

Personalized Reading Suggestions



Appeal Factors:

I selected authors and books based upon the following subject interests and appeal factors:

- ✓ Genres: Historical fiction, fantasy, romance, literary fiction, mysteries
- ✓ Tone: Happy/positive, serious, dark/ironic, demanding, humorous, thought provoking,
- ✓ Writing style: Experimental in structure, genre, & language, deliberate pacing, well plotted
- ✓ Focus: Character driven, appreciation for language
- ✓ Preferred format: Print
- ✓ Avoid/Include: Strong female characters, humor, magic and romance, multicultural authors
- ✓ Recent favorites: *All the Birds in the Sky* by Charlie Anders, *Territory* by Emma Bull, *The Bone Clocks* by David Mitchell, *The Wangs vs. the World* by Jade Chang, *Child 44* by Tom Rob Smith

Authors you might like:

Haruki Murakami

(Based on your interest in David Mitchell and character driven, stylistically complex/adventurous literary fiction.) Haruki Murakami's appeal lies in his characters and storylines, both of which seamlessly meld the mundane and the surreal. His protagonists are introspective and quirky, and they always end up mixed up in some crazy conspiracy. The Murakami plot grows from these situations as the characters and the reader go through a physical and mental journey to reach the novel's completion. Murakami sprinkles odd situations and eccentric characters into the mix to help lighten what can be a heavy load. Start with: [1Q84](#) (very long) or [Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage](#) (not as long).

Elizabeth Bear

(Based on your interest in *Territory*, plot driven stories, and strong female characters) Expect fantastic plots, dynamic characters, and intricate world-building in the stories of prolific, Hugo-award-winning fantasy and science-fiction author Elizabeth Bear. Whether she's writing about technologies of the distant future or mythical creatures inspired by Asian mythology, Bear excels in creating engaging, atmospheric tales that will whisk readers into far-off realms of imagination. Her stories frequently feature strong, richly developed female characters as they encounter nefarious adversaries, epic threats, and wondrous spectacles. Bear's clear, economical, and lively prose helps immerse her readers into her imaginative worlds without bogging them down with details. Start with: [Karen Memory](#).

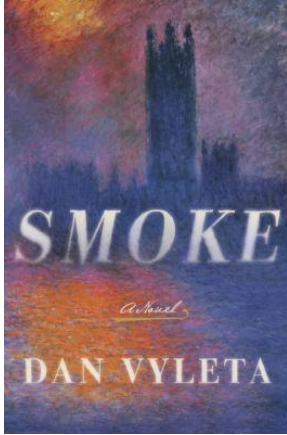
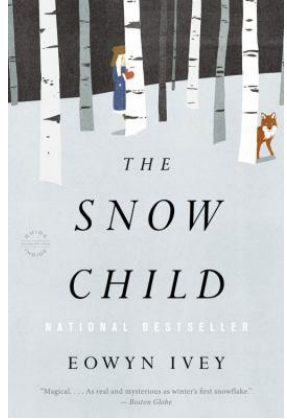
Helen Oyeyemi

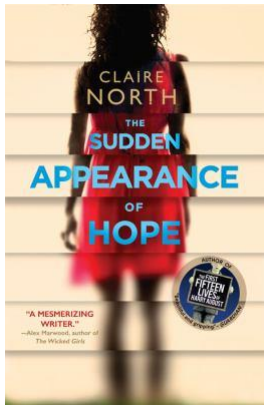
(Based on your interest in magical realism, metafiction, and multicultural authors) Helen Oyeyemi writes imaginative, surreal, and intricately plotted coming-of-age stories that blend magic realism, atmospheric gothic fiction, and meta-literary playfulness. Her stories frequently feature young female protagonists who, in coping with isolation, social rejection, and racial intolerance, investigate haunted houses, encounter mystical spirits or dangerous ghosts, and immerse themselves into imaginary (or real?) fairy tales. Through elegant, vibrantly lyrical prose and complex, often radically shifting narratives, Oyeyemi manages a delicate balance of candid psychological description, whimsical fantasy, incisive social commentary, and multicultural influences that will delight many readers. Start with: [The Icarus Girl](#).

Julia Alvarez

(Based on your interest in Sandra Cisneros, character driven stories with strong female characters, and historical fiction) Dominican-American Julia Alvarez writes novels featuring strong Hispanic women. Her stories revolve around the themes of identity and society, and showcase her diverse cultural upbringing. Her lyrical, literary writing often plays with language, finding her characters speaking in blended Spanish and English. Her novels rarely follow a linear storyline, but weave a story through the use of flashbacks and vignettes. Alvarez is also a highly regarded poet and essayist, and has written children's books. Start with: [How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents](#).

Titles you might enjoy:

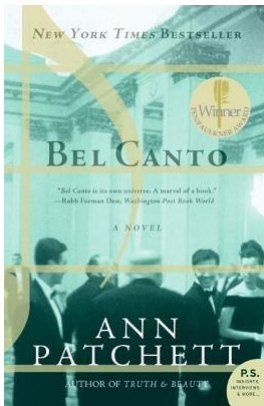
 The cover of the book 'Smoke' by Dan Vyleta features a dark, atmospheric illustration of a castle or large building at night, with smoke or mist rising from the base. The title 'SMOKE' is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the middle. Below the title, the author's name 'DAN VYLETA' is printed in smaller white capital letters.	<p>Smoke by Dan Vyleta</p> <p>Welcome to a Victorian England unlike any other you have experienced before. Here, wicked thoughts (both harmless and hate-filled) appear in the air as telltale wisps of Smoke. Young Thomas Argyle, a son of aristocracy, has been sent to an elite boarding school. Here he will be purged of Wickedness, for the wealthy do not Smoke. When he resists a sadistic headboy's temptations to Smoke, a much larger struggle beyond the school walls is revealed. Shortly thereafter, on a trip to London, Thomas and his best friend witness events that make them begin to question everything they have been taught about Smoke. And thus the adventure begins... You will travel by coach to a grand estate where secrets lurk in attic rooms and hidden laboratories; where young love blossoms; and where a tumultuous relationship between a mother and her children is the crucible in which powerful passions are kindled, and dangerous deeds must be snuffed out in a desperate race against time.</p> <p>Reason for selection: This well received (starred reviews from Booklist, Publishers Weekly, and Library Journal) piece of alternate historical fiction has a prominent fantasy/magic element and a touch of romance.</p>
 The cover of 'The Snow Child' by Eowyn Ivey shows a stylized illustration of a woman in a blue dress and a child in a red fox costume standing in a snowy, wooded area. The title 'THE SNOW CHILD' is prominently displayed in large, black, serif capital letters. Below the title, it says 'NATIONAL BESTSELLER' and 'EOWYN IVEY'. A quote from Bonnie Glady is at the bottom: 'Magical... As real and mysterious as winter's first snowflake'.	<p>The Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey</p> <p>Alaska, 1920: a brutal place to homestead, and especially tough for recent arrivals Jack and Mabel. Childless, they are drifting apart--he breaking under the weight of the work of the farm; she crumbling from loneliness and despair. In a moment of levity during the season's first snowfall, they build a child out of snow. The next morning the snow child is gone--but they glimpse a young, blonde-haired girl running through the trees. This little girl, who calls herself Faina, seems to be a child of the woods. She hunts with a red fox at her side, skims lightly across the snow, and somehow survives alone in the Alaskan wilderness. As Jack and Mabel struggle to understand this child who could have stepped from the pages of a fairy tale, they come to love her as their own daughter. But in this beautiful, violent place things are rarely as they appear, and what they eventually learn about Faina will transform all of them.</p> <p>Reason for selection: This literary debut novel by native Alaskan Ivey is a character driven historical novel involving magical realism.</p>



[The Sudden Appearance of Hope](#) by Claire North

My name is Hope Arden, and you won't know who I am. But we've met before—a thousand times. It started when I was sixteen years old. A father forgetting to drive me to school. A mother setting the table for three, not four. A friend who looks at me and sees a stranger. No matter what I do, the words I say, the crimes I commit, you will never remember who I am. That makes my life difficult. It also makes me dangerous. The Sudden Appearance of Hope is the tale of a girl no one remembers, yet her story will stay with you forever.

Reason for selection: A genre bending adventure/crime/psychological thriller/mystery featuring a strong female lead with a bizarre ability (or disorder, depending on your take). North is becoming known for her unusual and risky tales of suspense and oddities, such as [The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August](#) - about a man continually reincarnated into the same life, and [Touch](#) - about ghostly entities who can jump from body to body.



[Bel Canto](#) by Ann Patchett

Somewhere in South America, at the home of the country's vice president, a lavish birthday party is being held in honor of the powerful businessman Mr. Hosokawa. Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano, has mesmerized the international guests with her singing. It is a perfect evening -- until a band of gun-wielding terrorists takes the entire party hostage. But what begins as a panicked, life-threatening scenario slowly evolves into something quite different, a moment of great beauty, as terrorists and hostages forge unexpected bonds and people from different continents become compatriots, intimate friends, and lovers.

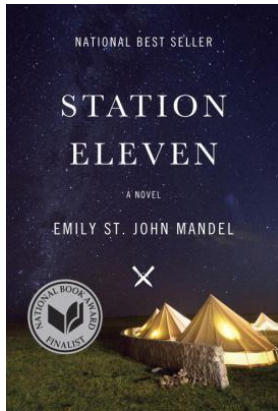
Reason for selection: Despite its description, this is less an action story and much more about a group of diverse characters, many of whom can't even communicate with each other, learning to adapt, live, and even love under very unusual circumstances. A great work of literary fiction.



[Swamplandia!](#) by Karen Russell

The Bigtree alligator-wrestling dynasty is in decline, and Swamplandia!, their island home and gator-wrestling theme park, formerly #1 in the region, is swiftly being encroached upon by a fearsome and sophisticated competitor called the World of Darkness. Ava's mother, the park's indomitable headliner, has just died; her sister, Ossie, has fallen in love with a spooky character known as the Dredgeman, who may or may not be an actual ghost; and her brilliant big brother, Kiwi, who dreams of becoming a scholar, has just defected to the World of Darkness in a last-ditch effort to keep their family business from going under. Ava's father, affectionately known as Chief Bigtree, is AWOL; and that leaves Ava, a resourceful but terrified thirteen, to manage ninety-eight gators and the vast, inscrutable landscape of her own grief. Against a backdrop of hauntingly fecund plant life animated by ancient lizards and lawless hungers, Karen Russell has written an utterly singular novel about a family's struggle to stay afloat in a world that is inexorably sinking. An arrestingly beautiful and inventive work from a vibrant new voice in fiction.

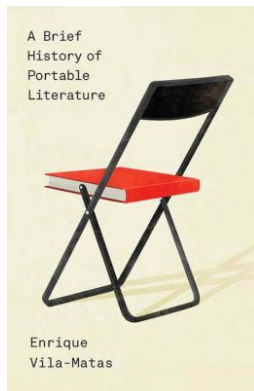
Reason for selection: A witty, metaphorical, and critically well received literary novel that blends the real world and the mystical.



[Station Eleven](#) by Emily St. John Mandel

One snowy night Arthur Leander, a famous actor, has a heart attack onstage during a production of King Lear. Jeevan Chaudhary, a paparazzo-turned-EMT, is in the audience and leaps to his aid. A child actress named Kirsten Raymonde watches in horror as Jeevan performs CPR, pumping Arthur's chest as the curtain drops, but Arthur is dead. That same night, as Jeevan walks home from the theater, a terrible flu begins to spread. Hospitals are flooded and Jeevan and his brother barricade themselves inside an apartment, watching out the window as cars clog the highways, gunshots ring out, and life disintegrates around them. Fifteen years later, Kirsten is an actress with the Traveling Symphony. Together, this small troupe moves between the settlements of an altered world, performing Shakespeare and music for scattered communities of survivors. Written on their caravan, and tattooed on Kirsten's arm is a line from Star Trek: "Because survival is insufficient." But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who digs graves for anyone who dares to leave. Spanning decades, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, this suspenseful, elegiac novel is rife with beauty. As Arthur falls in and out of love, as Jeevan watches the newscasters say their final good-byes, and as Kirsten finds herself caught in the crosshairs of the prophet, we see the strange twists of fate that connect them all.

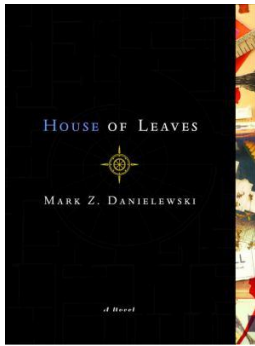
Reason for selection: This thought provoking literary fiction jumps back and forth between times and characters to tell how several disparate people are connected before, during, and after the fall of civilization.



[A Brief History of Portable Literature](#) by Enrique Vila-Matas

An author (a version of Vila-Matas himself) presents a short "history" of a secret society, the Shandies, who are obsessed with the concept of "portable literature." The society is entirely imagined, but in this rollicking, intellectually playful book, its members include writers and artists like Marcel Duchamp, Aleister Crowley, Witold Gombrowicz, Federico Garcia Lorca, Man Ray, and Georgia O'Keefe. The Shandies meet secretly in apartments, hotels, and cafes all over Europe to discuss what great literature really is: brief, not too serious, penetrating the depths of the mysterious. We witness the Shandies having adventures in stationary submarines, underground caverns, African backwaters, and the cultural capitals of Europe.

Reason for selection: A witty piece of literary metafiction by Spanish author Vila-Matas.



[House of Leaves](#) by Mark Danielewski

Years ago, when *House of Leaves* was first being passed around, it was nothing more than a badly bundled heap of paper, parts of which would occasionally surface on the Internet. No one could have anticipated the small but devoted following this terrifying story would soon command. Starting with an odd assortment of marginalized youth -- musicians, tattoo artists, programmers, strippers, environmentalists, and adrenaline junkies - - the book eventually made its way into the hands of older generations, who not only found themselves in those strangely arranged pages but also discovered a way back into the lives of their estranged children. Now, for the first time, this astonishing novel is made available in book form, complete with the original colored words, vertical footnotes, and newly added second and third appendices. The story remains unchanged, focusing on a young family that moves into a small home on Ash Tree Lane where they discover something is terribly wrong: their house is bigger on the inside than it is on the outside. Of course, neither Pulitzer Prize-winning photo-journalist Will Navidson nor his companion Karen Green was prepared to face the consequences of that impossibility, until the day their two little children wandered off and their voices eerily began to return another story -- of creature darkness, of an ever-growing abyss behind a closet door, and of that unholy growl which soon enough would tear through their walls and consume all their dreams.

Reason for selection: If you like experimental fiction and want a challenge, here's one to try. This one contains stories within stories within stories, and the book itself is practically a character.

Book news and events

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Resources

In addition to the Tulsa City-County Library [Catalog](#) and my own reading lists and annotations, I used the following resources to compile your personalized reading suggestions.

The author information and some book annotations of fiction titles are from *NoveList*, a terrific database with author read-alikes, series information, fiction prize-winners and convenient links to the Tulsa City-County Library catalog. You may access *NoveList* from home or any TCCL location with your library card number. Go to the "Books, Music, Movies +" section of the website, select the "Reading Resources" icon and look under the "Reading Lists" heading for *Novelist*.

When selecting books for Your Next Great Read, we rely heavily upon reviews from respected journals, including BookList, Publishers' Weekly, and Library Journal among others. You may be interested in perusing these publications, too. All are available electronically to TCCL cardholders.

A Final Note

Thank you for using *Your Next Great Read*, a Readers' Advisory service of the Tulsa City-County Library. We were delighted to share our knowledge of the wide range of books available to you for pleasure reading. Please give us feedback! You can reach us at (918) 549-7323 or askus@tulsalibrary.org. If you enjoyed the titles on this guide and would like some additional recommendations, you can fill out our [Your Next Great Read Follow-Up Survey](#) to receive a few more reading suggestions.

