

March 2021 Staff Picks

1. **Down to Earth: Gardening Wisdom by Monty Don**

Ready to get out in the garden? Need some motivation or new ideas? If so, then try Down to Earth: Gardening Wisdom by Monty Don. Although a British gardener, you can find advice and suggestions that apply to all gardens and gardeners. As a gardener with 50 years of experience, author of several books and presenter of BBC's "Gardener's World", Monty Don has a lot to say and a friendly, heartfelt way of saying it.

2. **Player's Handbook**

Reading lets you adventure to places you've never been and meet people you've never known, but as in life, experiencing something for yourself can be far more rewarding. If you're the type to enjoy crafting stories, as well as the characters that make those tales larger than life, consider delving into the game of Dungeons & Dragons. Imagine it. You have the makings of an adventurer! You traverse the land and earn fame and fortune. Perhaps your skills are nothing special now, but travel and danger will sharpen and embolden your talents into strengths to be feared and respected. Are you unmatched with a blade, or is your sharpest weapon a silver-tipped tongue? Does cunning and expertise open doors for you, or does your faith reside in something far more than yourself? Do you grapple with your demons, or let sparks of magic fly at them?

Whoever you are, wherever you come from, know that no one can face the world alone. The people beside you have their own legends to reach, and with you at their side they stand a chance. Your trials can be as somber or silly as a night with your best friends will allow. Whether riding on the high of triumph or sinking in a dip of failure, their support will come to mean everything to you. Strangers become friends, and friends family. In time you'll know that your band can do anything... You need only take the step.

3. **Dungeon Master's Guide**

Reading lets you adventure to places you've never been and meet people you've never known, but as in life, experiencing something for yourself can be far more rewarding. If you're the type to enjoy crafting stories, as well as the characters that make those tales larger than life, consider delving into the game of Dungeons & Dragons. You are the Dungeon Master. Actor, author, and architect, you set the stage for your friends and family. Map the land for your adventurers, and plant people, creatures, traps and mysteries wherever they make footfall. You will be every friend and monster they meet, both the root of every villainous plot and the hope that may yet prevail. Twist their stories in whatever way pleases you, so long as it's unforeseen, seemingly unstoppable, and captivating above all else. As guide for each person on their journey from humble beginnings to climactic conflicts, you have much to do. But I think you'll find that the only thing better than living an

adventure is watching one unfold in the eyes of others. Whether you make a simple story or an epic tale, if others find joy in your work, it will all have been worth it. You are bound only by your imagination and the role of the dice.

4. **Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier**

This is a classic romantic thriller. A naïve lady's companion and a charming, wealthy widower marry after a whirlwind romance in Monte Carlo. The honeymoon tour is wonderful, but everything is different when they come home to the husband's imposing family estate, where memories of his beautiful and sophisticated first wife Rebecca permeate everything with a brooding, mysterious tension. Alfred Hitchcock's movie adaptation is also a classic.

5. **Nine Perfect Strangers by Liane Moriarty**

Nine guests check in to an isolated health resort for ten days of rest, relaxation, and self-reflection. They give up their electronic devices, stick to the limited healthy food choices and even participate in long periods of silence. But the quirky and controlling resort owner is planning more than they bargained for. A Hulu limited series adaptation starring Nicole Kidman is coming soon.

6. **The Aosawa Murders by Riku Onda**

In 1970s Japan, seventeen people die of cyanide poisoning at a large birthday party in the home of a prominent physician. The only survivor in the family is Hisako, the family's blind, beautiful and extremely accomplished twelve year-old daughter. The only clue is a cryptic note possibly left by the killer, and the police strive for 30 years to solve the murders. Who could have done such a dreadful thing? The neighbor girl who discovered the murder scene becomes a writer and interviews a variety of people connected to the victims. A diverse group of narrators weave a dark and tangled explanation of what really happened.

7. **His Majesty's Dragon by Naomi Novik**

An alternate history fantasy that combines dragons (and dragon-riders) with the Napoleonic War. It has an interesting military history feel and there are talking dragons. How could you go wrong?

8. **City of Bones series by Cassandra Clare**

I loved this world& all of the characters so much.

9. **Red Queen by Aveyard**

I love the strong female character Mare! I would love to see this book series be made into a Netflix series.

10. Foe by Reid

This book is so strange and twisty! I don't know what else to say...

11. Soar by Joan Bauer

This thoughtful and thought-provoking book is one of my favorites. It addresses the conflict between good sportsmanship and the desire to win. The main character has physical limitations and issues like adoption, heart transplants, robotics and baseball stats are all included.

12. Thirteenth Child by Patricia Wrede

A little bit slow to start out with, this book is a magical fantasy with a westward expansion setting. The protagonist comes from a large family and those family dynamics include a lucky 7th son of a 7th son sibling and the protagonist who is the "unlucky" 13th child.

13. The Host by Stephenie Meyer

Kind of an Invasion of the Body Snatchers meets Romeo and Juliet set in a dystopian near future. It's a weird, interesting book and I liked it a lot.

14. The Chemist by Stephenie Meyer

A romantic spy thriller with assassination attempts, kitchen sink chemistry concoctions, heroic working dogs, a pair of identical twins (a good one and a lethal one) and a case of "oops!-sorry-I-accidentally-tortured-you" mistaken identity.