

Librarians' Summer Reading List 2004 Master List

Albanese, Lori Pico. **Blue Suburbia**. Adult.

Summary: A poetry memoir tracing the author's difficult childhood and her struggles as a wife and mother. Beautifully written and a super-fast read.

Ali, Monica. **Brick Lane**. Adult.

Summary: It is a novel about Bangladeshi immigrants to London.

Armstrong, Jennifer. **Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World**. YA

Summary: The amazing story of Shackleton's ill-fated voyage to Antarctica written for young people. It was fascinating how they managed to survive such extreme conditions and finally be rescued after more than a year without their ship.



Brown, Dan. **The DaVinci Code**. Adult

Summary: A Harvard professor discovers clues to a murder hidden in the works of Da Vinci -- clues visible for all to see -- yet ingeniously disguised by the painter that may also be connected to a religious conspiracy.

Burkett, Elinor. **Another Planet; A Year in the Life of a Suburban High School**. Adult

Summary: Shortly after the Columbine tragedy, this award winning journalist went back to public high school in suburban Minneapolis for one school year. She went to classes, hung out with students, got to know teachers and administrators. This is a fascinating and disturbing insider's view of American education. Must reading for high school educators and parents.

Carr, Josephine. **Dewey Decimal System of Love**.

Summary: This title is particularly funny for anyone who works in a library. I handed this around after it was recommended to me.

Clark, Mary Higgins. **Nighttime is my time**. Adult (Suitable for YA)

Summary: As the graduates prepare for their twentieth high-school reunion, it becomes apparent that members of a popular clique are targets of a serial killer, "The Owl".

Clements, Andrew. **The Report Card**.

Summary: In this day and age of stressing students and teachers out over grades and "THE TEST", I highly recommend this book.

Clements, Andrew. **Things Not Seen**. YA

Summary: A teenage boy wakes up one morning to find himself invisible. He is forced to cope with his delima in humorous and touching detail.

Codell, Esme. **Educating Esme** and **How to Get Your Child to Love Reading: For Ravenous and Reluctant Readers Alike**

Summary: Codell's books are great - she has one about her first year as a teacher (Educating Esme) and one about how to encourage children to read.

Collins, Suzanne. **Gregor the Overlander**. Middle Grades.

Summary: Gregor and his 2-year-old sister, Boots, fall into the Underland from the laundry room of their NYC apt building. Here they encounter the Underlanders, people who have been living underground for centuries and "bond" with giant bats. They believe Gregor to be the warrior mentioned in one of their ancient prophecies. He reluctantly joins their quest, joined by a host of creatures and his sister, who is the youngest, but sometimes the wisest (and definitely the funniest) of the company.



= "What Everyone is Talking About" – multiple recommendations



= Appearing on previous years' lists

Cornwall, Bernard. **Grail Quest Trilogy: The Archer's Tale, The Heretic and The Vagabond.** Adult
Summary: The young archer Thomas of Hookton joins the forces of King Edward III to fight against France in the mid-14th century at the beginning of the Hundred Years War. Thomas' quest takes on greater danger and significance as he makes a bitter enemy from within his own ranks, uncovers a dark family secret, and becomes embroiled in an idealistic scheme to reclaim the vanished Holy Grail.

Creech, Sharon. **Heartbeat.** Middle Grades.
Summary: A story that deals with juxtaposition – new birth and aging, passion and enjoying for the pure sake of enjoyment, of understanding life. Written in narrative poetry, this book can be read on many levels. It is the story of a young girl working through that awkward stage and learning what life is all about as she observes the development of her mother's pregnancy and her grandfather's mental deterioration. A powerful story.

Daum, Meghan. **The Quality of Life Report.** Adult.
Summary: This novel depicts the transformation of a semi-successful New York cable television reporter to a Midwesterner. Quirky characters and humorous situations make the story a quick read.

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. **Sister of My Heart.** Adult
Summary: This novel, primarily about the bond between two Indian women, also explores the cultures of modern India and Indians in the United States.



Donnelly, Jennifer. **A Northern Light.** YA

Summary: Historical fiction that blends the real murder of Grace Brown in the Adirondacks with the story of a teenage girl who needs to choose between doing what is expected of her (marriage) or pursuing her dream (higher education). Extremely well written!

DuPrau, Jeanne. **The City of Ember.** Middle Grades

Summary: A future setting of a created city where the sky is always dark except between the hours of 6 am and 9pm. We meet Lina and Doon, both 12, who are getting assigned to their first jobs in the city, which we learn is slowly breaking down and running out of supplies. Will they figure a way out of the city before it shuts down for good? Only the readers know that instructions have been left by the builders.



Eugenides, Jeffery. **Middlesex.** Adult

Summary: An epic that beings in turn-of-the-century Greece & takes the reader to Detroit, Michigan. The story is told through the voice of Calliope of the Stephanides family and through her/his eyes, a buried family secret is revealed.



Fforde, Jasper. **The Eyre Affair.** YA

Summary: set in a world not quite like our own, in which special agents protect literature. Great fun adventure sprinkled throughout with literary references galore. I'm in the middle of the third book right now - The Well of Lost Plots - and having great fun.

Frose, Deborah. **Out of the Fire.** YA

Summary: A teen-age girl reluctantly attends a wild party in a field where there is a giant bonfire. An accident occurs and she is severely burned. The book chronicles her journey back to "normalcy."

Fuller, Alexandra. **Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight.** Adult.

Summary: The memoir of a woman who was raised in Africa during the time of some of the struggles for independence. Her parents lived a hard-scrabble life on various farms, and it was not until she was older that she had the distance and maturity to assess the views of her white family and friends to the Africans around her.



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Funke, Cornelia. ***Inkheart***. Middle Grades

Summary: The ultimate book lover's book: Twelve-year-old Meggie learns that her father Mo, a bookbinder, can "read" fictional characters to life when an evil ruler named Capricorn, freed from the novel "Inkheart" years earlier, tries to force Mo to release an immortal monster from the story.

Goig, Kelly. ***Fat Kid Rules the World***. YA

Summary: Seventeen-year-old Troy, depressed, suicidal, and weighing nearly three hundred pounds, gets a new perspective on life when Curt, a semi-homeless teen who is a genius on guitar, asks Troy to be the drummer in a rock band.



Grisham, John. ***The Last Juror***. Adult (Suitable for YA)

Summary: Set in Mississippi, Danny Padgitt is paroled after serving less than a decade in jail for the murder of a young woman. Members of his jury are now being murdered.



Haddon, Mark. ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time***. Adult (suitable for YA)

Summary: 15 year old Christopher, is autistic, has a great fear of social interaction, but is a mathematical genius. He sets out to discover who killed his neighbor's dog and the process, uncovers secrets about his mother. The story gives insight into the mind of an autistic young adult in a very poignant way.

Hedges, Peter. ***An Ocean in Iowa***. Adult

Summary: Set in 1969, this is an interesting story about a year in the life of a young child.

Hesse, Karen. ***Aleutian Sparrow***. Middle Grades.

Summary: Written in prose form, this book is about the Aleut people during WWII when they were relocated to internment camps by the US government.

Jiles, Paulette. ***Enemy Women***. Adult.

Summary: A novel about the Civil War in Missouri, reminiscent of Cold Mountain. It is the story of a woman who is imprisoned by Northern troops because of her suspected knowledge of Southern guerrilla forces. She falls in love with her interrogator, escapes from prison and makes her way back to her home. Haunting scenes of common folk caught between 2 warring factions.



Kidd, Sue Monk. ***The Secret Life of Bees***. Adult (Suitable for YA)

Summary: Story of 14 year old Lily's search for self in the segregated South of the 1960's. Author's use of imagery is a delight.

King, Laurie R. ***The Game***. Adult.

Summary: Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes are afoot again, traveling to India investigating for Mycroft Holmes. A British agent has gone missing in Colonial India and Mary and Sherlock are to find the one and only "Kim" of Kipling fame.

Koertge, Ron. ***Shakespeare Bats Cleanup***. YA

Summary: 14 year-old boy is at home recovering from mononucleosis, and fills the time writing poetry. He starts out skeptical and fumbling, but soon comes to appreciate the outlet it gives him to process his grief over his mother's death, his impatience with his body to heal, and his growing interest in a girl. Touching, beautifully written, a near-perfect book.

Kozak, Harley Jane. ***Dating Dead Men***. Adult

Summary: A greeting card shop owner finds herself embroiled in a murder investigation while trying to complete a research project on blind dates. Hilarious! For Janet Evanovich fans.



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Lackey, Mercedes. **Fairy Godmother**. Adult.

Summary: Elena was supposed to be her kingdom's Cinderella, but when her fairytale ending doesn't come, she's recruited by her fairy godmother to become one herself. For anyone who grew up loving fairy tales.



Lahiri, Jhumpa. **Namesake**. Adult.

Summary: A few years ago Lahiri won the Pulitzer Prize for her book of short stories, Interpreter of Maladies. This is an amazing book about the immigrant experience in North America, with a story that keeps you reading into the night.

Little, Jean. **Willow and Twig**. Middle grades

Summary: Abandoned by their drug-addicted mother, two children struggle to find a place where they're accepted and loved.

MacDonald, Ann-Marie. **The Way the Crow Flies**. Adult

Summary: Strong story and characterization about a girl's loss of innocence in 1960's Canada.

Mackler, Carolyn. **The Earth My Butt and Other Big Round Things**. YA

Summary: Feeling like she does not fit in with the other members of her family, who are all thin, brilliant, and good-looking, fifteen-year-old Virginia tries to deal with her self-image, her first physical relationship, and her disillusionment with some of the people closest to her.



Martel, Yann. **The Life of Pi**. YA (suitable for Adult)

Summary: Pi Patel, the son of a zookeeper moving from India to Canada, survives a shipwreck on a raft with a Bengal tiger, Richard Parker, as his companion.

McCaughrean, Geraldine. **Stop the Train!** Middle Grades

Summary: All historical fiction should be so funny and touching. Oklahoma settlers circa 1900 try all sorts of ploys to get the train to stop in their newly created town.

McNamee, Graham. **Acceleration**. Middle Grades

Summary: This thriller is set in Toronto where 17 year old, Duncan, works in the Lost & Found Dept. of the Toronto subway. He stumbles across the diary of a serial killer and sets out to stop him!

Morse, Scott. **The Barefoot Serpent**

Summary: This graphic novel tells the story of a family devastated by the suicide death of the older brother and depicts the spiritual healing they experience on a vacation in Hawaii; the framing story is a short biography of famed Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa, whose story resembles the fictional one a little. Quiet yet emotionally powerful - and the Hawaii details are accurate.

Nelson, Peter. **Left For Dead: A Young Man's Search for Justice for the USS Indianapolis**. YA

Summary: This nonfiction account of the sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis details a 12 year old boys quest to clear the name of the only sea captain court-martialed during WWII.



Niffenegger, Audrey. **The Time Traveler's Wife**. Adult

Summary: A great love story about a chronological-impaired man who randomly catapults through time to the past and the future, encountering his wife, mother, and daughter along the way. And with a librarian as a main character, how could you go wrong?

O'Brien, Patrick. Aubrey/Maturin series, starting with **Master and Commander**. Adult

Summary: Twenty glorious titles, fabulous reading, great sea stories and terrific personal accounts of the friendship between Jack Aubrey, ship's captain, and his ship's surgeon Stephen Maturin, also Irish patriot and spy, during the Napoleonic Wars.



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 Parkhurst, Carolyn. ***The Dogs of Babel***. Adult

Summary: Dealing with grief from the death of his wife, a linguist turns to the only witness, his dog, for information.

Perotta, Tom. ***Little Children***. Adult.

Summary: When a man convicted of child sexual abuse moves to a quiet suburb after serving his time, an entire community is shaken. Perrotta explores the community in first person accounts of intertwined members of the community that is suspenseful, sad, and surprisingly funny.

 Picoult, Jodi. ***My Sister's Keeper***. Adult (suitable for YA)

Summary: Kate Fitzgerald has a rare form of leukemia. Anna, her sister, was conceived to provide a donor match for procedures to try to save Kate. When a kidney transplant is planned, Anna hires a lawyer so that she can sue her parents for the right to make her own decisions about how her body is used.

Polacco, Patricia. ***When Lightning Comes in a Jar***. Picture Book

Summary: An incredibly moving autobiographical tale of a little girl's family reunion. A little girl anticipates the moment when her Gramma will teach her how to catch lightning in a jar. A wonderful story filled with storytelling, watermelon seed spitting contests and meatloaves. I have used this book with students in first through fifth grade.

Rice, Luanne. ***The Secret Hour***. Adult

Summary: Attorney John O'Rourke has been juggling the rigors of a controversial capital murder case and the demands of raising eleven-year-old Maggie and fourteen-year-old Teddy. But one day a woman arrives at the O'Rourke's door. Kate comes to the seaside and discovers the one man who may be able to help her find her missing sister.

Sebold, Alice. ***Lucky: A Memoir***. Adult.

Sebold, author of The Lovely Bones, was raped as a college freshman, but the police said she was "lucky." At least she wasn't murdered and dismembered like the girl before her. Now a journalist, Sebold here details the aftermath.

Shea, Pegi Deitz. ***Tangled Threads: A Hmong Girl's Story***. Middle grades

Summary: A young girl and her grandmother travel from the refugee camps of southeast Asia to the suburbs of an American city. The culture shock is immense! This is a fascinating look at an undeveloped culture and the difficulties presented by contemporary American life.

Slack, Charles. ***Noble Obsession***. Adult

Summary: This nonfiction book is a biography of Charles Goodyear and the great sacrifices he made to patent a usable rubber product. It is truly a fascinating story.

Slater, Nigel. ***Toast***. Adult.

Summary: Nigel Slater is a British food writer. Toast is a memoir which follows his life from birth to around 20 years old - I'm eagerly awaiting a follow up which will show his transition from chef to food writer.


  Smith, Alexander McCall. ***Ladies No. 1 Detective Agency series***. Adult.

Summary: Botswana's only female detective, Precious Ramotswe – culturally fascinating.

Sparks, Nicholas. ***The Rescue***. Adult

*Summary: A woman and her son are rescued from an automobile accident by a firefighter. The little boy has a communication disability, yet has an almost an instant bond with their rescuer. However the fireman and woman's love affair is complicated because of a haunting incident in his past. Also by this author - **Bend in the Road**.*

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Tyler, Anne. ***The Amateur Marriage***. Adult

Summary: The story of a couple who met and married during WWII. They never really "got" each and shouldn't have married, but they struggle through life as amateurs, have children and grandchildren, finally divorcing. A really good story and good character development.

Van Draanen, Wendelin. ***Flipped***. Middle Grades/YA

Summary: Story of a boy and girl who meet as elementary students; each tells his/her perception of their interactions via alternate chapters. An entertaining introspective of how people view situations differently, and it also presents what character is.

Vanderbes, Jennifer. ***Easter Island***. Adult

Summary: Story toggles between 1912 and 1973 and the stories of 2 women from those years who visit Easter Island. You won't be able to put down this historical novel!



Vreeland, Susan. ***Passion of Artemisia***. Adult

Summary: What would it take to be a famous painter in Baroque Italy ... and a woman?

A wonderful story! I just loved it! Check out her website for the paintings talked about in the book:

<http://www.svreeland.com/>

Wilensky, Amy. ***The Weight of It***. Adult.

Summary: This is the author's story of how her sister's obesity and then her extreme weight loss after gastric bypass surgery affected her. I thought it was an excellent account of how body image shapes not just individuals, but entire families and especially sibling relationships.

Willett, Marcia. ***A Week in Winter***. Adult

Summary: A warm and cozy English countryside novel. The characters will stay with you for a long time.

Yorke, Christy. ***The Wishing Garden***. Adult

Summary: For Savanna Dawson, love has always been painful. After her cheating fiancé dies in an accident, she moves away from her hometown, only to return years later to deal with the ghosts of past loves and future possibilities. A fast-moving plot coupled with a touch of magic makes this an awesome literary read.



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