

2025 Texas Lariat Adult

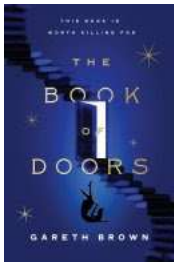
Fiction Reading List

Since 2009 the goal of the Lariat Adult Fiction Reading List has been to highlight outstanding fiction that is simply "a pleasure to read." Each year, 25 outstanding fiction titles are selected by a nine-member committee.

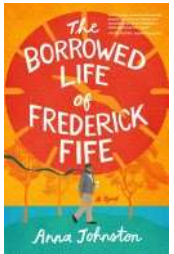


Each year, authors from past and current lists are invited to speak at the Lariat List Adult Fiction Author Event held at the TLA Annual Conference.

(* Denotes a top ten title)



The Book of Doors: A Novel by Gareth Brown (William Morrow an imprint of HarperCollins, 2024) *
In this debut novel, bookseller Cassie inherits a mysterious book called "The Book of Doors" from a customer. This magical tome allows her to travel anywhere through any doorway, simply by visualizing the destination. As Cassie and her friend Izzy explore what the book can do, they become entangled in a dangerous and violent underground network of book collectors who will do anything to obtain the powerful book. With the help of a mysterious librarian named Drummond Fox, they must protect themselves from those who would exploit the book's power for their own gain. Time travel at it's very best. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



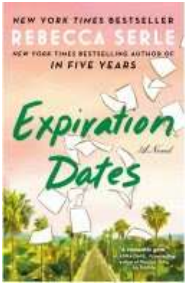
The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife: A Novel by Anna Johnston (William Morrow an imprint of HarperCollins, 2024) *
After the death of his beloved wife, Frederick Fife is alone and almost homeless when a mistaken identity lands him in a nursing home. Frederick uses his patience and his kindness to befriend the residents. This satisfying novel treats the reader to a humorous, feel-good story that redeems, forgives, and changes the lives of its characters. Reviewed in Library Journal.



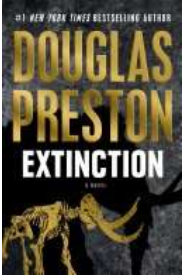
By Any Other Name: A Novel by Jodi Picoult (Ballentine Books an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024)
Two women, separated by centuries are united in their passion for writing and their determination to overcome obstacles in society. In Elizabethan England, female poet and playwright Emilia Bassano is forced to conceal her identity and collaborate with Shakespeare to bring her work to the stage. In present day New York, Melina Green faces similar challenges in the male-dominated world of Broadway theater. Readers will find the struggles and triumphs of these strong female characters who are fighting for their voices to be heard inspiring and relatable. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



Crow Talk: A Novel by Eileen Garvin (Dutton an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024) *
Two women go to find healing in the beautiful nature of a Pacific Northwest winter. They find it in caring for others, including one's young son and an injured crow. A beautifully written book about the power of nature, caring for others, and the art of listening as life moves forward. Reviewed in Booklist.



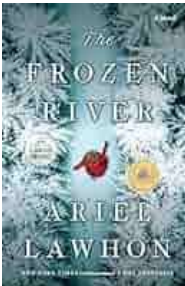
Expiration Dates: A Novel by Rebecca Serle (Atria Books an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2024)
Daphne Bell has always relied on the universe to guide her relationships, receiving slips of paper with a man's name and the exact amount of time they'll be together. When she meets Jake on a blind date and receives only his name, she begins to question the meaning of these predictions. As their connection deepens, Daphne struggles with secrets that could destroy their relationship, forcing her to choose between following fate or living for herself. Reviewed in Booklist.



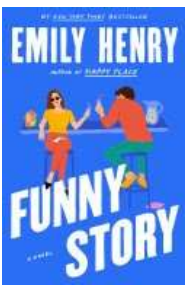
Extinction: A Novel by Douglas Preston (Forge Books an imprint of Macmillan, 2024)
Erebus Resort is a prestigious resort which offers visitors the opportunity to observe de-extincted animals such as woolly mammoths and giant sloths. However, when a young couple go missing, followed quickly by other incidents, Colorado Bureau of Investigation Agent Frances Cash and Sheriff James Colcord join forces to unravel the mystery and reveal a secret that could threaten humanity's existence. Reviewed in Booklist.



Family Family: A Novel by Laurie Frankel (Henry Holt and Co. an imprint of Macmillan, 2024)
A big-hearted family story that asks the question-what does it mean to be a real family. Frankel brings an upbeat, positive perspective on the messiness of being a family and complexity of defining what makes you family family. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon (Doubleday an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2023) *
Frozen River is based on the 18th century journals of renowned midwife and healer, Martha Ballard, who was privy to much of what occurred in her community of Hallowell, Maine. Often testifying in court, Martha verified abuse, causes of death, and murder issues. When a body appears in the local frozen river, it is deemed an accident. Martha believes it is related to an earlier vicious rape. In a world where women lack power, Martha and her journals speak clearly for truth and the equal rights of women. Reviewed by Booklist.



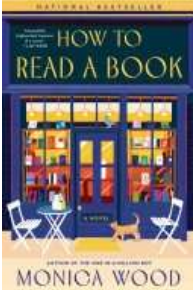
Funny Story by Emily Henry (Berkley and imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024)
Being a children's librarian in the summer is busy enough. But when you suddenly have a broken engagement and no place to live, then you have a crisis on your hands. After her fiancé dumps her for another woman and kicks her out of "their" house, Daphne is desperate to find a place to live so she can concentrate on her dream job. So desperate that she moves in with her now ex-fiancé's new fiancé's ex-boyfriend. After all, he now needs a roommate, too! As they go from opposites and broken-hearted to opposites attract, Daphne and Miles have the answer to the question-How did you meet? The answer: It's a funny story! Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



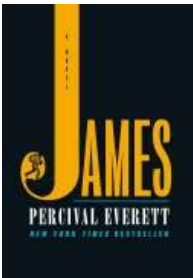
The God of the Woods: A Novel by Liz Moore (Riverhead Books an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024)
In 1975, a young girl named Barbara Van Laar goes missing from a summer camp owned by her family. The disappearance sparks a frantic search, unearthing long-buried secrets within the Van Laar family and the surrounding community. As the investigation unfolds, a parallel story emerges about Barbara's older brother, who vanished fourteen years earlier. This literary mystery explores thought-provoking themes of loss, grief, and the enduring power of the past while keeping readers guessing until the end. Reviewed in Booklist.



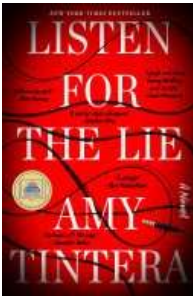
How the Light Gets In: A Novel by Joyce Maynard (William Morrow an imprint of HarperCollins, 2024)
Upon the death of her former husband, Eleanor returns to their home to care for Toby, their capable, but limited adult son who suffered a brain injury as a child. Over fifteen years we follow Eleanor through good decisions and bad as she works through the complexities of relationships her children and the men in her life. Beautifully written, we fall in love with these characters despite or maybe because of their humanity. Reviewed in Booklist.



How to Read a Book: A Novel by Monica Wood (Mariner Books an imprint of HarperCollins, 2024) *
Violet Powell has just been released from prison and is looking for a local bookshop to finish a novel she started reading in the prison book club. As it turns out, it is the same place frequented by her book club's leader, Harriet, and it's also where Frank, the bookshop's handyman, works and offers book recommendations. Soon we find their three lives intertwine in unexpected, yet lifechanging ways. This is a story about getting your life back, second chances, and the healing power of books. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



James: A Novel by Percival Everett (Doubleday an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024) *
A retelling of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from Jim's point of view. Jim and Huck are traveling down the Mississippi River on the run. Jim is a wanted man, accused of murder and kidnapping, along with being an escaped slave. Huck doesn't understand what Jim is struggling with, and Jim is going to help him learn. Reviewed in Booklist.



Listen for the Lie: A Novel by Amy Tintera (Celadon Books an imprint of Macmillan, 2024) *
Lucy Chase, once a golden girl, is now haunted by the past. Five years ago, she was found covered in her best friend Savvy's blood, but she can't remember what happened. Now, a true crime podcaster is digging up the case, and Lucy finds herself caught in a web of lies and deceit. As she tries to piece together the truth, she must confront the dark secrets of her past and the people who may have been involved in Savvy's murder. In this gripping psychological thriller, Lucy's sanity and her very life hang in the balance. Reviewed in Booklist.



Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books: A Novel by Kirsten Miller (William Morrow an imprint of HarperCollins, 2024) *
A satirical novel set in Troy, Georgia, where two women, Beverly and Lula, clash over a battle to ban books. Lula starts a lending library to promote "worthy" literature, but a prankster replaces her books with banned ones. As locals borrow these books, their lives change in unexpected ways. The story builds to a showdown between Beverly and Lula, both running for mayor, as the library sparks a community-wide transformation. The book humorously tackles censorship, personal growth, and the power of literature. Reviewed in Publishers Weekly.



Malas: A Novel by Marcela Fuentes (Viking an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024)

This debut novel set in the Texas/Mexico border follows two timelines: In 1951, Pilar Aguirre and her family are cursed. In 1991, Lulu Muñoz is just trying to survive life with a troubled father, her secret punk band, and her upcoming quinceanera. After her grandmother passes, Lulu finds herself drawn to the old recluse at the edge of town and finds an unlikely kinship. As the two stories unravel, they find unexpected secrets are revealed. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



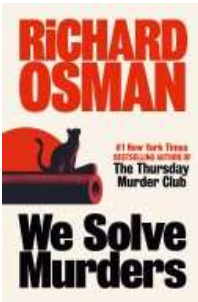
Middletime: A Novel by Sarah Crouch (Atria Books an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2024)

In this atmospheric debut, the death of Dr. Erin Landry in the small town of Point Orchards raises suspicions when clues suggest foul play. Found hanging from a tree on the property of Elijah Leith, a failed writer who returned to his hometown, the circumstances mirror those in Elijah's own novel. Sheriff Jim Godbout initially suspects suicide, but as the investigation unfolds, it points to Elijah, who is trying to rebuild his life and rekindle a romance with Nakita, the girl he once betrayed. As the town turns against him, Elijah must fight to prove his innocence in this gripping tale of love, loss, and revenge. Reviewed in Booklist.



The Spellshop by Sarah Beth Durst (Bramble an imprint of Macmillan, 2024)

This charming fantasy novel follows Kiela, a shy librarian, and her sentient spider plant assistant, Caz, as they flee from a coup with forbidden magic books. Navigating the world of illegal spellcasting in a cozy, magical setting, they find a community and we find a heartwarming story with endearing characters and a hope-filled touch of sweet romance. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



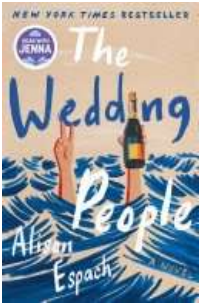
We Solve Murders: A Novel by Richard Osman (Pamela Dorman Books an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024)

Retired investigator Steve Wheeler enjoys a quiet life, but his daughter-in-law, Amy, thrives on adrenaline as a private security expert. When she's protecting bestselling author Rosie D'Antonio on a remote island and stumbles upon a dead body and a bag of money, Amy calls on Steve for help. Together, they race around the world to solve the murder, facing danger at every turn. This witty and exciting tale explores the family dynamic of a duo solving crimes together. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.

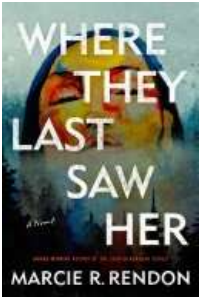


We Used to Live Here: A Novel by Marcus Kliewer (Atria/Emily Bestler Books an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2024)

This debut (soon to be Netflix movie) is about young house flippers Charlie and Eve who score an amazing deal on an old house in the woods. One day a family stops by and asks to tour the house as it's where the father grew up. Eve, against her better judgement, let's them in. As a blizzard looms on the horizon, she finds she can't get them out. Slowly the pasts of the house and the family are revealed and the lines between what's real and imagined begin to blur. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



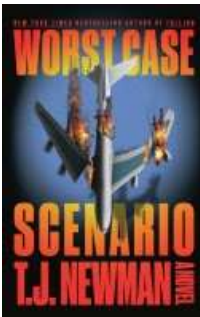
The Wedding People: A Novel by Alison Espach (Henry Holt and Co. an Imprint of Macmillan, 2024) * Phoebe, at long last, checks into an inn in Rhode Island because she has always wanted to visit there, and because she has hit rock bottom. When she arrives, she discovers she is the only guest there who is not a part of the wedding. She is willing to carry out her plans regardless, but the bride has other ideas for Phoebe, scooping her up and infiltrating her into the wedding people. Who will get her way—the rich, spoiled bride or Phoebe? Reviewed in Booklist.



Where They Last Saw Her: A Novel by Marcie R. Rendon (Bantam an imprint of Penguin Random House, 2024) The Red Pine reservation is home to Quill, Punk and Gaylyn who have bonded over their love of running. When Quill hears a scream while on a run she worries for the safety of her friends and family, but when a second woman goes missing and local officials seem disinterested, she begins to investigate on her own and with her friends. Her husband is fearful of her safety, but Quill sees only that someone must act, or nothing will change, and her own daughter will be always at risk. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



The Women: A Novel by Kristin Hannah (St. Martin's Press an imprint of Macmillan, 2024) The Women tells the story of Frances “Frankie” McGrath, a 20-year-old nursing student in 1965 Southern California who, inspired by the changing world, joins the Army Nurse Corps and serves in the Vietnam War. Sheltered and inexperienced, Frankie faces the chaos and destruction of war, forming deep yet fragile bonds with fellow soldiers. The story follows her and her veteran friends as they return home to a divided America, where they face anger, protest, and a country eager to forget the war. A powerful tale of courage, sacrifice, and friendship, this novel highlights the often-overlooked contributions of women in wartime. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



Worst Case Scenario: A Novel by T.J. Newman (Little, Brown and Company an imprint of Hachette Book Group, 2024) * When a commercial airliner crashes into a nuclear power plant in rural Minnesota, it triggers a catastrophic national crisis with global implications. The story follows ordinary people—power plant employees, firefighters, teachers, families, neighbors, and friends—who are thrust into an extraordinary situation, facing the ultimate test of their lives. It will take the combined courage, ingenuity, and determination of a brave few to determine the fate not only of their community and loved ones, but humanity at large. This high-stakes thriller has a fast-paced narrative and cliffhanger chapter endings that make it impossible to put down. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.



The Wren in the Holly Library by K. A. Linde (Entangled: Red Tower Books an imprint of Macmillan, 2024) In a world scarred by a cataclysmic war with monsters, Kierse, a skilled thief, breaks a fragile peace by entering the Holly Library, unaware it's home to a dangerous creature. This monster is both charming and terrifying, offering her a dangerous bargain—her freedom and skills in exchange for something more. As Kierse becomes entangled in a centuries-old game, she must navigate the deadly consequences of her choices, knowing there will be no escape once she's involved. The story explores the tension between desire, danger, and the monsters lurking in the dark. Reviewed in Kirkus Reviews.