

## **New Year, New Fiction: Books to Help You Take a Break from Studying**

### ***Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney**

Alice, a novelist, meets Felix, who works in a warehouse, and asks him if he'd like to travel to Rome with her. In Dublin, her best friend, Eileen, is getting over a break-up and slips back into flirting with Simon, a man she has known since childhood. Alice, Felix, Eileen, and Simon are still young—but life is catching up with them. They desire each other, they delude each other, they get together, they break apart. They have sex, they worry about sex, they worry about their friendships and the world they live in. Are they standing in the last lighted room before the darkness, bearing witness to something? Will they find a way to believe in a beautiful world? -Goodreads

### ***Daughters of Sparta* by Claire Heywood**

For millennia, men have told the legend of the woman whose face launched a thousand ships—but now it's time to hear her side of the story. *Daughters of Sparta* is a tale of secrets, love, and tragedy from the women behind mythology's most devastating war, the infamous Helen, and her sister Klytemnestra.

As princesses of Sparta, Helen and Klytemnestra have known nothing but luxury and plenty. With their high birth and unrivalled beauty, they are the envy of all of Greece. But such privilege comes at a cost. While still only girls, the sisters are separated and married to foreign kings of their father's choosing--the powerful Agamemnon, and his brother Menelaos. Yet even as Queens, each is only expected to do two things: birth an heir and embody the meek, demure nature that is expected of women.

But when the weight of their husbands' neglect, cruelty, and ambition becomes too heavy to bear, Helen and Klytemnestra must push against the constraints of their society to carve new lives for themselves, and in doing so, make waves that will ripple throughout the next three thousand years.

*Daughters of Sparta* is a vivid and illuminating reimagining of the Siege of Troy, told through the perspectives of two women whose voices have been ignored for far too long. - Goodreads

### ***Deportee* by Ikenna Okeh**

After spending two years living in Cyprus, Anayo, a Nigerian immigrant, is being deported back home, broke, stranded and without any savings to his name. Back in Nigeria he daily deals with the stigma associated with being a deportee even as he begins to re-assess everything that he had regarded as home, friendship, valid fears, love and community. With each new day in Nigeria comes new revelations, and nothing appears to be what he had thought them to be. This is a typical story of the hopes and expectations that sustain the drive for transcontinental migration in Africa, and one that depicts parts of the many realities that young African immigrants are confronted with. -Waterstones

### ***Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo**

*Girl, Woman, Other* follows the lives and struggles of twelve very different characters. Mostly women, black and British, they tell the stories of their families, friends and lovers, across the country and through the years.

Joyfully polyphonic and vibrantly contemporary, this is a gloriously new kind of history, a novel of our times: celebratory, ever dynamic, and utterly irresistible. -Goodreads

### ***Glory* by NoViolet Bulawayo**

*Glory* centers around the unexpected fall of Old Horse, a long-serving leader of a fictional country, and the drama that follows for a rumbustious nation of animals on the path to true liberation. Inspired by the unexpected fall by coup, in November 2017, of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's president of nearly four decades, Bulawayo's bold, vividly imagined novel shows a country imploding, narrated by a chorus of animal voices who unveil the ruthlessness and cold strategy required to uphold the illusion of absolute power, and the imagination and bullet-proof optimism to overthrow it completely.

As with her debut novel *We Need New Names*, Bulawayo's fierce voice and lucid imagery immerses us in the daily life of a traumatized nation, revealing the dazzling life force and irrepressible wit that lies barely concealed beneath the surface of seemingly bleak circumstances. At the center of this tumult is Destiny, who has returned to Jidada from exile to bear witness to revolution--and focus on the unofficial history and the potential legacy of the women who have quietly pulled the strings in this country.

The animal kingdom--its connection to our primal responses and resonance in the mythology, folktales, and fairytales that define cultures the world over--unmasks the surreality of contemporary global politics to help us understand our world more clearly, even as Bulawayo plucks us right out of it. *Glory* is a blockbuster, an exhilarating ride, and crystalizes a turning point in history with the texture and nuance that only the greatest of fiction can. -Goodreads

### ***How We Disappeared by Jing-Jing Lee***

Singapore, 1942. As Japanese troops sweep down Malaysia and into Singapore, a village is ransacked, leaving only two survivors and one tiny child.

In a neighbouring village, seventeen-year-old Wang Di is strapped into the back of a troop carrier and shipped off to a Japanese military brothel where she is forced into sexual slavery as a "comfort woman." After sixty years of silence, what she saw and experienced still haunts her.

In the year 2000, twelve-year-old Kevin is sitting beside his ailing grandmother when he overhears a mumbled confession. He sets out to discover the truth, wherever it might lead, setting in motion a chain of events he never could have foreseen.

Weaving together two timelines and two very big secrets, this stunning debut opens a window on a little-known period of history, revealing the strength and bravery shown by numerous women in the face of terrible cruelty. Drawing in part on her family's experiences, Jing-Jing Lee has crafted a profoundly moving, unforgettable novel about human resilience, the bonds of family and the courage it takes to confront the past. -Goodreads

### ***Jane Austen and Shelley in the Garden by Janet Todd***

Eccentric Fran wants a second chance. Thanks to her intimacy with Jane Austen, and the poet Shelley, she finds one.

Jane Austen is such a presence in Fran's life that she seems to share her cottage and garden, becoming an imaginary friend.

Fran's conversations with Jane Austen guide and chide her - but Fran is ready for change after years of teaching, reading and gardening. An encounter with a long-standing English friend, and an American writer, leads to new possibilities. Adrift, the three women bond through a love of books and a quest for the idealist poet Shelley at two pivotal moments of his life: in Wales and Venice. His otherworldly longing and yearning for utopian communities lead the women to interrogate their own past as well as motherhood, feminism, the resurgence of childhood memory in old age, the tensions and attractions between generations. Despite the appeal of solitude, the women open themselves social to ways of living - outside partnership and family. Jane Austen, as always, has plenty of comments to offer. -Goodreads

***My Life in the Bush of Ghost* by Amos Tutuola**

This novel recounts the fate of a mortal who strayed into the world of ghosts. The bush is the wilderness of Western Africa. Here, as every hunter and traveller knows, mortals venture at great peril, and it is here that a small boy is left alone. -Goodreads

***My Sister the Serial Killer* by Oyinkan Braithwaite**

When Korede's dinner is interrupted one night by a distress call from her sister, Ayoola, she knows what's expected of her: bleach, rubber gloves, nerves of steel and a strong stomach. This'll be the third boyfriend Ayoola's dispatched in, quote, self-defence and the third mess that her lethal little sibling has left Korede to clear away. She should probably go to the police for the good of the menfolk of Nigeria, but she loves her sister and, as they say, family always comes first. Until, that is, Ayoola starts dating the doctor where Korede works as a nurse. Korede's long been in love with him, and isn't prepared to see him wind up with a knife in his back: but to save one would mean sacrificing the other... -Goodreads

***Piranesi* by Susanna Clarke**

Piranesi's house is no ordinary building: its rooms are infinite, its corridors endless, its walls are lined with thousands upon thousands of statues, each one different from all the others. Within the labyrinth of halls an ocean is imprisoned; waves thunder up staircases, rooms are flooded in an instant. But Piranesi is not afraid; he understands the tides as he understands the pattern of the labyrinth itself. He lives to explore the house. There is one other person in the house—a man called The Other, who visits Piranesi twice a week and asks for help with research into A Great and Secret Knowledge. But as Piranesi explores, evidence emerges of another person, and a terrible truth begins to unravel, revealing a world beyond the one Piranesi has always known. -Goodreads

***Small Island* by Andrea Levy**

Hortense Joseph arrives in London from Jamaica in 1948 with her life in her suitcase, her heart broken, her resolve intact. Her husband, Gilbert Joseph, returns from the war expecting to be received as a hero, but finds his status as a black man in Britain to be second class. His white landlady, Queenie, raised as a farmer's daughter, befriends Gilbert, and later Hortense, with innocence and courage, until the unexpected arrival of her husband, Bernard, who returns from combat with issues of his own to resolve.

Told in these four voices, *Small Island* is a courageous novel of tender emotion and sparkling wit, of crossings taken and passages lost, of shattering compassion and of reckless optimism in the face of insurmountable barriers---in short, an encapsulation of the immigrant's life. - Goodreads

***The Missing Link* by Uzor Maxim Uzoatu**

In his search for man and mankind, Linkman, 'the missing link between the apes and man', traverses from a small hut to a big mansion, from the village of Agama to the city of Lagos, and from the confines of Nigeria to the outposts of London and New York. He makes many interesting discoveries along the way. -Browns Books