

Book suggestions for Mother's Day from Rare Birds

This Mother's Day home of female fiction, Rare Birds, has launched the perfect gift for mamas who love nothing more than to curl up and get lost in an good book.

The Good, The Bad and The Real, is the brand new three-book bundle (£30) offering the crème de la crème of favourite mums in literature – but not necessarily the ones you would expect...

Split into three categories – Good Mothers (positive portrayals of mothers in fiction), Bad Mothers (negative portrayals of mothers in fiction) and Real Mothers (non-fiction books about motherhood and its impact) – the bundle will have you laughing, crying and wondering where amongst it all your own mother sits.



So, which mums – and which stories – will this bundle explore?

(Good Mothers) **Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell**

A heart-breaking historical novel about the personal tragedy which inspired Shakespeare's most famous play. An exploration of what a mother will do to protect her children, and the fracturing of family relationships when this is not enough.

(Bad Mothers) **The Lost Daughter by Elena Ferrante**

When her two daughters leave home, Leda embraces her newfound freedom and embarks upon a solo holiday to an Italian coastal

town. But a chance meeting with an unsettling family forces Leda to confront her own past, and the choices she has made as a mother.

(Real Mothers) (M)otherhood: On the Choices of Being a Woman by Pragya Agarwal

Part memoir, part meticulous research, this is an urgent and necessary examination of motherhood, identity, and the continuous societal obsession with women's reproductive bodies.

Bound in a gorgeous Rare Birds branded box with the books elegantly wrapped, the gift is not only thoughtful, but beautiful.

For those who are keen to delve further into the theme of motherhood, Rare Birds has put together a list that you can pick and choose from to help you continue on your reading journey. Following the above themes, founder Rachel Wood, invites you to decide what being a mum really means...

Books for Good Mothers

Detransition, Baby by Torrey Peters

Can a trans woman, her de-transitioned ex, and his new straight girlfriend all raise a baby together? A witty and wise examination of sex, gender and contemporary family life.

Dial A for Aunties by Jesse Sutanto

A hysterical and heart-warming romcom, in which Meddy's meddling mother and aunties get more than they bargained for when she accidentally kills the blind date they sent her on.

Where'd you go Bernadette by Maria Semple

When her enigmatic architect mother goes missing before a trip to Antarctica, fifteen-year-old Bee will do anything to find

her. A funny and heart-warming look at what happens when motherhood upends your sense of identity.

Beloved by Toni Morrison

Toni Morrison's heart-breaking novel tells the story of Sethe, a formerly enslaved woman whose life has been spent desperately trying to protect her children. A raw and ruthless depiction of the horrors of slavery, and the power of a mother's love.

Room by Emma Donoghue

Told from the perspective of five-year old Jack, this emotional novel details he and his mother's captivity in a single room. Inspired by true stories, this is a searing portrayal of mother's love for her child.

Books for Bad Mothers

Oranges are Not the Only Fruit by Jeanette Winterson

Jeanette Winterson's fierce work of autofiction narrates her choice to abandon the missionary career her adopted mother had planned for her in order to be with the woman she loves. An unflinching depiction of religious zeal and desire.

Nightbitch by Rachel Yoder

In this witty and unsettling novel, the struggling artist mother of a young toddler finds herself undergoing a canine transformation. The only thing is those around her seem oblivious.

Hot Milk by Deborah Levy

Sun-drenched and surreal, this novel depicts the strained relationship between Sofia and her mother, Rose, whom she has accompanied to the Spanish coast in search of a cure for Rose's mysterious illness. A haunting exploration of

sexuality, womanhood, and the maternal bond.

Burnt Sugar by Avni Doshi

When Antara was young, her mother Tara ran wild – preferring to lavish her attention on the guru of an ashram than her own daughter. Now Tara’s memory is failing her, and Antara bitterly administers the help she needs. This is a sticky, biting novel which asks the question: are we obliged to take care of those who fail to take care of us?

The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood

In Margaret Atwood’s classic dystopian novel, motherhood is separated from pregnancy, as those women who are fertile are forced to produce children for the upper class who aren’t. But of these, June, longs to be free and reunited with her daughter.

Books for Real Mothers

The Other Mother: A Wickedly Honest Parenting Tale for Every Kind of Family by Jen Brister

A funny and moving look at mothering from the perspective of the ‘other mother’ in a lesbian relationship, addressing everything from IVF to sleep deprivation with the kind of anecdotes that will make you laugh-out.

Motherhood by Deborah Orr

At seventeen, Deborah Orr left Motherwell to attend university against her mother’s wishes. In this gritty and honest memoir, she recounts her girlhood in the industrial town, and the sticky bond between mother and daughter, ultimately asking the question: what does it mean to mother well?

Blue Nights by Joan Didion

Joan Didion’s memoir detailing the death of her own daughter

is a gut-wrenching account of motherhood, uncertainty, and ageing. Bleak and beautiful in equal measure, this is a book which will haunt you long after it is finished.

The Panic Years by Nell Frizzell

In this poetic and candid book, Nell Frizzell navigates the difficult personal decisions faced by women in their late twenties and thirties. The hardest of all? Whether or not to have a baby.

Mother: An Unconventional History by Sarah Knott

A fascinating exploration of the history of maternity, from medieval royals to 1950s housewives, through the lens of historian Sarah Knott's own experiences with pregnancy, motherhood, and loss.

www.rarebirdsbooks.com

Rare Birds Books is a book club founded on a simple principle: books should be fun to read. Centred upon contemporary women's fiction, Rare Birds Books selects only the very best pacey, interesting stories with gripping plotlines, amazing heroines, happyish endings, and – when the occasion calls for it – totally smouldering love interests.

Members can choose to be part of the club for three, six or twelve months, as well as on a rolling basis if needed. They will receive a surprise read at the start of each month along with a personal intro from founder Rachel as to why she thinks it's worth their time. After completing the book, members can log onto the digital book club, chatting about the story with likeminded others, as well as accessing members-only bonus content.

