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**Ratings**

Bad	
Average	★★
Good	★★★
Very Good	★★★★
Excellent	★★★★★

**Books**

By Isabel Smith

***Mercy***

By Lara Santoro (Penguin)

Rating: ★★★

When Italian-American journalist Anna arrives in Nairobi she knows that the daily atrocities she reports on will be upsetting, but she hadn't counted on having to battle her own personal demons, too. To escape the violence around her, Anna finds herself drinking too much and getting ever more entangled with two men. Mercy enters her life as her maid, but becomes Anna's judge and critic, and gradually also her counsellor and friend. This book is intriguing from beginning to end and shows the talent of Santoro perfectly.



***Goodnight, Beautiful***

By Dorothy Koomson (Penguin)

Rating: ★★

When Nova agrees to be a surrogate mother for her best friend Mal and his wife Stephanie, she didn't expect to be abandoned when they decide they no longer want the baby. Eight years later Nova is anxiously waiting for her son, Leo, to wake up from a coma, while childless Stephanie is desperately trying to save her failing marriage. Although they live separate lives, both women have secrets that will bind them together for ever. This book is good enough to want to read it in one evening, but that doesn't mean it will keep you engaged throughout.



***Pieterrella: Daughter Of Eva***

By Dalene Matthee (Penguin)

Rating: ★★★★

This book opens in the early days of the first white settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, beneath the shadow of Table Mountain, with the Dutch East India Company clinging to a little piece of land - Robben Island. Dalene Matthee skillfully balances the elements of Pieterrella's life in this novel: love and shame for her mother, the impersonal might of the Company versus one individual, and a slave who is more free than a free woman. She allows the historically misunderstood Eva finally to come into her own through the eyes of her clever, sensitive daughter.

