1. BOOKS BY GABOR MATÉ

THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE BY BESSEL VAN DER KOLK

2. THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY BY DOUGLAS ADAMS

ORBITAL BY SAMANTHA HARVEY

3. WAYS OF SEEING BY JOHN BERGER

THE CONSOLATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY BY ALAIN DE BOTTON

4. THE PAST AS PRESENT BY ROMILA THAPAR

EARLY INDIANS BY TONY JOSEPH

THE DAWN OF EVERYTHING BY GRAEBER AND WENGROW

5. CLEAR LIGHT OF DAY BY ANITA DESAI

THE BLUE UMBRELLA BY RUSKIN BOND

A CHRISTMAS CAROL BY CHARLES DICKENS

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE BY JANE AUSTEN

6. GOOD ECONOMICS FOR HARD TIMES BY ABHIJIT BANERJEE & ESTHER DUFLO

EVERYBODY LOVES A GOOD DROUGHT BY P SAINATH

THE DOCTOR AND THE SAINT BY ARUNDHATI ROY

7. TRAIN TO PAKISTAN BY KHUSHWANT SINGH

ਚਿੱਟਾ ਲਹੂ - ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿੰਘ

ਤੂਤਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਖੂਹ - ਸੋਹਣ ਸਿੰਘ 'ਸੀਤਲ'

ਅੰਨ੍ਹੇ ਘੋੜੇ ਦਾ ਦਾਨ - ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ

8. METAMORPHOSIS BY FRANZ KAFKA

THE STRANGER BY ALBERT CAMUS

BOOKS THAT 'FEEL' SIMILAR HAVE BEEN CLUBBED TOGETHER HERE; MORE DETAILS ON THE NEXT LEAF

r/PunjabReads

THE HANDBOOK FOR BEGINNERS

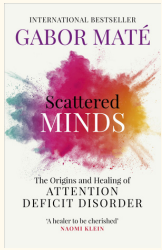
A CURATED LIST FOR THOSE NEW TO READING

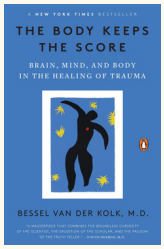


1 ARE YOU LOOKING FOR SELF-HELP?

There is no such thing as a self-help book. Time spent in solitude speaking to your self will help you much more than a book written by an author guilt-tripping you into maximising your productivity. You are not a machine, you are human - productivity is not your end-goal. If you seek to address a specific issue about yourself; shun self-help and read Psychology instead. Professor Gabor Maté has easy to read books on multiple subjects like ADHD, Stress, Addiction - choose one for yourself.

Additionally, Bessel van der Kolk's 'The Body Keeps The Score' deals with the implications of trauma. It's a staple recommendation by therapists.





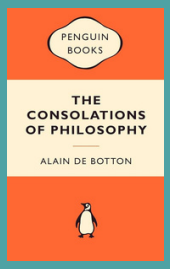
2

ORBITAL BY SAMANTHA HARVEY IS A VERY SHORT AND CRISP NOVELLA ABOUT SIX ASTRONAUTS AND THEIR MUSINGS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION (P.S. IT HAS A BEAUTIFUL LINE ABOUT THE INDO-PAK BORDER AT NIGHT- LOOK FOR IT WHEN YOUR READ)

READ THE HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY IF YOU WANT TO HAVE THE OPTION OF GETTING INTO A SCI-FI SERIES WITH A PROPER FANDOM - IT IS AS MUCH NON-SENSICAL AS IT IS BRILLIANT - UNIQUE, EH?



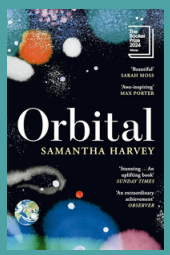


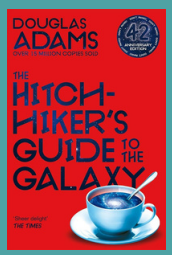


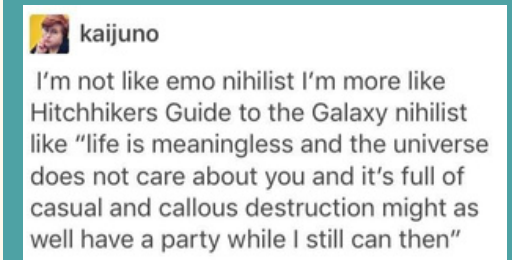
3

WAYS OF SEEING BY JOHN BERGER IS A PERSONAL FAVOURITE - THE BOOK HAS SHORT ESSAYS (EVEN PHOTO ESSAYS!) THAT TEACH YOU HOW TO 'SEE' ART. THIS BOOK IS OFTEN A RECOMMENDED TEXT IN ART SCHOOLS AND TRUST ME WHEN I SAY IT WILL CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE TO ART. (BONUS- BERGER ALSO HOSTED A BBC PROGRAMME WITH THE SAME NAME BASED ON THIS BOOK)

THE CONSOLATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY BY ALAIN DE BOTTON IS AN INTRODUCTORY TEXT TO PHILOSOPHY- IT EXPLAINS THE MAJOR SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY AND IT IS ALSO A RECOMMENDED TEXT IN PHILOSOPHY COURSES. IF YOU WANT TO START READING PHILOSOPHY - START HERE!



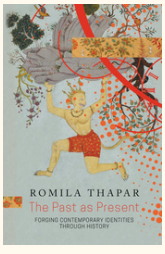


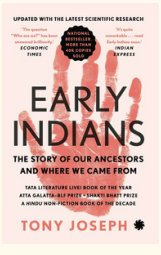


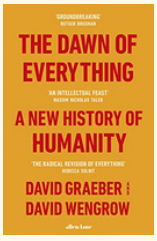
4 ARE YOU LOOKING FOR BOOKS LIKE 'SAPIENS?'

Books like 'Sapiens' and 'Guns, Germs and Steel' have been famously debunked - in the sense that their claims are not considered cognizant with modern scientific findings. To be honest, if you're looking for a 'complete history of how humankind came into being' - there is no book good enough for that and attempting this level of compression and then writing it for the layman will always involve some vague claims and assumptions filling the lacunae in the historical material that we have. Instead, start small and read specific histories by academic historians.

The Past as Present by Romila Thapar is a series of brilliant essays about history and identity. Tony Joseph's Early Indians is an easy read about how the Indian genetic composition came into being. (If you still really want to try a 'history of everything' kind of book - try The Dawn of Everything, it's not academic, but the better than the two I mentioned before)



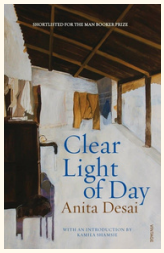




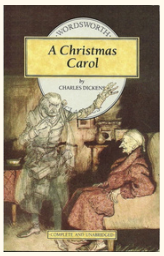


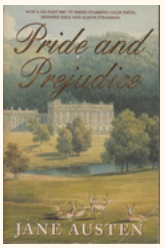
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Anita Desai's Clear Light of Day explores the themes of family, memory, forgiveness, and the changing roles of women in modern India. Set in the post-partition era, it uses flashbacks to show how past experiences shape present lives.
Ruskin Bond's Blue Umbrella is cutesy hilly tale with Bond's characteristic warm characters that transport you to a simpler time.
Dickens' A Christmas Carol is a very short novella about an elderly miser who is transformed into a kind man with the visitation of a ghost and the spirit of Christmas.
Austen's Pride and Prejudice is THE NOVEL if you're looking for classic chick-lit. It's been 250 years, and this novel is still relevant, funny, romantic and dear to many a woman's hearts.









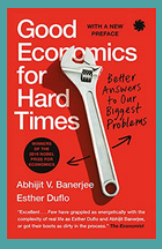
READ BOND & DICKENS IF YOU WANT TO FEEL LIKE A CHILD; AND READ AUSTEN IF YOU WANT TO FEEL LIKE A GIDDY TEENAGE GIRL

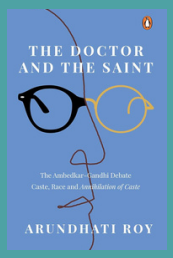
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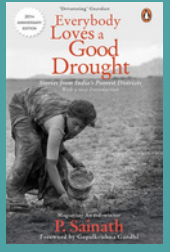
ABHIJIT BANERJEE & ESTHER DUFLO ARE NOBEL PRIZE WINNING ECONOMISTS - THE RARE TYPE OF ECONOMISTS WHO HAVE A HEART. 'GOOD ECONOMICS FOR HARD TIMES' USES VERY SIMPLE LANGUAGE (AND VERY ROBUST RESEARCH!) TO EXPLAIN HOW ECONOMICS CAN GIVE US THE SOLUTION FOR GLOBAL PROBLEMS LIKE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY. IT EMPHASISES THE NEED FOR RESPECT AND EMPATHY WHILE POLICY-MAKING.

ARUNDHATI ROY'S THE DOCTOR AND THE SAINT IS A BOOK-LONG PREFACE WRITTEN TO BR AMBEDKAR'S SPEECH (THAT WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO BE DELIVERED) ABOUT CASTE IN INDIA. ARUNDHATI COMPARES GANDHI AND AMBEDKAR AND THEIR POLITICS - IN MY OPINION THIS IS ESSENTIAL READING FOR ANYBODY INTERESTED IN INDIA. CASTE IS THE UNDERCURRENT THAT RUNS BENEATH EVERY SPHERE OF INDIAN LIFE AND ITS MUSTN'T BE IGNORED. (ALSO, BRILLIANT COVER!)

P SAINATH'S EVERYBODY LOVES A GOOD DROUGHT IS A HAUNTINGLY TRUE BOOK - IT INCLUDES METICULOUS RESEARCH ABOUT THE LIVES OF THE POOREST IN INDIA AND HOW THE RICH AND THE MEDIA FAIL THE COUNTRY'S POOR. IT IS A BOOK PRESCRIBED IN OVER 100 UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL READING FOR AN INDIAN. DECADES AFTER ITS PUBLICATION, THERE IS STILL NO BOOK PARALLEL TO IT.









> Empathy sometimes achieves what scholarship cannot
>
> Arundhati Roy, The Doctor and the Saint: The Ambedkar - Gandhi Debate

7

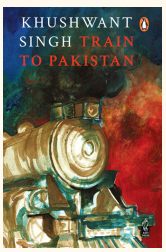
CLOSE TO HOME

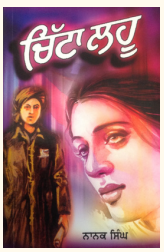
Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan is short but brilliant novel recounting the Partition. It begins with the depiction of the village of Mano Majra which I read in childhood and it still rests in my memory. Khushwant has the talent of writing brilliant thoughts in simple language so he makes for a brilliant author to be read by a novice.

Nanak Singh's Chitta Lahu is the considered the foremost punjabi novel - it provides commentary on the hypocrisy of society (which we all experience!)

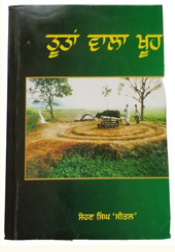
Anhe Ghode Da Daan by Gurdial Singh is a gut-wrenching novel about the treatment of sikh-dalits in rural punjabi society. It has also been adapted into a brilliant movie.

Tootaa'n Vala Khooh by Sohan Singh Seetal is an easily readable novel that depicts rural life of Punjab; as is evident by the name. It was widely prescribed in schools in Punjab.



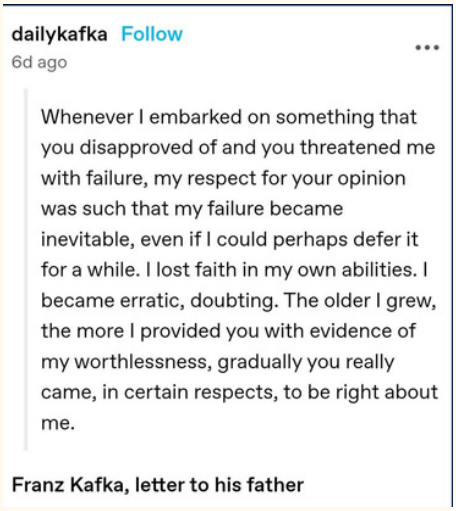






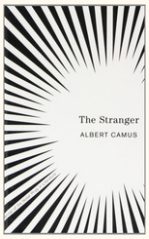
8

METAMORPHOSIS BY FRANZ KAFKA IS THE BEST PLACE TO START KAFKA AND THE BEST PLACE TO START READING ABSURDIST LITERATURE. IT IS A SMALL NOVELLA ABOUT A MAN WHO WAKES UP TO FIND HIMSELF TRANSFORMED INTO A ROACH. IT'S A TALE OF THE POWER OF NEGLECT AND THE LOSS OF LOVE (IN A SAD WAY, PERHAPS, MIRRORING THE MIND OF THE AUTHOR).



THE STRANGER BY ALBERT CAMUS IS A SMALL NOVELLA ABOUT THE 'MEANINGLESSNESS OF LIFE' - THE PROTAGONIST KILLS ANOTHER MAN ONE DAY, RANDOMLY, WITH NO REASON. WHILE SOCIETY GRAPPLES TO FIND A 'CAUSE' FOR HIS DOING - HE REITERATES HOW THERE IS REALLY NO CAUSE AND NO GREATER MEANING TO ANYTHING. ABSURD.







MODERATOR'S PERSONAL PICKS

1. For every Punjabi, **Panjab: Journey through the Faultlines by Amandeep Sandhu** is a very crucial read to understand contemporary Punjab, lest we stay limited to the history books.

2. **Punjab, Punjabis & Punjabiyat by Khushwant Singh**

3. **The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy** is my all-time favourite book. The sheer beauty of writing in this book puts me at a loss for words. I cannot recommend this enough- this was the book that made me stop writing forever, because how can I ever be as good as Arundhati! She's a wizard with words.

4. **Confabulations by John Berger** - read this especially if you like Ways of Seeing. John Berger is someone who could ramble on and on for ages and I would sit still and listen. I have almost the entire book underlined, that's how much I love it.

5. **Arundhati Roy's Essay Collections** - they are compiled in a bunch of books; Listening to Grasshoppers, The Algebra of Infinite Justice, My Seditious Heart and ofcourse the newly banned by the Indian Government - Azadi. Every line in every essay will make you put down the book and sigh twice, first for the pain in the world and the second for our apathy. Arundhati makes you feel - well yes, humanity is simple, why do we complicate it in the name of development and nations and what not?





SOME BITS:

WHEN TRYING TO FIND A BOOK TO READ, DO NOT READ THE FAMOUS BOOKS- INSTEAD INTROSPECT WHAT SUBJECT, TOPIC, COUNTRY, SETTING ETC. INTERESTS YOU - AND THEN SEARCH FOR BOOK BASED ON THAT/SET THERE.

YOU WILL TRULY FALL IN LOVE WITH READING WHEN YOU RANDOMLY DISCOVER A NICHE BOOK THAT SPEAKS TO YOU, PERSONALLY. THAT'S WHEN THE WORLD OF BOOKS WILL FEEL LIKE YOUR OWN. TRY TO FIND THAT BOOK. A BOOK THAT BELONGS TO YOUR HEART ALONE.

WHEN NOTHING MAKES SENSE, READ A BOOK YOU'VE ALREADY READ OR READ A CHILDREN'S BOOK. YOU CAN NEVER GO WRONG WITH A CHILDREN'S BOOK, THEY'RE THE BEST BOOKS OUT THERE.

IF YOU'RE FACING A READING SLUMP (OR ARE GETTING EASILY DISTRACTED), MAKE USE OF AUDIOBOOKS. PLAY THE AUDIOBOOK AS YOU READ THE BOOK - IT'LL BE LIKE A SUPERPOWER.

