***Animal Farm*** (141 pages)

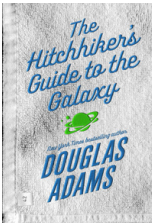
Animal Farm is George Orwell's allegorical novella about farm animals who overthrow their oppressive human farmer. Initially hoping to create an equal, self-governing society, the rebellion is slowly hijacked by the farm's pigs. It ultimately devolves into a harsh dictatorship where the corrupt ruling class becomes indistinguishable from the humans they originally fought.

***Fahrenheit 451*** (249 pages)

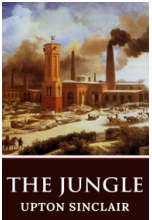
Fahrenheit 451 is a dystopian novel by Ray Bradbury, published in 1953, where "firemen" burn books instead of putting out fires in a future society that discourages critical thinking and values mindless entertainment. The story follows fireman Guy Montag, who begins to question his role and society after meeting a free-spirited young woman, Clarisse, and witnessing a woman choose to burn with her books. Montag starts hiding books, leading him to rebel, escape, and join a group of intellectuals who preserve literature, as his world is destroyed.

***The Handmaid's Tale*** (311 pages)

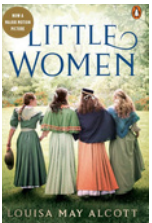
The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood is a chilling 1985 dystopian novel set in the Republic of Gilead, a theocratic dictatorship that overthrew the U.S. government. Facing an environmental and fertility crisis, fertile women are enslaved as "Handmaids" to bear children for the ruling elite.

***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*** (192 pages)

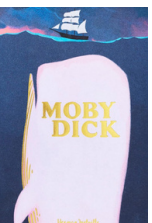
The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams is a comedic sci-fi tale about Arthur Dent, an ordinary Englishman who escapes Earth's destruction seconds before it is vaporized by an alien race to make way for a hyperspace bypass. Arthur and his alien friend, Ford Prefect, hitchhike across the cosmos, encountering absurd adventures.

***The Jungle*** (411 pages)

Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle* follows Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant who moves to Chicago's meatpacking district (Packingtown) dreaming of the American Dream. Instead, he and his family are crushed by a ruthless, unregulated capitalist system, facing exploitation, extreme poverty, tragic deaths, and the corrupting nature of survival.

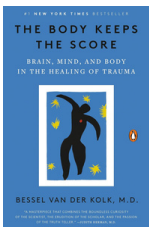
***Little Women*** (436 pages)

Louisa May Alcott's classic novel *Little Women* follows the coming-of-age journey of the four March sisters—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy—in 19th-century Massachusetts. Set during and after the Civil War, the story explores their struggles with poverty, family tragedies, personal growth, and romance as they transition into womanhood.

***Moby-Dick*** (608 pages)

Herman Melville's 1851 epic *Moby-Dick* is narrated by the sailor Ishmael, who joins the whaler Pequod. Its monomaniacal captain, Ahab, drives the crew on a destructive, vengeful quest to hunt down Moby Dick—the legendary giant white sperm whale that previously bit off Ahab's leg.

Nonfiction



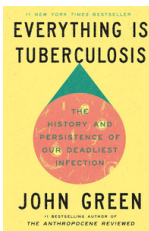
***The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (445 pages)**

The Body Keeps the Score by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk is a foundational book on psychological trauma. It argues that trauma is not just a mental memory, but a physical imprint stored in the nervous system and body. Traditional talk therapy often falls short because trauma changes how the brain functions.



***The Demon of Unrest: A Saga of Hubris, Heartbreak, and Heroism at the Dawn of the Civil War* (565 pages)**

Erik Larson's *The Demon of Unrest* is a nonfiction historical narrative that delves into the critical period between Abraham Lincoln's election in November 1860 and the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861. The book examines the complex interplay of political maneuvering, personal struggles, and ideological clashes that ultimately led to the outbreak of the Civil War. Larson uses a rich array of primary sources, including diaries and letters, to bring the historical figures and events to life.



***Everything Is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection* (198 pages)**

Everything Is Tuberculosis is a nonfiction work by John Green that blends personal narrative, medical history, and cultural analysis to examine the ongoing global crisis of tuberculosis (TB).



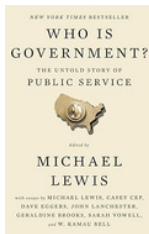
***The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration Into the Wonder of Consciousness* (261 pages)**

The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness is a 2015 nonfiction book by naturalist Sy Montgomery. It chronicles her deep emotional connections with several captive octopuses at the New England Aquarium, exploring their remarkable intelligence, distinct personalities, and the surprising capacity for interspecies consciousness. Great nonfiction companion read to Shelby Van Pelt's fiction title *Remarkably Bright Creatures*.



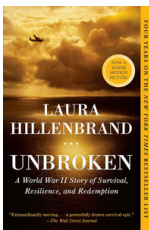
***The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder* (329 pages)**

David Grann's *The Wager* is a gripping, true-life tale of a doomed 1740s British naval expedition. Tasked with a secret mission to plunder a Spanish treasure ship, the HMS Wager wrecked on a desolate Patagonian island. Facing starvation and mutiny, the surviving crew fractured into warring factions.



***Who Is Government?: The Untold Story of Public Service* (243 pages)**

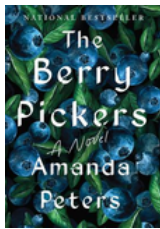
In *Who Is Government*, Michael Lewis examines the essential work of federal employees who operate behind the scenes to ensure the government functions effectively. The book is a collection of essays that profiles various civil servants, showcasing their dedication, integrity, and the significant impact of their work on American society. Lewis aims to challenge the prevailing stereotypes about government inefficiency and bureaucracy by presenting compelling narratives of individuals committed to public service.



***Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* (500 pages)**

Laura Hillenbrand's *Unbroken* is a nonfiction biography detailing the life of Louis "Louie" Zamperini. A troubled youth who channeled his energy into running to become a 1936 Olympian, Zamperini became a WWII bombardier. He survived 47 days adrift on a raft and years of brutal Japanese POW torture before finding ultimate redemption through faith.

Fiction



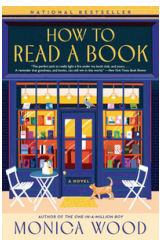
***The Berry Pickers* (307 pages)**

The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters is a poignant novel about a four-year-old Mi'kmaq girl named Ruthie who vanishes from a Maine blueberry field in 1962. The story explores the resulting five decades of trauma, following her guilty older brother Joe and Ruthie herself—raised as a disconnected white girl named Norma—as their lives inch toward a reunion.



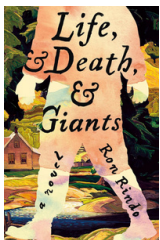
***The Diamond Eye* (436 pages)**

The Diamond Eye by Kate Quinn is a historical fiction novel based on the true story of Lyudmila "Mila" Pavlichenko, a bookish Ukrainian history student and single mother who became one of WWII's deadliest snipers. Dubbed "Lady Death," she tallied over 300 kills before being sent to America on a goodwill tour, where she befriended First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.



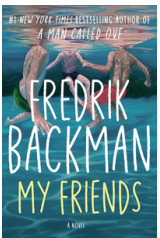
***How to Read a Book* (280 pages)**

How to Read a Book by Monica Wood follows the journey of three characters brought together through grief and trauma. In Violet, Frank, and Harriet's converging paths, Wood explores the effects of incarceration, the healing power of books, and the importance of forgiveness of self and others.



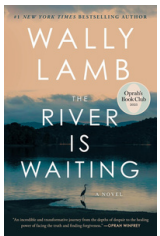
***Life, and Death, and Giants* (336 pages)**

Life, and Death, and Giants by Ron Rindo is a multigenerational saga set in rural Lakota, Wisconsin. It follows Gabriel Fisher, a boy born with pituitary gigantism to an excommunicated Amish woman. Raised by family and local townspeople, his extraordinary size and athletic prowess propel him into global fame, upending both the Amish and secular worlds.



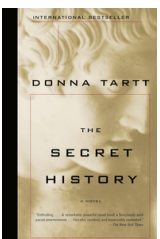
***My Friends* (448 pages)**

Fredrik Backman's *My Friends* is a deeply moving novel about art, grief, and human connection. It centers on an 18-year-old girl named Louisa who is tasked with looking after a famous painting. Through an unexpected road trip with Ted, a man depicted in the artwork, she uncovers the powerful bond of the four friends who inspired it.



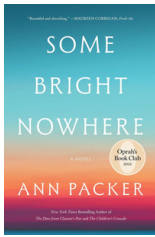
***The River is Waiting* (448 pages)**

In *The River Is Waiting* by Wally Lamb, struggling father Corbin "Corby" Ledbetter accidentally kills his toddler son, Niko, while backing out of his driveway while impaired. Convicted of involuntary manslaughter, Corby serves a three-year prison sentence, where he navigates profound guilt, harsh incarceration conditions, and his ongoing battle with addiction.



***The Secret History* (576 pages)**

The Secret History by Donna Tartt is an inverted detective story where a group of eccentric, elitist Classics students at a Vermont college, led by a charismatic professor, accidentally commit a murder during an ancient ritual. They subsequently murder one of their own classmates to cover it up, spiraling into paranoia and moral decay.



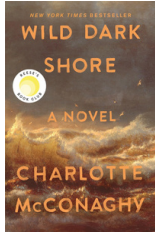
***Some Bright Nowhere* (252 pages)**

Some Bright Nowhere by Ann Packer is a profoundly moving novel that examines a 40-year marriage upended by terminal illness. When wife Claire transitions to hospice care, she asks her devoted husband, Eliot, to move out so her two best friends can care for her in her final weeks.



***The Vanishing Half* (400 pages)**

The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett is a multi-generational saga about identical twin sisters who run away from their insular, colorist Louisiana hometown at age sixteen. Their lives diverge when one sister lives as a Black woman, while the other secretly crosses the color line to live as a white woman.



***Wild Dark Shore* (320 pages)**

Wild Dark Shore is a 2025 climate fiction novel by Charlotte McConaghy about a family living on a remote sub-Antarctic island that houses a vital seed bank, whose isolated existence is upended by the arrival of a mysterious, shipwrecked woman during a massive storm, forcing them to confront personal secrets, survival, and the devastating impacts of climate change. The book is a suspenseful, character-driven story that blends ecological themes with psychological thriller and romance, exploring themes of love, loss, and the impossible choices required for survival in a world on the brink.



***Yellowface* (352 pages)**

Yellowface by R.F. Kuang is a gripping satirical thriller that explores racial diversity, cultural appropriation, and plagiarism in the publishing industry. It follows a struggling white author who steals a deceased Asian-American peer's manuscript, publishing it under an ambiguously ethnic pseudonym to achieve massive literary success.