



THE BOOK NOOK

ALL ON THE NEW ARRIVALS SHELF FOR NOW, Will be shelved appropriately later

Charles Todd

"Charles Todd was the pen name used by the mother-and-son writing team, Caroline Todd and Charles Todd. They are the New York Times Best Selling authors of the Inspector Ian Rutledge Series and the Bess Crawford series. They have published over thirty titles including two stand-alone novels, an anthology of short stories, and over twenty short stories appearing in mystery magazines and anthologies worldwide. Their works have received the Mary Higgins Clark, Agatha, and Barry awards along with nominations for the Anthony, Edgar, and Dagger awards. Caroline Todd died in August 2021."

. *A Test of Wills* (mystery)

(Inspector Ian Rutledge #1 of 25)

"Todd has written a first novel that speaks out, urgently and compassionately, for a long-dead generation.... A meticulously wrought puzzle." (*New York Times Book Review*)

"An intricately plotted mystery. With this remarkable debut, Charles Todd breaks new ground in the historical crime novel." (Peter Lovesey, author of *The Circle*)

"You're going to love Todd." (Stephen King, *Entertainment Weekly*)

"The first novel to feature war-damaged Scotland Yard inspector Ian Rutledge, *A Test of Wills* is the book that brought author Charles Todd into the spotlight. This Edgar- and Anthony Award-nominated *New York Times* Notable mystery brilliantly evokes post-World War I Great Britain and introduces readers to one of crime fiction's most compelling series protagonists. Here the shell-shocked Rutledge struggles to retain his fragile grip on sanity while investigating the death of a popular army colonel, murdered, it appears, by a decorated war hero with ties to the Royal Family. A phenomenal writer, a twisting puzzle, a character-rich re-creation of an extraordinary time and place... it all adds up to one exceptional read that will delight fans of Elizabeth George, Martha Grimes, Jacqueline Winspear, Ruth Rendell, and other masters of the British procedural."

. *A False Mirror* (mystery)

(Inspector Ian Rutledge #9 of 25)

"Unhealed scars of the Great War still torment Scotland Yard Inspector Ian Rutledge. A haunted, damaged shell of a man, he has been sent to the small coastal town of Hampton Regis to solve a violent crime and to confront his own tragic past.

An officer who served with Rutledge in the trenches of France before being sent back to England under suspicious circumstances has now been accused of savagely beating the husband of the woman he still loves. The suspect has taken the wife hostage, threatening

to kill her and her maid unless Rutledge takes charge of the investigation. Although the case painfully mirrors Rutledge's own past and the love he lost to another man, he cannot refuse it. When the unconscious brutalized victim vanishes without a trace, it's clear that this peaceful little town hides a vicious murderer and secrets powerful enough to kill for."

"No mystery series I can think of captures the sadness and loss that swept over England after World War I with the heartbreaking force of Charles Todd's books about Scotland Yard Inspector Ian Rutledge." (*Chicago Tribune*)

. *The Confession* (mystery)

(Inspector Ian Rutledge #14 of 25)

"Declaring he needs to clear his conscience, a dying man walks into Scotland Yard and confesses that he killed his cousin five years earlier during the Great War. When Inspector Ian Rutledge presses for details, the man reveals little else, only that he hails from a village somewhere east of London. With scant information to go on and no corpse, Rutledge cannot launch an official inquiry, but he is intrigued enough to look into the case on his own. Everything changes when the body of the confessed killer is found floating in the Thames, a bullet in the back of his head, and Rutledge discovers that the guilt-stricken alleged murderer was not who he claimed to be.

With but one clue to go on, a gold locket found around the dead man's neck, Rutledge finds himself drawn to an insular village in Essex, where the residents will do anything to keep out of the public eye. For notoriety could bring attention to a centuries-old act of evil that, even now, could damn them all."

"One of the best historical series being written today." (*Washington Post*)

"Todd once and for all establishes the shell-shocked Rutledge as the genre's most complex and fascinating detective." (*Entertainment Weekly*)

. *Hunting Shadows* (mystery)

(Inspector Ian Rutledge #16 of 25)

"A society wedding at Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire becomes a crime scene when a man is murdered. After another body is found, the baffled local constabulary turns to Scotland Yard. Though the second crime had a witness, her description of the killer is so strange it's unbelievable.

Despite his experience, Inspector Ian Rutledge has few answers of his own. The victims are so different that there is no rhyme or reason to their deaths. Nothing logically seems to connect them—except the killer. As the investigation widens, a clear suspect emerges. But for Rutledge, the facts still don't add up, leaving him to question his own judgment.

In going over the details of the case, Rutledge is reminded of a dark episode he witnessed in the war. While the memory could lead him to the truth, it also raises a prickly dilemma. To stop a murderer, will the ethical detective choose to follow the letter—or the spirit—of the law?

. *A Fine Summer's Day* (mystery)
(Inspector Ian Rutledge #17 of 25)

"*New York Times* best-selling author Charles Todd takes readers into Scotland Yard detective Ian Rutledge's past—to his perplexing final case before the outbreak of World War I.

On a fine summer's day in June, 1914, Ian Rutledge pays little notice to the assassination of an archduke in Sarajevo. An Inspector at Scotland Yard, he is planning to propose to the woman whom he deeply loves, despite intimations from friends and family that she may not be the wisest choice.

To the north on this warm and gentle day, another man in love—a Scottish Highlander—shows his own dear girl the house he will build for her in September. While back in England, a son awaits the undertaker in the wake of his widowed mother's death. This death will set off a series of murders across England, seemingly unconnected, that Rutledge will race to solve in the weeks before the fateful declaration in August that will forever transform his world.

As the clouds of war gather on the horizon, all of Britain wonders and waits. With every moment at stake, Rutledge sets out to right a wrong—an odyssey that will eventually force him to choose between the Yard and his country, between love and duty, and between honor and truth."

. *No Shred of Evidence* (mystery)
(Inspector Ian Rutledge #18 of 25)

"In this absorbing new entry in the acclaimed *New York Times* best-selling series, Scotland Yard's Ian Rutledge is caught up in a twisted web of vengeance and murder. On the north coast of Cornwall, an apparent act of mercy is repaid by an arrest for murder. Four young women have been accused of the crime. A shocked father calls in a favor at the Home Office. Scotland Yard is asked to review the case.

However, Inspector Ian Rutledge is not the first inspector to reach the village. Following in the shoes of a dead man, he is told the case is all but closed. Even as it takes an unexpected personal turn, Rutledge will require all his skill to deal with the incensed families of the accused, the grieving parents of the victim, and local police eager to see these four women sent to the infamous Bodmin Gaol. Then why hasn't the killing stopped?

With no shred of evidence to clear the accused, Rutledge must plunge deep into the darkest secrets of a wild, beautiful, and dangerous place if he is to find a killer who may—or may not—hold the key to their fate."

Ngaio Marsh, *Artists in Crime* (mystery)
(Inspector Roderick Alleyn #6 of 32)

"In the world of film, it's known as a 'meet cute.' But for Inspector Alleyn and Miss Agatha Troy, it's more like irritation: On the ship back to England after Alleyn's visit to New Zealand (see *Vintage Murder*), she finds him tedious and dull; he thinks she's a bohemian cliché. They may be destined for romance, but there's a murder in the way: No sooner has Alleyn settled in to his mother's house, eager for a relaxing end to his vacation, than

he gets a call that a model has been stabbed at the artists' community down the road. And wouldn't you know it: the artistic Miss Troy is one of the community's most prominent—and outspoken—members. This is the novel in which Ngaio Marsh introduces Inspector Alleyn to his future wife, painter Agatha Troy, who will go on to be a key character in a number of future mysteries."

"Ngaio Marsh transcended the detective genre by the power of her writing and the rich variety of characters who people her novels" (P.D. James)

Aimée & David Thurlo, *Black Thunder* (mystery)

(Ella Clah mystery series #16 of 17)

"A construction crew found the first body. The cops found three more—on both sides of the border of the Navajo Reservation.

Because some of the bodies were buried outside the rez, Navajo Police Special Investigator Ella Clah and her team must work a delicate joint investigation with the New Mexico police. Identifying the dead isn't easy—some had been buried for years—and the cases are stone cold. Then one of the bodies turns out to be that of a missing man who was believed to have embezzled funds from his construction firm...and suspicions focus on the man's partner.

With no obvious links between any of the corpses, and the anniversary of their deaths fast approaching, Ella feels frustrated. Unless she and her team can find what connects these victims, someone else may soon be killed. Ella's ability to concentrate is battered by worries about her teenage daughter, who has been skipping school, and her mother, who is cooking up a storm, a sure sign that trouble is brewing in the household."

Tana French, *In the Woods* (mystery/thriller)

(Dublin Murder Squad #1)

"As dusk approaches a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984, mothers begin to call their children home. But on this warm evening, three children do not return from the dark and silent woods. When the police arrive, they find only one of the children. He is gripping a tree trunk in terror, wearing blood-filled sneakers and unable to recall a single detail of the previous hours.

Twenty years later, the found boy, Rob Ryan, is a detective on the Dublin Murder Squad and keeps his past a secret. But when a 12-year-old girl is found murdered in the same woods, he and Detective Cassie Maddox (his partner and closest friend) find themselves investigating a case chillingly similar to the previous unsolved mystery. Now, with only snippets of long-buried memories to guide him, Ryan has the chance to uncover both the mystery of the case before him and that of his own shadowy past.

A gorgeously written novel that marks the debut of an astonishing new voice in psychological suspense."

Alexander McCall Smith, *The Handsome Man's De Luxe Café* (mystery)

(No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency #15 of 26)

"Over the years Mma Ramotswe has found many lost things, but never before has she been asked to help a woman find herself—until now. A kindhearted brother and sister

have taken in a nameless woman with no memory of her own history or how she came to Botswana. It falls to Precious Ramotswe and her new co-director, Grace Makutsi, to discover the woman's identity. Meanwhile, motherhood proves to be no obstacle to Mma Makutsi's professional success, as she launches a new enterprise of her own: the Handsome Man's De Luxe Café, a restaurant for Gaborone's most fashionable diners. And next door, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni is forced to make a choice that will directly affect not only Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors, but the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency as well. With sympathy and indefatigable good humor, Mma Ramotswe and her friends see one another through these major changes and discover along the way what true friendship really means.

Alexander McCall Smith, *How to Raise an Elephant* (mystery)

(No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency #21 of 26)

"In this latest installment in the cherished No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, Mma Ramotswe must balance family obligations with the growing needs of one of Charlie's pet projects.

Precious Ramotswe loves her dependable old van. Yes, it sometimes takes a bit longer to get going now, and it has developed some quirks over the years, but it has always gotten the job done. This time, though, the world—and Charlie—may be asking too much of it, for when he borrows the beloved vehicle, he returns it damaged. And, to make matters worse, the interior seems to have acquired an earthy smell that even Precious can't identify.

But the olfactory issue is not the only mystery that needs solving. Mma Ramotswe is confronted by a distant relative, Blessing, who asks for help with an ailing cousin. The help requested is of a distinctly pecuniary nature, which makes both Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni and Mma Makutsi suspicious. And there is no peace at home, either, as the new neighbors are airing their marital grievances rather loudly. Still, Mma Ramotswe is confident that the solutions to all of these difficulties are there to be discovered—as long as she is led by kindness, grace, and logic and can rely on the counsel of her friends and loved ones.

Alexander McCall Smith, *The Joy and Light Bus Company* (mystery)

(No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency #22 of 26)

"In this latest installment in the beloved No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, Mma Ramotswe is tempted to put the brakes on a business venture before it even gets rolling.

"McCall Smith is a master....There's beauty and revelation of one kind or another woven expertly into every line." (*The Christian Science Monitor*)

"Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni attends a course hosted by the local chamber of commerce entitled "Where Is Your Business Going?" But rather than feeling energized, he comes back in low spirits, unsure how to grow the already venerable and successful Tlokweng Road Speedy Motors. Then an old friend from school approaches him about a new business venture that could be just the ticket. When it turns out he will need to mortgage his property in order to pursue this endeavor, Mma Ramotswe and Mma Makutsi wonder what this will mean for his current business—as well as their own.

Even as she puzzles over mysteries on the domestic front, Mma Ramotswe's professional duties must take precedence. When a concerned son learns that his aging father's nurse now stands to inherit the family home, he begins to doubt her intentions and takes his case to Botswana's premier detective agency. Fortunately, Mma Ramotswe and Mma Makutsi are committed agents of justice and agree to investigate.

Tricky as these matters may be, Mma Ramotswe knows that the most creative solutions are often found with the support of loving friends and family. Working together over a cup of red bush tea, she and Mma Makutsi will rely on their tact, humor, and goodwill to ensure that all involved find the happiness that they deserve."

Alexander McCall Smith, *A Song of Comfortable Chairs* (mystery)

(No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency #23 of 26)

"In this latest installment in the beloved No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, Grace Makutsi encounters a pair of quandaries that will require all of her and Mma Ramotswe's cleverness and generosity to resolve."

"An escape from life's woes as well as a suggestion for how to make the whole deal more palatable—fragility, fruit cake, and all." (*The Boston Globe*)

"Grace Makutsi's husband, Phuti Radiphuti, is in a bind. An international firm is attempting to undercut his prices in the office furniture market. Phuti has always been concerned with quality and comfort, but this firm seems interested only in profits. To make matters worse, they have a slick new advertising campaign that seems hard to beat.

Meanwhile, Grace is approached by an old friend who has a troubled son. She and Phuti agree to take Patience and Modise in and lend a hand, but things don't work out quite as intended, and the situation proves difficult for them to handle. It will require not only all of their persistence and dedication but also help from an unexpected quarter to find a solution that will make everyone happy.

Faced with more than her fair share of delicate dilemmas, Mma Makutsi deals with it all with her usual graciousness. This—along with the kindness, generosity, and good sense for which the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency is known—assures us that, in the end, each of these matters will be set right."

Leslie Karst, *The Fragrance of Death* (mystery - local author)

(Sally Solari Mystery Books #5 of 6)

"*Restaurateur Sally Solari has a nose for trouble, but when her sense of smell goes missing, it's not just her career on the line . . . it's her life.*"

"Restaurateur Sally Solari is a champion, both in the kitchen and on the case, but after getting mixed up in one too many murders, her *nonna's* friends have taken to crossing themselves every time they meet. Sally's determined to stay out of trouble and focus on her cooking. It's too bad the food scene in Santa Cruz is cut-throat—sometimes literally.

When a head cold knocks out Sally's sense of taste and smell, at the same time her old acquaintance Neil Lerici is murdered at the annual Artichoke Cook-Off, her powers of investigation are once again called into action. Could Neil have been killed by the local restaurant owner who took his winning spot at the competition? Or maybe by one of his siblings, who were desperate to sell the family farm to a real estate developer?

Sally plunges headfirst into the case, risking alienating everyone she knows—including the handsome Detective Vargas, who finds her sleuthing both infuriating and endearing. And soon it's not just her restaurant and her tentative new relationship that are on the line—it's her life . . .

The Fragrance of Death is a non-stop fun cozy mystery that will keep your mind buzzing and your mouth watering, and contains a selection of delicious recipes to cook at home."

Peter Geye, *A Lesser Light* (fiction)

"Reading this book felt like watching some rare celestial event: sky-big, beautiful, and strangely tender, and full of a kind of magic at the edge of things that's impossible to describe and changes you forever to witness." (Amber Sparks, author of *And I Do Not Forgive You*)

"I will never forget this achingly beautiful story with its prose that sings through the soul." (Carol Dunbar, author of *The Net Beneath Us*)

"Geye portrays the stark landscape in luminous prose, and he eschews a simple black-and-white story of marital conflict for something much more surprising and complex. This bittersweet narrative astounds." (*Publishers Weekly*, starred review)

"On the rocky shores of Lake Superior, a piercing story of selfhood and determinism develops: is the future what we're handed or what we make of it?

It's 1910, and Theodulf Sauer has finally achieved a position befitting his ego: master lighthouse keeper at a newly commissioned station towering above Lake Superior. When his new wife, Willa, arrives on the first spring ferry, it's clear her life has taken the opposite turn: after being summoned home from college to Duluth when her father dies, she and her scheming mother find themselves destitute, and Willa is rushed into this ill-suited arranged marriage before she can comprehend her fate.

As the lighthouse station establishes, the new relationship teeters between tense and hostile, with little mutual understanding or tenderness. Willa takes solace in her learned fascination with the cosmos, especially (despite her husband's suspicion of the event) in viewing the imminent Halley's Comet. Under ominous night skies, Theodulf stands sentry over the lake, clinging to long-ago and faraway memories of happiness that fill him with longing and shame.

Into this impasse, a clairvoyant girl and her resolute uncle emerge from across the cove. They see through the Sauers' thin façade and, by turns and in different ways, convey promise, sympathy, and insight that counter Willa's despair. Armed with renewed self-determination, Willa forges a path to happiness. But before she can grasp it, tragedy comes to their remote beacon, and her future plunges toward a dark unknown.

Set against a brooding and beautiful landscape, *A Lesser Light* is a story about industry and calamity, science versus superstition, inner desire countered with societal expectations—and the consequences when these forces collide in the wilderness of rapid social change."

(continued)

Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient* (fiction)

"Sensuous, mysterious, rhapsodic, it transports the reader to another world Ondaatje's most probing examination yet of the nature of identity." (*San Francisco Chronicle*)

"Mr. Ondaatje [is] one of North America's finest novelists.... The spell of his haunted villa remains with us, inviting us to reread passages for the pure pleasure of being there." (*The Wall Street Journal*)

"Michael Ondaatje's Booker Prize-winning best seller lyrically portrays the convergence of four damaged lives in a bomb-riddled Italian villa in the last days of the war. Hana, the grieving nurse; the maimed thief, Caravaggio; the emotionally detached Indian sapper, Kip—each is haunted in different ways by the riddle of the man they know only as the English patient, a nameless burn victim who lies swathed in bandages in an upstairs room. It is this man's incandescent memories—of the bleak North African desert, of explorers' caves and Bedouin tribesmen, of forbidden love, and of annihilating anger—that illuminate the story, and the consequences of the mysteries they reveal radiate outward in shock waves that leave all the characters forever changed."

Arturo Pérez-Reverte, *The Painter of Battles* (fiction)

"[Pérez-Reverte's] best book yet . . . a game of mental chess, an excursion into art, history and imagination." (*The Times*, London)

"Andrés Faulques, a world-renowned war photographer, has retreated to a tower overlooking the Spanish coast, where he paints a vast mural incorporating the indelible images of conflict he's witnessed in his lifetime. One night, an unexpected visitor interrupts his solitude. As Faulques struggles to recall the face, the man explains that he was the subject of an iconic photo taken by Faulques in a war zone years ago—a photo that destroyed his life. 'And why have you come looking for me?' asks Faulques. The stranger answers, 'Because I'm going to kill you.'

So begins a life-or-death exchange in which Faulques is forced to recall a time when he loved a beautiful woman and risked his life daily for art and testimony. Yet as the tense dialogue between Faulques and his would-be killer continues, the stakes grow even higher. What they are grappling with becomes not just Faulques' fate, but the very nature of love and cruelty itself."

"Arturo Pérez-Reverte's bestselling books, including *The Club Dumas*, *The Flanders Panel*, *The Fencing Master*, and the Captain Alatriste series, have been translated into thirty-four languages in fifty countries and have sold millions of copies. Born in Cartagena, Spain, Pérez-Reverte now lives in Madrid, where he was recently elected to the Spanish Royal Academy. A former war journalist, he now writes fiction full time."

Jodi Picoult, *The Book of Two Ways* (fiction)

#1 *New York Times* Bestseller • From the author of *Small Great Things* and *A Spark of Light* comes a "powerful" (*The Washington Post*) novel about the choices that alter the course of our lives.

"[A] delightfully escapist, high-concept novel . . . a book of big, burning questions such as what defines a great life." (*BookTrib*)

"Unputdownable." (*E! Online*)

"Everything changes in a single moment for Dawn Edelstein. She's on a plane when the flight attendant makes an announcement: Prepare for a crash landing. She braces herself as thoughts flash through her mind. The shocking thing is, the thoughts are not of her husband but of a man she last saw fifteen years ago: Wyatt Armstrong.

Dawn, miraculously, survives the crash, but so do all the doubts that have suddenly been raised. She has led a good life. Back in Boston, there is her husband, Brian, their beloved daughter, and her work as a death doula, in which she helps ease the transition between life and death for her clients. But somewhere in Egypt is Wyatt Armstrong, who works as an archaeologist unearthing ancient burial sites, a career Dawn once studied for but was forced to abandon when life suddenly intervened. And now, when it seems that fate is offering her second chances, she is not as sure of the choice she once made.

After the crash landing, the airline ensures that the survivors are seen by a doctor, then offers transportation to wherever they want to go. The obvious destination is to fly home, but she could take another path: return to the archaeological site she left years before, reconnect with Wyatt and their unresolved history, and maybe even complete her research on *The Book of Two Ways*—the first known map of the afterlife.

As the story unfolds, Dawn's two possible futures unspool side by side, as do the secrets and doubts long buried with them. Dawn must confront the questions she's never truly asked: What does a life well lived look like? When we leave this earth, what do we leave behind? Do we make choices . . . or do our choices make us? And who would you be if you hadn't turned out to be the person you are right now?

Ruth Reichl, *The Paris Novel* (fiction)

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

A "mouthwatering" (*The New York Times*) adventure through the food, art, and fashion scenes of 1980s Paris—from the bestselling author of *Save Me the Plums* and *Delicious!* "An enchanting and irresistible feast . . . As with a perfect meal in the world's most magical city, I never wanted this sublime novel to end." (Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney, author of *Good Company*)

A BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR: *Saveur*, *Food & Wine*, *Bookreporter*, *The Charlotte Observer*

"Stella reached for an oyster, tipped her head, and tossed it back. It was cool and slippery, the flavor so briny it was like diving into the ocean. Oysters, she thought. Where have they been all my life?

When her estranged mother dies, Stella is left with an unusual inheritance: a one-way plane ticket and a note reading 'Go to Paris.' Stella is hardly cut out for adventure; a traumatic childhood has kept her confined to the strict routines of her comfort zone. But when her boss encourages her to take time off, Stella resigns herself to honoring her mother's last wishes.

Alone in a foreign city, Stella falls into old habits, living cautiously and frugally. Then she stumbles across a vintage store, where she tries on a fabulous Dior dress. The shopkeeper insists that this dress was meant for Stella and for the first time in her life Stella does something impulsive. She buys the dress—and embarks on an adventure.

Her first stop: the iconic brasserie Les Deux Magots, where Stella tastes her first oysters

and then meets an octogenarian art collector who decides to take her under his wing. As Jules introduces Stella to a veritable who's who of the Paris literary, art, and culinary worlds, she begins to understand what it might mean to live a larger life.

As weeks—and many decadent meals—go by, Stella ends up living as a 'tumbleweed' at famed bookstore Shakespeare & Company, uncovers a hundred-year-old mystery in a Manet painting, and discovers a passion for food that may be connected to her past. A feast for the senses, this novel is a testament to living deliciously, taking chances, and finding your true home."

Anita Shreve, *Where or When* (fiction)

"What would you do if out of the blue, you received a letter from your first love? Siân Richards sees no reason why she can't write back to Charles Callahan. After all, it's been thirty years and they are both married with families. But when they decide to meet again, an innocent correspondence becomes a dangerous intimacy. Swept up in the past and consumed by an obsessive love, Charles and Siân risk everything to be together. A heart-wrenching, suspenseful story with an unforgettable conclusion, *Where or When* is also a 'thoughtful, beautifully written contemporary romance' (*The Washington Post*).

Sebastian Faulks, *Birdsong* (fiction)

"Sebastian Faulks is a British novelist, journalist, and broadcaster best known for his acclaimed historical novels set in France, including *The Girl at the Lion d'Or*, *Birdsong*, and *Charlotte Gray*. Alongside these, he has written contemporary fiction, a James Bond continuation novel (*Devil May Care*), and a Jeeves homage (*Jeeves and the Wedding Bells*). A former literary editor and journalist, Faulks gained widespread recognition with *Birdsong*, which solidified his literary reputation. He has also appeared regularly on British media, notably as a team captain on BBC Radio 4's *The Write Stuff*, and authored the TV tie-in *Faulks on Fiction*. Honored as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and appointed CBE for his services to literature, Faulks continues to publish widely, with *The Seventh Son* released in 2023."

"Published to international critical and popular acclaim, this intensely romantic yet stunningly realistic novel spans three generations and the unimaginable gulf between the First World War and the present. As the young Englishman Stephen Wraysford passes through a tempestuous love affair with Isabelle Azaire in France and enters the dark, surreal world beneath the trenches of No Man's Land, Sebastian Faulks creates a world of fiction that is as tragic as *A Farewell to Arms* and as sensuous as *The English Patient*. Crafted from the ruins of war and the indestructibility of love, *Birdsong* is a novel that will be read and marveled at for years to come.

Birdsong is part of a loose trilogy of novels by Sebastian Faulks, alongside *The Girl at the Lion d'Or* and *Charlotte Gray*; the three are linked through location, history, and several minor characters.

Sebastian Faulks, *Charlotte Gray* (fiction)

"From the bestselling author of *Birdsong* comes *Charlotte Gray*, the remarkable story of a young Scottish woman who becomes caught up in the effort to liberate Occupied France

from the Nazis while pursuing a perilous mission of her own.

In blacked-out, wartime London, Charlotte Gray develops a dangerous passion for a battle-weary RAF pilot, and when he fails to return from a daring flight into France she is determined to find him. In the service of the Resistance, she travels to the village of Lavaurette, dyeing her hair and changing her name to conceal her identity. Here she will come face-to-face with the harrowing truth of what took place during Europe's darkest years, and will confront a terrifying secret that threatens to cast its shadow over the remainder of her days. Vividly rendered, tremendously moving, and with a narrative sweep and power reminiscent of his novel *Birdsong*, *Charlotte Gray* confirms Sebastian Faulks as one of the finest novelists working today."

Sebastian Faulks, *The Girl at the Lion d'Or* (fiction)

"A haunting historical novel of passion, loss, and courage set in France between the two world wars.

On a rainy night in the 1930s, Anne Louvet appears at the run-down Hotel du Lion d'Or in the village of Janvilliers. She is seeking a job and a new life, one far removed from the awful injustices of her past. As Anne embarks on a torrential love affair with a married veteran of the Great War, *The Girl at the Lion d'Or* fashions an unbreakable spell of narrative and atmosphere that evokes French masters from Flaubert to Renoir."

"This moving and profound novel is perfectly constructed, and admirable in its configurations of place and period." (*The Times*, London)

"Beautifully written and—extraordinarily moving." (*The Sunday Times*, London)

Fred Chappell, *Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You* (fiction)

(one of a cycle of three)

"*Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You* is rich with the music of the Southern mountains and the stories of their people. Jess Kirkman's grandmother is dying, and Jess remembers the tales she and his mother have passed down to him—a chorus of women's voices that sing and share and celebrate the common song of life."

"Grounded in the gripping art of storytelling, [it] demonstrates Fred Chappell's universal appeal . . . A stirring chorale of women's voices." (Robert Taylor, *The Boston Globe*)

"A vibrant picture . . . Chappell describes steely, passionate women, the savory foods they cook, and the luscious landscapes they inhabit." (Margot Mifflin, *Entertainment Weekly*)

"An array of flavorful tales . . . a sometimes boisterous, sometimes lyrical, sometimes Gothically romantic celebration of women." (David Willis McCullough, *The New York Times Book Review*)

"This is one of my favorite books ever. The beauty of the language and the stories that weave into a family vigil exceed even the richness, heart, and humor of the other three parts of Chappell's Kirkman tetralogy. This is a book to love and wear out." (A. Kass)

Fred Davis Chappell retired after 40 years as an English professor at University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He was the Poet Laureate of North Carolina from 1997-2002. His literary awards include the Prix de Meilleur des Livres Etrangers, the Bollingen Prize, and the T. S. Eliot Prize.

Sherman Alexie, *Reservation Blues* (fiction)

"The life of Spokane Indian Thomas Builds-the-Fire irrevocably changes when blues legend Robert Johnson miraculously appears on his reservation and passes the misfit storyteller his enchanted guitar. Inspired by this gift, Thomas forms Coyote Springs, an all-Indian Catholic band who find themselves on a magical tour that leads from reservation bars to Seattle and New York—and deep within their own souls.

Sherman Alexie is a Native American author, poet, and filmmaker known for his powerful portrayals of contemporary Indigenous life, often infused with wit, humor, and emotional depth. Drawing heavily on his experiences growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation, Alexie's work addresses complex themes such as identity, poverty, addiction, and the legacy of colonialism, all filtered through a distinctly Native perspective."

Julia Alvarez, *Saving the World* (fiction)

"Latina novelist Alma Huebner is suffering from writer's block and is years past the completion date for yet another of her bestselling family sagas. Her husband, Richard, works for a humanitarian organization dedicated to the health and prosperity of developing countries and wants her help on an extended AIDS assignment in the Dominican Republic. But Alma begs off joining him: the publisher is breathing down her neck. She promises to work hard and follow him a bit later.

The truth is that Alma is seriously sidetracked by a story she has stumbled across. It's the story of a much earlier medical do-gooder, Spaniard Francisco Xavier Balmis, who in 1803 undertook to vaccinate the populations of Spain's American colonies against smallpox. To do this, he required live 'carriers' of the vaccine.

Of greater interest to Alma is Isabel Sendales y Gómez, director of La Casa de Expósitos, who was asked to select twenty-two orphan boys to be the vaccine carriers. She agreed—with the stipulation that she would accompany the boys on the proposed two-year voyage. Her strength and courage inspire Alma, who finds herself becoming obsessed with the details of Isabel's adventures.

This resplendent novel-within-a-novel spins the disparate tales of two remarkable women, both of whom are swept along by machismo. In depicting their confrontation of the great scourges of their respective eras, Alvarez exposes the conflict between altruism and ambition."

"Julia Alvarez left the Dominican Republic for the United States in 1960 at the age of ten. She is the author of six novels, three books of nonfiction, three collections of poetry, and eleven books for children and young adults. She has taught and mentored writers in schools and communities across America and, until her retirement in 2016, was a writer-in-residence at Middlebury College. Her work has garnered wide recognition, including a Latina Leader Award in Literature from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, the Hispanic Heritage Award in Literature, the Woman of the Year by Latina magazine, and inclusion in the New York Public Library's program 'The Hand of the Poet: Original Manuscripts by 100 Masters, from John Donne to Julia Alvarez.' *In the Time of the Butterflies*, with over one million copies in print, was selected by the National Endowment for the Arts for its national Big Read program, and in 2013 President Obama awarded Alvarez the National Medal of Arts in recognition of her extraordinary storytelling."

Nicole Mones, *Lost in Translation* (fiction)

"Expatriate translator Alice Mannegan spends her nights in Beijing's smoky bars, seeking fleeting encounters with Chinese men to blot out the shame of her racist father back in Texas. But when she signs on to an archaeological expedition searching for the missing bones of Peking Man in China's remote Northwest deserts, her world cracks open. As the group follows the trail of the Jesuit philosopher/paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin to close in on one of archaeology's greatest mysteries, Alice finds herself increasingly drawn to a Chinese professor who is shackled by his own painful memories. Love in all its forms—human, sexual, divine, between a nation and its history, a man and his past, a father and his daughter—drives the story to its breathtaking finish."

"Emotionally charged and erotic, this widely translated bestseller has been universally praised for its authoritative portrayal of a China rarely captured in contemporary fiction. The novel's accolades include the Kafka Prize for the year's best work of fiction by any American woman, the Pacific Northwest Bookseller's Association Book Award for the year's best novel from the five northwestern states, and the *New York Times Book Review's* Notable Book and Editor's Choice."

"A newly launched textile business took Nicole Mones to China for the first time in 1977, after the end of the Cultural Revolution. As an individual she traded textiles with China for eighteen years before she turned to writing about that country. Her novels *Night in Shanghai*, *The Last Chinese Chef*, *Lost in Translation*, and *A Cup of Light* are in print in more than twenty-two languages and have received multiple juried prizes, including the Kafka Prize (year's best work of fiction by any American woman) and Kiriya Prize (finalist; for the work of fiction which best enhances understanding of any Pacific Rim Culture). *The Last Chinese Chef* also won a World Gourmand Award as the year's best Chinese cookbook (#1 in the U.S., #3 worldwide), even though it is a novel without a single recipe."

Pam Houston, *Contents May Have Shifted* (fiction)

"Heart-stopping prose and crackling observations on a spiritual journey toward a life rich in love and freedom. Stuck in a dead-end relationship, this fearless narrator leaves her metaphorical baggage behind and finds a comfort zone in the air, 'feeling safest with one plane ticket in her hand and another in her underwear drawer.' She flies around the world, finding reasons to love life in dozens of far-flung places from Alaska to Bhutan. Along the way she weathers unplanned losses of altitude, air pressure, and landing gear. With the help of a squad of loyal, funny, wise friends and massage therapists, she learns to sort truth from self-deception, self-involvement from self-possession."

At last, having found a new partner 'who loves Don DeLillo and the NHL' and a daughter 'who needs you to teach her to dive and to laugh at herself'—not to mention two dogs and two horses—'staying home becomes more of an option. Maybe.'

Houston is the Director of Creative Writing at U.C. Davis. Her stories have been selected for the Best American Short Stories, the O. Henry Awards, the Pushcart Prize, and the Best American Short Stories of the Century.

Elizabeth McKenzie, *The Dog of the North* (fiction - local author)

Finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize * A *New Yorker* Best Book of the Year *
A *New York Times* Book Review Editors' Choice * Nominated for the Women's Prize for Fiction *

"I'm in love with a grieving misfit driving around with a donkey-shaped piñata in an old van held together by duct tape...the great miracle of McKenzie's writing... is how she manages to transform misery into gentle humor...darkly hilarious." (*The Washington Post*)
"An addictive read with an ultimately hopeful core that recalls Haruki Murakami, Sayaka Murata, Richard Brautigan, and Miranda July" (Sanjena Sathian, author of *Gold Diggers*)

"Penny Rush has problems. Her marriage is over; she's quit her job. Her mother and stepfather went missing in the Australian outback five years ago; her mentally unbalanced father provokes her; her grandmother Dr. Pincer keeps experiments in the refrigerator and something worse in the woodshed. But Penny is a virtuoso at what's possible when all else fails."

"Elizabeth McKenzie, the National Book Award-nominated author of *The Portable Veblen*, follows Penny on her quest for a fresh start. There will be a road trip in *The Dog of the North*, an old van with gingham curtains, a piñata, and stiff brakes. There will be injury and peril. There will be a dog named Kweecoats and two brothers who may share a toupee. There will be questions: Why is a detective investigating her grandmother? What is 'the Scintillator'? And can Penny recognize a good thing when it finally comes her way?

This slyly humorous, thoroughly winsome novel finds the purpose in life's curveballs, insisting that even when we are painfully warped by those we love most, we can be brought closer to our truest selves."

Helen Humphreys, *The Lost Garden* (fiction)

"Leaving London to grow food for the war effort, Gwen discovers a mysterious lost garden and the story of a love that becomes her own. This word-perfect, heartbreaking novel is set in early 1941 in Britain when the war seems endless and, perhaps, hopeless. London is on fire from the Blitz, and a young woman gardener named Gwen Davis flees from the burning city for the Devon countryside. She has volunteered for the Land Army, and is to be in charge of a group of young girls who will be trained to plant food crops on an old country estate where the gardens have fallen into ruin. Also on the estate, waiting to be posted, is a regiment of Canadian soldiers. For three months, the young women and men will form attachments, living in a temporary rural escape. No one will be more changed by the stay than Gwen. She will inspire the girls to restore the estate gardens, fall in love with a soldier, find her first deep friendship, and bring a lost garden, created for a great love, back to life. While doing so, she will finally come to know herself and a life worth living."

Ann Packer, *The Dive from Clausen's Pier* (fiction - Bay Area author)

"How much do we owe the people we love? Is it a sign of strength or weakness to walk away from someone in need? These questions lie at the heart of Ann Packer's intimate and emotionally thrilling novel."

"Packer knows just how to make a story build: the novel (a national bestseller) reveals a sure sense of pace and pitch, a brilliant ear for character . . . a searching emotional generosity." (*The New York Times Book Review*)

"At the age of twenty-three Carrie Bell has spent her entire life in Wisconsin, with the same best friend and the same dependable, easygoing, high school sweetheart. Now to her dismay she has begun to find this life suffocating and is considering leaving it—and Mike—behind. But when Mike is paralyzed in a diving accident, leaving seems unforgivable and yet more necessary than ever.

The Dive from Clausen's Pier animates this dilemma—and Carrie's startling response to it—with the narrative assurance, exacting realism, and moral complexity we expect from the very best fiction.

"Intricately detailed, deeply felt, compelling and utterly surprising. . . . Wonderfully satisfying." (*The Boston Globe*)

William Maxwell, *They Came Like Swallows* (fiction)

"To eight-year old Bunny Morison, his mother is an angelic comforter in whose absence nothing is real or alive. To his older brother, Robert, his mother is someone he must protect, especially since the deadly, influenza epidemic of 1918 is ravaging their small Midwestern town. To James Morison, his wife, Elizabeth, is the center of a life that would disintegrate all too suddenly were she to disappear.

Through the eyes of these characters, William Maxwell creates a sensitive portrait of an American family and of the complex woman who is its emotional pillar. Beautifully observed, deftly rendering the civilities and constraints of a vanished era, *They Came Like Swallows* measures the subterranean currents of love and need that run through all our lives.

In quiet, piercing prose, William Maxwell's second novel, originally published in 1937, evokes the greatest of losses and the terrors of imagination."

"A story of such engaging warmth that it would thaw the heart of any critic... will melt many a reader to tears." (*Times*)

"Rare...exquisite...a cameo-like perfection." (*The New York Herald Tribune*)

Graciela Trevisan, *Cattail Stories* (fiction - local author)

"A series of ironic, imaginative, surreal stories with female characters doing fantastical and creative things that challenge authority and preserve life in a small South American town."

"Eighteen stories of neighbors sharing with delight the passing of time in a small south American town that is not located on any map. This book starts with the town needing a river, so a generous woman makes a river for the town with her tears. Aurora, a one-hundred-colored parrot who sings arias from famous operas, is mistaken as the devil. The songs of another woman make the stars come closer at night, which allows the town's people to find lost items. Sins are hidden in the priest's front yard, and a well-loved cow produces milk mixed with pieces of gold." (Joseph Kramer)

"Beautiful stories come alive at the end of a practiced storyteller, opening up worlds of possibility for how the world could and should be. You want to spend time with them, and read them again."