

MODERN MRS DARCY

2022

Summer Reading Guide





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Welcome, readers!

Grab a drink and put your feet up—it's Summer Reading Guide time! Whether you're by the pool, having a picnic, relaxing in your favorite reading nook, or just comfy on the couch, it's time to dive in to some serious (and seriously fun!) summer reading!





I adore summer reading season, and am thrilled to share our ELEVENTH annual Summer Reading Guide!

Where I live, we're rolling into the season of

sunshine and swimming pools, and I am ready for it. Timing is everything in the reading life—and while I love to read all year long, for me summer is the season where reading takes center stage. I look forward to it all year.

I've long said reading is my favorite hobby, easiest escape, and most reliable introvert coping strategy. I doubt I'm speaking only for myself when I say the past 2+ years have been a doozy, and I need these things more than ever right now.

Enter this year's Summer Reading Guide, which is a little different than our past several editions. In a sense, we're returning to our SRG origins, when I didn't just share brand-new titles, but also backlist titles that have stood the test of time (and have blessedly shorter wait lists at your local library).

Your reading life should give you life. But I've heard from so many of you over the past year that you're overwhelmed by the unending options of what you could read next, and you're feeling pressured to keep up with the latest and greatest titles "everyone" is reading. Friends, *overwhelmed* and *pressured* are not words that belong in a vibrant reading life!

We hear you, we're with you, and we're here to help. We're preparing for the season in a spirit of glorious abundance and *also* blissful ease. As we've been doing all year on the Modern Mrs Darcy blog and What Should I Read Next podcast, we're consciously reining in the number of titles we're sharing. It's true that 2022 is brimming with great releases—but does sharing 100 of them help you decide what to read next? No, it does not.

For 2022 we're featuring two dozen new-this-year titles I adore and think you might, too, plus we're highlighting favorite backlist books that may be just right for *your* reading list, right now.

Now about those books: it's always interesting to see trends emerge from season to season, and this year's were bizarre and fascinating. I read stories of a half-dozen protagonists whose chosen Subaru spoke volumes about their personality, an unusually high number of novels set at MIT, abundant religious themes from a variety of traditions, and a laughable number of stories featuring painters.

Our categories are designed to make it easy to find what you're looking for, while also helping you gently branch out. My best advice is to follow your instincts. What sounds good to you this summer? Start there.

Readers, we're so happy to read with you this season. Thanks for letting us be a part of it.

Happy summer and happy reading!

-Anne Bogel





OUR SUMMER READING *philosophy*

Reading is personal, timing is everything, and good books abound. For this summer season, we want to help you find the books that will make your heart sing right now.

After eleven years of lovingly creating this guide, I've learned that the best way to get the most out of your reading life is to know yourself as a reader. The Summer Reading Guide will always contain my enthusiastic recommendations, from one reader to another, of dozens of books I've read, loved, and can't wait to recommend for the summer season. But we implore you to keep your own taste, mood, and interests in mind as you contemplate which books will suit you best right now. Who gets to decide if a book is right for you? *You do!*

This year, as you browse the categories in this guide, I encourage you to be an open-minded explorer even as you keep your reading preferences in mind. (Don't know your reading personality? Track your reading, review your notes, and watch it emerge.) But don't just stick to the tried-and-true. Because I've talked to thousands of readers over the years, I can attest that the best reading experiences come from unexpected genres, authors, and themes. Try something new this year, and see if you're not surprised and delighted!

We can't wait to hear what you add to your summer reading list. Tag me at @AnneBogel on social media to share your selections, and use the hashtag #MMDSummerReading so we can see your posts.



Spread the book love! Send your friends to:
modernmrsdarcy.com/srg

Show us what you're reading! Tag us on social:
#MMDSummerReading & tag @AnneBogel

The Darcy

This bright and bubbly mocktail features a grapefruit Spindrift base. It's infinitely versatile: omit any of the ingredients (minus the Spindrift) you don't have on hand, add extra fruit, try a different citrus. Have fun with it, and enjoy!

**HANDFUL OF FRESH RASPBERRIES
OR BLACKBERRIES (ABOUT 6-8)**

**1/4 CUP FULL FAT COCONUT MILK
(CANNED IS PREFERABLE)**

**JUICE FROM WEDGE OF LIME
(EXTRA FOR A MORE TART DRINK)**

**GRAPEFRUIT SPARKLING WATER
(SPINDRIFT RECOMMENDED)**

**OPTIONAL: 1/2 TBS HONEY IF YOU
WANT A TOUCH OF SWEETNESS**

In a cocktail shaker or jar with a lid, add raspberries. Muddle raspberries (lightly press on them with a wood spoon or muddler) to release their juice. Add ice, coconut milk, juice from the lime wedge, and honey (optional) to the shaker. Shake vigorously for 15 seconds. This will chill the ingredients and mix them together. Strain the coconut mixture into a glass filled with ice. Fill the remainder of the glass with the grapefruit sparkling water. Enjoy!

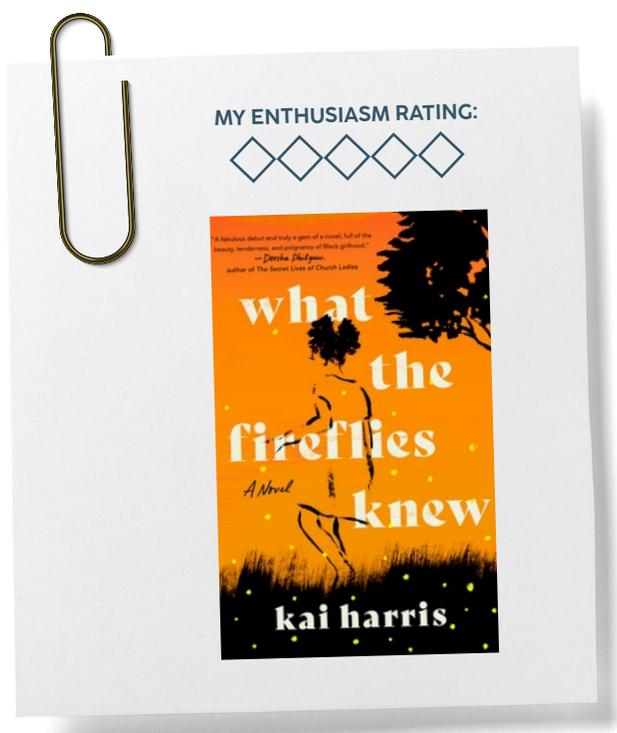


Take good care

OF YOURSELF THIS SUMMER

If you shy away from sensitive content, please know that many of these titles have tough themes or moments. We've flagged the presence of sensitive content that could potentially take you by surprise. (i.e., readers know what to expect when they start a true crime story, but certain content in a "tender coming of age story" could catch them off guard. We don't want anyone to feel this way.)

These content warnings are not comprehensive. If you have specific concerns, look to your fellow readers for guidance: book people really are the best people, and will be happy to advise you. Sites like Storygraph and Goodreads include warnings reported by other readers, and increasing numbers of authors include these on their websites. If you can't find the answers you seek, email us at hello@modernmrsdarcy.com. I've read every word of every book here, and will do my best to help you decide if that book is right for you.



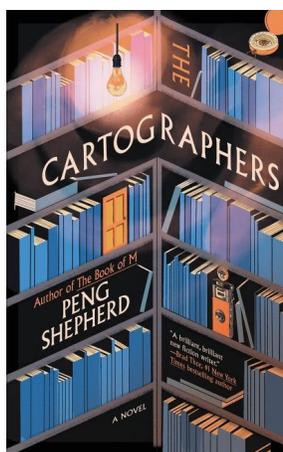
MY ENTHUSIASM RATING

In this year's guide we've included a *My Reading Life*-inspired "enthusiasm rating" to help you think through where each book belongs on your To Be Read list. Print out the guide, bust out your highlighters, and shade in the diamonds, OR make notes in your own journal about how excited you are to read each title: is it a must-read, a maybe, or perhaps a not-for-me-right-now? Don't overthink it, and have fun!

Mystery & Thriller

Get completely engrossed in a riveting mystery with these finely crafted narratives that range from character-driven slow burns to fast-paced suspense.

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

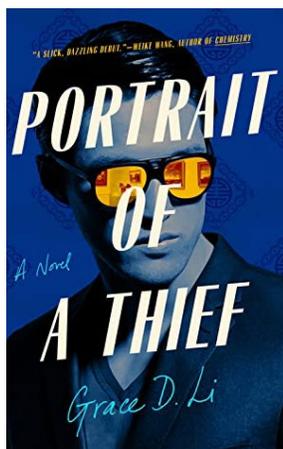


THE CARTOGRAPHERS, PENG SHEPHERD, WILLIAM MORROW, MARCH 15

A page-turning literary mystery with a dynamite premise and a little bit of magic. Seven years ago, cartographer Nell Young lost everything—her career, her reputation, her fiancé, and her family—because of an argument over a cheap gas station map. After her esteemed cartographer father unexpectedly dies, Nell learns he'd been working on some sort of secret project connected to the map, which isn't junk at all but an incredibly rare and hotly sought-after artifact—and her knowledge of its existence may put her very life in danger. A sophisticated scavenger hunt ensues, leading Nell to a secretive and powerful band of mapmakers called The Cartographers, and to closely guarded secrets held by her own family. A gripping and inventive story of family secrets, found family, second chances, and cartography, set against the backdrop of the storied New York Public Library.

For fans of Shepherd's *The Book of M* and Alix E. Harrow's *The Ten Thousand Doors of January*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

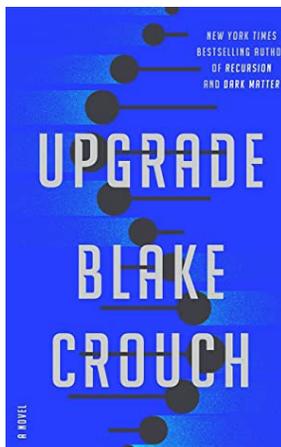


PORTRAIT OF A THIEF, GRACE D. LI, TINY REPARATIONS, APRIL 5

Five Chinese American college students become justice-driven international art thieves in this Ocean's Eleven-ish heist novel. When he's made an offer he can't refuse, MIT student Will Chen recruits four brilliant accomplices—all with looming midterms—to fulfill an audacious goal: to break into art museums in five countries, in order to steal back artifacts that were once wrongfully stolen from China. If they succeed, they'll receive a life-changing \$50 million payout. The heist storyline crackles and pops, but Li crams in plenty of substance alongside her flashy plot: an exploration of identity and belonging, crushing familial expectations, desires, love, and calling, plus meaningful LGBTQ representation and the seamless integration of pandemic realities. Word to the wise: This reads more Hollywood than real life but see if you don't enjoy the ride.

For fans of Gabrielle Zevin's *Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow* and Daniel Silva's *The Cellist*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

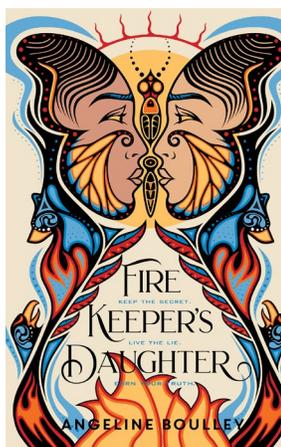


UPGRADE, BLAKE CROUCH, BALLANTINE, JULY 12

An ordinary man gets an unwelcome upgrade to superhuman status in Crouch's latest techno-thriller. Logan Ramsay already paid his debt to society for his role in the Great Starvation, a global catastrophe caused by his renegade scientist mother. Now, years later, the world is a mess. He dislikes serving the Gene Protection Agency, but his adored wife and daughter make it worth it. But on a routine raid for the GPA, Logan contracts a virus designed to slowly turn him superhuman. He soon realizes another terrifying catastrophe is looming, one with devastating connections to his past, and that he's uniquely qualified to intervene before it's too late—even though the cost is unbearable. An engrossing and cinematic blend of hard science and thrilling action, and a thoughtful and ultimately hopeful exploration of what makes us human—and what we stand to lose if we don't get our relationship with our vast technological power right.

For fans of Crouch's *Recursion* and Andy Weir's *Project Hail Mary*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

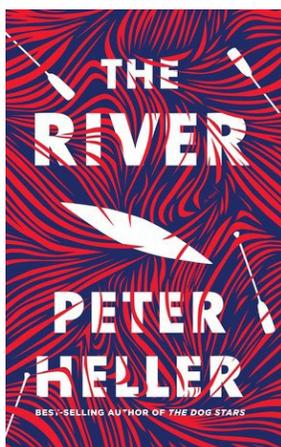


FIREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER, ANGELINE BOULLEY, HENRY HOLT & CO, 2021

A powerfully layered YA debut that adroitly balances a thrilling crime plot, a fake relationship, and a thoughtful exploration of identity and belonging. 18-year-old hockey star Daunis dreams of leaving her small community on Michigan's Upper Peninsula and making a fresh start in college. But after she witnesses a terrible crime, Daunis is persuaded to go undercover to nail the dealers whose deadly new drugs are ravaging her Anishinaabe community. While seeking justice for her best friend, Daunis also grapples with burgeoning feelings for her handsome hockey player crush and navigates often-tense relationships within her own family. This one shines for its pulse-pounding first-person narrative drive and prolific use of Ojibwe phrases and practices. While sensitively handled, content warnings apply.

For fans of Rebecca Roanhorse's *Trail of Lightning* and Tiffany D. Jackson's *Let Me Hear a Rhyme*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

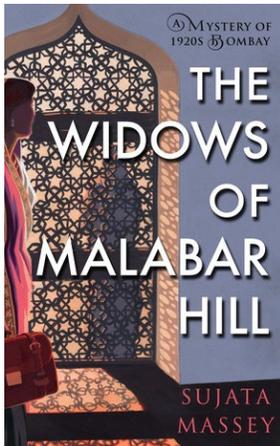


THE RIVER, PETER HELLER, KNOPF, 2019

I didn't know a book could be both gorgeous and terrifying—but then I devoured this in a day. When two college friends plan a long canoeing trip in northern Canada, they anticipate a peaceful yet memorable summer escape filled with whitewater paddling, fly fishing, and campfire cooking. The first hint of danger is a whiff of smoke, from an encroaching forest fire. The next comes from a man, seemingly in shock, who reports his wife disappeared in the woods. If these boys didn't feel compelled to do the right thing and go look for her, they'd be fine, but instead they step in to help—and are soon running for their lives, from disasters both natural and man-made. A tightly-written wilderness adventure, a lyrical mystery, and a heartrending story of friendship, rolled into one.

For fans of Sebastian Junger's *Fire* and Tim Johnston's *The Current*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

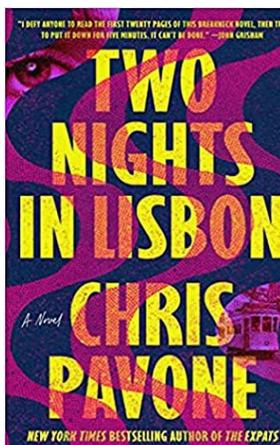


THE WIDOWS OF MALABAR HILL, SUJATA MASSEY, SOHO PRESS, 2018

An immersive murder mystery with a tightly-crafted plot, a vividly-drawn multicultural setting, and a spirited heroine fiercely taking on the challenges of her time. Perveen Mistry is Bombay’s first female solicitor, employed by her father’s respected firm. When her father’s Muslim client dies, he is tasked with executing the will, but the three devout widows “stay behind the veil” and must not be seen by men. When the duo discovers irregularities in the estate documents, Perveen resolves to speak with the widows, because—as a woman—she’s the only one who can. Perveen is determined to protect their interests, not just because of her legal obligations but because of a disastrous past marriage, where she experienced firsthand the cruelty women can endure under the law. A strong start to a historical series now three books strong.

For fans of Jacqueline Winspear’s *Maisie Dobbs* series and Nev March’s *Murder in Old Bombay*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



TWO NIGHTS IN LISBON, CHRIS PAVONE, MCD, MAY 24

“Justice is truth in action” in this taut and sexy thriller from spy novel

veteran Pavone. The Disraeli epigraph may initially puzzle; readers, keep turning those pages and all will become clear. Ariel Pryce wakes up on her honeymoon in a Lisbon hotel room to find her husband missing. Fearing the worst and increasingly frantic, Ariel turns to the Portuguese police and American embassy where her concern is met with skepticism: he’s a grown man and it’s only been a few hours. When they discover the couple both changed their names ten years ago, their skepticism balloons into outright disbelief—even though his kidnappers have surfaced and demanded an outrageous ransom. With the clock ticking and no help from authorities, Ariel seeks help from those she’d long since left behind in her old life—and then things get really interesting. Team member Shannan still loves *The Expats* most but *I* say this is Pavone’s best yet. Content warnings apply.

For fans of Chanel Cleeton’s *Our Last Days in Barcelona* and Daniel Silva’s *The Cellist*



MODERN MRS DARCY

We love reading
as much as you do.

Let's talk
about it.

WHAT SHOULD I READ NEXT?

a podcast *with* Anne Bogel

Love Stories

Whether you choose contemporary fiction, women's fiction, or romance, get lost in a book that puts love front and center.

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING, JULIA WHELAN, AVON, AUGUST 2

Two audiobook narrators find love in this meta take on contemporary publishing. Romance enthusiasts always roll their eyes when critical readers mock the “predictability” of the genre. In her long-anticipated sophomore novel, top-tier narrator Whelan (*Educated*, *The Great Alone*, and 2022’s *Book Lovers*) has a ball skewering the tired objections of romance skeptics as she takes us deep into the world of the field she knows so well. Actress-turned-narrator Sewanee is still recovering from a terrible accident that scarred her inside and out when she’s cast alongside the sexy and secretive Brock McKnight in a coveted project. Whelan clearly enjoys playing with the genre’s familiar tropes—snowed in, just one night, mistaken identity, and more. With wittily named chapter titles (don’t miss them!) and great supporting characters, this sometimes steamy romance shows our heroine forgiving herself and finding true love. Open door.

For fans of Emily Henry’s *Beach Read* and Linda Holmes’s *Evvie Drake Starts Over*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

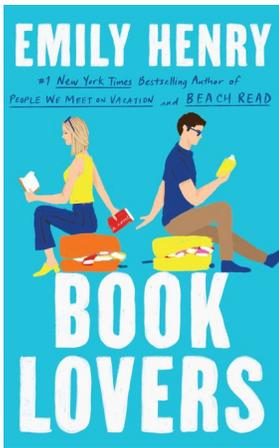


WHERE THE RHYTHM TAKES YOU, SARAH DASS, BALZER + BRAY, 2021

A sweet and chaste tropical YA romance inspired by Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*. Reyna and Aiden grew up and fell in love on the island of Tobago, where her family owns a beautiful seaside resort. When Aiden’s band hit it big, he left to pursue his dreams and Reyna got left behind. It’s been tough: she’s still grieving her mother’s death and starting to feel trapped by the hotel she once loved. After a two year absence, Aiden returns to the hotel with his bandmates as VIP guests. Though Reyna resolves to keep her distance, the two are thrown together when his friends insist she take charge of their schedule—and she can’t help but remember why she once thought they’d be together forever. Readers will appreciate the way Dass keeps the beats of Austen’s original while making the story her own with its winning characters, vivid tropical setting, and fun musical vibe.

For fans of Ibi Zoboi’s *Pride* and Tahereh Mafi’s *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



BOOK LOVERS, EMILY HENRY, BERKLEY, MAY 3

This readerly enemies-to-lovers romance delights with small town charm, serious Roy Kent energy, and banter galore. Successful literary agent Nora Stephens's colleagues call her the Shark, but Nora doesn't care. She's (mostly) at peace with who she is, plus she's proud of fighting for her clients—even if that same fierceness has always spelled disaster for her love life. But Nora has one soft spot: her beloved baby sister Libby. When Libby persuades her to take a sisters' trip to the too-cute-to-be-real hamlet of Sunshine Falls, Nora is gobsmacked to encounter her professional nemesis Charlie Lastra, a famously grumpy and inconveniently handsome editor who despises Nora. Soon the sparks are flying—and Nora has to keep reminding herself she hates his guts, lest she succumb to their undeniable chemistry. A heartwarming, steamy, and swearsy love letter to readers, and a moving exploration of family, ambition, love, and belonging. Open door.

For fans of *Ted Lasso* and *You've Got Mail*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

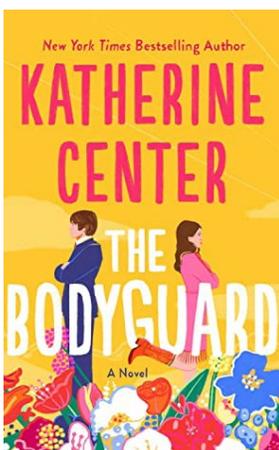


THE HAPPY EVER AFTER PLAYLIST, ABBY JIMENEZ, FOREVER, 2020

A grieving woman finds unexpected happiness in this delightful follow-up to *The Friend Zone*. After an adorable (and extended) meet-cute involving a stray pup, Sloan strikes up a flirty text thread with the dog's owner, who's out of the country for work. These texts turn into emails, and then hours-long phone calls; the two haven't met in person but the connection is undeniable. It's the first time Sloan has felt excited about anything since her fiancé died two years ago. But can a touring musician make a relationship work—and does Sloan even want it to? You'll have more context if you read *The Friend Zone* first, but this novel stands on its own. If you enjoy this backlist romance, check out Abby Jimenez's new-for-2022 release *Part of Your World*. Open door.

For fans of Beth O'Leary's *The No-Show* and Jasmine Guillory's *While We Were Dating*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

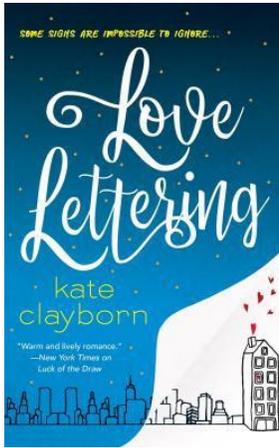


THE BODYGUARD, KATHERINE CENTER, ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, JULY 19

A workaholic bodyguard falls for the hunky actor she's paid to protect in Center's swoony new read about finding love and mending fences. Hannah Brooks may look like a kindergarten teacher, but that's just one reason she's a sought-after executive protection agent. Reclusive but adored actor Jack Stapleton doesn't want a bodyguard at all, and he definitely doesn't want his ailing mother to know he needs protection from a stalker. But his manager insists. When he meets Hannah—and when she lays him flat on his back with her badass bodyguard skills—not only does he want to hire her, he wants her to pose as his girlfriend so no one will suspect a thing. Complications ensue. *Happiness for Beginners* remains my favorite, but with its endearing protagonists, adorable banter, winning sense of humor, and fun industry details for both leads, this one is piles of breezy fun. Closed door.

For fans of Mikaella Clements and Onjali Datta's *The View Was Exhausting* and Annabel Monaghan's *Nora Goes Off Script*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



LOVE LETTERING, KATE CLAYBORN, KENSINGTON BOOKS, 2019

A funny and moving contemporary romance about love, friendship, and the ways we make a place home. Hand-letterer Meg designs custom journals and sees the world in fonts and signs. In fact, she first fell in love with New York City by walking every inch of it, drawing inspiration from the omnipresent custom signs. Meg also sees the signs other people miss, like the time she wove a secret message into a doomed couple’s wedding invitations. She didn’t count on the groom to notice—or for him to track her down one year later and demand answers after his relationship dissolved. Meg is desperate for his forgiveness, especially because her creative well has run dry—and so she impulsively invites Reid to accompany her on her walks through the city. He turns out to be nothing like the callous Wall Street type she’d expected, and their tentative friendship evolves into a slow burn romance. Open door.

For fans of Clayborn’s *Chance of a Lifetime* series and Emily Henry’s *Beach Read*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



THE LOVE CONNECTION, DENISE WILLIAMS,

BERKLEY APRIL 5  / MAY 17 

The first in an audio-first trilogy of flirty airport novellas sized just right for breezy summer reading. What do you do when the pandemic cancels your travel plans and you start missing the airports you once loved passing through? For Denise Williams, the obvious answer was to turn to vicarious travel, situating not just one but three novellas in the terminal. In the first installment we meet Ollie, an airport-based pet groomer who develops a serious crush on the handsome frequent flier she sees every Tuesday at the gate by her shop. When a runaway pup brings Ollie face to face with her longtime crush, she discovers he’s not just a pretty face. Bennett is a professional risk assessor by day but romance novelist by night, and to her great surprise, he needs her help. This is just the ticket if you need a quick win for your reading life. Open door.

For fans of Ali Hazelwood’s *Under One Roof* and Sophie Cousens’s *Just Haven’t Met You Yet*

What does open door / closed door mean?

The books on this list range in steaminess, something I find to be very subjective. My super-spicy might be someone else’s tame, and vice-versa. But here’s a helpful guide: if you prefer sex scenes to be minimal or only hinted at, look for “closed-door;” if you don’t mind (or prefer!) scenes to be more explicit, then “open-door” is a good fit. “Chaste” stories don’t include more than kissing on the page.



Historical Fiction

Escape to a different time and place with these enthralling novels that bring well-known historical events to life and shed light on history's forgotten—yet fascinating—chapters.

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

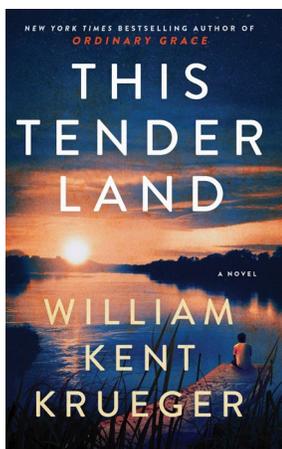


TAKE MY HAND, DOLEN PERKINS-VALDEZ, BERKLEY, APRIL 12

A timely and gripping work of historical fiction loosely inspired by the real-life groundbreaking court case of *Relf v. Weinberger*. In 2016 Memphis, distinguished Black doctor Civil Townsend prepares to retire. First she must journey to her hometown of Montgomery to make peace with the past and tell the truth of it to her own daughter. In alternating timelines, Civil reveals all that unfolded in 1973, when she was a young and idealistic nurse, stepping into her first job at a reproductive clinic serving Black women in her community. She cared deeply for the girls under her care, but grew alarmed at what she was called upon to do: administer experimental and perhaps unnecessary treatments to young patients without their understanding or consent. When the unthinkable happens to one patient and she is sterilized without consent, Civil becomes involved in a landmark lawsuit. A moving story and a testament to fiction's power to influence hearts and impact lives.

For fans of Kaia Alderson's *Sisters in Arms* and Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

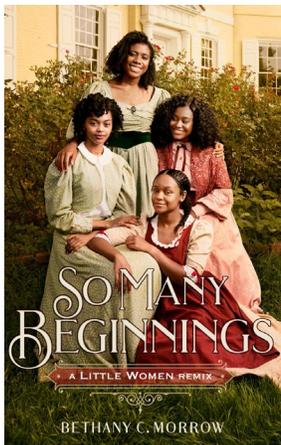


THIS TENDER LAND, WILLIAM KENT KRUEGER, ATRIA BOOKS, 2019

This tough and tender coming-of-age story is part *Grapes of Wrath* and part *Huckleberry Finn*, while mirroring *The Odyssey*'s narrative. The tale centers on four Minnesota kids during the Great Depression, whose respective situations become ever more impossible due to human cruelty and circumstance. After a tornado demolishes the last of life as they know it, they realize no one is going to save them—and so they make a plan to save themselves that starts with escaping down the river in a canoe. Their little band by turns encounters kind strangers and others all too willing to exploit vulnerable children. For those of you who say my husband Will is your book twin: he loved this. An epic story, beautifully told, and one that contains perhaps the finest setup-and-payoff sequence I've read in years. Content warnings apply.

For fans of Krueger's *Ordinary Grace* and Jess Walter's *The Cold Millions*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

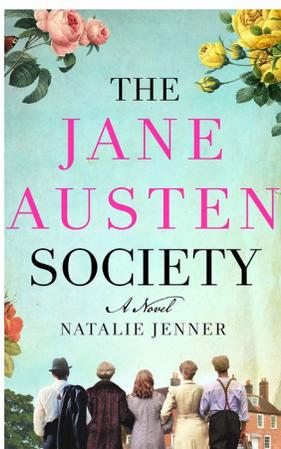


SO MANY BEGINNINGS, BETHANY MORROW, FEIWEL & FRIENDS, 2021

This sophisticated “remixed” classic keeps the familial love of Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* and sheds the rest to tell a new story of four Black sisters starting over in 1863 North Carolina. In her fresh and nuanced version, Morrow keeps the Civil War setting while moving the March family south to the Freedpeople Colony on Roanoke Island, where they’re recovering from the trauma of enslavement (which Morrow offers glimpses of) and struggling to build new lives. Morrow retains many of the young women’s personality traits from the original, while plunging them into new challenges in the colony. The sisters’ love anchors the story, giving the book a gentle feel though Morrow’s update deftly tackles painful topics as she sheds light on lesser-known experiences of the era. Don’t miss the author’s note.

For those familiar with or curious about *Little Women* and fans of Mitali Perkins’s *You Bring the Distant Near*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

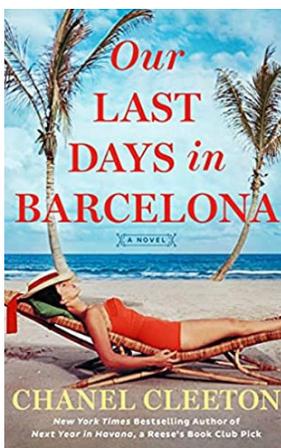


THE JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY, NATALIE JENNER, ST. MARTIN’S PRESS, 2020

This charming debut is sure to delight Austen fans. Jane Austen lived out her last days in the sleepy village of Chawton, and in the days just after World War II, her legacy still looms large. Times are hard, and we meet several villagers burdened with their own private sorrows, who are doing what they’ve always done: turning to the works of Austen for solace. When a local business attempts to buy the Austen property and raze her cottage, the villagers band together to preserve her legacy. At one point, a character muses that Austen’s works present “a world so a part of our own, yet so separate, that entering it is like some kind of tonic.” The same can be said of Jenner’s wonderful book. Don’t miss Jenner’s 2022 novel *Bloomsbury Girls*, out May 17; audiophiles should know Juliet Stevenson narrates.

For fans of Annie Barrows and Mary Ann Shaffer’s *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* and Charlie Lovett’s *The Last Book of the Grail*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



OUR LAST DAYS IN BARCELONA, CHANEL CLEETON, BERKLEY, MAY 24

Cleeton’s latest installment in the Perez sisters series features love, lies, and spies against an irresistible Barcelona backdrop. Resuming where *When We Left Cuba* leaves off, the story begins in 1964 with eldest sister Isabel traveling from Cuba to Spain on a rescue mission. Her glamorous—and estranged—younger sister Beatriz may be in trouble. But once she arrives in Barcelona, her search expands to involve not just Beatriz but long-buried secrets of her family’s past, which she hunts down with the help of Beatriz’s handsome friend. In satisfying alternate chapters, Cleeton shifts the story to 1936, when the girls’ disappointed mother, Alicia, leaves Cuba to seek solace with her parents in Spain after she makes an unwelcome discovery about her marriage. The storylines brilliantly converge—with a tied-with-a-bow ending. In her don’t-miss author’s note Cleeton says she initially resisted writing Isabel’s story, but the spirited eldest Perez sister is now her favorite. Read this and see if you don’t agree.

For fans of Cleeton’s *Next Year in Havana* and Lara Prescott’s *The Secrets We Kept*

The two best things

YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR READING LIFE

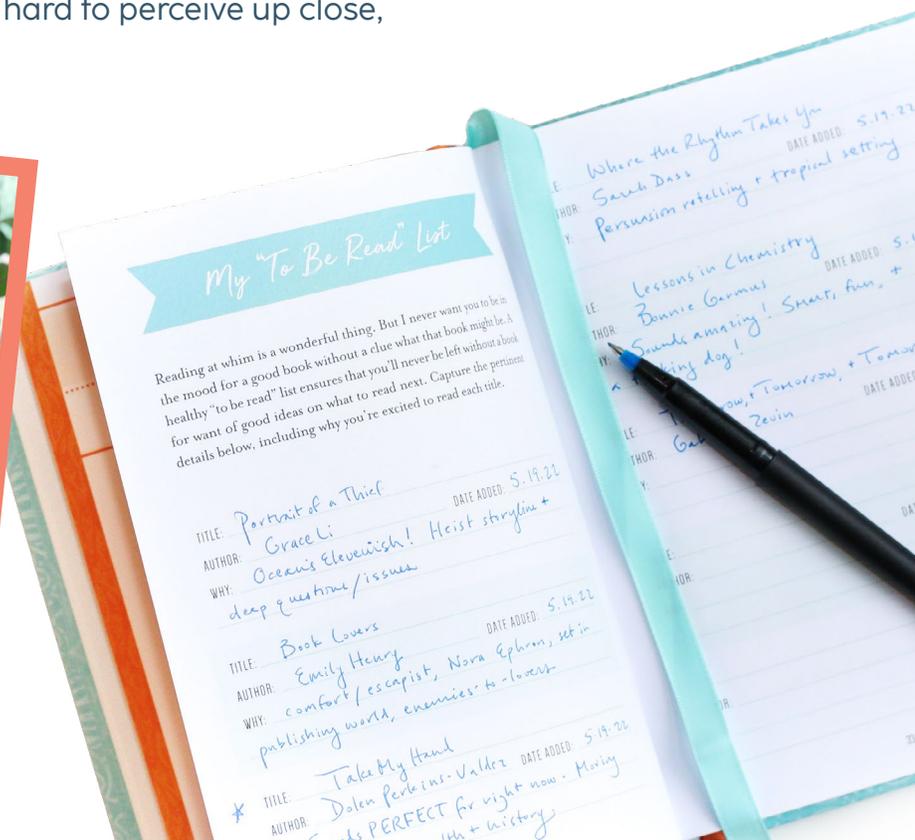
I've talked to thousands of readers about how they get more meaning and enjoyment out of the books they choose to read. Readers who report deep satisfaction with their reading lives swear by these two easy-to-implement practices. If you aren't already doing them, summer is a great time to give both a try!

1. Don't finish every book you start.

Readers who are willing to set aside books that aren't working for them are more satisfied with their reading lives. They're happier with what they read, and they read more books overall.

2. Track what you read.

Want to figure out your reading personality? This is how to do it. When you capture your reading history in one place—be that a journal, spreadsheet, or Pinterest board—you can see habits and patterns that are hard to perceive up close, day by day, or book by book.



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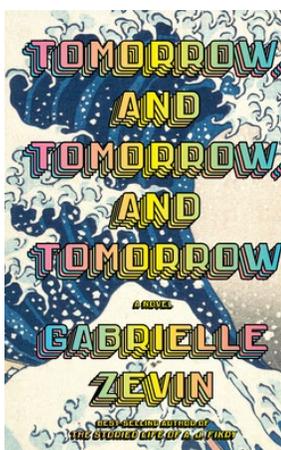
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Friends & Family

I'll confess: messy relationships anchor my favorite stories. These meditations on the lasting marks left by those closest to us will move, frustrate, inspire, and fascinate.

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

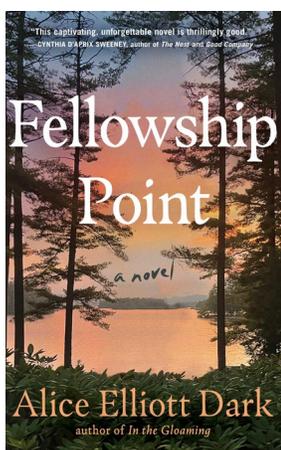


***TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW*, GABRIELLE ZEVIN, KNOFF, JULY 5**

An intoxicating and wholly unexpected epic of love, art, belonging, betrayal, and... video games. This is the story of Sam and Sadie, two childhood friends who meet in a hospital game room in 1986. They come from completely different worlds, but bond immediately over video games. Eight years later, as students at separate Boston colleges, the pair reunites and bootstrap a Tempest-inspired video game that becomes an unexpected blockbuster, cementing their future as game designers but bringing upheaval into their personal lives. I don't have much interest in video games but I adored this book, which is ultimately about creativity and ambition, astonishing success and what comes after, and the inevitable hurts and disappointments of a life-defining friendship. It's a stirring meditation on the intrinsic hopefulness of games, and what they might mean for us all. Content warnings apply.

For fans of *Free Guy*, Grace Li's *Portrait of a Thief*, and Alice Elliott Dark's *Fellowship Point*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

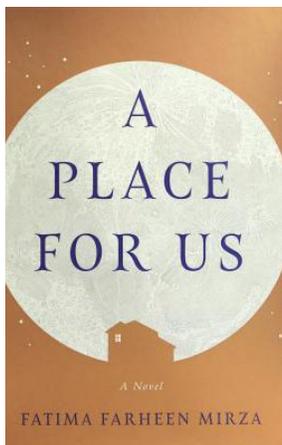


***FELLOWSHIP POINT*, ALICE ELLIOTT DARK, SCRIBNER/MARYSUE RUCCI BOOKS, JULY 5**

This sprawling saga featuring two octogenarian protagonists reads like a 19th century novel. Agnes Lee and Polly Wister have been friends their whole lives, growing up alongside each other in Philadelphia Quaker families and summering together in Maine. Agnes is beloved by the world as a bestselling children's author, but not a living soul—including Polly—knows she also pens the popular and critically praised *Franklin Square* series. Polly knows Agnes sees her as a pushover, especially when it comes to her family, but Polly never lets on she's wiser than her friend gives her credit for. When an enterprising (and nosy) young editor begins pestering Agnes to write a memoir, she sets in motion a chain of events that tests the women's lifelong friendship, and threatens to expose the long-buried secrets each has so carefully kept from the other. If you want a big, rich, and immersive novel to sink into this summer, this 592-pager is just the ticket.

For fans of Virginia Hume's *Haven Point* and Diane Setterfield's *The Thirteenth Tale*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

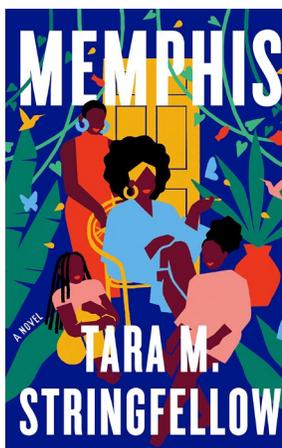


A PLACE FOR US, FATIMA FARHEEN MIRZA, SJP FOR HOGARTH, 2018

This slow-burning debut about an Indian-American Muslim family skillfully probes themes of identity, culture, family, and generational change. “I am to see to it that I do not lose you,” reads the epigraph (from Walt Whitman), and the story wonders if, despite our best intentions, one might nevertheless wound someone they love deeply enough to lose them forever. The story opens with the oldest daughter’s wedding: the bride scans the crowd for her beloved yet rebellious brother, hoping he’ll appear despite being estranged from the family for years. Through a series of flashbacks, and in rotating points of view, Mirza examines the series of small betrayals that splintered the family, skillfully imbuing quotidian events—a chance meeting at a party, a dinner conversation about a spelling test—with deep significance, showing how despite their smallness, they irrevocably alter the course of the family’s life. The last section is a stunner, but grab the tissues first.

For fans of Khaled Hosseini’s *And the Mountains Echoed* and Michelle Zauner’s *Crying in H Mart*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

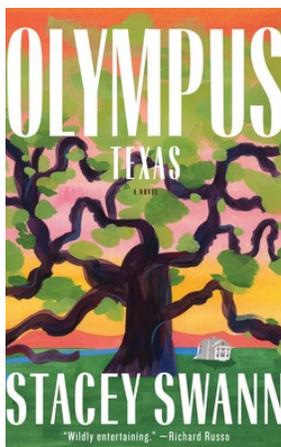


MEMPHIS, TARA M. STRINGFELLOW, THE DIAL PRESS, APRIL 5

Pushcart Prize-nominated poet and former attorney Stringfellow draws on her own family’s rich history to pen a stunning debut. Stringfellow’s grandfather was a World War II veteran who served as the first Black homicide detective in Memphis—before being lynched by his own all-white police squad. Her grandmother was among the first Black nurses in Memphis. This dual legacy of excellence and injustice permeates the novel as it traces a legacy of violence and matriarchal strength through three generations of Black women living in this historic city from 1937 to 2003. It unflinchingly portrays both its strong communities and grim history of racism and violence, illuminating the secrets each generation kept and the traumas they endured. Readers should know this novel depicts horrifying events (content warnings apply), yet it also lovingly and fiercely conveys the resilience, grit, love, and even joy of these women and their community.

For fans of Brit Bennett’s *The Mothers* and Dolen Perkins-Valdez’s *Take My Hand*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

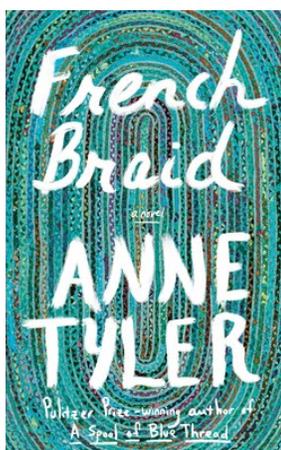


OLYMPUS, TEXAS, STACEY SWANN, DOUBLEDAY, 2021

This spellbinding dysfunctional family saga set in small-town Texas puts a modern spin on Greek tragedy. Everyone knows everyone else's business in the fictional town of Olympus, especially when it comes to the notorious Briscoe family. The clan is "a walking collection of deadly sins," and due to patriarch Peter's philandering, his children populate several households in town. When prodigal son March returns home after a years-long exile imposed after sleeping with his sister-in-law, he sets a devastating chain of events in motion. Though the story spans a mere six days, several lifetimes' worth of secrets are revealed in that time, and the ensuing consequences to the family and their town are irrevocable. I devoured this. Content warnings apply.

For fans of Lauren Groff's *Fates and Furies* and Ann Patchett's *Commonwealth*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

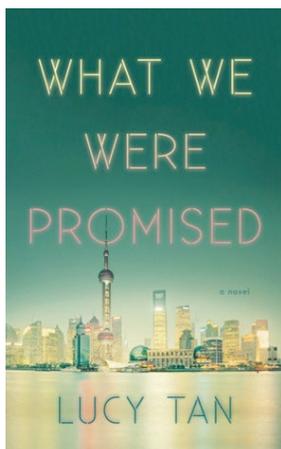


FRENCH BRAID, ANNE TYLER, KNOPF, MARCH 22

In her 24th novel, Anne Tyler offers a funny and wise meditation on the enduring imprint of one's family of origin. This multigenerational story portrays life with the Garrett family of Baltimore over a sixty-year span, beginning with a rare vacation in 1959 and ending in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. In vignettes set every ten years or so, the common thread is the little kindnesses and cruelties that characterize the family, along with their constitutional inability to share their true thoughts and emotions with each other. In the final pages, one character compares the indelible imprint of his family to his daughter's French braid: "That's how families work," he says. "You think you're free of them, but you're never really free; the ripples are crimped in forever." The family may be exasperating, but the book is anything but. I loved this.

For fans of Tyler's *Redhead by the Side of the Road* and Elizabeth Strout's *Oh, William!*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

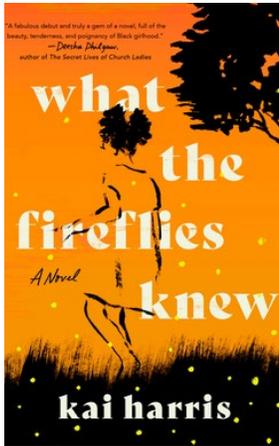


WHAT WE WERE PROMISED, LUCY TAN, LITTLE BROWN & COMPANY, 2018

An emotionally resonant debut about class, culture, regret, and the road not taken. After twenty years abroad, the Zhens return to their native China to take up residence among Shanghai's nouveau riche. But deep unease lies behind the façade of their pampered lifestyle, and the reappearance of a long-lost brother stirs up a host of long-buried emotions, and forces the family to revisit complicated (and secret) past choices. The backdrop of contemporary Shanghai and a national festival highlights how the family embodies China's current conflicts and complexities: rich vs poor, urban vs rural, old vs new values. This book deserves more attention than it's received.

For fans of Fatima Farheen Mirza's *A Place for Us* and Lisa See's *The Island of Sea Women*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



WHAT THE FIREFLIES KNEW, KAI HARRIS, TINY REPARATIONS, FEBRUARY 1
A tender coming of age story that unfolds over the course of a single summer. Our narrator is 10-year-old Kenyatta, whose family is in upheaval. After her father dies from an overdose and the family loses their Detroit home, KB's mother sends her and her older sister to live with their grandfather in Lansing, for reasons that, though unclear, are plenty scary to young KB. While Nia seems to slip easily into Lansing life, KB struggles to find her place, unsettled by the discovery her world and her family are more complex and frightening than she once believed them to be. A moving exploration of family, identity, and race that piercingly evokes the pains and pleasures of childhood summer days. Harris beautifully voiced her young book-loving protagonist and the many references to *Anne of Green Gables* are apt and touching. Content warnings apply.

For fans of Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing* and Gail Godwin's *Grief Cottage*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



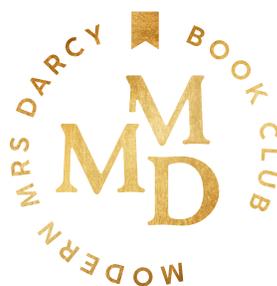
LIKE A HOUSE ON FIRE, LAUREN MCBRYER, PUTNAM, APRIL 26
When a life-changing friendship sparks into something more, a woman approaching midlife has to figure out what she really wants in life and love. Merit goes back to work for the money—that, and because her husband of twelve years likes her better when she's working. She loves her husband and young sons, yet she's come to feel like a stranger in her own life. But then on an interview she meets Jane, the brilliant and beautiful architect who becomes her boss, and a true friend who makes her feel like a whole person again. Their platonic friendship is electrifying: Merit has never felt more seen or understood. Slowly, she begins to question the very foundations of her life, opening up to the idea that Jane might actually be THE person she belongs with. A standout for its snappy dialogue, distinctive voice, and interesting religious thread. Heads up for piles of profanity and so much drinking, plus an open door scene. I inhaled this.

For fans of Meg Wolitzer's *The Female Persuasion* and Meryl Wilsner's *Something to Talk About*

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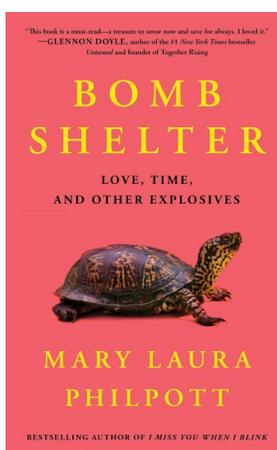
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Memoir & Nonfiction

This year we've got everything AND the kitchen sink! Memoir, peace, politics, and even a kitchen book—and not one of them would be out of place in your beach bag.

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



BOMB SHELTER: LOVE, TIME, AND OTHER EXPLOSIVES,
MARY LAURA PHILPOTT, ATRIA, APRIL 12

Among the finest—perhaps **THE finest**—memoir-in-essays I've ever read. This intimate look at family life is like sitting down with a trusted friend to talk about what matters most. Philpott's leaping-off point is her teenage son's middle-of-the-night medical emergency. She never sees it coming, but later wondered, *Should I have known?* He stabilized, but nothing is the same after that pivotal moment. In the aftermath, Philpott explores her long-held desire to keep those she loves safe through sheer will or worrying—but if that doesn't work, what can we do instead? She wrestles through the answers in these pages. Witty and candid, deeply relatable, humorous and heartstopping, with tales of hypothetical disaster balanced with restful interludes featuring Frank the Turtle and the Philpott family dogs. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll text all your friends.

For fans of Kelly Corrigan's *The Middle Place*, with interesting parallels to Nicki Erlick's *The Measure*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

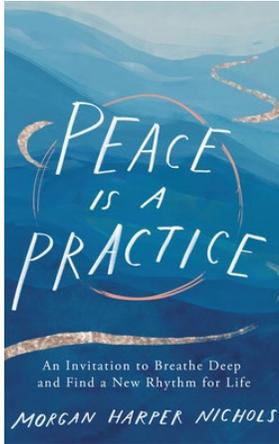


FINDING ME: A MEMOIR, VIOLA DAVIS, HARPERONE, APRIL 26

An honest, unflinching, and utterly brilliant account of how one of the best actors of our time became who she is today. Davis begins at the beginning: born on a South Carolina plantation (truly), she shortly moved with her mother and alcoholic father to Central Falls, Rhode Island, where she grew up in dire poverty. Her childhood was riddled with trauma: she shares devastating stories of enduring racism, constant hunger, rampant sexual assault by neighborhood men, and constantly reeking because her family couldn't afford to do laundry. But when she saw Cicely Tyson on TV, she was inspired to take up acting, first succeeding in small sketches at school and later earning a college scholarship. Davis recounts the successes and heartbreaks of her early career in intimate detail, including a life-changing trip to Africa while at Julliard. I was fascinated by her philosophy of creativity, and how she thinks about her field today. A wonder of a memoir, filled with strength, wisdom, grit, and resilience.

For fans of Cicely Tyson's *Just As I Am* and James McBride's *The Color of Water*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



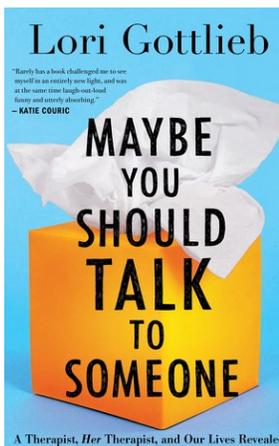
PEACE IS A PRACTICE: AN INVITATION TO BREATHE DEEP AND FIND A NEW RHYTHM FOR LIFE, MORGAN HARPER NICHOLS,

ZONDERVAN, FEBRUARY 15

A gentle and meditative invitation to create more peace in our daily lives. Poet and artist Morgan Harper Nichols learned to practice peace out of desperation. Because of long-undiagnosed autism, she would constantly find herself overwhelmed—on the brink of shutting down—and had to learn to make it through the difficult moments. She didn't receive her diagnosis until age 27, after which she was finally able to understand why she'd needed to build coping strategies, and what could make them even more effective. Nichols insists peace isn't something we merely hope for but *practice*, enacting it in everyday life through both general postures and specific exercises. While we can't fix all of life's problems through this practice, we *can* create breathing room. This encouraging volume occasionally references the Christian faith and is best enjoyed slowly over days or weeks, one chapter at a time.

For fans of James Nestor's *Breath* and Ross Gay's *The Book of Delights*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

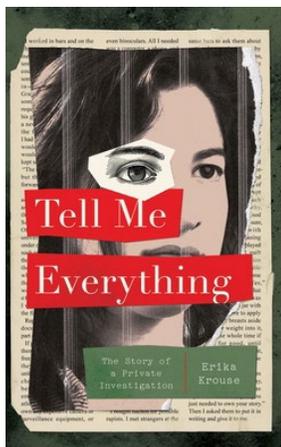


MAYBE YOU SHOULD TALK TO SOMEONE: A THERAPIST, HER THERAPIST, AND OUR LIVES REVEALED, LORI GOTTLIEB, HARPER, 2019

Part memoir, part educational glimpse into the profession of psychotherapy, completely absorbing. Making use of an unusual two-pronged approach, psychotherapist Gottlieb shows us how therapy really works. She introduces us to four of her patients, taking us inside the room to show what happens in their sessions. Thanks to a sudden breakup, Gottlieb is in therapy herself, and through her eyes we get the patient's perspective as well. I so enjoyed getting to know her patients, session by session, and rooted hard for them as they worked through the process. A book not just about therapy but about how we grow, change, and connect with each other—and how we can do it all more effectively.

For fans of Christie Tate's *Group* and Leslie Jamison's *The Empathy Exams*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



TELL ME EVERYTHING: THE STORY OF A PRIVATE INVESTIGATION,
ERIKA KROUSE, FLATIRON, MARCH 15

An arresting blend of memoir and true crime about a landmark sexual assault case. “I became a private investigator because of my face,” Krouse writes. No matter where she goes or who she meets, perfect strangers tell her things they’ve never told anyone else. To her great surprise, this inconvenience turns into a job offer when a local attorney hires her as a PI to investigate cases for his firm. When the attorney takes on a new client who was sexually assaulted by college football recruits, he sets an audacious goal: he wants to prove the school was not only aware of but complicit in the program’s culture of violence. The prospect of securing justice and making the perpetrators pay compels Krouse to take the case, despite her own history of sexual abuse. As the lawsuit—and the story—move forward, her past trauma and its present repercussions nestle up alongside the investigation in the narrative, to great effect, and build to a stirring, stunning, and gently hopeful ending. A painful yet purposeful book, beautifully executed, utterly unputdownable.

For fans of Chanel Miller’s *Know My Name*, with interesting parallels to Dolen Perkins-Valdez’s *Take My Hand*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

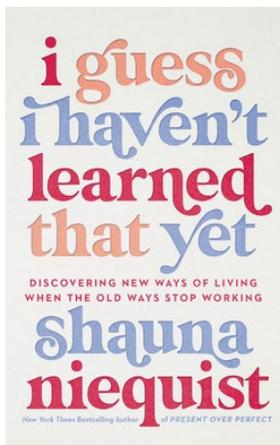


NOW WHAT?: HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WHEN WE'RE DIVIDED
(ABOUT BASICALLY EVERYTHING), SARAH STEWART HOLLAND AND
BETH SILVERS, REVELL, MAY 3

The political and relational guidebook we want and need for right now. In this story-driven guide, the cohosts of the *Pantsuit Politics* podcast provide a road map to having hard conversations and tackling tough topics with grace and care. Their suggestions and examples will bolster your confidence to discuss fraught issues in a way that bridges the gap between you and your loved ones instead of shutting down communication. (If you were to jot down their conversational prompts on index cards to keep by the phone or in your pocket for easy reference before your next family gathering, I wouldn’t blame you a bit!) Even in these difficult times, this dependable duo makes readers feel like we really might be able to all move forward, together.

For fans of Holland and Silvers’s *I Think You’re Wrong But I’m Listening* and *Difficult Conversations* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



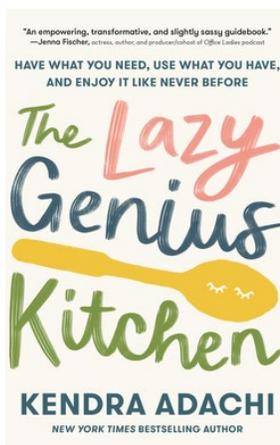
I GUESS I HAVEN'T LEARNED THAT YET: DISCOVERING NEW WAYS OF LIVING WHEN THE OLD WAYS STOP WORKING,

SHAUNA NIEQUIST, ZONDERVAN, APRIL 12

An all-too-relatable exploration of how to find new ways to live, work, and be in the world when our long-held beliefs and methods fail us. In this warm and wise collection of essayettes, Niequist relates the midlife circumstances that forced her to reconsider many things she thought she knew for sure, and to find new ways of living when the old ways broke down. Along the way she discusses love and friendship, trauma and loss, parenting and being parented, reading (so much reading!), and moving from the midwest town she thought she'd never leave to Manhattan at age forty. I inhaled it in one big enjoyable and occasionally teary gulp, while highlighting it to pieces and texting friends quotes with the caption *Weren't we just talking about this?* Comforting, practical, and wise, with meditations of faith and a chapter or two on Christian prayer; this reads like the kind of girls' night conversation that keeps you out too late because you can't bear to leave.

For fans of Kelly Corrigan's *Tell Me More* and Brené Brown's *Rising Strong*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



THE LAZY GENIUS KITCHEN, KENDRA ADACHI, WATERBROOK, MAY 3

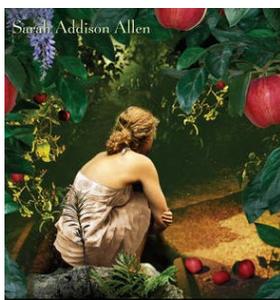
This life-giving kitchen book (not cookbook!) helps you develop and live out your own kitchen philosophy. As the Lazy Genius, Kendra's mission is to help you be a genius about the things that matter to you and lazy about the things that don't. In this beautifully illustrated hardcover that will look right at home on the cookbook shelf, she walks home cooks through five steps to "lazy genius" all parts of your kitchen: prioritize, essentialize, organize, personalize, and systemize. With tons of examples and agreeably bossy big sister energy, Kendra helps you name what matters in your own kitchen and empowers you to ditch the rest, freeing up mental space for your preferred pursuits (like reading a great novel, perhaps?). You still gotta figure out what to eat every night, but Kendra's practical and easily implementable guidelines make getting there a heck of a lot easier.

For fans of Samin Nosrat's *Salt Fat Acid Heat* and *The Home Edit Life* by Clea Shearer and Joanna Teplin

Feel-Good Fiction

Need a pick-me-up? Slip into one of these comfy and comforting stories full of quirky characters, found families, and zany escapades, and you'll feel like all is right with the world again.

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



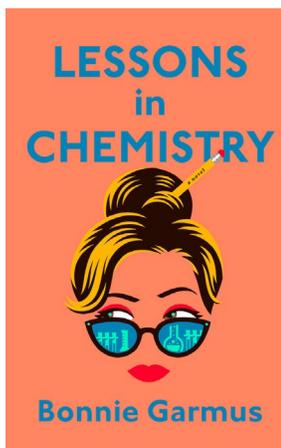
Garden Spells

GARDEN SPELLS, SARAH ADDISON ALLEN, BANTAM, 2007

Sweet, sparkly, and thoroughly Southern. Like all the women in her family, Claire Waverley possesses a unique magic: she uses edible flowers to prepare foods that affect the eater in “curious ways.” Years ago, Claire’s sister fled town—and her Waverley gift—but she discovers her own sort of magic when she returns. What to say about this book? The romance verges on twee, the magic is impossible, but put them together and it sings. If you’re not down with supernatural food or a magical apple tree, skip this one—but you should know how many readers call this “a wonderful surprise.” Allen’s long-anticipated next novel, *Other Birds*, is due out August 30. Open-ish door.

For fans of Emily Henry’s *Book Lovers* and Marisa de los Santos’s *Love Walked In*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

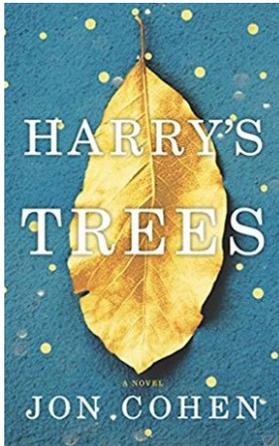


LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY, BONNIE GARMUS, DOUBLEDAY APRIL 5

A uplifting tale of a chemist ahead of her time, a life-changing love affair, a dog with a huge vocabulary, and the combustible combination of chemistry, cooking, and afternoon television. Elizabeth Zott only ever wanted to be a scientist—but because she’s a woman in the 1960s, she has to go begging for beakers despite being the smartest researcher in the building. After Elizabeth is ostensibly fired for being unwed and pregnant (but really for being smarter than her boss and dating a rival scientist he loathes), she can’t make ends meet. Out of desperation she accepts a job hosting a tv show called *Supper at 6*. She loves to cook, because cooking, after all, is chemistry. The producers want her to smile and look pretty, but Elizabeth is much more interested in teaching housewives not just how to make dinner, but how to change their lives. Lively and life-affirming, with an unforgettable protagonist. Content warnings apply.

For fans of Jennifer Ryan’s *The Kitchen Front* and Ann Patchett’s *The Dutch House*, with interesting parallels to *Like a House on Fire*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:

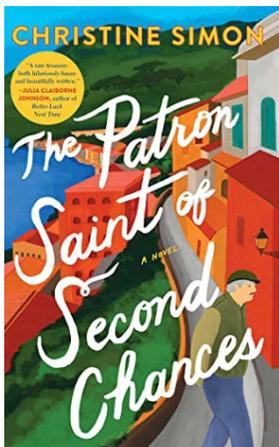


HARRY'S TREES, JON COHEN, MIRA, 2018

A grown-up sort of fairy tale about grief, redemption, forgiveness, and joy, set amidst the beautiful Pennsylvania forest. Have you ever read a book that makes the world around you feel just a little bit magical, even after you've turned the last page? Author Jon Cohen insists there's no real magic in this story, because there's nothing in these pages that couldn't actually happen. And yet a whimsical air of magic permeates this vivid portrayal of characters brought together by grief but ultimately united by joy. Likely-to-delight features include an unlikely friendship, a book within the book, a battle to save the local library, and a mysterious good Samaritan known as the Susquehanna Santa. A strong sense of humor prevents this tale from verging too far into sentimental territory. Content warnings apply.

For fans of Monica Wood's *The One-in-a-Million Boy* and Steven Rowley's *Lily and the Octopus*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



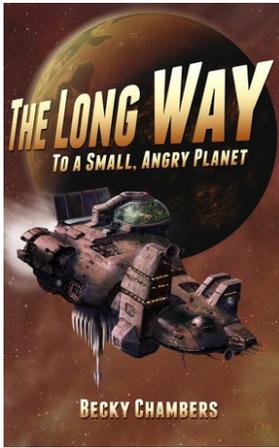
THE PATRON SAINT OF SECOND CHANCES, CHRISTINE SIMON,

ATRIA, APRIL 12

An ill-conceived plan to save a small Italian town spirals out of control in this hilarious and heartwarming debut. Signor Speranza is desperate for a miracle. In the opening pages, the de facto mayor of Prometto learns that if the residents can't raise an enormous sum quickly to repair the tiny town's ailing water pipes, the citizens will have to leave. Forever. Unwilling to reveal how desperate the situation really is, Speranza instead starts a rumor that a beloved Italian cinema star will soon arrive in Prometto to film his next movie. He asks an array of the town's quirky residents to invest in the production, and the situation rapidly escalates as they band together to prepare to welcome their illustrious guest. As Speranza tells increasingly ridiculous lies to keep his scheme afloat, every inch of progress is quickly undone by a fresh catastrophe. This witty and farcical tale is perfect for armchair travelers, lovers of small town stories, and anyone seeking a humorous escape this summer.

For fans of Mario Giordano's *Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions* and Fredrik Backman's *Britt-Marie Was Here*

MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



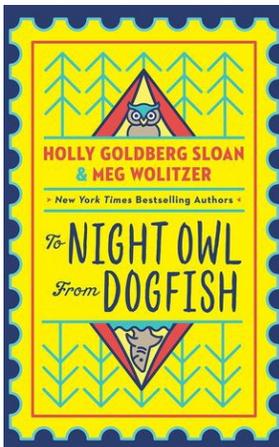
THE LONG WAY TO A SMALL ANGRY PLANET, BECKY CHAMBERS,

HARPER VOYAGER, 2016

A rollicking, big-hearted, constantly surprising space opera set in a future that feels good. This friendly and soothing sci-fi story features the patched-together ship *Wayfarer* and its motley crew, who take on a mission so lucrative they'll be set for years, should they succeed, but so dangerous they might die trying. The mission drives the story, but is almost beside the point in a book widely beloved not for exciting intergalactic exploits but for its seamless worldbuilding and palpable feeling of love and community. Like so many great science fiction writers, Chambers builds her story on big themes—friendship and love, gender and politics, mortality and prejudice—making the story every bit as smart as it is kind. This book kicks off the Hugo Award-winning *Wayfarers* series; the whole series is inclusive, diverse, and barrels of fun.

For fans of Chambers's *A Psalm for the Wild-Built* and Martha Wells's *Murderbot Diaries* series

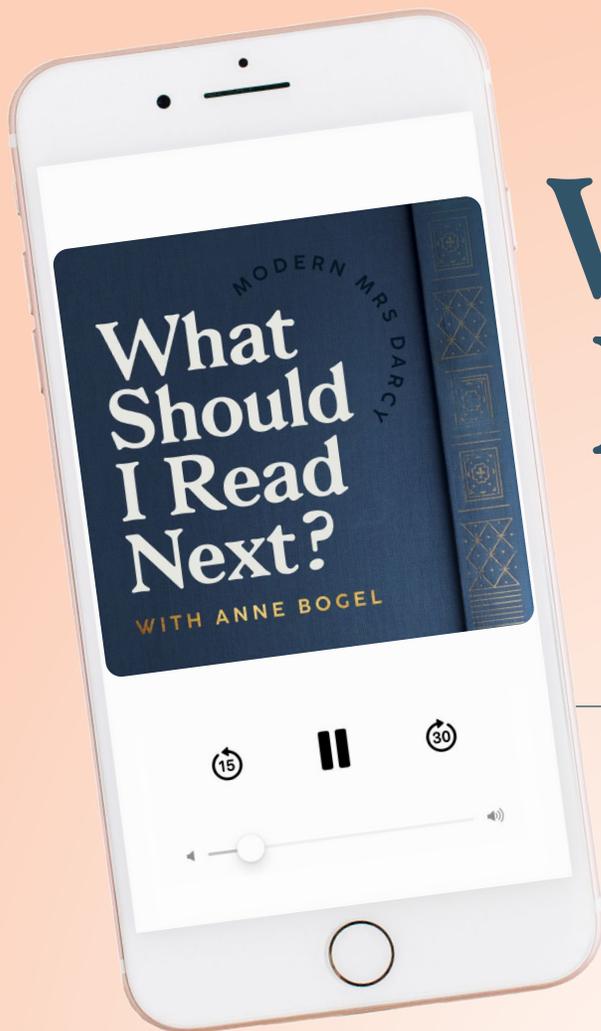
MY ENTHUSIASM RATING:



TO NIGHT OWL FROM DOGFISH, HOLLY GOLDBERG SLOAN AND MEG WOLITZER, DIAL BOOKS, 2019

This modern-day version of *The Parent Trap* is fun for the whole family. This collaboration between two highly successful authors—one who primarily writes for kids, the other for grown-ups—features two twelve-year old girls living on opposite coasts who strike up an unwanted correspondence after they discover their single fathers fell in love at a building conference and are now dating. This relationship is not good news to either of them, as they make clear in the ensuing emails that comprise the book. Their situation goes from bad to worse when their fathers force them to attend the same summer camp, hoping they'll become friends. Things go horribly wrong in more ways than one, but there's not a single page here that doesn't feel fresh, funny, charming, and real. A big-hearted story for readers of all ages.

For fans of C.C. Payne's *The Thing About Leftovers* and Rebecca Stead's *The List of Things That Will Not Change*



AS HEARD ON

What Should I Read Next

Looking for even more insight into this year's SRG picks? Check out these What Should I Read Next? episodes where I've already recommended titles to our podcast guests.

EPISODE 325: READING MAKES ME FEEL LIKE MYSELF

THE CARTOGRAPHERS BY PENG SHEPHERD

Odetta Dyrnishi was looking for more adventure in her reading life, and this twisty literary mystery—whose description reminded her of *The Da Vinci Code*—seemed to fit the bill.

EPISODE 240: SAVING THE WORLD ONE SERIES AT A TIME

LOVE LETTERING BY KATE CLAYBORN

This contemporary romance was just the ticket for KJ Dell'Antonia, who was looking for reads that are fun and hopeful, but still smart and thoughtful. She gave this book full of font nerdiness an immediate YES.

EPISODE 326: FICTION IS MY FIRST LOVE

FRENCH BRAID BY ANNE TYLER

Author Shauna Niequist loves a decades-spanning story to sink into, so I recommended this SRG pick that tells the multigenerational story of a family through vignettes into their everyday life.

EPISODE 184: YOU'LL NEVER CONQUER YOUR TBR

THE RIVER BY PETER HELLER

I recommended this personal favorite to author Will Schwalbe, who commented that Heller's layering a person against person plot atop a person against nature story sounded like an extraordinary combination.

EPISODE 329: MAKE YOUR READING HOURS COUNT

TAKE MY HAND BY DOLEN PERKINS-VALDEZ

This moving historical novel was perfect for Lisa Sølvsberg, who adores family sagas and books that deal with themes of social inequality and class dynamics.

EPISODE 322: THE ART OF A GREAT READING EXPERIENCE

MEMPHIS BY TARA STRINGFELLOW

I chose this stunning coming-of-age debut for Gina Ariko Marioni, an artist who wanted to expand her reading life beyond the black-and-white experience of weighty non-fiction and breezy, feel-good fiction. An added bonus is that it prominently features a budding artist!

EPISODE 315: A LIFE-CHANGING BAG OF BOOKS

LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY BY BONNIE GARMUS

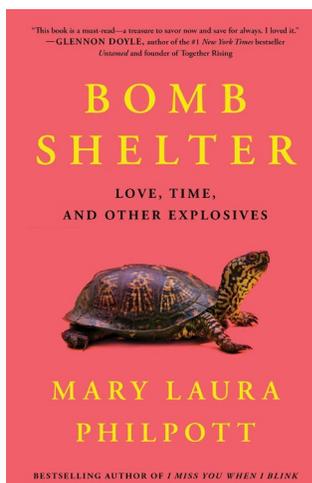
My guest Nicole Fagan loves books with big feelings that grip you and won't let go, and have a strong sense of food—and *Lessons in Chemistry* checks those boxes!



2022: The Minimalist Summer Reading Guide

Not sure where to begin? I humbly offer these highly engaging, skillfully written, and wonderfully discussable stories as your starting point.

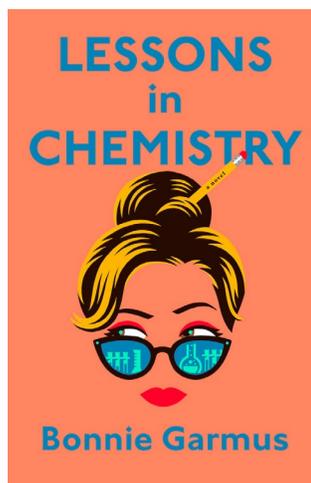




BOMB SHELTER

BY MARY LAURA PHILPOTT

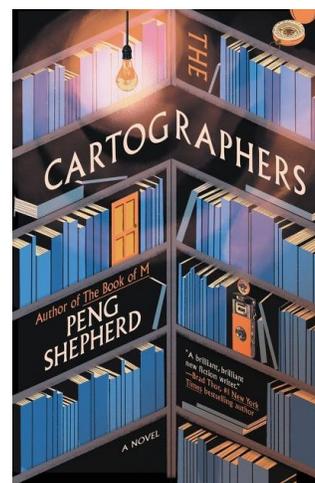
This relatable and intimate look at family life is like sitting down with a trusted friend to talk about what matters most in life. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll text all your friends.



LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY

BY BONNIE GARMUS

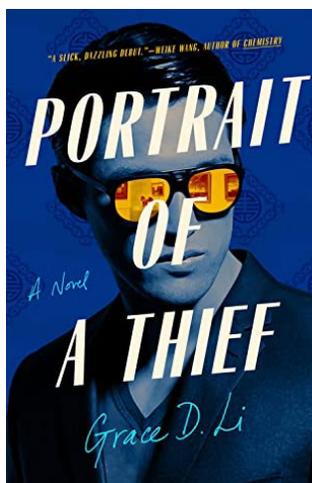
A life-affirming tale of a chemist ahead of her time, a life-changing love affair, a dog with a huge vocabulary, and the combustible combination of chemistry, cooking, and afternoon television.



THE CARTOGRAPHERS

BY PENG SHEPHERD

A gripping and inventive story of family secrets, found family, second chances, and cartography, set against the backdrop of the storied New York Public Library.



PORTRAIT OF A THIEF

BY GRACE D. LI

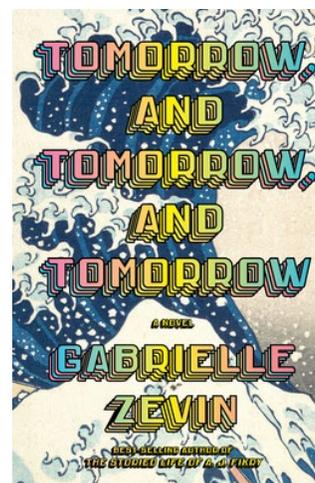
Five Chinese American college students become justice-driven international art thieves in this *Ocean's Eleven*-ish heist novel that combines a flashy plot with a meaningful exploration of questions of deep significance.



TAKE MY HAND

BY DOLEN PERKINS-VALDEZ

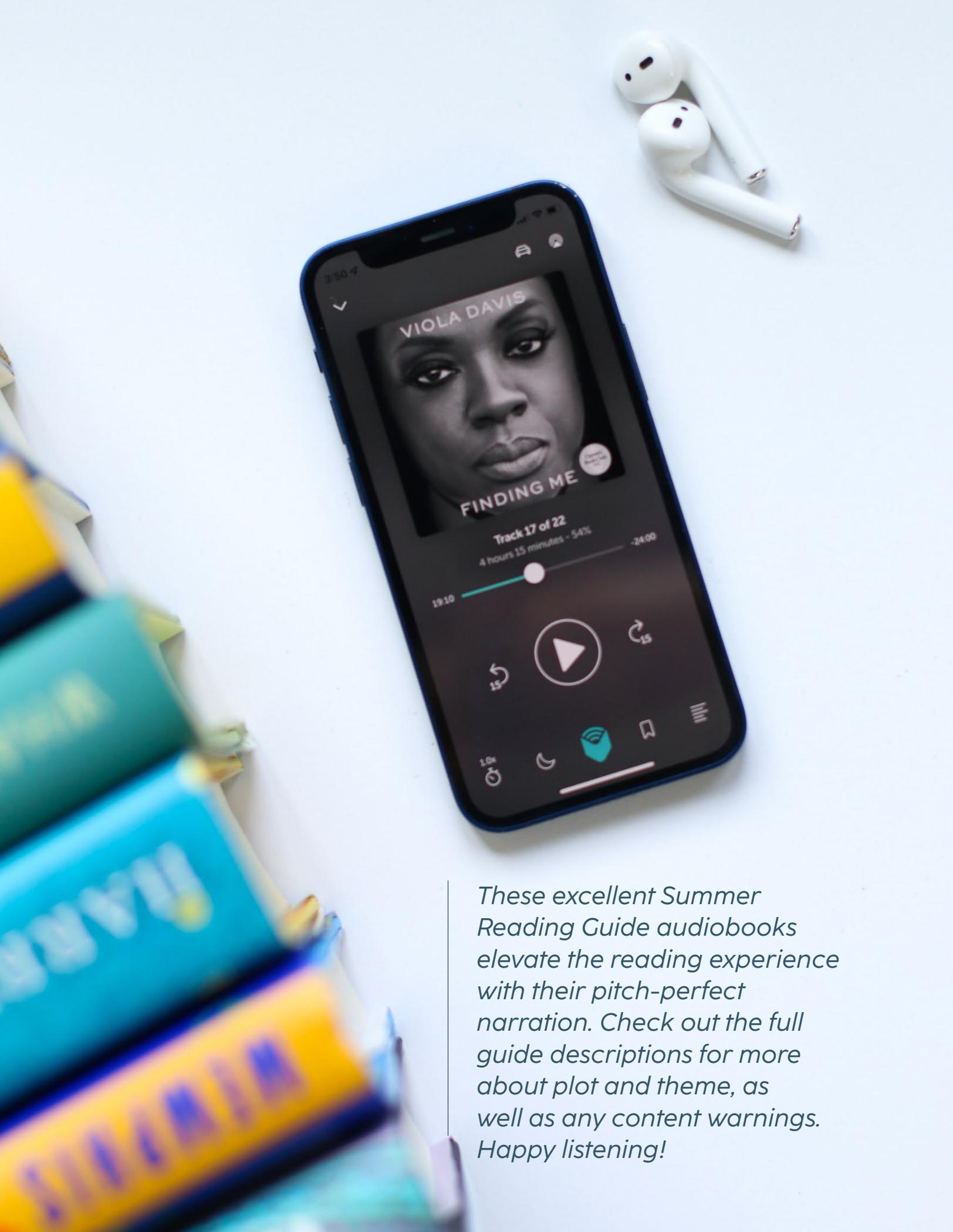
A timely and enrapturing work of historical fiction loosely inspired by a real-life groundbreaking court case about the forced sterilization of Black women in 1973 Alabama.



TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW, AND TOMORROW

BY GABRIELLE ZEVIN

Two lifelong friends are put through the wringer in this sprawling saga of friendship, love, creativity, and tragedy.



These excellent Summer Reading Guide audiobooks elevate the reading experience with their pitch-perfect narration. Check out the full guide descriptions for more about plot and theme, as well as any content warnings. Happy listening!

Awesome on Audio

FINDING ME: A MEMOIR – 9 HRS 15 MINS

In her own voice, Viola Davis reveals the stunning personal journey that led her from dire poverty to a historic career. An outstanding performance.

LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY – 11 HRS 56 MINS

A trio of narrators—Miranda Raison, Pandora Sykes, and author Bonnie Garmus—bring this hilarious and vibrant story of love, friendship, found family, and second chances to life.

FIREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER – 14 HRS 13 MINS

Native American narrator Isabella Star LeBlanc's brilliant performance captures the pulse-pounding first-person narrative drive and the new-to-me Ojibwe phrases and practices in this brilliant YA debut.

TAKE MY HAND – 10 HRS 57 MINS

This is narrator Lauren J. Daggett's first novel and it is a STUNNER. Her narration of this moving minimalist pick is stupendous, among the best I've ever listened to.

TWO NIGHTS IN LISBON – 14 HRS 30 MINS

Fan favorite January LaVoy voices Chris Pavone's newest mystery, driven by a missing person, a ticking clock, and secrets from an old life.

OLYMPUS, TEXAS – 10 HRS 17 MINS

This spellbinding dysfunctional family saga set in small-town Texas unfolds over a span of just six days. A modern spin on Greek tragedy, full of fistfights and firearms. Narrated by Karissa Vacker.

WHERE THE RHYTHM TAKES YOU – 10 HRS 13 MINS

In this tropical retelling of *Persuasion*, listeners will relish descriptions of the beautiful seaside resort voiced by native Trinidadian narrator Antonevia Ocho-Coultes.

THE HAPPY EVER AFTER PLAYLIST – 9 HRS 17 MINS

Zachary Webber and Erin Mallon do a fabulous job of capturing the characters' witty banter. I love any book that makes me laugh out loud while folding laundry: this one delivers.

PEACE IS A PRACTICE – 6 HRS 4 MINS

Morgan Harper Nichols's beautiful and calming narration will pull you into this practical guide to implementing peace as an everyday practice. Relish this one slowly, perhaps listening to one chapter a day on a neighborhood walk.

THE LOVE CONNECTION – 3 HRS 36 MINS

Narrated by January LaVoy and Shane East, this fast and fun listen features an adorable meet cute and is set in an airport terminal.

THE JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY – 9 HRS 55 MINS

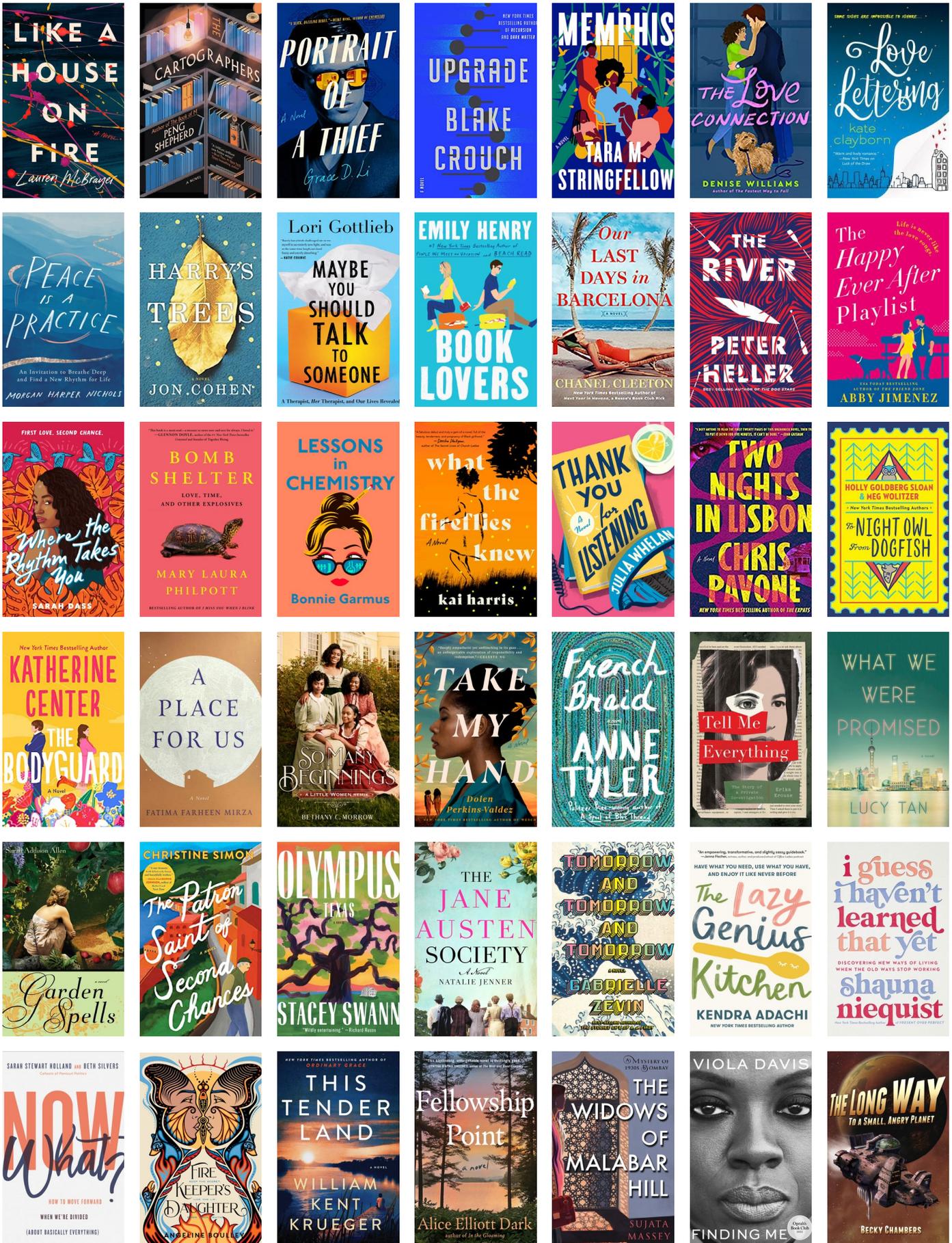
This charming historical novel set in the 1940s features a village united around Jane Austen, and the readers who love her work—and is narrated by Richard Armitage. (!!!)

BOOK LOVERS – 11 HRS 23 MINS

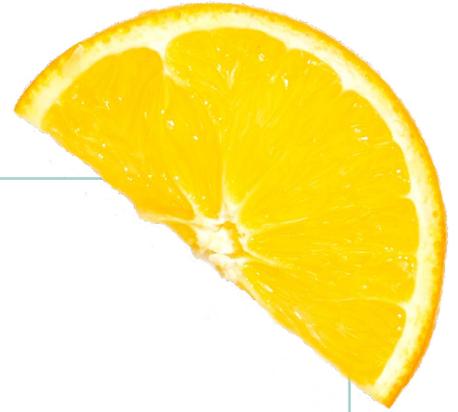
Beloved audiobook narrator (and author!) Julia Whelan strikes again in this banter-laden love letter to readers and New York City. Follow a literary agent, her nemesis editor, and their escapades in small-town North Carolina.

WHAT THE FIREFLIES KNEW – 8 HRS 35 MINS

Zenzi Williams brings to life the narration of 10-year-old KB, who struggles to adjust when her life is turned upside down by a move to Lansing, MI after her father dies.



Notes:



My To Be Read List

A healthy TBR ensures you'll never be left without a book for want of good ideas on what to read next. I encourage you to also jot down WHY you want to read each title. Your future self will thank you!



My Enthusiasm Rating

AT A GLANCE

MYSTERY AND THRILLER:

- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Cartographers
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Portrait of a Thief
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Upgrade
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Firekeeper's Daughter
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The River
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Widows of Malabar Hill
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Two Nights in Lisbon

LOVE STORIES:

- ◇◇◇◇◇ Thank You for Listening
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Where the Rhythm Takes You
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Book Lovers
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Happy Ever After Playlist
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Bodyguard
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Love Lettering
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Love Connection

HISTORICAL FICTION:

- ◇◇◇◇◇ Take My Hand
- ◇◇◇◇◇ This Tender Land
- ◇◇◇◇◇ So Many Beginnings
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Jane Austen Society
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Our Last Days in Barcelona

FRIENDS & FAMILY:

- ◇◇◇◇◇ Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Fellowship Point
- ◇◇◇◇◇ A Place for Us
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Memphis
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Olympus, Texas
- ◇◇◇◇◇ French Braid
- ◇◇◇◇◇ What We Were Promised
- ◇◇◇◇◇ What the Fireflies Knew
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Like a House on Fire

MEMOIR & NONFICTION:

- ◇◇◇◇◇ Bomb Shelter
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Finding Me
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Peace Is a Practice
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Maybe You Should Talk to Someone
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Tell Me Everything
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Now What?
- ◇◇◇◇◇ I Guess I Haven't Learned That Yet
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Lazy Genius Kitchen

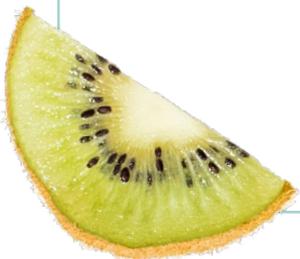
FEEL-GOOD FICTION:

- ◇◇◇◇◇ Garden Spells
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Lessons in Chemistry
- ◇◇◇◇◇ Harry's Trees
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Patron Saint of Second Chances
- ◇◇◇◇◇ The Long Way to a Small Angry Planet
- ◇◇◇◇◇ To Night Owl from Dogfish



Notes:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin teal border, intended for taking notes.



Happy summer &
happy reading!



MODERN MRS DARCY

