

Reading PDFs is so 2021. Unwrap a holiday surprise by scanning this QR code.



Daniel Casse

Middlemarch [audio/visual]

George Eliot

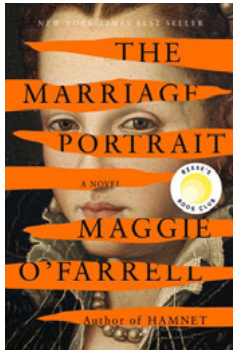
The old joke about Middlemarch (you start reading in the middle of March and you finish...in the middle of March) is true. It took me a big chunk of the summer to listen to all 32 hours of Maureen O'Brien's mesmerizing Audible version. But I haven't stopped thinking about it since. In addition to the usual Victorian themes - marriage, class, inheritance - George Eliot offers a subtle assessment of social reform, industrialization, and Darwinism as they disrupt provincial life in pre-Victorian England.



My Life in Middlemarch

Rebecca Mead

One hundred and fifty years after the novel was published, there is still a booming cottage industry of Middlemarch studies. It is hard to beat Rebecca Mead's take on the novel that is part memoir and part interpretative study of why the book's popularity endures. Inconceivably, her book makes you want to go back and start reading the 800-page behemoth again.

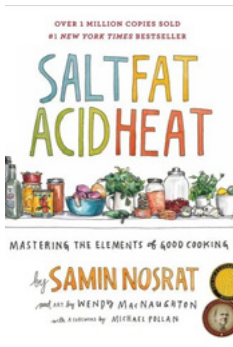


Cassie Dormond

The Marriage Portrait

Maggie O'Farrell

It follows the brief marriage of Lucrezia de' Medici to the Duke of Ferrera. No spoilers, but a quick Google search will show you that being his wife came with some significant occupational hazards. While this book is fairly different than her previous works, it maintains her trademark writing style - lush, descriptive, and nature-forward. And, in contrast to her last book, Hamnet (a phenomenal read), it won't absolutely rip your heart to shreds on its journey to its final destination.

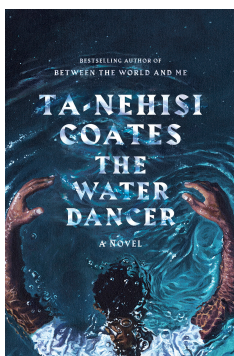


Kimberly Durante

Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat

Samin Nosrat

I was gifted this book this past year and love how it dives deep into the four elements of good cooking, as well as provides recipes and recommendations to choose from. This book teaches you how to cook delicious meals with any ingredient even without a recipe.

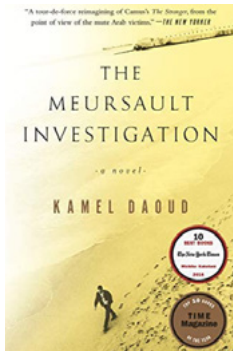


Alessandra D'Ugo

Water Dancer

Ta Nehisi Coates

This book was recommended by Emma Edney and also part of the Oprah Winfrey Book Club. The novel centers on Hiram Walker, a fugitive slave who becomes an agent in the Underground, an organization devoted to the destruction of slavery in the United States during the mid-1800s. With its focus on life after slavery, an alternate historical timeline, and the protagonist's ability to manipulate time and space, the novel combines elements of the neo-slave narrative and speculative fiction..



Emma Edney

The Meursault Investigation

Kamel Daoud

A novel told from the perspective of the brother of “the Arab” killed by Meursault in Albert Camus’ *The Stranger*. It’s both a homage and rebuke to the original story with a profound meditation on Arab identity and the effects of colonialism in Algeria. This novel is a gripping dialogue between the famous existentialist work and the untold stories of characters defined and forgotten by Camus. After reading this, I’m now of the firm opinion that more books should speak to one another.

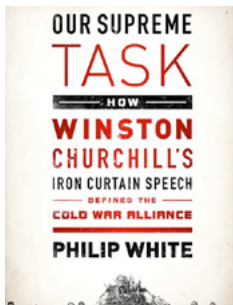


Mike Hodin

Bibi: My Story

Benjamin Netanyahu

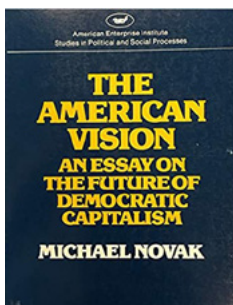
A personal portrait of leadership, family, love of country and the history of the Middle East



Our Supreme Task

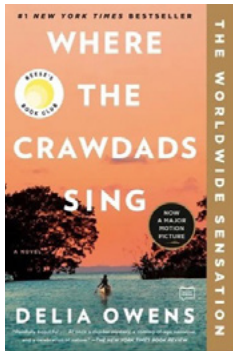
Philip White

Winston Churchill the writing of his Iron Curtain Speech and how the President of the small University in Missouri practiced Thought Leadership in action



The American Vision - An Essay on the Future of Democratic Capitalism

Michael Novak

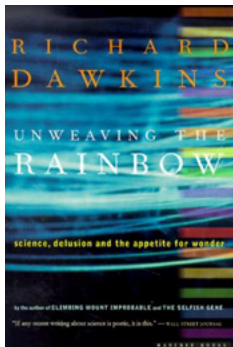


Drew Holzapfel

Where the Crawdads Sing

Delia Owens

“The best book I have ever read,” shared Charlotte, my 16-year-old daughter. As a dad, especially a dad of a teenager, you are always looking for a way to understand what your children are thinking. While I am not sure reading this book gave me any real clues into Charlotte’s head, I found this coming-of-age book an interesting murder mystery with more interesting characters than normally found in these two genres. As a result, I think this book has much broader appeal and worth a read.



Mark Hoffmann

Unweaving the Rainbow

Richard Dawkins

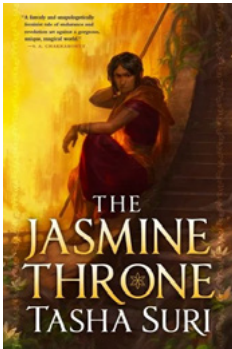
I’m a couple decades late to the Richard Dawkins party. I’m embarrassed, but happy to finally be here. The only way to recommend this book is to quote the first paragraph: “We are going to die, and that makes us the lucky ones. Most people are never going to die because they are never going to be born. The potential people who could have been here in my place but who will in fact never see the light of day outnumber the sand grains of Arabia. Certainly those unborn ghosts include greater poets than Keats, scientists greater than Newton. We know this because the set of possible people allowed by our DNA so massively outnumbers the set of actual people. In the teeth of these stupefying odds it is you and I, in our ordinariness, that are here. We privileged few, who won the lottery of birth against all odds, how dare we whine at our inevitable return to that prior state from which the vast majority have never stirred?”



The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music

Dave Grohl

Like any right-headed disgruntled teen of the '90s, I played my Nirvana CDs on repeat until I gave my parents an aneurysm. When I learned that Dave Grohl's Nirvana years would only take up a few small chapters of this book, I thought: nevermind. I'll read something else. Then, as a last second addition to my carry-on before a weeklong trip to Europe, I packed The Storyteller. All apologies to Mr. Grohl. Though he's handier with a drumstick than a pen, his anecdotes of a life spent making music are pure, light-hearted joy. Even if you think the Foo Fighters are more Maroon 5 than The Melvins, The Storyteller can fill any music-lover's heart-shaped box this holiday season.



Amanda Hu

The Jasmine Throne

Tasha Suri

Richly written fantasy with interesting explorations of sociopolitical and psychological concepts is my niche. This book, inspired by Indian epics and the Mughal period, is exactly that. Read for a sapphic romance, dynamic and morally ambiguous female characters, beautiful worldbuilding, and a disease that makes flowers grow out of people.

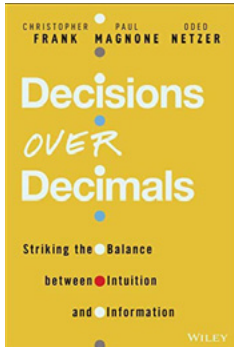


Kelly Jackson

That Cheese Plate Will Change Your Life: Creative Gatherings and Self-Care with the Cheese By Numbers Method

Marissa Mullen

Nothing says light hearted holiday fun like a festive charcuterie board. Feast your eyes on fifty exquisite, easy-to-make cheese and charcuterie plates. Some of my personal favorites for the holiday season can be found on pages 48, 126, 174, and 210.



Kira Jones

Decisions Over Decimals: Striking the Balance between Intuition and Information

Christopher J. Frank

In a world obsessed with data-driven decisions, don't dismiss the value of listening to your gut. Combining real-world examples with practical advice, this book is meant to serve as a guide for (more) accurate decision-making. If the phrase "Quantitative Intuition" piques your interest, give it a read!

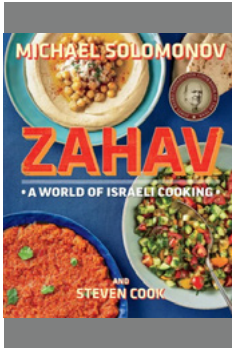


Meinte Kingma

The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini

If I had a time machine, I would go back to Kabul in the '70s before the Soviet invasion based on the incredibly graphic description Hosseini gives us in this classic read. This book provides such bittersweet insights into life in Afghanistan throughout the end of the 20th century, that it triggered me to learn more about the dynamics in the Middle East and how the historic events described in this book determine the situation Afghanistan finds itself in today.

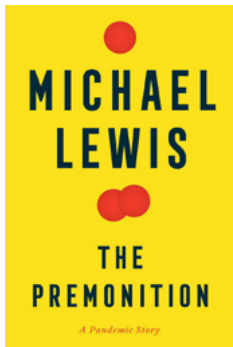


Kattie Krewer

Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking

Michael Solomonov

As the world returns to birthday parties, dinner soirees, and backyard BBQs, we all can use a little inspiration for our table. I recommend looking no further than this cookbook from James Beard Award winning Chef Michael Solomonov. While these dishes come with an extra labor of love, the elevation of standard classics such as hummus will make you the talk of every potluck and force you to question purchasing store-bought hummus ever again. If you're looking for a show-stopping dish the next time your in-laws are in town, pulling out a 48-hour brined and braised lamb shoulder is sure to earn some brownie points.

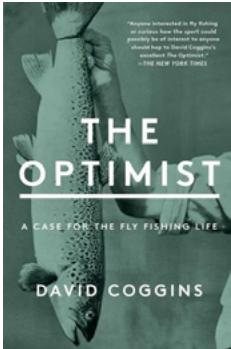


Olivia LeSueur

The Premonition: A Pandemic Story

Michael Lewis

Michael Lewis does a fantastic job turning complex situations into digestible, nonfiction narratives. "The Premonition" recounts the US' initial response to COVID-19 from the perspective of doctors and scientists who, more than ten years prior to 2020, anticipated and tried to plan for the next pandemic. A gripping read I'd highly recommend for a flight or vacation... now that we can travel again.

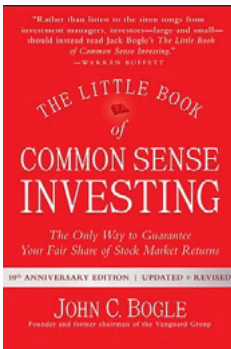


Connor McLaughlin

The Optimist: A Case for the Fly Fishing Life

David Coggins

“The Optimist” chronicles a man’s sophisticated obsession to learn the art of fly fishing – a tradition humans have practiced for at least 40,000 years. Each chapter focuses on a different location, fish, and lesson. A short read not just for the wannabe angler, Coggins observes that the reward is not landing the fish but the philosophy of patience and humility gained in the pursuit.



Cortland Mercer

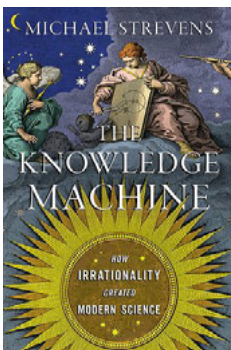
The Little Book of Common Sense Investing

Jack Bogle

Vanguard founder Jack Bogle’s timeless read on investing. A dizzying amount of data for the quantitatively inclined, but the plan is stunningly simple:

- No one beats the market, buy the entire market via low-cost index funds
- Time in the market is everything – start yesterday, stay invested
- Avoid fees and the tyranny of compounding expenses

Warren Buffet endorsed with one major caveat, “it’s simple, but it’s not easy.”

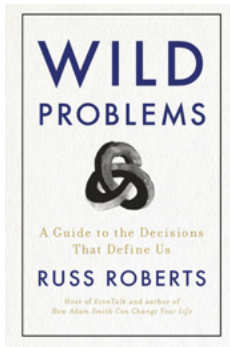


Evelyn Morrison

The Knowledge Machine

Michael Stevens

Stevens argues the reason modern science is successful is the same reason it was improbable – it builds from a set of highly constricting, collectively adopted rules, that break human logic, counter intuition, and depart from philosophy and religion. An engaging study in paradox – irrationality, monotony, and reduction underpin the momentous accomplishments of science. And a compelling case for protecting the process.



Danny O'Keefe

Wild Problems:
A Guide to the Decisions That Define Us

Russ Roberts

Today, no matter what problem you're trying to solve, there's likely an online guide, app, podcast, or perhaps a fantastic consulting firm to help take the guesswork out of your decision. Those are great resources when you're trying to find the best airfare, cook a new recipe, or create a corporate strategy. But there's a tendency to expect the same clear analysis with the big personal decisions in life – whether to marry, where to live, what to do, so on. Russ Roberts, an economist and longtime podcast host, offers a simple antidote to such over-analysis: stop! Drawing on examples from famous scientists, writers, and grumpy football coaches, among others, he posits that it's the “problem” itself, not the solution, that makes life interesting.

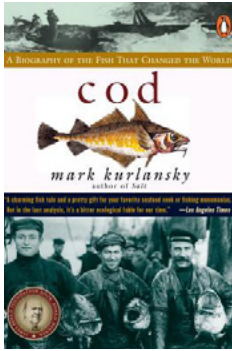


Mario Ottiglio

Quiet Leadership:
Winning Hearts, Minds and Matches

Carlo Ancelotti

It's a football year. So let me throw this in: “Quiet Leadership: Winning Hearts, Minds and Matches”, from Carlo Ancelotti one of my favorite Italian football coaches. Yes, football. It's obviously a light read, but as a football fan I found the book very fun as it combines business-speak and concepts. with football anecdotes. And actually, I agree with most of what's in there! Worth a read – you HLG football addicts (I think 2 or 3 max...?)

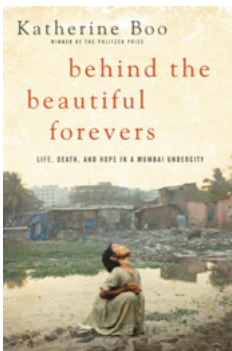


Ryan Paolicelli

Cod:
A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World

Mark Kurlansky

I have a soft spot for histories that tell a broad story through a narrow lens and this book is absolutely that. If you are interested in the ecological impacts of fishing, early exploration of North America, or just how tastes in food change over centuries there is something in here for you. Kurlansky's writing is engaging and turns what could otherwise be boring into a genuine page turner.

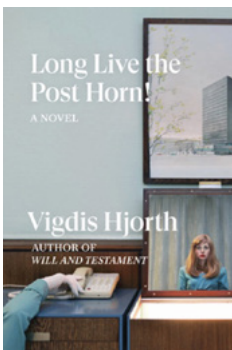


Katie Partrick

Behind the Beautiful Forevers

Katherine Boo

Katherine, a very talented investigative journalist, wrote this narrative using stories she was told while stationed in Mumbai for ~3 years. The book gives a glimpse of what life is like in a twenty-first century Mumbai undercity.

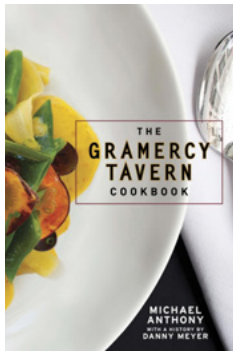


Charles Pennell

Long Live the Post Horn!

Vigdis Hjorth

A great novel, and it's about communications consulting. Familiar themes include a bungled workshop, an endless op-ed, a too-demanding account (the Norwegian postal workers' union), and, of course, an unswerving commitment to client service.



Michiel Peters

Gramercy Tavern Cookbook

Michael Anthony

&

Boqueria: A cookbook from Barcelona to New York

Marc Vidal and Yann de Rochefort



Both books are great for the ambitious hobby chef. When we moved to New York this summer we had to leave a closet full of cookbooks in the Netherlands. These books are the first we bought after arriving in New York after an amazing dinner in the restaurants these books are from. The Gramercy Tavern Cookbook contains modern American recipes - using techniques you will commonly find in the French kitchen. The cookbook from Boqueria features recipes for tapas that - when you're as good a cook as the chefs in the restaurant - will instantly transport you to Barcelona.



Katy Schneider Riddick

Half Baked Harvest Super Simple: More Than 125 Recipes for Instant, Overnight, Meal-Prepped, and Easy Comfort Foods

Tieghan Gerard

We can't be reading all the time, sometimes we have to take a break and eat. That's why my book choice this year is the Half Baked Harvest Super Simple cookbook.



Sophie Robert

Belle Greene

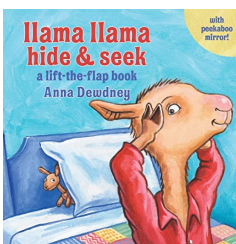
Alexandra Lapierre

Based on the true story of Belle da Costa Greene, a woman who defied all odds to carve out a destiny of her own choosing, this is a richly imagined novel bursting with atmosphere, lush period detail, and many unforgettable characters.

New York in the 1900s. A young girl fascinated by rare books defies all odds and becomes the director of one of the country's most prestigious private libraries. It belongs to the magnate J.P. Morgan, darling of the international aristocracy and one of the city's richest men.

Flamboyant, brilliant, and beautiful, Belle is among New York society's most sought-after intellectuals. She also hides a secret. Although she looks white, she is African American, the daughter of a famous black activist who sees her desire to hide her origins as a consummate betrayal. Despite the danger of "passing"—falsely posing as white carries a risk of the death penalty—Belle and her family swore not only to never reveal their true origins but also to never have children. It's a terrible concession that they all accepted that day because there can be no turning back. Torn between history's ineluctable imperatives and the freedom to belong to the society of her choosing, Belle's drama, which plays out in a violently racist America, is one that resonates forcefully, and illuminatingly even today.

I wish I had known about Belle's story when I visited J.P. Morgan's library years ago!

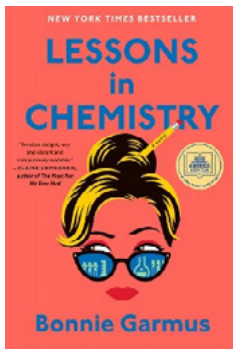


Sagar Sane

Llama Llama Hide & Seek: A Lift-the-Flap Book

Anna Dewdney, illustrated by JT Morrow

A silly llama searches for his stuffed animal and discovers it in an unsurprising place. This book was a lot better before my son ripped off the little flaps. Now everyone knows where Fuzzy Llama is.



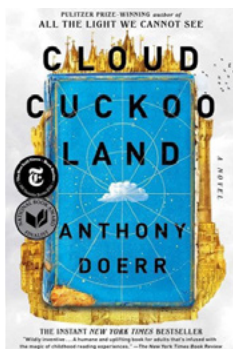
Emily Scholler

Lessons in Chemistry

Bonnie Garmus

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans; the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with—of all things—her mind. True chemistry results.

But like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking (“combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride”) proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.

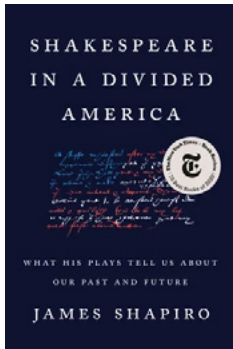


Jane Schumacher

Cloud Cuckoo Land

Anthony Doerr

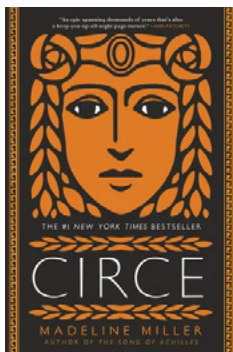
You've probably already heard of this one, because I found it looking through book reviews for “literary fiction” (a pretentious category of book if there ever was one). I tore through this 640-page novel about books as a beach read—on an annual family vacation where not only do we compete for who brings the most books (Kindle books may or may not count), but on which we spend most of our time sitting around reading (both on the beach and inside). What role do books and stories play in our lives? Doerr starts to answer this question across time and place in this engaging novel.



Shakespeare in a Divided America

James Shapiro

This book might be my favorite of a rather large collection of Shakespeare books I have – not just about Shakespeare, Shapiro uses Shakespeare throughout American history to examine cultural flashpoints and addresses where we have been and where we are now. From the founding fathers and Lincoln to Trump (with forays into a 19th century Shakespeare-induced riot and Steve Bannon’s failed screen adaptations of Shakespeare!), you’ll definitely learn a few things, whether you’re as big a Shakespeare nerd as I am (there aren’t many of us) or not.

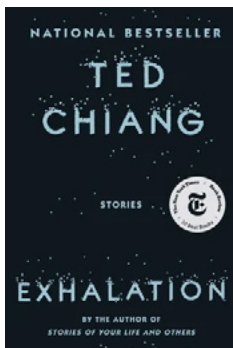


Emma Stutts

Circe

Madeleine Miller

In keeping with last year’s theme of retellings of classics, my book suggestion is Circe. It tells the story of a somewhat infamous character in The Odyssey – a banished witch who turns men into pigs. Madeline Miller gives perspective to the character, portraying a complex and alienated goddess. Throughout the book, you will sympathize with and cheer for Circe, even when she makes some questionable choices. This is a story of feminism, vindication, and rich Greek mythology brought to life.



Krishna Trivedi

Exhalation

Ted Chiang

A book of science fiction short stories I read earlier this year over the course of a rainy, cloudy week. Combining big questions and incredible world building, Ted Chiang has created an eclectic compilation that strikes the perfect balance of humanism and hard science.

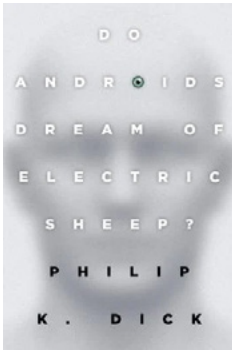


Peter Varnum

The Storyteller: Tales of Life and Music

Dave Grohl

It is an engaging, behind-the-scenes look at Grohl's life as a musician and a guy. The former Nirvana drummer and founder of the Foo Fighters, Grohl writes about his time touring the world, the meteoric rise of Nirvana and its implications on his own life, and how he made the transition from road warrior rock star to ... dad rock star. Interesting stuff all around from the era of my childhood, and I'm not even a huge fan of this kind of music!



Micah Wray

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Philip K. Dick

This novel is an essential science fiction read and the source material for the movie Blade Runner. Set in an Earth devoid of natural life due to pollution and war, Rick Deckard a bounty hunter, must "retire" androids who have escaped to Earth from off-world colonies.

As we join Deckard in his journey to retire rogue androids, we start to question what it truly means to be human, our relationship with the natural world and the role that empathy plays in how we distinguish ourselves from animals. As a longtime dystopian fiction enjoyer but recent science fiction convert, this is a fun and approachable book.