

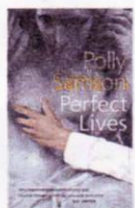
Christmas books

Our guide to
the year's
best reads



In the first of our two-week selection of the year's finest books, Peter Kemp picks the authors — Philip Roth, CJ Sansom, David Mitchell and Yiyun Li among them — of 2010's most unforgettable novels

PERFECT LIVES by POLLY SAMSON
Virago £15.99



The interconnected lives of characters in a tranquil English seaside town are further linked in these accomplished stories by a pervading theme of hidden disturbance lurking beneath the surface of enviable-seeming existences. Focusing, sometimes comically, sometimes compassionately, on apparently prospering, well-organised, civilised and contented people, Samson traces tremors of disruption threatening the stability of her characters' relationships and themselves.

Next week

The best biographies, memoirs, travel, science, politics, nature, stage & screen and children's books

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