



2022 Reading List

Act Your Age, Eve Brown by Talia Hibbert (Avon/HarperCollins)

The relationship between Eve Brown and Jacob Wayne begins when Eve runs over Jacob with her car, breaking his arm. The B&B owner needs help - and it comes in the form of Eve, whether he likes it or not. Over the next few weeks Eve shows she has the stuff to cook for the B&B, as well as help with other daily chores - and she also shows how her brand of differently-abled and that of Jacob can mesh together beautifully.

Black Buck, a Novel by Mateo Askaripour (Mariner/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

Darren lives with his mother and works as a barista at Starbucks - and he's okay with that. But an encounter with a powerful CEO lands Darren a job in their sales force as the only black person. He becomes the only black person in the company, and seeks to become Buck, a star salesperson. However, tragedy strikes at home and he realizes he has changed for the worse working for the company. Knowing he has the stuff to teach others how to sell, they begin to infiltrate corporate America.

The Dictionary of Lost Words by Pip Williams (Ballantine/Penguin Random House)

An inside look into the development of the Oxford English Dictionary or OED, told by Esme, a young girl working in the Oxford garden shed where the dictionary is being compiled word-by-word, scrap by scrap. Esme puzzles over the nature of words and the act of defining them. The author weaves kernels of fact into the fictional narrative that will draw in historical fiction fans as well as wordsmiths.

Down Range by Taylor Moore (William Morrow/HarperCollins)

Decorated DEA special agent Garret Kohl calls the High Plains of Texas his home and dreams of returning there one day. Kohl is sent to Afghanistan on a short mission and unexpectedly ends up caring for a young Afghan boy back in Texas. He finds that though he is leaving one war he is moving into a different kind he did not expect.

Everyone in This Room Will Someday Be Dead: A Novel by Emily Austin (Atria/Simon & Schuster)

Gilda, a twenty-something lesbian is desperate to relieve herself from her anxious mind and repressing family. While attempting to attend therapy at a Catholic church, she suddenly gets hired to replace a recently deceased secretary. She finds herself hiding her lifestyle and trying to learn lines to Catholic mass. Then things take an interesting turn that may expose all she has been hiding.

The Five Wounds by Kirstin Valdez Quade (Norton)

Amadeo Padilla has been chosen to be Jesus in the Holy Week procession in his New Mexico town. Going so far as to have nails driven into his hands he feels like this is the beginning of a renewed faith and better life. Then his daughter, Angela, ends up on his doorstep, pregnant, his mother is suffering from a brain tumor but doesn't tell anyone, and the relationships with other family members don't improve. With the added responsibility of a new grandson, he realizes he can't solve his problems with beer.

The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah (St. Martin's/Macmillan)

The Texas Panhandle of 1934 has become arid and barren due to drought. Then the winds start blowing and a whole new apocalypse occurs. After years of watching her children grow thin and ill, and after her husband deserts the family, Elsa Martinelli leaves her in-law's farm to find relief in California. After arriving the family survives by working the fields and for the rights of all the workers. Though tragedy strikes, the family is resilient, and eventually they return to their home in Texas.

Great Circle by Maggie Shipstead (Knopf/Penguin Random House)

Marian and Jamie Graves, born in 1914 and rescued from a sinking ocean liner at the age of a few months, are eventually sent to their uncle in Missoula, Montana, where they essentially raise themselves. Marian develops a love of flying, and learns that the patronage of a powerful man can lead to a type of imprisonment. Eventually Marian tries for the great circle, a circumnavigation of the globe. A century later Hadley Baxter is picked to play Marian in a film version of her life and finds many parallels to her own.

Infinite Country by Patricia Engel (Avid Reader Press/Simon & Schuster)

Rich with Bogota urban life, steeped in Andean myth, and tense with daily reality of the undocumented in the United States, *Infinite Country* is the story of a mixed-status family who came to occupy two different countries, in two different worlds.

The Invisible Life of Addie La Rue by V. E. Schwab (Tor-St. Martin's/Macmillan)

In 17th century France, Addie La Rue makes a deal with the devil to trade her soul for a life of freedom and immortality. Part of the bargain is that the people she meets cannot remember her name. For three hundred years, Addie lives a mostly invisible existence until one day she meets a man in a New York bookstore who remembers her name.

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro (Knopf/Penguin Random House)

In a near dystopian future, Klara is a companion robot devoted to providing friendship to a sick little girl named Josie. Klara spends her days doting on Josie and worshipping the sun. When she discovers that Josie's mother may have other plans for her if Josie dies, she must learn the true meaning of love and friendship. Once again, the author explores a variety of themes he has visited in past books, including "what does it mean to be human?"

The Lost Apothecary by Sarah Penner (Park Row-Harlequin/HarperCollins)

An apothecary vial found on the banks of the Thames inspires a young historian to research its provenance which draws her into a world long past. The parallel story of the apothecary shop, its owner, and the women she serves alternates with the historian, letting the reader find out how the bottle ended up in the mud of the river and what eventually happened to all of them.

Mary Jane: a Novel by Jessica Anya Blau (Custom House/HarperCollins)

Mary Jane, a sheltered teenager in 1970s Baltimore, becomes a nanny for a chaotic household that includes an eccentric mother, a psychiatrist father who uses unconventional methods, and their five-year-old daughter. Her awakening intensifies when she meets a drug-addicted rock star who arrives at the house for treatment with his celebrity wife.

The Midnight Library by Matt Haig (Viking/Penguin Random House)

Nora Seed finds herself facing the possibility of changing her life for a new one. At the edge of the universe is a library of infinite books with stories of realities and dreams. While we all wonder about

what could have been, Nora has the chance to go to the library and live those alternate lives. Would you choose to try all of the possibilities in life that you may never see?

Olympus, Texas by Stacey Swann (Doubleday/Penguin Random House)

This debut novel by a Texas author nails small town life with all the complexities and undercurrents worthy of Greek mythology. In fact, the characters and storyline are a loose retelling of Greek tales set in the fictional town of Olympus, Texas, set near Houston. The Briscoe family is the focus of cheating, lies, murder and more, all within one week! This deftly-woven narrative works on many levels.

The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot: a Novel by Marianne Cronin (Harper/HarperCollins)

One hundred years. The combined life spans of seventeen-year-old Lenni and eighty three year old Margot as they discover when they meet on the terminal ward. As their friendship deepens and they draw in a wonderful support group around them, the reader is privy to some amazing moments that are laugh-out-loud funny and painfully sad. The celebration of their combined one hundred years takes an amazing look at the acts of living and of dying, making this book a great read.

One Two Three by Laurie Frankel (Henry Holt/Macmillan)

Three extraordinary sisters work together to bring justice to their town which eighteen years earlier made news when their water turned green due to factory pollution. Since then the entire town has physically suffered and the three sisters, who were born with unique and diverse abilities figure out what happened. Now the company wants to return and bring the factory back to life - and the sisters are fixed on stopping it.

The Personal Librarian by Marie Benedict & Victoria Christopher Murray (Berkley/Penguin Random House)

Inspired by true events, this well-written, well-researched story tells the tale of Belle da Costa Greene who in her twenties was hired by J. P. Morgan to curate a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his newly built Pierpont Morgan Library. Belle excels at her job and, over time, positions herself as one of the most powerful dealers in the art world. Her success is all the more remarkable when one considers that Belle, a Black American, is forced to pass as white to succeed in this world.

The Push by Ashley Audrain (Pamela Dorman/Penguin Random House)

Blythe Connor desperately wants to be the perfect mother. When her daughter Violet begins exhibiting dangerous behaviors, Blythe wonders if it's all just in her head. Then one day her son Sam is involved in a tragic accident. This gripping psychological drama explores motherhood and the differences between nature and nurture.

The Reading List by Sara Nisha Adams (William Morrow/HarperCollins)

The lives of two individuals, high school student Aleisha and widower Mukesh, come together one summer due to an anonymously placed reading list. As they read and informally discuss these books they come to understand their commonalities and appreciate their differences and a special friendship develops. Later, when tragedy strikes, they are there to help each other, but also rebuild relationships within their own families.

Seven Days in June by Tia Williams (Grand Central/Hachette)

Being a single mom and the writer of a popular erotica fantasy series keeps Eva Mercy busy and sometimes stressed. Shane Hall is a virtual recluse, hiding from the literary world and occasionally writing award-winning novels. He shows up in New York at a Black literary event and sparks fly between the two writers. But what most people don't know is that Shane and Eva have a history and now they need to find out if seven days will be enough for a second chance.

The Southern Book Club's Guide to Slaying Vampires by Grady Hendrix (Quirk/Penguin Random House)

Set in Georgia in the 1990s, a women's book club discovers it must protect their community from a new arrival in town, a man who turns out to be a vampire who lived in town once before – back in the Prohibition '20s. Now he's back to start over and they and their families are in trouble.

The Sweetness of Water by Nathan Harris (Little, Brown/Hachette)

In the waning days of the Civil War, brothers Prentiss and Landry - freed by the Emancipation Proclamation - seek refuge on the homestead of George Walker and his wife, Isabelle. The Walkers, wracked by the loss of their only son to the war, hire the brothers to work their farm, hoping through an unexpected friendship to stanch their grief.

We Begin at the End by Chris Whitaker (Henry Holt/Macmillan)

Duchess Day Radley is thirteen and surrogate mother for both her brother and her own mother. Walk, the local police chief tries to watch over all three of them. Enter Vincent King, newly released from prison after serving thirty years for murder. How will his return affect everyone in town, especially the Radleys? The author draws wonderful, well-rounded characters in this mystery set in rural California.

Yellow Wife by Sadeqa Johnson (Simon & Schuster)

Based on a true story of a notorious slave jailer, this harrowing story follows Pheby Delores Brown's plight as an enslaved woman in the antebellum South. Her beauty and light skin make her valuable and she must learn to live a life as a "yellow wife" in order to survive.