

Book Descriptions 2021 Reading List

The Radium Girls

by Kate Moore

This story fully illuminates the inspiring young women exposed to the "wonder" substance of radium, and their awe-inspiring strength in the face of almost impossible circumstances. Their courage and tenacity led to life-changing regulations, research into nuclear bombing, and ultimately saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

If I Stay

by Gayle Forman

While in a coma following an automobile accident that killed her parents and younger brother, 17 year-old Mia, a gifted cellist, weighs whether to live with her grief or join her family in death.

Educated

by Tara Westover

An unforgettable memoir about a young girl who had been kept out of school, leaves her survivalist family and goes on to earn a PhD from Cambridge University.

Defending Jacob

by William Landay

A novel of an embattled family in crisis—a suspenseful, character-driven mystery that is also a spellbinding tale of guilt, betrayal, and the terrifying speed at which our lives can spin out of control.

True Grit

by Charles Ports

The story of 14 year-old Mattie Ross, as she sets out to avenge her father's murder, convincing one-eyed Rooster Cogburn, the meanest U.S. marshal there is, to accompany her. Things don't go as planned when a Texas Ranger comes along whose idea of justice is vastly different from Mattie and Rooster's.

The Lager Queen of Minnesota

by J. Ryan Stradal

A novel of a family, Midwestern values, hard work, fate and the secrets of making a world-class beer.

One Plus One

by Jojo Moyes

One single mom. One chaotic family. One quirky stranger. One irresistible love story.

Olive, Again

by Elizabeth Strout

The unforgettable Olive Kitteridge has returned, as indomitable as ever, this time as a person getting older, navigating her next decade as she comes to terms with the changes--sometimes welcome, sometimes not--in her own life.

The Book of Lost Friends

by Lisa Wingate

A family amid the destruction of the post-Civil War South, and of a modern-day teacher who learns of their story and its vital connection to her students' lives.

Britt Marie Was Here

by Fredrik Backman

This novel celebrates the importance of community and connection in a world that can feel isolating.

Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard

by Sarah Smarsh

The author's personal history affirms the corrosive impact intergenerational poverty can have on individuals, families, and communities. Combining memoir with powerful analysis and cultural commentary, this is an uncompromising look at class, identity, and the particular perils of having less in a country known for its excess.

A Piece of the World

by Christina Baker Kline

Told in evocative and lucid prose this is a story about the burdens and blessings of family history, and how artist and muse can come together to forge a new and timeless legacy.