

Confederacy of Dunces, by John Kennedy Toole. Called a "Canonical work of modern literature of the Southern United States." Won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1981.

Good Left Undone, by Adriana Trigiani. Story of three generations of Tuscan artisans with one remarkable secret. Epic in scope with themes of identity & belonging.

Remarkably Bright Creatures, by Shelby Van Pelt. Charming exploration of friendship, reckoning & hope, tracing a widow's connection with a giant octopus.

To Kill a Troubadour, by Martin Walker. When a musician's new song hits a political nerve, he provokes outrage among Spanish nationalists.

Next Ship Home: Novel of Ellis Island, by Heather Webb. Probes America's history of prejudice, exclusion, sexism and politics faced by immigrants.

Harlem Shuffle, by Colson Whitehead. Story of heists, shakedowns and rip-offs in Harlem in the 1960s.

Black Cake, by Isabel Wilkerson. Headstrong swimmer who escapes island home under suspicion of murder.

Lost Summers of Newport, by Beatriz Williams. Story of money and secrets among Newport summer mansions.

NON-FICTION

Mythologies, by Roland Barthes. Significant work in French theory (1957); all myths must be deciphered.

Also a Poet: Frank O'Hara, My Father. by *Ada Calhoun*. Memoir, traces her fraught relationship with her father.

City of Quartz, by Mike Davis. Hidden story of Los Angeles, where the city's money comes from.

Friluftsliv: Connect with Nature the Norwegian Way, by Oliver Luke Delorie.

Deaf Utopia, by Nyle Dimarco. Heartfelt, inspiring memoir and deaf culture anthem, by a culture icon.

Wonderworks: Literary Invention and the Science of Stories, by Angus Fletcher.

David and Goliath, by Malcolm Gladwell. Complex ways the weak can defeat the strong.

Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know About the People We Don't Know, by Malcolm Gladwell. Powerful examination of our interactions with strangers.

Frank Lloyd Wright, by Ada Louise Huxtable. Expertly written tribute to a man of genius.

Marie Kondo's Kurashi At Home, How to Organize Your Home, by Marie Kondo. Inspirational visual guide to elevating the joy via the magic of tidying-up.

Putting It Together: How Stephen Sondheim and I Created "Sunday in the Park With George", by James Lapine. Behind the scenes at the making of the musical "Sunday in the Park."

Girl With Seven Names: A North Korean Defector's Story, by David John Hyeonseo Lee.

Princess Spy: True Story of WWII Spy Aline Griffith, Countess of Romanones, by Larry Loftis. Life of glamour and danger, role Ingrid Bergman played.

Funny You Don't Look Autistic, by Michael McCreary. Slaying autism stereotypes with stand-up.

On Animals, by Susan Orlean. A lifetime of musings, meditations, and in-depth profiles about animals.

Shy: The Alarming Outspoken Memoirs, by Mary Rodgers Guettel, daughter of one composer and mother of another.

Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning with the Myth of the Lost Cause, by Ty Seidule. Forceful but humane narrative by former soldier who challenges the myths of the Confederate Legacy.

Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, by Rebecca Skloot. Poor Southern girl who had "immortal" human cells grown in culture, taken without consent, which became most important tool in medicine.

Sailing True North: Ten Admirals and the Voyage of Character, by James Stavridis. A meditation on leadership and character refracted through the lives of ten of the most illustrious naval commanders in history.
Set Boundaries, Find Peace: A Guide To Reclaiming Yourself, by Nedra Glover Tawwab. Speak up for what you need, and experience new freedom for yourself.

General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier, by Jeffrey D. Wert. Man is largely to blame for Confederacy's defeat at Gettysburg.

Little Book of Lykke: Secrets of the World's Happiest People, by Meik Wiking. Author is CEO of the world's only Happiness Research Institute, presents cases that can change the way you relate to your neighbors.

Somers Library

Staff Picks
2023



All of the books on this list were read by members of the Somers Library Staff in 2022. Some were hot off the press, others have stood the test of time. All come with a personal recommendation.

Descriptions adapted from Goodreads.com

FICTION

Inheritance Games, by Jennifer Barnes. To receive her inheritance, Avery moves into the old Hawthorne House. Caught in a world of wealth and privilege, she has to play the game to survive

Watt, by Samuel Beckett. Philosophical novel full of grim humor (1953), one of the most quoted and best-loved of Beckett's novels.

White Chrysanthemum, by Mary Lynn Bracht. Heart-breaking history of Korea brought to life through two sisters separated during WWII.

Horse, by Geraldine Brooks. Discovered painting of one of the greatest racehorses uncovers the lost history of the unsung Black horseman critical to his racing success.

Cold Sassy Tree, by Olive Burns. Moving account of small town Southern life in a bygone era, brimming with wise and loony characters

End of the Day, by Bill Clegg. Moving novel about the complicated bonds and breaking points of friendship, the corrosive forces of secrets, the heartbeat of longing, and the redemption found in forgiveness.

Desert Star, by Michael Connelly. LAPD detectives work together to hunt the killer, the man responsible for the murder of an entire family.

One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot, by Margot Cronin. Lenni and Margot together unwrap the extraordinary gift of life and revel in an infinite capacity for friendship and love when needed most.

Girl With the Louding Voice, by Abi Dare. Unforgettable, inspiring story of a teenage girl growing up in a rural Nigerian village who longs to get an education so she can find her "louding voice" and speak up for herself.

Fellowship Point, by Alice Dark. Story of friendship across eight decades, land and stewardship, consequences of aging and the choices we make.

Legendborn, by Tracy Deonn. After her mother dies in an accident, 16 year old Bree wants nothing to do with her family, memories or childhood home. A secret society of "Legendborn" students hunt people down...Bree uses her own unique magic to hunt down her mother's killers.

Trust, by Herman Diaz. Story of wealth and talent, trust and intimacy, truth and perception; young woman's quest for truth while confronting the pull of money and power; myths beneath our foundational inequality.

Measure, by Nikki Erlick. Eight ordinary people, each receives a box that determines their fate, in a new world whose decisions and fates interweave with each other

Every Summer After, by Carley Fortune. Told over six years and one weekend, story is a big, sweeping nostalgic look at love and the people and choices that mark us.

Lessons in Chemistry, by Bonnie Garmus, 1960's chemist Elizabeth Zott, reflects the limited role of women, launches a cooking show that teaches about life and empowerment for women.

Woman in the Library, by Sulari Gentill. In every person's life, there is something to hide; this is a twisty literary adventure that examines the nature of friendship and shows that words can be the most treacherous weapons.

Selected stories by O. Henry. William Sydney Porter, one of the great masters of the short story; called "America's best storyteller."

Hotel Nantuckett, by Elin Hilderbrand. After a 1922 tragic fire that killed 19 year old Grace Hadley, the Hotel went from a gilded age gem to an abandoned eye-sore, renovated but still haunted by the ghost of Grace.

What Happens in Paradise, by Elin Hilderbrand. Sequel to *Winter in Paradise*, where secret lives and new loves emerge in the Caribbean.

Winter in Paradise, by Elin Hilderbrand. On St. John, husband found dead; wife shockingly discovers he had a second secret family and a web of intrigue and deceit.

I Am Not Dying With You Tonight, by Kimberly Jones, and Gilly Segal. Two teen girls—one black, one white—confront their own assumptions about racial inequality as they rely on each other to get through a violent race riot that has set their city on fire.

Letters of the Cloth, by Robert Lupinacci. Nazis terrorizing Jews and sympathizers discover 6-year-old Marcello's father hiding his best friend's family. Despite absorbing the blows of brutality and loss, Marcello navigates the callous tides of injustice swelling hate.

Death and the Lit Chick (A St. Just Mystery), by G.M. Malliet. Successful chick lit mystery writer is found dead and Inspector tracks down the true killer in a castle full of cagey mystery connoisseurs.

Sea of Tranquility, by Emily St. John Mandel. Art, love, plague and time-travel on Vancouver Island, from 1912, to a dark colony on the moon 500 years later.

Nora Goes Off Script, by Annabel Monaghan. Screenwriter writes the script of her own life, which is picked up by Hollywood, and set to film on location in her house; Nora finds real love bigger than any screen

Our Missing Hearts, by Celeste Ng. Story of a mother's unbreakable love in a world consumed by fear; about power of art to create change

World of Curiosities, by Louise Penny. As the village celebrates, Gamache finds two young children have returned as adults; new evidence is found of their mother's murder and an old enemy returns.

Excellent Women, by Barbara Pym. Smart, supportive, repressed women in 1950s England; series of snapshots of human life as they actually lived in a vanishing world of manners and repressed desires.

Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, by Taylor Jenkins Reid. Aging, reclusive Hollywood actress is ready to tell the truth about her life; her biographer's life intersects with her own in tragic and irreversible ways.

West With Giraffes, by Lynda Rutledge. An emotional, rousing novel inspired by the true story of two giraffes who made headlines and won the hearts of Depression-era America. Part adventure, part historical saga, and part coming-of-age love story.

Christmas by the Book, by Anne Marie Ryan. Two booksellers facing tough times decide to spread some Christmas cheer through the magic of anonymous book deliveries.

Kitchen Front, by Jennifer Ryan. Set during World War II, four women compete for a spot hosting a wartime cooking program.

Wedding Dress Sewing Circle, by Jennifer Ryan. Three plucky women lift the spirits of home-front brides in wartime Britain, where rationing leaves little opportunity for pomp or celebration. Heartwarming novel based on true events.

Island of Sea Women, by Lisa See. On the Korean island of Jeju, story of two fierce female sea divers, their friendship and history that shaped their lives.

The Killer Angels, Shaara, Michael. Dramatic re-creation of the battleground for America's destiny.

Wish, by Nicholas Sparks. Beautiful love story of star-crossed lovers, thrown together then pulled apart.