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#ReadingIsRelevant

The Library is still “open”!

...and it's easy to use! All you need is **1)** a library card (libraries are allowing temporary digital ones if you don't already have one) and **2)** an electronic device!

If you are a member of the:

Minuteman Library Network, click [HERE](#) for digital resource info.

Merrimack Valley Library Consortium, click [HERE](#)...

Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing, click [HERE](#)...

North of Boston Library Exchange, click [HERE](#)...

Old Colony Library Network, click [HERE](#)...

There's an alternative to Amazon for buying books!

See if your local indie bookstore (or one that you just want to support...perhaps a shop from your childhood hometown?) is processing online sales. I bet it is! (I have been using Silver Unicorn in Acton.)

Alternatively, [Bookshop.org](#) is essentially the “Amazon” of the independent book world. Even if you decide to purchase directly from a shop, you can peruse this

site for curated lists...everything from “Books My Mom Likes” to “Popular Gardening Books” to “A Curation of Novels for Short Attention Spans.”

** for audiobooks, the “Amazon alternative” is libro.fm. “Same Audiobooks. Same Price. Different Story.”

“I want to ‘share’ books (either physically or just talk about) with other people!”

- If you are not already part of a book club, see if friends/neighbors would like to start one. People are looking for new ways to connect right now; why not try it? Here’s the benefit of us being distant from each other: It makes perfect sense to start an online book club with anyone, anywhere – geography be damned! (Just make sure you coordinate time zones if necessary!)
- Check if your library is hosting virtual book clubs. Some for sure are, and on Twitter, renowned novelist Tayari Jones (*American Marriage*) mused that she might pop in to one discussing her book...just sayin’.
- Join/use Instagram to find/follow authors and genres that you’re interested in. Follow the hashtag #bookstagram to start.
- One great aspect of Amazon: The “people also purchase” feature. Find a book that you’ve enjoyed and see what others with (possibly) similar preferences are interested in.
- If your town does not have a local “book club/group” Facebook group, start one! In Sudbury, ours isn’t really a “book club” where we discuss books...it’s more of a way to swap books and get recommendations. If you are able to set up swaps using proper distancing and sanitizing methods, go for it.
- If you’re feeling exceedingly handy and motivated, you could establish a Little Free Library in your neighborhood or on your street. (Or: You could just take advantage of one that already exists near you...)
- “Attend” a virtual literary/author event. Personally, I *never* want people to feel obligated to speak/share during events that I produce, so please don’t let that be an obstacle for trying something new!

Upcoming [virtual] A Lively Read events:

Thursday, May 28, time TBD, but most likely 7:30 pm: ‘Stay at Home, Story at Home’ with Elizabeth Ames, author of *The Other’s Gold*.

Hosted in conjunction with ātac (formerly Amazing Things Arts Center); watch our social channels for details!

Thursday, June 11, 8 pm: Book Covers: A MetroWest Read-Aloud Series, with Hank Philippi Ryan, Jen Maseda, Rep. Jack Lewis, Grace Talusan, and Marjan Kamali. Hosted in conjunction with ātac (formerly Amazing Things Arts Center); watch our social channels for details!

OK, onto Book Recommendations!

These are culled from some polls/questions on Instagram, as well as my own recommendations. I tend to read literary fiction (which admittedly is a pretty vague term!), both old and new, so if that is your style, I would recommend you take a look at <https://alifelyread.com/books/> for a list of all the books (nearly 50) I've written about since 2014. On Instagram, I chronicle pretty much everything I read.

“Literary Fiction”

The Stone Diaries, by Carol Shields
The Other's Gold, by Elizabeth Ames
Apeirogon, by Colum McCann
Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, by Taylor Jenkins Reid.
Dear Edward, by Ann Napolitano
The Woman Next Door, by Yewande Omotoso
A Visit from the Good Squad, by Jennifer Egan
You Think It, I'll Say It (short stories), by Curtis Sittenfeld
Little Fires Everywhere, by Celeste Ng
Olive, Again, by Elizabeth Strout

YA/Magical Realism/SciFi

The Ninth House, by Leigh Bardugo
A Deadly Education, by Naomi Novik
Renegades, by Marissa Meyer

Memoir/Nonfiction

Brother, I'm Dying, by Edwidge Danticat
The Body Papers, by Grace Talusan
Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches, by Audre Lorde

“Cotton Candy”

American Housewife (short stories), by Helen Ellis
The Slammed series, Coleen Hoover

Sea of Tranquility, by Katja Millay
Anything by Elin Hilderbrand (perfect beach reads)

Historical Fiction/"Issue" Novels (i.e. ones that teach us about global circumstances)

This Terrible Beauty, by Katrin Schumann
The Stationery Shop, by Marjan Kamali
A Woman is No Man, by Etaf Rum
Apeirogon, by Colum McCann
The Giver of Stars, by Jojo Moyes
The Great Believers, by Rebecca Makkai

Books for Teens (some maybe ok for tweens, depending)

I posted all of these on Facebook once schools were closed in March because I'm *trying* to have my own kids read some supplemental things. For reference, my children are 14 and 16 (9th and 10th grades), and I would be happy with them reading any of these. Most of these are "adult" books. But by all means, if your t(w)eens prefer fantasy/scifi, etc., let them read what they want! (Never take for granted a kid who likes to read!)

All Souls, by Michael Patrick MacDonald
Easter Rising, by Michael Patrick MacDonald
The Help, by Kathryn Stockett
Mona in the Promised Land, by Gish Jen
Let the Great World Spin, by Colum McCann
Brother, I'm Dying, by Edwidge Danticat
The Commitments, by Roddy Doyle
Prep, by Curtis Sittenfeld
Behold the Dreamers, by Imbolo Mbue
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, by Sherman Alexie
Born a Crime, by Trevor Noah
The Body Papers, by Grace Talusan
Nisei Daughter, by Monica Sone
Hillbilly Elegy, by JD Vance
Educated, by Tara Westover
Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive, by Stephanie Land and Barbara Ehrenreich

****There are just too many books to list! I know there are no mystery, thrillers, or non-fiction (besides memoir) on here. But these all came from people who love to read, so it's a start!****

