

# BOOKS What We're READING

By SAMANTHA IRBY

**1. THREE DAUGHTERS OF EVE**  
by Elif Shafak (Bloomsbury)  
lose friends Peri, Shirin, and Mona find themselves at odds over the divination teachings of their Oxford professor. In later years, against a backdrop of the threat of terrorist attacks in modern-day Istanbul, a brutal act reminds Peri of their dissolved relationship. Switching perspectives between the present and Peri's past, this novel from the award-winning Shafak is, at its core, a beautifully rendered tale of homeland and faith.

**2. THE AFTERLIVES**  
by Thomas Pierce (Riverhead)  
Jim was technically dead for five minutes. During that time, he met no God, was serenaded by no angels, and saw no beams of white light. Back on the life side, he and his newlywed bride are in search of a possible ghost. What ensues is a quirky, hilarious, and

heartrending journey to answer the question of what, if anything, happens when we transition from this life to the next.

**3. EVERYTHING HERE IS BEAUTIFUL**  
by Mira T. Lee (Pamela Dorman Books)

Told from alternating viewpoints, this is the story of two deeply bonded sisters pursuing love, family, and belonging while also caught in the firm grasp of one sister's mental illness. In the shadow of their mother's recent passing, Miranda (older, responsible) and Lucia (reckless, impulsive) struggle to find their footing. Lee's debut novel is a profoundly relatable drama about how far you would, or should, go for family.

**4. DANGEROUS CROSSING**  
by Rachel Rhys (Atria)  
As World War II looms over Europe, Lily, a

young servant trying to leave her past behind in England, takes a trip to Australia on an ocean liner. After the prologue hints at malice forthcoming, what follows is a vividly descriptive ride from this enticingly mysterious author (Rhys is a pen name), leading up to a killer ending we did not see coming.

**5. RED CLOCKS**  
by Leni Zumas (Lee Boudreaux Books)  
In an alarming peek into a dystopian future, a group of women navigates family and motherhood in an America that has outlawed abortion, in vitro fertilization, and adoption by single women. Each of the interwoven story lines is complex and heartbreaking in its own way, and overall, it's a fascinating and unsettling exploration of the limits society can place on women's bodies.

## BEHIND THE PAGES FORTUNE'S FOOLS

In author Chloe Benjamin's thrilling new novel, *The Immortalists* (G.P. Putnam's Sons), four siblings visit a mysterious psychic who predicts the date that each will die—and indelibly affects the way that each will live. By JULIA FELSENTHAL



**MARIE CLAIRE:** What led you to the idea of the fortune-teller's prophecy?

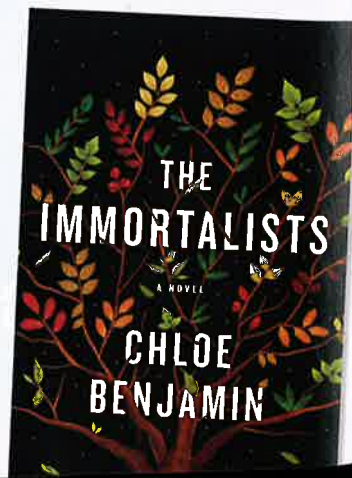
**CHLOE BENJAMIN:** For me, the question at the heart of the book is about knowledge—the benefits and perils. I'm someone who really longs for knowledge and control, but those things can be limiting. It's almost like a magic trick: The stories we tell ourselves enable us to keep going in the face of randomness but

also can become their own self-fulfilling prophecies.

**MC:** Would you ever see a fortune-teller?

**CB:** No, because I'm too superstitious. After writing this book, I'm like, *I don't want to know!* Actually, since I've written it, people have told me they had a fortune-teller tell them the day they were going to die.

One girl in particular, her date is coming up, and she's terrified.  
**MC:** One of the reasons *The Immortalists* is such a treat is that it delves into this world of magic, but it's not really a fantasy novel. It's escapist and literary.  
**CB:** What really drew me to reading was books that were beautifully written and full of story. [For a while] I felt I had to read stuff that was dense, or really subtle, or took place only in the mind. And now I'm getting back to the kinds of books that I loved as a young person. I'm rereading Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass*, which explores these questions of consciousness, religion, life, and death.



BENJAMIN: NATHAN JANDL. ALL OTHER IMAGES: COURTESY OF THE COMPANIES