

SUMMER 2020

Summer READING GUIDE

MODERN
Mrs Darcy

TABLE OF Contents

3 - Letter From the Editor

4 - Historical Fiction

8 - Tales of Complicated Families

11 - Mysteries & Thrillers

13 - 5 Ways to Get More Out of Your Reading Life

14 - Not Just for Young Adults

17 - How it All Comes Together

18 - Awesome on Audio

19 - Love Stories to Fall For

21 - 8 Favorites from 8 Past Summer Reading Guides

22 - Tales of Coming into Your Own

24 - Minimalist Picks

26 - Printables



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains the 30 books I am most excited about for summer. But reading is, above all, personal. That's why in every description, I give you the information you need to help you decide if that book sounds right for you. Consider these my enthusiastic recommendations, from one reader to another. Pay attention to the descriptors I use, keeping in mind your own taste, mood, and interests, as you contemplate which books will suit you best.

These books are divided by category, so feel free to click right to the section that interests you most. (That's right: we've included helpful links throughout this guide for titles, categories, and more; these will work in most browsers.) But I encourage you to gently branch out: give yourself the opportunity to try something a little different—whatever that looks like for you. I can't tell you how many readers over the years have said that their favorite summer read was a book off their beaten path.

This guide is thorough, but not exhaustive: there are *thousands* of books coming out this season.

Despite reading hundreds of books to prepare this guide, I haven't read *everything*. And I only included titles published through mid-summer. For more great reads for summer and beyond, keep an eye on Modern Mrs Darcy, where I'll be sharing more new favorites as I discover them.

We've included publication dates so you know which titles are available now, and which you can look forward to. All publication dates are correct at time of publication, but those may change as publishers rearrange publication schedules in light of current events.

A word about content warnings: this guide does not include explicit trigger warnings, but if you shy away from sensitive content, know that many of these titles have tough themes or moments. If you have specific concerns, email me at anne@modernmrsdarcy.com. I've read every word of every book here, and will do my best to answer. Or look to your fellow readers for help: book people are the best people, and we'll be happy to advise you the best way we know how.

book people
are the best
people

LETTER FROM THE *Editor*

Hey Readers,

Welcome to the NINTH MMD Summer Reading Guide! The seed for the guide you hold in your hands (or on your screen) today was planted back in late winter 2012, when my husband said, “You take your summer reading seriously. You love talking about books. Maybe it would be fun to create a summer guide for your readers?”

Way back when this guide was first conceived, I never envisioned facing a summer quite like this one. For many of us, Summer 2020 isn’t shaping up the way we expected. We’re having to reconfigure our calendars, as well as our expectations. It hurts.

At the same time, this summer is shaping up to be one of the best publishing seasons I can remember—and that’s despite all the big books publishers have postponed in light of current events. If you’re in need of bibliotherapy or craving a little literary escapism, you’re in luck: this summer, we’re swimming in great new books.

Once again, I’ve read literally hundreds of new releases to prepare this year’s guide, and compiled my 30 favorite summer titles in one compact, user-friendly guide. Every book here has earned its spot, and I’ve personally read them all, front to back. I can vouch for them, and answer any questions you have.

If you enjoy the Summer Reading Guide, would you spread the book love? Share the guide’s home page <https://modernmrsdarcy.com/srg> on your favorite social media platform or with your bookish friends. Use the hashtag #mmdsummerreading so we can see your posts. Thanks in advance!

(For our friends in the Southern Hemisphere—I can’t tell you how much I love your Instagram photos of you reading the books in this guide while curled up by the fire. You’re not forgotten.)

Readers, I hope you find plenty of books you LOVE on this list.



Happy summer, and happy reading!

Anne Bogel

Creator of Modern Mrs Darcy
& host of the podcast
What Should I Read Next?

Historical FICTION

Escape to a different place and time with these enthralling novels that bring well-known historical events to life and shed light on history's forgotten—yet fascinating—characters.

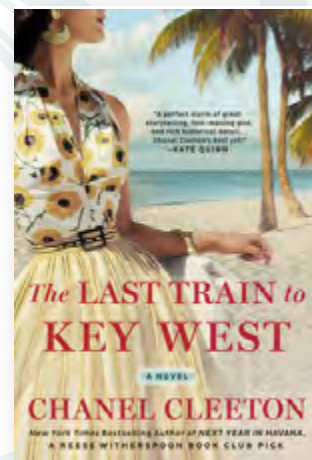


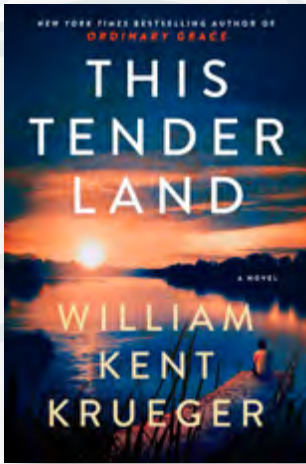
Code Name *Hélène* by Ariel Lawhon Doubleday - March 31

This WWII novel tells the story of Nancy Wake, the unsung French Resistance leader who was #1 on the Gestapo's most-wanted list by the end of the war. The real Nancy was larger than life; bold, bawdy, and brazen—a woman who, as the only female among thousands of French men, was not only respected as an equal but revered as a leader. The story is set during WWII, yes—a setting the author says she came to kicking and screaming, because there are a lot these days—but at its heart this is a story of friendship, and of love. Nancy leaps off the page, with her Victory Red lipstick, snappy one-liners, and incredible bravery. Riveting.

The Last Train to Key West by Chanel Cleeton Berkley - June 16

In this standalone novel from the author of *Next Year in Havana*, three women's lives become entangled over the course of Labor Day weekend, 1935, when the storm of the century slams into Key West. The story is told from three perspectives, that of three different women who seem to share little in common, but whose lives are about to intersect in ways no one could foresee. Helen is a Key West native, poor and pregnant, fleeing her abusive husband. Mirta is Cuban, newly married to a man she barely knows, just beginning her honeymoon. And Elizabeth has come down from New York on a dangerous search for a long-lost loved one. A captivating novel about a little-known historical event.



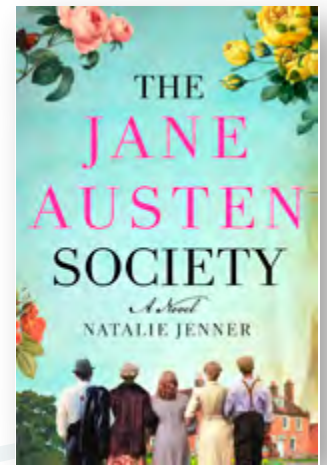


This Tender Land by William Kent Krueger
Atria - NEW in paperback May 19

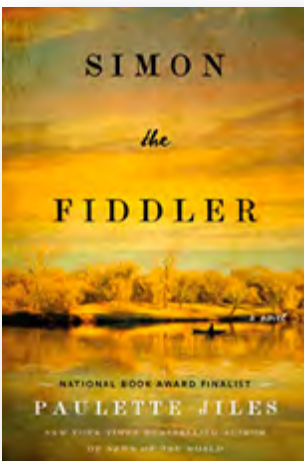
Part *Grapes of Wrath*, part *Huckleberry Finn*: this tough and tender coming-of-age story focuses on four Minnesota kids during the Great Depression, whose respective situations become ever more impossible due to human cruelty and circumstance. After a tornado demolishes life as they know it, they realize no one is going to save them—and so they make a plan to save themselves that starts with escaping down the river. This is one of my husband Will's favorite books of the year. A great story, beautifully told.

The Jane Austen Society by Natalie Jenner
St. Martin's - May 26

This charming debut is sure to delight Austen fans. Jane Austen lived out her last days in the sleepy village of Chawton, and in the days just after World War II, her legacy still looms large. Times are hard, and we meet several villagers burdened with their own private sorrows, who are doing what they've always done: turning to the works of Austen for solace. When a local business attempts to buy the Austen property and raze her cottage, the villagers band together to preserve her legacy. At one point, a character muses that Austen's works present "a world so a part of our own, yet so separate, that entering it is like some kind of tonic." The same can be said of Jenner's wonderful book.



Simon the Fiddler by Paulette Jiles
William Morrow - April 14



Jiles's confident new novel sweeps readers away to post-Civil War Texas, populated by frontiersmen, outlaws, soldiers, and those eager to seize opportunity wherever they can find it. Among them is a poor fiddler named Simon Boudlin, who, though just twenty-three, knows exactly what he wants from life: his own parcel of land and a wife to share it. While playing at an officers' dinner one fateful evening, Simon spies the beautiful Doris Dillon across the room and falls in love at first sight. But can Simon free the indentured Doris from her dangerous master? And can a lowly fiddler save enough gold to buy the homestead his future wife deserves? With a group of ragtag musicians for companions, Simon sets out on a quest to secure the future he's dreamed of. This story will make your heart sing as sweetly as Simon's fiddle, and that's saying something.



Lovely War by Julie Berry
Penguin - NEW in paperback February 4

This fun novel—and book club favorite—combines three unexpected elements to great effect: World War I, a love story, and Greek mythology. It begins with Aphrodite and Ares walking into a swanky Manhattan hotel, and soon enough Aphrodite’s husband Hephaestus challenges her to show him what love really looks like. She obliges, and takes the reader back in time to meet four young lovers in 1917 Britain, showing her fellow gods how each couple fell in love, and what they mean to each other. It sounds unlikely but the interesting narrative structure totally works.



WHAT SHOULD I READ NEXT?

with anne bogel

CLICK HERE TO LISTEN NOW

The show that's dedicated to answering the question that plagues every reader: *What should I read next?*

Every week we talk all things books and reading, and do a little literary matchmaking with one guest.

OR TEXT *READNEXT* TO 44222 TO LISTEN



BECOME A

Patreon Member

Join our podcast community for bonus episodes, fun printables, behind-the-scenes of how the show gets made, and get closer to the creative process.

TALES OF *Complicated Families*

Family relationships are complicated—whether the ties are forged by biology or choice—and those complications make for excellent reading material. These books strike different tones, but the constant is the through line of love, need, and obligation.



Musical Chairs by Amy Poeppel Atria - July 21

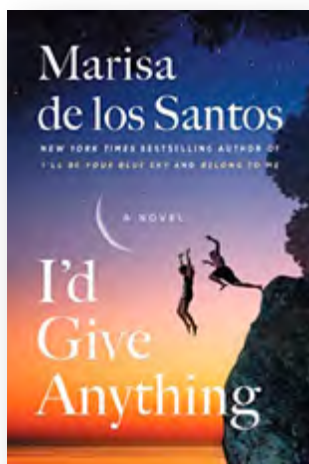
Bridget planned for the perfect summer ... but then it all went wrong. First her boyfriend breaks up with her, *over email*. Then her two twenty-something children, each dealing with their own crisis, invade her empty nest. And then the classical trio that is her livelihood comes unglued, and her aging father sets his own nearby house on fire. In the course of one short summer everything that *can* go wrong, *does* go wrong—and if she’s going to fix it, Bridget must fess up to secrets she’s buried for twenty years. It’s not the summer Bridget planned for, but it delivers the second chance she needs. Absolutely hilarious, with laugh-out-loud dialogue and a pitch-perfect ending.

I Was Told It Would Get Easier by Abbi Waxman Berkley - June 16

From the author of *The Garden of Small Beginnings*, a new novel about a distant mother-daughter duo who are forced to reconnect. Jessica is a lawyer and single mother who prides herself on always putting her daughter’s needs first. But 16-year-old Emily wishes her mother would spend more time *with* her, instead of working to provide *for* her. Mother and daughter are oblivious to the worries they’re both facing—Jessica may lose her job; Emily’s embroiled in a cheating scandal. But then they’re squashed into a charter bus with a dozen other student/parent duos for a weeklong college tour. The result isn’t pretty, but it sure does make for entertaining reading.



I'd Give Anything by Marisa de los Santos William Morrow - May 12



In trademark style, de los Santos presents a seemingly light story with hidden depths. Years ago, Ginny settled for marriage to a bland, dependable man. He's the last man you would expect to get caught up in a scandal, but then he does. *With his intern*. The revelation shakes Ginny to her core, and fractures the seemingly perfect life she's built for herself. Through an unexpected chain of events, one revelation leads to another, and Ginny is forced to re-examine—and finally reveal—a secret she's been keeping for twenty years, one that broke precious relationships long ago. Her teenage daughter is also rocked by her father's revelations, and sets out on a quest of her own. An absorbing tale of love, secrets, and forgiveness.

The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett Riverhead - June 2

Finally, a follow-up to Bennett's smashing debut *The Mothers*—and it's worth the wait. Identical twins Desiree and Stella grew up in a town so small it doesn't appear on maps. They're closer than close, so Desiree is shocked when Stella vanishes one night after deciding to sacrifice her past—and her relationship with her family—in order to marry a white man, who doesn't know she's black. Desiree never expects to see her sister again. The twins grow up, make lives for themselves, and raise daughters—and it's those daughters who bring the sisters together again. It's a reunion Stella both longs for and fears, because she can't reveal the truth without admitting her whole life is built on a lie. Bennett expertly weaves themes of family, race, identity, and belonging into one juicy, unputdownable novel spanning five turbulent decades.



*Book Lists
& More!*

Visit the blog at
ModernMrsDarcy.com



JOIN THE MODERN MRS. DARCY

Book Club

THE ONLINE HOME OF BOOKISH DELIGHT

Join us this summer for an incredible reading season full of author chats, new classes, small group discussions, and constant book talk.

“I am seriously having my best reading year ever.”

**- a happy MMD
Book Club member**

LEARN MORE

Mysteries & THRILLERS

CONTENT WARNING

Because of the subject matter, several of these books are loaded with potential triggers. If you're a sensitive reader, please do a little research or bring me your questions before diving in.

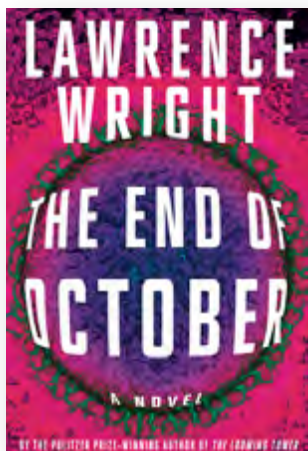
Whether you choose domestic suspense, an unconventional murder mystery, or an all-too-realistic pandemic tale, these engrossing novels are incredibly hard to put down.

Sea Wife by Amity Gaige Knopf - April 28

“Where does a mistake begin?” So begins Amity Gaige’s literary thriller, inspired by a real-life 2014 Coast Guard rescue. Michael and Juliet, facing an ailing marriage and midlife malaise, decided to sell all their worldly possessions and spend a year sailing around the Caribbean. But now Juliet is home, Michael is absent, and we don’t know why—but it’s clear everything changed on the yacht. In dual narratives, we see Juliet struggling mightily to cope with her current life in the suburbs, and—thanks to her early discovery of Michael’s captain’s log from the voyage—we get Michael’s real-time, emotional account of their harrowing times on the open seas, and the unbearable stress it placed on their already-crumbling relationship. A harrowing portrait of a boat in peril and a marriage in crisis.



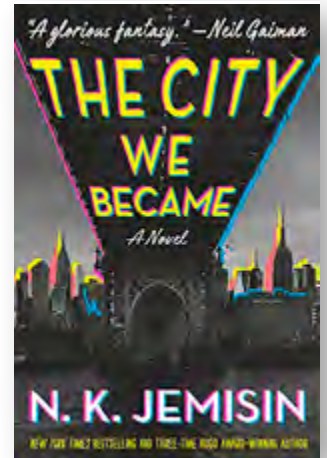
The End of October by Lawrence Wright Knopf - April 28



There are two kinds of readers: those who will enjoy reading this RIGHT NOW and those who need to stay far, far away. This prescient novel imagines a world struck by a novel virus that spawns a pandemic. The Kongoli flu begins in Indonesia, and takes root when a single infected driver travels to the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca that draws millions of Muslims from around the globe. All attempts to contain the virus are too little, too late. While the virus itself is the real star here, our hero is a CDC epidemiologist who endeavors first to contain and then cure the virus before it wipes out civilization as we know it. Wright credits his work as a journalist for the stunning resemblance of these fictional pages to real life right now.

The City We Became by N.K. Jemisin
Orbit - March 24

Jemisin's new urban fantasy, packed with explosive energy and astonishing worldbuilding, is the first installment of a planned trilogy. Every city has a soul, and the great cities of civilization—like Rome, Athens, São Paulo—finally reach a point when they come to life. Now it's New York's time to be born, but the city itself is too weakened by a gruesome attack to complete the process. If New York is to live, five people—or, more precisely, five avatars, one for each of the city's boroughs—must rise up and unite to evade, and then destroy, the creeping tentacles of their opponent, the amorphous power personified by the Woman in White. Jemisin layers her fantasy upon a deeply realistic modern-day New York. A wild and wonderful ride, fantastically inventive and imaginative.



Strike Me Down by Mindy Mejia
Atria - April 7



Forensic accountant Nora Trier has devoted her life to finding and prosecuting fraud. She's flattered and surprised when the co-owner of feminist fitness empire Strike comes to her with a problem: he needs Nora to find a missing twenty million dollars, and find it fast. The #1 suspect is his co-owner—and wife—Logan Russo. Nora knows she should say no: Logan is her trainer, and her idol. And worse, Nora once had a one-night-stand with Logan's husband, before she knew who he was. But Nora can't resist. As she investigates, it's clear something strange is going on with this case—and Nora soon realizes it's personal, and goes beyond just business. This is a matter of life and death. A thrilling, gritty psychological suspense with a fascinating setting; you'll be amazed at how riveting accounting is in Mejia's hands.

Big Summer by Jennifer Weiner
Atria - May 5

I found this book to be a delightful, engrossing, just-the-right-amount-of-zany surprise. Our heroine is Daphne Berg, a popular plus-size fashion influencer. Daphne's hard-earned equilibrium is rattled when her old frenemy Drue surfaces after a seven-year absence, begging Daphne to lend her platform and presence to Drue's high-society wedding to a reality tv star. Daphne's instincts say no, but she's never been able to resist her charming friend. Soon enough, she's at a million-dollar affair on Cape Cod, learning the troubled bride she's attending engineered the whole event with social media in mind—right down to the brand sponsorships Drue sold for big bucks. And that's when things *really* take a turn for the worse. A fun and fresh tale of female friendship, family secrets, influencer culture, and love.





5 WAYS TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR READING LIFE

1

Create a TBR (To Be Read list)

The foundation to a great reading life is to have at least a few titles ready that you're eager to read next.

2

If that book isn't working for you, set it aside

Summer's too short to read books you're not enjoying. You can always come back to it later.

3

Build reading into your routine

Start each day with a chapter and a cup of coffee, or end the days with your novel and a cup of tea. Read a bit on your lunch break, or while dinner cooks. When you establish a reading rhythm, you end up reading more.

4

Visit a book club or author event

Whether in person or on Zoom, the offerings are plentiful in the summertime—and digging into a book with fellow readers and/or the authors who wrote them helps you enjoy and appreciate your books even more. (We've got some great offerings on tap in the MMD Book Club this summer!)

5

Mix it up

Bring some variety to your reading life by trying something different this season: if you tend to read new releases, try something old this summer. If paperbacks are your go-to, try an audiobook while you water your plants or fold the laundry. If your staples are mysteries and thrillers, give a juicy family saga or breezy romance a try.

NOT JUST FOR

Young Adults

Summer is a great time to pick up a Young Adult novel, no matter your age. These fast-reading favorites hold loads of appeal.

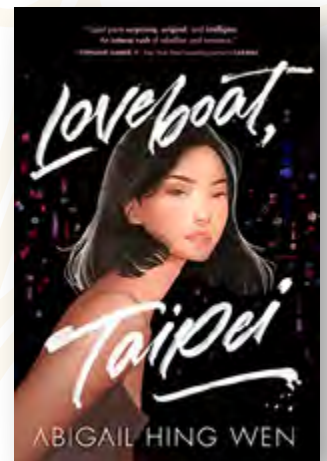


Tweet Cute by Emma Lord Wednesday Books - January 21

Listen up, *You've Got Mail* fans! In this new romantic comedy, Jack and Pepper are classmates at an Upper East Side private school. Unlike their privileged peers—and unbeknownst to each other—they spend their leisure hours managing the social media accounts for their families' respective restaurants. Pepper's family owns a hugely profitable burger chain; Jack's family owns a beloved deli on the Lower East Side. When a twitter battle about a grilled cheese recipe erupts between the two businesses, Jack and Pepper are each playing to win—but they don't know they're fighting each other. This breezy read features snappy dialogue and a slowburn friends-to-something-more story, while closely following the beats of Nora Ephron's film. I read this adorable (and chaste) story in a single evening.

Loveboat, Taipei by Abigail Hing Wen Harper Teen - January 7

In this fast-paced YA debut, a girl travels halfway around the world to find herself, and maybe find love, too. Ever Wong is an eighteen-year-old Asian American girl in Ohio, a talented dancer who, unbeknownst to her family, harbors dreams of pursuing professional dance. When her parents find out she's considering dance instead of med school, they send her to Taiwan to spend the rest of the summer at Chien Tan—an immersive high school program devoted to language and culture. When Ever arrives she's surprised to discover that far from the scholarly summer she expected, the students themselves call the program "Loveboat," because it's tons of fun and so many long-term relationships begin here. I enjoyed the audiobook version, narrated by Emily Woo Zeller. A sequel is expected in 2021.



Throw Like a Girl by Sarah Henning

Poppy - January 7



When Olive (or “O-Rod”) Rodinsky throws a punch that gets her kicked off her school’s softball team, she’s forced to quit the sport she loves and transfer to the school she hates. But then a second chance arrives in a form she never expected: her new school’s injured quarterback recruits Liv to be his back-up. The familiar premise feels fresh in Henning’s hands; she manages to cover serious issues relevant to teens and today’s culture (*hello, concussions*) while still delivering an easy, light-hearted read. If you’re on the lookout for a sweet, smart, and chaste YA novel—whether that’s for you or a young reader in your life—this could be exactly what you’re looking for.

Girl, Serpent, Thorn by Melissa Bashardoust

Flatiron - July 7

From the author of *Girls Made of Snow and Glass*, a brilliantly imagined fairy tale featuring dangerous demons, poisonous girls, and a kingdom in peril, inspired by the Persian epic *The Shahnameh*. The cursed princess

Soraya has been living inside her family’s palace walls—touching no one—for eighteen years. As her twin brother’s wedding day approaches, the palace guards capture a demon who may be able to tell her how to break the curse and gain her freedom. But the answers she seeks plunge her into personal crisis and political intrigue, and Soraya is soon forced to question everything she thought she knew about herself—while facing choices that may endanger not just her own fate, but that of the entire kingdom. An enthralling fantasy with broad appeal, lyrical prose and incredible worldbuilding.



Tell Me Three Things by Julie Buxbaum

Delacorte Press



I was so excited to share Buxbaum’s new release *Admission* with you in this year’s guide—but then coronavirus bumped the pub date till December. In the meantime, please enjoy my favorite book of hers, a crowd-pleaser I often recommend. When a girl-next-door type suddenly finds herself in an elite California prep school, she has to figure out how to navigate this new privileged world while still grieving her mother’s death. When she gets an email from an unidentified boy who calls himself “Somebody Nobody” offering to be her spirit guide to her new school, she doesn’t want to say yes—but she really needs his help. A sweet and fun teen romance, but also a pitch-perfect portrayal of the grieving process. I couldn’t stop myself from cheering for Jessie as she puts her life together again.

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo
Hot Key - May 5



The Poet X author Acevedo dedicates her new novel in verse to the memory of the lives lost on American Airlines flight 587, the passenger flight that crashed en route to Santo Domingo from JFK on November 12, 2001. Taking this historical event as her leaping off point, Acevedo tells the story of two teenage girls—one in New York, one in Santo Domingo—who are shocked to discover they are sisters in the aftermath of the crash, when the truth of their father’s double life is unceremoniously revealed. The girls tentatively bond as they explore the love—and pain—they share. A lyrical, heartfelt exploration of what it means to discover secrets, to find family, and to discover your own hidden resources in the face of great loss, and surprising joy.

NEED MORE *Books?*

GET PAST
SUMMER READING
GUIDES

The waitlist at your library will be
a lot shorter for these gems!





HOW IT ALL *Comes Together*

Every year I aim to pull together a collection of fabulous new-ish books that I can't wait to share. Each individual title matters, but so does the unified whole: I want to present a variety of genres and authors and settings, a balance of heavy and light, books that are uniformly great but all feel unique.

I'm constantly scanning the publishing horizons to see what promising books are on the way, and making notes on titles that won't be published for years. (My current list holds titles slated for publication in 2022 and 2023.) But practically speaking, the real process for creating each year's Summer Reading Guide begins the prior November, in my reading journal.

My first two-page spread holds my To Read list for potential guide titles (about 75 of them),

a list of potential categories and content, and a list ready to fill with "contenders," that is, books I enjoyed enough to possibly include in the guide.

And then I start reading.

I can't resist tinkering with the book selections up to the last minute

I add more titles to the list as I discover them. And as I complete more and more books, I cross off titles and reconfigure my lists. Eventually, the pages become too jumbled to be useful, and it's time to start a fresh two-page spread. In the early stages, I love the

flexibility and freedom that pencil-and-paper offer, but eventually I transfer everything over to digital. This year I went through four two-page spreads—or close to 250 potential titles captured in my journal—before transferring to digital in April.

While releasing a category-free guide in 2018 was illuminating for all of us, I knew from the beginning this year's guide would have categories. I just didn't know what they would be, because the categories emerge from the selections more than the other way around. Grouping the contenders into categories feels like working a crossword: no title stands in isolation; everything has to hang together.

I can't resist tinkering with the book selections up to the last minute, like moving

a beloved summer author into the expanded guide to make room for the new Jasmine Guillory, or completely restructuring two categories to accommodate an under-the-radar release I LOVED. With persistence, constant reconfiguring (notice a theme here?), and a few more quick reads, the title selection falls into place for another year.

So far we've only talked about the actual books, because in my mind, they come first. But meanwhile, I've been discussing layout and design with my team for months. (We started early this year, because I was originally slated to be on book tour for *Don't Overthink It* for significant chunks of March and April.)

The process of pulling it together looks like a thousand tiny tweaks: adjusting the word count, the flow of the language, the layout of the book lists, the precise shade of purple. If we do our job well, the guide looks effortless, but achieving a final effect that's both sophisticated and fun takes a lot of work.

I hope you enjoy this glimpse behind the scenes, and I hope you enjoy the final product. I sure enjoyed making it.



Awesome ON AUDIO

These excellent books are made even better with pitch-perfect narration.

***The Jane Austen Society* - 9 hrs 55 mins**

This charming historical novel set in the 1940s features a village united around Jane Austen, and the readers who love her work—and is narrated by Richard Armitage. (!!!)

***The Happy Ever After Playlist* - 9 hrs 17 mins**

This fresh, flirty, and sometimes-steamy romance is narrated by the duo who brought you *The Friend Zone*, Zachary Webber and Erin Mallon, who do a great job of capturing the characters' adorable banter.

***This Tender Land* - 14 hrs 19 mins**

Scott Brick's wistful, urgent narration elevates an already exceptional tale of three orphans on the run during the Great Depression to an extraordinary reading experience.

***Clap When You Land* - 5 hrs 32 mins**

Novels in verse such as this one spring to life when they're read aloud—especially when they're read by the author herself, the talented Elizabeth Acevedo.

***Code Name Hélène* - 17 hrs 17 mins**

Barrie Kreinik is one of my favorite narrators. She brings Nancy Wake vividly to life in this untold real-life WWII story. Reviewers say Peter Ganim's voicing of Nancy's husband Henri is downright sexy.

***Nothing to See Here* - 6 hrs 40 mins**

Need some momentum in your reading life? This quick and wholly original read about two kids who spontaneously combust when angry will make you laugh—and then get you right in the feels. Narrated by Marin Ireland.

***Beach Read* - 10 hrs 13 mins**

This meta take on love, grief, and writers' block is a joy in any format, and truly special in Julia Whelan's inimitable voice; so many of you say she is your Very Favorite Narrator.

Love Stories TO FALL FOR

Want a luscious summer read?
Get lost in a book that puts love front and center.



Love Lettering by Kate Clayborn Kensington Books - December 31, 2019

Hand-letterer Meg designs custom journals and sees the world in fonts and signs. She also sees the signs other people miss, like the time she wove a secret message into a doomed couple's wedding invitations. She didn't count on Reid to notice—or for him to track her down one year later and demand answers. Meg's in need of inspiration, as well as forgiveness, and so she and Reid embark on a tentative journey. Meg first fell in love with NYC by walking every inch of it and finding custom signs, and she wants Reid to do the same. Funny and moving, this contemporary romance is not only about love but friendship and the ways we make a place home. Heads up for a few open-door scenes.

Beach Read by Emily Henry Penguin - May 19

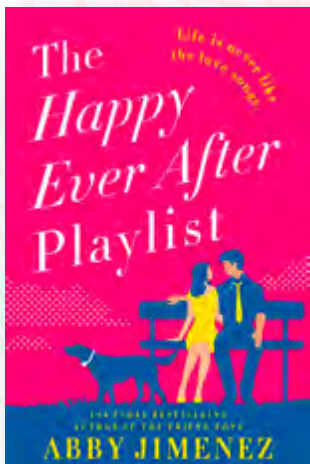
Don't be fooled by the cheery cover; I loved this book, but it's no rom-com. January is a 29-year-old romance writer who no longer believes in happily-ever-after. Demoralized and broke, she moves into the beach house she inherited when her father died, hoping to lick her wounds and finish her current manuscript. But then, in a cruel twist of fate, she discovers her neighbor is the beloved literary fiction writer Augustus Everett, her college rival (and crush), whom she was hoping to never see again. But it turns out Gus has troubles of his own, and so the two make a bet to get their writing back on track: January will try her hand at the "bleak literary fiction" that Gus writes, and Gus will write a romance novel. A warm and delightfully meta take on love, writing, and second chances. Heads up for a few open-door scenes.



Daily Book Deals

**GET CURRENT
DEALS NOW**

**Great deals curated every
day with MMD readers'
tastes in mind.**



The Happy Ever After Playlist by Abby Jimenez Forever - April 14

In this delightful follow-up to *The Friend Zone*, bestie Sloan gets her own story. After an adorable (and extended) meet-cute involving a stray pup, Sloan strikes up a flirty text thread with the dog's owner, who's out of the country for work. These texts turn into emails, and then hours-long phone calls; the two haven't met in person but the connection is undeniable. It's the first time Sloan has felt excited about anything since her fiancé died two year ago. But can a touring musician make a relationship work—and does Sloan even want it to? You'll have more context if you read *The Friend Zone* first, but this novel absolutely stands on its own. Heads up for a steamy open-door scene or two here.

Party of Two by Jasmine Guillory Berkley - June 23

Olivia Monroe (who you may remember as Alexa's sister in *The Wedding Date*) is back in L.A., freshly arrived from NYC to finally start an all-female law firm with an old friend. She hasn't even had a chance to find a place to live when she meets a cute guy in the hotel bar and enjoys lively banter about her favorite subject: dessert. It's not until Olivia turns on the tv later that she realizes there's a reason he looked so familiar: Max is the hot-shot junior California senator who is everything Olivia is not: wealthy, privileged, and a total workaholic. This relationship could never work. But when he begins wooing Olivia by sending her baked goods, she decides she'll see where it goes. Fast and fun. Heads up for an open-door moment or two.



8 FAVORITES FROM 8 PAST SUMMER READING GUIDES

2012: *Ballad of the Whiskey Robber*

The subtitle of this truth-is-stranger-than-fiction caper from journalist Julian Rubinstein says it all: a true story of bank heists, ice hockey, Transylvanian pelt smuggling, moonlighting detectives, and broken hearts.

2013: *What Alice Forgot*

My favorite Liane Moriarty novel about the easy carelessness we slip into with those we love; this one kept me glued to the couch for two days.

2014: *Bel Canto*

This oddly-structured page-turner from Ann Patchett fuses opera and a hostage crisis—and surprisingly, it works.

2015: *Everything I Never Told You*

“Lydia is dead, but they don’t know this yet.” That’s not a spoiler, that’s the opening line of Celeste Ng’s stunning (and slim) debut.

2016: *Everyone Brave Is Forgiven*

There have been so many WWII novels of late; Chris Cleave’s tale of four young, warm, wise-cracking friends in wartime England is a standout in the genre.

2017: *When Dimple Met Rishi*

Sandhya Menon’s feel-good Bollywood-inspired YA debut about a high school girl who accidentally falls in love with the future husband her parents chose for her is tons of fun and surprisingly insightful.

2018: *The Perfect Couple*

“Queen of the Summer Novel” Elin Hilderbrand reinvents herself with a murder mystery set during a wedding weekend on Nantucket.

2019: *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone*

Part memoir, part educational glimpse into the profession from psychotherapist Lori Gottlieb. For those who like to learn from the books they read, and enjoy a good story, well told.



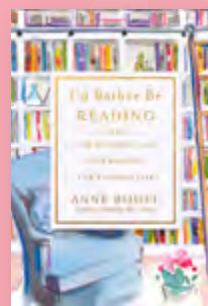
CHECK OUT

My Books



Don't Overthink It

I'd Rather Be Reading



Reading People

TALES OF

Coming Into Your Own

Life may have pushed these protagonists around, but each is about to discover a new direction for their futures—and it sure is fun to watch them do it.

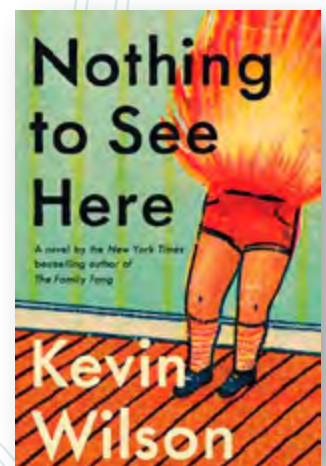


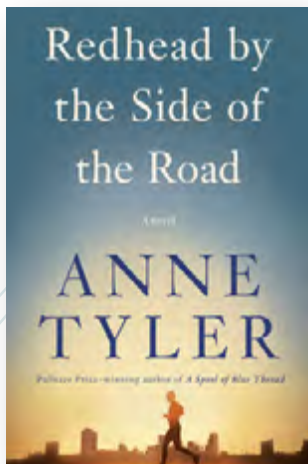
Writers & Lovers by Lily King
Grove Press - March 3

A young writer turns her life around in this new novel from the author of *Euphoria*. Casey Peabody's life is a catastrophe: she's grieving her mother, buried in debt, floundering in her love life, and fed up with waiting tables while she labors to finish the novel she's been working on for six years. But then slowly, slowly, she starts to pull it together. This novel has it all, while never feeling weighed down: a story of growing up, finding love, grieving loss, and a tribute to the writing life. This book was slow to hook me, but once I was in, I was IN. It also has one of the most exuberant, satisfying endings I've read in ages.

Nothing to See Here by Kevin Wilson
Ecco - October 29, 2019

This weird and wonderful story focuses on a powerful Southern political family with one tiny problem: when their kids get mad, they spontaneously combust. The husband is angling to become Secretary of State, and may even run for president one day—but if the truth gets out, his career is over. And so the family calls on an unlikely candidate to step in as a nanny-of-sorts: an estranged old friend with a troubled past who has no idea what she's in for. A surprisingly poignant meditation on friendship and motherhood, hopes and dreams, triumph and defeat, and a story about becoming your own person, and forming your own family—whether that's the one you're given, or the one you find.





Redhead by the Side of the Road by Anne Tyler
Knopf - April 7

Tyler’s gift is to make the struggles of ordinary (fictional) people feel real, relatable, and relevant to our own lives. In her slim new novel—just 192 pages—she introduces us to Micah Mortimer, a tech geek who has carefully calibrated his life to keep people at a distance. His strict routines give him security and his tech-support business, the aptly-named Tech Hermit, keeps him busy. But when two people with problems turn to him for help, he realizes that the “good life” he’s built for himself is an illusion. Tyler’s wry humor keeps this sad, sweet story about a lonely man waking up to life from veering into the morose.

The Switch by Beth O’Leary
Flatiron - August 18

In a plot reminiscent of *The Holiday*, a grandmother and granddaughter switch flats to shake up their stalled lives. Though Leena is twenty-something and Eileen 79, they have one thing in common: their lives have lost their luster, and their love lives are depressing. And so Leena proposes a two-month change of scenery for each. The lonely Eileen will take over Leena’s London flat so she can enjoy the city’s bustle and meet eligible bachelors, and workaholic Leena will enjoy a needed break in Eileen’s Yorkshire cottage, doing her chores and taking Eileen’s turn in the neighborhood watch group. This touching, lighthearted tale makes for a joyful summer escape.



The House in the Cerulean Sea by TJ Klune
Tor - March 17

In this whimsical fantasy, a 40-year-old career caseworker has his life turned upside down by a special assignment. Linus Baker’s job is to ensure the children are safe—or at least he’s convinced himself that the field visits he makes to the orphanages sanctioned by The Department of Magical Youth are crucial to the well-being of these unusual children. But everything changes for Linus when Extremely Upper Management sends him to report on an island orphanage that’s a place of last resort for magical children viewed as misfits by the establishment, as well as their unconventional caretaker. Linus may have always been a company man, but this visit forces him to question everything he thought he knew about the world—and himself. Many readers are going to find this quirky book a delightful surprise.





Minimalist PICKS

Every year I torture myself by attempting to narrow the Summer Reading Guide down to just a handful of titles. This year it was harder than ever ... but if you're only going to pick up a few books this summer, might I suggest these?

This Tender Land by William Kent Krueger

In this lyrical adventure, four children pile in a canoe and escape down the Minnesota River, encountering a variety of colorful characters on their Depression-era odyssey. Beautiful, absorbing fiction from a master storyteller.

The Last Train to Key West by Chanel Cleeton

The latest from the author of *Next Year in Havana* portrays a weekend in the lives of three women in southernmost Florida, each caught in their own pile of personal troubles, and how they are both harmed and aided when the storm of the century slams into Key West.

The Jane Austen Society by Natalie Jenner

Austen lovers will swoon over this historical novel set in Austen's final home of Chawton, and the band of beleaguered villagers to turn to her works—and to each other—in the dispiriting years just after WWII. Charming, sympathetic, and good for the soul.

The Vanishing Half by Brit Bennett

In Bennett's much-anticipated sophomore novel, two identical twin sisters are forever separated by one irrevocable choice. Or so they thought. It took me some time to get oriented in this much-anticipated sophomore novel, but once I was hooked I couldn't put it down. There's so much to think about—and to talk about—in these pages.

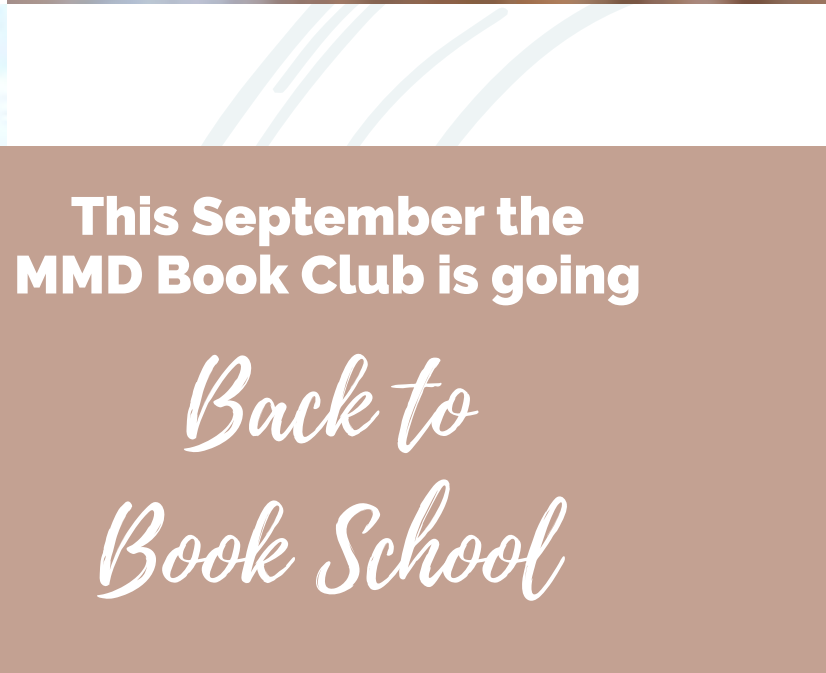
The City We Became by N.K. Jemisin

This dazzling novel feels big and brash and I LOVED it. This book will make you marvel at the power of the human imagination: how on earth does N.K. Jemisin come up with this stuff? A gateway fantasy, an homage to New York, a thrilling ride from first page to last.



**I HOPE THIS SUMMER
READING SEASON IS
YOUR BEST YET!**

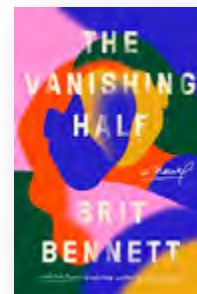
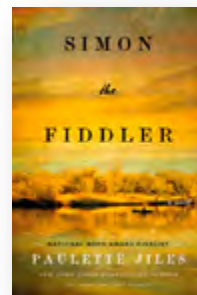
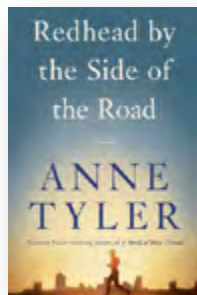
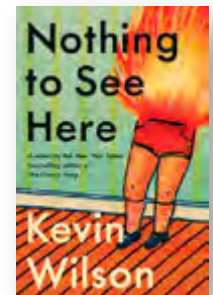
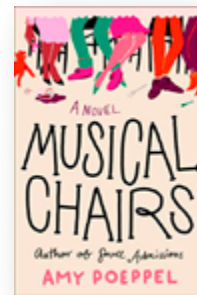
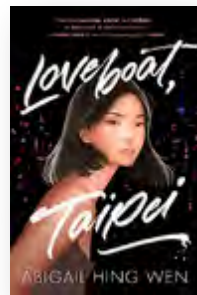
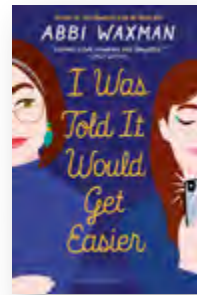
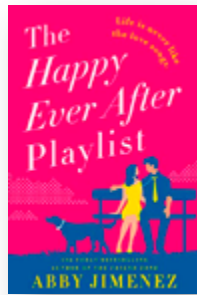
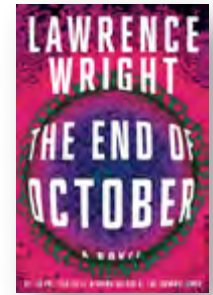
-Anne Bogel
(& DAISY)



**This September the
MMD Book Club is going**

*Back to
Book School*

2020 Summer READING GUIDE



MY

Summer Reading

LIST

#MMDSUMMERREADING

This printable is sized for a half-sheet notebook or binder (8.5x5.5 in).

Print this page, cut out the reading list along the dotted lines, and add to your journal or binder.

MY
Summer Reading
LIST

#mmdsummerreading