

SWC Recommended Reading List 2023-2024

Book Title	Author	Description	Genre	Recommendation
<i>Agatha Christie: an Elusive Woman</i>	Lucy Worsley	She was born in 1890 into a world that had its own rules about what women could and couldn't do. Lucy Worsley's biography is not just of a massively, internationally successful writer. It's also the story of a person who, despite the obstacles of class and gender, became an astonishingly successful working woman.	Historical Fiction	Thayre Dennis
<i>Good Night Irene</i>	Luis Alberto Urrea	This historical fiction is based on the life of his mother and her co-workers who served coffee and donuts in the Red Cross during WWII. Unbelievably, these women were on the front lines with our boys, providing a taste of home, and making them feel that America was with them.	Historical Fiction	MaryCarol Stearns
<i>The Marriage Portrait</i>	Maggie O'Farrell	This historical fiction is based on Robert Browning's poem, "My Last Duchess" which was based on an actual portrait of a young bride, Lucrezia di Cosimo de'Medici, who at 15 was forced by her parents to marry the older Alfonso II d-Este, Duke of Ferrara in the 1561.	Historical Fiction	MaryCarol Stearns, Carolyn Derby
<i>The Wager</i>	David Gran	This is non-fiction that reads like a novel. It is about an English war ship sent out to capture a Spanish Galleon with its load of gold from the New World in the year 1740.	Non-Fiction	MaryCarol Stearns
<i>Lady Tan's Circle of Women</i>	Lisa See	This fictional novel was inspired by the true story of Tan Yunxian - a woman born in the 15th century China, who became a doctor of women and girls. It is a story of the many classes in Chinese society and women helping other women in a closed male dominated society.	Historical Fiction	MaryCarol Stearns

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<i>The Lone Woman</i>	Victor Lavalle	This is this story of an African-American woman who heads to Montana to be a homesteader on laand (stolen from the Native Americans in the novel) because the land has been promised to anyone, regardless of race.	Historical Fiction	MaryCarol Stearns
<i>The Measure</i>	Nikki Erlich	It seems like any other day. You wake up, pour a cup of coffee, and head out. But today, when you open your front door, waiting for you is a small wooden box. This box holds your fate inside: the answer to the exact number of years you will live.	Fiction	Nan Healy
<i>where the Children Take Us: How One Family Achieved the Unimaginable</i>	Zain E. Asher	The story of a woman who survived genocide, famine, poverty, and crushing grief to rise from war torn Africa to the streets of South London and eventually the drawing rooms of Buckingham Palace,	Memoir	Nan Healy
<i>Before She Finds Me</i>	Heather Chavez	Two unlikely mothers race to uncover the truth behind a horrific attack, even after it becomes clear that the truth will destroy one of their families, in this shocking thriller that is "both timely and emotional."	Thriller	Nan Healy
<i>The Music of Bees</i>	Eileen Garvin	Three lonely strangers in a rural Oregon town, each working through grief and life's curveballs, are brought together by happenstance on a local honeybee farm where they find surprising friendship, healing, and maybe even a second chance.	Fiction	Deb Holton
<i>The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post</i>	Allison Pataki	A wife four times over, Marjorie sought her happily-ever-after with the blue-blooded party boy who could not outrun his demons, the charismatic financier whose charm turned to betrayal, the international diplomat with a dark side, and the bon vivant whose shocking secrets would shake Marjorie and all of society.	Non-Fiction	Gail Macneill, Jill Mountan

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<i>Affliction</i>	Russell Banks	Wade Whitehouse is a well-digger and policeman in a bleak New Hampshire town, he is a former high-school star gone to beer fat, a loner with a mean streak. Wade comes to loom in one's mind as a blue-collar American Everyman afflicted by the dark secret of the macho tradition.	Fiction	Jill Mountan
<i>Dinosaurs</i>	Lydia Millet	A man named Gil walks from New York to Arizona to recover from a failed love. After he arrives, new neighbors move into the glass-walled house next door, and his life begins to mesh with theirs. Its a warmly textured, dryly funny, and philosophical account of Gil's unexpected devotion to the family and explores the uncanny territory where the self ends and community begins.	Fiction	Anne Morgan
<i>The Island of Missing Trees</i>	Elif Shafak	This is a story about two people in love in Nicosia, Cypress. The problem is that one is Greek and the other Turkish. Their parents don't approve and war breaks out. We learn about their love and the community conflict from an unexpected narrator - a fig tree. Years later in Britain, a young daughter unravels the history her parents never told her.	Fiction	Anne Morgan
<i>Demon Copperhead</i>	Barbara Kingsolver	Set in the mountains of southern Appalachia, this is the story of a boy born to a teenaged single mother in a single-wide trailer, with no assets beyond his dead father's good looks and copper-colored hair, a caustic wit, and a fierce talent for survival. Demon braves the modern perils of foster care, child labor, derelict schools, athletic success, addiction, disastrous loves, and crushing losses.	Fiction	Anne Morgan, Carolyn Derby
<i>The Personal Librarian</i>	Marie Benedict	As J.P. Morgan's personal librarian, Belle was tasked with curating a collection of rare manuscripts, books, and artwork for his Pierpont Morgan Library. Her impeccable taste and unparalleled negotiating skills made her one of the most influential figures in New York City society, but beneath her perfectly crafted white identity lay a secret she was desperate to protect.	Fiction	Viki Wolf

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<i>Wolf Hall</i>	Hilary Mantel	This is a fictional portrait of Henry VIII's turbulent court including his then wife and queen, Katherine of Aragon, who can't produce an heir, Ann Boleyn, lady in waiting to the Queen and whom the King fancies and later marries, and Cardinal Thomas Wolsey who is about to fall from power because of his failure to secure an annulment for Henry from the Catholic Church.	Historical Fiction	Dianne Barkley
<i>Her Hidden Genius</i>	Marie Benedict	Rosalind Franklin discovers the structure of DNA but never receives credit for her discovery. This novel shines a light on a woman who sacrificed her life to discover the nature of our very DNA, a woman whose world-changing contributions were hidden by the men around her but whose relentless drive advanced our understanding of humankind.	Historical Fiction	Elly Stephens
<i>The Last Green Valley</i>	Mark Sullivan	This historical fiction based in Ukraine during 1944 and details the march of the Nazis to move people out of harm's way - as the Russians approached - supposedly to save them from murderous Russian aggression, yet lead away by Nazis promising to protect "pure-blood" Germans.	Historical Fiction	Elly Stephens
<i>Winter Sisters</i>	Robin Oliveira	This is about two sisters caught at school in the devastating blizzard of 1879, and when teachers are forced to release them into the winter storm for lack of food or supplies, the sisters walk out into the windy whiteout expecting their parents will arrive to help them. Instead, following the storm, their disappearance brings to light the corruption of authorities and the desperation of lonely men.	Historical Fiction	Elly Stephens

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<i>Yellow Wife</i>	Sadequa Johnson	This is about a biracial girl born into slavery. Because of her status, she was sheltered as a child from much of the violence and harshness of slavery. She was promised her freedom on her 18th birthday but all goes wrong. She is sent to the infamous Devils Half Acre in Virginia, where slaves are sent to be punished and sold.	Fiction	Leigh Warren
<i>Good Night June</i>	Sara Jio	Based on the story of "Good Night Moon" and how the author may have come up with the story.	Fiction	Leigh Warren
<i>What Alice Forgot</i>	Leanne Moriarty	A coming-of-age novel in a small town in Minnesota during the summer of 1961. This book holds a mystery when one of the five deaths is murder, but it also speaks of wisdom, secrets, forgiveness, the love of family, faith and miracles.	Historical Fiction	Betty MacGilvray
<i>Beneath a Scarlet Sky</i>	Mark Sullivan	A historical fiction outlining Pino Lella's fate - to work with the Nazi's. Many unexpected twists of fate lead him, finally, to a life he could only have dreamt of, but not until after pretending to respect and work for the German Nazis in WWII.	Historical Fiction	Jane Walsh
<i>Code Name Helene</i>	Ariel Lawhon	Based on the thrilling real-life story of a socialite spy and astonishing woman who killed a Nazi with her bare hands and went on to become one of the most decorated woman in WWII.	Historical Fiction	Leigh Warren
<i>My Name is Mary Sutter</i>	Robin Oliveira	Only custom keeps this young girl, who wishes to become a doctor, from doing so. Based in the Civil War era, this story is the heartbreaking truth of talent kept from reaching its beneficiaries, resulting in the huge loss of life during the war.	Historical Fiction	Elly Stephens

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<i>The Maid</i>	Nita Prose	A socially awkward and misunderstood maid in a boutique hotel is accused of a crime she didn't commit. A good mystery and heart warming story.	Fiction	Anne Horton
<i>Meet Me at the Museum</i>	Anne Youngson	A charming book that is told by letters between two very dissimilar people: a British farmer's wife and a Danish academic. There are so many profound thoughts that I want to go back and write them all down.	Fiction	Anne Horton
<i>The It Girl</i>	Ruth Ware	This author keeps you going until the very end. A young woman whose roommate was killed while they were students at Oxford starts to question if the man she helped to put in prison actually was the murderer.	Fiction	Anne Horton