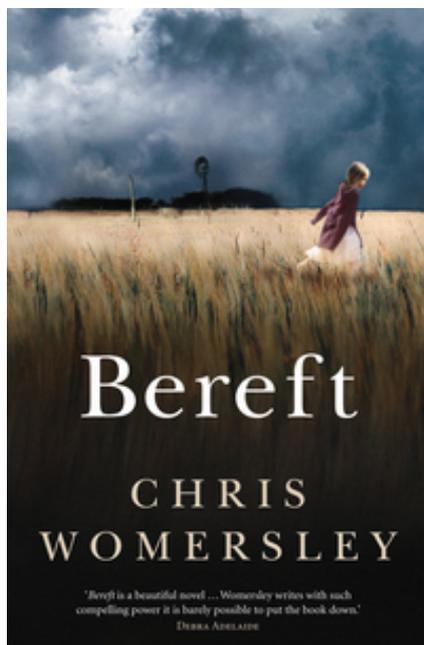


# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER READERS

## Fiction

### **Bereft - Chris Womersley (Thanks Tui)**



#### A CRIME UNSPEAKABLE

Australia, 1919. Quinn Walker returns from the Great War to the New South Wales town of Flint: the birthplace he fled ten years earlier when he was accused of a heinous act.

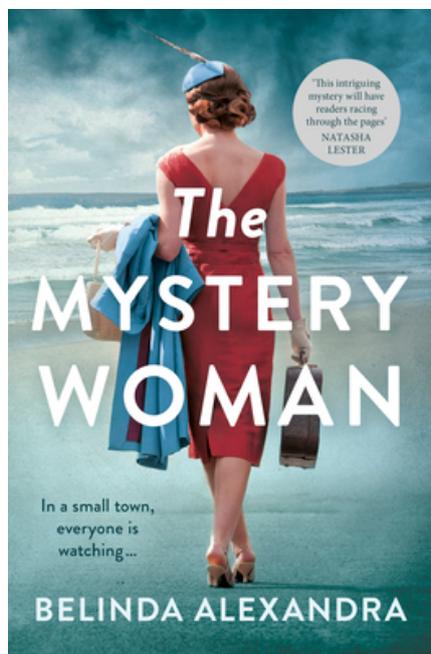
#### A LIE UNFORGIVABLE

Aware of the townsmen's vow to hang him, Quinn takes to the surrounding hills. Here, deciding upon his plan of action, and questioning just what he has returned for, he meets Sadie Fox.

#### A BOND UNBREAKABLE

This mysterious girl seems to know, and share, his darkest fear. And, as their bond greatens, Quinn learns what he must do to lay the ghosts of his past, and Sadie's present, to rest.

### **The Mystery Woman - Belinda Alexandra (2020) (Thanks Kay)**



*In a small town, everyone is watching ...* Secrets, scandal and betrayal in 1950s small town Australia: the stunning new novel from bestseller Belinda Alexandra *She had thought Shipwreck Bay was simply a remote town where people were bored senseless with their little lives. Now she saw its virtuous facade hid something darker, more sinister.*

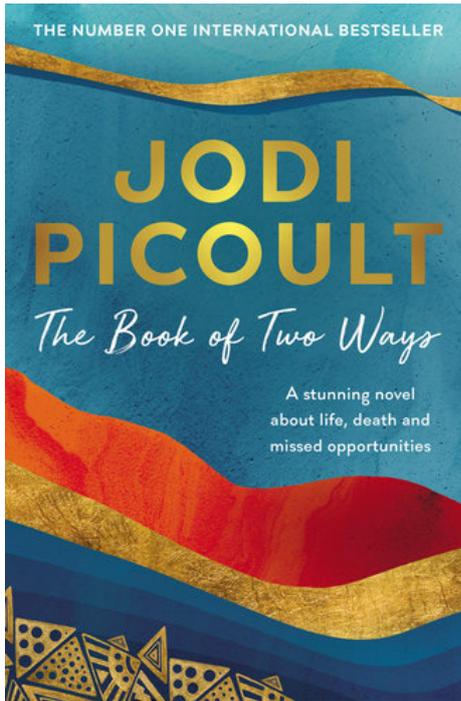
Rebecca Wood takes the role as postmistress in a sleepy seaside town, desperate for anonymity after a scandal in Sydney. But she is confronted almost at once by a disturbing discovery - her predecessor committed suicide.

To add to her worries, her hopes for a quiet life are soon threatened by the attentions of the dashing local doctor, the unsettling presence of a violent whaling captain and a corrupt shire secretary, as well as the watchful eyes of the town's

gossips. Yet in spite of herself she is drawn to the enigmatic resident of the house on the clifftop, rumoured to have been a Nazi spy.

Against the backdrop of the turbulent sea, Rebecca is soon caught up in the dangerous mysteries that lie behind Shipwreck Bay's respectable net curtains.

## The Book of Two Ways - Jodi Picoult (2020) (Thanks Debbie)



A thought-provoking and otherworldly new novel about the fates that we choose for ourselves and what happens when we have the chance to choose again.

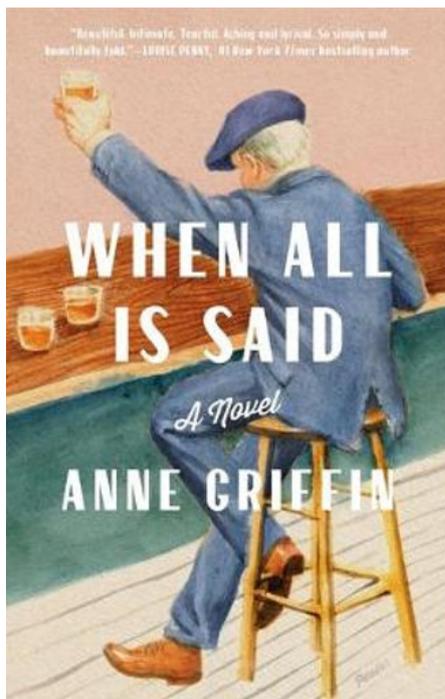
Dawn Edelstein knows everything there is to know about dying. She specialises in helping her clients make peace with the end of their lives. But as she's flying home from her latest case, she is forced to confront her own mortality for the first time.

Instead of seeing her brilliant quantum physicist husband and their beloved daughter flash before her eyes in what she assumes are her last moments, only one face is shockingly clear: Wyatt Armstrong.

Safely on the ground, Dawn now faces a desperate decision. Should she return to Boston, her family and the life she knows, or journey back to an Egyptian archaeological site she left over a decade earlier, reconnect with Wyatt, and finally finish her abandoned magnum opus, *The Book of Two Ways*?

As the story unfolds, Dawn must confront the questions she's never truly answered: What does a life well-lived look like? When we depart this earth, what do we leave behind of ourselves? And who would you be if you hadn't turned out to be the person you are right now?

## When All is Said - Anne Griffin (2019) (Thanks Lois)



*If you had to pick five people to sum up your life, who would they be? If you were to raise a glass to each of them, what would you say? And what would you learn about yourself, when all is said?*

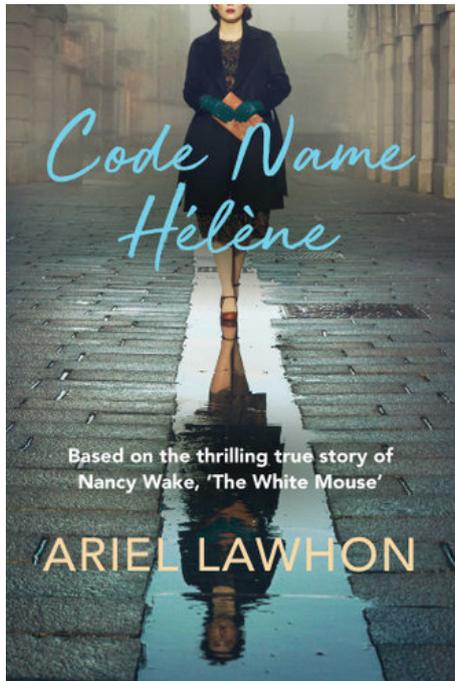
At the bar of a grand hotel in a small Irish town sits 84-year-old Maurice Hannigan. He's alone, as usual - though tonight is anything but. Pull up a stool and charge your glass, because Maurice is finally ready to tell his story.

Over the course of this evening, he will raise five toasts to the five people who have meant the most to him. Through these stories - of unspoken joy and regret, a secret tragedy kept hidden, a fierce love that never found its voice - the life of one man will be powerful and poignantly laid bare.

Beautifully heart-warming and powerfully felt, the voice of Maurice Hannigan will stay with you long after all is said and done.

## Historical Fiction

### **Code name Hélène : based on the thrilling true story of Nancy Wake, 'the white mouse' - Ariel Lawhon (2020) (Thanks Lynne and Lois)**

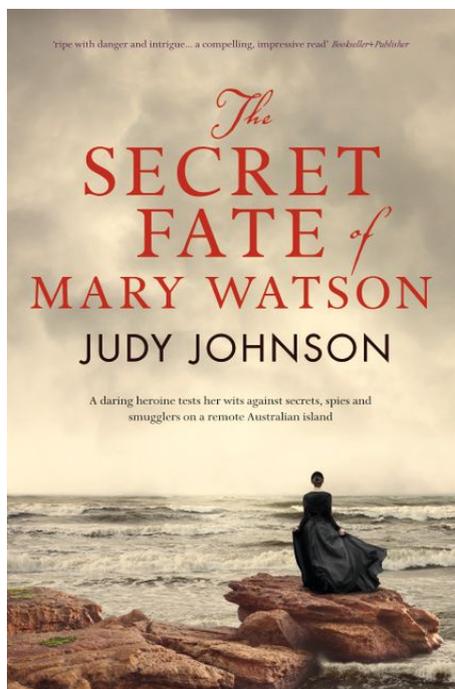


In 1936 intrepid young Australian journalist Nancy Wake is living in Paris after witnessing firsthand the terror of Hitler's rise in Europe, firing her resolve to fight against the Nazis. When Nancy falls in love with handsome French industrialist Henri Fiocca, no sooner has she become Mrs Fiocca than the Germans invade France and Nancy takes yet another name, a codename – the first of many.

As the elusive **Lucienne Carlier** she smuggles people across borders and earns a new name '**The White Mouse**' along with a five million franc bounty on her head, courtesy of the Gestapo. Forced to flee France, Nancy is trained by an elite espionage group under the codename **Hélène**. Finally, with mission in hand, she is airdropped back into France as the deadly **Madame Andrée**. But the closer to liberation France gets, the more exposed Nancy – and the people she loves – will become.

Based on the true story of an extraordinary woman who saved countless lives, *Code Name Hélène* is a thrilling tale of danger, intrigue, unflinching courage, remarkable sacrifice – and love.

### **The Secret Fate of Mary Watson - Judy Johnson (Thanks Sam)**



A daring heroine tests her wits against secrets, spies and smugglers on a remote Australian island  
'It's peculiar, the assumptions we all make. For instance, how, in a diary, the truth bone's connected to the hand bone ... You shouldn't believe everything you read.'

1879, Queensland. Fleeing her family home, 19-year-old Mary Oxnam has few prospects and no connections. Plain and penniless, she must rely on her audacious wit and fierce intelligence to survive.

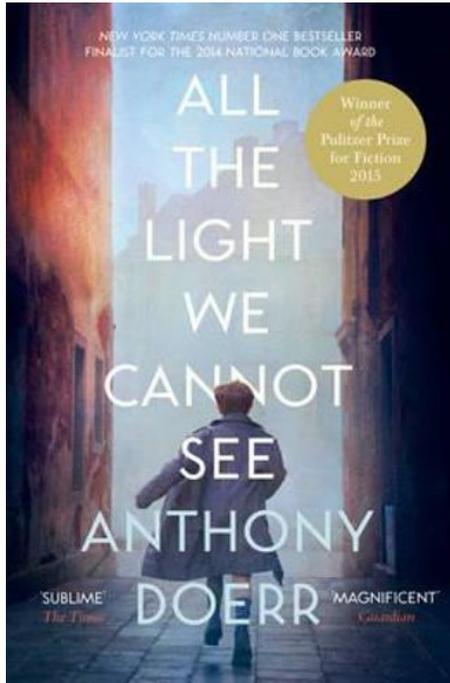
Mary soon finds work as a pianist in a Cooktown brothel, a cover for more lucrative employment as a spy into smuggling operations. Within a year she has moved to Lizard Island, locked into a marriage of convenience. It's a rough, isolated place, crawling with hidden enemies — and unexpected temptation.

Mary dreams of making enough money to live on her own terms, far from the murky world of espionage in which she

has become embroiled. But as the plot of her secret employers nears fruition, the stakes climb ever higher and Mary's life is in great danger. Can her daring and luck save her one last time?

Drawing on the little-known history of lawless Far North Queensland and based on the true story of a remarkable woman and her intriguing diary, *THE SECRET FATE OF MARY WATSON* is a thrilling tale of peril and intrigue, infused with a heady combination of beauty and foreboding.

## All the Light We Cannot See - Anthony Doerr (Thanks Sarah-Jane)



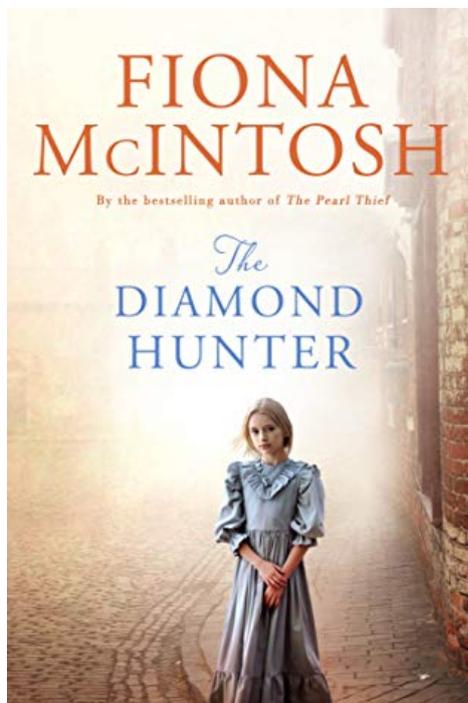
From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, a story

about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.

Marie-Laure lives in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where her father works. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure's reclusive great uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them they carry what might be the museum's most valuable and dangerous jewel.

In a mining town in Germany, Werner Pfennig, an orphan, grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find that brings them news and stories from places they have never seen or imagined. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments and is enlisted to use his talent to track down the resistance. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another.

## The Diamond Hunter by Fiona McIntosh (2019) (Thanks Georgie)



When six-year-old Clementine Knight loses her mother to malaria during the 1870s diamond rush in southern Africa, she is left to be raised by her destitute, alcoholic father, James. Much of Clementine's care falls to their trusty Zulu companion, Joseph One-Shoe, and the unlikely pair form an unbreakable bond.

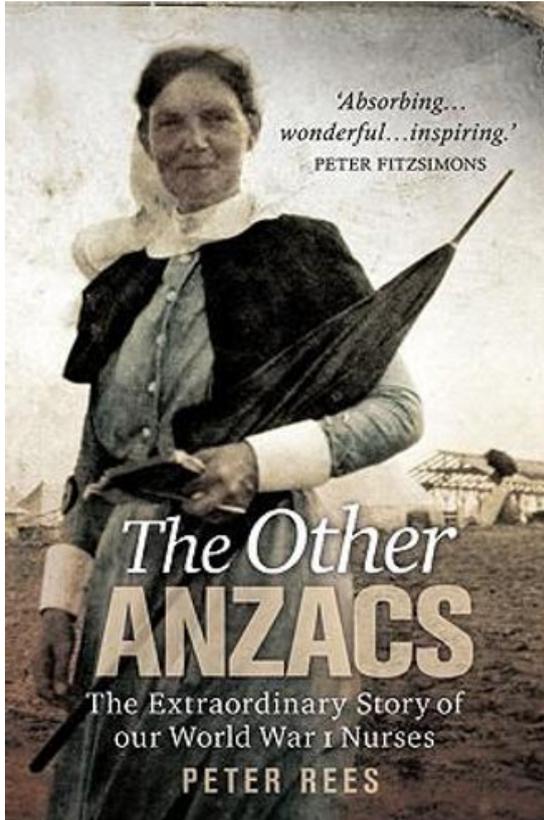
When the two men uncover a large, flawless diamond, James believes he has finally secured their future, but the discovery of the priceless gem comes at a huge cost. A dark bargain is struck to do whatever it takes to return Clementine to a respectable life at the Grant family's sprawling estate in northern England – while the diamond disappears.

Years on, long-buried memories of Clementine's childhood in Africa and her beloved Joseph One-Shoe are triggered, as she questions who she can trust. To solve the mystery of what happened to her loved ones all those years ago, she must confront a painful history and bring justice to bear.

From the harsh desert of Africa's Kimberley diamond mine to the misty, green plains of northern England, *The Diamond Hunter* is a breathtaking adventure story about trust and betrayal, the ultimate quest for truth, and a love that is truly priceless.

## Non Fiction

### **The Other ANZACS** by Peter Rees (Thanks Doug)



The harrowing, dramatic and profoundly moving story of the Australian and New Zealand nurses who served in the Great War.

'Compelling...' - *The Australian*

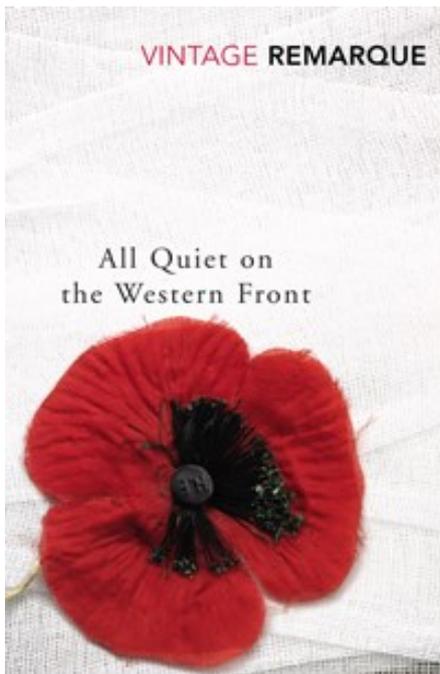
By the end of the Great War, forty-five Australian and New Zealand nurses had died on overseas service and over two hundred had been decorated. These were the women who left for war looking for adventure and romance but were soon confronted with challenges for which their civilian lives could never have prepared them. Their strength and dignity were remarkable.

Using diaries and letters, Peter Rees takes us into the hospital camps and the wards and the tent surgeries on the edge of some of the most horrific battlefronts of human history. But he also allows the friendships and loves of these courageous and compassionate women to enrich their experiences, and ours.

Profoundly moving, *The Other Anzacs* is a story of

extraordinary courage and humanity shown by a group of women whose contribution to the Anzac legend has barely been recognised in our history. Peter Rees has changed that understanding forever.

### **All Quiet On the Western Front** by Erich Remarque (Thanks Lisa)

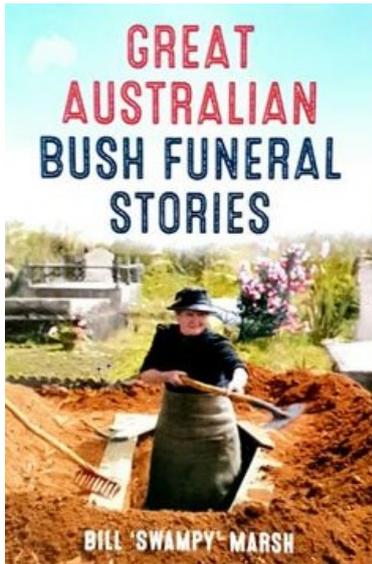


Paul Baumer enlisted with his classmates in the German army of World War I. Youthful, enthusiastic, they become soldiers. But despite what they have learned, they break into pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches. And as horrible war plods on year after year, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the principles of hate that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against each other--if only he can come out of the war alive.

"The world has a great writer in Erich Maria Remarque. He is a craftsman of unquestionably talent, a man who can bend language to his will. Whether he writes of men or of inanimate nature, his touch is sensitive, firm, and sure."

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

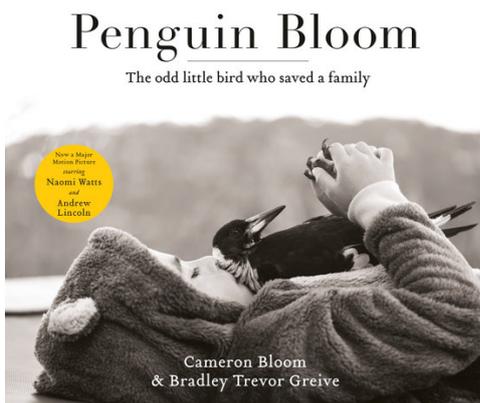
## Great Australian Bush Funeral Stories by Swampy Marsh (Thanks Lloyd)



Death doesn't mean the end of memorable stories from the bush. In fact, often it's just the beginning.

These tales from police officers, nurses, funeral directors, priests, gravediggers and those left behind, show that bush ingenuity comes to the fore when coping with corpses that won't cooperate or can't be found, bodies that don't stay buried, and weather and wildlife trying to sabotage the best-planned funerals. This memorable and eye-opening collection of real-life accounts of passing away and saying goodbye in the Australian bush is by turns, poignant, bizarre, heartbreaking and hilarious.

## Penguin Bloom/Heartache and Birdsong by Sam and Cameron Bloom (Thanks Vera)



***Penguin Bloom* is an extraordinary true story of recovery, hope and courage as one injured bird and her human family learn to heal and celebrate life, featuring the gorgeous photography of Cameron Bloom. In *Sam Bloom*, Sam tells her own story, honestly and compellingly.**

Sam suffered a near fatal fall that left her paralysed and deeply depressed. One of their three sons, reeling from the tragic accident, discovered an injured magpie chick abandoned after she had fallen from her nest. The boys name the bird Penguin, for her black-and-white plumage.

As they nursed Penguin back to health, the incredible joy, playfulness and strength she exuded fortified the family, especially lift Sam. Penguin's resilience demonstrates that, however bleak things may seem, compassion, friendship and support can come from unexpected places ensuring there will always be better days ahead. This plucky little magpie reminds us all that, no matter how lost, fragile, or damaged we feel, accepting the love of others and loving them in return will help to make us whole.