FICTION

**THE TOPEKA SCHOOL by BEN LERNER** *(PICKED BY SLS)*
Adam Gordon is a senior at Topeka High School, class of 1997. His mother, Jane, is a famous feminist author; his father, Jonathan, is an expert at getting "lost boys" to open up. They both work at the Foundation, a well-known psychiatric clinic that has attracted staff and patients from around the world. Adam is a renowned debater. He is an aspiring poet. He is — although it requires a great deal of posturing — one of the cool kids, passing himself off as a "real man".

Adam is also one of the seniors who brings the loner Darren Eberheart — who is, unbeknownst to Adam, his father's patient — into the social scene, with disastrous effects. The Topeka School is the story of a family's struggles and strengths: Jane's reckoning with the legacy of an abusive father, Jonathan's marital transgressions, the challenge of raising a good son in a culture of toxic masculinity. It is also a riveting prehistory of the present: the collapse of public speech, the tyrants of the new right, and the ongoing crisis of identity among white men. *(304 pgs)*

**A SINGLE THREAD by TRACY CHEVALIER** *(PICKED BY SM & SH)*
1932. After the Great War took both her brother and her fiancé, Violet Speedwell has become a "surplus woman", one of a generation doomed to a life of spinsterhood after the war killed so many young men. Yet Violet cannot reconcile herself to a life spent caring for her grieving, embittered mother. She saves enough to move out of her mother's place and into the town of Winchester, home to one of England's grandest cathedrals. There, Violet is drawn into a society of broderers—women who embroider kneelers for the Cathedral, carrying on a centuries-long tradition of bringing comfort to worshippers. Violet finds support and community in the group, and fulfillment in the work they create. But when forces threaten her new independence and another war appears on the horizon, Violet must fight to put down roots in a place where women aren't expected to grow. A Single Thread is a timeless story of friendship, love, and a woman crafting her own life. *(336 pgs)*

**AKIN by EMMA DONOGHUE** *(PICKED BY BS)*
Noah Selvaggio is a retired chemistry professor and widower living on the Upper West Side, but born in the South of France. He is days away from his first visit back to Nice since he was a child, bringing with him a handful of puzzling photos he's discovered from his mother's wartime years. But he receives a call from social services: Noah is the closest available relative of an eleven-year-old great-nephew he's never met, who urgently needs someone to look after him. Out of a feeling of obligation, Noah agrees to take Michael along on his trip. Much has changed in this charming seaside mecca, still haunted by memories of the Nazi occupation. The unlikely duo bicker about everything from steak frites to screen time. But Noah gradually comes to appreciate the boy's truculent wit, and Michael's ease with tech and sharp eye help Noah unearth all sorts of details about their family's past. Both come to grasp the risks people in all eras have run for their loved ones, and find they are more akin than they knew. *(352 pgs)*

**THE GIVER OF STARS by JOJO MOYES** *(PICKED BY SM)*
Alice Wright marries American Bennett Van Cleve hoping to escape her stifling life in England. But small-town Kentucky quickly proves equally claustrophobic, especially living alongside her overbearing father-in-law. So when a call goes out for a team of women to deliver books as part of Eleanor Roosevelt's new traveling library, Alice signs on enthusiastically. The leader, and soon Alice's greatest ally, is Margery, a smart-talking, self-sufficient woman who's never asked a man's permission for anything. They will be joined by three other singular women who become known as the Packhorse Librarians of Kentucky. What happens to them—and the men they love—becomes an unforgettable drama of loyalty, justice, humanity and passion. *(400 pgs)*
**THE NICKEL BOYS BY COLSON WHITEHEAD** *(PICKED KT)*

As the Civil Rights movement begins to reach segregated Tallahassee, Elwood Curtis takes the words of Dr. King to heart: He is "as good as anyone." Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But for a black boy in the Jim Crow South in the early 1960s, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy the future. Elwood is sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called The Nickel Academy, whose mission statement says it provides "physical, intellectual and moral training" so the delinquent boys in their charge can become "honorable and honest men." In reality, The Nickel Academy is a chamber of horrors, where the sadistic staff beats and sexually abuses the students, corrupt officials and locals steal food and supplies, and any boy who resists is likely to disappear "out back." His friend Turner thinks that the world is crooked and the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble. The tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades. Based on the real story of a reform school in Florida that operated for 111 years. *(224 pgs)*

**KOPP SISTERS ON THE MARCH BY AMY STEWART** *(PICKED BY KT)*

It's the spring of 1917. American women have banded together to create military-style training camps for women who want to serve. These so-called National Service Schools prove irresistible to the Kopp sisters, who leave their farm in New Jersey to join up. When an accident befalls the matron, Constance reluctantly agrees to oversee the camp—much to the alarm of the Kopps' tent-mate, the real-life Beulah Binford, who is seeking refuge from her own scandalous past under the cover of a false identity. Will she be denied a second chance? And after notoriety, can a woman's life ever be her own again? The women of Camp Chevy Chase face down the skepticism of the War Department, the double standards of a scornful public, and the very real perils of war. *(355 pgs)*

**THE RIGHT SWIPE BY ALISHA RAI** *(PICKED BY BS)*

Rhiannon Hunter may have revolutionized romance in the digital world, but in real life she only swipes right on her career—and the occasional hookup. The cynical dating app creator controls her love life with a few key rules. Only there aren't any rules to govern her attraction to her newest match, former pro-football player Samson Lima. The sexy and seemingly sweet hunk woos her one magical night... and disappears. Rhi thought she'd buried her hurt over Samson's latest swipes right on her career... but now she's stuck with him. Unable to resist, Juliette walks through, into the bizarre and enchanting lives of Soliman and his young daughter, Zaide. Before she realizes entirely what is happening, Juliette agrees to become a passeur, Soliman's name for the booksellers he hires to take stacks of used books out of his store and into the world, using their imagination and intuition to match books with readers. Suddenly, Juliette's daydreaming becomes her reality, and when Soliman asks her to move in to their store to take care of Zaide while he goes away, she has to decide if she is ready to throw herself headfirst into this new life. *(192 pgs)*

**THE GIRL WHO READS ON THE METRO BY CHRISTINE FERET-FLEURY** *(PICKED BY BS)*

Juliette leads a perfectly ordinary life in Paris, working an office job, dating a string of not-quite-right men, and fighting off melancholy. The only bright spots in her day are her metro rides across the city and the stories she dreams up about the strangers reading books across from her. One morning, Juliette finds herself on a new block, in front of a rusty gate wedged open with a book. Unable to resist, Juliette walks through, into the bizarre and enchanting lives of Soliman and his young daughter, Zaide. Before she realizes entirely what is happening, Juliette agrees to become a passeur, Soliman's name for the booksellers he hires to take stacks of used books out of his store and into the world, using their imagination and intuition to match books with readers. Suddenly, Juliette's daydreaming becomes her reality, and when Soliman asks her to move in to their store to take care of Zaide while he goes away, she has to decide if she is ready to throw herself headfirst into this new life. *(387 pgs)*

**WRATH BY K'WAN** *(PICKED BY LD)*

In the history of New York City's underworld, there have been a host of criminal figures whose exploits have gone on to inspire. One of them is Jonas Rafferty, known as Wrath. His life has been one battle after another. At night, he would dream of rising above his circumstances. When he crosses paths with a rogue homicide detective he's offered a bargain that will change the course of his life. Jonas goes from errand boy and street muscle to one of the most dangerous young men in the city. His dreams are finally becoming reality until Alex, his childhood crush, comes home on break from college and gives him a glimpse of the one thing he's always craved more than money and power: love. When Alex becomes pregnant, Wrath decides that being there for her is more important to him than power or money, but when he seeks to end his arrangement with the detective, he's taught the final lesson in his education: no bargain comes without a price. *(288 pgs)
NON-FICTION

**Unravelling the Double Helix by Gareth Williams** *(Picked by smc)*

Unraveling the Double Helix covers the most colorful period in the history of DNA, from the discovery of “nuclein” in the late 1860s to the publication of James Watson's The Double Helix in 1968. These hundred years included the establishment of the Nobel Prize, antibiotics, X-ray crystallography, the atom bomb and two world wars—events which are strung along the thread of DNA like beads on a necklace. The story of DNA is a saga packed with awful mistakes as well as brilliant science. The elucidation of the double helix was one of the most brilliant gems of twentieth century science, but some of the scientists who paved the way have been airbrushed out of history. James Watson and Francis Crick solved a magnificent mystery, but Gareth Williams shows that their contribution was the last few pieces of a gigantic jigsaw puzzle assembled over several decades. (504 pgs)

**Stealing Wyeth by Bruce Mowday** *(Picked by sls)*

Andrew Wyeth was one of the best known American artists in the world in the 20th century with his works being sought after by serious art collectors worldwide. His father, N.C., and son, Jamie, are integral parts of the best known American family of artists. A gang of thieves decided to steal an original Wyeth painting for their “retirement” and engaged a professional cat burglar (who was responsible for more than 1,500 crimes during his criminal career) to steal a Wyeth painting. The theft resulted in taking 15 paintings from the Wyeth estate in Chadds Ford, Pa. Seven were done by Andrew, six by Jamie and the other two by California artists. Today, those paintings would be worth millions of dollars. The FBI and Pennsylvania State Police were the investigating agencies. Were the paintings still in America, Europe or Asia? Were the paintings pre-sold and in a private collection, being stored for future sales or destroyed because the artwork was so well known? The search for the paintings takes the investigators throughout the United States. (144 pgs)

**Invisible Women by Caroline Criado Perez** *(Picked by sm)*

Imagine a world where your phone is too big for your hand, where your doctor prescribes a drug that is wrong for your body, where in a car accident you are 47% more likely to be seriously injured. If any of this sounds familiar, chances are that you’re a woman. Data is fundamental to the modern world. From economic development, to healthcare, to education and public policy, we rely on numbers to allocate resources and make crucial decisions. But because so much data fails to take into account gender, because it treats men as the default and women as atypical, bias and discrimination are baked into our systems. From government policy and medical research, to technology, workplaces, urban planning and the media, Invisible Women reveals the biased data that excludes women. In making the case for change, this powerful and provocative book will make you see the world anew. (272 pgs)

**The Education of an Idealist by Samantha Power** *(Picked by sls)*

In her memoir, Power offers an urgent response to the question “What can one person do?” and a call for a clearer eye, a kinder heart, and a more open and civil hand in our politics and daily lives. The Education of an Idealist traces Power’s distinctly American journey from immigrant to war correspondent to presidential Cabinet official. In 2005, her critiques of US foreign policy caught the eye of newly elected senator Barack Obama, who invited her to work with him on Capitol Hill and then on his presidential campaign. After Obama was elected president, Power went from being an activist outsider to a government insider, trying to put her ideals into practice. She served for four years as Obama’s human rights adviser, and in 2013, he named her US Ambassador to the United Nations, the youngest American to assume the role. Along the way, she illuminates the intricacies of politics and geopolitics, reminding us how the United States can lead in the world, and why we each have the opportunity to advance the cause of human dignity. (592 pgs)
**Know My Name by Chanel Miller** *(picked by sls)*

She was known to the world as Emily Doe when she stunned millions with a letter. Brock Turner had been sentenced to just six months in county jail after he was found sexually assaulting her on Stanford's campus. Her victim impact statement was posted on BuzzFeed, where it instantly went viral—viewed by eleven million people within four days, it was translated globally and read on the floor of Congress; it inspired changes in California law and the recall of the judge in the case. Thousands wrote to say that she had given them the courage to share their own experiences of assault for the first time. Now she reclaims her identity to tell her story of trauma, transcendence, and the power of words. *Know My Name* will forever transform the way we think about sexual assault, challenging our beliefs about what is acceptable and speaking truth to the tumultuous reality of healing. Entwining pain, resilience, and humor, this memoir will stand as a modern classic. (368 pgs)

**Where To Go When - Eyewitness Travel** *(picked by slh)*

This is the ultimate vacation planner, showcasing the most amazing places in the world and the best time of year to see them. It combines an inspiring narrative with sumptuous photography to bring to life over 100 destinations across the globe. To help you choose your destination, the clear layout features an array of exciting places and experiences for every month, and suggests an alternative time to visit if you’re unable to make that month. So whether you’re looking for festivals and culture, an unforgettable journey, natural wonders, rest and relaxation or active adventures - you’re sure to find something to fire your imagination. *Where to Go When: Unforgettable Trips for Every Month* makes finding that journey of a lifetime easier than ever. (256 pgs)

**The Years That Matter Most by Paul Tough** *(picked by smc)*

Does college still work? Can a college education today provide real opportunity to young Americans seeking to improve their station in life? *The Years That Matter Most* tells the stories of students trying to find their way through the application process and into college. The book reveals how the landscape of higher education has shifted in recent decades and exposes the hidden truths of how the system works and whom it works for. And it introduces us to the people who really make higher education go: admissions directors trying to balance the class and balance the budget, College Board officials scrambling to defend the SAT in the face of mounting evidence that it favors the wealthy, researchers working to unlock the mysteries of the college-student brain, and educators trying to transform potential dropouts into successful graduates. (400 pgs)

**Curveball by Barry Zito** *(picked by bs)*

In 2007, pitcher Barry Zito signed a seven-year, $126 million contract with the San Francisco Giants. At that time, it was the largest contract ever given to a pitcher. He was at the top of his game, in peak physical condition, and had the kind of financial security most people can only dream of. He was also miserable. And it began to show. Zito’s career declined over the next few years until he hit rock bottom—watching from the bench as his team won the World Series in 2010. In the months that followed, Zito came face-to-face with the destructiveness of his own ego—his need to be viewed as the best. He shares his story with honesty and transparency. By sharing his experiences as a man who had everything except happiness, Zito offers readers a path through adversity and toward a life defined by true success. (272 pgs)

**Near the Exit by Lori Erickson** *(picked by slh)*

After her brother died unexpectedly and her mother moved into a dementia-care facility, spiritual travel writer and Episcopal deacon Lori Erickson felt called to a new quest: to face death head on, with the eye of a tourist and the heart of a pastor. Blending memoir, spirituality, and travel, *Near the Exit* examines how cultures confront and have confronted death, from Egypt’s Valley of the Kings and Mayan temples, to a Colorado cremation pyre and Day of the Dead celebrations, to Maori settlements and tourist-destination graveyards. Erickson reflects on mortality—the ways we avoid it, the ways we cope with it, and the ways life is made more precious by accepting it—in places as far away as New Zealand and as close as the nursing home up the street. Throughout her personal journey and her travels, Erickson helps us to see that one of the most life-affirming things we can do is to invite death along for the ride. (180 pgs)