



AUTUMN

“There is love enough in this world for everybody, if people will just look.” – Kurt Vonnegut

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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss Henry



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Officials Misplace Rushdie Book Ban Order



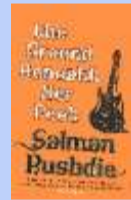
Dubbed blasphemous by some, Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* has been banned in India since shortly after its release in 1988. Around the same time, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa (a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) calling for Rushdie's assassination due to the book's content, causing Rushdie to go into hiding for over a decade. Now, some legal experts believe the ban in India may be lifted as the Indian government are unable to locate the notification banning the novel's import.

India's ban of *The Satanic Verses* first came under scrutiny in 2017 when Sandipan Khan, a resident of West Bengal state, tried to buy the book and learned that it was not published in India, nor could it be imported. Khan filed a Right to Information request for the official notification banning the books import, but the notification could not be found. In 2019, Khan took the matter to the high court in Delhi to argue that the ban impacted his freedom to read. The court investigated the situation for five years, but still no one was able to find the paperwork banning the book in the first place. Eventually, on the 5th of November this year,

the court declared that it 'had no option but to "presume" that no such ban notification exists and therefore couldn't assess its validity'. If the notification is not found, then "technically no ban exists". Madan Lokur, a former judge of the Supreme Court said of the situation: "I have never come across a situation like this... However, the government may pass a fresh notification [banning the book's import]" as the ban has not been declared to be unconstitutional, but rather presumed not to exist. Legal experts continue to debate the issue. Click [here](#) to read the original BBC article by Umang Poddar.

The Ground Beneath Her Feet by Salman Rushdie

On Valentine's Day, 1989, Vina Apsara, a famous and much-loved singer, disappears in a devastating earthquake. Her lover, the singer Ormus Cama, cannot accept that he has lost her, and so begins his eternal quest to find her and bring her back. His journey takes him across the globe and through cities pulsating with the power of rock 'n' roll, to Bombay, London and New York. But around the star-crossed lover and his quest, the uncertain world itself is beginning to tremble and break. Cracks and tears are appearing in the very fabric of reality and exposing the abyss beyond. And Ormus has to confront just how far he is willing to go for love.



The Moor's Last Sigh by Salman Rushdie

Moraes 'Moor' Zogoiby is the last in line of a crooked and fantastical dynasty of spice merchants and crime lords from Cochín. He is also a compulsive storyteller and an exile. As we travel with him on a route that takes him from India to Spain, he spins his labyrinthine family tale of mad passions and volcanic family hatreds, of titanic matriarchs and their mesmerised offspring, of premature deaths and curses that strike beyond the grave. But does the India of his parents – populated by extravagant artists, piratical gatekeepers and mysterious lost paintings – still exist? And will he ever discover what became of his fiery and tempestuous mother? Moraes' epic quest to uncover the truth of the past is a love story to a vanishing world, and also its last hurrah.



DNA Analysis Challenges Pompeii Narrative

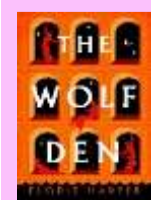


A new DNA analysis of victims of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79 has challenged long-held assumptions about the identities and relationships of the people behind some of the famous Pompeii plaster casts. Among the most notable findings, scientists revealed that a victim once thought to be a mother, found with two children at the base of a staircase in the House of the Golden Bracelet, was a man with black hair and dark skin. Genetic testing showed that the children were not related to him, and the victims' ancestors likely came from various eastern Mediterranean or North African populations. The study also shed new light on other famous casts, including two figures found in an embrace in the House of the Cryptoporticus. Previously thought to be sisters or a mother and daughter, the analysis revealed that one of the figures was male, challenging traditional interpretations of familial and social relationships based on physical closeness

and jewellery. While the analysis did not overturn every narrative – such as the gender of a victim found in the Villa of Mysteries, who was confirmed to be male as previously thought – the study has opened up new possibilities for understanding the diversity of Pompeii's inhabitants, and offers new insights into human mobility in the Roman world. Click [here](#) to read the original *Guardian* article by Nicola Davis.

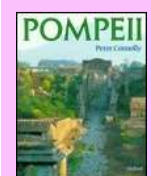
The Wolf Den by Elodie Harper (Recommended for Older Readers)

Sold by her mother. Enslaved in Pompeii's brothel. Determined to survive. Her name is Amara. Amara was once a beloved daughter, until her father's death plunged her family into penury. Now she is a slave in Pompeii's infamous brothel, owned by a man she despises. Sharp, clever, and resourceful, Amara is forced to hide her talents. For as a she-wolf, her only value lies in the desire she can stir in others. But Amara's spirit is far from broken. By day, she walks the streets with her fellow she-wolves, finding comfort in the laughter and dreams they share. For the streets of Pompeii are alive with opportunity. Out here, even the lowest slave can secure a reversal in fortune. Amara has learned that everything in this city has its price. But how much is her freedom going to cost her? Set in Pompeii's lupanar, *The Wolf Den* reimagines the lives of women who have long been overlooked.



Rebuilding the Past: Pompeii by Peter Connolly

From the remarkable pen of Peter Connolly comes a comprehensive look at the ancient city of Pompeii. He begins with the scientific how was Pompeii destroyed? How did Mount Vesuvius become an active volcano? What happened during the eruption? How long did Pompeii lay buried and forgotten and how was it finally rediscovered? What was Pompeii's history before the disaster? Peter Connolly does what he does better than anyone—he rebuilds the past in words and pictures, allowing us to imagine what it was like to live in old Pompeii. Like an archaeological detective, he sifts through the ruins and artifacts to reconstruct one area of the town in minute detail. With maps and cross-sections, photographs, drawings, and an engrossing and fact-filled text, Connolly takes us into the very homes of its citizens—into the kitchens, atriums, bedrooms and out into the gardens. We learn what the furniture looked like, how the homes were lighted and heated, and kind of jewellery was popular, and what the gladiators wore. We view the varied styles of architecture and decoration, attend a grand dinner party, visit local shops, go to the theatre, to a public bath, and to the gladiators' arena. We gain an understanding of this ancient civilization, and begin to see how much was lost when the city fell prey to the million of tons of lava and ashes that fell on it during the devastating disaster.



Komi Can't Communicate: Volume 4 by Tomohito Oda
The journey to 100 friends begins with a single conversation. Socially anxious high school student Shoko Komi's greatest dream is to make some friends, but everyone at school mistakes her crippling social anxiety for cool reserve. With the whole student body keeping its distance and Komi unable to utter a single word, friendship might be forever beyond her reach. School is out for the summer, and Komi is still getting used to this strange new world of having friends. She's discovering that friendship doesn't automatically save you from awkward situations with people, but the more time she spends with her friends, the easier it all seems. And to her astonishment, for the first time in her life Komi isn't anxious for summer to end.



Monsters of Verity #1: This Savage Song by VE Schwab

Kate Harker and August Flynn are the heirs to a divided city—a city where the violence has begun to breed actual monsters. All Kate wants is to be as ruthless as her father, who lets the monsters roam free and makes the humans pay for his protection. All August wants is to be human, as good-hearted as his own father, to play a bigger role in protecting the innocent—but he's one of the monsters. One who can steal a soul with a simple strain of music. When the chance arises to keep an eye on Kate, who's just been kicked out of her sixth boarding school and returned home, August jumps at it. But Kate discovers August's secret, and after a failed assassination attempt the pair must flee for their lives.

Monsters of Verity #2: Our Dark Duet by VE Schwab

Kate Harker isn't afraid of monsters. She hunts them. And she's good at it. August Flynn once yearned to be human. But no longer. He has a part to play. And he will play it, no matter the cost. The war has begun. The monsters are winning. Kate will have to return to Verity. August will have to let her back in. And a new monster is waiting – one that feeds on chaos and brings out its victims' inner demons. Which will be harder to conquer: the monsters they face, or the monsters within?

Warrior of the Wild by Tricia Levenseller

How do you kill a god? As her father's chosen heir, eighteen-year-old Rasmira has trained her whole life to become a warrior and lead her village. But when her coming-of-age trial is sabotaged and she fails the test, her father banishes her to the monster-filled wilderness with an impossible quest: To win back her honour, she must kill the oppressive god who claims tribute from the villages each year—or die trying.



Vision: The Complete Collection by Tom King

Vision wants to be human, and what's more human than family? So he heads back to the beginning — to the laboratory where Ultron created him as a weapon. The place where he first rebelled against his destiny and imagined that he could be more — that he could be a man. There, he builds them. A wife, Virginia. Teenage twins, Viv and Vin. They look like him. They have his powers. They share his grandest ambition — or obsession? — the unrelenting need to be ordinary. Behold the Visions! This is a story of togetherness and tragedy — one that will set the Android Avenger on course for a devastating confrontation with Earth's Mightiest Heroes.

Shatter Me #1.5 & #2.5: Unite Me by Tahereh Mafi

Two novellas from the world of Shatter Me. Destroy Me tells the events between Shatter Me and Unravel Me from Warner's point of view. Even though Juliette shot him in order to escape, Warner can't stop thinking about her—and he'll do anything to get her back. But when the Supreme Commander of The Reestablishment arrives, he has much different plans for Juliette. Plans Warner cannot allow. Fracture Me is told from Adam's perspective and bridges the gap between Unravel Me and Ignite Me. As the Omega Point rebels prepare to fight the Sector 45 soldiers, Adam's more focused on the safety of Juliette, Kenji, and his brother. The Reestablishment will do anything to crush the resistance... including killing everyone Adam cares about.

Jujutsu Kaisen: Volume 2 by Gege Akutami

Yuji Itadori is resolved to save the world from cursed demons, but he soon learns that the best way to do it is to slowly lose his humanity and become one himself! In a world where cursed spirits feed on unsuspecting humans, fragments of the legendary and feared demon Ryomen Sukuna were lost and scattered about. Should any demon consume Sukuna's body parts, the power they gain could destroy the world as we know it. Fortunately, there exists a mysterious school of Jujutsu Sorcerers who exist to protect the precarious existence of the living from the supernatural! A cursed womb mysteriously appears at a detention facility. Itadori and his classmates are dispatched to the scene, but they're in for quite the surprise when they're attacked by a special-grade curse! Itadori allows Sukuna to take over his body in order to survive, but the consequences are more drastic than anyone expected!



The People's Republic of Walmart by Leigh Phillips and Michal Rozworski

Since the demise of the USSR, the mantle of the largest planned economies in the world has been taken up by the likes of Walmart, Amazon and other multinational corporations. For the left and the right, the major multinational companies are held up as the ultimate expressions of free-market capitalism. Their remarkable success appears to vindicate the old idea that modern society is too complex to be subjected to a plan. And yet, as Leigh Phillips and Michal Rozworski argue, much of the economy of the West is centrally planned at present. Not only is planning on vast scales possible, we already have it and it works. The real question is whether planning can be democratic. Can it be transformed to work for us? An engaging, polemical romp through economic theory, computational complexity, and the history of planning, *The People's Republic of Walmart* revives the conversation about how society can extend democratic decision-making to all economic matters. With the advances in information technology in recent decades and the emergence of globe-straddling collective enterprises, democratic planning in the interest of all humanity is more important and closer to attainment than ever before.

Quiet Storm by Kimberly Whittam

Storm has never liked to stand out from the crowd, but ever since she started Year 7, her life has been full of people telling her she needs to speak up, make friends and be more like her popular big brother. Then Storm breaks a school record and finds herself the new star of the athletics team. But as she's thrust into the spotlight, her home life and friendships start spiralling out of control, and it's time for Quiet Storm to show that she has something to say. A tender, empowering novel about family, friendship and finding confidence in who you are.



World Philosophy Day

World Philosophy Day is held on the third Thursday of November each year. Organised by UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the purpose of the day is to 'underline the enduring value of philosophy for the development of human thought, for each culture and for each individual'. Philosophy can be defined as 'the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline' or 'a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behaviour'. Below are some philosophical questions to mull over.



- Should organ donation be made compulsory?
- What are numbers, and do they really exist?
- How do you know you are not dreaming right now?
- Can wars ever be just?
- What is a person? Is it the mind or the body?
- Is the main purpose of the law to promote morality?
- Is it always better to have more choices?

Find more philosophical questions [here](#).

Philosophy for Beginners by Osborne

Philosophy is a way of thinking about just about anything. It asks big questions from nature of reality to what beauty is. Using lively examples and thought experiments, this book provides an accessible introduction to a wide range of philosophical questions and invites the reader to think about things in ways they may not have done before. Cartoons, comic strips and diagrams offer simple explanations of big ideas. Suitable for adults and children alike – a brilliant resource for anyone looking to learn about philosophy. Explores big questions in philosophy including the nature of morality, do we have free will, whether knowledge is really possible and how we can justify government.



The Philosophy Book by DK

An innovative and accessible guide to more than 2,000 years of thought. To the complete novice learning about philosophy can be daunting - The Philosophy Book changes all that. With the use of powerful and easy-to-follow images, succinct quotations, and explanations that are easily understandable, this book cuts through any misunderstandings to demystify the subject. Each chapter is organised chronologically, and covers not only the big ideas, but the philosophers who first voiced them, as well as cross-referencing with earlier and later ideas and thinkers. The Philosophy Book untangles knotty theories and sheds light on abstract concepts, and is perfect for anyone with a general interest in how our social, political, and ethical ideas are formed, as well as students of philosophy and politics. Covers major and niche topics, from moral ethics to philosophies of religion. A brilliant introduction to philosophy, perfect for students.



Philosophy: Basic Readings by Nigel Warburton

Ideal readings for anyone coming to philosophy for the first time. Nigel Warburton brings philosophy to life with an imaginative selection of philosophical writings on key topics. These carefully chosen readings are easy to understand, are accessible and will give the reader a thorough understanding of philosophy. Each chapter considers a key area of philosophy grouped under the several themes. This is an ideal introduction to key philosophical texts for students.

Philosophy: 100 Essential Thinkers by Philip Stokes

This engaging and accessible book invites the reader to explore the questions and arguments of philosophy through the work of one hundred of the greatest thinkers within the Western intellectual tradition. Covering philosophical, scientific, political and religious thought over a period of 2500 years, Philosophy will serve as an excellent guide for those interested in knowing about individual thinkers – such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau and Nietzsche, to name just a few – and the questions and observations that inspired them to write. By presenting individual thinkers, details of their lives and the concerns and circumstances that motivated them, this book makes philosophy come to life as a relevant and meaningful approach to thinking about the contemporary world.



On This Day in History... The Birth of Kurt Vonnegut, 11th November 1922



Kurt Vonnegut, born in Indianapolis to a well-off family, had a challenging upbringing due to his father's unemployment during the Great Depression in the 1920s. Vonnegut began writing in high school and continued at Cornell University before enlisting in the U.S. Army during World War II. After being captured by the Germans and surviving the firebombing of Dresden, his wartime experiences deeply influenced his writing, which focused on the men serving for their country. Post-war, Vonnegut worked as a reporter and PR writer before turning to fiction. His early works, such as *Player Piano* (1952) and *The Sirens of Titan* (1959), explored themes of technology, automation, and the absurdity of existence, often incorporating science fiction elements, though he resisted the label of science fiction writer.

Vonnegut's breakthrough novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), drew directly from his Dresden experience and became a classic, solidifying his reputation. His 1970s work, including *Breakfast of Champions* (1973), blended satire, absurdism, and social critique, though it received mixed reviews. His later novels, such as *Slopstick* (1976) and *Jailbird* (1979), continued his exploration of American society but were less successful. Vonnegut faced personal struggles, including depression in 1984. This can be seen in his work where he incorporates themes of death, free will, and how the war impacted his contemporaries. His later works, including *Deadeye Dick* (1982), *Galdapagos* (1985), and *Timequake* (1997), became increasingly introspective, often focusing on human evolution and the artist's role in society. Despite a mixed reception towards some of these later works, Vonnegut remained a prominent and influential figure in American literature until his death in 2007.

Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut

Billy Pilgrim – hapless barber's assistant, successful optometrist, alien abductee, senile widower and soldier – has become unstuck in time. Hiding in the basement of a slaughterhouse in Dresden, with the city and its inhabitants burning above him, he finds himself a survivor of one of the most deadly and destructive battles of the Second World War. But when, exactly? How did he get here? And how does he get out? Travel through time and space on the shoulders of Vonnegut himself. This is a book about war. Listen to what he has to say: it is of the utmost urgency.



Books of My Life: Roddy Doyle



In a recent interview with *The Guardian*, author Roddy Doyle recounted the books that have made an impact on him throughout his lifetime. Doyle recalled his earliest reading memory in which his mother taught him to read using a comic called *Sparky*, which kindled his passion for books. His favourite childhood book was *Just William* by Richmal Crompton, which he loved for William's mischievousness and the absurdity of adults. *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens is a book Doyle continually rereads, finding new layers and a better understanding each time. He was less impressed with *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell which he found 'unappealing' even when rereading. For comfort, he turns to P.G. Wodehouse for laughter, and recounted a moment when Wodehouse's *The Code of the Woosters* made him laugh so hard he could not drive properly. Roddy Doyle's new book, *The Women Behind the Door*, was published on the 18th of September and is a psychological fiction focusing on Paula and her eldest, Nicola, untangling their past through nostalgia and revelations to confront the bruised symmetry of what it means to the other. Find the original *Guardian* article [here](#).

'My Comfort Read': The Code of the Woosters by P.G. Wodehouse

Take Gussie Fink-Nottle, Madeline Bassett, old Pop Bassett, the unscrupulous Stiffy Byng, the Rev., an 18th-century cow-creamer, a small brown leather covered notebook and mix with a dose of the aged aunt Dahlia and one has a dangerous brew which spells toil and trouble for Bertie and Jeeves.



'The Book I Could Never Read Again': Catch-22 by Joseph Heller

Set in Italy during World War II, this is the story of the incomparable, malingering bombardier, Yossarian, a hero who is furious because thousands of people he has never met are trying to kill him. But his real problem is not the enemy—it is his own army, which keeps increasing the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. Yet if Yossarian makes any attempt to excuse himself from the perilous missions he is assigned, he will be in violation of Catch-22, a hilariously sinister bureaucratic rule: a man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, but if he makes a formal request to be removed from duty, he is proven sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved.

'The Book I Reread': Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

Great Expectations charts the progress of Pip from childhood through often painful experiences to adulthood, as he moves from the Kent marshes to busy, commercial London, encountering a variety of extraordinary characters ranging from Magwitch, the escaped convict, to Miss Havisham, locked up with her unhappy past and living with her ward, the arrogant, beautiful Estella. Pip must discover his true self, and his own set of values and priorities. Whether such values allow one to prosper in the complex world of early Victorian England is the major question posed by *Great Expectations*, one of Dickens's most fascinating, and disturbing, novels.