

# Staff Picks 2022



All of the books on this list were read by members of the Somers Library staff during 2021. Some were *hot off the press*, others have stood *the test of time*. All come with a personal recommendation.

## FICTION

***Homeland Elegies*, by Ayad Akhtar.** Part family drama, part social essay, part picaresque adventure -- a story of a father, a son, and the country they both call home.

***Djinn Patrol On the Purple Line*, by Deepara Anappara.** Three friends venture into the most dangerous corners of a sprawling Indian city to find their missing classmate.

***Children's Train*, by Viola Ardone.** Heartbreaking story of love, family, hope, & survival; set in post-World War II Italy about poor children from the south sent to families in the north to survive.

***Northern Spy*, by Flynn Berry.** Story of two sisters who become entangled with the IRA.

***Lost Manuscript*, by Cathy Bonidan.** A charming epistolary novel about the love of books and the magical ability they have to bring people together.

***Dark Sky*, by C.J. Box.** Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett must accompany a Silicon Valley CEO on a hunting trip – but soon learns that he himself may be hunted.

***Trio*, by William Boyd.** Summer 1968, the year of the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, while the world is reeling the trio is involved in making a Swingin' Sixties

British movie in sunny Brighton.

***Tell the Wolves I'm Home*, by Carol Rifka Brunt.** Story of love, grief, and renewal, as two lonely people become the unlikeliest of friends.

***Moonglow*, by Michael Chabon.** Author visits his terminally ill grandfather, tongue loosened by powerful painkillers, he shares recollections & stories never heard before.

***Yiddish Policemen's Union*, by Michael Chabon.** For sixty years, Jewish refugees prospered in the Federal District of Sitka, Alaska. Now the District is set to revert to Alaskan control, and their dream is coming to an end.

***Leviathan Wakes*, by James S.A. Corey.** Scifi thriller. Humanity has colonized the solar system, but the stars are still out of reach.

***Last Thing He Told Me*, by Laura Dave.** Before Owen disappears, he smuggles a note to his beloved wife of one year: *Protect her!*

***Girl, Woman, Other*, by Bernardine Evaristo.** A love song to modern Britain and black womanhood .

***Every Last Fear*, by Alex Finlay.** A twisty, breathtaking novel that traces the fate of the Pine family, a thriller that will leave you on the edge of your seat.

***Unsettled Ground*, by Claire Fuller.** What if the life you have always known is taken from you in an instant? What would you do to get it back?

***Midnight Library*, by Matt Haig.** Between life and death there is a library; within that library, every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived.

***Time's Convert*, by Deborah Harkness.** Part of *All Souls Trilogy*, a passionate love story and a fascinating exploration of the power of tradition and change, as vampires.

***Fifth Avenue Story Society*, by Rachel Hauck.** An invitation to join The Fifth Avenue Story Society gives five New York strangers a chance to rewrite their own stories.

***Early Morning Riser*, by Katherine Heiny.** A wise, joyful novel of love, disaster, and unconventional family.

***Beach Read*, by Emily Henry.** A romance writer who no longer believes in love and a literary writer stuck in a rut engage in a summer-long challenge that may just upend everything they believe about happily ever afters.

***Moonflower Murders*, by Anthony Horowitz.** Brilliantly clever, relentlessly suspenseful, full of twists, novel is a deviously dark take on vintage English crime fiction.

***Basil's War*, by Stephen Hunter.** A classic espionage thriller with Basil St. Florian as an accomplished agent in the British Army.

***Klara and the Sun*, by Kazuo Ishiguro.** Klara, an *Artificial Friend* with outstanding observational qualities, looks at our rapidly changing modern world to explore a basic question: what does it mean to love?

***Shadow of the Fox*, by Julie Kagawa.** One thousand years ago, the great Kami Dragon granted a terrible wish—and the land of Iwagoto was plunged into an age of darkness and chaos. Now, a new wish will be granted. YA

***Girl From the Channel Islands*, by Jenny Lecoat.** An extraordinary story of triumph against impossible odds. June 1940, Hitler's army captures the Channel Islands—the only part of Great Britain occupied by German forces.

***We Were Liars*, by E. Lockhart.** A modern, sophisticated suspense novel. Read it. If anyone asks you how it ends, just LIE!

***Her Body and Other Parties: Stories*, by Carmen Maria Machado.** Author bends genre to shape startling narratives that map the realities of women's lives and the violence visited upon their bodies.

***Max Tudor (7 book series)*, by G.M Malliet.** Max Tudor mysteries featuring a handsome former-spy-turned-cleric, Father Max Tudor.

***Station Eleven*, by Emily St. John Mandel.** Story of a Hollywood star, his would-be-savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking all.

***Glass Hotel*, by Emily St. John Mandel.** Story of a massive Ponzi scheme collapse and the mysterious disappearance of a woman from a ship at sea.

***Adam's Rib*, by Antonio Manzini.** Small towns can hide big secrets, but Rocco Schiavone will do whatever it takes to bring them into the light.

***Animal Spirit: Stories*, by Franca Marciano.** Centered in Rome but transporting us into worlds as varied and alluring as they are emotionally real, these stories paint landscapes that are populated by animals.

***Count the Ways*, by Joyce Maynard.** Story of a family from the hopeful early days of young marriage to parenthood, divorce, and its costly aftermath—to illuminate how the mistakes of parents are passed down.

***Last Year of the War*, by Susan Meissner.** A fourteen year old lowan in 1943 is aware of the war but distanced from its reach. Suddenly her father, a legal U.S. resident, is arrested on suspicion as a Nazi sympathizer, and her whole world changes.

***Starless Sea*, by Erin Morgenstern.** Love story set in a secret underground world—a place of pirates, painters, lovers, liars, and ships sailing on a starless sea.

***Homesick For Another World*, by Otessa Moshfegh.** Electrifying first collection from one of the most exciting short story writers of our time.

***Cuban Girl's Guide to Tea and Tomorrow*, by Laura Taylor Namey.** Heart-broken Lila is sent to England, and bakes her way into the heart of an English boy. YA

***Outlawed: A Novel*, by Anna North.** In the year of Our Lord 1894, I became an outlaw.

***Hamnet: A Novel of the Plague*, by Maggie O'Farrell.** Drawing on the little-known story behind Shakespeare's enigmatic play, *Hamnet* is a portrait of a marriage and at its heart the loss of a beloved child.

***Madness of Crowds*, by Louise Penny,** Chief Inspector Armand Gamache, returns to Three Pines in latest spellbinding novel in the author's series.

**Rose Code, by Kate Quinn.** Three friends now-enemies reunite their alliance & crack one last code.

**When I Was the Greatest, by Jason Reynolds.** In “Bed Stuy,” New York, a small misunderstanding can escalate into having a price on your head—even if you’re totally clean. This gritty, triumphant story captures the heart and hardship of life for an urban teen. YA

**Warsaw Orphan, by Kelly Rimmer.** From Nazi occupation to the threat of a communist regime, this is the unforgettable story of Elzbieta and Roman's perilous attempt to reclaim the love and life they once knew.

**Yellow Bird Sings, by Jennifer Rosner.** A powerfully gripping and deeply moving novel about the unbreakable bond between parent and child, and the triumph of humanity and hope in even the darkest circumstances.

**West With Giraffes, by Lynda Rutledge.** An emotional, rousing novel inspired by the incredible true story of two giraffes who made headlines and won the hearts of Depression-era America.

**City of a Thousand Gates, by Rebecca Sacks.** Multiple strands open this magnificent and haunting novel of present-day Israel and Palestine, following each of these diverse characters as they try to protect what they love.

**Mistborn: The Final Empire, by Brandon Sanderson.**  
Part of the *Mistborn Saga*. Fantasy.

**Invisible Life of Addie LaRue, by Victoria Schwab.** France, 1714: in a moment of desperation, a young woman makes a Faustian bargain to live forever and is cursed to be forgotten by everyone she meets.

**Mouthful of Birds, by Samantha Schwebelin.** These stories have the feel of a sleepless night, where every shadow and bump in the dark take on huge implications.

**At the Edge of the Haight, by Katherine Seligman.** A 20 year old homeless person has made a family of sorts in the dangerous spaces of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. When she unwittingly witnesses the murder of a young homeless boy, her relatively stable life is upended.

**Raven Boys (Raven cycle #1), by Maggie Stiefvater.** A spellbinding series where the inevitability of death and nature of love lead us to a place we’ve never been. YA

**Olympus, Texas, by Stacey Swann.** Weaves elements of classical mythology into a thoroughly modern family saga, rich in drama and psychological complexity.

**Good Company, by Cynthia D’Aprix Sweeney.** Story of the enduring bonds of marriage and friendship.

**Lincoln Highway, by Amor Towles.** Story of the Lincoln Highway, first coast to coast American interstate highway that reads like a modern Huck Finn.

***Coldest Case*, by Martin Walker.** Bruno, Chief of Police, #14 in series.

***Beautiful Ruins*, by Jess Walter.** Story of flawed yet fascinating people, navigating the rocky shores of their lives while clinging to their improbable dreams.

***Liar's Dictionary*, by Eley Williams.** Misadventures of a lovelorn Victorian lexicographer and the young woman put on his trail a century later to root out his misdeeds.

***Nothing To See Here*, by Kevin Wilson.** Woman finds meaning in her life when she begins caring for two children with remarkable and disturbing abilities.

### NON-FICTION

***D-Day June 6, 1944: the Climactic Battle of WWII*, by Stephen Ambrose.** Story is about the young men born into the false prosperity of the 1920s and brought up in the bitter realities of the Depression of the 1930s.

***When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice For Difficult Times*, by Pema Chodron.** Author is one of the most beloved of contemporary American spiritual authors; a collection of her talks between 1987 and 1994, a treasury of wisdom for going on living when we are overcome by pain and difficulties.

***Plague Cycle: the Unending War Between Humanity and Disease*, by Charles Kenny.** A vivid, sweeping history of mankind's battle with infectious disease.

***Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz*, by Erik Larson.** Story of Churchill's political brinkmanship, as well as an intimate domestic drama, during Britain's "darkest hours," when the Nazis bombed the country over 12 month period.

***Odyssey: A Father, A Son, and an Epic*, by Daniel Mendelsohn.** Biography. When 81 year old Jay Mendelsohn decides to enroll in the undergraduate Odyssey seminar his son teaches at Bard College, the two find themselves on an adventure as profoundly emotional as intellectual.

***Victoria's Daughters*, by Jerrold M. Packard.** Five sisters who shared one of the most extraordinary and privileged sisterhoods of all time.

***North Korea Journal*, by Michael Palin.** Documents two weeks in the notoriously secretive Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a land cut-off without internet .

***Geniuses At War: Bletchley Park, Colossus, and the Dawn of the Digital Age*, by David A. Price.** Untold story of the team who built the world's first digital electronic computer at Bletchley Park, during a critical time in World War II.

***Robert E. Lee and Me: A Southerner's Reckoning With the Myth of the Lost Cause*, by Ty Seidule.** Story challenges the myths and lies of the Confederate legacy—and explores why some of this country's oldest wounds have never healed.

***Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, by Bessel Van Der Kolk.** Expert on traumatic stress offers bold new paradigm for healing.

***Electric Kool-aid Acid Test*, by Tom Wolfe.** One of the best about the history of the hippies.