



20 BOOKS

to read based on your favorite TV show

This spring, Amy Clark joined Mary Carver on an episode of The Couch Podcast and shared her best book recommendations based on your favorite TV show. Amy is the host of a vibrant book club community on Facebook and an expert in reading, reviewing, and recommending books that will keep you up late at night! If you love any of the following shows (or shows similar to these), keep reading to add a whole bunch of books to your TBR pile!

ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

OUTLANDER

THE MARVELOUS MRS. MAISEL

FRIENDS

THE HANDMAID'S TALE

THE CROWN

STRANGER THINGS

For more book reviews and recommendations, join Amy's Facebook group (search for MomAdvice Book Club) and check out her monthly book posts at MomAdvice.com.

And for more conversations about pop culture and why it matters, join Mary's Facebook group (search for The Couch with Mary Carver) and subscribe to The Couch podcast on iTunes!



IF YOU LIKE ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT...

SPOONBENDERS by Daryl Gregory

Known as the Amazing Telemachus Family, each family member has a special skill from moving objects with their mind, the ability to predict the future, a human lie detector...and a con man who has the sleight of hand ability being used by the CIA.

Decades later this family is not so amazing. In fact, if you are an Arrested Development fan, you just might recognize some of the quirks of these family members. When one family member owes a large sum of money to the mob, this magical family must come together to save their family member and they discover more about each other in the process.

If magical realism or dysfunctional family stories are your thing, this might be a winner in your book stack, too.

SEVEN DAYS OF US by Francesca Hornak

The entire Birch family must come together for seven long days to be locked down into quarantine for the holidays. Olivia, their daughter, is a doctor and has been treating an epidemic abroad and they need to ensure that no germs are spread. The family hasn't been together this long in years and, as we all do, everyone falls back into their old roles. Children become children again, parents resume fighting, and they all must learn to live with one another again.

Each of these family members is carrying a secret that holds detrimental consequences for the entire family. Told from their alternating perspectives, the chapters twist together as these secrets are revealed.

STANDARD DEVIATION by Katherine Heiny

Graham divorced his first wife to marry his girlfriend, Audra. Audra is a hilarious chatty busybody that keeps Graham on his toes and seems to know what is happening around town at all times. For Graham, a private introvert, this can be quite exhausting. Audra throws him into situations where he is forced to be social with the oddest group of characters, like the strange members of his son's origami club, leading from one awkward moment to the next.

When Audra decides it is time to be friends with his ex-wife, Elspeth, she throws Graham's world into a tailspin as he begins to acknowledge the contrasts between these two women and wonder why he let Elspeth go. It is in these moments when he must face his own choices and if he made the right ones.

I laughed out loud through soooo much of this book and found Audra to be wildly relatable (for the record, my husband found Graham to be – hahaha!). I really enjoyed this story, even if the plot felt a bit thin at times.



IF YOU LIKE OUTLANDER...

KINDRED by Octavia Butler

Dana is a black woman married to a white man in the late sixties who finds herself transported to the South in 1815 when a little boy, named Rufus, is drowning in a river. Dana saves him and this begins the first of many visits where he risks his life and Dana is pulled back into the 1800s. Her role as a black woman is not a free one, though, and she must work as a slave at the house and witnesses the true brutalities of an unkind slave owner.

When Dana and her husband are transported together, he must act as her slave owner in order to keep her safe, causing great stress and doubt between the two. The ending was a little strange to me, but overall, this was a riveting read that I could not put down!

(A warning: This book is brutal in its description of the treatment of slaves. I feel it's good to learn about this, but it's so hard to read.)

A MURDER IN TIME by Julie McElwain

This story follows an FBI agent, Kendra Donovan, who is involved in a case that goes horribly wrong and claims the life of her colleagues. While attending a party at a castle, she walks into a corridor and then comes out in the same castle, but in an entirely different era – the 1800s. Her ability to sleuth out cases comes in handy though when a serial killer is on the loose and no one else can solve it. Without her modern day tools, though, this case isn't an easy one. Oh, and she's a woman and a low-level employee at the castle so she's not respected either.

Although far-fetched, as most time travel books are, this is a fun escape. I actually learned a lot about that era that I had never known before. Twist in a fun love story, and you have a great escape that fans of The Outlander series will enjoy with this fun modern spin!

THE DREAM DAUGHTER by Diane Chamberlain

Carly's husband has passed away in the Vietnam War before she can even share with him the news that she is pregnant. At her routine doctor's visit, they discover that this baby has a heart condition that cannot be treated and that her baby will die.

Her brother-in-law, a gifted physicist, shares with her that there is actually a surgery that can be done, but it won't be available until 2001. How could he know this? Well, let's just say that he has time traveled a bit...

With his help, Carly time travels so her child can be part of this experimental surgery. Nothing is guaranteed, but Carly will do anything to save her daughter. Chamberlain creates such suspense with this story that I could not put it down. It's definitely one of my top 5 from this author!



LIKE THE MARVELOUS MRS. MAISEL?

BETWEEN ME AND YOU by Allison Winn Scotch

If you were a fan of *A Star is Born*, you'll love this story of two people on the search for fame and what happens when one person moves forward in their career while the other is struggling.

Ben has all the cards stacked in his favor in Hollywood. He comes from a privileged family and seems to have the right connections. Tatum, however, is a struggling actress who is working as a bartender at an NYC dive bar. When the two meet, they fall in love and get married. The thing is, Tatum's career takes off and Ben finds his own career is fading.

This touching love story is told from two perspectives with one rewinding history and one moving their story forward, both laced with their own bias and regret. Told from their unique perspectives and with this shifting timeline, the raw honesty in each of their stories really pulls through in a really unique way.

DEAR MRS. BIRD by A.J. Pearce

In 1940, Emmeline Lake can't believe her luck to secure a job as a reporter for a local newspaper – but when she arrives for her first day, she realizes she was not hired to be a war correspondent, but a typist screening letters for an advice columnist, Mrs. Henrietta Bird.

Mrs. Bird has a verrryyyy long list of topics she refuses to cover (referred to as UNPLEASANTNESS) and Emmeline is required to tear these "racy" letters up into tiny pieces. But Emmeline believes these topics deserve responses, so she secretly begins responding to the letters under Mrs. Bird's name. Emmeline quickly discovers why giving advice isn't always what it is cracked up to be, especially as her own life begins to unravel and the consequences of war hit too close to home.

Pearce was inspired by real letter submissions from this era and topics that were explored in women's publications around the time of World War II. If you are a fan of *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*, I just know you will adore this read, too.

LIMELIGHT by Amy Poeppel

Allison Brinkley has moved to Manhattan, and she's struggling to find her place in the big city. She can't seem to fit in with the other parents, not to mention that she can't fit their belongings in her very tiny apartment.

After getting into an embarrassing fender bender at school, she ends up in an unlikely role as a personal assistant to a spoiled teen celebrity who gives her purpose (and a headache). The story follows as Allison puts out one fire after another for a kid headed down the wrong path.



IF YOU LIKE FRIENDS...

FOREVER INTERRUPTED by Taylor Jenkins Reid

Elsie Porter is an average twentysomething and yet what happens to her is anything but ordinary. When she meets the adorable and charming Ben Ross, their chemistry is instant and electric. Within weeks, the two are head over heels in love. By May, they've eloped.

Only nine days later, Ben is out riding his bike when he is hit by a truck and killed on impact. At the hospital, she must face Susan, the mother-in-law she has never met and who doesn't even know Elsie exists.

Interweaving Elsie and Ben's charmed romance with Elsie and Susan's healing process, this book will remind you that there's more than one way to find a happy ending.

SOMETHING BORROWED by Emily Giffin

Rachel and Darcy have been best friends their whole lives. Darcy is the beautiful one who's always hogging the spotlight, while Rachel has always been content to be in Darcy's shadow. When Rachel celebrates her 30th birthday with friends, including Darcy and her fiancée, Dex, she drinks more than normal. Dex graciously offers to see her home, one thing leads to another, and the friends confess romantic feelings for each other and begin an affair.

As the two of them try to resist each other, Rachel is forced to complete the duties as the maid of honor to Darcy. She's consumed with guilt while Darcy continues to be consumed with herself. Still, because the story is told from Rachel's perspective, you begin to sympathize with her and root for her to be with Dex.

The twist is such a good one at the end, and I dived into the sequel, "Something Blue," as soon as I finished this book.

HEY LADIES!: THE STORY OF 8 BEST FRIENDS, 1 YEAR, AND WAY, WAY TOO MANY EMAILS by Michelle Markowitz & Caroline Moss

This entire book is in email format with a few text threads and hilarious illustrations woven in, and the correspondence mostly centers around the planning of one of the gal's weddings. You follow these friends throughout the year as they write back and forth to one another through dates, breakups, vacations, and hellish wedding planning. The friends' annoying behavior is exaggerated, but so recognizable.

Is this book life-changing? Nope. Is it a hilarious escape? Yes. I loved it from start to finish, and the email sign-offs and correspondences were so funny that I started sending screenshots to my husband.

Note: This book is best read in hardcover or through the Kindle app on a Fire or iPad because of the illustrations.



IF YOU LIKE THE HANDMAID'S TALE...

VOX by Christina Dalcher

Dr. Jean McClellan could have never imagined that a law restricting women to using 100 words a day, but she now finds herself wearing an electronic bracelet where each word is counted and each word overage is punished. When the president needs her expertise to help his brother recover from a brain injury, she decides to leverage this opportunity to have her word count bracelet removed and help her family.

Dalcher uses her background as a linguist in a really clever way through the book. This story is a really uncomfortable one and questions our own role as women and our silence during political times. What are we doing now with our voices and what would we do if our ability to use them was taken away from us? If you are not angry about what is happening in the #metoo world, you will be after reading this book.

This controversial story would yield a passionate, and perhaps uncomfortable, book club discussion about what is happening in politics today.

MY NOTORIOUS LIFE by Kate Manning

A brilliant rendering of a scandalous historical figure, this is an ambitious, thrilling novel introducing Axie Muldoon, a fiery heroine for the ages. An impoverished child of Irish immigrants living on the streets of 1860s New York, Axie grows up to become one of the wealthiest and most controversial women of her day.

In vivid prose, Axie recounts how she is forcibly separated from her mother and siblings, apprenticed to a doctor, and how she and her husband parlay the sale of a few bottles of 'Lunar Tablets for Female Complaint' into a thriving midwifery business. Flouting convention and defying the law in the name of women's reproductive rights, Axie rises from grim tenement rooms to the splendor of a mansion on Fifth Avenue, amassing wealth while learning over and over never to trust a man who says "trust me."

When her services attract outraged headlines, Axie finds herself on a collision course with a crusading official, Anthony Comstock, founder of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. It will take all of Axie's cunning and power to outwit him in the fight to preserve her freedom and everything she holds dear.

Inspired by the true history of an infamous female physician who was once called "the Wickedest Woman in New York," My Notorious Life is a mystery, a family saga, a love story, and an exquisitely detailed portrait of nineteenth-century America. Axie Muldoon's inimitable voice brings the past alive, and her story haunts and enlightens the present.



IF YOU LIKE THE HANDMAID'S TALE, cont....

YOUNG JANE YOUNG by Gabrielle Zevin

In this story, a politician becomes involved with a young intern who has been keeping an "anonymous blog" with juicy details of her scandalous affair. When the affair is brought to light, Aviva must move and try to start fresh with a new identity. She changes states, her name, and even steps out of politics to become a wedding planner. She is constantly dodging her past though because the story became national news.

You might think we've heard this story before, but Zevin smartly plays it out from many viewpoints (her mother, the wife, the daughter, and Jane's own view). These perspectives flesh out the story in a different way, examining the different roles of women and the double standards that occur in the political arena.

I really loved this book and I think you will, too. It is a quick page-turner with a lot of meat for discussion!

IF YOU LIKE THE CROWN...

THE GOWN by Jennifer Robson

Instead of exploring the story of the royal family and all of its mystery, Robson decides to explore a royal wedding through a different set of eyes – the women who made and embroidered the dress of Princess Elizabeth when she wedded Lieutenant Philip in 1947.

Ann Hughes and Miriam Dassin are talented embroiderers tasked with the intricate stitching that will adorn the royal bride's priceless wedding gown. Following the royal wedding, Ann moves and never tells her family of her life in London and the work she did for this famous gown.

In 2016, Ann's granddaughter stumbles a box of her late grandmother's belongings that hold hand-stitched flowers with no background information. Heather ends up traveling to London to unravel Ann's secret past, and this book tells her story.

THE ROYAL WE by Heather Cocks and Jessica Morgan

This book tells the fictional story of an American getting swept off her feet by a real prince. It dives into what it would take for someone to transition from college student into a princess -- the very real dilemma of losing her privacy, the strains that might put on her friendships, and what her family goes through as she takes on a celebrity status she had never desired.

This book was funny and heartwarming, reading like a guilty pleasure that still had lots of depth and soul. I laughed, cried, and was disappointed that I had to close the final pages when I was done.



LIKE STRANGER THINGS?

BEASTS OF EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCE by Ruth Emmie Lang

Weylyn is an orphan raised by a pack of wolves, which is just one of many reasons why he can't seem to fit in with others. When he finds that he can single-handedly stop a tornado, he realizes just how different he really is.

Weylyn finds a sweet friendship with a girl named Mary and her devotion has never ended, even as they have gotten older. The gift Weylyn has is a blessing and a curse, allowing him to bring magic into everything he does, and we get to hear his story through the eyes of many in this book.

I could not put this one down and would recommend it for anyone who enjoyed, *The Snow Child*, because it has a fairytale quality that makes you want to never stop flipping the pages until you reach the very end of the story. Although not labeled as YA, it is a clean, sweet, and magical story and the type of book you just want to share with others, with unforgettable characters and unbelievable storytelling.

THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS by M.R. Carey

Every morning, Melanie waits in her cell to be collected for class. When they come for her, Sergeant Parks keeps his gun pointing at her while two of his people strap her into the wheelchair. She thinks they don't like her. She jokes that she won't bite, but they don't laugh.

I'd tell you more about this one, but I don't want to ruin it. Just read it!

WHERE THE FOREST MEETS THE STARS by Glendy Vanderah

A child showing up at the temporary home where Joanna is studying research on nesting birds. Dirty and sickly looking, the girl says she's an alien who has taken over the body of a dead girl and has been granted access to Earth to witness five miracles before returning to her country.

Joanna reluctantly lets her stay and recruits her reclusive neighbor, Gabriel, to help her figure out where the child is from. What they don't realize is that the child has the power to work miracles and mend their broken places and bring them together. Laura and Gabriel become swept away in the magic and set aside the nagging responsibility of returning Ursa to her real family. These consequences loom while the reader wishes for a miracle themselves that will pull them all together.

Vanderah's writing really drew me in, and I doubt you'll be able to put this book down!