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August 2025

Book and audiobook recommendations for all ages

Caregiving and Self-Care

Top 10 Book-Group Books

Listen Up:
30 Minutes a Day

Nerd Sports



Art by Baraka Carberry, from *All the Noise at Once*, by DeAndra Davis

PBS BOOKS

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August 2025
Volume 4, Issue 12

Adult Books

3 Top 10
Health & Wellness Books

4 Caregiving and Self-Care
by Donna Seaman

6 Top 10
Sports Books

7 Fun and Games
by Susan Maguire

8 10 Questions
Stella Hayward
by John Charles

10 Dog Tales
by Donna Seaman

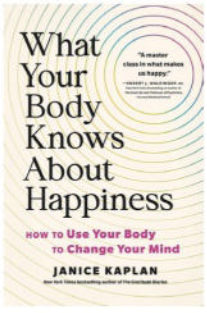
12 Imaginary Book Clubs
by Donna Seaman

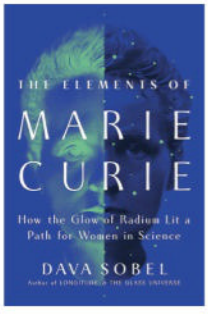
13 Read-alikes
Suspenseful Fiction with Multiple Viewpoints
by Annie Bostrom

14 Top 10
Book-Group Books

15 Reserve These Reads
Adult

16 LibraryReads
August Picks





Audiobooks & Video

18 PBS Books
PBS Books Readers Club

20 Top 10
Book-Group Books on Audio

21 Listen Up
Walking Audiobook Club Suggestions
by Van Hoang

22 Listen Up
30 Minutes a Day
by Heather Booth



Books for Youth

23 Top 10
Sports Books for Youth

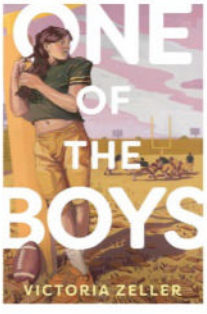
24 Sapphic Sports Romance
by Kelly Ferreira

26 Nerd Sports
by Ronny Khuri

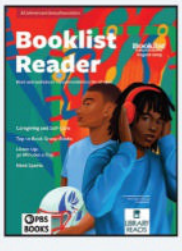
28 Invisible Disabilities
by Kelly Ferreira

30 Public Health
by Sarah Hunter

32 Reserve These Reads
Children & Teens







On the Cover

From *All the Noise at Once,* by DeAndra Davis. *All the Noise at Once* appears in this issue's Top 10 Sports Books for Youth. Illustration © 2025 by Baraka Carberry. Used by permission of the publisher.

From the Publisher

The *Booklist* team has been reflecting on our activities at ALA's Annual Conference in Philadelphia. I thought it was an all-around incredible and affirming experience. For us, if I may speak for the group, there is nothing better than being surrounded by booklovers, library workers, publishers, and anyone who contributes to this vibrant world. Books are our comfort food. This *Booklist Reader*'s focus is on health and wellness, so we can look to books (unlike some favorite if decadent snacks!) to give us the care and nourishment we need to be able to focus and center, yet also to escape, to understand and grow, to laugh and even cry. May the rest of your summer be healthy and well no matter what literal or figurative comfort foods you choose to sustain and delight you.

—George Kendall
gkendall@ala.org



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Top 10

Health & Wellness Books

These top health and wellness titles delve into a range of subjects from stress reduction to weight-loss drugs to the dramatic story of tuberculosis.

The Age of Diagnosis: How Our Obsession with Medical Labels Is Making Us Sicker. By Suzanne O'Sullivan. 2025. Thesis.

O'Sullivan examines the concerning rise of overdiagnosis and overmedicalization, noting that fear and billing requirements are two possible forces behind the rush to apply unnecessary medical labels to individuals.

The Centered Heart: Evidence-Based, Mind-Body Practices to Stress Less and Improve Cardiac Health. By Susi Amendola. 2024. Rowman & Littlefield.

Yoga therapist Amendola offers instructions for "centering" moments, gentle movements, relaxation, meditation, compassion, nature consciousness, and unity to reduce stress and support healing.

The Chair and the Valley: A Memoir of Trauma, Healing, and the Outdoors. By Banning Lyon. 2024. Penguin/Open Field.

Lyon details his horrific experiences, at age 15, in a psychiatric facility where violent abuse was masked as treatment.

Everything Is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection. By John Green. 2025. Penguin/Crash Course.

Green presents a passionate book about tuberculosis inspired by a visit to Sierra Leone, where he met Henry Reider, a 17-year-old infected with TB, whose miraculous recovery he chronicles.

The Living Medicine: How a Lifesaving Cure Was Nearly Lost—and Why It Will Rescue Us When Antibiotics Fail. By Lina Zeldovich. 2024. St. Martin's.

Antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections are on the rise as pharmaceutical companies fail to invest in novel antibiotics. Zeldovich makes the case for an alternative: bacteriophages (phages), viruses that naturally prey upon bacteria.

Magic Pill: The Extraordinary Benefits and Disturbing Risks of the New Weight-Loss Drugs. By Johann Hari. 2024. Crown.

Costly new drugs producing amazing weight loss are now available. But are they safe? Hari interviews obesity experts in his informative, lively, and careful overview.

Pieces You'll Never Get Back: A Memoir of Unlikely Survival. By Samina Ali. 2025. Catapult.

Ali and her husband looked forward to her son's birth, but after a traumatic labor she fell into a coma, from which she awakened bereft of her memory.

Rumbles: A Curious History of the Gut, the Secret Story of the Body's Most Fascinating Organ. By Elsa Richardson. 2024. Pegasus.

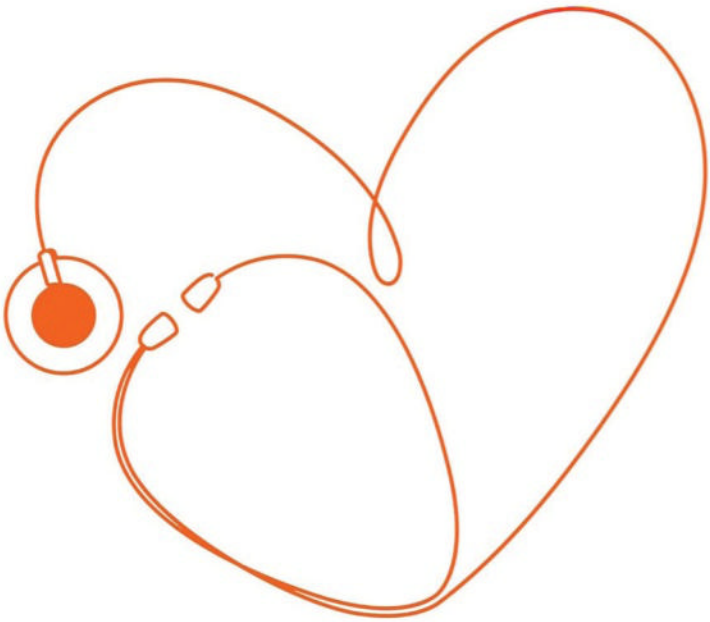
The gut gets little respect (until it malfunctions). Richardson explains why the gastrointestinal tract deserves far more esteem.

Telltale Hearts: A Public Health Doctor, His Patients, and the Power of Story. By Dean-David Schillinger. 2024. PublicAffairs.

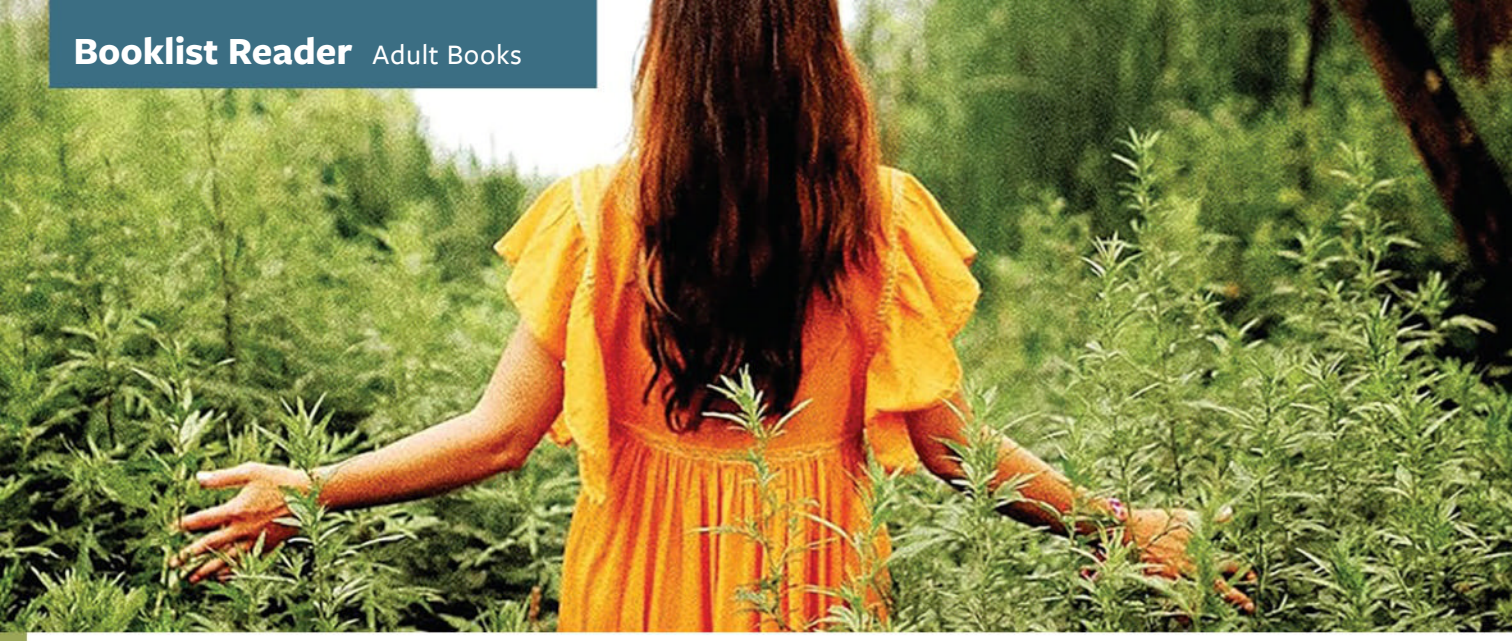
Schillinger argues that listening is an essential aspect of medicine because "in the story lies the answers." Yet doctors increasingly defer to blood tests and imaging studies rather than on the diagnostic value of medical interviews.

Treating Violence: An Emergency Room Doctor Takes on a Deadly American Epidemic. By Rob Gore. 2024. Beacon.

Emergency department physician Gore explains what drove him to establish efforts and organizations with a new approach to "treating violence" against people of color and the LGBTQ+ community.



Art from *Telltale Hearts.*



Art from *Get Rooted.*

Caregiving and Self-Care

by Donna Seaman

Caring for loved ones struggling with disease, advanced age, or both takes a toll, as do so many aspects of life. These candid, informative, practical, and inspiring memoirs and guides address the demands on caregivers and the need for self-care for everyone.

Already Toast: Caregiving and Burnout in America. By Kate Washington. 2021. Beacon.

Washington chronicles the exhausting caregiving stint she took on when her husband was diagnosed with lymphoma, then widens the lens to consider the challenges faced by caregivers and call for new and improved caregiver-centered government, employer, medical, and insurance policies.

First in the Family: A Story of Survival, Recovery, and the American Dream. By Jessica Hoppe. 2024. Flatiron.

Hoppe, a high-fashion-focused social media influencer, delves into her family's traumas, how such hardships can lead to drug and alcohol use as a coping mechanism, and how often BIPOC individuals are omitted from recovery research and practices.

Get Rooted: Reclaim Your Soul, Serenity, and Sisterhood through the Healing Medicine of the Grandmothers. By Robyn Moreno. 2022. Hachette Go.

TV host, podcaster, and life coach Moreno chronicles her struggle with deep-seated trauma, then provides practical steps for any woman's journey towards healing in a blend of memoir and guide rooted in her Mexican heritage, especially the Indigenous traditions of curanderas.

How Are You, Really? Living Your Truth One Answer at a Time. By Jenna Kutcher. 2022. Morrow/Dey St.

Host of the popular *Goal Digger* podcast, Kutcher says it's time to find out who we are, who we have around us, and what we're going to do to improve our lives, urging readers to feel at home in our bodies, explore the world, build meaningful relationships, and have fun.

Joy Is My Justice: Reclaim What Is Yours. By Tanmeet Sethi. 2023. Hachette.

After her three-year-old son was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy when she was nine months pregnant, Sethi, a Sikh American physician, activist, and meditation teacher, launched a search for joy and power, and now offers actions to help others face tough challenges.

Life in Five Senses: How Exploring the Senses Got Me out of My Head and into the World. By Gretchen Rubin. 2023. Crown.

A scare at the eye doctor prompted podcaster Rubin to focus on her five senses and their contributions to her happiness. Drawing on scientific studies, classes, experiments, and her own explorations of sensory input, she recommends activities that will lead to greater awareness and deeper connections to family and friends.

My Two Elaines: Learning, Coping, and Surviving as an Alzheimer's Caregiver. By Martin J. Schreiber. 2022. Harper Horizon.

Marty Schreiber, former governor of Wisconsin, and his wife, Elaine, were always a political team until she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Schreiber writes frankly about

the struggles of a caregiver, sharing invaluable information, advice, and encouragement.

Saving Time: Discovering a Life beyond the Clock. By Jenny Odell. 2023. Random.

Odell (*How to Do Nothing*, 2019) considers the imperative to squeeze as much quantifiable output as possible from our time, examines how this has corrupted our relationships to work, leisure, and self-worth, and suggests alternatives.

Taming the Chaos of Dementia: A Caregiver's Guide to Interventions That Make a Difference. By Barbara J. Huelat and Sharon T. Pochron. 2023. Rowman & Littlefield.

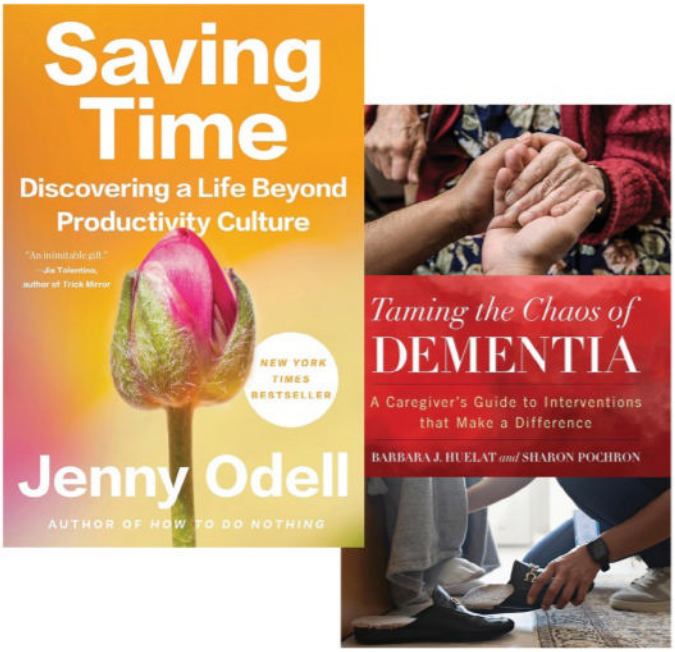
Dementia is taxing on loved ones. Huelat and her daughter offer a candid and practical account of caregiving lessons learned while watching over Huelat's mother, diagnosed with Parkinson's and dementia, and her husband, diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

We Will Rest! The Art of Escape. By Tricia Hersey. 2024. Little, Brown.

Hersey (*Rest Is Resistance*, 2022), founder of the Nap Ministry, encourages people to resist the incessant call for constant productivity, create boundaries, and question feelings of guilt and shame for resting.

What We Carry. By Maya Shanbhag Lang. 2020. Dial.

Lang uses her relationship with her Indian immigrant mother as a foundation from which to consider women's choices, the emotional complexities of caregiving for a parent, the turbulence of early parenthood, and the nature of creativity.



What Your Body Knows About Happiness: How to Use Your Body to Change Your Mind. By Janice Kaplan. 2025. Sourcebooks.

You may have noticed that it's easier to feel empowered when standing up straight. Kaplan outlines how messages from the body can be used to increase gratitude, creativity, health, and happiness.

When You Care: The Unexpected Magic of Caring for Others. By Elissa Strauss. 2024. Gallery.

Caring for others—including children, aging parents, special-needs family members, and the recovering—should be embraced by the community rather than foisted upon women in the household, writes Strauss, who also argues that caregiving is an opportunity to bring meaning and purpose into others' lives and that caregivers deserve financial and emotional support.

Your Turn: How to Be an Adult. By Julie Lythcott-Haims. 2021. Holt.

Lythcott-Haims, a former dean at Stanford, Black, and queer, addresses twentysomethings, identifying "fending"—knowing "it's on you to handle something"—and supporting yourself as the main ingredients in "adulting," while also covering sensitive, relevant, and essential social issues.



Top 10

Sports Books

These 10 sports books observe nearly every aspect of human life through lenses of history, equality, and extraordinary individual athleticism.

The American Game: History and Hope in the Country of Lacrosse. By S. L. Price. 2025. Atlantic Monthly.

Price meticulously elaborates on lacrosse players past and present, social issues surrounding the game, and the persistent racism that has plagued the sport.

The Black Widow. By Jeanette Lee and Dana Benbow. 2024. Triumph.

Billiards icon Lee shares her remarkable ascent, from rebellious child of Korean immigrants in Brooklyn to becoming the number-one female pool player worldwide.

Globetrotter: How Abe Saperstein Shook Up the World of Sports. By Mark Jacob and Matthew Jacob. 2024. Rowman & Littlefield.

Meticulously researched and written in an easy and entertaining style, *Globetrotter* provides a lively and honest look at Harlem Globetrotters founder Abe Saperstein.

I Felt the Cheers: The Remarkable Silent Life of Curtis Pride. By Curtis Pride and Doug Ward. 2025. Kensington/Dafina.

Pride's inspiring memoir is a rich mix of sporting achievement (and failure and then success again) and a celebration of the human side of sports, extolling the virtues of the author's teammates, coaches, and family.

The Last Manager: How Earl Weaver Tricked, Tormented, and Reinvented Baseball. By John W. Miller. 2025. Simon & Schuster/Avid Reader.

Reporter Miller covers the notorious side of Hall of Fame Baltimore Orioles manager Earl Weaver while also revealing Weaver's lesser-known strengths in this long overdue, humanizing reassessment of a near-mythic baseball figure.

Play It Forward: How Women Are Changing Sports to Change the World. By TOGETHXR. 2025. Chronicle.

This fascinating collection of 25 profiles and essays covers topics like Title IX legal battles and pay equality issues as well as maternity rights, efforts to destigmatize menstruation, and the story of a refugee Paralympian.

Runs in the Family: An Incredible True Story of Football, Fatherhood, and Belonging. By Sarah Spain and Deland McCullough. 2025. Simon Element.

Expanding on Spain's viral 2018 ESPN article about NFL coach McCullough, this incredible story about trauma, family, and hope is threaded with moments of profound sadness and unbelievable joy throughout.

The Striker and the Clock: On Being in the Game. By Georgia Cloepfil. 2024. Riverhead.

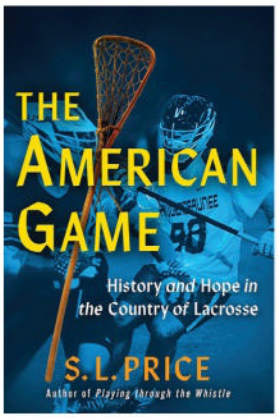
Both a marvelous love letter to soccer and a testament to the drive and determination of professional female athletes, Cloepfil's beautifully written memoir describes the six years she spent playing pro soccer.

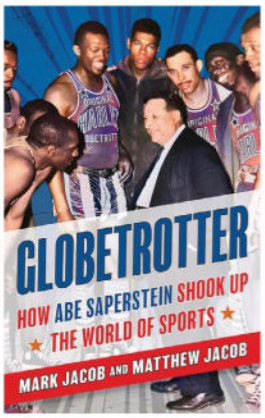
Thirty Below: The Harrowing and Heroic Story of the First All-Women's Ascent of Denali. By Cassidy Randall. 2025. Abrams.

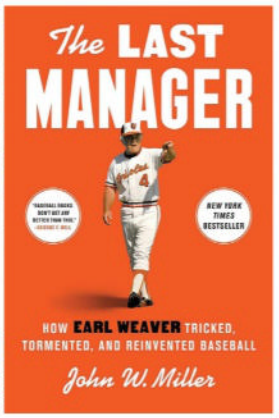
Randall brings to light the little-known story of an international team of six women who climbed North America's highest mountain peak to prove that women could be career-driven as well as vulnerable, ambitious climbers.

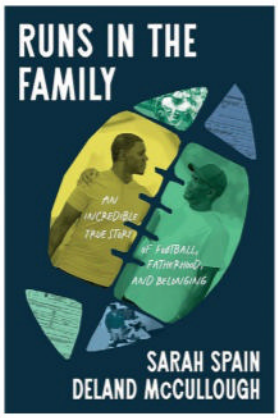
The Warrior: Rafael Nadal and His Kingdom of Clay. By Christopher Clarey. 2025. Grand Central.

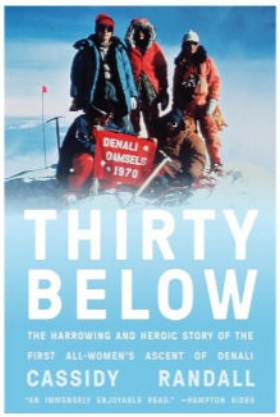
With exquisite writing and insightful interviews, Clarey recounts Rafael Nadal's meteoric rise from tennis prodigy to legendary champion, highlighting his unparalleled work ethic and revisiting his greatest matches.











Fun and Games

by Susan Maguire

From chess to Dungeons & Dragons to Pokémon GO, games bring people together in competition and, ideally, fun. From the most rudimentary board games to tech-heavy video games, these creative marvels stretch our brains while keeping us entertained. The following books about games delve into their history and impact, make the case for play, and will inspire curiosity and deeper thinking about what we do with our leisure time.

Across the Board: How Games Make Us Human. By Tim Clare. 2025. Abrams.

This illuminating look into various games, their history, and the impact they have had on the people who play them and on society as a whole reveals that games are probably as old as humanity itself.

Critical Hits: Writers Playing Video Games. Ed. by Carmen Maria Machado and J. Robert Lennon. 2023. Graywolf.

This ambitious set of essays straddles the line between memoir and media criticism, featuring essayists, fiction writers, poets, and comic book artists musing on their relationship to video games, whether as escapist fantasies, objects of scholarship, or new frameworks for relationships and moral dilemmas.

Exploring the History of Childhood and Play through 50 Historic Treasures. By Susan A. Fletcher. 2020. Rowman & Littlefield.

Drawing from research on the importance of childhood play and catalogs of collectible toys, this book chronicles evolving twentieth-century American social values through the lens of 50 iconic playthings, from Candyland to the Easy Bake Oven to Pac-Man.

Good Game, No Rematch: A Life Made of Video Games. By Mike Drucker. 2025. Hanover Square.

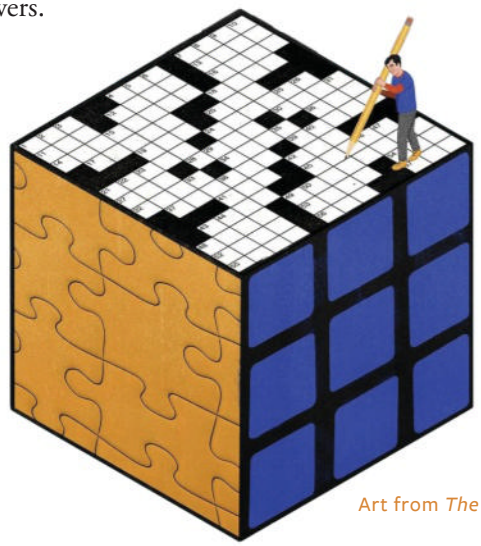
A quirky memoir chock-full of video-game minutia, Drucker's book traces the roots of his comedy-writing career all the way back to 1986, when, as a three-year-old, he first played *Duck Hunt* on the Nintendo Entertainment System.

It's All a Game: The History of Board Games from Monopoly to Settlers of Catan. By Tristan Donovan. 2017. St. Martin's/Thomas Dunne.

From ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and prehistoric sub-Saharan Africa to the golden age of Anglo-American tabletop games, this history of games artfully weaves together culture, business, and ways games impact society and is perfect for the budding social scientist, the casual reader, and anyone looking to impress party guests with trivia knowledge.

The Puzzler: One Man's Quest to Solve the Most Baffling Puzzles Ever, from Crosswords to Jigsaws to the Meaning of Life. By A. J. Jacobs. 2022. Crown.

Jacobs, known for his hands-on approach to his material, evolves into a serious puzzler by delving into this fascinating subculture and ruminating on some of life's bigger questions and how puzzles can sometimes point us toward the answers.



Art from *The Puzzler*.

The Queen of Katwe: A Story of Life, Chess, and One Extraordinary Girl's Dream of Becoming a Grandmaster. By Tim Crothers. 2012. Scribner.

Phiona Mutesi grew up poor in Uganda, where she was inspired by a missionary to take up chess. Her unlikely journey to becoming a national champion and traveling to the Chess Olympiad in Siberia is an inspiring tale, one that was made into a movie in 2016.

Significant Zero: Heroes, Villains, and the Fight for Art and Soul in Video Games. By Walt Williams. 2017. Atria.

Desperate to break into writing, Williams took a job quality-testing video games, which led to a career in the industry. Here, he reveals the video-gaming industry in all its lucrative shine and questionable morality.

The Tetris Effect: The Game That Hypnotized the World. By Dan Ackerman. 2016. PublicAffairs.

Gamers will turn the pages as fervently as they hit their controller keys in this account of the development of this first Russian-made computer game, its social and political impact, and the feverish race among media moguls to grab the rights to Tetris before it was unleashed upon the world.

10 Questions

Stella Hayward

by John Charles



Stella Hayward is a pseudonym for Rowan Coleman, the internationally best-selling and award-winning author and screenwriter of sixteen novels, including *The Memory Book, The Summer of Impossible Things*, and *The Girl at the Window*. A lifelong Brontë fan, under the Brontë inspired pen name Bella Ellis, Rowan also writes the Brontë Mysteries—a carefully researched series of novels that imagine that before they were famous the Brontë Sisters were amateur detectives.

1. Who is Stella Hayward when she is at home?
Good question. Stella Hayward is me, Rowan Coleman, longtime novelist owned by dogs and whimsical Brit who lives in Yorkshire and writes in a turret in the seaside town of Scarborough.

2. What can you tell us about **The Good Boy***?*
When Genie's accidental wish turns her golden retriever, Rory, into a human, he is very upset because being a human is rubbish (except that he is allowed chocolate). But as Genie and her best friend, boy-next-door Miles, search for a way to reverse the wish, Rory teaches them some of the wisdom and ways of being a dog and shows Genie her true feelings for Miles. Will they turn Rory back in time, and will Genie finally tell Miles that she loves him? Rory shows Genie and Miles how to be more human by being more dog.



3. What five words best describe* The Good Boy*?
Funny, whimsical, magical, romantic, and doggish.

4. If you were given one wish to use before midnight, what would you wish for?
World peace, but also that some people would stop assuming that *The Good Boy* is some gross girl-on-dog action. Rory would be disgusted at the very thought!! Ew!

5. Did your own crew of canines provide any inspiration when it came time to write* The Good Boy*?
Yes, very much so. I have three sheepdogs, Blossom, Bluebell, and Wufus (Wufus is really called Rufus, but he barks a lot, so . . .). Are you even a dog parent if you don't narrate your dog's inner thoughts at all times? So, it came quite naturally to translate Rory's take on the world into human. I love that dogs are always right in the moment and that they can find joy and beauty in anything, especially cheese. I'm with them on the cheese.

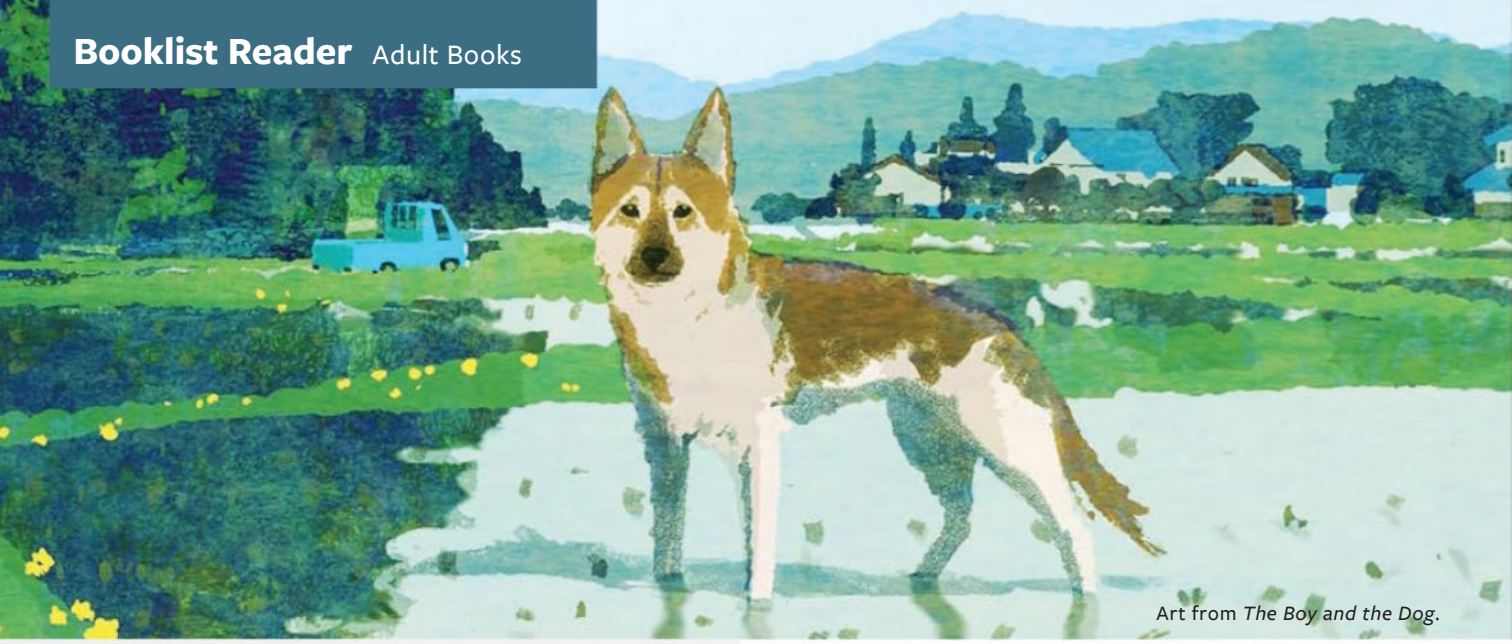
6. What are the books that made you fall in love with romance fiction as a reader?
The OGs, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, of course. I grew up on Bridget Jones and Outlander; now I am loving the resurgence of romantic fiction and basically reading as much as I can. Love being in love with a book boyfriend!

7. What role have libraries played in your life?
Libraries are such a hugely important part of my life. As a child, libraries were my refuge, and I couldn't wait to get down to my local on a Saturday and spend all day there. It's so wonderful to have such a safe place to explore worlds, ideas, and imaginations that are open to anyone. I think no matter who you are, you can always find a family and a home at the library.

8. What is the best piece of life advice you have been given?
Put it in your basket for 24 hours. Or follow your gut. I do really regret the times I haven't taken a risk when my gut said I should. And that's why we have *The Good Boy!*

9. What is next for you as an author?
I'm working on a follow-up to *The Good Boy* right now. It's currently called *My Brilliant AI Boyfriend* . . . that's all I'm telling you for now. I always have a ton of side projects on the go, including a new Rowan Coleman novel, a couple of film scripts, and maybe a spot of horror. I love all the reading and all the writing. I can't help myself!

10. How can readers learn more about you and your books?
I have a website: rowancoleman.co.uk, but the best way to connect is probably on social media: I am on Instagram, Tiktok, Threads, and Bluesky and love to chat with readers. I had to leave Twitter because, well, you know. Anyway, come and find me and send me pictures of your pets! I love pet pictures!!



Art from *The Boy and the Dog*.

Dog Tales

by Donna Seaman

Dogs are such sensitive, smart, and loving companions, full of joy and stubbornness, yearning and mischief. Each of these novels celebrate dogs and what they bring to their humans, whether the story is a serious one of crises and loss or a clever, charming rom-com.

The Boy and the Dog. By Seishu Hase. Tr. by Alison Watts. 2022. Viking.

Six months after the 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan, a driver for a theft ring finds a German shepherd mix in a parking lot. He dubs the dog Tamon, after a guardian deity. Thus begins an epic journey for Tamon, whose steady presence and focus on finding his way home deeply affect the people who care for him along the way.

Bug Hollow. By Michelle Huneven. 2025. Penguin.

In mid-1970s California, Phil and Sibyl Samuelson's oldest child, allegedly college-bound Ellis, goes on a road trip, moves into a rundown rental hippie nirvana called Bug Hollow, and dies. Throughout the family's struggles, their Manchester terrier, Hinky, attuned to everyone's feelings, offers soothing companionship, leaps with joy, licks faces, and intently follows their conversations.

Dr. No. By Percival Everett. 2022. Graywolf.

Mathematics professor Wala Kitu's name means "nothing," and he is the world's foremost expert on it. Unfortunately, his work draws the attention of John Milton Bradley Sills, billionaire and aspiring "modernist" James-Bond villain, intent on cornering the market on nothing. Wala is drawn into Sills' fiendish plot, accompanied by astrophysicist Eigen Vector, and Trigo, a trustworthy (and apparently psychic) one-legged dog. This is an inventive literary wonder by the celebrated author of *James*.

The Friend. By Sigrid Nunez. 2018. Riverhead.

The narrator's friend, a famous writer, killed himself, leaving behind a jealous wife and a now traumatized Great Dane named Apollo. The wife won't keep the dog. Driven by guilt and sorrow, the narrator opts to take him, even at the risk of losing her rent-controlled apartment, and she and Apollo end up helping each other through their mutual grief. Funny and penetrating, Nunez's novel won the National Book Award and has been adapted into a movie starring Naomi Watts, Bill Murray, and the hugely talented Bing as Apollo.

The Good Boy. By Stella Hayward. 2025. Avon.

At Genie's thirtieth birthday dinner with her family, her grandmother tells her about a magical ancestral ability in the female line to give a wish, once every 10 years, to a loved one. Back home, cuddling with her beloved golden retriever, Rory, Genie tells him she wishes he were human. In the morning, she's shocked to find a naked man in Rory's dog bed. Hayward's delightful romp brings Genie together with her oldest friend, Miles, as they try to find out how to turn Rory back into the dog he loved being. Laugh-out-loud comedic moments and a true appreciation for the wonderfulness of dogs enrich the ensuing unexpected romance. See 10 Questions for Stella Hayward, p.8.

The Good Pilot Peter Woodhouse. By Alexander McCall Smith. 2018. Pantheon.

In this WWII tale set mostly in Britain, the always popular McCall Smith introduces Val Eliot, a "land girl" sent to help on a farm near an air base where American recon-

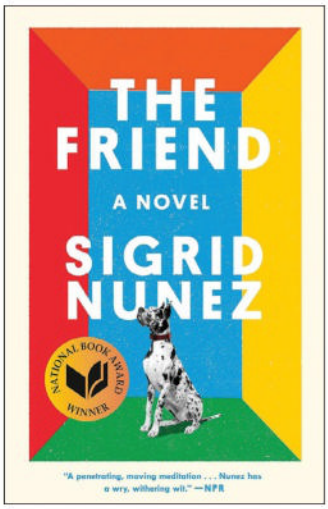
naissance officers are stationed. Val falls in love with an American, while an abused farm dog named Peter Woodhouse becomes an adored and valiant mascot for the pilots.

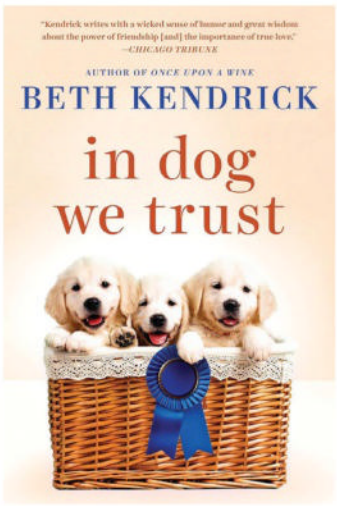
In Dog We Trust. By Beth Kendrick. 2019. Berkley.

Black Dog Bay resident Jocelyn Hillier doesn't associate much with the wealthy owners of the decadent beach houses until she becomes a dog walker for Mr. Allardyce. When he dies unexpectedly, Jocelyn learns that he left most of his wealth to his three show dogs and named Jocelyn as the dogs' guardian.

Love, Clancy: Diary of a Good Dog. By W. Bruce Cameron. 2023. Forge.

Cameron has written many best-selling dog-centric novels. In this one, JayB moves to Kansas City with his dog, Clancy, hoping to prevent his lottery-winning father from frittering away his new wealth. When JayB helps his neighbor, Helen, by walking her dog, Odin, he catches the eye of other dog owners and becomes a paid dog-walker. After Helen's passing, JayB keeps Odin until Helen's daughter, Alana, arrives, and sparks fly. Clancy narrates, using his canine senses to offer unusual insights into human and four-legged shenanigans.





Ring. By Michelle Lerner. 2025. Bancroft.

When their 23-year-old daughter, Rachel, is found dead, Lee is inconsolable. They travel to Seven Pillars Sanctuary in Canada, where bereft people are allowed to walk along a path until they die peacefully in the snow. Lee is surprised to find that participants are required to truly understand their lives before they give them up. As Lee struggles through the program, a dog named Ring becomes a lifeline. This is a mournful, powerful, and ultimately uplifting story with deep lessons on grief, life, and suicide.

Southernmost. By Silas House. 2018. Algonquin.

As the Cumberland River rises over its banks, Tennessee pastor Asher Sharp has an epiphany. But his sheltering of a gay couple and subsequent sermon on acceptance cost him his church, his marriage, and possibly his son. During a painful custody battle, he takes Justin and heads to Key West, hoping to find his gay brother, Luke, whom he abandoned. Shady, a stray dog, becomes a crucial touchstone for Justin in a novel full of complex characters.

What a Dog Knows. By Susan Wilson. 2021. St. Martin's.

Mary Jones never knew her birth family and felt doubly lost as her psychic abilities developed and she had no one to turn to for guidance. Calling herself Ruby Heartwood, she becomes a teen mom and uses her gifts to make a living at local fairs and with traveling carnivals. Arriving in Harmony Farms, Massachusetts, during a storm, Ruby opens her camper's door to a small stray dog. With the thoughts of Ruby's clever and irresistible canine companion in the narrative mix, this is an unusual and intriguing journey of self-discovery. Be sure to check out Wilson's other dog-focused novels.

Unleashed Holiday. By Victoria Schade. 2023. Berkley.

In a small, quaint Pennsylvania town, Chelsea Higgins runs a successful dog-training school. One day, she's bowled over in the parking lot by an off-leash boxer and the dog's owner: her college nemesis, Andrew Gibson. He's opening a personal gym just two doors down from the school. Given her unrequited feelings for him, this is an unbearable situation. With a feral cat who likes to menace Chelsea's canine students and lots of scene-stealing dogs, this is a lively and touching rom-com. Look for Schade's other charming dog-in-the-spotlight titles.

Art from *Unleashed Holiday*.



Imaginary Book Clubs

by Donna Seaman

Book clubs inspire novelists to create relationship fiction, romances, historical fiction, cozy mysteries, and stories of friendship.

The Best Life Book Club. By Sheila Roberts. 2024. MIRA.

After dumping her cheating husband, Karissa is ready for a new home with her young daughter and a new job with Heron Publishing. Divorced and out of work, Margot hopes to develop an app. Widowed Alice Strong's sister, Josie, believes that Alice's world is shrinking. When the four women form a neighborhood book club, they bond over books and discover a brighter future.

The Book Club for Troublesome Women. By Marie Bostwick. 2025. Harper Muse.

Three suburban women in early-1960s Virginia are seeking more in life. When they meet unconventional Charlotte, they start a book club and Charlotte has them read the newly published and controversial *The Feminine Mystique*, by Betty Friedan, which assures them that they are not alone in their longing for fulfillment.

A Book Club to Die For. By Dorothy St. James. 2022. Berkley.

Cypress Public Library assistant librarian Trudell "Tru" Becket is waiting to give a talk about the library to the Arete Society, an exclusive, invitation-only book group, when the club's president, the disagreeable Rebecca White, is murdered in the hostess' home. When the mother of Tru's boyfriend is arrested as the chief suspect, Tru, who has secretly hidden print books in the basement after the library went all-digital, begins her own investigation.

The Bookshop Sisterhood. By Michelle Lindo-Rice. 2024. MIRA.

Inspired by their love of books and their long-running book club, four friends band together to open the first Black-owned bookstore in Delaware. Though each appears to be thriving, each is coping with hidden trauma, requiring them to rely on their friendship to overcome personal roadblocks to keep the store afloat.

The Break-Up Book Club. By Wendy Wax. 2021. Berkley.

The book club at Between the Covers, Annell's bookstore, brings together a diverse group, from EMTs to sports agents, golf-obsessed wives to quiet grandmothers. When a rash of break-ups and tragedies hits the group, they turn to one another for cheering up, sage advice, and an impressively researched revenge plot.

The Bromance Book Club. By Lyssa Kay Adams. 2019. Berkley.

Professional baseball player Gavin wants another chance with his wife, Thea, after she kicks him out of the house. Three fellow Nashville Legend players bring Gavin into their secret book club, which is based on their discovery of the perfect way to learn what women really want: read romance novels. This is the first in a series.



Art from *A Book Club to Die For*.

The Titanic Survivors Book Club. By Timothy Schaffert. 2024. Doubleday.

After you've narrowly avoided death in a notoriously tragic shipwreck, how do you approach your remaining days? Having opened a Parisian bookshop after his secret library of controversial volumes got him replaced as the *Titanic*'s librarian, Yorick convenes a book club for fellow eccentrics who were also kept from taking that fatal voyage.

The Wartime Book Club. By Kate Thompson. 2024. Forever.

On the German occupied island of Jersey in 1943, public librarian Grace La Mottee uses what little power she has to fight back, forming the Wartime Book Club, a small escape from the war. She also discreetly shares banned books. Based on true events, this novel speaks to the power of books in times of tumult.

Read-alikes

Suspenseful Fiction with Multiple Viewpoints

By Annie Bostrom

Like Giovana Madalosso's tense and immersive *The Tokyo Suite,* these works of fiction, some of which have been translated from their original languages, tell stories from multiple, sometimes unreliable viewpoints; subtly (or not-so-subtly) unwind knots of class and gender; and keep pages turning with high-stakes suspense.

Beijing Sprawl. By Xu Zechen. Tr. by Eric Abrahamsen and Jeremy Tiang. 2023. Two Lines.

In connected stories, Xu gives voice to people on the outskirts of prosperous Beijing who cling to their dreams while denying their seemingly inevitable entrapment in their lower social class.

Clean. By Alia Trabucco Zerán. Tr. by Sophie Hughes. Riverhead.

An unreliable narrator who self-medicates with pills from her employer's stash, domestic worker Estela keeps señor and señora's household running, but when the couple's young daughter dies, Estela ends up in an interrogation room, where she tells her story to an unseen panel of judges.

The Cracks in Our Armor. By Anna Gavalda. Tr. by Alison Anderson. 2019. Europa.

The melancholy narrators of these atmospheric and raw short stories, translated from French, share a distinct sense of unease—whether they're mourning the death of a loved one, the what-ifs of an unrequited relationship, or a loss of self-confidence—but simple pleasures help temper the malaise.

The Lifeguards. By Amanda Eyre Ward. 2022. Ballantine.

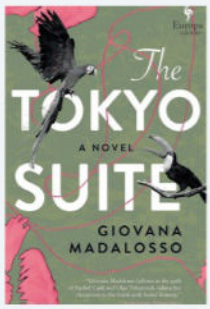
Touching on issues like class, gentrification, and opioid abuse, *The Lifeguards* combines relationship fiction with suspense as three moms, all best friends, close ranks to protect their teenage sons after the boys find a woman's body.

Our House. By Louise Candlish. 2018. Berkley.

In this English, twisty domestic thriller of picture-perfect lives falling apart, what seems to be a troubled husband swindling his wife is something far more complex and disturbing, featuring untrustworthy characters whose deepest secrets become their undoing.

The Tokyo Suite. By Giovana Madalosso. Tr. by Bruna Dantas Lobato. 2025. Europa.

Brazilian writer Madalosso's English-language debut opens with a kidnapping. Sweaty with nerves, nanny Maju will take four-year-old Cora from São Paulo over the border to Paraguay, where she can get the girl a new passport, then to the southern Brazilian state where Maju spent her impoverished childhood raised by her grandmother. Cora's mother, Fernanda, distracted by her high-profile TV job and a scorching affair, doesn't learn anything is amiss until late that evening. In Maju's and Fernanda's alternating first-person perspectives, chapters fly over the course of this day, with Madalosso's prose, translated by Lobato, becoming more unsettling and meaningful as Maju loses her grasp on what she's doing, and Fernanda envisions every worst case. Obsessed with cleanliness and prayer, Maju is paid well but lost everything, we learn, to work for Fernanda, a woman who literally buys a car when it will get Cora a vaccine. Fernanda, meanwhile, is dedicated to her demanding career but harbors a shadow truth: the work supports her family yet precludes her from mothering. "You had fun with her," she tells Cora's father. "I passed by her like a cumulonimbus." A bitter and loving, eviscerating, suspenseful, and tender psychological novel about class, gender, motherhood, and nature both within and without.



—*Annie Bostrom*

The Perfect Nanny. By Leila Slimani. Tr. by Sam Taylor. 2018. Penguin Press.

Moroccan French author Slimani's devastating, award-winning literary psychological drama, supported by absorbing character studies, begins with a gruesome crime scene—two young children dead in a Paris apartment—before moving back in time to introduce the children's parents and the nanny they thought would save everything.

Such a Fun Age. By Kiley Reid. 2019. Putnam.

With a finger solidly on the pulse of the pressures and ironies inherent in social media, privilege, modern parenting, racial tension, and political correctness, Reid unpacks a Black babysitter's complicated relationship with the white family she works for following an unsettling altercation.

Top 10

Book-Group Books

From topical nonfiction to the story of a café operated by giant cats, these books offer book groups of all stripes much to discuss.

Nonfiction

Book and Dagger: How Scholars and Librarians Became the Unlikely Spies of World War II. By Elyse Graham. 2024. Ecco.

James Bond has nothing on the librarians and historians who formed the OSS in the early days of WWII; this book is a powerful symphony celebrating these unsung heroes who helped bring down the Nazi state.

By the Fire We Carry: The Generations-Long Fight for Justice on Native Land. By Rebecca Nagle. 2024. Harper.

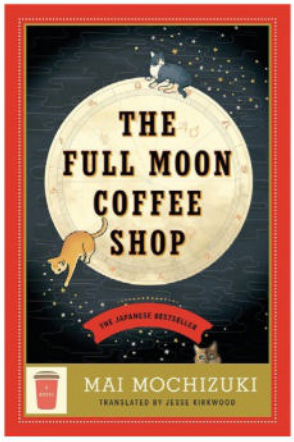
A thrilling legal exposé scrutinizes one Supreme Court case, which upheld the existence of the Muscogee reservation, while highlighting a history of crimes against Native Americans, particularly in Oklahoma.

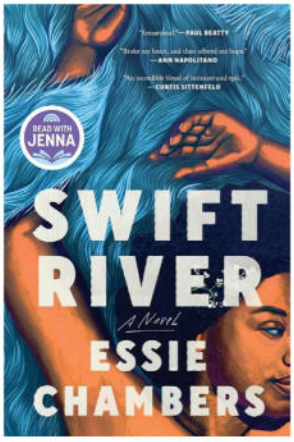
The Elements of Marie Curie: How the Glow of Radium Lit a Path for Women in Science. By Dava Sobel. 2024. Grove.

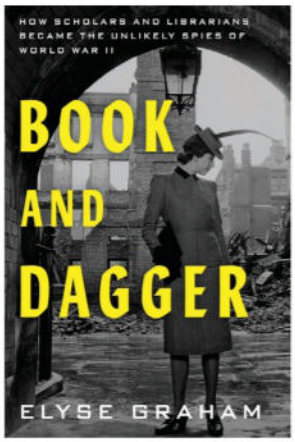
This vital portrait of Marie Curie—which chronicles tireless experiments, perseverance, discoveries—also incorporates details of the lives of the women who worked with her, fusing elements human and scientific.

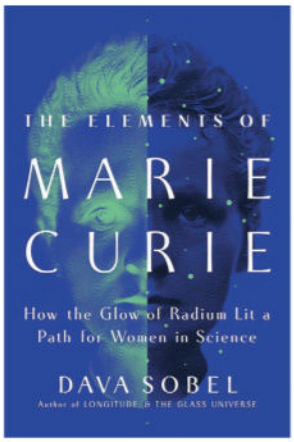
Our Hidden Conversations: What Americans Really Think about Race and Identity. By Michele Norris. 2024. Simon & Schuster.

The result of a mail-in project ("Race. Your Thoughts. 6 words. Please send.") explores eye-opening themes that emerged from the insightful, often painful experiences people shared.









The Truth about Immigration: Why Successful Societies Welcome Newcomers. By Zeke Hernandez. 2024. St. Martin's.

This clear, evidence-based discussion of a polarizing topic shows the positive contributions immigrants make and details the effects of the dysfunctional immigration system.

Fiction

All We Were Promised. By Ashton Lattimore. 2024. Ballantine.

In 1837 Philadelphia, three Black women—one who escaped slavery, one who was freeborn, and one who is still enslaved—explore the determined tenacity of female friendship.

Full Moon Coffee Shop. By Mai Mochizuki. Tr. by Jesse Kirkwood. 2024. Ballantine.

Five people find their lives changed by their encounters with a magical coffee shop staffed by giant, talking cats in this feel-good novel that is perfect for those needing a redirection.

One of Our Kind. By Nicola Yoon. 2024. Knopf.

A woman and her family move to a wealthy, all-Black suburb—touted as a Black utopia—but things are not what they seem in this suspenseful and provocative novel that raises unsettling questions.

Sandwich. By Catherine Newman. 2024. Harper.

As her family gathers for its annual vacation on Cape Cod, a woman comes to terms with life over 50, when her children are losing their innocent sweetness and her parents still see her as a child.

Swift River. By Essie Chambers. 2024. Simon & Schuster.

This insightful, moving, and wryly funny debut is set in the summer of 1987, when a teenager, the only Black person in her declining mill town, waits with her white mother for her father to be found dead so she can escape.

Reserve These Reads

Adult

Get your hands on these hotly anticipated books, all out this month.

Fiction

Hemlock & Silver. By T. Kingfisher. Tor.

Kingfisher, known for moody, atmospheric horror and fairy-tale retellings, turns her attention to Snow White, rendering the familiar story new in a unique way by telling it from the perspective of an independent, blunt healer whose expertise lies in antidotes to poison.

Katabasis. By R. F. Kuang. Harper Voyager.

When her dissertation advisor explodes (and it might be her fault), a student of Magick knows she has to go down to Hell to retrieve him. She is annoyed to be joined by her rival and former friend, and the two must learn to trust each other. At turns hilarious and sobering, *Katabasis* combines magic rooted in paradox with witty world building to give readers a simultaneous satire of and love letter to academia.

Kiss Her Goodbye. By Lisa Gardner. Grand Central.

Missing-persons hunter Frankie Elkins is back (after *Still See You Everywhere*, 2024), this time on the trail of a missing Afghan refugee, Sabera, who uncharacteristically left her young daughter behind. Frankie finds unlikely allies in the other folks who work at her side gig, pet-sitting a millionaire's reptiles, which is good, because a killer is after Sabera—and Frankie.

The Locked Ward. By Sarah Pekkanen. St. Martin's.

Pekkanen's latest deliciously twisty psychological thriller shuttles between two narratives: that of a woman locked in a psych ward who claims she is innocent of the murder she is accused of, and that of her twin sister—who didn't even know they were related—as she struggles with bureaucratic obstacles and the possibility that her newfound sister may be lying.

A New New Me. By Helen Oyeyemi. Riverhead.

Kinga isn't just one woman: she has a distinct personality for every day of the week, and each communicates with the others via a journal. When Monday's Kinga, known as Kinga-A, comes home to find a man tied up in her pantry, each Kinga must figure out who the man is and what he means to them. Oyeyemi's latest is a surrealist adventure with matryoshka-doll-style stories within stories that will dazzle adventurous readers.

People like Us. By Jason Mott. Dutton.

Mott, who won a National Book Award for *Hell of a Book* (2021), returns with this deeply personal tale of two writers—one on a global book tour, one giving a presentation at a school that just experienced a shooting—coping with the realities of gun violence as their lives intersect.

We Are All Guilty Here. By Karin Slaughter. Morrow.

The latest stand-alone from Slaughter follows a small-town police officer whose search turns personal when two teenage girls vanish during the town fireworks. She and her sheriff father think they got the guy who did it, but, years later, a podcast seems to have uncovered new evidence. Now, with the help of an FBI criminal psychologist with secrets of her own, they must find the real killer, who has struck again.

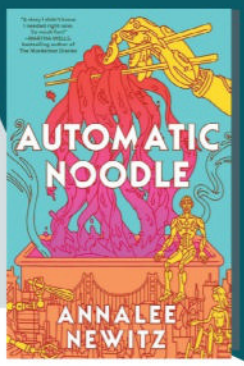


Art from *A New New Me.*

August 2025

The Top Ten Adult Fiction and Nonfiction Chosen Monthly by America's Library Staff

Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org



TOP PICK

Automatic Noodle
Annalee Newitz
(Tordotcom)

This refreshingly sweet and short tale is about a group of AI robots who band together in friendship to support each other—and along the way they open a wonderful little restaurant for the humans who survived a devastating war. This novel is the hopeful kind of science fiction we need right now.

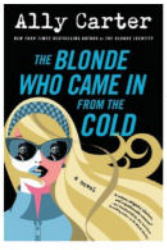
—Diana Tixier Herald, LibraryReads Ambassador
NoveList read-alike: *All Systems Red* by Martha Wells



The Battle of the Bookshops
Poppy Alexander
(Avon)

This charming literary-themed novel is about a young woman determined to save her great-aunt's beloved bookshop from extinction by the shiny new competition—which also happens to be run by the handsome son of her family's rivals. This is a great read for those who enjoy enemies-to-lovers romance.

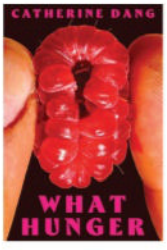
—Karen Troutman, LibraryReads Ambassador
NoveList read-alike: *Love to Hate You* by Marina Adair



The Blonde Who Came In from the Cold
Ally Carter
(Avon)

Two former covert agents wake up handcuffed in a shed, then start a globe-trotting trip down memory lane as they escape and try to figure out who's behind it all and what they want. This fast-paced, bantery rivals-to- lovers, second-chance romcom adventure works as a sequel and companion to *The Blonde Identity*.

—Julie Graham, Yakima Valley Libraries, WA
NoveList read-alike: *It Had to Be You* by Eliza Jane Brazier



What Hunger
Catherine Dang
(Simon & Schuster)

This gripping coming-of-age horror novel follows Ronny, who's entering high school when tragedy strikes her family. This is followed by an assault that alters her world. Forced to move forward, she must navigate the complexities of family life and a new school while carrying the weight of her trauma.

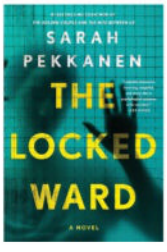
—Dominique Brown, Tinley Park Public Library, IL
NoveList read-alike: *The Lamb* by Lucy Rose



The Wrong Sister
Claire Douglas
(Harper Perennial)

Alice and her husband Kyle are watching her sister Tasha's children when the worst happens: they are attacked, leaving Alice in intensive care and Kyle dead. Was the target actually Tasha? This novel is full of suspense and secrets, and has great twists that will leave readers guessing.

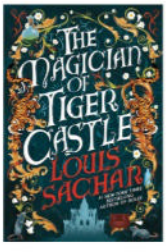
—Magan Szwarek, LibraryReads Ambassador
NoveList read-alike: *Our House* by Louise Candlish



The Locked Ward
Sarah Pekkanen
(St. Martin's Press)

Georgia has been accused of murdering her sister, and her adoptive parents have her locked in a psych ward. The only person she asks to see is her biological twin, who she has never met.The twists and turns will have readers breathlessly rushing through the final pages.

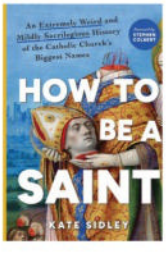
—Kaite Mediatore Stover, Kansas City Public Library, MO
NoveList read-alike: *Darling Girls* by Sally Hepworth



The Magician of Tiger Castle
Louis Sachar
(Berkley)

Anatole is a hairless magician tasked with getting the princess to fall out of love with Pito, a lowborn scribe, so she can proceed with her arranged marriage to a prince. A cozy fantasy novel brimming with Sachar's classic humor.

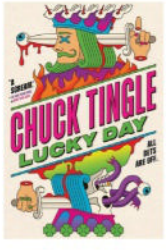
—Michelle Morris, Fort Worth Public LIbrary, TX
NoveList read-alike: *Kill the Farm Boy* by Kevin Hearne and Delilah S. Dawson



How to Be a Saint: An Extremely Weird and Mildly Sacrilegious History of The Catholic Church's Biggest Names
Kate Sidley
(Sourcebooks)

Readers will love the gruesome, weird, and goofy stories while they learn about Catholic miracles, martyrs, and traditions. With lively humor, Sibley covers the lives of saints, Medieval European history, and the past and current process of canonization.

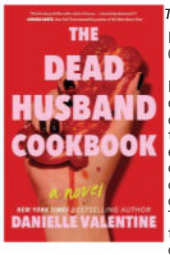
—Migdalia Jimenez, Chicago Public Library, IL
NoveList read-alike: *100 Places to Visit After You Die* by Ken Jennings



Lucky Day
Chuck Tingle
(Tor Nightfire)

Vera's life was perfect until a catastrophe so gruesome and unlikely that it resembled something out of a horror movie hit, causing her to question everything. Readers follow Vera as she is recruited by a secret government agency to help make sense of the events of that day four years ago and reset the scales of fate.

—William Ives, La Crosse Public Library, WI
NoveList read-alike: *Dr. No* by Percival Everett

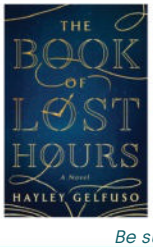


The Dead Husband Cookbook
Danielle Valentine
(Sourcebooks Landmark)

Maria's husband disappeared nearly 30 years ago, and now she's ready to tell her story. Enter Thea, an editor on the brink of career collapse. Arriving at Maria's country farm in an odd arrangement of secrecy, Thea will have to pick through Maria's story in order to save her career. A fun, fast read.

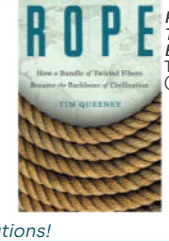
—Andrea Galvin, Mt. Pulaski Public Library, IL
NoveList read-alike: *Julie Tudor Is Not a Psychopath* by Jennifer Holdich

Bonus pick:



The Book of Lost Hours
Hayley Gelfuso
(Atria Books)

Notable Nonfiction:



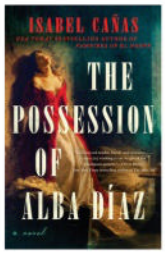
Rope: How a Bundle of Twisted Fibers Became the Backbone of Civilization
Tim Queeney
(St. Martin's Press)

Be sure to check out our social media for the Bonus Pick annotations!

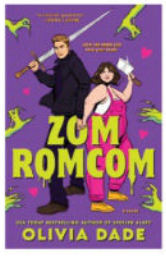
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August 2025
HALL OF FAME TITLES

The LibraryReads Hall of Fame designation honors authors who have had multiple titles appear on the monthly list since 2013.



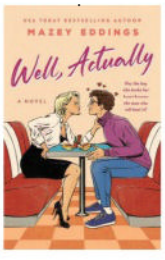
The Possession of Alba Díaz : A Novel
Isabel Cañas
(Berkley)



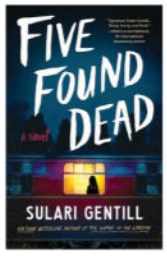
Zomromcom: A Novel
Olivia Dade
(Berkley)



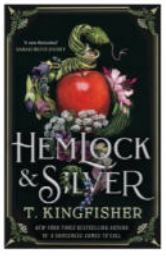
Too Old for This
Samantha Downing
(Berkley)



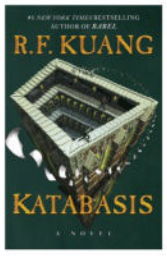
Well, Actually
Mazey Eddings
(St. Martin's Griffin)



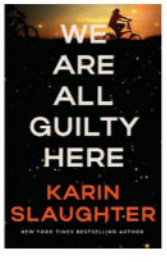
Five Found Dead
Sulari Gentill
(Poisoned Pen Press)



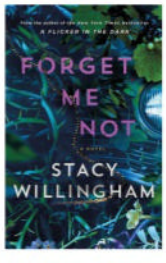
Hemlock & Silver
T. Kingfisher
(Tor Books)



Katabasis
R.F. Kuang
(Harper Voyager)



We Are All Guilty Here
Karin Slaughter
(William Morrow)



Forget Me Not
Stacy Willingham
(Minotaur Books)

Find out more at ww.LibraryReads.org/HOF

PBS BOOKS

PBS BOOKS READERS CLUB

This year marks the 250th birthday of Jane Austen, one of the most important and influential novelists in English literature. *Pride and Prejudice* is Jane Austen's most iconic novel, blending wit, romance, and sharp social commentary. It showcases her narrative innovation, and explores themes of class, pride, gender roles, and self-discovery. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was reimagined in *Bridget Jones's Diary,* by Helen Fielding, published in 1996. This clever, laugh-out-loud story, which is now considered a culturally iconic book, is told through the eyes of a hilariously imperfect modern heroine, Bridget; it popularized the chick lit genre as the novel explores the pressures women face to improve, adapt, and appear effortlessly put-together.

Fun Fact

Best-selling author Helen Fielding is not related to Henry Fielding (1707–54), the author of *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, which is considered to be one of the first modern English novels due to its blending comedy, social critique, and moral philosophy, as well as its complex plot, character development, and narrator. *Tom Jones*, a four-part Masterpiece miniseries, can be found on the PBS App.

For our August read, PBS Books Readers Club has selected *Bridget Jones's Diary,* welcoming beloved British author Helen Fielding to discuss her novel on Wednesday, August 27, at 8pm ET on Facebook Live, YouTube, PBSBooks.org, and the PBS App.



To further celebrate Jane Austen, we recommend that you read an Austen book this summer; *Pride and Prejudice* is a must. Then consider a few PBS watch-alikes:

Start with *Miss Austen,* a moving series that explores the untold story of Jane's sister, Cassandra, and the secret behind why she destroyed Jane's letters, revealing a tender, complicated bond between the sisters.

Then dive into *Death Comes to Pemberley,* a gripping whodunit that picks up where *Pride and Prejudice* left off—just as Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's happy marriage is upended by an unexpected murder at Pemberley.

And don't miss *Sanditon,* the lush, romantic adaptation of Austen's final, unfinished novel, full of strong heroines, seaside scandal, and sharp social commentary.

All are streaming on PBS—perfect for your Austen-inspired summer.

Program Highlights

MASTERPIECE Mystery!

MASTERPIECE Mystery! continues to entertain us with the amateur sleuth series, *The Marlow Murder Club,* season 2, and the cold case drama, *Unforgotten,* season 6. These fabulous series are cozy murder mysteries that keep you engaged and guessing, blending clever plots, sharp dialogue, and compelling characters with just the right touch of suspense.

***Unforgotten*, season 6 premieres Sunday, August 24, at 10/9 CT**
Unforgotten once again examines the lives of a disparate group of people linked to a single cold case. We follow DCI Jess James, DI Sunny Khan, and their team as they uncover the truth behind a dismembered body found in Whitney Marsh.



***The Marlow Murder Club*, season 2, debuts Sunday, August 24, at 9/8 CT.**
Life in the idyllic town of Marlow has just about returned to normal, but it's not long before Judith, Becks, and Suzie are called back into action, when a new series of unsettling crimes befall local residents. Navigating the delicate balance of Marlow society—from local aristocracy to boatyard workers, the picturesque High Street to a newly established archaeological dig—the sleuthing trio dig into all corners of Marlow life as they assist DCI Tanika Malik in her official investigations.

To get ready for *The Marlow Murder Club,* consider reading any of Robert Thorogood's books, including *The Marlow Murder Club* (2021), *Death Comes to Marlow* (2023), *The Queen of Poisons* (2024), *Murder on the Marlow Belle* (2025).

Curious about Pompeii?

POMPEII: THE NEW DIG chronicles the drama of the dig, the stunning discoveries and stylized fresco-inspired animations, which imagine what life was like in Pompeii before the eruption and the horror faced by the residents as Vesuvius erupted in AD 79. The excavation aims to unearth the buildings, their purpose, who lived there, and what happened to them during the eruption and its time line.

Watch episode 4 on August 6, at 10pm ET, and watch earlier episodes on PBS.org and the PBS app.

Some recommended read-alikes include The Wolf Den Trilogy, by Elodie Harper, and *There Will Be Bodies,* by Lindsey Davis.

Top 10

Book-Group Books on Audio

This year's list of discussable titles on audio is heavy on short stories and full casts—two elements that can make an audiobook listener out of the most devoted print reader.

Dearborn. By Ghassan Zeineddine. Read by Sarab Kamoo and Qarie Marshall. 2023. Dreamscape.

A debut short-story collection provides many avenues for viewing varied lives in the Muslim community of Dearborn, Michigan. Two narrators display excellent accent work.

Exodus: The Shanghai Jews. By Kate McAll. Performed by a full cast. 2023. L.A. Theatre Works.

This full-cast stage play portrays Jewish sojourners as they seek freedom, leaving listeners feeling that they have seen through a window into the hearty souls of these survivors.

Five-Star Stranger. By Kat Tang. Read by Julian Cihi. 2024. Simon & Schuster Audio.

The unnamed narrator becomes more vivid on audio as he shifts from one role to another in his job as a rent-a-stranger. Tang's debut offers much to discuss.

Gender Queer. By Maia Kobabe. Read by the author and a full cast. 2024. Listening Library. Gr. 9–12.

Book groups will recognize Kobabe's memoir from the news. This audio edition can be absorbed solo, or partnered with the print images. In the author's voice, supported by a full cast, listeners hear all of the emotion in eir complicated journey.

Long Island. By Colm Tóibín. Read by Jessie Buckley. 2024. Simon & Schuster Audio.

Ideal for book clubs favoring historical fiction and rich characterization. Buckley's narration of the people of a small town in 1970s Ireland is beautifully nuanced.

The Mighty Red. By Louise Erdrich. Read by Marin Ireland. 2024. HarperAudio.

Ireland enhances Erdrich's large, memorable cast of characters by tapping into personalities swirling around a story of love, land, and family.

The Sons of El Rey. By Alex Espinoza. Read by a full cast. 2024. Simon & Schuster Audio.

A stellar full cast evokes deep emotions in this tale of three generations of men in the Vega family as they grapple with how their identities, desires, and connection to lucha libre intersect.

This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things. By Naomi Wood. Read by Lynsey Beauchamp. 2024. HarperAudio.

Book clubs of the mom's-night-out variety may find resonance in how Beauchamp successfully captures the complex and constantly changing emotions of the women in this story collection set around COVID-19.

The Titanic Survivors Book Club. By Timothy Schaffert. Read by Max Meyers. 2024. Books on Tape.

Some book clubs can't get enough books about, well, book clubs! This one takes a curious tack in bringing together readers who skipped the fated voyage but find one another through reading.

A Well-Trained Wife: My Escape from Christian Patriarchy. By Tia Levings. Read by the author. 2024. Macmillan Audio.

A harrowing memoir of coming-of-age and parenting in a high-demand religion, overcoming odds, and finding inner strength in impossible situations. Levings tells her story with heart and grit.



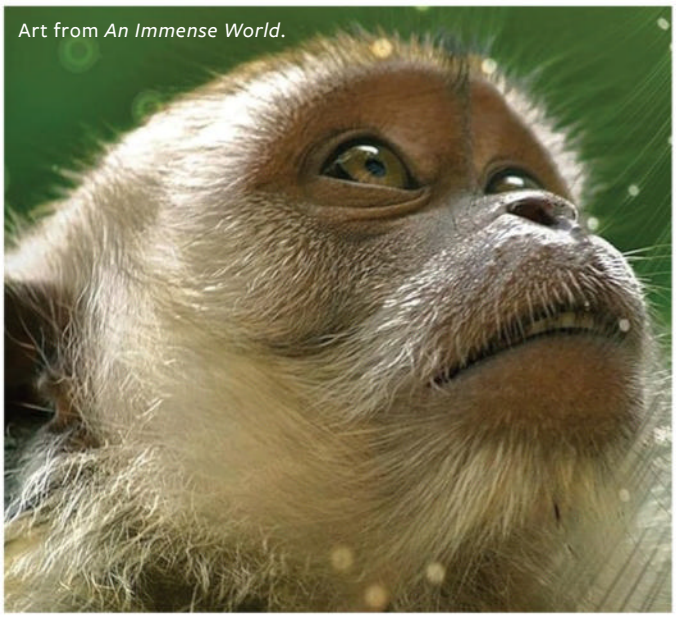
Art from *Exodus*.

Listen Up

Walking Audiobook Club Suggestions

by Van Hoang

Author and librarian Van Hoang's walking audiobook club is a great way to get some fresh air, meet with friends, and share favorite listens. Monthly, club members take to a local walking path to talk about books they've loved. Jump-start your own audiobook walking club with these club favorites.



Art from *An Immense World*.

An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us. By Ed Yong. Read by the author. 2022. Books on Tape.

Yong's fascination with the animals he studies shines through in this ode to their secret lives. Animals' umwelts, their perceptions of the world, are impossible to experience through our human lens, but with Yong's narration, we're lucky to have a glimpse into this magical universe.

The Indigo Girl. By Natasha Boyd. Read by Saskia Maarleveld. 2017. Blackstone.

The lyrical voice of the narrator helps us root for 16-year-old Eliza Clark as she overcomes the odds stacked against her in the struggle to plant indigo and harvest it into a dye, inspired by historical documents from 1739.

None of This Is True. By Lisa Jewell. Read by a full cast. 2023. Simon & Schuster Audio.

A full cast and realistic production elements make this super-compelling thriller about a podcaster and her mysterious birthday twin un-paus-able.



Art from *Vampires of El Norte*.

Pockets: An Intimate History of How We Keep Things Close. By Hannah Carlson. Read by Stephanie Cannon. 2023. Algonquin Books.

If you've ever experienced the pain of having no pockets, small pockets, or fake pockets, this book will give you the validation you need. Filled with historical details on pockets as well as social commentary on why some people have more of them than others, the narrator does an excellent job of keeping the facts quite riveting.

Sigh, Gone: A Misfit's Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In. By Phuc Tran. Read by the author. 2020. Macmillan.

The tattoo-artist-misfit-author talks about his struggles as a Vietnamese American kid growing up in a rocky world in this heartbreaking but entertaining and hopeful book.

Vampires of El Norte. By Isabel Cañas. Read by Jose Nateras and Krysta Gonzales. 2023. Books on Tape.

The double-cast narration brings this fast-paced supernatural western battle between vampires and vaqueros to life.

We Ride upon Sticks. By Quan Barry. Read by Isabel Keating. 2020. Books on Tape.

A field hockey team turns to witchcraft to improve its game in this entertaining, funny, and clever book that's made even more invigorating by Keating's enthusiastic narration for all the characters and their questionable but relatable antics.

Written in Bone: Hidden Stories in What We Leave Behind. By Sue Black. Read by the author. 2021. Dreamscape.

Black is a forensic anthropologist who details her extensive career in disgusting yet fascinating detail.

Listen Up

30 Minutes a Day

by Heather Booth

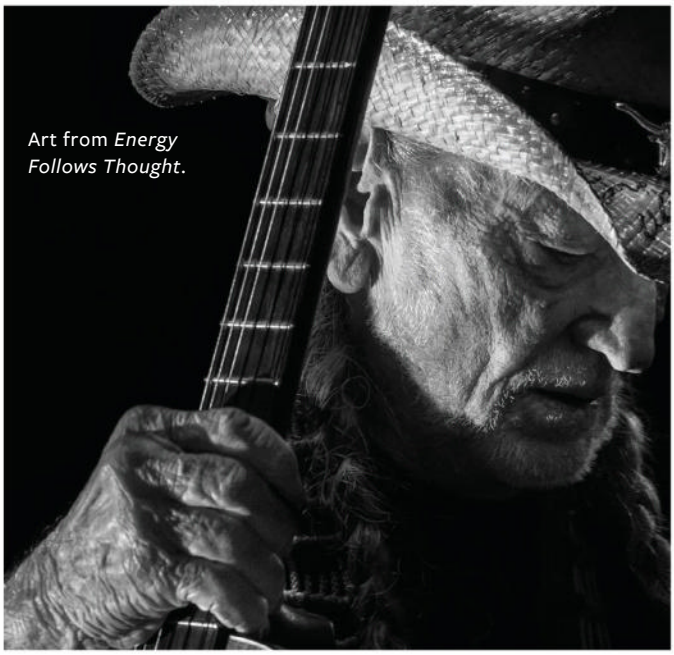
We've all heard the advice that 30 minutes of exercise each day is good for our health. What better to motivate and complement our physical self-care time than audiobooks that are easily listened to in healthy, bite-sized segments?

Energy Follows Thought: The Stories behind My Songs. By Willie Nelson and others. Read by Willie Nelson and Ethan Hawke. 2023. HarperAudio.

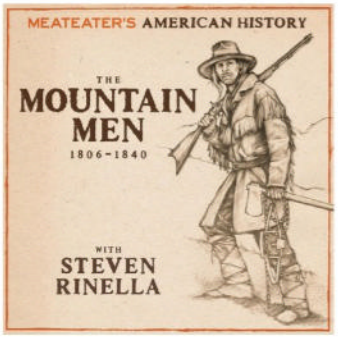
Nelson's long artistic career is a great model of tenacity and fortitude—good qualities to aspire to as we exercise. Each chapter is narrated by Hawke with a nostalgic twang and covers the history of a song in Nelson's vast catalog, which allows listeners to decide if they're having a "Twisted and Confused" kind of yoga session or are ready for a "Crazy" trail run instead.

The Golden Compass. By Philip Pullman. Read by Ruth Wilson. 2024. Listening Library. Gr. 7–12.

It's the start of a three-book epic adventure; what makes a book like this ideal for a workout pick? It's certainly long enough, and thoroughly engaging in a way that will keep listeners returning often enough, to turn that infrequent walk into a consistent healthy habit. Impeccable narration by Wilson, who played Mrs. Coulton in the BBC series based on Pullman's modern classic, brings a cinematic grandeur to the expansive tale.



Art from *Energy Follows Thought*.





MeatEater's American History: The Mountain Men (1806–1840). By Steve Rinella. Read by the author. 2025. Books on Tape.

Rinella's deep dive into a slim but significant slice of American history is an audio original and carries a similar vibe to his prolific podcast work. Listening to him discuss the grueling lives of rugged hunters in the early-1800s American west makes peak effort on the elliptical feel like a piece of cake.

Remote: The Six. By Eric Rickstad. Read by Ari Fliakos. 2025. Blackstone.

The Tableau Killer is about to strike again, and Gilles Garnier's ability to see events from afar may be the key that skeptical FBI Special Agent Lukas Stark needs. Brief chapters and taut writing keep the pace rapid and the opportunity for breaks ample . . . but the cliffhanger chapter endings might just urge you into taking one more lap around the block.

Turn to the Sun: Your Guide to Release Stress and Cultivate Better Health through Nature. By Brittany Gowan. Read by the author. 2024. Harper Celebrate.

For those who choose to exercise outside, a self-help title like Gowan's is a way to reinforce the restorative power of a connection to nature. Her companionable narration would make a good walking partner in a forest preserve or remind listeners of ways to seek nature even in our urban jungles. Questions to contemplate offer natural points to pause and reflect.

Wandering Stars. By Tommy Orange. Read by a full cast. 2024. Books on Tape.

Narrations with full casts will often lend themselves to episodic listening; a narrator change will almost always mean a break in the momentum of the story. Featuring Indigenous narrators, Orange's follow up to *There, There* tracks generations of a family recounting significant points in their and the country's history.

Top 10

Sports Books for Youth

Nontraditional representation—featuring almost exclusively women of intersectional backgrounds—takes the spotlight in these top 10 sports books for youth.

All the Noise at Once. By DeAndra Davis. 2025. Atheneum. Gr. 9–12.

Black, autistic Aiden longs to play football with his brother, Brandon, but when Brandon is accused of assaulting a cop, Aiden must find a way to clear his brother's name.

The Beautiful Game. By Yamile Saied Méndez. 2024. Little, Brown. Gr. 4–7.

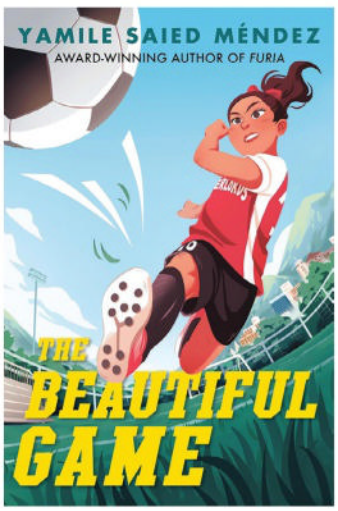
After a host of things goes wrong, including getting her period during a big match as part of the boys' soccer team, Valeria is forced to join the girls' squad.

Black Star. By Kwame Alexander. 2024. Little, Brown. Gr. 5–8.

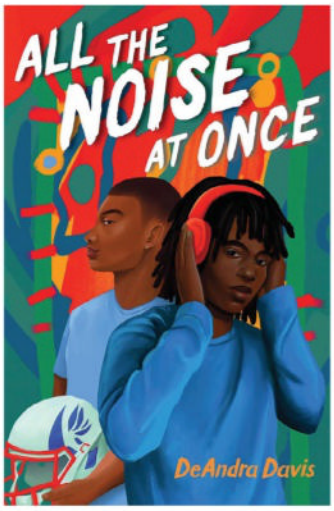
In this verse novel, 12-year-old Charley wants to be the first woman baseball pitcher, but racist realities of the 1920s South pose dangerous challenges.

Game Changers: Stories of Hijabi Athletes from Around the World. By Charlene Smith. Illus. by Natalya Tariq. 2025. Orca. Gr. 3–6.

Smith profiles 13 inspirational athletes from a variety of sports, all unified by their practice of hijab and its intersection with their athletic journeys.









A Greater Goal: The Epic Battle for Equal Pay in Women's Soccer—and Beyond. By Elizabeth Rusch. 2024. Greenwillow. Gr. 8–12.

This book explains how gender bias kept the top-tier U.S. Women's Soccer Team poorly paid in comparison with the Men's Team and what it took to level the playing field.

Introducing Sandwina: The Strongest Woman in the World! By Vicki Conrad. Illus. by Jeremy Holmes. 2024. Astra/Calkins Creek. Gr. 1–4.

This picture-book biography follows twentieth-century strong woman Katie Brumbach, who wowed audiences with feats of strength and advocated for women's suffrage.

It's All or Nothing, Vale. By Andrea Beatriz Arango. 2025. Random. Gr. 5–8.

Arango's vibrant verse ushers Vale's story along as she navigates recovery from a car-accident injury, a return to fencing, and her first crush.

One of the Boys. By Victoria Zeller. 2025. Levine Querido. Gr. 8–12.

In this standout debut, star football kicker Grace comes out as trans and spends senior year of high school grappling with the challenges of her transition.

Twist, Tumble, Triumph: The Story of Champion Gymnast Ágnes Keleti. By Deborah Bodin Cohen and Kerry Olitzky. Illus. by Martina Peluso. 2025. Lerner/Kar-Ben. K–Gr. 3.

An inspiring and fascinating biography of Ágnes Keleti, a Hungarian Jewish gymnast who survived the Nazis and persevered in her sport.

We Are Big Time. By Hena Khan. Art by Safiya Zerrougui. 2024. Knopf. Gr. 4–8.

Aliya's excited about joining the all-hijabi basketball team at her new school, but being named cocaptain after a tough start to the season adds lots of pressure.



Art from *You Don't Have a Shot.*

Sapphic Sports Romance

by Kelly Ferreira

Move over, classic YA romance tropes, there's a new femme in town. While sapphics in sports isn't exactly revolutionary (looking at you, *Bend It like Beckham*), lately, authors are cementing sporty WLWs as popular protagonists and love interests in the genre. There is an array of amorous, athletic "femininomenons" in the following sports-fiction titles, from a trans girl crushing it as the star football kicker to an egotistical baseball pitcher on the enemies-to-lovers train. Play on!

All's Fair in Love and Field Hockey. By Kit Rosewater. 2025. Delacorte Romance. Gr. 9–12.

Evelyn's life is fully engulfed by field hockey, but this new season brings two challenges in one package: Rosa, a highly skilled new player at the rival school who's also causing a big case of sexual identity crisis. A sweet, sporty, and hopeful look at figuring out life after high school and learning to make your own way and accept your own identity.

Alondra. By Gina Femia. 2023. Farrar. Gr. 7–10.

Alondra watches an amateur wrestling group outside her window and dreams of joining them. Opportunity strikes when Alondra is welcomed into the group, and she creates an alter ego exemplifying her most fearless traits. But grief over the loss of her mother lingers, and she can't stop thinking about Lexi, the leader of the wrestling group.

Bruised. By Tanya Boteju. 2021. Simon & Schuster. Gr. 10–12.

After losing her parents, Daya is consistently looking for ways to hurt herself to distract from her emotional pain. When her friend introduces her to roller derby, Daya sees a chance to dole out pain as well as receive it. She doesn't quite realize, though, that team sports might force her to face her inner turmoil—and maybe fall a little in love.

Cheer Up! Love and Pompoms. By Crystal Frasier. Art by Val Wise. 2021. Oni. Gr. 9–12.

Loner honor student Annie is pressured by her mom to branch out her extracurriculars, so she aims for cheer tryouts. Unfortunately, Annie's ex-best friend, Bebe, is on the team and Bebe has a challenge of her own—being the first trans girl cheerleader at the school. The two reconnect, make amends for their wrongdoings, and find new feelings for each other in this sweet, heartfelt tale of growth.

Home Field Advantage. By Dahlia Adler. 2022. St. Martin's/Wednesday. Gr. 9–12.

After the loss of the star quarterback in a car accident,

Amber is trying her hardest to just focus on becoming cheer captain and hiding her interest in girls by fake dating a closeted football player. Chaos erupts in their Florida town when the QB replacement, Jack, turns out to be a girl. Amber can't stop noticing Jack, though, and Jack is noticing her right back.

It's a Love/Skate Relationship. By Carli J. Corson. 2025. Harper. Gr. 9–12.

After a brutal hockey brawl, hotheaded Charlie is suspended from her private school and held responsible for paying back $10,000 of damage. Now at the rival public school, Charlie strikes a deal with prim figure skater Alexa: be her competition partner, and she'll cover the cost of damages. As the seeming opposites start to find rhythm together, their collision leads to sparks.

The Key to You and Me. By Jaye Robin Brown. 2021. HarperTeen. Gr. 9–12.

Getting over an ex-girlfriend is hard, but horse-crazy Piper is managing, training at the barn of a former Olympic horseback rider over the summer. What's harder is her grandmother's insistence that she learn to drive. Luckily, Piper's instructor, Kat, has as much to learn from Piper about being out-and-proud as Piper has to learn about driving and letting go.

Like Other Girls. By Britta Lundin. 2021. Disney/Freeform. Gr. 8–11.

Mara has anger issues, and now her basketball coach has given her an ultimatum—go one season on another team sport without losing her temper or be kicked off the basketball team for good. So she chooses football, though she accidentally inspires four more girls, including her biggest crush and greatest enemy, to join the team as well.

One of the Boys. By Victoria Zeller. 2025. Levine Querido. Gr. 8–12.

Grace was the star kicker of the football team prior to coming out as trans and fully believed that she had to leave that life behind to feel more like herself. But when her old friends/teammates desperately ask her to come back, Grace must deal with the clash of old habits and flames with new friends and interests.

Playing for Keeps. By Jennifer Dugan. 2024. Putnam. Gr. 9–12.

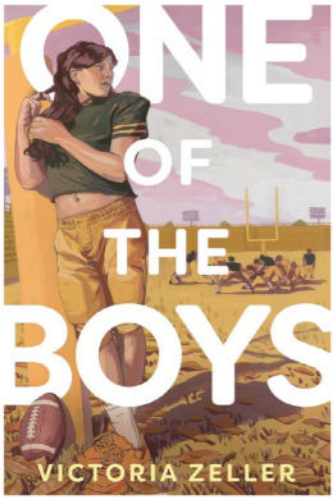
Pivoting from making calls for kids' soccer to being an umpire for elite club baseball is just what Ivy needs to move toward her goal of becoming a professional official. Then out of the dugout comes June, a hotheaded pitcher with her eyes on the major leagues. A misinterpreted umpire's call leads to mutual antagonism before shifting into begrudging friendship and then something more, which risks both girls' dreams.

She Drives Me Crazy. By Kelly Quindlen. 2021. Roaring Brook. Gr. 7–10.

Scottie can't catch a break: she and Tally break up, she loses to Tally's team in a varsity basketball game, and the final cherry on top? Getting into a fender bender with Irene, the gorgeous cheerleader who can't stand Scottie. Scottie and Irene are forced to carpool, presenting an opportunity for (bribed) fake dating to make Tally jealous.

Some Girls Do. By Jennifer Dugan. 2021. Putnam. Gr. 7–10.

When she's kicked out of her Catholic high school for violating the code of conduct just by being an out lesbian, track star Morgan takes it on the chin. At her new school, she runs into (literally) Ruby, an aspiring car mechanic stuck in the closet and competing in pageants to please her mom.



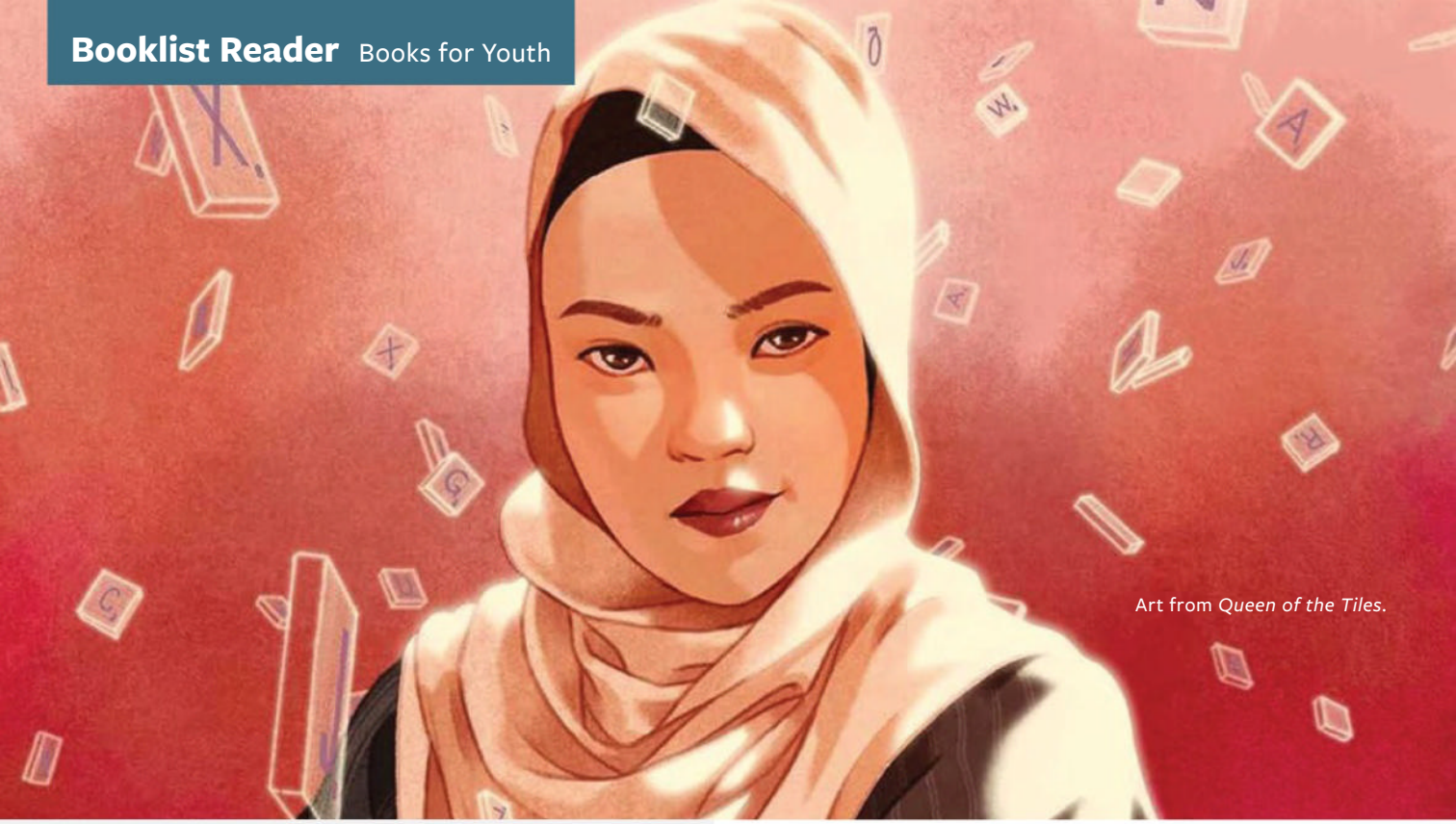


We Got the Beat. By Jenna Miller. 2024. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. Gr. 8–11.

Jordan is at the top of her game, ready to step into an editor role with her school newspaper. Except, there's been some kind of mistake: she's been assigned the volleyball beat and has to write a feature spotlight on her best friend turned nemesis, Mack, the team's captain. Though Jordan is determined to write a scathing review of Mack, their forced time together rekindles friendship and new feelings.

You Don't Have a Shot. By Racquel Marie. 2023. Feiwel and Friends. Gr. 9–12.

Vale is ready to be anywhere but home, but when she gets to soccer camp, she finds out she's cocaptain with her rival, Leticia, whom she got into some serious trouble with for fighting during a playoff game. The two need to make up and manage if they want their camp team to shine for the college scouts they'll be playing for.



Art from *Queen of the Tiles*.

Nerd Sports

by Ronny Khuri

We've been conditioned as a society (by patriarchal jocks, almost certainly) to believe that sports are exclusive to athletic contests, but I'm here—on behalf of nerds everywhere—to say nay! In a world in which we inhabit digital spaces, in which we can vie just as well (and perhaps more meaningfully) in contests that are more mental as we can in those physical, sports can and should include competition in activities such as chess, math, speech, debate, spelling, science, video games, speed-cubing, and even Scrabble. That's what I believe, at least. And so do the following novels, whose stories all tap into the power of nerd sports.

Be Dazzled. By Ryan La Sala. 2021. Sourcebooks/Fire. Gr. 8–12.

Raffy hopes to win this year's cosplay competition at Controverse, which could land him a sponsorship and even secure a path to art school, but his mother sees his cosplay designs as childish, and his former flame Luca has returned to compete against him.

The Best at It. By Maulik Pancholy. 2019. HarperCollins/Balzer+Bray. Gr. 5–7.

In this heartening debut novel, gay Indian American seventh-grader Rahul deals with his insecurities as he tries to find what he's best at. After reluctantly joining the Mathletes team, he works hard and excels.

Bird Nerd. By Jennifer Ann Richter. 2024. Holiday. Gr. 3–6.

As Nyla's Philadelphia school holds a birding tournament against a more affluent suburban class, she balances changing friendships even as she works to lead the majority-Black City Birders to victory against the majority-white Burb Birders.

Check & Mate. By Ali Hazelwood. 2023. Putnam. Gr. 8–12.

After quitting to take care of her struggling family, Mallory finds herself pulled back into the world of competitive chess—and into a simmering rivals-to-lovers romance with Nolan, known in the chess world as the "Kingkiller."

Chess Club: The Winning Move. By Rebecca Donnelly. Illus. by Isabelle Duffy. 2025. Farrar. Gr. 3–6.

Halima, Jem, Parker, and Daniel might not seem like they have much in common, but after Halima starts a chess club, the four members' friendship grows as they develop their skills and learn to work together.

Control Freaks. By J. E. Thomas. 2023. Levine Querido. Gr. 4–6.

Aspiring inventor Doug is paired with four other misfits

in a series of experimental STEAMS-based challenges that ruthlessly eliminate teams that can't get the hang of working together.

Curveball. By Pablo Cartaya. Art by Miguel Díaz Rivas and Lauren "Perry" Wheeler. 2024. Disney/Hyperion. Gr. 3–7.

After faking an injury, Elena takes the summer off from competitive baseball and joins her brother's LARPing group, in which she explores her imagination and rediscovers the fun of playing just to play instead of playing to win.

Gamerville. By Johnnie Christmas. Art by the author. 2024. HarperAlley. Gr. 3–6.

Just before the championship tournament for the video game Maxwell has mastered, his parents inform him that he has to go to nature camp for a month, where electronics are forbidden.

J vs. K. By Kwame Alexander and Jerry Craft. Illus. by Jerry Craft. 2025. Little, Brown. Gr. 4–6.

Two fifth-graders coincidentally named J and K—who look like junior versions of this book's coauthors—pair their skills in comics and poetry to compete in their K–8 school's annual creative-storytelling contest.



Art from *Gamerville*.

Lucky Scramble. By Peter Raymundo. Art by the author. 2024. Dial. Gr. 3–6.

In this graphic novel, 12-year-old Tyler dreams of making it to the Cube-Mania National Championships, the premiere event for Rubik's cube speed-cubers. After winning a regional competition, the only thing stopping him is the fact that his mom can't afford the trip.

Not an Easy Win. By Chrystal D. Giles. 2023. Random. Gr. 4–6.

Freshly expelled from his new school in his new town, Lawrence finds a home at a local rec-center chess club, where he learns that there's far more to the game and its real-life applications than he could have imagined.

Queen of the Tiles. By Hanna Alkaf. 2022. Simon & Schuster/Salaam Reads. Gr. 8–11.

A year after watching her best friend, Trina, keel over dead at a Scrabble tournament, Najwa returns to the scene to claim the title Trina left behind, Queen of the Tiles, and find out what really happened.

Skin. By Deborah Kelly. 2025. Wombat/Rhiza Edge. Gr. 8–12.

Fourteen-year-old Lexie has just won a regional public-speaking competition and is excited for state—until she finds a pre-melanoma growth that requires surgery, leaving her face scarred. Self-conscious about her appearance, Lexie is inspired to compete with a new speech.

Spelling It Out. By Margaret Finnegan. 2025. Atheneum. Gr. 4–7.

After winning a series of spelling bees, Ben spends the summer with his grandma in San Francisco, where he trains with a past winner of the National Spelling Bee. But he becomes troubled by signs that his grandmother is experiencing some form of dementia.

Status Royale, v.1. By Ru Xu. Art by the author. 2024. VIZ Media. Gr. 9–12.

In the world of competitive VR esports, Jun is heir apparent, while best friend and teammate Vell thinks they are just playing casually. This annoys Jun enough to block her, which prompts Vell to find a new team and train to beat Jun at his own game.

The Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee. By Deborah Abela. Illus. by the author. 2018. Sourcebooks/Jabberwocky. Gr. 3–6.

India loves watching the Stupendously Spectacular Spelling Bee, and after she tries out, her family and neighbors pitch in to help her get over her stage fright and conquer a series of challenges on the way to the finals.



Art from *Time and Time Again*.

Invisible Disabilities

by Kelly Ferreira

Too often, depictions of disability are limited to those obvious and visible to the general public, such as distinct physical differences from what we perceive as "average." But disability is far more diverse than what we can see: invisible disabilities are just as varied and distinct, from neurodiverse experiences with autism, psychosis, and OCD to less apparent physical disabilities like seizure disorders, chronic fatigue, and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. In the following titles, characters with invisible disabilities offer a wide array of nuanced representation and honest complexity, as well as a commendable amount of joy.

Middle Readers

Aniana del Mar Jumps In. By Jasminne Mendez. 2023. Dial. Gr. 4–8.

After receiving a diagnosis of juvenile idiopathic arthritis, Aniana is forbidden from swimming by her anxious mami. However, her doctor believes that swimming and medication might be just what Ani needs to manage her pain.

It's All or Nothing, Vale. By Andrea Beatriz Arango. 2025. Random. Gr. 5–8.

Vale returns to fencing after a car accident and months of physical therapy, but she can't move the way she used to due to chronic pain. Arango relays the challenges of recovery, disability, and queer awakening in quick, vibrant verse.

Not Quite a Ghost. By Anne Ursu. 2024. HarperCollins/Walden Pond. Gr. 4–6.

In this middle-grade reinvention of "The Yellow Wallpaper," Violet grapples with anxiety and chronic fatigue syndrome all while starting middle school and moving into a potentially haunted fixer-upper.

Something like Home. By Andrea Beatriz Arango. 2023. Random. Gr. 5–8.

After Laura ends up in kinship foster care with her aunt, she's determined to train a stray puppy to be a therapy dog so she can visit her parents in addiction rehab. Luckily, she befriends Benson, a great dog trainer managing his own trials with sickle-cell disease.

The Year My Life Went down the Toilet. By Jake Maia Arlow. 2023. Dial. Gr. 4–7.

Seventh grade is off to a rough start for Al, who has a recent Crohn's disease diagnosis and some friendship mishaps to handle. With the help of her support group, "The Bathroom Club," she finds community and confidence.

Older Readers

All the Noise at Once. By DeAndra Davis. 2025. Atheneum. Gr. 9–12.

Aiden, a Black, autistic teenager, wants nothing more than to play football like his older brother, Brandon, but a

mishap with the police puts Brandon on trial. Aiden must find a way to work through the system pitted against him to help clear Brandon's name.

Breathing Underwater. By Abbey Lee Nash. 2024. Holiday. Gr. 9–12.

After Tess has a seizure during an impromptu swim at a party, she's suddenly stuck on land and unable to participate on her private school's swim team. Tess works to come to terms with her new epilepsy diagnosis and the challenges surrounding accommodations in competitive sports.

Conditions of a Heart. By Bethany Mangle. 2024. Simon & Schuster/Margaret K. McElderry. Gr. 9–12.

Brynn is suspended from her prep school after trying to stop a fight at a pep rally, and her seemingly flawless high-school reputation is now up in the air. Her host of health conditions (hEDS, POTS) exacerbates the issue, but Brynn is determined to fight the systemic inequalities of her richer classmates' privilege.

Fight + Flight. By Jules Machias. Illus. by the author. 2022. HarperCollins/Quill Tree. Gr. 6–10.

Avery, who is living with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, and Sarah, who struggles with anxiety, begin a friendship—and maybe something more—in the wake of a school-shooting drill taken too far.

A Fix of Light. By Kel Menton. 2025. Little Island. Gr. 9–12.

Hanan consistently faces the question: are his powers real magic, or just another manifestation of his psychosis? This atmospheric read draws on Irish mythology and the challenges of mental illness to tell a fantastical trans love story.

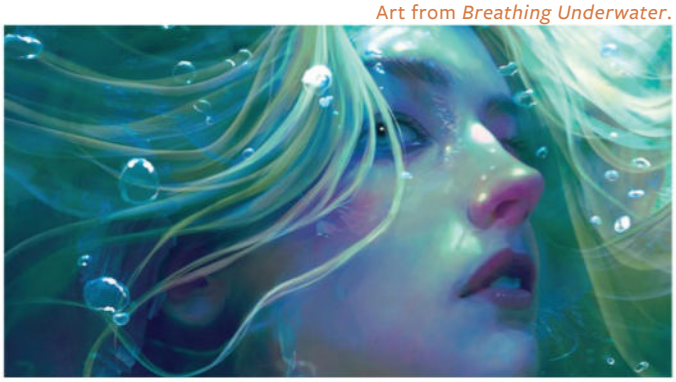
The Immeasurable Depth of You. By Maria Ingrande Mora. 2023. Peachtree Teen. Gr. 9–12.

Brynn's struggle with OCD and anxiety leaves her constantly riddled with intrusive thoughts about death, leading her mom to misinterpret a Tumblr post as a suicide note. Sent to live with her dad off the grid in Florida swampland, Brynn meets a ghost and finds purpose in solving the mystery of her new friend's death.



Art from *Aniana del Mar Jumps In.*

Art from *Breathing Underwater.*



Influence. By Sara Shepard and Lilia Buckingham. 2021. Delacorte. Gr. 7–10.

Alternating perspectives of four teens—each navigating internet virality and realistic experiences like managing diabetes, the intrusiveness of OCD, transitioning from poverty, and questioning sexuality—eventually come together as a deceptively dark murder whodunit in sunny California.

On the Bright Side. By Anna Sortino. 2024. Putnam. Gr. 9–12.

Ellie's Deaf boarding school was shut down by the state, forcing her back to an unwelcoming home and public school for senior year. There, she meets Jackson, a varsity soccer player who's experiencing unexplained health issues, including numbness in his legs. The duo navigate romance and their disabilities realistically in this sweet love story.

One for All. By Lillie Lainoff. 2022. Farrar. Gr. 9–12.

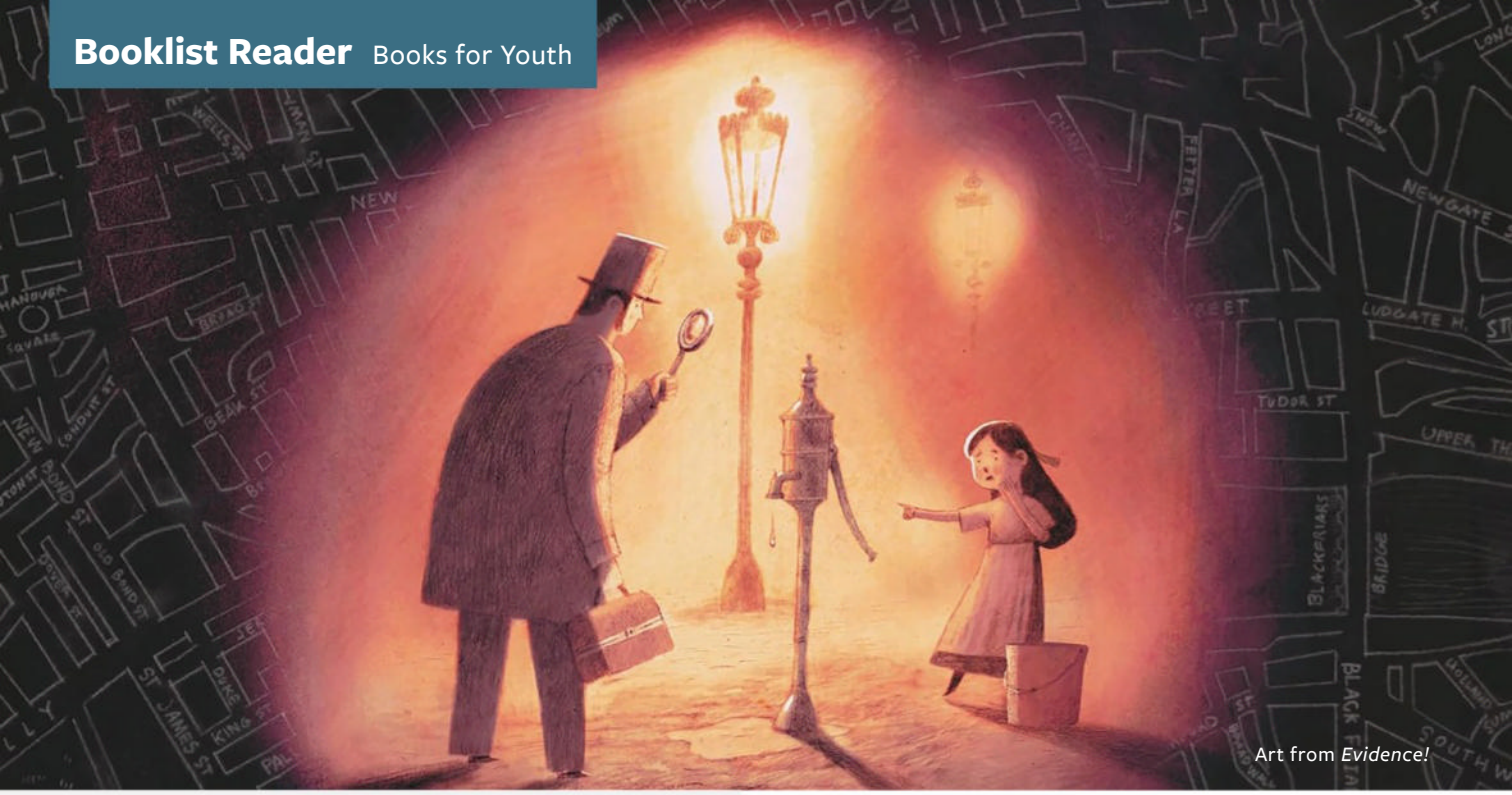
Tania grew up in seventeenth-century France knowing that everyone in her hometown believes that her chronic dizzy spells make her weak and unlikely to marry. After the mysterious death of her father, Tania is sent to a finishing school that is actually a secret spy academy in this reconceived version of *The Three Musketeers*.

Three Things About Emmy Crawford. By Allison L. Bitz. 2024. Harper. Gr. 9–12.

Emmy constantly dodges paparazzi as a senator's daughter, though she's more concerned with her debate performance and living around her disruptive Crohn's disease. When her secret ex, Gabe, returns to the debate scene and her younger sister, Issy, catches a crush, Emmy is determined to protect her.

Time and Time Again. By Chatham Greenfield. 2024. Bloomsbury YA. Gr. 9–12.

Phoebe is stuck in a time loop, waking up to a Dusty Springfield song as her mom makes the blueberry pancakes she knows Phoebe's IBS can't handle. But when her former friend Jess hits Phoebe with their car and remembers it the next day, the pair has a chance to figure out what pushed them apart.



Art from *Evidence!*

Public Health

by Sarah Hunter

Organizations and institutions that protect public health are essential to communities big and small. From vaccination programs to food standards to workplace safety, doctors, scientists, researchers, and policymakers have endeavored to enshrine guidelines and regulations to keep communities safe and healthy. The following titles, for a range of audiences, describe the sometimes gruesome and deadly conditions and circumstances that public-health programs were established to remedy, as well as the tireless, often thankless work that made them happen.

Older

Bubonic Panic: When Plague Invaded America. By Gail Jarrow. 2016. Astra/Calkins Creek. Gr. 6–9.

A plague outbreak in early twentieth-century San Francisco, primarily Chinatown, is the focus of Jarrow's comprehensive volume, which begins with a history of the infectious disease before moving on to describe how prejudice against Asian Americans hindered public health officials and mistrust of scientific research complicated mitigation efforts.

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World. By Tracy Kidder and Michael French. 2013. Delacorte. Gr. 7–12.

Renowned epidemiologist and medical anthropologist Paul Farmer dedicated his career to improving public-health policy at a global scale, and this young readers' adaptation of Kidder's adult title describes not only his life and work but also the values and convictions driving that work—that absolutely everyone deserves quality health care.

Terrible Typhoid Mary: A True Story of the Deadliest Cook in America. By Susan Campbell Bartoletti. 2015. Clarion. Gr. 6–9.

This title offers an uncommonly nuanced picture of the woman known as Typhoid Mary, and in revealing details of her life and times, including some on the public-health officials tasked with preventing the spread of typhoid, Bartoletti raises powerful questions about sensational journalism, government overreach, and science and medical literacy that will likely encourage critical thinking about contemporary topics.

Very, Very, Very Dreadful: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918. By Albert Marrin. 2018. Knopf. Gr. 9–12.

Acclaimed nonfiction author Marrin's detailed account of the 1918 flu pandemic illustrates the conditions and circumstances that exacerbated the deadly spread of the flu over a century ago, including the public-health measures attempted at the time and research into flu prevention. While Marrin's 2018-era predictions in the conclusion might feel quaint to contemporary readers, the historical parallels are undeniably thought-provoking.

Middle

Plague-Busters! Medicine's Battles with History's Deadliest Diseases. By Lindsey Fitzharris and Adrian Teal. Illus. by Adrian Teal. 2023. Bloomsbury. Gr. 4–7.

This entertaining, accessible, and satisfyingly disgusting history of six diseases explores notorious outbreaks and their effects on politics, military campaigns, and everyday life; noteworthy individuals who discovered, either accidentally or through rigorous research, effective treatments and cures; and the importance of public-health measures and policies for controlling—and in some cases, fully eradicating—these diseases.

Poison: Deadly Deeds, Perilous Professions, and Murderous Medicines. By Sarah Albee. Illus. by Karl Newsom Edwards. 2017. Crown. Gr. 5–8.

Amid this tantalizingly morbid yet very well-researched history of poisons, Albee of course covers some ignominious murders, but she also addresses how common people were victims of hazardous jobs, adulterated food, and deadly medical treatments, as well as the emergence of much-needed food and drug regulation.

The Poison Eaters: Fighting Danger and Fraud in Our Food and Drugs. By Gail Jarrow. 2019. Astra/Calkins Creek. Gr. 5–8.

Before federal regulatory bodies enforced rules about food and drug standards and safety, Harvey Washington Wiley spearheaded research into the effects of dangerous ingredients on human consumers, blazing a trail for what became the FDA. Jarrow describes in vivid detail the state of consumer goods in the U.S. before regulation, and the reality is stomach-churning.

The Radium Girls: The Scary but True Story of the Poison that Made People Glow in the Dark. By Kate Moore. 2020. Sourcebooks/eXplore. Gr. 4–8.

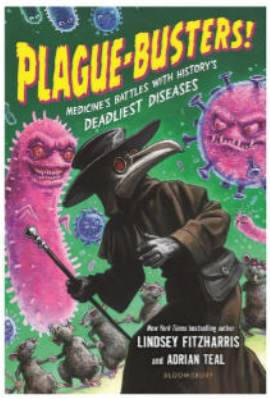
Moore recounts the circumstances that led to widespread radium poisoning among watch-dial painters in the early twentieth century and the painters' legal fight against their employer, a company that negligently downplayed the effects of radium, as well as the ensuing labor laws that afforded workers protections from occupational diseases and scientific discoveries that lead to a more comprehensive understanding of radiation exposure.

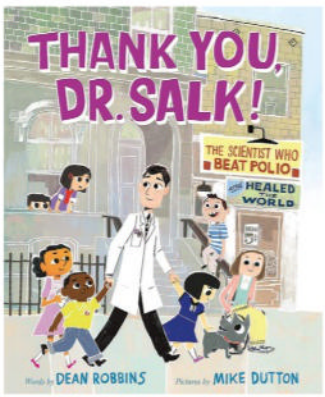
Red Madness: How a Medical Mystery Changed What We Eat. By Gail Jarrow. 2014. Astra/Calkins Creek. Gr. 5–8.

Pellagra, a potentially deadly illness that causes a menacing red rash, was unheard of in America when cases began to surface in the South in 1902. Jarrow lucidly details the ensuing medical investigation while explaining pertinent social issues of the day, such as the industrialization of the American food supply, the rise of sensational journalism, and the treatment of the poor, the ill, and the elderly.

Virus Hunters: How Science Protects People When Outbreaks and Pandemics Strike. By Amy Cherrix. 2024. Harper. Gr. 6–8.

Getting increasingly granular and technical as she goes, Cherrix surveys the history of modern epidemiology, from Dr. John Snow's groundbreaking detective work tracking down the cause of a London cholera epidemic in 1854 to the worldwide eradication of smallpox in the 1970s and the development of mRNA-tailored vaccines to fight COVID-19.





Young

Evidence! How Dr. John Snow Solved the Mystery of Cholera. By Deborah Hopkinson. Illus. by Nik Henderson. 2024. Knopf. K–Gr. 3.

Hopkinson's suspenseful case study reveals how Dr. John Snow, despite only having access to circumstantial evidence, identified the source of a cholera outbreak, persuaded skeptical officials to take action, and provided a model for epidemiological investigation that ultimately revolutionized public health as a field.

Thank You, Dr. Salk! The Scientist Who Beat Polio and Healed the World. By Dean Robbins. Illus. by Mike Dutton. 2021. Farrar. PreS–Gr. 3.

In a tone ideal for the youngest readers, Robbins gently but forthrightly describes the impact of polio on children—the illustrations show kids in wheelchairs or using crutches; others quarantined away from public pools and playgrounds—before detailing how Dr. Salk strove to develop a vaccine and the mass-vaccination campaign that resulted.

A Vaccine Is like a Memory. By Rajani LaRocca. Illus. by Kathleen Marcotte. 2023. little bee. K–Gr. 4.

Physician LaRocca not only explains in accessible detail how vaccines work to prevent major infection in individuals but describes how public-health institutions promoting vaccination campaigns can prevent the widespread prevalence of a disease through herd immunity. Cheerful artwork keeps the tone light and inviting.

Reserve These Reads

Children & Teens

Get your hands on these hotly anticipated books, all out this month.

Older

The Raven Boys: Graphic Adaptation. By Maggie Stiefvater. Adapted by Stephanie Williams. Art by Sas Milledge. Viking. Gr. 9–12.

Stiefvater's best-selling Raven Cycle gets the graphic treatment in this adaptation, the first volume in a planned series.

This Place Kills Me. By Mariko Tamaki. Art by Nicole Goux. Abrams/Fanfare. Gr. 8–12.

New-girl Abby investigates the murder of an elite theater-society student at her prep school in this twisty graphic mystery from acclaimed Tamaki.

Verity Vox and the Curse of Foxfire. By Don Martin. Page Street YA. Gr. 7–12.

Verity sets out to remove the curses afflicting the Appalachian town of Foxfire, encountering both the coziness of a pastoral town and the eldritch horrors of ancient magic.

White Lies: How the South Lost the Civil War, Then Rewrote the History. By Ann Bausum. Roaring Brook. Gr. 8–12.

Bausum expertly covers the Confederates who crafted the alternative post-Civil War narrative of the Lost Cause and its relevance to today's political climate.



Art from *Aggie and the Ghost*.

Middle

Dream On. By Shannon Hale. Art by Marcela Cespedes and Lark Pien. Roaring Brook. Gr. 3–6.

Cassie's anxieties about her crowded family, shifting friendships, and transforming perspectives come to life in this imaginative comic.

The Forest of a Thousand Eyes. By Frances Hardinge. Illus. by Emily Gravett. Abrams/Amulet. Gr. 3–7.

A girl ventures into the dangerous unknown as she impulsively follows a thief in this dark, illustrated fantasy.

The Library in the Woods. By Calvin Alexander Ramsey. Illus. by R. Gregory Christie. Carolrhoda. Gr. 2–5.

A Black boy growing up in the segregated South, where he is excluded from the town library, discovers and treasures a library that welcomes him.

The Sky Was My Blanket: A Young Man's Journey across Wartime Europe. By Uri Shulevitz. Illus. by the author. Farrar. Gr. 4–6.

This posthumous publication documents the true story of Shulevitz's uncle at 15 just before WWII, traveling Europe as fascism creeps in.

Your Turn Marisol Rainey. By Erin Entrada Kelly. Illus. by the author. Greenwillow. Gr. 3–7.

Language arts-loving Marisol has second thoughts on her passions when she finds out she has to write a haiku and read it—in front of everyone!



Art from *The Raven Boys*.

Young

Aggie and the Ghost. By Matthew Forsythe. Illus. by the author. Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane. PreS–Gr. 2.

Aggie is excited to live alone, but a ghost in her home makes things uncomfortable, prompting a list of rules and an inevitable clash.

The Invisible Parade. By Leigh Bardugo. Illus. by John Picacio. Little, Brown. K–Gr. 3.

This picture book is an understated masterclass in processing grief through the story of a melancholy Cala as she prepares for Día de los Muertos.



















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