

Suggested Reading for Adults - Summer Reading Challenge 2021

Animal Protagonists

The Art of Racing in the Rain, by Garth Stein (2008) - Fiction

A heart-wrenching but deeply funny and ultimately uplifting story of family, love, loyalty, and hope—a captivating look at the wonders and absurdities of human life . . . as only a dog could tell it. *FIC STEIN; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, eBook & Audiobook.*

H is for Hawk, by Helen Macdonald (2014) - Nonfiction

An inspired, beautiful and absorbing account of a woman battling grief—with a goshawk. Following the sudden death of her father, Macdonald tried staving off deep depression with a unique form of personal therapy: the purchase and training of an English goshawk, which she named Mabel. Although a trained falconer, the author chose a raptor both unfamiliar and unpredictable, a creature of mad confidence that became a means of working against madness. *598.944 MACDONALD; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, eBook & Audiobook.*

Life of Pi, by Yann Martel (2001) - Fiction

Possessing encyclopedia-like intelligence, unusual zookeeper's son Pi Patel sets sail for America, but when the ship sinks, he escapes on a life boat and is lost at sea with a dwindling number of animals until only he and a hungry Bengal tiger remain. *FIC MARTEL; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, eBook.*

Merle's Door: Lessons from a Freethinking Dog, by Ted Kerasote (2007) - Nonfiction

While on a camping trip, Ted Kerasote met a dog—a Labrador mix—who was living on his own in the wild. They became attached to each other, and Kerasote decided to name the dog Merle and bring him home. There, he realized that Merle's native intelligence would be diminished by living exclusively in the human world. He put a dog door in his house so Merle could live both outside and in. A deeply touching portrait of a remarkable dog and his relationship with the author, Merle's Door explores the issues that all animals and their human companions face as their lives intertwine, bringing to bear the latest research into animal consciousness and behavior as well as insights into the origins and evolution of the human-dog partnership. Merle showed Kerasote how dogs might live if they were allowed to make more of their own decisions, and Kerasote suggests how these lessons can be applied universally. *636.7 KERASOTE; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, eBook & Audiobook.*

The Travelling Cat Chronicles, by Hiro Arikawa (2012) - Fiction

Nana, a stray cat adopted by 30-something Satoru Miyawaki, narrates this lovely tale by Arikawa (**Library Wars**) of the travels that the pair take when Satoru must look for a new home for Nana. The stray is a proud, independent hunter who only deigns to be adopted after he is struck by a car and rescued by Satoru. After five years together, Satoru comes to the conclusion that he has to find a new home for Nana and so arranges a series of meetings with friends from

his youth. **The Travelling Cat Chronicles** is a life-affirming anthem to kindness and self-sacrifice that shows how the smallest things can provide the greatest joy. *FIC ARIKAWA; Overdrive, Audiobook.*

Watership Down, by Richard Adams (1972) - Fiction

A timeless classic and one of the most beloved novels of all time. Set in the Hampshire Downs in Southern England, an idyllic rural landscape, this stirring tale of "suspense, hot pursuit, and derring-do" (Chicago Tribune) follows a band of rabbits in flight from the incursion of man and the destruction of their home. Led by a stouthearted pair of brothers, they travel forth from their native Sandleford warren through harrowing trials to a mysterious promised land and a more perfect society. *FIC ADAMS; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, Audiobook.*

Books Made into Movies

Greyhound/The Good Shepherd, by C.S. Forester (1955) - Fiction

The mission of Commander George Krause of the United States Navy is to protect a convoy of thirty-seven merchant ships making their way across the icy North Atlantic from America to England. There, they will deliver desperately needed supplies, but only if they can make it through the wolfpack of German submarines that awaits and outnumbers them in the perilous seas. For forty-eight hours, Krause will play a desperate cat and mouse game against the submarines, combating exhaustion, hunger, and thirst to protect fifty million dollars' worth of cargo and the lives of three thousand men.

FIC FORESTER; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.

The Hate U Give, by Angie Thomas (2017) - Fiction

After witnessing her friend's death at the hands of a police officer, Starr Carter's life is complicated when the police and a local drug lord try to intimidate her in an effort to learn what happened the night Kahlil died. *YA FIC THOMAS; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, eBook & Audiobook.*

Olive Kitteridge, by Elizabeth Strout (2014) - Fiction

At the edge of the continent, in the small town of Crosby, Maine, lives Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher who deplores the changes in her town and in the world at large but doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her. *FIC STROUT; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

Ready Player One, by Ernest Cline (2011) - Fiction

Immersing himself in a mid-twenty-first-century technological virtual utopia to escape an ugly real world of famine, poverty, and disease, Wade Watts joins an increasingly violent effort to solve a series of puzzles by the virtual world's creator. *SCI FI CLINE; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, Audiobook.*

True Grit, by Charles Portis (1968) - Fiction

Mattie Ross is determined to avenge her father's blood by capturing Tom Chaney, the man who shot and killed him for two pieces of gold. Just fourteen, she enlists the help of Rooster

Cogburn, a one-eyed, trigger-happy U.S. Marshal with an affinity for drinking, and hardened Texas Ranger LaBoeuf to track the fleeing Chaney. Despite their differences, their ruthless determination leads them on a perilous adventure that can only have one outcome: retribution. *FIC PORTIS; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, eBook & Audiobook.*

Books Published in 2021

The Children's Blizzard, by Melanie Benjamin (2021) - Fiction

Draws on oral histories of the Great Plains blizzard of 1888 to depict the experiences of two teachers, a servant and a reporter who risk everything to protect the children of immigrant homesteaders. *FIC BENJAMIN; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

The Four Winds, by Kristin Hannah (2021) - Fiction

The Dust Bowl migration is brought to life in this riveting story of love, courage, and sacrifice. In 1934 Texas, after four years of drought, the Martinelli farm is no longer thriving, but Elsa is attached to the land and her in-laws, and she works tirelessly and cares for her children, 12-year-old Loreda and seven-year-old Anthony. Her husband, Rafe, has become distant and something of a hard drinker, and after he abandons them, Elsa reluctantly leaves with her children for California with the promise of steady work. *FIC HANNAH; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

Project Hail Mary, by Andy Weir (2021) - Fiction

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission--and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish. Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it. His crewmates dead, his memories fuzzily returning, he realizes that an impossible task now confronts him. Alone on this tiny ship that's been cobbled together by every government and space agency on the planet and hurled into the depths of space, it's up to him to conquer an extinction-level threat to our species. And thanks to an unexpected ally, he just might have a chance. *SCI FI WEIR; Overdrive, eBook.*

The Shadow Box, by Luanne Rice (2021) - Fiction

After artist Claire Beaudry Chase is attacked and left for dead in her home on the Connecticut coast, she doesn't know who she can trust. But her well-connected husband, Griffin—who is running for governor—is her prime suspect. Just before the attack, Claire was preparing for an exhibit of her shadow boxes, one of which clearly accuses Griffin of a violent crime committed twenty-five years ago. If the public were to find out who her husband is, his political career would be over. Claire's certain her husband and his powerful supporters would kill her to stop the truth from getting out. *FIC RICE.*

Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know, by Adam M. Grant (2021) - Nonfiction

The bestselling author of **Give and Take** and **Originals** examines the critical art of rethinking: learning to question your opinions and open other people's minds, which can position you for excellence at work and wisdom in life. **Think Again** reveals that we don't have to believe everything we think or internalize everything we feel. It's an invitation to let go of views that are no longer serving us well and prize mental flexibility over foolish consistency. If knowledge is power, knowing what we don't know is wisdom. *153.42 GRANT; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

Graphic Novels

American Utopia, by David Byrne & Maira Kalman (2020) - Fiction

From former Talking Heads front man and multimedia visionary David Byrne and revered bestselling author, illustrator, and artist Maira Kalman **American Utopia** is an inspiring celebration in words and art of the connections between us all, which offers readers an antidote to cynicism, bursting with pathos, humanism, and hope. *GN BYRNE.*

Fault Lines in the Constitution, by Cynthia Levinson (Graphic Novel Edition), Sanford Levinson & Ally Shwed (2020) - Nonfiction

With colorful art, compelling discourse, and true stories from America's past and present, **Fault Lines in the Constitution** sheds light on how today's political struggles have their origins in the decisions of our Founding Fathers, deftly illustrating how contemporary problems arose from this founding document—as well as possible solutions. *GN LEVINSON; Overdrive, eBook.*

Ghost Tree, by Bobby Curnow, Simon Gane, Ian Herring (2019) - Fiction

After his grandfather passed away, Brandt returns home. He visits the woods adjacent to his grandmother's house and find an unusual presence there in need of help. Does Brandt stay and help, or is he inserting himself where he doesn't belong? *GN CURNOW; Overdrive, eBook.*

The House, by Paco Roca (2019) - Fiction

Three siblings return to their family's vacation home after their father's death. They each bring their families with intentions of selling the house. While preparing the house, they reminisce and dig up the past. *GN ROCA; Available in Hoopla, eBook.*

In Love & Pajamas: A Collection of Comics About Being Yourself Together, by Catana Chetwynd (2021) - Fiction

When you've reached that sweatpants-wearing cozy place in your relationship, it's all **In Love & Pajamas!** With wholesome, sweet, feel-good humor, this is a perfect book to snuggle up and laugh with your loved one. *GN CHETWYND; Overdrive, eBook; Hoopla, eBook.*

Noir: A Collection of Crime Comics, by Ed Brubaker, Jeff Lemire, et al (2020) - Fiction

This Anthology hosts a baker's dozen of pitch-black noir stories of murder, passion, and criminal enterprise, featuring deadly conmen and embittered detectives converging on femme fatales and accidental murderers presented directly from the most talented craftsmen in the industry. *GN NOIR; Overdrive, eBook; Hoopla, eBook.*

Historical Fiction:

The Cold Millions, by Jess Walter (2020)

An intimate story of brotherhood, love, sacrifice, and betrayal set against the panoramic backdrop of an early twentieth-century America that eerily echoes our own time, **The Cold Millions** offers a kaleidoscopic portrait of a nation grappling with the chasm between rich and poor, between harsh realities and simple dreams. *FIC WALTER; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

The Jane Austen Society, by Natalie Jenner (2020)

Just after the Second World War, in the small English village of Chawton, an unusual but like-minded group of people band together to attempt something remarkable. One hundred and fifty years ago, Chawton was the final home of Jane Austen, one of England's finest novelists. Now it's home to a few distant relatives and their diminishing estate. With the last bit of Austen's legacy threatened, a group of disparate individuals come together to preserve both Jane Austen's home and her legacy. *FIC JENNER; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, Audiobook.*

The Pull of the Stars, by Emma Donoghue (2020)

Dublin 1918. In an Ireland doubly ravaged by war and disease, Nurse Julia Power works at an understaffed hospital in the city center, where expectant mothers who have come down with the terrible new Flu are quarantined together. Into Julia's regimented world step two outsiders -- Doctor Kathleen Lynn, a rumored Rebel on the run from the police, and a young volunteer helper, Bridie Sweeney. In the darkness and intensity of this tiny ward, over three days, these women change each other's lives in unexpected ways. They lose patients to this baffling pandemic, but they also shepherd new life into a fearful world. With tireless tenderness and humanity, care givers and mothers alike somehow do their impossible work. *FIC DONOGHUE; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

The Vanishing Half, by Brit Bennett (2020)

The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Many years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect? *FIC BENNETT; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

When We Were Young & Brave, by Hazel Gaynor (2020)

China, December 1941. Having left an unhappy life in England for a teaching post at a missionary school in northern China, Elspeth Kent is now anxious to return home to help the war effort. But as she prepares to leave China, a terrible twist of fate determines a different

path for Elspeth, and those in her charge. Inspired by true events surrounding the Japanese Army's internment of teachers and children from a British-run missionary school, **When We Were Young and Brave** is an unforgettable novel about impossible choices and unimaginable hardship, and the life-changing bonds formed between a young girl and her teacher in a remote corner of a terrible war. *FIC GAYNOR; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

National Outdoor Book Award Winners

Additional winners can be found here: <http://www.noba-web.org/>

The Book of Eels: Our Enduring Fascination with the Most Mysterious Creature in the Natural World, by Patrik Svensson (2020) - **Natural History Literature - Nonfiction**

Patrik Svensson's **Book of Eels** is natural history writing at its finest. It only takes a few pages, and Svensson draws you in, delivering a graceful and moving account of these elusive and mysterious creatures. Ever so gradually, he pieces together humankind's quest for knowledge about eels, a quest that, interestingly enough, starts with Aristotle. Parts are also played by Sigmund Freud and Rachel Carson, but the star of the show is Johannes Schmidt who spends much of his life searching the world's oceans to find where European eels are birthed. Part marine biology, part historical drama, and part personal narrative, **The Book of Eels** is an extraordinary achievement. *597.43 SVENSSON; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

Labyrinth of Ice: The Triumphant and Tragic Greely Polar Expedition, by Buddy Levy (2020) - **History/Biography - Nonfiction**

The Greely Expedition is perhaps one of the most harrowing expeditions in polar history. A. W. Greely, an American army lieutenant, set out to reach the farthest north yet achieved by any human. He was successful in that effort, but it is the return journey for which the expedition is known. A resupply ship is blocked by ice from reaching the party, and what follows is Greely and his men's desperate attempt to escape from the frozen north. Based on exhaustive research, this is an epic tale told with finesse and intelligence. *910.916 LEVY; Overdrive, eBook; Hoopla, Audiobook.*

The World Beneath Their Feet: Mountaineering Madness and the Deadly Race to Summit the Himalayas, by Scott Ellsworth (2020) - **History/Biography - Nonfiction**

Scott Ellsworth combines solid research, and a touch of panache, in this work on mountaineering history from 1930 to 1953. What separates this book from many other climbing histories is that Ellsworth approaches mountaineering from a cultural and political perspective. The British, aware that the days of their great empire were numbered, sought to bolster national pride by attempting to climb the world's highest peaks. So, too, are the newly empowered Nazis, but they also look to the Himalayas as a proving ground for the superiority of the Aryan master race. And the Americans? They were a motley lot of Ivy League college buddies, itching to be a player in this high-stake game. There's plenty to sink your teeth into, and plenty of new insights, in this absorbing and eminently readable book. *796.522 ELLSWORTH; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

The Pacific Alone: The Untold Story of Kayaking's Boldest Voyage, by Dave Shively (2019) - **Outdoor Literature - Nonfiction**

This is one of those absorbing books that is certain to carry you away on an inner voyage of your own. It is about an audacious attempt by Ed Gillet to cross the Pacific Ocean from California to Hawaii, a journey that would take at least two months. His means of travel? A kayak. That's right. A kayak! Even solo adventurers crossing the ocean in a row boat have a place to sleep. But a kayak? This is truly a great adventure, and outdoor writer and kayaking aficionado Dave Shively is perfect to tell the story. Does Gillet make it? You can find out in this first-rate chronicle of the journey. 797.1221 SHIVELY; *Overdrive, eBook*.

The Salt Path, by Raynor Winn (2019) - **Outdoor Literature - Nonfiction**

Lyrical, poignant, and full of heart, Raynor Winn's **Salt Path** is outdoor writing — or simply any kind of writing — at its very best. A true story, Raynor and her husband lose their small farm in Wales to creditors and find themselves nearly penniless, without even a place to live. Then to add to their already overwhelming burdens, her husband of thirty-two years is diagnosed with a terminal illness. With little time left, they decide to embark on a 630-mile trek on a coastal hiking trail in southwest England . . . and then everything changes. This is a story of hope, love, and the life-affirming power of living simply in the outdoors. *BIO WINN; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook*.

Underland: A Deep Time Journey, by Robert Macfarlane (2019) - **Natural History Literature - Nonfiction**

In this extraordinary book, Robert Macfarlane guides us on a journey downward through layers of soil where roots anchor trees and plants, and down further through bedrock and into caves where thousands of years ago the ancients left their art. Macfarlane relates one amazing story after another in vivid, soulful language, describing hidden worlds beneath our feet. Compelling and thought provoking, this is natural history writing at its best. 551.447 MACFARLANE; *Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook; Hoopla, Audiobook*.

Short Stories & Essays

All That Is Left Is All That Matters: Stories, by Mark Slouka (2018) - **Fiction**

In this meditative, powerfully moving collection, Slouka focuses on mortality and the passage of time, fearlessly confronting unpleasant truths about loss, death, and aging. As the title suggests, the book is philosophical and stoic in nature, exploring what it means to live and lose, make mistakes, and grow old in the company of our sorrows, missteps, and personal weaknesses. The poignant "Dominion" features a career journalist who feels that he "disappeared" after he retired. "Russian Mammoths" is a heartbreaking story about the loss of a child, a tragic accident in a neighborhood, and the Buddhist philosophy that life is divided into four parts, "reserving the last—after the kids, after the stuff—for enlightenment." *FIC SLOUKA; Overdrive, eBook*.

Difficult Women, by Roxane Gay (2017) - **Fiction**

Telling the stories of strong, imperfect, fully realized women, award-winning author Roxane Gay offers diverse protagonists and settings and unusual, often troubling situations in which women are haunted by pain and loss. In "The Mark of Cain," a woman pretends not to know that her abusive husband and his gentler identical twin have switched places; women participate in fight clubs in another story, while a priest refuses to feel bad about an affair in a third. With complex characters and straightforward writing, this collection stands out. *FIC GAY; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

Exhalation: Stories, by Ted Chiang (2019) - Fiction

Exploring humankind's place in the universe and the nature of humanity, many of the stories in this stellar collection focus on how technological advances can impact humanity's evolutionary journey. Chiang's second collection begins with an instant classic, "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate," which won Hugo and Nebula awards for Best Novelette in 2008. A time-travel fantasy set largely in ancient Baghdad, the story follows fabric merchant Fuwaad ibn Abbas after he meets an alchemist who has crafted what is essentially a time portal. After hearing life-changing stories about others who have used the portal, he decides to go back in time to try to right a terrible wrong—and realizes, too late, that nothing can erase the past. Other standout selections include "The Lifecycle of Software Objects," a story about a software tester who, over the course of a decade, struggles to keep a sentient digital entity alive. Visionary speculative stories that will change the way readers see themselves and the world around them. *SCI FI CHIANG; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

Grand Union, by Zadie Smith (2019) - Fiction

The 19 different tales in Grand Union are sprawling in their reach, touching on everything from single motherhood to the free speech debate in universities, objectifying men to the urban myth of Michael Jackson leaving New York with friends on the morning of 9/11, all told in Smith's commanding prose. *FIC SMITH; Overdrive, eBook & Audiobook.*

Upstream: Selected Essays, by Mary Oliver (2016) - Nonfiction

A collection of essays with a new piece on Provincetown, follows the author as she contemplates the pleasure of artistic labor; her boundless curiosity for the flora and fauna that surround her; and the responsibility she has inherited from the great thinkers and writers of the past, to live thoughtfully, intelligently and to observe with passion. *814.54 OLIVER; Overdrive, eBook*