast out of the gang which significantly aids her investigation.

Broken for You—by Stephanie Kallos.

Broken for You is a debut novel of infinite charm and tremendous heart that explores the risks and rewards of human connection, and the hidden strength behind things that only seem fragile. With a riotous energy that recalls the works of John Irving and Anne Tyler, Kallos brings to life a delightful set of characters—among them an old woman who converses regularly with her porcelain collection; a young woman who can fix a leaky sink but can't stop her own tears from falling; a Yeats-loving bowling enthusiast; and a woman who survived a world war with her sense of humor (and her affinity for Hawaiian shirts) intact.

When we meet septuagenarian Margaret Hughes, she is living alone in a mansion in Seattle with only a massive collection of valuable antiques for company. Enter Wanda Schultz, a young woman with a broken heart who has come west to search for her wayward boyfriend. Both women are guarding dark secrets and have spent many years building up protective armor against the outside world. But as the two begin their tentative dance of friendship, the armor begins to fall away and Margaret opens her house to the younger woman. This launches a series of remarkable and unanticipated events, leading Margaret to discover a way to redeem her cursed past, and Wanda to learn the true purpose of her cross-country journey. Along the way, a famous mosaic artist is born, a Holocaust survivor is reunited with her long-lost tea set, and a sad-eyed drifter finds his long-lost daughter.

Funny, heartbreaking, and alive with a potpourri of eccentric and irresistible characters, *Broken for You* is a testament to the saving graces of surrogate families, and shows how far the tiniest repair jobs can go in righting the world's wrongs.

Brothers Karamazov (The)—by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

Dostoyevsky began his first notes for *The Brothers Karamazov* in April 1878. Several influences can be gleaned from the earliest stages of the [novel](#)'s genesis. He was very affected by the Russian philosopher and thinker [Nikolai Fyodorovich Fyodorov](#).^[citation needed] Fyodorov advocated a [Christianity](#) in which human [redemption](#) and [resurrection](#) could occur on earth through sons redeeming the sins of their fathers to create human unity through a universal family. The tragedy of [patricide](#) in this novel becomes more poignant when seen as a reversal of this ideology. The brothers in the story do not resurrect their father but instead are complicit in his [murder](#), which Dostoyevsky expresses as complete [human](#) disunity.

Though Dostoyevsky was influenced by [religion](#) and [philosophy](#) in his life and the writing of *The Brothers Karamazov*, a personal tragedy altered the work. In May 1878, Dostoyevsky's three-year-old son Alyosha died of [epilepsy](#), a condition inherited from his father. The novelist's grief is apparent throughout the book; Dostoyevsky named the hero Alyosha, as well as imbuing him with qualities which he sought and most admired. His loss is also reflected in the story of Captain Snegiryov and his young son Ilyusha.

The death of his son brought Dostoyevsky to the monastery Optina Pustyn later that year. There, he found inspiration for several aspects of *The Brothers Karamazov*, though at the time he intended to write a novel about childhood instead. Parts of the biographical section of Zosima's life are based on *The Life of the Elder Leonid*, a text he found at Optina and copied "almost word for word".^[9]

Another experience led to his choosing patricide to dominate the external action of the novel. In the 1850s, while serving his sentence in Omsk, he met three brothers who represented the perfect fraternal union in expiation. They had committed a crime obeying the order of the firstborn, Alei, whose innocence and sweetness captivated the novelist from the first moment he met him.^[10]

Although it was written in the 19th century, *The Brothers Karamazov* displays a number of modern elements. Dostoyevsky composed the book with a variety of literary techniques, which led many of his critics^[who?] to characterize his work as "[slipshod](#)". Though privy to many of the thoughts and feelings of the [protagonists](#), the narrator is a self-proclaimed writer; he discusses his own mannerisms and personal perceptions so often in the novel that he becomes a character. Through his descriptions, the narrator's voice merges imperceptibly into the [tone](#) of the people he is describing, often extending into the characters' most personal thoughts. There is no voice of authority in the story (see [Mikhail Bakhtin](#) "Problems of Dostoyevsky's Art: Polyphony and Unfinalizability" for more on the relationship between Dostoyevsky and his characters). In addition to the principal narrator there are several sections narrated by other characters entirely, such as the story of the Grand Inquisitor and Zosima's confessions. This technique enhances the theme of truth, making many aspects of the tale completely subjective.

Dostoyevsky uses individual styles of speech to express the inner personality of each person. For example, the [attorney](#) Fetyukovich is characterized by [malapropisms](#) (e.g. 'robbed' for 'stolen', and at one point declares five possible suspects in the murder 'irresponsible' rather than innocent). Several plot digressions provide insight into other apparently minor characters. For example, the narrative in Book Six is almost entirely devoted to Zosima's biography, which contains a confession from a man whom he met many years before. Dostoyevsky does not rely on a single source or a group of major characters to convey the themes of this book, but uses a variety of viewpoints, narratives and characters throughout.

The diverse array of literary techniques and distinct voices in the novel makes its [translation](#) difficult, although *The Brothers Karamazov* has been translated from the original Russian into a number of languages. In [English](#), the translation by [Constance Garnett](#) probably continues to be the most widely read. However, some have criticized Garnett for taking too much liberty with Dostoyevsky's text while translating the novel in a [Victorian](#) manner.^[who?] Another popular translation is by [Julius Katzer](#), published by [Progress Publishers](#) in 1981 and later re-printed by [Raduga Publishers](#) [Moscow](#).

In 1958, Manuel Komroff released a translation of the novel, published by The New American Library of World Literature, Inc.^[11] In 1976, Ralph Matlaw thoroughly revised Garnett's work for his Norton Critical Edition volume.^[12] This in turn was the basis for Victor Terras' influential *A Karamazov Companion*.^[13] In 1990 [Richard Pevear](#) and [Larissa Volokhonsky](#) released a new translation; it won a PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Prize in 1991 and garnered positive reviews from [The New York Times Book Review](#) and the Dostoyevsky scholar Joseph Frank, who praised it for being the most faithful to Dostoyevsky's original Russian.^[14] The translation by Andrew R. MacAndrew is also highly regarded

Candide—by Voltaire.

A number of deadly historical events inspired Voltaire to write *Candide*, most notably the [Seven Years' War](#) and the [1755 Lisbon earthquake](#): both are frequently referred to in the book and are cited by scholars as reasons for its composition.^[11] The 1755 Lisbon earthquake, [tsunami](#), and resulting fires of [All Saints' Day](#), had a strong influence on theologians of the day and on Voltaire, who was himself disillusioned by them. The earthquake had an especially large effect on the contemporary doctrine of optimism, a philosophical system which implies that such events should not occur. Optimism is founded on the [theodicy](#) of [Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz](#) that says all is for the best because God is a benevolent deity. This concept is often put into the form, "all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds" (Fr. "*Tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes*"). Philosophers had trouble fitting the horrors of this earthquake into the optimist [world view](#).^[12]

Voltaire actively rejected Leibnizian optimism after the natural disaster, convinced that if this were the best possible world, it should surely be better than it is.^[13] In both *Candide* and [Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne](#) ("Poem on the Lisbon Disaster"), Voltaire attacks this optimist belief.^[12] He makes use of the Lisbon earthquake in both *Candide* and his *Poème* to argue this point, sarcastically describing the catastrophe as one of the most horrible disasters "in the best of all possible worlds".^[14] Immediately after the earthquake, unreliable rumours circulated around Europe, sometimes overestimating the severity of the event. Ira Wade, a noted expert on Voltaire and *Candide*, has analysed which sources Voltaire might have referenced in learning of the event. Wade speculates that Voltaire's primary source for information on the Lisbon earthquake was the 1755 work [Relation historique du Tremblement de Terre survenu à Lisbonne](#) by [Ange Goudar](#).^[14]

Apart from such events, contemporaneous stereotypes of the German personality may have been a source of inspiration for the text, as they were for [Simplicius Simplicissimus](#), a 1669 satirical picaresque novel written by [Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen](#) and inspired by the [Thirty Years' War](#). The protagonist of this novel, who was supposed to embody stereotypically German characteristics, is quite similar to the protagonist of *Candide*.^[4] These stereotypes, according to Voltaire biographer [Alfred Owen Aldridge](#), include "extreme credulousness or sentimental simplicity", two of Candide's, and Simplicius's, defining qualities. Aldridge writes, "Since Voltaire admitted familiarity with fifteenth-century German authors who used a bold and buffoonish style, it is quite possible that he knew *Simplicissimus* as well."^[4]

A satirical and parodic precursor of *Candide*, [Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels](#) (1726) is one of *Candide's* closest literary relatives. This satire tells the story of "a gullible ingenue", Gulliver, who (like Candide) travels to several "remote nations" and is hardened by the many misfortunes which befall him. As evidenced by similarities between the two books, Voltaire likely drew upon *Gulliver's Travels* for inspiration while writing *Candide*.^[15] Other probable sources of inspiration for *Candide* are [Télémaque](#) (1699) by [François Fénelon](#) and [Cosmopolite](#) (1753) by [Louis-Charles Fougeret de Monbron](#). *Candide's* parody of the *bildungsroman* is likely based on *Télémaque*, which includes the prototypical parody of the sagacious tutor on whom Pangloss may have been partly based. Likewise, Monbron's protagonist undergoes a disillusioning series of travels similar to those of Candide.

Canterbury Tales (The)—by Geoffrey Chaucer.

The Canterbury Tales is a collection of stories written in [Middle English](#) by [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) at the end of the 14th century. The tales (mostly in verse, although some are in prose) are told as part of a story-telling contest by a group of pilgrims as they travel together on a journey from [Southwark](#) to the shrine of [Saint Thomas Becket](#) at [Canterbury Cathedral](#). The prize for this contest is a free meal at the [Tabard Inn](#) at Southwark on their return.

Following a long list of works written earlier in his career, including *Troilus and Criseyde*, *House of Fame*, and *Parliament of Fowls*, the *Canterbury Tales* was Chaucer's [magnum opus](#). He uses the tales and the descriptions of the characters to paint an ironic and critical portrait of English society at the time, and particularly of the Church. Structurally, the collection bears the influence of *The Decameron*, which [Chaucer](#) is said to have come across during his first diplomatic mission to [Italy](#) in 1372. However, Chaucer peoples his tales with 'sondry folk' rather than Boccaccio's fleeing nobles.

Caretaker (The)—by Harold Pinter.

Aston has invited Davies, a homeless man, into his apartment after rescuing him from a bar fight (7–9). Davies comments on the apartment and criticizes the fact that it is cluttered and badly kept. Aston attempts to find him a pair of shoes for Davies but Davies rejects all the offers. Once he turns down a pair that doesn't fit well enough and another that has the wrong colour laces. Early on, Davies reveals to Aston that his real name is not "Bernard Jenkins", his "assumed name", but really "Mac Davies" (19–20, 25). He claims that his papers validating this fact are in [Sidcup](#) and that he must and will return there to retrieve them just as soon as he has a good pair of shoes. Aston and Davies discuss where he will sleep and the problem of the "bucket" attached to the ceiling to catch dripping rain water from the leaky roof (20–21) and Davies "*gets into bed*" while "ASTON *sits, poking his [electrical] plug*" (21).

As Aston dresses for the day, Davies awakes with a start, and Aston informs Davies that he was kept up all night by Davies muttering in his sleep. Davies denies that he made any noise and blames the racket on the neighbors, revealing his fear of foreigners: "I tell you what, maybe it were them Blacks" (23). Aston informs Davies that he is going out but invites him to stay if he likes, indicating that he trusts him (23–24), something unexpected by Davies; for, as soon as Aston does leave the room (27), Davies begins rummaging through Aston's "stuff" (27–28) but he is interrupted when Mick, Aston's brother, unexpectedly arrives, "*moves upstage, silently*," "*slides across the room*" and then suddenly "*seizes Davies' arm and forces it up his back*," in response to which "DAVIES *screams*," and they engage in a minutely-choreographed struggle, which Mick wins (28–29), ending Act One with the "*Curtain*" line, "What's the game?" (29).

Mick demands to know Davies' name, which the latter gives as "Jenkins" (30), interrogates him about how well he slept the night before (30), wonders whether or not Davies is actually "a foreigner"—to which Davies retorts that he "was" indeed (in Mick's phrase) "Born and bred in the British Isles" (33)—going on to accuse Davies of being "an old robber [...] an old skate" who is "stinking the place out" (35), and spinning a verbal web full of banking jargon designed to confuse Davies, while stating, hyperbolically, that his brother Aston is "a number one decorator" (36), either an outright lie or self-deceptive wishful thinking on his part. Just as Mick reaches the climactic line of his diatribe geared to put the old tramp off balance—"Who do you bank with?" (36), Aston enters with a "bag" ostensibly for Davies, and the brothers debate how to fix the leaking roof and Davies interrupts to inject the more practical question: "What do you do . . . when that bucket's full?" (37) and Aston simply says, "Empty it" (37). The three battle over the "bag" that Aston has brought Davies, one of the most comic and often-cited Beckettian routines in the

play (38–39). After Mick leaves, and Davies recognises him to be "a real joker, that lad" (40), they discuss Mick's work in "the building trade" and Davies ultimately discloses that the bag they have fought over and that he was so determined to hold on to "ain't my bag" at all (41). Aston offers Davies the job of Caretaker, (42–43), leading to Davies' various assorted animadversions about the dangers that he faces for "going under an assumed name" and possibly being found out by anyone who might "ring the bell called Caretaker" (44).

It appears to Davies that "the damn light's gone now," but, it becomes clear that Mick has sneaked back into the room in the dark and removed the bulb; he starts up "*the electrolux*" and scares Davies almost witless before claiming "I was just doing some spring cleaning" and returning the bulb to its socket (45). After a discussion with Davies about the place being his "responsibility" and his ambitions to fix it up, Mick also offers Davies the job of "caretaker" (46–50), but pushes his luck with Mick when he observes negative things about Aston, like the idea that he "doesn't like work" or is "a bit of a funny bloke" for "Not liking work" (Davies' camouflage of what he really is referring to), leading Mick to observe that Davies is "getting hypocritical" and "too glib" (50), and they turn to the absurd details of "a small financial agreement" relating to Davies' possibly doing "a bit of caretaking" or "looking after the place" for Mick (51), and then back to the inevitable call for "references" and the perpetually-necessary trip to Sidcup to get Davies' identity "papers" (51–52).

Davies wakes up and complains to Aston about how badly he slept. He blames various aspects of the apartment's set up. Aston suggests adjustments but Davies proves to be callous and inflexible. Aston tells the story of how he was checked into a mental hospital and given electric shock therapy, but when he tried to escape from the hospital he was shocked while standing, leaving him with permanent brain damage; he ends by saying, "I've often thought of going back and trying to find the man who did that to me. But I want to do something first. I want to build that shed out in the garden" (54–57). Critics regard Aston's monologue, the longest of the play, as the "climax" of the plot.^[5] In dramaturgical terms, what follows is part of the plot's "[falling action](#)".

Davies and Mick discuss the apartment. Mick relates ("*ruminatively*") in great detail what he would do to redecorate it (60). When asked who "would live there," Mick's response "My brother and me" leads Davies to complain about Aston's inability to be social and just about every other aspect of Aston's behaviour (61–63). Though initially invited to be a "caretaker," first by Aston and then by Mick, he begins to ingratiate himself with Mick, who acts as if he were an unwitting accomplice in Davies' eventual conspiracy to take over and fix up the apartment without Aston's involvement (64) an outright betrayal of the brother who actually took him in and attempted to find his "belongings"; but just then Aston enters and gives Davies yet another pair of shoes which he grudgingly accepts, speaking of "going down to Sidcup" in order "to get" his "papers" again (65–66).

Davies brings up his plan when talking to Aston, whom he insults by throwing back in his face the details of his treatment in the mental institution (66–67), leading Aston, in a vast understatement, to respond: "I . . . I think it's about time you found somewhere else. I don't think we're hitting it off" (68). When finally threatened by Davies pointing a knife at him, Aston tells Davies to leave: "Get your stuff" (69). Davies, outraged, claims that Mick will take his side and kick Aston out instead and leaves in a fury, concluding (mistakenly): "Now I know who I can trust" (69).

Davies reenters with Mick explaining the fight that occurred earlier and complaining still more bitterly about Mick's brother, Aston (70–71). Eventually, Mick takes Aston's side, beginning with the observation "You get a bit out of your depth sometimes, don't you?" (71). Mick forces Davies to disclose that his "real name" is Davies and his "assumed name" is "Jenkins" and, after Davies calls Aston "nutty", Mick appears to take offense at what he terms Davies' "impertinent thing to say," concludes, "I'm compelled to pay you off for your caretaking work. Here's half a dollar," and stresses his need to turn back to his own "business" affairs (74). When Aston comes back into the apartment, the brothers face each other, "*They look at each other. Both are smiling, faintly*" (75).

Using the excuse of having returned for his "pipe" (given to him earlier through the generosity of Aston), Davies turns to beg Aston to let him stay (75–77). But Aston rebuffs each of Davies' rationalisations of his past complaints (75–76). The play ends with a "*Long silence*" as Aston, who "*remains still, his back to him [Davies], at the window*, apparently unrelenting as he gazes at his garden and makes no response at all to Davies' futile plea, which is sprinkled with many dots (". . .") of elliptical hesitations (77–78).

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof—by Tennessee Williams.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is the story of a Southern family in crisis, especially the husband and wife, Brick and Margaret (usually called Maggie or "Maggie the Cat"), and their interaction with Brick's family over the course of one evening gathering at the family estate in [Mississippi](#). The party is to celebrate the birthday of patriarch Big Daddy Pollitt, "the Delta's biggest cotton-planter"^[2] and that he has returned from the Ochsner Clinic with a clean bill of health. All family members (except Big Daddy and his wife, Big Mama) are aware that Big Daddy is dying of cancer; they have lied to Big Daddy and Big Mama to spare them pain on his birthday.

Maggie, witty and beautiful, has escaped a childhood of poverty to marry into the wealthy Pollitt family, but finds herself unfilled. The family is aware that Brick has not slept with Maggie for a long time, which has strained their marriage. Brick, an aging football hero, infuriates her by ignoring his brother Gooper's attempts to gain control of the family fortune. Brick's indifference and his near-continuous drinking relate to the recent suicide of his friend Skipper. Maggie fears that Brick's malaise will ensure that Gooper and his wife Mae end up with Big Daddy's inheritance.

Through the evening, Brick, Big Daddy and Maggie—and the entire family—separately must face down the issues which they have bottled up inside. Big Daddy attempts a reconciliation with the [alcoholic](#) Brick. Both Big Daddy and Maggie separately confront Brick about the true nature of his relationship with his pro football buddy Skipper, which appears to be the source of Brick's sorrow and the cause of his alcoholism.

Brick explains to Big Daddy how Maggie, convinced that Brick and Skipper were engaged in a homosexual relationship, slept with Skipper out of revenge. He thinks Skipper's self-questioning about himself and his friendship with Brick led to his suicide. Disgusted with "[mendacity](#)", Brick tells Big Daddy that the report from the clinic was falsified for his sake. Big Daddy storms out of the room, leading the party gathered out on the gallery to drift inside. Maggie, Brick, Mae, Gooper, and Doc Baugh (the family's physician) decide to tell Big Mama the truth about his illness and she is devastated by the news. Gooper and Mae start to discuss the division of the Pollitt estate. Big Mama defends her husband from Gooper and Mae's proposals.

Big Daddy reappears and makes known his plans to die peacefully. Attempting to secure Brick's inheritance, Maggie tells him she is pregnant. Gooper and Mae know this is a lie, but Big Mama and Big Daddy believe that Maggie "has life". When they are alone again, Maggie locks away the liquor and promises Brick that she will "make the lie true," revealing both her will to be satisfied and her enduring forgiveness and love for him.

Catch-22—by Joseph Heller.

The development of the novel can be split into multiple segments. The first (chapters 1–11) broadly follows the story fragmented between characters, but in a single chronological time in 1943. The second (chapters 12–20) flashes back to focus primarily on the "Great Big Siege of

Bologna" before once again jumping to the chronological "present" of 1943 in the third part (chapter 21–25). The fourth (chapters 26–28) flashes back to the origins and growth of [Milo's](#) syndicate, with the fifth part (chapter 28–32) returning again to the narrative "present" but keeping to the same tone of the previous four. In the sixth and final part (chapter 32 on) while remaining in the "present" time the novel takes a much darker turn and spends the remaining chapters focusing on the serious and brutal nature of war and life in general.^[4]

While the previous five parts develop the novel in the present and by use of flash-backs, it is in chapters 32–41 of the sixth and final part where the novel significantly darkens. Previously the reader had been cushioned from experiencing the full horror of events, but now the events are laid bare, allowing the full effect to take place. The horror begins with the attack on the undefended Italian mountain village, with the following chapters involving despair ([Doc Daneeka](#) and the [Chaplain](#)), disappearance in combat ([Orr](#) and [Clevinger](#)), disappearance caused by the army ([Dunbar](#)) or death ([Nately](#), [McWatt](#), [Mudd](#), [Kid Sampson](#), [Dobbs](#), [Chief White Halfoat](#) and [Hungry Joe](#)) of most of [Yossarian's](#) friends, culminating in the unspeakable horrors of Chapter 39, in particular the rape and murder of [Michaela](#), who represents pure innocence.^[4] In Chapter 41, the full details of the gruesome death of [Snowden](#) are finally revealed.

Despite this, the novel ends on an upbeat note with Yossarian learning of [Orr's](#) miraculous escape to Sweden and Yossarian's pledge to follow him there.

Catcher in the Rye (The)—by J.D. Salinger.

The majority of the novel takes place in December 1949. The story commences with [Holden Caulfield](#) describing encounters he has had with students and faculty of Pencey Prep in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. He criticizes them for being superficial, or, as he would say, "phony." After being expelled from the school for his poor academic performance, Holden packs up and leaves the school in the middle of the night after a physical altercation with his roommate. He takes a train to New York but does not want to return to his family and instead checks into the dilapidated Edmont Hotel. There, he spends an evening dancing with three tourist girls and has a clumsy encounter with a young [prostitute](#) named Sunny.^[13] His attitude toward the prostitute changes the minute she enters the room, because she seems to be about the same age as Holden. Holden becomes uncomfortable with the situation, and when he tells her that all he wants to do is talk, she becomes annoyed with him and leaves. However, he still pays her for her time. Sunny and Maurice, her [pimp](#), later return to Holden's hotel room and demand more money than was originally agreed upon. Despite the fact that Sunny takes five dollars from Holden's wallet, Maurice punches Holden in the stomach.

Holden calls up his old girlfriend, Sally Hayes, to invite her to see a musical. Sally very excitedly agrees, and they meet for the play. After the play Holden and Sally go skating, and while drinking coffee Holden impulsively invites Sally to run away with him, but she declines. Her response deflates Holden's mood, which prompts a remark: "You give me a royal pain in the ass, if you want to know the truth", he tells her, regretting it immediately. Sally storms off as Holden follows, pleading with her to accept his apology. Finally, Holden gives up and leaves her there. Holden spends a total of three days in the city, and this time is characterized largely by drunkenness and loneliness. At one point he ends up at a museum, where he contrasts his life with the statues of Eskimos on display. For as long as he can remember, the statues have been unchanging. These concerns may have stemmed largely from the death of his brother, Allie. Eventually, he sneaks into his parents' apartment while they are away, to visit his younger sister, Phoebe, who is the only person with whom he seems to be able to communicate. Phoebe views Holden as a hero, and she is naively unaware that Holden's view of her is virtually identical. Holden shares a fantasy he has been thinking about (based on a mishearing of [Robert Burns' Comin' Through the Rye](#)): he pictures himself as the sole guardian of numerous children running and playing in a huge [rye](#) field on the edge of a cliff. His job is to catch the children if they wander

close to the brink; to be a "catcher in the rye." Because of this misinterpretation, Holden believes that to be a "catcher in the rye" means to save children from losing their innocence.

After leaving his parents' apartment, Holden drops by to see a former and much admired English teacher, Mr. Antolini, in the middle of the night, and is offered advice on life and a place to sleep. Mr. Antolini tells Holden that it is the mark of the mature man to live humbly for a cause, rather than die nobly for it. This is at odds with Holden's ideas of becoming a "catcher in the rye," a heroic figure who symbolically saves children from "falling off a crazy cliff" and being exposed to the evils of adulthood. During the speech on life, Mr. Antolini has a number of "highballs," referring to a cocktail served in a [highball glass](#). Holden is upset when he wakes up in the night to find Mr. Antolini patting his head in a way that he regards as "flitty." There is much speculation on whether Mr. Antolini was making a sexual advance on Holden, and it is left up to the reader to decide. Holden leaves and spends his last afternoon wandering the city. He later wonders if his interpretation of Mr. Antolini's actions was actually correct.

Holden makes the decision that he will head out west, and when he mentions these plans to his little sister, she decides she wants to go with him. Holden declines her offer and refuses to have her accompany him. This upsets Phoebe, so Holden does her a favor and decides not to leave after all. Holden tries to reverse her saddened mood by taking her to the [Central Park Zoo](#). He realizes his mistake as she rides the [carousel](#) that lies within the zoo. While watching Phoebe, Holden realizes that he can't be the "Catcher in the Rye" and that he is in need of help. At the conclusion of the novel, Holden decides not to mention much about the present day, finding it inconsequential. He alludes to "getting sick" and living in a [mental hospital](#), and mentions that he'll be attending another school in September; he relates how he has been asked whether he will apply himself properly to study this time around and questions whether such a question has any meaning before the fact. Holden says that he has surprisingly found himself missing two of his former classmates, Stradlater and Ackley, and even Maurice, the elevator operator/pimp; and warns the reader that telling others about their experiences will lead them to miss the people who shared them, whoever they are: "Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody."

Cat's Eye—by André Norton.

After being called back to her childhood home of Toronto for a retrospective show of her art, Elaine reminisces about her childhood. At the age of eight she becomes friends with Carol and Grace, and, through their eyes, realises that her atypical background of constant travel with her entomologist father and independent mother has left her ill-equipped for conventional expectations of femininity. When Cordelia joins the group, Elaine is bullied by the three girls, her "best friends". The bullying escalates that winter, when the girls abandon Elaine in a ravine; half-frozen, she sees a vision of the Virgin Mary who guides her to safety. Afterward, realising she had allowed herself to be a victim, Elaine makes new friends.

The narrative then follows Elaine through her teenage years and her early adulthood as an art student and a Feminist artist. However, throughout this time, she is haunted by her childhood and has difficulties forming relationships with other women.

Towards the end of the novel, owing to her retrospective exhibition and her return to Toronto, she eventually faces her past and gets closure.

Centaur (The)—by John Updike.

The story concerns George Caldwell, a school teacher, and his son Peter, outside of Alton (i.e., [Reading](#)), Pennsylvania. The novel explores the relationship between the depressive Caldwell and his anxious son. George has largely given up on life; what glory he knew, as a football player and

soldier in World War I, has passed. He feels put upon by the school's principal, and he views his students as hapless and uninterested in anything he has to teach them. Peter, meanwhile, is a budding [aesthete](#) who idolizes [Vermeer](#) and dreams of becoming a painter in a big city, like New York. He has no friends his age, and regularly worries that his peers might detect his [psoriasis](#), which stains his skin and flecks his clothes every season but summer. One thing George and Peter share is the desire to get out, to escape their hometown. This masculine desire for escape appears in Updike's famed "Rabbit" novels. Similarly, the novel's image of Peter's mother alone on an unfarmed farm is one we later see in Updike's 1965 novel [Of the Farm](#).

Like [James Joyce](#) in [Ulysses](#), Updike drew on the myths of antiquity in an attempt to turn a modern and common scene into something more profound, a meditation on life and man's relationship to nature and eternity. George is both the [Centaur Chiron](#) and [Prometheus](#) (some readers might see George's son Peter as Prometheus), Mr. Hummel, the automobile mechanic, is [Hephaestus](#) (AKA Vulcan); and so forth. The novel's structure is unusual; the narrative shifts from present day (late 1940s) to retrospective (early 1960s), from describing the characters as George, Vera, and the rest, to the Centaur, Venus, and so forth. It also is punctuated with a feverish dream scene and a newspaper obituary of George. Near the end of the book, Updike includes two untranslated [Greek](#) sentences.

Ceremony—by Leslie Marmon Silko.

The story documents the troubles of Tayo, a Native American World War II veteran who strives to overcome Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and end the drought that is devastating his [Laguna Pueblo](#) people.

Tayo is under the a great deal of stress when he returns home from World War II having believed he killed his own uncle and having to watch his cousin die right before his eyes. After a brief stay in the Veterans' Hospital, Tayo returns home to reunite with his family. Tayo feels tremendous guilt for having not kept Rocky alive as he was the community's favorite young man, as well as for the drought in the Pueblo lands that he believes he caused.

Tayo is unsure about how to relieve his stress, but eventually falls into the same alcoholic lifestyle as many of his other childhood friends who fought in World War II. These friends share with Tayo their anger with the white men for having used Native Americans in the war and then not respecting their place in American culture back in the United States.

Tayo's grandmother seeks out the assistance of medicine men to cure Tayo's problems. While Old Ku'oosh is unable to assist him and believes traditional ceremonies are not applicable to Tayo's trauma, another medicine man, Betonie, turns Tayo toward traditional spirituality and the Scalp Ceremony as a source of healing.

Tayo returns home after consulting Betonie and quickly falls into line with Harley and Leroy's destructive and alcoholic lifestyle once again. Eventually, Tayo leaves his friends behind, and travels into the countryside to find Josiah's cattle. With the help of a Native American hunter, Ts'eh, Tayo succeeds in finding the cattle and bringing them home.

Tayo spends the summer with Ts'eh in order to complete the ceremony, but he is eventually pursued by Emo and the white police. In an effort to evade the police, Tayo hides in an abandoned uranium mine, where he is forced to watch Emo and Pinkie kill Harley. Soon thereafter, Tayo returns to Ku'oosh in order to finally complete the ceremony.

Cherry Orchard (The)—by Anton Chekhov.

The Cherry Orchard (Вишнёвый сад or *Vishnyovy sad* in Russian) is Russian playwright [Anton Chekhov](#)'s last play. It premiered at the [Moscow Art Theatre](#) 17 January 1904 in a production directed by [Constantin Stanislavski](#). Chekhov intended this play as a [comedy](#) and it does contain some elements of [farce](#); however, Stanislavski insisted on directing the play as a [tragedy](#). Since this initial production, [directors](#) have had to contend with the dual nature of this play.

The play concerns an aristocratic Russian woman and her family as they return to the family's [estate](#) (which includes a large and well-known cherry orchard) just before it is auctioned to pay the mortgage. While presented with options to save the estate, the family essentially does nothing and the play ends with the estate being sold to the son of a former [serf](#), and the family leaving to the sound of the cherry orchard being cut down. The story presents themes of cultural futility — both the futility of the [aristocracy](#) to maintain its status and the futility of the [bourgeoisie](#) to find meaning in its newfound materialism. In reflecting the socio-economic forces at work in Russia at the turn of the 20th century, including the rise of the [middle class](#) after the abolition of serfdom in the mid-19th century and the sinking of the aristocracy, the play reflects forces at work around the globe in that period.

Since the first production at the Moscow Art Theatre, this play has been translated and adapted into many languages and produced around the world, becoming a classic work of [dramatic literature](#). Some of the major directors of the world have directed this play, each interpreting the work differently. Some of these directors include [Charles Laughton](#), [Peter Brook](#), [Andrei Serban](#), [Eva Le Gallienne](#), [Jean-Louis Barrault](#), [Tyrone Guthrie](#) and [Giorgio Strehler](#).

The play's influence has also been widely felt in dramatic works by many including [Eugene O'Neill](#), [George Bernard Shaw](#) and [Arthur Miller](#).

Chosen (The)—by Chaim Potok.

The Chosen is set in the 1900s, in [Williamsburg](#), [Brooklyn](#), [New York City](#). The story takes place over a period of six years, beginning in 1944 when the protagonists are fifteen years old. It is set against the backdrop of the historical events of the time: the death of President Roosevelt, the end of World War II, the revelation of the Holocaust in Europe, and the struggle for the creation of the state of Israel.

Danny and Reuven meet for the first time as rivals in a softball game between their school teams that turns into a spiritual war. Danny's batting style is such that the ball is sent speeding back up the middle of the field, and so he receives a reputation of trying to kill pitchers. Angered by unsuccessful attempts to hit Reuven's previous pitches, Danny hits a line drive toward Reuven, shattering his glasses and sending him to the hospital with an injured eye.

After a chapter of Reuven familiarizing himself with the other patients of the hospital, Danny visits Reuven in the hospital. At first Reuven rejects Danny's attempts to apologize. But, Reuven's father insists that he make peace with Danny, telling him "A boy like that needs friends." After Reuven accepts his father's advice, friendship develops between the two. Reuven learns about Danny's life, and finds that the Hasidic boy is very different from his expectations. Danny admits to Reuven "I wanted to kill you" when they played baseball together, but did not know why; after a brief conversation, Danny admitted that the reason there had been a softball game in the first place is because:

"It's the only way we could have a team. I sort of convinced my father you were the best team around and that we had a duty to beat you up at what you were best at." pg. 71

Reuven learns that because of this, Danny was under a lot of pressure to win. After revealing some things about themselves, Danny says that he must leave, but promises to come back the next day.

Reuven comes to experience the pain of silence himself, while the two young men are in college together. Though accepted as family after he stays with the Saunderses while his father is recovering at the hospital, he incurs Reb Saunders's wrath when he speaks favorably of the struggle to establish a secular Jewish nation in Palestine, which Saunders vehemently opposes. When Mr. Malter makes a speech at a pro-Israel rally that makes the newspapers, Saunders forbids his son to speak to Reuven, or even mention his name. (Danny breaks this order once, to let Reuven know, but tells him "I won't go against my father. I won't!") The ban lasts for two years, during which time Reuven experiences anguish, rage, and depression (particularly after his father suffers a second heart attack), before learning to cope with being alone.

Their friendship resumes after modern Israel is founded; Danny explains to Reuven that Reb Saunders has relented, since the new nation is "no longer an issue; it's a fact." Reuven finds that Danny has come to terms with the silence imposed by his father, having discovered that silence can be a teacher, and a source of beauty as well as pain. Danny himself waits in fear for the day following graduation, when he must tell his father that he does not wish to succeed him. (Reb Saunders already knows this to be true, after Danny receives an acceptance letter from [Columbia University](#).)

Reuven again finds himself a buffer between father and son when, in the novel's climax, the two friends learn Reb Saunders's purpose for raising his son in silence: Reb Saunders had discovered early on that his son's dawning intelligence was far outstripping his sense of compassion for others. He wanted his son to understand the meaning of pain, so he shut him out emotionally. Finding the grown-up Danny indeed has a heart, and cares deeply about other people, Reb Saunders is willing to give his blessing to Danny's dream of studying psychology. "He will be a [tzadik](#) for the world," Reb Saunders tells Reuven. Saunders then finally, after many years, truly talks to Danny, asking him to forgive him for the pain he caused, bringing him up as he did. The words finally spoken, he leaves the room, and both boys burst into tears.^[1]

Danny visits Reuven on his way to Columbia University, his Hasidic locks shorn and his clothing up to date. Reuven has definitely decided he wants to be a rabbi, and is going on to study at a [yeshiva](#). Danny tells Reuven that his younger brother Levi will take his place as his father's successor, and his own relationship with Reb Saunders has completely changed. "We talk now," he says quietly. Danny is finally set free, and Reuven and Danny taste profoundly the pain in life, and the consolation of deep friendship. Danny goes on to study psychology.

Civil Disobedience—by Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau asserts that because governments are typically more harmful than helpful, they therefore cannot be justified. [Democracy](#) is no cure for this, as majorities simply by virtue of being majorities do not also gain the virtues of [wisdom](#) and [justice](#). The judgment of an individual's conscience is not necessarily inferior to the decisions of a political body or majority, and so "[i]t is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right... Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice."^[5] He adds, "I cannot for an instant recognize as my government [that] which is [the slave's government](#) also."^[6]

The government, according to Thoreau, is not just a *little* corrupt or unjust in the course of doing its otherwise-important work, but in fact the government is *primarily* an agent of [corruption](#) and injustice. Because of this, it is "not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize."^[7]

Political philosophers have counseled caution about revolution because the upheaval of revolution typically causes a lot of expense and suffering. Thoreau contends that such a cost/benefit analysis is inappropriate when the government is actively facilitating an injustice as extreme as slavery.

Such a fundamental immorality justifies any difficulty or expense to bring to an end. "This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make [war on Mexico](#), though it cost them their existence as a people."^[8]

Thoreau tells his audience that they cannot blame this problem solely on pro-slavery [Southern](#) politicians, but must put the blame on those in, for instance, [Massachusetts](#), "who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may*... There are thousands who are in opinion opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them."^[9] (See also: Thoreau's [Slavery in Massachusetts](#) which also advances this argument.)

He exhorts people not to just wait passively for an opportunity to *vote* for justice, because voting for justice is as ineffective as *wishing* for justice; what you need to do is to actually *be just*. This is not to say that you have an obligation to devote your life to fighting for justice, but you *do* have an obligation not to commit injustice and not to give injustice your practical support.

Paying [taxes](#) is one way in which otherwise well-meaning people collaborate in injustice. People who proclaim that the war in Mexico is wrong and that it is wrong to enforce slavery contradict themselves if they fund both things by paying taxes. Thoreau points out that the same people who applaud soldiers for refusing to fight an unjust war are not themselves willing to refuse to fund the government that started the war.

In a constitutional republic like the United States, people often think that the proper response to an unjust law is to try to use the political process to change the law, but to obey and respect the law until it is changed. But if the law is itself clearly unjust, and the lawmaking process is not designed to quickly obliterate such unjust laws, then Thoreau says the law deserves no respect and it should be broken. In the case of the United States, the [Constitution](#) itself enshrines the institution of slavery, and therefore falls under this condemnation. [Abolitionists](#), in Thoreau's opinion, should completely withdraw their support of the government and stop paying taxes, even if this means courting imprisonment.

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison.... where the State places those who are not *with* her, but *against* her,— the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor.... Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible.^[10]

Because the government will retaliate, Thoreau says he prefers living simply because he therefore has less to lose. "I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts.... It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case."^[11]

He was briefly imprisoned for refusing to pay the [poll tax](#), but even in jail felt freer than the people outside. He considered it an interesting experience and came out of it with a new perspective on his relationship to the government and its citizens. (He was released the next day when "someone interfered, and paid that tax.")^[12]

Thoreau said he was willing to pay the highway tax, which went to pay for something of benefit to his neighbors, but that he was opposed to taxes that went to support the government itself—even if he could not tell if his particular contribution would eventually be spent on an unjust project or a

beneficial one. "I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually."^[13]

Because government is man-made, not an element of nature or an [act of God](#), Thoreau hoped that its makers could be reasoned with. As governments go, he felt, the U.S. government, with all its faults, was not the worst and even had some admirable qualities. But he felt we could and should insist on better. "The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual.... Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly."^[14]

"That government is best which governs least"

An aphorism sometimes attributed to either [Thomas Jefferson](#) or [Thomas Paine](#), "That government is best which governs least", actually was first found in this essay.^[15] Thoreau was paraphrasing the motto of [The United States Magazine and Democratic Review](#): "The best government is that which governs least"

Cold Mountain—by Charles Frazier.

The novel opens in a Confederate military hospital near [Raleigh, North Carolina](#), where the male protagonist, Inman, is recovering from a recent battle wound. Tired of fighting for a cause he never believed in and longing for his home at Cold Mountain, North Carolina, pushed by advice from a blind man, and moved by the death of the man in the bed next to him, he steals out of the hospital after nightfall and sets out west on a walking journey of approximately 250 miles.

The narrative alternates back and forth every chapter between the story of Inman and that of Ada Monroe, a minister's daughter recently relocated from Charleston to a farm in the rural mountain community called Cold Mountain from which Inman hails. Though they only knew each other for a brief time before Inman departed for the war, it is largely the hope of seeing Ada again that drives Inman to desert the army and make the dangerous journey back to Cold Mountain. Details of their brief history together are told at intervals in flashback over the course of the novel.

At Cold Mountain, Ada's father soon dies, and the farm that the genteel city-bred Ada lives on, named Black Cove, is soon reduced to a state of disrepair. A young woman named Ruby, homeless but a stronger worker than Ada and resourceful, soon moves in. She is capable of hard work and not only helps Ada clean the place up and return it to productivity, but teaches her what she must know to survive in this very different environment.

Inman is on his way, but must beware of the [Home Guard](#), who search for and capture Confederate deserters. He meets a preacher called Veasey, whom he catches in the act of attempting to murder his impregnated lover. After Inman dissuades him, they travel together. They butcher a dead cow that had fallen into a creek and the cow's owner, Junior, gives them away to the Home Guard. They are put into a group of other captured prisoners, and march for days before the Home Guard decides to simply shoot them because they are "too much trouble". Veasey steps forward to try to stop them and is killed. Inman survives when he takes a graze from a bullet that has already gone through Veasey and they think he is dead. They dig a shoddy mass grave and Inman pulls himself out, helped in part by some passing wild pigs. He cannot bury Veasey, but turns him face down, and continues on.

Inman's journey is rough. He faces hunger and an attempted armed robbery at a rural tavern, though carrying a [LeMat revolver](#) which he uses when necessary. Occasionally he is helped and

sheltered by civilians who want nothing to do with the war. Through cunning ingenuity he helps one of them track and recover a hog, her only possession and source of food for the winter, which had just been seized from her by Union soldiers. He is also helped by a woman who owns goats, who gives him advice and medicines to finally heal his wounds.

At Ada's farm, Ruby's father, Stobrod, is caught stealing corn. He was a deadbeat who abused and neglected Ruby when she was very young; he is also a Confederate deserter. Ruby grudgingly feeds him. He returns another day with a friend named Pangle, and they play a [fiddle](#) and [banjo](#). Stobrod and Pangle soon leave and, instead of stealing, take food from a hiding place where Ruby leaves it for them. They are caught and shot by the Home Guard. A third companion, referred to as the Georgia boy, hides when the Guard finds the other two. The Georgia boy runs back and alerts Ada and Ruby, who ride out to see the two men. Stobrod just barely survives; Ada and Ruby pitch camp to give him a place to recover.

Inman arrives at Black Cove to find it empty, and sets out to find Ada on the mountain. He unexpectedly encounters her, greatly altered; she's dressed in britches, and is out hunting wild turkeys. Both have changed so greatly in their appearance and demeanor since they parted that it is some moments before they recognize one another. Inman takes up camp with Ada and Ruby. Ruby is afraid Ada will dismiss her now she has a husband, and Ada reassures her that she needs her as a friend and for her ideas and help. Ruby gives the pair her blessing, and they make love. They happily begin to imagine the life they will have together at Black Cove and make plans for their future.

As the party begins the trek back to the farm, however, they encounter the Home Guard. A shootout commences in which Inman kills all the members of the Guard except for a seventeen year old boy who flees into the thicket and is cornered against a rock ledge. Inman, reluctant to shoot him down in cold blood, tries to convince him to lay down his arms and leave. After several moments, the boy shoots and kills Inman.

Ada is left pregnant, and raises her daughter at Black Cove, where she lives with Stobrod and Ruby. Ruby marries the Georgia boy (it is revealed his name is Reid) who worked for them a few years and has 3 children.

Color Purple (The)—by Alice Walker.

Celie, the protagonist and narrator of *The Color Purple*, is a poor, uneducated, fourteen year-old black girl living in rural Georgia. Celie starts writing letters to God because her stepfather, Alphonso, beats and rapes her. Alphonso has already impregnated Celie once. Celie gave birth to a girl, whom her father stole and presumably killed in the woods. Celie has a second child, a boy, whom her father also steals. Celie's mother becomes seriously ill and dies. Alphonso brings home a new wife but continues to abuse Celie.

Celie and her bright, pretty younger sister, Nettie, learn that a man known only as Mr. wants to marry Nettie. Mr. has a mistress named Shug Avery, a sultry lounge singer whose photograph fascinates Celie. Alphonso refuses to let Nettie marry, and instead offers Mr. the "ugly" Celie as a bride. Mr. eventually accepts the offer, and takes Celie into a difficult and joyless married life. Nettie runs away from Alphonso and takes refuge at Celie's house. Mr. still desires Nettie, and when he advances on her she flees for her own safety. Never hearing from Nettie again, Celie assumes she is dead.

Mr.'s sister Kate feels sorry for Celie, and tells her to fight back against Mr. rather than submit to his abuses. Harpo, Mr.'s son, falls in love with a large, spunky girl named Sofia. Shug Avery comes to town to sing at a local bar, but Celie is not allowed to go see her. Sofia becomes pregnant and marries Harpo. Celie is amazed by Sofia's defiance in the face of Harpo's and Mr.'s

attempts to treat Sofia as an inferior. Harpo's attempts to beat Sofia into submission consistently fail, as Sofia is by far the physically stronger of the two.

Shug falls ill and Mr. takes her into his house. Shug is initially rude to Celie, but the two women become friends as Celie takes charge of nursing Shug. Celie finds herself infatuated with Shug and attracted to her sexually. Frustrated with Harpo's consistent attempts to subordinate her, Sofia moves out, taking her children. Several months later, Harpo opens a juke joint where Shug sings nightly. Celie grows confused over her feelings toward Shug.

Shug decides to stay when she learns that Mr. beats Celie when Shug is away. Shug and Celie's relationship grows intimate, and Shug begins to ask Celie questions about sex. Sofia returns for a visit and promptly gets in a fight with Harpo's new girlfriend, Squeak. In town one day, the mayor's wife, Miss Millie, asks Sofia to work as her maid. Sofia answers with a sassy "Hell no." When the mayor slaps Sofia for her "insubordination", she returns the blow, knocking the mayor down. Sofia is sent to jail. Squeak's attempts to get Sofia freed are futile. Sofia is sentenced to work for twelve years as the mayor's maid.

Shug returns with a new husband, Grady. Despite her marriage, Shug instigates a sexual relationship with Celie, and the two frequently share the same bed. One night Shug asks Celie about her sister. Celie assumes Nettie is dead because she had promised to write to Celie, but never did. Shug says she has seen Mr. hide away numerous mysterious letters that have arrived in the mail. Shug manages to get her hands on one of these letters, and they find it is from Nettie. Searching through Mr.'s trunk, Celie and Shug find dozens of letters that Nettie has sent to Celie over the years. Overcome with emotion, Celie reads the letters in order, wondering how to keep herself from killing Mr.

The letters indicate that Nettie befriended a missionary couple, Samuel and Corrine, and traveled with them to Africa to do ministry work. Samuel and Corrine have two adopted children, Olivia and Adam. Nettie and Corrine become close friends, but Corrine, noticing that her adopted children resemble Nettie, wonders if Nettie and Samuel have a secret past. Increasingly suspicious, Corrine tries to limit Nettie's role within her family.

Nettie becomes disillusioned with her missionary experience, as she finds the Africans self-centered and obstinate. Corrine becomes ill with a fever. Nettie asks Samuel to tell her how he adopted Olivia and Adam. Based on Samuel's story, Nettie realizes that the two children are actually Celie's biological children, alive after all. Nettie also learns that Alphonso is really only Nettie and Celie's stepfather, not their real father. Their real father was a storeowner whom white men lynched because they resented his success. Alphonso told Celie and Nettie he was their real father because he wanted to inherit the house and property that was once their mother's.

Nettie confesses to Samuel and Corrine that she is in fact their children's biological aunt. The gravely ill Corrine refuses to believe Nettie. Corrine dies, but accepts Nettie's story and feels reconciled just before her death. Meanwhile, Celie visits Alphonso, who confirms Nettie's story, admitting that he is only the women's stepfather. Celie begins to lose some of her faith in God, but Shug tries to get her to reimagine God in her own way, rather than in the traditional image of the old, bearded white man.

The mayor releases Sofia from her servitude six months early. At dinner one night, Celie finally releases her pent-up rage, angrily cursing Mr. for his years of abuse. Shug announces that she and Celie are moving to Tennessee, and Squeak decides to go with them. In Tennessee, Celie spends her time designing and sewing individually tailored pairs of pants, eventually turning her hobby into a business. Celie returns to Georgia for a visit, and finds that Mr. has reformed his ways, and Alphonso has died. Alphonso's house and land are now hers, so she moves there.

Meanwhile, Nettie and Samuel marry and prepare to return to America. Before they leave, Samuel's son, Adam, marries Tashi, a native African girl. Following African tradition, Tashi undergoes the painful rituals of female circumcision and facial scarring. In solidarity, Adam undergoes the same facial scarring ritual.

Celie and Mr. reconcile, and begin to genuinely enjoy each other's company. Now independent financially, spiritually and emotionally, Celie is no longer bothered by Shug's passing flings with younger men. Sofia remarries Harpo and now works in Celie's clothing store. Nettie finally returns to America with Samuel and the children. Emotionally drained but exhilarated by the reunion with her sister, Celie notes that though she and Nettie are now old, she has never in her life felt younger.

Copenhagen—by Michael Frayn.

Copenhagen is a play by [Michael Frayn](#), based around an event that occurred in [Copenhagen](#) in 1941, a meeting between the [physicists Niels Bohr](#) and [Werner Heisenberg](#). It debuted in [London](#) in 1998. Within the National Theatre in London, it ran for more than 300 performances, starring David Burke (Niels Bohr), Sara Kestelman (Margrethe Bohr), and Matthew Marsh (Werner Heisenberg).

It opened on [Broadway](#) at the [Royale Theatre](#) on April 11, 2000 and ran for 326 performances. Directed by [Michael Blakemore](#), it starred [Philip Bosco](#) (Niels Bohr), [Michael Cumpsty](#) (Werner Heisenberg), and [Blair Brown](#) (Margrethe Bohr). It won the [Tony Award](#) for Best Play, Best Featured Actress in a Play (Blair Brown), and Best Direction of a Play (Michael Blakemore).

In 2002, the play was [adapted as a film](#) by [Howard Davies](#), produced by the [BBC](#) and presented on the [Public Broadcasting Service](#) (PBS) in the [United States](#).

Country of the Pointed Firs (The)—by Sarah Orne Jewett

The narrator returns after a brief visit a few summers prior, to the small coastal town of Dunnet, Maine, in order to finish writing her book. Upon arriving she settles in with Mrs. Todd, a local elderly apothecary, or homeopathic "herbalist." The narrator begins to work for Mrs. Todd when Mrs. Todd goes out, but this distracts the narrator from her writing.

She rents an empty schoolhouse, so she can concentrate on her writing. After a funeral, Captain Littlepage, an 80-year-old retired sailor, comes to the schoolhouse to visit the narrator because he knows Mrs. Todd. He tells a story about his time on the sea and she is noticeably bored so he begins to leave. She sees that she has offended him with her display of boredom, so she covers her tracks by asking him to tell her more of his story. The Captain's story cannot compare to the stories that Mrs. Todd, Mrs. Todd's brother and mother, and residents of Dunnet tell of their lives in Dunnet. The narrator's friendship with Mrs. Todd strengthens over the course of the summer, and the narrator's appreciation of the Maine coastal town increases each day.

Crime and Punishment—by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

Raskolnikov, a conflicted former student, lives in a tiny, rented room in [Saint Petersburg](#). He refuses all help, even from his friend Razumikhin, and devises a plan to murder and to rob an unpleasant elderly pawn-broker and money-lender, Alyona Ivanovna. His motivation comes from the overwhelming sense that he is predetermined to kill the old woman by some power outside of himself. While still considering the plan, Raskolnikov makes the acquaintance of Semyon Zakharovich Marmeladov, a drunkard who recently squandered his family's little wealth. He also

receives a letter from his sister and mother, speaking of their coming visit to Saint Petersburg, and his sister's sudden marriage plans which they plan on discussing upon their arrival.

After much deliberation, Raskolnikov sneaks into Alyona Ivanovna's apartment where he murders her with an axe. He also kills her half-sister, Lizaveta, who happens to stumble upon the scene of the crime. Shaken by his actions, Raskolnikov manages to only steal a handful of items and a small purse, leaving much of the pawn-broker's wealth untouched. Raskolnikov then flees and, due to a series of coincidences, manages to leave unseen and undetected.

After the bungled murder, Raskolnikov falls into a feverish state and begins to worry obsessively over the murder. He hides the stolen items and purse under a rock, and tries desperately to clean his clothing of any blood or evidence. He falls into a fever later that day, though not before calling briefly on his old friend Razumikhin. As the fever comes and goes in the following days, Raskolnikov behaves as though he wishes to betray himself. He shows strange reactions to whoever mentions the murder of the pawn-broker, which is now known about and talked of in the city. In his delirium, Raskolnikov wanders Saint Petersburg, drawing more and more attention to himself and his relation to the crime. In one of his walks through the city, he sees Marmeladov, who has been struck mortally by a carriage in the streets. Rushing to help him, Raskolnikov gives the remainder of his money to the man's family, which includes his teenage daughter, Sonya, who has been forced to become a prostitute to support her family.

In the meantime, Raskolnikov's mother, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, and his sister, Avdotya Romanovna (or Dounia) have arrived in the city. Avdotya had been working as a governess for the Svidrigailov family until this point, but was forced out of the position by the head of the family, Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov. Svidrigailov, a married man, was attracted to Avdotya's physical beauty and her feminine qualities, and offered her riches and elopement. Avdotya, having none of this, fled the family and lost her source of income, only to meet Pyotr Petrovich Luzhin, a man of modest income and rank. Luzhin proposes to marry Avdotya, thereby securing her and her mother's financial safety, provided she accept him quickly and without question. It is for these very reasons that the two of them come to Saint Petersburg, both to meet Luzhin there and to attain Raskolnikov's approval. Luzhin, however, calls on Raskolnikov while he is in a delirious state and presents himself as a foolish, self-righteous and presuming man. Raskolnikov dismisses him immediately as a potential husband for his sister, and realizes that she only accepted him to help her family.

As the novel progresses, Raskolnikov is introduced to the detective Porfiry, who begins to suspect him for the murder purely on psychological grounds. At the same time, a chaste relationship develops between Raskolnikov and Sonya. Sonya, though a prostitute, is full of Christian virtue and is only driven into the profession by her family's poverty. Meanwhile, Razumikhin and Raskolnikov manage to keep Avdotya from continuing her relationship with Luzhin, whose true character is exposed to be conniving and base. At this point, Svidrigailov appears on the scene, having come from the province to Petersburg, almost solely to seek out Avdotya. He reveals that his wife is dead, and that he is willing to pay Avdotya a vast sum of money in exchange for nothing. She, upon hearing the news, refuses flat out, suspecting him of treachery.

As Raskolnikov and Porfiry continue to meet, Raskolnikov's motives for the crime become exposed. Porfiry becomes increasingly certain of the man's guilt, but has no concrete evidence or witnesses with which to back up this suspicion. Furthermore, another man admits to committing the crime under questioning and arrest. However, Raskolnikov's nerves continue to wear thin, and he is constantly struggling with the idea of confessing, though he knows that he can never be truly convicted. He turns to Sonya for support and confesses his crime to her. By coincidence, Svidrigailov has taken up residence in a room next to Sonya's and overhears the entire confession. When the two men meet face to face, Svidrigailov acknowledges this fact, and suggests that he may use it against him, should he need to. Svidrigailov also speaks of his own past, in which he reveals that he has committed murder and most recently killed his wife.

Raskolnikov is at this point completely torn; he is urged by Sonya to confess, and Svidrigailov's testimony could potentially convict him. Furthermore, Porfiry confronts Raskolnikov with his suspicions and assures him confession would substantially lighten his sentence. Meantime, Svidrigailov attempts to seduce and then rape Avdotya, who convinces him not to. He then spends a night in confusion and in the morning shoots himself. This same morning, Raskolnikov goes again to Sonya, who again urges him to confess and to clear his conscience. He makes his way to the police station, where he is met by the news of Svidrigailov's suicide. He hesitates a moment, thinking again that he might get away with a perfect crime, but is persuaded by Sonya to confess.

The epilogue tells of how Raskolnikov is sentenced to penal servitude in [Siberia](#), where Sonya follows him. Avdotya and Razumikhin marry and are left in a happy position by the end of the novel, while Pulcheria, Raskolnikov's mother, falls ill and dies, unable to cope with her son's situation. Raskolnikov himself struggles in Siberia. It is only after some time in prison that his redemption and moral regeneration begin under Sonya's loving influence

Crisis (The)—by Thomas Payne.

In late 1776 Paine published [The Crisis](#) pamphlet series, to inspire the Americans in their battles against the British army. He juxtaposed the conflict between the good American devoted to civic virtue and the selfish provincial man.^[30] To inspire his soldiers, General [George Washington](#) had *The American Crisis*, first *Crisis* pamphlet, read aloud to them.^[31] It begins:

These are the times that try men's souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.

Crossing (The)—by Cormac McCarthy.

The first sojourn details a series of [hunting](#) expeditions conducted by Billy, his father and to a lesser extent, Boyd. They are attempting to locate and [trap](#) a [pregnant](#) female [wolf](#) which has been preying on cattle in the area of the family [homestead](#). McCarthy explores themes throughout the action such as the [mystical](#) passage on page 22 describing his father setting a trap:

Crouched in the broken shadow with the sun at his back and holding the trap at eyelevel against the morning sky he looked to be truing some older, some subtler instrument. [Astrolabe](#) or [sextant](#). Like a man bent at fixing himself someway in the world. Bent on trying by arc or chord the space between his being and the world that was. If there be such space. If it be knowable.

When Billy finally catches the animal, he [harnesses](#) it and, instead of killing it, determines to return it to the [mountains](#) of Mexico where he believes its original home is located. He develops a deep affection for and bond with the wolf, risking his life to save it on more than one occasion. Along the way Billy encounters many other travellers and inhabitants of the land who relate in a sophisticated [dialogue](#) their deepest [philosophies](#). Take for example a Mormon who converts to Catholicism who describes his vision of reality in this way:

Things separate from their stories have no meaning. They are only shapes. Of a certain size and color. A certain weight. When their meaning has become lost to us they no longer have even a name. The story on the other hand can never be lost from its place in the world for it is that place.

And that is what was to be found here. The [corrido](#). The tale. And like all corridos it ultimately told one story only, for there is only one to tell.

In the second border crossing, Billy and Boyd have set out to recover horses stolen from his family spread. Boyd is eventually shot through the chest in a squabble. After he is nursed back to health he disappears with a young girl.

The third crossing features Billy alone attempting to discover the whereabouts of his brother. He learns that Boyd has been killed in a gunfight and sets out to find his dead brother's remains and return them to New Mexico. After finding Boyd's grave and exhuming the body, Billy is ambushed by a band of men who desecrate Boyd's remains and stab Billy's horse through the chest. Billy, with the help of a gypsy, nurses the horse back to riding condition.

The last scene shows Billy alone and desolate, coming across a terribly beat up dog, that approaches him for help. In a marked contrast to his youthful bond with the wolf, he shoos the dog away angrily, meanly. Suddenly, he feels a flood of remorse: he goes after the dog, calling for it to come back—but it has gone. He breaks down in tears—what has been lost will not be found.

The title contributes the notion that it is not just crossing a border, but at one point, the crossing of one's soul between dream and consciousness, reality and narrative, youth and maturity, and life and death.

Crucible (The)—by Arthur Miller.

[Rev. Parris](#) is praying over his daughter Betty, who lies as if unconscious in her bed. Conversations between Parris, his niece [Abigail Williams](#) and between several girls reveal that they, including Abigail and Betty, were engaged in heretical activities in a nearby forest, apparently led by [Tituba](#), Parris's slave from Barbados. Parris had discovered them, whereupon Betty fainted and has not yet recovered. The townspeople do not know exactly what the girls were up to, but there are rumors of [witchcraft](#).

[John Proctor](#) enters the room in which Betty lies in bed, and Abigail, otherwise alone, tries to seduce him. It does not work, but it is revealed that Abigail and Proctor had had a previous affair and that Abigail still has feelings for him.

[Reverend John Hale](#) is summoned from Beverly to look upon Betty and research the incident. He is a self-proclaimed expert in occult phenomena and is eager to use his acquired learning. He questions Abigail, who accuses Tituba of being a witch. Tituba, afraid of being hanged and threatened with beating, professes faith in [God](#) and accuses Goodwives Sarah Good and Osborn of witchcraft. Betty, now awake, claims to have been bewitched and professes her faith in God, too. Betty and Abigail sing out a list of people whom they claim to have seen with the Devil.

Elizabeth questions Proctor to find out if he is late for dinner because of a visit to [Salem](#). She tells him that their housemaid, [Mary Warren](#), has been there all day. Having forbidden Mary from going to Salem, Proctor becomes angry, but Elizabeth explains that Mary has been named an official of the court.

Elizabeth tells Proctor that he must reveal that Abigail is a fake. He declares that he cannot prove what she told him because they were alone when they talked. Elizabeth becomes upset because he has not previously mentioned this time alone with Abigail. Proctor believes that she is accusing him of resuming his affair with Abigail. Then an argument ensues.

Mary returns. Proctor is furious that she has been in Salem all day, but she advises that she will be gone every day because of her duties as an official of the court. Mary gives Elizabeth a poppet that she made while in court, and tells the couple that thirty-nine people are now in jail, and that [Goody Osborne](#) (sic) will hang for her failure to confess to witchcraft. Proctor is angry because he believes that the court is condemning people without solid evidence. Mary states that Elizabeth has also been accused, but, as she herself defended her, the court dismissed the accusation.

Elizabeth tells Proctor that she believes that Abigail will accuse her of witchcraft and have her executed because she wants to become Proctor's wife. Elizabeth asks Proctor to speak to Abigail and tell her that no chance exists of him marrying her if anything happens to his wife.

Reverend Hale visits the Proctor house and tells Elizabeth and Proctor that the former has been named in court. Hale questions Proctor about his poor church attendance and asks him to recite the [Ten Commandments](#). When Proctor gets stuck on the tenth, Elizabeth reminds him of the commandment forbidding adultery.

Proctor tells Hale that Abigail has admitted to him that witchcraft was not responsible for the children's ailments. Hale asks Proctor to testify in court and then questions Elizabeth to find out if she believes in witches. [Giles Corey](#) and Francis Nurse arrive and tell Proctor, Hale and Elizabeth that the court has arrested both of their wives for witchcraft.

Ezekiel Cheever and Willard/Herrick arrive with a warrant for Elizabeth's arrest. Cheever discovers the poppet that Mary made for Elizabeth, with a needle inside it. Cheever tells Proctor and Hale that, after apparently being stabbed with a needle while eating at Parris' house, Abigail accused Elizabeth's spirit of stabbing her. Mary tells Hale that she made the doll in court that day and stored the needle inside it. She also states that Abigail saw this because she sat next to her. The men still take Elizabeth into custody, and Hale, Corey and Nurse leave.

Proctor tells Mary that she must testify in court against Abigail. Mary replies that she fears doing this because Abigail and the others will turn against her.

In the original showing of the play, an additional scene in this act was shown. Since then, it has been removed from most productions of the play, but is added as an appendix in many written book forms of the play:

In the woods, Proctor meets with Abigail. She again tries to seduce him, but he continuously pushes her away, informing her that she must stop all accusations being made against his wife. They argue, and Abigail asks him how he intends to prove that what she is saying is false. He informs her that he fully intends to admit to their affair in court if it comes to it, and the scene ends with Abigail saying, "I will save you tomorrow... from yourself I will save you."

Judge [Hathorne](#) (offstage) is in the midst of questioning [Martha Corey](#) on accusations of witchcraft, during which her husband, Giles, interrupts the court proceedings and declares that [Thomas Putnam](#) is "reaching out for land!" He is removed from the courtroom and taken to the [vestry](#) room by Willard/Herrick.

Judge Hathorne enters and angrily asks: "How dare you come roarin' into this court, are you gone daft, Corey?". Corey replies that since Hathorne isn't a [Boston](#) Judge yet, he has no right to ask him that question. [Deputy Governor Danforth](#), Cheever, Reverend Parris and Francis Nurse enter the vestry room. Corey explains that he owns 600 acres (2.4 km²) of land, and a large quantity of timber, both of which Putnam had been eyeing. Corey also states that the court is holding his wife Martha by mistake saying he had only said Martha was reading books, but he never accused her of witchcraft.

Danforth soon thereafter takes utter control of the situation, and denies others in the court even a modicum of power. John Proctor enters with Mary Warren, promising to clear up any doubts regarding the girls if his wife is freed from custody. Danforth orders the girls into the vestry. Reverend Parris is skeptical, pointing out that the girls fainted, screamed, and turned cold before the accused, which they see as proof of the spirits. Mary tells them that she believed at first to have seen the spirits, however knows now that there aren't any.

In an attempt to discredit Mary, Abigail and the other girls begin to scream and cry out that they are freezing. When Abigail calls to God, Proctor accuses her of being a whore and tells the court of their affair. Abigail denies it and the court has Elizabeth brought in to verify if Proctor is telling the truth. Not knowing that he had already confessed, Elizabeth lies and denies any knowledge of the affair. When Proctor continues to insist that the affair took place, the girls begin to pretend to see a yellow bird sent by Mary to attack them. To save herself from being accused of witchcraft, Mary tells the court that Proctor was in league with the devil and forced her to testify. Proctor is arrested for witchcraft, and Reverend Hale storms out of the court, shouting "I denounce these proceedings!"

Proctor is chained to a jail wall totally isolated from the outside. Reverend Parris begins to panic, because John was liked by many in the village (as were Martha Corey and Rebecca Nurse, who are also to be hanged), and he explains his fears to Hathorne, Danforth and Cheever. He also reveals that Abigail and Mercy Lewis (one of the "afflicted" girls) stole 31 pounds (about half his yearly salary) and boarded a ship in the night. Hale enters, now a broken man who spends all his time with the prisoners, praying with them and advising prisoners to confess to witchcraft so that they can live. The authorities send Elizabeth to John, telling her to try to convince Proctor to confess to being a witch. When Proctor and Elizabeth are alone, she forgives him and reaffirms their love. Elizabeth tells of Giles Corey being pressed to death. John chooses to confess in exchange for his life and calls out to Hathorne, who is almost overjoyed to hear such news. Proctor signs the confession, then tears it up when realizing that Danforth is going to nail the signed confession to the church (which Proctor fears will ruin his name and the names of other Salemites). Proctor, [Rebecca Nurse](#) and Martha Corey are led to the gallows to hang.

Cry Beloved Country—by Alan Paton.

The novel opens in a small village in [Ixopo](#) (Ndotsheni), where the black pastor Stephen Kumalo receives a letter from the priest Theophilus Msimangu in [Johannesburg](#). Msimangu urges Kumalo to come to the city to help his sister Gertrude, because she is ill. Kumalo goes to Johannesburg to help Gertrude and to find his son Absalom, who had gone to the city to look for Gertrude but never came home. When he gets to the city, Kumalo learns that Gertrude has taken up a life of prostitution and beer brewing, and is now drinking heavily. She agrees to return to the village with her young son. Assured, Kumalo embarks on the search for his son, first seeing his brother John, a carpenter who has become involved in the politics of South Africa. Kumalo and Msimangu follow Absalom's trail only to learn that Absalom has been in a reformatory and impregnated a young woman. Shortly thereafter, Kumalo learns that his son has been arrested for the murder during a burglary of Arthur Jarvis (who was an engineer), a white activist for racial justice and son of Kumalo's neighbour James Jarvis.

Jarvis learns of his son's death and comes with his family to Johannesburg. Jarvis and his son had been distant, and now the father begins to know his son through his writings. Through reading his son's essays, Jarvis decides to take up his son's work on behalf of South Africa's black population.

Absalom is sentenced to death for the murder of Arthur Jarvis. Before his father returns to Ndotsheni, Absalom marries the girl who is carrying his child, and she joins Kumalo's family. Kumalo returns to his village with his daughter-in-law and nephew, having found that Gertrude ran away on the night before their departure.

Back in Ixopo, Kumalo makes a futile visit to the tribe's chief in order to discuss changes that must be made to help the barren village. Help arrives, however, when James Jarvis becomes involved in the work. He arranges to have a dam built and hires a native agricultural demonstrator to implement new farming methods.

The novel ends at dawn on the morning of Absalom's execution.

Daisy Miller—by Henry James.

Daisy Miller and Winterbourne first meet in [Vevey](#), Switzerland, where Winterbourne is vacationing from his alleged studies (although an attachment to an older lady is rumoured). They are introduced by Randolph Miller, Daisy's 9-year old brother. Randolph considers their hometown of [Schenectady, New York](#), to be absolutely superior to all of Europe. Daisy, however, is absolutely delighted with the continent, especially the high society which she wishes to enter.

Winterbourne is at first confused by her attitude, although greatly impressed by her beauty, but soon determines that she is nothing more than a young flirt. He continues his pursuit of Daisy in spite of the disapproval of his snobbish aunt Mrs. Costello, who spurns any family with so close a relationship to their courier as the Millers have with their Eugenio. She also thinks Daisy is a shameless girl for agreeing to visit the [Château de Chillon](#) with Winterbourne after they have known each other for only half an hour. Winterbourne then informs Daisy that he must go to [Geneva](#) the next day. Daisy feels disappointment and chaffs him, eventually asking him to visit her in Rome later that year.

In Rome, Winterbourne and Daisy meet unexpectedly in the parlor of Mrs. Walker, an American expatriate. Her moral values have become adapted to those of Italian society. Rumors about Daisy meeting with young Italian gentlemen make her socially exceptionable under these criteria. Winterbourne learns of Daisy's increasing intimacy with a young Italian of questionable society, Giovanelli, as well as the growing scandal caused by the pair's behavior. Daisy is undeterred by the open disapproval of the other Americans in Rome, and her mother seems quite unaware of the underlying tensions. Winterbourne and Mrs. Walker attempt to persuade Daisy to separate from Giovanelli, but she refuses any help that is offered.

One night, Winterbourne takes a walk through the [Colosseum](#) and, at its center, sees a young couple sitting there. He realizes that they are Giovanelli and Daisy. Winterbourne, infuriated with Giovanelli, asks him how he could dare to take Daisy to a place where she runs the risk of "[Roman Fever](#)". Daisy says she does not care and Winterbourne leaves them. Daisy falls ill, and dies a few days later.

The issue on which the novella turns is the 'innocence' of Daisy .

David Copperfield—by Charles Dickens.

The story traces the life of David Copperfield from childhood to maturity. David is born in England in 1820. David's father had died six months before he was born, and seven years later, his mother marries Mr. [Edward Murdstone](#), who is born in 1775. David is given good reason to dislike his stepfather and has similar feelings for Mr Murdstone's sister Jane (born in 1780), who moves into the house soon afterwards. Mr Murdstone thrashes David for falling behind with his studies. Following one of these thrashings, David bites him and is sent away to a boarding school, Salem House, with a ruthless headmaster, Mr. Creakle. Here he befriends [James Steerforth](#) and Tommy Traddles, both of whom he meets again later on.

David returns home for the holidays to find out that his mother has had a baby boy. Soon after David goes back to Salem House, his mother and her baby die and David has to return home immediately. Mr Murdstone sends him to work in a factory in London, of which Murdstone is a joint owner. The grim reality of hand-to-mouth factory existence echoes Dickens' own travails in a blacking factory. Copperfield's landlord, Mr [Wilkins Micawber](#), is sent to a [debtor's prison](#) (the [King's Bench Prison](#)) after going bankrupt and remains there for several months before being released and moving to Plymouth. No one remains to care for David in London, so he decides to run away.

He walks all the way from London to [Dover](#), where he finds his only relative, his aunt Miss [Betsey Trotwood](#). This eccentric aunt agrees to raise him, despite Mr Murdstone's attempt to regain David's custody. David's aunt renames him 'Trotwood Copperfield', shortened to "Trot", and for the rest of the novel David is called by either name, depending on whether he is communicating with someone he has known for a long time or someone he has only recently met.

The story follows David as he grows to adulthood and is enlivened by the many now well-known characters who enter, leave, and re-enter his life. These include [Peggotty](#)--his mother's faithful former housekeeper--and Peggotty's family, including her orphaned niece "Little Em'ly", who moves in with them and charms the young David. David's romantic but self-serving school friend, Steerforth, seduces and dishonors Little Em'ly, precipitating the novel's greatest tragedy, and his landlord's daughter and "angel in the house," Agnes Wickfield, becomes his confidante. The novel's two most familiar characters are David's sometime-mentor, the debt-ridden Micawber, and the devious and fraudulent clerk, [Uriah Heep](#), whose misdeeds are eventually revealed with Micawber's assistance. Micawber is painted sympathetically even as the narrator deplores his financial ineptitude. Micawber, like Dickens's own father, is briefly imprisoned for insolvency.

In typical Dickens fashion, the major characters eventually get some measure of what they deserve, and few narrative threads are left hanging. Dan Peggotty safely transports Little Em'ly to a new life in Australia; accompanied by Mrs. Gummidge and the Micawbers. All eventually find security and happiness in their adopted country. First, David marries the beautiful but naïve [Dora Spenlow](#), who dies after failing to recover from a miscarriage early in their marriage. David then searches his soul and marries the sensible Agnes, who had always loved him and with whom he finds true happiness. David and Agnes then have several children, including a daughter named for Betsey Trotwood.

Dead (The)—by James Joyce.

The story centres on Gabriel Conroy on the night of the Morkan sisters' annual dance and dinner in the first week of January 1904, perhaps the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6). Typical of the stories in [Dubliners](#), "The Dead" develops toward a moment of painful self-awareness; [Joyce](#) described this as an [epiphany](#). The narrative generally concentrates on Gabriel's insecurities, his social awkwardness, and the defensive way he copes with his discomfort. The story culminates at the point when Gabriel discovers that, through years of marriage, there was much he never knew of his wife's past.

Upon arriving at the party with his wife, Gabriel makes an unfunny joke about the maid's marriage prospects; and he fidgets, adjusts his clothing, and offers her money as a holiday present. Not long after that, he gets flustered again when his wife pokes fun at him over a conversation they had earlier, in which he had forced her to wear galoshes for the bad weather. With such episodes, Gabriel is depicted as particularly pathetic. Similarly, Gabriel is unsure about quoting a poem from the poet [Robert Browning](#) when he is giving his dinner address, as he is afraid to be seen as pretentious. But, at the same time, Gabriel considers himself above the others when he speculates that his audience would not understand the words he uses.

Later, when giving the traditional holiday toast, Gabriel overcompensates for some of his earlier statements to his evening dancing partner Miss Ivors, an Irish nationalist. His talk relies heavily on conventions; and he praises the virtues of the Irish people and idealizes the past in a way that feels contrived and disingenuous, especially considering what the past will mean to him once he hears his wife's story. In fact he hurts Miss Ivors by mistake so much that she rushes away even before dinner is served.

As Gabriel is preparing to leave the party, he sees a woman absorbed in thought, standing at the top of the staircase. He stares at her for a moment before he recognizes her as his wife. He then envisages her as though she were the model in a painting that he would call "Distant Music". Her distracted and wistful mood arouses sexual interest in him. He tries indirectly to confront her about it after the party, in the hotel room he has reserved for them; but he finds her unresponsive. Trying to make ironic, half-suggestive comments, Gabriel learns that she was feeling nostalgic after having heard Mr. D'Arcy singing *The Lass of Aughrim* at the party.

Upon being pressed further, Gretta says that the song reminds her of the time when she was a girl in [Galway](#) and in love with a boy named Michael Furey. At the time, Gretta was being kept at her grandmother's home before she was to be sent off to a convent in [Dublin](#). Michael was terribly sick and unable to see her. Despite being bedridden, when it came time for her to leave Galway, Michael travelled through the rain to Gretta's window; and, although he was able to speak with her again, he died within the week.

The remainder of the text delves further into Gabriel's thoughts after he hears this story, exploring his shifting views on himself, his wife, the past, the living and the dead. It is ambiguous whether the epiphany is just an artistic and emotional moment or is meant to set the reader pondering whether Gabriel will ever manage to escape his smallness and insecurity.

Death of a Salesman—by Arthur Miller.

Willy Loman returns home after an unsuccessful business trip. Frustrated at his lack of success, his wife Linda suggests that he asks his boss Howard Wagner to allow him to work in his home city so he will not have to travel. Willy complains to Linda that their son, Biff, who comes home for the holidays, has yet to make good on his life. Despite Biff's promise as an athlete in high school, he flunked senior year math, made no effort in summer school, and never went to college.

Biff and his brother, Happy, who is also visiting, reminisce about their childhood together. They discuss their father's mental degeneration, which they have witnessed by his constant vacillations and talking to himself. When Willy walks in, angry that the two boys have never amounted to anything, Biff and Happy tell Willy that Biff plans to make a business proposition the next day in an effort to pacify their father.

The next day, Willy goes to ask his boss for a job in town while Biff goes to make a business proposition. Both fail, as Willy gets angry and ends up getting fired when the boss tells him to continue being a traveling salesman, while Biff makes a terrible impression during his business presentation and impulsively steals a fountain pen (an expensive symbol of status worth far more than a ball point pen). Willy then meets Bernard, who tells him that Biff originally wanted to do well in summer school, but something happened in Boston when Biff went to visit Willy there that changed his mind.

Happy, Biff, and Willy meet for dinner at a restaurant, but Willy refuses to hear bad news from Biff. The two sons decide to lie to their father, who then goes into a flashback of what happened in Boston the day Biff stopped trying to succeed in life. Willy had been in a hotel on a sales trip with a young woman when Biff showed up, causing him to want to flunk math and ruin his father's dreams of his success out of spite.

Biff and Happy leave their deranged father in the restaurant, and return home, where their mother angrily shouts at them while Willy remains talking to himself outside. Eventually Willy joins the argument, at which point Biff forcefully says that he is no longer being a failure out of spite: he simply knows he isn't cut out to be a successful businessman. The feud culminates with Biff hugging Willy, telling his father he loves him.

Rather than listen to what Biff actually says, Willy realizes his son has forgiven him and thinks Biff will now pursue a career as a businessman. Willy decides to kill himself in an auto accident so that Biff can get enough money to start his business, yet at the funeral Biff retains his belief that he does not want to become a businessman. Happy, on the other hand, chooses to take the insurance money and follow in his father's footsteps.

Death of Ivan Ilyich—by Leo Tolstoy.

Ivan Ilyich Golovin, a high court judge in [St. Petersburg](#) with a wife and family, lives a carefree life that is "most simple and most ordinary and therefore most terrible." Like everyone he is aware of, he lives a life spent almost entirely in climbing the social ladder, and his life begins to amass more hypocrisy as it goes on. Enduring life with a wife whom he often finds too demanding, he works his way up to be a magistrate owing to the influence he has over a friend who has just been promoted, focusing more and more on his work as family life becomes more miserable.

While hanging curtains for his new home one day, Ivan Ilyich falls awkwardly and hurts his side. Though he does not think much of it at first, he begins to suffer from a pain in his side. As Ilyich's discomfort increases, his behavior towards his family becomes more irritable. His wife finally insists that he visit a physician. The physician cannot pinpoint the source of his malady, but soon it becomes clear that his condition is terminal. He is brought face to face with his mortality, and realizes that although he knows of it, he does not truly grasp it.

During the long and painful process of death, Ivan dwells on the idea that he does not deserve his suffering because he has lived rightly. If he had not lived a good life, there could be reason for his pain; but he has, so pain and death must be arbitrary and senseless. As he begins to hate his family for avoiding the subject of his death, for pretending he is only sick and not dying, he finds his only comfort in his peasant boy servant Gerasim, the only person in Ivan's life who does not fear death, and also the only one who, apart from his own son, shows compassion for him. Ivan begins to question whether he has, in fact, lived a good life.

In the final days of his life, Ivan makes a clear split between an artificial life, such as his own, which masks the true meaning of life and makes one fear death, and an authentic life, the life of Gerasim. Authentic life is marked by compassion and sympathy; the artificial life by self-interest. Then "some force" strikes Ivan in the chest and side, and he is brought into the presence of a bright light. His hand falls onto his nearby son's head, and he pities him. He no longer hates his daughter or wife, but rather feels sorry for them, because he has found at last a joy in authentic life and they will continue their artificial lives, fearing death. In the middle of a sigh, Ivan dies.

Delta Wedding—by Eudora Welty

Delta Wedding is about southern family about to have a wedding for their young daughter. The book starts by being narrated by the young Laura McRaven who's mother recently passed. Then the book shifts to Dabney Fairchild who is getting married to the infamest Troy. She is very lackadaisical as she is about to get married. Through all the help her family is trying to give her all she has been thinking about is Troy. Then the book's point of view shifts to George Fairchild who is like the hero of the family. His wife Robbie Reid left him and he is very down and the family hates her because she married George and moved him away from the family. As the wedding is

nearing you start to feel more of a sense of the families feelings and emotion. The fairchilds are a tight knit family and they believe this wedding might tear them apart, AGAIN!

Desire Under the Elms—by Eugene O’Neill.

Widower Ephraim Cabot abandons his [New England](#) farm to his three sons, who hate him but share his greed. Eben, the youngest and brightest sibling, feels the farm is his birthright, as it originally belonged to his mother. He buys out his half-brothers' shares of the farm with money stolen from his father, and Peter and Simeon head off to [California](#) to seek their fortune. Later, Ephraim returns with a new wife, the beautiful and headstrong Abbie, who enters into an adulterous affair with Eben. Soon after, Abbie bears Eben's child, but lets Ephraim believe that the child is his, in the hopes of securing her future with the farm. The proud Ephraim is oblivious as his neighbors openly mock him as a cuckold. Madly in love with Eben and fearful it would become an obstacle to their relationship, Abbie kills the infant. An enraged and distraught Eben turns Abbie over to the sheriff, but not before admitting to himself the depths of his love for her and thus confessing his own role in the [infanticide](#).

Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant—by Anne Tyler.

Pearl Tull is a rigid perfectionist. She has three children with her husband, traveling salesman Beck, who abandons the family. After Beck leaves Pearl struggles to maintain a front as if nothing is wrong, but she is prone to angry outbursts when her children misbehave. Cody, the oldest, is wild and adventurous, but is envious of his brother Ezra whom he believes is Pearl's favorite. As they are growing up, this plays out in endless pranks. Ezra is passive, and never tries to get back at Cody. He is nurturing and sweet, traits that often interest Cody's girlfriends furthering Cody's resentment. Ezra goes to work at a restaurant which he later manages and ultimately inherits, while Cody becomes a wealthy and successful efficiency expert. When Ezra becomes engaged to Ruth, his star cook, Cody becomes obsessed with luring her away, and ultimately succeeds, but his marriage to Ruth is not easy. Ezra never recovers, and remains at home with Pearl; he is a caregiver, both for Pearl and his customers, but this is underlain by sadness.

Jenny is the youngest and most scholarly of the Tulls, but in college she marries on an impulse with unhappy results. Only in her third marriage to a man with six children whose wife has abandoned him does she find stability in family life and in her successful if harried career as a pediatrician.

A recurring scene in the novel involves Ezra's unsuccessful attempts to bring the family together for a meal at his "Homesick Restaurant", reflecting his desire to unite and mend the family. At Pearl's funeral Beck returns to the family for the first time. However, they never seem to be able to get through a single dinner without conflict, this time with Cody facing down his father.

Divine Comedy (The)—by Dante Aligheri.

The *Divine Comedy* is composed of 14,233 lines that are divided into three canticas (Ital. pl. *cantiche*)—*Inferno* ([Hell](#)), *Purgatorio* ([Purgatory](#)), and *Paradiso* ([Paradise](#))—each consisting of 33 [cantos](#) (Ital. pl. *canti*). An initial canto serves as an introduction to the poem and is generally considered to be part of the first cantica, bringing the total number of cantos to 100. It is generally accepted, however, that the first two [cantos](#) serve as a unitary prologue to the entire epic, as well as the opening two cantos of each cantica serving as a prologue to each of the three cantiche.^{[9][10][11]} The number three is prominent in the work, represented here by the length of each cantica. The verse scheme used, *terza rima*, is [hendecasyllabic](#) (lines of eleven syllables), with the lines composing [tercets](#) according to the [rhyme scheme](#) *aba, bcb, cdc, ded, ...*

The poem is written in the first person, and tells of Dante's journey through the three realms of the dead, lasting from the night before [Good Friday](#) to the Wednesday after [Easter](#) in the spring of 1300. The Roman poet [Virgil](#) guides him through Hell and Purgatory; [Beatrice](#), Dante's ideal woman, guides him through Heaven. Beatrice was a Florentine woman whom he had met in childhood and admired from afar in the mode of the then-fashionable [courtly love](#) tradition which is highlighted in Dante's earlier work [La Vita Nuova](#).

The structure of the three realms follows a common numerical pattern of 9 plus 1 for a total of 10: 9 circles of the Inferno, followed by Lucifer contained at its bottom; 9 rings of Mount Purgatory, followed by the [Garden of Eden](#) crowning its summit; and the 9 celestial bodies of Paradiso, followed by the [Empyrean](#) containing the very essence of God. Within the 9, 7 correspond to a specific moral scheme, subdividing itself into three subcategories, while two others of more particularity are added on for a completion of nine. For example, the [seven deadly sins](#) of the Catholic Church that are cleansed in Purgatory are joined by special realms for the Late repentant and the [excommunicated](#) by the church. The core seven sins within purgatory correspond to a moral scheme of love perverted, subdivided into three groups corresponding to excessive love ([Lust](#), [Gluttony](#), [Greed](#)), deficient love ([Sloth](#)), and malicious love ([Wrath](#), [Envy](#), [Pride](#)).

In central Italy's political struggle between [Guelphs and Ghibellines](#), Dante was part of the Guelphs, who in general favored the [Papacy](#) over the [Holy Roman Emperor](#). Florence's Guelphs split into factions around 1300, the White Guelphs, and the Black Guelphs. Dante was among the White Guelphs who were exiled in 1302 by the Lord-Mayor Cante de' [Gabrielli](#) di [Gubbio](#), after troops under [Charles of Valois](#) entered the city, at the request of [Pope Boniface VIII](#), who supported the Black Guelphs. This exile, which lasted the rest of Dante's life, shows its influence in many parts of the Comedy, from prophecies of Dante's exile to Dante's views of politics to the eternal damnation of some of his opponents.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)}

In Hell and Purgatory, Dante shares in the [sin](#) and the penitence respectively. The last word in each of the three parts of the *Divine Comedy* is *stelle*, "stars."

Diviners (The)—by Margaret Laurence.

The Diviners is a novel by [Margaret Laurence](#). Published by [McClelland & Stewart](#) in 1974, it was Laurence's final novel, and is considered one of the classics of [Canadian literature](#).

The novel won the [Governor General's Award for English language fiction](#) in 1974. The protagonist of the novel is Morag Gunn, a fiercely independent writer who grew up in [Manawaka](#), [Manitoba](#). Morag has a difficult relationship with her daughter Pique and her [Métis](#) lover Jules Tonnerre, and struggles to maintain her independence.

The Diviners was adapted for television by [Anne Wheeler](#), with a screenplay by [Linda Svendsen](#), and aired on [CBC Television](#) in 1993. [Sonja Smits](#) starred as Morag, and [Tom Jackson](#) starred as Jules Tonnerre.

The book has been repeatedly banned by schoolboards and high schools - usually by complaint from [fundamentalist Christian](#) groups labelling the book [blasphemous](#) and [obscene](#). It is a regularly featured book on the Canadian [Freedom to Read](#) campaign.

Doctor Faustus—by Christopher Marlowe.

The play may have been entered into the [Stationers' Register](#) on 18 December 1592—though the records are confused, and appear to indicate a conflict over the rights to the play. A subsequent Stationers' Register entry, dated 7 January 1601, assigns the play to the bookseller Thomas

Bushnell, the publisher of the 1604 first edition. Bushnell transferred his rights to the play to John Wright on 13 September 1610.^[4]

Two versions of the play exist:

The 1604 [quarto](#), printed by [Valentine Simmes](#) for Thomas Law; sometimes termed the A text. The title page attributes the play to "Ch. Marl.". A second edition (A2) in 1609, printed by [George Eld](#) for John Wright, is merely a reprint of the 1604 text. The text is short for an English Renaissance play, only 1485 lines long.

The 1616 quarto, published by John Wright, the enlarged and altered text; sometimes called the B text. This second text was reprinted in 1619, 1620, 1624, 1631, and as late as 1663.

The 1616 version omits 36 lines but adds 676 new lines, making it roughly one third longer than the 1604 version. Among the lines shared by both versions, there are some small but significant changes in wording; for example, "Never too late, if Faustus can repent" in the 1604 text becomes "Never too late, if Faustus will repent" in the 1616 text, a change that offers a very different possibility for Faustus's hope and repentance.

A major change between texts A and B is the name of the devil summoned by Faustus. Text A states the name is "Mephistophilis", while the version of text B states "Masturtophilis". The name of the devil is in each case a reference to [Mephistopheles](#), though these names are both of Marlowe's invention.

The relationship between the texts is uncertain and many modern editions print both. As an Elizabethan playwright, Marlowe had nothing to do with the publication and had no control over the play in performance, so it was possible for scenes to be dropped or shortened, or for new scenes to be added, so that the resulting publications may be modified versions of the original script.

The 1604 version is believed by most scholars to be closer to the play as originally performed in Marlowe's lifetime, and the 1616 version to be a posthumous adaptation by other hands. However, some disagree, seeing the 1604 version as an abbreviation and the 1616 version as Marlowe's original fuller version.

In the past, it was assumed that the comic scenes were additions by other writers.^{[[citation needed](#)]} However, most scholars today consider the comedy an integral part of the play, as its tone shows the change in Faustus' ambitions, suggesting Marlowe did oversee the composition of them.^{[[citation needed](#)]} The clown is seen as the archetype for comic relief.

Doctor Zhivago—by Boris Pasternak.

Yuri Zhivago is sensitive and poetic nearly to the point of [mysticism](#). Zhivago's idealism and principles stand in contrast to the brutality and horror of [World War I](#), the [Russian Revolution](#), and the subsequent [Russian Civil War](#). A major theme of the novel is how mysticism and idealism are destroyed by both the [Bolsheviks](#) and the [White Army](#) alike, as both sides commit horrible atrocities.

Zhivago's great love is Lara, whose full name is Larissa Feodorovna Guishar (later Antipova), born into the bourgeoisie. She is engaged to Pavel "Pasha" Antipov, an idealistic young student who becomes involved in Bolshevism through his father. Lara unwillingly has an affair with Viktor Komarovsky, a powerful lawyer with political connections. To gain independence from Komarovsky, Lara spends three years working as a nanny for a wealthy family (the Kologrivovs).

Upon returning, Lara's brother begs her for 700 rubles from Komarovsky to repay money that he has gambled away. Her employer Kologrivov gives her the money; however, when Lipa graduates, Lara resents that Kologrievs allow her to stay out of charity. Angry at Komarovsky, whom she believes has ruined her life, she attends a party to demand the money from Komarovsky. She shoots with a gun, but misses.^[4]

Lara and Zhivago first meet when Lara's mother attempts suicide and Zhivago, along with Misha Gordon, visit with a doctor. Zhivago is also present the night Lara shoots Komarovsky. Lara and Zhivago first speak to each other when they meet again in the country and are surrounded by troops. Lara has been serving as nurse while searching for her husband Antipov, whom she believes may have been killed. Lara and Zhivago serve together in a makeshift field hospital and fall in love. They do not consummate their relationship until much later, meeting in the town of Yuriatin after the war.

Pasha Antipov is believed to have been killed in World War I, but was captured by the Germans and escapes. Antipov joins the Bolsheviks and becomes Strelnikov (the shooter), a fearsome Red Army general who becomes infamous for executing White prisoners (hence his nickname).

Another major character is Liberius, commander of the "Forest Brotherhood", the Red Partisan band which conscripts Yuri into service. Liberius is a dedicated and heroic revolutionary. But he is also a cocaine addict, loud-mouthed and vain, and bores Yuri with his constant lectures about the justice of their cause and the inevitability of their victory.

Komarovsky reappears towards the end of the story. He has gained some influence in the Bolshevik government and been appointed minister of justice of the [Far Eastern Republic](#), a Bolshevik puppet state in Siberia. He offers Zhivago and Lara transit out of Russia. They initially refuse. But Komarovsky lies about Pasha Antipov's death and persuades Zhivago that it is in Lara's best interests to leave; Zhivago convinces Lara to go with Komarovsky, telling her (falsely) that he will follow her shortly.

Meanwhile, Antipov/Strelnikov, loses his position in the Red Army, and returns to Varykino, near Yuriatin, where he hopes to find Lara. She, however, has just left with Komarovsky. After having a lengthy conversation with Zhivago, Pasha Antipov commits suicide and is found the next morning by Zhivago.

Zhivago's life and health decline; he lives with another woman and has two children with her, plans numerous writing projects but does not finish them, and is increasingly absent-minded, erratic, and unwell. Lara eventually returns to Russia on the day of Zhivago's funeral. She gets Yevgraf, his half brother, to try to find her daughter but then disappears.

During World War II Zhivago's old friends Nika Dudorov and Misha Gordon meet up. One of their discussions revolves around a local laundress named Tanya, a *bezprizornaya* or parentless child, one of many left by the Civil War, and her resemblance to Zhivago. Much later they meet over the first edition of Zhivago's poems.

Other major characters include Tonya Gromeko, Zhivago's wife, and her parents Alexander and Anna, with whom Zhivago lived after he lost his parents as a child. Yevgraf (Evgraf) Zhivago, Yuri's younger illegitimate half-brother (son of his father and a Mongolian princess), is a mysterious figure who gains power and influence with the Bolsheviks and helps his brother evade arrest throughout the course of the story.

Doll House (A)—by Henrik Ibsen.

A Doll's House opens as Nora Helmer returns from Christmas shopping. Her husband Torvald comes out of his study to banter with her. They discuss how their finances will improve now that Torvald has a new job as a bank manager. Torvald expresses his horror of debt. Nora behaves childishly and he enjoys treating her like a child to be instructed and indulged.

Soon an old friend of Nora's, Kristine Linde, arrives. She is a childless widow who is moving back to the city. Her husband left her no money, so she has tried different kinds of work, and now hopes to find some work that is not too strenuous. Nora confides to Kristine that she once secretly borrowed money from a disgraced lawyer, Nils Krogstad, to save Torvald's life when he was very ill, but she has not told him in order to protect his pride. She told everyone that the money came from her father, who died at about the same time. She has been repaying the debt from her housekeeping budget, and also from some work she got copying papers by hand, which she did secretly in her room, and took pride in her ability to earn money "as if she were a man." Torvald's new job promises to finally liberate her from this debt.

Nora asks Torvald to give Kristine a position as a secretary in the bank, and he agrees, as she has experience in bookkeeping. They leave the house together.

Krogstad arrives and tells Nora that he is worried he will be fired. He asks her to help him keep his job and says that he will fight desperately to keep it. Nora is reluctant to commit to helping him, so Krogstad reveals that he knows she committed forgery on the [bond](#) she signed for her loan from him. As a woman, she needed an adult male co-signer, so she said she would have her father do so. However the signature is dated three days after his death, which suggests that it is a forgery. Nora admits that she did forge the signature, so as to spare her dying father further worry about her (she was pregnant, poor, and had a seriously ill husband). Krogstad explains that the forgery betrayed his trust and is also a serious crime. If he told others about it, her reputation would be ruined, as was his after a similar "indiscretion," even though he was never prosecuted. He implies that what he did was in order to provide for his sick wife, who later died.

Kristine arrives to help Nora repair a dress for a costume party she and Torvald are going to tomorrow. Then Torvald comes home from the bank and Nora pleads with him to reinstate Krogstad at the bank. She claims she is worried that Krogstad will publish libelous articles about Torvald and ruin his career. Torvald dismisses her fears and explains that although Krogstad is a good worker and seems to have turned his life around, he insists on firing him because Krogstad is not deferential enough to him in front of other bank personnel. Torvald goes into his study to do some work.

Next Dr. Rank, a family friend, arrives. Nora talks about asking him for a favor. Then he reveals that he has entered the terminal stage of [tuberculosis](#) of the spine (a contemporary euphemism for [congenital syphilis](#)), and that he has always been secretly in love with her. Nora tries to deny the first revelation and make light of it, but she is more disturbed by the second. She tries clumsily to tell him that she is not in love with him, but loves him dearly as a friend.

Desperate after being fired by Torvald, Krogstad arrives at the house. Nora gets Dr. Rank to go in to Torvald's study, so he does not see Krogstad. When Krogstad comes in he declares he no longer cares about the remaining balance of Nora's loan, but that he will preserve the associated [bond](#) in order to blackmail Torvald into not only keeping him employed, but giving him a promotion. Nora explains that she has done her best to persuade her husband, but he refuses to change his mind. Krogstad informs Nora that he has written a letter detailing her crime (forging her father's signature of [surety](#) on the bond) and puts it in Torvald's mailbox, which is locked.

Nora tells Kristine of her predicament. Kristine says that she and Krogstad were in love before she married, and promises that she will try to convince him to relent.

Torvald comes in and tries to check his mail, but Nora distracts him by begging him to help her with the dance she has been rehearsing for the costume party, as she is so anxious about performing. She dances so badly and acts so worried that Torvald agrees to spend the whole evening coaching her. When the others go in to dinner, Nora stays behind for a few minutes and contemplates suicide to save her husband from the shame of the revelation of her crime, and more importantly to pre-empt any gallant gesture on his part to save her reputation.

Kristine tells Krogstad that she only married her husband because she had no other means to support her sick mother and young siblings, and that she has returned to offer him her love again. She believes that he would not have stooped to unethical behavior if he had not been devastated by her abandonment and in dire financial straits. Krogstad is moved and offers to take back his letter to Torvald. However, Kristine decides that Torvald should know the truth for the sake of his and Nora's marriage.

After literally dragging Nora home from the party, Torvald goes to check his mail, but is interrupted by Dr. Rank, who has followed them. Dr. Rank chats for a while so as to convey obliquely to Nora that this is a final goodbye, as he has determined that his death is near, but in general terms so that Torvald does not suspect what he is referring to. Dr. Rank leaves, and Torvald retrieves his letters. As he reads them Nora steels herself to take her life. Torvald confronts her with Krogstad's letter. Enraged, he declares that he is now completely in Krogstad's power—he must yield to Krogstad's demands and keep quiet about the whole affair. He berates Nora, calling her a dishonest and immoral woman and telling her she is unfit to raise their children. He says that from now on their marriage will be only a matter of appearances.

A maid enters, delivering a letter to Nora. Krogstad has returned the incriminating papers, saying that he regrets his actions. Torvald exults that he is saved as he burns the papers. He takes back his harsh words to his wife and tells her that he forgives her. Nora realizes that her husband is not the strong and gallant man she thought he was, and that he truly loves himself more than he does her.

Torvald explains that when a man has forgiven his wife it makes him love her all the more since it reminds him that she is totally dependent on him, like a child. He dismisses Nora's agonized choice made against her conscience for the sake of his health and her years of secret efforts to free them from the ensuing obligations and danger of loss of reputation, while preserving his peace of mind, as a mere mistake that she made owing to her foolishness, one of her most endearing feminine traits.

Nora tells Torvald that she is leaving him to live alone so she can find out who she is and what she believes and decide what to do with her life. She says she has been treated like a doll to play with, first by her father and then by him. Concerned for the family reputation, Torvald insists that she fulfill her duty as a wife and mother, but Nora says that her first duties are to herself, and she cannot be a good mother or wife without learning to be more than a plaything. She reveals that she had expected that he would want to sacrifice his reputation for hers, and that she had planned to kill herself to prevent him from doing so. She now realizes that Torvald is not at all the kind of person she had believed him to be, and that their marriage has been based on mutual fantasies and misunderstanding.

Torvald is unable to comprehend Nora's point of view, since it contradicts all that he had been taught about the female mind throughout his life. Furthermore, he is so narcissistic that it would be impossible for him to bear to understand how he appears to her, as selfish, hypocritical and more concerned with public reputation than with actual morality. Nora leaves her keys and wedding ring and as Torvald breaks down and begins to cry, baffled by what has happened, Nora leaves the house, slamming the door behind herself.

Dollmaker (The)—by Harriette Arnow.

The story of a family that moves from the rural home in [Appalachia](#) to [Detroit Michigan](#) where the father intends to find work in a factory. Fonda's character, Gertie, is hesitant to leave their home; her husband [Clovis](#) believes that it will bring the family a regular income and better way of living. What Fonda's Gertie finds is a new place to exist, rather than live, and the family settles down in a tar paper shack by the railroad tracks in an industrial area.

All the while Gertie holds onto her homespun ways, one of which is through carving. Her husband begins to dismiss her talents and puts down Gertie for holding onto her [folk art](#) in a modern world. Still, her handiwork is admired by those around her. One of the items that she hangs onto is a piece of a tree limb in which she sees a figure of [Jesus](#) calling to her to carve it from it.

One setback after another begins to pull the family apart. Gertie's husband doesn't find work and begins to get involved with matters that trouble her; her children begin to also get involved in unsavory affairs.

The event that breaks Gertie's passivity to her situation is the death of her youngest daughter, who is killed by a railroad car. She confronts her husband, whose best of intentions has led the family to this tragedy; Gertie decides that she will earn enough money to get the family back home to where it belongs. To do this she will make dolls, but she has no material from which she can carve the dolls. It is then that she takes the treasured piece of lumber that she longed to carve the Christ figure from, and splits it (in a slow motion scene) with an [axe](#). From one piece of wood, she will carve many dolls. It is the only way to save the family.

From this sacrifice, the family is able to return to their home.

Don Quixote—by Miguel de Cervantes.

Don Quixote, the protagonist of the novel, is a retired country gentleman nearing fifty years of age, living in an unnamed section of [La Mancha](#) with his niece and housekeeper. While mostly a rational man of sound reason, reading [Romances](#) in excess, or books of chivalry, has had a profound effect on Don Quixote, leading to the distortion of his perception and the wavering of his mental faculties. In essence, he believes every word of these books of chivalry to be true, though for the most part, the content of these books be clearly false. Otherwise, his wits, in regards to everything other than chivalry, are intact.

He decides to go out as a [knight-errant](#) in search of adventure. He dons an old suit of armour, renames himself "Don Quixote de la Mancha," and names his skinny horse "[Rocinante](#)". He designates a neighboring farm girl, **Aldonza** Lorenzo, as his lady love, renaming her [Dulcinea del Toboso](#), while she knows nothing about this.

He sets out in the early morning and ends up at an inn, which he believes to be a castle. He asks the innkeeper, whom he thinks to be the lord of the castle, to dub him a knight. He spends the night holding vigil over his armor, where he becomes involved in a fight with [muleteers](#) who try to remove his armor from the horse trough so that they can water their mules. The innkeeper then dubs him a knight, and sends him on his way. He frees a young boy who is tied to a tree by his master, because the boy had the audacity to ask his master for the wages the boy had earned but had not yet been paid (who is promptly beaten as soon as Quixote leaves). Don Quixote has a run-in with traders from [Toledo](#), who "insult" the imaginary Dulcinea, one of whom severely beats Don Quixote and leaves him on the side of the road. Don Quixote is found and returned to his home by a neighboring peasant, Pedro Crespo.^[2]

Don Quixote plots an escape. Meanwhile, his niece, the housekeeper, the parish [curate](#), and the local barber secretly burn most of the books of chivalry, and seal up his library pretending that a magician has carried it off. Don Quixote approaches another neighbor, [Sancho Panza](#), and asks

him to be his squire, promising him governorship of an island. The uneducated Sancho agrees, and the pair sneak off in the early dawn. It is here that their series of famous adventures begin, starting with Don Quixote's attack on [windmills that he believes to be ferocious giants](#).

In the course of their travels, the protagonists meet innkeepers, prostitutes, goatherds, soldiers, priests, escaped convicts, and scorned lovers. These encounters are magnified by Don Quixote's imagination into chivalrous quests. Don Quixote's tendency to intervene violently in matters which do not concern him, and his habit of not paying his debts, result in many privations, injuries, and humiliations (with Sancho often getting the worst of it). Finally, Don Quixote is persuaded to return to his home village. The author hints that there was a third quest, but says that records of it have been lost.

Although the two parts are now normally published as a single work, *Don Quixote, Part Two* was a sequel published ten years after the original novel. While Part One was mostly [farcical](#), the second half is more serious and philosophical about the theme of deception.

As *Part Two* begins, it is assumed that the literate classes of Spain have all read the first part of the history of Don Quixote and his squire. When they encounter the duo in person, a Duke and Duchess, and others, deceive Don Quixote for entertainment, setting forth a string of imagined adventures resulting in a series of practical jokes that put Don Quixote's sense of chivalry and his devotion to Dulcinea through many tests.

Even Sancho deceives him at one point. Pressured into finding Dulcinea, Sancho brings back three dirty and ragged peasant girls, and tells Don Quixote that they are Dulcinea and her ladies-in-waiting. When Don Quixote only sees the peasant girls, Sancho pretends that their derelict appearance results from an enchantment. Sancho later gets his comeuppance for this when, as part of one of the duke and duchess's pranks, the two are led to believe that the only method to release Dulcinea from her spell is for Sancho to give himself a surplus of three thousand lashes. Sancho naturally resists this course of action, leading to friction with his master. Under the duke's patronage, Sancho eventually gets an governorship, though it be false, and proves to be wise and practical ruler; though this, too, ends in humiliation.

Near the end, Don Quixote reluctantly sways towards sanity: an inn is just an inn, not a castle.

Obviously there is much more that occurs in the "history" than can be related here, but Don Quixote's adventures in knight-errantry come to a close after his battle with the Knight of the White Moon, in which we the readers find him conquered. Bound by the rules of chivalry, Don Quixote submits to prearranged terms that the vanquished is to obey the will of the conqueror, which in this case, is that Don Quixote is to lay down his arms and cease his acts of chivalry for the period of one year (a duration in which he may be cured of his madness). Defeated and dejected, he and Sancho start their journey home.

Upon returning to his village, Don Quixote announces his plan to retire to the countryside and live the pastoral existence of shepherd, although his housekeeper, who has a more realistic view of the hard life of a shepherd, urges him to stay home and tend to his own affairs. Soon after, he retires to his bed with a deathly illness, possibly brought on by melancholy over his defeats and humiliations. One day, he awakes from a dream having fully recovered his sanity. Sancho tries to restore his faith, but Alonso Quixano, for that is his true name, can only renounce his previous existence and apologize for the harm he has caused. He dictates his will, which includes a provision that his niece will be disinherited if she marries a man who reads books of chivalry. After Alonso Quixano dies, the author emphasizes that there are no more adventures to relate, and that any further books about Don Quixote would be spurious.

Dreaming in Cuban—by Christina Garcia.

As a young woman living in Havana, Celia Almeida meets and falls in love with a married Spaniard named Gustavo. The two become lovers until Gustavo returns to Spain. After Gustavo leaves, Celia loses the will to live. Though she has no known medical condition, she wastes away (due to depression). While she is housebound Jorge del Pino courts her and persuades her to marry him. After their honeymoon, he leaves her at home with his mother and sister while he goes on long business trips, punishing her out of his jealousy for her past with Gustavo. His mother and sister are cruel to Celia, even more so after she becomes pregnant. By the time she gives birth to her daughter Lourdes, her mind has snapped.

Thus, for the first months of Lourdes' life, Celia is in a mental institution and Jorge is the one who cares for Lourdes. When Celia is released, Jorge brings her to a new home on the edge of the ocean in Santa Teresa del Mar. Lourdes is distant from her mother and closely bonded to her father. A couple years later, a second daughter named Felicia is born. Finally, they have a son named Javier, who is born eight years after Felicia. Ideologically, Jorge and Celia are very different. Jorge prefers the American-friendly government, while Celia supports attempts at revolution.

Over the years, the three children grow up, and their lives take different paths. Lourdes attends the university and falls in love with a man named Rufino Puente, the son of a wealthy family. They are married in spite of his mother's disapproval. After Rufino and Lourdes are married, they live at the Puente family ranch. Eleven days after the [Cuban revolution](#) takes place, Lourdes gives birth to a daughter named Pilar. Two years later, Lourdes is pregnant with a second child. One day, she is thrown from her horse while riding frantically to return to the house, and it causes her to lose the child. Lourdes reaches the house just in time to find two soldiers holding Rufino at gunpoint. She scares the soldiers off, but the soldiers return later. They claim the Puente estate as property of the revolutionary government. Lourdes tries to resist, but one of the soldiers rapes her at knifepoint. Soon after, the Puente family flees to Miami. Lourdes finds life in Miami intolerable, and soon they drive north until they reach New York City, where they make their new life. Rufino does not fit in well, and he spends his time working on his inventions. It is Lourdes who supports the family, saving up enough money to purchase a bakery. She runs the bakery herself. Pilar grows up rebelling against her mother and feeling much closer to her father. She becomes a sort of stereotypical "teenage punk artist".

Felicia, the second oldest daughter, becomes the best friend of the daughter of a [santería](#) high priest at age six. From that time forward, santería has a presence in Felicia's life. She drops out of high school and drifts from job to job until she meets Hugo Villaverde. Felicia is enamored with him immediately, and they soon consummate their relationship. Felicia becomes pregnant as a result. Hugo vanishes for seven months before returning and marrying Felicia in a City Hall wedding. He becomes physically abusive almost immediately and then departs to sea the next day. Thus, Felicia is without her husband when she gives birth to her twin daughters, Luz and Milagro. Hugo continues to be a sporadic presence in their lives after that. He manages to impregnate Felicia again and give her syphilis. It is during Felicia's pregnancy that her lack of mental stability becomes apparent. She attempts to kill Hugo by dropping a burning rag onto his face while he is sleeping; Hugo wakes up just as she drops the rag on him and he flees, never to be seen again. She later gives birth to a son, who she names Ivanito. While the twins resent their mother, Ivanito is extremely close to her.

The youngest child of Jorge and Celia, Javier, has a talent for science and shares his mother's support of the revolution and El Líder. As a result of his rebellion against his father, Javier eventually leaves for Czechoslovakia without telling his parents. He goes on to become a professor of biochemistry and marries a Czech girl, having a daughter with her named Irinita.

When Jorge develops stomach cancer, he travels to New York for treatment, where he spends the last four years of his life. His health gradually fails and he is hospitalized. Over the course of her father's illness, Lourdes has a constant desire for food and sex.

When Jorge dies, his spirit leaves his body and appears to bid farewell to his wife. She glimpses him briefly, but she cannot understand his words. Felicia turns to santería to make peace with her father, but she becomes mentally unwell again. When Celia discovers Felicia's illness, she takes Luz and Milagro to her home, but Ivanito will not leave his mother. Eventually, Felicia's mental state deteriorates to the point where she tries to kill Ivanito and herself with drugged ice cream. The attempt fails. As a result, Felicia is sent to join a Cuban military brigade and Ivanito is sent to boarding school. Celia becomes a full devotee of the revolution and El Líder, performing a wide variety of tasks and becoming a local judge of the People's Court.

Meanwhile, in New York, Pilar discovers that her father is cheating on her mother. She tries to run away to Cuba, but she only makes it as far as Miami. She gets caught while seeking out one of her cousins for help. Her mother is called, and Pilar is made to return home to New York. Lourdes becomes an auxiliary policewoman. Her father's spirit begins speaking to her regularly. Eventually, Lourdes' business becomes so successful that she buys a second bakery. She has Pilar paint a mural for the opening. Pilar, unbeknownst to her mother, paints a punk Statue of Liberty for the unveiling, but when the crowd disapproves, Lourdes defends her daughter's work.

In Cuba, Felicia meets and marries a man named Ernesto Brito, but he dies in a fire soon afterwards. Felicia blames El Líder for his death, though there is no evidence to support this belief. She descends into madness again, and then vanishes, losing her memory and identity for months. When she recovers herself, Felicia discovers that she has married a man named Otto. Whether or not his death was Felicia's fault is debatable. While on a ride, he stands up while Felicia performs oral sex. When the ride begins again, he falls over and lands on electrical wires and is electrocuted, but it is unclear as to exactly how he falls, and later in the story, Felicia says that she pushed him.

Meanwhile, the day after Felicia's disappearance, Javier returns home to his mother. Celia learns that his wife has left him and taken their daughter. In his heartbreak, Javier wastes away, just as Celia once did, until he vanishes to die. Felicia returns to Havana and fully embraces santería, becoming a priestess. She is still distanced from her mother and children, who do not come to see her. Gradually, Felicia's health fades for reasons unknown and she too dies.

In the U.S., Jorge's presence begins to fade from the world, and he goes to Lourdes to ask her to go to Cuba and apologize on his behalf and make amends with her mother. One day while Pilar is out in the city, she encounters a botánica (a store that sells the paraphernalia of santería). The proprietor instructs her in a ritual she must perform and gives her the items she needs. On her way home, Pilar is attacked by boys in the park. Pilar recovers herself and returns home to carry out her ritual, which reveals that she and her mother should go to Cuba.

Celia wanders out into the ocean at night after Felicia's burial, and she is found in the aftermath by a newly arrived Lourdes and Pilar. They care for her. Lourdes views Cuba with great dislike, but she becomes fond of her nephew Ivanito. Pilar listens to Celia's stories and paints her portrait many times. Lourdes finds herself unable to forgive her mother. She resolves to help Ivanito leave Cuba, taking him to join the defectors at the Peruvian embassy. Celia sends Pilar to find him, and though Pilar manages to do so, she tells her grandmother that she did not. After Pilar and Lourdes are gone, Celia walks into the ocean a final time.

Dutchman—by [LeRoi Jones](#) a.k.a. [Amiri Baraka](#).

The action focuses almost exclusively on Lula, a flirtatious white woman, and Clay, a young black man who rides the subway in New York City. Clay's name evokes symbolism that highlights the malleability of identity. In this case, identity likely relates to questions of manhood. Connotations of 'Clay' might also allude to the playwright's critique of the young male as an integrationist or assimilationist. ^[2] Lula boards the train munching an apple, an allusion to the Biblical Eve. After

Lula bends over in front of Clay in an obvious sexual come-on, the two characters engage in a flirtatious conversation throughout the long train ride.

Lula then begins to insult Clay, implying that somehow he is not "really" black because he is college educated, wears a three button suit and because his "grandfather was not a slave". She is now dancing in the train and ridicules Clay by asking him to join her and "do the nasty. Rub bellies". Clay, who initially does not respond to the provocation, rises up in extreme anger, menacing the other riders, telling Lula that she knew nothing about him, referring to her and other white people as "ofays". Forcing her on her seat next to him he slaps her twice and tells her that the neuroses of black men can be cured with her murder. He asks his leave and expresses his pity that it wouldn't work out between them. As he bends over to pick up his books, Lula stabs him into his chest in full view of the other (both white and black) riders who do nothing to stop the attack. She then instructs everyone else to help her throw his body out of the train and get off the subway at the next stop.

The play ends on a chilling note; Lula approaches another well-dressed black man in exactly the same way that she approached Clay. As the train conductor enters the compartment, dancing "soft-shoe", Lula watches his movements.

East of Eden—by John Steinbeck.

The story is primarily set in the Salinas Valley, [California](#), between the beginning of the 20th century and the end of [World War I](#), though some chapters are in [Connecticut](#) and [Massachusetts](#), and the story goes as far back as the [American Civil War](#).

In the beginning of *East of Eden*, before introducing his characters, John Steinbeck carefully establishes the setting with a description of the Salinas Valley in Central California.

Then he outlines the story of the warmhearted inventor and farmer Samuel Hamilton and his wife Liza, immigrants from [Ireland](#). He describes how they raise their nine children on a rough, infertile piece of land. As the Hamilton children begin to grow up and leave the nest, a wealthy stranger, Adam Trask, purchases the best ranch in the Valley.

Adam Trask's life is seen in a long, intricate flashback. We see his tumultuous childhood on a farm in Connecticut and the brutal treatment he endured from his younger but stronger half-brother, Charles. As a young man, Adam spent his time first in the military and then wandering the country. He was caught for vagrancy, escaped from a chain gang and burgled a store for clothing to use as a disguise. Later he wired Charles for 100 dollars to pay for the clothes he stole. After Adam finally made his way home to their farm, Charles revealed that their father had died and left them an inheritance of \$50,000 each. Charles is torn with fear that his father did not come by the money honestly.

A parallel story introduces a girl named Cathy Ames, who grows up in a town not far from the brothers' family farm. Cathy is described as having a "malformed soul"; she is cold and calculating, prone to violence, and uses her sexuality to manipulate and control men. She leaves home one evening after setting fire to her family's home, killing both of her parents. Finally, she is viciously beaten by a pimp and is left close to death on the brothers' doorstep. Although Charles is repelled by her, Adam, unaware of her past, falls in love with and marries her.

Adam Trask — newly wed and newly rich — now arrives in California and settles with the pregnant Cathy in the Salinas Valley, near the Hamilton family ranch. Cathy does not want to be a mother or to stay in California, but Adam is so ecstatically happy with his new life that he does not realize there is any problem. Shortly after Cathy gives birth to twin boys, she shoots Adam in the shoulder and flees. Adam recovers, but remains in a deep and terrible depression. He is roused

out of it enough to name and raise his sons with the help of his [Cantonese](#) cook, Lee, and his neighbor Samuel Hamilton.

Adam takes in a [Chinese](#) servant, Lee, who becomes a good friend and adopted family member. Lee, Adam, and Samuel Hamilton have long philosophical talks, particularly about the story of [Cain and Abel](#), which Lee maintains has been incorrectly translated in [English-language](#) Bibles. Lee tells about how his relatives in San Francisco, a group of Chinese scholars, spent two years studying Hebrew so they might discover what the moral of the Cain and Abel story actually was. Their discovery that the Hebrew word "Timshel" means "thou mayest" becomes an important symbol in the novel, meaning that mankind is neither compelled to pursue sainthood or doomed to sin, but rather has the [power to choose](#).

Meanwhile, Cathy has become a prostitute at the most respectable [brothel](#) in the city of [Salinas](#). She renames herself "Kate" and embarks on a devious — and successful — plan to ingratiate herself with the owner, murder her and inherit the business. She makes her new brothel infamous as a den of [sexual sadism](#). She is not concerned that Adam Trask might ever look for her, and she has no feelings whatsoever about the children she abandoned.

Adam's sons, Caleb and Aaron — echoing Cain and Abel — grow up oblivious of their mother's situation. At a very early age, Aaron meets a girl named Abra from a well-to-do family, and the two fall in love. Although there are rumors around town that Caleb and Aaron's mother is not dead but is actually still in Salinas, the boys do not yet know that she is Kate.

The popular and beloved Samuel Hamilton finally passes away and is mourned. Adam becomes inspired by the memory of Samuel Hamilton's inventiveness and loses almost all of the family fortune in an ill-fated business venture. The boys, particularly Aaron, are horrified that their father is now a town laughingstock.

As the boys reach the end of their school days, Caleb decides to pursue a career in farming and Aaron goes to college to become an [Episcopalian](#) priest. Caleb, restless and tortured by guilt about his very human failings, shuns everyone around him and takes to wandering around town late at night. During one of these ramblings, he discovers that his mother is alive and the head of a brothel.

Caleb decides to "buy his father's love" by going into business with one of Samuel Hamilton's children, Will Hamilton, who is now a successful automobile dealer. Caleb's plan is to make his father's money back, capitalizing on [World War I](#) by selling beans grown in the Salinas Valley to nations in Europe for a considerable premium. He succeeds beyond his wildest expectations and wraps up a gift of \$15,000 in cash which he plans to give Adam Trask at [Thanksgiving](#).

Aaron returns from [Stanford](#) for the holiday. There is tension in the air, because Aaron has not yet told their father that he intends to drop out of college. Rather than let Aaron steal the moment, Caleb gives Adam the money at dinner, expecting his father to be proud of him.

But Adam refuses to accept it. Instead, he tells Caleb to give it back to the poor farmers he exploited. Adam explains by saying,

I would have been so happy if you could have given me — well, what your brother has — pride in the thing he's doing, gladness in his progress. Money, even clean money, doesn't stack up with that.^[3]

In a fit of jealousy, Caleb takes his brother Aaron to see their mother, knowing it will be a shock to him. Aaron, his idealistic worldview shattered, enlists in the army to fight in [World War I](#). He is killed in battle in the last year of the war, and Adam suffers a [stroke](#) upon hearing the news from

Lee. Caleb, who begins to develop a relationship with Abra after Aaron leaves for war, tells her why Aaron left and tries to convince her to run away with him. She instead persuades him to return home.

The novel ends with Lee pleading with a bedridden Adam to forgive his only remaining son. Adam responds by giving Caleb his blessing in the form of the word *Timshel*.

Emma—by Jane Austen.

Although convinced that she herself will never marry anyone, [Emma Woodhouse](#), a precocious almost twenty-one-year-old^[2] resident of the village of Highbury, imagines herself to be naturally gifted in conjuring love matches. After self-declared success at matchmaking between her governess and Mr. Weston, a village widower, Emma takes it upon herself to find an eligible match for her new friend, Harriet Smith. Though Harriet's parentage is unknown, Emma is convinced that Harriet deserves to be a gentleman's wife and sets her friend's sights on Mr. Elton, the village vicar. Meanwhile, Emma persuades Harriet to reject the proposal of Robert Martin, a well-to-do farmer for whom Harriet clearly has feelings.

Harriet becomes infatuated with Mr. Elton under Emma's encouragement, but Emma's plans go awry when Elton makes it clear that his affection is for Emma, not Harriet. Emma realizes that her obsession with making a match for Harriet has blinded her to the true nature of the situation. Mr. Knightley, the brother of Emma's brother-in-law and her treasured friend, watches Emma's matchmaking efforts with a critical eye. He believes that Mr. Martin is a worthy young man whom Harriet would be lucky to marry. He and Emma quarrel over Emma's meddling, and, as usual, Mr. Knightley proves to be the wiser of the pair. Elton, spurned by Emma and offended by her insinuation that Harriet is his equal, leaves for the town of Bath and marries a young woman there almost immediately.

Emma is left to comfort Harriet and to wonder about the character of a new visitor expected in Highbury—Mr. Weston's son, Frank Churchill. Frank is set to visit his father in Highbury after having been raised by his aunt and uncle in London, who have also adopted him as their heir. Emma knows nothing about Frank, who has long been deterred from visiting his father by his aunt's illnesses and complaints. Mr. Knightley is immediately suspicious of the young man, especially after Frank rushes back to London merely to have his hair cut. Emma, however, finds Frank delightful and notices that his charms are directed mainly toward her. Though she plans to discourage these charms, she finds herself flattered and engages in a flirtation with the young man. Emma greets Jane Fairfax, another addition to the Highbury set, with less enthusiasm. Jane is beautiful and accomplished, but Emma dislikes her because of her reserve and, the narrator insinuates, because she is jealous of Jane.

Suspicion, intrigue, and misunderstandings ensue. Mr. Knightley defends Jane, saying that she deserves compassion because, unlike Emma, she has no independent fortune and must soon leave home to work as a governess. Mrs. Weston suspects that the warmth of Mr. Knightley's defense comes from romantic feelings, an implication Emma resists. Everyone assumes that Frank and Emma are forming an attachment, though Emma soon dismisses Frank as a potential suitor and imagines him as a match for Harriet. At a village ball, Knightley earns Emma's approval by offering to dance with Harriet, who has just been humiliated by Mr. Elton and his new wife. The next day, Frank saves Harriet from Gypsy beggars. When Harriet tells Emma that she has fallen in love with a man above her social station, Emma believes that she means Frank. Knightley begins to suspect that Frank and Jane have a secret understanding, and he attempts to warn Emma. Emma laughs at Knightley's suggestion and loses Knightley's approval when she flirts with Frank and insults Miss Bates, a kindhearted spinster and Jane's aunt, at a picnic. When Knightley reprimands Emma, she weeps.

News comes that Frank's aunt has died, and this event paves the way for an unexpected revelation that slowly solves the mysteries. Frank and Jane have been secretly engaged; his attentions to Emma have been a screen to hide his true preference. With his aunt's death and his uncle's approval, Frank can now marry Jane, the woman he loves. Emma worries that Harriet will be crushed, but she soon discovers that it is Knightley, not Frank, who is the object of Harriet's affection. Harriet believes that Knightley shares her feelings. Emma finds herself upset by Harriet's revelation, and her distress forces her to realize that she is in love with Knightley. Emma expects Knightley to tell her he loves Harriet, but, to her delight, Knightley declares his love for Emma. Harriet is soon comforted by a second proposal from Robert Martin, which she accepts. The novel ends with the marriage of Harriet and Mr. Martin and that of Emma and Mr. Knightley, resolving the question of who loves whom after all.

Equus—by Peter Shaffer.

Martin Dysart is a psychiatrist in a psychiatric hospital. He begins with a monologue in which he outlines Alan Strang's case. He also divulges his feeling that his occupation is not all that he wishes it to be and his feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment about his barren life. Dysart finds that there is a never-ending supply of troubled young people for him to "adjust" back into "normal" living; but he doubts the value of treating these youths, since they will simply return to a dull, normal life that lacks any commitment and "worship" (a recurring theme). He comments that Alan Strang's crime was extreme but adds that just such extremity is needed to break free from the chains of existence.

A court magistrate, Hesther Salomon, visits Dysart, believing that he has the skills to help Alan come to terms with his violent acts.

Dysart has a great deal of difficulty making any kind of headway with Alan, who at first responds to questioning by singing [advertising jingles](#). Slowly, however, Dysart makes contact with Alan by playing a game where each of them asks a question, which must be answered honestly. He learns that, from an early age, Alan has been receiving conflicting viewpoints on [religion](#) from his parents. Alan's mother, Dora Strang, is a devout [Christian](#) who has read to him daily from the [Bible](#). This practice has antagonized Alan's [atheist](#) father, Frank Strang, who, concerned that Alan has taken far too much interest in the more violent aspects of the Bible, destroyed a violent picture of the [Crucifixion](#) that Alan had hung at the foot of his bed. Alan replaced the picture with one of a horse, with large, staring eyes.

Moreover, during his youth, Alan had established his attraction to horses by way of his mother's biblical tales, a horse story that she had read to him, western movies, and his grandfather's interest in horses and riding.

Dysart reveals a dream he has had, in a [Grecian/Homeric](#) setting, in which he is a public official presiding over a mass ritual sacrifice. Dysart slices open the [viscera](#) of hundreds of children, and pulls out their [entrails](#). He becomes disgusted with what he is doing, but desiring to "look professional" to the other officials, does not stop.

Alan's sexual training began with his mother, who told him that the sexual act was dirty, but that he could find true love and contentment by way of religious devotion and marriage. During this time he also begins to show a sexual attraction to horses, desiring to pet their thick coats, feel their muscular bodies and smell their sweat. Alan reveals to Dysart that he had first encountered a horse at age six, on the beach. A rider approached him, and took him up on the horse. Alan was visibly excited, but his parents found him and his father pulled him violently off the horse. The horse rider scoffed at the father and rode off.

In another key scene, Dysart hypnotizes Alan, and during the hypnosis, Dysart reveals elements of his terrifying dream of the ritual murder of children. This is only one of numerous "confessions" that take place in the play. Dysart begins to jog Alan's memory by filling in blanks of the dialogue, and asking questions. Alan reveals that he wants to help the horses by removing the bit, which enslaves them. Enslaved and tortured "like Jesus?" asks Dysart, and Alan replies "Yes."

Alan has a job working in a shop selling electrical goods, where he meets Jill Mason. She visits the shop wanting blades for horse-clippers. Alan is instantly interested when he discovers that Jill has such close contact with horses. Jill suggests that Alan work for the owner of the stables, Harry Dalton, and Alan agrees. Alan is held by Dalton to be a model worker, since he keeps the stables immaculately clean and grooms the horses, including one named "Nugget". Through Dysart's questioning, it becomes clear that Alan is [erotically fixated](#) on *Nugget* (or Equus) and secretly takes him for midnight rides, [bareback](#) and naked. Alan also envisions himself as a king, on the godhead Equus, both destroying their enemies.

Dysart gives Alan a [placebo](#) "truth pill" and revealing a tryst with Jill, begins to enact the event. Jill, who had taken an interest in Alan, had asked him to take her to a [pornography theatre](#). While there, they ran into Frank. Alan was traumatized, particularly when he realized that his father was lying when he tried to justify his presence in the theater. However, this occurrence allows Alan to realize that sex is a natural thing for all men—even his father. Alan walks Jill home after they leave. She convinces Alan to come to the stables with her.

Once there, she seduces Alan and the two start having sex. However, Alan breaks this off when he hears the horses making noises in the stables beneath. Jill tries to ask Alan what the problem is, but he shouts at her to leave. He begs the horses for forgiveness, as he sees the horses as God-like figures. "Mine!... You're mine!... I am yours and you are mine!" cries Equus through Dysart, but then he becomes threatening. "The Lord thy God is a Jealous God", Equus/Dysart seethes, "He sees you, He sees you forever and ever, Alan. He sees you!... *He sees you!*" Alan screams, "God seest!" Then he says, "No more. No more, Equus." With that he blinds the horses, whose eyes have "seen" his very soul, with a [hoof pick](#).

The play concludes with Dysart questioning the fundamentals of his practice and whether or not what he does will actually help Alan, as the effect of his treatment will remove Alan's intense sexual and religious commitment, and his worship of the horses. Earlier, Dysart had asked Saloman what it would be like to be robbed of the ability to worship. He also reflects again on his own life, his envy of Alan's passion, and what he imagines is a [bit](#) in his mouth.

Ethan Frome—by Edith Wharton.

Ethan Frome is set in a fictional New England town named Starkfield, where an unnamed narrator tells the story of his encounter with Ethan Frome, a man with dreams and desires that end in an [ironic](#) turn of events. The narrator tells the story based on an account from observations at Frome's house when he had to stay there during a winter storm.^[2]

The novel is framed with the literary concept of an extended [flashback](#). The first chapter opens with an unnamed narrator who, while spending a winter in Starkfield, sets out to learn about the life of a mysterious local figure named Ethan Frome, a man who had been injured in a horrific "smash-up" some two decades before. Frome is described as "the most striking figure in Starkfield", "the ruin of a man" with a "careless powerful look... in spite of a lameness checking each step like the jerk of a chain".

The narrator fails to get many details from the townspeople. However, the narrator hires him as his driver for a week. A severe snowstorm forces Frome to take the narrator to his home one night for shelter. Just as the two are entering Frome's house, the first chapter ends. The second chapter

flashes back twenty years; the narration switches from the [first-person narrator](#) of the first chapter to an omniscient [third-person narrator](#). Ethan is waiting outside a church dance for Mattie, his wife's cousin, who lives with Ethan and his wife Zeena (Zenobia) to help around the house since Zeena is sickly. Mattie is given the occasional night off to entertain herself in town as partial recompense for taking care of the Frome family without pay, and Ethan has fallen into the habit of walking her home. It is made clear that Ethan has deep feelings for Mattie, and it is equally clear that Zeena suspects these feelings and does not approve.

When Zeena leaves for a two-day visit to seek treatment for her illness in a neighboring town, Ethan is excited to have an evening alone with Mattie. However, the two never verbalize or show their passion for each other throughout their evening together. The Fromes' cat breaks Zeena's favorite pickle dish which Mattie had set on the table. Ethan sets the dish's pieces neatly in the cupboard with plans to fix it soon. He represses the impulse to demonstrate his passion and affection for Mattie.

In the morning, Ethan's plans to reveal his love for Mattie are foiled by the presence of his hired man; he runs into town to pick up some glue for the broken pickle dish, and upon his return finds that Zeena has returned. Zeena informs him that she plans to send Mattie away and hire a more efficient girl to replace her, as her health is failing even more rapidly. Ethan's passions are inflamed by the thought of losing Mattie, and he kisses her passionately when he finds her in the kitchen after Zeena's pronouncement. He tells her of Zeena's plans to dismiss her, but their moment is interrupted by Zeena herself. Zeena discovers the broken pickle dish and is angered, furthering her determination to get rid of Mattie.

Ethan considers running away with Mattie, but he does not possess the financial wherewithal to do so. The next morning, Zeena announces the plans to hire a new girl and send Mattie on her way. Ethan rushes into town on an errand to seek out an advance from a customer for a load of lumber, so as to give him the money to run away with Mattie. His plan is unhinged by guilt, however, when his customer's wife compliments him on his patience and dedication in caring for Zeena through her sickness.

Ethan returns to the farm, picking up Mattie to go to the train station. They stop at a hill upon which they had once proposed to go [sledding](#), and they decide to go through with the sledding despite the dangers of the trees. After their first run, Mattie suggests a [suicide pact](#); that they run themselves into a tree so they may spend their last moments together. Ethan resists the notion, but then finally agrees, and they take the ride down together. On the way down, a vision of Zeena's face makes Ethan try to turn aside at the last moment, but he recovers and hits the elm tree. Instead of both of them being killed, Ethan regains consciousness after the accident and, dazed and confused, finds Mattie lying beside him fully paralyzed and moaning in pain. Additionally, Ethan is partially paralyzed, finding movement to be difficult. This was the so-called "smash-up" introduced at the beginning of the novel.

The final chapter switches back to the first-person narrator point of view of the first chapter, as Frome and the narrator walk into the Frome household two decades later. The tables are turned; Mattie's personality has "soured" and Zeena now must care for her and Ethan.

Eumenides—by Aeschylus.

Orestes is tormented by the Erinyes, or Furies, [chthonic](#) deities that avenge [patricide](#) and [matricide](#). He, at the instigation of his sister Electra and the god Apollo, has killed their mother Clytemnestra, who had killed their father, King Agamemnon, who had killed his daughter and Orestes's sister, [Iphigenia](#). Orestes finds a refuge and a solace at the new temple of Apollo in [Delphi](#), and the god, unable to deliver him from the Erinyes' unappeasable wrath, sends him along

to Athens under the protection of [Hermes](#), while he casts a drowsy spell upon the pursuing Erinyes in order to delay them.

Clytemnestra's ghost appears "exactly how or from where is uncertain . . . noteworthy is the poet's bold inventiveness in presenting her as a dream to a collection rather than to a single individual",^[6] to the sleeping Erinyes, urging them to continue hunting Orestes. "As the first of them begins to awake the ghost departs".^[7] The Erinyes' first appearance on stage is haunting: they hum in unison as they slowly wake up, and seek to find the scent of blood that will lead them to Orestes' tracks. Ancient tradition says that on the play's premiere this struck so much fear and anguish in the audience, that a pregnant woman named [Neaira](#) suffered a [miscarriage](#) and died on the spot.^[citation needed]

The Erinyes' tracking down of Orestes in Athens is equally haunting: Orestes has clasped [Athena's](#) small statue in [supplication](#), and the Erinyes close in on him by smelling the blood of his slain mother in the air. Once they do see him, they can also see rivulets of blood soaking the earth beneath his footsteps.

As they surround him, Athena intervenes and brings in eleven Athenians to join her in forming a jury to judge her supplicant.^[8] Apollo acts as attorney for Orestes, while the Erinyes act as advocates for the dead Clytemnestra. During the trial, Apollo convinces Athena that, in a marriage, the man is more important than the woman, by pointing out that Athena was born only of [Zeus](#) and without a mother. Athena votes last and casts her vote for acquittal; after being counted, the votes on each side are equal, thus acquitting Orestes as Athena had earlier announced that this would be the result of a tie. She then persuades the Erinyes to accept the verdict, and they eventually submit. Athena then leads a procession accompanying them to their new abode and the escort now addresses them as "Semnai" (Venerable Ones), as they will now be honored by the citizens of Athens and ensure the city's prosperity. Athena also declares that henceforth tied juries will result in the defendant being acquitted, as [mercy](#) should always take precedence over harshness.

Fall (The)—by Albert Camus.

The novel opens with Clamence sitting in the bar, *Mexico City*, casually talking to a stranger — that is, the reader — about the proper way to order a drink; for here, despite the cosmopolitan nature of Amsterdam, the bartender refuses to respond to anything other than Dutch. Thus, Clamence serves as interpreter and he and the stranger, having discovered that they are fellow compatriots who, moreover, both hail from Paris, begin discussing more substantive matters.

Clamence tells us that he used to lead an essentially perfect life in Paris as a highly successful and well-respected defence lawyer. The vast majority of his work centred around "widow and orphan" cases, that is, the poor and disenfranchised who otherwise would be unable to provide themselves with a proper defence before the law. He also relates anecdotes about how he always enjoyed giving friendly directions to strangers on the streets, yielding to others his seat on the bus, giving alms to the poor, and, above all, helping the blind to cross the street. In short, Clamence conceived of himself as living purely for the sake of others and "achieving more than the vulgar ambitious man and rising to that *supreme summit* where virtue is its own reward" (Camus 288).

However, late one night when crossing the Pont Royal on his way home from his "mistress," Clamence comes across a woman dressed in black leaning over the edge of the bridge. He hesitates for a moment, thinking the sight strange at such an hour and given the barrenness of the streets, but continues on his way nevertheless. He had only walked a short distance when he heard the distinct sound of a body hitting the water. Clamence stops walking, knowing exactly what has happened, but does nothing — in fact, he doesn't even turn around. The sound of screaming was

repeated several times, [as it went] downstream; then it abruptly ceased. The silence that followed, as the night suddenly stood still, seemed interminable. I wanted to run and yet didn't move an inch. I was trembling, I believe from cold and shock. I told myself that I had to be quick and felt an irresistible weakness steal over me. I have forgotten what I thought then. "Too late, too far..." or something of the sort. I was still listening as I stood motionless. Then, slowly, in the rain, I went away. I told no one. (Camus 314)

Despite Clamence's view of himself as a selfless advocate for the weak and unfortunate, he simply ignores the incident and continues on his way. He later elaborates that his failure to do anything was most probably because doing so would have required him to put his own personal safety in jeopardy.

Several years after the apparent suicide of the woman off the Pont Royal — and an evidently successful effort to purge the entire event from his memory — Clamence is on his way home one autumn evening after a particularly pleasing day of work. He pauses on the empty Pont des Arts and reflects:

I was happy. The day had been good: a blind man, the reduced sentence I had hoped for, a cordial handclasp from my client, a few generous actions and, in the afternoon, a brilliant improvisation in the company of several friends on the hard-handedness of our governing class and the hypocrisy of our leaders. ... I felt rising within me a vast feeling of power and — I don't know how to express it — of completion, which cheered my heart. I straightened up and was about to light a cigarette, the cigarette of satisfaction, when, at that very moment, a laugh burst out behind me. (Camus 296)

Clamence turns around to discover that the laughter, of course, was not directed at him, but probably originated from a far-off conversation between friends — such is the rational course of his thought. Nevertheless, he tells us that "I could still hear it distinctly behind me, coming from nowhere unless from the water." The laughter is thus alarming because it immediately reminds him of his obvious failure to do anything whatsoever about the woman who had presumably drowned years before. The unlucky coincidence for Clamence here is that he is reminded of this precisely at the moment when he is congratulating himself for being such a selfless individual. Furthermore, the laughter is described as a "good, hearty, almost friendly laugh," whereas, mere moments later, he describes himself as possessing a "good, hearty laugh" (Camus 297). This implies that the laughter originated within himself, adding another dimension to the inner meaning of the scene. That evening on the Pont des Arts represents, for Clamence, the collision of his true self with his inflated self-image, and the final realization of his own hypocrisy becomes painfully obvious.

A third and final incident initiates Clamence's downward spiral. One day while waiting at a stoplight, Clamence finds that he is trapped behind a motorcycle which has stalled ahead of him and is unable to proceed once the light changes to green as a result. Other cars behind him start honking their horns, and Clamence politely asks the man several times if he would please move his motorcycle off the road so that others can drive around him; however, with each repetition of the request, the motorcyclist becomes increasingly agitated and threatens Clamence with physical violence.

Angry, Clamence exits his vehicle in order to confront the man when someone else intervenes and "informed me that I was the scum of the earth and that he would not allow me to strike a man who had a motor-cycle [*sic*] between his legs and hence was at a disadvantage" (Camus 303-4). Clamence turns to respond to his interlocutor when suddenly the motorcyclist punches him in the side of the head and then speeds off. Without retaliating against his interlocutor, Clamence, utterly humiliated, merely returns to his car and drives away. Later, he runs through his mind "a hundred times" what he thinks he should have done — namely strike his interlocutor, then chase after the

motorcyclist and run him off the road. The feeling of resentment gnaws away at him, and Clamence explains that

after having been struck in public without reacting, it was no longer possible for me to cherish that fine picture of myself. If I had been the friend of truth and intelligence I claimed to be, what would that episode have mattered to me? It was already forgotten by those who had witnessed it. (Camus 305)

Clamence thus arrives at the conclusion that his whole life has in fact been lived in search of honour, recognition, and power over others. Having realized this, he can no longer live the way he once did.

However, Clamence initially attempts to resist the sense that he has lived hypocritically and selfishly. He argues with himself over his prior acts of kindness, but quickly discovers that this is an argument he cannot win. He reflects, for example, that whenever he had helped a blind man across the street — something he especially enjoyed doing — he would doff his hat to the man. Since the blind man obviously cannot see this acknowledgement, Clamence asks, "To whom was it addressed? To the public. After playing my part, I would take my bow" (Camus 301). As a result, he comes to see himself as duplicitous and hypocritical.

The realization that his whole life has been lived in hypocrisy and denial precipitates an emotional and intellectual crisis for Clamence which, moreover, he is unable to avoid having now discovered it; the sound of laughter that first struck him on the Pont des Arts slowly begins to permeate his entire existence. In fact, Clamence even begins laughing at himself as he defends matters of justice and fairness in court. Unable to ignore it, Clamence attempts to silence the laughter by throwing off his hypocrisy and ruining the reputation he acquired therefrom.

Clamence thus proceeds to "destroy that flattering reputation" (Camus 326) primarily by making public comments that he knows will be received as objectionable: telling beggars that they are "embarrassing people," declaring his regret at not being able to hold [serfs](#) and beat them at his whim, and announcing the publication of a "manifesto exposing the oppression that the oppressed inflict on decent people." In fact, Clamence even goes so far as to consider

jostling the blind on the street; and from the secret, unexpected joy this gave me I recognized how much a part of my soul loathed them; I planned to puncture the tyres of wheelchairs, to go and shout 'lousy proletarian' under the scaffoldings on which labourers were working, to smack infants in the subway. ... the very word 'justice' gave me strange fits of rage. (Camus 325)

However, to Clamence's frustration and dismay, his efforts in this regard are ineffective, generally because many of the people around him refuse to take him seriously; they find it inconceivable that a man of his reputation could ever say such things and not be joking. Clamence eventually realizes that his attempts at self-derision can only fail, and the laughter continues to gnaw at him. This is because his actions are just as dishonest: "In order to forestall the laughter, I dreamed of hurling myself into the general derision. In fact, it was still a question of dodging judgment. I wanted to put the laughs on my side, or at least to put myself on their side" (Camus 325).

Ultimately, Clamence responds to his emotional-intellectual crisis by withdrawing from the world on precisely those terms. He closes his law practice, avoids his former colleagues in particular and people in general, and throws himself completely into uncompromising debauchery; while humankind may be grossly hypocritical in the areas from which he has withdrawn, "no man is a hypocrite in his pleasures" (Camus 311 - a quotation from Samuel Johnson).

The last of Clamence's monologues takes place in his apartment in the (former) Jewish Quarter, and recounts more specifically the events which shaped his current outlook; in this regard his experiences during the Second World War are crucial. With the outbreak of war and the fall of France, Clamence considers joining the [French Resistance](#), but decides that doing so would ultimately be futile. He explains,

The undertaking struck me as a little mad ... I think especially that underground action suited neither my temperament nor my preference for exposed heights. It seemed to me that I was being asked to do some weaving in a cellar, for days and nights on end, until some brutes should come to haul me from hiding, undo my weaving and then drag me to another cellar to beat me to death. I admired those who indulged in such heroism of the depths but couldn't imitate them. (Camus 342)

Instead, Clamence decides to flee Paris for London, and takes an indirect route there, moving through North Africa; however, he meets a friend while in Africa and decides to stay and find work, eventually settling in Tunis. But after the Allies [land in Africa](#), Clamence is arrested by the Germans and thrown into a concentration camp — "chiefly [as] a security measure," he assures himself (Camus 343).

While interned, Clamence meets a comrade, introduced to the reader only as "Du Guesclin", who had fought in the [Spanish Civil War](#), was captured by "the Catholic general", and now found himself in the hands of the Germans in Africa. These experiences subsequently caused the man to lose his faith in the Catholic Church (and perhaps in God as well); as a form of protest Duguesclin announces the need for a new Pope — one who will "agree to keep alive, in himself and in others, the community of our sufferings" — to be chosen from among the prisoners in the camp. As the man with "the most failings," Clamence jokingly volunteers himself, but finds that the other prisoners agree with his appointment. As a result of being selected to lead a group of prisoners as "Pope," Clamence is afforded certain powers over them, such as how to distribute food and water and deciding who will do what kind of work. "Let's just say that I closed the circle," he confesses, "the day I drank the water of a dying comrade. No, no, it wasn't Duguesclin; he was already dead, I believe, for he stunted himself too much" (Camus 343-4).

Clamence then relates the story of how a famous fifteenth-century painting, a panel from the [Ghent Altarpiece](#) known as *The Just Judges*, came into his possession. One evening a regular patron of *Mexico City* entered the bar with the priceless painting and sold it for a bottle of [jenever](#) to the bartender who, for a time, displayed the piece prominently on the wall of his bar. (Both the man who sold the painting and the now-vacant place on the wall where it hung are cryptically pointed out at the beginning of the novel.) However, Clamence eventually informs the bartender that the painting is in fact stolen, that police from several countries are searching for it, and offers to keep it for him; the bartender immediately agrees to the proposal. Clamence attempts to justify his possession of the stolen painting in a number of ways, primarily "because those judges are on their way to meet the Lamb, because there is no lamb or innocence any longer, and because the clever rascal who stole the panel was an instrument of the unknown justice that one ought not to thwart" (Camus 346). The full story of the Ghent Altarpiece and the "Just Judges" panel, along with its role in Camus' novel, is told in Noah Charney's 2010 book, *Stealing the Mystic Lamb: the True Story of the World's Most Coveted Masterpiece*.

Finally, Clamence employs the imagery of the Ghent Altarpiece and *The Just Judges* to explain his self-identification as a "judge-penitent". This essentially espouses a doctrine of relinquished freedom as a method of enduring the suffering imposed on us by virtue of living in a world without objective truth and one that is therefore ultimately meaningless. With the [death of God](#), one must also accept by extension the idea of universal guilt and the impossibility of innocence. Clamence's argument posits, somewhat paradoxically, that freedom from suffering is attained only through submission to something greater than oneself. Clamence, through his confession, sits in permanent judgment of himself and others, spending his time persuading those around him of their

own unconditional guilt. The novel ends on a sinister note: "Pronounce to yourself the words that years later haven't ceased to resound through my nights, and which I will speak at last through your mouth: "O young girl, throw yourself again into the water so that I might have a second time the chance to save the two of us!" A second time, eh, what imprudence! Suppose, dear sir, someone actually took our word for it? It would have to be fulfilled. Brr...! the water is so cold! But let's reassure ourselves. It's too late now, it will always be too late. Fortunately!"

Farewell to Arms (A)—by Ernest Hemingway.

The novel is divided into five books. In the first book, Rinaldi introduces Henry to Catherine Barkley; Henry attempts to seduce her, and their relationship begins. While on the [Italian front](#), Henry is wounded in the knee by a [mortar](#) shell and sent to a hospital in [Milan](#). The second book shows the growth of Henry and Catherine's relationship as they spend time together in Milan over the summer. Henry falls in love with Catherine and, by the time he is healed, Catherine is three months pregnant. In the third book, Henry returns to his unit, but not long afterwards the [Austro-Germans](#) break through the Italian lines in the [Battle of Caporetto](#), and the Italians retreat. Henry kills an engineering sergeant for insubordination. After falling behind and catching up again, Henry is taken to a place by the "battle police", where officers are being interrogated and executed for the "treachery" that supposedly led to the Italian defeat. However, after seeing and hearing that everyone interrogated is killed, Henry escapes by jumping into a river. In the fourth book, Catherine and Henry reunite and flee to Switzerland in a [rowboat](#). In the final book, Henry and Catherine live a quiet life in the mountains until she goes into labor. After a long and painful birth, their son is stillborn. Catherine begins to hemorrhage and soon dies, leaving Henry to return to their hotel in the rain.

Father (The)—by Raymond Carver.

A mother and grandfather and daughter discuss the new baby's features. "But who does Daddy look like?"

Fathers and Sons—by Ivan Turgenev.

The fathers and children of the novel refers to the growing divide between the two generations of Russians, and the character Yevgeny Bazarov a [nihilist](#) who rejects the old order.

Turgenev wrote *Fathers and Sons* as a response to the growing cultural schism that he saw between liberals of the 1830s/1840s and the growing [nihilist movement](#). Both the nihilists (the "sons") and the 1830s liberals sought Western-based social change in [Russia](#). Additionally, these two modes of thought were contrasted with the conservative [Slavophiles](#), who believed that Russia's path lay in its [traditional spirituality](#).

Fathers and Sons might be regarded as the first wholly modern novel in [Russian Literature](#) ([Gogol's *Dead Souls*](#), another main contender, is sometimes referred to as a poem or epic in prose as in the style of [Dante's *Divine Comedy*](#)). The novel introduces a dual character study, as seen with the gradual breakdown of Bazarov's and Arkady's nihilistic opposition to emotional display, especially in the case of Bazarov's love for Madame Odintsova and Fenichka. This prominent theme of character duality and deep psychological insight would exert an influence on most of the great Russian novels to come, most obviously echoed in the novels of [Tolstoy](#) and [Dostoevsky](#).

The novel is also the first Russian work to gain prominence in the Western world, eventually gaining the approval of well established novelists [Gustave Flaubert](#), [Guy de Maupassant](#), and [Henry James](#).

Faust—by D. Johann Fausten.

Despite his scholarly eminence, Faust is bored and disappointed. He decides to call on the [Devil](#) for further knowledge and [magic](#) powers with which to indulge all the pleasure and knowledge of the world. In response, the Devil's representative, [Mephistopheles](#), appears. He makes a bargain with Faust: Mephistopheles will serve Faust with his magic powers for a term of years, but at the end of the term, the devil will claim Faust's [soul](#) and Faust will be eternally damned. The term usually stipulated in the early tales is 24 years.

During the term of the bargain, Faust makes use of Mephistopheles in various ways. In many versions of the story, particularly Goethe's drama, Mephistopheles helps him to seduce a beautiful and innocent girl, usually named Gretchen, whose life is ultimately destroyed. However, Gretchen's innocence saves her in the end, and she enters [Heaven](#). In Goethe's rendition, Faust is saved by God's grace via his constant striving—in combination with Gretchen's pleadings with God in the form of the Eternal Feminine. However, in the early tales, Faust is irrevocably corrupted and believes his sins cannot be forgiven; when the term ends, the devil carries him off to [Hell](#).

Federalist (The)

The **Federalist Papers** are a series of [85 articles](#) or essays promoting the [ratification](#) of the [United States Constitution](#). Seventy-seven of the essays were published serially in [The Independent Journal](#) and [The New York Packet](#) between October 1787 and August 1788. A compilation of these and eight others, called *The Federalist; or, The New Constitution*, was published in two volumes in 1788 by J. and A. McLean.^[1] The series' correct title is *The Federalist*; the title *The Federalist Papers* did not emerge until the twentieth century.

The authors of The Federalist wanted both to influence the vote in favor of ratification and to shape future interpretations of the Constitution.

However, the authors of the Federalist papers also had a greater plan in mind. According to Federalist 1:

It has been frequently remarked, that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not, of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend, for their political constitutions, on accident and force.^[2]

According to historian [Richard B. Morris](#), they are an "incomparable exposition of the Constitution, a classic in political science unsurpassed in both breadth and depth by the product of any later American writer."^[3]

At the time of publication, the authorship of the articles was a closely guarded secret, though astute observers guessed that [Alexander Hamilton](#), [James Madison](#), and [John Jay](#) were the likely authors. Following Hamilton's death in 1804, a list that he drew up became public; it claimed fully two-thirds of the essays for Hamilton, including some that seemed more likely the work of Madison (Nos. 49-58, 62, and 63). The scholarly detective work of [Douglass Adair](#) in 1944 postulated the following assignments of authorship, corroborated in 1964 by a computer analysis of the text:

Alexander Hamilton (51 articles: nos. 1, 6–9, 11–13, 15–17, 21–36, 59–61, and 65–85)

James Madison (26 articles: nos. 10, 14, 37–58 and 62–63)

John Jay (5 articles: 2–5 and 64).

Nos. 18–20 were the result of a collaboration between Madison and Hamilton.^[1]

The authors used the [pseudonym](#) "Publius", in honor of [Roman](#) consul [Publius Valerius Publicola](#).^[4] While some historians credit Jefferson's influence, it is Madison who often now receives greater foundational credit as the father of the Constitution despite his repeated rejection of the honor during his lifetime.^[citation needed] Madison became a leading member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Virginia (1789–1797), Secretary of State (1801–1809), and ultimately the fourth [President of the United States](#).^[5] Hamilton, who had been a leading advocate of national constitutional reform throughout the 1780s and represented [New York](#) at the [Constitutional Convention](#), in 1789 became the first [Secretary of the Treasury](#), a post he held until his resignation in 1795. John Jay, who had been secretary for foreign affairs under the [Articles of Confederation](#) from 1784 through their expiration in 1789, became the first [Chief Justice of the United States](#) in 1789, stepping down in 1795 to accept election as governor of New York, a post he held for two terms, retiring in 1801.

There are many highlights among the essays of *The Federalist*. [Federalist No. 10](#), in which Madison discusses the means of preventing rule by majority faction and advocates a large, commercial republic, is generally regarded as the most important of the 85 articles from a philosophical perspective; it is complemented by [Federalist No. 14](#), in which Madison takes the measure of the United States, declares it appropriate for an extended republic, and concludes with a memorable defense of the constitutional and political creativity of the Federal Convention.^[6] In [Federalist No. 84](#), Hamilton makes the case that there is no need to amend the Constitution by adding a [Bill of Rights](#), insisting that the various provisions in the proposed Constitution protecting liberty amount to a bill of rights. [Federalist No. 78](#), also written by Hamilton, lays the groundwork for the doctrine of [judicial review](#) by federal courts of federal legislation or executive acts. [Federalist No. 70](#) presents Hamilton's case for a one-man chief executive. In [Federalist No. 39](#), Madison presents the clearest exposition of what has come to be called "[Federalism](#)". In [Federalist No. 51](#), Madison distills arguments for checks and balances in a memorable essay often quoted for its justification of government as "the greatest of all reflections on human nature."

Fences—by August Wilson.

The focus of Wilson's attention in *Fences* is Troy, a fifty-something head of household who struggles with providing for his family and with his obsession about cheating death. The location is never specified but seems to be [Pittsburgh](#) as there are several references to some of its notable institutions. Troy was a great [baseball](#) player in his youth, during which time he learned to play in prison. But because the color barrier had not yet been broken in [Major League Baseball](#), Troy was unable to make good money or to save for the future. He now lives a menial life along with his wife, Rose, his son Cory (who still lives in the house at the play's opening), and his younger brother Gabriel, an ex-soldier whose war injury occasionally causes him to act crazy. Lyons is Troy's son from a previous marriage, and lives outside the home. Bono is Troy's best friend. Troy had taken Gabriel's money to buy the house he currently lives in, since Gabriel never got a key to show his independence.

The play begins on payday, with Troy and Bono drinking and talking. Troy's character is revealed through his speech about how he went up to their boss, Mr. Rand, and asked why [Black](#) men are not allowed to drive garbage trucks (Troy works as a garbage man); Rose and Lyons join in the conversation. Lyons, a musician, has come to ask for money, confident that he will receive it from his father and promises to give him back because his girlfriend Bonnie just got a job. Troy gives his son a hard time, but eventually gives him the requested ten dollars after Rose persuades him to do so. An affair between Troy and a woman named Alberta (who is never seen in the play) is revealed, followed by the discovery that Alberta was pregnant, and died in childbirth. During the

final act, Raynell, the daughter conceived in Troy's union with Alberta, is seen as a happy seven-year-old; Cory comes home from war, and after initially refusing to go to his father's funeral due to long-standing resentment, is convinced by his mother to pay his respects to his father—the man who, though hard-headed and often poor at demonstrating affection, nevertheless loved his son.

The fence referred to by the play's title is an unfinished fence in Troy's yard. It is not immediately known why Troy wants to build it, but a dramatic [monologue](#) in the second act shows how he conceptualizes it as an [allegory](#)—to keep the [Grim Reaper](#) away. Analogously, the fence is not completed within the course of Troy's actions; thus, he does not live to the play's conclusion. Rose also wanted to build the fence and forced her husband to start it as a means of securing what was her own, keeping what belonged inside in and what should stay outside stay out.

Fifth Business—by Robertson Davies.

Ramsay's passion for [hagiology](#) and his guilty connection to Mary Dempster provide most of the impetus and background for this novel. He spends much of the book struggling with his image of Mary Dempster as a [fool-saint](#) and dealing with issues of guilt that grew from a childhood accident.

The entire story is told in the form of a letter written by Ramsay on his retirement from teaching at Colborne College, addressed to the school Headmaster.

Fine Balance (A)—by Rohinton Mistry

The book exposes the changes in Indian society from independence in 1947 to the [Emergency](#) called by [Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi](#). Mistry is generally critical of P. M. Gandhi in the book. Interestingly, however, Gandhi is never referred to by name by any of the characters, and is instead called simply "the prime minister". The characters, from diverse backgrounds, are all brought together by economic forces changing India.

Ishvar and Omprakash's family is part of the [Chamaar caste](#), who traditionally cured leather and were considered [untouchable](#). In an attempt to break away from the restrictive caste system, Ishvar's father apprentices his sons Ishvar and Narayan to a Muslim tailor, Ashraf Chacha, in a nearby village, and so they became tailors. As a result of their skills, which are also passed on to Narayan's son Omprakash (Om), Ishvar and Om move to Mumbai to get work, by then unavailable in the town near their village because a pre-made clothing shop has opened.

Maneck, from a small mountain village in northern India, moves to the city to acquire a college certificate "as a back-up" in case his father's soft drink business is no longer able to compete after the building of a highway near their village.

Dina, from a traditionally wealthy family, maintains tenuous independence from her brother by living in the flat of her deceased husband, who was a chemist.

Dina distances herself from the political ferment of the period: "Government problems and games played by people in power," she tells Ishvar. "It doesn't affect ordinary people like us" (Mistry, 86). But in the end it does affect all of them, drastically.

At the beginning of the book, the two tailors, Ishvar and Omprakash, are on their way to the flat of Dina Dalal via a train. While on the train, they meet a college student named Maneck Kohlah, who coincidentally is also on his way to the flat of Dina Dalal to be a boarder. They become friends and go to Dina's flat together. Dina hires Ishvar and Om for piecework, and agrees to let Maneck stay with her. Dina then reflects on her past and how she was brought to her current situation.

Fixer (The)—by Bernard Malamud.

The Fixer is a 1966 novel by [Bernard Malamud](#) inspired by the true story of [Menahem Mendel Beilis](#), an unjustly imprisoned [Jew](#) in [Tsarist Russia](#). The notorious "[Beilis trial](#)" of 1913 caused an international uproar that forced Russia to back down in the face of world indignation. The Beilis case is fictionalized along a highly similar story line. The book won the [Pulitzer Prize for Fiction](#) and the [National Book Award](#) in 1967.

The book was later adapted into *The Fixer* (1968) starring [Alan Bates](#) (Yakov Bok) who received an Oscar nomination.

The novel is about Yakov Bok - a Jewish handyman or "fixer". While living in Kiev without official papers, Bok is arrested on suspicion of murder when a Christian boy is killed during [Passover](#). Jailed without being officially charged and denied visitors or legal counsel, Bok is treated poorly and interrogated repeatedly. Among other things, he is asked about his political views, and replies that he is apolitical. During his many months in jail, he has time to contemplate his sad life and human nature in general. He finally finds it in his heart to forgive his former wife, who left him just before the novel began. This act of forgiveness is symbolically important in Bok's spiritual growth.

The novel ends with Bok finally being charged and brought to trial. In the final scene, on his way to court, he has an imaginary dialogue with the Tzar. Bok blames the Tzar for ruling over the most backward and regressive regime in Europe. He also famously concludes that "there is no such thing as an apolitical man, especially a Jew."

For Whom the Bell Tolls—by Ernest Hemingway.

This novel is told primarily through the thoughts and experiences of Robert Jordan, a character inspired by Hemingway's own experiences in the Spanish Civil War, as a reporter for the North American Newspaper Alliance. Robert Jordan is an American who travels to Spain to oppose the fascist forces of [Francisco Franco](#).

A Russian Communist military superior has ordered him to travel behind enemy lines and destroy a bridge, using the aid of a group of [guerrillas](#) who have been living in the mountains nearby. (The Soviet Union aided and advised the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War.) In their camp, Robert Jordan encounters María, a young Spanish woman whose life has been shattered by the execution of her parents and the gang rape of herself by the Falangists (part of the fascist coalition) at outbreak of the war. His strong sense of duty clashes with both Republican partisan leader Pablo's fear and unwillingness to commit to a covert operation that would have repercussions, and his own [joie de vivre](#) that is kindled by his newfound love for María. It is unclear till late in the novel if they will succeed blowing up the bridge and it is unclear at the end of the novel if blowing up the bridge has helped in the war effort though many soldiers die during the battle. At the end of the novel Robert Jordan is mortally wounded but hopes to kill a few enemy soldiers and slow down enemy action before he dies.

The novel graphically describes the brutality of civil war.

Frankenstein—by Mary Shelley.

Frankenstein begins in [epistolary form](#), documenting the correspondence between *Captain Robert Walton* and his sister, *Margaret Walton Saville*. Walton sets out to explore the [North Pole](#) and expand his scientific knowledge in hopes of achieving fame and friendship. The ship becomes trapped in ice, and, one day, the crew sees a [dog sled](#) in the distance, on which there is the figure

of a giant man. Hours later, the crew finds a frozen and emaciated man, [Victor Frankenstein](#), in desperate need of sustenance. Frankenstein has been in pursuit of the gigantic man observed by Walton's crew when all but one of his dogs died. He has broken apart his dog sled to make oars and rowed an ice-raft toward the vessel. Frankenstein starts to recover from his exertion and recounts a story of his life's miseries caused by his obsession for wisdom to Walton. Before he begins, he warns Walton of the wretched effects of allowing ambition to push one to aim beyond what one is capable of achieving. In telling his story to the captain, he finds peace within himself.

Free Life: A Novel (A)—by Ha Jin.

Run down to the bar and rouse the culture editor: the impossible has happened. In the dispiriting age of Bush and Britney, with our military still bogged down in Baghdad and our media still bewitched by Beverly Hills, an accomplished, respected American writer (a recent National Book Award Winner, in fact) has published a serious patriotic novel. Its title, "A Free Life," is not altogether ironic. Its subject, everyday bravery and nobility in a system built on risk and too often based on mutual exploitation, is delivered straight. Finally, its Chinese-born author, Ha Jin (whose seven previous works of fiction have all been set abroad), seems positively pleased and proud to be here.

Or at least his characters do. Nan and Pingping Wu, a husband and wife, are the sort of persevering newcomers, firmly set on a legal path to citizenship by way of unremitting thrift and toil, whom presidents like to point to from the podium during major addresses on the economy. Much as Jin himself did, the Wus came from China to study, not to stay, but they realized after the Tiananmen Square massacre (as Jin did too, he's said in interviews) that they couldn't go home again and be themselves, since both their selves and their native land had changed. "A Free Life" is the story of their family's naturalization — bank deposit by bank deposit, dental appointment by dental appointment, appliance purchase by appliance purchase — and like most novels of what professors call "The American Immigrant Experience," it's chiefly a tale of trial and error. The trials provide the drama, the errors the comedy, and their overlap the pathos. It's an orthodox format, hard to reinvent, mostly because reinvention is its theme.

For Nan, who's at graduate school in Boston when the tank turrets swivel in downtown Beijing, the first trick is to switch from brains to brawn. To support the good wife whom he doesn't truly love and the young son, Taotao, whom he doesn't quite understand, he gives up the life of the mind, which suits his temperament, for the lot of the laborer, which doesn't. On one of his early jobs as a security guard, he runs out to a market for a snack and finds himself waylaid on his return trip by a boozy, aggressive man and woman who badger him to come with them to a party packed with "purty girls." Nan's confusion about their motives panics him. Once he's back at his post with the trusty pocket dictionary he's using to improve his English and the tattered literary classics that speak to his stifled dream of writing poetry, he concludes that he's barely avoided being forced to join in an orgy or a smut film. Had he weakened, it might be all over for him now. His aspirations are thoroughly middle-class — a decent house, a healthy bank account and maybe, someday, time for thought and art — and while he knows he's starting from the bottom, he also knows that, in America, there's nothing under the bottom but more bottom.

As Jin puts the Wus through their paces as up-and-comers who might become down-and-outers at any moment (or so their exaggerated sense of caution causes them to fear), the story develops the cycling, skipping rhythm of a dirty compact disc. Each step up for the Wus — from renter to owner, employee to employer, bricked-in city dweller to waterfront suburbanite — stirs a vivid burst of hope followed by a fresh new stretch of static, as when the Wus grow mistrustful of the lawyer who uses a legal tactic called a "straw" to secure their joint title to a small restaurant they've bought in Atlanta's all-beige strip mall outskirts.

“Stupefied, Nan couldn’t help but imagine that they’d sold their business for only one dollar. At the same time, he kept reminding himself that he shouldn’t be too paranoid or think ill of Mr. Shang. ... According to the attorney, they’d receive a notice about the registration from the deeds office within two months. What could the Wus do in the meantime? It looked like they could do nothing but wait anxiously.”

The nervousness of the Wus is not infectious but sympathy-inducing, like watching a bright child learn to spell. You know she will; you just wish that she knew, too. Given the novel’s 600-page-plus length, the Wus’ regular lapses into bafflement breed no suspense about their ultimate destinies. As they blunder along through the hazards and the hassles of ascending sandy Mount Capitalism, from confronting bouts of sickness without sufficient insurance to losing, in stages, their only child’s attention to the nonstop come-hithers of the Internet, the sheer volume of unread print and untouched paper signals us that their climb will go ahead, with lots of skids and slip-ups, naturally, but no headlong plunges, even at the end. Volatility, after all, is a measure of health in a free market, and the elementary algebra of Jin’s narrative pace — as slow, implacable and steady as interest accumulating in a savings account — implicitly promises that his dimes and quarters of mundane description and petty conflict will result in a full piggy bank for all. Neither does Jin give his people flaws or problems grave enough to threaten their well-being. Pingping’s chronic fretting is not disabling, and Nan’s nascent ambitions as a poet aren’t the kind that lead to leaps off bridges if they go unattained.

The Wus’ credentials as model neo-puritans — their humility, self-sacrifice, efficiency and unremitting skepticism about easy credit in all its forms, including the loans to the erotic self afforded by commercial sex and porn, which Nan feels calling to him on occasion — are so unassailable that if they failed, the book would wind up as an Upton Sinclair-ish protest novel; a case study in humanity’s futile puniness against the Great Machine. The Wus are the only ones who can’t see that they’re moving up, which feels almost jokelike because the novel’s timeline — from the late ’80s to the late ’90s — was, we know now, an era of mass bounty. The novel’s sole mystery is how satisfied the Wus will feel when they pull up the rope ladder behind them and kick back in their little piece of heaven. The range of possibilities is narrow. They won’t be euphoric — it’s not their way — but they won’t be radically disappointed, either. A headspinning windfall might unhinge them, yes, but what seems most likely, and what we watch occur, is their introduction to the faint melancholy of “Is this all there is?” American comfort, followed by Nan’s resolution to aim higher on the spiritual and mental plane the instant his mortgage is paid off.

Impeccable kitchen-sink realism? Not really. The two steps forward, one step back progression of the Wu’s acculturation may be true to the actual experiences of countless naïve, non-native English speakers, but it feels here more like a monastic meditation or a ritual breathing exercise than a fictional documentary. Jin’s simple sentences, familiar sentiments, and uneventful three- to five-page chapters that typically end with such pulse-suppressing non-cliffhangers as “the day before the Wangs returned, the Wus moved out of the bungalow and set up their residence at 568 March Drive,” appear to derive from a highly refined aesthetic of anti-excitability.

Life, from day to day, seems hardly to alter, yet it shifts beyond recognition over the years — this is what fascinates Jin, apparently, and it’s what the Zen-like composure of his prose and his conveyor-belt time-sense seek to demonstrate. This proved, the experimental apparatus keeps on operating, though, repeating the same results with dwindling verve and testing the inner Buddhist in Jin’s audience in ways that some may find calming and others sedating. Aside from a bruising medical episode concerning the abortion of a dead fetus, the novel’s fiercest interludes are rhetorical, as the Pledge of Allegiance-minded Nan debates the China-first set at various gatherings. Eventually, thanks to a winning raffle ticket, he gets to see firsthand the country he left, which has been transformed during his absence into a carnival caricature of the nation he left it for. That Nan finds China’s rapaciousness familiar from what its blackest propagandists have alleged about America is the novel’s only excursion into cynicism. Nan has seen the future, and it ain’t us. His retreat to Atlanta and a menial job that will at last allow him to write poetry feels

oddly elegiac — a great leap backward into a New World that he was too busy growing into, and growing fond of, to notice becoming ancient.

Gathering of Old Men (A)—by Ernest J. Gaines.

One afternoon, a white woman discovers that a Cajun farmer has been shot in Mathu's, a black man's, yard. She enlists the help of seventeen other old black men by having them come to Mathu's yard, each with a shotgun and one empty number 5 shell. She and the men all claim to be responsible for the murder, in an effort to protect the guilty party and make things difficult for Sheriff Mapes.

Germinal—by Émile Zola.

The novel's central character is Étienne Lantier, previously seen in [L'Assommoir](#) (1877), a young migrant worker who arrives at the foreboding coal mining town of Montsou in the bleak area of the far north of France to earn a living as a miner. Sacked from his previous job on the railways for assaulting a superior, Étienne was originally to have been the central character in Zola's "murder on the trains" thriller [La Bête humaine](#) (1890) before the overwhelmingly positive reaction to *Germinal* persuaded him otherwise: he befriends the veteran miner Maheu, who finds him somewhere to stay and gets him a job pushing the carts down the pit.

Étienne is portrayed as a hard-working idealist but also a naïve youth; Zola's genetic theories come into play as Étienne is presumed to have inherited his Macquart ancestors' traits of hotheaded impulsiveness and an addictive personality capable of exploding into rage under the influence of drink or strong passions. Zola keeps his theorizing in the background and Étienne's motivations are much more natural as a result. He embraces socialist principles, reading large amounts of working class movement literature and fraternizing with Souvarine, a Russian anarchist and political émigré who has also come to Montsou to seek a living in the pits. Étienne's simplistic understanding of socialist politics and their rousing effect on him are very reminiscent of the rebel Silvère in the first novel in the cycle, [La Fortune des Rougon](#) (1871).

While this is going on, Étienne also falls for Maheu's daughter Catherine, also employed pushing carts in the mines, and he is drawn into the relationship between her and her brutish lover Chaval, a prototype for the character of Buteau in Zola's later novel [La Terre](#) (1887). The complex tangle of the miners' lives is played out against a backdrop of severe poverty and oppression, as their working and living conditions continue to worsen throughout the novel; eventually, pushed to breaking point, the miners decide to strike and Étienne, now a respected member of the community and recognized as a political idealist, becomes the leader of the movement. While the anarchist Souvarine preaches violent action, the miners and their families hold back, their poverty becoming ever more disastrous, until they are sparked into a ferocious riot, the violence of which is described in explicit terms by Zola, as well as providing some of the novelist's best and most evocative crowd scenes. The rioters are eventually confronted by police and the army that repress the revolt in a violent and unforgettable episode. Disillusioned, the miners go back to work, blaming Étienne for the failure of the strike; then, Souvarine sabotages the entrance shaft of one of the Montsou pits, trapping Étienne, Catherine and Chaval at the bottom. The ensuing drama and the long wait for rescue are among some of Zola's best scenes, and the novel draws to a dramatic close. Étienne is eventually rescued and fired but he goes on to live in Paris with Pluchart.

The title, *Germinal*, is drawn from the springtime seventh month of the [French Revolutionary Calendar](#) and is meant to evoke imagery of germination, new growth and fertility. Accordingly, Zola ends the novel on a note of hope and one that has provided inspiration to socialist and reformist causes of all kinds throughout the years since its first publication:

"Beneath the blazing of the sun, in that morning of new growth, the countryside rang with song, as its belly swelled with a black and avenging army of men, germinating slowly in its furrows, growing upwards in readiness for harvests to come, until one day soon their ripening would burst open the earth itself."

By the time of his death, the novel had come to be recognized as his undisputed masterpiece. At his funeral crowds of workers gathered, cheering the cortège with shouts of "Germinal! Germinal!". Since then the book has come to symbolize working class causes and to this day retains a special place in French mining-town folklore.

Zola was always very proud of *Germinal* and was always keen to defend its accuracy against accusations of hyperbole and exaggeration (from the conservatives) or of slander against the working classes (from the socialists). His research had been typically thorough, especially the parts involving lengthy observational visits to northern French mining towns in 1884, such as witnessing the after-effects of a crippling miners' strike first-hand at [Anzin](#) or actually going down a working coal pit at [Denain](#). The mine scenes are especially vivid and haunting as a result.

A sensation upon original publication, it is now by far the best-selling of Zola's novels, both in France and internationally. A number of exceptional modern translations are currently in print and widely available.

Gesture Life (A)—by Chang-Rae Lee.

The whole story, told by the first person narrator Doc Hata, consists of flashbacks. The main story line reaches from the time he gives up his store in Bedley Run until he meets his adopted daughter again. The sub story lines show the reader about his time during the war and also about his time with a teenage daughter and how he experienced the time in which his daughter was very difficult.

At the beginning of the story, Doc Hata describes where he lives and how his situation is. He lives in a small town called Bedley Run, where he is first accepted from the other inhabitants as a decent shopkeeper, although he sold his store to a young couple from New York, and is now retired. He has problems to let his old life behind him and visits his old store nearly every day. At this point, i.e. very early, he mentions that he has a daughter who comes from Japan as well.

Then, he describes his house and the area he lives in. He also introduces Liv Crawford to the reader, who is a real estate agent and wants him to move and sell his house. Doc Hata thinks a lot about his past in Bedley Run but also about his past experiences in Japan. He gives a lot of insights into his daily routines, like going to his old store or going to swim every day in his own pool. He also thinks a lot about Sunny and how she arrived when she was a little girl. Later on, it becomes clear that Sunny was adopted and that Doc Hata was very fanatic about getting a girl and even bribed the relevant person to get what he wants. He remembers Sunny playing the piano and about the initial problems he had with her.

In the first flashback we can see how he remembers his time with Mary Burns, one of his neighbors. He remembers meeting her the first time during his gardening. She quickly becomes a kind of girlfriend for him and spends a lot of time with Sunny who does not accept her at all. Although Mary Burns works a lot on her relationship to Sunny, the young girl does not get along with her. In her first conversation with Doc Hata it becomes clear that he is not a real doctor but that everybody calls him 'doc' because of his store. Mary Burns is very impressed of him because of the fact that he lives in a house that would fit a real doctor and his salary. At the beginning, the relationship between Doc Hata and Mary Burns is very close but they start very early to argue a lot about Sunny and about how Doc Hata treats his daughter.

Doc Hata gives one piece of information about his relationship to his daughter after the other. He never gives all information at the same point. While the story is going on it becomes clear that a big fight between Doc Hata and Sunny took place awhile ago and parted them from each other. During a stay in the hospital, where he has to stay because he almost burned his own house, Doc Hata remembers what this fight was about. In hospital Officer Como's daughter visits Doc Hata and he begins to remember which problems Sunny had with Officer Como. Sunny was in trouble and she did not accept the authority of the police officer. This is just the beginning of the tragedy which is going on between Sunny and Doc Hata. At this point of the story, in the flashback situation, it becomes clear that Sunny runs away from home and that she meets with dubious persons.

Going on in the story, Doc Hata goes back in time a lot, he starts to talk about his time in World War II. He explains that most of the soldiers and also some officers had fun with abducted, young women, who were brought there for the pleasures of the soldiers. He talks in particular about one girl he thought about the whole time.

Before he comes back to the war situation he tells the reader about how he finds Sunny again and how this situation goes on and he also gives more background information on the conflict with Sunny. Then, he meets Sunny again on a regular basis. She has a son, named Thomas of whom Doc Hata takes care, but he does not tell him that he is his grandfather, because Sunny does not want her son to know that. For Sunny it is quite a comfort that her dad takes care of her child, because she can apply for a new job and does not need to find a new baby sitter or nanny. When he speaks about his war time he talks most of the time about K and about their relationship to each other. K is a girl who was arrested by the Lieutenant Kurohata for special services. She was a kind of prostitute (comfort woman), but without getting any money for it from the soldiers, the young Franklin Hata tried to protect her from the treatment of the others. It seems that Doc Hata fell in love with K and he wanted to protect her from everything. While Captain Ono tried to rape her, she killed him, and she asked Hata to kill her too, but instead, he told the others that Captain Ono killed himself in an accident. In the end, Doc Hata does not say explicitly that K died after she is raped by 30 or more soldiers, but implicitly it is clear that she is dead.

At the end of the story, Doc Hata changes a lot. He stops following his rituals, he sells his house and he gets along with Sunny. So, it can be seen that he begins to handle his war experiences and that he is able to change

Ghosts—by Henrik Ibsen.

Helen Alving is about to dedicate an orphanage she has built in the memory of her dead husband, Captain Alving. She reveals to her spiritual advisor, Pastor Manders, that she has hidden the evils of her marriage, and has built the orphanage to deplete her husband's wealth so that their son, Oswald, might not inherit anything from him. Pastor Manders had previously advised her to return to her husband despite his [philandering](#), and she followed his advice in the belief that her love for her husband would eventually reform him. However her husband's philandering continued until his death, and Mrs. Alving was unable to leave him prior for fear of being shunned by the community. During the action of the play she discovers that her son Oswald (whom she had sent away so that he would not be corrupted by his father) is suffering from inherited [syphilis](#), and (worse) has fallen in love with Regina Engstrand, Mrs. Alving's maid, who is revealed to be an illegitimate daughter of Captain Alving, and thereby Oswald's own half-sister.

The play concludes with Mrs. Alving having to decide whether or not to [euthanize](#) her son Oswald in accordance with his wishes. Her choice is left unknown.

Glass Menagerie (The)—by Tennessee Williams.

The play is introduced to the audience by Tom as a memory play, based on his recollection of his mother Amanda and his sister Laura.

Amanda's husband abandoned the family long ago. Although a survivor and a pragmatist, Amanda yearns for the illusions and comforts she remembers from her days as a fêted Southern belle. She yearns especially for these things for her daughter Laura, a young adult with a crippled foot and tremulous insecurity about the outside world. Tom works in a warehouse, doing his best to support them. He chafes under the banality and boredom of everyday life and spends much of his spare time watching movies in cheap cinemas at all hours of the night. Amanda is obsessed with finding a suitor for Laura, who spends most of her time with her collection of little glass animals. Eventually Tom brings home an acquaintance from work named Jim, who Amanda hopes will be the long-awaited suitor for Laura. Laura realizes that Jim is the man she loved in high school and has thought of ever since. After a long evening in which Jim and Laura are left alone by candlelight in the living room, waiting for electricity to be restored, Jim reveals that he is already engaged to be married, and he leaves. During their long scene together, Jim and Laura have shared a quiet dance, and he accidentally brushes against the glass menagerie, knocking the glass unicorn to the floor and breaking its horn off ("Now it's just like the other horses," Laura says). When Amanda learns that Jim was engaged she assumes Tom knew and lashes out at him: ("That's right, now that you've had us make such fools of ourselves. The effort, the preparations, all the expense! The new floor lamp, the rug, the clothes for Laura! All for what? To entertain some other girl's fiancé! Go to the movies, go! Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who's crippled and has no job! Don't let anything interfere with your selfish pleasure. Just go, go, go — to the movies !") At play's end, as Tom speaks, it becomes clear that Tom left home soon afterward and never returned. In Tom's final speech, as he watches his mother comforting Laura long ago, he bids farewell: "Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger — anything that can blow your candles out! [LAURA bends over the candles.]- for nowadays the world is lit by lightning ! Blow out your candles, Laura — and so good-bye." Laura blows the candles out as the play ends.

Go Tell It on the Mountain—by James Baldwin.

The opening chapter tells the story of John, a young African-American boy in [Harlem](#) in the 1930s. John has been raised by his mother Elizabeth and her preacher husband Gabriel, who nominally is John's father and is a strict disciplinarian, abusive to both his children and his wife. Gabriel's religious philosophy is tough and one of [salvation](#) through faith in [Jesus](#), without which one is damned to [hell](#). John hates his father and dreams of wounding or killing him and running away. The characters are members of the Temple of the Fire Baptized Church in Harlem.

Florence's prayer tells her life story. She was born to a freed slave who chose to continue to work in the South for a white family. Her mother always favored Florence's younger brother Gabriel, causing Florence to feel a yearning need to escape from her life. Inspired by a black cook, Florence buys a one-way train ticket to New York and leaves her mother on her deathbed with Gabriel. In New York, Florence marries a dissolute man named Frank, resulting in a power struggle within their marriage which ends after ten years when Frank leaves one night and never returns. He later dies in France in [World War I](#), but Florence only finds out from Frank's girlfriend.

Gabriel's prayer starts with a description of his drunken, womanizing ways as a teenager, before his rebirth in Christ and the start of his career as a preacher. After his conversion he forms a relationship with a childhood friend of Florence, a slightly older woman from his town named Deborah who was gang-raped as a teenager by a band of white men. Deborah is devout in her faith, and Gabriel uses her strength to become a successful Reverend himself. However, despite his religious convictions, Gabriel is unable to resist his physical attraction for a woman named Esther. Esther and Gabriel work for the same white family. Gabriel has a brief affair with her that

but then ends it out of guilt. When Esther finds herself pregnant, Gabriel steals his wife's savings and gives them to Esther to hush up the matter and allow Esther to go away to have her baby; she goes to Chicago but dies giving birth to their son, Royal. Royal knows his father but doesn't know of their relationship, and is eventually killed in a barroom fight in Chicago. Gabriel is powerless and unable to stop his son's murder. Deborah, who knew or suspected that Royal was her husband's son from the beginning, admonishes Gabriel before her death for abandoning Esther and his son.

Elizabeth's prayer, the shortest of the three, tells her story. As a young girl, Elizabeth was very close to her father, but when her mother dies, she is forced by a court order to live with an imperious and cold aunt, and then goes to live in New York with a friend of the aunt's who works as a medium. It turns out that Gabriel is not John's biological father. Elizabeth had gone to New York with her boyfriend, Richard, a self-educated "sinner" who did not believe in the Church and who never carried out his promise to marry Elizabeth. Richard is arrested for a robbery he didn't commit, and while he is acquitted at trial, the experience – including the abuse he takes at the hands of white police officers – leads him to commit suicide on his first night home. Elizabeth, then just a few months pregnant with John, takes a job, where she meets Florence. Florence introduces her to Gabriel, whom she marries.

The final chapter returns to the church, where John falls to the floor in a spiritual fit (which is depicted as real and unaffected). Curiously, he is overtaken (by the spirit) right after his friend Elisha swoons. He has a series of dreamlike visions, seeing visions of hell and heaven, life and death, and seeing Gabriel standing over him. When he awakes, he says that he is saved and that he has accepted Jesus. Yet even as the group leaves the church, old sins are revisited as Florence threatens to tell Elizabeth of Gabriel's sordid past.

God of Small Things (The)—by Arundhati Roy.

The story primarily takes place in a town named Ayemenem or [Aymanam](#) now part of [Kottayam](#) in [Kerala](#) state of [India](#). The temporal setting shifts back and forth from 1969, when fraternal twins Rahel and Estha are seven years old, to 1993, when the twins are reunited at age 31. Much of the story is written in a viewpoint sympathetic to the seven-year-old children. [Malayalam](#) words are liberally used in conjunction with English. Prominent facets of Kerala life that the novel captures are [Communism](#), the [caste system](#), and the [Keralite Syrian Christian](#) way of life.

This plot summary places the events in chronological order, though the novel shifts around in time.

Without sufficient dowry for a marriage proposal, Ammu Ipe becomes desperate to escape her ill-tempered father (Pappachi) and bitter, long-suffering mother (Mammachi). Finally, she convinces her parents to let her spend a summer with a distant aunt in Calcutta. To avoid returning to Ayemenem, she marries a man who assists managing a tea estate (who she later discovers to be a heavy alcoholic, who beats her and attempts to prostitute her to his boss so that he can keep his job). She gives birth to two children, [dizygotic](#) twins Estha and Rahel, but ultimately leaves her husband and returns to live with her mother and brother, Chacko, in Ayemenem.

Also living at the house is Pappachi's sister: Baby Kochamma (Kochamma is an honorific name for a female). As a young girl, Baby Kochamma fell in love with Father Mulligan, a young Irish priest who had come to Ayemenem to study Hindu scriptures. In order to get closer to him, Baby Kochamma became a Roman Catholic and joined a convent against her father's wishes. After a few lonely months in the convent, Baby Kochamma realized that her vows brought her no closer to the man she loved. Her father eventually rescues her from the convent and sends her to America for an education, where she obtains a diploma in ornamental gardening. She remains unmarried for the rest of her life, her unrequited love for Father Mulligan turning to bitterness. Throughout the

book, Baby Kochamma delights in the misfortune of others and manipulates events to bring down calamity upon Ammu and the twins.

While studying at Oxford, Chacko fell in love and married an English woman named Margaret. Shortly after the birth of their daughter Sophie Mol (Mol meaning "little girl"), Margaret reveals that she had been having an affair with another man. They divorce and Chacko, unable to find a job, returns to India. After the death of Pappachi, Chacko returns to Ayemenem and takes over his mother's business, called Paradise Pickles and Preserves.

"It didn't matter that the story had begun, because Kathakali discovered long ago that the secret of the Great Stories is that they have no secrets. The Great Stories are the ones you have heard and want to hear again. The ones you can enter anywhere and inhabit comfortably. They don't deceive you with thrills and trick endings."
- *The God of Small Things* ^[2]

When Margaret's second husband is killed in a car accident, Chacko invites her and Sophie to spend Christmas in Ayemenem. On the way to the airport to pick them up, the family (Chacko, Ammu, Estha, Rahel, and Baby Kochamma) encounters a group of communist protesters. The protesters surround the car and force Baby Kochamma to wave a red flag and chant a communist slogan, humiliating her. Rahel thinks she sees Velutha, an untouchable servant that works in the pickle factory, in the crowd. Velutha's alleged presence with the communist mob makes Baby Kochamma associate him with her humiliation at their hands, and she begins to harbor a deep hatred towards him.

The day before Margaret and Sophie arrive, the family visits a theater to see "The Sound of Music", where Estha is molested by the "Orangedrink Lemondrink man", a beverage vendor. His fear stemming from this encounter factors into the circumstances that lead to the tragic events at the heart of the narrative.

Velutha is an untouchable (the lowest caste in India), a [dalit](#). His family has been working for the Ipe family for generations. Velutha is an extremely gifted and accomplished carpenter and mechanic. His skills with repairing the machinery make him indispensable at the pickle factory, but result in resentment and hostility from the other, touchable factory workers.

Rahel and Estha form an unlikely bond with Velutha and come to love him, despite his untouchable status. It's her children's love for Velutha that causes Ammu to realize her attraction to him and eventually, she comes to "love by night the man her children love by day". They begin a short-lived affair that culminates in tragedy for the family.

When her relationship with Velutha is discovered, Ammu is locked in her room and Velutha is banished. In her rage, Ammu blames the twins for her misfortune and calls them the "millstones around her neck". Distraught, Rahel and Estha decide to run away. Their cousin Sophie Mol convinces them to take her with them. During the night, while trying to reach the abandoned house across the river, their boat capsizes and Sophie drowns.

When Sophie's body is discovered, Baby Kochamma goes to the police and accuses Velutha of being responsible for Sophie's death. She claims that Velutha attempted to rape Ammu, threatened the family, and kidnapped the children. A group of policemen hunt Velutha down and savagely beat him for crossing caste lines. The twins witness this horrific scene and are deeply affected.

When the twins reveal the truth of Sophie's death to the Chief of Police, he is alarmed. He knows that Velutha is a communist, and is afraid that the wrongful arrest and beating of Velutha will

cause unrest amongst the local communists. He threatens to hold Baby Kochamma responsible for falsely accusing Velutha. To save herself, Baby Kochamma tricks Rahel and Estha into accusing Velutha of Sophie's death. Velutha dies of his injuries.

Hearing of his arrest, Ammu goes to the police to tell the truth about their relationship. The police threaten her to make her leave the matter alone. Afraid of being exposed, Baby Kochamma convinces Chacko that Ammu and the twins are responsible for his daughter's death. Chacko kicks Ammu out of the house. Unable to find a job, Ammu is forced to send Estha to live with his father. Estha never sees Ammu again, and she dies alone and impoverished a few years later.

After a turbulent childhood and adolescence in India, Rahel goes to America to study. While there, she gets married, divorced and finally returns to Ayemenem after several years of working dead-end jobs. Rahel and Estha, both 31-years old, are reunited for the first time since they were children. In the intervening years, Estha and Rahel have been haunted by their guilt and grief-ridden pasts. Estha is perpetually silent and Rahel has a haunted look in her eyes. It becomes apparent that neither twin ever found another person who understands them in the way they understand each other. The twin's renewed intimacy ultimately culminates in them sleeping together.

Going After Cacciato—by Tim O'Brien.

Typical of many stories that deal with [themes](#) of [psychological trauma](#), *Going After Cacciato* contains distinct ambiguities concerning the nature and order of events that occur, which often requires readers to look beyond superficial appearances conveyed by the narrator's language. Its chronology is nonlinear, for most of the book.

The main idea of the story is, by O'Brien's estimation, that being a soldier in Vietnam for the standard tour of duty entails constant walking; if one were to put all the walking in a straight line, one would end up in Paris, where Cacciato is going.

It is important to note that Cacciato is always portrayed as self-sufficient and happy. It is Cacciato who is hunted, pursued throughout the imagined story of the book. The final pages feature the juxtaposition of two statements, by Sarkin Aung Wan and Paul Berlin, which contrast the early American view (think Emerson and Thoreau) of independence and happiness against the modern view of obligations placed on the individual to conform to society. The obligations lead to complicity in atrocities—Cacciato marches to the beat of a different drum, and is freer, and happy.

Paul Berlin, the main character, is a frustrated soldier who during the entire novel, focuses on every minor detail he encounters, whether in the past or in the would-be chase. In the chapter "Tunneling Toward Paris", the characters escape the endless tunnels by "falling out" just as they fell in; this allusion to [Alice In Wonderland](#) helps to reveal the story as fiction.

Golden Bowl (The)—by Henry James.

Prince Amerigo, an impoverished but charismatic [Italian](#) nobleman, is in [London](#) for his marriage to Maggie Verver, only child of the fabulously wealthy [American](#) financier and art collector, Adam Verver. While there, he re-encounters the American Charlotte Stant, a former mistress of his from his days in Rome, in Mrs. Assingham's drawing room; Maggie and Charlotte have been dear friends since childhood, although Maggie doesn't know of Charlotte and Amerigo's past relationship. Charlotte and Amerigo go shopping for a wedding present for Maggie. They find a curiosity shop where the shopkeeper offers them an antique gilded crystal bowl. But the Prince declines to purchase the bowl because he suspects it contains a hidden flaw.

After Maggie's marriage she is afraid that her father has become lonely. She persuades him to propose to Charlotte, unaware of the past relationship between Charlotte and Amerigo. Adam's proposal is accepted, and soon after the wedding, Charlotte and the Prince find themselves thrown together because their respective spouses seem more interested in their father-daughter relationship than in their marriages. The Prince and Charlotte finally consummate an adulterous affair.

Maggie eventually begins to suspect Amerigo and Charlotte. This suspicion is intensified when she accidentally meets the shopkeeper and buys the golden bowl. Uncomfortable with the high price she paid for the bowl, the shopkeeper visits Maggie and confesses to overcharging her. At Maggie's home he sees photographs of Amerigo and Charlotte. He tells Maggie of the pair's shopping trip on the eve of her marriage and their intimate conversation in his shop. (They had spoken Italian, but he happens to understand the language.)

Maggie now confronts Amerigo, and then begins a secret campaign to separate the Prince and Charlotte while never letting her father know of their affair. She lies to Charlotte about not having anything to accuse her of, and she gradually persuades her father to return to America with his wife. Amerigo appears impressed by Maggie's delicate diplomacy, after he had previously regarded her as rather naive and immature. The novel ends with Mr. and Mrs. Verver about to depart for America, while Amerigo says he can see nothing but Maggie and embraces her.

Good Soldier (The)—by Ford Madox Ford.

The Good Soldier is narrated by the character John Dowell, half of one of the couples whose dissolving relationships form the subject of the novel. Dowell tells the stories of those dissolutions as well as the deaths of three characters and the madness of a fourth, in a rambling, non-chronological fashion that leaves gaps for the reader to fill.

The novel opens with the famous line, “This is the saddest story I have ever heard.” Dowell explains that for nine years he, his wife Florence and their friends Captain Edward Ashburnham (the “good soldier” of the book’s title) and his wife Leonora had an ostensibly normal friendship while Edward and Florence sought treatment for their heart ailments at a spa in [Nauheim, Germany](#).

As it turns out, nothing in the relationships or in the characters is as it first seems. Florence’s heart ailment is a fiction she perpetrated on John to force them to stay in [Europe](#) so that she could continue her affair with an [American](#) thug named Jimmy. Edward and Leonora have a loveless, imbalanced marriage broken by his constant infidelities (both of body and heart) and Leonora’s attempts to control Edward’s affairs (both financial and romantic). Dowell is a fool and is coming to realize how much of a fool he is, as Florence and Edward had an affair under his nose for nine years without John knowing until Florence was dead.

Florence’s affair with Edward leads her to commit [suicide](#) when she realizes that Edward is falling in love with his and Leonora’s young ward, Nancy Rufford, the daughter of Leonora's closest friend. Florence sees the two in an intimate conversation and rushes back into the resort, where she sees John talking to a man she knows (and who knows of her affair with Jimmy) but whom John doesn’t know. Assuming that her relationship with Edward and her marriage to John are over, Florence takes [prussic acid](#) – which she has carried for years in a vial that John thought held her heart medicine – and dies.

With that story told, Dowell moves on to tell the story of Edward and Leonora’s relationship, which appears normal but which is a power struggle that Leonora wins. Dowell runs through several of Edward’s affairs and peccadilloes, including his possibly innocent attempt to comfort a crying servant on a train; his affair with the married Maisie Maidan, the one character in the book

whose heart problem was unquestionably real, and his bizarre tryst in [Monte Carlo](#) and [Antibes](#) with a kept woman known as La Dolciquita. Edward's philandering ends up costing them a fortune in bribes, blackmail and gifts for his lovers, leading Leonora to take control of Edward's financial affairs. She gradually gets him out of debt.

Edward's last affair is his most scandalous, as he becomes infatuated with their young ward, Nancy. Nancy came to live with them after leaving a convent where her parents had sent her; her mother was a violent [alcoholic](#), and her father (it is later suggested that this man may not be Nancy's biological father) may have abused her. Edward, tearing himself apart because he does not want to spoil Nancy's innocence, arranges to have her sent to India to live with her father, even though this frightens her terribly. Once Leonora knows that Edward intends to keep his passion for Nancy chaste, but only wants Nancy to continue to love him from afar, Leonora torments him by making this wish impossible—she pretends to offer to [divorce](#) him so he can marry Nancy, but informs Nancy of his sordid sexual history, destroying Nancy's innocent love for him. After Nancy's departure, Edward commits suicide, and when she reaches [Aden](#) and sees the obituary in the paper, she becomes [catatonic](#).

The novel's last section has Dowell writing from Edward's old estate in [England](#), where he takes care of Nancy, whom he cannot marry because of her mental illness. Nancy is only capable of repeating two things – a [Latin](#) phrase meaning “I believe in an omnipotent [God](#)” and the word “shuttlecocks.” Dowell states that the story is sad because no one got what he wanted: Leonora wanted Edward but lost him and marries the normal (but dull) Rodney Bayham; Edward wanted Nancy but lost her; Dowell wanted a wife but has twice ended up a nurse to a sick woman, one a fake.

As if in an afterthought, Dowell closes the novel by telling the story of Edward's suicide. Edward receives a telegram from Nancy that reads, “Safe [Brindisi](#). Having a rattling good time. Nancy.” He asks Dowell to take the telegram to his wife, pulls out his pen knife, says that it's time he had some rest and slits his own throat.

Dowell ends up expressing sympathy for Edward, even though he casts both Edward and Florence as the villains.

Grapes of Wrath (The)—by John Steinbeck.

The narrative begins just after Tom Joad is paroled from [McAlester prison](#) for homicide. On his journey to his home near [Sallisaw](#), Oklahoma, he meets former preacher Jim Casy whom he remembers from his childhood, and the two travel together. When they arrive at his childhood farm home, they find it deserted. Disconcerted and confused, he and Casy meet their old neighbor, Muley Graves, who tells them that the family has gone to stay at Uncle John Joad's home nearby. He goes on to tell them that the banks have kicked all the farmers off their land, but he refuses to go. Tom and Casy get up the next morning to go to Uncle John's. There, Tom finds his family loading a converted [Hudson](#) truck with what remains of their possessions; the crops were destroyed in the [Dust Bowl](#) and as a result, the family had to default on their loans. With their farm repossessed, the Joads cling to hope, mostly in the form of handbills distributed everywhere in Oklahoma, describing the fruitful country of California and the high pay to be had in that state. The Joads are seduced by this advertising and invest everything they have into the journey. Although leaving Oklahoma would be breaking parole, Tom decides that it is a risk worth taking. Casy joins the family as well.

Going west on [Route 66](#), the Joad family discovers that the road is saturated with other families making the same trek, ensnared by the same promise. In makeshift camps, they hear many stories from others, some coming back from California, and are forced to confront the possibility that their prospects may not be what they hoped. Along the road, Grampa dies and is buried in the

camp; Granma dies close to the California state line, both Noah (the eldest Joad son) and Connie (the husband of the pregnant Joad daughter, Rose of Sharon) split from the family; the remaining members, led by Ma, realize they have no choice but to go on, as there is nothing remaining for them in Oklahoma.

Upon arrival, they find little hope of making a decent wage, as there is an oversupply of labor and a [lack of rights](#), and the big corporate farmers are in collusion, while smaller farmers are suffering from collapsing prices. A gleam of hope is presented at [Weedpatch Camp](#), one of the clean, utility-supplied camps operated by the [Resettlement Administration](#), a [New Deal](#) agency that has been established to help the migrants, but there is not enough money and space to care for all of the needy. As a Federal facility, the camp is also off-limits to California deputies who constantly harass and provoke the newcomers.

How can you frighten a man whose hunger is not only in his own cramped stomach but in the wretched bellies of his children? You can't scare him – he has known a fear beyond every other.

In response to the exploitation of laborers, there are people who attempt for the workers to join [unions](#), including Casy, who had gone to jail after taking the blame for attacking a rogue deputy. The remaining Joads work as [strikebreakers](#) on a peach orchard where Casy is involved in a [strike](#) that eventually turns violent. Tom Joad witnesses the killing of Casy and kills the attacker, becoming a fugitive. They later leave the orchard for a cotton farm where Tom is at risk of being identified for the murder he committed. He bids farewell to his mother, promising that no matter where he runs, he will be a tireless advocate for the oppressed. Rose of Sharon's baby is stillborn; however, Ma Joad remains steadfast and forces the family through the bereavement. When the rains arrive, the Joads' dwelling is flooded, and they move to higher ground, where Rose of Sharon breast feeds a man too sick from starvation to eat solid food.

Great Expectations—by Charles Dickens.

On Christmas Eve, around 1812,^[3] Pip, a boy around the age of six, encounters an escaped convict in the village churchyard while visiting his mother's, father's and younger brothers' graves. The convict scares Pip into stealing food for him and a [file](#) to grind away his leg shackles. He warns Pip not to tell anyone and to do as he says or he will cut out Pip's heart and liver. Pip returns home, where he lives with his older sister Mrs. Joe, whose name is later revealed to be Georgiana Maria, and her husband Joe Gargery. His sister is very cruel and beats him as well as her husband with various objects regularly; however, Joe is much kinder to Pip. Pip's sister, called Mrs. Joe throughout the novel, often reminds Pip that she was the one who "brought him up by hand". Early the next morning, Pip steals food and drink from the Gargery pantry (including a pie for their Christmas feast) and sneaks out to the graveyard. It is the first time in Pip's life he has felt truly guilty.

During Christmas dinner with the minister Mr. Wopsle, Mr. and Mrs. Hubble, and Uncle Pumblechook, Pip's and Mrs. Joe's moderately wealthy uncle, nobody notices the missing food or brandy until Uncle Pumblechook drinks some brandy and spits it out. Pip realizes that he filled the brandy jug not with water, but with tar-water (a foul-tasting tonic made of pine tar and water often used for medicinal purposes), instead. He had brought some of the brandy to the convict and had to replace it somehow. Pip sits at the table being told how lucky he is by all the relatives all the while in fear that someone will notice the missing pie. However, the moment his sister goes to the pantry to retrieve the pie and discovers it is missing, soldiers approach the house and ask Joe to repair their handcuffs and invite Joe, Pip and Mr. Wopsle to come with them to hunt for some escaped prisoners from the local jail. As they hunt through the marshes outside the village, they accost two convicts while engaged in a fight. One of them is the convict helped by Pip; the convict freely confesses to the theft of the file and "some wittles" (i.e. [victuals](#)) in order to shield Pip. The

police take the two to the Hulk, a giant prison ship, and Pip is carried home by Joe, where they finish Christmas dinner. A while after Pip's encounter with the convict, Pip's life returns to normal. He continues to attend the local school which is run by Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt, and becomes friends with Biddy, an orphan who was adopted by the Wopsles; even though no more was said of the incident with the convict and he has been absolved of any wrongdoing, he still feels guilty for the theft. A wealthy old woman named [Miss Havisham](#) asks Pip's Uncle Pumblechook to find a boy of a certain age and bring him to her home to play. Pumblechook immediately selects Pip and brings him to Miss Havisham's, who lives in the village in [Satis House](#). Miss Havisham is a spinster who wears an old wedding dress with one shoe on and has all the house clocks stopped at 20 minutes to nine. She has not seen sunlight in years and claims that she just wants to see Pip play cards with [Estella](#), a young girl she has adopted.

Pip's first encounter with Miss Havisham and Estella is a strange one. He discovers Miss Havisham is a shut-in who has boarded up the windows around the entire house so as not to allow any light in. She remains seated in a tattered chair where she instructs Pip to play cards with Estella. Here, Estella is cruel to Pip, calls him names and laughs at him. Miss Havisham seems to delight in this ill-treatment of Pip and asks him repeatedly what he thinks of Estella in turn by whispering it in her ear. Miss Havisham continually praises Estella for her pride and her beauty. Hurt and angry, Pip leaves Satis House to walk the grounds and cries. Estella brings him food; however, she begins to make fun of him again as she sees that he has been crying and teases him for doing so.

After this first meeting, Pip frequently visits Miss Havisham and Estella, with whom he soon realizes he is in love. He begins to tenaciously learn everything he can from Biddy in school, with the hopes of becoming more educated and refined, in an effort to win Estella's affections, who had called him a "common, labouring boy". One day, when Pip goes to the town pub to pick up Joe, they are approached by a messenger sent by Pip's convict who gives Pip two pound notes before leaving; however, upon returning home with the notes, Mrs. Joe takes the money from Pip and places it in a jar with the intention of sending word to the pub the next day, as she believed that the messenger made a mistake and did not mean to give such a large amount of money to Pip. Soon after his encounter with the messenger, Pip returns to Satis House to visit Miss Havisham on her birthday where she shows him her wedding cake, which is being eaten by mice, and the place where she will be laid out when she is dead, a death she looks forward to. He also meets the Pockets who give him a chilly welcome. Outside, Pip is accosted by a young man, a young Hebert Pocket of about the same age, who tries to engage him in a fight. He calls Pip out but Pip refuses to fight with him at first; however, after this has gone on for a time, Pip swings at and strikes the young man, knocking him to the ground. The young man repeatedly encourages Pip to hit him even though he is clearly losing and becoming increasingly battered and bloody. After the fight is over, the two part ways; Estella, having seen the fight, lets Pip kiss her, excited that two young men are fighting for her, and he returns to the forge.

Miss Havisham requests an interview with Joe during which she inquires whether he still wishes Pip to be apprenticed to him as a blacksmith; Joe confirms this and she gives Joe 25 pounds, money Pip has earned keeping her company, and releases him from her services. Pip works with Joe for a few years in the forge, doing work that he once looked forward to however now despises as he begins to see it as "common" and "low". After making an agreement with Joe, Pip receives a half-holiday and visits Miss Havisham one final time on her birthday. This causes Joe's only other employee, a journeyman named Orlick, to become angry and demand a half day-holiday as well. Joe grants this and declares a "half-holiday for all." Upon hearing this, Mrs. Joe goes into a violent fit, angry that Joe is losing money by giving Pip and Orlick time off and closing the business early. Orlick and Mrs. Joe get into an argument during which they threaten each other and Orlick calls her a "shrew." She demands her husband punish Orlick for his actions and Joe and Orlick get into a short altercation after which Orlick is subsequently let go from his job. When Pip returns home, he discovers that Mrs. Joe had been attacked. The attack left her seriously injured and as she was struck in the head with a blunt object several times, the brain damage has left her an

invalid. Pip feels guilty again when the police believe escaped criminals attacked Mrs. Joe. The detectives from London, however, do not discover anything more about the suspected attacker and thus no one is ever apprehended.

After her attack, Mrs. Joe spends her days calling for Orlick and drawing a capital "T" on a slate. Biddy believes that the "T" represents a hammer and that Orlick is the attacker. When Orlick arrives however, Mrs. Joe is very pleased to see him and soon after Orlick regularly comes to keep company and entertain Mrs. Joe. Meanwhile Biddy, being given the task of nursing Mrs. Joe, moves in with the Gargerys leading Pip to confide in her his true feelings for Estella. When Pip and Joe are listening to Mr. Wopsle read a murder trial from a newspaper, a London lawyer, Mr. Jagers, approaches Pip, revealing very startling news: Pip has been given a large sum of money by an anonymous benefactor. The conditions of the receipt of said money require him to leave for London immediately, buy new clothes, always keep his name Pip, and become a gentleman.

Pip behaves badly in society (mostly over jealousy of Estella) and squanders his allowance, running into debt. He is rescued on his 21st birthday, when he is notified by Jagers that he is awarded 500 pounds (equal to about £36,000 today) and an increased steady allowance, until such a time as his benefactor will appear and make himself known to Pip.

Pip originally believes Miss Havisham is his benefactress (and so the reader is led to believe, as well) for several years as he begins to learn to be a gentleman, helped by the now grown Herbert Pocket, (whom he discovers is the young man he fought at Satis House as a boy), who is assigned as his companion. Pip returns to the village often, however rarely visiting his family and instead visiting Miss Havisham. For several years Estella had been studying abroad on the Continent (a fashionable tradition of women's education for the wealthy at the time). Upon her return, Pip finds Estella much changed and her attitude refined. She apologizes for her earlier cruelty, however, seeing Pip's affections warns him that he should not fall in love with her. Pip ignores these repeated warnings as he has long harbored the belief that Miss Havisham (as his benefactress) intended them for each other. Estella continues to warn him that her heart is cold and cannot love him and entreats him to take her seriously, but he refuses, still believing they will be married and that her heart is not as cold as she claims.

During this time, Mrs. Joe dies. Pip returns home to the funeral where Biddy confides in him that Orlick has made several unwanted advances toward her. Pip is infuriated and warns Orlick to stay away from Biddy, however Orlick continues to harass Biddy after Pip is gone.

Pip returns to London, heavily in debt that increases by the day. Having led Herbert into debt as well, Pip feels a deep sense of remorse for his irresponsible actions. In one of Dickens's famous plot twists, Pip's benefactor turns out to be instead Abel Magwitch, the convict whom Pip helped, who had been transported to [New South Wales](#), where he had eventually prospered and become extremely wealthy.

Magwitch left all his money to Pip in gratitude for that kindness and also because Pip reminded him of his own child, whom he believes to have been killed by her mother over two decades earlier. The revelation of his true benefactor crushes Pip. He is ashamed of Magwitch's criminal past and deeply saddened by the realization that Miss Havisham merely allowed him to believe she was the source of his expectations and never intended for Pip to marry Estella. However, Magwitch now expects to spend the rest of his life living with Pip in England. Pip, very reluctantly, lets Magwitch stay with him. Pip is unhappy in his new found knowledge and the danger and uncertainty it brings. Pip, at one time entertained the idea of running off and joining the military to avoid Magwitch and his expectations. There is a warrant out for Magwitch's arrest in England and he will be hanged if he is caught in the country. Pip becomes increasingly suspicious of being watched and tells his landlord and all other close acquaintances (save for Herbert) that Magwitch is an uncle by the name of Provis. Eventually, it is understood that Magwitch cannot afford to stay in England much longer as the probability of Magwitch's arrest

increases with each day he remains in the country. A plan is hatched by Herbert and Pip which involves fleeing the country by boat.

During these events, it is revealed to Pip that Estella is the daughter of Mr. Jaggers's housemaid, Molly, whom he defended in a murder charge and who gave up her daughter to be adopted by another of his clients, Miss Havisham, in return for his service in allowing her to be acquitted of the charge. Pip later realizes Magwitch is Estella's father. When Pip lays the claim before him, Mr. Jaggers does not outright confess to anything, however gives Pip a hypothetical situation in which these events transpired. He also hints that Molly, Estella's mother, used to be jealous and wild and that in order to keep her wildness in check he beat her regularly and severely. These hints are proven true by Molly's and Mr. Jaggers's interactions. Molly appears to be very much afraid of her master.

Shortly before Magwitch and Pip are scheduled to flee, Pip receives an unsigned note at his home telling him to appear at the marshes near his old home that night at 9pm. Pip is timid at first, but the letter mentions his "Uncle Provis" and threatens his safety. Pip is lured in by the threats to his benefactor and leaves for the village by carriage immediately. On the marshes, Pip is struck on the head by a blunt object, rendering him unconscious for a period of time. When he awakens, he finds himself bound in a small shack far away from any other residences. It is revealed that both the author of the anonymous note and his attacker is Orlick, who admits that he was in fact the one who attacked Mrs. Joe. Orlick confides that he intends to kill Pip as he was always jealous of young Pip when he worked with Joe and for Pip's intervention with his advances on Biddy. Pip is sure he is going to die though he refuses to cry out or beg for mercy.

Nevertheless, before Orlick can exact his revenge, Pip is rescued by Herbert, a village shop boy and their old friend, Startop. Herbert explains that he knew where to find him because Pip accidentally left the cryptic note at their home. Orlick flees, but it is decided not to alert the police as their situation with Magwitch is too precarious.

Meanwhile, out of spite for Miss Havisham, Estella has married Bentley Drummle, a boastful rival of Pip's whom he very much dislikes. Mr. Jaggers hints that he believes Drummle will beat Estella into submission so as to prove who is the stronger in the marriage. Pip is incensed and dejected, though he refuses to believe that Drummle would do such a thing.

Before Pip flees with Magwitch, he makes one final visit to Miss Havisham. Miss Havisham realizes that she created a monster out of Estella by encouraging her vanity and her coldness towards others but especially Pip. Miss Havisham claims that she adopted Estella for the sole purpose of saving someone else from the heartbreak and misfortune she herself suffered as a young woman. She instead taught Estella to be cruel, prideful and vain. It is revealed that Miss Havisham was convinced to buy her half-brother out of his share of the brewery at Satis House by a young man who claimed to love her. The young man proposed to Miss Havisham and arrangements were made; however, on her wedding day, shortly before the ceremony the young man never showed up; she had been jilted. After this heartbreak, Miss Havisham shut herself in her darkened house where she has sat in her bridal gown amongst the rotting wedding cake for decades. Miss Havisham vowed never to be heartbroken again and use Estella as a tool with which to exact her revenge on all men by encouraging her vanity and her meanness and her constant misleading of men.

However, seeing how much these teachings have corrupted Estella and broken Pip's heart, she asks him for forgiveness. Pip confronts Miss Havisham with Estella's history and present circumstance in an unhappy marriage, blaming Miss Havisham for teaching Estella to be cold and unloving. After the confrontation, Pip comes back into the house once more to discover Miss Havisham standing too close to the fire and it ignites her dress. In an effort to save her, he removes his overcoat and throws it around Miss Havisham. The fire is put out, however, he and Miss

Havisham are both badly injured, Miss Havisham infinitely moreso, and she eventually succumbs to her injuries.

Pip, Herbert, and another friend, Startop, make a gallant attempt to help Magwitch escape, but instead, he is captured and sent to jail. Pip is devoted to Magwitch by now and recognizes in him a good and noble man, and he is ashamed that he had formerly looked down on Magwitch as his inferior. Pip tries to have Magwitch released, but Magwitch dies shortly before his execution. Under English law, Magwitch's wealth forfeits to the Crown, thus extinguishing Pip's "Great Expectations."

During an extended period of sickness, Pip is nearly arrested for his numerous unpaid debts to several creditors; however, because of his ill health, which includes fever, he is not arrested. During this illness, he is looked after by Joe and eventually returns to good health. Joe departs early one morning leaving Pip with only a note of well-wishes, believing that as Pip had not visited him for so many years prior, he would not visit him again and that he likely would never see Pip again. Pip is greatly saddened by this turn of events and realizes how thankless and ungrateful he had been over the years. His guilt is then compounded by the discovery that he avoided arrest for debt, not because of his illness, but because Joe had paid all of his debts in full. Pip returns home to ask Biddy and Joe for forgiveness and to thank Joe for his undeserved kindness and unfailing love, for which Pip felt unworthy. When he arrives in the village, he finds that it is Biddy's and Joe's wedding day. He congratulates the couple, but tells them that his visit is only temporary, for he intended to pay Joe back every penny of the money he paid the creditors. Afterwards, Pip goes into business overseas with Herbert. After eleven relatively successful years abroad, Pip goes back to visit Joe and the rest of his family out in the marshes.

Great Gatsby (The)—by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Nick Carraway, having graduated from Yale and fought in World War I, has returned home to begin a career. He is restless and has decided to move to New York to learn the bond business. The novel opens early in the summer of 1922 in West Egg, Long Island, where Nick has rented a house. Next to his place is Gatsby's mansion.

Tom and Daisy Buchanan live across the bay in the more fashionable East Egg. Daisy is Nick's cousin and Tom had been in the same senior society at Yale. They invite Nick to dinner at their mansion where he meets a young woman named Jordan Baker, whom Daisy wants Nick to date. Daisy now has a young child, although she has remained beautiful and charming. Tom is muscular, brusque and fancies himself an intellectual. During dinner the phone rings, and when Tom and Daisy leave the room, Jordan informs Nick that the caller is Tom's mistress from New York.

Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress, lives in a section of Long Island known as the Valley of Ashes, where Myrtle's husband, George Wilson, owns a garage. Painted on a large billboard nearby is a fading advertisement for an [ophthalmologist](#): a set of huge eyes looking through a pair of glasses.

Around three weeks after the soirée at the Buchanans' Tom takes Nick to meet the Wilsons. He then takes Nick and Myrtle to New York to a party in a flat he is renting for her. The party breaks up when Myrtle insolently starts shouting Daisy's name, and Tom breaks her nose with a blow of his open hand. Several weeks later Nick is invited to one of Gatsby's elaborate parties. He attends with Jordan and finds that many of the guests are uninvited and know very little about their host, leading to much speculation about his past. Nick meets Gatsby and notices that he does not drink or join in the revelry of the party.

On the way to lunch in New York with Nick, Gatsby tells Nick that he is the son of a rich family ("all dead now") from San Francisco and that he attended [Oxford](#). During lunch Gatsby introduces

Nick to his business associate, Meyer Wolfsheim, who fixed the World Series in 1919. Nick is astonished and slightly unsettled.

At tea that afternoon Nick finds out that Gatsby wants Nick to arrange a meeting between him and Daisy. Gatsby and Daisy had loved each other five years ago, but he was penniless and chose to let Daisy believe that he was as well off as she was. Gatsby was then sent overseas by the army. Daisy had given up waiting for him and had married Tom. After the War, Gatsby decided to win Daisy back by buying a house in West Egg and throwing lavish parties in the hopes that she would attend. His house is directly across the bay from hers, and he can see a green light at the end of Daisy's dock.

Gatsby and Daisy meet for the first time in five years, and he tries to impress her with his mansion and his wealth. Daisy is overcome with emotion and their relationship begins anew. She and Tom finally attend one of Gatsby's parties, but she dislikes it. Gatsby remarks unhappily that their relationship is not like how it was five years ago.

Tom, Daisy, Gatsby, Nick and Jordan get together at Daisy's house, where they meet Daisy's young daughter. They decide to go to the city to escape the heat. Tom, Jordan and Nick take Gatsby's car, a yellow Rolls-Royce. Daisy and Gatsby go in Tom's car, a blue coupé. On the way to the city, Tom stops at Wilson's garage to fill up the tank. Wilson is distraught and ill, saying his wife has been having an affair, though he doesn't know with whom. Tom feels Myrtle watching them from the window.

The party goes to a hotel suite, where Tom confronts Gatsby about his relationship with Daisy. Gatsby demands that Daisy leave Tom and tell him that she never loved him. Daisy is unwilling to do either, admitting that she did love Tom once, which shocks Gatsby. Tom accuses Gatsby of [bootlegging](#) and other illegal activities, and Daisy begs to go home. Gatsby and Daisy drive back together in Gatsby's car, followed by the rest of the party in Tom's car. On the way home by Wilson's garage, Myrtle runs out into the street, believing it to be Tom coming by in his car, and the yellow Rolls-Royce hits and kills her before speeding off. Gatsby tells Daisy, who was driving, that he'll take the blame. When Tom arrives at Wilson's garage shortly afterward, he is horrified to find Myrtle dead. He believes Gatsby killed her and drives home in tears. Once home, Tom and Daisy seem to have reconciled. After a sleepless night, Nick goes over to Gatsby's house where Gatsby ponders the uncertainty of his future with Daisy.

Wilson has been restless from grief, convinced that Myrtle's death was not accidental. He goes around town inquiring about the yellow Rolls-Royce. While Gatsby is relaxing in his pool, Wilson shoots and kills him before killing himself.

Nick struggles to arrange Gatsby's funeral, finding that while he was well-connected in life, very few people, especially business associates like Wolfsheim, are willing to attend his funeral. Daisy is unable to be reached after going off on vacation with Tom. In the end, only Nick, a few servants, and Gatsby's father, Mr. Gatz, are present. Mr. Gatz proudly tells Nick about his son, who was born James Gatz and worked tirelessly to improve and reinvent himself. Nick decides to move back West, breaking things off with Jordan Baker. After Tom reveals that he told Wilson that the yellow car was Gatsby's, Nick loses respect for the Buchanans and shakes Tom's hand one last time before going on his own way.

Gulliver's Travels—by Jonathan Swift.

The book begins with a very short preamble in which [Lemuel Gulliver](#), in the style of books of the time, gives a brief outline of his life and history prior to his voyages. He enjoys travelling, although it is that love of travel that is his downfall.

During his first voyage, Gulliver is washed ashore after a shipwreck and finds himself a prisoner of a race of people, less than 6 inches high, who are inhabitants of the neighbouring and rival countries of Lilliput. After giving assurances of his good behaviour, he is given a residence in Lilliput and becomes a favourite of the court. From there, the book follows Gulliver's observations on the Court of Lilliput. He is also given the permission to roam around the city on a condition he not harm their subjects. Gulliver assists the Lilliputians to subdue their neighbours the Blefuscudians by stealing their fleet. However, he refuses to reduce the country to a province of Lilliput, displeasing the King and the court. Gulliver is charged with treason and sentenced to be blinded. With the assistance of a kind friend, Gulliver escapes to Blefuscu, where he spots and retrieves an abandoned boat and sails out to be rescued by a passing ship which safely takes him back home.

When the sailing ship *Adventure* is steered off course by storms and forced to go in to land for want of fresh water, Gulliver is abandoned by his companions and found by a farmer who is 72 feet (22 m) tall (the scale of Lilliput is approximately 1:12; of [Brobdingnag](#) 12:1, judging from Gulliver estimating a man's step being 10 yards (9.1 m)). He brings Gulliver home and his daughter cares for Gulliver. The farmer treats him as a curiosity and exhibits him for money. The word gets out and the Queen of Brobdingnag wants to see the show. She loves Gulliver and he is then bought by her and kept as a favourite at court.

Since Gulliver is too small to use their huge chairs, beds, knives and forks, the queen commissions a small house to be built for Gulliver so that he can be carried around in it. This is referred to as his "travelling box." In between small adventures such as fighting giant wasps and being carried to the roof by a monkey, he discusses the state of Europe with the King. The King is not impressed with Gulliver's accounts of Europe, especially upon learning of the usage of guns and cannons. On a trip to the seaside, his travelling box is seized by a giant eagle which drops Gulliver and his box right into the sea where he is picked up by some sailors, who return him to England.

This book compares the truly moral man to the representative man, the latter of whom is clearly shown to be the lesser of the two; Swift, being in Anglican holy orders, was likely to make such comparisons.

After Gulliver's ship is attacked by pirates, he is [marooned](#) close to a desolate rocky island, near India. Fortunately he is rescued by the flying island of [Laputa](#), a kingdom devoted to the arts of [music](#) and [mathematics](#) but unable to use them for practical ends. ("Laputa" is Spanish for "the whore;" Swift was attacking reason and the [deism](#) movement in this book, the last one he wrote for the *Travels*.)

Laputa's method of throwing rocks at rebellious surface cities also seems the first time that [aerial bombardment](#) was conceived as a method of warfare. While there, he tours the country as the guest of a low-ranking courtier and sees the ruin brought about by blind pursuit of science without practical results, in a satire on bureaucracy and the [Royal Society](#) and its experiments. At The Grand Academy of Lagado great resources and manpower are employed on researching completely preposterous and unnecessary schemes such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, softening marble for use in pillows, learning how to mix paint by smell, and uncovering political conspiracies by examining the excrement of suspicious persons (see [muckraking](#)).

Gulliver is then taken to Balnibarbi to await a trader who can take him on to Japan. While waiting for passage, Gulliver takes a short side-trip to the island of [Glubbdubdrib](#), where he visits a magician's dwelling and discusses history with the ghosts of historical figures, the most obvious restatement of the "ancients versus moderns" theme in the book. In Luggnagg he encounters the [struldbrugs](#), unfortunates who are immortal, but not forever young, but rather forever old, complete with the infirmities of old age and considered legally dead at the age of eighty. After reaching Japan, Gulliver asks the Emperor "to excuse my performing the ceremony imposed upon

my countrymen of [trampling upon the crucifix](#)", which the Emperor grants. Gulliver returns home, determined to stay there for the rest of his days.

Despite his earlier intention of remaining at home, Gulliver returns to the sea as the captain of a merchantman as he is bored with his employment as a surgeon. On this voyage he is forced to find new additions to his crew who he believes to have turned the rest of the crew against him. His crew then mutiny, and after keeping him contained for some time resolve to leave him on the first piece of land they come across and continue as pirates. He is abandoned in a landing boat and comes first upon a race of (apparently) hideous deformed and savage humanoid creatures to which he conceives a violent antipathy. Shortly thereafter he meets a horse and comes to understand that they call themselves [Houyhnhms](#) (which in their language means "the perfection of nature"), and that they are the rulers, while the deformed creatures called [Yahoos](#) are human beings in their base form.

Gulliver becomes a member of the horse's household, and comes to both admire and emulate the Houyhnhms and their lifestyle, rejecting his fellow humans as merely Yahoos endowed with some semblance of reason which they only use to exacerbate and add to the vices Nature gave them. However, an Assembly of the Houyhnhms rules that Gulliver, a Yahoo with some semblance of reason, is a danger to their civilization, and expels him.

He is then rescued, against his will, by a Portuguese ship, and is surprised to see that Captain Pedro de Mendez, a Yahoo, is a wise, courteous and generous person. He returns to his home in England, but he is unable to reconcile himself to living among Yahoos and becomes a recluse, remaining in his house, largely avoiding his family and his wife, and spending several hours a day speaking with the horses in his stables.

This book uses coarse metaphors to describe human depravity, and the Houyhnhms are symbolized as not only perfected nature but also the emotional barrenness which Swift maintained that devotion to reason brought.

Hairy Ape (the)—by Eugene O'Neill.

The play tells the story of a brutish, unthinking laborer known as Yank, as he searches for a sense of belonging in a world controlled by the rich. At first Yank feels secure as he stokes the engines of an oceanliner, and is highly confident in his physical power over the ship's engines.

However, when the weak but rich daughter of an industrialist in the steel business refers to him as a "filthy beast," Yank undergoes a crisis of identity. He leaves the ship and wanders into [Manhattan](#), only to find he does not belong anywhere—neither with the socialites on [Fifth Avenue](#), nor with the labor organizers on the waterfront. Finally he is reduced to seeking a kindred being with the gorilla in the zoo and dies in the animal's embrace.

Hamlet—by William Shakespeare.

The [protagonist](#) of *Hamlet* is [Prince Hamlet](#) of Denmark, son of deceased [King Hamlet](#) and his wife, [Queen Gertrude](#).

The story opens on a chilly night at [Elsinore](#), the Danish royal castle. Francisco, one of the sentinels, is relieved of his watch by Bernardo, another sentinel, and exits while Bernardo remains. A third sentinel, Marcellus, enters with [Horatio](#), Hamlet's best friend. The [sentinels](#) inform Horatio that they have seen a ghost that looks like the dead King Hamlet. After hearing from Horatio of the Ghost's appearance, Hamlet resolves to see the Ghost himself. That night, the Ghost appears again. It leads Hamlet to a secluded place, claims that it is the actual spirit of his father, and

discloses that he—the elder Hamlet—was murdered by Claudius' pouring [poison](#) in his ear. The Ghost demands that Hamlet avenge him; Hamlet agrees, swears his companions to secrecy, and tells them he intends to "put an antic disposition on"^[7] (presumably to avert suspicion). Hamlet initially attests to the ghost's reliability, calling him both an "honest ghost" and "truepenny." Later, however, he expresses doubts about the ghost's nature and intent, claiming these as reasons for his inaction.

[Polonius](#) is Claudius' trusted chief counsellor; [Polonius](#)'s son, [Laertes](#), is returning to France, and [Polonius](#)'s daughter, [Ophelia](#), is courted by Hamlet. Both Polonius and Laertes warn Ophelia that Hamlet is surely not serious about her. Shortly afterward, Ophelia is alarmed by Hamlet's strange behaviour, reporting to her father that Hamlet rushed into her room, stared at her, and said nothing. Polonius assumes that the "ecstasy of love"^[8] is responsible for Hamlet's "mad" behaviour, and he informs Claudius and Gertrude.

Perturbed by Hamlet's continuing deep mourning for his father and his increasingly erratic behaviour, Claudius sends for two of Hamlet's acquaintances—[Rosencrantz and Guildenstern](#)—to find out the cause of Hamlet's changed behaviour. Hamlet greets his friends warmly but quickly discerns that they have been sent to spy on him.

Together, Claudius and Polonius convince Ophelia to speak with Hamlet while they secretly listen. When Hamlet enters, she offers to return his remembrances, upon which Hamlet questions her honesty and furiously rants at her to "get thee to a nunnery."^[9]

Hamlet remains uncertain whether the Ghost has told him the truth, but the arrival of a troupe of actors at Elsinore presents him with a solution. He will have them stage a play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, re-enacting his father's murder and determine Claudius's guilt or innocence by studying his reaction to it. The court assembles to watch the play; Hamlet provides an agitated running commentary throughout. When the murder scene is presented, Claudius abruptly rises and leaves the room, which Hamlet sees as proof of his uncle's guilt.

Gertrude summons Hamlet to her closet to demand an explanation. On his way, Hamlet passes Claudius in prayer, but hesitates to kill him, reasoning that death in prayer would send him to heaven. However, it is revealed that the King is not truly praying, remarking that "words" never made it to heaven without "thoughts."^[11] An argument erupts between Hamlet and Gertrude. Polonius, spying on the scene from behind an arras and convinced that the prince's madness is indeed real, panics when it seems as if Hamlet is about to murder the Queen and cries out for help. Hamlet, believing it is Claudius hiding behind the [arras](#), stabs wildly through the cloth, killing Polonius. When he realises that he has killed Ophelia's father, he is not remorseful, but calls Polonius "Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool."^[12] The Ghost appears, urging Hamlet to treat Gertrude gently, but reminding him to kill Claudius. Unable to see or hear the Ghost herself, Gertrude takes Hamlet's conversation with it as further evidence of madness.

Claudius, now fearing for his life, finds a legitimate excuse to get rid of the prince: he sends Hamlet to England on a diplomatic pretext, accompanied (and closely watched) by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Alone, Claudius discloses that he is actually sending Hamlet to his death. Prior to embarking for England, Hamlet hides Polonius's body, ultimately revealing its location to the King. Upon leaving Elsinore, Hamlet encounters the army of Prince Fortinbras en route to do battle in Poland. Upon witnessing so many men going to their death on the brash whim of an impulsive prince, Hamlet declares, "O, from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!"^[13]

At Elsinore, further demented by grief at her father Polonius's death, Ophelia wanders the castle, acting erratically and singing [bawdy](#) songs. Her brother, Laertes, returns from France, horrified by his father's death and his sister's madness. She appears briefly to give out herbs and flowers.

Claudius convinces Laertes that Hamlet is solely responsible; then news arrives that Hamlet is still alive—a story is spread that his ship was attacked by [pirates](#) on the way to England, and he has returned to Denmark. Claudius swiftly concocts a plot to kill his nephew but make it appear to be an accident, taking all of the blame off his shoulders. Knowing of Hamlet's jealousy of Laertes' prowess with a sword, he proposes a [fencing](#) match between the two. Laertes, enraged at the murder of his father, informs the king that he will further poison the tip of his sword so that a mere scratch would mean certain death. Claudius, unsure that capable Hamlet could receive even a scratch, plans to offer Hamlet poisoned wine if that fails. Gertrude enters to report that Ophelia has drowned.

In the Elsinore churchyard, two "[clowns](#)", typically represented as "gravediggers," enter to prepare Ophelia's grave, and, although the coroner has ruled her death accidental so that she may receive Christian burial, they argue about its being a case of suicide. Hamlet arrives with Horatio and banter with one of them, who unearths the skull of a [jester](#) whom Hamlet once knew, [Yorick](#) ("Alas, Poor Yorick; I knew him, Horatio."). Ophelia's funeral procession approaches, led by her mournful brother Laertes. Distraught at the lack of ceremony (due to the actually-deemed suicide) and overcome by emotion, Laertes leaps into the grave, cursing Hamlet as the cause of her death. Hamlet interrupts, professing his own love and grief for Ophelia. He and Laertes grapple, but the fight is broken up by Claudius and Gertrude. Claudius reminds Laertes of the planned fencing match.

Later that day, Hamlet tells Horatio how he escaped death on his journey, disclosing that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been sent to their deaths instead. A courtier, [Osric](#), interrupts to invite Hamlet to fence with Laertes. Despite Horatio's warnings, Hamlet accepts and the match begins. After several rounds, Gertrude toasts Hamlet—against the urgent warning of Claudius—accidentally drinking the wine he poisoned. Between bouts, Laertes attacks and pierces Hamlet with his poisoned blade; in the ensuing scuffle, Hamlet is able to use Laertes's own poisoned sword against him. Gertrude falls and, in her dying breath, announces that she has been poisoned.

In his dying moments, Laertes is reconciled with Hamlet and reveals Claudius's murderous plot. Hamlet stabs Claudius with the poisoned sword, and then forces him to drink from his own poisoned cup to make sure he dies. In his final moments, Hamlet names [Prince Fortinbras of Norway](#) as the probable heir to the throne, since the Danish kingship is an elected position, with the country's nobles having the final say. Horatio attempts to kill himself with the same poisoned wine but is stopped by Hamlet, as he will be the only one left alive who can give a full account of the story.

When Fortinbras arrives to greet King Claudius, he encounters the deadly scene: Gertrude, Claudius, Laertes, and Hamlet are all dead. Horatio asks to be allowed to recount the tale to "the yet unknowing world," and Fortinbras orders Hamlet's body borne off in honour.

Handmaid's Tale (The)—by Margaret Atwood.

The Handmaid's Tale is set in the near future in the [Republic of Gilead](#), a country formed within the borders of what was formerly the United States of America. It was founded by a racist, male chauvinist, [nativist](#), theocratic-organized military coup as an ideologically driven response to the pervasive ecological, physical and social degradation of the country.

Beginning with a staged [terrorist](#) attack (blamed on Islamic extremist terrorists) that kills the President and most of [Congress](#), a movement calling itself the "Sons of Jacob" launched a revolution and suspended the [United States Constitution](#) under the pretext of restoring order.

Taking advantage of [electronic banking](#), they were quickly able to freeze the assets of all women and other "undesirables" in the country, stripping them of their rights. The new theocratic [military](#)

[dictatorship](#), styled "The Republic of Gilead", moved quickly to consolidate its power and reorganize society along a new militarized, hierarchical, compulsorily Christian regime of Old Testament-inspired social and religious orthodoxy among its newly created social classes. ^{[[citation needed](#)]}

The story is presented from the point of view of a woman called Offred (a [patronymic](#) name that means "Of Fred", referring to the man she serves). The character is one of a class of individuals kept as concubines ("handmaids") for reproductive purposes by the ruling class in an era of declining births. The book is told in the first person by Offred, who describes her life during her third assignment as a handmaid, in this case to Fred (referred to as "The Commander"). Interspersed in flashbacks are portions her life from the beginnings of the revolution, when she finds she has lost all autonomy to her husband, through her failed attempt to escape with her husband and daughter to Canada, to her indoctrination into life as a handmaid. Through her eyes, the structure of Gilead's society is described, including the several different categories of women and their circumscribed lives in the new theocracy.

The Commander, a high ranking official in Gilead, participates in a sexual ritual (known as "The Ceremony") once a month with his wife and Offred (who lies upon the wife) in an attempt to conceive. During Offred's assignment at the Commander's house, he begins an illegal and ambiguous relationship with her, exposing Offred to many hidden or contraband aspects of the new society, such as fashion magazines and [cosmetics](#). He takes her to a secret [brothel](#) run by the government, and he furtively meets with her in his study, where he allows her the contraband activity of reading. The Commander's wife strikes a deal with Offred—she arranges for Offred to secretly have sex with her driver Nick in an effort to get her pregnant. The Commander's wife believes the Commander to be sterile, a subversive belief as official Gilead policy is that only women can be sterile. In exchange for Offred's cooperation, the Commander's wife gives her news of her daughter, whom Offred has not seen since she and her family were captured trying to escape Gilead.

After Offred's initial meeting with Nick, they begin to rendezvous more frequently. Offred find herself enjoying sex with Nick despite her indoctrination, and even goes as far as to divulge potentially dangerous information about her past. Through another handmaid, Ofglen, Offred learns of the Mayday resistance, an underground network with the intent of overthrowing Gilead. Shortly after Ofglen's disappearance (later discovered to be a suicide), the Commander's wife finds evidence of the relationship between Offred and the Commander, and Offred contemplates suicide. As the novel concludes, she is being taken away by men from the [secret police](#), known as the Eyes, in a large black van under orders from Nick. Before she is taken away, Nick tells her that the men are part of the Mayday resistance and that Offred must trust him. Offred does not know if Nick is truly a member of the Mayday resistance or if he is a government agent posing as one, and she does not know if going with the men will result in her escape or her capture. She enters the van with a final thought on her uncertain future.

The novel concludes with a metafictional [epilogue](#) that explains that the events of the novel occurred shortly after the beginning of what is called "the Gilead Period." The epilogue itself is a "transcription of a Symposium on Gileadean Studies written some time in the distant future (2195)", and according to the symposium's "keynote speaker" Professor Pieixoto, he and "a colleague", Professor Knotly Wade, discovered Offred's narrative recorded onto thirty cassette tapes. They created a "probable order" for these tapes and transcribed them, calling them collectively "the handmaid's tale". ^{[[5](#)][[6](#)][[7](#)][[8](#)]} The epilogue implies that, following the collapse of the theocratic Republic of Gilead, a more equal society re-emerged with a return of the legal rights of women and also Native Americans. It's further suggested that freedom of religion was also re-established.

Hard Times—by Charles Dickens.

[Mr. Gradgrind](#), whose voice is "dictatorial", opens the novel by stating "Now, what I want is facts" at his school in Coketown. He is a man of "facts and calculations." He interrogates one of his pupils, Sissy, whose father is involved with the circus, the members of which are "Fancy" in comparison to Gradgrind's espousal of "Fact." Since her father rides and tends to horses, Gradgrind offers Sissy the definition of horse. She is rebuffed for not being able to define a horse factually; her classmate Bitzer does, however, provide a more zoological profile description and factual definition. She does not learn easily, and is censured for suggesting that she would carpet a floor with pictures of flowers "So you would carpet your room—or your husband's room, if you were a grown woman, and had a husband—with representations of flowers, would you? Why would you?" She is taught to disregard Fancy altogether. It is Fancy Vs Fact.

Louisa and Thomas, two of Mr. Gradgrind's children, pay a visit after school to the touring circus run by Mr. Sleary, only to find their father, who is disconcerted by their trip since he believes the circus to be the bastion of Fancy and conceit. With their father, Louisa and Tom trudge off in a despondent mood. Mr. Gradgrind has three younger children: Adam Smith, (after [the famous theorist](#) of laissez-faire policy), Malthus (after Rev. [Thomas Malthus](#), who wrote *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, warning of the dangers of future overpopulation) and Jane.

Josiah Bounderby, "a man perfectly devoid of sentiment", is revealed as being Gradgrind's boss. Bounderby is a manufacturer and mill owner who is affluent as a result of his [enterprise](#) and [capital](#). Bounderby is what one might call a "self-made man" who has risen from the gutter. He is not averse to giving dramatic summaries of his childhood, which terrify Mr. Gradgrind's wife who is often rendered insensate by these horrific stories. He is described in an acerbic manner as being "the Bully of Humility."

Mr. Gradgrind and Bounderby visit the public-house where Sissy resides to inform her that she cannot attend the school any more due to the risk of her ideas propagating in the class. Sissy meets the two collaborators, informing them her father has abandoned her not out of malice, but out of desire for Sissy to lead a better life without him. This was the reasoning behind him enlisting her at Gradgrind's school and Gradgrind is outraged at this desertion. At this point members of the circus appear, fronted by their manager and Sissy's father, Mr. Sleary. Mr. Gradgrind gives Sissy a choice: either to return to the circus and forfeit her education, or to continue her education and never to return to the circus. Sleary and Gradgrind both have their say on the matter, and at the behest of Josephine Sleary she decides to leave the circus and bid all the close friends she had formed farewell, hoping she may one day be re-united with her father.

Back at the Gradgrind house, Tom and Louisa sit down and discuss their feelings, however repressed they seem to be. Tom, already at this present stage of education finds himself in a state of dissatisfaction, and Louisa also expresses her discontent at her childhood while staring into the fire. Louisa's ability to wonder, however, has not been entirely extinguished by her rigorous education based in Fact.

We are introduced to the workers at the mills, known as the "Hands." Amongst them is a man named Stephen Blackpool or "Old Stephen" who has led a toilsome life. He is described as a "man of perfect integrity." He has ended his day's work, and his close companion Rachael is about somewhere. He eventually meets up with her, and they walk home discussing their day. On entering his house he finds that his drunken wretch of a wife, who has been in exile from Coketown, has made an unwelcome return to his house. She is unwell, and mumbles inebriated remarks to Stephen, who is greatly perturbed by this event.

The next day, Stephen makes a visit to Bounderby to try and end his woeful, childless marriage through divorce. Mrs. Sparsit, Mr. Bounderby's paid companion, is "dejected by the impiety" of Stephen and Bounderby explains that he could not afford to effect an annulment anyway. Stephen is very bewildered and dejected by this verdict given by Bounderby.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gradgrind prepares to talk to his daughter about a "business proposal", but she is seemingly apathetic in his company, and this seems to frustrate Mr. Gradgrind's efforts. He says that a proposal of marriage has been made to Louisa by Josiah Bounderby, who is some 30 years her senior. Gradgrind uses statistics to prove that an age inequity in marriage does not prove an unhappy or short marriage however. Louisa passively accepts this offer. Bounderby is rendered ecstatic by the news, as is Louisa's mother, who again is so overwhelmed that she is overcome yet again. Sissy is confounded by, but piteous of, Louisa.

Bounderby and Louisa get married, and they set out to their honeymoon in "Lyon"; so Bounderby can observe the progress of his 'Hands' (labourers who work in his factories there). Tom, her brother, bumps into her before they leave. They hug each other, Tom bidding her farewell and promising to look for her after they come back from their honeymoon.

Book Two opens with the attention focused on Bounderby's new bank in Coketown, of which Bitzer alongside the austere Mrs. Sparsit keep watch at night for intruders or burglars. A dashing gentleman enters, asking for directions to Bounderby's house, as Gradgrind has sent him from London, along with a letter. It is James Harthouse, a languid fellow, who became an MP out of boredom.

Harthouse is introduced to Bounderby, who regales him with improbable stories of his childhood. Harthouse is utterly bored by the blustering millowner, yet is astounded by his wife, Louisa, and notices her melancholy nature. Louisa's brother Tom works for Bounderby, and he has become reckless and wayward in his conduct, despite his meticulous education. Tom decides to take a liking to James Harthouse, on the basis of his clothes, showing his superficiality. Tom is later debased to animal status, as he comes to be referred to as the "whelp", a denunciatory term for a young man. Tom is very forthcoming in his contempt for Bounderby in the presence of Harthouse, who soaks up all these secretive revelations.

Stephen is called to Bounderby's mansion, where he informs him of his abstention from joining the union led by the orator Slackbridge, and Bounderby accuses Stephen of fealty and of pledging an oath of secrecy to the union. Stephen denies this, and states that he avoided the Union because of a promise he'd made earlier to Rachael. Bounderby is bedevilled by this conflict of interest and accuses Stephen of being waspish. He dismisses him on the spot, on the basis that he has betrayed both employer and union. Later on a bank theft takes place at the Bounderby bank, and Stephen Blackpool is inculpated in the crime, due to him loitering around the bank at Tom's promise of better times to come, the night before the robbery.

Sparsit observes that the relationship between James Harthouse and Louisa is moving towards a near tryst. She sees Louisa as moving down her "staircase", metaphorically speaking. She sets off from the bank to spy upon them, and catches them at what seems to be a propitious moment. However, despite Harthouse confessing his love to Louisa, Louisa is restrained, and refuses an affair. Sparsit is infatuated with the idea that the two do not know they are being observed. Harthouse departs as does Louisa, and Mrs. Sparsit tries to stay in pursuit, thinking that Louisa is going to assent to the affair, though Louisa has not. She follows Louisa to the railway station assuming that Louisa has hired a coachman to dispatch her to Coketown. Sparsit however, misses the fact that Louisa has instead boarded a train to her father's house. Sparsit relinquishes defeat and proclaims "I have lost her!" When Louisa arrives at her father's house, she is revealed to be in an extreme state of disconsolate grief. She accuses her father of denying her the opportunity to have an innocent childhood, and that her rigorous education has stifled her ability to express her emotions. Louisa collapses at her father's feet, into an insensible torpor.

Mrs. Sparsit arrives at Mr. Bounderby's house, and reveals to him the news her surveillance has brought. Mr. Bounderby, who is rendered irate by this news, journeys to Stone Lodge, where Louisa is resting. Mr. Gradgrind tries to disperse calm upon the scene, and reveals that Louisa resisted the temptation of adultery. Bounderby is inconsolable and he is immensely indignant and

ill-mannered towards everyone present, including Mrs. Sparsit, for her falsehood. Bounderby finishes by offering the ultimatum to Louisa of returning to him, by 12 o'clock the next morning, else the marriage is forfeited. Suffice it to say, Mr. Bounderby resumes his bachelorhood when the request is not met.

The discomfited Harthouse leaves Coketown, on an admonition from Sissy Jupe, never to return. He submits. Meanwhile, Mr. Gradgrind and Louisa cast suspicions that Tom, the "whelp", may have committed the bank robbery. Stephen Blackpool who has been absent from Coketown, trying to find mill work under a pseudonym, tries to exculpate himself from the robbery. On walking back to Coketown, he falls down the Old Hell Shaft, an old pit, completing his terminal bad luck in life. He is rescued by villagers, but after speaking to Rachael for the last time, he dies.

Louisa suspects that Tom had a word with Stephen, making a false offer to him, and therefore urging him to loiter outside of the bank. Mr. Gradgrind and Sissy concur with this theory and resolve to find Tom, since he is in danger. Sissy makes a plan for rescue and escape, however, and she reveals that she suspected Tom early on during the proceedings. She sends Tom off to the circus that she used to be a part of, namely Mr. Sleary's. Louisa and Sissy travel to the circus; Tom is there, disguised in [blackface](#). Remorselessly, Tom says that he had little money, and that robbery was the only solution to his dilemma. Mr. Sleary is not aware of this and agrees to help him reach Liverpool, and Mr. Gradgrind, prays that his son is able to board a ship that will send him to the faraway Americas. The party is stopped, however, by Bitzer, who is anxious to claim his reward for the misdemeanour. The "excellent young man" is entreated to show compassion and is questioned as to whether he has a heart, to which Bitzer cynically responds that of course he has a heart, and that the "[circulation](#) could not be carried on without one." Sleary is dismayed by this revelation, and agrees to take Bitzer and Tom to the bank without any further delays. However, he sees that Mr. Gradgrind has been kind to Sissy, and agrees to detain and divert Bitzer whilst Tom leaves for [Liverpool](#).

Returning to Coketown, Mrs. Sparsit is relieved of her duty to Bounderby who has no qualms about firing a lady, however "highly connected" she may be. The final chapter of the book details the fates of the characters. Mrs. Sparsit returns to live with her aunt, Lady Scadgers. The two have feelings of acrimony towards each other. Bounderby dies of a fit in a street one day. Tom dies in the Americas, having begged for penitence in a half-written letter to his sister, Louisa. Louisa herself grows old and never remarries. Mr. Gradgrind abandons his Utilitarian stance, which brings contempt from his fellow MPs, who give him a hard time. Rachael continues to labour while still consistently maintaining her work ethic and honesty. Sissy is the moral victor of the story, as her children have also escaped the desiccative education of the Gradgrind school and grown learned in "childish lore."

Heart of Darkness—by Joseph Conrad.

The story opens with an unnamed narrator on board a sailing yacht anchored in the [Thames Estuary](#) downstream from London and near Gravesend. He is with four friends, and dusk is falling as they wait for some hours for the turning of the tide. The narrator briefly describes the others, all of whom seem to be middle-aged men. One is called Marlow – the only one who "still followed the sea." Marlow makes a comment about London having been "one of the dark places on earth", and then begins a story of how he once took a job as captain of a river steamboat in Africa.

Marlow begins by ruminating on how Britain's obscure image among Ancient Roman officials must have been similar to Africa's image among 19th-century European officials. He describes how his "dear aunt" used many of her contacts to secure the job for him, calling him an "emissary of light."

When he arrives in Africa at the job, the other white men he encounters, the company agents, he dislikes as they strike him as shallow and untrustworthy – one is like "papier-mache". The company's main business seems to be buying ivory from the natives with beads, cloth and bits of brass. They speak often of one of the company's agents named Kurtz, stationed further up-river, who has quite a reputation in many (and somewhat mysterious) ways. Kurtz seems to be a rogue ivory collector, "essentially a great musician", journalist, skilled painter and "universal genius".

Marlow arrives up river at the Central Trading Station run by a manager who is an unwholesome conspiratorial character. He finds that his steamship has been sunk and suspects the manager of causing the "accident," and spends three months repairing it, including a frustrating wait for spare parts. His first assignment is a voyage up-river to Kurtz's station to collect ivory and Kurtz himself. There is a rumour regarding Kurtz being ill; this makes the delays in repairing the ship all the more costly. During the delay, Marlow overhears the manager talking about his fearful dislike of Kurtz, who appears to be a threat to the manager's powerful position, and how he wishes to execute a particular one of Kurtz's minions. Eventually Marlow, the manager and three other white agents set out with a crew of blacks from a cannibal tribe on a long and difficult voyage up the river.

As they near Kurtz's station they find an unexpected hut by the river with stacked firewood together with a note saying that the wood is for them but that they should approach cautiously. Shortly after the steamer has taken on the firewood it is surrounded by a dense fog. When the fog clears, the ship is attacked by an unseen band of natives, who shoot arrows from the safety of the forest, killing one of the crew. When they later reach Kurtz's station, which is surrounded by a collection of natives' severed head on poles, they are first met by a guileless Russian traveler, sometimes referred to as the [harlequin](#) because of his [motley](#)-like clothing. The Russian assures them that everything is fine and informs them that he is the one who had lived in the downstream hut and who had left the firewood. The Russian, a lone and aimless trader in the wilderness, came across Kurtz's station unexpectedly and has become a "disciple" of Kurtz, who seems to have the power to dominate anyone he meets. Marlow and his companions find that Kurtz has persuaded the natives to treat him as a god, and has led brutal raids in the surrounding territory in search of ivory. Marlow also recounts the brief appearance at the station of an awe-inspiring and enigmatic African woman, who may be Kurtz's mistress. The Russian, learning through Marlow of the manager's prior talk of punishing him, quietly flees the station, though not before admitting that it was Kurtz, refusing to be taken away from his god-like place in the wilderness, who ordered Marlow's boat to be attacked.

Due to Kurtz's ailing condition, however, Marlow and his crew take him aboard their ship themselves and depart. Kurtz is lodged in Marlow's pilot-house and Marlow begins to see that Kurtz is every bit as [grandiose](#) as previously described, especially with regards to the enthralling tone of his speech. However, Marlow finds himself disappointed with Kurtz's childish schemes for fame and fortune. During this time, Kurtz gives Marlow a collection of papers and a photograph for safekeeping, as both had witnessed the Manager going through Kurtz's belongings. The photograph is of a beautiful young woman whom Marlow correctly assumes is Kurtz's fiancée, or as Marlow calls her, "his Intended."

One night Marlow happens upon Kurtz, obviously near death. As Marlow comes closer with a candle, Kurtz seems to experience a "supreme moment of complete knowledge" and speaks his last words: "The horror! The horror!" Marlow believes this to be Kurtz's reflection on the events of his life. Marlow does not tell the others immediately of Kurtz's death; the news is instead presented to the whole crew scornfully by the manager's child-servant who has peered inquisitively into the room with Kurtz's body.

Marlow later returns to Europe and is confronted by many people seeking things and ideas of Kurtz. Marlow visits Kurtz's fiancée about a year later; she is still [in mourning](#) and strongly maintains naïve notions of his virtue. When she asks him about Kurtz's death and his final words,

Marlow is unable to tell her the truth, instead telling her that his last words were "your name," and not "the horror! the horror!"

The story concludes back on the boat on the Thames, with a description of how the river seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.

Heart of the Matter (The)—by Graham Greene.

Major Henry Scobie, a long-serving policeman in a British colonial colony on the West Coast of Africa during World War II, is responsible for local and wartime security. His wife Louise, an unhappy, solitary woman who loves literature and poetry, cannot make friends. Scobie feels responsible for her misery, but does not love her. Their only child, Catherine, died in England several years before. Louise is a devout Catholic. Scobie is a convert and devout. Scobie is passed over for promotion to Commissioner, which upsets Louise both for her personal ambition and her hope that the local British community will begin to accept her. Louise asks Scobie if she can go and live in South Africa to escape the life she hates.

At the same time, a new inspector, named Wilson, arrives in the town. He is priggish and socially inept, and hides his passion for poetry for fear of ostracism from his colleagues. He and Louise strike up a friendship, which Wilson mistakes for love. Wilson rooms with another colleague named Harris, who has created a sport for himself of killing the cockroaches that appear in the apartment each night. He invites Wilson to join him, but in the first match, they end up quarreling over the rules of engagement.

One of Scobie's duties is to lead the inspections of local passenger ships, particularly looking for smuggled diamonds, a needle-in-a-haystack problem that never yields results. A Portuguese ship, the *Esperança* (the Portuguese word for "hope"), comes into port, and a disgruntled steward reveals the location of a letter hidden in the captain's quarters. Scobie finds it, and because it is addressed to someone in Germany, he must confiscate it in case it should contain secret codes or other clandestine information. The captain says it's a letter to his daughter and begs Scobie to forget the incident, offering him a bribe of one hundred pounds when he learns that they share a faith. Scobie declines the bribe and takes the letter, but having opened and read it through (thus breaking the rules) and finding it innocuous, he decides not to submit it to the authorities, and burns it.

Scobie is called to a small inland town to deal with the suicide of the local inspector, a man named Pemberton, who was in his early twenties and left a note implying that his suicide was due to a loan he couldn't repay. Scobie suspects the involvement of the local agent of a [Syrian](#) man named Yusef, a local black marketeer. Yusef denies it, but warns Scobie that the British have sent a new inspector specifically to look for diamonds; Scobie claims this is a hoax and that he doesn't know of any such man. Scobie later dreams that he is in Pemberton's situation, even writing a similar note, but when he awakens, he tells himself that he could never commit suicide, as no cause is worth the eternal damnation that suicide would bring.

Scobie tries to secure a loan from the bank to pay the two hundred pound fee for Louise's passage, but is turned down. Yusef offers to lend Scobie the money at four percent per annum. Scobie initially declines, but after an incident where he mistakenly thinks Louise is contemplating suicide, he accepts the loan and sends Louise to South Africa. Wilson meets them at the pier and tries to interfere with their parting.

Shortly afterwards, the survivors of a [shipwreck](#) begin to arrive after forty days at sea in lifeboats. One young girl dies as Scobie tries to comfort her by pretending to be her father, who was killed in the wreck. A nineteen-year-old woman named Helen Rolt also arrives in bad shape, clutching an album of postage stamps. She was married before the ship left its original port and is now a

widow, and her wedding ring is too big for her finger. Scobie feels drawn to her, as much to the cherished album of stamps as to her physical presence, even though she is not beautiful. She reminds him of his daughter.

He soon starts a passionate affair with her, all the time being aware that he is committing a grave sin of adultery. A letter he writes to Helen ends up in Yusef's hands, and the Syrian uses it to blackmail Scobie into sending a package of diamonds for him via the returning *Esperança*, thus avoiding the authorities.

When Louise unexpectedly returns, Scobie struggles to keep her ignorant of his love affair. But he is unable to renounce Helen, even in the [confessional](#), so the priest tells him to think it over again and postpones [absolution](#). Still, in order to please his wife, Scobie goes to [Mass](#) with her and thus receives [communion](#) in state of [mortal sin](#)—one of the gravest sins for a Catholic to commit.

Shortly after he witnesses Yusef's boy delivering a 'gift' to Scobie, Scobie's servant Ali is killed by teenage thieves known as "wharf rats." Scobie had begun to doubt Ali's loyalty, and he hinted this distrust to Yusef. We are led to believe that Yusef arranged the death of Ali, although Scobie blames himself for the matter. In the body of his dead servant, Scobie sees the image of God.

Now desperate, he decides to free everyone from himself—even God—so he commits suicide, being aware that this will result in [damnation](#) according to the teaching of the Church. For the sake of his life insurance he feigns symptoms of [angina](#) thus receiving a terminal prognosis from his doctor in an attempt to have his death appear natural. Instead, his efforts prove useless in the end. Louise had been not as naive as he had believed, the affair with Helen and the suicide are found out, and his wife is left behind wondering about the mercy and forgiveness of God and Helen almost immediately moves on to an affair with another man.

Hedda Gabler—by Henrik Ibsen.

Hedda Gabler, daughter of an aristocratic general, has just returned to her villa in [Kristiania](#) (now [Oslo](#)) from her [honeymoon](#). Her husband is Jørgen Tesman, an aspiring, young, reliable (but not brilliant) academic who has combined research with their honeymoon. It becomes clear in the course of the play that she has never loved him but has married him for reasons pertaining to the boring nature of her life, and it is suggested that she may be pregnant.

The reappearance of Tesman's academic rival, Ejlert Løvborg, throws their lives into disarray. Løvborg, a writer, is also a recovered [alcoholic](#) who has wasted his talent until now. Thanks to a relationship with Hedda's old schoolmate Thea Elvsted (who has left her husband for him), Løvborg shows signs of rehabilitation and has just completed a bestseller in the same field as Tesman.

The critical success of his recently published work transforms Løvborg into a threat to Tesman, as Løvborg becomes a competitor for the university professorship Tesman had been counting on. Tesman and Hedda are financially overstretched, and Tesman tells Hedda that he will not be able to finance the regular entertaining or luxurious housekeeping that Hedda had been expecting. Upon meeting Løvborg, however, the couple discover that he has no intention of competing for the professorship, but rather has spent the last few years labouring with Mrs. Elvsted over what he considers to be his masterpiece, the "sequel" to his recently published work.

Apparently jealous of Mrs. Elvsted's influence over Løvborg, Hedda hopes to come between them. She provokes Løvborg to get drunk and go to a party. Tesman returns home from the party and reveals that he found the [manuscript](#) of Løvborg's great work, which the latter has lost while drunk. When Hedda next sees Løvborg, he confesses to her, despairingly, that he has lost the manuscript. Instead of telling him that the manuscript has been found, Hedda encourages him to

commit [suicide](#), giving him a [pistol](#). She then burns the manuscript and tells Tesman she has destroyed it to secure their future.

When the news comes that Løvborg has indeed killed himself, Tesman and Mrs. Elvsted are determined to try to reconstruct his book from what they already know. Hedda is shocked to discover from the sinister Judge Brack (a friend of Tesman's), that Løvborg's death, in a brothel, was messy and probably accidental (this "ridiculous and vile" death contrasts with the "beautiful and free" one that Hedda had imagined for him). Worse, Brack knows the origins of the pistol. This means that he has power over her, which he will use to insinuate himself into the household; there is a strong implication that he will force Hedda into a sexual affair. Leaving the others, she goes into her smaller room and shoots herself in the head.

Henry IV, Part I—by William Shakespeare.

Henry Bolingbroke – now [King Henry IV](#) – is having an unquiet reign. His personal disquiet at the means whereby he gained the crown – by [deposing Richard II](#) – would be solved by a journey or [crusade](#) to the [Holy Land](#) to fight Muslims, but broils on his borders with [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) prevent that. Moreover, his guilt causes him to mistreat the Earls Northumberland and Worcester, heads of the Percy family, and Edmund Mortimer, the [Earl of March](#). The first two helped him to his throne, and the third claims to have been proclaimed by Richard, the former king, as his rightful [heir](#).

Adding to King Henry's troubles is the behaviour of his son and heir, the [Prince of Wales](#). Hal (the future [Henry V](#)) has forsaken the Royal Court to waste his time in [taverns](#) with low companions. This makes him an object of scorn to the nobles and calls into question his royal worthiness. Hal's chief friend and foil in living the low life is [Sir John Falstaff](#). Fat, old, drunk, and corrupt as he is, he has a [charisma](#) and a zest for life that captivates the Prince, born into a world of hypocritical pieties and mortal seriousness.

The play has three groups of characters that interact slightly at first, and then come together in the [Battle of Shrewsbury](#), where the success of the rebellion will be decided. First there is King Henry himself and his immediate council. He is the engine of the play, but usually in the background. Next there is the group of rebels, energetically embodied in Harry Percy – [Hotspur](#) – and including his father (Northumberland) and led by his uncle [Thomas Percy](#) (Worcester). The Scottish Earl of Douglas, Edmund Mortimer and the Welshman [Owen Glendower](#) also join. Finally, at the center of the play are the young Prince Hal and his companions Falstaff, Poins, Bardolph, and Peto. Streetwise and pound-foolish, these rogues manage to paint over this grim history in the colours of comedy.

As the play opens, the king is angry with Hotspur for refusing him most of the prisoners taken in a recent action against the Scots at Holmedon (see the [Battle of Humbleton Hill](#)). Hotspur, for his part, would have the king ransom Edmund Mortimer (his wife's brother) from Owen Glendower, the Welshman who holds him. Henry refuses, berates Mortimer's loyalty, and treats the Percys with threats and rudeness. Stung and alarmed by Henry's dangerous and peremptory way with them, they proceed to make common cause with the Welsh and Scots, intending to depose "this ingrate and cankered Bolingbroke."^[7] By Act II, rebellion is brewing.

As Henry Bolingbroke is mishandling the affairs of state, his son Hal is joking, drinking, and whoring with Falstaff and his associates. He likes Falstaff but makes no pretense at being like him. He enjoys insulting his dissolute friend and makes sport of him by joining in Poins's plot to disguise themselves and rob and terrify Falstaff and three friends of loot they glean from a highway robbery, purely for the fun of watching Falstaff lie about it later, after which Hal returns the stolen money. Rather early in the play, in fact, Hal informs us that his riotous time will soon come to a close, and he will reassume his rightful high place in affairs by showing himself worthy

to his father and others through some (unspecified) noble exploits. Hal believes that this sudden change of manner will amount to a greater reward and acknowledgment of prince-ship, and in turn "earn" him respect from the members of the court.

The revolt of Mortimer and the Percys very quickly gives him his chance to do just that. The high and the low come together when the Prince makes up with his father and is given a high command. He orders Falstaff (who is, after all, a [knight](#)) to procure a group of footsoldiers and proceed to the battle site at Shrewsbury. The easy life is over for now.

Shrewsbury (see [Battle of Shrewsbury](#)) is crucial. If the rebels even achieve a standoff their cause gains greatly, as they have other powers awaiting under Northumberland, Glendower, Mortimer, and the Bishop of York. Henry needs a decisive victory here. He outnumbers the rebels,^[8] but Hotspur, with the wild hope of despair, leads his troops into battle. The day wears on, the issue still in doubt, the king harried by the wild Scot Douglas, when Prince Hal and Hotspur, the two Harrys that cannot share one land, meet. Finally they will fight – for glory, for their lives, and for the kingdom. No longer a tavern brawler but a warrior, the future king prevails, ultimately killing Hotspur in single combat.

On the way to this climax, we are treated to Falstaff, who has "misused the King's press damnably",^[9] not only by taking money from able-bodied men who wished to evade service but by keeping the wages of the poor souls he brought instead who were killed in battle ("food for powder, food for powder").^[10] Now on his own Falstaff is attacked by the Douglas during Hal's battle with Hotspur, but plays possum and is presumed dead. After Hal leaves Hotspur's body on the field, Falstaff revives in a mock miracle. Seeing he is alone, he stabs Hotspur's corpse in the thigh and claims credit for the kill.^[11] Though incredulous of this report, Hal allows Sir John his disreputable tricks.^[12]

The play ends at Shrewsbury, after the battle. The death of Hotspur has taken the heart out of the rebels,^[13] and the king's forces prevail. Henry is pleased with the outcome, not least because it gives him a chance to execute Thomas Percy, the Earl of Worcester, one of his chief enemies (though previously one of his greatest friends). Meanwhile Hal shows off his kingly mercy in praise of valor; having taken the valiant Douglas prisoner, Hal orders his enemy released without ransom.^[14] But the war goes on: now the king's forces must deal with the Archbishop of York, who has joined with Northumberland, and with the forces of Mortimer and Glendower. This unsettled ending sets the stage for [Henry IV, Part 2](#).

Henry IV, Part II—by William Shakespeare.

The play picks up where *Henry IV, Part One* left off. Its focus is on [Prince Hal](#)'s journey toward kingship, and his ultimate rejection of [Falstaff](#). However, unlike *Part One*, Hal and Falstaff's stories are almost entirely separate, as the two characters meet only twice and very briefly. The tone of much of the play is [elegiac](#), focusing on Falstaff's age and his closeness to death.

Falstaff is still drinking and engaging in petty criminality in the London underworld. Falstaff appears, followed by a new character, a young page whom Prince Hal has assigned him as a joke. Falstaff enquires what the doctor has said about the analysis of his [urine](#), and the page cryptically informs him that the urine is healthier than the patient. Falstaff promises to outfit the page in "vile apparel" (ragged clothing). They go off, Falstaff vowing to find a wife "in the stews" (i.e., the local brothels).

He has a relationship with Doll Tearsheet, a prostitute. When news of a second rebellion arrives, Falstaff joins the army again, and goes to the country to raise forces. There he encounters Mouldy, Bullcalf, Feeble, Shadow and Wart, a band of rustic yokels who are to be conscripted into the

loyalist army, with two of whom, Mouldy and Bullcalf, bribing their way out. He also meets with an old school-chum, Master Shallow, and they reminisce about their youthful follies.

In the other storyline, Hal remains an acquaintance of London lowlife and seems unsuited to kingship. His father, [King Henry IV](#), has apparently forgotten his reconciliation with his son in *Henry IV, Part One*, and is again disappointed in the young prince. Another rebellion is launched against Henry IV, but this time it is defeated, not by a battle, but by the duplicitous political machinations of Hal's brother, Prince John. King Henry then sickens and appears to die. Hal, seeing this, believes he is King and exits with the crown. King Henry, awakening, is devastated, thinking Hal cares only about becoming King. Hal convinces him otherwise and the old king subsequently dies contentedly.

The two storylines meet in the final scene, in which Falstaff, having learned that Hal is now King, travels to London in expectation of great rewards. But Hal rejects him, saying that he has now changed, and can no longer associate with such people. The London lowlives, expecting a "paradise of thieves" under Hal's governance, are instead purged and imprisoned by the authorities.

At the end of the play, an [epilogue](#) thanks the audience and promises that the story will continue in a forthcoming play "with Sir John in it". In fact, the subsequent play, [Henry V](#), does not feature Falstaff except for a brief mention of his death.

Henry V—by William Shakespeare.

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High Wind in Jamaica (A)—by Richard Hughes.

The Bas-Thornton children (John, Emily, Edward, Rachel, and Laura) are raised on a [plantation](#) in [Jamaica](#) at an unspecified time after the emancipation of slaves in Britain (1837). It is a time of technological transformation, and sailing ships and steamers coexist on the high seas. A hurricane destroys their home, and the parents decide the children must leave the island to return to their original home in England. Accompanied by two [creole](#) children from Jamaica, Margaret and Harry Fernandez, they leave on the *Clorinda*, a merchant ship under the command of Captain Marpole. The *Clorinda* is seized by [pirates](#) shortly after leaving Jamaica.

The pirates first pretend they need to seize the ship's cargo and will refund the price of the goods taken, but when the lie becomes obvious, they menace Captain Marpole by threatening to shoot the children if he does not disclose where the *Clorinda's* safe is kept. The ship is ransacked, and the children are brought aboard the pirate [schooner](#) for dinner. Captain Marpole, thinking under cover of darkness that the children have been murdered, flees the scene unknowingly abandoning the children to the pirates. Marpole writes a letter to Mr and Mrs Thornton informing them that their children have been murdered by the pirates.

The children quickly become part of life aboard the pirate ship and treat it as their new home. They are treated with some indifference, though a few crew members – José the cook and Otto the [chief mate](#) – care for them and become fond of them, and Captain Jonsen, the pirate captain himself, becomes very fond of Emily.

The pirates stop at their home base of Santa Lucia to sell the seized goods. Captain Jonsen tries unsuccessfully to convince a rich woman to take care of the children. During the night, José takes John, Edward, and Margaret ashore, and John accidentally falls to his death. He is immediately forgotten by his own siblings. The pirate captain seems to be the last one to forget him.

While drunk, Captain Jonsen approaches Emily. She bites his hand before harm can be physically done, but the girl is tormented by the look in the pirate's eye as he reached for her. From this point, Margaret, the eldest of all the children, seems to be distressed and particularly afraid of the pirates. The author gives no explicit details about the reason, just a veiled description from Emily's point of view. Emily is later injured on her leg in an accident caused by Rachel and is confined on the captain's cabin.

Having made no further captures, the pirates quickly take the first ship they finally see, a Dutch vessel transporting some wild animals. The captain of this ship is tied up and left in the cabin with Emily. Everyone else on the pirate ship boards the Dutch vessel to watch a fight between a lion and a tiger. The Dutch captain does all he can to get Emily to free him but is unable to communicate with her. Finally, seeing a knife, he rolls towards it. Emily, injured and terrified, screams, but no one is near her to hear. She pounces at the last second and stabs the captain multiple times. He soon dies. Margaret, oldest of the children, witnesses this event. When the crew returns to the ship, the pirates mistake Margaret for the murderer and without ceremony throw her overboard, only for her to be rescued by other pirates heading back to the ship.

From that point on, the crew grows tired and scared of the children. Jonsen arranges for them to transfer to a passing steamer. Disguised as a British merchant vessel, the captain claims that some

pirates abandoned the children on the Cuban shore and that he then picked them up to bring them to England. Before sending them on board the steamer, Otto instructs Emily not to disclose the truth about what has happened to them in the past months. He chooses Emily rather than Margaret, as the latter seems to have lost her sanity.

Once aboard the steamer, the children are delighted with the boat's luxury and the loving treatment by the passengers, who knew already of the story of the children told by Captain Marpole.

Despite her fondness for Captain Jonsen and the fact that she promised not to tell about what really happened, Emily quickly tells the truth to a stewardess. The pirate ship is pursued and seized by British authorities.

Back in London, the children are reintegrated into their families. They seem completely unaffected by their traumatic experiences aboard the ship, apart from Margaret who has lost her sanity. Emily is only half aware herself of the crime she has committed. The younger children have distorted and contradictory memories of the facts, and after unsuccessfully attempting to extract any information from them, the family solicitor decides that only Emily should testify at the trial against the pirate crew and only to repeat a statement written by him.

Under the pressure of the courtroom, she abandons her carefully memorized statement and cries out that the Dutch captain died before her very eyes. Her testimony is taken as evidence that the pirates committed the murder and they are subsequently executed.

On the way home from the trial, the narrator seems to imply that Emily tells the truth about the Dutch captain's murder to her father.

The book ends with Emily playing with her schoolmates. She is so similar to them that "only God" could tell them apart.

Home to Harlem—by Claude McKay.

In 1928, McKay published his most famous novel, *Home to Harlem*, which won the Harmon Gold Award for Literature. The novel, which depicted street life in Harlem, would have a major impact on black intellectuals in the [Caribbean](#), [West Africa](#), and [Europe](#).^[5]

McKay's novel gained a substantial readership, especially with people who wanted to know more about the intense, and sometimes shocking, details of [Harlem](#) nightlife. His novel was an attempt to capture the energetic and intense spirit of the "uprooted black [vagabonds](#)." *Home to Harlem* was a work in which McKay looked among the common people for a distinctive black identity.

Despite this, the book drew fire from one of McKay's heroes, [W. E. B. Du Bois](#). To Du Bois, the novel's frank depictions of sexuality and the nightlife in Harlem only appealed to the "prurient demand[s]" of white readers and publishers looking for portrayals of black "licentiousness." As Du Bois said, "*Home to Harlem* ... for the most part nauseates me, and after the dirtier parts of its filth I feel distinctly like taking a bath."^[5] Modern critics now dismiss this criticism from Du Bois, who was more concerned with using art as [propaganda](#) in the struggle for [African American](#) political liberation than in the value of art to showcase the truth about the lives of black people.

Homecoming (The)—by Harold Pinter.

After having lived in the [United States](#) for several years, Teddy brings his wife, Ruth, home for the first time to meet his working-class family in North London, where he grew up and which she finds more familiar than their arid academic life in America.

Much sexual tension occurs as Ruth teases Teddy's brothers and father and the men taunt one another in an [Oedipal](#) game of oneupmanship, resulting in Ruth's staying behind with Teddy's relatives as "one of the family" and Teddy returning home to America and their three sons without her.¹¹

The play begins in the midst of what becomes an ongoing power struggle between the two more dominant men, the father, Max, and his middle son, Lenny, obvious from their initial exchange: "What have you done with the scissors? ... Why don't you shut up, you daft prat?" (23). Max and the other men put down one another, expressing their "feelings of resentment," with Max feminizing his brother Sam, while, ironically, himself claiming to have "given birth to three grown men! All on my own bat": "What have you done? [*Pause.*] What have you done, you tit?" (55–56). Lenny and Max spar over who knows more about "the horses", particularly the "fillies"; Max claims that he does—"And he talks to me about horses" (25–26); Max's "dog cooking"; and his liking "tucking up his sons" (33). Max mocks Sam's inability to find his own "bride" (31–32), suggesting, abusively, that his brother is a homosexual: "it's funny you never got married, isn't it? A man with all your gifts.[...] A man like you" (30); "What you been doing, banging away at your lady customers, have you?" (30); "You leave it to others? What others? You paralysed prat! [...] What other people?" (31); "you bitch" (32); "You tit" (56); "Anyone could have you at the same time. You'd bend over for half a dollar on Blackfriar's Bridge" (64). He responds to his sons' complaints about his cooking with: "Go find yourself a mother" (32).

Teddy arrives ("in the middle of the night" [51]) with his wife, Ruth, whom he eventually discloses that he has married, in London, before leaving London for America, where they lived and had three sons together for the six years prior to his returning to the family home to introduce her (Teddy's "homecoming"). Ruth's and Teddy's discomfort with each other, marked by her restless desire to go out exploring after he goes to bed and followed by her sexually suggestive first-time encounter with her brother-in-law Lenny, begins to expose that there are severe problems in the marriage.

Whereas Ruth appeared both listless and restless around Teddy prior to his going up to bed without her, she appears energized by the encounter with Lenny (35–51) and even seems to relish gaining the upper hand over him, taunting him with a "name" his "mother" used ("Leonard" [49]) and then appearing to make him "some kind of proposal" over a clash over a "glass of water": "If you take the glass . . . I'll take you" (50), she threatens. Suggestively "draining the glass" of water, she goes upstairs to bed.

Max, awakened by the voices, comes down (51). Though he has the opportunity to do so, Lenny fails to reveal Teddy's and Ruth's arrival at the house and that they are staying in his old bedroom upstairs and instead engages in more vituperation with Max, as they bait each other, with Lenny asking about his conception, "that night" that his parents went "at it" and Max (in the past a butcher) threatening "You'll drown in your own blood" (52) and spitting at him (53). There is a "blackout", but "*Lights UP*" leads to "*Morning*", Max's coming down to make breakfast for the clan and discovering, when Teddy and Ruth appear the next morning—later than they expected, because they "overslept"—that they've been there all night without his knowledge: "I'm a laughing stock. How did you get in? [...] [referring to Ruth] Who asked you to bring dirty tarts into this house?" (57). It takes a bit of explaining, and there is some physical violence between Max and Joey, but finally he understands that Ruth and Teddy have married and that she is his daughter in law, and he offers Teddy a "cuddle," which Teddy tries to accept ("I'm ready for the cuddle") as Max exclaims, "He still loves his father!" (60), and Act One ends.

This act begins (61) with the men's ritual of sharing the lighting of cigars (choreographed in Hall's stage productions and film), ending with Teddy's cigar going out, prematurely and symbolically (Lahr, *Casebook* 47–48). That is followed by Max's sentimental series of reminiscences of family life with Jessie and the "boys" and his experiences as a butcher with what he describes first as "a top-class group of butchers with continental connections" and then reveals that "They turned out to

be a bunch of criminals like everyone else"; with that sour acknowledgment, he also decides "This is a lousy cigar" and "*stubs it out*" (62–63).

After Teddy's marriage to Ruth finally receives Max's "blessing" (64–65), Ruth lets her guard down, relaxes, and reveals some facts about her previous life (before she met Teddy and "had all" her "children")—the turning point of the drama (66, 69–70), leading Teddy abruptly to suggest their returning home to America immediately (70). Apparently, he knows something about her past history about which the audience (and his brothers) are just getting an inkling. That life begins to emerge and to become further recognizable to the other men, as soon as brother Lenny initiates dancing with her; he turns her over to brother Joey (said to have a good touch with the ladies), who realizes, "Christ, she's wide open" and that "Old Lenny's got a tart in here" and begins to make out with her on the sofa, stopping to declare Ruth "Just up my street" and "better than a rubdown" (74–76). As Joey "*looks up*" from his first embrace with Ruth to Teddy and Max (husband and father), Max "*looks at the [suit]cases*" that Teddy has just brought down, in preparation for their premature and (Teddy seems to expect) imminent departure, slinging an initial barb: "You going. Teddy? Already?"

He continues, with [irony](#):

next time you come over, don't forget to let us know beforehand whether you're married or not. I'll always be glad to meet the wife. Honest. I'm telling you. Listen, you think I don't know why you didn't tell me you were married? I know why. You were ashamed. You thought I'd be annoyed because you married a woman behead you. You should have known me better. I'm broadminded. I'm a broadminded man. (75)

Then he "*peers to see RUTH's face under JOEY, turns back to TEDDY*" to say:

Mind you, she's a lovely girl. A beautiful woman. And a mother too. A mother of three. You've made a happy woman out of her. It's something to be proud of. I mean, we're talking about a woman of quality. We're talking about a woman of feeling. (75–76)

With comic timing, just at that very point, punctuating the irony of this assessment, "*JOEY and RUTH roll off the sofa on to the floor*" (76).

Ruth takes command of the men, barks her demands for "something to eat" and "drink" (which they attempt to fulfill), though she questions what they know about "rocks"—literally referring to drinks "on the rocks" with obvious [phallic symbolic](#) implications doubting their "manhood" (Lahr, *Casebook* 47–48)—as Lenny tries to assure her that their "rocks" are "frozen stiff in the fridge" (77).

Ruth goes upstairs for what they say later turns out to be a "two hour" sexual interlude in bed with Joey, without going "the whole hog" (82); Lenny, the "expert" in such sexual matters, according to the family, labels her a "tease" (82); Joey insists that "sometimes" a man can be "satisfied" without "going any hog," suggesting that Ruth is good at this "game" too.

While Ruth is still upstairs, getting dressed but perhaps not getting ready for their trip back to America (contrary to Teddy's apparently residual expectations), Lenny and the others reminisce about Lenny's and Joey's sexual exploits, riffing on the theme of going "the whole hog," mocking Joey's "bird" requesting "contraception" and his doing whatever he wants without her consent.

By that time most of the "family" members (and the audience) have recognized Ruth to be unhappy in their marriage—except perhaps Teddy, who keeps insisting that she simply needs to "rest" but does, nevertheless, appear willing to leave her there, and Sam:

She goes on to negotiate a "workable" business "employment" arrangement ("contract") for herself: "All aspects of the agreement and conditions of employment would have to be clarified to our mutual satisfaction before we finalized the contract," she tells them (92–93), ignoring Max's and Lenny's subsequent reminder that she would have to do some cooking and cleaning (94), and, as Teddy has already put it, "pull your weight a little" because "my father is not financially well off" (91). Ruth expresses, apparently sympathetically, how "sorry" she is to hear that.

Whatever its initial motivations, *Ruth* chooses to take "the family's" invitation seriously and to accept it, either actually or as a temporarily convenient way to leave Teddy.

Ruth appears to have the power as the men appear to be meeting her demands, with Max, who by then has apparently realized that she may have gotten the upper hand in their negotiation (91–94), fearing that she might "do the dirty" on them after accepting the family's "invitation" to "stay on" under her "conditions" (95–96).

The final [tableau vivant](#) (96–98) depicts Ruth sitting, "*relaxed in her chair*," as if on a throne,^[2] with Sam lying "*still*" on the floor, Joey, who has walked "*slowly*" across the stage over to her, placing his "*head in her lap*," and Lenny, who "*stands still*," looking on. After repeatedly insisting "I'm not such an old man," worrying that Ruth might not "understand" "What . . . what . . . what . . . we're getting at? What . . . we've got in mind?", and repeating "I'm not an old man," getting no reply from Ruth, who remains silent, Max beseeches her, "Kiss me"—the final words of the play—as Ruth just sits and "*continues to touch JOEY's head, lightly*" (maternally, as it were), while Lenny still "*stands, watching*" (98). In this "resolution" of the play (its [dénouement](#)), what might happen later remains unresolved. Such lack of plot resolution and other [ambiguities](#) characterize most of Pinter's dramas (Merritt, *Pinter in Play* 1–4, 66–86, and throughout).

House for Mr. Biswas (A)—by V.S. Naipaul.

Mohun Biswas (Mr Biswas) is born in rural [Trinidad](#) to parents of Indian origin. His birth is considered inauspicious as he is born "in the wrong way" and with an extra finger. A [pundit](#) prophesies that the newly born Mr Biswas "will be a lecher and a spendthrift. Possibly a liar as well", and that he will "eat up his mother and father." The pundit further advises that the boy be kept "away from trees and water. Particularly water". A few years later, Mohun leads a neighbour's calf, which he is tending, to a stream. The boy, who has never seen water "in its natural form", becomes distracted watching the fish and allows the calf to wander off. Mohun hides in fear of punishment. His father, believing his son to be in the water, drowns in an attempt to save him, thus in part fulfilling the pundit's prophecy. This leads to the dissolution of Mr Biswas's family. His sister is sent to live with a wealthy aunt and uncle, Tara and Ajodha, while Mr Biswas, his mother, and two older brothers go to live with other relatives.

Mr Biswas is withdrawn prematurely from school and apprenticed to a pundit, but is cast out on bad terms. Ajodha then puts him in the care of his alcoholic and abusive brother Bhandat which also comes to a bad result. Finally, Mr Biswas now becoming a young man decides to set out to make his own fortune. He encounters a friend from his days of attending school who helps him get into the business of sign-writing. While on the job, Mr Biswas attempts to romance a client's daughter and his advances are misinterpreted as a wedding proposal. He is drawn into a marriage which he does not have the nerve to stop and becomes a member of the Tulsi household.

With the Tulsis, Mr Biswas becomes very unhappy with his wife Shama and her overbearing family, which bears a slight resemblance to the Capildeo family into which Naipaul's father married. He is usually at odds with the Tulsis and his struggle for economic independence from the oppressive household drives the plot. The Tulsi family (and the big decaying house they live in) represents the traditional communal world, the way life is lived, not only among the Hindu immigrants of Trinidad but throughout Africa and Asia as well. Mr Biswas is offered a place in it,

a subordinate place to be sure, but a place that's guaranteed and from which advancement is possible. But Mr Biswas rejects that. He is, without realizing it or thinking it through but through deep and indelible instinct, a modern man. He wants to BE, to exist as something in his own right, to build something he can call his own. That is something the Tulsis cannot deal with, and that is why their world—though that traditional world, like the old Tulsi house which is its synecdoche, is collapsing—conspires to drag him down.^[3] Nevertheless, despite his poor education, Mr Biswas becomes a journalist, has four children with Shama, and attempts (more than once, with varying levels of success) to build a house that he can call his own. He becomes obsessed with the notion of owning his own house and it becomes a symbol of his independence and merit.

House Made of Dawn—by N. Scott Momaday.

House Made of Dawn begins with the [protagonist](#), Abel, returning to his [reservation](#) in [New Mexico](#) after fighting in [World War II](#). The war has left him emotionally devastated and he arrives too drunk to recognize his grandfather, Francisco. Now an old man with a lame leg, Francisco had earlier been a respected hunter and participant in the village's religious ceremonies. He raised Abel after the death of Abel's mother and older brother, Vidal. Francisco instilled in Abel a sense of native traditions and values, but the war and other events severed Abel's connections to that world of spiritual and physical wholeness and connectedness to the land and its people, a world known as a "house made of dawn."

After arriving in the village, Abel attains a job through Father Olguin chopping wood for Angela St. John, a rich white woman who is visiting the area to bathe in the mineral waters. Angela seduces Abel to distract herself from her own unhappiness, but also because she senses an animal-like quality in Abel. She promises to help him leave the reservation to find better means of employment. Possibly as a result of this affair, Abel realizes that his return to the reservation has been unsuccessful. He no longer feels at home and he is confused. His turmoil becomes clearer when he is beaten in a game of horsemanship by a local [albino](#) Indian named Juan Reyes, described as "the white man." Deciding Juan is a witch, Abel stabs him to death outside of a bar. Abel is then found guilty of murder and sent to jail.

Part II takes place in [Los Angeles](#), six and a half years later. Abel has been released from prison and unites with a local group of Indians. The leader of the group, Reverend John Big Bluff Tosamah, Priest of the Sun, teases Abel as a "longhair" who is unable to assimilate to the demands of the modern world. However, Abel does become friends with an Indian named Ben Benally from a reservation in New Mexico and develops an intimate relationship with Milly, a kind, blonde [social worker](#). However, his overall situation has not improved and Abel ends up drunk on the beach with his hands, head, and upper body beaten and broken. Memories run through his mind of the reservation, the war, jail, and Milly. Abel eventually finds the strength to pick himself up and he stumbles across town to the apartment he shares with Ben.

Ben puts Abel on a train back to the reservation and narrates what has happened to Abel in Los Angeles. Life had not been easy for Abel in the city. First he was ridiculed by Reverend Tosamah during a poker game with the Indian group. Abel is too drunk to fight back. He remains drunk for the next two days and misses work. When he returns to his job, the boss harasses him and Abel quits. A downward spiral begins and Abel continues to get drunk every day, borrow money from Ben and Milly, and laze around the apartment. Fed up with Abel's behavior, Ben throws him out of the apartment. Abel then seeks revenge on Martinez, a corrupt policeman who robbed Ben one night and hit Abel across the knuckles with his [nightstick](#). Abel finds Martinez and is almost beaten to death. While Abel is in the hospital recovering, Ben calls Angela who visits him and revives his spirit, just as he helped revive her spirit years ago, by reciting a story about a bear and a maiden which incidentally matches an old Navajo myth.

Abel returns to the reservation in New Mexico to take care of his grandfather, who is dying. His grandfather tells him the stories from his youth and stresses the importance of staying connected to his people's traditions. When the time comes, Abel dresses his grandfather for burial and smears his own body with ashes. As the dawn breaks, Abel begins to run. He is participating in a ritual his grandfather told him about—the race of the dead. As he runs, Abel begins to sing for himself and Francisco. He is coming back to his people and his place in the world.

House of Mirth (The)—by Edith Wharton.

The House of Mirth tells the story of Lily Bart, a woman who is torn between her desire for luxurious living and a relationship based on mutual respect and love. She sabotages all her possible chances for a wealthy marriage, loses the good opinion of her social circle, and dies young, poor, and alone.

Lily is initially of good social standing and rejects several offers of advantageous marriage. Lily then damages that good standing by accepting an invitation to Lawrence Selden's private rooms. Lily's social standing erodes further when her friend Judy Trenor's husband Gus gives Lily a large sum of money. Lily innocently accepts the money, believing that it is the return on investments he supposedly made for her. The rumors of this transaction, and of her mysterious visit to Gus in his city residence crack her social standing.

To escape the rumors and gossip, she accepts an invitation from Bertha Dorset to join her and her husband, George, on a cruise of Europe aboard their yacht the *Sabrina*. Unfortunately, while aboard the yacht Bertha accuses Lily of adultery with George to move societal attention from Bertha's own infidelity with the poet Ned Silverton. Lily has the option of saving herself by publishing evidence of an affair between Bertha and Selden, but abstains for sake of Selden's reputation. The ensuing scandal ruins Lily, leading her Aunt Peniston to disinherit her.

Lily descends the social strata, working as a personal secretary until Bertha sabotages her position by turning her employers against her. Lily then takes a job as social secretary for a disreputable woman, but resigns after Selden comes to rescue her from complete infamy. She then works in a [millinery](#), but produces poorly and is let go at the end of the season. Simon Rosedale, the Jewish suitor who had proposed marriage to her when she was higher on the social scale tries to rescue her, but she is unwilling to meet his terms: use love letters between Bertha Dorset and Selden that have come into her possession. Eventually, she receives her \$10,000 inheritance which she uses to pay her debt to Trenors. Lily dies from an overdose of the [sleeping draught](#) to which she had become addicted.

House of the Seven Gables (The)—by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The novel is set in the mid-19th century, with glimpses into the history of the house, which was built in the late 17th century. The primary interest of this book is in the subtle and involved descriptions of character and motive.

The house of the title is a gloomy [New England](#) mansion, haunted from its foundation by fraudulent dealings, accusations of [witchcraft](#), and sudden death. The current resident, the dignified but desperately poor Hepzibah Pyncheon, opens a shop in a side room to support her brother Clifford, who is about to leave prison after serving thirty years for murder. She refuses all assistance from her unpleasant wealthy cousin Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon. A distant relative, the lively and pretty young Phoebe, turns up and quickly becomes invaluable, charming customers and rousing Clifford from depression. A delicate romance grows between Phoebe and the mysterious attic lodger Holgrave, who is writing a history of the Pyncheon family.

Phoebe takes leave of the family to return to her country home for a brief visit, but will return soon. Unfortunately, before she leaves, Clifford stands at the large arched window above the stairs and has a sudden urge to jump upon viewing the mass of humanity passing before him and his recollection of his youth lost to prison. That instance, coupled with Phoebe's departure — she was the only happy and beautiful thing in the home for the depressed Clifford to dwell on — sends Clifford into a bed-ridden state.

Judge Pyncheon arrives at the house one day, and threatens to have Clifford committed to an insane asylum if he does not disclose information regarding mystical "eastern lands" of Maine that the family is rumored to own. The deed however has been lost. Before Clifford can be brought before the Judge (which, it is implied, will completely destroy Clifford's sanity), the Judge mysteriously dies in the same chair as the historical Pyncheon who stole the land on which the house was later built from a settler named Maule. Hepzibah and Clifford escape on a train (then a very new form of transport) after the Judge dies. The townsfolk murmur about their sudden disappearance, and, upon Phoebe's return, the Judge's body is discovered. Hepzibah and Clifford return shortly, to Phoebe's relief. Events from past and present throw light on the circumstances which sent Clifford to prison, proving his innocence. Holgrave is discovered to be a descendant of Maule but bears the Pyncheon family no ill will, mostly due to his feelings for Phoebe. The romance ends with the characters leaving the old house to start a new life, free of the burdens of the past.

House on Mango Street (The)—by Sandra Cisneros.

The House on Mango Street is made up of [vignettes](#) that are not quite poems and not quite full stories. Esperanza narrates these vignettes in [first-person present tense](#), focusing on her day-to-day activities but sometimes narrating sections that are just a series of observations. The vignettes can be as short as two or three paragraphs long and sometimes contain internal [rhymes](#). In *The Family of Little Feet* for example, Esperanza says:

"Their arms were little, and their hands were little, and their height was not tall, and their feet very small"^[1] Each vignette can stand as an independent story. The vignettes don't follow a complete or chronological narrative, although they often mention characters introduced in earlier sections. The conflicts and problems in these short stories are never fully resolved, just as the futures of people in the neighborhood are often uncertain. The overall [tone](#) is earnest and intimate, with very little distance between the reader and the narrator. The tone varies from pessimistic to hopeful, as Esperanza herself sometimes expresses her jaded views on life:

"I knew then I had to have a house. A real house. The house on Mango Street isn't it. For the time being, Mama says. Temporary, says Papa. But I know how those things go."^[2]

The set of vignettes charts her life as Esperanza Cordero grows during the year, both physically and emotionally. Though Esperanza's age is never revealed to the reader, it is implied that she is about twelve. She begins to write as a way of expressing herself and as a way to escape the suffocating effect of the neighborhood. The novella also includes the stories of many of Esperanza's neighbors, giving a full picture of the neighborhood and showing the many influences surrounding her. Esperanza quickly befriends Lucy and Rachel Guerrero, two Texan girls who live across the street. Lucy, Rachel, Esperanza, and Esperanza's little sister, Nenny, have many adventures in the small space of their neighborhood.

Esperanza later slips into puberty and begins to like it when boys watch her dance. Esperanza's newfound views lead her to become friends with Sally, a girl her age who wears clothes like black nylon stockings, makeup, high heels, and short skirts, and uses boys as an escape from her abusive father. Esperanza is not completely comfortable with Sally's sexuality. Their friendship is compromised when Sally ditches Esperanza for a boy at a carnival. As a result Esperanza is

sexually assaulted by a group of men at the carnival. Earlier at her first job, an elderly man tricked her into kissing him on the lips. Esperanza's traumatic experiences and observations of the women in her neighborhood cement her desire to escape Mango Street. She later realizes that she will never fully be able to leave Mango Street behind. She vows that after she leaves she will return to help the people she has left behind.

Esperanza regards the house on Mango Street as simply a house she lives in with her family. When she was younger and constantly on the move from apartment to apartment her parents promised her a real home with a green yard, real stairs, and running water with pipes that worked. She dislikes the house on Mango Street because its sad appearance and cramped quarters are completely contrary to the idealistic home she always wanted.

While she may not recognize it, Esperanza is one of the most free female characters in the novel. Most of the other female characters spend their lives in isolation, trapped. Rosa Vargas can't do anything for herself because she has too many children and no one to help her raise the children. Alicia has found herself trapped in the kitchen, as she picks up where her deceased mother left off, cooking and cleaning for her younger siblings, although she would like nothing more than to attend the university. Minerva has an abusive husband who she is constantly fighting with and she finally kicks out but then lets him back in to her life. Rafaela is stuck inside her house because her husband believes that she is too beautiful to go out. Sally is abused by her father, and she dreams of getting married. She eventually marries an older man who does not allow her to leave the house without him, and she is not allowed to have guests over.

Iliad (The)—Homer.

After an [invocation](#) to the [Muses](#), the story launches *in medias res* towards the end of the Trojan War between the Trojans and the besieging Greeks. [Chryses](#), a Trojan priest of [Apollo](#), offers the Greeks wealth for the return of his daughter [Chryseis](#), a captive of [Agamemnon](#), the Greek leader. Although most of the Greek army is in favour of the offer, Agamemnon refuses. Chryses prays for Apollo's help, and Apollo causes a plague throughout the Greek army. After nine days of plague, [Achilles](#), the leader of the [Myrmidon](#) contingent, calls an assembly to solve the plague problem. Under pressure, Agamemnon agrees to return [Chryseis](#) to her father, but also decides to take Achilles's captive, [Briseis](#), as compensation. Angered, Achilles declares that he and his men will no longer fight for Agamemnon, but will go home. [Odysseus](#) takes a ship and brings Chryseis to her father, whereupon Apollo ends the plague. In the meantime, Agamemnon's messengers take Briseis away, and Achilles asks his mother, [Thetis](#), to ask [Zeus](#) that the Greeks be brought to the breaking point by the Trojans, so Agamemnon will realise how much the Greeks need Achilles. Thetis does so, Zeus agrees, (2) and sends a dream to Agamemnon, urging him to attack the city. Agamemnon heeds the dream but decides to first test the morale of the Greek army by telling them to go home. The plan backfires, and only the intervention of Odysseus, inspired by [Athena](#), stops the rout. Odysseus confronts and beats [Thersites](#), a common soldier who voices discontent at fighting Agamemnon's war. After a meal, the Greeks deploy in companies upon the Trojan plain. The poet takes the opportunity to describe each Greek contingent. When news of the Greek deployment reaches king [Priam](#), the Trojans too sortie upon the plain. In a similar list to that for the Greeks, the poet describes the Trojans and their allies. (3) The armies approach each other on the plain, but before they meet, [Paris](#) offers to end the war by fighting a duel with [Menelaus](#), to the advice and will of his brother and head of the Trojan army, [Hector](#). While [Helen](#) tells [Priam](#) about the Greek commanders from the walls of Troy, both sides swear a truce and promise to abide by the outcome of the duel. Paris is beaten, but [Aphrodite](#) rescues him and leads him to bed with Helen before Menelaus could kill him. (4) Pressured by [Hera](#)'s hatred of Troy, Zeus arranges for the Trojan [Pandaros](#) to break the truce by wounding Menelaus with an arrow. Agamemnon rouses the Greeks, and battle is joined. (5) In the fighting, [Diomedes](#) kills many Trojans and defeats [Aeneas](#), whom again Aphrodite rescues, but Diomedes attacks and wounds the goddess. Apollo faces Diomedes, and warns him against warring with gods. Many heroes and commanders join in,

including Hector, and the gods supporting each side try to influence the battle. Emboldened by Athena, Diomedes wounds [Ares](#) and puts him out of action.

(6) Hector rallies the Trojans and stops a rout; the Greek Diomedes and the Trojan [Glaukos](#) find common ground and exchange unequal gifts. Hector enters the city, urges prayers and sacrifices, incites Paris to battle, bids his wife [Andromache](#) and son [Astyanax](#) farewell on the city walls, and rejoins the battle. (7) Hector duels with [Ajax](#), but nightfall interrupts the fight and both sides retire. The Greeks agree to burn their dead and build a wall to protect their ships and camp, while the Trojans quarrel about returning Helen. Paris offers to return the treasure he took, and give further wealth as compensation, but without returning Helen, and the offer is refused. A day's truce is agreed for burning the dead, during which the Greeks also build their wall and trench. (8) The next morning, Zeus prohibits the gods from interfering, and fighting begins anew. The Trojans prevail and force the Greeks back to their wall while Hera and Athena are forbidden from helping. Night falls before the Trojans can assail the Greek wall. They camp in the field to attack at first light, and their watchfires light the plain like stars.

(9) Meanwhile, the Greeks are desperate. Agamemnon admits his error, and sends an embassy composed of Odysseus, Ajax, [Phoenix](#), and two heralds to offer Briseis and extensive gifts to Achilles, who has been camped next to his ships throughout, if only he would return to the fighting. Achilles and his companion [Patroclus](#) receive the embassy well, but Achilles angrily refuses Agamemnon's offer, and declares that he would only return to battle if the Trojans reach his ships and threaten them with fire. The embassy returns empty-handed. (10) Later that night, Odysseus and Diomedes venture out to the Trojan lines, kill the Trojan [Dolon](#), and wreak havoc in the camps of some [Thracian](#) allies of Troy. (11) In the morning, the fighting is fierce and Agamemnon, Diomedes, and Odysseus are all wounded. Achilles sends Patroclus from his camp to inquire about the Greek casualties, and while there Patroclus is moved to pity by a speech of [Nestor](#). (12) The Trojans assault the Greek wall on foot. Hector, ignoring an omen, leads the terrible fighting. The Greeks are overwhelmed in rout, the wall's gate is broken, and Hector charges in. (13) Many fall on both sides. The Trojan seer [Polydamas](#) urges Hector to fall back and warns him about Achilles, but is ignored. (14) Hera [seduces](#) Zeus and lures him to sleep, allowing [Poseidon](#) to help the Greeks, and the Trojans are driven back onto the plain. (15) Zeus awakes and is enraged by Poseidon's intervention. Against the mounting discontent of the Greek-supporting gods, Zeus sends Apollo to aid the Trojans, who once again breach the wall, and the battle reaches the ships.

(16) Patroclus can stand to watch no longer, and begs Achilles to be allowed to defend the ships. Achilles relents, and lends Patroclus his armor, but sends him off with a stern admonition to not pursue the Trojans, lest he take Achilles's glory. Patroclus leads the [Myrmidons](#) to battle and arrives as the Trojans set fire to the first ships. The Trojans are routed by the sudden onslaught. Patroclus, ignoring Achilles's command, pursues and reaches the gates of Troy, where Apollo himself stops him. Patroclus is set upon by Apollo and [Euphorbos](#), and is finally killed by Hector. (17) Hector takes Achilles's armor from the fallen Patroclus, but fighting develops around Patroclus' body. (18) Achilles is mad with grief when he hears of Patroclus's death, and vows to take vengeance on Hector; his mother Thetis grieves, too, knowing that Achilles is fated to die if he kills Hector. Achilles is urged to help retrieve Patroclus' body, but has no armour. Made brilliant by Athena, Achilles stands next to the Greek wall and roars in rage. The Trojans are dismayed by his appearance and the Greeks manage to bear Patroclus' body away. Again Polydamas urges Hector to withdraw into the city, again Hector refuses, and the Trojans camp in the plain at nightfall. Patroclus is mourned, and meanwhile, at Thetis' request, [Hephaistos](#) fashions a new set of armor for Achilles, among which is a magnificently wrought [shield](#). (19) In the morning, Agamemnon gives Achilles all the promised gifts, including Briseis, but he is indifferent to them. Achilles fasts while the Greeks take their meal, and straps on his new armor, and heaves his great spear. His horse [Xanthos](#) prophesies to Achilles his death. Achilles drives his chariot into battle.

(20) [Zeus](#) lifts the ban on the gods' interference, and the gods freely intervene on both sides. The onslaught of Achilles, burning with rage and grief, is terrible, and he slays many. (21) Driving the Trojans before him, Achilles cuts off half in the river [Skamandros](#) and proceeds to slaughter them and fills the river with the dead. The river, angry at the killing, confronts Achilles, but is beaten back by Hephaistos' firestorm. The gods fight among themselves. The great gates of the city are opened to receive the fleeing Trojans, and Apollo leads Achilles away from the city by pretending to be a Trojan. (22) When Apollo reveals himself to Achilles, the Trojans had retreated into the city, all except for Hector, who, having twice ignored the counsels of Polydamas, feels the shame of rout and resolves to face Achilles, in spite of the pleas of Priam and [Hecuba](#), his parents. When Achilles approaches, Hector's will fails him, and he is chased around the city by Achilles. Finally, Athena tricks him to stop running, and he turns to face his opponent. After a brief duel, Achilles stabs Hector through the neck. Before dying, Hector reminds Achilles that he is fated to die in the war as well. Achilles takes Hector's body and dishonors it. (23) The ghost of Patroclus comes to Achilles in a dream and urges the burial of his body. The Greeks hold a day of funeral games, and Achilles gives out the prizes. (24) Dismayed by Achilles's continued abuse of Hector's body, Zeus decides that it must be returned to Priam. Led by [Hermes](#), Priam takes a wagon out of Troy, across the plains, and enters the Greek camp unnoticed. He grasps Achilles by the knees and begs to have his son's body. Achilles is moved to tears, and the two lament their losses in the war. After a meal, Priam carries Hector's body back into Troy. Hector is buried, and the city mourns.

Importance of Being Earnest (The)—by Oscar Wilde.

Set in "The Present" (1895) in [London](#), the play opens with Algernon Moncrieff, an idle young gentleman, receiving his best friend, whom he knows as Ernest Worthing. Ernest has come from the country to propose to Algernon's cousin, Gwendolen. Algernon, however, refuses his consent until Ernest explains why his cigarette case bears the inscription, "From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack." "Ernest" is forced to admit to living a double life. In the country, he assumes a serious attitude for the benefit of his young ward, Cecily, and goes by the name of John (or Jack), while pretending that he must worry about a wastrel younger brother named Ernest in London. In the city, meanwhile, he assumes the identity of the libertine Ernest. Algernon confesses a similar deception: he pretends to have an invalid friend named Bunbury in the country, whom he can "visit" whenever he wishes to avoid an unwelcome social obligation. Jack, however, refuses to tell Algernon the location of his country estate.

Gwendolen and her formidable mother Lady Bracknell now call on Algernon. As Algernon distracts Lady Bracknell in another room, Jack proposes to Gwendolen. She accepts, but seems to love him very largely for his professed name of Ernest; Jack resolves to himself to be [rechristened](#) "Ernest". Lady Bracknell discovers them and interrogates Jack as a prospective suitor. Horrified that he was adopted after being discovered as a baby in a handbag at Victoria Station, she refuses him and forbids further contact. Gwendolen, however, manages covertly to swear her undying love. As Jack gives her his address in the country, Algernon surreptitiously notes it on the cuff of his sleeve; Jack's revelation of his pretty and wealthy young ward has motivated Algernon to meet her.

Act II moves to Jack's country house, the Manor House in Woolton, Hertfordshire, where Cecily is found studying with her governess, Miss Prism. Algernon arrives, pretending to be Ernest Worthing, and soon charms Cecily. Cecily has long been fascinated by Uncle Jack's hitherto absent black sheep younger brother, and is thus predisposed to fall for Algernon in his role of Ernest. So Algernon, too, plans for the rector, Dr. Chasuble, to rechristen him "Ernest".

Jack, meanwhile, has decided to put his double life behind him. He arrives in full mourning and announces Ernest's death in Paris of a severe chill, a story undermined by Algernon's presence in the guise of Ernest. Gwendolen now arrives, having run away from home. She meets Cecily in the temporary absence of the two men, and each indignantly declares that *she* is the one engaged to "Ernest". When Jack and Algernon reappear, their deceptions are exposed.

Act III moves inside to the drawing room. Lady Bracknell arrives in pursuit of her daughter and is surprised to be told that Algernon and Cecily are engaged. The size of Cecily's trust fund soon dispels her initial doubts over Cecily's suitability as a wife for her nephew. However, stalemate develops when Jack refuses his consent to the marriage of his ward to Algernon until Lady Bracknell consents to his own union with Gwendolen.

The impasse is broken by the return of Miss Prism. Lady Bracknell recognises the governess: twenty-eight years earlier, as a family nursemaid, she took a baby boy for a walk in a [perambulator](#) and never returned. Miss Prism explains that she had abstractedly put the manuscript of a novel she was writing in the perambulator, and the baby in a handbag, which she had left at Victoria Station. Jack produces the very same handbag, showing that he is the lost baby, the elder son of Lady Bracknell's late sister, and thus indeed Algernon's older brother – and suddenly eligible as a suitor for Gwendolen.

Gwendolen, however, remains firm that she can only love a man named Ernest. What is her fiancé's real first name? Lady Bracknell informs Jack that, as the first-born, he would have been named after his father, General Moncrieff. Jack examines the army lists and discovers that his father's name – and hence his own real name – was in fact Ernest. As the happy couples embrace – Jack and Gwendolen, Algernon and Cecily, and even Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prism – Lady Bracknell complains to her new-found relative: "My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality." "On the contrary, Aunt Augusta", he replies.

In the Lake of the Woods—by Tim O'Brien.

The main storyline often branches out to flashbacks of significant events in John Wade's past. John's childhood is constantly referred to as the advent of his persona, Sorcerer. As a child John was frequently abused verbally and emotionally by his alcoholic father, whom to other children seemed the perfect father. John often visited Karra's Studio of Magic, where he bought the Guillotine of Death, purchased by his father. John was devastated after his father's death and channeled his grief into magic. Wade met his future wife Kathy during their college years, becoming intimate with her despite his secretive nature. John spied on Kathy, of which she was aware, just as he was aware of her affair with a dentist. When John was deployed to Vietnam, he and Kathy conversed through letters, some of which frightened Kathy. John became deeply absorbed in his identity as Sorcerer. Charlie Company was involved in a massacre of a village, reminiscent of the real-life [My Lai massacre](#) but later, while working a desk job in records, John erased his involvement with the Company. Afterwards, John became lieutenant governor of [Minnesota](#) and later ran for the [US Senate](#), with his campaign managed by the business-oriented Tony Carbo. At one point, Kathy has an abortion, despite her great wish to have a baby, because having a child would be problematic for John's career.

After his landslide loss, John and Kathy took a vacation at a cabin in Lake of the Woods. They are continuously troubled by the revelation of John's Vietnam secrets, but pretend to be happy nevertheless. One night, John wakes up to boil a kettle of water for tea. Instead of preparing a drink, he pours the boiling water over a few household plants, reciting "Kill Jesus", which seems to please him. He remembers climbing back into bed with Kathy, but the next morning she's gone. After a day of walking around the area and discovering the boat's absence, John talks to his closest neighbors, the Rasmussens. After some time they call the sheriff and organize a search party. The authorities are suspicious of John's calm demeanor and noninvolvement in the search effort. Kathy's sister joins the effort and John begins to search for Kathy as well. After eighteen days the search party is called off and the investigation into John heats up. With a boat from Claude and supplies from the Mini-Mart, John heads north on the lake. Claude is the last person to talk to the disoriented John, over the boat's radio.

O'Brien introduces a number of theories over the course of the story. Maybe Kathy had sped over the lake too quickly, hit a rough patch of water, and had been violently tossed into the lake, where she drowned. Perhaps she had misnavigated the boat and had become hopelessly lost in the wilderness, only to run out of supplies. Or possibly John had returned to the bedroom with the boiling water and had poured it over her face, scalding her. Afterwards he would have sunk the boat and body in the lake, weighed down by a number of rocks. Or the event might have been John's last great magic trick, a disappearing act. John and Kathy would have planned her disappearance, and to have John join her later on, after the search efforts had been called off, leaving them to a new start at life. O'Brien introduces numerous pieces of evidence to support these theories, and leaves the decision up to the reader. Although the inconclusive ending irritates many readers, O'Brien tries to argue that this is the truest way to tell a story, which is reminiscent of his other book, [*The Things They Carried*](#).

In the Time of the Butterflies—by Julia Alvarez.

This is the story of the four Mirabal sisters during the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo. The sisters make a political commitment to overthrow the Trujillo regime. They are harassed, persecuted, and imprisoned, their family suffers retaliation from the Military Intelligence Service, and they are eventually awarded awards for their awesome leadership. The book presents the perspective of each, including the one surviving sister, Dede. Throughout the book the events leading up to each sisters political awakening are discussed.

s Dede Mirabal to discuss the tragic story of her sisters. Although Dede at first refuses, she eventually tells her sisters' tale. She explains how Minerva had a dream of going to a school, which was unusual for farmers' daughters. When she eventually convinced her father to allow her go, Minerva meets a girl, Sinita, who later became one of her best friends. Sinita eventually confided in Minerva the truth about Trujillo - that their "glorious" leader was a killer.

During the time Minerva was in school, other events help bring the dictator's secrets to light. One of Minerva's friends was taken by Trujillo to carry his child, and was then exiled from the Dominican Republic to escape the wrath of Trujillo's wife.

Years later, Minerva was invited to a party held by Trujillo in Santo Domingo. When he repeatedly tried to court her, she slapped him, putting her family in jeopardy. The Mirabal sisters and their husbands were participants in the June 14 political group, which operated through illegal gatherings in Patria Mirabal's house, where they discussed their plot against Trujillo. The members of the group used false names, with the Mirabal sisters all referred to as "Butterfly", followed by a number to indicate the individual sister.

As punishment for their political activities, Trujillo orders three of the sisters be killed on Puerto Plata Road, with their driver Rufino, while returning from visiting their husbands in jail. The women and driver are beaten to death and later their vehicle and bodies are dumped off a cliff in order to make their deaths look like an accident.

Inheritance of Loss—by Kiran Desai.

The story is centered on two main characters: Biju and Sai. Biju is an illegal Indian immigrant living in the United States. Sai is a girl living in [*Darjeeling*](#). Desai switches the narration between both points of view.

The novel follows the journey of Biju, an illegal immigrant in the US who is trying to make a new life; and Sai, an Anglicised Indian girl living with her grandfather in India. The novel shows the internal conflict in India between Muslim groups, and Buddhist groups, whilst showing a conflict

between past and present. There is the rejection and yet awe of the English way of life, the opportunities for money in the US, and the squalor of living in India. Many leading Indians were considered to be becoming too English and having forgotten the traditional ways of Indian life, shown through the character of the grandfather, The Judge. The major theme running throughout is one closely related to colonialism and the effects of post-colonialism: the loss of identity and the way it travels through generations as a sense of loss. Individuals within the text show snobbery at those who embody the Indian way of life and vice versa, with characters displaying an anger at the English Indians who have lost their traditions.

Jemubhai Patel in this novel and Anita Desai's Nanda Kaul in *Fire on the Mountain* have some similarities. Both of them want to lead a secluded life. They don't want to be disturbed by others. Their grandchild is the first one who disturbs their aloneness. At first, they feel the presence of their grandchild embarrassing. But, they gradually understand that there are certain similarities between them and their grandchildren. In the portrayal of Jemubhai Patel, Kiran must have been inspired by the character, Nanda Kaul of her mother.

Invisible Man—by H.G. Wells.

The book starts in the English village of [Iping, West Sussex](#), as curiosity and fear are started up in the inhabitants when a mysterious stranger arrives to stay at the local inn, The Coach and Horses. The stranger wears a long sleeved, thick coat, gloves, his face is hidden entirely by bandages, large goggles, and a wide-brimmed hat. The stranger is extremely reclusive and demands to be left alone, spending most of his time in his room working with a set of chemicals and laboratory apparatus, only venturing out at night. He quickly becomes the talk of the village as he unnerves the locals.

Meanwhile, a series of mysterious burglaries occur in the village in which the victims catch no sight of the thief. One morning when the innkeepers pass the stranger's room, they enter in curiosity when they notice the stranger's clothes are scattered all over the floor but the stranger is nowhere to be seen. The furniture seems to spring alive and the bedclothes and a chair leap into mid-air and push them out of the room. Later in the day Mrs. Hall confronts the stranger about this, and the stranger reveals that he is invisible, removing his bandages and goggles to reveal nothing beneath. As Mrs. Hall flees in horror, the police attempt to catch the stranger, but he throws off all his clothes and escapes.

The Invisible Man flees to the downs, where he frightens a tramp, Thomas Marvel, with his invisibility and forces him to become his lab assistant. Together with Marvel, he returns to the village where Marvel steals the Invisible Man's books and apparatus from the inn while the Invisible Man himself steals the doctor's and vicar's clothes. But after the theft, Marvel attempts to betray the Invisible Man to the police, and the Invisible Man chases after him, threatening to kill him.

Marvel flees to the seaside town of Burdock where he takes refuge in an inn. The Invisible Man attempts to break in through the back door but he is overheard and shot by a black-bearded American, and flees the scene badly injured. He enters a nearby house to take refuge and dress his wound. The house turns out to belong to Dr. Kemp, whom the Invisible Man recognizes, and he reveals to Kemp his true identity — Griffin, a brilliant medical student with whom Kemp studied at university.

Mr. Griffin explains to his old friend Kemp that after leaving university he was desperately poor. Determined to achieve something of scientific significance, he began to work on an experiment to make people and objects invisible, using money stolen from his own father, who committed suicide after being robbed by his son. Griffin experimented with a formula that altered the refractive index of objects, which resulted in light not bending when passing through the object,

thereby making it invisible. He performed the experiment using a cat, but when the cat's owner, Griffin's neighbor, realized the cat was missing, she made a complaint to their landlord, and Griffin wound up performing the invisibility procedure on himself to hide from them. Griffin theorizes part of the reason he can be invisible stems from the fact he is albino, mentioning that food becomes visible in his stomach and remains so until digested, with the bizarre image passing through air in the meantime.

After burning the boarding house down to cover his tracks, he felt a sense of invincibility from being invisible. However, reality soon proved that sense misguided. After struggling to survive out in the open, he stole some clothing from a dingy backstreet shop and took residence at the Coach & Horses inn to reverse the experiment. He then explains to Kemp that he now plans to begin a Reign of Terror (The First Year of the Invisible Man the First), using his invisibility to terrorize the nation with Kemp as his secret confederate.

Realizing that Griffin is clearly insane, Kemp has no plans to help him and instead alerts the police. When the police arrive, Griffin violently assaults Kemp and a policeman before escaping, and the next day he leaves a note on Kemp's doorstep announcing that Kemp will be the first man killed in the Reign of Terror. Kemp remains cool and writes a note to the Colonel, detailing a plan to use himself as bait to trap the Invisible Man, but as a maidservant attempts to deliver the note she is attacked by Griffin and the note is stolen.

Just as the police accompany the attacked maid back to the house, the Invisible Man breaks in through the back door and makes for Kemp. Keeping his head cool, Kemp bolts from the house and runs down the hill to the town below, where he alerts a [navvy](#) that the Invisible Man is approaching. The crowd in the town, witnessing the pursuit, rally around Kemp. When Kemp is pinned down by Griffin, the navvy strikes him with a spade and knocks him to the ground, and he is violently assaulted by the workers. Kemp calls for the mob to stop, but it is too late. The Invisible Man dies of the injuries he has received, and his naked battered body slowly becomes visible on the ground after he dies. Later it is revealed that Marvel has Griffin's notes, with the invisibility formula written in a mix of Russian and Greek which he cannot read, and with some pages washed out.

J.B.—by Archibald MacLeish.

The play opens in "a corner inside an enormous circus tent." Two vendors, Mr. Zuss and Nickles, begin the [play-within-a-play](#) by assuming the roles of [God](#) and [Satan](#), respectively. They watch J.B., a wealthy banker, describe his prosperity as a just reward for his faithfulness to God. Scorning, Nickles challenges Zuss that J.B. will curse God if his life is ruined. The vendors observe as J.B.'s children and property are destroyed in horrible accidents and the former millionaire takes to the streets. J.B. is visited by three Comforters (representing [History](#), [Science](#), and [Religion](#)) who offer contradicting explanations for his plight. He declines to believe any of them, instead calling out to God to show him the just cause for his punishment. When finally confronted by the circus vendors, J.B. refuses to accept Nickles' urging toward suicide to spite God or Zuss' offer of his old life in exchange for quiet obedience to religion. Instead, he takes solace in his wife Sarah and the new life they will create together.

Jane Eyre—by Charlotte Brontë.

The novel begins with a ten-year-old orphan named [Jane Eyre](#) who is living with her uncle's family, the Reeds, as her uncle's dying wish. Jane's parents died of typhus. Jane's aunt Sarah Reed does not like her and treats her like a servant. She and her three children are abusive to Jane, physically and emotionally. One day Jane gets locked in the room in which her uncle died, and panics after seeing visions of him. She is finally rescued when she is allowed to attend Lowood School for Girls.

Jane arrives at Lowood Institution, a charity school, with the accusation that she is deceitful. During an inspection, Jane accidentally breaks her slate, and Mr. Brocklehurst, the self-righteous clergyman who runs the school, brands her as a liar and shames her before the entire assembly. Jane is comforted by her friend, Helen Burns. Miss Temple, a caring teacher, facilitates Jane's self-defense and writes to Mr. Lloyd whose reply agrees with Jane's. Ultimately, Jane is publicly cleared of Mr. Brocklehurst's accusations.

The eighty pupils at Lowood are subjected to cold rooms, poor meals, and thin clothing. Many students fall ill when a [typhus](#) epidemic strikes. Jane's friend Helen dies of [consumption](#) in her arms. When Mr. Brocklehurst's neglect and dishonesty are discovered, several benefactors erect a new building and conditions at the school improve dramatically.

After eight years as a student and two years as a teacher, Jane decides to leave Lowood, like her friend and confidante Miss Temple. She advertises her services as a governess, and receives one reply. It is from Alice Fairfax, who is a keeper of Thornfield Hall. She takes the position, teaching Adele Varens, a young French girl. While Jane is walking one night to a nearby town, a horseman passes her. The horse slips on ice and throws the rider. She helps him. Later, back at the mansion she learns that this man is Edward Rochester, master of the house. He wonders whether she bewitched his horse to make him fall. Adele is his ward, who could be his daughter; she was left in Mr. Rochester's care when her alleged mother was found with a rival of Mr. Rochester, laughing at his faults. Mr. Rochester denies he is her father and disowns her. Mr. Rochester and Jane enjoy each other's company and spend many hours together, and Jane longs for him.

Odd things happen at the house, such as a strange laugh, a mysterious fire in Mr. Rochester's room, on which Jane throws water, and an attack on Rochester's house guest, Mr. Mason. Jane hears that her aunt was calling for her, after being in much grief because her son has died. She returns to Gateshead and remains there for a month caring for her dying aunt. Mrs. Reed gives Jane a letter from Jane's uncle, asking for her to live with him. Mrs. Reed admits to telling her uncle that Jane had died of fever. Soon after, Jane's aunt dies, and Jane returns to Thornfield.

After returning to Thornfield, Jane broods over Mr. Rochester's impending marriage to Blanche Ingram. But on a midsummer evening, he proclaims his love for Jane and proposes. As she prepares for her wedding, Jane's forebodings arise when a strange, savage-looking woman sneaks into her room one night and rips her wedding veil in two. As with the previous mysterious events, Mr. Rochester attributes the incident to drunkenness on the part of Grace Poole, one of his servants. During the wedding ceremony, Mr. Mason and a lawyer declare that Mr. Rochester cannot marry because he is married to Mr. Mason's sister Bertha. Mr. Rochester admits this is true, but explains that his father tricked him into the marriage for her money. Once they were united, he discovered that she was rapidly descending into madness and eventually locked her away in Thornfield, hiring Grace Poole as nurse to look after her. When Grace gets drunk, his wife escapes, and causes the strange happenings at Thornfield. Mr. Rochester asks Jane to go with him to the south of France, and live as husband and wife, even though they cannot be married. Refusing to go against her principles, and despite her love for him, Jane leaves Thornfield in the middle of the night.

Jane travels through England using the little money she had saved. She leaves her bundle of her possessions on the coach and has to sleep on the moor, trying to trade her scarf and gloves for food. Exhausted, she makes her way to the home of Diana and Mary Rivers, but is turned away by the housekeeper. She faints on the doorstep, preparing for her death. St. John Rivers, Diana and Mary's brother, saves her. After she regains her health, St. John finds her a teaching position at a nearby charity school. Jane becomes good friends with the sisters, but St. John is too reserved.

The sisters leave for governess jobs and St. John becomes closer with Jane. St. John discovers Jane's true identity, and astounds her by showing her a letter stating that her uncle John has died and left her his entire fortune of [£20,000](#) (equivalent to over £45.5 million in 2009, calculated

using the share of GDP).^[3] When Jane questions him further, St. John reveals that John is also his and his sisters' uncle. They had once hoped for a share of the inheritance, but have since resigned themselves to nothing. Jane, overjoyed by finding her family, insists on sharing the money equally with her cousins, and Diana and Mary come to Moor House to stay.

Thinking she will make a suitable missionary's wife, St. John asks Jane to marry him and go with him to India, not out of love but out of duty. Jane initially accepts going to India, but rejects the marriage proposal. Jane's resolve begins to weaken when she mysteriously hears Mr. Rochester's voice calling her name. Jane returns to Thornfield to find only blackened ruins. She learns that Mr. Rochester's wife set the house on fire and committed suicide by jumping from the roof. In his rescue attempts, Mr. Rochester lost a hand and his eyesight. Jane reunites with him, but he fears that she will be repulsed by his condition. When Jane assures him of her love and tells him that she will never leave him, Mr. Rochester again proposes and they are married. He eventually recovers enough sight to see their first-born son.

Jasmine—by Bharati Mukherjee.

The main backdrop of *Jasmine*, which was based on an earlier short story in *The Middleman and Other Stories*, is the mixing of the East and West through the story telling of a seventeen-year-old Hindu woman who leaves India for the U.S. after her husband's murder. Her husband dies due to a religious attack in India. In her path she faces many problems including rape and eventually returned to the position of a health professional through a series of jobs. Here in this context the unity between the First and Third world is shown to be in the treatment of women as subordinate in both countries. The story expanded as a story of a young widow suddenly widowed at seventeen. She uproots herself from her life in India and re-roots herself in search of a new life and the image of America as well. It is a story of dislocation and relocation as the protagonist continually sheds lives to move into other roles, moving further westward. The author in some parts of this novel shows some agony to the third world as she shows that Jasmine needs to travel to America to make something significant in her life. And in the third world she faced only despair and loss.

Joe Turner's Come and gone—by August Wilson.

The audience is introduced to Seth Holly's boardinghouse, where Seth and his wife Bertha are in the kitchen watching Bynum in the backyard. Seth is complaining to Bertha about Bynum's strange spiritual activities. Bertha tells Seth to let him be as he isn't bothering anyone. They also talk about Jeremy, a young man staying in the boardinghouse, getting arrested the night before for supposedly being drunk in public. Seth then has a monologue about the poor situation that the freed slaves are in after traveling up North. He worries that the African-Americans are too naïve and that all the promises of jobs in the North will be taken by the poor white Americans. Then Rutherford Selig, the People Finder, comes to order dustpans from Seth, a maker of pots and pans. Then Bynum talks about an adventure that he once took up river where he found the "shiny man", a man he found on the road that offered to explain to him the Secret of Life. He had a spiritual encounter with the man, and sees the ghost of his father, telling him to find his song in life. His song, he later explains, is the Binding Song, which he uses to bind people to one another. Selig leaves and Jeremy enters, and after getting a scolding from Seth, he tells him that the white cops came and picked him up for no reason and that he was, in fact, not drunk at all. Then Herald Loomis and his daughter Zonia enter, looking for a place to stay for the week. They reveal that he is looking for his wife, Martha. After Seth shows them to their room, Jeremy relates a story about his guitar-playing abilities and how he is wary of playing for white men or money because of a bad experience. Bynum convinces Jeremy to go down to a bar to play for some money. Seth confides in the Bynum and Bertha his lack of confidence in Loomis, and thinks that he is a "mean looking" man and he doesn't want to help him find his wife because of it. After this Mattie Campbell enters, looking for Bynum because she has heard that he can "fix things". Her man, Jack

has up and left her, but she wants him to come back. Bynum tells her that he can only bind people that wish to be bound; that she is better off just letting him find his own path in life. Jeremy intervenes and suggests that Mattie stays with him as to cure both of their loneliness. The scene ends with Zonia and Reuben, the little boy from next door. Reuben discloses Bynum's odd tendencies to Zonia and tells her a story about his friend Eugene that used to sell pigeons to Bynum so he could use their blood in his rituals.

It is a week later and the audience again finds Seth and Bertha eating breakfast in the kitchen. Seth is still worried about Loomis's intentions and doesn't like the look of the man. He suspects that he knows who Loomis's wife is but won't tell him because he is worried about what he will do once he finds her. Selig returns to the house to pick up the dustpans that Seth has made for him and Loomis pays him to try to find his wife because Bynum tells him that Selig is the People Finder.

It is the next day and yet again we find Seth and Bertha in the kitchen. Seth is upset because he can't find anyone to front him the money to make a new factory for making pots and pans. Then Bynum and Jeremy talk about the importance of being in love with a woman and how being with a woman is all a man needs in life. Then the last boarder enters, Molly Cunningham. She is also looking for a place to stay because she missed her train to Cincinnati. Jeremy takes a liking to Molly's appearance.

Again they are in the kitchen of the boarding house when the scene opens. The group has just finished eating breakfast when Seth suggests they "juba"- an African style call and response song and dance. Loomis enters and demands that they stop the singing. He goes into an episode where he talks in tongues and falls to the floor. He starts recalling a religious hallucination and Bynum has to calm him down and take him upstairs.

Seth informs Loomis that he has to leave the boardinghouse because he thinks that Loomis was drunk when he had his episode. Seth tells him that he runs a respectable house and won't put up with any shenanigans. Loomis and Zonia have until the next Saturday to leave the house. Bynum, Molly and Mattie are left in the kitchen where they talk about how children often follow in their parents' footsteps. Molly asserts that she will never follow her father's path and that she will always be a strong, independent woman. Mattie leaves for Doc Goldblum's, where she cleans and irons for work. Jeremy returns to the house from work and reveals to Seth that he would not give a white foreman 50 cents to keep his job so he was fired. Seth thinks it was an idiotic choice because now he is out of a job and no longer makes \$8 a week. Molly tells Jeremy that he could easily get his job back by simply returning to work. Jeremy then asks Molly to travel around with him because he needs a woman that is independent and knows what she wants. Molly agrees but refuses to return to the South.

Bynum and Seth are playing a game of dominoes and Bynum is singing a song about Joe Turner. Loomis asks Bynum to stop because he is uncomfortable with the song. Bynum reveals that he knew all along that Loomis was taken away by Joe Turner and that he needs to find his song in order to start his life again. Loomis relates his story to Bynum and Seth, telling them that he was taken by Joe Turner's men while trying to preach to some gambling African-Americans. He spent seven years on Turner's chain gang and only survived by the thought of his wife and daughter. He tells them that after seven years he returned home to find that his wife had left and his daughter was living with her grandmother. The scene ends with Loomis being skeptical of Bynum and his voodoo abilities.

The scene opens with Bertha reassuring Mattie that she will find everything that she wants and needs in life and that she just has to be patient. The scene ends with Loomis telling Mattie that he noticed her watching him and that he finds her attractive. He goes to touch her, however, but feels awkward and says "I done forgot how to touch".

It is the next morning and Zonia and Reuben are in the yard. Reuben tells Zonia that he has seen the ghost of Seth's mother earlier that morning and she made him keep his promise to Eugene and release the pigeons. They marvel at the idea that people could come back to life in the form of spirits. Reuben then asks Zonia if he can kiss her on the lips and she agrees. They decide that later in life they will find each other to get married.

In the final scene Loomis and Zonia leave the boardinghouse as it is Saturday. Bertha tells Mattie that all she needs in life is love and laughing- which they all start to do. Then Martha Pentecost [Loomis] enters with Selig looking for Loomis and Zonia. Loomis reenters with Zonia and he recounts the last decade of his life; his search for her and the heartache it has caused him. Martha tells him that she has moved on with her life because she couldn't wait for him any longer. Martha also reveals that she had Bynum put a binding spell on her and Zonia and that is why they have come to find each other. Loomis goes into a rage and pulls out a knife. He denounces his Christian background and slashes his chest. The stage directions read "Having found his song, the song of self-sufficiency, fully resurrected, cleansed and given breath, free from any encumbrance other than the workings of his own heart and the bonds of the flesh, having accepted the responsibility for his own presence in the world, he is free to soar above the environs that weighed and pushed his spirit into terrifying contractions." He leaves and the play ends with Bynum yelling "Herald Loomis, you shining! You shining like new money!"

Joseph Andrews—by Henry Fielding.

The novel begins with the affable, intrusive [narrator](#) outlining the nature of our hero. Joseph Andrews is the brother of Richardson's Pamela and is of the same rustic parentage and patchy ancestry. At the age of ten years he found himself tending to animals as an apprentice to Sir Thomas Booby. It was in proving his worth as a horseman that he first caught the eye of Sir Thomas's wife, Lady Booby, who employed him (now seventeen) as her footman.

After the death of Sir Thomas, Joseph finds that his Lady's affections have redoubled as she offers herself to him in her chamber while on a trip to London. In a scene analogous to many of Pamela's refusals of Mr B in Richardson's novel, however, Lady Booby finds that Joseph's [Christian](#) commitment to [chastity](#) before marriage is unwavering. After suffering the Lady's fury, Joseph dispatches a letter to his sister very much typical of Pamela's anguished missives in her own novel. The Lady calls him once again to her chamber and makes one last withering attempt at seduction before dismissing him from both his job and his lodgings.

With Joseph setting out from London by moonlight, the narrator introduces the reader to the heroine of the novel, Fanny Goodwill. A poor illiterate girl of 'extraordinary beauty' (I, xi) now living with a [farmer](#) close to Lady Booby's [parish](#), she and Joseph had grown ever closer since their childhood, before their local [parson](#) and [mentor](#), [Abraham Adams](#), recommended that they postpone marriage until they have the means to live comfortably.

On his way to see Fanny, Joseph is [mugged](#) and laid up in a nearby [inn](#) where, by dint of circumstance, he is reconciled with Adams, who is on his way to [London](#) to sell three volumes of his [sermons](#). The thief, too, is found and brought to the inn (only to escape later that night), and Joseph is reunited with his possessions. Adams and Joseph catch up with each other, and the parson, in spite of his own poverty, offers his last [9s 3½d](#) to Joseph's disposal.

Joseph and Adams' stay in the inn is capped by one of the many burlesque, [slapstick](#) digressions in the novel. Betty, the inn's 21-year-old [chambermaid](#), had taken a liking to Joseph since he arrived; a liking doomed to inevitable disappointment by Joseph's constancy to Fanny. The [landlord](#), Mr Tow-ouse, had always admired Betty and saw this disappointment as an opportunity to take advantage. Locked in an embrace, they are discovered by the choleric Mrs Tow-ouse, who chases the maid through the house before Adams is forced to restrain her. With

the landlord promising not to transgress again, his lady allows him to make his peace at the cost of 'quietly and contentedly bearing to be reminded of his transgressions, as a kind of penance, once or twice a day, during the residue of his life' (I, xviii).

During his stay in the inn, Adams' hopes for his sermons were mocked in a discussion with a travelling [bookseller](#) and another parson. Nevertheless, Adams remains resolved to continue his journey to London until it is revealed that his wife, deciding that he would be more in need of shirts than sermons on his journey, has neglected to pack them. The pair thus decide to return to the parson's parish: Joseph in search of Fanny, and Adams in search of his sermons.

With Joseph following on horseback, Adams finds himself sharing a [stagecoach](#) with an anonymous lady and Madam Slipslop, an admirer of Joseph's and a servant of Lady Booby. When they pass the house of a teenage girl named Leonora, the anonymous lady is reminded of a story and begins one of the novel's three interpolated tales, 'The History of Leonora, or the Unfortunate Jilt'. The story of Leonora continues for a number of chapters, punctuated by the questions and interruptions of the other passengers.

After stopping at an inn, Adams relinquishes his seat to Joseph and, forgetting his horse, embarks ahead on foot. Finding himself some time ahead of his friend, Adams rests by the side of the road where he becomes so engaged in conversation with a fellow traveller that he misses the stagecoach as it passes. As the night falls and Adams and the stranger discourse on [courage](#) and [duty](#), a shriek is heard. The stranger, having seconds earlier lauded the virtues of [bravery](#) and [chivalry](#), makes his excuses and flees the scene without turning back. Adams, however, rushes to the girl's aid and after a [mock-epic](#) struggle knocks her attacker unconscious. In spite of Adams' good intentions, he and the girl, who reveals herself to be none other than Fanny Goodwill (in search of Joseph after hearing of his mugging), find themselves accused of [assault](#) and [robbery](#).

After some comic litigious wrangling before the local magistrate, the pair are eventually released and depart shortly after midnight in search of Joseph. They do not have to walk far before a [storm](#) forces them into the same inn that Joseph and Slipslop have chosen for the night. Slipslop, her jealousy ignited by seeing the two lovers reunited, departs angrily. When Adams, Joseph and Fanny come to leave the following morning, they find their departure delayed by an inability to settle the bill, and, with Adams' solicitations of a [loan](#) from the local parson and his wealthy parishioners failing, it falls on a local [peddler](#) to rescue the trio by loaning them his last 6s 6d.

The solicitations of [charity](#) that Adams is forced to make, and the complications which surround their stay in the parish, bring him into contact with many local [squires](#), [gentlemen](#) and parsons, and much of the latter portion of Book II is occupied with the discussions of literature, [religion](#), philosophy and [trade](#) which result.

The three depart the inn by night, and it is not long before Fanny needs to rest. With the party silent, they overhear approaching voices agree on 'the [murder](#) of any one they meet' (III, ii) and flee to a local house. Inviting them in, the owner, Mr Wilson, informs them that the gang of supposed murderers were in fact sheep-stealers, intent more on the killing of [livestock](#) than of Adams and his friends. The party being settled, Wilson begins the novel's most lengthy interpolated tale by recounting his life story; a story which bears a notable resemblance to Fielding's own young adulthood.

At the age of 16, Wilson's father died and left him a modest fortune. Finding himself the master of his own destiny, he left school and travelled to London where he soon acquainted himself with the dress, manners and reputation for womanising necessary to consider himself a '[beau](#)'. Wilson's life in the town is a façade: he writes love-letters to himself, obtains his fine clothes on credit and is concerned more with being seen at the [theatre](#) than with watching the [play](#). After two bad experiences with women, he is financially crippled and, much like Fielding himself, falls into the

company of a group of [Deists](#), [freethinkers](#) and [gamblers](#). Finding himself in [debt](#), he turns to the writing of plays and [hack journalism](#) to alleviate his financial burden (again, much like the author himself). He spends his last few pence on a [lottery](#) ticket but, with no reliable income, is soon forced to exchange it for food. While in jail for his debts, news reaches him that the ticket he gave away has won a £3,000 prize. His disappointment is short-lived, however, as the daughter of the winner hears of his plight, pays off his debts, and, after a brief courtship, agrees to become his wife.

Wilson had found himself at the mercy of many of the social ills that Fielding had written about in his journalism: the over-saturated and abused literary market, the exploitative state lottery, and regressive laws which sanctioned [imprisonment](#) for small debts. Having seen the corrupting influence of wealth and the town, he retires with his new wife to the rural solitude in which Adams, Fanny and Joseph now find them. The only break in his contentment, and one which will turn out to be significant to the plot, was the [kidnapping](#) of his eldest son, whom he has not seen since.

Wilson promises to visit Adams when he passes through his parish, and after another mock-epic battle on the road, this time with a party of [hunting dogs](#), the trio proceed to the house of a local squire, where Fielding illustrates another contemporary social ill by having Adams subjected to a humiliating [roasting](#). Enraged, the three depart to the nearest inn to find that, while at the squire's house, they had been robbed of their last [half-guinea](#). To compound their misery, the squire has Adams and Joseph accused of kidnapping Fanny, in order to have them detained while he orders the abduction of the girl himself. She is rescued in transit, however, by Lady Booby's steward, Peter Pounce, and all four of them complete the remainder of the journey to Booby Hall together.

On seeing Joseph arrive back in the parish, a jealous Lady Booby meanders through emotions as diverse as rage, pity, hatred, pride and love. The next morning Joseph and Fanny's [banns are published](#) and the Lady turns her anger onto Parson Adams, who is accommodating Fanny at his house. Finding herself powerless either to stop the marriage or to expel them from the parish, she enlists the help of Lawyer Scout, who brings a spurious charge of [larceny](#) against Joseph and Fanny in order to prevent, or at least postpone, the wedding.

Three days later, the Lady's plans are foiled by the visit of her nephew, Mr Booby, and a surprise guest: Booby has married Pamela, granting Joseph a powerful new ally and brother-in-law. What is more, Booby is an acquaintance of the [justice](#) presiding over Joseph and Fanny's trial, and instead of [Bridewell](#), has them committed to his own custody. Knowing of his sister's antipathy to the two lovers, Booby offers to reunite Joseph with his sister and take him and Fanny into his own parish and his own family.

In a discourse with Joseph on [stoicism](#) and [fatalism](#), Adams instructs his friend to submit to the [will of God](#) and control his passions, even in the face of overwhelming tragedy. In the kind of cruel [juxtaposition](#) usually reserved for Fielding's less savoury characters, Adams is informed that his youngest son, Jacky, has drowned. After indulging his grief in a manner contrary to his lecture a few minutes previously, Adams is informed that the report was premature, and that his son had in fact been rescued by the same pedlar that loaned him his last few shillings in Book II.

Lady Booby, in a last-ditch attempt to sabotage the marriage, brings a young beau named Didapper to Adams' house to seduce Fanny. Fanny is unattracted to his bold attempts of courtship. Didapper is a little too bold in his approach and provokes Joseph into a fight. The Lady and the beau depart in disgust, but the pedlar, having seen the Lady, is compelled to relate a tale. The pedlar had met his wife while in the army, and she died young. While on her death bed, she confessed that she once stole an exquisitely beautiful baby girl from a family named Andrews, and sold her on to Sir Thomas Booby, thus raising the possibility that Fanny may in fact be Joseph's sister. The company is shocked, but there is general relief that the crime of [incest](#) may have been narrowly averted.

The following morning, Joseph and Pamela's parents arrive, and, together with the pedlar and Adams, they piece together the question of Fanny's parentage. The Andrews identify her as their lost daughter, but have a twist to add to the tale: when Fanny was an infant, she was indeed stolen from her parents, but the thieves left behind a sickly infant Joseph in return, who was raised as their own. It is immediately apparent that Joseph is the abovementioned kidnapped son of Wilson, and when Wilson arrives on his promised visit, he identifies Joseph by a [birthmark](#) on his chest. Joseph is now the son of a respected gentleman, Fanny an in-law of the Booby family, and the couple no longer suspected of being siblings. Two days later they are married by Adams in a humble ceremony, and the narrator, after bringing the story to a close, and in a disparaging allusion to Richardson, assures the reader that there will be no [sequel](#).

Joy Luck Club (The)—by Amy Tan.

The Joy Luck Club (1989) is a best-selling [novel](#) written by [Amy Tan](#). It focuses on four [Chinese American immigrant](#) families in [San Francisco, California](#) who start a club known as "the Joy Luck Club," playing the Chinese game of [mahjong](#) for money while feasting on a variety of foods. The book is structured somewhat like a mahjong game, with four parts divided into four sections to create sixteen chapters. The three mothers and four daughters (one mother, Suyuan Woo, dies before the novel opens) share stories about their lives in the form of [vignettes](#). Each part is preceded by a [parable](#) relating to the game.

In 1993, the novel was adapted into a feature [film](#) directed by [Wayne Wang](#) and starring [Ming-Na](#), [Lauren Tom](#), [Tamlyn Tomita](#), [France Nuyen](#), [Rosalind Chao](#), [Kieu Chinh](#), [Tsai Chin](#), [Lisa Lu](#), and [Vivian Wu](#). The screenplay was written by the author Amy Tan along with [Ronald Bass](#). The novel was also adapted into a play, by Susan Kim, which premiered at [Pan Asian Repertory Theatre](#) in [New York](#).

Jude the Obscure—by Thomas Hardy.

The novel tells the story of Jude Fawley, a village stonemason in the southern English region of [Wessex](#) who yearns to be a scholar at "Christminster", a city modeled on [Oxford](#). In his spare time while working in his aunt's bakery, he teaches himself [Greek](#) and [Latin](#). Before he can try to enter the university, the naïve Jude is manipulated, through a process he later calls [erotolepsy](#), into marrying a rather coarse and superficial local girl, Arabella Donn, who deserts him within two years. By this time, he has abandoned the [classics](#) altogether.

After Arabella leaves him, Jude moves to Christminster and supports himself as a mason while studying alone, hoping to be able to enter the university later. There, he meets and falls in love with his free-spirited cousin, Sue Bridehead. Jude shortly introduces Sue to his former schoolteacher, Mr. Phillotson, whom she later marries. Sue is satisfied by the normality of her married life, but quickly finds the relationship an unhappy one; in addition to being in love with Jude, not her husband, she is physically disgusted by her spouse, and, apparently, by sex in general.

Sue eventually leaves Phillotson for Jude. Sue and Jude spend some time living together without any sexual relationship; they are both afraid to get married because their family has a history of tragic unions, and think that being legally bound to one another might destroy their love. Jude eventually convinces Sue to sleep with him and, over the years, they have two children together. They are also bestowed with a child "of an intelligent age" from Jude's first marriage to Arabella, whom Jude did not know about earlier. He is named Jude and nicknamed "Little Father Time" because of his intense seriousness and moroseness.

Jude and Sue are socially ostracized for living together unmarried, especially after the children are born. Jude's employers always dismiss him when they find out, and landlords evict them. Their

socially-disturbed boy, "Little Father Time," comes to believe that he and his half-siblings are the source of the family's woes. He [murders](#) Sue's two children and commits [suicide](#) by [hanging](#). He leaves behind a note that simply reads, "Done because we are too menny."^{[3][4]} Shortly thereafter, Sue has a miscarriage.

Beside herself with [grief](#) and blaming herself for "Little Father Time"'s actions, which were, in part, instigated by a conversation the two had had the previous night, Sue turns to the church that has ostracized her and comes to believe that the children's deaths were [divine retribution](#) for her relationship with Jude. Although horrified at the thought of resuming her marriage with Phillotson, she becomes convinced that, for religious reasons, she should never have left him. Arabella discovers Sue's feelings and informs Phillotson, who soon proposes they remarry. This results in Sue leaving Jude for Phillotson. Jude is devastated and remarries Arabella after she plies him with alcohol to once again trick him into marriage.

After one final, desperate visit to Sue in freezing weather, Jude becomes seriously ill and dies within the year. It is revealed that Sue has grown "staid and worn" with Phillotson. Arabella fails to mourn Jude's passing, instead setting the stage to ensnare her next suitor.

Julius Caesar—by William Shakespeare.

[Marcus Brutus](#) is Caesar's close friend and a Roman [praetor](#). Brutus allows himself to be cajoled into joining a group of conspiring [senators](#) because of a growing suspicion—implanted by [Caius Cassius](#)—that Caesar intends to turn republican Rome into a monarchy under his own rule.

Traditional readings of the play maintain that Cassius and the other conspirators are motivated largely by [envy](#) and [ambition](#), whereas Brutus is motivated by the demands of [honour](#) and patriotism. One of the central strengths of the play is that it resists categorising its characters as either simple heroes or villains. The early scenes deal mainly with Brutus's arguments with Cassius and his struggle with his own [conscience](#). The growing tide of public support soon turns Brutus against Caesar (this public support was actually faked; Cassius wrote letters to Brutus in different handwritings over the next month in order to get Brutus to join the conspiracy). A soothsayer warns Caesar to "beware the [Ides of March](#),"^[4] which he ignores, culminating in his assassination at the [Capitol](#) by the conspirators that day.

Caesar's assassination is one of the most famous scenes of the play, occurring in Act 3 (the other is Mark Antony's oration "Friends, Romans, countrymen".) After ignoring the soothsayer as well as his wife's own premonitions, Caesar comes to the Senate. The conspirators create a superficial motive for the assassination by means of a petition brought by Metellus Cimber, pleading on behalf of his banished brother. As Caesar, predictably, rejects the petition, Casca grazes Caesar in the back of his neck, and the others follow in stabbing him; Brutus is last. At this point, Caesar utters the famous line "[Et tu, Brute?](#)"^[5] ("And you, Brutus?", *i.e.* "You too, Brutus?"). Shakespeare has him add, "Then fall, Caesar," suggesting that Caesar did not want to survive such treachery. The conspirators make clear that they committed this act for Rome, not for their own purposes and do not attempt to flee the scene. After Caesar's death, Brutus delivers an oration defending his actions, and for the moment, the crowd is on his side. However, [Mark Antony](#), with a subtle and eloquent speech over Caesar's corpse—beginning with the much-quoted "[Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears](#)"^[6]—deftly turns [public opinion](#) against the assassins by manipulating the emotions of the [common people](#), in contrast to the rational tone of Brutus's speech. Antony rouses the mob to drive the conspirators from Rome. Amid the violence, the innocent poet, [Cinna](#), is confused with the conspirator [Lucius Cinna](#) and is murdered by the mob.

The beginning of Act Four is marked by the quarrel scene, where Brutus attacks Cassius for soiling the noble act of [regicide](#) by accepting bribes ("Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake? / What villain touch'd his body, that did stab, / And not for justice?"^[7]) The two are reconciled; they

prepare for [war](#) with Mark Antony and Caesar's adopted son, [Octavian](#) (Shakespeare's spelling: Octavius). That night, Caesar's ghost appears to Brutus with a warning of defeat ("thou shalt see me at Philippi"^[8]). At the [battle](#), Cassius and Brutus knowing they will probably both die, smile their last smiles to each other and hold hands. During the battle, Cassius commits suicide after hearing of the capture of his best friend, Titinius. After Titinius, who wasn't really captured, sees Cassius's corpse, he commits suicide. However, Brutus wins the battle. Brutus, with a heavy heart, [battles](#) again the next day. He loses and commits suicide. The play ends with a tribute to Brutus by Antony, who proclaims that Brutus has remained "the noblest Roman of them all"^[9] because he was the only conspirator who acted for the good of Rome. There is then a small hint at the friction between Mark Antony and Octavius which will characterise another of Shakespeare's Roman plays, [Antony and Cleopatra](#).

Jungle (The)—by Upton Sinclair.

From the beginning, they have to make compromises and concessions to survive. They quickly make a series of bad decisions that cause them to go deep into debt and fall prey to [con men](#). The most devastating decision comes when, in hopes of owning their own home, the family falls victim to a [predatory lending](#) scheme that exhausts all their remaining savings on the down-payment for a sub-standard slum house that (by design) they cannot possibly afford. The family is evicted and their money taken, leaving them truly devastated.

The family had formerly envisioned that Jurgis alone would be able to support them in the United States, but one by one, all of them — the women, the young children, and Jurgis's sick father — have to find jobs in order to contribute to the meager family income. As the novel progresses, the jobs and means the family uses to stay alive slowly and inevitably lead to their physical and moral decay.

They faced a cruel world of work in the [Chicago Stockyards](#), where everyone has his or her price, where everyone in a position of power, including government inspectors, the police and judges, must be paid off, and where [blacklisting](#) is common. A series of unfortunate events — accidents at work, a number of deaths in the family that under normal circumstances could have been preventable — leads the family further toward catastrophe. Jurgis Rudkus, the book's [main character](#), is young, strong, and honest, but also naïve and [illiterate](#); this Lithuanian farmboy is no match for the powerful forces of American industry and he gradually loses all hope of succeeding in the New World. After Ona dies in childbirth — for lack of money to pay for a doctor — and their young son drowns in the muddy street, he flees the city in utter despair. At first the mere presence of fresh air is balm to his soul, but his brief sojourn as a [hobo](#) in rural United States shows him that there is really no escape — even farmers turn their workers away when the harvest is finished.

Jurgis returns to Chicago and holds down a succession of jobs outside the meat packing industry — digging tunnels, as a political hack, and as a con-man — but injuries on the job, his past and his innate sense of personal integrity continue to haunt him, and he drifts without direction. One night, while looking for a warm and dry refuge, he wanders into a lecture being given by a charismatic [Socialist](#) orator, and finds a sense of community and purpose. Socialism and strong [labor unions](#) are the answer to the evils that he, his family and their fellow sufferers have had to endure. A fellow socialist employs him, and he resumes his support of his wife's family, although some of them are damaged beyond repair.

The book ends with another socialist rally, which comes on the heels of several recent political victories. The speaker encourages his comrades to keep fighting for victories, chanting "Chicago will be ours!"

Kafka on the Shore—by Haruki Murakami.

Comprising two distinct but interrelated plots, the narrative runs back and forth between the two, taking up each plotline in alternating chapters.

The odd chapters tell the 15 year old Kafka's story as he runs away from his father's house to escape an [Oedipal](#) curse and to embark upon a quest to find his mother and sister.^[4] After a series of adventures, he finds shelter in a quiet, private library in [Takamatsu](#), run by the distant and aloof Miss Saeki and the intelligent and more welcoming Oshima. There he spends his days reading the unabridged [Richard Francis Burton](#) translation of *A Thousand and One Nights* and the collected works of [Natsume Sōseki](#) until the police begin inquiring after him in connection with a brutal murder.

The even chapters tell Nakata's story. Due to his uncanny abilities, he has found part-time work in his old age as a finder of lost cats (a clear reference to [The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle](#)). The case of one particular lost cat puts him on a path that ultimately takes him far away from his home, ending up on the road for the first time in his life. He befriends a truck-driver named Hoshino. Hoshino takes him on as a passenger in his truck and soon becomes very attached to the old man.

Nakata and Kafka are on a collision course throughout the novel, but their convergence takes place as much on a metaphysical plane as it does in reality and, in fact, that can be said of the novel itself. Due to the Oedipal theme running through much of the novel, *Kafka on the Shore* has been called a modern Greek tragedy.

King Lear—by William Shakespeare.

King Lear, who is elderly, wants to retire from power. He decides to divide his realm among his three daughters, and offers the largest share to the one who loves him best. Goneril and Regan both proclaim in fulsome terms that they love him more than anything in the world, which pleases him. For Cordelia, there is nothing to compare her love to, nor words to properly express it; she speaks honestly but bluntly, which infuriates him. In his anger he disinherits her, and divides the kingdom between Regan and Goneril. Kent objects to this unfair treatment. Lear is further enraged by Kent's protests, and banishes him from the country. Cordelia's two [suits](#) enter. Learning that Cordelia has been disinherited, the Duke of [Burgundy](#) withdraws his suit, but the King of France is impressed by her honesty and marries her.

Lear announces he will live alternately with Goneril and Regan, and their husbands, the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall respectively. He reserves to himself a retinue of one hundred knights, to be supported by his daughters. Goneril and Regan speak privately, agreeing that Lear is old and foolish.

Edmund resents his illegitimate status, and plots to supplant his legitimate older brother Edgar. He tricks their father Gloucester with a forged letter, making him think Edgar plans to usurp the estate. Kent returns from exile in disguise under the name of Caius, and Lear hires him as a servant. Lear discovers that now that Goneril has power, she no longer respects him. She orders him to behave better and reduces his retinue. Enraged, Lear departs for Regan's home. The Fool mocks Lear's misfortune. Edmund fakes an attack by Edgar, and Gloucester is completely taken in. He disinherits Edgar and proclaims him outlaw.

Kent meets Oswald at Gloucester's home, quarrels with him, and is put in the stocks by Regan and her husband Cornwall. When Lear arrives, he objects, but Regan takes the same line as Goneril. Lear is enraged but impotent. Goneril arrives and echoes Regan. Lear yields completely to his rage. He rushes out into a storm to [rant](#) against his ungrateful daughters, accompanied by the mocking Fool. Kent later follows to protect him. Gloucester protests against Lear's mistreatment. Wandering on the [heath](#) after the storm, Lear meets Edgar, in the guise of [Tom o' Bedlam](#), that is,

a madman. Edgar babbles madly while Lear denounces his daughters. Kent leads them all to shelter.

Edmund betrays Gloucester to Cornwall, Regan, and Goneril. He shows a letter from his father to the [King of France](#) asking for help against them; and in fact a French army has landed in Britain. Gloucester is arrested, and Cornwall [gouges out his eyes](#). As he is doing so, a servant is overcome with rage by what he is witnessing and attacks Cornwall, killing him. Regan kills the servant, and tells Gloucester that Edmund betrayed him; then she turns him out to wander the [heath](#) too. Edgar, in his madman's guise as Tom, meets blinded Gloucester on the heath. Gloucester begs Tom to lead him to a cliff so that he may jump to his death.

Goneril meets Edmund and discovers that she finds him more attractive than her honest husband Albany, whom she regards as cowardly. Albany is disgusted by the sisters' treatment of Lear, and the mutilation of Gloucester, and denounces Goneril. Kent leads Lear to the French army, which is accompanied by Cordelia. But Lear is half-mad and terribly embarrassed by his earlier follies. Albany leads the British army to meet the French. Regan too is attracted to Edmund, and the two sisters become jealous of each other. Goneril sends Oswald with letters to Edmund and also tells Oswald to kill Gloucester if he sees him. Edgar pretends to lead Gloucester to a cliff, then changes his voice and tells Gloucester he has miraculously survived a great fall. They meet Lear, who is now completely mad. Lear rants that the whole world is corrupt and runs off.

Oswald tries to kill Gloucester but is slain by Edgar. In Oswald's pocket, Edgar finds a letter from Goneril to Edmund suggesting the murder of Albany. Kent and Cordelia take charge of Lear, whose madness largely passes. Regan, Goneril, Albany, and Edmund meet with their forces. Albany insists that they fight the French invaders but not harm Lear or Cordelia. The two sisters lust for Edmund, who has made promises to both. He considers the dilemma and plots the deaths of Albany, Lear, and Cordelia. Edgar gives Goneril's letter to Albany. The armies meet in battle, the British defeat the French, and Lear and Cordelia are captured. Edmund sends them off with secret orders for execution.

The victorious British leaders meet, and Regan now declares she will marry Edmund. But Albany exposes the intrigues of Edmund and Goneril and proclaims Edmund a traitor. Regan collapses; Goneril has poisoned her. Edmund defies Albany, who calls for a [trial by combat](#). Edgar appears to fight Edmund and fatally stabs him in a duel. Albany shows Goneril's letter to her; she flees in shame and rage. Edgar reveals himself; Gloucester dies offstage from the overwhelming shock and joy of this revelation.

Offstage, Goneril stabs herself and confesses to poisoning Regan. Dying Edmund reveals his order to kill Lear and Cordelia, but it is too late: Cordelia is dead though Lear slew the killer. Lear carries the dead Cordelia in his arms onstage. Lear recognises Kent. Albany urges Lear to resume his throne, but Lear is too far gone in grief and hardship. Lear collapses and dies. Albany offers to share power between Kent and Edgar. At the end, either Albany or Edgar (depending on whether one reads the Quarto or the Folio version)^[4] is crowned King.

Kite Runner (The)—Khaled Hosseini.

Amir, a well-to-do [Pashtun](#) boy, and Hassan, a [Hazara](#) who is the son of Ali, Amir's father's servant, spend their days in the then peaceful city of Kabul, [kite fighting](#) and roaming through the streets. Amir's father, a wealthy merchant, whom Amir affectionately refers to as *Baba*, loves both boys, but seems critical of Amir for not being manly enough. However, he has a kinder father figure in the form of Rahim Khan, Baba's friend, who understands Amir better, and supports his interest in writing. Amir tells us that his first word was 'Baba' and Hassan's 'Amir', suggesting that Amir looked up most to Baba, while Hassan looked up to Amir.

Assef, a notorious [sociopath](#) and violent older boy, mocks Amir for socializing with a Hazara, which is, according to Assef, an inferior race that should only live in [Hazarajat](#). He prepares to attack Amir with [brass knuckles](#), but Hassan bravely stands up to him, threatening to shoot out Assef's left eye with his [slingshot](#). Assef and his posse back off, but Assef threatens revenge.

Hassan is a successful "kite runner" for Amir, knowing where the kite will land without watching it. One triumphant day, Amir wins the local tournament, and finally Baba's praise. Hassan runs for the last cut kite, a great trophy, saying to Amir, "For you, a thousand times over." Unfortunately, Hassan encounters Assef. Hassan refuses to give up Amir's kite. Assef decides to teach Hassan a lesson by beating him half to death and then anally raping him. Amir witnesses the act but convinced himself that he is too scared to intervene; though it's actually the fact that he needs the kite for Baba's praise and approval and he knows if he does intervene, then he won't get the kite and he returns home ashamed, guilty for not being able to help his best friend. He feels that his cowardice in Hassan's rape would destroy any hopes for Baba's affections, so he says nothing. Afterward, Hassan and Amir keep a distance from each other. Amir reacts indifferently because he feels ashamed, and is frustrated by Hassan's saint-like behavior. Already jealous of Baba's love for Hassan, he worries that if Baba knew of Hassan's bravery and his own cowardice, that Baba's love for Hassan would grow even more.

Amir, filled with guilt on his birthday, cannot enjoy his gifts.^[2] The only present that does not feel like "blood" money is the notebook to write his stories in given to him by Rahim Khan, his father's friend and the only one Amir felt really understood him.

Amir felt life would be easier if Hassan was not around, so he planted a watch and some money under Hassan's mattress in hopes that Baba would make him leave; Hassan falsely confesses when confronted by Baba. Baba forgives him, despite the fact that, as he explained earlier, he believes that "there is no act more wretched than stealing." Hassan and Ali, to Baba's extreme sorrow, leave anyway. This frees Amir of the daily reminder of his cowardice and betrayal, but he still lives in their shadow and his guilt.

Five years later, the [Soviet Union](#) invades Afghanistan. Amir and Baba escape to [Peshawar, Pakistan](#) and then to [Fremont, California](#), where Amir and Baba, who lived in luxury in an expensive mansion in Afghanistan, settle in a run-down apartment and Baba begins work at a gas station. Amir eventually takes classes at a local [community college](#) to develop his writing skills after graduating from high school at age twenty. Every Sunday, Baba and Amir make extra money selling used goods at a [flea market](#) in [San Jose](#). There, Amir meets fellow refugee Soraya Taheri and her family. Soraya's father, General Taheri, once a high-ranking officer in Afghanistan, has contempt for Amir's literary aspiration. Baba is diagnosed with terminal [small cell carcinoma](#) but is still capable of granting Amir one last favor: he asks Soraya's father's permission for Amir to marry her. He agrees and the two marry. Shortly thereafter Baba dies. Amir and Soraya settle down in a happy marriage, but to their sorrow they learn that they cannot have children.

Amir embarks on a successful career as a novelist. Fifteen years after his wedding, Amir receives a call from Rahim Khan, who is dying from an illness. Rahim Khan asks Amir to come to Peshawar, Pakistan. He enigmatically tells Amir, "There is a way to be good again." Amir goes.

From Khan, Amir learns the fates of Ali and Hassan. Ali was killed by a land mine. Hassan had a wife named Farzana and a son named Sohrab. He had lived in a village near [Bamiyan](#), but returned to Baba's house as a caretaker at Khan's request, although he moved to a hut in the yard so as not to dishonor Amir by taking his place in the house. During his stay, his mother Sanaubar returned after a long search for him, and died after four years. One month after Khan left for Pakistan, the [Taliban](#) ordered Hassan to give up the house and leave, but he refused, and was executed, along with Farzana. Khan reveals that Ali was not really Hassan's father, that Ali was sterile, and that Hassan was actually Baba's son, and therefore Amir's half-brother. Finally, Khan

tells Amir that the true reason he called Amir to Pakistan was to rescue Sohrab from an orphanage in Kabul.

Khan asks Amir to bring Sohrab to Thomas and Betty Caldwell, who own an orphanage.^[3] Amir becomes furious; he feels cheated because he had not known that Hassan was his half-brother.^[4] Amir finally relents and decides to go to Kabul to get Sohrab.^[5] He travels in a taxi with an Afghan driver named Farid,^[6] a veteran of the war with the Soviets, and stays as a guest at Farid's brother Wahid's house. Farid, initially hostile to Amir, is sympathetic when he hears of Amir's true reason for returning, and offers to accompany him on his journey.

Amir searches for Sohrab at the orphanage. To enter [Taliban](#) territory, clean shaven Amir wears a fake beard and mustache. However, Sohrab is not at the orphanage; its director tells them that a [Taliban](#) official comes often, brings cash, and usually takes a girl away with him. Once in a while however, he takes a boy, recently Sohrab. The director tells Amir to go to a soccer match, where the [procurer](#) makes speeches at half-time. Farid secures an appointment with the speaker at his home, by claiming to have "personal business" with him.

At the house, Amir meets the man, who turns out to be Assef. Assef recognizes Amir from the outset, but Amir does not recognise Assef until he asks about Ali, Baba, and Hassan. Sohrab is being kept at Assef's home where he is made to [dance dressed in women's clothes](#), and it seems Assef may have raped him. (Sohrab later confirms this saying, "I'm so dirty and full of sin. The bad man and the other two did things to me.") Assef agrees to relinquish him, but only for a price—cruelly beating Amir. However, Amir is saved when Sohrab uses his slingshot to shoot out Assef's left eye, fulfilling Hassan's threat made many years before.

While at a hospital treating his injuries, Amir asks Farid to find information about Thomas and Betty Caldwell.^[7] When Farid returns, he tells Amir that the American couple does not exist.^[8]

Amir tells Sohrab of his plans to take him back to America and possibly adopt him, and promises that he will never be sent to an orphanage again. However, US authorities demand evidence of Sohrab's orphan status. After decades of war, this is all but impossible to get in Afghanistan. Amir tells Sohrab that he may have to temporarily break his promise until the paperwork is completed. Upon hearing this, Sohrab attempts suicide. Amir eventually takes him back to the United States without an orphanage, and introduces him to his wife. However, Sohrab is emotionally damaged and refuses to speak to or even glance at Soraya. His frozen emotions eventually thaw when Amir reminisces about Hassan and kites. Amir shows off some of Hassan's tricks, and Sohrab begins to interact with Amir again. In the end Sohrab only shows a lopsided smile, but Amir takes to it with all his heart as he runs the kite for Sohrab, saying, "For you, a thousand times over."

Lady Windermere's Fan—by Oscar Wilde.

The play opens in the [morning room](#) of the Windermeres' residence in London. It is [tea time](#) and Lady Windermere—who is preparing for her [coming of age](#) birthday ball that evening—has a visit from a friend, Lord Darlington. She shows off her new fan: a present from her husband. She explains to Lord Darlington that she is upset over the compliments he continues to pay to her, revealing that she is a [Puritan](#) and has very particular views about what is acceptable in society.

The Duchess of Berwick calls and Lord Darlington leaves shortly thereafter. The Duchess informs Lady Windermere that her husband may be betraying her marriage by making repeated visits to another woman, a *Mrs Erlynne*, and possibly giving her large sums of money. These rumours have been gossip among London society for a good while, though seemingly this is the first Lady Windermere has heard about it.

Following the departure of the Duchess, Lady Windermere decides to check her husband's [bank book](#). She finds the book in a desk and sees that nothing appears amiss, though on returning she discovers a second bank book: one with a [lock](#). After prying the lock open, she finds it lists large sums of money given to Mrs Erlynne.

At this point, Lord Windermere enters and she confronts him. Though he cannot deny that he has had dealings with Mrs Erlynne, he states that he is not betraying Lady Windermere. He requests that she send Mrs Erlynne an invitation to her birthday ball that evening in order to help her back into society. When Lady Windermere refuses, he writes out an invitation himself. Lady Windermere makes clear her intention to cause a scene if Mrs Erlynne appears, to which Lord Windermere responds that it would be in her best interest to not do so.

Lady Windermere leaves in disgust to prepare for the party, and Lord Windermere reveals in [soliloquy](#) that he is protecting Mrs Erlynne's true identity to save his wife extreme humiliation.

What shall I do? I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her.

—Lord Windermere

Act II opens in the Windermeres' [drawing room](#) during the birthday ball that evening. Various guests enter, and make small-talk. Lord Windermere enters and asks Lady Windermere to speak with him, but she brushes him off.

A friend of Lord Windermere's, Lord Augustus Lorton ("Tuppy"), pulls him aside to inquire about Mrs Erlynne, with whom he is enamoured. Lord Windermere reveals that there is nothing untoward in his relationship with Mrs Erlynne, and that she will be attending the ball, which comes as a great relief to Lord Augustus as he was worried about her social standing.

After an unsuccessful attempt to make peace with his wife, Lord Windermere summons the courage to tell the truth to her, but at that moment Mrs Erlynne arrives at the party, where she is greeted coldly by Lady Windermere, spoiling his plan.

Alone, Lady Windermere and Lord Darlington discuss Mrs Erlynne's attendance. Lady Windermere is enraged and confused and asks Lord Darlington to be her friend. Instead of friendship, Lord Darlington takes advantage of Lady Windermere's tragic state and professes his love to her, offering her his life, and inviting her to risk short-term social humiliation for a new life with him. Lord Darlington sets her an ultimatum to try to convince her to take action immediately, while still in a state of shock. Lady Windermere is shocked by the revelation, and finds she does not have the courage to take the offer. Heartbroken, Lord Darlington announces that he will be leaving the country the next day and that they will never meet again, and leaves.

The guests begin to leave, and say their goodnights to Lady Windermere—some remarking positively about Mrs Erlynne. On the other side of the room Mrs Erlynne is discussing her plans with Lord Windermere; she intends to marry Lord Augustus and will require some money from Lord Windermere.

Later, Lady Windermere, in spite of her earlier reluctance, decides to leave the house at once for Lord Darlington, and leaves a note to that effect for Lord Windermere. Mrs Erlynne discovers the note and that Lady Windermere has gone, and is curiously worried by this. While reading the note, a brief monologue reveals that she is in fact Lady Windermere's mother and made a similar mistake herself twenty years previously. She takes the letter and exits to locate Lady Windermere.

How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better than I?

—Mrs Erlynne

Lady Windermere is alone in Lord Darlington's rooms unsure if she has made the right decision. Eventually, she resolves to return to her husband, but then Mrs Erlynne appears. Despite Mrs Erlynne's honest attempts to persuade her to return home to her husband, Lady Windermere is convinced her appearance is part of some plot conceived by her and Lord Windermere. Mrs Erlynne finally breaks Lady Windermere's resistance by imploring her to return for the sake of her young child, but as they begin to exit they hear Lord Darlington entering with friends. The two women hide.

The men — who include Lord Windermere and Lord Augustus — have been evicted from their [gentlemen's club](#) at closing time and talk about women: mainly Mrs Erlynne. One of them takes notice of a [fan](#) lying on a table (Lady Windermere's) and presumes that Lord Darlington presently has a woman visiting. As Lord Windermere rises to leave, the fan is pointed out to him, which he instantly recognises as his wife's. He demands to know if Lord Darlington has her hidden somewhere. Lord Darlington refuses to co-operate, believing that Lady Windermere has come to him. Just as Lord Windermere is about to discover Lady Windermere's hiding place, Mrs Erlynne reveals herself instead, shocking all the men and allowing Lady Windermere to slip away unnoticed.

I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry.

—Mrs Erlynne

The next day, Lady Windermere is lying on the couch of the morning room anxious about whether to tell her husband what actually happened, or whether Mrs Erlynne will have already betrayed her secret. Her husband enters. He is sympathetic towards her and they discuss the possibility of taking a holiday to forget the recent incident. Lady Windermere apologises for her previous suspicion of her husband and behaviour at the party, and Lord Windermere makes clear his new contempt for Mrs Erlynne — warning his wife to stay away from her.

Mrs Erlynne's arrival is announced along with the return of the fan, and despite her husband's protestations, Lady Windermere insists on seeing her. Mrs Erlynne enters and states that she shall be going abroad, but asks that Lady Windermere give her a photograph of herself and her son.

Whilst Lady Windermere leaves the room to find one, the story is revealed: Mrs Erlynne left her husband for a lover shortly after Lady Windermere's birth. When her new lover abandoned her, Mrs Erlynne was left alone and in disrepute. More recently, using the assumed name of Mrs Erlynne, she has begun blackmailing Lord Windermere in order to regain her lifestyle and status, by threatening to reveal her true identity as Lady Windermere's shameful mother — not dead, as Lady Windermere believes. Lord Windermere laments not having told his wife the whole story at once and resolves to tell her the truth now. Mrs Erlynne forbids him to do so, threatening to spread shame far and wide if he does.

Lady Windermere returns with the photograph which she presents to Mrs Erlynne, and requests that Lord Windermere check for the return of Mrs Erlynne's coach. Now that they are alone, and being owed a favour, Mrs Erlynne demands that she does not reveal the truth revealed the night before to her husband, and Lady Windermere promises to keep the secret.

After Lord Windermere's return, Lord Augustus enters. He is shocked to see Mrs Erlynne after the events of the night before, but she requests his company as she heads to her carriage, and he soon returns to the Windermers with news that she has satisfactorily explained the events of the evening, and that they are to marry and live out of England.

[Taking her husband's hand.] Ah, you're marrying a very good woman!

—Lady Windermere

Their marriage is restored, but both Lord and Lady Windermere keep their secrets.

Lesson Before Dying (A)—Ernest J. Gaines.

The reader is given a unique outlook on the status of African Americans in the South, after World War II and before the Civil Rights Movement. Indeed, we see a Jim Crow South through the eyes of a formally educated African American teacher who often feels helpless and alienated from his own country. In "A Lesson Before Dying," Grant is the only educated black man in the area and the only member of the black community who might be considered capable of becoming free of overt oppression. Nevertheless, his life and career choices are severely limited and he must refer to white male authority figures as "Sir." Because of this, he yearns to leave the disheartening situation he is in. Grant feels that he is cornered by myriad forces: his aunt's incessant wants, pressure to conform to a fundamentalist religion he does not believe in, the children's need for a teacher, and the community's need for leadership. Grant was a man just trying to help another young man become a man. It was a really hard time, because before Grant could teach Jefferson how to become a man, Grant had to familiarize himself with his mistakes and how life was going.

Letters from an American Farmer—Jean de Crèvecoeur.

Letter I: Introduction - This letter introduces the persona of James, an American Farmer, and his epistolary dialogue with a minister in Oxford, England. Letter II: "On the Situation, Feelings, and Pleasures of an American Farmer" - This letter describes the creatures, plants, and activities on and around the farm owned by James. Its main focus is on the "bee's, wasps, hornets, and birds" (Patterson) and illustrates the abundance of life and the dependence on good soil in the American land. Letter III: "What is American?" - This letter compares people to plants and leads the reader to pursue the idea of whether or not the soil has anything to do with the prosperity of the person living there. Letter IV-VIII: This popopand also the land in which they inhabit. It also describes the conditions in which they live and the customs of whaling villages of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. Letter IX: "Description of Charles Town; Thoughts on Slavery; on Physical Evil; a Melancholy Scene" - This letter gives an account of Charleston, South Carolina. The letter then quickly moves to the notion of slavery in the South. It argues about the destruction that revolves around the slave-master relationships and makes an appeal to the North, in particular, that slavery is a truly evil practice in the midst of the new nation of America. Letter X: This letter talks extensively about a wide variety of snakes and even speaks to the American Indians practices of eating them. It also mentions their habits and stories that have been told in America, warning people about certain ones. At the end of this letter, it speaks about the hummingbirds found around James' land and their habits and varieties as well. Letter XI: This letter is supposedly narrated by a Russian, but is almost indistinguishable from James himself. It describes a visit to the famous Pennsylvanian botanist, Mr. John Bertram. The narrator tells of the new methods of fertilizing and irrigation that Bertram has invented and used on his own plants. Letter XII: "Distresses of a Frontier Man"- This letter describes the coming Revolutionary War and the narrator's stress of being caught between forces beyond his own control. This particular letter is the only one written that has any traces of anti-British ideas and opinions. The letter also includes James' view of the

American Indians around him and his idea to run away with his family and live among them until the fighting is over.

Light in August—by William Faulkner.

The narrative structure consists of three connected plot-strands. The first strand tells the story of Lena Grove, a young pregnant woman who is trying to find Lucas Burch, the father of her unborn child. With that purpose she leaves her home town and walks several hundred miles to Jefferson, a town in Faulkner's fictional [Yoknapatawpha County](#). There she is supported by Byron Bunch, an employee in the [planing mill](#) who falls in love with Lena and hopes to marry her. The narrative plot of Lena's story is also circular; it builds a framework around the two other plot-strands. One of these is the story of the enigmatic character [Joe Christmas](#).

Christmas came to Jefferson three years before the novel's beginning, and got a job at the planing mill. The work at the planing mill is a cover up for his illegal alcohol business. He has a sexual relationship with Joanna Burden, an older woman who descended from a formerly powerful abolitionist family. Joanna Burden continues her ancestors' struggle for Black emancipation, which makes her an outsider in the society of Jefferson, much like Christmas.

Her relationship with Christmas begins rather unusually, with Christmas sneaking into her house to steal food, for he has not eaten in twenty-four hours. As a result of sexual frustration and the beginning of menopause, Joanna turns to religion. Joanna's turn to religion is frustrating for Christmas, who as a child ran away from his abusive adoptive parents who were conservatively religious. At the climax of her relation to Christmas, she tries to force him, by threatening him with a gun, to admit publicly his black ancestry and to join a black law firm. Joanna is murdered soon after. Her throat is slit and she is nearly decapitated. Her body was left to burn inside her house which is set on fire to cover the evidence of her murder. The murder was presumably committed by Joe Christmas, but this is not explicitly narrated. It appears that Lucas Burch/Joe Brown might have set the house on fire, however. Burch is initially cast as a possible murderer, as he was found inside the burning house by a passing farmer who rescued Joanna's body from the flames.

Thanks to a tip-off by Burch (Joe Brown, Christmas' previous business partner in the moon-shining venture and the father of Lena's child), Christmas is caught after giving himself up in a neighboring town. During his unsuccessful escape attempt, Christmas is shot and castrated by a national guardsman named Percy Grimm.

The third plot strand tells the story of Reverend Gail Hightower. He is obsessed by the past adventures of his [Confederate](#) grandfather, who was killed while stealing chickens from a farmer's shed. Hightower's community dislikes him because of his sermons about his dead grandfather, and because of the scandal surrounding his personal life: his wife committed adultery, and later killed herself, turning the town against Hightower and effectively making him a pariah. The only character who does not turn his back on the Reverend Hightower is Byron Bunch, who visits Hightower from time to time. Bunch tries to convince Hightower to give the imprisoned Joe Christmas an alibi, but Hightower initially refuses. When Joe Christmas escapes from police custody he runs to Hightower's house, seeking to hide. Hightower then accepts Byron's suggestion, but it is too late as Percy Grimm is close behind. Hightower is then seen musing over his past alone in his house as he prepares for his own death.

Before Christmas' escape attempt, Hightower delivered Lena's child in the cabin where Brown and Christmas had been staying before the murder, and Byron arranges for Brown/Burch to come and see her. However, when Brown gets there, he runs again, and Byron follows him, instigating a fight which he loses. Brown gets into a moving train and is not seen again. At the end of the story, an anonymous man is talking to his wife about two strangers he picked up on a trip to Tennessee,

recounting that the woman had a child and the man was not the father. This was Lena and Byron, who were conducting a half-hearted search for Brown, and they are eventually dropped off in Tennessee.

Little Foxes (The)—by Lillian Hellman.

The focus is on [Southern](#) aristocrat **Regina Hubbard Giddens**, who struggles for wealth and freedom within the confines of an early 20th century society where a father considered only sons as legal heirs. As a result, her [avaricious](#) brothers **Benjamin** and **Oscar** are independently wealthy, while she must rely upon her sickly, wheelchair-using husband **Horace** for financial support.

Regina's brother Oscar has married **Birdie**, his much-maligned, alcoholic wife, solely to acquire her family's [plantation](#) and its cotton fields. Oscar now wants to join forces with his brother, Benjamin, to construct a [cotton mill](#). They approach their sister with their need for an additional \$75,000 to invest in the project. Oscar initially proposes marriage between his son **Leo** and Regina's daughter **Alexandra** - first cousins - as a means of getting Horace's money, but Horace and Alexandra are repulsed by the suggestion. When Regina asks Horace outright for the money, he refuses, so Leo, a bank teller, is pressured into stealing his uncle Horace's [railroad bonds](#) from the bank's safety deposit box.

Horace, after discovering this, tells Regina he is going to change his will in favor of their daughter, and also will claim he gave Leo the bonds as a loan, thereby cutting Regina out of the deal completely. When he suffers a heart attack during this chat, she makes no effort to help him. He dies within hours, without anyone knowing his plan and before changing his will. This leaves Regina free to blackmail her brothers by threatening to report Leo's theft and she acquires 75% ownership in the cotton mill. The price Regina ultimately pays for her evil deeds is the loss of her daughter Alexandra's love and respect. Regina's actions cause Alexandra to finally understand the importance of not idly watching people do evil. She tells Regina she will not watch her be "one who eats the earth," and abandons her. Having let her husband die, alienated her brothers, and driven away her only child, Regina is left wealthy but completely alone.

Little Women—by Louisa Mae Alcott.

The four March sisters and their mother, whom they call "Marmee", live in New England during the Civil War. Mr. March is a chaplain in the Union Army and rarely at home. The March girls suffer many privations because of the war and their poverty, but contrive to be happy by performing charitable services for neighbors, staging home theatricals, and attending parties. Theodore "Laurie" Laurence III, the grandson of Mr. Laurence, their wealthy next-door neighbor, makes their acquaintance and falls in love with Jo, the tomboy of the March family. Meg, the eldest, is a governess who wishes she were rich. Beth is Jo's pet; she is shy, quiet, and very musical. All she ever wants is to be at home. Amy is the youngest sister. She is a selfish, pretty little artist who often fights with Jo. At the end of the first part of *Little Women*, Meg is engaged to Laurie's tutor John Brooke; Beth has recovered from a terrible illness she contracted from helping a poor, starving family; Jo wants to write a great novel; and Amy is growing less selfish and more womanly every day. In addition, their father has come home from war.

At the beginning of [Good Wives](#), Meg and John are getting married. They have twins, a boy and a girl named Daisy and Demi. Daisy is very sweet and loving, while Demi is mischievous and curious about everything. Laurie graduates from college and proposes to Jo. However, she doesn't want to marry him; he has always been just a brother to her. He goes to Europe to get over his failed proposal. Amy is already there; her aunt sponsored the trip and is taking care of her as she tours all over. Jo goes to New York to try to make something of herself, but she realizes that her writing dreams might be unattainable. But she does make a very good friend: Professor Friedrich

Bhaer, who tutors in the house she stays in. Meanwhile, Beth's illness comes back and she eventually dies, leaving a very lonely Jo behind. Amy is still in Europe when Beth dies. She is all alone in a foreign land until Laurie comes to her; they spend months together and a love blossoms. They marry and have one daughter, Beth. Professor Bhaer comes to visit the March family and proposes to Jo, who accepts. They marry and open a boys' school (as well as having two boys of their own, Rob & Teddy) and their story continues in the sequel [Little Men](#) and [Jo's Boys](#). The book closes with the whole family together in Jo's apple orchard, reflecting on their lives & how they each have everything they need.

Long Day's Journey into Night—by Eugene O'Neill.

The action covers a fateful, heart-rending day from around 8:30 am to midnight, in August 1912 at the seaside [Connecticut](#) home of the Tyrones - the semi-autobiographical representations of O'Neill himself, his older brother, and their parents at their home, [Monte Cristo Cottage](#).

One theme of the play is [addiction](#) and the resulting [dysfunction](#) of the family. All three males are [alcoholics](#) and Mary is addicted to [morphine](#). In the play the characters conceal, blame, resent, regret, accuse and deny in an escalating cycle of conflict with occasional desperate and half-sincere attempts at affection, encouragement and consolation.

Look Homeward, Angel—by Thomas Wolfe.

The book is divided into three parts, with a total of forty chapters. The first 90 pages of the book deal with an early biography of Gant's parents, very closely based on the actual history of Wolfe's own mother and father. It begins with his father, Oliver's decision to become a stone cutter after seeing a statue of a stone angel.

Oliver Gant's first marriage ends in tragedy, and he becomes a raging [alcoholic](#) afterwards, which becomes his major struggle throughout his life. He eventually remarries after roaming the countryside, builds his new wife a house, and commences to start a family. The couple is beset with tragedy, as their first daughter dies of [cholera](#) at two months old, while two more die during [childbirth](#). In the wake of these losses, Oliver is sent to Richmond for a "cure," to little success and becomes abusive to his family at times, threatening to kill his second wife Eliza (Eugene Gant's mother) in one drunken incident. The two remain together, however, and have a total of six surviving children, with the oldest, Steve, born in 1894.

Eugene's father is drunk downstairs while his mother gives birth to him in a difficult labor. Oliver Gant forms a special bond with his son from early on. He begins to get his drinking under control, save for occasional binges, though his marriage becomes strained as Eliza's patience with him grows thinner. By the fifth chapter they are no longer sleeping in the same bedroom. Though, during all this time he is especially fond of his youngest son, Eugene, with whom he makes a special bond.

Despite his flaws, Oliver Gant is the family's keystone, reading Shakespeare, having his daughter Helen read poetry, and keeping great fires burning in the house, symbolic of him as a source of warmth for the family. His gusto is the source of energy and strength for the family. Shortly after this, he journeys to California for the last time, returning home to the joy of his family. At this point Eugene is six years old and begins to attend school. His early education takes place, including several incidents of trouble with some of his teachers. He has a love of books and is a bright young boy, much to the pride of both his parents. His mother continues to baby him, unwilling to see him grow up; she does not cut his hair, even though he is teased about its length by the other boys.

Lord Jim—by Joseph Conrad.

Jim (his surname is never disclosed), a young British seaman, becomes first mate on the *Patna*, a ship full of pilgrims travelling to [Mecca](#) for the [hajj](#). Jim joins his captain and other crew members in abandoning the ship and its passengers. A few days later, they are picked up by a British ship. However, the *Patna* and its passengers are later also saved, and the reprehensible actions of the crew are exposed. The other participants evade the judicial court of inquiry, leaving Jim to the court alone. The court strips him of his navigation command certificate for his dereliction of duty. Jim is angry with himself, both for his moment of weakness, and for missing an opportunity to be a 'hero'.

At the trial, he meets Marlow, a [sea captain](#), who in spite of his initial misgivings over what he sees as Jim's moral unsoundness, comes to befriend him, for he is "one of us". Marlow later finds Jim work as a [ship chandler's clerk](#). Jim tries to remain incognito, but whenever the [opprobrium](#) of the *Patna* incident catches up with him, he abandons his place and moves further east.

At length, Marlow's friend Stein suggests placing Jim as his [factor](#) in *Patusan*, a remote inland settlement with a mixed [Malay](#) and [Bugis](#) population, where Jim's past can remain hidden. While living on the island he acquires the title 'Tuan' ('Lord').^[1] Here, Jim wins the respect of the people and becomes their leader by relieving them from the predations of the bandit Sherif Ali and protecting them from the corrupt local Malay chief, Rajah Tunku Allang. Jim wins the love of Jewel, a woman of mixed race, and is "satisfied... nearly". The end comes a few years later, when the town is attacked by the marauder "Gentleman" Brown. Although Brown and his gang are driven off, Dain Waris, the son of the leader of the Bugis community, is slain. Jim returns to Doramin, the Bugis leader, and willingly takes a fatal bullet in the chest from him as retribution for the death of his son.

Lord of the Flies—by William Golding.

In the midst of a wartime evacuation, a British plane crashes onto an isolated island. The only survivors are male children below the age of 13.^[4] Two boys, the fair-haired Ralph and an overweight, [bespectacled](#) boy reluctantly nicknamed "Piggy" find a [conch](#), which Ralph uses as a horn to bring all the survivors to one area. Two dominant boys emerge during the meeting: Ralph and Jack Merridew, a redhead who is the leader of a choir group that was among the survivors. Ralph is voted chief, losing only the votes of Jack's fellow choirboys. Ralph asserts two goals: have fun, and work towards a rescue by maintaining a constant [fire signal](#). They create the fire with Piggy's glasses, nearly catching the whole island on fire. For a time, the boys work together.

Jack organises his choir group into the group's hunters, who are responsible for hunting for meat. Ralph, Jack, and a black-haired boy named Simon soon become the supreme trio among the children. Piggy is quickly made an outcast by his fellow "biguns" (older boys) and becomes an unwilling source of laughs for the other children. Simon, in addition to supervising the project of constructing shelters, feels an instinctive need to protect the younger boys.

The original semblance of order imposed by Ralph quickly deteriorates as the majority of the boys turn idle. Around the same time, many of the younger boys begin to believe that the island is inhabited by a monster, referred to as "the beast". Jack gains control of the discussion by boldly promising to kill the beast. At one point, Jack summons all of his hunters to hunt down a [wild pig](#), including those who were supposed to be maintaining the fire. A ship approaches, but passes by because the signal fire has gone out. Although the hunting of the pig turns out to be the hunters' first successful catch, Ralph is infuriated that they have missed a potential rescue. Later, Ralph envisages relinquishing his position, though Piggy discourages him from doing so. Ralph, Simon, and Piggy yearn hopefully for some guidance from the adult world.

After twins Sam and Eric, who are in charge of keeping the smoke signal going, report possibly seeing the beast atop a mountain, Ralph and Jack investigate; they encounter the [corpse](#) and the open [parachute](#) of a [fighter pilot](#) who has landed on the island but mistake it as "the beast", asleep. Jack assembles the children with the conch and confirms the beast's existence to them. The meeting results in a [schism](#), splitting the children into two groups. Ralph's group focuses on preserving the signal fire. Jack becomes the chief of his own tribe, which focuses on hunting, while exploiting the iron-clad belief in the beast. As Jack and the hunters have already slain their first pig, they offer promises of meat, fun, and protection from the beast. Jack's tribe gradually becomes more animalistic, applying [face paint](#) while they hunt. The face paint becomes a [motif](#) which recurs throughout the story, with more and more intensity toward the end.

Simon, who had "cracked" and gone off by himself to think, finds the head of the hunters' dead pig on a stick, left as an offering to the beast. Simon envisions the pig head, now swarming with scavenging [flies](#), as the "[Lord of the Flies](#)" and believes that it is talking to him. Simon hears the pig identifying itself as the real "Beast" and disclosing the truth about itself—that the boys themselves "created" the beast, and that the real beast was inside them all. Simon also locates the dead parachutist who had been mistaken for the beast, and is the sole member of the group to recognise that it is a [cadaver](#) instead of a sleeping monster. Simon attempts to alert Jack's tribe that the "beast" is nothing more than a cadaver. While trying to tell Jack's tribe of this fact, Simon is caught in a ring during a primal dance. He is mistaken for the "beast" in the darkness, and Jack's tribe kills him, with Ralph, Piggy, Sam, and Eric in the ring also. Ralph, Piggy, Sam, and Eric later try to convince themselves that they did not take part in the murder.

Jack's tribe then raids Ralph's camp to steal Piggy's glasses – the glass lenses being the only source of starting a fire. Ralph's tribe journeys to Jack's tribe at Castle Rock to try to retrieve the glasses. In the ensuing confrontation, Roger drops a boulder, aiming at Piggy. Piggy is struck by the boulder, and the conch is smashed into pieces. Piggy flies through the air and falls forty feet onto the rocks below by the sea, and is killed. Sam and Eric are captured and tortured into joining Jack's tribe. Ralph is forced to flee.

The following morning, Jack leads his tribe on a manhunt for Ralph, and in the ensuing search set the forest alight. However, the fire and smoke attract the attention of a nearby [warship](#). Then a [naval officer](#) lands on the island near where Ralph is lying, and his sudden appearance brings the children's fighting to an abrupt halt. Upon learning of the boys' activities, the officer remarks that he would have expected better from British boys, initially believing them only to be playing a game. In the final scene, although now certain he will be rescued after all, Ralph starts crying.

Love Medicine—by Louise Erdrich.

The closeness and interconnectedness of the entire family/clan/tribe is emphasized. The Kashpaws and Pillagers were leaders of a community in the past before the move to the reservation. Their lineage and heritage was proud, but broken due to government policy that divided the clans and tribes.

Native American government policy is a recurrent topic, especially because the Kashpaw family is (according to Nector) "respected as the last hereditary leaders of this tribe." As we learn from Lyman later, the Pillagers were members of the Midewiwin (medicine men and women who were blessed by the Higher Power to help others): "The Pillagers had been the holdouts, the ones who wouldn't sign the treaties, the keepers of the birch bark scroll and practitioners of medicines so dark and helpful that the more devout Catholic Indians crossed their breasts when a Pillager happened to look straight at them." Native American politics and government policy actually turn out to be the family's saving grace as the novel describes gambling: "one of history's small ironies... to take money from retired white people who had farmed Indian hunting grounds,

worked Indian jobs, lived high while their neighbors lived low, looked down or never noticed who was starving, who was lost" (327).

Loss of a cultural identity and Native American spirituality characterizes and separates the two generations in *Love Medicine*: "They gave you worthless land to start with and then they chopped it out from under your feet. They took your kids away and stuffed the English language in their mouth." The generations that Erdrich covers experience that loss of culture. The youngest family members (or, perhaps those who attend American schools) are socialized in an American tradition rather than a Native American tradition. With each passing of a generation, vital knowledge of the culture seems to be lost.

Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock (The)—T. S. Eliot

Because the poem is concerned primarily with the irregular musings of the narrator, it can be difficult to interpret. [Laurence Perrine](#) wrote, "[the poem] presents the apparently random thoughts going through a person's head within a certain time interval, in which the transitional links are psychological rather than logical".^[16] This stylistic choice makes it difficult to determine exactly what is literal and what is symbolic. On the surface, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" relays the thoughts of a sexually frustrated middle-aged man who wants to say something but is afraid to do so, and ultimately does not.^{[16][17]} The dispute, however, lies in to whom Prufrock is speaking, whether he is actually *going* anywhere, what he wants to say, and to what the various images refer.

The intended audience is not evident. Some believe that Prufrock is talking to another person^[18] or directly to the reader,^[19] while others believe Prufrock's monologue is internal. Perrine writes "The 'you and I' of the first line are divided parts of Prufrock's own nature",^[16] while Mutlu Konuk Blasing suggests that the "you and I" refers to the relationship between the dilemmas of the character and the author.^[20] Similarly, critics dispute whether Prufrock is going somewhere during the course of the poem. In the first half of the poem, Prufrock uses various outdoor images (the sky, streets, cheap restaurants and hotels, fog), and talks about how there will be time for various things before "the taking of toast and tea", and "time to turn back and descend the stair." This has led many to believe that Prufrock is on his way to an afternoon tea, in which he is preparing to ask this "overwhelming question".^[16] Others, however, believe that Prufrock is not physically going anywhere, but rather, is playing through it in his mind.^{[19][20]}

Perhaps the most significant dispute lies over the "overwhelming question" that Prufrock is trying to ask. Many believe that Prufrock is trying to tell a woman of his romantic interest in her,^[16] pointing to the various images of women's arms and clothing and the final few lines in which Prufrock laments that the mermaids will not sing to him. Others, however, believe that Prufrock is trying to express some deeper philosophical insight or disillusionment with society, but fears rejection, pointing to statements that express a disillusionment with society such as "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" (line 51). Many believe that the poem is a criticism of [Edwardian](#) society and Prufrock's dilemma represents the inability to live a meaningful existence in the modern world.^[21] McCoy and Harlan wrote "For many readers in the 1920s, Prufrock seemed to epitomize the frustration and impotence of the modern individual. He seemed to represent thwarted desires and modern disillusionment."^[19]

As the poem uses the [stream of consciousness](#) technique, it is often difficult to determine what is meant to be interpreted literally or symbolically. In general, Eliot uses imagery which is indicative of Prufrock's character,^[16] representing aging and decay. For example, "When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherized upon a table" (lines 2-3), the "sawdust restaurants" and "cheap hotels," the yellow fog, and the afternoon "Asleep...tired... or it malingers" (line 77), are reminiscent of languor and decay, while Prufrock's various concerns about his hair and teeth, as well as the mermaids "Combing the white hair of the waves blown back / When the wind blows the water white and black," show his concern over aging.

Loved One (The)—by Evelyn Waugh.

Sir Ambrose Abercrombie visits housemates Dennis Barlow and Sir Francis Hinsley to express his concern about Barlow's new job and how it reflects on the British enclave in Hollywood, which is also taken as an announcement of Barlow's impending exclusion from British society. Barlow reports to his job at the Happier Hunting Ground, a pet cemetery and funeral service, and picks up a couple's dead [Sealyham Terrier](#).

Due to the difficulty he is having rebranding actress Juanita del Pablo as an Irish starlet (having previously rebranded Baby Aaronson as del Pablo), he is sent to work from home. After his secretary stops showing up, he ventures to Megalopolitan Studios and finds a man named [Lorenzo Medici](#) in his office. After working his way through the bureaucracy he finds he has been unceremoniously fired. In the next scene, Abercrombie and other British expatriates are discussing Hinsley's suicide and the funeral arrangements.

Barlow, tasked with making Hinsley's funeral arrangements, visits Whispering Glades. There he is transfixed by the cosmetician Aimée Thanatogenos, though he has yet to learn her name.

Barlow continues with the funeral arrangements while Hinsley's body arrives at Whispering Glades and is tended to by Thanatogenos and the senior mortician Mr. Joyboy.

Barlow visits Whispering Glades seeking inspiration for Hinsley's funeral ode. While touring a British-themed section of the cemetery, he meets Thanatogenos and begins his courtship of her when she learns he is a poet.

Six weeks later, Thanatogenos is torn between her very different affections for Barlow and Joyboy. She writes to the advice columnist "The Guru Brahmin" for advice. Joyboy invites her over for dinner and he meets his mother.

The office of the Guru Brahmin consists of "two gloomy men and a bright young secretary." Tasked with responding to Thanatogenos' letters is Mr. Slump, a grim drunk who advises that she marry Joyboy. She instead decides to marry Barlow.

Joyboy learns that the poems Barlow has been wooing Thanatogenos with are not his own, and arranges that Thanatogenos, who still does not know Barlow works for a pet cemetery, attend the funeral of her mother's parrot at the Happier Hunting Ground.

Some time after Thanatogenos' discovery of Barlow's deceptions, Barlow reads the announcement of her engagement to Joyboy. Barlow meets with her and she is again torn between the two men. She tracks down Mr. Slump to seek the advice of the Guru Brahmin and finds him, via telephone, in a bar after he has been fired. Slump tells her to jump off a building. She commits suicide by injecting herself with chemicals in Joyboy's workroom at Whispering Glades.

Joyboy discovers Thanatogenos' body and seeks assistance from Barlow. Then Barlow meets with Abercrombie, who, fearing Barlow's plans to become a non-sectarian funeral pastor will further damage the image of the British enclave, pays his passage back to England. Joyboy returns, unaware of Barlow's impending departure, and in exchange for all his savings, Barlow says he will leave town so it will appear that he ran away with Thanatogenos. After cremating the body, Barlow signs Joyboy up for the Happier Hunting Ground annual postcard service so every year Joyboy will receive a card reading "Your little Aimée is wagging her tail in heaven tonight, thinking of you."

Lysistrata—by Aristophanes.

Lys.: There are a lot of things about us women

That sadden me, considering how men

See us as rascals. Cal.: As indeed we are!^[4]

These lines, spoken by Lysistrata and her friend Calonice (Greek: 'Kalonike') at the beginning of the play, set the scene for the action that follows. Women, as represented by Calonice, are sly hedonists in need of firm guidance and direction. Lysistrata however is an extraordinary woman with a large sense of individual responsibility. She has convened a meeting of women from various city states in Greece (there is no mention of how she managed this feat) and, very soon after confiding in her friend about her concerns for the female sex, the women begin arriving. With support from Lampito, the Spartan, Lysistrata persuades the other women to withhold sexual privileges from their menfolk as a means of forcing them to end the interminable [Peloponnesian War](#). The women are very reluctant but the deal is sealed with a solemn oath around a wine bowl, Lysistrata choosing the words and Calonice repeating them on behalf of the other women. It is a long and detailed oath, in which the women abjure all their sexual pleasures, including *The Lioness on The Cheese Grater* (a sexual position). Soon after the oath is finished, a cry of triumph is heard from the nearby [Acropolis](#) – the old women of Athens have seized control of it at Lysistrata's instigation, since it holds the state treasury, without which the men cannot long continue to fund their war. Lampito goes off to spread the word of revolt and the other women retreat behind the barred gates of the Acropolis to await the men's response.

A Chorus of Old Men arrives, intent on burning down the gate of the Acropolis if the women don't open up. Encumbered with heavy timbers, inconvenienced with smoke and burdened with old age, they are still making preparations to assault the gate when a Chorus of Old Women arrives, bearing pitchers of water. The Old Women complain about the difficulty they had getting the water but they are ready for a fight in defense of their younger comrades. Threats are exchanged, water beats fire and the Old Men are discomfited with a soaking. The magistrate then arrives with some [Scythian](#) archers (the Athenian version of police constables). He reflects on the hysterical nature of women, their devotion to wine, promiscuous sex and exotic cults (such as to [Sabazius](#) and [Adonis](#)) but above all he blames men for poor supervision of their womenfolk. He has come for silver from the state treasury to buy oars for the fleet and he instructs his Scythians to begin levering open the gate. However, they are quickly overwhelmed by groups of unruly women with such unruly names as *σπερμαγοραιολεκιθολαχανοπώλιδες* (seed-market-porridge-vegetable-sellers) and *σκοροδοπανδοκεντριαρτοπώλιδες* (garlic-innkeeping-bread-sellers).^[5] Lysistrata restores order and she allows the magistrate to question her. She explains to him the frustrations women feel at a time of war when the men make stupid decisions that affect everyone, and their wives' opinions are not listened to. She drapes her headdress over him, gives him a basket of wool and tells him that war will be a woman's business from now on. She then explains the pity she feels for young, childless women, ageing at home while the men are away on endless campaigns. When the magistrate points out that men also age, she reminds him that men can marry at any age whereas a woman has only a short time before she is considered too old. She then dresses the magistrate like a corpse for laying out, with a wreath and a fillet, and advises him that he's dead. Outraged at these indignities, he storms off to report the incident to his colleagues, while Lysistrata returns to the Acropolis. The debate or *agon* is continued between the Chorus of Old Men and the Chorus of Old Women until Lysistrata returns to the stage with some news — her comrades are desperate for sex and they are beginning to desert on the silliest pretexts (for example, one woman says she has to go home to air her fabrics by spreading them on the bed). After rallying her comrades and restoring their discipline, Lysistrata again returns to the Acropolis to continue waiting for the men's surrender.

A man soon appears, desperate for sex. It is Cinesias, the husband of Myrrhine. Lysistrata instructs her to torture him and Myrrhine then informs Cinesias that she can't have sex with him until he stops the war. He promptly agrees to these terms and the young couple prepares for sex on the

spot. Myrrhine fetches a bed, then a mattress, then a pillow, then a blanket, then a flask of oil, exasperating her husband with delays until finally disappointing him completely by locking herself in the Acropolis again. The Chorus of Old Men commiserates with the young man in a plaintive song. A Spartan herald then appears with a large burden (an erection) scarcely hidden inside his tunic and he requests to see the ruling council to arrange peace talks. The magistrate, now also sporting a prodigious burden, laughs at the herald's embarrassing situation but agrees that peace talks should begin. They go off to fetch the delegates; and, while they are gone, the Old Women make overtures to the Old Men. The Old Men are content to be comforted and fussed over by the Old Women; and thereupon the two Choruses merge, singing and dancing in unison. Peace talks commence and Lysistrata introduces the Spartan and Athenian delegates to a gorgeous young woman called Reconciliation. The delegates cannot take their eyes off the young woman; and meanwhile, Lysistrata scolds both sides for past errors of judgment. The delegates briefly squabble over the peace terms; but, with Reconciliation before them and the burden of sexual deprivation still heavy upon them, they quickly overcome their differences and retire to the Acropolis for celebrations. Another choral song follows; and, after a bit of humorous dialogue between drunken dinner guests, the celebrants all return to the stage for a final round of songs, the men and women dancing together.

Macbeth—by William Shakespeare.

The first act of the play opens amidst thunder and lightning with the Three Witches deciding that their next meeting shall be with Macbeth. In the following scene, a wounded sergeant reports to [King Duncan](#) of [Scotland](#) that his generals — Macbeth, who is the [Thane](#) of [Glamis](#), and [Banquo](#) — have just defeated the allied forces of [Norway](#) and Ireland, who were led by the traitor Macdonwald. Macbeth, the King's kinsman, is praised for his bravery and fighting prowess.

The scene changes. Macbeth and Banquo enter, discussing the weather and their victory ("So foul and fair a day I have not seen").^[1] As they wander onto a heath, the Three Witches enter, who have waited to greet them with prophecies. Even though Banquo challenges them first, they address Macbeth. The first witch hails Macbeth as "Thane of Glamis," the second as "Thane of Cawdor," and the third proclaims that he shall "be King hereafter." Macbeth appears to be stunned to silence, so again Banquo challenges them. The witches inform Banquo that he will father a line of kings, though he himself will not be one. While the two men wonder at these pronouncements, the witches vanish, and another thane, [Ross](#), a messenger from the King, arrives and informs Macbeth of his newly bestowed title: Thane of Cawdor. The first prophecy is thus fulfilled. Immediately, Macbeth begins to harbour ambitions of becoming king.

Macbeth writes to his wife about the witches' prophecies. When Duncan decides to stay at the Macbeths' castle at [Inverness](#), [Lady Macbeth](#) hatches a plan to murder him and secure the throne for her husband. Although Macbeth raises concerns about the regicide, Lady Macbeth eventually persuades him, by challenging his manhood, to follow her plan.

On the night of the king's visit, Macbeth hallucinates before entering Duncan's quarters, believing he sees a bloody dagger. Macbeth later reunites with his wife, having "done the deed." He is so shaken that Lady Macbeth has to take charge. In accordance with her plan, she frames Duncan's sleeping servants for the murder by placing bloody daggers on them. Early the next morning, Lennox, a Scottish nobleman, and [Macduff](#), the loyal [Thane of Fife](#), arrive.^[2] A porter opens the gate and Macbeth leads them to the king's chamber, where Macduff discovers Duncan's corpse. In a feigned fit of anger, Macbeth murders the guards before they can protest their innocence. Macduff is immediately suspicious of Macbeth, but does not reveal his suspicions publicly. Fearing for their lives, Duncan's sons flee, [Malcolm](#) to England and [Donalbain](#) to Ireland. The rightful heirs' flight makes them suspects and Macbeth assumes the throne as the new [King of Scotland](#) as a kinsman of the dead king. Banquo reveals this to the audience, and while skeptical of the new King Macbeth, remembers the witches' prophecy about him.

Despite his success, Macbeth, also aware of this prophecy, remains uneasy about this, so Macbeth invites Banquo to a royal [banquet](#), where he discovers that Banquo and his young son, [Fleance](#), will be riding out that night. He hires two men to kill them; a third murderer appears in the park before the murder. The assassins succeed in killing Banquo, but Fleance escapes. At the banquet, Macbeth invites his lords and Lady Macbeth to a night of drinking and merriment. Banquo's [ghost](#) enters and sits in Macbeth's place. Being visible only to Macbeth, he grows furious. The rest panic at the sight of Macbeth raging at an empty chair, until a desperate Lady Macbeth tells them that her husband is merely afflicted with a familiar and harmless malady. The ghost departs and returns once more, causing the same riotous anger in Macbeth. This time, the lords flee.

Macbeth, disturbed, visits the Three Witches once more. They conjure up three spirits with three further warnings and prophecies: an armed head tells him to, "beware Macduff,"^[3] a bloody child, that warns, "none of woman born / shall harm Macbeth," and a crowned child holding a tree, stating Macbeth will "never vanquish'd be until / [Great Birnam Wood](#) to high [Dunsinane Hill](#) / shall come against him". Macbeth is informed that Macduff is in exile in England. Macbeth, believing that he is safe, puts to death everyone in Macduff's castle, including [Macduff's wife](#) and their young son.

Lady Macbeth becomes wracked with guilt from the crimes she and her husband have committed. She sleepwalks and tries to wash imaginary bloodstains from her hands, all the while speaking of the terrible things she knows she pressed her husband to do.

In England, Macduff is informed by Ross that his "castle is surprised; [his] wife and babes / Savagely slaughter'd."^[4] Macbeth, now viewed as a tyrant, sees many of his thanes defecting. Malcolm leads an army, along with Macduff and Englishmen [Siward](#) (the Elder), the [Earl of Northumberland](#), against Dunsinane Castle. While encamped in Birnam Wood, the soldiers are ordered to cut down and carry tree limbs to camouflage their numbers, thus fulfilling the witches' third prophecy. Meanwhile, Macbeth delivers a [soliloquy](#) ("[Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow](#)")^[5] upon his learning of Lady Macbeth's death (the cause is undisclosed, and some assume that she committed suicide, as Malcolm's last reference to her reveals "'tis thought, by self and violent hands / Took off her life").^[6]

A battle culminates in the slaying of the young Siward and Macduff's confrontation with Macbeth. Macbeth boasts that he has no reason to fear Macduff, for he cannot be killed by any man born of woman. Macduff declares that he was "from his mother's womb / Untimely ripp'd"^[7] (i.e., born by [Caesarean section](#)) and was not "of woman born" (an example of a [literary quibble](#)), fulfilling the second prophecy. Macbeth realizes too late that he has misinterpreted the witches' words. Macduff beheads Macbeth offstage and thereby fulfills the first prophecy.

Although Malcolm, and not Fleance, is placed on the throne, the witches' prophecy concerning Banquo ("Thou shalt get kings") was known to the audience of Shakespeare's time to be true: James VI of Scotland (later also [James I of England](#)) was supposedly a descendant of Banquo.^[8]

Madame Bovary—by Gustav Flaubert.

Madame Bovary takes place in provincial northern [France](#), near the town of [Rouen](#) in [Normandy](#). The story begins and ends with Charles Bovary, a stolid, kindhearted man without much ability or ambition. As the novel opens, Charles is a shy, oddly-dressed teenager arriving at a new school amidst the ridicule of his new classmates. Later, Charles struggles his way to a second-rate medical degree and becomes an *officier de santé* in the Public Health Service. His mother chooses a wife for him, an unpleasant but supposedly rich widow, and Charles sets out to build a practice in the village of Tostes (now [Tôtes](#)).

One day, Charles visits a local farm to set the owner's broken leg, and meets his client's daughter, Emma Rouault. Emma is a beautiful, daintily-dressed young woman who has received a "good education" in a convent and who has a latent but powerful yearning for luxury and romance imbibed from the popular novels she has read. Charles is immediately attracted to her, and begins checking on his patient far more often than necessary until his wife's jealousy puts a stop to the visits. When his wife dies, Charles waits a decent interval, then begins courting Emma in earnest. Her father gives his consent, and Emma and Charles are married.

At this point, the novel begins to focus on Emma. Charles means well, but is boring and clumsy, and after he and Emma attend a ball given by the [Marquis d'Andervilliers](#), Emma grows disillusioned with married life and becomes dull and listless. Charles consequently decides that his wife needs a change of scenery, and moves from the village of Tostes into a larger, but equally stultifying market town, Yonville (traditionally based on the town of [Ry](#)). Here, Emma gives birth to a daughter, Berthe; however, motherhood, too, proves to be a disappointment to Emma. She then becomes infatuated with one of the first intelligent young men she meets in Yonville, a young law student, Léon Dupuis, who seems to share her appreciation for "the finer things in life", and who returns her admiration. Out of fear and shame, however, Emma hides her love for Léon and her contempt for Charles, and plays the role of the devoted wife and mother, all the while consoling herself with thoughts and self-congratulations of her own virtue. Finally, in despair of ever gaining Emma's affection, Léon departs to study in [Paris](#).

One day, a rich and rakish landowner, Rodolphe Boulanger, brings a servant to the doctor's office to be bled. He casts his eye over Emma and decides she is ripe for [seduction](#). To this end, he invites Emma to go riding with him for the sake of her health; solicitous only for Emma's health, Charles embraces the plan, suspecting nothing. A four-year affair follows. Swept away by romantic fantasy, Emma risks compromising herself with indiscreet letters and visits to her lover, and finally insists on making a plan to run away with him. Rodolphe, however, has no intention of carrying Emma off, and ends the relationship on the eve of the great elopement with an apologetic, self-excusing letter delivered at the bottom of a basket of apricots. The shock is so great that Emma falls deathly ill, and briefly turns to religion.

When Emma is nearly fully recovered, she and Charles attend the [opera](#), on Charles' insistence, in nearby [Rouen](#). The opera reawakens Emma's passions, and she re-encounters Léon who, now educated and working in Rouen, is also attending the opera. They begin an affair. While Charles believes that she is taking piano lessons, Emma travels to the city each week to meet Léon, always in the same room of the same hotel, which the two come to view as their "home." The love affair is, at first, ecstatic; then, by degrees, Léon grows bored with Emma's emotional excesses, and Emma grows ambivalent about Léon, who becoming himself more like the mistress in the relationship, compares poorly, at least implicitly, to the rakish and domineering Rodolphe. Meanwhile, Emma, given over to vanity, purchases increasing amounts of luxury items on credit from the crafty merchant, Lheureux, who arranges for her to obtain [power of attorney](#) over Charles' estate, and crushing levels of debts mount quickly.

When Lheureux calls in Bovary's debt, Emma pleads for money from several people, including Léon and Rodolphe, only to be turned down. In despair, she swallows [arsenic](#) and dies an agonizing death; even the romance of suicide fails her. Charles, heartbroken, abandons himself to grief, preserves Emma's room as if it is a shrine, and in an attempt to keep her memory alive, adopts several of her attitudes and tastes. In his last months, he stops working and lives off the sale of his possessions. When he by chance discovers Rodolphe and Léon's love letters, he still tries to understand and forgive. Soon after, he becomes reclusive; what has not already been sold of his possessions is seized to pay off Lheureux, and he dies, leaving his young daughter Berthe to live with distant relatives and she is eventually sent to work at a cotton mill.

Madame Butterfly—by Giacomo Puccini.

In 1904, A U.S. Naval officer named Pinkerton rents a house on a hill in Nagasaki, Japan for him and his soon-to-be wife, nicknamed Butterfly. Her real name is Cio-Cio San, and she is a 15 year-old Japanese girl whom he secretly intends to divorce once he finds a proper American wife, since Japanese divorce laws are very lax. The wedding is to take place at the house, and Butterfly is so excited to marry an American that earlier, she secretly converted from Buddhism to Christianity. Her uncle Bonze, a Buddhist priest, finds out about her conversion, comes to the house, curses her and orders all the guests to leave, which they do while renouncing her. Pinkerton and Butterfly sing a duet and marry anyway.

Three years later, Butterfly is still waiting for Pinkerton to return, as he had left shortly after their wedding. Her bridesmaid Suzuki keeps trying to convince her he's not coming back, but she won't listen to her. Goro, the marriage broker who arranged her marriage, keeps trying to marry her off again, but she won't listen to him either. The American Consul, Sharpless, comes to the house with a letter from Pinkerton to him, in which he is asked to break the news to Butterfly that he is coming back to Japan, but not to her. He begins to read it, but can't bring himself to finish it because Butterfly becomes very excited to hear Pinkerton is coming back. She reveals that she had Pinkerton's son after he left, but she has not told him.

From the hill house, Butterfly sees Pinkerton's ship arriving in the harbor. She and Suzuki get herself and the house ready and wait for him. Suzuki and the child fall asleep, but Butterfly stays up all night waiting for him to arrive.

Suzuki wakes up in the morning and Butterfly finally falls asleep. Sharpless and Pinkerton arrive at the house, along with Pinkerton's new American wife, Kate. They have come because Kate agreed to raise the child, but as Pinkerton sees how Butterfly decorated the house for his return, he realizes he's made a huge mistake. He admits that he's a coward and cannot face her, so Suzuki, Sharpless and Kate break the news to her. She agrees to give up her child if Pinkerton comes himself to see her. In the meantime, she apologizes to a statue of Buddha, then says goodbye to her son and blindfolds him. She goes behind a screen and cuts herself with her father's knife. She staggers back, kisses her son and dies. Pinkerton rushes in, but he is too late.

Main Street—by Sinclair Lewis.

Carol Milford is a liberal, free-spirited young woman, reared in the metropolis of [Saint Paul, Minnesota](#). She marries Will Kennicott, a doctor, who is a small-town boy at heart.

When they marry, Will convinces her to live in his home-town of Gopher Prairie, Minnesota (a town modeled on [Sauk Centre](#), Minnesota, the author's birthplace). Carol is appalled at the backwardness of Gopher Prairie. But her disdain for the town's physical ugliness and smug conservatism compels her to reform it.

She speaks with its members about progressive changes, joins women's clubs, distributes literature, and holds parties to liven up Gopher Prairie's inhabitants. Despite her friendly, but ineffective efforts, she is constantly derided by the leading cliques.

She finds comfort and companionship outside her social class. These companions are taken from her one by one.

In her unhappiness, Carol leaves her husband and moves for a time to Washington, D.C., but she eventually returns. Nevertheless, Carol does not feel defeated:

"I do not admit that *Main Street* is as beautiful as it should be! I do not admit that dish-washing is enough to satisfy all women!"

Major Barbara—by George Bernard Shaw.

Lady Britomart, the daughter of a [British earl](#), and her son Stephen discuss a source of income for her grown daughters Sarah, who is engaged to Charles Lomax, and Barbara, who is engaged to Adolphus Cusins (a [scholar](#) of [Greek literature](#)). Lady Britomart leads Stephen to accept her decision that they must ask her estranged husband, Andrew Undershaft, for financial help. Mr. Undershaft is a successful and wealthy [businessman](#) who has made millions of pounds from his munitions factory, which manufactures the world famous Undershaft guns, cannons, torpedoes, submarines and aerial battleships.

When their children were still small, the Undershafts separated; now grown up, the children have not seen their father since, and Lady Britomart has raised them by herself. During their reunion, Undershaft learns that Barbara is a Major in The Salvation Army who works at their shelter in [West Ham](#), east London. Barbara and Mr. Undershaft agree that he will visit Barbara's Army shelter, if she will then visit his munitions factory.

When he visits the shelter, Mr. Undershaft is impressed with Barbara's handling of the various people who seek [social services](#) from the Salvation Army: she treats them with patience, firmness, and sincerity. Undershaft and Cusins discuss the question of Barbara's commitment to The Salvation Army, and Undershaft decides he must overcome Barbara's moral horror of his occupation. He declares that he will therefore "buy" the Salvation Army. He makes a sizeable donation, matching another donation from a whisky distiller. Barbara wants the Salvation Army to refuse the money because it comes from the armaments and alcohol industries, but her supervising officer eagerly accepts it. Barbara sadly leaves the shelter in disillusionment.

According to tradition, the heir to the Undershaft fortune must be an orphan who can be groomed to run the factory. Lady Britomart tries to convince Undershaft to bequeath the business to his son Stephen, but he will not. He says that the best way to keep the factory in the family is to find a [foundling](#) and marry him to Barbara. Later, Barbara and the rest of her family accompany her father to his munitions factory. They are all impressed by its size and organisation. Cusins declares that he is a foundling, and is thus eligible to inherit the business. Undershaft eventually overcomes Cusins' moral scruples about the nature of the business. Cusins' acceptance makes Barbara more content to marry him, not less, because bringing a message of salvation to the factory workers, rather than to London slum-dwellers, will bring her more fulfilment.

Man and Superman—by George Bernard Shaw.

Man and Superman by [George Bernard Shaw](#) was written in 1903 as a four act drama, responding to those who had questioned Shaw as to why he had never written a play based on the [Don Juan](#) theme. *Man and Superman* opened at [The Royal Court Theatre](#) in London on 23 May 1905 without the performance of the 3rd Act. A part of the act, *Don Juan in Hell* (Act 3, Scene 2), was performed when the drama was staged on June 4, 1907 at the Royal Court. The play was not produced in its entirety until 1915 by the Travelling Repertory Company at the Lyceum Theatre, [Edinburgh](#).

The long third act of the play is often cut. *Don Juan in Hell* consists of a philosophical debate between Don Juan (played by the same actor who plays Jack Tanner), and the [Devil](#), with Doña Ana (Ann) and the [Statue](#) of Don Gonzalo, Ana's father (Roebuck Ramsden, an aged acquaintance of Tanner's and Ann's Guardian) looking on. *Don Juan in Hell* is often performed separately as a play in its own right, most famously in the 50's in a concert version with [Charles Boyer](#) as Don Juan, [Charles Laughton](#) as the Devil, [Cedric Hardwicke](#) as the Commander, and [Agnes Moorehead](#) as Doña Ana. This version was also released as a [spoken word album](#) on LP, but has yet to appear on CD. However, the complete performance recording is now available at various sites on the Internet.

Although *Man and Superman* can be performed as a light [comedy of manners](#) Shaw intended the drama to be something much deeper, as suggested by the title. This title comes from [Friedrich Nietzsche's](#) philosophical ideas about the "[Übermensch](#)" ("Superman"). The plot centers on John Tanner, author of "The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion," which is published with the play as a 58-page appendix. Tanner is a confirmed bachelor despite the pursuits of Ann Whitefield and her persistent efforts to make him marry her. Ann is referred to as "the [Life Force](#)" and represents Shaw's view that in every culture, it is the women who force the men to marry them rather than the men who take the initiative.

Mansfield Park—by Jane Austen.

The main character, [Fanny Price](#), is a young girl from a relatively poor family, raised by her rich uncle and aunt, Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, at Mansfield Park. She grows up with her four cousins, [Tom Bertram](#), [Edmund Bertram](#), [Maria Bertram](#) and Julia, but is always treated as inferior to them; only Edmund shows her real kindness. He is also the most virtuous of the siblings: Maria and Julia are vain and spoiled, while Tom is an irresponsible gambler. Over time, Fanny's gratitude for Edmund's kindness secretly grows into romantic love.

When the children have grown up, the stern patriarch Sir Thomas leaves for a year so he can deal with problems on his plantation in [Antigua](#). The fashionable and worldly [Henry Crawford](#) and his sister [Mary Crawford](#) arrive in the village, and stay with their sister, the Parson's wife. The arrival of the Crawfords disrupts the staid world of Mansfield and sparks a series of romantic entanglements. Mary and Edmund begin to form an attachment, though Edmund often worries that her manners are fashionable and her conversation often cynical, masking a lack of firm principle. However, she is engaging, beautiful and charming, and goes out of her way to befriend Fanny. Fanny fears that Mary has enchanted Edmund, and love has blinded him to her flaws. Henry plays with the affections of both Maria and Julia, despite Maria being already engaged to the dull, but very rich, Mr. Rushworth. Maria believes that Henry is really in love with her, and treats Mr. Rushworth coldly, invoking his jealousy. Fanny is little observed in the family circle—her presence is often overlooked and she frequently witnesses Maria and Henry in compromising situations.

Encouraged by Tom and his friend Mr. Yates, the young people decide to put on [Elizabeth Inchbald's](#) play [Lovers' Vows](#); Edmund and Fanny both initially oppose the plan, believing Sir Thomas would disapprove and feeling that the subject matter of the play is not appropriate. Edmund is eventually swayed, reluctantly agreeing to play the part of Anhalt, the lover of the character played by Mary Crawford, to prevent the others bringing an outsider in to take the role. As well as giving Mary and Edmund a vehicle to talk about love and marriage, the play provides a pretext for Henry and Maria to flirt in public. Sir Thomas arrives unexpectedly in the middle of a rehearsal, which ends the plan. Henry leaves, and Maria is crushed; realising that Henry does not love her, she marries Mr. Rushworth and they leave for [Brighton](#), taking Julia with them. Meanwhile, Fanny's improved looks and pleasant temper endear her to Sir Thomas, who pays more attention to her care.

Henry returns to Mansfield Park and decides to amuse himself by making Fanny fall in love with him. However, her genuine gentleness and kindness cause him to fall in love with her instead. When he proposes marriage, Fanny's disgust at his improper flirtations with her cousins, as well as her love for Edmund, cause her to reject him. The Bertrams are dismayed, since it is an extremely advantageous match for a poor girl like Fanny. Sir Thomas rebukes her for ingratitude. Henry decides he will continue to pursue Fanny, hoping that in time she will change her mind by coming to believe he is constant. Sir Thomas supports a plan for Fanny to pay a visit to her relatively poor family in [Portsmouth](#), hoping that as Fanny suffers from the lack of comforts there, she will realize the usefulness of a good income. Henry pays Fanny a visit in Portsmouth, to convince her that he has changed and is worthy of her affection. Fanny's attitude begins to soften but she still maintains that she will not marry him.

Henry leaves for London, and shortly afterward, Fanny learns of a scandal involving Henry and Maria. The two had met again and rekindled their flirtation, which quickly had developed into an affair. The affair is discovered and hinted at in a national newspaper; Maria leaves her husband's house and elopes with Henry. The scandal is terrible and the affair results in Maria's divorce; however Henry refuses to marry her. To make matters worse, the dissolute Tom has taken ill, and Julia has eloped with Mr. Yates. Fanny returns to Mansfield Park to comfort her aunt and uncle and to help take care of Tom.

Although Edmund knows that marriage to Mary is now impossible because of the scandal between their relations, he goes to see her one last time. During the interview, it becomes clear that Mary does not condemn Henry and Maria's adultery, only that they were caught. Her main concern is covering it up and she implies that if Fanny had accepted Henry, he would have been too busy and happy to have an affair, and would have been content with merely a flirtation. This reveals Mary's true nature to Edmund, who realises he had idealised her as someone she is not. He tells her so and returns to Mansfield and his living as a Parson at Thornton Lacey, "At exactly the time it should be so, and not a week sooner." Edmund realises how important Fanny is to him, declares his love for her and they are married. Tom recovers from his illness, a steadier and better man for it, Maria is banished by her family to live "in another country," and Julia's elopement turns out to be not such a desperate business after all. Austen points out that if only Crawford had persisted in being steadfast to Fanny, and not succumbed to the affair with Maria, Fanny eventually would have accepted his marriage proposal—especially after Edmund had married Mary.

Master Harold ...and the Boys—by Athol Fugard.

Seventeen year-old Hally spends time with two middle-aged [African](#) servants, Sam and Willie, whom he has known all his life. On a rainy afternoon, Sam and Willie are practicing [ballroom](#) steps in preparation for a major competition. Sam is quickly characterized as being the more worldly of the two. When Willie, in broken English, describes his ballroom partner as lacking enthusiasm, Sam correctly diagnoses the problem: Willie beats her if she doesn't know the steps.

Hally then arrives from school. Sam is on an equal intellectual footing with Hally; Willie, for his part, always calls the white boy "Master Harold." The conversation moves from Hally's schoolwork, to an intellectual discussion on "A Man of Magnitude", to flashbacks of Hally, Sam and Willie when they lived in a Boarding House. Hally warmly remembers the simple act of flying a kite Sam had made for him out of junk, which we learn later, Sam made to cheer Hally up after Hally was embarrassed greatly by his father's drunkenness. Conversation then turns to Hally's 500-word [English](#) composition. The play reaches an emotional apex as the beauty of the [ballroom dancing](#) floor ("a world without collisions") is used as a transcendent [metaphor](#) for life and a creative paper topic... But almost immediately despair returns: Hally's tyrannical father has been in the hospital recently, undergoing medical complications due to the leg he lost in [World War II](#), but it appears that today he is coming home. Hally, utterly distraught with this news, unleashes years of anger and pain on his two black friends, creating possibly permanent rifts in his relationship with them. For the first time, Hally begins to treat Sam and Willie as subservient help, rather than as friends or playmates. Sam is hurt but understands that Hally is really causing himself the most pain. There is a glimmer of hope for reconciliation at the end, when Sam addresses Hally by his name again and asks to start over the next day, hearkening back to the simple days of the kite. Hally responds "It's still raining, Sam. You can't fly kites on rainy days, remember," then walks out into the rain.

Mayor of Casterbridge (The)—by Thomas Hardy.

At a country fair near Casterbridge, Wessex, a young hay-trusser named Michael Henchard overindulges in rum-laced [furmity](#) and quarrels with his wife, Susan. Spurred by alcohol, he decides to [auction off his wife](#) and baby daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, to a sailor, Mr. Newson, for five

[guineas](#). Once sober the next day, he is too late to recover his family, particularly since his reluctance to reveal his own bad conduct keeps him from conducting an effective search. When he realizes that his wife and daughter are gone, probably for good, he swears not to touch liquor again for as many years as he has lived so far (twenty-one).

Eighteen years later, Henchard, now a successful grain merchant, is the eponymous Mayor of Casterbridge, known for his staunch sobriety. He is well respected for his financial acumen and his work ethic, but he is not well liked. Impulsive, selfish behavior and a violent temper are still part of his character, as are dishonesty and secretive activity.

All these years, Henchard has kept the details surrounding the "loss" of his wife a secret. The people in Casterbridge believe he is a widower, although he never explicitly says that his first wife died. He lies by omission instead, allowing other people to believe something false. Over time he finds it convenient to believe Susan probably is dead. While traveling to the island of Jersey on business, Henchard falls in love with a young woman named Lucette Le Sueur, who nurses him back to health after an illness. The book implies that Lucette (Lucetta, in English) and Henchard have a sexual relationship, and Lucetta's reputation is ruined by her association with Henchard. When Henchard returns to Casterbridge he leaves Lucetta to face the social consequences of their fling. In order to rejoin polite society she must marry him, but there is a problem: Henchard is already technically married. Although Henchard never told Lucetta exactly how he "lost" his wife to begin with, he does tell her he has a wife who "is dead probably dead, but who may return". Besotted, Lucetta develops a relationship with him despite the risk. Yet just as Henchard is about to send for Lucetta, Susan unexpectedly appears in Casterbridge with her daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, who is now fully grown. Susan and Elizabeth-Jane are both very poor. Newson appears to have been lost at sea, and without means to earn an income Susan is looking for Henchard again. Susan, who is not a very intelligent or sophisticated woman, believed for a long time that her "marriage" to Newson was perfectly legitimate. Only recently, just before Newson's disappearance, had Susan begun to question whether or not she was still legally married to Henchard.

Just as Susan and Elizabeth-Jane arrive in town, a tidy Scotsman, Donald Farfrae, is passing through on his way to America. The energetic, amiable Farfrae happens to be in Henchard's line of work. He has experience as a grain and corn merchant, and is on the cutting edge of agricultural science. He befriends Henchard and helps him out of a bad financial situation by giving him some timely advice. Henchard persuades him to stay and offers him a job as his corn [factor](#), rudely dismissing a man named Jopp to whom he had already offered the job. Hiring Farfrae is a stroke of business genius for Henchard, who although hardworking is not well educated. Henchard also makes Farfrae a close friend and confides in him about his past history and personal life.

Henchard is also reunited with Susan and the fully grown Elizabeth-Jane. To preserve appearances, Henchard sets Susan and Elizabeth-Jane up in a nearby house. He pretends to court Susan, and marries her. Both Henchard and Elizabeth-Jane's mother keep their past history from their daughter. Henchard also keeps Lucetta a secret. He writes to her, informing her that their marriage is off. Lucetta is devastated and asks for the return of her letters. Henchard attempts to return them, but Lucetta misses the appointment owing to a family emergency that is not explained until later in the book.

The return of his wife and daughter sets in motion a decline in Henchard's fortunes. Yet Susan and Elizabeth-Jane are not the root cause of Henchard's fall. Henchard alone makes the decisions that bring him down, and much of his bad luck is the delayed and cumulative consequence of how Henchard treats other people. His relationship with Farfrae deteriorates gradually as Farfrae becomes more popular than Henchard. In addition to being more friendly and amiable, Farfrae is better informed, better educated, and in short everything Henchard himself wants to be. Henchard feels threatened by Farfrae, particularly when Elizabeth-Jane starts to fall in love with him.

The competition between Donald Farfrae and Henchard grows. Eventually they part company and Farfrae sets himself up as an independent hay and corn merchant. The rivalry and resentment for the most part is one-sided, and Farfrae conducts himself with scrupulous honesty and fair dealing. Henchard meanwhile makes increasingly aggressive, risky business decisions that put him in financial danger. The business rivalry leads to Henchard standing in the way of a marriage between Donald and Elizabeth-Jane, until after Susan's death at which point Henchard learns he is not Elizabeth-Jane's father, and realizes that if she marries Farfrae, he will be rid of her. The Elizabeth-Jane he auctioned off died in infancy; this second Elizabeth-Jane is Newson's daughter. He learns this secret, however, after Susan's death when he reads a letter which Susan, on her deathbed, marked to be opened only after Elizabeth-Jane's marriage. Feeling ashamed and hard done by, Henchard conceals the secret from Elizabeth-Jane, but grows cold and cruel towards her.

In the meantime, Henchard's former mistress, Lucetta, arrives from [Jersey](#) and purchases a house in Casterbridge. She has inherited money from a wealthy relative who died: in fact it was this relative's death that had kept her from picking up her letters from Henchard. Initially she wants to pick up her relationship with him where it left off, but propriety requires that they wait a while. She takes Elizabeth-Jane into her household as a companion thinking it will give Henchard an excuse to come to visit, but the plan backfires because of Henchard's hatred of Elizabeth-Jane. She also learns a little bit more about Henchard. Specifically, the details of how he sold his first wife become public knowledge when the furnity vendor who witnessed the sale makes the story public. Henchard does not deny the story, but when Lucetta hears a little bit more about what kind of man Henchard really is she stops rationalizing his conduct in terms of what she wants to believe. For the first time, she starts to see him more clearly, and she no longer particularly likes what she sees.

Donald Farfrae, who visits Lucetta's house to see Elizabeth-Jane and who becomes completely distracted by Lucetta, has no idea that Lucetta is the mysterious woman who was informally engaged to Henchard. Since Henchard is such a reluctant and secretive suitor who in no way reveals his attachment to Lucetta to anybody, Lucetta starts to question whether her engagement to Henchard is valid. She too is lying about her past: she claims to be from Bath, not Jersey, and she has taken the surname of her wealthy relative. Yet she came to Casterbridge seeking Henchard, and sent him letters after Susan's death indicating that she wanted to resume and legitimize the relationship. Although he was initially reluctant he gradually realizes that he wants to marry Lucetta, particularly since he is having financial trouble due to some speculations having gone bad. Lenders are unwilling to extend credit to him, and he believes that they would extend credit if they at least believed he was about to be married to a wealthy woman. Frustrated by her stalling, Henchard bullies Lucetta into agreeing to marry him. But by this point she is in love with Farfrae. The two run away one weekend and get married, and Lucetta does not have the nerve to tell Henchard until well after the fact. Henchard's credit collapses, he becomes bankrupt, and he sells all his personal possessions to pay creditors.

As Henchard's fortunes decline, Farfrae's rise. He buys Henchard's old business and employs Henchard as a journeyman day-laborer. Farfrae is always trying to help the man who helped him get started, whom he still regards as a friend and a former mentor. He does not realize Henchard is his enemy even though the town council and Elizabeth-Jane both warn him.

Lucetta, feeling safe and comfortable in her marriage with Farfrae, keeps her former relationship with Henchard a secret. This secret is revealed when Henchard foolishly lets his enemy Jopp deliver Lucetta's old love letters. Jopp makes the secret public and the townspeople publicly shame Henchard and Lucetta. Lucetta, who by this point is pregnant, dies of an epileptic seizure.

When Newson, Elizabeth-Jane's biological father, returns, Henchard is afraid of losing her companionship and tells Newson she is dead. Henchard is once again impoverished, and, as soon as the twenty-first year of his oath is up, he starts drinking again. By the time Elizabeth-Jane, who

months later is married to Donald Farfrae and reunited with Newson, goes looking for Henchard to forgive him, he has died and left a will requesting no funeral or fanfare:

"That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me. "& that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground. "& that no sexton be asked to toll the bell. "& that nobody is wished to see my dead body. "& that no murners walk behind me at my funeral. "& that no flours be planted on my grave, "& that no man remember me. "To this I put my name.

Medea—by Euripides.

The play tells the story of the revenge of a woman betrayed by her husband. All of the action of the play is at [Corinth](#), where Jason has brought Medea after the adventures of the [Golden Fleece](#). He has now left her in order to marry [Glauce](#), the daughter of King Creon. (Glauce is also known in Latin works as [Creusa](#) — see [Seneca the Younger's Medea](#) and [Propertius 2.16.30](#). This King Creon is not to be confused with [King Creon of Thebes](#).) The play opens with Medea grieving over her loss and with her elderly nurse fearing what she might do to herself or her children.

Creon, also fearing what Medea might do, arrives determined to send Medea into exile. Medea pleads for one day's delay. In the next scene Jason arrives to confront her and explain himself. He believes he could not pass up the opportunity to marry a royal princess, as Medea is only a barbarian woman, but hopes to someday join the two families and keep Medea as his mistress. Medea, and the [chorus](#) of Corinthian women, do not believe him. She reminds him that she left her own people for him ("*I am the mother of your children. Whither can I fly, since all Greece hates the barbarian?*"), and that she saved him and slew the dragon. Jason promises to support her after his new marriage, but Medea spurns him: "*Marry the maid if thou wilt; perchance full soon thou mayst rue thy nuptials.*"

Next Medea is visited by [Aegeus, King of Athens](#); he is aggrieved by his lack of children, and does not understand the [oracle](#) that was supposed to give him guidance. Medea begs him to protect her, in return for her helping his wife conceive a child. Aegeus does not know what Medea is going to do in Corinth, but promises to give her refuge in any case, provided she can escape to [Athens](#).

Medea then returns to her plotting how she may kill Creon and Glauce. She decides to poison some golden robes (a family heirloom and gift from the sun god), in hopes that the bride will not be able to resist wearing them, and consequently be poisoned. Medea resolves to kill her own children as well, not because the children have done anything wrong, but because she feels it is the best way to hurt Jason. She calls for Jason once more, falsely apologizes to him, and sends the poisoned robes with her children as the gift-bearers.

"Forgive what I said in anger! I will yield to the decree, and only beg one favor, that my children may stay. They shall take to the princess a costly robe and a golden crown, and pray for her protection."

The request is granted and the gifts are accepted. Offstage, while Medea ponders her actions, Glauce is killed by the poisoned dress, and Creon is also killed by the poison while attempting to save her. These events are related by a messenger.

"Alas! The bride had died in horrible agony; for no sooner had she put on Medea's gifts than a devouring poison consumed her limbs as with fire, and in his endeavor to save his daughter the old father died too."

Medea is pleased with her revenge thus far, but resolves to carry it further: to utterly destroy Jason's plans for a new family, she will kill her own sons. She rushes offstage with a knife to kill her children. As the chorus laments her decision, the children are heard screaming. Jason rushes to the scene to punish her for the murder of Glauce and learns that his children too have been killed. Medea then appears above the stage in the chariot of the sun god [Helios](#); this was probably accomplished using the [mechane](#) device usually reserved for the appearance of a god or goddess. She confronts Jason, reveling in his pain at being unable to ever hold his children again:

"I do not leave my children's bodies with thee; I take them with me that I may bury them in [Hera's](#) precinct. And for thee, who didst me all that evil, I prophesy an evil doom."

She escapes to Athens with the bodies. The chorus is left contemplating the will of [Zeus](#) in Medea's actions:

"Manifold are thy shapings, [Providence](#)!

Many a hopeless matter gods arrange.

What we expected never came to pass,

What we did not expect the gods brought to bear;

So have things gone, this whole experience through!"

Member of the Wedding (The)—by Carson McCullers

The main action of the novel takes place over a few days in late August. It tells the story of 12-year-old [tomboy](#) Frankie Addams, who feels disconnected from the world—an "unjoined person". She dreams of going away with her brother and his bride-to-be on their honeymoon, following them to the [Alaskan](#) wilderness. She has no friends in the small Southern town in which she lives. Her mother died giving birth to Frankie and her father is a distant, uncomprehending figure. Her closest companions are the family's [African American](#) maid, Berenice Sadie Brown, and her six-year-old cousin, John Henry West.

The novel is more concerned with the psychology of the three main characters and an evocation of the setting than with incident. Frankie does, however, have a brief and troubling encounter with a soldier. Her hopes of going away having been disappointed — her fantasy destroyed — a short coda reveals how her personality has changed. It also recounts the fate of John Henry West, and Berenice Sadie Brown's future plans.

Memory Keeper's Daughter (The)—by Kim Edwards.

In 1964, during an unusual [Kentucky](#) blizzard, Dr. David Henry is forced to deliver his and his wife Norah's first child, with the help of a nurse; Caroline Gill. Their first child, a boy they name Paul, is born a visibly perfect child, but it then becomes apparent that Norah is giving birth to twins. When the second baby, a girl, is born David notices immediately she is a mongoloid (a name given at the time for people with [Down syndrome](#)). David, recalling the possibility of heart complications, and thinking of his sister, June, who died young due to a heart defect, decides that the baby girl will be placed in an institution to spare Norah the suffering June's death caused his own mother. Caroline, the nurse — who has been in love with David since the moment she met him — is charged with the task of carrying the infant to the institution. After assessing the wretched conditions of the place, however, she decides to keep and raise the baby herself. Remembering Norah's mention of the names she had chosen for her baby, both for a boy and a

girl, Caroline names the baby Phoebe. While Caroline is at the store buying baby supplies, her car battery dies and she is stranded in the snow with Phoebe. She is picked up by a truck driver, Albert "Al" Simpson, who lets her shelter with Phoebe in his truck before driving them to Caroline's home in Lexington, and eventually staying there for the night. Meanwhile, David lies to Norah and tells her that their daughter died at birth; leaving his passive wife plagued by post-natal depression as those around her refuse to let her talk about the daughter she lost, treating her as if she should be satisfied with Paul and forget about Phoebe's 'death'. She decides to hold a memorial for Phoebe and places an announcement in the paper without David's knowledge—astonished, Caroline seeks David out after reading it, and after hearing that she had kept the baby rather than take her to the institution, he bids her to do what she thinks is right. Caroline refuses the money he offers her and leaves for Pittsburgh to make fresh start - with Phoebe.

The 'death' of their daughter has caused a distance between David and Norah, even after they move to a new home, as they now find it difficult to connect with one another. Phoebe had a surviving healthy twin, Paul, but Norah wants another child; David says no, telling Norah that to have another child would be her way of replacing Phoebe. David thinks a lot about his childhood—the struggles with poverty (he had to catch snakes to pay his way through high school), his younger sister June and her death at the age of twelve, and his parents. Norah drinks too much for the first time, and crashes her car on the night of her and David's anniversary. Norah buys David a camera as an anniversary gift, which rapidly becomes an obsession for him.

Caroline is in [Pittsburgh](#) and is hired by a woman named Dorothy "Doro" March, to work as a private nurse for her father, Leo; an oft disagreeable elderly physicist, whose brilliant mind is slowly failing him. Caroline and Phoebe live with Doro and Leo, with Caroline working for room, board and pay. Caroline claims that Phoebe is her daughter, and cares for her as such; staying up all night with Phoebe in a steamy bathroom to relieve her croup. Doro notices Phoebe's slow development, and Caroline tells her that Phoebe has Down Syndrome; claiming she ran away from Phoebe's father as he wanted to put Phoebe in an institution: a half-truth. Caroline sends letters and pictures of Phoebe to David. David sends money to Caroline through a PO Box address, and then makes a half-hearted attempt to find out where Caroline and Phoebe live. Al, the truck driver who assisted Caroline on the night of Paul and Phoebe's birth, discovers their whereabouts and begins visiting regularly.

The distance between the Henrys has grown even further. David, now is an aspiring photographer with his own [darkroom](#), where he keeps Phoebe's pictures and Caroline's letters hidden; retreats further into himself, immersing himself in his work - whilst Norah, still drinking secretly, is overprotective of Paul and has taken to throwing herself into time-consuming projects and activities to distract herself and fill up her days, applying for a job with a travel agent in an attempt to build a life of her own. Paul, however, is oblivious to this - a happy six-year-old, doing well at school, seeming to have an aptitude for music and singing, and well other than a severe allergy to bees and a broken arm which he sustains falling out of a tree.

In Pittsburgh, contrary to the prediction David made at her birth, Phoebe is growing up a healthy child- she loves butterflies and singing, and attends preschool. Caroline and a group of other women - the Upside Down Society - are petitioning to let their children go to public school. Leo March has died, but Doro - used to Caroline and Phoebe's company - asks her to remain living with them. Al still visits Caroline regularly, and has twice proposed to her - however, she has turned him down both times, doubting not his love for her but his love for Phoebe. Each time he visits, he brings small gifts for her or Phoebe, and her letters - containing money - from David Henry. While playing, Phoebe is stung by a bee, and Phoebe also turns out to be allergic. Al helps get Phoebe to a hospital, and steps in when a nurse's comment about Phoebe's condition makes Caroline see red. At this, Caroline realizes that he really does love Phoebe. Al asks her to marry him for a third time, and she says yes.

Paul and Phoebe are now aged thirteen, and Caroline and Al have been married for five years. Phoebe has been confirmed; and Doro has retired to leave on a year-long cruise with her lover, named Trace. Over the years, Caroline has saved the money David Henry has sent her and kept it in trust for Phoebe. David sends Caroline a letter, asking her to let him meet Phoebe and to let Phoebe know her twin brother, Paul. Phoebe disappears briefly, panicking Caroline, who finds her rescuing a kitten from a water drainage pipe. Caroline decides not to contact David again, worried that David might unknowingly hurt Phoebe (as he hurt her, by not noticing or ignoring her love for him) and feeling that he wants too much from her, too late.

Paul is becoming an accomplished musician, playing the guitar and the piano and dreaming of attending Juilliard, while also behaving like a daredevil teenager - experimenting with cannabis and walking on rail tracks. David and Norah, now living almost separate lives, have differing views on what Paul should do when he's older - Norah simply wants her son to be happy, while David pushes for his son to take an interest in basketball and to follow a career path that will guarantee him stability, money and success. Norah Henry is excelling in her work at the travel agency, though she is still frustrated by the distance between her and David, and his apparent lack of love for or interest in her. While on vacation, in [Aruba](#), she has an affair with Howard, a divorcee. Both David and Paul realize what she has done, but neither of them talk about it. David blames the affair on himself and continues to spend more and more time in his darkroom with his photographs.

David has an arts show in Pittsburgh. Caroline turns up and shows him pictures of Phoebe. He has to stop the conversation briefly to answer an art critic. When he's speaking to the critic, Caroline leaves. David is devastated and goes to his parents' abandoned house, where he finds Rosemary, a pregnant 16-year-old, who is [squatting](#) in the house. He tells Rosemary his secret. He asks her to come and live with him. Paul and Norah can't believe the way he's behaving. Paul runs away for a couple of days. Paul has been accepted at [Juilliard](#).

Rosemary and her son Jack move back to live with her family. Norah and David are now divorced and Norah is dating. Paul is traveling and studying music in France. David dies of a heart attack. When Norah sorts through David's photographs she understands David in a way she never did when he was alive.

Phoebe is in love with Robert, also an individual with Down syndrome, and wants to get married and live in a group home with more independence. Caroline worries about the future and is scared about letting Phoebe live her own life. When Caroline hears of David's death she goes and finds Norah and tells her the truth. Norah and Paul meet Phoebe for the first time. Phoebe and Paul both attend their mother's wedding. Paul takes Phoebe to their father's grave.

Merchant of Venice (The)—by William Shakespeare.

In the 14th century, the city of Venice in Italy was one of the richest of the world. Among the wealthiest of its merchants was Antonio. Among the Christian community, he was known as a kind and generous person. Bassanio, a young [Venetian](#), of noble rank but having squandered his estate, wishes to travel to [Belmont](#) to woo the beautiful and wealthy heiress [Portia](#). He approaches his friend [Antonio](#), who has previously and repeatedly bailed him out, for three thousand [ducats](#) needed to subsidise his travelling expenditures as a suitor for three months. Antonio agrees, but he is cash-poor; his ships and merchandise are busy at sea. He promises to cover a bond if Bassanio can find a lender, so Bassanio turns to the Jewish moneylender Shylock and names Antonio as the loan's guarantor.

Shylock hates Antonio because of his [antisemitism](#), shown when he insulted and spat on Shylock for being a Jew. Additionally, Antonio undermines Shylock's moneylending business by lending money at zero interest. Shylock proposes a condition for the loan: if Antonio is unable to repay it

at the specified date, he may take a [pound](#) of Antonio's flesh. Bassanio does not want Antonio to accept such a risky condition; Antonio is surprised by what he sees as the moneylender's generosity (no "usance" – interest – is asked for), and he signs the contract. With money at hand, Bassanio leaves for Belmont with his friend Gratiano, who has asked to accompany him. Gratiano is a likeable young man, but is often flippant, overly talkative, and tactless. Bassanio warns his companion to exercise self-control, and the two leave for Belmont and Portia.

Meanwhile in Belmont, Portia is awash with suitors. Her father has left a [will](#) stipulating each of her suitors must choose correctly from one of three caskets – one each of gold, silver, and lead. If he chooses the right casket, he gets Portia; if he loses, he must go away and never trouble her or any other woman again with a proposal of marriage. The first suitor, the luxury- and money-obsessed Prince of Morocco, reasons to choose the gold casket, because lead proclaims "Choose me and risk hazard", and he has no wish to risk everything for lead, and the silver's "Choose me and get what you deserve" sounds like an invitation to be tortured, but "Choose me and get what most men desire" all but spells it out that he that chooses gold will get Portia, as what all men desire is Portia. Inside the casket are a few gold coins and a skull with a scroll containing the famous verse [All that glisters is not gold](#) / *Often have you heard that told / Many a man his life hath sold / But my outside to behold / Gilded tombs do worms enfold / Had you been as wise as bold, / Young in limbs, in judgment old / Your answer had not been inscroll'd: / Fare you well; your suit is cold.*

The second suitor is the conceited [Prince of Aragon](#). He decides not to choose lead, because it is so common, and will not choose gold because he will then get what many men desire and wants to be distinguished from the barbarous multitudes. He decides to choose silver, because the silver casket proclaims "Choose Me And Get What You Deserve", which he imagines must be something great, because he egotistically imagines himself as great. Inside the casket is the picture of a court jester's head on a baton and remarks "What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot... / Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?"^[1] The scroll reads: *Some there be that shadows kiss; / Such have but a shadow's bliss: / ...Take what wife you will to bed, / I will ever be your head* – meaning that he was foolish to imagine that a pompous man like him could ever be a fit husband for Portia, and that he was always a fool, he always will be a fool, and the fact that he chose the silver casket is mere proof that he is a fool.

The last suitor is Bassanio, who chooses the lead casket. As he is considering his choice of caskets, members of Portia's household sing a song which says that "fancy" (not true love) is "engend' red in the eyes, / With gazing fed."^[2] Seemingly in response to this little bit of philosophy, Bassanio remarks, "So may the outward shows be least themselves. / The world is still deceived with ornament." And at the end of the same speech, just before choosing the least valuable, and least showy metal, Bassanio says, "Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence; / And here choose I; joy be the consequence!" He has made the right choice.

At Venice, Antonio's ships are reported lost at sea. This leaves him unable to satisfy the bond (in financial language, [insolvent](#)). Shylock is even more determined to exact revenge from Christians after his daughter Jessica flees his home to convert to Christianity and elope with Lorenzo, taking a substantial amount of Shylock's wealth with her, as well as a turquoise ring which was a gift to Shylock from his late wife, Leah. Shylock has Antonio arrested and brought before court.

At Belmont, Portia and Bassanio have just been married, as have Gratiano and Portia's handmaid Nerissa. Bassanio receives a letter telling him that Antonio has been unable to return the loan taken from Shylock. Shocked, Bassanio and Gratiano leave for [Venice](#) immediately, with money from Portia, to save Antonio's life by offering the money to Shylock. Unknown to Bassanio and Gratiano, Portia has sent her servant, Balthazar, to seek the counsel of Portia's cousin, Bellario, a lawyer, at [Padua](#). The climax of the play comes in the court of the [Duke of Venice](#). Shylock refuses Bassanio's offer of 6,000 ducats, twice the amount of the loan. He demands his pound of flesh from Antonio. The Duke, wishing to save Antonio but unwilling to set a dangerous legal

precedent of nullifying a contract, refers the case to a visitor who introduces himself as Balthazar, a young male "doctor of the law", bearing a letter of recommendation to the Duke from the learned lawyer Bellario. The "doctor" is actually Portia in disguise, and the "law clerk" who accompanies her is actually Nerissa, also in disguise. Portia, as "Balthazar", asks Shylock to show mercy in a famous speech ("*The quality of mercy is not strain'd, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.*"—IV,i,185, arguing for [debt relief](#)), but Shylock refuses. Thus the court must allow Shylock to extract the pound of flesh. Shylock tells Antonio to "prepare". At that very moment, Portia points out a flaw in the contract (see [quibble](#)): the bond only allows Shylock to remove the *flesh*, not the "blood", of Antonio. Thus, if Shylock were to shed any drop of Antonio's blood, his "lands and goods" would be forfeited under Venetian laws.

Defeated, Shylock concedes to accepting Bassanio's offer of money for the defaulted bond, but Portia prevents him from taking the money on the ground that he has already refused it. She then cites a law under which Shylock, as a Jew and therefore an "alien", having attempted to take the life of a citizen, has forfeited his property, half to [the government](#) and half to Antonio, leaving his life at the mercy of the Duke. The Duke immediately pardons Shylock's life. Antonio asks for his share "in use" (that is, reserving the [principal](#) amount while taking only the income) until Shylock's death, when the principal will be given to Lorenzo and Jessica. At Antonio's request, the Duke grants remission of the state's half of forfeiture, but in return, Shylock is forced to convert to Christianity and to make a will (or "deed of gift") bequeathing his entire estate to Lorenzo and Jessica (IV,i).

Bassanio does not recognise his disguised wife, but offers to give a present to the supposed lawyer. First she declines, but after he insists, Portia requests his ring and Antonio's gloves. Antonio parts with his gloves without a second thought, but Bassanio gives the ring only after much persuasion from Antonio, as earlier in the play he promised his wife never to lose, sell or give it. Nerissa, as the lawyer's clerk, also succeeds in likewise retrieving her ring from Gratiano, who does not see through her disguise.

At Belmont, Portia and Nerissa taunt and pretend to accuse their husbands before revealing they were really the lawyer and his clerk in disguise (V). After all the other characters make amends, Antonio learns from Portia that three of his ships were not stranded and have returned safely after all.

Metamorphosis (The)—by Franz Kafka.

Gregor Samsa wakes up to find that he has been transformed into a giant insect-like creature. Gregor briefly examines his new body, but wonders only momentarily about what has happened to him. His attention quickly switches to observing his room, which he finds very ordinary but a bit small, and a framed magazine clipping of a woman in fur hanging up on the wall. Since he cannot turn on his side, Gregor cannot fall asleep, so instead he begins thinking about his job. He is a traveling salesman, and he hates traveling because he dislikes worrying and getting up early. Gregor's boss at work is extremely tyrannical, and Gregor wants to quit the job but cannot do so until he has paid off the debts that his parents owe the boss.

Gregor wants to get up to go to work, but suddenly realizes that he is already late and must have missed the alarm. He cannot call in sick because he has not missed a day of work in fifteen years and it would look suspicious. Gregor's mother calls to him, and he answers her, noticing that his voice is changing. Gregor's father and Grete, his sister, realize that he is still at home and try to enter his room, but he has locked his doors and they cannot get in. Gregor attempts to get out of bed, but finds this very difficult. He realizes that he is now very late, and lies back hoping that some clear thinking will resolve the situation. Suddenly the doorbell rings and the chief clerk

comes into the apartment. Angry that his firm sends the chief clerk himself if he is only a little late, Gregor finally swings himself out of bed.

As the family entreats Gregor to open the door, he refuses. Mrs. Samsa insists that Gregor must be ill or he would not be acting like this. The chief clerk loses his temper and tells Gregor that he is shocked by his attitude, insisting that his position in the company is not unassailable because his work has been poor lately. Gregor is angered by this speech, and insists that he is simply feeling slightly indisposed but will soon return to work. He retorts that his business has not been bad lately. Because of the changes in Gregor's voice, no one outside understands a word he says. Fearing he is ill, his parents send Grete and the servant girl to get the doctor and the locksmith. With great difficulty Gregor manages to open the door by himself.

Seeing Gregor, the chief clerk backs away while his father begins to weep. Gregor begs the chief clerk to explain the situation at the office and to stand up for him. He says that he will gladly come back to work and asks the chief clerk not to leave without agreeing with him. Gregor tries to stop the clerk so as to keep him from leaving with such a negative view of things, but then his mother, backing away, knocks over a coffee pot, causing a commotion and giving the chief clerk an opportunity to get away. Gregor's father picks up a walking stick to drive Gregor back into his room. Gregor gets stuck in the doorway, and his father shoves him through, injuring him in the process, and slams the door behind him.

Gregor wakes up at twilight and smells food. He realizes that his sister had brought him milk with bread in it. Gregor attempts to drink the milk, but finds that he is repulsed by the taste. Gregor notices that his father is not reading the paper to the family as he usually does and there is complete silence in the apartment. He wants someone to come in his room, but the doors are locked from the outside and no one will enter. Gregor climbs under the couch, where he feels more comfortable, and decides that he has to help his family through this difficult situation. Gregor's sister brings him a variety of foods in order to determine what he will eat. She throws away everything he does not finish, even if he has not touched it. Gregor hides under the couch to protect Grete from having to see him.

Assuming that Gregor cannot understand anything, no one talks to him directly, so he learns what is happening by listening to their conversations through the door. He finds out that the family has money saved from his father's business, which had collapsed five years ago. Gregor had not known about this money, and when his father's business fell apart, he had thrown himself into his work in order to provide for his family. The family's initial excitement of receiving his earnings had worn off, however, and he remained intimate only with Grete, whom he had wanted to send to the Conservatory to study the violin.

Gregor watches his movements carefully, since any noise he makes distracts his family. He learns from their conversations that in addition to money from the business, the family has also saved money from his salary, but it is not enough to live off of for very long. Gregor feels deep shame every time money is mentioned. He finds that his vision is getting worse, so that he can no longer see across the street. Every time Grete walks into the room, she runs to open the window, which bothers Gregor. Realizing that his sister is uncomfortable in his presence, Gregor figures out a way to cover himself with a sheet to keep out of sight. Gregor's parents never come into his room, and when his mother begs to see her son, the others hold her back.

Gregor discovers that he enjoys climbing the walls and the ceiling. Noticing this, his sister decides to give him more space by clearing the furniture from his room, and she asks her mother to help. Gregor's mother says that this will make it look like they are giving up on Gregor's recovery, but Grete disagrees. Hearing his mother's voice, Gregor realizes the importance of the furniture to him. The noise that the women make upsets him, and he decides to come out of hiding to save the framed picture on the wall from being taken. Seeing him, his mother faints and Grete runs out of the room for medicine to revive her with. Gregor follows and when his sister sees him she runs

into his room and slams the door, trapping Gregor outside. His father arrives to find him out of his room and begins throwing apples at him. One of these lodges itself in Gregor's back, almost crippling him. As he loses consciousness, his mother begs her husband to spare her son's life.

Gregor's injury makes the family decide to be more accepting of him, and they leave his door open so he can watch them. They are very quiet most of the time and extremely tired from the jobs they have taken. No one bothers with Gregor too much. They have replaced the servant girl with a charwoman. Gregor, lying in his room, resorts to his memory. The family considers moving, but cannot because they do not know how to move Gregor. He becomes angry that he is being neglected. Grete barely cleans his room and does not bother very much with his food anymore. When his mother tries to clean the room in Grete's absence, this triggers a family fight.

The charwoman, discovering Gregor, is not repulsed but rather spends her time teasing him, which annoys him to no end. Three lodgers have moved into the apartment, and the excess furniture, as well as all superfluous junk, is moved into Gregor's room so that he barely has room to move. He also stops eating almost entirely. The door to his room is now usually kept closed because of the lodgers, but Gregor does not care any more and often ignores it even when it's open.

The lodgers, who are domineering and receive too much service and respect from Gregor's parents, ask Grete to play the violin in the living room when they hear her practicing. She begins to play, but the lodgers are soon tired of this and move away to show that they are disappointed with her playing. Gregor, however, is drawn to the music and crawls out of his room to get closer, dreaming of getting Grete to play for him in his room and of telling her about his plans to send her to the Conservatory. The lodgers suddenly notice Gregor and give notice immediately, saying they will not pay for the time they have lived there.

Grete steps forward and tells her parents that they have to get rid of Gregor. He is persecuting them and trying to drive them out of the apartment and, if he really were Gregor, he would have left of his own accord and let them live their lives in peace. Suddenly realizing that he feels only love and tenderness for his family, Gregor understands that his sister is right and he should disappear. He returns to his room, waits until sunrise, and dies.

Gregor's family is happy, but they also mourn his passing. Mr. Samsa instantly kicks the lodgers out and the family decides to take the day off from work and go for a stroll. They feel relieved and the future seems bright to them. The parents notice that their daughter has grown up and decide that it is time to find her a husband. At the end of their trip, she is the first to stand up and stretch.

Middle Passage—by Charles R. Johnson.

The protagonist is Rutherford Calhoun, a freed slave, who flees from [New Orleans](#) on a ship called the *Republic* to escape being blackmailed into marriage by Isadora Bailey, a schoolteacher who convinces Calhoun's creditor, Papa, to demand Calhoun pays him all he owes if he will not consent to marry Isadora. After meeting the drunken cook of the *Republic* while drinking to forget his troubles, Calhoun stows away aboard the ship (and is later found after the voyage begins). The ship travels to Africa to capture members of the Allmuseri tribe to take back to America to sell as slaves. Although an educated man, Rutherford is at first self-absorbed and thus initially unable to grasp the hardships of slave life. During the voyage, Rutherford becomes humbled, learning lessons that teach him to value and respect humanity which includes identification with his own country, America.

A man named Falcon serves as the captain of the *Republic*. Falcon treats his men poorly, and they conspire to take over the ship. However, to their surprise, the Allmuseri tribe mutiny before they can. A violent conflict occurs, which exacerbates the existing hardships of all of the ship's passengers and kills Falcon. After the captain has been shot and killed, an Allmuseri man named

Ngonyama takes his place. Rutherford continues to write in the ship's log, ensuring that the progress of the voyage continues to be recorded. Baleka, a young Allmuseri, takes care of Rutherford when he is injured and translates Ngonyama's orders and decrees. She tells Rutherford he must take his turn feeding a monster with unusual powers that Captain Falcon put in the hold of the ship with the intent of making money by selling him in America.

The ship eventually sinks due to a combination of various factors, including a storm as well as the sailing inexperience of the ship's passengers. There are few survivors, and a nearby ship named the *Juno* rescues them. Rutherford discovers that Isadora is aboard the *Juno* and is about to marry Papa, who has partial ownership of the *Republic*. Papa learns that Rutherford has the ship's log to the and he bargains with Rutherford to get possession of it. Rutherford brings up the fact that the ship was illegally dealing in slave trade and uses his influence with Santos, Papa's black servant, to get what he wants, namely Isadora in marriage. Isadora, who is knitting booties for her cats and dogs whom Papa is making her give up, leaves Papa and marries Rutherford.

Middlemarch—by George Eliot.

Dorothea Brooke is an idealistic, well-to-do young woman, engaged in schemes to help the lot of the local poor. She is seemingly set for a comfortable, idle life as the wife of neighbouring landowner Sir James Chettam, but to the dismay of her sister, Celia (who later marries Chettam), and of her loquacious uncle Mr. Brooke, she marries instead Edward Casaubon, a middle-aged pedantic scholar who, she believes, is engaged on a great work, *The Key to All Mythologies*. She wishes to find fulfilment through sharing her husband's intellectual life, but during an unhappy honeymoon in Rome she experiences his coldness towards her ambitions. Slowly she realises that his great project is doomed to failure and her feelings for him descend to pity. She forms a warm friendship with a young cousin of Casaubon's, Will Ladislaw, but her husband's antipathy towards him is clear (partly based on his belief that Ladislaw is trying to seduce Dorothea in order to gain access to Casaubon's fortune) and Ladislaw is forbidden to visit. In poor health, Casaubon attempts to extract from Dorothea a promise that, should he die, she will "avoid doing what I should deprecate and apply yourself to do what I desire" — meaning either that she should shun Ladislaw, or, as Dorothea believes, that she will complete *The Key to All Mythologies* in his place. Before Dorothea can give her reply, Casaubon dies. She then learns that he has added the extraordinary provision to his will that, if she should marry Ladislaw, Dorothea will lose her inheritance from Casaubon.

Meanwhile, an idealistic young doctor, Tertius Lydgate, has arrived in Middlemarch, with advanced ideas for medical reform. His voluntary hospital work brings him into contact with the town's financier, Mr. Bulstrode, who has philanthropic leanings, but who is also a religious zealot with a secret past. Bulstrode's niece is Rosamond Vincy, the mayor's daughter and the town's recognised beauty, who sets her sights on Lydgate, attracted by what she believes to be his aristocratic connections and his novelty. She ensnares him, but the disjunction between her self-centredness and his idealism ensures that their marriage is unhappy. Through a combination of her material greed and Lydgate's weakness he is soon deep in debt and has to seek help from Bulstrode. He is partly sustained emotionally in his marital and financial woes by his friendship with Camden Farebrother, the generous-spirited and engaging parson from a local parish.

At the same time we have become acquainted with Rosamond's university-educated, restless, and somewhat irresponsible brother, Fred, reluctantly destined for the Church. He is in love with his childhood sweetheart, Mary Garth, a sensible and forthright young woman, who will not accept him until he abandons the Church (which she knows he has no interest in) and settles in a more suitable career. Mary has been the unwitting cause of Fred's loss of a considerable fortune, bequeathed to him by the aged and irascible Mr. Featherstone, then rescinded by a later will which Featherstone, on his death-bed, begs Mary to destroy. Mary, unaware of what is at stake, refuses to do so. Fred, in trouble over some injudicious horse-dealing, is forced to borrow from Mary's

father, Caleb Garth, to meet his commitments. This humiliation shocks Fred into a reassessment of his life and he resolves to train as a land agent under the forgiving Caleb.

These three interwoven narratives, with side-plots such as the disastrous though comedic attempt by Mr. Brooke to enter Parliament as a sponsor of Reform, are the basis of the story until it is well into its final third. Then a new thread emerges, with the appearance of John Raffles, who knows about Bulstrode's past and is determined to exploit this knowledge. Bulstrode's terror of public exposure as a hypocrite leads him to hasten the death of the mortally sick Raffles by giving him access to forbidden alcohol and excess amounts of opium. But he is too late; Raffles had already spread the word. Bulstrode's disgrace engulfs the luckless Lydgate, as knowledge of the financier's loan to the doctor becomes public, and he is assumed to be complicit with Bulstrode. Only Dorothea and Farebrother maintain faith in Lydgate, but Lydgate and Rosamond are forced by the general opprobrium to leave Middlemarch. The disgraced and reviled Bulstrode's only consolation is that his wife stands by him as he, too, faces exile.

The final thread in the complex weave concerns Ladislav, who, since their initial meeting, has kept his love for Dorothea to himself. He has remained in Middlemarch, working for Mr. Brooke, and has also become a focus for Rosamond's treacherous attentions. After Brooke's election campaign collapses, there is nothing to keep Ladislav and he visits Dorothea to make his farewell. But Dorothea, released from life with Casaubon, but still the prisoner of his will, now sees Ladislav as the means of her escape to a new life. Renouncing her independence, and Casaubon's fortune, she shocks her family again, by announcing she will marry Ladislav. At the same time Fred, who has proved an apt pupil in Caleb's profession, finally wins the approval and hand of Mary.

Beyond the principal stories we are given constant glimpses into other scenes. We observe Featherstone's avaricious relatives gathering for the spoils, visit Farebrother's strange ménage, and become aware of enormous social and economic divides. But these are the backdrops for the main stories which, true to life, are left largely suspended, leaving a short finale to summarise the fortunes of our protagonists over the next thirty years or so. The book ends as it began, with Dorothea: "Her full nature [. . .] spent itself in channels which had no great name on the Earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts."

Midsummer Night's Dream (A)—by William Shakespeare.

The play features three interlocking plots, connected by a celebration of the wedding of Duke [Theseus](#) of [Athens](#) and the [Amazon](#) queen, [Hippolyta](#), and set simultaneously in the woodland, and in the realm of [Fairyland](#), under the light of the moon.^[1]

In the opening scene, Hermia refuses to follow her father Egeus's instructions to marry Demetrius, whom he has chosen for her. In response, Egeus quotes before Theseus an ancient Athenian law whereby a daughter must marry the suitor chosen by her father, or else face death. Theseus offers her another choice: lifelong chastity worshiping the goddess [Diana](#) as a [nun](#).

At that same time, Quince and his fellow players were engaged to produce an act which is "the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe", for the Duke and the Duchess.^[2] Peter Quince reads the names of characters and bestows them to the players. Nick Bottom who is playing the main role of Pyramus, is over-enthusiastic and wants to dominate others by suggesting himself for the characters of Thisbe, The Lion and Pyramus at the same time. Also he would rather be a tyrant and recites some lines of Ercles or [Hercules](#). Quince ends the meeting with "at the Duke's oak we meet".

Meanwhile, [Oberon](#), king of the fairies, and his queen, [Titania](#), have come to the forest outside Athens. Titania tells Oberon that she plans to stay there until after she has attended Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. Oberon and Titania are estranged because Titania refuses to give her Indian [changeling](#) to Oberon for use as his "knight" or "henchman," since the child's mother was one of Titania's worshippers. Oberon seeks to punish Titania's disobedience, so he calls for his mischievous court jester [Puck](#) or "Robin Goodfellow" to help him apply a magical juice from a flower called "[love-in-idleness](#)," which when applied to a person's eyelids while sleeping makes the victim fall in love with the first living thing seen upon awakening. He instructs Puck to retrieve the flower so that he can make Titania fall in love with the first thing she sees when waking from sleep, which he is sure will be an animal of the forest. Oberon's intent is to shame Titania into giving up the little Indian boy. He says, "And ere I take this charm from off her sight, / As I can take it with another herb, / I'll make her render up her page to me."^[3]

Having seen Demetrius act cruelly toward Helena, Oberon orders Puck to spread some of the magical juice from the flower on the eyelids of the young Athenian man. Instead, Puck mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, not having actually seen either before. Helena, coming across him, wakes him while attempting to determine whether he is dead or asleep. Upon this happening, Lysander immediately falls in love with Helena. Oberon sees Demetrius still following Hermia and is enraged. When Demetrius decides to go to sleep, Oberon sends Puck to get Helena while he charms Demetrius' eyes. Upon waking up, he sees Helena. Now, both men are in pursuit of Helena. However, she is convinced that her two suitors are mocking her, as neither loved her originally. Hermia is at a loss to see why her lover has abandoned her, and accuses Helena of stealing Lysander away from her. The four quarrel with each other until Lysander and Demetrius become so enraged that they seek a place to duel each other to prove whose love for Helena is the greatest. Oberon orders Puck to keep Lysander and Demetrius from catching up with one another and to remove the charm from Lysander, so that he goes back to being in love with Hermia.

Meanwhile, a band of six labourers ("rude mechanicals", as they are described by Puck) have arranged to perform a play about [Pyramus and Thisbe](#) for Theseus' wedding and venture into the forest, near Titania's [bower](#), for their rehearsal. [Nick Bottom](#), a stage-struck [weaver](#), is spotted by Puck, who (taking his name to be another word for a [jackass](#)) transforms his head into that of a [donkey](#). When Bottom returns for his next lines, the other workmen run screaming in terror. Determined to wait for his friends, he begins to sing to himself. Titania is awakened by Bottom's singing and immediately falls in love with him. She lavishes him with attention, and presumably makes love to him. While she is in this state of devotion, Oberon takes the changeling. Having achieved his goals, Oberon releases Titania, orders Puck to remove the donkey's head from Bottom, and arrange everything so that Hermia, Lysander, Demetrius, and Helena will believe that they have been dreaming when they awaken. The magical enchantment is removed from Lysander, leaving Demetrius under the spell and in love with Helena.

The fairies then disappear, and Theseus and Hippolyta arrive on the scene, during an early morning hunt. They wake the lovers and, since Demetrius does not love Hermia any more, Theseus overrules Egeus's demands and arranges a group wedding. The lovers decide that the night's events must have been a dream. After they all exit, Bottom awakes, and he too decides that he must have experienced a dream "past the wit of man". In Athens, Theseus, Hippolyta and the lovers watch the six workmen perform *Pyramus and Thisbe*. The play is badly performed to the point where the guests laugh as if it were meant to be a comedy, and afterward everyone retires to bed. Afterward, Oberon, Titania, Puck, and other fairies enter, and bless the house and its occupants with good fortune. After all other characters leave, Puck "restores amends" and reminds the audience that this might be nothing but a dream (hence the name of the play).

Mill on the Floss (The)—by George Eliot.

The novel details the lives of Tom and Maggie Tulliver, a brother and sister growing up on the River Floss near the village of St. Ogg's in England, probably in the 1820s after the [Napoleonic Wars](#) but before the [Reform Act of 1832](#). Both the river and the village are fictional.

The novel spans a period of 10 to 15 years, from Tom's and Maggie's childhood up until their deaths in a flood on the Floss. The book is fictional autobiography in part, reflecting the disgrace that George Eliot ([Mary Ann Evans](#)) herself had while in a lengthy relationship with a married man, [George Henry Lewes](#).

Maggie Tulliver holds the central role in the book. Her relationship with her older brother Tom, and her romantic relationships with Philip Wakem, a hunchbacked, sensitive, and intellectual friend, and with Stephen Guest, a vivacious young socialite in St. Ogg's and assumed fiancé of Maggie's cousin Lucy Deane, constitute the most significant narrative threads.

Tom and Maggie have a close yet complex bond, which continues throughout the novel. Their relationship is coloured by Maggie's desire to recapture the unconditional love her father provides before his death. Tom's pragmatic and reserved nature clashes with Maggie's idealism and fervor for intellectual gains and experience. Various family crises, including bankruptcy, Mr. Tulliver's rancorous relationship with Philip Wakem's father, which results in the loss of the mill, and Mr. Tulliver's untimely death, serve both to intensify Tom's and Maggie's differences and to highlight their love for each other. To help his father repay his debts, Tom leaves his desultory schooling to enter a life of business. He eventually finds a measure of success, restoring the family's former estate. Meanwhile Maggie languishes in the impoverished Tulliver home, her intellectual aptitude wasted in her socially isolated state. She passes through a period of intense spirituality, during which she renounces the world, spurred by [Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*](#).

This renunciation is tested by a renewed friendship with Philip Wakem, with whom she had developed an affinity while he was a fellow pupil with Tom. Against the wishes of Tom and her father, who both despise the Wakems, Maggie secretly meets with Philip, and together they go for long walks through the woods. The relationship they forge is founded partially in Maggie's heartfelt pity for broken and neglected human beings, as well as an outlet for her intellectual romantic desires. Philip's and Maggie's attraction is, in any case, inconsequential because of the family antipathy. Philip manages to coax a pledge of love from Maggie. When Tom discovers the relationship between the two, however, he forces his sister to renounce Philip, and with him her hopes of experiencing the broader, more cultured world he represents.

Several more years pass, during which Mr. Tulliver dies. Lucy Deane invites Maggie to come and stay with her and experience the life of cultured leisure that she enjoys. This includes long hours conversing and playing music with Lucy's suitor, Stephen Guest, a prominent St. Ogg's resident. Stephen and Maggie, against their rational judgments, become attracted to each other. The complication is further compounded by Philip Wakem's friendship with Lucy and Stephen; he and Maggie are reintroduced, and Philip's love for her is rekindled, while Maggie, no longer isolated, enjoys the clandestine attentions of Stephen Guest, putting her past professions for Philip in question. In the event Lucy intrigues to throw Philip and Maggie together on a short rowing trip down the Floss, but when Stephen unwittingly takes a sick Philip's place, and Maggie and Stephen find themselves floating down the river, negligent of the distance they have covered, he proposes they board a passing boat to the next substantial city, Mudport, and get married. Maggie struggles between her love for Stephen and her duties to Philip and Lucy, contracted as it were in her past, when she was poor and isolated, and dependent on either of them for what good her life contained. Upon arrival in Mudport she rejects Stephen and makes her way back to St. Ogg's, where she lives for a brief period as an outcast, Stephen having fled to Holland. Although she immediately goes to Tom for forgiveness and shelter, he roughly sends her away, telling her that she will never again be welcome under his roof. Both Lucy and Philip forgive her, she in a moving reunion, he in an eloquent letter.

Maggie's brief exile ends when the river floods. The flood is considered by some to be a [deus ex machina](#). Those who do not support this view cite the frequent references to flood as a foreshadowing which makes this natural occurrence less contrived. Having struggled through the waters in a boat to find Tom at the old mill, she sets out with him to rescue Lucy Deane and her family. In a brief tender moment, the brother and sister are reconciled from all past differences. When their boat capsizes, the two drown in an embrace, thus giving the book its Biblical epigraph, "In their death they were not divided."

Misanthrope (The)—by Molière.

Much to the horror of his friends and companions, Alceste rejects the notion *la politesse*, or the social conventions of the seventeenth century French [salon](#). His refusal to "make nice" makes him tremendously unpopular and he laments his isolation in a world he sees as superficial and base, saying early in Act I, "... Mankind has grown so base, / I mean to break with the whole human race."

Despite his convictions, however, Alceste cannot help but love the flighty and vicious Célimène, a consummate flirt whose wit and frivolity epitomizes the courtly manners that Alceste despises. Though he constantly reprimands her, Célimène refuses change, charging Alceste with being unfit for society.

Despite his sour reputation, "the misanthrope," Alceste, does have women pining for him, in particular the moralistic Arsinoé and the honest Eliante. Though he acknowledges their superior virtues, his heart still lies with Célimène. His deep feelings for the latter primarily serve to counter his negative expressions about mankind, since the fact that he has such feelings includes him amongst those he so fiercely criticizes.

When Alceste insults a sonnet written by the powerful noble, Oronte, he is called to stand trial. Refusing to dole out false compliments, he is charged and humiliated, and resolves on self-imposed exile.

His friends forsake him and upon meeting them, he discovers that Célimène has been leading him on. She has written identical love letters to numerous suitors, and broken her vow to favor him above all others. He gives her an ultimatum. He will forgive her and marry her if she runs away with him to exile. Célimène refuses, believing herself too young and beautiful to leave society and all her suitors behind. Philinte, for his part, marries Eliante and the pair receives Alceste's blessing.

Miss Lonelyhearts—by Nathanael West.

In the story, Miss Lonelyhearts is an unnamed male [newspaper columnist](#) writing an advice column which the newspaper staff considers a joke. As Miss Lonelyhearts reads letters from desperate New Yorkers, he feels terribly burdened and falls into a cycle of deep [depression](#), accompanied by heavy drinking and occasional bar fights. He is also the victim of the pranks and cynical advice of his feature editor at the newspaper, "[Shrike](#)" (a type of predatory bird).

Miss Lonelyhearts tries several approaches to escape the terribly painful letters he has to read through religion, trips to the countryside with his fiancée Betty, and sex with Shrike's wife and Mrs. Doyle, a reader of his column. However, Miss Lonelyhearts' efforts do not seem to ameliorate his situation. After his sexual encounter with Mrs. Doyle, he meets her husband, a poor crippled man. The Doyles invite Miss Lonelyhearts to have dinner with them. When he arrives, Mrs. Doyle tries to seduce him again, but he responds by beating her. Mrs. Doyle tells her husband that Miss Lonelyhearts tried to rape her.

In the last scene, Mr. Doyle hides a gun inside a rolled newspaper and decides to take revenge on Miss Lonelyhearts, who has just experienced a religious enlightenment after three days of sickness and runs toward Mr. Doyle to embrace him. The gun "explodes," and the two men roll down a flight of stairs together.

Moby-Dick—by Herman Melville.

"Call me [Ishmael](#)," *Moby-Dick* begins, in one of the most recognizable opening lines in Western literature.^[25] The narrator, an observant young man setting out from [Manhattan](#), has experience in the [merchant marine](#) but has recently decided his next voyage will be on a whaling ship. On a cold, gloomy night in December, he arrives at the Spouter-Inn in [New Bedford, Massachusetts](#), and agrees to share a bed with a then-absent stranger. When his [bunk](#) mate, a heavily [tattooed Polynesian harpooner](#) named [Queequeg](#), returns very late and discovers Ishmael beneath his covers, both men are alarmed, but the two quickly become close friends and decide to sail together from [Nantucket, Massachusetts](#) on a whaling voyage.

In Nantucket, the pair signs on with the [Pequod](#), a whaling ship that is soon to leave port. The ship's captain, Ahab, is nowhere to be seen; nevertheless, they are told of him — a "grand, ungodly, godlike man,"^[26] who has "been in colleges as well as 'mong the cannibals," according to one of the owners. The two friends encounter a mysterious man named Elijah on the dock after they sign their papers and he hints at troubles to come with Ahab. The mystery grows on Christmas morning when Ishmael spots dark figures in the mist, apparently boarding the *Pequod* shortly before it sets sail that day.

The ship's officers direct the early voyage while Ahab stays in his cabin. The chief mate is Starbuck, a serious, sincere [Quaker](#) and fine leader; second mate is Stubb, happy-go-lucky and cheerful and always smoking his pipe; the third mate is Flask, short and stout but thoroughly reliable. Each mate is responsible for a whaling boat, and each whaling boat of the *Pequod* has its own pagan harpooneer assigned to it. Some time after sailing, Ahab finally appears on the [quarter-deck](#) one morning, an imposing, frightening figure whose haunted visage sends shivers over the narrator. One of his legs is missing from the knee down and has been replaced by a prosthesis fashioned from a [sperm whale's](#) jawbone.

He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them, or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness... Threading its way out from among his grey hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck, till it disappeared in his clothing, you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive, but branded.

—*Moby-Dick*, Ch. 28

Soon gathering the crewmen together, with a rousing speech Ahab secures their support for his single, secret purpose for this voyage: hunting down and killing Moby Dick, an old, very large sperm whale, with a snow-white hump and mottled skin, that crippled Ahab on his last whaling voyage. Only Starbuck shows any sign of resistance to the charismatic but monomaniacal captain. The first mate argues repeatedly that the ship's purpose should be to hunt [whales for their oil](#), with luck returning home profitably, safely, and quickly, but not to seek out and kill Moby Dick in particular — and especially not for revenge. Eventually even Starbuck acquiesces to Ahab's will, though harboring misgivings.

The mystery of the dark figures seen before the *Pequod* set sail is explained during the voyage's first lowering for whales. Ahab has secretly brought along his own boat crew, including a mysterious harpooner named Fedallah (also referred to as 'the Parsee'), an inscrutable figure with a sinister influence over Ahab. Later, while watching one night over a captured whale carcass, Fedallah gives dark prophecies to Ahab regarding their twin deaths.

The novel describes numerous "gams," social meetings of two ships on the open sea. Crews normally visit each other during a gam, captains on one vessel and chief mates on the other. Mail may be exchanged and the men talk of whale sightings or other news. For Ahab, however, there is but one relevant question to ask of another ship: "Hast seen the White Whale?" After meeting several other whaling ships, which have their own peculiar stories, the *Pequod* enters the Pacific Ocean. Queequeg becomes deathly ill and requests that a coffin be built for him by the ship's carpenter. Just as everyone has given up hope, Queequeg changes his mind, deciding to live after all, and recovers quickly. His coffin becomes his sea chest, and is later caulked and pitched to replace the *Pequod's* [life buoy](#).

Soon word is heard from other whalers of Moby Dick. The jolly Captain Boomer of the [Samuel Enderby](#) has lost an arm to the whale, and is stunned at Ahab's burning need for revenge. Next they meet the *Rachel*, which has seen Moby Dick very recently. As a result of the encounter, one of its boats is missing; the captain's youngest son had been aboard. The *Rachel's* captain begs Ahab to aid in the search for the missing boat, but Ahab is resolute; the *Pequod* is very near the White Whale now and will not stop to help. Finally the *Delight* is met, even as its captain buries a sailor who had been killed by Moby Dick. Starbuck begs Ahab one final time to reconsider his thirst for vengeance, but to no avail.

The next day, the *Pequod* meets Moby Dick. For two days, the *Pequod's* crew pursues the whale, which wreaks widespread destruction, including the disappearance of Fedallah. On the third day, Moby Dick rises up to reveal Fedallah tied to him by harpoon ropes, clearly dead. Even after the initial battle on the third day, it is clear that while Ahab is a vengeful whale-hunter, Moby-Dick, while dangerous and fearless, is not motivated to hunt humans. As he swims away from the *Pequod*, Starbuck exhorts Ahab one last time to desist, observing that:

"Moby-Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!".

—*Moby-Dick*, Ch. 135

Ahab ignores this voice of reason and continues with his ill-fated chase. As the three boats sail out to hunt him, Moby Dick damages two of them, forcing them to go back to the ship and leaving only Ahab's vessel intact. Ahab harpoons the whale, but the harpoon-line breaks. Moby Dick then rams the *Pequod* itself, which begins to sink. As Ahab harpoons the whale again, the unfolding harpoon-line catches him around his neck and he is dragged into the depths of the sea by the diving Moby Dick. The boat is caught up in the whirlpool of the sinking ship, which takes almost all the crew to their deaths. Only Ishmael survives, clinging to Queequeg's coffin-turned-life buoy for an entire day and night before the *Rachel* rescues him.

Moll Flanders—by Daniel Defoe.

Moll's mother is a convict in [Newgate Prison](#) in [London](#) who is given a reprieve by "pleading her belly", a reference to the custom of staying the executions of pregnant criminals. Her mother is eventually transported to America, and Moll Flanders (not her birth name, she emphasises, taking care not to reveal it) is raised until adolescence by a goodly foster mother, and then gets attached to a household as a servant where she is loved by both sons, the elder of whom convinces her to "act like they were married" in bed, yet eventually unwilling to marry her, he convinces her to marry his younger brother. She then is widowed, leaves her children in the care of in-laws, and

begins honing the skill of passing herself off as a fortunèd widow to attract a man who will marry her and provide her with security.

The first time she does this, her husband goes bankrupt and flees to the Continent, leaving her on her own with his blessing to do the best she can and forget him. The second time, she makes a match that leads her to [Virginia](#) with a kindly man who introduces her to his mother. After three children (one dies), Moll learns that her mother-in-law is actually her biological mother, which makes her husband her half-brother. She dissolves their marriage and travels back to England, leaving her two children behind, and goes to live in [Bath](#) to seek a new husband.

Again she returns to her [con skills](#) and develops a relationship with a man in Bath whose wife is elsewhere confined due to insanity. Their relationship is at first platonic, but eventually develops into Moll becoming something of a "kept woman" in [Hammersmith](#), London. They have three children (one lives), but after a severe illness he repents, breaks off the arrangement, and commits to his wife.

Moll, now 42, resorts to another beau, a banker, who while still married to an adulterous wife (a "whore"), proposes to Moll after she entrusts him with her money. While waiting for the banker to divorce, Moll pretends to have a great fortune in order to attract another wealthy husband. She becomes involved with some Roman Catholics in [Lancashire](#) that try to convert her, and she marries one of them, a supposedly rich man. She soon realises he expected to receive a great dowry which she denies having, leading him to admit that he has cheated her into marriage, having himself lied about having money that he does not possess. He is in fact a ruined gentleman and discharges her from the marriage, telling her nevertheless that she should inherit any money he might ever get (finally, she mentions his name). Although now pregnant again, Moll lets the banker believe she is available, hoping he returns. She gives birth and the [midwife](#) gives a tripartite scale of the costs of bearing a child, with one value level per social class.

Moll's son is born when the banker's wife commits [suicide](#) following their divorce, and Moll leaves her newborn in the care of a countrywoman in exchange for the sum of £5 a year. Moll marries the banker now, but realises "what an abominable creature am I! and how is this innocent gentleman going to be abused by me!" They live in happiness for five years before he becomes bankrupt and dies of despair, the fate of their two children left unstated.

Truly desperate now, Moll begins a career of artful thievery, which, by employing her wits, beauty, charm, and femininity, as well as hard-heartedness and wickedness, brings her the financial security she has always sought. Only here does she take the name Moll Flanders and is known thereby. On the downside, she stoops to robbing a family in their burning house, then a lover to whom she becomes a mistress, and is sent to Newgate Prison (like the book's author 20 years prior).

In Newgate she is led to her repentance. At the same time, she reunites with her soulmate, her "Lancashire husband", who is also jailed for his robberies (before and after they first met, he acknowledges). Moll is found guilty of felony, but not burglary, the second charge; still, the sentence is death in any case. Yet Moll convinces a minister of her repentance, and together with her Lancashire husband is sent to [the Colonies](#) to avoid hanging, where they live happily together (she even talks the ship's captain into not being with the convicts sold upon arrival, but instead in the captain's quarters). Once in the colonies, Moll learns her mother has left her a plantation and that her own son (by her brother) is alive, as is her brother/husband.

Moll carefully introduces herself to her brother and their son, in disguise. With the help of a Quaker, the two found a farm with 50 servants in [Maryland](#). Moll reveals herself now to her son in [Virginia](#) and he gives her her mother's inheritance, a farm for which he will now be her steward,

providing £100 a year income for her. In turn, she makes him her heir and gives him a (stolen) gold watch.

At last, her life of conniving and desperation seems to be over. When her brother/husband is dead, Moll tells her (Lancashire) husband the entire story and he is "perfectly easy on that account... For, said he, it was no fault of yours, nor of his; it was a mistake impossible to be prevented". Aged 69 (in 1683), the two return to England to live "in sincere penitence for the wicked lives we have lived".

Monkey Bridge—by Lan Cao.

[Lan Cao's debut novel](#) *Monkey Bridge* traverses several opposing worlds. The novel consists of two narrators: Mai, a teenage [Vietnamese](#) immigrant, who flees to [America](#) on the day [Saigon](#) falls in 1975, and her mother, Thanh, who manages to join Mai a few months after Mai is settled in [United States Of America](#).

Three years after their arrival in [the United States](#), Thanh is in the hospital with a [blood clot](#) in her [brain](#), suffering [paralysis](#) of half side. She has been calling out for Baba Quan, her father, in her sleep. Thanh and Baba Quan are supposed to meet in [Saigon](#) and leave for [America](#) together back in 1975, but this plan fails because Baba Quan, due to some unknown reason, does not show up. Since then, Thanh has "never truly recovered from the mishap that left him without the means to leave Saigon" (4).

Mai, who worries about her mother's health condition and understands how desperately her mother wants to see Baba Quan, decides to make a dangerous trip to [Canada](#) with her best friend Bobbie, where they plan to make a phone call to Baba Quan once they cross the border and hopefully take a wild chance to bring her grandfather to [the United States](#). The plan, however, does not succeed. Mai retreats at the last minute because she not only fears for being [deported](#) by the U.S government but also recalls what her father says all the time: "One wrong move...the entire course of a country changed" (25), in which he refers to America's decision to make the crucial commitment in [the Vietnam War](#).

Thanh gets discharged by the hospital and decides to temporarily leave her Vietnam past behind so she can move on. She becomes socially active again in the [Vietnamese American](#) community, [Little Saigon](#). Meanwhile, Mai, idling around at home in the summer before attending college, gets very curious about her mysterious grandfather and starts to pry into things about Baba Quan from her mother and different acquaintances, such as Mrs. Bay, Thanh's best friend, and Uncle Michael, a [Vietnam veteran](#) who befriends with her father and brings her to the United States when Saigon falls. After several attempts, Mai still fails to learn anything specific about Baba Quan, all they would tell her are some basic facts and superficial comments. She also fails to convince Uncle Michael to help her grandfather relocate in [the United States](#).

Wanting to know more about her mother's and Baba Quan's [Vietnam](#) past—"the vivid details that accompanied every fault and fracture, every movement and shift that had forced her apart and at the same time kept her stitched together" (168), Mai sneaks in her mother's room and steals the letters that her mother has kept writing her, but has not let her read them yet. From her mother's secret letters, Mai finally learns the unspoken family history that Thanh has been avoiding telling her and the reason why Baba Quan did not show up at their escape:

Unable to maintain his rental payments, Baba Quan, who Thanh once believed to be her father, prostitutes his wife to his rich landlord, Uncle Khan, whose wife is sterile. Tuyet, Baba Quan's wife, later on has Khan's child, Thanh. From this act, Baba Quan secures his land and gets endless benefits from the rich [landlord](#). The Khan's soon adopt Thanh and send her to a [catholic boarding school](#). Living with shame and rage, Baba Quan has been planning to get revenge on his landlord

by committing a murderous act but never succeeds. Later on when the war begins, Baba Quan becomes a Vietcong. His village is declared a free-fire zone, and his family is moved away from their ancestral land to a nearby strategic hamlet, while he stays there to keep working with the Vietcong. Thanh's mother dies during the transition. In accordance with Vietnamese ritual, Thanh has to escort her mother's body back to their home village for burial. By a riverbank on her way back home, Thanh witnesses Baba Quan murder his landlord. Struck with panic, Thanh runs away and incautiously leaves her mother's body behind. Because Thanh loses her mother's body and fails to perform the proper burial rituals, she is left with a permanent scar and never adjusts her to new life in [America](#).

Moor's Last Sigh (The) —by Salman Rushdie.

The Moor's Last Sigh traces four generations of the narrator's family and the ultimate effects upon the narrator. The narrator, Moraes Zogoiby, traces his family's beginnings down through time to his own lifetime. Moraes, who is called "Moor" throughout the book, is an exceptional character, whose physical body ages twice as fast as a normal person's does and also has a deformed hand. The book also focusses heavily on the Moor's relationships with the women in his life, including his mother Aurora, who is a famous national artist, his first female tutor, and his first love, a charismatic, demented sculptress named Uma.

Mother Courage—by Bertold Brecht.

Mother Courage is one of nine plays that Brecht wrote in an attempt to counter the rise of [Fascism](#) and [Nazism](#). Written largely in response to the [invasion of Poland \(1939\)](#) by the German armies of [Adolf Hitler](#), Brecht wrote *Mother Courage* in what writers call a "white heat"—in a little over a month.^[5] As leading Brecht scholars [Ralph Manheim](#) and [John Willett](#) wrote:

Mother Courage, with its theme of the devastating effects of a European war and the blindness of anyone hoping to profit by it, is said to have been written in a month; judging by the almost complete absence of drafts or any other evidence of preliminary studies, it must have been an exceptionally direct piece of inspiration.^[6]

Following Brecht's own principles for [political drama](#), the play is not set in modern times but during the [Thirty Years' War](#) of 1618–1648. It follows the fortunes of Anna Fierling, nicknamed "[Mother Courage](#)", a wily [canteen](#) woman with the [Swedish Army](#) who is determined to make her living from the war. Over the course of the play, she loses all three of her children, Swiss Cheese, Eilif, and Kattrin, to the same war from which she sought to profit.

Mrs. Dalloway—by Virginia Woolf.

Clarissa Dalloway goes around London in the morning, getting ready to host a party that evening. The nice day reminds her of her youth at [Bourton](#) and makes her wonder about her choice of husband; she married the reliable Richard Dalloway instead of the enigmatic and demanding Peter Walsh and she "had not the option" to be with Sally Seton. Peter reintroduces these conflicts by paying a visit that morning.

Septimus Warren Smith, a veteran of [World War I](#) suffering from deferred traumatic stress, spends his day in the park with his Italian-born wife Lucrezia, where they are observed by Peter Walsh. Septimus is visited by frequent and indecipherable [hallucinations](#), mostly concerning his dear friend Evans who died in the war. Later that day, after he is prescribed [involuntary commitment](#) to a [psychiatric hospital](#), he commits [suicide](#) by jumping out of a window.

Clarissa's party in the evening is a slow success. It is attended by most of the characters she has met in the book, including people from her past. She hears about Septimus' suicide at the party and gradually comes to admire the act of this stranger, which she considers an effort to preserve the purity of his happiness.

Mrs. Warren's Profession—by George Bernard Shaw.

Mrs Warren's Profession is a [play](#) written by [George Bernard Shaw](#) in 1893. The story centers on the relationship between Mrs Kitty Warren, a [brothel](#) owner, described by the author as "on the whole, a genial and fairly presentable old blackguard of a woman" and her daughter, Vivie.^[1] Mrs Warren is a middle-aged woman whose [Cambridge](#)-educated daughter, Vivie, is horrified to discover that her mother's fortune was made managing high-class brothels. The two women make a brief reconciliation when Mrs Warren explains her impoverished youth, which originally led her into prostitution. The reconciliation ends when Vivie learns that the highly profitable business remains in operation. Vivie walks out of her mother's life, apparently for good.

Shaw said he wrote the play "*to draw attention to the truth that prostitution is caused, not by female depravity and male licentiousness, but simply by underpaying, undervaluing, and overworking women so shamefully that the poorest of them are forced to resort to prostitution to keep body and soul together.*"^[2]

Shaw explained the source of the play in a letter to *The Daily Chronicle* on 28 April 1898:

Miss [Janet Achurch](#) [an actress and friend of Shaw's] mentioned to me a novel by some [French](#) writer [*Yvette* by [Guy de Maupassant](#)] as having a dramatisable story in it. It being hopeless to get me to read anything, she told me the story... In the following autumn I was the guest of a lady [Beatrice Webb] of very distinguished ability — one whose knowledge of English social types is as remarkable as her command of industrial and political questions. She suggested that I should put on the stage a real modern lady of the governing class — not the sort of thing that theatrical and critical authorities imagine such a lady to be. I did so; and the result was Miss Vivie Warren ... Mrs. Warren herself was my version of the heroine of the romance narrated by Miss Achurch. The tremendously effective scene — which a baby could write if its sight were normal — in which she justifies herself, is only a paraphrase of a scene in a novel of my own, *Cashel Byron's Profession* (hence the title, *Mrs Warren's Profession*), in which a prize-fighter shows how he was driven into the ring exactly as Mrs. Warren was driven on the streets.^[3]

Much Ado About Nothing—by William Shakespeare.

Much Ado About Nothing is a [comedy](#) written by [William Shakespeare](#) about two pairs of lovers, Benedick and Beatrice, and Claudio and Hero.

Benedick and Beatrice are engaged in a "merry war"; they both talk a mile a minute and proclaim their scorn for love, marriage, and each other. In contrast, Claudio and Hero are sweet young people who are rendered practically speechless by their love for one another. By means of "noting" (which sounds the same as "nothing," and which is gossip, rumour, and overhearing), Benedick and Beatrice are tricked into confessing their love for each other, and Claudio is tricked into rejecting Hero at the altar. However, Dogberry, a Constable who is a master of [malapropisms](#), discovers the evil trickery of the villain, the bastard Don John. In the end, Don John is captured and everyone else joins in a dance celebrating the marriages of the two couples.

Murder in the Cathedral—by T.S. Eliot.

The action occurs between December 2 and December 29, 1170, chronicling the days leading up to the martyrdom of Thomas Becket following his absence of seven years in [France](#). Becket's internal struggle is the main focus of the play.

The play is divided into two "parts" separated by an "interlude". Part one takes place in the Archbishop's hall on December 2, 1170. The play begins with a Chorus singing, foreshadowing the coming violence. The Chorus is a key part of the drama, with its voice changing and developing during the play, offering comments about the action and providing a link between the audience and the characters and action, as in Greek drama. Three priests are present, and they reflect on the absence of Becket and the rise of temporal power. A herald announces Becket's arrival. Becket is immediately reflective about his coming martyrdom, which he embraces, and which is understood to be a sign of his own selfishness—his fatal weakness. The tempters arrive, three of whom parallel the [Temptations of Christ](#).

The first tempter offers the prospect of physical safety.

Take a friend's advice. Leave well alone,

Or your goose may be cooked and eaten to the bone.

The second offers power, riches and fame in serving the King.

To set down the great, protect the poor,

Beneath the throne of God can man do more?

The third tempter suggests a coalition with the barons and a chance to resist the King.

For us, Church favour would be an advantage,

Blessing of Pope powerful protection

In the fight for liberty. You, my Lord,

In being with us, would fight a good stroke

Finally, a fourth tempter urges him to seek the glory of [martyrdom](#).

You hold the keys of heaven and hell.

Power to bind and loose : bind, Thomas, bind,

King and bishop under your heel.

King, emperor, bishop, baron, king:

Becket responds to all of the tempters and specifically addresses the immoral suggestions of the fourth tempter at the end of the first act:

Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain:

Temptation shall not come in this kind again.

The last temptation is the greatest treason:

To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

The Interlude of the play is a sermon given by Becket on Christmas morning 1170. It is about the strange contradiction that Christmas is a day both of mourning and rejoicing, which Christians also do for martyrs. He announces at the end of his sermon, "it is possible that in a short time you may have yet another martyr". We see in the sermon something of Becket's ultimate peace of mind, as he elects not to seek sainthood, but to accept his death as inevitable and part of a better whole.

Part II of the play takes place in the Archbishop's Hall and in the Cathedral, December 29, 1170. Four knights arrive with "Urgent business" from the king. These knights had heard the king speak of his frustration with Becket, and had interpreted this as an order to kill Becket. They accuse him of betrayal, and he claims to be loyal. He tells them to accuse him in public, and they make to attack him, but priests intervene. The priests insist that he leave and protect himself, but he refuses. The knights leave and Becket again says he is ready to die. The chorus sings that they knew this conflict was coming, that it had long been in the fabric of their lives, both temporal and spiritual. The chorus again reflects on the coming devastation. Thomas is taken to the Cathedral, where the knights break in and kill him. The chorus laments: "Clean the air! Clean the sky!", and "The land is foul, the water is foul, our beasts and ourselves defiled with blood." At the close of the play, the knights step up, address the audience, and defend their actions. The murder was all right and for the best: it was in the right spirit, sober, and justified so that the church's power would not undermine stability and state power.

My Antonia—by Willa Cather.

The book's narrator, Jim Burden, arrives in the fictional town of Black Hawk, Nebraska, on the same train as the Shimerdas, when he goes to live with his grandparents after his parents have died. Jim develops strong feelings for Antonia, something between a crush and a filial bond, and the reader views Antonia's life, including its attendant struggles and triumphs, through that lens.

The novel is divided into five books, some of which incorporate short stories Cather had previously written, based on her own life growing up on the Nebraska [prairies](#). The volumes correspond roughly to the stages of Antonia's life up through her marriage and motherhood, although the third volume, "Lena Lingard," focuses more on Jim's time in college and his affair with Lena, another childhood friend of his, who is also Antonia's friend.

The five books, in order, are:

The Shimerdas - the longest book within the novel. It covers Jim's early years spent on his grandparents' farm, out on the prairie.

The Hired Girls - the second longest section of the novel. It covers Jim's time in town, when he spends time with Antonia and the other country girls who work in town. Language, particularly descriptions, begin to become more sexualized, particularly concerning Antonia and Lena.

Lena Lingard - this chronicles Jim's time at the university, and the period in which he becomes reacquainted with Lena Lingard.

The Pioneer Woman's Story - Jim visits the Harlings and hears about Antonia's fateful romance with Larry Donovan. This is the shortest book.

Cuzak's Boys - Jim goes to visit *Ántonia* and meets her new family, her children and husband.

My Last Duchess—by Robert Browning.

The poem is set during the late [Italian Renaissance](#). The [speaker](#) (presumably the Duke of Ferrara) is giving the emissary of his prospective second wife a tour of the artworks in his home. He draws a curtain to reveal a painting of a woman, explaining that it is a portrait of his late wife; he invites his guest to sit and look at the painting. As they look at the portrait of the late Duchess, the Duke describes her happy, cheerful and flirtatious nature, which had displeased him. He says, "She had a heart -- how shall I say? -- too soon made glad..." He goes on to say that his complaint of her was that "'twas not her husband's presence only" that made her happy. Eventually, "I gave commands; then all smiles stopped together." He now keeps her painting hidden behind a curtain that only he is allowed to draw back, meaning that now she only smiles for him. The Duke then resumes an earlier conversation regarding wedding arrangements, and in passing points out another work of art, a bronze statue of [Neptune](#) taming a sea-horse.

In an interview, Browning said, "I meant that the commands were that she should be put to death . . . Or he might have had her shut up in a convent."

My Name is Asher Lev—by Chaim Potok.

This is the story of Asher Lev, a boy born with a prodigious artistic ability into a Hasidic Jewish family, set in the 1950s in the time of Joseph Stalin and the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union. During Asher's childhood, his artistic inclination brings him into conflict with the members of his Jewish community, which values things primarily as they relate to faith and considers art unrelated to religious expression to be at best a waste of time and possibly a sacrilege. It brings him into particularly strong conflict with his father, a man who has devoted his life to serving their leader, the Rebbe, by traveling around the world bringing the teachings and practice of their sect to other Jews, and who is by nature incapable of understanding or appreciating art.

In the middle is Asher's mother, who in Asher's early childhood was severely traumatized by the death of her brother, who was killed while traveling for the Rebbe; she suffers anxiety for her husband's safety during his almost constant traveling. It didn't just affect her, but it affected her whole family and community. After her anxiety had passed, she decided she wanted to continue her brother's work.

Asher begins to go to art museums where he studies paintings. He becomes very interested in the paintings, especially the ones of the crucifixions. He starts copying the paintings of the crucifixions and nudes, but this would only get him into trouble. Asher's father returned home one night after a long trip to Russia for the Rebbe. He then sees Asher's paintings of the crucifix and nudes and is furious. Asher's father thinks that his gift is foolish and from the *Sitra Achra*, or Other Side. Asher's mother doesn't know whether to support her son or her husband. She is torn between the two of them.

The Rebbe asks Asher's father to travel to Vienna, since it would make his work easier. Asher becomes very upset about this and complains that he doesn't want to go to Vienna. His mother decides to stay in Brooklyn with Asher, while his father goes to Vienna. While Asher's father is away, Asher gets more into his paintings and neglects his Jewish studies.

Yet the gift will not be denied, and finally the Rebbe intercedes and allows Asher to study under one of the greatest living artists, Jacob Kahn, a non-observant Jew who is an admirer of the Rebbe. Asher grows up to be a formidable artist as an apprentice of Jacob Kahn, and even his father cannot help but be proud of his son's success. Jacob Kahn becomes more than just an art teacher to

Asher. Jacob Kahn also teaches Asher about life and they eventually become really good friends. However, the gift finally calls upon Asher to paint his masterpiece—a work which uses the symbolism of the crucifixion to express his mother's torment. This imagery so offends his parents and his community that he is asked to leave. Asher goes away not wanting to hurt the ones he loves further.

Namesake (The) —by Jhumpa Lahiri.

The novel describes the struggles and hardships of a [Bengali](#) couple who immigrate to the United States to form a life outside of everything they are accustomed to.

The story begins as Ashoke and Ashima leave [Calcutta, India](#) and settle in [Central Square](#), in [Cambridge, Massachusetts](#). Through a series of errors, their son's nickname, [Gogol](#), becomes his official birth name, an event which will shape many aspects of his life.

As *The Namesake* opens, Ashima Ganguli is a young bride who is about to deliver her first child in a hospital in Massachusetts. Her husband, Ashoke, is an engineering student at the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) (MIT). As she prepares to give birth, she realizes how isolated she has become. If she were still in Calcutta, she would have her baby at home, surrounded by all the women in her family who would administer all the proper Bengali ceremonies and would tell her what to expect. In the United States, Ashima struggles through language and cultural barriers as well as her own fears as she delivers her first child.

The baby boy is healthy and the new parents are prepared to take their son home. But Ashima and Ashoke are stunned to learn that they cannot leave the hospital before they give their son a legal name. The traditional naming process in their families is to have an elder give the new baby a name. They have chosen Ashima's grandmother for this honor. They have written the grandmother to ask her to give the baby a name. But the letter never arrives and soon after, the grandmother dies. In the meantime, Ashoke suggests the name of Gogol. He chooses this name for two reasons. First, it is the name of his favorite author, the famous Russian author. The second reason is that Ashoke, before he was married, had been in a very serious accident. The train he was riding in had derailed. Many people died. Ashoke had broken his back and could not move. He had been reading Gogol just before the accident. He had a page of that book clutched in his hand. The paper caught the attention of the medics who had come to rescue him. If it had not been for that page, acting as a flag in the darkness, Ashoke could have died.

While he insists on being called Gogol in elementary school, by the time he turns 14 he starts to hate the name. His father tries once to explain the significance of it, but he senses that Gogol is not old enough to understand. His parents decide to give him a more public name, which is part of the Bengali tradition—having a private name that only family and friends use and a public name for everything else. They chose Nikhil. Shortly before leaving for college, he travels to the courthouse and has his name legally changed to Nikhil Gogol Ganguli. When Gogol goes off to college, he uses his public name.

This change in name and Gogol's going to [Yale](#), rather than following his father's footsteps to MIT, sets up the barriers between Gogol and his family. The distance, both geographically and emotionally, between Gogol and his parents continues to increase. He wants to be American, not Bengali. He goes home less frequently, dates American girls, and becomes angry when anyone calls him Gogol. During his college years, he smokes [cigarettes](#) and [marijuana](#), goes to many parties, and loses his virginity to a girl he cannot remember.

When he goes home for the summer, Gogol's train is suddenly stopped and temporarily loses electricity. A man had jumped in front of the train and committed suicide, and the wait for the authorities causes a long delay. Ashoke, who is waiting at the train station for Gogol, becomes

very concerned when he calls the train company and hears of this incident. When they pull into the Ganguli's driveway, Ashoke turns off the car and finally explains the true significance of Gogol's name. Gogol is deeply troubled by this news, asking his father why he didn't tell him this earlier. He starts to regret changing his name and changing his identity.

He lives in a very small apartment in New York City, where he has landed a job in an established architectural office after graduating from [Columbia](#). He is rather stiff personality-wise, perpetually angry or else always on the lookout for someone to make a stereotypical comment about his background.

At a party, Gogol meets a very attractive and rather socially aggressive [Barnard](#) girl named Maxine. Gogol becomes completely wrapped up in her and her family. Maxine's parents are financially well off and live in a four-story house in New York City. Maxine has one floor to herself and invites Gogol to move in. Gogol becomes a member of the family, helping with the cooking and shopping. Maxine's parents appear to have accepted him as a son. When Maxine's parents leave the city for the summer, they invite Maxine and Gogol to join them for a couple of weeks. They are staying in the mountains in [New Hampshire](#), where Maxine's grandparents live. For a while, Gogol is entrenched in this very American family.

Gogol introduces Maxine to his parents. Ashima dismisses Maxine as something that Gogol will eventually get over. Shortly after this meeting, Gogol's father dies of a heart attack while he is working on a temporary project in [Ohio](#). Gogol travels to Ohio to gather his father's belongings and his father's ashes. Something inside of Gogol changes. He slowly withdraws from Maxine as he tries to sort out his emotions. Maxine tries to pressure him to open up to her. Gogol breaks off the relationship and begins to spend more time with his mother and sister, Sonia.

Ashima, after some time has gone by, suggests that Gogol contact the daughter of one of her friends. Gogol knows of the woman from his own childhood. Her name is Moushumi, and she has had the unfortunate experience of having planned a wedding only to have her intended groom change his mind at the last minute. Gogol is reluctant to meet with Moushumi for two reasons. She is Bengali, and she is recovering from having been shamed. But he meets her anyway, to please his mother.

Moushumi and Gogol are attracted to one another and eventually are married. However, by the end of their first year of marriage, Moushumi becomes restless. She feels tied down by marriage and begins to regret what she has done. Gogol suspects something is wrong and often feels like a poor substitute for Moushumi's ex-fiance, Graham, who abandoned her. One day, Moushumi comes across the name of a man she knew when she was a senior in high school. She contacts him, and they begin an affair. Gogol finds out. Moushumi and Gogol divorce.

The story ends with Ashima selling the family home so she can live in India with her siblings for half of the year. Sonia is preparing to marry to an American man named Ben. Gogol is once again alone. But he feels comforted by one thing: before his father died, he finally told his son why he had chosen that name for him. By the end of the novel, Gogol has come to accept his name and picks up a collection of the Russian author's stories that his father had given him as a birthday present many years ago.

Native Son—by Richard Wright.

Bigger Thomas wakes up in a dark, small room at the sound of the alarm clock. He lives in one room with his brother Buddy, his sister Vera, and their mother. Suddenly, a rat appears. The room turns into a maelstrom and after a violent chase, Bigger kills the animal with an iron skillet and terrorizes Vera with the dark body. Vera faints and Mrs. Thomas scolds Bigger, who hates his family because they suffer and he cannot do anything about it.

That evening, Bigger has to see Mr. Dalton for a new job. Bigger's family depends on him. He would like to leave his responsibilities forever but when he thinks of what to do, he only sees a blank wall. He walks to the poolroom and meets his friend Gus. Bigger tells him that every time he thinks about whites, he feels something terrible will happen to him. They meet other friends, G. H. and Jack, and plan a robbery. They are all afraid of attacking and stealing from a white man, but none of them wants to admit their concerns. Before the robbery, Bigger and Jack go to the movies. They are attracted to the world of wealthy whites in the newsreel and feel strangely moved by the tom-toms and the primitive black people in the film, but they also feel that they do not belong to either of those worlds. After the cinema, Bigger returns to the poolroom and attacks Gus violently, forcing him to lick his blade in a demeaning way to hide his own cowardice. The fight ends any chance of the robbery occurring; Bigger is obscurely conscious that he has done this intentionally.

When he finally gets the job, Bigger does not know how to behave in the large and luxurious house. Mr. Dalton and his blind wife use strange words. They try to be kind to Bigger, but they actually make him very uncomfortable; Bigger does not know what they expect of him. Then their daughter, Mary, enters the room, asks Bigger why he does not belong to a union, and calls her father a "capitalist." Bigger does not know that word and is even more confused and afraid to lose the job. After the conversation, Peggy, an Irish cook, takes Bigger to his room and tells him that the Daltons are a nice family but that he must avoid Mary's communist friends. Bigger has never had a room for himself before.

That night, he drives Mary around and meets her Communist boyfriend, Jan. Throughout the evening, Jan and Mary talk to Bigger, oblige him to take them to the diner where his friends are, invite him to sit at their table, and tell him to call them by their first names. Bigger does not know how to respond to their requests and becomes very frustrated, as he is simply their chauffeur for the night. At the diner they buy a bottle of rum. Bigger drives throughout the park, and Jan and Mary drink the rum and have sex in the back seat. Jan and Mary part, but Mary is so drunk that Bigger has to carry her to her bedroom when they arrive home. He is terrified someone will see him with her in his arms; however, he cannot resist the temptation of the forbidden, and he kisses her.

Just then, the bedroom door opens, and Mrs. Dalton enters. Bigger knows she is blind but is terrified she will sense him there. He silences Mary by pressing a pillow into her face. Mrs. Dalton approaches the bed, smells whiskey in the air, scolds her daughter, and leaves. Mary claws at Bigger's hands while Mrs. Dalton is in the room, trying to alert Bigger that she cannot breathe. As Bigger removes the pillow, he realizes that she has suffocated. Bigger starts thinking frantically, and decides he will tell everyone that Jan, her Communist boyfriend, took Mary into the house that night. Thinking it will be better if Mary disappears and everyone thinks she has gone for a visit, he decides in desperation to burn her body in the house's furnace. Her body would not originally fit through the furnace opening, but, after decapitating her head with a nearby hatchet, Bigger finally manages to put the body inside. He adds extra coal to the furnace, leaves the corpse there to burn, and goes home.

When Bigger talks with his family and meets his friends, he feels different now. The crime gives meaning to his life. When he goes back to the big house, Mrs. Dalton notices her daughter's disappearance and asks Bigger about the night before. Bigger tries to point suspicion toward Jan. Mrs. Dalton sends Bigger home for the day, and Bigger decides to visit his girlfriend, Bessie. Bessie complains, claiming that he did not love her, and he gives her some money to assure her of his affection. Bessie mentions a famous case in which the kidnapers of a child first killed him and then asked for ransom money. Bigger decides to do the same. He tells Bessie that he knows Mary has disappeared and will use that knowledge to get money from the Daltons, but in the conversation he realizes Bessie suspects him of having done something to Mary. Bigger goes back to work. Mr. Dalton has called a private detective, Mr. Britten, and this time, sensing Britten's racism, Bigger accuses Jan on the grounds of his religion (he is Jewish), his political beliefs

(Communist), and his friendly attitude towards black people. When Britten finds Jan, he puts the boy and Bigger in the same room and confronts them with their conflicting stories. Jan is surprised by Bigger's story but offers him help.

Bigger storms away from the Daltons. He decides to write the false kidnap note when he discovers that the owner of the rat-infested flat his family rents is Mr. Dalton. Bigger slips the note under the Dalton's front door and then returns to his room. When the Daltons receive the note, they contact the police, who take over the investigation from Britten, and journalists soon arrive at the house. Bigger is afraid, but he does not want to leave. In the afternoon, he is ordered to take the ashes out of the furnace and make a new fire. He is terrified and starts poking the ashes with the shovel until the whole room is full of smoke. Furious, one of the journalists takes the shovel and pushes Bigger aside. He immediately finds the remains of Mary's bones and an earring in the furnace, and Bigger flees.

Bigger goes directly to Bessie and tells her the whole story. Bessie realizes that white people will think he raped the girl before killing her. They leave together, but Bigger has to drag Bessie around because she is paralyzed by fear. When they lie down together in an abandoned building, Bigger rapes Bessie, then waits for her to fall asleep and kills her. He hits Bessie's head with a brick several times before throwing her through a window and into an air shaft. He quickly realizes that the only money he had was in her pocket.

Bigger runs through the city. He sees newspaper headlines concerning the crime and overhears different conversations about it. Whites call him "ape." Blacks hate him because he has given the whites an excuse for racism. But now he is someone; he feels he has an identity. He will not say the crime was an accident. After a wild chase over the rooftops of the city, the police catch him.

During his first few days in prison, Bigger does not eat, drink, or talk to anyone. Then Jan comes to see him. He says Bigger has taught him a lot about black-white relationships and offers him the help of a communist lawyer named Max. In the long hours Max and Bigger pass together, Max learns about the sufferings and feelings of black people and Bigger learns about himself. He starts understanding his relationships with his family and with the world. He acknowledges his fury, his need for a future, and his wish for a meaningful life. He reconsiders his attitudes about white people, whether they are prejudiced like Britten, or accepting like Jan. Bigger is found guilty and is sentenced to death for his murder and false witness.

Native Speaker—by Chang-Rae Lee.

Henry is the quintessential Korean-American, yet much of his Korean heritage resonates through his voice, personality, and beliefs. His Korean upbringing still shows up in his adult life. Like many American immigrants trying to find an identity in a foreign land, Henry is an "...emotional alien...stranger [and] follower..." who constantly feels isolated from the country in which he lives and also the country from which he came. Even though he is almost completely Americanized, Henry Park has trouble adapting to the U.S. There are many challenges that come with fitting in to American life because of the difference in culture, beliefs, behavior; and because of the desire to still hold on to one's heritage.

Never Let Me Go—by Kazuo Ishiguro.

The novel is divided in three sections that chronicle the phases of the main characters' lives.

This section is set at the fictional Hailsham [boarding school](#) in [East Sussex](#), England. It is clear from the peculiar way the teachers—known as "guardians"—treat the students, that Hailsham is not a normal boarding school. Eventually, it is revealed to the reader and to the students that the

children are [clones](#) created to [provide vital organs](#) for non-clones ("originals"). The students are not taught any life skills, though the teachers encourage the students to produce various forms of art and poetry. The best works are chosen by a woman known only as "Madame," who takes them away. Students believe she keeps their work in a secret Gallery although this is not discussed with guardians.

The three main characters—Ruth, Tommy and Kathy—develop a close friendship. From a young age, Kathy seems to have resigned herself to being a rather passive observer of other people and the choices they make, instead of making her own. Tommy, an isolated boy who struggles to be creative, is often the target of [bullies](#). And while Ruth is an [extrovert](#) with strong opinions who appears to be the center of social activity in her cohort, she is not as confident as she is perceived to be. Early on in the story, Kathy develops a fondness for Tommy, looking after him when he is bullied.

Although a bond grows between Kathy and Tommy, their relationship doesn't become physical. Instead, Ruth and Tommy enter into a sexual relationship, as many of the students do. At one point, they break up, and Kathy resolves to begin a relationship with Tommy, with many of the fellow students seeing it as the normal course of events. But Ruth asks Kathy to talk to Tommy in order to patch things up between herself and Tommy, so instead of asking for a relationship between herself and Tommy, Kathy ends up interceding to get Tommy to take Ruth back. Ruth and Tommy remain together throughout their remaining time at Hailsham.

In the second section, the characters, who are now young adults, around age 16 – 18, have moved to the "Cottages," residential complexes where they begin contact with the external world. It is clear from the descriptions of the Cottages that they are vastly inferior to the luxuries of Hailsham. The buildings are cold and in poor condition, and there is little for the clones to do there, with no supervision apart from one maintenance man. The romantic relationship that had developed between Ruth and Tommy continues, while Kathy explores her [sexuality](#) with other students there without forming any long-term relationship. Kathy often takes the role of the peacemaker in the tumultuous relationship between Tommy and Ruth.

During their time at the Cottages, the characters travel to [Norfolk](#), where two of their housemates tell them of a rumor that Hailsham students might be allowed to "defer" from being donors for three years if they have truly fallen in love. Tommy hypothesizes that Madame collected their art for her Gallery to use it as a kind of lie detector. The art would tell administrators whether clones are telling the truth about being in love, via their personality that they reveal through their art. Tommy feels great anxiety about this issue, because he was always bad at art; he was told that it wasn't important if his art was any good, but then later told that it *was* important. Thus he began working on his art in secret in order to convince Madame that he can truly be in love with Ruth.

Tensions among Tommy, Ruth, and Kathy rise as they all struggle to find acceptance and understanding outside Hailsham and with each other. Among these tensions is Kathy's hypothesis and Ruth's outburst that children such as themselves were modeled from the human "trash" of the Earth. These complications inevitably lead to Kathy requesting early departure from the cottages to become a "carer"—a clone who cares for other clones recovering from organ-removal surgery.

The third section involves Tommy and Ruth becoming [donors](#) and Kathy becoming a "carer." About ten years go by without Kathy seeing Ruth or Tommy, until on one hospital visit, Kathy discovers that Ruth has been staying there. Ruth is on her first donation, which did not go well, and her health has deteriorated. Kathy begins to care for Ruth, and Ruth is aware that the next donation will most likely be her last. She suggests to Kathy that they take a trip and, knowing that Tommy is in a nearby facility, bring Tommy with them. Kathy and Ruth pick up Tommy at his hospital, and they drive to see a beached boat that they'd heard about. During the car ride, Tommy shares news that Hailsham has closed.

During this trip, Ruth expresses regret and vocalizes what had been only earlier implied: she used deliberate manipulations to come between Kathy and Tommy despite sensing their bond. In an effort to make amends, Ruth hands them a piece of paper with Madame's address, and urges them to pursue a relationship with one another and seek a deferral. Tommy seems puzzled yet excited about the possibility of getting a deferral, while Kathy seems skeptical and afraid to be too hopeful. Soon after the trip, Ruth makes her final donation and dies, which is euphemistically referred to as "completion" by the characters.

Kathy then becomes Tommy's carer and begins a romantic relationship with him. Encouraged by Ruth's last wishes, the pair decide to seek out Madame and see if they can defer Tommy's fourth donation (which is often the last one). Tommy has brought art with him, as evidence of his personality, to back up his claims that he and Kathy are in love. Madame leads Kathy and Tommy inside, where they also meet Miss Emily, their old headmistress. They learn that Hailsham was a failed effort on their part to prove to society that clones had [souls](#). They emphasized [art](#) as a means to make this point to the world. However, the experiment ultimately failed to achieve what they had wanted and they lost their funding and Hailsham had to be closed. Other clones were raised in much grimmer circumstances. Miss Emily dismisses the rumor that Hailsham students may defer their donations if they fall in love.

The pair learn that Hailsham was an experiment to improve the living conditions and alter societal attitudes toward clones. Until Hailsham, society had preferred to view clones merely as non-human sources of organs. Kathy and Tommy learn that Miss Emily actually was disgusted by the clones, and that Miss Lucy (another teacher at Hailsham) was dismissed for her dangerously open attitudes towards them. Tommy is upset and bewildered by the discovery of the purpose of Hailsham, whereas Kathy appears simply humbled, as if she has passively accepted her fate. The novel ends after Tommy's "completion" (i.e. death), on a note of resignation, as Kathy will now become a donor and eventually "complete".

The novel's title comes from a song on an American cassette tape called *Songs After Dark* by fictional singer Judy Bridgewater. Kathy finds the tape during a swap meet-type event at Hailsham. Hearing it not as a love song, as it is supposedly intended, but rather as a mother's plea to her baby, Kathy on many occasions dances while holding her pillow and singing the chorus: "Baby, never let me go." On one occasion, while she is dancing and singing, she notices Madame watching her and crying. At this time Kathy does not understand the significance of the event. She then loses the tape and is devastated. Years later, on a trip to Norfolk, Tommy and Kathy find the tape and he buys it for her, although it has lost some of its significance. As adults, during the final confrontation between Kathy, Tommy, and Madame, Kathy asks Madame about her tears after seeing her that day, years ago. Madame replies that the image she had seen was of a little girl facing the new world that was emerging, an efficient but cruel world, and asking the old world not to let her go.

No Exit—by Jean-Paul Sartre.

No Exit is a one-act play for four actors (one of whom, the [Valet](#), appears for only a very limited time) and only one scene.

The play begins with a Valet leading a man named Joseph Garcin into a room that the audience soon realizes is in [hell](#) (hell is described as a series of "rooms and passages"). The room has no windows, no mirrors, and only one door. Eventually Garcin is joined by Inès Serrano, and then another woman, Estelle Rigault. After their entry, the Valet leaves and the door is closed and locked. All expect to be tortured, but no torturer arrives. Instead, they are left to probe each other's sins, desires, and unpleasant memories, gradually realizing that this is their punishment: they are each other's torturers.

At first, the three see events concerning themselves that are happening on Earth, but eventually (as their connection to Earth dwindles and the living move on) they are left with only their own thoughts and the company of the other two. Near the end of the play, Garcin demands he be let out; at his words the door flies open, however, none of the three will leave. This is due partly to the substantial hate and fear of the unknown, but primarily to Garcin's desire for validation from Inès that he is not a coward.

No-No Boy—by John Okada.

No-No Boy is the only [novel](#) published by [Japanese American writer, John Okada](#). It deals with the aftermath of the [Japanese American internment](#) during [World War II](#). The novel begins as Ichiro Yamada is returning home from prison, and follows him as he struggles to come to terms with his decision of not having joined the army. Yamada experiences intense inner turmoil as he tries to identify why things happened the way they did, why people hate one another, and why he acted the way he did.

The title refers to Japanese Americans who answered 'no' to the following two questions, when asked by the United States government on a [1943](#) Leave Clearance Application Form administered to Interned Japanese Americans.

"Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty wherever ordered?"

"Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the [United States of America](#) and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, to any other foreign government, power or organization?"

Both questions were confusing in different ways. Many respondents thought that by answering yes to the first question, they were signing up for the draft. Others, given the circumstances of the questions—in which Americans of Japanese descent were held in "concentration camps" -- said no to resist the draft. The second question implied that the respondent, most of whom were American citizens, had already sworn allegiance to the Japanese emperor. Many respondents saw this question as a trap, and rejected the premise by answering no. Afterwards, many of those who answered "No" were thrown into Federal Prison.

Notes from Underground—by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

The novel is divided into two rough parts.

It consists of an introduction, three main sections and a conclusion. (i) The short introduction propounds a number of riddles whose meanings will be further developed. (1) Chapters two, three and four deal with suffering and the enjoyment of suffering; (2) chapters five and six with intellectual and moral vacillation and with conscious "inertia"-inaction; (3) chapters seven through nine with theories of reason and logic; (c) the last two chapters are a summary and a transition into Part 2.

[War](#) is described as people's rebellion against the assumption that everything needs to happen for a purpose, because humans do things without purpose, and this is what determines human history. ^{[[citation needed](#)]}

Secondly, the narrator's desire for happiness is exemplified by his liver pain and toothache. This parallels [Raskolnikov](#)'s behavior in Dostoyevsky's later novel, [Crime and Punishment](#). He says

that, due to the cruelty of society, human beings only moan about pain in order to spread their suffering to others. He builds up his own paranoia to the point he is incapable of looking his co-workers in the eye.

The main issue for the Underground Man is that he has reached a point of [ennui](#)^[2] and [inactivity](#).^[3] Unlike most people, who typically act out of revenge because they believe justice is the end, the Underground Man is conscious of his problems, feels the desire for revenge, but he does not find it virtuous; this [incongruity](#) leads to spite and spite towards the act itself with its concomitant circumstances. He feels that others like him exist, yet he continuously concentrates on his spitefulness instead of on actions that would avoid the problems he is so concerned with. He even admits at one point that he'd rather be inactive out of laziness.

The first part also gives a harsh criticism of [determinism](#) and intellectual attempts at dictating human action and behavior by logic, which the Underground Man mentions in terms of a simple math problem [two times two makes four](#) (see also [necessitarianism](#)). He states that despite humanity's attempt to create the "Crystal Palace," a reference to a famous symbol of [utopianism](#) in [Nikolai Chernyshevsky's](#) *What Is to Be Done?*, one cannot avoid the simple fact that anyone at any time can decide to act in a way which might not be considered good, and some will do so simply to validate their existence and to protest and confirm that they exist as individuals. For good as a general term is subjective and in the case of the Underground Man the good here he's ridiculing is [enlightened self interest](#) (egoism, selfishness). It is this position being depicted as logical and valid that the novel's protagonist despises. Since his romantic embracing of this ideal, he seems to blame it for his current base unhappiness. This type of rebellion is critical to later works of Dostoyevsky as it is used by adolescents to validate their own existence, uniqueness, and independence (see Dostoyevsky's *The Adolescent*). Rebellion in the face of the dysfunction and disorder of adult experience that one inherits when reaching adulthood under the understanding of tradition and society.

In other works, Dostoyevsky again confronts the concept of free will and constructs a negative argument to validate free will against determinism in the character Kirillov's suicide in his novel *The Demons*. *Notes from Underground* marks the starting point of Dostoyevsky's move from [psychological](#) and [sociological](#) themed novels to novels based on existential and general human experience in [crisis](#).

The second part is the actual story and consists of three main segments that lead to a furthering of the Underground Man's consciousness.

The first is his obsession with an officer who physically moves him out of the way without a word or warning. He sees the officer on the street and thinks of ways to take revenge, eventually deciding to bump into him, which he does, finding to his surprise that the officer does not seem to even notice it happened.

The second segment is a dinner party with some old school friends to wish Zverkov, one of their number, goodbye as he is being transferred out of the city. The underground man hated them when he was younger, but after a random visit to Simonov's, he decides to meet them at the appointed location. They fail to tell him that the time has been changed to six instead of five, so he arrives early. He gets into an argument with the four after a short time, declaring to all his hatred of society and using them as the symbol of it. At the end, they go off without him to a secret brothel, and, in his rage, the underground man follows them there to confront Zverkov once and for all, regardless if he is beaten or not. He arrives to find Zverkov and company have left, but, it is there that he meets Liza, a young prostitute.

The story cuts to Liza and the underground man lying silently in the dark together. The underground man confronts Liza with an image of her future, by which she is unmoved at first,

but, she eventually realizes the plight of her position and how she will slowly become useless and will descend more and more, until she is no longer wanted by anyone. The thought of dying such a terribly disgraceful death brings her to realize her position, and she then finds herself enthralled by the underground man's seemingly poignant grasp of society's ills. He gives her his address and leaves.

After this, he is overcome by the fear of her actually arriving at his dilapidated apartment after appearing such a "hero" to her and, in the middle of an argument with his servant, she arrives. He then curses her and takes back everything he said to her, saying he was, in fact, laughing at her and reiterates the truth of her miserable position. Near the end of his painful rage he wells up in tears after saying that he was only seeking to have power over her and a desire to humiliate her. He begins to criticize himself and states that he is in fact horrified by his own poverty and embarrassed by his situation. Liza realizes how pitiful he is and tenderly embraces him. The underground man cries out "They — they won't let me — I — I can't be good!"

After all this, he still acts terribly towards her, and, before she leaves, he stuffs a five ruble note into her hand, which she throws onto the table. He tries to catch her as she goes out onto the street but cannot find her and never hears from her again. He tries to stop the pain in his heart by "fantasizing", "And isn't it better, won't it be better?...Insult — after all, it's a purification; it's the most caustic, painful consciousness! Only tomorrow I would have defiled her soul and wearied her heart. But now the insult will never ever die within her, and however repulsive the filth that awaits her, the insult will elevate her, it will cleanse her..." He recalls this moment as making him unhappy whenever he thinks of it, yet again proving the fact from the first section that his spite for society and his inability to act like it makes him unable to act better than it.

Obasan—by Joy Kogowa.

Set in 1972, *Obasan* centres on the memories and experiences of Naomi Nakane, a 36 year old schoolteacher living in the rural Canadian town of [Cecil, Alberta](#), when the novel begins. The death of Naomi's uncle, with whom she had lived as a child, leads Naomi to visit and care for her widowed aunt Aya, whom she refers to as Obasan (Obasan being the Japanese word for "Aunt" in this context). Her brief stay with Obasan in turn becomes an occasion for Naomi to revisit and reconstruct in memory her painful experiences as a child during and after World War II, with the aid of a box of correspondence and journals sent to her by her Aunt Emily, detailing the years of the measures taken by the Canadian government against the Japanese citizens of Canada and their aftereffects. With the aid of Aunt Emily's box, Naomi learns that her mother, who had been in Japan before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, was severely injured by the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki and I; a finding which changes her perspective of the 'War in the Pacific', and rekindles the heartbreak she experienced as a child.

Naomi's narration thus interweaves two stories, one of the past and another of the present, mixing experience and recollection, history and memory throughout. Naomi's struggle to come to terms with both past and present confusion and suffering form the core of the novel's plot.

Although "Obasan" is a fictional novel, the events, Parliamentary legal documents, and overall notion of racism mirror reality. Through the eyes of fictional characters, Kogawa tells the story of Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War.

Octopus (The) —by Elizabeth Dilling.

Dilling authored many anti-Semitic books. Dilling was the author of **several wildly anti-Semitic works** in addition to *The Red Network*. One polemic titled *The Jewish Religion: Its Influence Today* (originally titled "The Plot Against Christianity") was **highlighted** by the Anti-Defamation League for its claims that Jews consider non-Jews to be sub-human, and that Jews

have a hatred for Christians that is expressed in code in the Talmud. *The Jewish Religion* also made clear that anti-Semitism was a key component to Dilling's ant-communist philosophy; Dilling wrote: "Marxism, Socialism, or Communism in practice are nothing but state-capitalism and rule by a privileged minority, exercising despotic and total control over a majority having virtually no property or legal rights. As is discussed elsewhere herein, Talmudic Judaism is the progenitor of modern Communism and Marxist collectivism as it is now applied to a billion or more of the world's population."

Another of Dilling's books, *The Octopus*, which she wrote under a pseudonym, was **described** by *Life* magazine in 1942 as "a yellow-covered compilation of anti-Jewish slanders."

Odyssey (The) —by Homer.

The Odyssey begins ten years after the end of the ten-year [Trojan War](#), and Odysseus has still not returned home from the war. Odysseus' son [Telemachus](#) is 20 and is sharing his absent father's house on the island of [Ithaca](#) with his mother [Penelope](#) and a crowd of 108 boisterous young men, "the Suitors", whose aim is to persuade Penelope to marry one of them, all the while enjoying the hospitality of Odysseus' household and eating up his wealth.

Odysseus' protectress, the goddess [Athena](#), discusses his fate with [Zeus](#), king of the [gods](#), at a moment when Odysseus' enemy, the god of the sea [Poseidon](#), is absent from [Mount Olympus](#). Then, disguised as a [Taphian](#) chieftain named [Mentes](#) (otherwise known as "Mentor"), she visits Telemachus to urge him to search for news of his father. He offers her hospitality; they observe the Suitors dining rowdily while the bard [Phemius](#) performs a narrative poem for them. Penelope objects to Phemius' theme, the "Return from Troy"^[4] because it reminds her of her missing husband, but Telemachus rebuts her objections.

That night Athena, disguised as Telemachus, finds a ship and crew for the true Telemachus. The next morning, Telemachus calls an assembly of citizens of Ithaca to discuss what should be done with the suitors. Accompanied by Athena (still disguised as Mentor), he departs for the Greek mainland and the household of [Nestor](#), most venerable of the Greek warriors at Troy, now at home in [Pylos](#). From there, Telemachus rides overland, accompanied by Nestor's son, [Peisistratus](#), to [Sparta](#), where he finds [Menelaus](#) and [Helen](#), now reconciled. He is told that they returned to [Sparta](#) after a long voyage by way of [Egypt](#). There, on the island of [Pharos](#), Menelaus encountered the old sea-god [Proteus](#), who told him that Odysseus was a captive of the nymph [Calypso](#). Incidentally, Telemachus learns the fate of Menelaus' brother [Agamemnon](#), king of [Mycenae](#) and leader of the Greeks at Troy: he was murdered on his return home by his wife [Clytemnestra](#) and her lover [Aegisthus](#).

Then the story of Odysseus is told. He has spent seven years in captivity on Calypso's island, [Ogygia](#). Calypso falls deeply in love with him but he has consistently spurned her advances. She is persuaded to release him by Odysseus' great-grandfather, the messenger god [Hermes](#), who has been sent by Zeus in response to Athena's plea. Odysseus builds a raft and is given clothing, food and drink by Calypso. When Poseidon finds out that Odysseus has escaped, he wrecks the raft, but Odysseus swims ashore on the island of [Scherie](#) (helped by a veil given by the sea nymph [Ino](#)), the home of the Phaeacians, where, naked and exhausted, he hides in a pile of leaves and falls asleep. The next morning, awakened by the laughter of girls, he sees the young [Nausicaa](#), who has gone to the seashore with her maids to wash clothes, after Athena appeared to her in a dream and told her to do so. He appeals to her for help. She encourages him to seek the hospitality of her parents, [Arete](#) and [Alcinous](#), or Alcinous. Odysseus is welcomed and is not at first asked for his name. He remains for several days, takes part in a [pentathlon](#), and hears the blind singer [Demodocus](#) perform two narrative poems. The first is an otherwise obscure incident of the Trojan War, the "Quarrel of Odysseus and [Achilles](#)"; the second is the amusing tale of a love affair between two Olympian gods, [Ares](#) and [Aphrodite](#). Finally, Odysseus asks Demodocus to return to the Trojan War theme

and tell of the [Trojan Horse](#), a stratagem in which Odysseus had played a leading role. Unable to hide his emotion as he relives this episode, Odysseus at last reveals his identity. He then begins to tell the story of his return from Troy.

After a piratical raid on [Ismaros](#) in the land of the [Cicones](#), he and his twelve ships were driven off course by storms. They visited the lethargic [Lotus-Eaters](#) who gave two of his men their fruit which caused them to forget their homecoming, and then were captured by the [Cyclops Polyphemus](#), escaping by blinding him with a wooden stake. While they were escaping, however, Odysseus foolishly told Polyphemus his identity, and Polyphemus told his father, Poseidon, that Odysseus had blinded him. Poseidon then curses Odysseus to wander the sea for ten years, during which he would lose all his crew and return home through the aid of others. After their escape, they stayed with [Aeolus](#), the master of the winds and he gave Odysseus a leather bag containing all the winds, except the west wind, a gift that should have ensured a safe return home. However, the sailors foolishly opened the bag while Odysseus slept, thinking that it contained gold. All of the winds flew out and the resulting storm drove the ships back the way they had come, just as Ithaca came into sight.

After unsuccessfully pleading with Aeolus to help them again, they re-embarked and encountered the [cannibalistic Laestrygonians](#). All of Odysseus's ships except his own entered the harbor of the Laestrygonians' Island and were immediately destroyed. He sailed on and visited the witch-goddess [Circe](#). She turned half of his men into swine after feeding them cheese and wine. Hermes warned Odysseus about Circe and gave Odysseus a drug called *moly* which gave him resistance to Circe's magic. Circe, being attracted to Odysseus' resistance, agreed to bargain with him. She agreed to change his men back to their human form in exchange for Odysseus' love. They remained with her on the island for one year, while they feasted and drank. Finally, guided by Circe's instructions, Odysseus and his crew crossed the ocean and reached a harbor at the western edge of the world, where Odysseus sacrificed to the dead and summoned the spirit of the old prophet [Tiresias](#) to advise him of how to appease the gods upon his return home. Next Odysseus met the spirit of his own mother, who had died of grief during his long absence. From her, he learned for the first time news of his own household, threatened by the greed of the Suitors. Here, too, he met the spirits of famous women and famous men. Notably he encountered the spirit of Agamemnon, of whose murder he now learned, and Achilles, who told him about the woes of the land of the dead (for Odysseus' encounter with the dead, see also [Nekuia](#)).

Returning to Circe's island, they were advised by her on the remaining stages of the journey. They skirted the land of the [Sirens](#), who sang an enchanting song that normally caused passing sailors to steer toward the rocks, only to hit them and sink. All of the sailors except for Odysseus, who was tied to the mast, had their ears plugged up with beeswax. They then passed between the six-headed monster [Scylla](#) and the whirlpool [Charybdis](#), and landed on the island of [Thrinacia](#). There, Odysseus' men ignored the warnings of Tiresias and Circe, and hunted down the sacred cattle of the sun god [Helios](#). This sacrilege was punished by a shipwreck in which all but Odysseus drowned. He was washed ashore on the island of Calypso, where she compelled him to remain as her lover for seven years before she was ordered by Zeus to release Odysseus.haha

Having listened with rapt attention to his story, the [Phaeacians](#), who are skilled mariners, agree to help Odysseus get home. They deliver him at night, while he is fast asleep, to a hidden harbour on Ithaca. He finds his way to the hut of one of his own former slaves, the swineherd [Eumaeus](#). Athena disguises Odysseus as a wandering beggar in order to learn how things stand in his household. After dinner, he tells the farm laborers a fictitious tale of himself: he was born in [Crete](#), had led a party of Cretans to fight alongside other Greeks in the Trojan War, and had then spent seven years at the court of the king of Egypt; finally he had been shipwrecked in [Thesprotia](#) and crossed from there to Ithaca.

Meanwhile, Telemachus sails home from Sparta, evading an ambush set by the Suitors. He disembarks on the coast of Ithaca and makes for Eumaeus's hut. Father and son meet; Odysseus

identifies himself to Telemachus (but still not to Eumaeus) and they determine that the suitors must be killed. Telemachus gets home first. Accompanied by Eumaeus, Odysseus now returns to his own house, still pretending to be a beggar. He is ridiculed by the suitors in his own home, especially by one extremely impertinent man named [Antinous](#). His son is beaten up by the larger men to show his "transition to manhood", and Odysseus attempts to stop the fight; as a result, Antinous throws a chair at him and laughs at him. Odysseus meets Penelope and tests her intentions with an invented story of his birth in Crete, where, he says, he once met Odysseus. Closely questioned, he adds that he had recently been in Thesprotia and had learned something there of Odysseus's recent wanderings. Odysseus's identity is discovered by the housekeeper, [Eurycleia](#), as she is washing his feet and discovers an old scar Odysseus had received during a boar hunt. He had received the scar when he was hunting with the sons of [Autolycus](#). They had been told to go boar hunting so that they could prepare a meal with the meat. The three climbed [Mount Parnassus](#) and eventually came across a boar in a large and deep meadow. Because of the meadow's depth, the three hunters were ambushed by the seemingly invisible boar and when Odysseus first saw the animal, he rushed at it but the animal was too fast and slashed him in the right thigh. Despite being gored by the boar, Odysseus still hit his mark and stabbed the boar through the shoulder. Odysseus' bleeding was staunching by a spell that was chanted by the sons of Autolycus and he received great glory and treasure for his bravery.^[5] Having seen this scar, Eurycleia tries to tell Penelope about Odysseus' true identity, but Athena makes sure that Penelope cannot hear Eurycleia. Meanwhile, Odysseus swears her to secrecy, and she promises not to tell.

The next day, at Athena's prompting, Penelope maneuvers the Suitors into competing for her hand with an archery competition using Odysseus' bow. The man who can string the bow and shoot it through a dozen axe heads would win. Odysseus takes part in the competition himself: he alone is strong enough to string the bow and shoot it through the dozen axe heads, making him the winner. He then turns his arrows on the Suitors and with the help of Athena, Telemachus, Eumaeus and Philoteus the cowherd, he kills all the Suitors. Odysseus and Telemachus hang twelve of their household maids, who had betrayed Penelope or had sex with the Suitors, or both; they mutilate and kill the goatherd [Melanthius](#), who had mocked and abused Odysseus. Now at last, Odysseus identifies himself to Penelope. She is hesitant, but accepts him when he mentions that their bed was made from an olive tree still rooted to the ground. Many modern and ancient scholars take this to be the original ending of the *Odyssey*, and the rest to be an interpolation.

The next day he and Telemachus visit the country farm of his old father [Laertes](#), who likewise accepts his identity only when Odysseus correctly describes the orchard that Laertes had previously given him.

The citizens of Ithaca have followed Odysseus on the road, planning to avenge the killing of the Suitors, their sons. Their leader points out that Odysseus has now caused the deaths of two generations of the men of Ithaca: his sailors, not one of whom survived; and the Suitors, whom he has now executed. The goddess Athena intervenes and persuades both sides to give up the [vendetta](#), a *deus ex machina*. After this, Ithaca is at peace once more, concluding the *Odyssey*.

Oedipus Rex—by Sophocles.

As is the case in most [climactic](#) drama, much of what constitutes the myth of Oedipus takes place before the opening scene of the play. In his youth, [Laius](#) was a guest of King [Pelops](#) of [Elis](#), and became the tutor of [Chrysippus](#), youngest of the king's sons, in chariot racing. He then violated the sacred laws of hospitality by abducting and raping Chrysippus, who according to some versions killed himself in shame. This cast a doom over him and his descendants.

The protagonist of the [tragedy](#) is the son of King Laius and Queen [Jocasta](#) of [Thebes](#). After Laius learns from an [oracle](#) that "he is doomed/To perish by the hand of his own son", he tightly binds the feet of the infant Oedipus together with a pin and orders Jocasta to kill the infant. Hesitant to

do so, she orders a servant to commit the act for her. Instead, the servant takes baby Oedipus to a mountain top to die from exposure. A shepherd rescues the infant and names him Oedipus (or "swollen feet"). The shepherd carries the baby with him to [Corinth](#), where Oedipus is taken in and raised in the court of the childless King [Polybus of Corinth](#) as if he were his own.

As a young man in Corinth, Oedipus hears a rumour that he is not the biological son of Polybus and his wife Merope. When Oedipus questions the King and Queen, they deny it, but, still suspicious, he asks the [Delphic Oracle](#) who his parents really are. The Oracle seems to ignore this question, telling him instead that he is destined to "*Mate with [his] own mother, and shed/With [his] own hands the blood of [his] own sire*". Desperate to avoid his foretold fate, Oedipus leaves Corinth in the belief that Polybus and Merope are indeed his true parents and that, once away from them, he will never harm them.

On the road to Thebes, he meets Laius, his true father. Unaware of each other's identities, they quarrel over whose chariot has right-of-way. King Laius moves to strike the insolent youth with his sceptre, but Oedipus throws him down from the chariot and kills him, thus fulfilling part of the oracle's prophecy. He kills all but one of the other men. Shortly after, he solves the [riddle of the Sphinx](#), which has baffled many a diviner: "*What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three in the evening?*"

To this Oedipus replies, "Man" (who crawls on all fours as an infant, walks upright later, and needs a walking stick in old age), and the distraught Sphinx throws herself off the cliffside. Oedipus' reward for freeing the kingdom of Thebes from her curse is the kingship and the hand of [Queen Dowager](#) Jocasta, his biological mother. The prophecy is thus fulfilled, although none of the main characters know it.

A priest and the [chorus](#) of [Thebans](#) arrive at the palace to call upon their King, Oedipus, to aid them with the [plague](#). Oedipus had sent his brother-in-law Creon to ask help of the oracle at [Delphi](#), and he returns at that moment. Creon says the plague is the result of religious pollution, caused because the murderer of their former King, [Laius](#), had never been caught. Oedipus vows to find the murderer and curses him for the plague that he has caused.

Oedipus summons the blind prophet [Tiresias](#) for help. When Tiresias arrives he claims to know the answers to Oedipus's questions, but refuses to speak, instead telling Oedipus to abandon his search. Oedipus is enraged by Tiresias's refusal, and says the prophet must be complicit in the murder. Outraged, Tiresias tells the king that Oedipus himself is the murderer. Oedipus cannot see how this could be, and concludes that the prophet must have been paid off by Creon in an attempt to undermine him. The two argue vehemently and eventually Tiresias leaves, muttering darkly that when the murderer is discovered he shall be a native [citizen](#) of Thebes; brother and father to his own children; and son and husband to his own mother.

Creon arrives to face Oedipus's accusations. The King demands that Creon be executed, however the [chorus](#) convince him to let Creon live. Oedipus's wife [Jocasta](#) enters, and attempts to comfort Oedipus, telling him he should take no notice of prophets. Many years ago she and Laius received an [oracle](#) which never came true. It was said that Laius would be killed by his own son, but, as all Thebes knows, Laius was killed by bandits at a [crossroads](#) on the way to [Delphi](#).

The mention of this crossroads causes Oedipus to pause and ask for more details. He asks Jocasta what Laius looked like, and suddenly becomes worried that Tiresias's accusations were true. Oedipus then sends for the one surviving witness of the attack to be brought to the palace from the fields where he now works as a shepherd. Jocasta, confused, asks Oedipus what is the matter, and he tells her.

Many years ago, at a banquet in Corinth, a man drunkenly accused Oedipus of not being his father's son. Bothered by the comment Oedipus went to Delphi and asked the oracle about his parentage. Instead of answers he was given a prophecy that he would one day murder his father and sleep with his mother. Upon hearing this he resolved to quit Corinth and never return. While travelling he came to the very crossroads where Laius was killed, and encountered a carriage which attempted to drive him off the road. An argument ensued and Oedipus killed the travellers, including a man who matches Jocasta's description of Laius.

Oedipus has hope, however, because the story is that Laius was murdered by *several* robbers. If the shepherd confirms that Laius was attacked by many men, then Oedipus is in the clear.

A man arrives from [Corinth](#) with the message that Oedipus's [father](#) has died. Oedipus, to the surprise of the messenger, is made ecstatic by this news, for it proves one half of the prophecy false, for now he can never kill his father. However he still fears that he may somehow commit incest with his mother. The messenger, eager to ease Oedipus's mind, tells him not to worry, because [Merope](#) the Queen of [Corinth](#) was not in fact his real mother.

It emerges that this messenger was formerly a shepherd on [Mount Cithaeron](#), and that he was given a baby, which the childless [Polybus](#) then adopted. The baby, he says, was given to him by another shepherd from the Laius household, who had been told to get rid of the child. Oedipus asks the chorus if anyone knows who this man was, or where he might be now. They respond that he is the *same shepherd* who was witness to the murder of Laius, and whom Oedipus had already sent for. Jocasta, who has by now realized the truth, desperately begs Oedipus to stop asking questions, but he refuses and Jocasta runs into the [palace](#).

When the shepherd arrives Oedipus questions him, but he begs to be allowed to leave without answering further. Oedipus presses him however, finally threatening him with torture or execution. It emerges that the child he gave away was Laius's own son, and that Jocasta had given the baby to the shepherd to secretly be [exposed](#) upon the mountainside. This was done in fear of the prophecy that Jocasta said had never come true: that the child would kill its father.

Everything is at last revealed, and Oedipus curses himself and fate before leaving the stage. The chorus laments how even a great man can be felled by fate, and following this, a servant exits the palace to speak of what has happened inside. When Jocasta enters the house, she runs to the palace bedroom and hangs herself there. Shortly afterward, Oedipus enters in a fury, calling on his servants to bring him a sword so that he might kill himself. He then rages through the house, until he comes upon Jocasta's body. Giving a cry, Oedipus takes her down and removes the long gold pins that held her dress together, before plunging them into his own eyes in despair.

A blind Oedipus now exits the palace and begs to be [exiled](#) as soon as possible. Creon enters, saying that Oedipus shall be taken into the house until oracles can be consulted regarding what is best to be done. Oedipus's two daughters (and half-sisters), [Antigone](#) and [Ismene](#), are sent out, and Oedipus laments that they should be born to such a cursed family. He asks Creon to watch over them and Creon agrees, before sending Oedipus back into the palace.

On an empty stage the chorus repeat the common Greek [maxim](#), that no man should be considered fortunate until he is dead.^[3]

The two cities of [Troy](#) and [Thebes](#) were the major focus of Greek [epic poetry](#). The events surrounding the [Trojan War](#) were chronicled in the [Epic Cycle](#), of which much remains, and those about Thebes in the [Theban Cycle](#), which have been lost. The Theban Cycle recounted the sequence of tragedies that befell the house of [Laius](#), of which the story of Oedipus is a part.

[Homer's *Odyssey*](#) (XI.271 ff.) contains the earliest account of the Oedipus myth when [Odysseus](#) encounters Jocasta (named Epicaste) in the [underworld](#). Homer briefly summarises the story of Oedipus, including the incest, patricide, and Jocasta's subsequent suicide. However in the Homeric version Oedipus remains King of Thebes after the revelation and neither blinds himself, nor is sent into exile. In particular, it is said that the gods made the matter known, whilst in *Oedipus the King* Oedipus very much discovers the truth himself.^[4]

In 467 BCE, Sophocles's fellow tragedian [Aeschylus](#) won first prize at the [City Dionysia](#) with a trilogy about the House of Laius, comprising *Laius*, *Oedipus* and *Seven against Thebes* (the only play which survives). Since he did not write connected trilogies as Aeschylus did, *Oedipus the King* focuses on the titular character while hinting at the larger myth obliquely, which was already known to the audience in Athens at the time.

The trilogy containing *Oedipus the King* took second prize in the [City Dionysia](#) at its original performance. Aeschylus' nephew [Philocles](#) took first prize at that competition.^[5] However, in his *Poetics*, [Aristotle](#) considered *Oedipus the King* to be the tragedy best matched his prescription for how drama should be made.^[6]

Many modern critics agree with Aristotle on the quality of *Oedipus the King*, even if they don't always agree on the reasons. For example, [Richard Claverhouse Jebb](#) claimed that "The *Oedipus Tyrannus* is in one sense the masterpiece of Attic tragedy. No other shows an equal degree of art in the development of the plot; and this excellence depends on the powerful and subtle drawing of the characters."^[7] [Cedric Whitman](#) noted that "the *Oedipus Rex* passes almost universally for the greatest extant Greek play..."^[8] Whitman himself regarded the play as "the fullest expression of this conception of tragedy," that is the conception of tragedy as a "revelation of the evil lot of man," where a man may have "all the equipment for glory and honor" but still have "the greatest effort to do good" end in "the evil of an unbearable self for which one is not responsible."^[9] Edith Hall referred to *Oedipus the King* as "this definitive tragedy" and notes that "the magisterial subtlety of Sophocles' characterization thus lend credibility to the breathtaking coincidences," and notes the irony that "Oedipus can only fulfill his exceptional god-ordained destiny because Oedipus is a preeminently capable and intelligent human being."^[10] [H. D. F. Kitto](#) said about *Oedipus the King* that "it is true to say that the perfection of its form implies a world order," although Kitto notes that whether or not that world order "is beneficent, Sophocles does not say."^[11]

The science revolution attributed to Thales began gaining political force, and this play offered a warning to the new thinkers. Oedipus (symbolized reason) destroying the sphinx (symbolizing the gods) and being cursed through a misunderstanding of the gods (the oracle).^[citation needed] Kitto interprets the play as Sophocles' retort to the [sophists](#), by dramatizing a situation in which humans face undeserved suffering through no fault of their own, but despite the apparent randomness of the events, the fact that they have been prophesied by the gods implies that the events are not random, despite the reasons being beyond human comprehension.^[12] Through the play, according to Kitto, Sophocles declares "that it is wrong, in the face of the incomprehensible and unmoral, to deny the moral laws and accept chaos. What is right is to recognize facts and not delude ourselves. The universe is a unity; if, sometimes, we can see neither rhyme nor reason in it we should not suppose it is random. There is so much that we cannot know and cannot control that we should not think and behave as if we do know and can control.

Of Mice and Men—by John Steinbeck.

Two migrant field workers in [California](#) during the [Great Depression](#)—George Milton, an intelligent and cynical man, and Lennie Small, an ironically named man of large stature and immense strength but limited mental abilities—are on their way to a ranch near Soledad (southeast of [Salinas, California](#)) to "work up a stake." They hope to one day attain their shared dream of

settling down on their own piece of land. Lennie's part of the dream is merely to tend to (and touch) soft rabbits on the farm. This dream is one of Lennie's favorite stories, which George constantly retells. They are fleeing from their previous employment in [Weed, California](#), where they were run out of town after Lennie's love of stroking soft things resulted in an accusation of attempted rape when he touched a young woman's dress. It soon becomes clear that the two are close friends and George is Lennie's protector.

At the ranch, the situation appears to be menacing and dangerous, especially when the pair are confronted by Curley—the boss's small-statured aggressive son with an [inferiority complex](#) and who dislikes larger men—leaving the gentle giant Lennie potentially vulnerable. Curley's flirtatious and provocative wife, to whom Lennie is instantly attracted, poses a problem as well. In sharp contrast to these two characters, the pair also meet Slim, the kind, intelligent and intuitive jerkline skinner who agrees to give Lennie one of the puppies his dog has recently given birth to, and another to a ranch hand named Carlson.

Amazingly, and in spite of the potential problems on the ranch, their dream leaps towards reality when Candy, the aged, one-handed ranch-hand, offers to pitch in with George and Lennie so that they can buy a farm at the end of the month in return for permission to live with them on it. The trio are ecstatic, but their joy is overshadowed when Curley attacks Lennie and Lennie, urged on by George, catches his fist and crushes it, reminding the group there are still obstacles to overcome before their goal is reached.

Nevertheless, George feels more relaxed, since the dream seems just within their grasp, to the extent that he even leaves Lennie behind on the ranch while he goes into town with the other ranch hands. Lennie wanders into the stable, and chats with Crooks, the bitter, yet educated stable buck, who is isolated from the other workers because he is black. Candy finds them and they discuss their plans for the farm with Crooks, who cannot resist asking them if he can hoe a garden patch on the farm, despite scorning the possibility of achieving the dream. Curley's wife makes another appearance and flirts with the men, especially Lennie. However, her spiteful side is shown when she belittles them and is especially harsh towards Crooks because of his race.

Lennie accidentally kills his puppy while stroking it. Curley's wife enters and tries to speak to Lennie, admitting that she is lonely, how her dreams of becoming a movie star crashed, revealing the reason she flirts with the ranch hands. After finding out that Lennie loves stroking soft things, she offers to let him stroke her hair, but panics and begins to scream when she feels his strength. Lennie becomes frightened, and in the scuffle, unintentionally breaks her neck. When the other ranch hands find the body, George unhappily realizes that their dream is at an end. George hurries away to find Lennie, hoping he will be at the meeting place they designated at the start of the novel in case Lennie got into trouble, knowing that there is only one thing he can do to save Lennie from the painful death that Curley's [lynch mob](#) intends to deliver.

George meets Lennie at the designated place, the same spot they camped in the night before they came to the ranch. The two sit together and George retells the beloved story of the bright future together that they will never share. He then shoots Lennie in the back of the head, so that his friend's inevitable death is painless and happy. Curley, Slim, and Carlson find George seconds after the shooting. Only Slim realizes that George killed Lennie out of love, and gently and consolingly leads him away, while Curley and Carlson look on, unable to comprehend the subdued mood of the two men.

Old School—by Tobias Wolff.

Old School is a novel by [Tobias Wolff](#). It was first published on November 4, [2003](#), after three portions of the novel had appeared in [The New Yorker](#) as short stories.

The book is narrated by a high-school senior ("sixth former" in prep-school vernacular) at an (unnamed) elite boarding school in the Northeast in 1960-61. It is possible to infer that [The Hill School](#), which Wolff attended, at least partially inspired the setting for the novel. Further proof of this can also be inferred based on the fact that Hill's dining hall is the photograph depicted on the novel's cover. The narrator aspires to be a writer, and the school he attends is an embodiment of a certain kind of academic fantasy, where non-English teachers (teachers are "masters" here) "floated at the fringe of [the English masters'] circle, as if warming themselves at a fire", and literature is still believed to hold the key to the soul. [Robert Frost](#), [Ayn Rand](#), and [Ernest Hemingway](#), with each of whom the narrator crosses paths, appear in the story, dispensing wisdom, pseudo-wisdom, vitriol and nonsense in varying degrees. Aside from its service as a sort of literary fantasy camp, the novel addresses issues of class, privilege and ethnic identity in a manner subtle enough to mask their importance to the story.

Stylistically, the novel is marked by direct, clear language, appearing simpler than, upon inspection, it actually is:

"The crowd had gathered around the old field house at the near end of the football field. The firemen stood by their truck drinking coffee and taking turns with the hose. No flames were visible, though I could hear the water seethe as it hit the roof. The shingles had burned through here and there, exposing a sheet of charred subroofing that sent up a greasy hiss of smoke as the firemen played the hose over it."

[The New York Times](#) published two reviews of the book. [Michiko Kakutani](#) wrote (12 December 2003) that Wolff, best known for short stories and memoirs, "seems thoroughly ill at ease with the long-distance form of the novel: his book feels overstuffed and undernourished at the same time." [A.O. Scott's](#) review (23 November 2003) was more positive, characterizing Wolff as a "modest and resolutely un-self-aggrandizing" writer and "no mean caricaturist. Well, maybe a little mean."

The book also features an editorial curiosity: there are no quotation marks indicating speech. This detail prompted the following sudden splash of ire from [Thomas Mallon](#), reviewing the novel (otherwise favorably) in [The Atlantic Monthly](#) (2 December 2003): "And let me say this, above all, Mr. Wolff: the lack of quotation marks around the dialogue is a ridiculous piece of postmodern pretentiousness that has no place in your book

Oliver Twist—by Charles Dickens.

[Oliver Twist](#) is born into a life of poverty and misfortune in a workhouse in an unnamed town (although when originally published in [Bentley's Miscellany](#) in 1837 the town was called [Mudfog](#) and said to be within 75 miles north of London). Orphaned almost from his first breath by his mother's death in childbirth and his father's unexplained absence, Oliver is meagerly provided for under the terms of the [Poor Law](#), and spends the first nine years of his life at a [baby farm](#) in the 'care' of a woman named Mrs. Mann. Along with other juvenile offenders against the poor laws, Oliver is brought up with little food and few comforts. Around the time of Oliver's ninth birthday, Mr. Bumble, a parish [beadle](#), removes Oliver from the baby farm and puts him to work picking [oakum](#) at the main workhouse (the same one where his mother worked before she died). Oliver, who toils with very little food, remains in the workhouse for six months. One day, the desperately hungry boys decide to draw lots; the loser must ask for another portion of [gruel](#). The task falls to Oliver, who at the next meal tremblingly comes forward, bowl in hand, and makes his famous request: "*Please, sir, I want some more.*"

A great uproar ensues. The board of well-fed gentlemen who administer the workhouse, while eating a meal fit for a mighty king, offer five pounds to any person wishing to take on the boy as an apprentice. A brutal chimney sweep almost claims Oliver, however, when he begs despairingly not to be sent away with "that dreadful man", a kindly old magistrate refuses to sign the

indentures. Later, Mr. Sowerberry, an undertaker employed by the parish, took Oliver into his service. He treats Oliver better, and because of the boy's sorrowful countenance, uses him as a mourner at children's funerals. However, Mr. Sowerberry is in an unhappy marriage, and his wife takes an immediate dislike to Oliver — primarily because her husband seems to like him — and loses few opportunities to underfeed and mistreat him. He also suffers torment at the hands of Noah Claypole, an oafish but bullying fellow apprentice and "charity boy" who is jealous of Oliver's promotion to mute, and Charlotte, the Sowerberrys' maidservant, who is in love with Noah.

One day, in an attempt to bait Oliver, Noah insults the Oliver's biological mother, calling her "a regular right-down bad 'un". Oliver flies into a rage, attacking and even beating the much bigger boy. Mrs. Sowerberry takes Noah's side, helps him to subdue, punching, and beating Oliver, and later compels her husband and Mr. Bumble, who has been sent for in the aftermath of the fight, into beating Oliver again. Once Oliver is sent to his room for the night, he does something that he hadn't done since babyhood — he breaks down and weeps. Alone that night, Oliver finally decides to run away, and wanders aimlessly for a time until a well-placed milestone sets his wandering feet towards [London](#).

During his journey to London, Oliver encounters Jack Dawkins, a [pickpocket](#) more commonly known by the nickname the "[Artful Dodger](#)", although Oliver's innocent nature prevents him from recognising this hint that the boy may be dishonest. Dodger provides Oliver with a free meal and tells him of a gentleman in London who will "give him lodgings for nothing, and never ask for change". Grateful for the unexpected assistance, Oliver follows Dodger to the "old gentleman"'s residence. In this way, Oliver unwittingly falls in with an infamous Jewish criminal known as [Fagin](#), the so-called gentleman of whom the Artful Dodger spoke. Ensnared, Oliver lives with Fagin and his gang of juvenile [pickpockets](#) in their lair at [Saffron Hill](#) for some time, unaware of their criminal occupations. He believes they make wallets and handkerchiefs.

Later, Oliver naïvely goes out to "make handkerchiefs" because of no income coming in, with two of Fagin's underlings: The Artful Dodger and a boy of a humorous nature named Charley Bates. Oliver realises too late that their real mission is to pick pockets. Dodger and Charley steal the handkerchief of an old gentleman named Mr. Brownlow, and promptly flee. When he finds his handkerchief missing, Mr. Brownlow turns round, sees Oliver, and pursues him. Others join the chase and Oliver is caught and taken before the magistrate. Curiously, Mr. Brownlow has second thoughts about the boy—he seems reluctant to believe he is a pickpocket. To the judge's evident disappointment, a bookstall holder who saw Dodger commit the crime clears Oliver, who, by now actually ill, faints in the courtroom. Mr. Brownlow takes Oliver home and, along with his housekeeper Mrs. Bedwin, cares for him.

Oliver stays with Mr. Brownlow, recovers rapidly, and blossoms from the unaccustomed kindness. His bliss, however, is interrupted when Fagin, fearing Oliver might "peach" on his criminal gang, decides that Oliver must be brought back to his hideout. When Mr. Brownlow sends Oliver out to pay for some books, one of the gang, a young girl named [Nancy](#), whom Oliver had previously met at Fagin's, accosts him with help from her abusive lover, a brutal robber named [Bill Sikes](#), and Oliver is quickly bundled back to Fagin's lair. The thieves take the five pound note Mr. Brownlow had entrusted to him, and strip him of his fine new clothes. Oliver, dismayed, flees and attempts to call for police assistance, but is ruthlessly dragged back by the Dodger, Charley and Fagin. Nancy, however, is sympathetic towards Oliver and saves him from beatings by Fagin and Sikes.

In a renewed attempt to draw Oliver into a life of crime, Fagin forces him to participate in a [burglary](#). Nancy reluctantly assists in recruiting him, all the while assuring the boy that she will help him if she can. Sikes, after threatening to kill him if he does not cooperate, sends Oliver through a small window and orders him to unlock the front door. The robbery goes wrong, however, and Oliver is shot and wounded in his left arm. After being abandoned by Sikes, the

wounded Oliver ends up under the care of the people he was supposed to rob: Miss Rose and her guardian Mrs. Maylie

Meanwhile, a mysterious man named Monks has found Fagin and is plotting with him to destroy Oliver's reputation. Monks denounces Fagin's failure to turn Oliver into a criminal and the two of them agree on a plan to make sure he does not find out about his past. Monks is apparently related to Oliver in some manner, although it's not mentioned until later.

Back in Oliver's home town, Mr. Bumble has married Ms. Corney, the wealthy matron of the workhouse, only to find himself in an unhappy marriage constantly arguing with his domineering wife. After one such argument, Mr. Bumble walks over to a pub, where he meets Monks, who questions him about a boy named Oliver Twist. Bumble informs Monks that he knows someone who can give Monks more information for a price, and later Monks meets secretly with the Bumbles. After Mrs. Bumble has told Monks all she knows, the three arrange to take a locket and ring which had once belonged to Oliver's mother (and which had been secretly kept by Mrs. Bumble) and toss them into a nearby river. Monks relates this to Fagin as part of the plot to destroy Oliver, unaware that Nancy has eavesdropped on their conversation and gone ahead to inform Oliver's benefactors.

Nancy, by this time ashamed of her role in Oliver's kidnapping, and fearful for the boy's safety, goes to Rose Maylie and Mr. Brownlow to warn them. She knows that Monks and Fagin are plotting to get their hands on the boy again and holds some secret meetings on the subject with Oliver's benefactors. One night Nancy tries to leave for one of the meetings but Sikes refuses permission when she doesn't state exactly where she's going. Fagin realizes that Nancy is up to something and resolves to find out what her secret is.

Meanwhile, Noah has fallen out with the undertaker Mr. Sowerberry, stolen money from him and fled to London. Charlotte has accompanied him — they are now in a relationship. Using the name "Morris Bolter", he joins Fagin's gang for protection and becomes a practitioner of "the kinchen lay" (robbing children) while it is implied that Charlotte becomes a prostitute. During Noah's stay with Fagin, the Artful Dodger is caught with a stolen silver snuff box, convicted (in a very humorous courtroom scene) and transported to Australia. Later, Noah is sent by Fagin to "dodge" (spy on) Nancy, and discovers her secret: she has been meeting secretly with Rose and Mr. Brownlow to discuss how to save Oliver from Fagin and Monks.

Fagin angrily passes the information on to Sikes, twisting the story just enough to make it sound as if Nancy had informed on him (in reality, she had shielded Sikes, whom she loves despite his brutal character). Believing Nancy to be a traitor, Sikes beats her to death in a fit of rage, then flees to the countryside to escape from the police. There, Sikes is haunted by visions of Nancy's ghost and increasingly alarmed by news of her murder spreading across the countryside. He flees back to London to find a hiding place, only to be killed when he accidentally hangs himself while fleeing across a rooftop from an angry mob.

Monks is forced by Mr. Brownlow (an old friend of Oliver's father) to divulge his secrets: his real name is Edward Leeford, and he is Oliver's paternal half-brother and, although he is legitimate, he was born of a loveless marriage. Oliver's adapted mother, Agnes, was their father's true love. Mr. Brownlow has a picture of her, and began making inquiries when he noticed a marked resemblance between her face, and the face of Oliver. Monks has spent many years searching for his father's child—not to befriend him, but to destroy him (see [Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*](#) for similar circumstances). Brownlow asks Oliver to give half his inheritance (which proves to be meagre) to Monks because he wants to give him a second chance; and Oliver, being prone to giving second chances, is more than happy to comply. Monks then moves to America, where he squanders his money, reverts to crime, and ultimately dies in prison. Fagin is arrested and condemned to the gallows. On the eve of his hanging, in an emotional scene, Oliver, accompanied by Mr. Brownlow, goes to visit the old reprobate in [Newgate Gaol](#), where Fagin's terror at being

hanged has caused him to come down with fever. As Brownlow and a nervous Oliver leave the prison, Fagin screams in terror and despair as a crowd gathers to see his hanging.

On a happier note, Rose Maylie turns out to be the long-lost sister of Agnes; she is therefore Oliver's aunt. She marries her long-time sweetheart Harry, and Oliver lives happily with his saviour, Mr. Brownlow. Noah becomes a paid, semi-professional informer to the police. The Bumbles lose their jobs (under circumstances that cause him to utter the well-known line "The law is a ass") and are reduced to great poverty, eventually ending up in the same workhouse where they once lorded it over Oliver and the other boys; and Charley Bates, horrified by Sikes's murder of Nancy, becomes an honest citizen, moves to the country, and works his way up to prosperity.

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich—by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Ivan Denisovich Shukhov has been sentenced to a camp in the Soviet [gulag](#) system, accused of becoming a spy after being captured by the Germans as a [prisoner of war](#) during [World War II](#). He is innocent but is nonetheless punished by the government for being a spy. The final paragraph suggests that Shukhov serves ten years.

The day begins with Shukhov waking up sick. For waking late, he is sent to the guardhouse and forced to clean it—a minor punishment compared to others mentioned in the book. When Shukhov is finally able to leave the guardhouse, he goes to the dispensary to report his illness. Since it is late in the morning by now, the orderly is unable to exempt any more workers, and Shukhov must work regardless.

The rest of the day mainly speaks of Shukhov's squad (the 104th, which has 24 members), their allegiance to the squad leader, and the work that the prisoners (zeks) do—for example, at a brutal construction site where the cold freezes the mortar used for bricklaying if not applied quickly enough. Solzhenitsyn also details the methods used by the prisoners for survival; the whole camp lives by the rule of survival of the fittest. Tiurin, the foreman of gang 104 is strict but kind, and the squad grows to like him more as the book goes on. Though a "morose" man, Tiurin is liked because he understands the prisoners and he tells them a lot and does a lot to help them. Shukhov is one of the hardest workers in the squad and is generally well respected. Rations at the camp are scant, but for Shukhov, they are one of the few things to live for. He conserves the food that he receives and is always watchful for any item that he can hide and trade for food at a later date.

At the end of the day, Shukhov is able to provide a few special services for Tsezar (Caesar), an intellectual who is able to get out of manual labor and do office work instead. Tsezar is most notable, however, for receiving packages of food from his family. Shukhov is able to get a small share of Tsezar's packages by standing in lines for him. Shukhov's day ends up being productive, even "almost happy": "Shukhov went to sleep fully content. He'd had many strokes of luck that day." (p.139).

Those in the camps found everyday life extremely difficult. For example, one rule states that if the thermometer reaches $-41\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ($-42\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$), then the prisoners are exempt from outdoor labor that day—anything above that was considered bearable. The reader is reminded in passing through Shukhov's matter-of-fact thoughts of the harshness of the conditions, worsened by the inadequate bedding and clothing. The boots assigned to the zeks rarely fit, in addition cloth had to be used or taken out, for example, and the thin mittens issued were easily ripped.

The prisoners were assigned numbers for easy identification and in an effort to dehumanize them; Ivan Denisovich's prisoner number was III-854. Each day, the squad leader would receive their assignment of the day, and the squad would then be fed according to how they performed. Prisoners in each squad were thus forced to work together and to pressure each other to get their work done. If any prisoner was slacking, the whole squad would be punished. Despite this,

Solzhenitsyn shows that a surprising loyalty could exist among the work gang members, with Shukhov teaming up with other prisoners to steal felt and extra bowls of soup; even the squad leader defies the authorities by tar papering over the windows at their work site. Indeed, only through such solidarity can the prisoners do anything more than survive from day to day.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest—by Ken Kesey.

The story, narrated by the gigantic but docile half-Native American inmate "Chief" Bromden focuses on the antics of the rebellious [Randle Patrick McMurphy](#), who faked insanity to serve out his prison sentence, for statutory rape, in the hospital. The head administrative nurse, [Mildred Ratched](#), rules the ward with a mailed fist and with little medical oversight. She is assisted by her three black day-shift orderlies, and her assistant doctors.

McMurphy constantly antagonizes Nurse Ratched and upsets the routines, leading to constant power struggles between the inmate and the nurse. He runs a card table, captains the ward's basketball team, comments on Nurse Ratched's figure, incites the other patients on the ward to conduct a vote on watching the [World Series](#) on television, and organizes a supervised deep sea [fishing](#) trip. His reaction after failing to lift a heavy shower room control panel (which he had claimed to be able to) – "But at least I tried." – gives the men incentive to try to stand up for themselves, to do their best instead of allowing Nurse Ratched to take control of everything they do. The Chief opens up to McMurphy and reveals late one night that he can speak and hear. A disturbance after the fishing trip results in McMurphy and the Chief being sent for [electroshock therapy](#) sessions, but even this experience does little to tamp down McMurphy's rambunctious behavior.

One night, after bribing the night orderly, McMurphy breaks into the pharmacy and smuggles bottles of liquor and two [prostitute](#) girlfriends onto the ward. McMurphy persuades one of the women to seduce Billy Bibbit, a timid, boyish patient, with a terrible [stutter](#) and little experience with women, so that he can lose his [virginity](#). Although McMurphy plans to escape before the morning shift arrives, he and the other patients fall asleep instead without cleaning up the mess and the staff finds the ward in complete disarray. Nurse Ratched finds Billy and the prostitute in each other's arms, partially dressed, and admonishes him. Billy asserts himself for the first time, answering Nurse Ratched without stuttering. Ratched calmly threatens to tell Billy's mother what she has seen. Billy has an emotional breakdown and, once left alone in the doctor's office, commits [suicide](#) by cutting his throat. Nurse Ratched blames McMurphy for the loss of Billy's life. Enraged at what she has done to Billy, McMurphy attacks her and attempts to [strangle](#) her to death and tears off her uniform, revealing her breasts to the patients and aides watching. He has to be dragged away from her and is moved to the Disturbed ward.

Nurse Ratched misses a week of work due to her injuries, during which time many of the patients either transfer to other wards or check out of the hospital forever. When she returns, she cannot speak and is thus deprived of her most potent tool to keep the men in line. Most of the patients leave shortly after this event. Later, after only Bromden, Martini, and Scanlon are the only original patients left on the ward, McMurphy is brought back in. He has received a [lobotomy](#) and is now in a vegetative state, silent and motionless. The Chief later smothers McMurphy with a pillow during the night, before throwing the shower room control panel, the same one McMurphy could not lift earlier, through a window, and escaping the hospital.

One Hundred Years of Solitude—by Gabriël Garcia Márquez.

One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967) is the story of seven [generations](#) of the Buendía Family in the town of [Macondo](#). The founding [patriarch](#) of Macondo, José Arcadio Buendía, and Úrsula, his wife (and first cousin), leave [Riohacha, Colombia](#), to find a better life and a new home. One night of their emigration journey, whilst camping on a riverbank, José Arcadio Buendía dreams of

“Macondo”, a city of mirrors that reflected the world in and about it. Upon awakening, he decides to found Macondo at the river side; after days of wandering the jungle, José Arcadio Buendía’s founding of Macondo is [utopic](#).^[1]

Founding patriarch José Arcadio Buendía believes Macondo to be surrounded by water, and from that island, he invents the world according to *his* perceptions.^[1] Soon after its foundation, Macondo becomes a town frequented by unusual and extraordinary events that involve the generations of the Buendía family, who are unable or unwilling to escape their periodic (mostly) self-inflicted misfortunes. Ultimately, a hurricane destroys Macondo, the city of mirrors; just the cyclical turmoil inherent to Macondo. At the end of the story, a Buendía man deciphers an encrypted cipher that generations of Buendía family men had failed to decipher. The secret message informed the recipient of every fortune and misfortune lived by the Buendía Family generations.^[1]

Optomist's Daughter (The) —by Eudora Welty.

The book begins with the main character Laurel Hand who travels to New Orleans from her home in Chicago to assist her aging father as a family friend and doctor operates on his eye. Laurel’s father remains in the hospital for recovery for several months. During this time, Laurel begins to get to know her outsider stepmother better, as she rarely visited her father since the two were married. Fay begins to show her true colors as the Judge’s condition worsens. To the distress of all who knew him, the Judge dies after his wife throws a violently emotional fit in the hospital and confesses of cheating and interest in his money.

The two women travel back to the Judge’s home in Mount Salus Mississippi for the funeral and are received by close friends of the family. Here, Laurel finds love and friendship in a community which she left after childhood. Ironically, the warmth of the town clashes with Fay’s dissenting and antagonistic personality. The woman from Alabama, who claimed to have no family other than the Judge, is soon confronted by her past as her mother, siblings, and other members of her family show up to her house to attend the funeral. Though Laurel confronts Fay as to the reason for which she lied, she cannot help but feel anything except pity for the lonely, sullen woman. Directly after her husband’s funeral, Fay leaves to go back home to Madrid, Spain with her family.

After her distraught and immature stepmother leaves, Laurel finally has time to herself in the house she grew up in with the friends and neighbors she knew since childhood. During the few days she remains, Laurel digs through the past as she goes through her house remembering her deceased parents and the life she had before she left Mount Salus. She rediscovers the life of friendship and love that she left behind so many years ago, along with heartache.

Her visit to her hometown and the memories of her parents open up a new insight on life for Laurel. She leaves Mount Salus with a new understanding of life and the factors which influence it the most—friends and family. But most of all, she gains a new understanding and respect for herself.

Orestia (The) —by Aeschylus.

Orestes arrives at the grave of his father, accompanied by his friend [Pylades](#), the son of the king of Phocis, where he has grown up in exile; he places two locks of his hair on the tomb. Orestes and Pylades hide as [Electra](#), Orestes' sister, arrives at the grave accompanied by a chorus of elderly slave women (the libation bearers of the title) to pour libations on Agamemnon's grave; they have been sent by Clytemnestra in an effort "to ward off harm" (1.42). Just as the ritual ends, Electra spots a lock of hair on the tomb which she recognizes as similar to her own; subsequently she sees two sets of footprints, one of which has proportions similar to hers. At this point Orestes and Pylades emerge from their hiding place and Orestes gradually convinces her of his identity.

Now, in the longest and most structurally complex lyric passage in extant Greek tragedy, the chorus, Orestes, and Electra, conjure the departed spirit of Agamemnon to aid them in revenging his murder. Orestes then asks "why she sent libations, what calculation led her to offer too late atonement for a hurt past cure"(l.515-516). The chorus responds that in the palace of Argos Clytemnestra was roused from slumber by a nightmare: she dreamt that she gave birth to a snake, and the snake now feeds from her breast and draws blood along with milk. Alarmed by this, a possible sign of the gods' wrath, she "sent these funeral libations"(l.538). Orestes believes that he is the snake in his mother's dream, so together with Electra they plan to avenge their father by killing their mother Clytemnestra and her new husband, [Aegisthus](#).

Orestes and Pylades pretend to be ordinary travelers from Phocis, and ask for hospitality at the palace. They even tell the Queen that Orestes is dead. Delighted by the news, Clytemnestra sends a servant to summon Aegisthus. When Aegisthus arrives, Orestes reveals himself and kills the usurper. Clytemnestra hears the shouting of a servant and appears on the scene. She sees Orestes standing over the body of Aegisthus. Orestes is then presented with a difficult situation: in order to avenge his father, he must kill his mother. Clytemnestra bares her breast and pleads, "Hold, oh child, and have shame" to which he responds by saying to his close friend Pylades, the son of the king of Phocis: "Shall I be ashamed to kill [my] mother ?"(l.896-899). Some interpreters have suggested that Orestes' question may be connected to a greater theme in the Oresteia: that sometimes we are faced with impossible decisions; in this case, Orestes' familial duty to his father is fundamentally opposed to his familial duty to his mother. On the other hand, it appears straightforward as not much more than a pro forma rhetorical question because he readily accepts Pylades advice that it is the correct course of action. Pylades implores Orestes not to forget his duty to Apollo "and our sworn pact" (900). Orestes proceeds immediately with the murder and wraps the bodies of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in the cloak that Agamemnon was wearing when he was slain.

As soon as he exits the palace, the [Erinyes](#), or [Furies](#) as they are known in Roman mythology, begin to haunt and torture him in his flight. Orestes flees in agonized panic. The chorus complains that the cycle of violence did not stop with Clytemnestra's murder, but continues.

Orlando—by Virginia Wolff.

Orlando tells the story of a young man named Orlando, born in [England](#) during the reign of [Elizabeth I](#), who decides not to grow old. He is briefly a lover to the elderly queen, but after her death has a brief, intense love affair with Sasha, a princess in the entourage of the Russian embassy. This episode, of love and excitement against the background of the [Great Frost](#), is one of the best known, and is said to represent Vita Sackville-West's affair with [Violet Trefusis](#).

Following Sasha's sudden, unwarned departure and return to Russia, the desolate, heartbroken Orlando returns to writing *The Oak Tree*, a poem started and abandoned in his youth. He meets with Nicholas Greene, a famous poet and with whom he joyfully entertains, but who criticises Orlando's writing, later making Orlando feel betrayed when he finds himself made the foolishly-depicted subject of one of Greene's subsequent works. This period of contemplating love and life leads Orlando to appreciate the value of his ancestral stately home, which he proceeds to furnish lavishly and then plays host to the populace. [Ennui](#) sets in and the harassment of a persistent suitor, the Archduchess Harriet, leads to Orlando's fleeing the country when appointed by [King Charles II](#) as British ambassador to [Constantinople](#). Orlando performs his duties well, until a night of civil unrest and murderous riots. He falls asleep for a lengthy period of days while in Turkey, resistant to all efforts to rouse him. Upon awakening he finds, unsurprised, that he has metamorphosed into a woman—the same person, with the same personality and intellect, but in a woman's body.

The now *Lady* Orlando covertly escapes Constantinople in the company of a [Gypsy](#) clan, adopting their way of life until its essential conflict with her upbringing leads her to head home. Only on the ship back to England, with her constraining female clothes and an incident in which a flash of her ankle nearly results in a sailor's falling to his death, does she realise the magnitude of becoming a woman; yet she concludes the overall advantages, declaring 'Praise God I'm a woman!' Back in England, Orlando is hounded once again by the archduchess, who now reveals herself in fact to be a man, the Archduke Harry. Orlando evades his marriage proposals, instead living a life switching between gender roles, dressing as both man and woman.

Orlando soon becomes caught up in the life of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, holding court with the great poets (notably [Alexander Pope](#)), including Nick Greene who appears to be as timeless as she, now promoting her writing and promising to help her publish *The Oak Tree*. Orlando wins a lawsuit over her property and marries a sea captain, Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine. In 1928, she publishes *The Oak Tree* centuries after starting it, winning a prize. As her husband's ship returns, in the aftermath of her success, she rushes to greet him.

Othello—by William Shakespeare.

The play opens with Roderigo, a rich and dissolute gentleman, complaining to Iago, a high-ranking soldier, that Iago has not told him about the secret marriage between [Desdemona](#), the daughter of a Senator named [Brabantio](#), and [Othello](#), a [Moorish](#) general in the Venetian army. He is upset by this development because he loves Desdemona and had previously asked her father for her hand in marriage. Iago is upset with Othello for promoting a younger man named [Cassio](#) above him, and tells Roderigo that he plans to use Othello for his own advantage. Iago is also upset because he believes that Othello slept with his wife Emilia. Iago's argument against Cassio is that he is a scholarly tactician with no real battle experience from which he can draw strategy; in contrast, Iago has practical battle skills. By emphasizing Roderigo's failed bid for Desdemona, and his own dissatisfaction with serving under Othello, Iago convinces Roderigo to wake Brabantio, Desdemona's father, and tell him about his daughter's [elopement](#). Iago sneaks away to find Othello and warns him that Brabantio is coming for him.

Before Brabantio reaches Othello, news arrives in Venice that the Turks are going to attack Cyprus; therefore Othello is summoned to advise the senators. Brabantio arrives and accuses Othello of seducing Desdemona by witchcraft, but Othello defends himself successfully before an assembly that includes the Duke of Venice, Brabantio's kinsman Lodovico and Gratiano, and various senators. He explains that Desdemona became enamored of him for the stories he told of his early life, not because of any witchcraft he might have used. The senate is satisfied, but the broken Brabantio leaves saying that Desdemona will betray Othello. By order of the Duke, Othello leaves Venice to command the Venetian armies against invading Turks on the island of [Cyprus](#), accompanied by his new wife, his new lieutenant Cassio, his ensign Iago, and Emilia as Desdemona's attendant.

The party arrives in Cyprus to find that a storm has destroyed the Turkish fleet. Othello orders a general celebration. Iago schemes to use Cassio to ruin Othello and takes the opportunity of Othello's absence at the celebration to persuade Roderigo to engage Cassio in a fight. He achieves this by getting Cassio drunk on wine after Cassio's own admission that he cannot hold his drink. The brawl greatly alarms the citizenry, and Othello is forced to quell the disturbance. Othello blames Cassio for the disturbance, and the former strips the latter of his rank. Cassio is distraught, but Iago persuades him to importune Desdemona to act as an intermediary between himself and Othello, and persuade her husband to reinstate him.

Iago now persuades Othello to be suspicious of Cassio and Desdemona. As it happens, Cassio is having a relationship of sorts with Bianca, a prostitute. Desdemona drops the [handkerchief](#) that was Othello's first gift to Desdemona and which he has stated holds great significance to him in

the context of their relationship. Emilia, at the request of Iago, but unaware of what he plans to do with the handkerchief, steals it. Iago plants it in Cassio's lodgings as evidence of Cassio and Desdemona's affair. After he has planted the handkerchief, Iago tells Othello to stand apart and watch Cassio's reactions while Iago questions him about the handkerchief. Iago goads Cassio on to talk about his affair with Bianca, but very quietly mentions her name so that Othello believes they are still talking about Desdemona when Cassio is really speaking of Bianca. Bianca, on discovering the handkerchief, chastises Cassio, accusing him of giving her a second-hand gift which he received from another lover. Othello sees this, and Iago convinces him that Cassio received the handkerchief from Desdemona. Enraged and hurt, Othello resolves to kill his wife and Iago is "asked" to kill Cassio as a duty to their intimacy. Othello proceeds to make Desdemona's life a misery, hitting her in front of her family. Desdemona laments her suffering, remembering the fate of her mother's maid, who was forsaken by her lover.

Roderigo complains that he has received nothing for his efforts and threatens to abandon his pursuit of Desdemona, but Iago convinces him to kill Cassio instead, because Cassio has just been appointed in Othello's place as governor of Cyprus, and—Iago argues—if Cassio lives to take office, Othello and Desdemona will leave Cyprus, thwarting Roderigo's plans to win Desdemona. Roderigo attacks Cassio in the street after Cassio leaves Bianca's lodgings. They fight and both are wounded. Cassio's leg is cut from behind by Iago who manages to hide his identity as perpetrator. Passers-by arrive to help; Iago joins them, pretending to help Cassio. When Cassio identifies Roderigo as one of his attackers, Iago secretly stabs Roderigo to stop him from confessing. He then accuses Bianca of the failed conspiracy to kill Cassio.

In the night, Othello confronts Desdemona, and then [smothers](#) her to death in bed, before Emilia arrives. At Emilia's distress, Othello tries to explain himself, justifying his actions by accusing Desdemona of adultery. Emilia calls for help. The Governor arrives, with Iago, Cassio, and others, and Emilia begins to explain the situation. When Othello mentions the handkerchief as proof, Emilia realizes what Iago has done. She exposes him, whereupon Iago kills her. Othello, realizing Desdemona's innocence, attacks Iago but does not kill him, saying that he would rather have Iago live the rest of his life in pain. Lodovico, a Venetian nobleman, apprehends both Iago and Othello, but Othello commits suicide with a sword before they can take him into custody. At the end, it can be assumed, Iago is taken off to be tortured, and Cassio becomes governor of Cyprus.

Other (The) —by Tom Tryon.

It's a seemingly idyllic summer in 1935, and identical twins Niles and Holland Perry play around the bucolic family farm. We see the daily activities of the farm through the eyes of the eleven year old boys. Holland is clearly the amoral mischief maker, though sympathetic Niles is often caught in their shenanigans. Niles carries a Prince Albert tobacco tin with several secret trinkets, including the Perry family ring, which came down from their grandfather, and something mysteriously wrapped in wax paper. He asks Holland to "take them back," but Holland insists "I gave them to you, they're yours now." Their cousin Russell finds the boys in the forbidden apple cellar, and promises to snitch on them.

Their mother is a recluse in her upstairs bedroom, grieving over the recent death of the boys' father in the apple cellar. Grandmother Ada, a Russian emigrant, dotes on Niles, and has taught him a psychic ability to project himself outside of his body, for example in a bird; this ability she calls "the great game."

As the summer progresses, Holland appears to play some deadly practical jokes. A pitchfork left hidden in some straw in the floor of the hayloft takes the life of their sneering cousin Russell (he leaps from the upper loft onto it) before he can betray their secret hideaway in the apple cellar. A frightening magic trick for nearby spinster Mrs. Rowe causes her to have a fatal heart attack. After Russell's funeral, Niles' mother finds the ring, and the severed finger that is wrapped in wax paper.

That night she demands Niles to tell her how he has taken possession of father's ring. "Holland gave it to me," he answers. She's shocked, and asks him *when* he gave it to Niles. "In the parlor, after our birthday," he answers. Holland appears, whispering, "Give it back!" After a struggle on the handing over the ring, she falls down the stairs and is rendered partially paralyzed.

Ada finds Holland's harmonica at Mrs. Rowe's house after her body is discovered. Finding Niles in church, transfixed by the image of "The Angel of a Better Day," she asks Niles about Mrs. Rowe, and he identifies Holland as the culprit. Ada drags Niles to the family graveyard and demands that Niles face the truth: *Holland has been dead* since their birthday in March, when he fell down the well. He was thought to have been buried with his father's ring ... which we know to be in Niles' possession. At home, Ada blames herself for teaching Niles "the game," but insists that he not play it anymore. But Niles continues to talk with Holland. Holland helps Niles to remember how he got his father's ring: Holland insisted that he cut his finger off while he lay in his casket in the parlor. In the stairway, Ada hears Niles whispering....

More tragedy strikes the family. During a storm, Rider and Torrie's newborn baby is kidnapped, a copycat of [the recent Lindbergh tragedy](#). (News about the trial is seen in a newspaper, and Niles has a crayon portrait of [Bruno Hauptmann](#) in his bedroom.) As the adults mount a search for the baby, Niles sneaks off to the barn. Ada suspects that Niles knows more than he's letting on. When she discovers Niles in the barn, pleading for Holland to tell him where the baby is, she fears that Niles is beyond hope. She insists that he, Niles, has done all these things, but he refuses to believe her. The baby is found, drowned in one of Mr. Angelini's pickle barrels, and they apprehend the (innocent) handyman. Returning to the barn and shutting the door, Ada hears Niles in the apple cellar where the boys like to hide, whispering with Holland. She empties a can of gasoline into the apple cellar, and, clutching an oil lantern, dives into the cellar, starting a cataclysmic fire.

As autumn begins, the ruins of the barn are being cleared. The camera zooms in on a padlock that has been cut open with a bolt-cutter. We find that in spite of the fire, Niles is alive and well. His mother is a catatonic invalid, Ada has died in the barn fire, and no one knows Niles's terrible secret.

Our Mutual Friend—by Charles Dickens.

A rich misanthropic [miser](#) who has made his fortune from London's rubbish dies, estranged from all except his faithful employees Mr and Mrs Boffin. By his will, his fortune goes to his estranged son John Harmon, who is to return from where he has settled abroad (putatively in South Africa, though this is never stated) to claim it, on condition that he marries a woman he has not met, Miss Bella Wilfer. The implementation of the Will is in the charge of the solicitor, Mortimer Lightwood, who has no other practice.

Before the son and heir can claim his inheritance, he goes missing, presumed drowned, at the end of his journey back to London. A body is found in the Thames by Gaffer Hexam, a waterman who makes his living from retrieving corpses and robbing them of valuables before rendering them to the authorities. The body is identified from papers in the pockets as that of the heir, John Harmon. Present at the identification is a mysterious young man, who gives his name as Julius Handford and then disappears.

By the terms of the [miser](#)'s will, the whole estate then devolves upon Mr and Mrs Boffin, naive and good hearted people who wish to enjoy it for themselves and to share it with others. They take the disappointed bride of the drowned heir, Miss Wilfer, into their household, and treat her as their pampered child and heiress. They also accept an offer from Julius Handford, now going under the name of John Rokesmith, to serve as confidential secretary and man of business, at no salary. He uses this position to watch and learn everything about the Boffins, Miss Wilfer, and the aftershock of the drowning of the heir John Harmon. A one-legged ballad seller, Silas Wegg, is engaged to

read to Mr Boffin in the evenings, and he tries to take advantage of his position and Mr Boffin's good heart to obtain other advantages from the wealthy [dustman](#).

Gaffer Hexam, who found the body, is accused of murdering John Harmon by a fellow-waterman, Roger "Rogue" Riderhood, who is bitter at having been cast off as Hexam's partner on the river and who covets the large reward offered in relation to the murder. Hexam is shunned by his fellows on the river, and excluded from The Six Jolly Fellowship-Porters, a public house frequented by them on the river. Hexam's young son, the clever but priggish Charley Hexam, leaves his father's house in order to better himself at school, and train to be a schoolmaster, encouraged by his sister, the beautiful Lizzie Hexam. Meanwhile, Lizzie stays with her father, to whom she is devoted.

Before Riderhood can claim the reward for his false allegation against Hexam, Hexam is found drowned himself. Lizzie Hexam becomes the lodger of a doll's dressmaker. But she has caught the eye of the briefless and languid barrister, Eugene Wrayburn, who noticed her when accompanying his friend, the Harmon solicitor Mortimer Lightwood, in pursuit of Gaffer Hexam upon the accusation of Riderhood. Wrayburn falls in love with her. However, he has a violent rival in Bradley Headstone, the schoolmaster of Charley Hexam, who is set on marrying her, and believes that Wrayburn will make her his mistress but not his wife. Lizzie Hexam flees both men, getting work up river outside London.

Mr and Mrs Boffin adopt a young orphan, previously in the care of his grandmother, Betty Higden. Mrs Higden minds children for a living, assisted by the gangling foundling known as Sloppy. She has a terror of the workhouse. When Mrs Higden is found dying by Lizzie Hexam, Lizzie is thereby introduced to the Boffins and to Bella Wilfer. But Lizzie has been tracked down by Eugene Wrayburn and also by Bradley Headstone. Headstone assaults Wrayburn and leaves him for dead but Lizzie finds and rescues him. Wrayburn, thinking he will die anyway, marries Lizzie to save her reputation. When he survives, he is glad that this has brought him into a loving marriage, albeit with a social inferior. He had not cared about the social gulf between them but Lizzie had and would not otherwise have married him.

Rokesmith has clearly fallen in love with Bella Wilfer but she cannot bear to accept him, determining that she will marry only for money. Mr Boffin appears to be corrupted by his wealth and becomes a [miser](#). He also begins to treat his secretary Rokesmith with contempt and cruelty. This rouses the sympathy of Bella Wilfer and both she and Rokesmith are turned out of the Boffin household. They marry and live happily although poor.

Meanwhile, Bradley Headstone has tried to put the blame for his assault on Wrayburn on Rogue Riderhood, now working as a lock gate keeper by dressing in similar clothes when doing the deed. Riderhood realizes this and also knows of the assault, and he attempts to blackmail Headstone. Headstone, overcome with the hopelessness of his situation, is seized with a self-destructive urge and flings himself into the lock, pulling Riderhood with him so that both are drowned.

The one-legged parasite Silas Wegg has with Venus, the articulator of bones, discovered a will subsequent to the one which has given the Boffins the whole of the Harmon estate. By the later will, the estate goes to the Crown. Wegg and Venus decide to blackmail Boffin with this will.

It becomes clear to the reader that John Rokesmith is the missing heir, John Harmon. He had been robbed of his clothes and possessions by the man later found drowned and wrongly identified as him. Rokesmith/Harmon has been maintaining his alias in order to see Bella Wilfer before committing himself to marry her as required by the terms of his father's will. Now that she has married him believing him to be poor, he can throw off his disguise. He does so and it is revealed that Mr Boffin's ill treatment of him and his miserliness was part of a scheme to test Miss Wilfer's motives and affections.

When Wegg (abandoned by Venus) attempts to clinch his blackmail on the basis of the later will disinheriting Boffin, Boffin turns the tables by revealing a still later will by which the fortune is granted to Boffin even at young John Harmon's expense. The Boffins are determined to make John Harmon and his bride Bella Wilfer their heirs anyway so all ends well, except for the villain Wegg, who is carted away by Sloppy.

Our Town—by Thornton Wilder.

The play begins with the Stage Manager describing the town. After this come scenes in the Gibbs' and Webbs' homes, where both families prepare their children for school. The Stage Manager then guides the audience through a day in the life of the town. The local milkman, Howie Newsome, reappears during every morning scene—once each in Acts I, II, and III—highlighting the continuity of life in Grover's Corners and in the general human experience. The Stage Manager also has Professor Willard, a long-winded local historian, and Mr. Webb, editor of the *Grover's Corners Sentinel*, talk about the town. During this scene, Editor Webb answers some questions from actors who have been planted in the audience. After a scene within the [Congregational Church](#) at a choir practice, Mrs. Webb, Mrs. Gibbs, and Mrs. Soames discuss Simon Stimson. Stimson is the church organist with a reputation for being a drunkard. Due to his non-conforming nature, he is often the subject of the town's gossip. The act also includes a scene in which George and Emily discuss school. Also on the ladder, George's younger sister Rebecca, talks about the moon and how it might get nearer and nearer until there's a "big 'explosion'". Rebecca proceeds to tell George about a letter that a girl received from her minister in which the address on the envelope says, "Jane Crofut, the Crofut farm, Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, United States of America, continent of North America, the Western Hemisphere, the world, the solar system, the universe, the mind of God," in a reference to how all people are connected through humanity. The subject of "daily life" addressed throughout this act [stereotypes](#) the average "American family."

Three years pass and George and Emily announce their plans to wed. The day is filled with stress, topped off by George's visit to the Webb family home. There, he meets Mr. Webb, who tells George of his own father's advice to him: to treat his wife like property and never to respect her needs. Mr. Webb then says that he did the exact opposite of his father's advice and has been happy since. Mr. Webb concludes by telling George not to take advice from anyone on matters of that nature. Here, the Stage Manager interrupts the scene and takes the audience back a year, to the end of Emily and George's junior year. Over an ice cream soda, Emily confronts George about his pride, and they discuss the future and their love for each other. The wedding follows, where George, in a fit of nervousness, tells his mother that he is not ready to marry. Emily, too, tells her father of her anxiety about marriage, saying she wishes she were dead. However, they both regain their composure, and George proceeds down the aisle to be wed by the preacher (played by the Stage Manager). Mrs. Soames is very pleased with the whole affair, as she says, "Isn't this the loveliest wedding?" The text is interrupted by the individual thoughts in a modern twist to Shakespeare's soliloquy.

The setting for Act III is a cemetery near Grover's Corners. The Stage Manager opens this act with a lengthy monologue emphasizing eternity, expressed by the survival of Emily's second child after Emily herself dies giving birth. Emily's coffin is brought to the cemetery and buried, and she emerges from the mourners as a spirit. She joins her relatives and fellow townsfolk in the graveyard, including her mother-in-law, Mrs. Gibbs, Simon Stimson, Mrs. Soames, Wally Webb and Mr. Carter. The dead tell her that they must wait and forget the life that came before, but Emily refuses. Soon Emily's ghost learns it is possible to re-live parts of her past. Despite the warnings of Simon, Mrs. Soames, and Mrs. Gibbs, Emily decides to return to Earth to re-live just one day, her 12th birthday, and realizes just how much life should be valued, "every, every minute." Poignantly, she asks the Stage Manager whether anyone realizes life while they live it, and is told, "No. The saints and poets, maybe--they do some." She then returns to her grave. The Stage Manager concludes the play with a monologue and wishes the audience a good night.

Out of Africa—by Isak Dinesen.

At first glance much of the book, especially the section titled “From an Immigrant’s Notebook,” seems to be a string of loosely related episodes organized from Blixen’s memory, or perhaps from notes she made while in Africa (indeed, in one of the early chapters she describes discussing the beginning of her work on the book with her young cook Kamante).

A closer look, however, yields a more formal approach.

Blixen examines the details and ethical implications of two separate “trials.” The first is African: a gathering of tribesmen on her farm to adjudicate the case of a [Kikuyu](#) child who accidentally killed one playmate and maimed another with a shotgun. This process seems largely devoid of Western-style moral or ethical considerations: most of the energy expended in deliberations is directed at determining the proper amount of reparation the perpetrator’s father must pay, in livestock, to the families of the victims. Later, Blixen describes a British colonial criminal trial in Nairobi: the defendant is a European settler who is accused of causing, by intention or indifference, the death of a disobedient African servant named Kitosch. Blixen does not directly compare the two proceedings, but the contrasts are stark.

These two trials, separated by most of the bulk of the book, may also be part of a deeper exploration by Blixen into one of her pet notions: the “Unity” of contrasts. Perhaps her greatest elucidation of this idea comes in *Shadows on the Grass*, which she wrote thirty years after leaving Kenya:

"Two homogenous units will never be capable of forming a whole... Man and woman become one... A hook and an eye are a Unity, a fastening, but with two hooks you can do nothing. A right-hand glove with its contrast the left-hand glove makes a whole, a pair of gloves; but two right-hand gloves you throw away."^[14]

Her life in Africa offered her no shortage of such contrasting dualities: town and country, dry season and rainy season, Muslim and Christian. But her most constant theme is the contrast of African and European.

Much of Blixen’s energy in *Out of Africa* is spent trying to capture for the reader the character of the Africans who lived on or near her farm, and the efforts of European colonists (herself included) to co-exist with them.

Although she was unavoidably in the position of landholder, and wielded great power over her tenants, Blixen was known in her day for her respectful and admiring relationships with Africans^[15] – a connection that made her increasingly suspect among the other colonists as tensions grew between Europeans and Africans.^[16] “We were good friends,” she writes about her staff and workers. “I reconciled myself to the fact that while I should never quite know or understand them, they knew me through and through.”^[17]

But Blixen does understand – and thoughtfully delineates – the differences between the culture of the [Kikuyu](#) who work her farm and who raise and trade their own sheep and cattle, and that of the [Maasai](#), a volatile warrior culture of nomadic cattle-drovers who live on a designated tribal reservation south of the farm’s property. Blixen also describes in some detail the lives of the Somali Muslims who immigrated south from Somaliland to work in Kenya, and a few members of the substantial Indian merchant minority which played a large role in the colony’s early development.

Her descriptions of Africans and their behavior or customs sometimes employ some of the abrasive racial language of her time, but her portraits are unusually frank and accepting, and are generally free of the period's European preconceptions of Africans as savages or simpletons. She saw in the ancient tribal customs a logic and dignity which many of her fellow colonists did not. Some of those customs, such as the valuation of daughters based on the dowry they will bring at marriage, seem ugly to Western eyes; Blixen's voice in describing these traditions is largely free of judgment.

She was admired in return by many of her African employees and acquaintances, who saw her as a thoughtful and wise figure, and turned to her for the resolution of many disputes and conflicts.

The other characters who populate *Out of Africa* are the Europeans – colonists as well as some of the wanderers who stopped in Kenya. Foremost among them is [Denys Finch Hatton](#), who was for a time Blixen's lover after her separation and then her divorce from her husband. Finch Hatton, like Blixen herself, was known to feel close to his African acquaintances – as, indeed, do virtually all of the Europeans for whom Blixen expresses real regard in *Out of Africa*.

Blixen limits most of her reflections to those Europeans who were her frequent or favorite guests, such as a man she identifies only as "Old Knudsen," a down-and-out Danish fisherman who invites himself to take up residence on her farm, and then abruptly dies there.

[Edward, Prince of Wales](#) also makes an appearance; his 1928 visit to the colony was an event of the utmost importance in Kenya's aristocratic social circles (the governor of the colony ordered the streets of Nairobi repaved for the occasion).

Pale Fire—by Vladimir Nabokov.

Shade's poem digressively describes many aspects of his life. Canto 1 includes his early encounters with death and glimpses of what he takes to be the supernatural. Canto 2 is about his family and the apparent suicide of his daughter, Hazel. Canto 3 focuses on Shade's search for knowledge about an afterlife, culminating in a "faint hope" in higher powers "playing a game of worlds" as indicated by apparent coincidences. Canto 4 offers details on Shade's daily life and creative process, as well as thoughts on his poetry, which he finds to be a means of somehow understanding the universe.

In Kinbote's editorial contributions he tells three stories intermixed with each other. One is his own story, notably including what he thinks of as his friendship with Shade. After Shade was murdered, Kinbote acquired the manuscript, including some variants, and has taken it upon himself to oversee the poem's publication, telling readers that it lacks only line 1000. Kinbote's second story deals with King Charles II, "The Beloved," the deposed king of Zembla. King Charles escaped imprisonment by [Soviet](#)-backed revolutionaries, making use of a secret passage and brave adherents in disguise. Kinbote repeatedly claims that he inspired Shade to write the poem by recounting King Charles's escape to him and that possible allusions to the king, and to Zembla, appear in Shade's poem, especially in rejected drafts. However, no explicit reference to King Charles is to be found in the poem. Kinbote's third story is that of Gradus, an assassin dispatched by the new rulers of Zembla to kill the exiled King Charles. Gradus makes his way from Zembla through Europe and America to New Wye, suffering comic mishaps. In the last note, to the missing line 1000, Kinbote narrates how Gradus killed Shade by mistake.

The reader soon realizes that Kinbote is King Charles, living incognito—or, though Kinbote builds an elaborate picture of Zembla complete with samples of a [constructed language](#), that he is insane and that his identification with King Charles is a delusion, as perhaps all of Zembla is.

Nabokov said in an interview that Kinbote committed suicide after finishing the book.^[9] The critic Michael Wood has stated, "This is authorial trespassing, and we don't have to pay attention to it,"^[10] but Brian Boyd has argued that internal evidence points to Kinbote's suicide.^[11] One of Kinbote's annotations to Shade's poem (corresponding to line 493) addresses the subject of suicide at some length.

Pamela—by Samuel Richardson.

Pamela Andrews is a young servant of 15, very pious and innocent, serving Lady B. as a waiting-maid, in Bedfordshire. When the lady dies, her son, the squire Mr. B, shows more and more his attraction towards Pamela, first by being kind to her (he gives her his mother's clothes), then by trying to take advantage of her in the Summer House. But she resists, and as he wants to pay her to keep the secret, she refuses and tells Mrs Jervis, the housekeeper (her best friend in the house, a motherly figure although faithful to Mr. B). He pops out of her closet and tries to kiss her, after watching her undress for bed. Pamela thinks of going back to her poverty-ridden parents to preserve her innocence, but can't make up her mind. Mr. B plans to marry her to Mr. Williams, his chaplain in Lincolnshire, and gives money to her parents in case she then lets him take advantage of her. She refuses and decides to go back to her parents.

But Mr. B intercepts her letters to her parents and tells them she is having an affair with a poor clergyman and that he will send her to a safe place to preserve her honour. Pamela is then driven to Lincolnshire Estate and begins a journal (because she is a prisoner and can't write letters anymore) hoping it will be sent to her parents one day. The housekeeper there, Mrs. Jewkes, is very different from Mrs. Jervis: she is an "odious," rude, "unwomanly" woman (Pamela speculates that she is perhaps even "an atheist!") and is devoted to Mr. B. She imposes Pamela to be her bedfellow. Mr. B promises her that he won't approach her without her leave (indeed he's away from Lincolnshire for a long time).

Pamela meets Mr. Williams and they agree to communicate by putting letters under a sunflower of the garden. Mrs. Jewkes beats her because she calls her "her [Jezebel](#)". Mr. Williams asks the gentry of the village for help and, even though they pity Pamela, no one agrees to help her because of Mr. B's social position. Mr. Williams proposes marriage to her in order to escape Mr. B's wickedness.

Mr. Williams is attacked and beaten by robbers. Pamela wants to escape when Mrs. Jewkes is away, but is very frightened by two bulls watching her (they are actually cows). By mistake, Mr. Williams reveals the correspondence to Mrs. Jewkes and, as a result, Mr. B is jealous and says he hates Pamela. He wants to marry her to one of his servants. Mr. Williams is arrested. Pamela is desperate; she thinks of running away and making them believe she has been drowned in the pond. She tries to climb a wall, but can't do it: she is injured and renounces escape.

Mr. B comes back. He sends her a list of articles which would rule their partnership: she refuses each point because it would mean to be his mistress. Mr. B tries to go to bed with her disguised as Nan (the housemaid) with the complicity of Mrs. Jewkes, but Pamela faints and thwarts his designs. He seems to repent then, he is kinder in his attempts to seduce her. She implores him to cease. When he talks to her in the garden, he implicitly says he loves her but can't marry her because of the social gap.

A gypsy fortune-teller wants to predict Pamela's future, but only in order to give her a bit of paper warning her against a sham-marriage. Pamela has hidden a parcel of letters under a rose bush, and, when she comes to take them back, Mrs. Jewkes seizes them and gives them to Mr. B. After having read the letters, Mr. B feels pity for what she has undergone because of him and decides to marry her.

But she still doubts him and begs him to let her return to her parents. He is vexed but lets her go. She bids him goodbye and feels strangely sad. On her way home, he sends her a letter wishing her a good life. Pamela is moved and realizes she is in love. Then he sends her a second paper asking her to come back because he's very ill: she accepts.

Pamela and Mr. B talk of their future life as husband and wife and she agrees with everything he says. She explains why she doubted him. This is the end of her trials: she is more submissive to him and owes him everything now as a wife. Mr. Williams is released. Some neighbours come to the estate and all admire Pamela. Pamela's father comes to take her away but he is reassured when he sees Pamela happy.

Finally, she marries Mr. B in the chapel. But when Mr. B has gone to see a sick man, his sister, Lady Davers comes to threaten Pamela and considers her not really married. Pamela escapes by the window and goes in Colbrand's chariot to be taken away to Mr. B. The following day, Lady Davers enters their room without permission and insults Pamela. Mr. B is furious; he wants to renounce his sister, but Pamela wants to reconcile the two of them. But Lady Davers is still contemptuous towards Pamela. Vexed, she mentions Sally Godfrey, a girl Mr. B seduced in his youth, with whom he had a child. He is cross with Pamela because she dared approach him when he was in a temper.

Lady Davers accepts Pamela. Mr. B explains to Pamela what he expects of his wife. They go back to Bedfordshire. Pamela rewards the good servants with money and forgives John, who betrayed her. They make a little "Airing" to a farmhouse and encounter Miss Goodwin, Mr. B's child. Pamela would like to take her with them. They learn that Sally Godfrey is now happily married in Jamaica. Pamela is praised by the gentry of the neighbourhood who once despised her.

Paradise Lost—by John Milton.

The story is separated into twelve books, broken down shortly after initial publication, following the model of the *Aeneid* of [Virgil](#). The books' lengths vary; longest being Book IX, with 1,189 lines, and the shortest Book VII, having 640. In the second edition, each book was preceded by a summary titled "The Argument". The poem follows the epic tradition of starting *in medias res* (Latin for *in the midst of things*), the background story being recounted later.

Milton's story contains two arcs: one of [Satan \(Lucifer\)](#) and another of [Adam and Eve](#). It begins after Satan and the other [rebel angels](#) have been defeated and banished to [Hell](#), or as it is also called in the poem, [Tartarus](#). In [Pandæmonium](#), Satan employs his rhetorical skill to organize his followers; he is aided by his lieutenants [Mammon](#) and [Beelzebub](#). [Belial](#) and [Moloch](#) are also present. At the end of the debate, Satan volunteers himself to poison the newly-created [Earth](#) and God's new and most favored creation, Mankind. He braves the dangers of the [Abys](#)s alone in a manner reminiscent of [Odysseus](#) or [Aeneas](#). After arduously traversing the Chaos outside Hell, he enters God's new material World, and later the Garden of Eden.

Partway through the story, the [Angelic War](#) over Heaven is recounted. Satan's rebellion follows the epic convention of large-scale warfare. The battles between the faithful angels and Satan's forces take place over three days. The final battle involves the Son of God single-handedly defeating the entire legion of angelic rebels and banishing them from Heaven. Following the purging of Heaven, God creates the World, culminating in his creation of Adam and Eve. While God gave Adam and Eve [total freedom](#) and power to rule over all creation, He gave them one explicit command: not to eat from the [Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil](#) on penalty of death.

The story of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall is a fundamentally different, new kind of epic: a domestic one. Adam and Eve are presented for the first time in Christian literature as having a full

relationship while still without [sin](#). They have passions and distinct personalities. Satan, disguised in the form of a serpent, successfully tempts Eve to eat from the Tree by preying on her vanity and tricking her with [rhetoric](#). Later, Adam seeing Eve has sinned, knowingly commits the same sin. He declares to Eve that since she was made from his flesh, they are bound to one another so that if she dies, he must also die. In this manner, Milton portrays Adam as a [heroic](#) figure, but also as a deeper sinner than Eve, as he is aware that what he is doing is wrong.

After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve have lustful sex, and at first, Adam is convinced that Eve was right in thinking that eating the fruit would be beneficial. However, they soon fall asleep, having terrible nightmares, and after they awake, they experience [guilt](#) and [shame](#) for the first time. Realizing that they have committed a terrible act against God, they engage in mutual recrimination.

However, Eve's pleas to Adam reconcile them somewhat. Her encouragement enables Adam and Eve both to approach God, to "bow and sue for grace with suppliant knee", and to receive grace from God. Adam is shown a vision by the angel Michael, in which Adam witnesses everything that will happen to mankind until the [Great Flood](#). Since Adam is very upset by this vision of humankind's future, Michael also tells him about humankind's potential redemption from original sin through [Jesus Christ](#) (whom Michael calls "King Messiah").

Adam and Eve are then cast out of Eden, and Michael says that Adam may find "a paradise within thee, happier far". Adam and Eve also now have a more distant relationship with God, who is omnipresent, but invisible (unlike the previous tangible Father in the [Garden of Eden](#)).

Passage to India (A) —by E.M. Forster.

A young [British](#) schoolmistress, Adela Quested, and her elderly friend, Mrs. Moore, visit the fictional city of [Chandrapore](#), [British India](#). Adela is to marry Mrs. Moore's son, Ronny Heaslop, the city magistrate.

Meanwhile, Dr. Aziz, a young [Muslim Indian physician](#), is dining with two of his Indian friends and conversing about whether it is possible to be friends with an [Englishman](#). During the meal, a summons arrives from Major Callendar, Aziz's unpleasant superior at the hospital. Aziz hastens to Callendar's bungalow as ordered, but is delayed by a flat tyre and difficulty in finding a [tonga](#) and the major has already left in a huff.

Disconsolate, Aziz walks down the road toward the railway station. When he sees his favourite mosque, a rather ramshackle but beautiful structure, he enters on impulse. He sees a strange Englishwoman there, and angrily yells at her not to profane this sacred place. The woman, however, turns out to be Mrs Moore. Her respect for native customs (she took off her shoes on entering and she acknowledged that "God is here" in the mosque) disarms Aziz, and the two chat and part friends.

Mrs. Moore returns to the British club down the road and relates her experience at the mosque. Ronny Heaslop, her son, initially thinks she is talking about an Englishman, and becomes indignant when he learns the truth. He thinks she should have indicated by her tone that it was a "Mohammedan" who was in question. Adela, however, is intrigued.

Because the newcomers had expressed a desire to see Indians, Mr. Turton, the city tax collector, invites numerous Indian gentlemen to a party at his house. The party turns out to be an awkward business, thanks to the Indians' timidity and the Britons' bigotry, but Adela does meet Cyril Fielding, headmaster of Chandrapore's little government-run college for Indians. Fielding invites Adela and Mrs. Moore to a tea party with him and a [Hindu-Brahmin](#) professor named Narayan Godbole. On Adela's request, he extends his invitation to Dr. Aziz.

At Fielding's tea party, everyone has a good time conversing about India, and Fielding and Aziz even become great friends. Aziz buoyantly promises to take Mrs. Moore and Adela to see the Marabar Caves, a distant cave complex that everyone talks about but no one seems to actually visit. Aziz's Marabar invitation was one of those casual promises that people often make and never intend to keep. Ronny Heaslop arrives and rudely breaks up the party.

Aziz mistakenly believes that the women are really offended that he has not followed through with his promise and arranges the outing at great expense to himself. Fielding and Godbole were supposed to accompany the little expedition, but they miss the train.

Aziz and the women begin to explore the caves. In the first cave, however, Mrs. Moore is overcome with claustrophobia, for the cave is dark and Aziz's retinue has followed her in. The press of people nearly smothers her. But worse than the claustrophobia is the echo. No matter what sound one makes, the echo is always "Boum." Disturbed by the echo, Mrs. Moore declines to continue exploring. So Adela and Aziz, accompanied by a single guide, a local man, climb on up the hill to the next cluster of caves.

As Aziz helps Adela up the hill, she innocently asks him whether he has more than one wife. Disconcerted by the bluntness of the remark, he ducks into a cave to compose himself. When he comes out, he finds the guide sitting alone outside the caves. The guide says Adela has gone into one of the caves by herself. Aziz looks for her in vain. Deciding she is lost, he angrily punches the guide, who runs away. Aziz looks around again and discovers Adela's field-glasses (binoculars) lying broken on the ground. He puts them in his pocket.

Then Aziz looks down the hill and sees Adela speaking to another young Englishwoman, Miss Derek, who has arrived with Fielding in a car. Aziz runs down the hill and greets Fielding effusively, but Miss Derek and Adela have already driven off without a word of explanation. Fielding, Mrs. Moore, and Aziz return to Chandrapore on the train.

Then the blow falls. At the train station, Dr. Aziz is arrested and charged with sexually assaulting Adela in a cave. She reports the alleged incident to the British authorities.

The run-up to Aziz's trial for attempted sexual assault releases the racial tensions between the British and the Indians. Adela accuses Aziz only of trying to touch her. She says that he followed her into the cave and tried to grab her, and that she fended him off by swinging her field glasses at him. She remembers him grabbing the glasses and the strap breaking, which allowed her to get away. The only actual evidence the British have is the field glasses in the possession of Dr. Aziz. Despite this, the British colonists firmly believe that Aziz is guilty; at the back of all their minds is the conviction that all darker peoples lust after white women. They are stunned when Fielding proclaims his belief in Aziz's innocence. Fielding is ostracized and condemned as a blood-traitor. But the Indians, who consider the assault allegation a fraud aimed at ruining their community's reputation, welcome him.

During the weeks before the trial, Mrs. Moore is unexpectedly apathetic and irritable. Her experience in the cave seems to have ruined her faith in humanity. Although she curtly professes her belief in Aziz's innocence, she does nothing to help him. Ronny, alarmed by his mother's assertion that Aziz is innocent, decides to arrange for her return by ship to [England](#) before she can testify to this effect at the trial. Mrs. Moore dies during the voyage. Her absence from India becomes a major issue at the trial, where Aziz's legal defenders assert that her testimony alone, had it been available, would have proven the accused's innocence.

After an initial period of fever and weeping, Adela becomes confused as to Aziz's guilt. At the trial, she is asked point-blank whether Aziz sexually assaulted her. She asks for a moment to think before replying. She has a vision of the cave in that moment, and it turns out that Adela had, while

in the cave, received a shock similar to Mrs. Moore's. The echo had disconcerted her so much that she temporarily became unhinged. She ran around the cave, fled down the hill, and finally sped off with Miss Derek. At the time, Adela mistakenly interpreted her shock as an assault by Aziz, who personifies the India that has stripped her of her psychological innocence, but he was never there. She admits that she was mistaken. The case is dismissed. (Note that in the 1913 draft of the novel EM Forster originally had Aziz guilty of the assault and found guilty in the court, but later changed this in the 1924 draft to create a more ambiguous ending).

All the [Anglo-Indians](#) are shocked and infuriated by what they view as Adela's betrayal of the white race. Ronny Heaslop breaks off their engagement. Adela stays at Fielding's house until her passage on a boat to England is arranged. After explaining to Fielding that the echo was the cause of the whole business, she departs India, never to return.

Although he is free and vindicated, Aziz is angry and bitter that his friend, Fielding, would befriend Adela after she nearly ruined his life. The two men's friendship suffers in consequence, and Fielding soon departs for England. Aziz believes that he is leaving to marry Adela for her money. Bitter at his friend's perceived betrayal, he vows never again to befriend a white person. Aziz moves to the [Hindu](#)-ruled state of [Mau](#) and begins a new life.

Two years later, Fielding returns to India and to Aziz. His wife is Stella, Mrs. Moore's daughter from a second marriage. Aziz, now the [Raja](#)'s chief physician, at first persists in his anger against his old friend. But in time, he comes to respect and love Fielding again. However, he does not give up his dream of a free and united India. In the novel's last sentences, he explains that he and Fielding cannot be friends, at least not until India is free of the British Raj. Even the earth and the sky seem to say, "Not yet."

Peer Gynt—by Henrik Ibsen.

While [Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson](#) admired the play's "satire in Norwegian egotism, narrowness, and self-sufficiency" and described it as "magnificent", [Hans Christian Andersen](#), [Georg Brandes](#) and [Clemens Petersen](#) all joined a widespread hostility.^[5] Enraged by Petersen's criticisms in particular, Ibsen defended his work by arguing that it "*is poetry*; and if it isn't, it will become such. The conception of poetry in our country, in [Norway](#), shall shape itself according to this book."^[6] Despite this defense of his poetic achievement in *Peer Gynt*, the play was his last to employ verse; from [The League of Youth](#) (1869) onwards, Ibsen was to write [drama](#) only in [prose](#).^[7]

Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt* in deliberate disregard of the limitations that the conventional [stagecraft](#) of the [19th century](#) imposed on drama.^[8] Its 40 scenes move uninhibitedly in time and space and between [consciousness](#) and the [unconscious](#), blending [folkloric](#) fantasy and unsentimental [realism](#).^[9]

[Raymond Williams](#) compares *Peer Gynt* with [August Strindberg](#)'s early drama [Lucky Peter's Journey](#) (1882) and argues that both explore a new kind of [dramatic action](#) that was beyond the capacities of the [theatre](#) of the day; both created "a sequence of images in language and visual composition" that "became technically possible only in [film](#)."^[10] *Peer Gynt* was first performed in [Christiania](#) (now [Oslo](#)) on 24 February [1876](#), with original music composed by [Edvard Grieg](#), which includes some of today's most recognized classical pieces, [In the Hall of the Mountain King](#) and [Morning Mood](#). It was published in a German translation in 1881, in English in 1892, and in French in 1896.

Pere Goriot—by Honoré de Balzac.

Originally published in [serial](#) form during the winter of 1834–35, *Le Père Goriot* is widely considered Balzac's most important novel.^[1] It marks the first serious use by the author of characters who had appeared in other books, a technique that distinguishes Balzac's fiction. The novel is also noted as an example of his [realist](#) style, using minute details to create character and [subtext](#).

The novel takes place during the [Bourbon Restoration](#), which brought about profound changes in French society; the struggle of individuals to secure upper-class status is ubiquitous in the book. The city of Paris also impresses itself on the characters – especially young Rastignac, who grew up in the provinces of southern France. Balzac analyzes, through Goriot and others, the nature of family and marriage, providing a pessimistic view of these institutions.

The novel was released to mixed reviews. Some critics praised the author for his complex characters and attention to detail; others condemned him for his many depictions of corruption and greed. A favorite of Balzac's, the book quickly won widespread popularity and has often been adapted for film and the stage. It gave rise to the French expression "Rastignac", a social climber willing to use any means to better his situation.

Persuasion—by Jane Austen.

More than seven years prior to the events in the novel, Anne Elliot falls in love with a handsome young naval officer named Frederick Wentworth, who is intelligent and ambitious, but poor. Sir Walter, Anne's father and lord of the family estate of Kellynch, and her older sister Elizabeth are dissatisfied with her choice, maintaining that he is not distinguished enough for their family. Her older friend and mentor, Lady Russell, acting in place of Anne's deceased mother, persuades her to break off the match.

Now, aged 27 and still unmarried, Anne re-encounters her former fiancé when his sister and brother-in-law, the Crofts, take out a lease on Kellynch. Wentworth, now a captain, is wealthy from wartime victories in the Royal Navy and from prize-money for capturing enemy ships. However, he has not forgiven Anne for her rejection of him.

The self-interested machinations of Anne's father, her older sister Elizabeth, Elizabeth's friend Mrs. Clay, and William Elliot (Anne's cousin and her father's heir) constitute important subplots.

Phèdre—by Jean Racine.

Following Theseus's six month absence, his son Hippolytus tells his tutor Theramenes of his intention to leave Troezen in search of his father. When pressed by Theramenes, he reveals that the real motive is his forbidden love for Aricia, sole survivor of the royal house supplanted by Theseus and under a vow of chastity against her will. During her husband's absence, Phèdre has been consumed by an illicit but overpowering passion for her stepson Hippolytus, which she has kept as a dark secret. Close to death and reeling about half-dementedly, under pressure from her old nurse Oenone she explains her state, on condition that she be permitted to die rather than face dishonour. The death of Theseus is announced with the news that his succession is in dispute. Oenone urges her mistress that, since her love for her stepson is now legitimate, she should form an alliance with him, if only for the future benefit of the infant son of her own flesh.

With fresh hope for her liberty, Aricia reveals to her maidservant Ismène her feelings towards Hippolytus, who promptly appears to declare his love for her. Their discourse is interrupted by Phèdre, who distraughtly pleads for the rights of her infant son, explaining her coldness and personal despair. Suddenly entering a trance-like state overcome by emotion, she involuntarily confesses her hidden passions to her horrified dumb-struck stepson. Sensing rejection, she leaves

in a wild frenzy, demanding Hippolytus' sword to end her torment. Theramenes brings news to Hippolytus that Theseus might still be alive.

In desperation Phèdre sends word to Hippolytus inviting him to share the crown of Athens. However, Oenone brings her the devastating news that Theseus has returned in perfect health. To avert Phèdre's deathwish and her possible betrayal by Hippolytus, Oenone urges that a story should be concocted around his abandoned sword. Seeing Hippolytus by Theseus' side, Phèdre grants Oenone free rein. After his long period in captivity, Theseus is surprised by his cold reception from his wife and son, each anxious to conceal their passions: Phèdre, consumed by guilt; and Hippolytus, anxious to distance himself from his stepmother's advances, but unable to tell his father of his love for Aricia.

Theseus has just been told by Oenone that Hippolytus has attempted to take Phèdre by force. Overcome by rage, Theseus banishes Hippolytus and invokes the god [Neptune](#), who has promised to grant any wish of Theseus, to avenge him by his son's death. Protesting his innocence, Hippolytus discloses his secret love for Aricia to his incredulous father and leaves in despair. Fearing that she might be guilty for Hippolytus' death, Phèdre determines to reveal the truth to her husband, until she is told of Hippolytus' love for Aricia. Consumed by jealousy, she refuses to defend Hippolytus further, leaving his father's curse to run its course. When Oenone tries to make light of her mistress's illicit love, Phèdre in a towering rage accuses her of being a poisonous scheming monster and banishes her from her presence.

Hippolytus takes his leave of Aricia, promising to marry her in a temple outside Troezen. On witnessing the tenderness of their parting, Theseus begins to have doubts about his son's guilt. He decides to question Oenone, but it is too late: Oenone has thrown herself to the waves. Theramenes brings news of his son's death: Hippolytus' departing chariot has been interrupted by a terrifying horned monster rising from the waves; mortally wounded by Hippolytus, its death throes drive his horses into a wild frenzy; in their flight, the chariot is dashed against the rocks and their master dragged helplessly to his death. In the closing scene, Phèdre, now calm, appears before Theseus to confess her guilt and to confirm Hippolytus's innocence. She finally succumbs to the effects of a self-administered draught of [Medean](#) poison, taken to rid the world of her impurity. As an act of atonement and in respect for his son's parting promise, Theseus pardons Aricia and adopts her as his daughter.

Piano Lesson (The) —by August Wilson.

The Boy Willie and Lymon enter into the Charles household at dawn with a truck full of watermelon they intend to sell. Against his better judgment and Uncle Doaker's insistence, Boy Willie calls awake his sister, Berniece who he has not seen in three years due to his sentence in the Parchment Prison Farm. Altogether, the family members and Lymon celebrate the drowning of Sutter (the family who owned the Charles's family during slavery) in the well. Tired of her brother's stupid actions, Berniece dismisses her brother's words and wishes him to leave the house as soon as possible. To annoy her further, Boy Willie calls upon Maretha, Berniece's daughter, in the middle of the night to stir her from her sleep, causing Berniece to run back up the stairs.

Switching topics, Willie then asks of his Uncle Wining Boy, who has become a wanderer in his middle age looking for the past he seems to want to relive. Lymon then brings up the piano. Willie intends to sell the watermelon and the piano to buy the Sutter's land the Charles family had once toiled upon. Doaker insists that Berniece will not agree to selling the piano and Willie insists that he will convince her.

Seeing Sutter's ghost dressed in a blue suit, Berniece then screams at the top of the stairs. Her brother, Willie tells her that she is imaging things and that Sutter is looking for the piano to be rid of the Charles household. After Doaker rambles on about his railroad stories, Maretha comes

downstairs and Willie asks her to play the piano. She plays the beginning of a few simple tunes and he answers her song with a boogie-woogie. Willie then asks Maretha if she knows the origins of the piano and is surprised to discover she does not. Avery and Berniece reenter the room and Willie casually asks his sister if she might still have the protective buyer's name. Finally professing his want to sell the piano for land, Berniece refuses to listen and walks out.

Wining Boy and Doaker are having a conversation of the daily events and together they muse over the present and the past. Boy Willie and Lymon enter and claim that they have already bargained with the piano purchaser. Both of Willie's uncles warn Willie that the white man Sutter is cheating him and that he should be more careful. Seeing himself as equal to the white man, Boy Willie refuses to listen. The story behind Lymon and Boy Willie's term in the Parchment Prison Farm is revealed. Lymon and Willie both gather different perspectives from their experiences. Lymon feels that he should flee to the North where he will be better treated while Willie feels that whites only treat blacks badly if the blacks do not try and stop them. Wining Boy is then asked to play the piano, instead he gives a short speech regarding his inexistence due to playing piano his whole life and knowing nothing more.

On the topic of the piano, Doaker then tells the piano's story to Lyman. The story represented the enriching values that the piano bestowed on the Charles family. When he finished the tale, Willie firmly declares that these are stories of the past and that the piano should now be put to good use. Willie and Lymon then attempt to move the piano to test its weight for moving day. As soon as they try to move it, Sutter's ghost is heard. Berniece commands Willie to stop and informs him that he is selling his soul for money. Willie refutes her, Berniece blames Crawley's death on Willie, and the two engage in a fight. Upstairs, Maretha is confronted by the ghosts, and she screams.

Doaker and Wining Boy are again together in the house alone. Doaker confesses that he saw Sutter's ghost playing the piano and feels that Berniece should discard the piano as to prevent spirits from traumatizing the Charles family. Wining Boy disagrees and changes the subject. As this happens, Lymon and Willie walk into the room after a watermelon sale. Wining Boy sells his suit and shoes to Lymon promising its swooning affects on woman. Both Lymon and Willie leave the house in hot pursuit of women.

Later that day as Berniece is preparing for her bath, Avery enters and proposes that Berniece should open up and let go. He tells her that she cannot continue to live her life with Crawley's memory shut inside her. Berniece changes the topic and asks Avery to bless the house, hoping to destroy the spirit of the Sutter Ghost. Avery then brings up the piano and tells Berniece she should learn to not be afraid of her family's spirits and play it again. Berniece breaks down her story of her mother's tears and blood mingled with her father's soul on the piano and refuses to open her wounds for everyone to see.

Boy Willie enters the Charles House with Grace and begins to fool around on the couch. Berniece orders them out and opens the door to see Lymon. Lymon is upset over his disability to woo woman and begins to talk about woman's virtues to Berniece. The two kiss, breaking Berniece's discomfort over Crawley's death and Berniece heads back upstairs.

The next morning, Lymon and Willie try to move the piano out and is stopped by Uncle Doaker. Willie becomes frustrated and demands that he will sell the piano no matter what extents he has to reach. As the next day passes, the day to move the piano draws closer. Excited to sell the piano, Willie quickly partakes on his actions without a care of his sister's words. Berniece appears with Crawley's gun leading Doaker and Avery to urge them to talk it through first. Sutter's presence as a ghost is suddenly revived. Avery attempts to drive the ghost away with his blessings but is not successful. Suddenly, Berniece knows that she must play the piano again as a plea to her ancestors. Finally, the house is lead to a calm aura, and Willie leaves.

Picture of Dorian Gray (The) —by Oscar Wilde.

It starts on a beautiful hot summer day with Lord Henry Wotton observing the artist Basil Hallward painting the portrait of a handsome young man named Dorian Gray. Lord Henry asks to meet Dorian, and when he arrives later, Basil is hesitant but agrees. After hearing Lord Henry's world view, Dorian begins to think beauty is the only worthwhile aspect of life, the only thing left to pursue. He wishes that the portrait Basil is painting would grow old in his place. Under the influence of Lord Henry (who relishes the hedonic lifestyle and is a major exponent thereof), Dorian begins to explore his senses. He discovers actress Sibyl Vane, who performs [Shakespeare](#) in a dingy theatre. Dorian approaches her and soon proposes marriage. Sibyl, who refers to him as "Prince Charming", rushes home to tell her skeptical mother and brother. Her protective brother James tells her that if "Prince Charming" harms her, he will certainly kill her.

Dorian invites Basil and Lord Henry to see Sibyl perform in [Romeo and Juliet](#). Sibyl, whose only knowledge of love was love of theatre, loses her acting abilities through the experience of true love with Dorian. Dorian rejects her, saying her beauty was in her art, and he is no longer interested in her if she can no longer act. When he returns home he notices that his portrait has changed. Dorian realizes his wish has come true – the portrait now bears a subtle sneer and will age with each sin he commits, while his own appearance remains unchanged.

He decides to reconcile with Sibyl, but Lord Henry arrives in the morning to tell him that she has killed herself by swallowing [prussic acid](#). Dorian realizes that lust and looks are where his life is headed and he needs nothing else. That marks the end of Dorian's last and only true love affair. Over the next 18 years, he experiments with every vice, mostly under the influence of a "poisonous" French decadence novel, a present from Lord Henry. The title is never revealed in the novel, but at Oscar Wilde's trial he admitted that he had 'had in mind' [Joris-Karl Huysmans's *À Rebours*](#) (*Against Nature*).^[5]

One night, before he leaves for Paris, Basil arrives to question Dorian about rumours of his indulgences. Dorian does not deny his debauchery. He takes Basil to the portrait, which is as hideous as Dorian's sins. In anger, Dorian blames the artist for his fate and stabs Basil to death. He then blackmails an old friend named Alan Campbell, a chemist, into destroying Basil's body. Wishing to escape his crime, Dorian travels to an [opium den](#). James Vane is nearby and hears someone refer to Dorian as "Prince Charming." He follows Dorian outside and attempts to shoot him, but he is deceived when Dorian asks James to look at him in the light, saying he is too young to have been involved with Sibyl 18 years earlier. James releases Dorian but is approached by a woman from the opium den who chastises him for not killing Dorian and tells him Dorian has not aged for 18 years and he attempts to run after him, only to find Dorian long gone.

While at dinner, Dorian sees James stalking the grounds (he sees James peering through a window at him) and fears for his life. However, during a game-shooting party a few days later, a lurking James is accidentally shot and killed by one of the hunters. After returning to London, Dorian tells Lord Henry that he will be good from now on, and has started by not breaking the heart of his latest innocent conquest, a vicar's daughter in a country town, named Hetty Merton. At his apartment, Dorian wonders if the portrait has begun to change back now that he has given up his immoral ways. He unveils the portrait to find it has become worse. Seeing this, he questions the motives behind his "mercy", whether it was merely vanity, curiosity, or the quest for new emotional excess.

Deciding that only full [confession](#) will [absolve](#) him, but lacking feelings of guilt and fearing the consequences, he decides to destroy the last vestige of his conscience. In a rage, he picks up the knife that killed Basil Hallward and plunges it into the painting. His servants hear a cry from inside the locked room and send for the police. They find Dorian's body, stabbed in the heart and

suddenly aged, withered and horrible. It is only through the rings on his hand that the corpse can be identified. Beside him, however, the portrait has reverted to its original form.

Plague (The) —by Albert Camus.

In the town of Oran, thousands of rats, initially going unnoticed by the populace, begin to die in the streets. A hysteria develops soon after, causing the local newspapers to report the incident. Authorities responding to public pressure order the collection and cremation of the rats, unaware that the collection itself was the catalyst for the spread of the [bubonic plague](#).

The main character, Dr. Bernard Rieux, lives comfortably in an apartment building when strangely the building's concierge, M. Michel, a confidante, dies from a fever. Dr. Rieux consults his colleague, Castel, about the illness until they come to the conclusion that a plague is sweeping the town. They both approach fellow doctors and town authorities about their theory, but are eventually dismissed on the basis of one death. However, as more and more deaths quickly ensue, it becomes apparent that there is an epidemic.

Authorities, including the Prefect, M. Othon, are slow to accept that the situation is serious and quibble over the appropriate action to take. Official notices enacting control measures are posted, but the language used is optimistic and downplays the seriousness of the situation. A "special ward" is opened at the hospital, but its 80 beds are filled within three days. As the death toll begins to rise, more desperate measures are taken. Homes are quarantined, corpses and burials are strictly supervised. A supply of plague serum finally arrives, but there is only enough to treat existing cases and the country's emergency reserves are depleted. When the daily number of deaths jumps to 30, the town is sealed and an outbreak of plague is officially declared.

The town is sealed off. The town gates are shut, rail travel is prohibited, and all mail service is suspended. The use of telephone lines is restricted only to "urgent" calls, leaving short telegrams as the only means of communicating with friends or family outside the town. The separation affects daily activity and depresses the spirit of the townspeople, who begin to feel isolated and introverted, and the plague begins to affect various characters.

One character, Raymond Rambert, devises a plan to escape the city to join his lover in Paris after city officials refused his request to leave. He befriends some criminals so that they may smuggle him out of the city. Another character, Father Paneloux, uses the plague as an opportunity to advance his stature in the town by suggesting that the plague was an act of God for the citizens' sinful nature. His diatribe falls on the ears of many citizens of the town, who turned to religion in droves and who would not have done so under normal circumstances. Cottard, a criminal remorseful enough to attempt suicide yet fearful of being arrested, becomes wealthy as a major smuggler. Meanwhile, Dr. Rieux, a vacationer Jean Tarrou, and a civil servant Joseph Grand exhaustively treat patients in their homes and in the hospital.

Rambert informs Tarrou of his escape plan, but when Tarrou tells him that others in the city, including Dr. Rieux, also have loved ones outside the city that they are not allowed to see, Rambert becomes sympathetic and changes his mind. He then decides to join Tarrou and Dr. Rieux to help fight the epidemic.

In mid-August, the situation continues to worsen. People try to escape the town, but some are shot by armed sentries. Violence and looting break out on a small scale, and the authorities respond by declaring martial law and imposing a curfew. Funerals are conducted with more and more speed, no ceremony, and little concern for the feelings of the families of the deceased. The inhabitants passively endure their increasing feelings of exile and separation; despondent, they waste away emotionally as well as physically.

In September and October, the town remains at the mercy of the plague. Rieux hears from the sanatorium that the condition of his wife is worsening. He also hardens his heart regarding the plague victims so that he can continue to do his work. Cottard, on the other hand, seems to flourish during the plague, because it gives him a sense of being connected to others, since everybody faces the same danger. Cottard and Tarrou attend a performance of [Gluck's](#) opera [Orpheus and Eurydice](#), but the actor portraying Orpheus collapses with plague symptoms during the performance.

Rambert finally has a chance to escape, but he decides to stay, saying that he would feel ashamed of himself if he left.

Towards the end of October, Castel's new anti-plague serum is tried for the first time, but it cannot save the life of Othon's young son, who suffers greatly, as Paneloux, Rieux, and Tarrou look on in horror.

Paneloux, who has joined the group of volunteers fighting the plague, gives a second sermon. He addresses the problem of an innocent child's suffering and says it is a test of a Christian's faith, since it requires him either to deny everything or believe everything. He urges the congregation not to give up the struggle but to do everything possible to fight the plague.

A few days after the sermon, Paneloux is taken ill. His symptoms do not conform to those of the plague, but the disease still proves fatal.

Tarrou and Rambert visit one of the isolation camps, where they meet Othon. When Othon's period of quarantine ends, he elects to stay in the camp as a volunteer because this will make him feel less separated from his dead son. Tarrou tells Rieux the story of his life, and the two men go swimming together in the sea. Grand catches the plague and instructs Rieux to burn all his papers. But Grand makes an unexpected recovery, and deaths from the plague start to decline.

By late January, the plague is in full retreat, and the townspeople begin to celebrate the imminent opening of the town gates. Othon, however, does not escape death from the disease. Cottard is distressed by the ending of the epidemic, from which he has profited by shady dealings. Two government employees approach him, and he flees. Despite the ending of the epidemic, Tarrou contracts the plague and dies after a heroic struggle. Rieux's wife also dies.

In February, the town gates open and people are reunited with their loved ones from other cities. Rambert is reunited with his wife. Rieux reveals that he is the narrator of the chronicle and that he tried to present an objective view of the events.

Cottard goes mad and shoots at people from his home. He is arrested. Grand begins working on his sentence again. Rieux reflects on the epidemic and reaches the conclusion that there is more to admire than to despise in humans.

Playboy of the Western World (The) —by John Millington Synge.

On the west coast of County Mayo^[3] Christy Mahon stumbles into Flaherty's tavern. There he claims that he is on the run because he killed his own father by driving a [loy](#) into his head. Flaherty praises Christy for his boldness, and Flaherty's daughter (and the barmaid), Pegeen, falls in love with Christy, to the dismay of her betrothed, Shawn. Because of the novelty of Christy's exploits and the skill with which he tells his own story, he becomes something of a town hero. Many other women also become attracted to him, including the Widow Quinn, who tries unsuccessfully to seduce Christy at Shawn's behest. Christy also impresses the village women by his victory in a [donkey](#) race, using the slowest beast.

Eventually Christy's father, Mahon, who was only wounded, tracks him to the tavern. When the townsfolk realize that Christy's father is alive, everyone (including Pegeen) shuns him as a liar and a coward. In order to regain Pegeen's love and the respect of the town, Christy attacks his father a second time. This time it seems that Old Mahon really is dead, but instead of praising Christy, the townspeople, led by Pegeen, bind and prepare to hang him to avoid being implicated as accessories to his crime. Christy's life is saved when his father, beaten and bloodied, crawls back onto the scene, having improbably survived his son's second attack. As Christy and his father leave to wander the world, Shawn suggests he and Pegeen get married soon, but she spurns him. Pegeen then laments betraying and losing Christy, *The Playboy of the Western World*.

Pnin—by Vladimir Nabokov.

The book's [eponymous protagonist](#), Timofey Pavlovich Pnin, is a [Russian](#)-born [professor](#) living in the [United States](#). Pnin, a refugee in his 50s from both [Communist Russia](#) and what he calls the "[Hitler war](#)", is an assistant professor of Russian at fictional Waindell College, possibly modeled on [Wellesley](#) College or [Cornell](#) University, at both of which Nabokov himself taught^[1]. At Waindell, Pnin has settled down to an uncertain, [untethered](#), but semi-respectable academic life, full of various tragicomic mishaps, misfortunes, and difficulties adjusting to [American](#) life and language.

Characters in the book include his departmental supervisor, various professors and university staff, his landlord, his ex-wife, and her son. The book's narrator, who never identifies himself but who bears many similarities to Nabokov—lepidoptery, a landed-gentry Russian émigré past—gradually reveals himself as a less than disinterested observer. Pnin is last glimpsed fleeing Waindell College, jobless, for an unknown destination

Pocho—by José Antonio Villarreal.

Villarreal's novel *Pocho* (1959) is one of the first Chicano novels, and the first to gain widespread recognition. *Pocho* has been called the "pivotal transitional link between 'Mexican American' and 'Chicano' literature", both because of its strengths as a novel and because of its use in the rediscovery and recuperation of Latino literature in the 1970s.^[4] The novel details the childhood of Richard Rubio, whose father Juan Manuel left Mexico in the post-[Revolution](#) exodus of 1910; as a first-generation American, Richard struggles with the conflicting values of his parents: his father's Mexican sense of honor, tradition, pride and masculinity and the more Americanized view of family and women's roles that his mother and especially his sisters adopt. Richard's father harbors a dream to return his family to Mexico, but his circumstances and choices keep him in the United States. Similarly, Richard does well in school and wants to go to college to become a writer, but he must become the man of the house after his father leaves the family; yet Richard himself leaves the family to join the Navy after [Pearl Harbor](#). According to scholar Francisco A. Lomelí, the novel argues "that people of Mexican descent have a rightful place they can claim their own that is both Mexican and Anglo American, which Chicanos synthesize in varying degrees [and] accentuates, for the first time in a mainstream American literary scene, Hispanic characters as complex and multidimensional who, despite their individual flaws, possess depth and credibility".^[5]

Poisonwood Bible (The) —by Barbara Kingsolver.

Orleanna Price narrates the introductory chapter in five of the novel's seven sections. The [narrative](#) then alternates among the four daughters, with a slight preference for the [voice](#) of the most outspoken one, Leah. The four girls increasingly mature, as each adapts differently to African village life, to the [misogyny](#) of their father, and the [political turmoil](#) that overtakes The [Congo](#) in the 1960s. Since we see the Congolese villagers through the eyes of the growing daughters, our view changes. At first, they appear as ridiculous savages. But as the girls mature, the villagers become fully fleshed-out human beings immersed in a complex, sophisticated culture. Nathan's

lack of responsiveness to this culture wears out his family's welcome, but he refuses to depart. It is only after a series of misfortunes, culminating in the death of one of the daughters, that the women leave the father to his folly. The survivors take very different paths into their futures, which are described up to the 1990s. The novel ends at the time of the death of [Mobutu Sese Seko](#).

Portrait of a Lady (The)—by Henry James.

Isabel Archer, originally from Albany, New York, is invited by her maternal aunt, Lydia Touchett, to visit Lydia's rich husband Daniel at his estate near London, following the death of Isabel's father. There, she meets her cousin Ralph Touchett, a friendly invalid, and the Touchetts' robust neighbor, Lord Warburton. Isabel later declines Warburton's sudden proposal of marriage. She also rejects the hand of Caspar Goodwood, the charismatic son and heir of a wealthy Boston mill owner. Although Isabel is drawn to Caspar, her commitment to her independence precludes such a marriage, which she feels would demand the sacrifice of her freedom. The elder Touchett grows ill and, at the request of his son, leaves much of his estate to Isabel upon his death.

With her large legacy, Isabel travels the Continent and meets an American expatriate, Gilbert Osmond, in Florence. Although Isabel had previously rejected both Warburton and Goodwood, she accepts Osmond's proposal of marriage. She is unaware that this marriage has been actively promoted by the accomplished but untrustworthy Madame Merle, another American expatriate, whom Isabel had met at the Touchetts' estate.

Isabel and Osmond settle in Rome, but their marriage rapidly sours due to Osmond's overwhelming egotism and his lack of genuine affection for his wife. Isabel grows fond of Pansy, Osmond's presumed daughter by his first marriage, and wants to grant her wish to marry Edward Rosier, a young art collector. The snobbish Osmond would rather that Pansy accept the proposal of Warburton, who had previously proposed to Isabel. Isabel suspects, however, that Warburton may just be feigning interest in Pansy to get close to Isabel again.

The conflict creates even more strain within the unhappy marriage. Isabel then learns that Ralph is dying at his estate in England and prepares to go to him for his final hours, but Osmond selfishly opposes this plan. Meanwhile, Isabel learns from her sister-in-law that Pansy is actually the daughter of Madame Merle, who had an adulterous relationship with Osmond for several years.

Isabel visits Pansy one last time, who desperately begs her to return someday, something Isabel reluctantly promises. She then leaves, without telling her spiteful husband, to comfort the dying Ralph in England, where she remains until his death. Goodwood encounters her at Ralph's estate and begs her to leave Osmond and come away with him. He passionately embraces and kisses her, but Isabel flees. Goodwood seeks her out the next day, but is told she has set off again for Rome. The ending is ambiguous, and the reader is left to imagine whether Isabel returned to Osmond to suffer out her marriage in noble tragedy (perhaps for Pansy's sake) or whether she is going to rescue Pansy and leave Osmond.

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (A)—by James Joyce.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is a semi-autobiographical novel by [James Joyce](#), first serialised in the magazine [The Egoist](#) from 1914 to 1915, and published first in book format during 1916 by [B. W. Huebsch](#), New York. The first English edition was published by the Egoist Press during February 1917. The story describes the formative years of the life of [Stephen Dedalus](#), a fictional [alter ego](#) of Joyce and an [allusion](#) to the consummate craftsman of [Greek mythology](#), [Daedalus](#).

A novel written in Joyce's characteristic [free indirect speech](#) style, *A Portrait* is a major example of the [Künstlerroman](#) (an artist's [Bildungsroman](#)) in English literature. Joyce's novel traces the intellectual and religio-philosophical awakening of young Stephen Dedalus as he begins to question and rebel against the Catholic and Irish conventions with which he has been raised. He finally leaves for abroad to pursue his ambitions as an artist. The work is an early example of some of Joyce's [modernist](#) techniques that would later be represented in a more developed manner by *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. The novel, which has had a "huge influence on novelists across the world",^[1] was ranked by [Modern Library](#) as the third greatest English-language novel of the 20th century.¹

Power and the Glory (The) —by Graham Greene.

The main character in the story is a nameless "[whisky priest](#)", who combines a great power for self-destruction with pitiful cravenness, an almost painful penitence and a desperate quest for dignity^[citation needed]. By the end, though, the priest "acquires a real holiness."^[13] The other main character is a lieutenant of the police who is given the task of hunting down this priest. This Lieutenant—also nameless but thought to be based upon [Tomás Garrido Canabal](#)^{[14][15]}—is a committed [socialist](#) who despises everything that the church stands for.

The story starts with the arrival of the priest in a country town in an area where Catholicism is outlawed, and then follows him on his trip through Mexico, where he is trying to minister to the people as well as he can^[citation needed]. He is also haunted by his personal demons, especially by the fact that he had fathered a child in his parish some years before. He meets the child, but is unable to feel repentant about what happened. Rather, he feels a deep love for the evil-looking and awkward little girl and decides to do everything in his power to save her from [damnation](#). The priest's opposite player among the clericals is *Padre José*, a priest who has been forced to renounce his faith and marry a woman (by order of the government) and lives as a state pensioner.

During his journey the priest also encounters a [mestizo](#) who later reveals himself to be a [Judas](#) figure. The lieutenant, on the other hand, is morally irreproachable, yet he is cold and inhumane. While he is supposedly "living for the people", he puts into practice a diabolic plan of taking hostages from villages and shooting them, if it proves that the priest has sojourned in a village but is not denounced. The lieutenant has also had bad experiences with the church in his youth, and as a result there is a personal element in his search for the whisky priest. The lieutenant thinks that all members of the clergy are fundamentally evil, and believes that the church is corrupt, and does nothing but provide [delusion](#) to the people.

In his flight from the lieutenant and his posse, the priest escapes into a neighbouring province, only to re-connect with the mestizo, who persuades the priest to return in order to hear the confession of a dying man. Though the priest suspects that it is a trap, he feels compelled to fulfil his priestly duty. Although he finds the dying man, it is a trap and the lieutenant captures the priest. The lieutenant admits he has nothing against the priest as a man, but he must be shot "as a danger". On the eve of the execution, the lieutenant shows mercy and attempts to enlist Padre José to hear the condemned man's confession. The lieutenant is convinced that he has "cleared the province of priests". In the final scene, however, another priest arrives in the town - which, among other possible readings, suggests that the [Catholic Church](#) cannot be destroyed.

Praising for the Widow—by Paule Marshall.

The opening begins with Avey "Avatara" Johnson packing her bags aboard her seventeen day cruise on the "Bianca Pride", during the late 1970s. The reason for her sudden departure began three nights before, when she had a dream about her great aunt Cuney and a disturbing encounter in the Versailles dining room with a peach parfait. Her first since the 1960s, the dream consists of Avey's aunt in Tatem attempting to convince Avey to follow her down the road in Tatem, [South](#)

[Carolina](#), a childhood vacation spot. When Avey resists, the two have a physical brawl. The next morning, Avey wants nothing more than to be alone, and yet cannot get away from anyone on the cruise ship, no matter where she goes. At this point, she makes the decision to leave the ship. The next morning, she packs her bags and leaves to the next port-of-call, which is the island of [Grenada](#). On Grenada, the atmosphere seems to be festive, as people dressed in bright clothing, carrying packages, are getting onto boats. Confused, Avey Johnson is later informed by her taxi driver that it is the annual excursion to [Carriacou](#), a nearby island. At the hotel, the sick feeling in Avey's stomach returns, and Avey spends her last moments of consciousness painfully reminiscing about her relationship with her late husband, Jerome "Jay" Johnson, and for the first time in four years, she mourns his loss.

Avey wakes up the next day in the home of Rosalie Parvay, the widow daughter of Lebert Joseph. Along with Milda the maid, Rosalie washes Avey and feeds her a typical Carriacou breakfast, during which Lebert enters the home to see how Avey is feeling. Despite her sickness of the previous day, Avey decides to go to the dances that will take place that night.

That night, Avey, Rosalie, Milda, and Lebert all go to the "Big Drum" dances. There, Avey is at first happy merely to be a bystander and watch Lebert and other elders of the community sing and dance for the ancestors. However, by the end of the night, Avey is dancing along with the other people celebrating their cultural roots to Africa. The next morning, Avey leaves on a plane back to New York, but decides to sell her home that she no longer needs and move to Tatem, in the home left for her by aunt Cuney. There, she will demand that her grandchildren come to see her, so that she may teach them about their heritage, like Cuney did for her.

Prayer for Owen Meany (A) —by John Irving.

The story is narrated by John Wheelwright, a former citizen of [New Hampshire](#), USA who has become a voluntary exile from the United States (having settled in [Toronto](#), [Canada](#) and taken on Canadian citizenship).

The story is narrated in two interwoven timeframes. The first timeframe is the perspective of John in the present day (1987). The second (much larger) timeframe is John's memories of the past, growing up in New Hampshire in the 1950s and 1960s alongside his best friend, Owen Meany.

The present-day John works as an English teacher at the [Bishop Strachan](#) private girls' school in Toronto. He is a committed Christian (attending the [Anglican Church](#)), with a strong but important sense of right and wrong and an abiding, obsessive anger with the actions and attitude of America. The latter haunts him to intense degree; and he is known to his Canadian friends and associates as a fussy bachelor who cannot entirely embrace the Canadian identity that he has chosen. Some of them also suspect him of being [homosexual](#), although the truth is that he has never lost his virginity. He engages in frequent and fervent tirades against the [Reagan](#) administration and although his teaching career is going moderately well, he still struggles with his past life.

The truth of John's attitude and choices is explained by his childhood friendship with Owen Meany, and by the details and repercussions of Owen's life and death. These details, John makes clear, are responsible for his belief in [God](#).

John's present-day narrative bookends, comments on and punctuates the narrative of the past, in which the vast majority of the novel's events occur.

John Wheelwright and Owen Meany are both residents of the (fictitious) town of Gravesend, New Hampshire. Despite being best friends since childhood, their backgrounds and attitudes are very different.

John is the unambitious (and rather dull) descendant of several New England founding families with long and lofty pedigrees: most notably the Wheelwrights, who themselves are one of the leading Gravesend families. He is the illegitimate son of the vivacious Tabitha "Tabby" Wheelwright, and knows nothing about his absent father apart from the fact that he was someone his mother "met on the Boston & Maine railroad". Tabitha never had any intention of marrying John's father and cheerfully refuses to reveal his identity. Instead, she weathers the scandal and brings John up at the family home of 80 Front Street as a single parent, with the bewildered and curious support of John's formidable grandmother (and family matriarch) Harriet Wheelwright and his grandmother's maid Lydia. A significant percentage of John's attention is taken up by the mystery of his parentage.

Conversely, Owen is the child of a granite-quarrying family from the New Hampshire working class. He is affected by two mysterious conditions – one of which stunts his growth (unusually tiny as a child, his eventual adult height is under five feet tall) and the other of which has damaged his larynx (so that in order to be heard he has to shout through his nose in a penetrating childlike tone which John describes as a "wrecked" voice). Although he lacks John's social and physical advantages, he is far cleverer and possesses the conviction and determination that John conspicuously lacks. Owen also has an unusual relationship with his parents, both of whom seem afraid of him (although the reason why is not revealed until late in the novel). Owen's father Mr. Meany is a class-conscious but pleasant man, apparently easily bent to his son's will, and his mother is a strange woman who isolates herself in her home (described as being almost [catatonic](#), she rarely speaks or moves from her spot in front of the fireplace). Owen spends much of his time at the Wheelwright house with John and John's family.

During the course of his life, Owen develops the conviction that he is "God's instrument", although he does not know how until the end of his life.

Despite his miniature stature and odd appearance (variously described as "ethereal", "adorable" and "creepy"), Owen has a striking personality which commands immediate attention and ensures that he dominates his surroundings. Owen is extremely intelligent and self-possessed, even as a child. He directs the actions of many of the people around him by either charming them, frightening them, or craftily manipulating them. Children and adults alike are drawn to Owen, and many people (such as John's mother Tabitha), are unable to resist touching him. Others' urges to touch him often put Owen in embarrassing situations, such as a Sunday School ritual in which his classmates hold him over their heads and pass him around the room. Owen himself is enchanted with Tabitha, and she adores him almost as much as she adores John.

Eventually Tabitha meets a new man on the Boston & Maine railroad - Dan Needham, a good-natured teacher travelling to Gravesend to apply for a job teaching at the boy's private school, Gravesend Academy, to teach dramatic arts. Dan is awarded the position, and he and Tabitha become engaged, with the full approval of everyone (even Grandmother Wheelwright). Mysteriously, Tabitha makes Dan wait for four years before they are finally married. After the marriage, Tabitha and John move into Dan's apartment in the staff dormitory of Gravesend Academy.

Tragedy strikes when Owen hits a foul ball at a [Little League](#) baseball game, which hits and kills Tabitha. The whole community is affected by Tabitha's death, but life goes on. Despite Owen's responsibility for Tabitha's death, John refuses to blame him and the two of them remain close. The ball which killed Tabitha disappears, and John assumes Owen took it. Dan Needham takes John under his wing as his adoptive son and allows him to spend time at his apartment at Gravesend Academy.

At this point, three more characters are introduced - John's cousins Hester (a tomboy), Simon and Noah (both rough-housing older boys). Owen begs to be introduced, but embarrasses himself by accidentally urinating on Hester when startled during a game of hide-and-seek. Despite this (and

despite Hester's antagonistic nature) all is forgiven, and Owen and Hester begin to develop an unorthodox closeness. Although John himself grows to be incestuously attracted to Hester, he puts these feelings away (chalking them up to lust, and by extension his absent father) especially after Owen admits his own serious attraction to Hester.

Two major events (both theatrical) then occur, shaping the narrative. The Gravesend Players, the local amateur acting group, put on a performance of [A Christmas Carol](#) while the boys' [Episcopalian](#) Church puts on a performance of [The Nativity](#). Owen, with natural charisma, gets the parts of both baby [Jesus](#) and the [Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come](#).

In [A Christmas Carol](#), during the last performance, Owen becomes overwhelmed and faints, nearly delirious with fever. He claims to have seen his own name on [Scrooge's](#) grave, although Dan dismisses his concerns. During the chaotic performance of the Nativity play, Owen notices that his parents are in attendance – he sits up in his manger and shouts to his parents that it is a 'sacrilege' that they should be there. This is revealed to be something to do with a 'grave' injustice his parents were dealt at the hands of the [Catholic](#) Church. Owen does not specify what this injustice was, but it has resulted in his strong animosity towards Catholicism.

Upon reaching Grade 9, both Owen and John are admitted to Gravesend Academy - Owen on the grounds of intelligence (he wins a scholarship) and with the financial backing of Harriet Wheelwright, and John simply because his stepfather teaches there. The unacademic John struggles to deal with the coursework, and Owen is there to help him. All through school, Owen and John practice "the Shot", a basketball move in which John lifts Owen over his head so that he may dunk the basketball. They practice it intermittently over the following years, eventually achieving the skill to dunk the ball in under three seconds.

John finds no success with the search for his father, or the opposite sex, or his schoolwork – his failure in the last forces him to see the bumbling school psychiatrist, Doctor Dolder. Owen, in contrast, is a straight-A student, considered to be Harvard or Yale material. He also is more socially successful, having the attention of girls - though electing to date Hester (much to John's chagrin), and becomes 'The Voice', the pen name of his withering Socratic editorial in the school newspaper.

In 1960, Owen is forced into an antagonistic relationship with the new school headmaster, the arrogant and dictatorial businessman-turned-educator Randy White. A series of confrontations between Owen and White - ending in several spectacular and symbolic pranks masterminded and executed by Owen - ends with Owen being kicked out of school on charges of vandalism, forging draft cards and various issues of anti-religious bigotry. In the process, White overreaches himself and ruins his own career as headmaster.

The incident has, however, destroyed Owen's chances of attending university. He has also become fixated upon his death. It's revealed that not only did he see his name on the grave during that fateful performance of 'A Christmas Carol', he also saw the date of his death: July 8, 1968.

The [Vietnam War](#) begins, and Owen strikes a deal with the [University of New Hampshire](#) under which he will undergo [ROTC](#) training and a period of active service in the Army in return for a scholarship. He is still dating Hester, although she has become fervently anti-war and their relationship is stormy.

Despite his determination to get into Vietnam, Owen ends up in Arizona as a casualty officer, bringing bodies of Arizona soldiers home from California. He later explains to John that he has had a recurring dream in which he saves many Vietnamese children, but is killed in the process. He believes this to happen on the date he saw on the grave, and strives to fulfil his destiny. His actions create discord, but he stays the course.

John, meanwhile, has been working as a graduate student to avoid the dreaded [draft](#). At the end of this work, he risks being drafted. Owen ensures that this does not happen by persuading John to let him to amputate part of John's trigger finger with a granite-cutting saw at the Meany quarry. John later learns from Owen's diary that Owen did this both to save his friend and to avoid John having to go to Vietnam, since Owen has seen him in the dream and is afraid he, like Owen, will die there.

There is a break in the story at this point, flashing forward to the events surrounding and following Owen's funeral, and joining the two timeframes. In 1968, at the funeral, Mr. Meany confides in John. He claims that he never had sex with Owen's mother, and that he believes Owen to have been the product of a virgin birth, 'like the Christ Child', a revelation which was rejected by their local Catholic priests (finally explaining Owen's antipathy towards Catholicism). John is internally furious at Mr. Meany, but says nothing, even when Mr. Meany says that he told Owen this 'fact' at the age of eleven (which John then blames for Owen's belief he was the Instrument of God).

John also finally discovers the identity of his father, a man whom he has known all his life. It is Rev. Lewis Merrill, the ineffective (and married) local minister of the Congregationalist Church and of Gravesend Academy, who is also revealed as the secret hoarder of the baseball which killed Tabitha Wheelwright. The revelation is a depressing anticlimax for John, although it further seals his love for Dan Needham as his "real" father. It's also revealed that a broken-hearted Hester went on to become a hard rock superstar in the 1970s and 1980s called "Hester The Molester", and that her songs, videos and stage act (which appear to have some similarities to those of [Alice Cooper](#)) features strong references to the soldier casualties of Vietnam and to Owen's life and eventual death.

The last part of the book covers the story of Owen's death in 1968. As the date approaches, Owen has invited John to visit him in Arizona for one last get-together. Owen has matured in his role - even praising Catholics, whom he had earlier despised. The duo, along with a Major, confront a low-class family whose son was killed in Vietnam. The entire family, save the boy's sister, is openly angry with the military. The boy's brother Dick is particularly contemptuous and nihilistic, showing John and Owen the lethal weaponry which his brother smuggled back from Vietnam on a previous leave, including a [Viet Cong grenade](#).

As Owen and John and the Major meet at the airport, Owen becomes ecstatic that he may not die that day. However, a planeload of Vietnamese children arrive. Recognising them from the dream, Owen knows that the time has arrived, although he is still not sure how the final events are going to happen. Owen and John escort the kids into the bathroom of the airport. At this point, Dick (who has been skulking around the airport) barges into the bathroom with his smuggled grenade, intent on killing some "dinks", even if they are children. He triggers the grenade's fuse and contemptuously throws it to John.

At this point, the apparent purposes of Owen's condition and actions are revealed. His child's voice and physique calm the frightened children, ensuring that they do not panic and that they therefore enable him to have the space to save them. On Owen's command, John passes him the grenade, and the two friends use "the Shot" one last time to throw Owen up to the bathroom's upper windowsill where the grenade explodes, maiming Owen but not the children. Dick is killed by the Major, who, along with John and some nuns, tries to save Owen. It is no use, however, and Owen dies from his injuries, beatific in the knowledge that he has fulfilled his task for God.

John is left with the memory of his friend, and the firm belief that Owen and his life were a miracle. The last words of his narrative are an impassioned plea: "O God – please bring him back! I shall keep asking You."

Pride and Prejudice—by Jane Austen.

The narrative opens with Mr Bingley, a wealthy young bachelor, moving into Netherfield Park in the neighbourhood of the Bennet family. Mr Bingley is soon well-received, while his friend [Mr Darcy](#) makes a less favourable first impression by appearing proud and condescending. When Elizabeth Bennet overhears herself slighted by Mr Darcy, she forms a prejudice against him. Mr Bingley singles out Elizabeth's elder sister, Jane, for particular attention and it soon becomes apparent that they have formed an attachment to one another.

On paying a visit to Mr Bingley's sister, Jane is caught in a heavy downpour, catches cold and is forced to stay at Netherfield for several days. Elizabeth arrives to nurse her sister and is thrown into frequent company with Mr Darcy who begins to perceive his attachment to her.

Mr Collins, a clergyman, pays a visit to the Bennets. Mr Bennet and Elizabeth are much amused by his obsequious veneration of his employer, the noble Lady Catherine de Bourgh, as well as by his self-important and pedantic nature. It soon becomes apparent that Mr Collins has come to Longbourne to choose a wife from among the Bennet sisters and Elizabeth has been singled out. At the same time, Elizabeth forms an acquaintance with Mr Wickham, a militia officer who claims to have been very seriously mistreated by Mr Darcy, despite having been a ward of Mr Darcy's father. This tale, and Elizabeth's attraction to Mr Wickham, adds fuel to her dislike of Mr Darcy.

At a ball given by Mr Bingley at Netherfield, Mr Darcy becomes aware of a general expectation that Mr Bingley and Jane will marry, and the Bennet family, with the exception of Jane and Elizabeth, make a public display of poor manners and decorum. The following morning, Mr Collins proposes marriage to Elizabeth, who refuses him, much to her mother's distress. Mr Collins recovers and promptly becomes engaged to Elizabeth's close friend, Charlotte. Mr Bingley abruptly quits Netherfield and returns to London, and Elizabeth is convinced that Mr Darcy and Mr Bingley's sister have conspired to separate him from Jane.

In the spring, Elizabeth visits Charlotte and Mr Collins. Elizabeth and her hosts are frequently invited to Rosings Park, home of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Mr Darcy's aunt, and soon Mr Darcy and his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam arrive to visit. Mr Darcy finds himself, again, attracted to Elizabeth and proposes to her. Elizabeth, however, has recently learned from Colonel Fitzwilliam of Mr Darcy's role in separating Mr Bingley and Jane and she angrily rebukes him. During a heated discussion, Elizabeth charges him with destroying her sister's happiness, with his disgraceful treatment of Mr Wickham, and with having conducted himself in an ungentlemanly manner. Mr Darcy responds with a letter clearing himself and showing that the blame lies with Mr Wickham. Regarding Mr Bingley and Jane, Mr Darcy claims that he had observed in Jane no reciprocal interest in Mr Bingley. Upon reading the letter, Elizabeth comes to acknowledge the truth of Mr Darcy's assertions.

[Elizabeth](#) tells her father that Darcy was responsible for uniting Lydia and Wickham. This is one of the two earliest illustrations of *Pride and Prejudice*.^[3] The clothing styles reflect the time the illustration was engraved (the 1830s), not the time the novel was written or set.

Some months later, Elizabeth and her Aunt and Uncle Gardiner visit [Pemberley](#), Mr Darcy's estate, believing him absent, when he returns unexpectedly. Although surprised to find her there, Mr Darcy appears gracious and welcoming, and treats the Gardiners with great civility. Mr Darcy introduces Elizabeth to his sister and Elizabeth begins to realise her attraction to Mr Darcy. Their renewed acquaintance, however, is cut short by news that Lydia, Elizabeth's youngest sister, has run away with Mr Wickham. Elizabeth and the Gardiners return to Longbourne, where Elizabeth grieves that her acquaintance with Mr Darcy will end because of her sister's disgrace.

Lydia and Mr Wickham are soon found, married and pay visit Longbourn where Lydia discloses that Mr Darcy was present at her wedding. Elizabeth finds that Mr Darcy was responsible for finding the couple and arranging their marriage, at great expense to himself. Soon after, Mr Bingley returns to Longbourn and proposes marriage to Jane, who immediately accepts.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh then makes an unexpected visit to warn Elizabeth against marrying Mr Darcy. While confused at the source of Lady Catherine's suspicions, Elizabeth refuses to comply. Mr Darcy, upon hearing this, realises that Elizabeth's opinion of him may have changed and again proposes. Elizabeth accepts, and both of the elder Bennet sisters are married.

Prime of Miss Jean Brodie—by Muriel Spark.

In 1930s [Edinburgh](#), six ten-year-old girls are assigned Miss Jean Brodie, self-described as in her prime, as their teacher: Sandy, Rose, Mary, Jenny, Monica, and Eunice (only the first two of them are major figures). Miss Brodie, intent on their receiving an education in the original sense of the Latin verb *educere*, "to lead out", gives her students lessons about her personal love life and travels, promoting art history, Classical studies, and [fascism](#). Under her mentorship, these six girls whom Brodie singles out as the elite group among her students—known as the "Brodie set"—begin to stand out from the rest of the school. However, in one of the novel's typical flash-forwards, we learn that one of them will later betray Brodie, causing her to lose her teaching job, but that she never learned which one.

In the Junior School, they meet the singing teacher, the short Mr Gordon Lowther; and the art master, the handsome, one-armed war veteran Mr Teddy Lloyd, a married [Roman Catholic](#) man with six children. These two teachers form a love triangle with Miss Brodie, each loving her, while she only loves Mr Lloyd. Brodie never, however, overtly acts on her love for Mr Lloyd except once to exchange a kiss with him, which is witnessed by Monica.

During a two week absence from school, Brodie enters into an affair with Mr Lowther on the grounds that a bachelor makes a more respectable paramour: she had renounced Mr Lloyd as he was married. At one point during these two years in the Junior School, Jenny is "accosted by a man joyfully exposing himself beside the [Water of Leith](#)".^[3] The police investigation of the exposure leads Sandy to imagine herself as part of a fictional police force seeking incriminating evidence in respect of Brodie and Mr Lowther.^[4]

Once the girls are promoted to the Senior School (in the seventh year of school, around age twelve) though now dispersed, they hold on to their identity as the Brodie set. Brodie keeps in touch with them after school hours by inviting them over as she used to do when they were her pupils. All the while, the headmistress Miss Mackay tries to break them up and compile information gleaned from them into sufficient cause to fire Brodie. Miss Mackay, in the novel (but not in the 1969 film) younger than Brodie, had more than once suggested to Miss Brodie that the latter seek employment at a 'progressive' school; Brodie declined to move to what she describes as a 'crank' school. When two other teachers at the school, the Kerr sisters, take part-time employment as Mr Lowther's housekeepers, Brodie tries to take over their duties. She sets about fattening him up with extravagant cooking. The girls, now thirteen, visit Miss Brodie in pairs over at Mr Lowther's house, where all Brodie does is ask about Mr Lloyd in Mr Lowther's presence. It is at this point that Mr Lloyd asks Rose, and occasionally the other girls, to pose for him as portrait subjects. Each face he paints ultimately resembles Miss Brodie, as her girls report to her in detail, and she thrills at the telling. One day when Sandy is over visiting Mr Lloyd, he kisses her.

Before the Brodie set turns sixteen, Brodie tests her girls to discover which of them she can really trust, ultimately settling upon Sandy as her confidante. Miss Brodie, obsessed with the notion that Rose (as the most beautiful of the Brodie set) should have an affair with Mr Lloyd in her place, begins to neglect Mr Lowther, who ends up marrying Miss Lockhart, the science teacher. Another

student, Joyce Emily, steps briefly into the picture, trying unsuccessfully to join the Brodie set. Miss Brodie takes her under her wing separately, however, encouraging her to run away to fight in the [Spanish Civil War](#) on the [Nationalist](#) side, which she does, only to be killed in an accident when the train she is travelling in is attacked.^[5]

The original Brodie set, now seventeen and in their final year of school, begin to go their separate ways. Mary and Jenny quit before graduating, Mary to become a typist and Jenny to pursue a career in acting. Eunice becomes a nurse and Monica a scientist. Rose lands a handsome husband. Sandy, with a keen interest in psychology, is fascinated by Mr Lloyd's stubborn love, his painter's mind, and his religion. Sandy and Rose model for Mr Lloyd's paintings with Sandy's knowing that Brodie expects Rose to become sexually involved with Lloyd. Rose, however, is oblivious to the plan crafted for her and so Sandy, for five weeks during the summer, now eighteen and alone with him in his house while his wife and children are on holiday, has an affair with Mr Lloyd herself. Over time, Sandy's interest in the man wanes while her interest in the mind that loves Jean Brodie grows. In the end, Sandy leaves him, adopts his Roman Catholic religion, and becomes a nun. Beforehand, however, she meets with the Miss Mackay and blatantly confesses to wanting to put an end to Brodie. She suggests that the headmistress accuse Brodie of encouraging fascism, and this tactic succeeds. Not until her dying moment a year after the end of [World War II](#) is Brodie able to imagine that it was her confidante, Sandy, who betrayed her. After Brodie's death, however, Sandy, now called Sister Helena of the [Transfiguration](#) and author of *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, maintains that "it's only possible to betray where loyalty is due".^[6] One day when an enquiring young man visits Sandy at the convent because of her strange book on psychology to ask what were the main influences of her school years, "Were they literary or political or personal? Was it Calvinism?" Sandy says: "There was a Miss Jean Brodie in her prime."

Push—by Sapphire.

The novel is set in [New York City](#) in 1987. The narrator, Clarice "Precious" Jones, is an [obese](#) and [illiterate](#) 16-year-old. Precious is pregnant with her second child, both pregnancies the result of repeated rape by her father. Her mother, Mary Lee Johnston, an obese woman who hasn't left the house in several years, supports both of them with welfare money and food stamps. She receives extra money for Precious' first child, Mongo, who has [Down Syndrome](#). The child lives with Mary's mother. Although Precious' father, Carl Kenwood Jones, is married to another woman and has another family, he lived with Precious and her mother until Mongo was born. After that, he disappeared for about three or four years, returning to rape Precious and impregnate her once more. Mary, physically and verbally abusive, hates Precious because Carl would rather have sex with Precious than her.

As the novel begins, Precious is summoned to the guidance counselor's office. The school has decided to expel her because she is pregnant. Precious is furious, but the counselor later visits Precious' home and convinces her to enter an alternative school called Each One Teach One. Despite her mother's insistence that she apply for welfare, Precious enrolls in the school. She meets her teacher, Ms. Blue Rain, and fellow students Rhonda, Jermaine, Rita, Jo Ann, and Consuelo. All of the girls come from troubled backgrounds. Ms. Rain's class is a pre-[GED](#) class for young women who are below an eighth-grade level in reading and writing and therefore are unprepared for high school-level courses. They start off by learning the basics of phonics and vocabulary building. Despite their academic and personal deficits, Ms. Rain strives to ignite a passion in her students for literature and writing. She believes that the only way to learn to write is to write every day. Each girl is required to keep a journal. Ms. Rain reads their entries and provides feedback and advice. By the time the novel ends, the women have created an anthology of autobiographical short stories called "LIFE STORIES – Our Class Book" appended to the book. The works of classic African-American writers like [Audre Lorde](#), [Alice Walker](#) and [Langston Hughes](#) are inspirational for the students. Precious is particularly moved by [The Color Purple](#).

While in the hospital for the birth of her second child, a boy she names Abdul Jamal Louis Jones, Precious tells a social worker that her first child is living with her grandmother. The confession leads to Precious' mother having her welfare taken away. When Precious returns home with her newborn baby, her mother is enraged and chases her out of the house. Homeless and alone, she first passes a night at the armory, then turns to Ms. Rain who uses all of her resources to get Precious into a [halfway house](#) with childcare. Her new environment provides her with the stability and support to continue with school. The narrative prose, which is told from Precious' voice, continually improves in terms of grammar and spelling, and is even peppered with imagery and similes. Precious has taken up poetry. She's also eventually awarded the Mayor's office's literacy award for outstanding progress. This accomplishment boosts her spirits.

With her attitude changing and her confidence growing, Precious finds herself thinking about having a boyfriend, a real relationship with someone near her age, with someone who attracts her interest. Her only sexual experience thus far has been the rape and sexual abuse by her father and, to a lesser extent, her mother. Although she tries to move beyond the trauma of her childhood and distance herself from her parents, an unwelcome visit from Precious' mother reveals that her father has died from AIDS. Testing verifies that Precious is HIV positive, but both her children are not. Her classmate Rita encourages Precious to join an incest support group, as well as an HIV positive group. The meetings provide source of support and friendship for Precious as well as the revelation that her color and socio-economic background weren't necessarily the cause of her abuse. Women of all ages and backgrounds attend the meetings. The book concludes with no specific fate outlined for Precious, with the author leaving her future undetermined.

Pygmalion—by George Bernard Shaw.

Shaw was conscious of the difficulties involved in staging a complete representation of the play. Acknowledging in a "Note for technicians" that such a thing would only be possible "on the cinema screen or on stages furnished with exceptionally elaborate machinery", he marked some scenes as candidates for omission if necessary. Of these, a short scene at the end of Act One in which Eliza goes home, and a scene in Act Two in which Eliza is unwilling to undress for her bath, are not described here. The others are the scene at the Embassy Ball in Act Three and the scene with Eliza and Freddy in Act Four. Neither the Gutenberg edition referenced throughout this page nor the Wikisource text linked below contain these sequences.

'Portico of Saint Paul's Church(not Wren's Cathedral but Inigo Jones Church in Covent Garden vegetable market)' - 11.15p.m. A group of people are sheltering from the rain. Amongst them are the **Eynsford-Hills**, superficial social climbers eking out a living in "genteel poverty", consisting initially of **Mrs. Eynsford-Hill** and her daughter **Clara**. Clara's brother **Freddy** enters having earlier been dispatched to secure them a cab (which they can ill afford), but being rather timid and faint-hearted he has failed to do so. As he goes off once again to find a cab, he bumps into a flower girl, **Eliza**. Her flowers drop into the mud of [Covent Garden](#), the flowers she needs to survive in her poverty-stricken world. Shortly they are joined by a gentleman, **Colonel Pickering**. While Eliza tries to sell flowers to the Colonel, a bystander informs her that a man is writing down everything she says. The man is Henry **Higgins**, a professor of phonetics. Eliza worries that Higgins is a police officer and will not calm down until Higgins introduces himself. It soon becomes apparent that he and Colonel Pickering have a shared interest in phonetics; indeed, Pickering has come from India to meet Higgins, and Higgins was planning to go to India to meet Pickering. Higgins tells Pickering that he could pass off the flower girl as a duchess merely by teaching her to speak properly. These words of bravado spark an interest in Eliza, who would love to make changes in her life and become more mannerly, even though, to her, it only means working in a flower shop. At the end of the act, Freddy returns after finding a taxi, only to find that his mother and sister have gone and left him with the cab. The streetwise Eliza takes the cab from him, using the money that Higgins tossed to her, leaving him on his own.

Higgins' - Next Day. As Higgins demonstrates his phonetics to Pickering, the housekeeper, **Mrs. Pearce**, tells him that a young girl wants to see him. Eliza has shown up, and she tells Higgins that she will pay for lessons. He shows no interest in her, but she reminds him of his boast the previous day, so she can talk like a lady in a flower shop. Higgins claimed that he could pass her for a duchess. Pickering makes a bet with him on his claim, and says that he will pay for her lessons if Higgins succeeds. She is sent off to have a bath. Mrs. Pearce tells Higgins that he must behave himself in the young girl's presence. He must stop swearing, and improve his table manners. He is at a loss to understand why she should find fault with him. Then Alfred **Doolittle**, Eliza's father, appears with the sole purpose of getting money out of Higgins. He has no interest in his daughter in a paternal way. He sees himself as member of the undeserving poor, and means to go on being undeserving. He has an eccentric view of life, brought about by a lack of education and an intelligent brain. He is also aggressive, and when Eliza, on her return, sticks her tongue out at him, he goes to hit her, but is prevented by Pickering. The scene ends with Higgins telling Pickering that they really have got a difficult job on their hands....

Mrs. Higgins' drawing room. Higgins bursts in and tells his mother he has picked up a "common flower girl" whom he has been teaching. Mrs. Higgins is not very impressed with her son's attempts to win her approval because it is her 'at home' day and she is entertaining visitors. The visitors are the Eynsford-Hills. Higgins is rude to them on their arrival. Eliza enters and soon falls into talking about the weather and her family. Whilst she is now able to speak in beautifully modulated tones, the substance of what she says remains unchanged from the gutter. She confides her suspicions that aunt was killed by relatives, and mentions that gin had been "mother's milk" to this aunt, and that Eliza's own father was always more cheerful after a good amount of gin. Higgins passes off her remarks as "the new small talk", and Freddy is enraptured. When she is leaving, he asks her if she is going to walk across the park, to which she replies, "Walk? Not bloody likely!" (This is the most famous line from the play, and, for many years after the play's debut, use of the word 'bloody' was known as a *pygmalion*; Mrs. Campbell was considered to have risked her career by speaking the line on stage.^[15]) After she and the Eynsford-Hills leave, Henry asks for his mother's opinion. She says the girl is not presentable and is very concerned about what will happen to her, but neither Higgins nor Pickering understand her thoughts of Eliza's future, and leave feeling confident and excited about how Eliza will get on. This leaves Mrs. Higgins feeling exasperated, and exclaiming, "Men! Men!! Men!!!"

However, the six months are not yet up, and just in time for the Embassy Ball Eliza learns to behave properly as well as to speak properly. The challenge she faces is increased, however, by the presence at the Ball of **Nepommuck**, a former pupil of Higgins' who speaks 32 languages and is acting as an interpreter for a "Greek diplomatist" who was in fact born the son of a [Clerkenwell](#) watchmaker and "speaks English so villainously that he dare not utter a word of it lest he betray his origin." Nepommuck charges him handsomely for helping keep up the pretence. Pickering worries that Nepommuck will see through Eliza's disguise; nonetheless, Eliza is presented to the Ball's hosts, who, impressed by this vision of whom they know nothing, despatch Nepommuck to find out about her. Meanwhile Higgins, the interesting work done, rapidly loses interest in proceedings as he sees that no-one will see through Eliza. Indeed, Nepommuck returns to his hosts to report that he has detected that Eliza is not English, as she speaks it too perfectly ("only those who have been taught to speak it speak it well"), and that she is, in fact, Hungarian, and of Royal blood. When asked, Higgins responds with the truth - and no-one believes him.

Higgins' home - The time is midnight, and Higgins, Pickering, and Eliza have returned from the ball. A tired Eliza sits unnoticed, brooding and silent, while Pickering congratulates Higgins on winning the bet. Higgins scoffs and declares the evening a "silly tomfoolery", thanking God it's over and saying that he had been sick of the whole thing for the last two months. Still barely acknowledging Eliza beyond asking her to leave a note for Mrs. Pearce regarding coffee, the two retire to bed. Higgins returns to the room, looking for his slippers, and Eliza throws them at him. Higgins is taken aback, and is at first completely unable to understand Eliza's preoccupation, which aside from being ignored after her triumph is the question of what she is to do now. When

Higgins does understand he makes light of it, saying she could get married, but Eliza interprets this as selling herself like a prostitute. "We were above that at the corner of [Tottenham Court Road](#)." Finally she returns her jewellery to Higgins, including the ring he had given her, which he throws into the fireplace with a violence that scares Eliza. Furious with himself for losing his temper, he damns Mrs. Pearce, the coffee and then Eliza, and finally himself, for "lavishing" his knowledge and his "regard and intimacy" on a "heartless guttersnipe", and retires in great dudgeon. Eliza roots around in the fireplace and retrieves the ring.

Mrs. Higgins' drawing room, the next morning. Higgins and Pickering, perturbed by the discovery that Eliza has walked out on them, call on Mrs. Higgins to phone the police. Higgins is particularly distracted, since Eliza had assumed the responsibility of maintaining his diary and keeping track of his possessions, which causes Mrs. Higgins to decry their calling the police as though Eliza were "a lost umbrella". Doolittle is announced; he emerges dressed in splendid wedding attire and is furious with Higgins, who after their previous encounter had been so taken with Doolittle's unorthodox ethics that he had recommended him as the "most original moralist in England" to a rich American founding Moral Reform Societies; the American had subsequently left Doolittle a pension worth three thousand pounds a year, as a consequence of which Doolittle feels intimidated into joining the middle class and marrying his missus. Mrs. Higgins observes that this at least settles the problem of who shall provide for Eliza, to which Higgins objects — after all, he paid Doolittle five pounds for her. Mrs. Higgins informs her son that Eliza is upstairs, and explains the circumstances of her arrival, alluding to how marginalised and overlooked Eliza felt the previous night. Higgins is unable to appreciate this, and sulks when told that he must behave if Eliza is to join them. Doolittle is asked to wait outside.

Eliza enters, at ease and self-possessed. Higgins blusters but Eliza isn't shaken and speaks exclusively to Pickering. Throwing Higgins' previous insults back at him ("Oh, I'm only a squashed cabbage leaf"), Eliza remarks that it was only by Pickering's example that she learned to be a lady, which renders Higgins speechless. Eliza goes on to say that she has completely left behind the flower girl she was, and that she couldn't utter any of her old sounds if she tried — at which point Doolittle emerges from the balcony, causing Eliza to relapse totally into her gutter speech. Higgins is jubilant, jumping up and crowing over her. Doolittle explains his predicament and asks if Eliza will come to his wedding. Pickering and Mrs. Higgins also agree to go, and leave with Doolittle with Eliza to follow.

The scene ends with another confrontation between Higgins and Eliza. Higgins asks if Eliza is satisfied with the revenge she has wrought thus far and if she will now come back, but she refuses. Higgins defends himself from Eliza's earlier accusation by arguing that he treats everyone the same, so she shouldn't feel singled out. Eliza replies that she just wants a little kindness, and that since he will never stoop to show her this, she will not come back, but will marry Freddy. Higgins scolds her for such low ambitions: he has made her "a consort for a king." When she threatens to teach phonetics and offer herself as an assistant to Nepommuck, Higgins again loses his temper and promises to wring her neck if she does so. Eliza realises that this last threat strikes Higgins at the very core and that it gives her power over him; Higgins, for his part, is delighted to see a spark of fight in Eliza rather than her erstwhile fretting and worrying. He remarks "I like you like this", and calls her a "pillar of strength". Mrs. Higgins returns and she and Eliza depart for the wedding. As they leave Higgins incorrigibly gives Eliza a number of errands to run, as though their recent conversation had not taken place. Eliza disdainfully explains why they are unnecessary, and wonders what Higgins is going to do without her. Higgins laughs to himself at the idea of Eliza marrying Freddy as the play ends.

Ragtime—by E. L. Doctorow.

The novel opens in the year 1902, in the town of [New Rochelle, New York](#), at the house of an upper class family composed of Mother, Father, and the little boy. Mother's Younger Brother falls in love with the famous beauty [Evelyn Nesbit](#), whose husband [Harry Kendall Thaw](#) has recently

been charged with the murder of her ex-lover, architect [Stanford White](#). [Harry Houdini](#)'s car breaks down in front of the family's house, and he pays them a visit. Father leaves on a trip to the Arctic with the explorer Adm. [Robert E. Peary](#).

An immigrant family, consisting of Mameh, Tateh, and the little girl, live in the Lower East Side in utter poverty. To make ends meet, Mameh is forced to prostitute herself to her employer. When Tateh finds out, he takes the little girl and leaves. Evelyn Nesbit visits the Lower East Side, where she becomes enchanted with Tateh's daughter, and soon her visits become regular. The little girl becomes ill, and Evelyn cares for her. Mother's Younger Brother begins to follow Evelyn everywhere, she is aware of her secret admirer and tolerates his presence from a distance. Tateh, Evelyn Nesbit, and the little girl attend a socialist meeting whose featured speaker, [Emma Goldman](#), recognizes and singles out the disguised Evelyn among the crowd. Tateh is furious when he realizes her identity and leaves with the little girl. Mother rescues and claims responsibility for a newborn baby she discovers buried alive in her backyard; she soon learns it is the child of a black washwoman named Sarah.

Evelyn Nesbit and Mother's Younger Brother start to see a lot of one another. Mother's Younger Brother helps Evelyn search for Tateh and his little girl, but to no avail. Tateh and his daughter happily leave New York City and travel up the Eastern seaboard. Meanwhile, Houdini learns how to fly planes, and performs a demonstration for [Archduke Franz Ferdinand](#) and [Countess Sophie](#). Father experiences a feeling of profound isolation upon his return to New Rochelle. Mother's Younger Brother becomes proficient in the use of bombs. Tateh and his little girl travel to Lawrence, Massachusetts, [where there is a strike](#) against the textile mills, and continue to many other cities.

In Philadelphia, Tateh finds a novelty store where the owner agrees to buy the movie books ([flip books](#)) Tateh has invented. Tateh decides they will return to Lawrence to settle down. [Henry Ford](#) pays a lunch visit to [J.P. Morgan](#) and they discuss technology and religion. One afternoon, a black man named Coalhouse Walker, the father of Sarah's child, stops by the home in New Rochelle, asking to see Sarah, who refuses to see him. After Coalhouse continues to call on her every Sunday, Sarah finally accepts his proposal for marriage. One day Coalhouse Walker is driving to New York when volunteers from the Emerald Isle firehouse, led by fire chief Willie Conklin, bar his path. While Coalhouse seeks help from the police, the volunteers wreck his car. When Coalhouse complains, he is arrested. Coalhouse dedicates the funds he originally intended for his wedding toward securing a lawyer. However, he cannot find a lawyer willing to represent him.

One night, Sarah leaves the house to attend an event at which Mr. Taft's Vice- President would be present; she wishes to petition the federal government on Coalhouse's behalf. However, the secret service men hit her hard in the chest; she soon grows ill and dies. In revenge, Coalhouse causes an explosion at the Emerald Isle firehouse, killing four volunteers. Father and Mother's Younger Brother fight over the situation, and Mother's Younger Brother leaves the household to join Coalhouse and his followers. Mother and Father move to Atlantic City to escape the scrutiny of the townspeople. Willie Conklin also begins to feel a lot of pressure to leave town. Mother and Father meet Tateh in Atlantic City, and the little boy and the little girl soon begin to spend a lot of time together.

Coalhouse and his followers break into the library of J.P. Morgan, who is abroad at the time, and threaten to explode the building. The District Attorney Charles S. Whitman calls Coalhouse, who reiterates to him his original demands that they return his vehicle and that Conklin dies for Sarah's death. [Booker T. Washington](#) attempts to persuade Coalhouse to end his siege, but soon leaves out of frustration. Father then meets with Coalhouse, and approaches Whitman with his demands, at which point Whitman presents Coalhouse with both his Model T and Willie Conklin. After his followers leave free of punishment, Coalhouse exits Morgan's house, and Father, still inside, hears the firing squad. Police report that Coalhouse had made an attempt at escaping, but he more likely made a slight movement that he knew would cause his death. Mother's Younger Brother, having

secured the use of Coalhouse's Model-T, travels all around the country and soon to Mexico, where he joins revolutionary forces and dies about a year later.

As tensions in Europe develop, World War I approaches. Morgan travels to Egypt, where he hopes a visit to the pyramids will restore his sense of spirituality. Rather, he cannot sleep and becomes disheartened by his failure to experience what he has expected. Soon his health rapidly deteriorates and he dies. The narrator describes the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Countess Sophie. Father dies aboard the Lusitania, and a year after his death, Tateh and Mother marry. [Emma Goldman](#) has been deported. [Evelyn Nesbit](#) is no longer beautiful and is therefore ignored. [Harry Kendall Thaw](#) is released from the insane asylum and marches in the Armistice Day parade.

Raisin in the Sun (A) —by Lorraine Hansberry.

A Raisin in the Sun portrays a few weeks in the life of the Youngers, an African-American family living in Chicago's Southside sometime between World War II and the 1950s. When the play opens, the Youngers are about to receive an insurance check for \$10,000 from the deceased Mr. Younger's life insurance policy. Each of the adult members of the family has an idea as to what he or she would like to do with this money. The matriarch of the family, Mama, wants to buy a house to fulfill a dream she shared with her husband. Mama's son, Walter Lee, would rather use the money to invest in a liquor store with his friends. He believes that the investment will solve the family's financial problems forever. Walter's wife, Ruth, agrees with Mama, however, and hopes that she and Walter can provide more space and opportunity for their son, Travis. Beneatha, Walter's sister and Mama's daughter, wants her mother to use the money for whatever be her will. Mama does mention she'd also like to use the money for Beneatha's medical school tuition. She also wishes that her family members were not so interested in joining the white world. Beneatha instead tries to find her identity by looking back to the past and to Africa.

As the play proceeds, the Youngers clash over their competing dreams. Ruth discovers that she is pregnant but fears that if she has the child, she will put more financial pressure on her family members. When Walter says nothing to Ruth's admission that she is considering abortion, Mama puts a down payment on a house for the whole family. She believes that a bigger, brighter dwelling will help them all. This house is in Clybourne Park, an entirely white neighborhood. When the Youngers' future neighbors find out that the Youngers are moving in, they send Mr. Lindner, from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, to offer the Youngers money in return for staying away. The Youngers refuse the deal, even after Walter loses the rest of the money (\$6,500) to his friend Willy Harris, who persuades Walter to invest in the liquor store and then runs off with his cash.

In the meantime, Beneatha rejects her suitor, George Murchison, whom she believes to be shallow and blind to the problems of race. Subsequently, she receives a marriage proposal from her Nigerian boyfriend, Joseph Asagai, who wants Beneatha to get a medical degree and move to Africa with him (Beneatha does not make her choice before the end of the play). The Youngers eventually move out of the apartment, fulfilling the family's long-held dream. Their future seems uncertain and slightly dangerous, but they are optimistic and determined to live a better life. They believe that they can succeed if they stick together as a family and resolve to defer their dreams no longer.

Rape of the Lock (The) —by Alexander Pope.

The Rape of the Lock is a [mock-heroic narrative poem](#) written by [Alexander Pope](#), first published anonymously in *Lintot's Miscellany* in May [1712](#) in two [cantos](#) (334 lines), but then revised, expanded and reissued under Pope's name on March 2, 1714, in a much-expanded 5-canto version

(794 lines). The final form was available in 1717 with the addition of Clarissa's speech on good humour.

The poem [satirizes](#) a petty squabble by comparing it to the [epic](#) world of the gods. It was based on an incident recounted by Pope's friend, [John Caryll](#). Arabella Fermor and her suitor, [Lord Petre](#), were both from aristocratic [recusant](#) Catholic families at a period in England when under such laws as the [Test Act](#), all denominations except [Anglicanism](#) suffered legal restrictions and penalties (for example Petre could not take up his place in the [House of Lords](#) as a Catholic). Petre, lusting after Arabella, had cut off a lock of her hair without permission, and the consequent argument had created a breach between the two families. Pope, also a Catholic, wrote the poem at the request of friends in an attempt to "comically merge the two." He utilized the character Belinda to represent Arabella and introduced an entire system of "[sylphs](#)," or guardian spirits of virgins, a parodied version of the gods and goddesses of conventional epic.

Pope's poem mocks the traditions of classical epics: the abduction of [Helen of Troy](#) becomes here the theft of a lock of hair; the gods become minute sylphs; the description of [Achilles'](#) shield becomes an excursus on one of Belinda's petticoats. He also uses the epic style of invocations, lamentations, exclamations and similes, and in some cases adds [parody](#) to imitation by following the framework of actual speeches in Homer's [Iliad](#). Although the poem is humorous at times, Pope keeps a sense that beauty is fragile, and that the loss of a lock of hair touches Belinda deeply. As his introductory letter makes clear, women in that period were essentially supposed to be decorative rather than rational, and the loss of beauty was a serious matter.

The humour of the poem comes from the [storm in a teacup](#) of vanity being couched within the elaborate, formal verbal structure of an epic poem.

Three of [Uranus's moons](#) are named after characters from *The Rape of the Lock*: [Belinda](#), [Umbriel](#), and [Ariel](#), the last name also (previously) appearing in [Shakespeare's](#) [The Tempest](#).

It is one of the most commonly cited examples of [high burlesque](#).

Red Badge of Courage (The) —by Stephen Crane.

On a cold day the fictional 304th New York Regiment awaits battle beside a river. Eighteen-year-old Private Henry Fleming, remembering his romantic reasons for enlisting as well as his mother's resulting protests, wonders whether he will remain brave in the face of fear, or turn and run. He is comforted by one of his friends from home, Jim Conklin, who admits that he would run from battle if his fellow soldiers also fled. During the regiment's first battle, Confederate soldiers charge, but are repelled. The enemy quickly regroups and attacks again, this time forcing some of the unprepared Union soldiers to flee. Fearing the battle is a lost cause, Henry [deserts](#) his battalion. Only after he reaches the rear of the army does he overhear a general announcing the Union's victory.

Ashamed, Henry escapes into a nearby forest, where he discovers a decaying body in a peaceful clearing. In his distress, he hurriedly leaves the clearing and stumbles upon a group of injured men returning from battle. One member of the group, the "tattered soldier", asks Henry where he is wounded, but the youth dodges the question. Amongst the group is Jim Conklin, who has been shot in the side and is suffering [dementia](#) from blood-loss. Jim eventually dies of his injury, defiantly resisting aid from his friend, and an enraged and helpless Henry runs from the wounded soldiers. He next joins a retreating column that is in disarray. In the ensuing panic, a man accidentally hits Henry on the head with his rifle, wounding him. Exhausted, hungry, thirsty, and now wounded, Henry decides to return to his regiment regardless of his shame. When he arrives at camp, the other soldiers believe his injury resulted from a grazing bullet during battle. The other men care for the youth, dressing his wound.

The next morning Henry goes into battle for the third time. His regiment encounters a small group of Confederates, and in the ensuing fight Henry proves to be a capable soldier, comforted by the belief that his previous cowardice had not been noticed, as he "had performed his mistakes in the dark, so he was still a man".^[19] Afterward, while looking for a stream from which to obtain water with a friend, he discovers from the commanding officer that his regiment has a lackluster reputation. The officer speaks casually about sacrificing the 304th because they are nothing more than "mule drivers" and "mud diggers". With no other regiments to spare, the general orders his men forward.

In the final battle, Henry acts as the [flag-bearer](#) after the assigned man falls. A line of Confederates hidden behind a fence beyond a clearing shoot with impunity at Henry's regiment, which is ill-covered in the tree-line. Facing certain death if they stay, and disgrace if they retreat, the officers order a charge. Unarmed, Henry leads the men while entirely escaping injury. Most of the Confederates run before the regiment arrives, and four of the remaining men are taken [prisoner](#). The novel closes with the following passage:

It rained. The procession of weary soldiers became a bedraggled train, despondent and muttering, marching with churning effort in a trough of liquid brown mud under a low, wretched sky. Yet the youth smiled, for he saw that the world was a world for him, though many discovered it to be made of oaths and walking sticks. He had rid himself of the red sickness of battle. The sultry nightmare was in the past. He had been an animal blistered and sweating in the heat and pain of war. He turned now with a lover's thirst to images of tranquil skies, fresh meadows, cool brooks—an existence of soft and eternal peace.

Over the river a golden ray of sun came through the hosts of leaden rain clouds.^[20]

Redburn—by Herman Melville.

The author returned to the tone of his first novels, *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847). Redburn is a semi-autobiographical novel concerning the sufferings of a refined youth among coarse and brutal sailors and the seedier areas of [Liverpool](#). This theme of a youth confronted by realities and evils for which he is unprepared—or incorrectly prepared by both family and American institutions—is a prominent one in Melville's works.^[citation needed]

While not generally considered as profound as Melville's later works, the most notable being *Moby-Dick*, the novel can be viewed as a precursor to later, more complex works of fiction. For example, many of Redburn's themes are echoed in *Moby-Dick*, and some of Redburn's characters are forerunners of those in Melville's most epic novel (e.g., Jackson is a precursor of Captain Ahab).

With Redburn, Melville was hastily trying to return to a more commercial format after having taken a critical and commercial drubbing with his allegorical novel *Mardi*, which had been published earlier in the year. Melville leaves behind the complex structures in *Mardi*, a book that never quite gelled, for a more straightforward and travelogue-like narrative in the traditions of his earliest work. The novel does, however, display some of the more experimental tendencies that made *Moby-Dick* so popular after Melville's death, and begins to incorporate much of the symbolism that separates his earlier work from later, denser novels such as *Pierre*. Melville also takes the opportunity in Redburn to make a number of social criticisms, perhaps most prominent among them both explicit and implicit attacks on the evils of drink.

Oddly enough, Redburn also contains one of the notable examples of [spontaneous combustion](#) in literature, along with [Charles Dickens'](#) *Bleak House*.

Remains of the Day (The) —by Kazuo Ishiguro.

The Remains of the Day tells the story of Stevens, an [English butler](#) who has dedicated his life to the loyal [service](#) of [Lord Darlington](#) (mentioned in increasing detail in flashbacks). The novel begins with Stevens receiving a letter from a former colleague, Miss Kenton, describing her married life, which he believes hints at an unhappy marriage. The receipt of the letter coincides with Stevens having the opportunity to revisit this once-cherished relationship, if only under the guise of investigating the possibility of re-employment. Stevens's new employer, a wealthy American named Mr Farraday, encourages Stevens to borrow his car to take a well-earned break, a "motoring trip". As he sets out, Stevens has the opportunity to reflect on his immutable loyalty to Lord Darlington, on the meaning of the term "dignity", and even on his relationship with his own late father. Ultimately Stevens is forced to ponder the true nature of his relationship with Miss Kenton. As the book progresses, increasing evidence of Miss Kenton's one-time love for Stevens, and of his for her, is revealed.

Working together during the years leading up to the Second World War, Stevens and Miss Kenton fail to admit their true feelings towards each other. All of their recollected conversations show a professional friendship which at times came close to crossing the line into romance, but never dared to do so.

Miss Kenton, it later emerges, has been married for over 20 years and therefore is no longer Miss Kenton but has become Mrs Benn. She admits to wondering occasionally what a life with Stevens might have been like, but she has come to love her husband and is looking forward to the birth of their first grandchild. Stevens muses over lost opportunities, both with Miss Kenton and with his long-time employer, Lord Darlington. At the end of the novel, Stevens instead focuses on the "remains of [his] day", referring to his future service with Mr Farraday.

"The Remains of the Day" refers to evening, when a person can reflect on a day's work. Evening is symbolic for older age, when one can look back and assess one's life work. But "remains" also suggests what is left after a wreck, and it may be suggesting that this life was wrecked.

"The Remains of the Day" also refers to the last vestiges of Great Britain's grand houses. Stevens is part of these "remains," paralleling the other trace remains of Britain's overseas empire. The action takes place during July 1956 which coincides with the [Suez Canal Crisis](#), a notable marker of the decline of overseas British influence.

At the end of the novel, Stevens reflects on the "remains of my day", referring to his future service with Mr Farraday.

"The remains of the day" is also a part of two sentences of this story, written under "day one — evening", as a summary of the first day of his journey. 'And yet tonight, in the quiet of this room, I find that what really remains with me from this first day's travel is not Salisbury Cathedral, nor any of the other charming sights of this city, but rather that marvellous view encountered this morning of the rolling English countryside.' In addition, near the end of the book, Stevens stands at seaside reflecting on advice an elderly gentleman had given him. Stevens says to himself, "Perhaps, then, there is something to his advice that I should cease looking back so much, that I should adopt a more positive outlook and try to make the best of what remains of my day."

"Remains of the day" is an alternate translation of the German "Rückstände des Tages," a Freudian term generally translated as "day's residues." These are experiences of the day before the night of a dream. Freud discovered these are always present in dream formation. They are used as symbolic representations and disguises for forbidden wishes.

Reservation Blues—by Sherman Alexie.

Alexie uses many different types of texts to weave his story, from songs, newspaper articles, journals, dreams, visions, narration from nearly every character, and even a radio broadcast. While this technique has the possibility of becoming choppy and hard to follow, Alexie does an effective job at weaving them together to make a clear surface meaning and for the reader to dig deeper into the text.

The novel begins with a strange African American man walking into the town of Wellpinit on the Spokane Reservation carrying only his guitar and his tattered clothes. While many Spokanes make excuses to drive past the stranger, only one (Thomas Builds-the-Fire) has the courage and kind spirit to stop and ask the man about himself. The man's name is Robert Johnson, and he refuses to play the guitar because he claims he has sold his soul to the Gentleman and does not want the Gentleman to hear his music. Johnson has been wandering the roads searching for a mysterious woman from his dreams who he claims can help him with his problem. Thomas agrees to take Johnson to Big Mom, a mysterious woman who lives in a shack on Wellpinit hill above the town. When Thomas drops off Johnson, he realizes Johnson left his guitar in Thomas' van. And so the story truly begins. While sitting at the Trading Post, the town bullies Victor Joseph and Junior Polatkin decide to pick a fight with Thomas. They smash the guitar and rush off to Junior's job. Thomas wants to fix the guitar but when he gets home he decides it is irreparable and that he will burn it the next day. When he goes to burn the guitar he finds it has fixed itself as well as begins playing and talking to him. The guitar tells him he needs to start a band with Victor and Junior. When the two show up they immediately agree and the band is formed. The band sparks controversy among the tribes Catholic community yet draws large crowds. Crowds large enough, in fact, that the band begins playing real gigs, one of which they meet Chess and Checkers Warm Water whose beauty and voices cause them to join the band nearly immediately. The Warm Waters are Flathead Indians and leave their reservation to join the group, now titled "Coyote Springs". The group goes on to win the Battle of the Bands in Seattle through what seems like divine intervention and return to their reservation to find they are seen as traitors for ever leaving the reservation at all. The group is then offered a record deal by Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Wright. Coyote Springs is flown to New York only to flop in their audition due, again, to what appears to be some spiritual intervention. The band returns home and goes their separate ways, ending with one member committing suicide, one swearing off alcohol, and three deciding to leave the reservation.

Return of the Native (The) —by Thomas Hardy.

The novel takes place entirely in the environs of [Egdon Heath](#), and, with the exception of the epilogue, *Aftercourses*, covers exactly a year and a day. The narrative begins on the evening of [Guy Fawkes Night](#) as Diggory Venn drives slowly across the heath, carrying a hidden passenger in the back of his van. When darkness falls, the country folk light bonfires on the surrounding hills, emphasizing—not for the last time—the pagan spirit of the heath and its denizens.

Venn is a reddenman; he travels the country marking flocks of sheep with a red mineral called "reddle", a dialect term for [red ochre](#). Although his trade has stained him red from head to foot, underneath his devilish colouring he is a handsome, shrewd, well-meaning young man. His passenger is a young woman named Thomasin Yeobright, whom Venn is taking home. Earlier that day, Thomasin had planned to marry Damon Wildeve, a local innkeeper known for his fickleness; however, a minor change in disposition as regards to Wildeve delayed the marriage. Thomasin, in distress, ran after the reddenman's van and asked him to take her home. Venn himself is in love with Thomasin, and unsuccessfully wooed her a year or two before. Now, although he knows Wildeve is unworthy of her love, he is so devoted to her that he is willing to help her secure the man of her choice.

At length, Venn reaches Bloom's End, the home of Thomasin's aunt, Mrs. Yeobright. She is a good woman, if somewhat proud and inflexible, and she wants the best for Thomasin. In former months she opposed her niece's choice of husband, and publicly forbade the [banns](#); now, since Thomasin has compromised herself by leaving town with Wildeve and returning unmarried, the best outcome Mrs. Yeobright can envision is for the postponed marriage to be duly solemnized as soon as possible. She and Venn both begin working on Wildeve to make sure he keeps his promise to Thomasin.

Wildeve, however, is still preoccupied with Eustacia Vye, an exotically beautiful young woman living with her grandfather in a lonely house on Egdon Heath. Eustacia is a black-haired, queenly woman who grew up in Budmouth, a fashionable seaside resort. She holds herself aloof from most of the heathfolk; they, in turn, consider her an oddity, and one or two even think she's a witch. She is nothing like Thomasin, who is sweet-natured. She loathes the heath, yet roams it constantly, carrying a [spyglass](#) and an [hourglass](#). The previous year, she and Wildeve were lovers; however, even during the height of her passion for him, she knew she only loved him because there was no better object available. When Wildeve broke off the relationship to court Thomasin, Eustacia's interest in him briefly returned. The two meet on Guy Fawkes night, and Wildeve asks her to run off to America with him. She demurs.

Eustacia drops Wildeve when Mrs. Yeobright's son Clym, a successful diamond merchant, returns from [Paris](#) to his native [Egdon Heath](#). Although he has no plans to return to Paris or the diamond trade and is, in fact, openly planning to become a schoolmaster for the rural poor, Eustacia sees him as a way to escape the hated heath and begin a grander, richer existence in a glamorous new location. With some difficulty, she arranges to meet Clym, and the two soon fall in love. When Mrs. Yeobright objects, Clym quarrels with her; later, she quarrels with Eustacia as well.

"Unconscious of her presence, he still went on singing." Eustacia watches Clym cut furze in this illustration by Arthur Hopkins for the original *Belgravia* edition (Plate 8, July 1878).

When he sees that Eustacia is lost to him, Wildeve marries Thomasin, who gives birth to a daughter the next summer. Clym and Eustacia also marry and move to a small cottage five miles away, where they enjoy a brief period of happiness. The seeds of rancour soon begin to germinate, however: Clym studies night and day to prepare for his new career as a schoolmaster while Eustacia clings to the hope that he'll give up the idea and take her abroad. Instead, he nearly blinds himself with too much reading, then further mortifies his wife by deciding to eke out a living, at least temporarily, as a [furze](#)-cutter. Eustacia, her dreams blasted, finds herself living in a hut on the heath, chained by marriage to a lowly labouring man.

At this point, Wildeve reappears; he has unexpectedly inherited a large sum of money, and is now in a better position to fulfill Eustacia's hopes. He comes calling on the Yeobrights in the middle of one hot August day and, although Clym is at home, he is fast asleep on the hearth after a gruelling session of furze-cutting. While Eustacia and Wildeve are talking, Mrs. Yeobright knocks on the door; she has decided to pay a courtesy call in the hopes of healing the estrangement between herself and her son. Eustacia looks out at her and then, in some alarm, ushers her visitor out the back door. She hears Clym calling to his mother and, thinking his mother's knocking has awakened him, remains in the garden for a few moments. When Eustacia goes back inside, she finds Clym still asleep and his mother gone. Clym, she now realises, merely cried out his mother's name in his sleep.

Mrs Yeobright, it turns out, saw Eustacia looking out the window at her; she also saw Clym's gear by the door, and so knew they were both at home. Now, thinking she has been deliberately barred from her son's home, she miserably begins the long, hot walk home. Later that evening, Clym, unaware of her attempted visit, heads for Bloom's End and on the way finds her crumpled beside the path, dying from an [adder](#)'s bite. When she expires that night from the combined effects of snake venom and [heat exhaustion](#), Clym's grief and remorse make him physically ill for several

weeks. Eustacia, racked with guilt, dare not tell him of her role in the tragedy; when he eventually finds out from a neighbour's child about his mother's visit—and Wildeve's—he rushes home to accuse his wife of murder and adultery. Eustacia refuses to explain her actions; instead, she tells him *You are no blessing, my husband* and reproaches him for his cruelty. She then moves back to her grandfather's house, where she struggles with her despair while she awaits some word from Clym.

Wildeve visits her again on Guy Fawkes night, and offers to help her get to Paris. Eustacia realises that if she lets Wildeve help her, she'll be obliged to become his mistress. She tells him she will send him a signal by night if she decides to accept. Clym's anger, meanwhile, has cooled and he sends Eustacia a letter the next day offering reconciliation. The letter arrives a few minutes too late; by the time her grandfather tries to give it to her, she has already signalled to Wildeve and set off through wind and rain to meet him. She walks along weeping, however, knowing she is about to break her marriage vows for a man who is unworthy of her.

Wildeve readies a horse and gig and waits for Eustacia in the dark. Thomasin, guessing his plans, sends Clym to intercept him; she also, by chance, encounters Diggory Venn as she dashes across the heath herself in pursuit of her husband. Eustacia does not appear; instead, she falls or throws herself into nearby Shadwater [Weir](#). Clym and Wildeve hear the splash and hurry to investigate. Wildeve plunges recklessly after Eustacia without bothering to remove his coat, while Clym, proceeding more cautiously, nevertheless is also soon at the mercy of the raging waters. Venn arrives in time to save Clym, but is too late for the others. When Clym revives, he accuses himself of murdering his wife and mother.

In the epilogue, Venn gives up being a reddleman to become a dairy farmer. Two years later, Thomasin marries him and they settle down happily together. Clym, now a sad, solitary figure, eventually takes up preaching.

Rhinoceros—by Eugène Ionesco.

The play starts in the town square of a small, unnamed French village. Two friends; the eloquent, intellectual but incredibly prideful Jean and the simplistic, shy, kind-hearted drunkard Berenger; meet up in a coffee house to talk about an unspecified urgent matter. Instead of talking about what they were supposed to, Jean becomes furious at Berenger's tardiness and drunken state and berates him until a [rhinoceros](#) rampages across the square, considerably startling the people there. The people there begin to discuss what has happened when another rhinoceros appears and crushes a woman's cat. This generates incredible outrage and people begin to band together to argue that the presence of these rhinos should not be allowed. The beginning of a mass movement is seen onstage.

Berenger arrives late for work at the local newspaper office, but the newspaper's receptionist Daisy (whom Berenger is in love with), covers for him. At the office, an argument has broken out between the sensitive and logical Dudard and the violent, temperamental Botard; since Botard does not believe a rhinoceros could actually appear in France despite all the claims by eyewitnesses that one did.

Suddenly, Mrs. Bœuf (the wife of a local tradesman) appears to say that her husband has turned into a rhinoceros and that streets are plagued with people who have turned into them. Botard argues against the existence of the so called rhinoceritis movement that Mrs. Bœuf claims is occurring, saying that the local people are too intelligent to be tricked by the empty rhetorics of a mass movement. Despite this, Mr. Bœuf (turned into a rhinoceros) arrives and destroys the staircase that leads out of the office, trapping all the workers and their boss, Mr. Papillion, inside. Mrs. Bœuf joins her husband by jumping down the stair-hole and also turns into a rhinoceros while the office-workers escape through a window.

Berenger goes to visit Jean in order to apologize for the previous day's argument they had, but finds him in bed, heavy with a sickness he has never had. The two friends begin to argue again, initially about the possibility of people actually turning into rhinos and then about the morality of the transformations. Jean is initially staunchly against the rhinos, but gradually grows lenient. As the scene progresses, Jean's skin turns greyer and greyer, the bumps in his head grow into a horn, his voice grows hoarse and he begins to pace around his apartment like a caged beast. Finally, he proclaims that rhinoceros have just as much of a right to life as humans and that "Humanism is dead, those who follow it are just old sentimentalists" before he turns into a rhino himself and chases Berenger out of his apartment.

Everyone in town has succumbed to rhinocerotitis save for Berenger, Dudard and Daisy. Berenger is locked up in his apartment, yelling at the rhinos that rush by for having destroyed civilization until Dudard arrives to check on him. Dudard trivializes the transformations by saying that people have the right to choose what they do, even transform; but Berenger insists that the transformations couldn't be voluntary since his friend Jean had initially hated the rhinos and that he was probably brainwashed. Dudard counterargues that people can change their minds and gradually grows more accepting until he concludes that he must "follow [his] peers and [his] leaders" before departing and turning into a rhino.

Daisy arrives to make dinner for Berenger, but is deeply shaken to find Berenger in his state of despair. She admits her love for him, which brings Berenger out of his panic by saying he loves her too. They vow to stay together and stand out against rhinocerotitis even if it turns out to be irreversible, but Daisy says she must check on her mother to see if she has turned or not. Berenger does not want her to leave and they have an argument that's initially about her freedom to do what she likes but gradually evolves into freedom in general and then the freedom to transform into a rhino. Daisy leaves in a fit of rage and is crushed by the rhinos outside.

Berenger is devastated at witnessing her death and flies into another panic in which he considers just giving up and joining the rhinos; he tries to turn into one of them but is unable to and bursts into tears at his inability to convert. After a brief moment of doubt, Berenger recomposes and vows to himself that he will be the last man standing against rhinocerotitis. He gets his courage once again and returns to hurling insult at the passing rhinos.

Richard III—by William Shakespeare.

The play begins with Richard describing the accession to the throne of his brother, King [Edward IV of England](#), eldest son of the late [Richard, Duke of York](#).

Now is the winter of our discontent

Made glorious summer by this sun of York;

And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house

In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

("sun of York" is a punning reference to the badge of the "blazing sun," which Edward IV adopted, and "son of York", i.e., the son of the Duke of York.)

The speech reveals Richard's jealousy and ambition, as his brother rules the country successfully. Richard is an ugly [hunchback](#) who is "rudely stamp'd", "deformed, unfinish'd", and cannot "strut before a wanton ambling [nymph](#)." He responds to the anguish of his condition with an outcast's [credo](#): "I am determined to prove a [villain](#) / And hate the idle pleasures of these days." Richard

plots to have his brother Clarence, who stands before him in the line of succession, conducted to the [Tower of London](#) over a prophecy he fed to the King; that "G of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be", which the king interprets as referring to **George** of Clarence.

Richard next ingratiates himself with "the Lady Anne" – [Anne Neville](#), widow of the Lancastrian [Edward of Westminster](#), [Prince of Wales](#). Richard confides to the audience:

"I'll marry [Warwick](#)'s youngest daughter.
What, though I kill'd her husband and his father?"

Despite initially hating him, Anne is won over by his pleas of love and repentance and agrees to marry him. When she leaves, Richard exults in having won her over despite all he has done to her, and tells the audience that he will discard her once she has served her purpose.

The atmosphere at court is poisonous: The established nobles are at odds with the upwardly mobile relatives of [Queen Elizabeth](#), a hostility fuelled by Richard's machinations. [Queen Margaret](#), Henry VI's widow, returns in defiance of her banishment and warns the squabbling nobles about Richard. Queen Margaret curses Richard and the rest who were present. The nobles, all [Yorkists](#), reflexively unite against this last [Lancastrian](#), and the warning falls on deaf ears.

Richard orders two murderers to kill Clarence in the tower. Clarence, meanwhile, relates a dream to his keeper. The dream includes extremely visual language describing Clarence falling from an imaginary ship as a result of Gloucester, who had fallen from the hatches, striking him. Under the water Clarence sees the skeletons of thousands of men "that fishes gnawed upon." He also sees "wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl, inestimable stones, unvalued jewels." All of these are "scatterd in the bottom of the sea." Clarence adds that some of the jewels were in the skulls of the dead. Clarence then imagines dying and being tormented by the ghosts of his father-in-law (Warwick, Anne's father) and brother-in-law (Edward, Anne's former husband).

After Clarence falls asleep, Brakenbury, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, enters and observes that between the titles of princes and the low names of commoners there is nothing different but the "outward fame", meaning that they both have "inward toil" whether rich or poor. When the murderers arrive, he reads their warrant (issued in the name of the King), and exits with the Keeper, who disobeys Clarence's request to stand by him, and leaves the two murderers the keys.

Clarence wakes and pleads with the murderers, saying that men have no right to obey other men's requests for murder, because all men are under the rule of God not to commit murder. The murderers imply Clarence is a hypocrite because, as one says, "thou ... unripped'st the bowels of thy sovereign's son [Edward] whom thou wast sworn to cherish and defend." Tactically trying to win them over, he tells them to go to his brother Gloucester, who will reward them better for his life than Edward will for his death. One murderer insists Gloucester himself sent them to perform the bloody act, but Clarence does not believe him. He recalls the unity of Richard Duke of York blessing his three sons with his victorious arm, bidding his brother Gloucester to "think on this and he will weep." Sardonicly, a murderer says Gloucester weeps millstones – echoing Richard's earlier comment about the murderers' own eyes weeping millstones rather than "foolish tears" (Act I, Sc. 3).

Next, one of the murderers explains that his brother Gloucester hates him, and sent them to the Tower to kill him. Eventually, one murderer gives in to his [conscience](#) and does not participate, but the other killer stabs Clarence and drowns him in "the [Malmsey butt](#) within". The first act closes with the perpetrator needing to find a hole to bury Clarence.

Edward IV soon dies, leaving as Protector his brother Richard, who sets about removing the final obstacles to his accession. He meets his nephew, the young [Edward V](#), who is en route to London

for his coronation accompanied by relatives of Edward's widow (Lord Rivers, Lord Grey, and Sir Thomas Vaughan). These Richard arrests and (eventually) beheads, and then has a conversation with the Prince and his younger brother, the duke of York. The two princes easily outsmart Richard and match his wordplay and use of language easily. Richard is nervous about them, and the potential threat they are. The young prince and his brother are coaxed (By Richard) into an extended stay at the [Tower of London](#). The prince and his brother the duke of York prove themselves to be extremely intelligent and charismatic characters, boldly defying and outsmarting Richard and openly mocking him.

Assisted by his cousin [Buckingham](#), Richard mounts a campaign to present himself as the true heir to the throne, pretending to be a modest, devout man with no pretensions to greatness. [Lord Hastings](#), who objects to Richard's ascension, is arrested and executed on a trumped-up charge. Together, Richard and Buckingham spread the rumour that Edward's two sons are illegitimate, and therefore have no rightful claim to the throne, assisted by Catesby, Ratcliffe, and Lovell. The other lords are cajoled into accepting Richard as king, in spite of the continued survival of his nephews (the [Princes in the Tower](#)).

Richard asks Buckingham to secure the death of the princes, but Buckingham hesitates. Richard then recruits [James Tyrrell](#), who kills both children. When Richard denies Buckingham a promised land grant, Buckingham turns against Richard and defects to the side of [Henry, Earl of Richmond](#), who is currently in exile. Richard has his eye on his niece, princess Elizabeth, and poisons Lady Anne so he can be free to woo the princess. The Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth mourn the princes' deaths, when Queen Margaret arrives. Queen Elizabeth, as predicted, asks Queen Margaret's help in cursing. Later, the Duchess applies this lesson and curses her only surviving son before leaving. Richard tries his old dissembling to get into princess Elizabeth's "nest of spicery", but her mother is not taken in by his eloquence, and even manages to trick and stall him.

In due course, the increasingly paranoid Richard loses what popularity he had. He soon faces rebellions led first by Buckingham and subsequently by the invading Richmond. Buckingham is captured and executed. Both sides arrive for a final battle at [Bosworth Field](#). Prior to the battle, Richard is visited by the ghosts of his victims, all of whom tell him to "Despair and die!" after which they wish victory upon Richmond. He awakes screaming for "[Jesu](#)" to help him, slowly realising that he is all alone in the world, and cannot even pity himself.

At the battle of Bosworth Field, Lord Stanley (who is also Richmond's stepfather) and his followers desert Richard's side, whereupon Richard calls for the execution of George Stanley, Lord Stanley's son. This does not happen, as the battle is in full swing, and Richard is left at a disadvantage. Richard is soon unhorsed on the field at the climax of the battle, and cries out, "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!" Richmond kills Richard in the final duel. Subsequently, Richmond succeeds to the throne as [Henry VII](#), and marries Princess Elizabeth from the House of York.

River Runs Through It (A) —by Norman MacLean.

"A River Runs Through It" concerns the Macleans, a [Presbyterian](#) family during early 20th century [Montana](#) whose opinions of life are filtered through their passion for [fly fishing](#). The novella is presented from the point of view of older brother Norman who goes on one last fishing trip with his rowdy and troubled younger brother Paul in an attempt to help him get his life on track.^[1] After a brief introduction of his early life, most of the action takes place during the summer of 1937 and both Norman and Paul were in their early 30s.^[2]

The novella is noted for using detailed descriptions of fly fishing and nature to engage with a number of profound metaphysical questions.^[3] In a review for the [Chicago Tribune](#), critic [Alfred](#)

[Kazin](#) stated: "There are passages here of physical rapture in the presence of unsullied primitive America that are as beautiful as anything in [Thoreau](#) and [Hemingway](#)"

Road (The)—by Cormac McCarthy.

The Road follows an unnamed father and son journeying together across a grim [post-apocalyptic](#) landscape, some years after a great, unexplained cataclysm has destroyed most civilization and most life on Earth. Realizing that they will not survive another winter in their unspecified original location, the father leads the boy south, through a desolate American landscape along a vacant highway, towards the sea, sustained only by the vague hope of finding warmth and more "good guys" like them, and carrying with them only what is on their backs and what will fit into a damaged supermarket cart.

The setting is very cold, dark and filled with ash, and the land is devoid of living animals and vegetation. There is frequent rain or gray snow, and occasional electrical storms. Many of the remaining human survivors are cannibalistic tribes or nomads, scavenging the detritus of city and country alike for human flesh, though that too is almost entirely depleted.

Overwhelmed by this desperate and apparently hopeless situation, the boy's mother, pregnant with him at the time of the cataclysm, commits suicide some time before the story begins; the rationality and calmness of her act being her last "great gift" to the man and the boy. The father coughs blood every morning and eventually realizes he is dying, yet still struggles to protect his son from the constant threats of attack, exposure, and starvation. The revolver they carry, meant for protection or suicide if necessary, has only one [round](#) for much of the story. The boy has been told to use it on himself if capture is imminent, to spare himself the horror of death at the hands of the cannibals.

In the face of these obstacles, the man and the boy have only each other. They repeatedly assure one another that they are "the good guys," who are "carrying the fire" of humanity and civilization. On their journey, the duo scrounge for food, encounter and evade roving bands of cannibals, and contend with horrors such as a newborn infant being roasted on a spit, and people being kept captive as they are slowly harvested for food. Much of the book is written in the third person, with references to "the father" and "the son" or to "the man" and "the boy."

Although the man and the boy eventually reach the sea, neither the climate nor availability of food improves. The man succumbs to an illness and dies, leaving the boy alone. Not long before he dies, the father tells the boy that he can continue to speak with him in his imagination after he is gone. The boy holds wake over his father's corpse for three days, with no idea of what he is to do next. On the third day, the grieving boy encounters a man who says he has been tracking the father and son. This man, who has a woman and two children of his own, a boy and a girl, invites him to join his family after convincing the boy that he is indeed one of the "good guys", like the boy and his dead father. A brief epilogue following meditates on nature and infinity in this altered environment.

Robinson Crusoe—by Daniel Defoe.

Crusoe (the family name corrupted from the German name "Kreutznaer") sets sail from the [Queen's Dock](#) in [Hull](#) on a sea voyage in August 1651, against the wishes of his parents, who want him to stay at home and pursue a career, possibly in law. After a tumultuous journey that sees his ship wrecked in a storm, his lust for the sea remains so strong that he sets out to sea again. This journey too ends in disaster as the ship is taken over by [Salé pirates](#) (the [Salé Rovers](#)) and Crusoe becomes the slave of a [Moor](#). After two years of slavery, he manages to escape in a boat with a boy named Xury; later, Crusoe is rescued and befriended by the Captain of a [Portuguese](#) ship off

the west coast of Africa. The ship is en route to [Brazil](#). There, with the help of the captain, Crusoe becomes owner of a [plantation](#).

Years later, he joins an expedition to [bring slaves from Africa](#) but he is shipwrecked in a storm about forty miles out to sea on an island (which he calls the Island of Despair) near the mouth of the [Orinoco](#) river on September 30, 1659. His companions all die, save himself, and three animals who survived the shipwreck, the captain's dog and two cats. Having overcome his despair, he fetches arms, tools and other supplies from the ship before it breaks apart and sinks. He proceeds to build a fenced-in habitation near a cave which he excavates himself. He keeps a calendar by making marks in a wooden cross which he has built. He hunts, grows barley and rice, dries grapes to make raisins for the winter months, learns to make pottery and raises goats, all using tools salvaged from his ship, as well as created from stone and wood which he harvests on the island. He also adopts a small parrot. He reads the Bible and becomes religious, thanking God for his fate in which nothing is missing but human society.

Years later, he discovers native [cannibals](#) who occasionally visit the island to kill and eat prisoners. At first he plans to kill them for committing an abomination but later realises that he has no right to do so as the cannibals do not knowingly commit a crime. He dreams of obtaining one or two servants by freeing some prisoners; when a prisoner manages to escape, Crusoe helps him, naming his new companion "[Friday](#)" after the day of the week he appeared. Crusoe then teaches him English and converts him to Christianity.

After another party of natives arrives to partake in a cannibal feast, Crusoe and Friday manage to kill most of the natives and save two of the prisoners. One is Friday's father and the other is a Spaniard, who informs Crusoe that there are other Spaniards shipwrecked on the mainland. A plan is devised wherein the Spaniard would return with Friday's father to the mainland and bring back the others, build a ship and sail to a Spanish port.

Before the Spaniards return, an English ship appears; mutineers have taken control of the ship and intend to maroon their former captain on the island. Crusoe and the ship's captain strike a deal in which he helps the captain and the loyal sailors retake the ship from the mutineers, whereupon they intend to leave the worst of the mutineers on the island. Before they leave for England, Crusoe shows the former mutineers how he lived on the island and states that there will be more men coming. Crusoe leaves the island 19 December 1686 and arrives in England on 11 June 1687. He learns that his family believed him dead and there was nothing in his father's will for him. Crusoe departs for Lisbon to reclaim the profits of his estate in Brazil, which has granted him a large amount of wealth. In conclusion, he takes his wealth overland to England to avoid travelling at sea. Friday comes with him and along the way they endure one last adventure together as they fight off hundreds of famished wolves while crossing the [Pyrenees](#).

Romeo and Juliet—by William Shakespeare.

The play, set in [Verona](#), begins with a street brawl between [Montague](#) and [Capulet](#) supporters who are sworn enemies. The [Prince of Verona](#) intervenes and declares that further breach of the peace will be punishable by death. Later, [Count Paris](#) talks to Capulet about marrying his daughter, but Capulet is wary of the request because [Juliet](#) is only thirteen. Capulet asks Paris to wait another two years and invites him to attend a planned Capulet [ball](#). Lady Capulet and Juliet's nurse try to persuade Juliet to accept Paris's courtship.

Meanwhile, [Benvolio](#) talks with his cousin [Romeo](#), Lord Montague's son, about Romeo's recent depression. Benvolio discovers that it stems from unrequited infatuation for a girl named [Rosaline](#), one of Capulet's nieces. Persuaded by Benvolio and [Mercutio](#), Romeo attends the ball at the Capulet house in hopes of meeting Rosaline. However, Romeo instead meets and falls in love with Juliet. After the ball, in what is now called the "balcony scene", Romeo sneaks into the Capulet

courtyard and overhears Juliet on her balcony vowing her love to him in spite of her family's hatred of the Montagues. Romeo makes himself known to her and they agree to be married. With the help of [Friar Laurence](#), who hopes to reconcile the two families through their children's union, they are secretly married the next day.

Juliet's cousin [Tybalt](#), incensed that Romeo had sneaked into the Capulet ball, challenges him to a duel. Romeo, now considering Tybalt his kinsman, refuses to fight. Mercutio is offended by Tybalt's insolence, as well as Romeo's "vile submission,"^[2] and accepts the duel on Romeo's behalf. Mercutio is fatally wounded when Romeo attempts to break up the fight. Grief-stricken and wracked with guilt, Romeo confronts and slays Tybalt.

Montague argues that Romeo has justly executed Tybalt for the murder of Mercutio. The Prince, now having lost a kinsman in the warring families' feud, exiles Romeo from Verona and declares that if Romeo returns, "that hour is his last."^[3] Romeo secretly spends the night in Juliet's chamber, where they [consummate](#) their marriage. Capulet, misinterpreting Juliet's grief, agrees to marry her to Count Paris and threatens to disown her when she refuses to become Paris's "joyful bride."^[4] When she then pleads for the marriage to be delayed, her mother rejects her.

Juliet visits Friar Laurence for help, and he offers her a drug that will put her into a death-like coma for "two and forty hours."^[5] The Friar promises to send a messenger to inform Romeo of the plan, so that he can rejoin her when she awakens. On the night before the wedding, she takes the drug and, when discovered apparently dead, she is laid in the family crypt.

The messenger, however, does not reach Romeo and, instead, Romeo learns of Juliet's apparent death from his servant Balthasar. Heartbroken, Romeo buys poison from an [apothecary](#) and goes to the Capulet [crypt](#). He encounters Paris who has come to mourn Juliet privately. Believing Romeo to be a vandal, Paris confronts him and, in the ensuing battle, Romeo kills Paris. Still believing Juliet to be dead, he drinks the poison. Juliet then awakens and, finding Romeo dead, stabs herself with his dagger. The feuding families and the Prince meet at the tomb to find all three dead. Friar Laurence recounts the story of the two "star-cross'd lovers". The families are reconciled by their children's deaths and agree to end their violent feud. The play ends with the Prince's elegy for the lovers: "For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

Room of One's Own—by Virginia Woolf.

A Room of One's Own is an extended [essay](#) by [Virginia Woolf](#). First published on 24 October 1929,^[1] the essay was based on a series of lectures she delivered at [Newnham College](#) and [Girton College](#), two women's colleges at [Cambridge University](#) in October 1928. While this extended essay in fact employs a fictional narrator and narrative to explore women both as writers of and characters in fiction, the manuscript for the delivery of the series of lectures, titled "Women and Fiction", and hence the essay, are considered non-fiction.^[2] The essay is generally seen as a [feminist](#) text, and is noted in its argument for both a literal and figural space for women writers within a literary tradition dominated by [patriarchy](#).

Room with a View (A) —by E.M. Forster.

The first part of the novel is set in [Florence](#), Italy, and describes a young English woman's confusion at the [Pensione](#) Bertolini over her feelings for an Englishman staying at the same hotel. Lucy Honeychurch is touring Italy with her overbearing older cousin and [chaperone](#), Charlotte Bartlett, and the novel opens with their complaints about the hotel, "The Pension Bertolini." Their primary concern is that although rooms with a view of the River Arno have been promised for each of them, their rooms instead look over a courtyard. A Mr. Emerson interrupts their "peevish wrangling," offering to swap rooms as he and his son, George Emerson, look over the [Arno](#). This

behavior causes Miss Bartlett some consternation, as it appears impolite. Without letting Lucy speak, Miss Bartlett refuses the offer, looking down on the Emersons because of their unconventional behaviour and thinking it would place her under an "unseemly obligation" towards them. However, another guest at the pension, an [Anglican](#) clergyman named Mr. Beebe, persuades the pair to accept the offer, assuring Miss Bartlett that Mr. Emerson only meant to be kind.

The next day, Lucy embarks on a tour of Florence with another guest, Miss Eleanor Lavish, a novelist who shows Lucy the back streets of Florence, takes her [Baedeker](#) guidebook and subsequently loses her in [Santa Croce](#), where Lucy meets the Emersons again. Although their manners are awkward and they are deemed socially unacceptable by the other guests, Lucy likes them and continues to run into them in Florence. One afternoon Lucy witnesses a murder in Florence. George Emerson happens to be nearby and catches her when she faints. Lucy asks George to retrieve some photographs of hers that happen to be near the murder site. George, out of confusion, throws her photographs into the river because they were spotted with blood. Lucy observes how boyish George is. As they stop to look over the River Arno before making their way back to the hotel, they have an intimate conversation. After this, Lucy decides to avoid George, partly because she is confused by her feelings and partly to keep her cousin happy—Miss Bartlett is wary of the eccentric Emersons, particularly after a comment made by another clergyman, Mr. Eager, that Mr. Emerson "murdered his wife in the sight of God." Later on in the week, a party made up of Beebe, Eager, the Emersons, Miss Lavish, Miss Bartlett and Lucy Honeychurch make their way to [Fiesole](#), in carriages driven by Italians. The driver invites a woman he claims is his sister onto the carriage, and when he kisses her, Mr. Eager promptly forces the lady to get off the carriage. Mr. Emerson remarks how it is defeat rather than victory to part two people in love. In the fields, Lucy searches for Mr. Beebe, and asks in poor Italian for the driver to show her the way. Misunderstanding, he leads her to a field where George stands. George is overcome by Lucy's beauty among a field of violets and kisses her, but they are interrupted by Lucy's cousin, who is outraged. Lucy promises Miss Bartlett that she will not tell her mother of the "insult" George has paid her because Miss Bartlett fears she will be blamed. The two women leave for Rome the next day before Lucy is able to say goodbye to George.

In Rome, Lucy spends time with Cecil Vyse, whom she knew in England. Cecil proposes to Lucy twice in Italy; she rejects him both times. As Part Two begins, Lucy has returned to [Surrey](#), England to her family home, Windy Corner. Cecil proposes yet again at Windy Corner, and this time she accepts. Cecil is a sophisticated and "superior" Londoner who is desirable in terms of rank and class, even though he despises country society; he is also somewhat of a comic figure in the novel, as he gives himself airs and is quite pretentious.

The [vicar](#), Mr. Beebe, announces that new tenants have leased a local cottage; the new arrivals turn out to be the Emersons, who have been told of the available cottage at a chance meeting with Cecil; the young man brought them to the village as a comeuppance to the cottage's landlord, whom Cecil thinks to be a snob. Fate takes an ironic turn as Lucy's brother, Freddy, befriends George and invites him to play tennis one Sunday at Windy Corner. Although Lucy is initially mortified at the thought of facing both George and Cecil (who is also visiting Windy Corner that Sunday), she resolves to be gracious. Cecil annoys everyone by reading aloud from a light romance novel that contains a scene suspiciously reminiscent of when George kissed Lucy in Florence. George catches Lucy alone in the garden and kisses her again. Lucy realizes that the novel is by Miss Lavish (the writer-acquaintance from Florence) and that Charlotte must thus have told her about the kiss.

Furious with Charlotte for betraying her secret, Lucy forces her cousin to watch as she tells George to leave and never return. George argues with her, saying that Cecil only sees her as an "object for the shelf" and will never love her enough to grant her independence, while George loves her for who she is. Lucy is moved but remains firm. Later that evening, after Cecil again rudely declines to play tennis, Lucy sours on Cecil and immediately breaks off her engagement. She decides to flee to Greece with acquaintances from her trip to Florence, but shortly before her

departure she accidentally encounters Mr. Emerson senior. He is not aware that Lucy has broken her engagement with Cecil, and Lucy cannot lie to the old man. Mr. Emerson forces Lucy to admit out loud that she has been in love with his son George all along.

The novel ends in Florence, where George and Lucy have [eloped](#) without her mother's consent. Although Lucy "had alienated Windy Corner, perhaps for ever," the story ends with the promise of lifelong love for both her and George.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead—by Tom Stoppard.

The play concerns the misadventures and musings of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two minor characters from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* who are childhood friends of the prince, focusing on their actions with the events of *Hamlet* as background. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is structured as the inverse of *Hamlet*; the title characters are the leads, not supporting players, and Hamlet himself has only a small part. The duo appears on stage here when they are off-stage in Shakespeare's play, with the exception of a few short scenes in which the dramatic events of both plays coincide. In *Hamlet*, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are used by the King in an attempt to discover Hamlet's motives and to plot against him. Hamlet, however, mocks them derisively and outwits them, so that they, rather than he, are executed in the end. Thus, from Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's perspective, the action in *Hamlet* is largely nonsensically comical.

The two characters, brought into being within the puzzling universe of Stoppard's play by an act of the playwright's creation, have generally interchangeable, yet periodically unique, identities. Thus, the two often confuse their own names, as do the other characters when referring to them. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are portrayed as two clowns or fools in a world that is beyond their understanding; they cannot identify any reliable feature or the significance in words or events. Their own memories are not reliable or complete and they misunderstand each other as they stumble through philosophical arguments while not realizing the implications to themselves. They often state deep philosophical truths during their nonsensical ramblings, yet they depart from these ideas as quickly as they come to them. At times Guildenstern appears to be more enlightened than Rosencrantz; at times both of them appear to be equally confounded by the events occurring around them.

After the two characters witness a performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*—the [story within a story](#) in the play *Hamlet*—they find themselves on a boat taking prince Hamlet to England with the troupe that staged the performance. They are intended to give the English king a message telling him to kill Hamlet. Instead, Hamlet discovers this and switches the letter for another, telling the king to kill Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. During the voyage, the two are ambushed by pirates and lose their prisoner, Hamlet, before resigning themselves to their fate and presumably dying thereafter.

Major themes of the play include [existentialism](#), [free will](#) vs. [determinism](#), the search for value, and the impossibility of certainty. As with many of Tom Stoppard's works, the play has a love for cleverness and language. It treats language as a confounding system fraught with ambiguity.

Saint Joan—by George Bernard Shaw.

Shaw characterised *Saint Joan* as "A Chronicle Play in 6 Scenes and an Epilogue". Joan, a simple peasant girl, hears voices which she claims to be those of [Saint Margaret](#), [Saint Catherine](#), and the archangel [Michael](#), sent by God to guide her conduct.

Scene 1 begins with Robert de Baudricourt complaining about the inability of the hens on his farm to produce eggs. Joan claims that her voices are telling her to raise a siege against [Orléans](#), and to

allow her several of his men for this purpose. Joan also says that she will eventually crown the [Dauphin](#) in [Rheims](#) cathedral. de Baudricourt ridicules Joan, but his servant feels inspired by her words. de Baudricourt eventually begins to feel the same sense of inspiration, and gives his consent to Joan. The servant enters at the end of the scene to exclaim that the hens have begun to lay eggs again. de Baudricourt interprets this as a sign from God of Joan's divine inspiration.

In Scene 2 (8 March 1429), Joan talks her way into being received at the court of the weak and vain Dauphin. There, she tells him that her voices have commanded her to help him become a true king by rallying his troops to drive out the English occupiers and restore France to greatness. Joan succeeds in doing this through her excellent powers of flattery, negotiation, leadership, and skill on the battlefield.

In Scene 3 (29 April 1429), Dunois and his page are waiting for the wind to turn so that he and his forces can lay siege to Orléans. Joan and Dunois commiserate, and Dunois attempts to explain to her more pragmatic realities of an attack, without the wind at their back. Her replies eventually inspire Dunois to rally the forces, and at the scene's end, the wind turns in their favour.

Ultimately she is betrayed, and captured by the English at the siege of [Compiègne](#). Scene 6 (30 May 1431) deals with her [trial](#). John de Stogumber is adamant that she be executed at once. The Inquisitor, the Bishop of Beauvais, and the Church officials on both sides of the trial have a long discussion on the nature of her [heresy](#). Joan is brought to the court, and continues to assert that her voices speak to her directly from God and that she has no need of the Church's officials. This outrages de Stogumber. She acquiesces to the pressure of torture at the hands of her oppressors, and agrees to sign a confession relinquishing the truth behind her voices, so that she can live a life in permanent confinement without hope of parole. Upon hearing this, Joan changes her mind:

Joan: "You think that life is nothing but not being dead? It is not the bread and water I fear. I can live on bread. It is no hardship to drink water if the water be clean. But to shut me from the light of the sky and the sight of the fields and flowers; to chain my feet so that I can never again climb the hills. To make me breathe foul damp darkness, without these things I cannot live. And by your wanting to take them away from me, or from any human creature, I know that your council is of the devil."

Joan accepts the ultimate punishment of death at the stake as preferable to such an imprisoned existence. de Stogumber vehemently demands that Joan then be taken to the stake for immediate execution. The Inquisitor and the Bishop of Beauvais excommunicate her and deliver her into the hands of the English. The Inquisitor asserts that Joan was fundamentally innocent, in the sense that she was sincere and had no understanding of the church and the law. de Stogumber re-enters, screaming and severely shaken emotionally after seeing Joan die in the flames, the first time that he has witnessed such a death, and realising that he has not understood what it means to burn a person at the stake until he has actually seen it happen. A soldier had given Joan two sticks tied together in a cross before the moment of her death. Bishop Martin Ladvenu also reports that when he approached with a cross to let her see the cross before she died, and he approached too close to the flames, she had warned him of the danger from the stake, which convinced him that she could not have been under the inspiration of the devil.

In the Epilogue, 25 years after Joan's execution, a new trial has cleared her of heresy. Brother Martin brings the news to the now-King Charles. Charles then has a dream in which Joan appears to him. She begins conversing cheerfully not only with Charles, but with her old enemies, who also materialise in the King's bedroom. An emissary from the present day (at the time of the play, the 1920s) brings news that the Catholic Church is to canonise her, in the year 1920. Joan says that saints can work miracles, and asks if she can be resurrected. At this, all the characters desert her one by one, asserting that the world is not prepared to receive a saint such as her. The last to leave is the English soldier, who is about to engage in a conversation with Joan before he is summoned

back to hell at the end of his 24-hour respite. The play ends with Joan ultimately despairing that mankind will never accept its saints:

O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to accept thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?

Sandbox (The) —by Edward Albee.

Beginning with brightest day, the Young Man is performing [calisthenics](#) (which he continues to do until the very end of the play) near a sandbox (or [sandpit](#)) at the beach. Mommy and Daddy have brought Grandma all the way out from the city and place her in the sandbox. As Mommy and Daddy wait nearby in some chairs, the Musician plays off and on, according to what the other characters instruct him to do. Throughout the play, the Young Man is very pleasant, greeting the other characters with a smile as he says, "Hi!". As Mommy and Daddy cease to acknowledge Grandma while they wait, Grandma reverts from her childish behavior and begins to speak coherently to the audience. Grandma and the Young Man begin to converse with each other. Grandma feels comfortable talking with the Young Man as he treats her like a human being (whereas Mommy and Daddy imply through their actions and dialog that she is more of a chore that they must take care of). While still talking with the Young Man, she reminds someone off-stage that it should be nighttime by now. Once brightest day has become deepest night, Mommy and Daddy hear on-stage rumbling. Acknowledging that the sounds are literally coming from off-stage and not from thunder or breaking waves, Mommy knows that Grandma's death is here. As daylight resumes, Mommy briefly weeps by the sandbox before quickly exiting with Daddy. Although Grandma, who is lying down half buried in sand, has continued to mock the mourning of Mommy and Daddy, she soon realizes that she can no longer move. It is at this moment that the Young Man finally stops performing his calisthenics and approaches Grandma and the sandbox. As he directs her to be still, he reveals that he is the angel of death and says, "...I am come for you." Even though he says his line like a real amateur, Grandma compliments him and closes her eyes with a smile.

Scarlet Letter (The)—by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The story starts during the summer of 1642, near [Boston, Massachusetts](#), in a [Puritan](#) village. A young woman, named Hester Prynne, has been led from the town [prison](#) with her infant daughter in her arms, and on the breast of her gown "a rag of [scarlet](#) cloth" that "assumed the shape of a letter." It is the uppercase letter "[A](#)." The Scarlet Letter "A" represents the act of adultery that she has committed and it is to be a symbol of her sin—a [badge of shame](#)—for all to see. A man, who is elderly and a stranger to the town, enters the crowd and asks another onlooker what's happening. The second man responds by explaining that Hester is being punished for adultery. Hester's husband, who is much older than she, and whose real name is unknown, has sent her ahead to America whilst settling affairs in Europe. However, her husband does not arrive in Boston and the [consensus](#) is that he has been lost at sea. It is apparent that, while waiting for her husband, Hester has had an affair, leading to the birth of her daughter. She will not reveal her lover's identity, however, and the scarlet letter, along with her subsequent [public shaming](#), is the punishment for her sin and secrecy. On this day, Hester is led to the town scaffold and harangued by the town fathers, but she again refuses to identify her child's father.^[2]

The elderly onlooker is Hester's missing husband, who is now practicing medicine and calling himself [Roger Chillingworth](#). He reveals his true identity to Hester and medicates her daughter. They have a frank discussion where Chillingworth states that it was foolish and wrong for a cold, old intellectual like him to marry a young lively woman like Hester. He expressly states that he thinks that they have wronged each other and that he is even with her — her lover is a completely different matter. Hester refuses to divulge the name of her lover and Chillingworth does not press her stating that he will find out anyway. He does elicit a promise from her to keep his true identity

as Hester's husband secret, though. He settles in Boston to practice medicine there. Several years pass. Hester supports herself by working as a seamstress, and her daughter, Pearl, grows into a willful, impish child, and is said to be the scarlet letter come to life as both Hester's love and her punishment. Shunned by the community, they live in a small cottage on the outskirts of Boston. Community officials attempt to take Pearl away from Hester, but with the help of [Arthur Dimmesdale](#), an eloquent minister, the mother and daughter manage to stay together. Dimmesdale, however, appears to be wasting away and suffers from mysterious heart trouble, seemingly caused by psychological distress. Chillingworth attaches himself to the ailing minister and eventually moves in with him so that he can provide his patient with round-the-clock care. Chillingworth also suspects that there may be a connection between the minister's torments and Hester's secret, and he begins to test Dimmesdale to see what he can learn. One afternoon, while the minister sleeps, Chillingworth discovers something undescribed to the reader, supposedly an "A" burned into Dimmesdale's chest, which convinces him that his suspicions are correct.^[2]

Dimmesdale's psychological anguish deepens, and he invents new tortures for himself. In the meantime, Hester's charitable deeds and quiet humility have earned her a reprieve from the scorn of the community. One night, when Pearl is about seven years old, she and her mother are returning home from a visit to the deathbed of [John Winthrop](#) when they encounter Dimmesdale atop the town scaffold, trying to punish himself for his sins. Hester and Pearl join him, and the three link hands. Dimmesdale refuses Pearl's request that he acknowledge her publicly the next day, and a meteor marks a dull red "A" in the night sky as Dimmesdale sees Chillingworth in the distance. It is interpreted by the townsfolk to mean *Angel*, as a prominent figure in the community had died that night, but Dimmesdale sees it as meaning *adultery*. Hester can see that the minister's condition is worsening, and she resolves to intervene. She goes to Chillingworth and asks him to stop adding to Dimmesdale's self-torment. Chillingworth refuses. She suggests that she may reveal his true identity to Dimmesdale.^[2]

As Hester walks through the forest, she is unable to feel the sunshine. Pearl, on the other hand, basks in it. They coincide with Dimmesdale, also on a stroll through the woods. Hester informs him of the true identity of Chillingworth. The former lovers decide to flee to Europe, where they can live with Pearl as a family. They will take a ship sailing from Boston in four days. Both feel a sense of relief, and Hester removes her scarlet letter and lets down her hair. The sun immediately breaks through the clouds and trees to illuminate her release and joy. Pearl, playing nearby, does not recognize her mother without the letter. She is unnerved and expels a shriek until her mother points out the letter on the ground. Hester beckons Pearl to come to her, but Pearl will not go to her mother until Hester buttons the letter back onto her dress. Pearl then goes to her mother. Dimmesdale gives Pearl a kiss on the forehead, which Pearl immediately tries to wash off in the brook, because he again refuses to make known publicly their relationship. However, he clearly feels a release from the pretense of his former life, and the laws and sins he has lived with.

The day before the ship is to sail, the townspeople gather for a holiday put on in honor of an election and Dimmesdale preaches his most eloquent sermon ever. Meanwhile, Hester has learned that Chillingworth knows of their plan and has booked passage on the same ship. Dimmesdale, leaving the church after his sermon, sees Hester and Pearl standing before the town scaffold. He impulsively mounts the scaffold with his lover and his daughter, and confesses publicly, exposing the mark supposedly seared into the flesh of his chest. He falls dead just after Pearl kisses him.^[2]

Frustrated in his revenge, Chillingworth dies a year later. Hester and Pearl leave Boston, and no one knows what has happened to them. Many years later, Hester returns alone, still wearing the scarlet letter, to live in her old cottage and resumes her charitable work. She receives occasional letters from Pearl, who was rumored to have married a European aristocrat and established a family of her own. Pearl also inherits all of Chillingworth's money even though he knows she is not his daughter. There is a sense of liberation in her and the townspeople, especially the women, who had finally begun to forgive Hester of her tragic indiscretion. When Hester dies, she is buried in "a new grave near an old and sunken one, in that burial ground beside which [King's Chapel](#) has

since been built. It was near that old and sunken grave, yet with a space between, as if the dust of the two sleepers had no right to mingle. Yet one tombstone served for both." The tombstone was decorated with a letter "A", for Hester and Dimmesdale.

Sent for You Yesterday—by John Edgar Wideman.

Sent for You Yesterday is a [novel](#) by the [American](#) writer [John Edgar Wideman](#) set in [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#) during the 1970s.

The novel tells the story of Albert Wilkes, who after seven years on the run, returns to [Homewood](#), an [African American](#) neighborhood of the East End.

Sent for You Yesterday is the third volume of what some critics call *The Homewood Trilogy*. The other books are *Damballah* and *Hiding Place*. In 1992 the [University of Pittsburgh Press](#) published the three in one volume under the title *The Homewood Books*. In its preface Wideman admits discomfort with the term trilogy because it implies a plan of linking the volumes, and he did not compose the books that way.

Shipping News (The) —by E. Annie Proulx.

The story centers on Quoye, a third-rate newspaper [reporter](#) from [upstate New York](#) whose father emigrated from [Newfoundland](#). Shortly after his parents' suicide, Quoye's unfaithful and abusive wife Petal leaves town and attempts to sell their daughters to sex traffickers. Soon thereafter, Petal and her lover are killed in a car accident; the young girls are located by police and returned to Quoye. Despite his daughters' safe return, Quoye's life is collapsing, and his paternal aunt, Agnis Hamm, convinces him to return to Newfoundland for a new beginning. They return to their ancestral home on Quoye's Point.

He obtains work as a traffic accident reporter for the *Gammy Bird*, the local newspaper in Killick-Claw, a small town. The *Gammy Bird's* editor also asks him to document the shipping news, arrivals and departures from the local port, which soon grows into Quoye's signature articles on boats of interest in the harbour.

Quoye gradually makes friends within the community, learns about his own troubled family background, and begins a relationship with a local woman, Wavey. Quoye's growth in confidence and emotional strength, as well as his ability to be comfortable in a loving relationship, become the book's main focus. Quoye learns deep and disturbing secrets about his ancestors that emerge in strange ways.

Silas Marner—by George Eliot.

The novel is set in the early years of the 19th century. Silas Marner is a member of a small [Calvinist](#) congregation in Lantern Yard, a slum street in an unnamed city in [Northern England](#). He is falsely accused of stealing the congregation's funds while watching over the very ill deacon of the group. Two clues are given against Silas: a pocket-knife and the discovery of the bag formerly containing the money in his own house. Silas is proclaimed [guilty](#) and the woman he was to marry casts him off, and later marries his best friend, William Dane. With his life shattered and his heart broken, he leaves Lantern Yard and the city.

Marner heads south to the [Midlands](#) and settles near the village of Raveloe, where he lives as a recluse, existing only for work and the gold he has hoarded from his earnings. When it is stolen by Dunstan ('Dunsey') Cass, a dissolute younger son of Squire Cass, the town's leading landowner,

Silas sinks into a deep gloom, despite the villagers' attempts to aid him. Dunsey disappears, but little is made of this not unusual behaviour, and no association is made between him and the theft.

Godfrey Cass, Dunsey's elder brother, also harbours a secret. He is married to, but estranged from, Molly, an opium-addicted woman of low birth. This secret threatens to destroy Godfrey's blooming relationship with Nancy, a young woman of higher social and moral standing. On a winter's night, Molly tries to make her way into town with her two-year-old child to prove that she is Godfrey's wife and ruin him. On the way she takes opium, becomes disoriented and sits down to rest in the snow, child in arm. The child wanders from her mother's still body into Silas' house. Upon discovering the child, Silas follows her tracks in the snow and discovers the woman dead. Godfrey also arrives at the scene, but resolves to tell no one that she was his wife.

Silas decides to keep the child and names her Eppie, after his deceased mother and his sister, Hephzibah. Eppie changes Silas' life completely. Symbolically, Silas has been robbed of his material gold but has it returned to him in the golden-haired Eppie. Godfrey Cass is now free to marry Nancy, but continues to conceal the existence of his first marriage—and child—from her, while continuing to aid Marner in caring for Eppie with occasional financial gifts.

Sixteen years pass, and Eppie grows up to be the pride of the town with a very strong bond with Silas, who through her has found inclusion and purpose in life. Meanwhile, Godfrey and Nancy mourn their own childless state. Eventually, the skeleton of Dunstan Cass - still clutching Silas' gold - is found at the bottom of the stone quarry near Silas' home, and the money is duly returned to Silas. Shocked by this revelation, and coming to the realization of his own conscience, Godfrey confesses to Nancy that Molly was his first wife and that Eppie is his child. They hope to raise her as a gentleman's daughter, which for Eppie would mean forsaking Silas.

The mystery of the robbery that caused Silas' exile from Lantern Yard is never solved, as Silas' old neighbourhood has been "swept away" and replaced by a large factory and no one seems to know what happened to Lantern Yard's inhabitants. However, Silas contentedly resigns himself to the fact that he now leads a happier existence among his family and friends. In the end, Eppie marries a local boy, Aaron, son of Dolly, and both of them move into Silas' new house, courtesy of Godfrey. Silas' actions through the years in caring for Eppie have provided joy for everyone and the extended family celebrates their happiness.

Sister Carrie—by Theodore Dreiser.

Dissatisfied with life in her rural [Wisconsin](#) home, 18-year-old Caroline "Sister Carrie" Meeber takes the train to [Chicago](#), where her older sister Minnie, and her husband Sven Hanson, have agreed to take her in. On the train, Carrie meets Charles Drouet, a traveling salesman, who is attracted to her because of her simple beauty and unspoiled manner. They exchange contact information, but upon discovering the "steady round of toil" and somber atmosphere at her sister's flat, she writes to Drouet and discourages him from calling on her there.

Carrie soon embarks on a quest for work to pay rent to her sister and her husband, and takes a job running a machine in a shoe factory. Before long, however, she is shocked by the coarse manners of both the male and female factory workers, and the physical demands of the job, as well as the squalid factory conditions, begin to take their toll. She also senses Minnie and Sven's disapproval of her interest in Chicago's recreational opportunities, particularly the theatre. One day, after an illness that costs her job, she encounters Drouet on a downtown street. Once again taken by her beauty, and moved by her poverty, he encourages her to dine with him, where, over sirloin and asparagus, he persuades her to leave her sister and move in with him. To press his case, he slips Carrie two ten dollar bills, opening a vista of material possibilities to her. The next day, he rebuffs her feeble attempts to return the money, taking her shopping at a Chicago department store and

securing a jacket she covets and some shoes. That night, she writes a good-bye note to Minnie and moves in with Drouet.

Drouet installs her in a much larger apartment, and their relationship intensifies as Minnie dreams about her sister's fall from innocence. She acquires a sophisticated wardrobe and, through his offhand comments about attractive women, sheds her provincial mannerisms, even as she struggles with the moral implications of being a kept woman. By the time Drouet introduces Carrie to George Hurstwood, the manager of Fitzgerald and Moy's – a respectable bar that Drouet describes as a "way-up, swell place" – her material appearance has improved considerably. Hurstwood, unhappy with and distant from his social-climbing wife and children, instantly becomes infatuated with Carrie's youth and beauty, and before long they start an affair, communicating and meeting secretly in the expanding, anonymous city.

One night, Drouet casually agrees to find an actress to play a key role in an amateur theatrical presentation of [Augustin Daly](#)'s melodrama, "Under the Gaslight," for his local chapter of the [Elks](#). Upon returning home to Carrie, he encourages her to take the part of the heroine, Laura. Unknown to Drouet, Carrie long has harbored theatrical ambitions and has a natural aptitude for imitation and expressing [pathos](#). The night of the production – which Hurstwood attends at Drouet's invitation – both men are moved to even greater displays of affection by Carrie's stunning performance.

The next day, the affair is uncovered: Drouet discovers he has been cuckolded, Carrie learns that Hurstwood is married, and Hurstwood's wife, Julia, learns from an acquaintance that Hurstwood has been out driving with another woman and deliberately excluded her from the Elks theatre night. After a night of drinking, and despairing at his wife's financial demands and Carrie's rejection, Hurstwood stumbles upon a large amount of cash in the unlocked safe in Fitzgerald and Moy's offices. In a moment of poor judgment, he succumbs to the temptation to embezzle a large sum of money. Under the pretext of Drouet's sudden illness, he lures Carrie onto a train and escapes with her to Canada. Once they arrive in [Montreal](#), Hurstwood's guilty conscience – and a private eye – induce him to return most of the stolen funds, but he realizes that he cannot return to Chicago. Hurstwood mollifies Carrie by agreeing to marry her, and the couple move to New York City.

In New York, Hurstwood and Carrie rent a flat where they live as George and Carrie Wheeler. Hurstwood buys a minority interest in a saloon and, at first, is able to provide Carrie with a satisfactory – if not lavish – standard of living. The couple grow distant, however, as Hurstwood abandons any pretense of fine manners toward Carrie, and she realizes that Hurstwood no longer is the suave, powerful manager of his Chicago days. Carrie's dissatisfaction only increases when she meets Robert Ames, a bright young scholar from Indiana and her neighbor's cousin, who introduces her to the idea that great art, rather than showy materialism, is worthy of admiration.

After only a few years, the saloon's landlord sells the property and Hurstwood's business partner expresses his intent to terminate the partnership. Too arrogant to accept most of the job opportunities available to him, Hurstwood soon discovers that his savings are running out and urges Carrie to economize, which she finds humiliating and distasteful. As Hurstwood lounges about, overwhelmed by apathy and foolishly gambling away most of his savings, Carrie turns to New York's theatres for employment and becomes a chorus girl. Once again, her aptitude for theatre serves her well, and, as the rapidly aging Hurstwood declines into obscurity, Carrie begins to rise from chorus girl to small speaking roles, and establishes a friendship with another chorus girl, Lola Osborne, who begins to urge Carrie to move in with her. In a final attempt to prove himself useful, Hurstwood becomes a [scab](#) driving a [Brooklyn streetcar](#) during a streetcar operator's strike. His ill-fated venture, which lasts only two days, prompts Carrie to leave him; in her farewell note, she encloses twenty dollars.

Hurstwood ultimately joins the homeless of New York, taking odd jobs, falling ill with pneumonia, and finally becoming a beggar. Reduced to standing in line for bread and charity, he commits suicide in a [flophouse](#). Meanwhile, Carrie achieves stardom, but finds that money and fame do not satisfy her longings or bring her happiness and that nothing will.

Sister of My Heart—by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

The Princess in the Palace of Snakes follows two cousins from birth until their wedding day. The sudden death of their fathers on a reckless hunt for rubies sends Anju and Sudha's mothers into premature labor, and the two girls are born twelve hours apart. From a young age the girls become best friends, sisters, and each other's constant companion.

Anju and Sudha grow up in a household run by their three mothers: Pishi, Gouri, and Nalini. Even though Anju and Sudha call each other sisters, they are technically cousins. Pishi is the girls' aunt. Pishi's youngest brother, Bijoy Chatterjee, married Gouri. Anju is their daughter. So in addition to Pishi and Gouri, there is Nalini, Sudha's mother. The family relationships may seem complicated, but they play an important role in the novel.

Anju and Sudha are inseparable, but different. Beautiful and calm, Sudha is a storyteller and dreams of designing clothes and having a family. Anju has a fierce spirit and longs to study Literature in college. The girls get caught skipping school and this event, along with a health scare in the family, suddenly changes plans for college to plans of marriage. Book one ends with Anju and Sudha getting married on the same day. Sudha will move in with her husband and in-laws who live in another part of India. Anju's husband works in the United States, and she plans to join him after getting a visa.

More than marriage has driven Anju and Sudha apart. Sudha has learned a dark secret about their family's past. Shame and guilt over keeping this secret causes Sudha to pull away from Anju. But her love for her sister does not falter, and she even refuses to elope for fear it would damage Anju's reputation. On the night of their double wedding, Anju becomes aware of her husband's attraction to Sudha. Anju does not blame Sudha, but it is with some relief the two young women begin to live separate lives.

In *The Queen of Swords* Sudha quickly learns the ways of her demanding and controlling mother-in-law. After five long years, Sudha is elated to learn she is pregnant. Meanwhile, Anju's life in the United States has not entirely turned out as she expected. Anju and Sudha exchange regular letters and short phone calls, but their old intimacy is missing. The friends discover they are pregnant at the same time and both seem finally happy.

Sudha's mother-in-law finds out that Sudha's child is a girl. She demands Sudha abort the baby, believing the first child should be a son. Sudha has nowhere to turn, leaving her husband would be grounds to talk to each other again as true sisters. Refusing to tie her life to another man and realizing Anju needs her, Sudha and her daughter decide to go to the United States. After many years, the sisters are reunited, but future obstacles still loom.

Slaughterhouse-Five—by Kurt Vonnegut.

Chaplain's Assistant Billy Pilgrim is a disoriented, fatalistic, and ill-trained American soldier. He does not like wars and he is captured by the Germans during the [Battle of the Bulge](#). The Germans put Billy and his fellow prisoners in a disused [slaughterhouse](#) (although there are animal carcasses hanging in the underground shelter) in [Dresden](#). Their building is known as "Slaughterhouse number 5". The [POWs](#) and German guards alike hide in a deep cellar; because of their safe hiding

place, they are some of the few survivors of the city-destroying [firestorm](#) during the [Bombing of Dresden in World War II](#).

Billy has come "unstuck in time" and experiences past and future events out of sequence and repetitively, following a [nonlinear narrative](#). He is [kidnapped](#) by extraterrestrial aliens from the planet [Tralfamadore](#). They exhibit him in a zoo with B-movie starlet Montana Wildhack as his mate. The Tralfamadorians, who can see in four dimensions, have already seen every instant of their lives. They say they *cannot choose* to change anything about their fates, but *can choose* to concentrate upon any moment in their lives, and Billy becomes convinced of the veracity of their theories.

As Billy travels—or believes he travels—forward and backward in time, he relives occasions of his life, real and fantasy. He spends time on Tralfamadore, in Dresden, in the War, walking in deep snow before his German capture, in his mundane post-war married life in the U.S.A. of the 1950s and early 1960s, and in the moment of his murder by Lazzaro.

Billy's death is the consequence of a string of events. Before the Germans capture Billy, he meets Roland Weary, a [jingoist](#) character and bully, just out of childhood like Billy, who constantly chastises him for his lack of enthusiasm toward war. At their capture, the Germans confiscate everything Weary has, including his boots, giving him hinged, wooden [clogs](#) to wear; Weary eventually dies of gangrene caused by the clogs. On his deathbed, Weary manages to convince another soldier, petty thief Paul Lazzaro, that Billy is to blame; Paul vows to avenge Weary's death by killing Billy, because revenge is "the sweetest thing in life." Time-traveler Billy already knows where, when, and how he will be killed: he is shot with a laser gun after his speech on flying saucers and the true nature of time before a large audience in [Chicago](#), in a [balkanized](#) United States on February 13, 1976 (in the future at the time of writing).

Snow Falling on Cedars—by David Guterson.

Set on the [fictional](#) San Piedro Island in the northern [Puget Sound](#) region of the state of [Washington](#) coast in 1954, the plot revolves around a [murder](#) case in which Kabuo Miyamoto, a [Japanese American](#), is accused of killing Carl Heine, a respected [fisherman](#) in the close-knit community. Carl's body had been pulled from the sea, trapped in his own net, on September 16, 1954. His water-damaged watch had stopped at 1:47. The trial, being held in December 1954 with the island being gripped in a snowstorm, occurs in the midst of deep [anti-Japanese sentiments](#) following [World War II](#). Covering the case is the editor of the town's one-man newspaper, the San Piedro Review, Ishmael Chambers, a World War II [US Marine Corps](#) veteran who lost an arm fighting the Japanese at the [Battle of Tarawa](#). Torn by a sense of hatred for the [Japanese](#), Chambers struggles with his love for Kabuo's wife, Hatsue, and his conscience, wondering if Kabuo is truly innocent.

Spearheading the prosecution are the town's [sheriff](#), Art Moran, and [prosecutor](#), Alvin Hooks. Leading the defense is the old, experienced Nels Gudmondsson. Several [witnesses](#), including Etta Heine, Carl's mother, accuse Kabuo of murdering Carl for racial and personal reasons. Kabuo Miyamoto (a decorated war veteran of the [442nd Regimental Combat Team](#)), experienced prejudice because of his ancestry, following the Japanese [attack on Pearl Harbor](#).

Also involved in the trial are Horace Whaley, the town [coroner](#), and Ole Jurgensen, an elderly man who sells his [strawberry](#) field to Carl. The strawberry field is contested in the trial. The land was originally owned by Carl Heine Sr. The Miyamotos lived in a house on the Heines' land and picked strawberries for Mr. Heine. Kabuo and Carl Heine Jr. were close friends as children. Kabuo's father eventually approached Heine Sr. about purchasing 7 acres (28,000 m²) of the farm. Though Etta opposed the sale, Carl Sr. agreed. The payments were to be made over a ten-year period. However, before the last payment was made, war erupted between the US and Japan

following Pearl Harbor, and all islanders of Japanese ancestry were forced to relocate to internment camps. Hatsue and her family, the Imadas, are interned in [Manzanar](#) camp in [California](#).

In 1944, Carl Sr. died due to a heart attack and Etta Heine sold the land to Jurgensen. When Kabuo returned after the war, he was extremely bitter towards Etta for renegeing on the land sale. When Jurgensen suffered a stroke and decided to sell the farm, he was approached by Carl Heine Jr., hours before Kabuo arrived to try to buy the land back. During the trial, the disputed land is presented as a family feud and the motivation behind Carl's murder.

Ishmael's search of the maritime records at Point White lighthouse station reveals that on the night that Carl Heine died, a freighter, the SS "West Corona" had passed through the channel where Carl had been fishing at 1:42am, just five minutes before his watch had stopped. Ishmael realizes that Carl was likely to have been thrown overboard by the force of the freighter's wake. Despite the bitterness he feels as Hatsue's rejected lover, Ishmael comes forward with the new information. Further evidence is collected in support of the conclusion that Carl had climbed the boat's mast to cut down a lantern, been knocked from the mast by the freighter's wake, hit his head, then fallen into the sea. The charges against Kabuo Miyamoto are dismissed.

Song of Solomon—by Toni Morrison.

Morrison's protagonist, Macon "Milkman" Dead III, derives his nickname from the fact that he was [breastfed](#) during childhood (Macon's age can be inferred as he was wearing pants with elastic instead of a diaper, and that he later forgets the event, suggesting he was still rather young). Milkman's father's employee, Freddie, happens to see him through the window being breastfed by his mother. He quickly gains a reputation for being a "Momma's boy" in direct contrast to his (future) best friend, Guitar, who is motherless and fatherless.

Milkman has two sisters, "First Corinthians" and "Magdelene called Lena." The daughters of the family are named by putting a pin in the Bible, while the eldest son is named after his father. The first Macon Dead's name was the result of an [administrative error](#) when Milkman's grandfather had to register subsequent to the end of [slavery](#).

Milkman's mother (Ruth Foster Dead) is the daughter of the town's only black doctor; she makes her husband feel inadequate, and it is clear she idolized her father, Doctor Foster, to the point of obsession. After her father dies, her husband claims to have found her in bed with the dead body, sucking his fingers. Ruth later tells Milkman that she was kneeling at her father's bedside kissing the only part of him that remained unaffected by the illness from which he died. These conflicting stories expose the problems between his parents and show Milkman that "truth" is difficult or impossible to obtain. Macon (Jr.) is often violently aggressive towards Ruth because he believes that she was involved sexually with her father and loved her father more than her own husband. On one occasion, Milkman punches his father after he strikes Milkman's mother, exposing the growing rift between father and son.

In contrast, Macon Dead Jr.'s sister, Pilate, is seen as nurturing—an [Earth Mother](#) character. Born without a navel, she is a somewhat mystical character. It is strongly implied that she is Divine—a female Christ—in spite of her name. Macon (Jr.) has not spoken to his sister for years and does not think highly of her. She, like Macon, has had to fend for herself from an early age after their father's murder, but she has dealt with her past in a different way than Macon, who has embraced money as the way to show his love for his father. Pilate has a daughter, Reba, and a granddaughter named Hagar. Hagar falls desperately and obsessively in love with Milkman, and is unable to cope with his rejection, attempting to kill him at least six times.

Hagar is not the only character who attempts to kill Milkman. Guitar, Milkman's erstwhile best friend, tries to kill Milkman more than once after incorrectly suspecting that Milkman has cheated him out of hidden gold, a fortune he planned to use to help his Seven Days group fund their revenge killings in response to killings of blacks.

Searching for the gold near the old family farm in [Pennsylvania](#), Milkman stops at the rotting Butler Mansion, former home of the people who killed his ancestor to claim the farm. Here he meets Circe, an almost supernaturally old ex-slave of the Butlers. She tells Milkman of his family history and this leads him to the town of Shalimar. There he learns his great-grandfather Solomon was said to have escaped slavery by flying back to Africa, leaving behind twenty-one children and his wife Ryna, who goes crazy with loss. Returning home, he learns that Hagar has died of a broken heart. He accompanies Pilate back to Shalimar, where she is accidentally shot and killed by Guitar, who had intended to kill Milkman.

The novel ends on a poignant note. In an attempt to confront and reconnect with Guitar, Milkman leaps toward Guitar—and his own death, uttering his hard-won psychological truth: "if you surrendered to the air, you could *ride* it." Milkman's death brings the novel full circle, from the initial suicide "flight" of insurance agent Robert Smith to the self-sacrificing "flight" by Milkman.

Sons and Lovers—D.H. Lawrence.

The original 1913 edition was heavily edited by [Edward Garnett](#) who removed 80 passages, roughly a tenth of the text. The novel is dedicated to Garnett. Garnett, as the literary advisor to the publishing firm Duckworth, was an important figure in leading Lawrence further into the London literary world during the years 1911 and 1912. It was not until the 1992 [Cambridge University Press](#) edition was released that the missing text was restored.

Lawrence began working on the novel in the period of his mother's illness, and often expresses this sense of his mother's wasted life through his female protagonist Gertrude Morel. Letters written around the time of its development clearly demonstrate the admiration he felt for his mother - viewing her as a 'clever, ironical, delicately moulded woman' - and her apparently unfortunate marriage to his coal mining father, a man of 'sanguine temperament' and instability. He believed that his mother had married below her class status. Rather interestingly, Lydia Lawrence wasn't born into the middle-class. ^[clarification needed] This personal family conflict experienced by Lawrence provided him with the impetus for the first half of his novel - in which both William, the older brother, and Paul Morel become increasingly contemptuous of their father - and the subsequent exploration of Paul Morel's antagonizing relationships with both his lovers, which are both invariably affected by his allegiance to his mother.

The first draft of Lawrence's novel is now lost and was never completed, which seems to be directly due to his mother's illness. He did not return to the novel for three months, at which point it was titled 'Paul Morel'. The penultimate draft of the novel coincided with a remarkable change in Lawrence's life, as his health was thrown into tumult and he resigned his teaching job in order to spend time in Germany. This plan was never followed, however, as he met and married the German minor aristocrat, Frieda Weekley. According to Frieda's account of their first meeting, she and Lawrence talked about [Oedipus](#) and the effects of early childhood on later life within twenty minutes of meeting.

The third draft of 'Paul Morel' was sent to the publishing house [Heinemann](#), which was repulsively responded to by [William Heinemann](#) himself. His reaction captures the shock and newness of Lawrence's novel, 'the degradation of the mother [as explored in this novel], supposed to be of gentler birth, is almost inconceivable', and encouraged Lawrence to redraft the novel one more time. In addition to altering the title to a more thematic 'Sons and Lovers', Heinemann's response had reinvigorated Lawrence into vehemently defending his novel and its themes as a coherent

work of art. In order to justify its form Lawrence explains, in letters to Garnett, that it is a 'great tragedy' and a 'great book', one that mirrors the 'tragedy of thousands of young men in England'.

Sophie's Choice—by William Stryton.

Sophie's Choice is narrated by Stingo, a writer recalling the summer when he began his first novel.

As the story begins, in the early summer of 1947, Stingo (like Styron, a writer and [Duke](#) graduate) has been fired from his low-level reader's job at the publisher [McGraw-Hill](#) and has moved into a cheap boarding house in [Brooklyn](#), where he hopes to devote some months to his writing. While he is working on his novel, he is drawn into the lives of the lovers Nathan Landau and Sophie Zawistowski, fellow boarders at the house, who are involved in an intense and difficult relationship. Sophie is a beautiful, Polish-Catholic survivor of the concentration camps of World War II, and Nathan is a Jewish-American – and, purportedly, a genius. Although Nathan claims to be a [Harvard](#) graduate and a cellular biologist with a pharmaceutical company, it is later revealed that this is a fabrication. Almost no one – including Sophie and Stingo – knows that Nathan is a paranoid schizophrenic. However, Sophie is aware that Nathan is self-medicating with drugs, including [cocaine](#) and benzadrine, that he supposedly obtains at [Pfizer](#), his employer. This means that although he sometimes behaves quite normally and generously, there are times that he becomes frighteningly jealous, violent, abusive and delusional.

As the story progresses, Sophie tells Stingo of her past, of which she has never before spoken. She describes her violently anti-Semitic father, a law professor in [Krakow](#); her unwillingness to help him spread his ideas; her arrest by the [Nazis](#) for smuggling ham to her mother, who was on her deathbed; and particularly, her brief stint as a stenographer-typist in the home of [Rudolf Höss](#), the commander of [Auschwitz](#), where she was interned. She specifically relates her attempts to seduce Höss in an effort to persuade him that her blonde, blue-eyed, German-speaking son, called Jan, should be allowed to leave the camp and enter the [Lebensborn](#) program, in which he would be raised as a German child. She failed in this attempt and, ultimately, never learned of her son's fate. Only at the end of the book do we also learn what became of Sophie's daughter, named Eva.

As Nathan's "outbreaks" become more violent and abusive, Stingo receives a summons from Nathan's brother, Larry. He learns that Nathan is schizophrenic and is not a cellular biologist, although, as Larry says, "he could have been fantastically brilliant at anything he might have tried out . . . But he never got his mind in order." Nathan's delusions have led him to believe that Stingo is having an affair with Sophie, and he threatens to kill them both.

Sophie and Stingo attempt to flee to a peanut farm in Virginia that Stingo's father has inherited. On the way there, Sophie reveals her deepest, darkest secret: on the night that she arrived at Auschwitz, a sadistic doctor made her choose which of her two children would die immediately by gassing and which would continue to live, albeit in the camp. Of her two children, Sophie chose to sacrifice her seven-year-old daughter, Eva, in a heart-rending decision that has left her in mourning and filled with a guilt that she cannot overcome. By now an alcoholic and deeply depressed, she is clearly willing to self-destruct with Nathan, who has already tried to persuade her to commit suicide with him. Despite the fact that Stingo proposes marriage to her, and despite a shared night that relieves Stingo of his virginity and fulfills many of his sexual fantasies, Sophie disappears, leaving only a note in which she says that she must return to Nathan.

Upon arriving back in Brooklyn, Stingo discovers that Sophie and Nathan have committed suicide by ingesting sodium cyanide. Stingo is devastated.

Sound and the Fury (The)—by William Faulkner.

The four parts of the novel relate many of the same episodes, each from a different point of view and therefore with emphasis on different themes and events. This interweaving and nonlinear structure makes any true synopsis of the novel difficult, especially since the narrators are all unreliable in their own way, making their accounts not necessarily trustworthy at all times. Also in this novel, Faulkner uses italics to indicate points in each section where the narrative is moving into a significant moment in the past. The use of these italics can be confusing, however, as time shifts are not always marked by the use of italics, and periods of different time in each section do not necessarily stay in italics for the duration of the flashback. Thus, these time shifts can often be jarring and confusing, and require particularly close reading.

The general outline of the story is the decline of the Compson family, a once noble Southern family descended from U.S. Civil War hero General Compson. The family falls victim to those vices which Faulkner believed were responsible for the problems in the [reconstructed South](#): racism, avarice, selfishness, and the psychological inability of individuals to become determinants^[clarification needed]. Over the course of the thirty years or so related in the novel, the family falls into financial ruin, loses its religious faith and the respect of the town of Jefferson, and many of them die tragically.

The reader may also wish to look in *The Portable Faulkner* for a four-page history of the Compson family. Faulkner said afterwards that he wished he had written the history at the same time he wrote *The Sound and the Fury*.

The first section of the novel is narrated by Benjamin "Benjy" Compson, a source of shame to the family due to his [autism](#); the only characters who evidence a genuine care for him are Caddy, his older sister; and Dilsey, a matriarchal servant. His narrative voice is characterized predominantly by its nonlinearity: spanning the period 1898–1928, Benjy's narrative is a pastiche of events presented in a seamless [stream of consciousness](#). The presence of italics in Benjy's section is meant to indicate significant shifts in the narrative. Originally Faulkner meant to use different colored inks to signify chronological breaks. This nonlinearity makes the style of this section particularly challenging, but Benjy's style develops a cadence that, while not chronologically coherent, provides unbiased insight into many characters' true motivations. Moreover, Benjy's caretaker changes to indicate the time period: Luster in the present, T.P. in Benjy's teenage years, and Versh during Benjy's infancy and childhood.

In this section we see Benjy's three passions: fire, the golf course on land that used to belong to the Compson family, and his sister Caddy. But by 1928 Caddy has been banished from the Compson home after her husband divorced her because her child was not his, and the family has sold his favorite pasture to a local golf club in order to finance Quentin's Harvard education. In the opening scene, Benjy, accompanied by Luster, a servant boy, watches golfers on the nearby golf course as he waits to hear them call "caddie"—the name of his favorite sibling. When one of them calls for his golf caddie, Benjy's mind embarks on a whirlwind course of memories of his sister, Caddy, focusing on one critical scene. In 1898 when their grandmother died, the four Compson children were forced to play outside during the funeral. In order to see what was going on inside, Caddy climbed a tree in the yard, and while looking inside, her brothers—Quentin, Jason and Benjy—looked up and noticed that her underwear was muddy. How each of them reacts to this is the first insight the reader has into the trends that will shape the lives of these boys: Jason is disgusted, Quentin is appalled, and Benjy seems to have a "sixth-sense" in that he moans (he is unable to speak using words), as if sensing the symbolic nature of Caddy's dirtiness, which hints at her later sexual promiscuity. At the time the children were aged 9 (Quentin), 7 (Caddy), 5 (Jason) and 3 (Benjy). Other crucial memories in this section are Benjy's change of name (from Maury, after his uncle) in 1900 upon the discovery of his disability; the marriage and divorce of Caddy (1910), and Benjy's [castration](#), resulting from an attack on a girl that is alluded to briefly within this chapter when a gate is left unlatched and Benjy is out unsupervised. Readers often report trouble understanding this portion of the novel due to its impressionistic language, necessitated by Benjamin's Autism, and its frequent shifts in time and setting.

Quentin, the most intelligent and tormented of the Compson children, gives the novel's best example of Faulkner's narrative technique. We see him as a freshman at [Harvard](#), wandering the streets of [Cambridge](#), contemplating death, and remembering his family's estrangement from his sister Caddy. Like the first section, its narrative is not strictly linear, though the two interweaving threads, of Quentin at Harvard on the one hand, and of his memories on the other, are clearly discernible.

Quentin's main obsession is Caddy's virginity and purity. He is obsessed with Southern ideals of chivalry and is strongly protective of women, especially his sister. When Caddy engages in sexual promiscuity, Quentin is horrified. He turns to his father for help and counsel, but the pragmatic Mr. Compson tells him that virginity is invented by men and should not be taken seriously. He also tells Quentin that time will heal all. Quentin spends much of his time trying to prove his father wrong, but is unable to. Shortly before Quentin leaves for Harvard in the fall of 1909, Caddy becomes pregnant with the child of Dalton Ames, whom Quentin confronts. The two fight, with Quentin losing disgracefully and Caddy vowing, for Quentin's sake, never to speak to Dalton again. Quentin tells his father that they have committed [incest](#), but his father knows that he is lying: "and he did you try to make her do it and i i was afraid to i was afraid she might and then it wouldn't do any good" (112). Quentin's idea of incest is shaped by the idea that, if they "could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us" (51), he could protect his sister by joining her in whatever punishment she might have to endure. In his mind, he feels a need to take responsibility for Caddy's sin. Pregnant and alone, Caddy then marries Herbert Head, whom Quentin finds repulsive, but Caddy is resolute: she must marry before the birth of her child. Herbert finds out that the child is not his and sends mother and daughter away in shame. Quentin's wanderings through Harvard, as he cuts classes, follow the pattern of his heartbreak over losing Caddy. For instance, he meets a small Italian immigrant girl who speaks no English. Significantly, he calls her "sister" and spends much of the day trying to communicate with her, and to care for her by finding her home, to no avail. He thinks sadly of the downfall and squalor of the South after the [American Civil War](#). Because he can't deal with the amorality of the world around him, he commits suicide. While many first-time readers report Benjy's section as being difficult to understand, these same readers often find Quentin's section to be near impossible. Not only do chronological events mesh together regularly, but often (especially at the end) Faulkner completely disregards any semblance of grammar, spelling, or punctuation, instead writing in a rambling series of words, phrases, and sentences that have no separation to indicate where one thought ends and another begins. This confusion is due to Quentin's severe depression and [deteriorating state of mind](#). The section is therefore ironic in that Quentin is an even more [unreliable narrator](#) than his brother Benjy was. Because of the staggering complexity of this section, it is often the one most extensively studied by scholars of the novel.

The third section is narrated by Jason, the third son and Caroline's favorite. It takes place the day before Benjy's section, on Good Friday. Of the three brothers' sections, Jason's is the most straightforward, reflecting his single-minded desire for material wealth. By 1928, Jason is the economic foundation of the family after his father's death. He supports his mother, Benjy, and Miss Quentin (Caddy's daughter), as well as the family's servants. His role makes him bitter and cynical, with little of the passionate sensitivity that mark his older brother and sister. He goes so far as to blackmail Caddy into making him Miss Quentin's sole guardian, then uses that role to steal the support payments that Caddy sends for her daughter.

This is the first section that is narrated in a linear fashion. It follows the course of Good Friday, a day in which Jason decides to leave work to search for Miss Quentin (Caddy's daughter), who has run away again, seemingly in pursuit of mischief. Here we see most immediately the conflict between the two predominant traits of the Compson family, which Jason's mother Caroline attributes to the difference between her blood and her husband's: on the one hand, Miss Quentin's recklessness and passion, inherited from her grandfather and, ultimately, the Compson side; on the other, Jason's ruthless cynicism, drawn from his mother's side. This section also gives us the

clearest image of domestic life in the Compson household, which for Jason and the servants means the care of the [hypochondriac](#) Caroline and of Benjy.

April 8, 1928, is [Easter Sunday](#). This section, the only one without a single [first-person narrator](#), focuses on Dilsey, the powerful matriarch of the black servant family. She, in contrast to the declining Compsons, draws a great deal of strength from her faith, standing as a proud figure amid a dying family. It can be said that Dilsey gains her strength by looking outward (i.e. outside of one's self for support) while the Compsons grow weak by looking inward.

On this Easter Sunday, Dilsey takes her family and Benjy to the 'colored' church. Through her we sense the consequences of the decadence and depravity in which the Compsons have lived for decades. Dilsey is mistreated and abused, but nevertheless remains loyal. She, with the help of her grandson Luster, cares for Benjy, as she takes him to church and tries to bring him to salvation. The preacher's sermon inspires her to weep for the Compson family, reminding her that she's seen the family through its destruction, which she is now witnessing.

Meanwhile, the tension between Jason and Miss Quentin reaches its inevitable conclusion. The family discovers that Miss Quentin has run away in the middle of the night with a carnival worker, having found the hidden collection of cash in Jason's closet and taken both her money (the support from Caddy, which Jason had stolen) and her money-obsessed uncle's life savings. Jason calls the police and tells them that his money has been stolen, but since it would mean admitting embezzling Quentin's money he doesn't press the issue. He therefore sets off once again to find her on his own, but loses her trail in nearby Mottson, and gives her up as gone for good.

The novel ends with a very powerful and unsettling image. After church, Dilsey allows her grandson Luster to drive Benjy in the family's decrepit horse and carriage (another sign of decay) to the graveyard. Luster, not caring that Benjy is so entrenched in the routine of his life that even the slightest change in route will enrage him, drives the wrong way around a monument. Benjy's hysterical sobbing and violent outburst can only be quieted by Jason, of all people, who understands how best to placate his brother. Jason slaps Luster, turns the carriage around, and Benjy suddenly becomes silent. Luster turns around to look at Benjy and sees Benjy drop his flower. Benjy's eyes are "...empty and blue and serene again."

In 1945, Faulkner wrote an appendix to the novel to be published in the then-forthcoming anthology *The Portable Faulkner*. At Faulkner's behest, however, subsequent printings of *The Sound and the Fury* frequently contain the appendix at the end of the book; it is sometimes referred to as the fifth part. Having been written sixteen years after *The Sound and the Fury*, the appendix presents some textual differences from the novel, but serves to clarify the novel's opaque story.

The appendix is presented as a complete history of the Compson family lineage, beginning with the arrival of their ancestor Quentin Maclachlan in America in 1779 and continuing through 1945, including events that transpired after the novel (which took place in 1928). In particular, the appendix reveals that Caroline Compson died in 1933, upon which Jason had Benjy committed to the state asylum; fired the black servants; sold the last of the Compson land; and moved into an apartment above his farming supply store. It is also revealed that Jason had himself declared Benjy's legal guardian many years ago, without their mother's knowledge, and used this status to have Benjy castrated.

The appendix also reveals the fate of Caddy, last seen in the novel when her daughter Quentin is still a baby. After marrying and divorcing a second time, Caddy moved to Paris, where she lived at the time of the German occupation. In 1943 the librarian of Yoknapatawpha County discovered a magazine photograph of Caddy in the company of a German staff general and attempted separately to recruit both Jason and Dilsey to save her; Jason, at first acknowledging that the photo

was of his sister, denied that it was she after realizing the librarian wanted his help, while Dilsey pretended to be unable to see the picture at all. The librarian later realizes that while Jason remains cold and unsympathetic towards Caddy, Dilsey simply understands that Caddy neither wants nor needs salvation from the Germans, because nothing else remains for her.

The appendix concludes with an accounting for the black family who worked as servants to the Compsons. Unlike the entries for the Compsons themselves, which are lengthy, detailed, and told with an omniscient narrative perspective, the servants' entries are simple and succinct. Dilsey's entry, the final in the appendix, consists of two words: "They endured."

Stone Angel (The)—by Margaret Laurence.

In a series of vignettes, *The Stone Angel* tells the story of Hagar Shipley, a 90-year old woman struggling to come to grips with a life of intransigence and loss. "Pride was my wilderness, the demon that led me there was fear."

Stranger (The)—by Albert Camus.

Part One begins with Meursault being notified of his mother's death. At her funeral, he expresses none of the expected emotions of grief. When asked if he wishes to view the body, he says no, and, instead, smokes and drinks coffee with milk before the coffin. Rather than expressing his feelings, he only comments to the reader about the others at the funeral. He later encounters, by chance, Marie, a former employee of his firm, and the two become re-acquainted and begin to have a sexual relationship, regardless of the fact that Meursault's mother died just a day before. In the next few days, he helps his friend and neighbour, Raymond Sintès, take revenge on a [Moorish](#) girlfriend suspected of infidelity. For Raymond, Meursault agrees to write a letter to his girlfriend, with the sole purpose of inviting her over so that Raymond can have sex with her and beat her up one last time. Meursault sees no reason not to help him, and it pleases Raymond. He does not express concern that Raymond's girlfriend is going to be injured, as he believes Raymond's story that she has been unfaithful, and he himself is both somewhat drunk and characteristically unfazed by any feelings of empathy. In general he considers other people either interesting or annoying.

The letter works: the girlfriend returns and Raymond beats her. Raymond is taken to court where Meursault testifies that she had been unfaithful, and Raymond is let off with a warning. After this, the girlfriend's brother and several Arab friends begin tailing Raymond. Raymond invites Meursault and Marie to a friend's beach house for the weekend, and when there, they encounter the spurned girlfriend's brother and an Arab friend; these two confront Raymond and wound him with a knife during a fist fight. Later, walking back along the beach alone and now armed with a pistol he took from Raymond so that Raymond would not do anything rash, Meursault encounters the Arab. Meursault is now disoriented on the edge of heatstroke, and when the Arab flashes his knife at him, Meursault shoots. Despite killing the Arab man with the first gunshot, he shoots the cadaver four more times after a brief pause. He does not divulge to the reader any specific reason for his crime or emotions he experiences at the time, if any, aside from the fact that he was bothered by the heat and bright sunlight.

Part Two begins with Meursault incarcerated, explaining his arrest, time in prison, and upcoming trial. His general detachment makes living in prison very tolerable, especially after he gets used to the idea of not being able to go places whenever he wants to and no longer being able to satisfy his sexual desires with Marie. He passes the time sleeping, or mentally listing the objects he owned back in his apartment building. At the trial, Meursault's quietness and passivity is seen as demonstrative of his seeming lack of remorse or guilt by the prosecuting attorney, and so the attorney concentrates more upon Meursault's inability or unwillingness to cry at his mother's funeral than on the actual murder. The attorney pushes Meursault to tell the truth but never comes through and later, on his own, Meursault explains to the reader that he simply was never really

able to feel any remorse or personal emotions for any of his actions in life. The dramatic prosecutor theatrically denounces Meursault to the point that he claims Meursault must be a soulless monster, incapable of remorse and that he thus deserves to die for his crime. Although Meursault's attorney defends him and later tells Meursault that he expects the sentence to be light, Meursault is alarmed when the judge informs him of the final decision: that he will be decapitated publicly.

In prison, while awaiting the execution of his death sentence by the [guillotine](#), Meursault meets with a chaplain, but rejects his proffered opportunity of turning to God, explaining that God is a waste of his time. Although the chaplain persists in attempting to lead Meursault from his [atheism](#), Meursault finally accosts him in a rage, with a climactic outburst on his frustrations and the absurdity of the human condition; his personal anguish at the meaninglessness of his existence without respite. That at the beginning of his outrage he mentions other people in anger, that they have no right to judge him, for his actions or for who he is, no one has the right to judge someone else. Meursault ultimately grasps the universe's indifference towards humankind (coming to terms with his execution): "As if that blind rage had washed me clean, rid me of hope; for the first time, in that night alive with signs and stars, I opened myself to the benign indifference of the world. Finding it so much like myself—so like a brother, really—I felt that I had been happy and that I was happy again. For everything to be consummated, for me to feel less alone, I had only to wish that there be a large crowd of spectators the day of my execution and that they greet me with cries of hate.

Street (The)—by Ann Petry.

The Street is an [African-American](#) novel by [Ann Petry](#) that was published in 1946. Set in [Harlem](#) in the 1940s, it centers on the life of Lutie Johnson. Petry describes a world of trials and tribulations that came with being a single black mother living on 116th street in [New York City](#)

Streetcar Named Desire (A)—by Tennessee Williams.

Widely considered a landmark play, *A Streetcar Named Desire* deals with a culture clash between two characters, [Blanche DuBois](#), a fading relic of the [Old South](#), and [Stanley Kowalski](#), a rising member of the industrial, urban working class.^[1]

The play presents Blanche DuBois, a fading but still-attractive [Southern belle](#) whose pretensions to virtue and culture only thinly mask [alcoholism](#) and [delusions of grandeur](#). Her poise is an illusion she presents to shield others (but most of all, herself) from her reality, and an attempt to make herself still attractive to new male suitors. Blanche arrives at the apartment of her sister [Stella Kowalski](#) in the [French Quarter](#) of [New Orleans](#), on [Elysian Fields Avenue](#); the local transportation she takes to arrive there includes a streetcar route named "Desire." The steamy, urban ambiance is a shock to Blanche's nerves. Blanche is welcomed with some trepidation by Stella, who fears the reaction of her husband Stanley. As Blanche explains that their ancestral southern plantation, Belle Reve in [Laurel, Mississippi](#), has been "lost" due to the "epic fornications" of their ancestors, her veneer of self-possession begins to slip drastically. Here "epic fornications" may be interpreted as the debauchery of her ancestors which in turn caused them financial losses. Blanche tells Stella that her supervisor allowed her to take time off from her job as an English teacher because of her upset nerves, when in fact, she has been fired for having an affair with a 17-year-old student. This turns out not to be the only seduction she has engaged in—and, along with other problems, has led her to escape Laurel. A brief marriage marred by the discovery that her spouse, Allan Grey, was having a homosexual affair and his subsequent suicide has led Blanche to withdraw into a world in which fantasies and illusions blend seamlessly with reality.

In contrast to both the self-effacing and deferential Stella and the pretentious refinement of Blanche, Stella's husband, [Stanley Kowalski](#), is a force of nature: primal, rough-hewn, brutish and sensual. He dominates Stella in every way and is physically and emotionally abusive.^[1] Stella tolerates his primal behaviour as this is part of what attracted her in the first place; their love and relationship are heavily based on powerful—even animalistic—sexual chemistry, something that Blanche finds impossible to understand.

The arrival of Blanche upsets her sister and brother-in-law's system of mutual dependence. Stella's concern for her sister's well-being emboldens Blanche to hold court in the Kowalski apartment, infuriating Stanley and leading to conflict in his relationship with his wife. Blanche and Stanley are on a collision course, and Stanley's friend and Blanche's would-be suitor, [Mitch](#),^[1] will get trampled in their path. Stanley discovers Blanche's past through a co-worker who travels to Laurel frequently, and he confronts her with the things she has been trying to put behind her, partly out of concern that her character flaws may be damaging to the lives of those in her new home, just as they were in Laurel, and partly out of a distaste for pretense in general. However, his attempts to "unmask" her are predictably cruel and violent. In their final confrontation, Stanley [rapes](#) Blanche, which results in her nervous breakdown. Stanley has her committed to a mental institution, and in the closing moments, Blanche utters her signature line to the kindly doctor who leads her away: "Whoever you are, I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."

The reference to the [streetcar](#) called *Desire*—providing the aura of New Orleans geography—is symbolic. Blanche not only has to travel on a streetcar route named "Desire" to reach Stella's home on "[Elysian Fields](#)" but her desire acts as an irrepressible force throughout the play—she can only hang on as her desires lead her.

The character of Blanche is thought to be based on Williams' sister Rose Williams who struggled with her mental health and became incapacitated after a [lobotomy](#).

Sula—by Toni Morrison.

The Bottom is a mostly black community in Ohio, situated in the hills above the mostly white, wealthier community of Medallion. The Bottom first became a community when a master gave it to his former slave. This "gift" was in fact a trick: the master gave the former slave a poor stretch of hilly land, convincing the slave the land was worthwhile by claiming that because it was hilly, it was closer to heaven. The trick, though, led to the growth of a vibrant community. Now the community faces a new threat; wealthy whites have taken a liking to the land, and would like to destroy much of the town in order to build a golf course.

Shadrack, a resident of the Bottom, fought in World War I. He returns a shattered man, unable to accept the complexities of the world; he lives on the outskirts of town, attempting to create order in his life. One of his methods involves compartmentalizing his fear of death in a ritual he invents and names National Suicide Day. The town is at first wary of him and his ritual, then, over time, unthinkingly accepts him.

Meanwhile, the families of the children Nel and Sula are contrasted. Nel is the product of a family that believes deeply in social conventions; hers is a stable home, though some might characterize it as rigid. Nel is uncertain of the conventional life her mother, Helene, wants for her; these doubts are hammered home when she meets Rochelle, her grandmother and a former prostitute, the only unconventional woman in her family line. Sula's family is very different: she lives with her grandmother, Eva, and her mother, Hannah, both of whom are seen by the town as eccentric and loose. Their house also serves as a home for three informally adopted boys and a steady stream of boarders.

Despite their differences, Sula and Nel become fiercely attached to each other during adolescence. However, a traumatic accident changes everything. One day, Sula playfully swings a neighborhood boy, Chicken Little, around by his hands. When she loses her grip, the boy falls into a nearby river and drowns. They never tell anyone about the accident even though they did not intend to harm the boy. The two girls begin to grow apart. One day Sula's mother's dress catches fire and she dies of the burns. Eva, her mother, sees her from the window and jumps out into the garden.

After high school, Nel chooses to marry and settles into the conventional role of wife and mother. Sula follows a wildly divergent path and lives a life of fierce independence and total disregard for social conventions. Shortly after Nel's wedding, Sula leaves the Bottom for a period of 10 years. She has many affairs, some, it is rumored, with white men. However, she finds people following the same boring routines elsewhere, so she returns to the Bottom and to Nel.

Upon her return, the town regards Sula as the very personification of evil for her blatant disregard of social conventions. Their hatred in part rests upon Sula's interracial relationships, but is crystallized when Sula has an affair with Nel's husband, Jude, who subsequently abandons Nel. Ironically, the community's labeling of Sula as evil actually improves their own lives. Her presence in the community gives them the impetus to live harmoniously with one another. Nel breaks off her friendship with Sula. Just before Sula dies in 1940, they achieve a half-hearted reconciliation. With Sula's death, the harmony that had reigned in the town quickly dissolves.

Sun Also Rises (The)—by Ernest Hemingway.

The [protagonist](#) of *The Sun Also Rises* is Jake Barnes, an expatriate American journalist living in Paris. Jake suffered a war wound that has caused him to be impotent, though the nature of his wound is never explicitly described in the novel. He is in love with Lady Brett Ashley, a twice-divorced Englishwoman. Brett, with her [bobbed](#) hair, embodies the new sexual freedom of the 1920s, having had numerous love affairs. Book One is set in the [Café society](#) of Paris. In the opening scenes, Jake plays tennis with his college friend Robert Cohn, picks up a prostitute (Georgette), and runs into Brett and Count Mippipopolous in a nightclub. Brett and Jake leave together; in a taxi she tells him she loves him, but they know they have no chance at a lasting relationship.

In Book Two Jake is joined by Bill Gorton, recently arrived from New York, and Brett's fiancé Mike Campbell, who arrives from Scotland. Jake and Bill travel to Spain, where they meet Robert Cohn north of [Pamplona](#) for a fishing trip. Cohn, however, leaves for Pamplona to wait for Brett and Mike. Cohn had an affair with Brett a year earlier and still feels possessive of her despite her engagement to Mike. Jake and Bill enjoy five days of tranquillity, fishing the streams near [Burguete](#), after which they rejoin the group in Pamplona, where they begin to drink heavily. Cohn's presence is increasingly resented by the others, who taunt him with [anti-semitic](#) remarks. During the fiesta the characters drink, eat, watch the [running of the bulls](#), attend bullfights, and bicker with each other. Jake introduces Brett to Romero at Montoya's inn; she is smitten with the 19-year-old matador and seduces him. The jealous tension between the men builds; Mike, Jake, Cohn, and Romero each love Brett. Cohn, who had been a champion boxer in college, has fistfights with Jake, Mike, and Romero, whom he injures. Despite the tension, Romero continues to perform brilliantly in the bullring.

Book Three shows the characters in the aftermath of the fiesta. Sober again, they leave Pamplona. Bill returns to Paris, Mike stays in [Bayonne](#), and Jake goes to [San Sebastián](#) in northeastern Spain. As Jake is about to return to Paris he receives a [telegram](#) from Brett, who left for [Madrid](#) with Romero, asking for help. He finds her in a cheap hotel, without money, and without Romero. She announces she has decided to marry Mike. The novel ends with Jake and Brett in a taxi speaking of the things that might have been.

Surfacing—by Margaret Atwood.

The book tells the story of a woman who returns to her hometown in [Canada](#) to find her missing father. Accompanied by her lover and another married couple, the unnamed [protagonist](#) meets her past in her childhood house, recalling events and feelings, while trying to find clues for her father's mysterious disappearance. Little by little, the past overtakes her and drives her into the realm of wildness and madness.

Tale of Two Cities (A)—by Charles Dickens.

The first book of the novel takes place in 1775. Mr. Jarvis Lorry, an employee of Tellson's Bank, is travelling from England to France to bring Dr. [Alexandre Manette](#) to London on his return trip. Before crossing into France, he meets 17-year-old Miss Lucie Manette at [Dover](#), and reveals to her that her father, [Monsieur](#) Manette, is not dead, as she had been told; instead, he was a prisoner in the [Bastille](#) for eighteen years.

Mr. Jarvis Lorry and Miss Manette travel to Saint Antoine, a suburb of Paris, and meet Monsieur Defarge and [Madame](#) Defarge. The Defarges operate a wine shop they use to lead a [clandestine](#) band of revolutionaries; they refer to each other by the codename "Jacques," which Charles Dickens drew from the [Jacobins](#), an actual French revolutionary group.

Monsieur Defarge was Monsieur Manette's servant before his incarceration, and now has care of him, and he takes them to see the doctor. Because of his long imprisonment, Monsieur Manette entered a form of [psychosis](#) and has become [obsessed](#) with making shoes, a trade he had learned whilst he was incarcerated. At first, he does not recognize his daughter; but he eventually compares her long golden hair with her mother's, which he found on his sleeve when he was incarcerated and kept, and notices their identical blue eye colour. Mr. Jarvis Lorry and Miss Manette then take him back to England.

"The Golden Thread" redirects here. For the legal judgement, see [Golden thread \(law\)](#).

Five years later, two British spies, Mr. John Barsad and Roger Cly, are trying to frame French [émigré Charles Darnay](#) for their own gain; and Charles Darnay is on trial for treason at the [Old Bailey](#). They claim, falsely, that Darnay gave information about [British troops in North America](#) to the French. Charles Darnay is acquitted when a witness who claims he would be able to recognize Darnay anywhere cannot tell Darnay apart from a barrister present in court, [Sydney Carton](#), who looks almost identical to him.

In Paris, the despised Monsieur the [Marquis](#), Charles Darnay's uncle, runs over and kills the son of the peasant Gaspard and throws a coin to Gaspard to compensate him for his loss. Monsieur Defarge comforts Gaspard. As the Marquis's coach drives off, Defarge throws the coin back into the coach, enraging the Marquis.

Arriving at his [château](#), the Marquis meets with his nephew and heir Charles Evrémonde, now known as Charles Darnay. (Out of disgust with his family, Darnay shed his real surname and adopted an Anglicised version of his mother's maiden name, D'Aulnais.^[4]) They argue: Darnay has sympathy for the peasantry, while the Marquis is cruel and heartless:

"Repression is the only lasting philosophy. The dark deference of fear and slavery, my friend," observed the Marquis, "will keep the dogs obedient to the whip, as long as this roof," looking up to it, "shuts out the sky."^[5]

That night, Gaspard, who followed the Marquis to his [château](#), hanging under his coach, murders the Marquis in his sleep. He leaves a note saying, "Drive him fast to his tomb. This, from JACQUES."^[6] He is later executed above the village's fountain, poisoning its water, which angers the peasants greatly.

In London, Darnay gets Dr. Manette's permission to wed Lucie; but Carton confesses his love to Lucie as well. Knowing she will not love him in return, Carton promises to "embrace any sacrifice for you and for those dear to you".^[7]

On the morning of the marriage, Darnay reveals his real name and who his family is, a detail which Dr. Manette had asked him to withhold until then. This unhinges Dr. Manette, who reverts to his obsessive shoemaking. His sanity is restored before Lucie returns from her honeymoon. To prevent a further relapse, banker Lorry destroys the shoemaking bench, which Dr. Manette had brought with him from Paris.

It is 14 July 1789. The Defarges help to lead the [storming of the Bastille](#). Defarge enters Dr. Manette's former cell, "One Hundred and Five, North Tower".^[8] The reader does not know what Monsieur Defarge is searching for until Book 3, Chapter 9. It is a statement in which Dr. Manette explains why he was imprisoned.

In the summer of 1792, a letter reaches Tellson's bank. Mr. Lorry, who is planning to go to Paris to save the French branch of Tellson's, announces that the letter is addressed to someone named Evrémonte. Nobody in England knows who this is, because Darnay has kept his real name a secret there. Darnay acquires the letter by pretending Evrémonte is an acquaintance of his. The letter turns out to be from Gabelle, a servant of the former Marquis. Gabelle has been imprisoned and begs the new Marquis to come to his aid. Darnay, who feels guilty, leaves for Paris to help Gabelle.

In France, Darnay is denounced for emigrating from France and imprisoned in [La Force Prison](#) in Paris.^[9] Dr. Manette and Lucie—along with Miss Pross, Jerry Cruncher, and "Little Lucie", the daughter of Charles and Lucie Darnay—come to Paris and meet Mr. Lorry to try to free Darnay. A year and three months pass, and Darnay is finally tried.

Dr. Manette, who is seen as a hero for his imprisonment in the hated Bastille, is able to have him released; but, that same evening, Darnay is again arrested. He is put on trial again the following day, under new charges brought by the Defarges and one "unnamed other". We soon discover that this "other" is Dr. Manette, through his own account of his imprisonment. Manette did not know that his statement had been found and is horrified when his words are used to condemn Darnay.

On an errand, Miss Pross is amazed to see her long-lost brother, Solomon Pross; but Solomon does not want to be recognised. Sydney Carton suddenly steps forward from the shadows much as he had done after Darnay's first trial in London and identifies Solomon Pross as John Barsad, one of the men who tried to frame Darnay for treason at his first trial in London. Carton threatens to reveal Solomon's identity as a Briton and an opportunist who spies for the French or the British as it suits him. If this were revealed, Solomon would surely be executed, so Carton's hand is strong.

Darnay is confronted at the tribunal by Monsieur Defarge, who identifies Darnay as the Marquis St. Evrémonte and reads the letter Dr. Manette had hidden in his cell in the Bastille. Defarge can identify Darnay as Evrémonte because Barsad told him Darnay's identity when Barsad was fishing for information at the Defarges' wine shop in Book 2, Chapter 16. The letter describes how Dr. Manette was locked away in the Bastille by Darnay's father and his uncle for trying to report their crimes against a peasant family. Darnay's uncle had become infatuated with a girl, whom he had kidnapped and raped and then killed her husband. Before he died defending the family honor, the brother of the raped peasant had hidden the last member of the family, his younger sister. The

paper concludes by condemning the Evrémondes, "them and their descendants, to the last of their race".^[10] Dr. Manette is horrified, but his protests are ignored—he is not allowed to take back his condemnation. Darnay is sent to the [Conciergerie](#) and sentenced to be [guillotined](#) the next day.

Carton wanders into the Defarges' wine shop, where he overhears Madame Defarge talking about her plans to have the rest of Darnay's family (Lucie and "Little Lucie") condemned. Carton discovers that Madame Defarge was the surviving sister of the peasant family savaged by the Evrémondes. The only plot detail that might give one any sympathy for Madame Defarge is the loss of her family and that she has no (family) name. Defarge is her married name, and Dr. Manette cannot learn her family name, though he asks her dying sister for it.^[11] At night, when Dr. Manette returns shattered after spending the day in many failed attempts to save Charles' life, he has reverted to his obsessive shoemaking. Carton urges Lorry to flee Paris with Lucie, her father, and Little Lucie.

That same morning, Carton visits Darnay in prison. Carton drugs Darnay, and Barsad (whom Carton is blackmailing) has Darnay carried out of the prison. Carton has decided to pretend to be Darnay and to be executed in his place. He does this out of love for Lucie, recalling his earlier promise to her. Following Carton's earlier instructions, Darnay's family and Lorry flee Paris and France. In their coach is an unconscious man who carries Carton's identification papers, but is actually Darnay.

Meanwhile, Madame Defarge, armed with a pistol, goes to the residence of Lucie's family, hoping to catch them mourning for Darnay, since it was illegal to mourn an enemy of the Republic; however, Lucie and Little Lucie, Dr. Manette, and Mr. Lorry are already gone. To give them time to escape, Miss Pross confronts Madame Defarge and they struggle. Pross speaks only English and Defarge speaks only French, so neither can understand each other. In the fight, Madame Defarge's pistol goes off, killing her; the noise of the shot and the shock of Madame Defarge's death cause Miss Pross to go permanently deaf.

The novel concludes with the guillotining of Sydney Carton. Carton's unspoken last thoughts are prophetic:^[12] Carton foresees that many of the revolutionaries, including Defarge, Barsad and The Vengeance (a lieutenant of Madame Defarge) will be sent to the guillotine themselves, and that Darnay and Lucie will have a son whom they will name after Carton: a son who will fulfil all the promise that Carton wasted. Lucie and Darnay have a first son earlier in the book who is born and dies within a single paragraph. It seems likely that this first son appears in the novel so that their later son, named after Carton, can represent another way in which Carton restores Lucie and Darnay through his sacrifice.¹

Tartuffe—by Molière.

Orgon's family is up in arms because Orgon and his mother have fallen under the influence of Tartuffe, a pious fraud (and a vagrant prior to Orgon's help). Tartuffe pretends to be pious and to speak with divine authority, and Orgon and his mother no longer take any action without first consulting him. One could even say Orgon has a single-minded obsession with Tartuffe, as clearly demonstrated in Act I, Scene 5..

Tartuffe's antics do not fool the rest of the family or their friends; they detest him. The stakes are raised when Orgon announces that he will marry Tartuffe to his daughter Mariane (already engaged to Valère). Mariane is, of course, very upset at this news and the rest of the family realizes how deeply Tartuffe has embedded himself into the family.

In an effort to show Orgon how awful Tartuffe really is, the family devises a plan to trap Tartuffe into confessing to Elmire his desire for her. As a pious man and a guest, he should have no such feelings for the lady of the house, and the family hopes that after such a confession, Orgon will

throw Tartuffe out of the house. Indeed, Tartuffe does try to seduce Elmire, but their interview is interrupted when Orgon's son, Damis, who has been eavesdropping, is no longer able to control his boiling indignation and jumps out of his hiding place to denounce Tartuffe.

Tartuffe is at first shocked but recovers very well. When Orgon enters the room and Damis triumphantly tells him what happened, Tartuffe uses reverse psychology and accuses himself of being the worst sinner:

Oui, mon frère, je suis un méchant, un coupable.

Un malheureux pécheur tout plein d'iniquité

(Yes, my brother, I am an evildoer, a guilty man,

An unhappy sinner full of iniquity) (III.vi).

Orgon is convinced that Damis was lying and banishes him from the house. Tartuffe even gets Orgon to order that, to teach Damis a lesson, Tartuffe should be around Elmire more than ever. As a gift to Tartuffe and further punishment to Damis and the rest of his family, Orgon signs over all his worldly possessions to Tartuffe.

In a later scene, Elmire takes up the charge again and challenges Orgon to be witness to a meeting between herself and Tartuffe. Orgon, ever easily convinced, decides to hide under a table in the same room, confident that Elmire is wrong. He overhears, of course, Elmire resisting Tartuffe's very forward advances. When Tartuffe has incriminated himself beyond all help and is dangerously close to violating Elmire, Orgon comes out from under the table and orders Tartuffe out of his house.

But this wily guest means to stay, and Tartuffe finally shows his hand. It turns out that earlier, before the events of the play, Orgon had admitted to Tartuffe that he was in possession of a box of incriminating letters (written by a friend, not by him). Tartuffe had taken care to take this box and now tells Orgon that he must leave the house if he does not want to be exposed. Tartuffe takes his temporary leave and Orgon's family tries to figure out what to do. Very soon, Monsieur Loyal shows up with a message from Tartuffe and the court itself - they must move out from the house because it now belongs to Tartuffe. Dorine makes fun of his name, not aloud, mocking his fake loyalty.

Later that day, Tartuffe returns with a police officer to begin the eviction. But to his surprise, the police officer arrests him instead. The enlightened King Louis XIV (name not mentioned in play) has heard of the injustices happening in the house and decides to arrest Tartuffe instead. Even Madame Pernelle is convinced by this time of Tartuffe's chicanery, and the entire family thanks its lucky stars that it has escaped the mortification of leaving their house to a man with a long criminal history, changing his name often to avoid being caught. The drama ends well, and Orgon announces the upcoming wedding of Valère and Mariane.

Tempest (The)—by William Shakespeare.

The Tempest is a play by [William Shakespeare](#), believed to have been written in 1610–11, and thought by many critics to be the last play that Shakespeare wrote alone. It is set on a remote island, where [Prospero](#), the exiled [Duke of Milan](#), plots to restore his daughter [Miranda](#) to her rightful place, using illusion and skilful manipulation. The [eponymous](#) tempest brings to the island Prospero's usurping brother Antonio and the complicit Alonso, [King of Naples](#). There, his

machinations bring about the revelation of Antonio's low nature, the redemption of Alonso, and the marriage of Miranda to Alonso's son, [Ferdinand](#).

There is no obvious single source for the plot of *The Tempest*, but researchers have seen parallels in [Erasmus's *Naufragium*](#), [Peter Martyr's *De orbo novo*](#), and an eyewitness report by [William Strachey](#) of the real-life shipwreck of the [Sea Venture](#) on the islands of [Bermuda](#). In addition, one of [Gonzalo's](#) speeches is derived from [Montaigne's essay *Of the Canibales*](#); and much of Prospero's renunciative speech is taken word for word from a speech by [Medea](#) in [Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses*](#). The [masque](#) in Act 4 may have been a later addition, possibly in honour of the wedding of [Princess Elizabeth of Bohemia](#) and [Frederick V, Elector Palatine](#), in 1613. The play was first published in the [First Folio](#) of 1623.

The story draws the tradition of the [romance genre](#), and it was influenced by [tragicomedy](#) and the courtly [masque](#) and perhaps by the [commedia dell'arte](#). It differs from Shakespeare's other plays in its observation of a stricter, more organised [neoclassical](#) style. Critics see *The Tempest* as explicitly concerned with its own nature as a play, frequently drawing links between Prospero's "art" and theatrical illusion; and early critics saw Prospero as a representation of Shakespeare, and his renunciation of magic, as signalling Shakespeare's farewell to the stage. The play portrays Prospero as a [rational](#), not an [occultist](#), [magician](#) by providing a contrast to him in Sycorax: her magic is frequently described as destructive and terrible, where Prospero's is said to be wondrous and beautiful. Beginning in about 1950, with the publication of *Psychology of Colonization* by [Octave Mannoni](#), *The Tempest* was viewed more and more through the lens of [postcolonial](#) theory—exemplified in adaptations like [Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête*](#) set in [Haiti](#)—and there is even a [scholarly journal](#) on post-colonial criticism named after [Caliban](#). Miranda is typically viewed as having completely internalised the patriarchal order of things, thinking of herself as subordinate to her father.

The Tempest did not attract a significant amount of attention before the [closing of the theatres](#) in 1642, and only attained popularity after the [Restoration](#), and then only in adapted versions, such as that of [Dryden](#) and [D'Avenant](#). In the mid-19th century, theatre productions began to reinstate the original Shakespearean text, and in the 20th century, critics and scholars undertook a significant re-appraisal of the play's value, to the extent that it is now considered to be one of Shakespeare's greatest works. It has been adapted numerous times in a variety of styles and formats: in music, at least 46 operas by composers such as [Fromental Halévy](#), [Zdeněk Fibich](#), [Lee Hoiby](#), and [Thomas Adès](#); orchestral works by [Tchaikovsky](#), [Arthur Sullivan](#) and [Arthur Honegger](#); and songs by such diverse artists as [Ralph Vaughan Williams](#), [Michael Nyman](#) and [Pete Seeger](#); in literature, [Percy Bysshe Shelley's](#) poem *With a Guitar, To Jane* and [W. H. Auden's *The Sea and the Mirror*](#); novels by [Aimé Césaire](#) and *The Diviners* by [Margaret Laurence](#); in paintings by [William Hogarth](#), [Henry Fuseli](#), and [John Everett Millais](#); and on screen, ranging through a hand-tinted version of [Herbert Beerbohm Tree's](#) 1905 stage performance, the science fiction film *Forbidden Planet* in 1956, to [Peter Greenaway's](#) 1991 *Prospero's Books* featuring [John Gielgud](#) as Prospero.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles—by Thomas Hardy.

The novel is set in impoverished rural [Wessex](#) during the [Long Depression](#). Tess is the eldest child of John and Joan Durbeyfield, uneducated rural peasants. One day, Parson Tringham informs John that he has noble blood. Tringham, an amateur [genealogist](#), has discovered that "Durbeyfield" is a corruption of "D'Urberville", the surname of a noble [Norman](#) family, now extinct. The news immediately goes to John's head.

That same day, Tess participates in the village [May Dance](#), where she meets Angel Clare, youngest son of Reverend James Clare, who is on a walking tour with his two brothers. He stops to join the dance, and finds partners in several other girls. Angel notes of Tess's beauty, too late to dance with her, as he is already late for a promised meeting with his brothers. Tess feels slighted.

Tess's father, overjoyed with learning of his noble lineage, gets too drunk to drive to market that night, so Tess undertakes the journey herself. However, she falls asleep at the reins, and the family's only horse encounters a speeding wagon and is fatally wounded. Tess feels so guilty over the horse's death that she agrees, against her better judgement, to visit Mrs. d'Urberville, a wealthy widow who lives in the nearby town of Trantridge, and "claim kin." She is unaware that in reality, Mrs. d'Urberville's husband, Simon Stoke, purchased the baronial title and adopted the new surname, and so is not related to the d'Urbervilles.

Tess does not succeed in meeting Mrs. d'Urberville, but her [libertine](#) son Alec takes a fancy to Tess and secures her a position as poultry keeper on the d'Urberville estate. He immediately begins making advances. Tess dislikes Alec and repels him verbally but endures his persistent unwanted attention, feeling she has no choice, as she must earn enough to replace her family's only means of support, the dead horse. The threat that Alec presents to Tess's virtue is obscured for Tess by her inexperience and almost daily commonplace interactions with him. He calls her "coz" (cousin), indicating a male protector, not a ravisher. Late one night, walking home from town with some other Trantridge villagers, Tess inadvertently antagonises Car Darch, Alec's most recently discarded favourite, and finds herself about to come to blows. When Alec rides up and offers to "rescue" her from the situation, she accepts. He does not take her home, however, but rides through the fog until they reach an ancient grove called "The Chase." Here, Alec informs her that he is lost and leaves on foot to get his bearings. Tess stays behind and falls asleep atop the coat he lent her. After Alec returns he rapes her. The rape is also alluded to in another chapter, with reference to the "screams heard in the Chase" during the season Tess was at Trantridge.

After a few weeks of confused dalliance with Alec, Tess begins to despise him. Against his wishes, she goes home to her father's cottage, where she keeps almost entirely to her room. The next summer, she gives birth to a sickly boy, who lives only a few weeks. On his last night alive, Tess [baptises](#) him herself, after her father locked the doors to keep the parson away. The child is given the name 'Sorrow'. Tess buries Sorrow in unconsecrated ground, makes a homemade cross and lays flowers on his grave in an empty marmalade jar.

More than two years after the Trantridge debacle, Tess, now 20, is ready to make a new start. She seeks employment outside the village, where her past is not known, and secures a job as a [milkmaid](#) at Talbothays Dairy, working for Mr. and Mrs. Crick. There, she befriends three of her fellow milkmaids, Izz, Retty, and Marian, and re-encounters Angel Clare, who is now an apprentice farmer and has come to Talbothays to learn dairy management. Although the other milkmaids are sick with love for him, Angel soon singles out Tess, and the two gradually fall in love.

Angel spends a few days away from the dairy visiting his family at Emminster. His brothers Felix and Cuthbert, ordained ministers both, note Angel's coarsened manners, while Angel considers his brothers staid and narrow-minded. Following evening prayers, Angel discusses his marriage prospects with his father. The Clares have long hoped that Angel would marry Mercy Chant, a [pious](#) schoolmistress, but Angel argues that a wife who knows farm life would be a more practical choice. He tells his parents about Tess, and they agree to meet her. His father, the Reverend James Clare, tells Angel about his efforts to convert the local populace, and mentions his failure to tame a young miscreant named Alec d'Urberville.

Angel returns to Talbothays Dairy and asks Tess to marry him. This puts Tess in a painful dilemma: Angel obviously thinks her a virgin and, although she does not want to deceive him, she shrinks from confessing lest she lose his love and admiration. Such is her passion for him that she finally agrees to the marriage, explaining that she hesitated because she had heard he hated old families and thought he would not approve of her d'Urberville ancestry. However, he is pleased by this news, because he thinks it will make their match more suitable in the eyes of his family.

As the marriage approaches, Tess grows increasingly troubled. She writes to her mother for advice; Joan tells her to keep silent about her past. Her anxiety increases when a man from Trantridge, named Groby, recognises her while she is out shopping with Angel and crudely alludes to her sexual history. Angel overhears and flies into an uncharacteristic rage. Tess resolves to deceive Angel no more, and writes a letter describing her dealings with d'Urberville and slips it under his door. After Angel greets her with the usual affection the next morning, she discovers the letter under his carpet and realises that he has not seen it. She destroys it.

The wedding goes smoothly although a bad omen of a cock crowing in the afternoon is noticed by Tess. Tess and Angel spend their wedding night at an old d'Urberville family mansion, where Angel presents his bride with some beautiful [diamonds](#) that belonged to his godmother and confesses that he once had a brief affair with an older woman in [London](#). When she hears this story, Tess feels sure that Angel will forgive her own indiscretion, and finally tells him about her relationship with Alec.

Angel, however, is appalled by Tess' confession, and spends the wedding night on a sofa. Tess, devastated, accepts the sudden estrangement as something she deserves. After a few awkward, awful days, she suggests they separate, saying that she will return to her parents. Angel gives her some money and promises to try to reconcile himself to her past, but warns her not to try to join him until he sends for her. After a quick visit to his parents, Angel takes ship for [Brazil](#) to start a new life. Before he leaves, he encounters Izz Huett on the road and impulsively asks her to come to Brazil with him, as his mistress. She accepts, but when he asks her how much she loves him, she admits "Nobody could love 'ee more than Tess did! She would have laid down her life for 'ee. I could do no more!" Hearing this, he abandons the whim, and Izz goes home weeping bitterly.

Tess returns home for a time but, finding this unbearable, decides to join Marian and Izz at a [starve-acre](#) farm called Flintcomb-Ash. On the road, she is recognised and insulted by a farmer named Groby (the same man who slighted her in front of Angel); this man proves to be her new employer. At the farm, the three former milkmaids perform very hard physical labour.

One day, Tess attempts to visit Angel's family at the parsonage in Emminster. As she nears her destination, she encounters Angel's priggish older brothers and the woman his parents once hoped he would marry, Mercy Chant. They do not recognise her, but she overhears them discussing Angel's unwise marriage. Shamed, she turns back. On the way, she overhears a wandering preacher and is shocked to discover that he is Alec d'Urberville, who has been converted to [Christianity](#) under the Reverend James Clare's influence.

Alec and Tess are each shaken by their encounter, and Alec begs Tess never to tempt him again as they stand beside an ill-omened stone monument called the Cross-in-Hand. However, Alec soon comes to Flintcomb-Ash to ask Tess to marry him. She tells him she is already married. He returns at [Candlemas](#) and again in early spring, when Tess is hard at work feeding a [threshing machine](#). He tells her he is no longer a preacher and wants her to be with him. She slaps him when he insults Angel, drawing blood. Tess then learns from her sister, Liza-Lu, that her father, John, is ill and that her mother is dying. Tess rushes home to look after them. Her mother soon recovers, but her father unexpectedly dies.

The family is evicted from their home, as Durbeyfield held only a [life lease](#) on their cottage. Alec tells Tess that her husband is never coming back and offers to house the Durbeyfields on his estate. Tess refuses his assistance. She had earlier written Angel a [psalm-like](#) letter, full of love, self-abasement, and pleas for mercy; now, however, she finally admits to herself that Angel has wronged her and scribbles a hasty note saying that she will do all she can to forget him, since he has treated her so unjustly.

The Durbeyfields plan to rent some rooms in the town of Kingsbere, ancestral home of the d'Urbervilles, but they arrive there to find that the rooms have already been rented to another family. All but destitute, they are forced to take shelter in the churchyard, under the D'Urberville window. Tess enters the church and in the d'Urberville Aisle, Alec reappears and importunes Tess again. In despair, she looks at the entrance to the d'Urberville vault and wonders aloud, "Why am I on the wrong side of this door?"

In the meantime, Angel has been very ill in Brazil and, his farming venture having failed, he heads home to England. On the way, he confides his troubles to a stranger, who tells him that he was wrong to leave his wife; what she was in the past should matter less than what she might become. Angel begins to repent his treatment of Tess.

Upon his return to his family home, Angel has two letters waiting for him: Tess's angry note and a few cryptic lines from "two well-wishers" (Izz and Marian), warning him to protect his wife from "an enemy in the shape of a friend." He sets out to find Tess and eventually locates Joan, now well-dressed and living in a pleasant cottage. After responding evasively to his enquiries, she finally tells him her daughter has gone to live in [Sandbourne](#), a fashionable seaside resort. There, he finds Tess living in an expensive [boarding house](#) under the name "Mrs. d'Urberville." When he asks for her, she appears in startlingly elegant attire and stands aloof. He tenderly asks her forgiveness, but Tess, in anguish, tells him he has come too late; thinking he would never return, she yielded at last to Alec d'Urberville's persuasion and has become his mistress. She gently asks Angel to leave and never come back. He departs, and Tess returns to her bedroom, where she falls to her knees and begins a lamentation. She blames Alec for causing her to lose Angel's love a second time, accusing Alec of having lied when he said that Angel would never return to her.

The landlady, Mrs. Brooks, tries to listen in at the keyhole, but withdraws hastily when the argument becomes heated. She later sees Tess leave the house, then notices a spreading red spot — a bloodstain — on the ceiling. She summons help, and Alec is found stabbed to death in his bed.

Angel, totally disheartened, has left Sandbourne; Tess hurries after him and tells him that she has killed Alec, saying that she hopes she has won his forgiveness by murdering the man who ruined both their lives. Angel doesn't believe her at first, but grants his forgiveness — as she is in such a fevered state — and tells her that he loves her. Rather than head for the coast, they walk inland, vaguely planning to hide somewhere until the search for Tess is ended and they can escape abroad from a port. They find an empty mansion and stay there for five days in blissful happiness, until their presence is discovered one day by the cleaning woman.

They continue walking and, in the middle of the night, stumble upon [Stonehenge](#) where Tess lies down to rest on an ancient altar. Before she falls asleep, she asks Angel to look after her younger sister, Liza-Lu, saying that she hopes Angel will marry her after she is dead. At dawn, Angel sees that they are surrounded by police. He finally realises that Tess really has committed murder and asks the men in a whisper to let her awaken naturally before they arrest her. When she opens her eyes and sees the police, she tells Angel she is "almost glad" because "now I shall not live for you to despise me". She is allowed a dignified death through the fact that Angel listens to her (he hasn't throughout the rest of the novel) and through her parting words of "I am ready".

Tess is escorted to Wintoncester ([Winchester](#)) prison. The novel closes with Angel and Liza-Lu watching from a nearby hill as the black flag signalling Tess's execution is raised over the prison. Angel and Liza-Lu then join hands and go on their way.

Color Purple (The)—by Alice Walker.

Celie, the protagonist and narrator of *The Color Purple*, is a poor, uneducated, fourteen year-old black girl living in rural Georgia. Celie starts writing letters to God because her stepfather, Alphonso, beats and rapes her. Alphonso has already impregnated Celie once. Celie gave birth to a girl, whom her father stole and presumably killed in the woods. Celie has a second child, a boy, whom her father also steals. Celie's mother becomes seriously ill and dies. Alphonso brings home a new wife but continues to abuse Celie.

Celie and her bright, pretty younger sister, Nettie, learn that a man known only as Mr. wants to marry Nettie. Mr. has a mistress named Shug Avery, a sultry lounge singer whose photograph fascinates Celie. Alphonso refuses to let Nettie marry, and instead offers Mr. the "ugly" Celie as a bride. Mr. eventually accepts the offer, and takes Celie into a difficult and joyless married life. Nettie runs away from Alphonso and takes refuge at Celie's house. Mr. still desires Nettie, and when he advances on her she flees for her own safety. Never hearing from Nettie again, Celie assumes she is dead.

Mr.'s sister Kate feels sorry for Celie, and tells her to fight back against Mr. rather than submit to his abuses. Harpo, Mr.'s son, falls in love with a large, spunky girl named Sofia. Shug Avery comes to town to sing at a local bar, but Celie is not allowed to go see her. Sofia becomes pregnant and marries Harpo. Celie is amazed by Sofia's defiance in the face of Harpo's and Mr.'s attempts to treat Sofia as an inferior. Harpo's attempts to beat Sofia into submission consistently fail, as Sofia is by far the physically stronger of the two.

Shug falls ill and Mr. takes her into his house. Shug is initially rude to Celie, but the two women become friends as Celie takes charge of nursing Shug. Celie finds herself infatuated with Shug and attracted to her sexually. Frustrated with Harpo's consistent attempts to subordinate her, Sofia moves out, taking her children. Several months later, Harpo opens a juke joint where Shug sings nightly. Celie grows confused over her feelings toward Shug.

Shug decides to stay when she learns that Mr. beats Celie when Shug is away. Shug and Celie's relationship grows intimate, and Shug begins to ask Celie questions about sex. Sofia returns for a visit and promptly gets in a fight with Harpo's new girlfriend, Squeak. In town one day, the mayor's wife, Miss Millie, asks Sofia to work as her maid. Sofia answers with a sassy "Hell no." When the mayor slaps Sofia for her "insubordination", she returns the blow, knocking the mayor down. Sofia is sent to jail. Squeak's attempts to get Sofia freed are futile. Sofia is sentenced to work for twelve years as the mayor's maid.

Shug returns with a new husband, Grady. Despite her marriage, Shug instigates a sexual relationship with Celie, and the two frequently share the same bed. One night Shug asks Celie about her sister. Celie assumes Nettie is dead because she had promised to write to Celie, but never did. Shug says she has seen Mr. hide away numerous mysterious letters that have arrived in the mail. Shug manages to get her hands on one of these letters, and they find it is from Nettie. Searching through Mr.'s trunk, Celie and Shug find dozens of letters that Nettie has sent to Celie over the years. Overcome with emotion, Celie reads the letters in order, wondering how to keep herself from killing Mr.

The letters indicate that Nettie befriended a missionary couple, Samuel and Corrine, and traveled with them to Africa to do ministry work. Samuel and Corrine have two adopted children, Olivia and Adam. Nettie and Corrine become close friends, but Corrine, noticing that her adopted children resemble Nettie, wonders if Nettie and Samuel have a secret past. Increasingly suspicious, Corrine tries to limit Nettie's role within her family.

Nettie becomes disillusioned with her missionary experience, as she finds the Africans self-centered and obstinate. Corrine becomes ill with a fever. Nettie asks Samuel to tell her how he adopted Olivia and Adam. Based on Samuel's story, Nettie realizes that the two children are

actually Celie's biological children, alive after all. Nettie also learns that Alphonso is really only Nettie and Celie's stepfather, not their real father. Their real father was a storeowner whom white men lynched because they resented his success. Alphonso told Celie and Nettie he was their real father because he wanted to inherit the house and property that was once their mother's.

Nettie confesses to Samuel and Corrine that she is in fact their children's biological aunt. The gravely ill Corrine refuses to believe Nettie. Corrine dies, but accepts Nettie's story and feels reconciled just before her death. Meanwhile, Celie visits Alphonso, who confirms Nettie's story, admitting that he is only the women's stepfather. Celie begins to lose some of her faith in God, but Shug tries to get her to reimagine God in her own way, rather than in the traditional image of the old, bearded white man.

The mayor releases Sofia from her servitude six months early. At dinner one night, Celie finally releases her pent-up rage, angrily cursing Mr. for his years of abuse. Shug announces that she and Celie are moving to Tennessee, and Squeak decides to go with them. In Tennessee, Celie spends her time designing and sewing individually tailored pairs of pants, eventually turning her hobby into a business. Celie returns to Georgia for a visit, and finds that Mr. has reformed his ways, and Alphonso has died. Alphonso's house and land are now hers, so she moves there.

Meanwhile, Nettie and Samuel marry and prepare to return to America. Before they leave, Samuel's son, Adam, marries Tashi, a native African girl. Following African tradition, Tashi undergoes the painful rituals of female circumcision and facial scarring. In solidarity, Adam undergoes the same facial scarring ritual.

Celie and Mr. reconcile, and begin to genuinely enjoy each other's company. Now independent financially, spiritually and emotionally, Celie is no longer bothered by Shug's passing flings with younger men. Sofia remarries Harpo and now works in Celie's clothing store. Nettie finally returns to America with Samuel and the children. Emotionally drained but exhilarated by the reunion with her sister, Celie notes that though she and Nettie are now old, she has never in her life felt younger.

Their Eyes Were Watching God—by Zora Neale Hurston.

The main character, an African American woman in her early forties named Janie Crawford, tells the story of her life and [journey](#) via an extended flashback to her best friend, Pheoby, so that Pheoby can tell Janie's story to the nosy community on her behalf. Her life has three major periods corresponding to her marriages to three very different men.

Nanny, Janie's grandmother, was a slave who became pregnant by her owner and gave birth to a daughter, Leafy. Though Nanny tries to create a good life for her daughter, Leafy is raped by her school teacher and she becomes pregnant with Janie. Shortly after Janie's birth, Leafy begins to drink and stay out at night. Eventually, she runs away leaving Janie with Nanny. Nanny transfers all the hopes she had for Leafy to Janie. When Janie is sixteen, Nanny sees her kissing a neighborhood boy, Johnny Taylor, and fears that Janie will become a "mule" to some man. Nanny arranges for Janie to marry Logan Killicks, an older man and farmer who is looking for a wife to keep his home and help on the farm. Although Janie was not interested in marriage at that time, her grandmother wanted her to have the kinds of things she never had the chance to have, and by marrying Logan Killicks Janie's grandmother thought it gave her the opportunity to make this possible.^[3] Janie has the idea that marriage must involve love, forged in a pivotal early scene where she sees bees pollinating a pear tree, and believes that marriage is the human equivalent to this natural process. Logan Killicks, however, wants a domestic helper rather than a lover or partner, and after he tries to force her to help him with the hard labor of the farm, Janie runs off with the glib Jody (Joe) Starks, who takes her to [Eatonville](#).

Starks arrives in Eatonville to find the residents devoid of ambition, so he arranges to buy more land from the neighboring landowner, hires some local residents to build a general store for him to own and run, and the people of the town appoint him mayor. Janie soon realizes that Joe wants her as a trophy wife. He wants the image of his perfect wife to reinforce his powerful position in town, as he asks her to run the store but forbids her from participating in the substantial social life that occurs on the store's front porch.

After Starks passes away, Janie finds herself financially independent and beset with suitors, some of whom are men of some means or have prestigious occupations, but she falls in love with a drifter and gambler named Vergible Woods who goes by the name of Tea Cake throughout the story. She falls in love with Tea Cake after he plays the [guitar](#) for her. She sells the store and the two head to [Jacksonville](#) and get married, only to move to the [Everglades](#) region ("the muck") soon after for Tea Cake to find work planting and harvesting beans. While their relationship has its ups and downs, including mutual bouts of jealousy, Janie now has the marriage with love that she had wanted.

The area is hit by the great [Okeechobee hurricane](#), and while Tea Cake and Janie survive it, Tea Cake is bitten by a [rabid](#) dog while saving Janie from drowning. He contracts the disease himself. He ultimately tries to shoot Janie with his [pistol](#), but she shoots him with a [rifle](#) in self-defense. She is charged with [murder](#). At the trial, Tea Cake's black, male friends show up to oppose her, while a group of local white women arrive to support her. The all-white jury acquits Janie, and she gives Tea Cake a lavish funeral. Tea Cake's friends forgive her, and they want her to remain in the Everglades. However, she decides to return to Eatonville, only to find the residents gossiping about her.

Things Fall Apart—by Chinua Achebe.

Okonkwo is a leader and wrestling champion in his village. He is known to be hard working and shows no weakness — emotional or otherwise — to anyone. Although brusque with his family and neighbors, he is wealthy, courageous, and powerful among the people of his village. He is a leader of his village, and his place in that society is what he has striven for his entire life.

Because of his great esteem in the village, Okonkwo is selected by the elders to be the guardian of Ikemefuna, a boy taken prisoner by the village as a peace settlement between two villages after his father killed an Umuofian woman. Ikemefuna is to stay with Okonkwo until the Oracle instructs the elders on what to do with the boy. For three years the boy lives with Okonkwo's family and Okonkwo grows fond of him. The boy looks up to Okonkwo and considers him a second father. Then the elders decide that the boy must be killed. The oldest man in the village warns Okonkwo, telling him to have nothing to do with the murder because it would be like killing his own child. Rather than seem weak and feminine to the other men of the village, Okonkwo participates in the murder of the boy despite the warning from the old man. In fact, Okonkwo himself strikes the killing blow as Ikemefuna begs him for protection.

Shortly after Ikemefuna's death, things begin to go wrong for Okonkwo. When he accidentally kills someone at a ritual funeral ceremony when his gun explodes, he and his family are sent into exile for seven years to appease the gods he has offended. While Okonkwo is away in exile, white men begin coming to Umuofia and they peacefully introduce their religion. As the number of converts increases, the foothold of the white people grows beyond their religion and a new government is introduced.

Okonkwo returns to his village after his exile to find it a changed place because of the presence of the white man. He and other tribal leaders try to reclaim their hold on their native land by destroying a local Christian church that has insulted their gods and religion. In return, the leader of the white government takes them prisoner and holds them for ransom for a short while, further

humiliating and insulting the native leaders. As a result, the people of Umuofia finally gather for what could be a great uprising. Okonkwo, adamant over following Umuofian custom and tradition, despises any form of cowardice and advocates for war against the white men. When messengers of the white government try to stop the meeting, Okonkwo kills one of them. He realizes with despair that the people of Umuofia are not going to fight to protect themselves because they let the other messengers escape and so all is lost for the village.

When the local leader of the white government comes to Okonkwo's house to take him to court, he finds that Okonkwo has [hanged himself](#), ruining his great reputation as it is strictly against the custom of the Igbo to commit suicide.

Things They Carried (The)—by Tim O'Brien.

The Things They Carried is a collection of related stories by [Tim O'Brien](#), about a [platoon](#) of [American](#) soldiers in the [Vietnam War](#), originally published in hardcover by [Houghton Mifflin](#), 1990. While apparently based on some of O'Brien's own experiences, the title page refers to the book as "a work of fiction"; indeed, the majority of stories in the book possess some quality of [metafiction](#). Even though the characters are based on a work of fiction, they show similarities of real soldiers that O'Brien knew during his time in the war. A few of the characters show similarities of characters from his autobiography *If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home*. That is why O'Brien dedicated his book to the men of the Alpha Company.

Thousand Acres (A)—by Jane Smiley.

Larry Cook is an aging farmer who decides to incorporate his farm, handing complete and joint ownership to his three daughters, Ginny, Rose, and Caroline. When the youngest daughter objects, she is removed from the agreement. This sets off a chain of events that brings dark truths to light and explodes long-suppressed emotions, as the story eventually reveals the long-term sexual abuse of the two eldest daughters that was committed by their father.

The plot also focuses on Ginny's troubled marriage, her difficulties in bearing a child and her relationship with her family.

To Kill a Mockingbird—by Harper Lee.

The story takes place during three years of the [Great Depression](#) in the fictional "tired old town" of Maycomb, Alabama. It focuses on six-year-old Scout Finch, who lives with her older brother Jem and their widowed father Atticus, a middle-aged lawyer. Jem and Scout befriend a boy named Dill who visits Maycomb to stay with his aunt each summer. The three children are terrified of, and fascinated by, their neighbor, the [reclusive](#) "Boo" Radley. The adults of Maycomb are hesitant to talk about Boo and, for many years, few have seen him. The children feed each other's imagination with rumors about his appearance and reasons for remaining hidden, and they fantasize about how to get him out of his house. Following two summers of friendship with Dill, Scout and Jem find that someone is leaving them small gifts in a tree outside the Radley place. Several times, the mysterious Boo makes gestures of affection to the children, but, to their disappointment, never appears in person.

Atticus is appointed by the court to defend Tom Robinson, a black man who has been accused of raping a young white woman, Mayella Ewell. Although many of Maycomb's citizens disapprove, Atticus agrees to defend Tom to the best of his ability. Other children taunt Jem and Scout for Atticus' actions, calling him a "nigger-lover". Scout is tempted to stand up for her father's honor by fighting, even though he has told her not to. For his part, Atticus faces a group of men intent on

lynching Tom. This danger is averted when Scout, Jem, and Dill shame the mob into dispersing by forcing them to view the situation from Atticus' and Tom's points of view.

Because Atticus does not want them to be present at Tom Robinson's trial, Scout, Jem, and Dill watch in secret from the [colored balcony](#). Atticus establishes that the accusers—Mayella and her father, Bob Ewell, the [town drunk](#)—are lying. It also becomes clear that the friendless Mayella was making sexual advances towards Tom and her father caught her and beat her badly. Despite significant evidence of Tom's innocence, the jury convicts him. Jem's faith in justice is badly shaken, as is Atticus', when a hopeless Tom is shot and killed while trying to escape from prison.

Humiliated by the trial, Bob Ewell vows revenge. He spits in Atticus' face on the street, tries to break into the presiding judge's house, and menaces Tom Robinson's widow. Finally, he attacks the defenseless Jem and Scout as they walk home on a dark night from the school [Halloween](#) pageant. Jem's arm is broken in the struggle, but amid the confusion, someone comes to the children's rescue. The mysterious man carries Jem home, where Scout realizes that he is Boo Radley.

Maycomb's sheriff arrives and discovers that Bob Ewell has been killed in the struggle. The sheriff argues with Atticus about the prudence and ethics of holding Jem or Boo responsible. Atticus eventually accepts the sheriff's story that Ewell simply fell on his own knife. Boo asks Scout to walk him home, and after she says goodbye to him at his front door, he disappears again. While standing on the Radley porch, Scout imagines life from Boo's perspective and regrets that they never repaid him for the gifts he had given them.

To the Lighthouse—by Virginia Woolf.

The novel is set in the Ramsays' summer home in the [Hebrides](#), on the [Isle of Skye](#). The section begins with Mrs Ramsay assuring James that they should be able to visit the lighthouse on the next day. This prediction is denied by Mr Ramsay, who voices his certainty that the weather will not be clear, an opinion that forces a certain tension between Mr and Mrs Ramsay, and also between Mr Ramsay and James. This particular incident is referred to on various occasions throughout the chapter, especially in the context of Mr and Mrs Ramsay's relationship.

The Ramsays have been joined at the house by a number of friends and colleagues, one of them being Lily Briscoe, who begins the novel as a young, uncertain painter attempting a portrayal of Mrs. Ramsay and James. Briscoe finds herself plagued by doubts throughout the novel, doubts largely fed by the claims of Charles Tansley, another guest, that women can neither paint nor write. Tansley himself is an admirer of Mr Ramsay and his philosophical treatises.

The section closes with a large dinner party. When Augustus Carmichael, a visiting poet, asks for a second serving of soup, Mr Ramsay nearly snaps at him. Mrs Ramsay, who is striving for the perfect dinner party, is herself out of sorts when Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle, two acquaintances whom she has brought together in engagement, arrive late to dinner, as Minta has lost her grandmother's brooch on the beach.

The second section gives a sense of time passing, absence, and death. Ten years pass, during which the four-year [First World War](#) begins and ends. Mrs Ramsay passes away, Prue dies from complications of childbirth, and Andrew is killed in the war. Mr Ramsay is left adrift without his wife to praise and comfort him during his bouts of fear and his anguish regarding the longevity of his philosophical work.

In the final section, "The Lighthouse," some of the remaining Ramsays and other guests return to their summer home ten years after the events of Part I. Mr Ramsay finally plans on taking the long-delayed trip to the lighthouse with his son James and daughter Cam(illa). The trip almost

does not happen, as the children are not ready, but they eventually set off. As they travel, the children are silent in protest at their father for forcing them to come along. However, James keeps the sailing boat steady and rather than receiving the harsh words he has come to expect from his father, he hears praise, providing a rare moment of empathy between father and son; Cam's attitude towards her father changes also, from resentment to eventual admiration.

They are accompanied by the sailor Macalister and his son, who catches fish during the trip. The son cuts a piece of flesh from a fish he has caught to use for bait, throwing the injured fish back into the sea.

While they set sail for the lighthouse, Lily attempts to finally complete the painting she has held in her mind since the start of the novel. She reconsiders her memory of Mrs and Mr Ramsay, balancing the multitude of impressions from ten years ago in an effort to reach towards an objective truth about Mrs Ramsay and life itself. Upon finishing the painting (just as the sailing party reaches the lighthouse) and seeing that it satisfies her, she realizes that the execution of her vision is more important to her than the idea of leaving some sort of legacy in her work.

Tom Jones—by Henry Fielding.

Tom Jones is a [foundling](#) discovered on the property of a very kind, wealthy landowner, Squire Allworthy, in [Somerset](#) in England's [West Country](#). Tom grows into a vigorous and lusty, yet honest and kind-hearted, youth. He develops affection for his neighbour's daughter, Sophia Western. On one hand, their love reflects the [romantic comedy](#) genre that was popular in 18th-century Britain. However, Tom's status as a [bastard](#) causes Sophia's father and Allworthy to oppose their love; this criticism of class friction in society acted as a biting [social commentary](#). The inclusion of [prostitution](#) and sexual promiscuity in the plot was also original for its time, and also acted as the foundation for criticism of the book's "lowness."

Tracks—by Louise Erdrich.

Tracks alternates between two narrators: Nanapush, a jovial tribal elder, and Pauline, a young girl of mixed heritage. In Nanapush's chapters the point-of-view is that of Nanapush telling stories to his grand-daughter, Lulu, several years after the main events in the novel occur. When Lulu was ten years old, her mother, Fleur Pillager, sent her away to a government school. Because of this, Lulu is now estranged from Fleur. Nanapush, therefore, attempts to reconcile mother and daughter by telling Lulu about the events between 1912 and 1924 that led Fleur to her decision.

Nanapush first meets Fleur in 1912 when he rescues her in the middle of winter and nurses her back to health from [consumption](#) – a recent epidemic among the Ashininaabe. Because of their shared grief at losing so many from their community, Nanapush and Fleur develop a friendship and begin to see one another as family. The next year, Fleur goes to the nearby town of Argus and takes a job at a butcher's shop, where she meets Pauline Puyat – the novel's second narrator. After beating a group of men from the shop one night at a game of poker, Fleur is beaten and raped. She leaves town, but the next day a tornado strikes Argus. Mysteriously, no one in town is harmed in the storm with the exception of the men who raped her – whose bodies are found locked in the freezer of the butcher shop, where they had taken cover.

Fleur returns to her family home on the reservation, where she meets Eli Kashpaw while hunting in the woods one day. Much to his mother's dismay, Eli falls in love with Fleur and moves in with her. Soon, Fleur begins to show signs that she is pregnant and, although the true paternity is unknown, Eli takes responsibility of the child as his own. A new family unit begins to form at the Pillager home – Fleur, Eli and their daughter, Lulu, as well as Eli's mother, Margaret, and her second son, Nector. Throughout the novel, Margaret and Nanapush, whom Fleur regards as a

father, also develop an intimate relationship. Together, the family faces trials of hunger, tribal conflict, and ultimately the loss of their land to the government.

In the meantime, Pauline has also left Argus and is staying with a widow named Bernadette Morrissey, from whom she learns the art of tending the sick and dying. Pauline serves as a midwife to Fleur and begins to spend time at the Pillager home. She becomes increasingly jealous of Fleur and her relationship with Eli and goes to desperate measures to break them up. Claiming to have received a vision, she decides to join a convent, where she only delves further into obsession. She devotes herself to the cause of converting Fleur and the others, but is generally regarded as a nuisance. She develops several unusual habits as a means of self-inflicting suffering to remind herself of Christ's suffering. Her behaviors are frowned upon by the superior nun and she is eventually sent away to teach at a Catholic school. Pauline's narratives deal with her own personal story and also provide a second perspectives on many of the same events described by Nanapush.

Trial (The)—by Franz Kafka.

On his thirtieth birthday, a senior bank clerk, Josef K., is unexpectedly arrested by two unidentified agents for an unspecified crime. The agents do not name the authority for which they are acting. He is not taken away, however, but left at home to await instructions from the Committee of Affairs.

K. later visits the court and stands in the witness box pleading his case. He then returns home.

K. later goes to visit the magistrate again, but instead is forced to have a meeting with an attendant's wife. Looking at the Magistrate's books, he discovers a cache of pornography.

K. returns home to find Fräulein Montag, a lodger from another room, moving in with Fräulein Bürstner. He suspects that this is to prevent him from pursuing his affair with the latter woman. Yet another lodger, Captain Lanz, appears to be in league with Montag.

Later, in a store room at his own bank, K. discovers the two agents, who arrested him, being whipped by a flogger for asking K. for bribes, as a result of complaints K. previously made about them to the Magistrate. K. tries to argue with the flogger, saying that the men need not be whipped, but the flogger cannot be swayed. The next day he returns to the store room and is shocked to find everything as he had found it the day before, including the Whipper and the two agents.

K. is visited by his uncle, who is a friend of a lawyer. The lawyer was with the Clerk of the Court. The uncle seems distressed by K.'s predicament. At first sympathetic, he becomes concerned K. is underestimating the seriousness of the case. The uncle introduces K. to an advocate, who is attended by Leni, a nurse, who K.'s uncle suspects is the advocate's mistress. K. has a sexual encounter with Leni, whilst his uncle is talking with the Advocate and the Chief Clerk of the Court, much to his uncle's anger, and to the detriment of his case.

K. visits the advocate and finds him to be a capricious and unhelpful character. K. returns to his bank but finds that his colleagues are trying to undermine him.

K. is advised by one of his bank clients to visit Titorelli, a court painter, for advice. Titorelli has no official connections, yet seems to have a deep understanding of the process. K. learns that, to Titorelli's knowledge, not a single defendant has ever been acquitted. He sets out what K.'s options are, but the consequences of all of them are unpleasant: they consist of different delay tactics to

stretch out his case as long as possible before the inevitable "Guilty" verdict. Titorelli instructs K. that there's not much he can do since he doesn't know of what crime he has been accused.

K. decides to take control of matters himself and visits his advocate with the intention of dismissing him. At the advocate's office he meets a downtrodden individual, Block, a client who offers K. some insight from a client's perspective. Block's case has continued for five years and he appears to have been virtually enslaved by his dependence on the advocate's meaningless and circular advice. The advocate mocks Block in front of K. for his dog-like subservience. This experience further poisons K.'s opinion of his advocate, and K. is bemused as to why his advocate would think that seeing such a client, in such a state, could change his mind. (This chapter was left unfinished by the author.)

K. is asked to tour an Italian client around local places of cultural interest, but the Italian client short of time asks K. to tour him around only the cathedral, setting a time to meet there. When the client doesn't show up, K. explores the cathedral which is empty except for an old woman and a church official. K. decides to leave, as a priest K. notices seems to be preparing to give a sermon from a small second pulpit, lest it begin and K. be compelled to stay for its entirety. Instead of giving a sermon, the priest calls out K.'s name, although K. has never known the priest. The priest works for the court, and tells K. a fable, (which has been published separately as [Before the Law](#)) that is meant to explain his situation, but instead causes confusion, and implies that K.'s fate is hopeless. *Before the Law* begins as a parable, then continues with several pages of interpretation between the Priest and K. The gravity of the priest's words prepares the reader for an unpleasant ending.

On the last day of K.'s thirtieth year, two men arrive to execute him. He offers little resistance, suggesting that he has realised this as being inevitable for some time. They lead him to a quarry where he is expected to kill himself, but he cannot. The two men then execute him. His last words describe his own death: "Like a dog!"

Trifles—by Susan Glaspell.

Trifles is seen as an example of early [feminist](#) drama, because it is two female characters', Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale's, ability to sympathize with the victim's wife, Minnie, and so understand her motives, that leads them to the evidence against her, while the men are blinded by their cold, emotionless investigation of material facts. The female characters find the body of a canary, which had its neck wrung, killed in the same way as the deceased (John Wright), thus leading them to the conclusion that Minnie was the murderer, and they appear to empathize with her situation. Clearly, the wife is symbolized by the caged bird, a common symbol of women's roles in society. The plot concludes with the two women hiding the evidence against Minnie.

The male characters are prejudiced in believing that nothing important can be discovered in areas of the house where Minnie spent the majority of her time. Their minds are clouded by the prejudice and disregard important clues as being mere "trifles" that women concern themselves with, searching the barn and the bedroom, places where men have dominance, rather than the kitchen, the only place where a woman would be in charge. One important line, spoken by the sheriff, says of the kitchen "Nothing here but kitchen things." This dismissal of the importance of the woman's life and the male reluctance to enter the "woman's sphere" is key in the men's failure to discover the crucial evidence for the case. The most important evidence, the dead canary that the two women find, was hidden in Minnie's sewing basket. The men scorn the domestic sphere, even kicking some of the items in contempt.

The two women, having pieced together the murder, face the moral dilemma of telling the men about the motive or protecting Minnie, who they see as a victim. Their choice raises questions

about solidarity among women, the meaning of justice, and the role of women in society as a source of justice.

Tristram Shandy—by Laurence Sterne.

As its title suggests, the book is ostensibly Tristram's narration of his life story. But it is one of the central jokes of the novel that he cannot explain anything simply, that he must make explanatory diversions to add context and colour to his tale, to the extent that we do not even reach Tristram's own birth until Volume III.

Consequently, apart from Tristram as narrator, the most familiar and important characters in the book are his father Walter, his mother, his Uncle Toby, Toby's servant Trim, and a supporting cast of popular minor characters, including the chambermaid, Susannah, [Doctor Slop](#), and the parson, Yorick.

Most of the action is concerned with domestic upsets or misunderstandings, which find humour in the opposing temperaments of Walter—splenetic, rational, and somewhat sarcastic—and Uncle Toby, who is gentle, uncomplicated, and a lover of his fellow man.

In between such events, Tristram as narrator finds himself discoursing at length on [sexual practices](#), [insults](#), the influence of one's name, and noses as well as explorations of [obstetrics](#), [siege warfare](#), and [philosophy](#) as he struggles to marshal his material and finish the story of his life.

Though Tristram is always present as narrator and commentator, the book contains surprisingly little of his life, only the story of a trip through France and accounts of the four comical mishaps which shaped the course of his life from an early age:

While still only a [homunculus](#), Tristram's implantation within his mother's womb was disturbed. At the very moment of procreation, his mother asked his father if he had remembered to wind the clock. The distraction and annoyance led to the disruption of the [proper balance of humors](#) necessary to conceive a well-favoured child.

One of his father's pet theories was that a large and attractive nose was important to a man making his way in life. In a difficult birth, Tristram's nose was crushed by Dr. Slop's forceps.

A second theory of his father was that a person's name exerted enormous influence over that person's nature and fortunes, with the worst possible name being Tristram. In view of the previous accidents, Tristram's father decreed that the boy would receive an especially auspicious name, [Trismegistus](#). Susannah mangled the name in conveying it to the curate, and the child was christened Tristram. According to his father's theory, his name, being a [portmanteau](#)-like conflation of "Trismegistus" (after the [esoteric mystic Hermes Trismegistus](#)) and "Tristan" (whose connotation bore the influence through [folk etymology](#) of Latin *tristis*, "sorrowful"), both doomed him to a life of woe and cursed him with the [inability to comprehend](#) the causes of his misfortune.

As a toddler, Tristram suffered an accidental [circumcision](#) when Susannah let a window sash fall as he urinated out of the window because his [chamberpot](#) was missing.

Turn of the Screw (The)—by Henry James.

An unnamed narrator listens to a male friend reading a manuscript written by a former **governess** whom the friend claims to have known and who is now dead. The manuscript tells the story of how the young governess is hired by a man who has become responsible for his young **nephew**

and **niece** after the death of their parents. He lives mainly in **London** and is not interested in raising the children himself.

The boy, Miles, is attending a **boarding school**, while his younger sister, Flora, is living at a country estate in **Essex**. She is currently being cared for by the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose. The governess's new employer, the uncle of Miles and Flora, gives her full charge of the children and explicitly states that she is not to bother him with communications of any sort. The governess travels to her new employer's country house and begins her duties.

Miles soon returns from school for the summer just after a letter arrives from the headmaster stating that he has been expelled. Miles never speaks of the matter, and the governess is hesitant to raise the issue. She fears that there is some horrid secret behind the expulsion, but is too charmed by the adorable young boy to want to press the issue. Soon thereafter, the governess begins to see around the grounds of the estate the figures of a man and woman whom she does not recognize. These figures come and go at will without ever being seen or challenged by other members of the household, and they seem to the governess to be supernatural. She learns from Mrs. Grose that her predecessor, Miss Jessel, and another employee, Peter Quint, had had a sexual relationship with each other and had both died. Prior to their deaths, they spent much of their time with Flora and Miles, and this fact has grim significance for the governess when she becomes convinced that the two children are secretly aware of the presence of the ghosts.

Later, Flora leaves the house while Miles plays music for the governess. They notice Flora's absence and go to look for her. The governess and Mrs. Grose find her in a clearing in the wood, and the governess is convinced that she has been talking to Miss Jessel. When she finally confronts Flora, Flora denies seeing Miss Jessel, and demands never to see the governess again. Mrs. Grose takes Flora away to her uncle, leaving the governess with Miles. That night, they are finally talking of Miles' expulsion when the ghost of Quint appears to the governess at the window. The governess shields Miles, who attempts to see the ghost. The governess tells him that he is no longer controlled by the ghost, and then finds that Miles has died in her arms.

Twelfth Night—by William Shakespeare.

The subtitle for this play is *What You Will*.

Like many of [Shakespeare's comedies](#), this one centres on mistaken identity. The leading character, Viola, is shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria during the opening scenes. She loses contact with her twin brother, Sebastian, whom she believes to be dead. Masquerading as a young [page](#) under the name Cesario, she enters the service of Duke Orsino through the help of the sea captain who rescues her. Orsino has convinced himself that he is in love with the bereaved Lady Olivia, whose father and brother have recently died, and who will have nothing to do with any suitors, the Duke included. Orsino decides to use "Cesario" as an intermediary to tell Olivia about his love for her. Olivia, believing Viola to be a man, falls in love with this handsome and eloquent messenger. Viola, in turn, has fallen in love with the Duke, who also believes Viola is a man, and who regards her as his confidant.

Much of the play is taken up with the comic [subplot](#), in which several characters conspire to make Olivia's pompous head steward, [Malvolio](#), believe that his lady Olivia wishes to marry him. It involves Olivia's uncle, [Sir Toby Belch](#); another would-be suitor, a silly squire named [Sir Andrew Aguecheek](#); her servants Maria and Fabian; and her father's favourite [fool](#), [Feste](#). Sir Toby and Sir Andrew get drunk and disturb the peace of their lady's house by continuously singing [catches](#) late into the night at the top of their voices, prompting Malvolio to chastise them. This is the basis for Sir Toby's, Sir Andrew, and Maria's revenge on Malvolio.

The riotous company convince Malvolio that Olivia is secretly in love with him through a love letter written by Maria in Olivia's hand asking Malvolio to wear yellow stockings cross-gartered, to be rude to the rest of the servants, and to smile constantly in the presence of Olivia. Malvolio finds the letter and reacts in surprised delight. He starts acting out the contents of the letter to show Olivia his positive response. Olivia, saddened by Viola's attitude towards her, asks for her chief steward, and is shocked by a Malvolio who has seemingly lost his mind. She leaves him to the contrivances of his tormentors.

Pretending that Malvolio is insane, they lock him up in a dark cellar (a common "treatment" for the mentally ill), with a slit for light. Feste visits him to mock his "insanity", once disguised as a priest, and again as himself. At the end of the play Malvolio learns of their conspiracy and storms off promising revenge, but the Duke sends Fabian to pacify him.

Meanwhile Sebastian arrives on the scene, sowing confusion. Mistaking him for Viola, Olivia asks him to marry her, and they are secretly united. Finally, when the twins appear in the presence of both Olivia and the Duke, there is more wonder and awe at their similarity, at which point Viola reveals she is really a female and that Sebastian is her lost twin brother. The play ends in a declaration of marriage between the Duke and Viola, and it is learned that Toby has married Maria. An [elegiac](#) song from Feste ("heigh-ho, the wind and the rain") brings the entertainment to a close.

Typical American—by Gish Jen.

Like Amy Tan and Timothy Mo, Jen's delightful first novel follows the hopeful lives of Chinese immigrants with a great deal of humor and sympathy. As foreign students in New York, Ralph Chang, "Older Sister" Teresa, and Ralph's future wife Helen become trapped in the United States when the Communists assume control of China in 1948. Banding together, the three of them innocently plan to achieve the American dream, while retaining their Chinese values. Predictably, just when they appear to have reached their goal, the lures of freedom prove too great. Ralph's greed leads him to sacrifice his family's security to build Ralph's Chicken Palace, while Teresa and Helen find their own passions ignited in illicit ways. Inevitably, the family--the Chinese symbol of unity--suffers more than a few cracks along the way. This is truly "an American story"--a poignant and deftly told tale of immigrants coming to terms with the possibilities of America and with their own limitations, foibles, and the necessity of forgiveness. Sure to be a popular purchase for public and academic libraries.

Uncle Tom's Cabin—by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

The book opens with a [Kentucky](#) farmer named Arthur Shelby facing the loss of his farm because of debts. Even though he and his wife, [Emily Shelby](#), believe that they have a benevolent relationship with their slaves, Shelby decides to raise the needed funds by selling two of them—Uncle Tom, a middle-aged man with a wife and children, and Harry, the son of Emily Shelby's maid [Eliza](#)—to a slave trader. Emily Shelby hates the idea of doing this because she had promised her maid that her child would never be sold; Emily's son, [George Shelby](#), hates to see Tom go because he sees the man as his friend and mentor.

When Eliza overhears Mr. and Mrs. Shelby discussing plans to sell Tom and Harry, Eliza determines to run away with her son. The novel states that Eliza made this decision because she fears losing her only surviving child (she had already [miscarried](#) two children). Eliza departs that night, leaving a note of apology to her mistress.

While all of this is happening, Uncle Tom is sold and placed on a [riverboat](#), which sets sail down the [Mississippi River](#). While on board, Tom meets and befriends a young white girl named [Eva](#). When Eva falls into the river, Tom saves her. In gratitude, Eva's father, [Augustine St. Clare](#), buys

Tom from the slave trader and takes him with the family to their home in [New Orleans](#). During this time, Tom and Eva begin to relate to one another because of the deep Christian faith they both share.

Eliza's family hunted, Tom's life with St. Clare

During Eliza's escape, she meets up with her husband George Harris, who had run away previously. They decide to attempt to reach Canada. However, they are now being tracked by a slave hunter named Tom Loker. Eventually Loker and his men trap Eliza and her family, causing George to shoot Loker. Worried that Loker may die, Eliza convinces George to bring the slave hunter to a nearby [Quaker](#) settlement for medical treatment.

Back in New Orleans, St. Clare debates slavery with his Northern cousin Ophelia who, while opposing slavery, is prejudiced against black people. St. Clare, however, believes he is not biased, even though he is a slave owner. In an attempt to show Ophelia that her views on blacks are wrong, St. Clare purchases [Topsy](#), a young black slave. St. Clare then asks Ophelia to educate her.

After Tom has lived with the St. Clares for two years, Eva grows very ill. Before she dies she experiences a vision of [heaven](#), which she shares with the people around her. As a result of her death and vision, the other characters resolve to change their lives, with Ophelia promising to throw off her personal prejudices against blacks, Topsy saying she will better herself, and St. Clare pledging to free Uncle Tom.

Tom sold to Simon Legree

Before St. Clare can follow through on his pledge, however, he dies after being stabbed while entering a New Orleans tavern. His wife reneges on her late husband's vow and sells Tom at auction to a vicious [plantation](#) owner named [Simon Legree](#). Legree (a transplanted northerner) takes Tom to rural [Louisiana](#), where Tom meets Legree's other slaves, including Emmeline (whom Legree purchased at the same time).

Full page illustration by Hammatt Billings for *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (First Edition: Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1852). Cassy, another of Legree's slaves, is shown ministering to Uncle Tom after his whipping.

Legree begins to hate Tom when Tom refuses Legree's order to whip his fellow slave. Legree beats Tom viciously, and resolves to crush his new slave's faith in God. Despite Legree's cruelty, however, Tom refuses to stop reading his Bible and comforting the other slaves as best he can. While at the plantation, Tom meets Cassy, another of Legree's slaves. Cassy was previously separated from her son and daughter when they were sold; unable to endure the pain of seeing another child sold, she killed her third child.

At this point Tom Loker returns to the story. Loker has changed as the result of being healed by the Quakers. George, Eliza, and Harry have also obtained their freedom after crossing into Canada. In [Louisiana](#), Uncle Tom almost succumbs to hopelessness, as his faith in God is tested by the hardships of the plantation. However, he has two visions, one of [Jesus](#) and one of Eva, which renew his resolve to remain a faithful Christian, even unto death. He encourages Cassy to escape, which she does, taking Emmeline with her. When Tom refuses to tell Legree where Cassy and Emmeline have gone, Legree orders his overseers to kill Tom. As Tom is dying, he forgives the overseers who savagely beat him. Humbled by the character of the man they have killed, both men become Christians. Very shortly before Tom's death, George Shelby (Arthur Shelby's son) arrives to buy Tom's freedom, but finds he is too late.

On their boat ride to freedom, Cassy and Emmeline meet George Harris' sister and accompany her to Canada. Once there, Cassy discovers that Eliza is her long-lost daughter who was sold as a child. Now that their family is together again, they travel to France and eventually [Liberia](#), the African nation created for former American slaves. There they meet Cassy's long-lost son. George Shelby returns to the Kentucky farm and frees all his slaves. George tells them to remember Tom's sacrifice and his belief in the true meaning of Christianity.

USA—by John Dos Passos.

In the fictional narrative sections, the U.S.A. trilogy relates the lives of twelve different characters as they struggle to find a place in American society during the early part of the twentieth century. Each character is presented to the reader from their childhood on and in [free indirect speech](#). While their lives are quite separate and distinct, characters occasionally meet and interact with each other; also, some minor characters whose own point of view is never given crop up again and again in the background, forming a kind of bridge between the different characters.

"The Camera Eye" sections are written in stream of consciousness technique and add up to an [autobiographical *Künstlerroman*](#) of Dos Passos, tracing the author's development from a child to a politically committed writer. Camera Eye 50 arguably contains the most famous line of the whole trilogy, when Dos Passos states upon the executions of [Sacco and Vanzetti](#): "all right we are two nations."

The "Newsreels" consist of front page [headlines](#) and article fragments from the [Chicago Tribune](#) for *The 42nd Parallel* and the [New York World](#) for *Nineteen Nineteen* and *The Big Money*, as well as lyrics from popular songs of the time. Newsreel 66, for example, immediately preceding Camera Eye 50 and announcing the Sacco and Vanzetti verdict, contains the lyrics of "[The Internationale](#)."

The biographies are accounts of historical figures. The most often anthologized of these biographies is "The Body of an American," which tells the story of an unknown soldier who fell in [World War I](#) which concludes *Nineteen Nineteen*.

However, the separation between these narrative modes is rather a stylistic than a thematic one. Thus, some critics have pointed out connections between the fictional character Mary French in *The Big Money* and journalist [Mary Heaton Vorse](#), calling into question the strict separation between fictional characters and biographies; and coherent quotes from newspaper articles are often woven into the biographies as well, calling into question the strict separation between them and the "Newsreel" sections.

The fragmented narrative style of this trilogy later influenced the work of British science-fiction novelist [John Brunner](#).

Vicar of Wakefield (The)—by Oliver Goldsmith.

Dr Primrose, his wife Deborah and their six children live an idyllic life in a country [parish](#). The vicar is wealthy due to investing an inheritance he received from a deceased relative, and the vicar donates the £34 that his job pays annually to local orphans and war veterans. On the evening of his son George's wedding to wealthy Arabella Wilmot, the [vicar](#) loses all his money through the bankruptcy of his merchant investor who left town with his money.

The wedding is called off by Arabella's father, who is known for his prudence with money. George, who was educated at Oxford and is old enough to be considered an adult, is sent away to town. The rest of the family move to a new and more humble parish on the land of Squire

Thornhill, who is known to be a womanizer. On the way, they hear about the dubious reputation of their new landlord. Also, references are made to the squire's uncle Sir William Thornhill, who is known throughout the country for his worthiness and generosity.

A poor and eccentric friend, Mr. Burchell, whom they meet at an inn, rescues Sophia from drowning. She is instantly attracted to him, but her ambitious mother does not encourage her feelings.

Then follows a period of happy family life, interrupted only by regular visits of the dashing Squire Thornhill and Mr. Burchell. Olivia is captivated by Thornhill's hollow charm, but he also encourages the social ambitions of Mrs. Primrose and her daughters to a ludicrous degree.

Finally, Olivia is reported to have fled. First Burchell is suspected, but after a long pursuit Dr. Primrose finds his daughter, who was in reality deceived by Squire Thornhill. He planned to marry her in a mock ceremony and leave her then shortly after, as he had done with several women before.

When Olivia and her father return home, they find their house in flames. Although the family has lost almost all their belongings, the evil Squire Thornhill insists on the payment of the rent. As the vicar cannot pay, he is brought to gaol.

Afterwards is a chain of dreadful occurrences. The vicar's daughter, Olivia, is reported dead, Sophia is abducted, and George too is brought to gaol in chains and covered with blood, as he had challenged Thornhill to a [duel](#) when he had heard about his wickedness.

But then Mr. Burchell arrives and solves all problems. He rescues Sophia, Olivia is not dead, and it emerges that Mr. Burchell is in reality the worthy Sir William Thornhill, who travels through the country in disguise. In the end, there is a double wedding: George marries Arabella, as he originally intended, and Sir William Thornhill marries Sophia. Squire Thornhill's servant turns out to have tricked him, and thus the sham marriage of the Squire and Olivia is real. Finally, even the wealth of the vicar is restored, as the bankrupt merchant is reported to be found.

Victory—by Joseph Conrad.

Through a business misadventure, the European Axel Heyst ends up living on an island in what is now Indonesia, with a Chinese assistant Wang. Heyst visits a nearby island when a female band is playing at a hotel owned by Mr. Schomberg. Schomberg attempts to force himself sexually on one of the band members, Alma, later called Lena. She flees with Heyst back to his island and they become lovers. Schomberg seeks revenge by attempting to frame Heyst for the "murder" of a man who had died of natural causes and later by sending three desperadoes (Pedro, Martin Ricardo and Mr. Jones) to Heyst's island with a lie about treasure hidden on the island. The three die (Wang kills one) but Lena dies as well and Axel is overcome with grief and commits suicide.

Volpone—by Ben Jonson.

Volpone, a Venetian gentleman, is pretending to be on his deathbed after a long illness in order to dupe Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino, who aspire to his fortune. They each arrive in turn, bearing extravagant gifts with the aim of being inscribed as Volpone's heir. Mosca, Volpone's assistant, encourages them, making each of them believe that he has been named in the will, and getting Corbaccio to disinherit his son in favour of Volpone.

Mosca mentions in passing that Corvino has a beautiful wife, Celia, and Volpone goes to see her in the disguise of Scoto the [Mountebank](#). Corvino drives him away, but Volpone is now insistent

that he must have Celia for his own. Mosca tells Corvino that Volpone requires sex with a young woman to help revive him, and will be very grateful to whoever provides the lady. Corvino offers Celia.

Just before Corvino and Celia are due to arrive for this tryst to take place, Corbaccio's son Bonario arrives to catch his father in the act of disinheriting him. Mosca ushers him into a sideroom. Volpone is left alone with Celia, and after failing to seduce her with promises of luxurious items and role-playing fantasies, attempts to rape her. Bonario sees this, comes out of hiding and rescues Celia. However, in the ensuing courtroom sequence, the truth is well-buried by the collusion of Mosca, Volpone and all three of the dupes.

Volpone now insists on disguising himself as an officer and having it announced that he has died and left all his wealth to Mosca. This enrages Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino, and everyone returns to court. Despite Volpone's pleas, Mosca refuses to give up his wealthy new role, and Volpone decides to reveal himself in order to take Mosca down with him. They, Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino are punished.

This main plot is interspersed with episodes involving the English travellers Sir and Lady Politic Would-Be and Peregrine. Sir Politic constantly talks of plots and his outlandish business plans, while Lady Would-Be annoys Volpone with her ceaseless talking. Mosca co-ordinates a mix-up between them which leaves Peregrine, a more sophisticated traveller, feeling offended. He humiliates Sir Politic by telling him he is to be arrested for sedition, and making him hide inside a giant tortoise shell.

There is a school of thought that, like another of Jonson's works, [The Alchemist](#), all the action in *Volpone* takes place over a single 24 hour period; this would be in accordance with the contemporary understanding of the [dramatic unities](#), which Jonson claims to adhere to in the play's Prologue.

Waiting for Godot—by Samuel Beckett.

Waiting for Godot follows two days in the lives of a pair of men who divert themselves while they wait expectantly and in vain for someone named Godot to arrive. They claim him as an acquaintance but in fact hardly know him, admitting that they would not recognise him were they to see him. To occupy themselves, they eat, sleep, converse, argue, sing, play games, exercise, swap hats, and contemplate suicide – anything "to hold the terrible silence at bay".^[4]

The play opens with the character [Estragon](#) struggling to remove his boot from his foot. Estragon eventually gives up, muttering, "Nothing to be done." His friend [Vladimir](#) takes up the thought and muses on it, the implication being that nothing is a thing that has to be done and this pair is going to have to spend the rest of the play doing it.^[5] When Estragon finally succeeds in removing his boot, he looks and feels inside but finds nothing. Just prior to this, Vladimir peers into his hat. The motif recurs throughout the play.

The pair discuss repentance, particularly in relation to the [two thieves](#) crucified alongside Jesus, and that only one of the [Four Evangelists](#) mentions that one of them was saved. This is the first of numerous Biblical references in the play, which may be linked to its putative central theme of the search for and reconciliation with God, as well as salvation: "We're saved!" they cry on more than one occasion when they feel that Godot may be near.

Presently, Vladimir expresses his frustration with Estragon's limited conversational skills: "Come on, Gogo, return the ball, can't you, once in a while?" Estragon struggles in this regard throughout the play, and Vladimir generally takes the lead in their dialogue and encounters with others.

Vladimir is at times hostile towards his companion, but in general they are close, frequently embracing and supporting one another.

Estragon peers out into the audience and comments on the bleakness of his surroundings. He wants to depart but is told that they cannot because they must wait for Godot. The pair cannot agree, however, on whether or not they are in the right place or that this is the arranged day for their meeting with Godot; indeed, they are not even sure what day it is. Throughout the play, experienced time is attenuated, fractured or eerily non-existent.^[6] The only thing that they are fairly sure about is that they are to meet at a tree: there is one nearby.

Estragon dozes off, but Vladimir is not interested in hearing about his dream after rousing him. Estragon wants to hear an old joke about a brothel, which Vladimir starts but cannot finish, as he is suddenly compelled to rush off and urinate. He does not finish the story when he returns, asking Estragon instead what else they might do to pass the time. Estragon suggests that they hang themselves, but they quickly abandon the idea when it seems that they might not both die: this would leave one of them alone, an intolerable notion. They decide to do nothing: "It's safer," explains Estragon,^[7] before asking what Godot is going to do for them when he arrives. For once it is Vladimir who struggles to remember: "Oh ... nothing very definite," is the best that he can manage.^[7]

When Estragon declares that he is hungry, Vladimir provides a carrot, most of which, and without much relish, the former eats. The diversion ends as it began, Estragon announcing that they still have nothing to do.

Their waiting is interrupted by the passing through of Pozzo and his heavily-laden slave Lucky. "A terrible cry"^[8] from the wings heralds the initial entrance of Lucky, who has a rope tied around his neck. He crosses half the stage before his master appears holding the other end. Pozzo barks orders at his slave and frequently calls him a "pig", but is civil towards the other two. They mistake him at first for Godot and clearly do not recognise him for the self-proclaimed personage he is. This irks him, but, while maintaining that the land that they are on is his, he acknowledges that "the road is free to all".^[9]

Deciding to rest for a while, Pozzo enjoys a pre-packed meal of chicken and wine. Finished, he casts the bones aside, and Estragon jumps at the chance to ask for them, much to Vladimir's embarrassment, but is told that they belong to the carrier. He must first, therefore, ask Lucky if he wants them. Estragon tries, but Lucky only hangs his head, refusing to answer. Taking this as a "no", Estragon claims the bones.

Vladimir takes Pozzo to task regarding his mistreatment of his slave, but his protestations are ignored. When the original pairing tries to find out why Lucky does not put down his load (at least not unless his master is prevailing on him to do something else), Pozzo explains that Lucky is attempting to mollify him to prevent him from selling him. At this, Lucky begins to cry. Pozzo provides a handkerchief, but, when Estragon tries to wipe his tears away, Lucky kicks him in the shins.

Before he leaves, Pozzo asks if he can do anything for the pair in exchange for the company they have provided him during his rest. Estragon tries to ask for some money, but Vladimir cuts him short, explaining that they are not beggars. They nevertheless accept an offer to have Lucky dance and think.

The dance is clumsy and shuffling, and everyone is disappointed. Lucky's "think", induced by Vladimir's putting his hat on his head, is a lengthy and disjointed verbal [stream of consciousness](#).^[10] The soliloquy begins relatively coherently but quickly dissolves into [logorrhoea](#) and only ends when Vladimir rips off Lucky's hat.

Once Lucky has been revived, Pozzo has him pack up his things and, together, they leave. At the end of the act (and its successor), a boy arrives, purporting to be a messenger sent from Godot, to advise the pair that he will not be coming that "evening but surely tomorrow."^[11] During Vladimir's interrogation of the boy, he asks if he came the day before, making it apparent that the two men have been waiting for an indefinite period and will likely continue to wait *ad infinitum*. After the boy departs, they decide to leave but make no attempt to do so, an action repeated in Act II, as the curtain is drawn.

Act II opens with Vladimir singing a [recursive round](#) about a dog which serves to illustrate the cyclical nature of the play's universe, and also points toward the play's debt to the [carnavalesque](#), [music hall](#) traditions, and [vaudeville](#) comedy (this is only one of a number of canine references and allusions in the play). There is a bit of realisation on Vladimir's part that the world they are trapped in evinces convoluted progression (or lack thereof) of time. He begins to see that although there is notional evidence of linear progression, basically he is living the same day over and over. Eugene Webb writes of Vladimir's song that^[12] "Time in the song is not a [linear](#) sequence, but an endlessly reiterated moment, the content of which is only one eternal event: death."^[13]

Once again Estragon maintains he spent the night in a ditch and was beaten – by "ten of them"^[14] this time – though once again he shows no sign of injury. Vladimir tries to talk to him about what appears to be a seasonal change in the tree and the proceedings of the day before, but he has only a vague recollection. Vladimir tries to get Estragon to remember Pozzo and Lucky but all he can call to mind are the bones and getting kicked. Vladimir realises here an opportunity to produce tangible evidence of the previous day's events. With some difficulty he gets Estragon to show him his leg. There is a wound which is beginning to fester. Only then Vladimir notices that Estragon is not wearing any boots.

He discovers the pair of boots, which Estragon insists are not his but nevertheless fit when he tries them on. With no carrots left, Vladimir offers Estragon the choice between a [turnip](#) and a [radish](#). He opts for the radish but it is black and he hands it back. He decides to try and sleep again and adopts the same [fetal position](#) as the previous day. Vladimir sings him a [lullaby](#).

Vladimir notices Lucky's hat, and he decides to try it on. This leads to a frenetic hat swapping scene. They play at imitating Pozzo and Lucky, but Estragon can barely remember having met them and simply does what Vladimir asks. They fire insults at each other and then make up. After that, they attempt some physical jerks which do not work out well, and even attempt a single [yoga](#) position, which fails miserably.

Pozzo and Lucky arrive, with Pozzo now [blind](#) and insisting that Lucky is [dumb](#). The rope is now much shorter, and Lucky – who has acquired a new hat – leads Pozzo, rather than being driven by him. Pozzo has lost all notion of time, and assures them he cannot remember meeting them the day before, and does not expect to remember the current day's events when they are over.

They fall in a heap at one point. Estragon sees an opportunity to extort more food or to exact revenge on Lucky for kicking him. The issue is debated at length. Pozzo offers them money but Vladimir sees more worth in their entertainment value since they are compelled to wait to see if Godot arrives anyway. Eventually though, they all find their way onto their feet.

Whereas the Pozzo in Act I is a windbag, he now (as a blind man) appears to have gained some insight. His parting words – which Vladimir expands upon later – eloquently encapsulate the brevity of human existence: "They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more."^[15]

Lucky and Pozzo depart. The same boy returns to inform them not to expect Godot today, but promises he will arrive the next day. The two again consider suicide but their rope, Estragon's belt,

breaks in two when they tug on it. Estragon's trousers fall down, but he does not notice until Vladimir tells him to pull them up. They resolve to bring a more suitable piece and hang themselves the next day, if Godot fails to arrive.

Again, they agree to leave but neither of them makes any move to go.

Warden (The)—by Anthony Trollope.

The Warden concerns Mr [Septimus Harding](#), elderly warden of Hiram's Hospital and [Precentor](#) of Barchester Cathedral.

Hiram's Hospital is an [alms house](#) supported by the income from a medieval charitable bequest to the Diocese of Barchester. The income maintains the alms house itself, supports its twelve [bedesmen](#), and, in addition, provides a comfortable abode and living for its warden. Mr Harding has been appointed to this position through the patronage of his old friend the Bishop of Barchester, who is also the father of Archdeacon Grantly to whom Harding's older daughter, Susan, is married. The warden, who lives with his remaining child, an unmarried younger daughter Eleanor, performs his duties conscientiously.

The story concerns the impact upon Harding and his circle when a zealous young reformer, John Bold, launches a campaign to expose the disparity in the apportionment of the charity's income between its object, the bedesmen, and its officer, Mr Harding. John Bold embarks on this campaign out of a spirit of public duty despite his romantic involvement with Eleanor and previously cordial relations with Mr Harding.

Bold attempts to enlist the support of the press and engages the interest of *The Jupiter* (a newspaper representing [The Times](#)) whose editor, Tom Towers, pens editorials supporting reform of the charity, and presenting a portrait of Mr Harding as being selfish and derelict in his conduct of his office. This image is taken up by the commentators Dr Pessimist Anticant, and Mr Popular Sentiment, who have been seen as caricatures of [Thomas Carlyle](#) and [Charles Dickens](#) respectively.^[2]

Ultimately, despite much browbeating by his son-in-law, the Archdeacon, and the legal opinion solicited from the barrister, Sir Abraham Haphazard, Mr Harding concludes that he cannot in good conscience continue to accept such generous remuneration and resigns the office. John Bold, who has appealed in vain to Tom Towers to redress the injury to Mr Harding, returns to Barchester where he marries Eleanor.

Those of the bedesmen of the hospital who have allowed their appetite for greater income to estrange them from the warden are

Washington Square—by Henry James.

Dr. Austin Sloper, a rich and intelligent widower, lives in [Washington Square, New York](#) with his only surviving child, Catherine, a sweet-natured woman who is a great disappointment to her father, being physically plain and, he believes, mentally dull. Sloper's beloved wife, along with a promising young son, died many years before. His silly busybody sister, the widowed Lavinia Penniman, is the only other member of the doctor's household.

One day, Catherine meets the charming Morris Townsend at a party and is swept off her feet. Morris [courts](#) Catherine, aided by Mrs. Penniman, who loves [melodrama](#). Dr. Sloper strongly disapproves, believing him to be after Catherine's money alone. When Catherine and Morris announce their [engagement](#), he checks into Morris's background and finds him to be penniless and

parasitic. The doctor forbids his daughter to marry Townsend, and the loyal Catherine cannot bring herself to choose between her father and her fiancé.

Dr. Sloper understands Catherine's strait and pities her a little, but also finds an urbane entertainment in the situation. In an effort to resolve the matter, he announces that he will not leave any money to Catherine if she marries Morris; he then takes her on a twelve month [grand tour](#) of Europe. During their months abroad, he mentions Catherine's engagement only twice; once while they are alone together in the Alps, and again on the eve of their return voyage. On both occasions, Catherine holds firm in her desire to marry. After she refuses for a second time to give Morris up, Sloper sarcastically compares her to a sheep fattened up for slaughter. With this, he finally goes too far: Catherine recognises his contempt, withdraws from him, and prepares to bestow all her love and loyalty on Morris.

Upon her return, however, Morris breaks off the relationship when Catherine convinces him that her father will never relent. Catherine, devastated, eventually recovers her equanimity but is never able to forget the injury. Many years pass; Catherine refuses two respectable offers of marriage and grows into a middle aged [spinster](#). Dr. Sloper finally dies and leaves her a sharply reduced income in his [will](#) out of fear that Townsend will reappear. In fact, Morris – now fat, balding, cold-eyed, but still somewhat attractive – does eventually pay a call on Catherine, hoping to reconcile; but she calmly rebuffs his overtures. In the last sentence, James tells us that "Catherine,... picking up her morsel of fancy-work, had seated herself with it again — for life, as it were."

Waste Land (The)—by T.S. Eliot.

The Waste Land^[A] is a 434-line^[B] [modernist](#) poem by [T. S. Eliot](#) published in 1922. It has been called "one of the most important poems of the 20th century."^[1] Despite the poem's obscurity^[2]—its shifts between [satire](#) and [prophecy](#), its abrupt and unannounced changes of [speaker](#), [location](#) and [time](#), its [elegiac](#) but intimidating summoning up of a vast and dissonant range of cultures and literatures—the poem has become a familiar [touchstone](#) of [modern literature](#).^[3] Among its famous phrases are "April is the cruellest month" (its first line); "I will show you fear in a handful of dust"; and (its last line) the [mantra](#) in the [Sanskrit](#) language "[Shantih shantih shantih](#)."

Watch on the Rhine—by John Ringo.

Watch on the Rhine is the seventh book in [John Ringo's](#) *Legacy of the Aldenata* series, co-authored with [Tom Kratman](#). The book, which is a spin-off of the main series, focuses on the Posleen invasion of Europe, with an emphasis on Germany. Part of the technology brought to humans by the Galactics is the ability to rejuvenate old soldiers, so that countries can draw on their combat experiences. In Germany, this leads to the controversial decision to reactivate the [Waffen SS](#).

Way of the World (The)—by Ron Suskind.

In the book, Suskind details and describes a variety of actions, policies, and procedure of the Bush Administration. The most widely publicized allegation in the book is that high-ranking White House officials ordered the [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA) to forge or manufacture a false-pretense for the [Iraq war](#) through a backdated, handwritten document — namely, the Habbush letter — linking [Saddam Hussein](#) and [al-Qaeda](#).^{[2][3]} The letter purported to be from General [Tahir Jalil Habbush al-Tikriti](#), the head of Iraqi Intelligence, to Saddam Hussein, detailing training which 9/11 hijacker [Mohamed Atta](#) supposedly received in Iraq and mentioning receipt of a shipment from Niger. The D.C.-based author says the CIA forged this letter before the 2003 Iraqi invasion on an order from the White House. The author also claims that the Bush administration had information from a top Iraqi Intelligence official, General [Tahir Jalil Habbush al-Tikriti](#), "that

there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq – intelligence they received in plenty of time to stop an invasion."^[4] Suskind further states that Vice-President [Dick Cheney](#) implemented a set of procedures and processes designed to make the President less involved and less accountable for various controversial decisions and actions.

Way We Live Now (The)—by Anthony Trollope.

Augustus Melmotte is a foreign-born financier with a mysterious past (he is rumored to have Jewish origins, and it is later revealed that he owned a failed bank in Munich). When he moves his business and his family to London, the city's upper crust begins buzzing with rumours about him—and a host of characters ultimately find their lives changed because of him.

Melmotte sets up his office in the [City of London](#) and he purchases a fine house in [Grosvenor Square](#). He sets out to woo rich and powerful investors by hosting a lavish party, and finds an appropriate investment vehicle when he is approached by a young engineer, Paul Montague, and his American partner, Hamilton K. Fisker, to invest in the construction of a new railway line running from [Salt Lake City](#) to [Veracruz](#), Mexico. Melmotte's goal is to ramp up the share price without paying out any actual money into the scheme itself, thereby increasing his own not-inconsiderable wealth.

Amongst the aristocratic investors on the railway scheme's board is Sir Felix Carbury, a young and dissolute [baronet](#) who is quickly running through his widowed mother's savings. In an attempt to restore their fortunes, as they are being beset by their creditors, his mother, Lady Matilda Carbury—who makes ends meet by writing historical potboilers with titles like *Criminal Queens: Powerful Women as the Playthings of Love*—endeavours to have him become engaged to Marie Melmotte, the Melmottes' only child and a considerable heiress in her own right. Sir Felix manages to win Marie's heart, but his schemes are blocked by Melmotte, who has no intention of allowing his daughter to marry a penniless aristocrat. Felix's situation is also complicated by his relationship with Ruby Ruggles, a buxom young farm girl living with her grandfather on the estate of Roger Carbury, his well-off cousin.

Whilst Melmotte is carrying out his financial shenanigans, Paul Montague is the one person who is a thorn in his side. In the South Central Pacific and Mexican Railway Board meetings, chaired and controlled by Melmotte, it is Paul who raises the difficult questions of when the money will actually be allocated to the railway line. Paul's personal life is also made complicated by his amorous affairs. He falls in love with Lady Carbury's young and beautiful daughter Hetta—much to her mother's fury—but has been followed to England by a former American fiancée, the dashing Mrs Winifred Hurtle. Mrs Hurtle is determined to make Paul marry her based on the fact that they had lived together in America, and that she offered him "all that a woman can give". It is Lady Carbury's plan, advised by her literary friend Mr Broune, a distinguished London publisher, for Hetta to marry her cousin Roger. Roger has been Paul's mentor and the two start to come into conflict over their attentions towards Hetta, who steadfastly refuses to marry her cousin, against her mother's wishes.

Events start to come to a head when Paul finally gets Mrs Hurtle's consent to free him of his obligations towards her, in exchange for agreeing to spend one final weekend with her on the coast. Whilst walking along the sands, they meet Roger Carbury, who, on seeing Paul with another woman, decides to break off all acquaintance with him, believing that Paul is simply playing with Hetta's affections. In the meantime, Felix Carbury is torn between his affection for Ruby and his financial need to pursue Marie Melmotte. Ruby, after being beaten by her grandfather for not marrying a respectable local miller, John Crumb, runs away to London and finds refuge in the boarding house owned by her aunt, Mrs Pipkin—where, as it happens, Mrs Hurtle is lodging. Felix learns from Ruby about Mrs Hurtle's relationship with Paul and, coming into conflict with Mrs Hurtle over his attentions to Ruby, reveals all his new-found knowledge to his mother and sister.

Hetta is devastated and breaks off her engagement to Paul. Meanwhile, in order to get Paul out of London and away from the Board meetings, Melmotte attempts to send Paul off to Mexico on a nominal inspection trip of the railway line; but Paul declines to go.

Finding that they cannot get around Melmotte, Felix and Marie decide to elope together to America. Marie and her maid steal a blank cheque from her father's desk and cash it at his bank, arranging to meet Felix on the ship at Liverpool. Felix, who has been given money by Marie for his expenses, goes to his club and gambles it all away in a revenge card game, instigated by his friend Lord Nidderdale, against Miles Grendall, who had cheated Felix in a previous game. Drunk and penniless, Felix returns to his mother's house, knowing the game is up. Meanwhile, after Melmotte has been alerted by his bank, Marie and her maid, who believe that Felix is already on the ship at Liverpool, are intercepted by the police before they can board the ship, and Marie is brought back to London.

Melmotte, who by this time has also become an [MP](#) and the purchaser of a grand country estate belonging to Mr Longestaffe (whose daughter Georgiana is the heroine of a lengthy satirical subplot), also knows that his own game is nearly up, particularly after his shenanigans are exposed by Paul to Mr Alf, a journal editor and political rival. When Longestaffe and his son demand the purchase money for the estate Melmotte had bought from them, Melmotte [forges](#) his daughter's name to a document that will allow him to get at her money (money that Melmotte had put in her name precisely to protect it from creditors, and which Marie refused to give back to him). He tries to get his clerk, Croll, to witness the forged signature. Croll refuses. Melmotte then also forges Croll's signature, but makes the mistake of leaving the documents with Mr Brehgert, a banker. When Brehgert returns the documents to Croll, rather than to Melmotte, Croll discovers the forgery and leaves Melmotte's service. With his creditors now knocking at his door, the railway shares nearly worthless, charges of forgery looming in his future, and his political reputation in tatters after a drunken appearance in the [House of Commons](#), Melmotte poisons himself.

The remainder of the novel ties up the loose ends. While Felix is out with Ruby one evening, John Crumb comes upon them and, believing that Felix is forcing his attentions on her, thoroughly beats Felix. Ruby finally realizes that Felix will never marry her, and returns home to marry John. Felix is forced to live by his wits on the Continent. Lady Carbury marries Mr Broune, who has been a true friend to her throughout her troubles. Hetta and Paul are finally reconciled after he tells her the truth about Mrs Hurtle; Roger forgives Paul and allows the couple to live at Carbury Manor, which he vows to leave to their child. Marie, now financially independent, becomes acquainted with Hamilton K. Fisker, and agrees to go with him to San Francisco, where she eventually marries him. She is accompanied by her stepmother, Madame Melmotte; Croll, who marries Madame Melmotte; and Mrs Hurtle. They never return to England.

We Were the Mulvaney—by Joyce Carol Oates.

Michael and Corinne Mulvaney are the parents of four children: Michael, Patrick, Marianne, and Judd. Living in a picture perfect farm in upstate New York, the Mulvaneys own a successful roofing company; Michael Mulvaney is considered a serious [businessman](#). Corinne is a bubbly, earthy mother whose life revolves around the family unit. For nearly twenty years the Mulvaney clan thrives, admired throughout Mt. Ephraim for being the model family.

On St. Valentine's night, 1976, Marianne Mulvaney, after [prom](#), goes to a party where she becomes [intoxicated](#) and is [raped](#) by an upperclassman whose father is a well-respected businessman and friend of Mr. Mulvaney.

Marianne's rape is the beginning of a tumultuous fifteen-year period. Her father, lost and angry, does not understand why his daughter will not press charges against her attacker. He can no longer look at his daughter the same way, and sends her to live with a distant relative of Corinne's in

[Salamanca](#). Marianne, moving haphazardly from place to place, continues to wait for her father to call on her—but he never does.

Michael Mulvaney's casual drinking turns into full-fledged [alcoholism](#). Gradually, his reputation as a respected businessman disintegrates. The Mulvaney's are forced into [bankruptcy](#) and forced to sell the farm. Eventually, Corinne and Michael split up. For the other family members, things continue to get worse. All three of the Mulvaney boys leave home angrily, never to return. One of them "executes justice" on his sister's rapist.

After many years, the Mulvaney's meet once again in a family reunion at Corinne's new home which she shares with a friend. The family has extended to include spouses and children. Finally, the Mulvaney's come full circle and receive closure.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?—by Edward Albee.

The play involves the two couples playing "games," which are savage verbal attacks against one or two of the others at the party. These games are referred to with sarcastically alliterative names: "Humiliate the Host", "Get the Guests", "Hump the Hostess", and "Bringing Up Baby".

George and Martha return from a faculty party, but Martha soon informs George that she has invited over guests. These guests, Nick and his wife, Honey, are much younger than George and Martha. During the "after-party" Martha taunts George. She stresses his failures brutally and drives him out of the room. Martha then tells an embarrassing story about how she humiliated him with a sucker punch in front of her father. During the telling George appears with a gun; he fires it and an [umbrella](#) pops out. Even after this joke, Martha's taunts continue. Nick and Honey grow uneasy; George reacts violently. Honey runs to the bathroom to [vomit](#).

Nick and George are then alone. Nick talks about his wife and her [hysterical pregnancy](#). George proceeds to tell Nick a story about visiting a [gin](#) mill with a [boarding school](#) classmate. This friend had killed his mother accidentally by shooting her. He was laughed at for ordering "[bergin](#)", killed his father while driving, and was committed to an [asylum](#) shortly thereafter where he never spoke again. George and Nick argue. Eventually, George calls Nick a "smug son of a bitch." Once the wives rejoin the men, Martha begins to describe (in the face of a persistent protest from George) her husband's only novel, buried by her powerful and controlling father, a work which turns out to be embarrassingly autobiographical. The culmination of George's violent reaction to Martha's refusal to stop telling this story is to grab Martha by the throat and nearly strangle her. In his stage direction, Albee suggests that Nick may be making a connection between the "novel" and the story George had told him earlier.

George is quick to retort Martha's prior actions, in the next game, which he calls "Get the Guests." George tells an extemporaneous tale of "the Mousie" who "tooted brandy immodestly and spent half of her time in the upchuck," and Nick's thoroughly drunk wife realizes that the story is about her and her hysterical pregnancy. She feels as if she is about to be sick and runs to the bathroom again.

At the end of this scene, Martha starts to seduce Nick in George's presence. George reacts calmly, simply sitting and reading a book. As Martha and Nick walk upstairs, George throws his book against the door chimes in anguish; Honey returns, wondering who rang the doorbell and George comes up with an idea to get Martha, he plans on telling Martha that their son has died. And the act ends as George tells an invisible Martha that their son has died.

Martha appears alone in the living room, shouting at the others to come out from hiding. Nick joins her after a while, recalling Honey in the bathroom winking at him. The doorbell rings: it is George, with a bunch of [snapdragons](#) in his hand, calling out, "Flores para los muertos" (*flowers*

for the dead, in a reference to a line in [A Streetcar Named Desire](#)). Martha and George argue about whether the moon is up or down (possibly a [Taming of the Shrew](#) reference): George insists it is up, while Martha says she saw no moon from the bedroom. This leads to a discussion where Martha and George insult Nick in tandem, an argument that reveals that Nick was too drunk to have sex with Martha upstairs anyway.

George asks Nick to bring his wife back out for the final game "Bringing Up Baby." George and Martha have a son, about whom George has repeatedly told Martha to keep quiet over the course of the night, but now George talks about Martha's overbearingness toward their son. George then prompts Martha for her "recitation", in which they describe their son's upbringing in a bizarre duet. Martha describes their son's beauty and talents and then accuses George of ruining his life. As this tale progresses, George begins to recite sections of the [Liberate me](#) (part of the [Requiem](#), the [Latin](#) mass for the dead).

At the end of the tale, George informs Martha that the door chimes heard earlier was a boy from [Western Union](#) who brought a telegram that said their son had died: "killed late in the afternoon ... on a country road, with his learner's permit in his pocket, he swerved, to avoid a porcupine"—a description that matches that of the boy in the gin mill story told earlier. Martha screams "You can't do that!" and collapses.

It becomes clear that George and Martha never had a son and George has decided to "kill" him. Martha broke their rule that she could not speak of their son to others. Nick and Honey leave, realizing what has happened. The play ends with George singing, "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?" to Martha, whereupon she replies, "I am, George... I am."

The play itself is performed in three acts, and is a little under three hours long: 1 hour, 1 hour, 40 minutes, with two 10-minute [intermissions](#).

Wide Sargasso Sea—by Jean Rhys.

The opening of the novel is set a short while after the 1834 [emancipation](#) of the slaves in [British-owned Jamaica](#). The protagonist Antoinette conveys the story of her life from childhood to her arranged marriage to an unnamed Englishman (implied as Mr Rochester from *Jane Eyre*). As the novel and their relationship progress, Antoinette, whom he renames Bertha, descends into madness.

The novel is split into three parts. Part One takes place in [Coulibri](#), Jamaica and is narrated by Antoinette. Describing her childhood experience, she includes several facets of her life, such as her mother's [mental instability](#) and her learning disabled brother's tragic death.

Part Two alternates between the points of view of her husband and of Antoinette following their marriage and is set in [Granbois](#), [Dominica](#). One of the likely catalysts for Antoinette's downfall is the suspicion with which they both begin to view each other, fuelled by the machinations of a supposed relative of Antoinette's, Daniel Cosway (Boyd). Antoinette's old nurse Christophine's constant mistrust of the husband and Rochester's unwavering belief in Boyd further aggravates the situation. This increased sense of paranoia tinged with the disappointment of their failing marriage unbalances Antoinette's already precarious mental state.

The shortest part, Part Three, is once again from the perspective of Antoinette, now known as Bertha, as she lives in the Rochester mansion, which she calls the "Great House". It traces her relationship with Grace, the servant who is tasked with 'guarding' her in England. Narrating in a [stream of consciousness](#), Bertha decides to take her own life as she believes it to be her destiny.

Wild Duck (The)—by Henrik Ibsen.

The first act opens with a dinner party hosted by Håkon Werle, a wealthy merchant and industrialist. The gathering is attended by his son, Gregers Werle, who has just returned to his father's home following a self-imposed exile. There, he learns the fate of a former classmate of his, Hjalmar Ekdal. Hjalmar married Gina, a young servant woman in the Werle household. The elder Werle had arranged the match by providing Hjalmar with a home and a profession as a photographer. Gregers, whose mother died believing that Gina and her husband had carried on an affair, becomes enraged at the thought that his old friend is living a life built on a lie.

The remaining four acts take place in Hjalmar Ekdal's apartments. The Ekdals initially appear to be living a life of cozy domesticity. Hjalmar's father makes a living doing odd copying jobs for Werle. Hjalmar runs a busy portrait studio out of the apartment. Gina helps him run the business in addition to keeping house. They both dote on their daughter Hedvig. Gregers travels directly to their home from the party. While getting acquainted with the family, Hjalmar confesses that Hedvig is both his greatest joy and greatest sorrow, because she is slowly losing her eyesight. The family eagerly reveals a loft in the apartment where they keep various animals like rabbits and pigeons. Most prized is the wild duck they rescued. The duck was wounded by none other than Werle, whose eyesight is also failing. His shot winged the duck, which dove to the bottom of the lake to drown itself by clinging to the seaweed. Werle's dog retrieved it though, and despite its wounds from the shot and the dog's teeth, the Ekdals had nursed the duck back to good health.

Gregers decides to rent the spare room in the apartment. The next day, he begins to realize that there are more lies hanging over the Ekdals than Gina's affair with his father. While talking to Hedvig, she explains that Hjalmar keeps her from school because of her eyesight, but he has no time to tutor her, leaving the girl to escape into imaginary worlds through pictures she sees in books. During their conversation, Gregers hears shots in the attic, and the family explains that Old Ekdal entertains himself by hunting rabbits and birds in the loft, and Hjalmar often joins in the hunts. The activity helps Old Ekdal cling to his former life as a great hunter. Hjalmar also speaks of his 'great invention', which he never specifies. It is related to photography, and he is certain that it will enable him to pay off his debts to Werle and finally make himself and his family completely independent. In order to work on his invention, he often needs to lie down on the couch and think about it.

During a lunch with Gregers and Hjalmar's friends Relling and Molvik, Werle arrives to try to convince Gregers to return home. Gregers insists that he cannot return and that he will tell Hjalmar the truth. Werle is certain that Hjalmar will not be grateful for Gregers' intervention. After he leaves, Gregers asks Hjalmar to accompany him on a walk, where he reveals the truth about Gina's affair with his father.

Upon returning home, Hjalmar is aloof from his wife and daughter. He demands to handle all future photography business by himself with no help from Gina. He also demands to manage the family's finances, which Gina has traditionally done. Gina begs him to reconsider, suggesting that with all his time consumed he will not be able to work on his invention. Hedvig adds that he also will not have time to spend in the loft with the wild duck. Embittered by Gregers' news, Hjalmar bristles at the suggestion and confesses that he would like to wring the duck's neck. Indulging his mood, Hjalmar confronts Gina about her affair with Werle. She confesses to it, but insists that she loves Hjalmar intensely.

In the midst of the argument, Gregers returns, stunned to find that the couple are not overjoyed to be living without such a lie hanging over their heads. Mrs. Sørby arrives with a letter for Hedvig and news that she is marrying Werle. The letter announces that Werle is paying Old Ekdal a pension of 100 crowns per month until his death. Upon his death, the allowance will be transferred to Hedvig for the remainder of her life. The news sickens Hjalmar even further, and it dawns on

him that Hedvig may very well be Werle's child. He cannot stand the sight of Hedvig any longer and leaves the house to drink with Molvik and Relling. Gregers tries to calm the distraught Hedvig by suggesting that she sacrifice the wild duck for her father's happiness. Hedvig is desperate to win her father's love back and agrees to have her grandfather shoot the duck in the morning.

The next day, Relling arrives to tell the family that Hjalmar has stayed with him. He is appalled at what Gregers has done, and he reveals that he long ago implanted the idea of the invention with Hjalmar as a "life-lie" to keep him from giving in to despair. The pair argue as Hjalmar returns to gather his materials to work on the invention. He is overwhelmed by the number of details involved in moving out of the apartment. Hedvig is overjoyed to see him, but Hjalmar demands to be 'free from intruders' while he thinks about his next move. Crushed, Hedvig remembers the wild duck and goes to the loft with a pistol. After hearing a shot, the family assumes Old Ekdal is hunting in the loft, but Gregers knows he has shot the wild duck for Hedvig. He explains the sacrifice to Hjalmar who is deeply touched. When Old Ekdal emerges from his room, the family realizes he could not have fired the gun in the loft. They rush in to see Hedvig lying on the ground. No one can find a wound, and Relling has to examine the girl. He finds that the shot has penetrated her breastbone and she died immediately. Given the powder burns on her shirt, he determines that she shot herself. Hjalmar begs for her to live again so that she can see how much he loves her. The play ends with Relling and Gregers arguing again. Gregers insists that Hedvig did not die in vain, because her suicide unleashed a greatness within Hjalmar. Relling sneers at the notion, and insists that Hjalmar will be a drunk within a year.

Winter in the Blood—by James Welch.

The novel, set in contemporary times, features a self-destructive narrator undergoing an identity crisis. He lives in a Native American reservation in Montana. His tribe and his culture are clashing with a nearby white settlement and misguided legislation. He moves through his days in a mental haze and tries to console himself with sexual encounters.

He attempts to deal with the memories of his father found dead in a snowdrift and of his brother, who died at the age of fourteen.

Winter's Tale (The)—by William Shakespeare.

Following a brief setup scene the play begins with the appearance of two childhood friends: Leontes, King of [Sicilia](#), and Polixenes, the King of [Bohemia](#). Polixenes is visiting the kingdom of Sicilia, and is enjoying catching up with his old friend. However, after nine months, Polixenes yearns to return to his own kingdom to tend to affairs and see his son. Leontes desperately attempts to get Polixenes to stay longer, but is unsuccessful. Leontes then sends his wife, Queen Hermione, to try to persuade Polixenes. Hermione agrees and with three short speeches is successful. Leontes is puzzled as to how Hermione convinced Polixenes so easily, and is suddenly consumed with an insane paranoia that his pregnant wife has been having an affair with Polixenes and that the child is a [bastard](#). Leontes orders Camillo, a Sicilian Lord, to poison Polixenes.

When Camillo instead warns Polixenes and they both flee to Bohemia, Leontes arrests Hermione on charges of adultery and conspiracy against his life. Paulina, a woman of the court and an ardent friend to Hermione, attempts to visit Hermione but must settle with seeing her handmaid, who reports Hermione has prematurely given birth to a daughter in prison. Paulina, hoping the sight of his child will convince him where words have not, takes the child to Leontes. Leontes angrily dismisses all attempts to convince him he is wrong and he believes Antigonus, a Sicilian courtier and Paulina's husband, has conspired against him alongside Paulina. Paulina having gone, Leontes considers killing this child—which he believes to be the bastard of Polixenes and Hermione—before ordering Antigonus, instead, to abandon the infant far away.

At her trial for treason, Hermione delivers a heart-rending speech that fails to move Leontes. A report from the Oracle on the [Isle of Delphos](#) pronounces her innocence, but Leontes defies the oracle. But he then immediately receives word that his young son, Mamillius, has died of grief, a fulfilment of another of the Oracle's prophecies. Hermione faints and is reported to have died. Leontes laments his poor judgment and promises to grieve for his dead wife and son every day for the rest of his life.

Antigonus, unaware of Leontes' change of heart, follows Leontes' earlier instructions to abandon Hermione's newborn daughter on the seacoast of Bohemia. Antigonus recalls a vision the night before of Hermione, who told him to name the child "Perdita" (Latin: 'lost'). He wishes to take pity on the child, but Antigonus is then suddenly pursued and eaten by a bear. Fortunately, [Perdita](#) is rescued by a shepherd and his simpleton son also known as "Clown." There is a large amount of money with the baby and the shepherd is now very rich.

[Time](#) enters and announces the passage of sixteen years. Leontes has spent the sixteen years mourning his wife and children. In Bohemia, Polixenes and Camillo become aware that Florizel (Polixenes' son) has become infatuated with a shepherdess. They attend a sheep-shearing festival (in disguise) and confirm that the young Prince Florizel plans to marry a shepherd's beautiful young daughter (Perdita, who knows nothing of her royal heritage). Polixenes objects to the marriage and threatens the young couple. Quickly, the lovers flee to Sicilia with the help of Camillo, and Polixenes pursues them. Eventually, with a bit of help from a comical rogue/[pickpocket](#) named Autolycus, Perdita's heritage is revealed and she reunites with her father Leontes. The kings are reconciled and both approve of Florizel and Perdita's marriage. They all go to visit a statue of Hermione kept by Paulina. Miraculously, the statue comes to life and speaks, appearing to be the real Hermione, who went into hiding to await the fulfilment of the oracle's prophecy and be reunited with her daughter.

Wise Blood—by Flannery O'Connor.

Hazel Motes begins the novel having returned from serving in the Army, and he is travelling by train to the city of Taulkinham having just found his family home abandoned. His grandfather was a tent revival preacher, and Hazel himself is irresistibly drawn to wearing a bright blue suit and a black hat. He is told repeatedly that he "looks like a preacher," though he despises preachers.

In the [United States Army](#), presumably during the Korean War era (when the book was published), Hazel came to the conclusion that the only way to escape [sin](#) is to have no [soul](#). In Taulkinham, he first goes to the home of a Mrs. Leora Watts, a casual prostitute, who tells him "Mamma don't care if you ain't a preacher," and provides him services.

The next night, he comes across a street vendor hawking potato peelers and Enoch Emery, a sad and manic 18-year-old who was forced to come to the big city after his father abandoned him. The huckster is interrupted by a blind preacher, Asa Hawks, and his young daughter, Sabbath Lily Hawks. Motes finds the daughter eerie, and the preacher says that he has really been attracted to him for repentance. In attempted [blasphemy](#), Hazel says, to Hawks, "My Jesus!" He turns to a crowd Hawks is attempting to reach and begins to announce his "church of truth without Jesus Christ Crucified," but no one seems to be listening.

Enoch Emery is attracted to Hazel's new "Church Without Christ," and together they follow Asa Hawks and his daughter, Sabbath Lily. Eventually Hazel Motes rents a room in the same place as the Hawks after becoming irritated that a preacher such as Asa Hawks wouldn't be interested in saving him. Ostensibly, Asa Hawks had blinded himself with lye, and his daughter is his only aid as he preaches the joys of redemption. It turns out, however, that Asa promised the public to blind himself and then did not, though he carries on as if he had. Hawks is not only lying about his blindness, he is a [raptor](#) who is preying upon those who pray. The pure daughter, Sabbath Lily,

instead of being pure, has a wild sex drive, and she uses the semblance of purity and virginity to heighten her sexual allure. Asa encourages his daughter to seduce Hazel so that he can leave her with him, and Hazel initially intends to seduce her as well, but despite their mutual intentions their "relationship" is not initially consummated.

The *Church Without Christ* staggers along with Hazel as its only follower, until one day when a Christian evangelist named Hoover Shoats (his preaching name is "Onnie Jay Holy") adapts the message for himself, intending to use it as a moneymaking scheme where potential members have to pay a dollar to join the renamed *Holy Church of Christ Without Christ*. The new preacher explains, "It's based on your own personal interpretation (sic) of the Bible, friends. You can sit at home and interpret your own Bible however you feel in your heart it ought to be interpreted." Hazel declines to participate in the scheme, instead watching as Shoats's church gains followers. Shoats hires a man as his "Prophet" who dresses and looks strikingly similar to Hazel.

Meanwhile, Enoch believes that he, like his father, has "wise blood" that tells him secrets about things. After hearing Hazel's message that the Church needs a "new Jesus," Enoch's blood tells him that a mummy in a museum is the one, and so he steals it. By this time, Hazel has discovered that Asa was not blind, and Asa has since left and Sabbath is living with Hazel. Enoch delivers the "new Jesus" to Sabbath, who cradles it in her arms like a baby, and when Hazel returns he destroys the corpse by throwing it against the wall of his room and then dropping the remains out the window into a pouring rain. Enoch later steals a gorilla costume from a man who had insulted him—and presumably Enoch stabs him and possibly kills him in the act—and puts it on, burying his old clothes in the woods. The novel's last image of Enoch is him approaching a couple in his gorilla suit, frightening them away.

Hazel watches as his rival, the Holy Church of Christ Without Christ, turn in a profit of \$15 on its second day, Hazel then follows the "Prophet" on his way home and confronts him. He rams the man's car, which looks very much like Hazel's own car, pushing it into a ditch. He then orders the man to take off the blue suit, but before the man can finish, Hazel runs him over in his car, killing him, and backing over the body to make sure he is dead.

The next day, a policeman catches Hazel driving without a drivers permit while on his way moving to a new town. The policeman rolls Hazel's car over the embankment and the car is destroyed. Shortly after, Hazel blinds himself with lye and become somewhat of an ascetic. Hazel invests his passionate belief in suffering, blinds himself, sleeps with barbed wire around his chest, and puts stones and glass in his shoes. All of the money that Hazel receives from the government "because something was wrong with his insides" (a possible allusion to what is now called post traumatic stress disorder, possibly from WW II or the Korean War) he puts towards rent, all of his leftover money he literally throws away in his trash can. His landlady, Mrs. Flood, believes that she can take advantage of Hazel to make some money by marrying him and having him committed. However, just the opposite happens as she falls in love with him and becomes preoccupied with caring for him, but when she tells him of her plans for them to marry, he wanders off and is found 3 days later in a ditch just about dead. While being driven in the car of the police who found him, Hazel dies, presumably from the blow to the head which he received from the police and their "new" billy club. His body is taken back to Mrs. Flood, where she decides he can stay as long as he would like, and for free.

Woman Warrior—by Maxine Hong Kingston.

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts is a [memoir](#) by [Maxine Hong Kingston](#), published by [Vintage Books](#) in 1975. Although there are many scholarly debates surrounding the official genre classification of the book, it can best be described as a work of creative non-fiction.

Throughout the five chapters of *The Woman Warrior*, Kingston blends autobiography with old Chinese folktales. What results is a complex portrayal of the 20th Century experiences of Chinese-Americans living in the U.S in the shadow of the [Chinese Revolution](#).

The Woman Warrior has been reported by the [Modern Language Association](#) as the most commonly taught text in modern university education. It has been used in disciplines as far reaching as American literature, anthropology, Asian studies, composition, education, psychology, sociology, and women's studies. In addition, it has also won the [National Book Critics Circle Award](#) and has been named one of [Time Magazine's](#) top nonfiction books of the 1970s.¹

Women of Brewster Place (The)—by Gloria Naylor.

The women of Brewster Place are "hard-edged, soft-centered, brutally demanding, and easily pleased". Their names are Mattie Michael, Etta Mae Johnson, Lucielia Turner, Kiswana/Melanie Browne, Cora Lee, Lorraine, and Theresa. Each of their lives are explored in several short stories. These short stories also chronicle the ups and downs many women of color face.

Wuthering Heights—by Emily Brontë.

In 1801, Mr. Lockwood, a rich man from the south, rents Thrushcross Grange in the [north of England](#) for peace and recuperation. Soon after his arrival, he visits his [landlord](#), Mr. Heathcliff, who lives in the remote [moorland](#) farmhouse called "Wuthering Heights". He finds the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights to be a strange group: Mr. Heathcliff appears a gentleman but his mannerisms suggest otherwise; the reserved mistress of the house is in her mid-teens; and a young man appears to be one of the family, although he dresses and talks like a servant.

Being snowed in, Mr. Lockwood stays the night and is shown to an unused chamber, where he finds books and graffiti from a former inhabitant of the farmhouse named Catherine. When he falls asleep, he has a nightmare in which he sees Catherine as a [ghost](#) trying to enter through the window. He wakes and is unable to return to sleep. As soon as the sun rises, he is escorted back to Thrushcross Grange by Heathcliff. There, he asks his housekeeper, Ellen Dean, to tell him the story of the family from the Heights.

Thirty years prior, the Earnshaw family lives at Wuthering Heights. The children of the family are the teenaged Hindley and his younger sister, Catherine. Mr. Earnshaw travels to [Liverpool](#), where he finds a homeless [gypsy](#) boy whom he decides to adopt, naming him "Heathcliff". Hindley finds himself robbed of his father's affections and becomes bitterly [jealous](#) of Heathcliff. However, Catherine grows very attached to him. Soon, the two children spend hours on the moors together and hate every moment apart.

Because of the domestic discord caused by Hindley and Heathcliff's [sibling rivalry](#), Hindley is eventually sent to college. However, he marries a woman named Frances and returns three years later, after Mr. Earnshaw dies. He becomes master of Wuthering Heights, and forces Heathcliff to become a servant instead of a member of the family.

Several months after Hindley's return, Heathcliff and Catherine travel to Thrushcross Grange to spy on the Linton family. However, they are spotted and try to escape. Catherine, having been caught by a dog, is brought inside the Grange to have injuries tended to while Heathcliff is sent home. Catherine eventually returns to Wuthering Heights as a changed woman, looking and acting as a lady. She laughs at Heathcliff's unkempt appearance. When the Lintons visit the next day, Heathcliff dresses up to impress her. It fails when Edgar, one of the Linton children, argues with him. Heathcliff is locked in the attic, where Catherine later tries to comfort him. He swears [vengeance](#) on Hindley.

In the summer of the next year, Frances gives birth to a son, Hareton, but she dies before the year is out. This leads Hindley to descend into a life of drunkenness and waste.

Two years later and Catherine has become close friends with Edgar, growing more distant from Heathcliff. One day in August, while Hindley is absent, Edgar comes to visit Catherine. She has an argument with Ellen, which then spreads to Edgar who tries to leave. Catherine stops him and, before long, they declare themselves lovers.

Later, Catherine talks with Ellen, explaining that Edgar had asked her to marry him and she had accepted. She says that she does not really love Edgar but Heathcliff. Unfortunately she could never marry Heathcliff because of his lack of status and education. She therefore plans to marry Edgar and use that position to help raise Heathcliff's standing. Unfortunately, Heathcliff had overheard the first part about not being able to marry him and runs away, disappearing without a trace. After three years, Edgar and Catherine are married.

Six months after the marriage, Heathcliff returns as a gentleman, having grown stronger and richer during his absence. Catherine is delighted to see him although Edgar is not so keen. Edgar's sister, Isabella, now eighteen, falls in love with Heathcliff, seeing him as a romantic hero. He despises her but encourages the infatuation, seeing it as a chance for revenge on Edgar. When he embraces Isabella one day at the Grange, there is an argument with Edgar which causes Catherine to lock herself in her room and fall ill.

Heathcliff has been staying at the Heights, gambling with Hindley and teaching Hareton bad habits. Hindley is gradually losing his wealth, mortgaging the farmhouse to Heathcliff to repay his debts.

While Catherine is ill, Heathcliff elopes with Isabella, causing Edgar to disown his sister. The fugitives marry and return two months later to Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff hears that Catherine is ill and arranges with Ellen to visit her in secret. In the early hours of the day after their meeting, Catherine gives birth to her daughter, Cathy, and then dies.

The day after Catherine's funeral, Isabella flees Heathcliff and escapes to the south of England where she eventually gives birth to Linton, Heathcliff's son. Hindley dies six months after Catherine. Heathcliff finds himself the master of Wuthering Heights and the guardian of Hareton.

Twelve years later, Cathy has grown into a beautiful, high-spirited girl who has rarely passed outside the borders of the Grange. Edgar hears that Isabella is dying and leaves to pick up her son with the intention of adopting him. While he is gone, Cathy meets Hareton on the moors and learns of her cousin and Wuthering Heights' existence.

Edgar returns with Linton who is a weak and sickly boy. Although Cathy is attracted to him, Heathcliff wants his son with him and insists on having him taken to the Heights.

Three years later, Ellen and Cathy are on the moors when they meet Heathcliff who takes them to Wuthering Heights to see Linton and Hareton. He has plans for Linton and Cathy to marry so that he will inherit Thrushcross Grange. Cathy and Linton begin a secret friendship.

In August of the next year, while Edgar is very ill, Ellen and Cathy visit Wuthering Heights and are held captive by Heathcliff who wants to marry his son to Cathy and, at the same time, prevent her from returning to her father before he dies. After five days, Ellen is released and Cathy escapes with Linton's help just in time to see her father before he dies.

With Heathcliff now the master of both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, Cathy has no choice but to leave Ellen and to go and live with Heathcliff and Hareton. Linton dies soon afterwards and, although Hareton tries to be kind to her, she retreats into herself. This is the point of the story at which Lockwood arrives.

After being ill with a cold for some time, Lockwood decides that he has had enough of the moors and travels to Wuthering Heights to inform Heathcliff that he is returning to the south.

In September, eight months after leaving, Lockwood finds himself back in the area and decides to stay at Thrushcross Grange (since his tenancy is still valid until October). He finds that Ellen is now living at Wuthering Heights. He makes his way there and she fills in the rest of the story.

Ellen had moved to the Heights soon after Lockwood left to replace the housekeeper who had departed. In March, Hareton had an accident and has been confined to the farmhouse. During this time, a friendship developed between Cathy and Hareton. This continues into April when Heathcliff begins to act very strangely, seeing visions of Catherine. After not eating for four days, he is found dead in his room. He is buried next to Catherine. Lockwood visits their graves.

Lockwood departs but, before he leaves, he hears that Hareton and Cathy plan to marry on New Year's Day.

Zoo Story (The)—by Edward Albee.

This one-act play concerns two characters, Peter and Jerry. Peter is a middle-class publishing executive with a wife, two daughters, two cats and two parakeets. Jerry is an isolated and disheartened man. These men meet on a park bench in [New York City's Central Park](#). Jerry is desperate to have a meaningful conversation with another human being. He intrudes on Peter's peaceful state by interrogating him and forcing him to listen to stories like "THE STORY OF JERRY AND THE DOG", and the reason behind his visit to the [zoo](#). The action is linear, unfolding in front of the audience in "real time". The elements of ironic humor and unrelenting dramatic suspense are brought to a climax when Jerry brings his victim down to his own savage level.

The catalyst for the shocking ending transpires when Peter announces, "I really must be going home;..." At the same time Jerry begins pushing Peter off the bench. Peter decides to fight for his territory on the bench and becomes angry. Unexpectedly, Jerry pulls a knife on Peter, and then drops it as initiative for Peter to grab. When Peter holds the knife defensively, Jerry charges him and impales himself on the knife. Bleeding on the park bench, Jerry finishes his *zoo story* by bringing it into the immediate present, "Could I have planned all this. No... no, I couldn't have. But I think I did." Horrified, Peter runs away from Jerry whose dying words, "Oh...my...God", are a combination of scornful mimicry and supplication.

Zoot Suit—by Luis Valdez.

Henry Reyna (inspired by real-life defendant [Henry Leyvas](#)) is a Zoot Suiter "[Pachuco](#)". On his last night of freedom before beginning his Naval service he and his "gang" are accused of the murder of a rival "gangster" after a party. Unfairly prosecuted, the entire gang is thrown in jail for a murder they did not commit. The play is set in the [barrios](#) of [Los Angeles, California](#) in the early 1940s against the backdrop of the [Zoot Suit Riots](#) and [World War II](#). The play is narrated throughout and most of the songs are performed by El Pachuco, an idealized Zoot Suiter. El Pachuco functions as a "Greek Chorus", commenting on the action of the play, and functioning as Henry's conscience. While in prison, Henry develops a crush on the legal aide working on his case, and his brother is wounded in the infamous Zoot Suit riots. The opinion of the public is

given in the form of news headlines by a reporter who is sometimes a journalist and a radio broadcaster.