May 2023
The Top Ten Adult Fiction and Nonfiction
Chosen Monthly by America’s Library Staff

Find out more at www.LibraryReads.org

Top Ten
but
Made in LibraryAware
Bitch Planet
Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Bookstore
can’t return to the
The Talented
drawn into a mystery at the
www.libraryaware.com
Everyone in My Family Has Killed
The Goblin Emperor
Early Morning Riser
Beth Mills, New Rochelle Public Library
with no memories,

Luster
She’s Nice Though
Saha

Books)

NoveList read-alike:— Ron Bloch, Cuyahoga County Public Library
When a mysterious book
haunts them into adulthood.

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NoveList read-alike:— Laura Bovee, Chicopee Public Library

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Chain-Gang All-Stars: A Novel
Nano Kwame Adjei-Brenyah
(Pantheon)

In a near-future America, prisoners can opt into a gruesome program of death matches against other prisoners. Their lives are broadcast to a bloodthirsty public, and they can win their freedom if they kill enough opponents. The novel employs an effective series of rotating narrators to tell all sides of this story, forcing us to look at how we dehumanize prisoners.

— Laura Bovee, Chicopee Public Library
NoveList read-alike: Bitch Planet/Kelly Sue DeConnick

Killing Me
Michelle Gagnon
(G.P. Putnam’s Sons)

Amber has very strong opinions about people who fall prey to serial killers and is sure that being savvy and street smart will keep her safe. Until she is taken by a serial killer, and her life becomes a hot mess. This quirky, snarky book reads like Janet Evanovich teamed up with Stephen King.

— Linda Quinn, Fairfield Public Library
NoveList read-alike: Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone/Benjamin Stevenson

Practice Makes Perfect: A Novel
Sarah Adams
(Dell)

A sweet Kentucky florist looking for love asks her sister-in-law’s bodyguard to help her suss up after a date accuses her of being too boring. With wonderful characters, this cute romance is a great second installment in The When in Rome series.

— Sonya Skibicki, Bartlett Public Library
NoveList read-alike: The American Roommate
Experiment/Elena Armas

The Secret Book of Flora Lea
Patti Callahan Henry
(Atria)

A poetic tribute to the power of story. Exploring the lifelong effects of the horrors of war, the richly developed characters endure loss that haunts them into adulthood. When a mysterious book appears, it sets in motion a search for answers, making sense of the past, and healing of broken hearts.

— Ron Block, Cuyahoga County Public Library
NoveList read-alike: The Distant Hours/Kate Morton

The Wishing Game: A Novel
Meg Shaffer
(Ballantine Books)

In this magical tale, a beloved children’s author announces a tantalizing game: four fans can compete to win the only copy of his new book. All the contestants are intriguing, but readers will root for Lucy, a teacher’s aide desperate to find the money needed to adapt an orphaned boy.

— Beth Mills, New Rochelle Public Library
NoveList read-alike: Mr. Penumbra’s 24-Hour Bookstore/Rabin Sloan

Quietly Hostile: Essays
Samantha Irby
(Vintage)

If you haven’t already read Irby: 1) Who are you and how do you live? 2) This is a perfect time to start. Reading her relatable essays feels like hanging out with an older sister who doesn’t sugarcoat the awkward parts of life and helps you recognize you’re not the only one faking your way through adulthood.

— Rebecca Hayes, Highland Park Public Library
NoveList read-alike: She’s Nice Though/Mia Mercado

Witch King
Martina Wells
(Tordotcom)

Kai, the eponymous (and erroneously named) Witch King, traverses two timelines as he helps overthrow an empire and then has to deal with the descendants of heroes, who, it turns out, become villains. A very fun, tightly plotted epic fantasy with spectacular worldbuilding and pacing.

— Veronica Raven-Matasy, Boston Public Library
NoveList read-alike: The Goblin Emperor/Katherine Addison

Bonus pick:
Hula: A Novel
Jasmine ‘Iolani Hakes
(HarperVia)

See our social media for annotation!

Read-alikes provided by NoveList and the LibraryReads Community. | Made in LibraryAware - www.libraryaware.com
Romance author Felicity (Fizzy) Chen is asked by documentary filmmaker Connor Prince to find her “Golden Match” on a reality dating show. Readers will love seeing the dynamic between Fizzy and Connor grow through both their perspectives. Fun and light, this is perfect for Bachelor/Bachelorette fans.

The Celebrants by Steven Rowley (G.P. Putnam’s Sons)

This story of four lifelong friends going through the challenges of middle age will make the reader feel like they know each character intimately by the end. And even when tragic events occur, there is still humor and a lot of heart. Highly recommended for readers looking for a light read with emotional depth.

—Elizabeth I., Dekalb County Public Library System
Novelist read-alike: This Time Tomorrow/Emma Straub

The Senator’s Wife: A Novel by Liv Constantine (Bantam Books)

After her husband was murdered, Sloane never expected to find happiness, but she did…with Whit, who was married to her husband’s killer. Whit considerately hires an aide for Sloane, who has a chronic illness, to help her recover from major surgery. But as she suffers debilitating flare-ups and Whit exhibits suspicious behavior, Sloane wonders whether she will ever get her life back. This thriller will keep readers up well after bedtime.

—Chris Markley, Kingsport Public Library
Novelist read-alike: The Personal Assistant/Kimberly Belle

The True Love Experiment by Christina Lauren (Gallery Books)

Romance author Felicity (Fizzy) Chen is asked by documentary filmmaker Connor Prince to find her “Golden Match” on a reality dating show. Readers will love seeing the dynamic between Fizzy and Connor grow through both their perspectives. Fun and light, this is perfect for Bachelor/Bachelorette fans.

Yellowface: A Novel by R. F. Kuang (William Morrow)

Kuang hits it out of the park with eviscerating observations on the publishing world. She asks astute and provoking questions: Who gets to succeed in publishing? Why can we only have a few writers of color in a publisher’s docket at a time? Who gets to call out these transactions and does cancel culture hold the transgressors responsible? As a biracial reader, this hit home, particularly the way it ends with the question: What is the point of writing the great American novel if you’ve manipulated, exploited, and fetishized people of color to get there? An excellent example of women’s work that expresses anger, which is still rarely shown in contemporary fiction.

—Rachel Salazar, Pueblo City County Library District
Novelist read-alike: The Charm Offensive/Allison Coccrun

—Molly Nota, Ada Community Library, Connect Branch
Novelist read-alike: The Other Black Girl/Zakiya Dalila Harris

—Rache Salazar, Pueblo City County Library District
Novelist read-alike: The Charm Offensive/Allison Cochrun

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