

Top fives



Charlotte Heathcote

Fiction

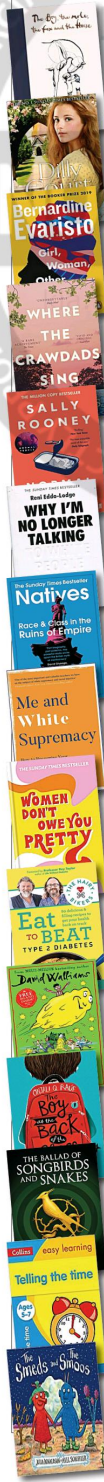
- 1. The Boy, The Mole, The Fox And The Horse** by Charlie Mackesy (Ebury, £16.99)
- 2. The Country Bride** by Dilly Court (HarperCollins, £7.99)
- 3. Girl, Woman, Other** by Bernadine Evaristo (Penguin, £8.99)
- 4. Where The Crawdads Sing** by Delia Owens (Corsair, £8.99)
- 5. Normal People** by Sally Rooney (Faber & Faber, £8.99)

Non-fiction

- 1. Why I'm No Longer Talking To White People About Race** by Reni Eddo-Lodge (Bloomsbury, £8.99)
- 2. Natives** by Akala (Two Roads, £8.99)
- 3. Me And White Supremacy** by Layla Saad (Quercus, £14.99)
- 4. Women Don't Owe You Pretty** by Florence Given (Cassell, £12.99)
- 5. The Hairy Bikers Eat To Beat Type 2 Diabetes** by Hairy Bikers (Orion Spring, £12.99)

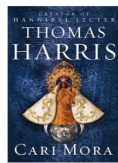
Children's

- 1. Slime** by David Walliams (HarperCollins, £12.99)
- 2. The Boy At The Back Of The Class** by Onjali Q Rauf (Orion, £6.99)
- 3. The Ballad Of Songbirds And Snakes** by Suzanne Collins (Scholastic, £18.99)
- 4. Telling The Time Ages 5-7** by Ian Jacques and Melissa Blackwood (Collins, £3.99)
- 5. The Smeds And The Smoos** Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler (Alison Green, £6.99)



Well worth investigating

Jake Kerridge picks summer's best paperback thrillers



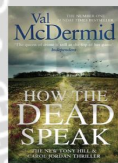
Cari Mora by Thomas Harris (Arrow, £7.99)

The creator of Hannibal Lecter heads in a new direction with this comic crime caper about competing gangsters searching for a dead crook's stash of gold. Yes, there's a cannibal, but don't expect Thomas Harris to scare you out of your wits as per usual. *Cari Mora* is not only beautifully written, but it's fun, too.



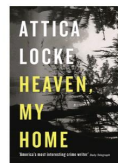
Big Sky by Kate Atkinson (Black Swan, £8.99)

After a decade's absence, Kate Atkinson's grouchy, noble private detective Jackson Brodie – played by Jason Isaacs in the TV series *Case Histories* – returns. The novel's multiple plots encompass such serious topical issues as sex trafficking and paedophile rings but the author's comic genius ensures you'll laugh as much as you wring your hands.



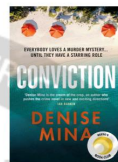
How The Dead Speak by Val McDermid (Sphere, £8.99)

It's a welcome return for Val McDermid's regular sleuths, criminal psychologist Tony Hill and DI Carol Jordan – except that, after the events of the last book, Tony is banged up for a crime he didn't commit and Carol has been forced out of the police. So it's up to the rest of their team to investigate when the remains of several bodies are found in the grounds of a former convent.



Heaven, My Home by Attica Locke (Serpent's Tail, £14.99)

African-American Texas Ranger Darren Matthews returns and he's investigating the disappearance of the nine-year-old son of an Aryan Brotherhood member. As always, Attica Locke combines a searingly exciting story with an intelligent exploration of racial prejudice in the US, righteously angry, but never simplifying the complex issues involved.



Conviction by Denise Mina (Vintage, £8.99)

Anna's life is turned upside down when her husband leaves her for her best friend, Estelle, so she distracts herself by investigating the murder of an old acquaintance. She soon finds herself heading on a road trip around Europe with Estelle's drippy husband, Fin, in a book that combines mystery with beautifully observed comedy.

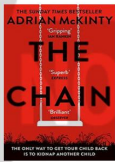


The Language Of Birds by Jill Dawson (Sceptre, £8.99)

This novel is based closely on the events surrounding the disappearance of Lord Lucan following the murder of the family nanny, Sandra Rivett, in 1974. Focusing as much on the nanny's life as that of her aristocratic employer, it's strangely dreamlike, sometimes surreal and always enthralling.

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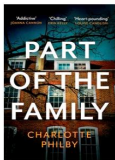
The Chain
by Adrian McKinty
(Orion, £8.99)

"The chain" is a diabolically brilliant criminal scheme where the victims do all the work. A child is abducted and the parents have to kidnap somebody else's kid as well as pay a ransom before their own offspring is returned to them – and so on ad infinitum. How the evil masterminds behind the scheme are brought down makes for compulsive reading in this white-knuckle ride of a thriller.



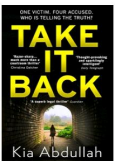
All the Rage
by Cara Hunter
(Penguin, £7.99)

Cara Hunter's capable cop DI Adam Fawley is rapidly usurping Inspector Morse's claim to the title of Oxford's best-loved fictional detective. In this absorbing fourth entry in the series, based on a recent real-life case in Oxford, Adam senses something fishy when a teenage girl reports an assault.



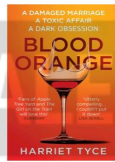
Part of the Family
by Charlotte Philby
(Borough, £8.99)

It's unsurprising that the granddaughter of notorious double agent Kim Philby should write a spy novel but this compelling debut combines espionage with domestic suspense as we discover why spy Anna Witherall walked out on her husband and children forever. (Previously published in hardback as *The Most Difficult Thing*.)



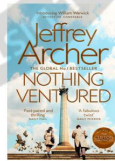
Take It Back
by Kia Abdullah
(HQ, £8.99)

A 16-year-old girl, badly deformed by a genetic condition, claims to have been raped by a group of Muslim boys from her school. Are they guilty or has the lonely girl invented the claims to get attention? It's a brave writer who tackles a story in which one of those two scenarios must be true and Kia Abdullah has produced an unflinching, riveting novel.



Blood Orange
by Harriet Tye
(Wildfire, £8.99)

Madeleine is accused of murdering her husband – but her life is simple compared with that of her drunken, adulterous defence barrister Alison. A blackmailer threatens to expose Alison's secrets in a thriller that, as a portrait of just how quickly and dramatically one's life can go wrong, is both chilling and great fun.



Nothing Ventured
by Jeffrey Archer
(Pan, £8.99)

The first in a series of novels about the career of police detective William Warwick. In this volume, William progresses from lowly constable on the beat to an officer in Scotland Yard's art and antiques squad, tasked with finding a stolen Rembrandt. As so often, Jeffrey Archer has spun a tale that's often clunky and a bit silly but very hard to put down.



One Way Out
by A.A. Dhand
(Corgi, £7.99)

This series about Sikh detective DCI Harry Virdee returns with a bang when he gets caught up in a terrorist incident at City Park in Bradford. With his wife taken hostage and the Government refusing to negotiate, Harry takes matters into his own hands in a relentlessly exciting story which tells you a great deal about modern Britain.



The Truants
by Kate Weinberg
(Bloomsbury, £8.99)

Literature student Jess Walker arrives at university in East Anglia and soon falls under the spell of the privileged, outrageous Georgie and her maverick tutor, Lorna, who is trying to reclaim Agatha Christie as a feminist icon. Jess's new friends turn out not to be all they seem, however, in a dark debut that may appear modern but owes a debt to the good old-fashioned storytelling skills of Christie herself.



A Dark Matter
by Doug Johnstone
(Orenda, £8.99)

The first in a new series featuring three generations of women in the Skelf family who, after the death of patriarch Jim, are obliged to take over his funeral and private eye business in Edinburgh. Enticing mysteries and secrets abound in a book that manages to be full of warmth and edgy at the same time.



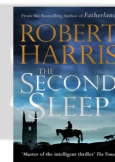
American Spy
by Lauren Wilkinson
(Dialogue, £8.99)

The heroine of this spy thriller is African-American, trying to prove herself in the boys' club that is the FBI of the 1980s. When her big break finally comes, it's the disagreeable task of seducing the visiting Communist president of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara. A good moral workout and breathlessly thrilling, too. Available in paperback from July 2.



We Know You Know
by Erin Kelly
(Hodder, £7.99)

A woman returns to live in the rundown town in Suffolk where she grew up and hopes that a secret from her teenage years will remain hidden. And what is the connection with a woman wrongly committed to an asylum in the 1950s? Previously published in hardback under the title *Stone Mothers*, this is consummately plotted and glowing with rage at the way society treats women. Available in paperback from July 9.



The Second Sleep
by Robert Harris
(Arrow, £8.99)

This blisteringly intelligent thriller is set in 1468 at a time when the Church is all-powerful and the British people lead primitive, superstitious lives. But as young priest Christopher Fairfax investigates the mysterious death of a fellow cleric, it becomes clear all is not as it seems. Available in paperback from July 9.

To buy these books, see Bookshop on page 69