

A. G. Riddle - Lost in time

One morning, Dr. Sam Anderson wakes up to find that the woman he loves has been murdered.

For Sam, the horror is only beginning. He and his daughter are accused of the crime. The evidence is ironclad. They will be convicted. And so, to ensure his daughter goes free, Sam does what he must: he confesses. But in the future, murderers aren't sent to prison. Thanks to a machine Sam helped invent, the world's worst criminals are now sent to the past – approximately 200 million years into the past, to the dawn of the time of the dinosaurs – where they must live out their lives alone, in exile from the human race.

Sam accepts his fate. But his daughter doesn't. Adeline Anderson has already lost her mother to a deadly, unfair disease. She can't bear to lose her father as well. So she sets out on a quest to prove him innocent. And to get him back. People around her insist that both are impossible tasks. But Adeline doesn't give up. She only works harder. She soon learns that impossible tasks are her specialty. And that she is made of tougher stuff than she ever imagined. As she peels back the layers of the mystery that tore her father from this world, Adeline finds more questions than answers. Everyone around her is hiding a secret. But which ones are connected to the murder that exiled her father? (455 pages)

Adam Roberts - Lake of Darkness

The Starship Sa Niro and the Starship Sß Oubliette were in orbit around a black hole, one afternoon... by the end of the day, the crews of both starships were dead, victims of a single Captain Alpha Raine.

Raine claims he's acting under the command of a voice emanating from the black Mr Modo. No one believes him. Everyone knows that things go into black holes; nothing comes out.

But something inexplicable has been happening to Raine, and whatever it is seems to be spreading. An historian studying serial killers from the 21st century interviews him... and then nearly kills someone herself. It becomes increasingly undeniable that there's something inside that black hole... and it's found a way out. (308 pages)

Adam Troy-Castro - Emissaries from the Dead

Two murders have occurred on One One One, an artificial ecosystem created by the universe's dominant AIs to house several engineered species, including a violent, sentient race of sloth-like creatures. Under order from the Diplomatic Corps, Counselor Andrea Cort has come to this cylinder world where an indentured human community hangs suspended high above a poisoned, acid atmosphere. Her assignment is to choose a suitable homicide suspect from among those who have sold their futures to escape existences even worse than this one. And no matter where the trail leads her she must do nothing to implicate the hosts, who hold the power to obliterate humankind in an instant.

But Andrea Cort is not about to hold back in her hunt for a killer. For she has nothing to lose and harbors no love for her masters or fellow indentures. And she herself has felt the terrible exhilaration of taking life. (387 pages)

Ally Wilkes - Where The Dead Wait (horror novel)

William Day should be an acclaimed Arctic explorer. But after a failed expedition, in which his remaining men only survived by eating their dead comrades, he returned in disgrace.

Thirteen years later, his second-in-command, Jesse Stevens, has gone missing in the same frozen waters. Perhaps this is Day's chance to restore his tarnished reputation by bringing Stevens---the

man who's haunted his whole life—back home. But when the rescue mission becomes an uncanny journey into his past, Day must face up to the things he's done.

Abandonment. Betrayal. Cannibalism.

Aboard ship, Day must also contend with unwanted passengers: a reporter obsessively digging up the truth about the first expedition, as well as Stevens's wife, a spirit-medium whose séances both fascinate and frighten. Following a trail of cryptic messages, gaunt bodies, and old bones, their search becomes more and more unnerving, as it becomes clear that the restless dead are never far behind. Something is coming through. (400 pages)

Andrew Michael Hurley - Barrowbeck (Folk Horror)

For centuries, the inhabitants of Barrowbeck, a remote valley on the Yorkshire-Lancashire border, have lived uneasily with forces beyond their reckoning. They raise their families, work the land, and do their best to welcome those who come seeking respite. But there is a darkness that runs through the village as persistently as the river.

A father fears that his daughter has become possessed by something unholy.

A childless couple must make an agonising decision.

A widower awaits the return of his wife.

A troubled man is haunted by visions of end times.

As one generation gives way to the next and ancient land is carved up in the name of progress, darkness gathers. The people of Barrowbeck have forgotten that they are but guests in the valley.

Now there is a price to pay. Two thousand years of history is coming to an end. (235 pages)

Andrew Michael Hurley - Starve Acre (Folk Horror)

The worst thing possible has happened. Richard and Juliette Willoughby's son, Ewan, has died suddenly at the age of five. Starve Acre, their house by the moors, was to be full of life, but is now a haunted place. Convinced Ewan still lives there in some form, Juliette seeks the help of the Beacons, a seemingly benevolent group of occultists. Richard, to try and keep the boy out of his mind, has turned his attention to the field opposite the house, where he patiently digs the barren dirt in search of a legendary oak tree. But as they delve further into their grief, both uncover more than they set out to. (256 pages)

Arkady and Boris Strugatsky - Hard to be a God (Russian sf classic)

The novel follows Anton, an undercover operative from the future planet Earth, in his mission on an alien planet, that is populated by human beings, whose society has not advanced beyond the Middle Ages. The novel's core idea is that human progress throughout the centuries is often cruel and bloody, and that religion and blind faith can be an effective tool of oppression, working to destroy the emerging scientific disciplines and enlightenment.

-

Don Rumata has been sent from Earth to the medieval kingdom of Arkanar with instructions to observe and to save what he can. Masquerading as an arrogant nobleman, a dueler, and a brawler, he is never defeated, but yet he can never kill. With his doubt and compassion, and his deep love for a local girl named Kira, Rumata wants to save the kingdom from the machinations of Don Reba, the first minister to the king. But given his orders, what role can he play? (219 pages)

Becky Chambers - The Long Way to a Small Angry Planet

Rosemary Harper doesn't expect much when she joins the crew of the aging Wayfarer. While the patched-up ship has seen better days, it offers her a bed, a chance to explore the far-off corners of the galaxy, and most importantly, some distance from her past. An introspective young woman who learned early to keep to herself, she's never met anyone remotely like the ship's diverse crew, including Sissix, the exotic reptilian pilot, chatty engineers Kizzy and Jenks who keep the ship running, and Ashby, their noble captain.

Life aboard the Wayfarer is chaotic and crazy—exactly what Rosemary wants. It's also about to get extremely dangerous when the crew is offered the job of a lifetime. Tunneling wormholes through space to a distant planet is definitely lucrative and will keep them comfortable for years. But risking her life wasn't part of the plan. In the far reaches of deep space, the tiny Wayfarer crew will confront a host of unexpected mishaps and thrilling adventures that force them to depend on each other. To survive, Rosemary's got to learn how to rely on this assortment of oddballs—an experience that teaches her about love and trust, and that having a family isn't necessarily the worst thing in the universe. (518 pages)

Cate Baumer - As Born to Rule the Storm

Cadet Charlotte Amsel will trade her life to win a war but not all at once. As part of an elite group of experimental soldiers, she can move through time, with each jump taking months from her own fated lifespan as she struggles to prevent the cold war from boiling over into an apocalypse. With her own side just as untrustworthy as the enemy, the only thing she cares about is keeping her best friend and fellow soldier (and in some timelines, lover) safe. But each time loop adds violent complications, and saving anyone before she runs out of life to give may prove impossible. (111 pages i.e. a novella)

David Barnett - Withered Hill

Inside

A year ago Sophie Wickham stumbled into the isolated Lancashire village of Withered Hill, naked, alone and with no memory of who she is.

Surrounded by a thick ring of woodland, its inhabitants seem to be of another world, drenched in pagan, folklorish traditions.

As Sophie struggles to regain the memories of her life from before, she quickly realises she is a prisoner after multiple failed escape attempts. But is it the locals who keep her trapped, with smiles on their faces, or something else, lurking in the woods?

Outside

In London, Sophie leads a chaotic life, with too many drunken nights, inappropriate men and boring temp jobs. But things take a turn as she starts to be targeted by strange messages warning her that someone, or something, is coming for her.

With no idea who to trust, or where to turn for help, the messages become more insistent and more intimidating, urging Sophie to make her way to a place called Withered Hill...

An utterly bewitching, dual timeline folk horror novel, with a truly devastating twist you have to read to believe. (337 pages)

Frederic S. Durbin - A Green and Ancient Light

Set in a world similar to our own, during a war that parallels World War II, A Green and Ancient Light is the stunning story of a boy who is sent to stay with his grandmother for the summer in a

serene fishing village. Their tranquility is shattered by the crash of a bullet-riddled enemy plane, the arrival of grandmother's friend Mr. Girandole—a man who knows the true story of Cinderella's slipper—and the discovery of a riddle in the sacred grove of ruins behind grandmother's house. In a sumptuous idyllic setting and overshadowed by the threat of war, four unlikely allies learn the values of courage and sacrifice. (320 pages)

Fredric Brown - Martians Go Home

Luke Devereaux was a science-fiction writer, holed up in a desert shack waiting for inspiration. He was the first man to see a Martian...but he wasn't the last!

It was estimated that a billion of them had arrived, one to every three human beings on Earth—obnoxious green creatures who could be seen and heard, but not harmed and who probed private sex lives as shamelessly as they probed government secrets.

No one knew why they had come. No one knew how to make them go away—except, perhaps, Luke Devereaux. Unfortunately Devereaux was going slightly bananas, so it wouldn't be easy.

But for a science-fiction writer nothing was impossible... (163 pages)

Grace Curtis - Floating Hotel

Welcome to the Grand Abeona Hotel: home of the finest food, the sweetest service, and the very best views the galaxy has to offer. All year round it moves from planet to planet, system to system, pampering guests across the furthest reaches of the milky way. The last word in sub-orbital luxury—and an absolute magnet for intrigue. Intrigues such as: Why are there love poems in the lobby inbox? How many Imperial spies are currently on board? What is the true purpose of the Problem Solver's conference? And perhaps most pertinently—who is driving the ship?

Each guest has a secret, every member of staff a universe unto themselves. At the center of these interweaving lives and interlocking mysteries stands Carl, one time stowaway, longtime manager, devoted caretaker to the hotel. It's the love of his life and the only place he's ever called home. But as forces beyond Carl's comprehension converge on the Abeona, he has to face one final question: when is it time to let go? (324 pages)

Jesse Bullington - The Enterprise of Death

As the witch-pyres of the Spanish Inquisition blanket Renaissance Europe in a moral haze, a young African slave finds herself the unwilling apprentice of an ancient necromancer. Unfortunately, quitting his company proves even more hazardous than remaining his pupil when she is afflicted with a terrible curse. Yet salvation may lie in a mysterious tome her tutor has hidden somewhere on the war-torn continent.

She sets out on a seemingly impossible journey to find the book, never suspecting her fate is tied to three the artist Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, the alchemist Dr. Paracelsus, and a gun-slinging Dutch mercenary. As Manuel paints her macabre story on canvas, plank, and church wall, the young apprentice becomes increasingly aware that death might be the least of her concerns. (465 pages)

John Crowley - Engine Summer

Born into the community of Truthful Speakers one thousand years after the Storm, he was raised on stories of the old days -- a world filled with saints, a world in which all things were possible, a world which finally destroyed itself. In love with a beautiful woman, Rush journeys far and learns much.

Taken into the society of Dr. Boots's List, attached to the old mysteries, Rush grows closer to a sainthood he could never have imagined. (209 pages)

Karen Lord - The Best of all Possible Worlds

A proud and reserved alien society finds its homeland destroyed in an unprovoked act of aggression, and the survivors have no choice but to reach out to the indigenous humanoids of their adopted world, to whom they are distantly related. They wish to preserve their cherished way of life but come to discover that in order to preserve their culture, they may have to change it forever.

Now a man and a woman from these two clashing societies must work together to save this vanishing race—and end up uncovering ancient mysteries with far-reaching ramifications. As their mission hangs in the balance, this unlikely team—one cool and cerebral, the other fiery and impulsive—just may find in each other their own destinies . . . and a force that transcends all. (308 pages)

Keith Donohue - The Stolen Child

On a summer night, Henry Day runs away from home and hides in a hollow tree. There he is taken by the changelings—an unaging tribe of wild children who live in darkness and in secret. They spirit him away, name him Aniday, and make him one of their own. Stuck forever as a child, Aniday grows inspirit, struggling to remember the life and family he left behind. He also seeks to understand and fit in this shadow land, as modern life encroaches upon both myth and nature.

In his place, the changelings leave a double, a boy who steals Henry's life in the world. This new Henry Day must adjust to a modern culture while hiding his true identity from the Day family. But he can't hide his extraordinary talent for the piano (a skill the true Henry never displayed), and his dazzling performances prompt his father to suspect that the son he has raised is an imposter. As he ages the new Henry Day becomes haunted by vague but persistent memories of life in another time and place, of a German piano teacher and his prodigy. Of a time when he, too, had been a stolen child.

Both Henry and Aniday obsessively search for who they once were before they changed places in the world. (327 pages)

Kit Whitfield - In the Heart of Hidden Things

The inhabitants of the village of Gyrford live mostly in harmony with their neighbours in the Forest, and that is in large part down to the fairy-smiths, Jedediah, his son Matthew and grandson Johnny, for only fairy-smiths can intercede with the People when a problem arises - like when one of the fae - who, in fairness, does look a lot like a thornbush with a blackberry for a head - is dug up and transplanted by someone who didn't know any better and is now determined to wreak vengeance on anyone it can.

That's not the only problem, for there's a skinflint landlord determined to sell the mill and kick out the family who've run it for untold generations. And a young boy who was clearly damaged by the People at birth is spending most of his time trying to get into the Forest, which is forbidden territory for all but a very few men.

There's even a rumour that Black Hal has been seen running - fire strikes from the great hound's heels, they said, and his eyes are the red of coals.

So one way or another, the Smiths have got a lot on their plate, and a lot of people depending on them. (362 pages)

Laird Barron - The Croning

Strange things exist on the periphery of our existence, haunting us from the darkness looming beyond our firelight. Black magic, weird cults and worse things loom in the shadows. The Children of Old Leech have been with us from time immemorial. And they love us...

Donald Miller, geologist and academic, has walked along the edge of a chasm for most of his nearly eighty years, leading a charmed life between endearing absent-mindedness and sanity-shattering realization. Now, all things must converge. Donald will discover the dark secrets along the edges, unearthing savage truths about his wife Michelle, their adult twins, and all he knows and trusts. For Donald is about to stumble on the secret...

...of *The Croning*. (245 pages)

Margaret St Clair - Sign of the Labrys (a very strange sf novel from 1963)

Like others who withstood the pandemic, Sam Sewell lives in a subterranean shelter. The vast catacombs were built before the military's biological weapon leaked out, killing nine out of ten people and leaving the survivors so traumatized that they can barely tolerate each other's company. So it's quite peculiar that some government agents seem to think that Sam lives with a woman, Despoina, who's suspected of conducting germ warfare. Pressured by the agents to locate Despoina, Sam must literally go underground to discover the truth about a hidden world of witchcraft and secret rituals. (139 pages)

Martha Wells - City of Bones

Khat, a member of a humanoid race created by the Ancients to survive in the Waste, and Sagai, his human partner, are relic dealers working on the edge of society, trying to stay one step ahead of the Trade Inspectors and to support Sagai's family. When Khat is hired to find relics believed to be part of one of the Ancients' arcane engines, they are both reluctant to become involved. But the request comes from the Warders, powerful mages who serve Charisat's Elector. Khat soon discovers that the deadly politics of Charisat's upper tiers aren't the only danger. The relics the Warders want are the key to an Ancient magic of unknown power, and, as all the inhabitants of Charisat know, no one understands the Ancients' magic. (442 pages)

Massimo Paradiso - After Arrival

In 2045, little remains of Earth. The aliens arrived a decade ago, eradicating most human life in the process. No one knows why they did it or why they are here. Their vessel stands out at sea, silently stretching up into the clouds while the survivors of Earth fight over what's left. England is reduced to two Oxford, a beacon of hope and prosperity; and Chard, a rebel encampment. While they squabble at a distance, a girl stumbles across a secret that could turn what's left of the world upside down. But there is far more at risk than the humans know. (456 pages)

Molly O'Neill - Greenteeth

Beneath the still surface of a lake lurks a monster with needle sharp teeth. Hungry and ready to pounce.

Jenny Greenteeth has never spoken to a human before, but when a witch is thrown into her lake, something makes Jenny decide she's worth saving. Temperance doesn't know why her village has suddenly turned against her, only that it has something to do with the malevolent new pastor.

Though they have nothing in common, these two must band together on a magical quest to defeat the evil that threatens Jenny's lake and Temperance's family, as well as the very soul of Britain. (304 pages)

Ray Naylor - The Mountain in the Sea (about octopuses . . . What's not to like?)

Rumors begin to spread of a species of hyperintelligent, dangerous octopus that may have developed its own language and culture. Marine biologist Dr. Ha Nguyen, who has spent her life researching cephalopod intelligence, will do anything for the chance to study them.

The transnational tech corporation DIANIMA has sealed the remote Con Dao Archipelago, where the octopuses were discovered, off from the world. Dr. Nguyen joins DIANIMA's team on the islands: a battle-scarred security agent and the world's first android.

The octopuses hold the key to unprecedented breakthroughs in extrahuman intelligence. The stakes are high: there are vast fortunes to be made by whoever can take advantage of the octopuses' advancements, and as Dr. Nguyen struggles to communicate with the newly discovered species, forces larger than DIANIMA close in to seize the octopuses for themselves.

But no one has yet asked the octopuses what they think. And what they might do about it. (456 pages)

Sue Burke - Semiosis

Only mutual communication can forge an alliance with the planet's sentient species and prove that mammals are more than tools.

Forced to land on a planet they aren't prepared for, human colonists rely on their limited resources to survive. The planet provides a lush but inexplicable landscape--trees offer edible, addictive fruit one day and poison the next, while the ruins of an alien race are found entwined in the roots of a strange plant. Conflicts between generations arise as they struggle to understand one another and grapple with an unknowable alien intellect. (333 pages)

Tim Rees - Original Earth

Imagine if we were offered a new, uncontaminated planet and a fresh start, how would you wish to see humanity move forward...?

Now, armed with some knowledge of the complex relationships that exist between both fauna and flora - all life with whom we share this incredible planet - what lessons have we learned?

This is a story about a new beginning...

Anu has a her personal vibration is in perfect harmony with the natural world. (336 pages)

Yukimi Ogawa - Like Smoke, Like Light

In this debut collection of breath-taking, genre-blending short stories, Yukimi Ogawa explores realms of folklore and fantastic new worlds. Within these moving, imagination-stretching tales, the dawn of history, the travails of the present and the outer reaches of space and time are all home to creatures of fantasy and of Japanese legends, who intermingle with their environments in surprising and delightful ways. In a series of connected stories, a once-hidden island admits tourists from the outside world to meet inhabitants colored like jewels and cognizant of extrasensory patterns. Most importantly, all of

these dense, rich and complex interstitial stories focus on relationships and family, creating a feast for both the mind and the heart. (262 pages)