



May 2023

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

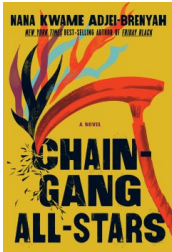
Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org



The Ferryman: A Novel
Justin Cronin
(Ballantine Books)

In a world where people don't die but are ferried away to be regenerated into a 16-year-old with no memories, Proctor is responsible for making sure the "retirees" go without a fuss. But he is quickly drawn into a mystery at the heart of their society. The multi-layered quality moves this from a poignant story into thriller, into world-exploring science fiction.

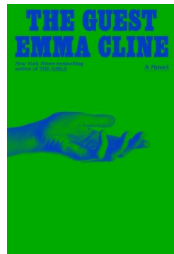
—John Sloan, Chicago Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *Saha* /Nam-Ju Cho



Chain-Gang All-Stars: A Novel
Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah
(Pantheon)

In a near-future America, prisoners can opt into a gruesome program of death matches against other prisoners. Their lives are broadcast to a bloodthirsty public, and they can win their freedom if they kill enough opponents. The novel employs an effective series of rotating narrators to tell all sides of this story, forcing us to look at how we dehumanize prisoners.

— Laura Bovee, Chicopee Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *Bitch Planet*/Kelly Sue DeConnick



The Guest: A Novel
Emma Cline
(Random House)

Alex is coasting through life on the grace and credit card of her older boyfriend for the summer. She can't return to the city now that her roommates want nothing to do with her, and her friends have all disappeared. There is nothing she won't do, and no one she won't manipulate, to get what she needs: a bit more time. Perfect for fans of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.

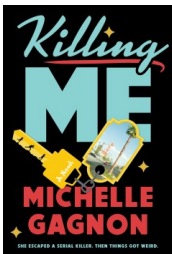
— Kimberly McGee, Lake Travis Community Library
Novelist read-alike: *Luster*/Raven Leilani



The Half Moon: A Novel
Mary Beth Keane
(Scribner)

What happens when your current life doesn't match your expectations? That's what's happening with Malcom and Jess. The married couple thought things would be easier, but life keeps throwing curveballs at them. Over the course of a blizzard, they are forced to reckon with their decisions and determine if they can move forward on a different path.

—Melissa Tunstall, Charleston County Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *Early Morning Riser*/Katherine Heiny



Killing Me
Michelle Gagnon
(G.P. Putnam's Sons)

Amber has very strong opinions about people who fall prey to serial killers and is sure that being savvy and street smart will keep her safe. Until she is taken by a serial killer, and her life becomes a hot mess. This quirky, snarky book reads like Janet Evanovich teamed up with Stephen King.

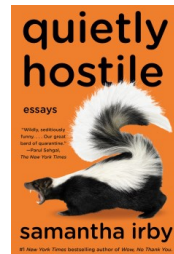
— Linda Quinn, Fairfield Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone*/Benjamin Stevenson



Practice Makes Perfect: A Novel
Sarah Adams
(Dell)

A sweet Kentucky florist looking for love asks her sister-in-law's bodyguard to help her sass up after a date accuses her of being too boring. With wonderful characters, this cute romance is a great second installment in the *When in Rome* series.

— Sonya Skibicki, Bartlett Public Library District
Novelist read-alike: *The American Roommate Experiment*/Elena Armas



Quietly Hostile: Essays
Samantha Irby
(Vintage)

If you haven't already read Irby: 1) Who are you and how do you live? 2) This is a perfect time to start. Reading her relatable essays feels like hanging out with an older sister who doesn't sugarcoat the awkward parts of life and helps you recognize you're not the only one faking your way through adulthood.

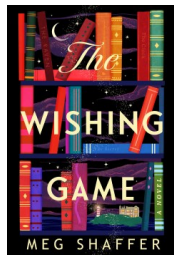
— Rebecca Hayes, Highland Park Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *She's Nice Though*/Mia Mercado



The Secret Book of Flora Lea
Patti Callahan Henry
(Atria)

A poetic tribute to the power of story. Exploring the lifelong effects of the horrors of war, the richly developed characters endure loss that haunts them into adulthood. When a mysterious book appears, it sets in motion a search for answers, making sense of the past, and healing of broken hearts.

— Ron Block, Cuyahoga County Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *The Distant Hours*/Kate Morton



The Wishing Game: A Novel
Meg Shaffer
(Ballantine Books)

In this magical tale, a beloved children's author announces a tantalizing game: four fans can compete to win the only copy of his new book. All the contestants are intriguing, but readers will root for Lucy, a teacher's aide desperate to find the money needed to adopt an orphaned boy.

— Beth Mills, New Rochelle Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore*/Robin Sloan



Witch King
Martha Wells
(Tordotcom)

Kai, the eponymous (and erroneously named) Witch King, traverses two timelines as he helps overthrow an empire and then has to deal with the descendants of heroes who live long enough to become villains. A very fun, tightly plotted epic fantasy with spectacular worldbuilding and pacing.

— Veronica Koven-Matasy, Boston Public Library
Novelist read-alike: *The Goblin Emperor*/Katherine Addison

Bonus pick:



Hula: A Novel
Jasmin 'Iolani Hakes
(HarperVia)

See our social media for annotation!



HALL OF FAME AUTHORS

MAY 2023

The LibraryReads Hall of Fame designation honors authors who have had multiple titles appear on the monthly LibraryReads list since 2013. When their third title places on the list via library staff votes, the author moves into the Hall of Fame.

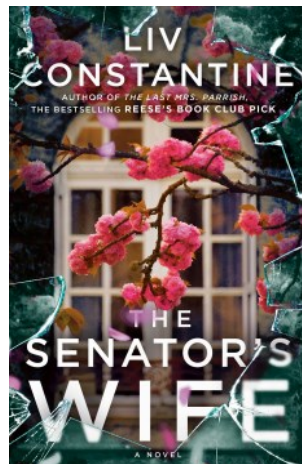


The Celebrants
by Steven Rowley
(G.P. Putnam's Sons)

This story of four lifelong friends going through the challenges of middle age will make the reader feel like they know each character intimately by the end. And even when tragic events occur, there is still humor and a lot of heart. Highly recommended for readers looking for a light read with emotional depth.

—Elizabeth I., DeKalb County Public Library System

Novelist read-alike:
This Time Tomorrow/Emma Straub

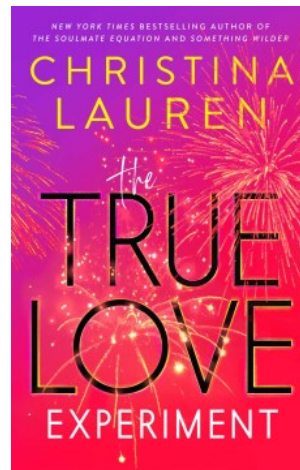


The Senator's Wife: A Novel
by Liv Constantine
(Bantam Books)

After her husband was murdered, Sloane never expected to find happiness, but she did...with Whit, who was married to her husband's killer. Whit considerably hires an aide for Sloane, who has a chronic illness, to help her recover from major surgery. But as she suffers debilitating flare-ups and Whit exhibits suspicious behavior, Sloane wonders whether she will ever get her life back. This thriller will keep readers up well after bedtime.

—Chris Markley, Kingsport Public Library

Novelist read-alike:
The Personal Assistant/Kimberly Belle



The True Love Experiment
by Christina Lauren
(Gallery Books)

Romance author Felicity (Fizzy) Chen is asked by documentary filmmaker Connor Prince to find her "Golden Match" on a reality dating show. Readers will love seeing the dynamic between Fizzy and Connor grow through both their perspectives. Fun and light, this is perfect for *Bachelor/Bachelorette* fans.

—Rachel Salazar, Pueblo City County Library District

Novelist read-alike:
The Charm Offensive/Allison Cochran



Yellowface: A Novel
by R. F. Kuang
(William Morrow)

Kuang hits it out of the park with viscerating observations on the publishing world. She asks astute and provoking questions: Who gets to succeed in publishing? Why can we only have a few writers of color in a publisher's docket at a time? Who gets to call out these transactions and does cancel culture hold the transgressors responsible? As a biracial reader, this hit home, particularly the way it ends with the question: What is the point of writing the great American novel if you've manipulated, exploited, and fetishized people of color to get there? An excellent example of women's work that expresses anger, which is still rarely shown in contemporary fiction.

—Molly Nota, Ada Community Library-Connect Branch

Novelist read-alike:
The Other Black Girl/Zakiya Dalila Harris

Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org

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