



The Next Chapter: July 2021 Book Recommendations

[*For Your Own Good*](#) by Samantha Downing

Berkley (July 20, 2021)

“USA Today bestselling author Samantha Downing teaches all the wrong lessons in her latest sneaky thriller about a calculating teacher in a privileged private school who knows he has the power to make or break your kid's future...and he uses it.... Teddy Crutcher has just won Teacher of the Year at the prestigious Belmont Academy, home to the best and brightest. He says his wife couldn't be more proud--though no one has seen her in a while. But Teddy can't be bothered with any of the rumors and the recent string of murders on campus. His main focus is on these kids. Sure, his methods can be a little unorthodox and maybe just a few of them don't actually deserve a bright a future. But someone's got push these kids to their full potential. It's really too bad that sometimes excellence can come at such a high cost.”

[*Half Sick of Shadows*](#) by Laura Sebastian

Ace (July 6, 2021)

"The Lady of Shalott reclaims her story in this bold feminist reimagining of the Arthurian myth from the New York Times bestselling author of, *Ash Princess*. Everyone knows the legend. Of Arthur, destined to be a king. Of the beautiful Guinevere, who will betray him with his most loyal knight, Lancelot. Of the bitter sorceress, Morgana, who will turn against them all. But Elaine alone carries the burden of knowing what is to come--for Elaine of Shalott is cursed to see the future. On the mystical isle of Avalon, Elaine runs free and learns of the ancient prophecies surrounding her and her friends--countless possibilities, almost all of them tragic. When their future comes to claim them, Elaine, Guinevere, Lancelot, and Morgana accompany Arthur to take his throne in stifling Camelot, where magic is outlawed, the rules of society chain them, and enemies are everywhere. Yet the most dangerous threats may come from within their own circle. As visions are fulfilled and an inevitable fate closes in, Elaine must decide how far she will go to change fate--and what she is willing to sacrifice along the way.”

[*Intimacies*](#) by Katie Kitamura

Riverhead Books (July 20, 2021)

“A novel from the author of, *A Separation*, an electrifying story about a woman caught between many truths. An interpreter has come to The Hague to escape New York and work at the International Court. A woman of many languages and identities, she is looking for a place to finally call home. She's drawn into simmering personal dramas: her lover, Adriaan, is separated from his wife but still entangled in his marriage. Her friend Jana witnesses a seemingly random act of violence, a crime the interpreter becomes increasingly obsessed with as she befriends the victim's sister. And she's pulled into an explosive political controversy when she's asked to interpret for a former president accused of war

crimes. A woman of quiet passion, she confronts power, love, and violence, both in her personal intimacies and in her work at the Court. She is soon pushed to the precipice, where betrayal and heartbreak threaten to overwhelm her, forcing her to decide what she wants from her life.”

[It Happened One Summer](#) by Tessa Bailey

Avon (July 13, 2021)

“Tessa Bailey is back with a Schitt's Creek-inspired rom-com about a Hollywood "It Girl" who's cut off from her wealthy family and exiled to a small Pacific Northwest beach town... where she butts heads with a surly, sexy local who thinks she doesn't belong. Piper Bellinger is fashionable, influential, and her reputation as a wild child means the paparazzi are constantly on her heels. When too much champagne and an out-of-control rooftop party lands Piper in the slammer, her stepfather decides enough is enough. So he cuts her off, and sends Piper and her sister to learn some responsibility running their late father's dive bar... in Washington. Piper hasn't even been in Westport for five minutes when she meets big, bearded sea captain Brendan, who thinks she won't last a week outside of Beverly Hills. So what if Piper can't do math, and the idea of sleeping in a shabby apartment with bunk beds gives her hives. How bad could it really be? She's determined to show her stepfather -- and the hot, grumpy local -- that she's more than a pretty face. Except it's a small town and everywhere she turns, she bumps into Brendan. The fun-loving socialite and the gruff fisherman are polar opposites, but there's an undeniable attraction simmering between them. Piper doesn't want any distractions, especially feelings for a man who sails off into the sunset for weeks at a time. Yet as she reconnects with her past and begins to feel at home in Westport, Piper starts to wonder if the cold, glamorous life she knew is what she truly wants. LA is calling her name, but Brendan -- and this town full of memories -- may have already caught her heart.”

***My Mistress' Eyes are Raven Black* by Terry Roberts**

Turner (July 27, 2021)

“Ellis Island, 1920. New York Harbor's immigration and public health authorities are slowly recovering from the war years when a young, pregnant Irish woman disappears from the Isolation Hospital on Ellis Island. Stephen Robbins, a specialist in finding missing persons, is assigned the case. Yet when he arrives at the isolation hospital, he discovers an inexplicable string of deaths and disappearances among immigrant patients...and a staff that seems to be hiding a chilling secret. Stephen finds an ally in Lucy Paul, an undercover nurse who is also investigating the mysterious incidents. Together, they begin to unearth a horrifying conspiracy masked beneath the hospital's charitable exterior. As Stephen and Lucy get closer to the truth and each other, they are swept directly into the danger haunting Ellis Island and become the next targets. Amidst growing racial tensions in the wake of World War I, *My Mistress' Eyes are Raven Black* explores the disturbing lengths to which people will go to protect racial purity and condemn those they fear.”

***People Like Them* by Samira Sedira (Author) and Lara Vergnaud (Translator)**

Penguin Books (July 6, 2021)

“Anna and Constant Guillot live with their two daughters in the peaceful, remote mountain village of Carmac, largely deaf to the upheavals of the outside world. Everyone in Carmac knows each other, and most of its residents look alike—until Bakary and Sylvia Langlois arrive with their three children. Wealthy

and flashy, the family of five are outsiders in the small town, their impressive chalet and three expensive cars a stark contrast to the modesty of those of their neighbors. Despite their differences, the Langlois and the Guillots form an uneasy, ambiguous friendship. But when both families begin experiencing financial troubles, the underlying class and racial tensions of their relationship come to a breaking point, and the unthinkable happens. With piercing psychological insight and gripping storytelling, *People Like Them* asks: How could a seemingly "normal" person commit an atrocious crime? How could that person's loved ones ever come to terms with it afterward? And how well can you really know your own spouse?"

[Razorblade Tears](#) by S. A. Cosby

Flatiron Books (July 6, 2021)

"A Black father. A white father. Two murdered sons. A quest for vengeance. Ike Randolph has been out of jail for fifteen years, with not so much as a speeding ticket in all that time. But a Black man with cops at the door knows to be afraid. The last thing he expects to hear is that his son Isiah has been murdered, along with Isiah's white husband, Derek. Ike had never fully accepted his son but is devastated by his loss. Derek's father Buddy Lee was almost as ashamed of Derek for being gay as Derek was ashamed his father was a criminal. Buddy Lee still has contacts in the underworld, though, and he wants to know who killed his boy. Ike and Buddy Lee, two ex-cons with little else in common other than a criminal past and a love for their dead sons, band together in their desperate desire for revenge. In their quest to do better for their sons in death than they did in life, hardened men Ike and Buddy Lee will confront their own prejudices about their sons and each other, as they rain down vengeance upon those who hurt their boys. Provocative and fast-paced, S. A. Cosby's *Razorblade Tears* is a story of bloody retribution, heartfelt change - and maybe even redemption."

[The Comfort Book](#) by Matt Haig

PenguinLife (July 6, 2021)

"A small book for anyone in search of hope, looking for a path to a more meaningful life, or in need of encouragement. "Happiness occurs when you forget who you're expected to be. And what you're expected to do. Happiness is an accident of self-acceptance. It's the warm breeze you feel when you open the door to who you are." Years ago, Matt Haig began writing notes to his future self. These notes were meant as gifts to his future self: offerings of hope to help himself through anything from the darkest periods of his life to a not-so-great day. As time went on, he added new thoughts and stories, and he turned them into *The Comfort Book* so that everyone could draw on this well of reassurance and encouragement. Each of its short meditations gives a new perspective on life and all of its highs and lows--small islands of hope for anyone looking for a more fulfilling, more uplifting way through life. Incorporating a diverse array of sources from across the world, history, science, and his own experiences, Haig offers warmth and reassurance, reminding us to slow down and appreciate the beauty and unpredictability of existence."

[The Final Girl Support Group](#) by Grady Hendrix

Berkley (July 13, 2021)

“A fast-paced, thrilling horror novel that follows a group of heroines to die for, from the brilliant New York Times bestselling author of, *The Southern Book Club's Guide to Slaying Vampires*. In horror movies, the final girl is the one who's left standing when the credits roll. The one who fought back, defeated the killer, and avenged her friends. The one who emerges bloodied but victorious, a victim and a hero. But after the sirens fade and the audience moves on, what happens to her? Lynnette Tarkington is a real-life final girl who survived a massacre twenty-two years ago, and it has defined every day of her life since. And she's not alone. For more than a decade she's been meeting with five other actual final girls and their therapist in a support group for those who survived the unthinkable, putting their lives back together, piece by piece. That is until one of the women misses a meeting and Lynnette's worst fears are realized—someone knows about the group and is determined to take their lives apart again. But the thing about these final girls is that they have each other now, and no matter how bad the odds, how dark the night, how sharp the knife . . . they will never, ever give up.”

[The Icepick Surgeon: Murder, Fraud, Sabotage, Piracy, and Other Dastardly Deeds Perpetrated in the Name of Science](#) by Sam Kean

Little, Brown and Company (July 13, 2021)

“Science is a force for good in the world—at least usually. But sometimes, when obsession gets the better of scientists, they twist a noble pursuit into something sinister. Under this spell, knowledge isn't everything, it's the only thing—no matter the cost. Bestselling author Sam Kean tells the true story of what happens when unfettered ambition pushes otherwise rational men and women to cross the line in the name of science, trampling ethical boundaries and often committing crimes in the process. *The Icepick Surgeon* masterfully guides the reader across two thousand years of history, beginning with Cleopatra's dark deeds in ancient Egypt. The book reveals the origins of much of modern science in the transatlantic slave trade of the 1700s, as well as Thomas Edison's mercenary support of the electric chair and the warped logic of the spies who infiltrated the Manhattan Project. But the sins of science aren't all safely buried in the past. Many of them, Kean reminds us, still affect us today. We can draw direct lines from the medical abuses of Tuskegee and Nazi Germany to current vaccine hesitancy, and connect icepick lobotomies from the 1950s to the contemporary failings of mental-health care. Kean even takes us into the future, when advanced computers and genetic engineering could unleash whole new ways to do one another wrong. Unflinching, and exhilarating to the last page, *The Icepick Surgeon* fuses the drama of scientific discovery with the illicit thrill of a true-crime tale. With his trademark wit and precision, Kean shows that, while science has done more good than harm in the world, rogue scientists do exist, and when we sacrifice morals for progress, we often end up with neither.”

[The Mixtape](#) by Brittainy Cherry

Montlake (July 1, 2021)

“Emery has never felt more alone. Raising her daughter is both her pleasure and her pain as she struggles to hold on to her job as a bartender and keep a roof over their heads. With no one to help them--no support system--any unexpected expense or late bill could turn their whole world upside down. Reeling from the death of his twin brother and bandmate, rock star Oliver Smith is trying to drink

his problems away. Apparently he isn't very good at it; they follow him wherever he goes. Also in hot pursuit are the paparazzi, who catch Oliver at his lowest low. He could have walked into any bar in California, but he walked into hers. Emery helps Oliver lose the crowd, and they find themselves alone: two people whose paths are marked with loss and pain. However, they hold an unshakable hope for healing. They find solace together, but can their love withstand the world?"

[The Seven Day Switch](#) by Kelly Harms

Lake Union Publishing (July 1, 2021)

"Celeste Mason is the Pinterest stay-at-home supermom of other mothers' nightmares. Despite her all-organic, SunButter-loving, free-range kids, her immaculate home, and her volunteering awards, she still has time to relax with a nice glass of pinot at the end of the day. The only thing that ruins it all is her workaholic, career-obsessed neighbor, who makes no secret of what she thinks of Celeste's life choices every chance she gets. Wendy Charles is a celebrated productivity consultant, columnist, and speaker. On a minute-by-minute schedule, she makes the working-mom hustle look easy. She even spends at least one waking hour a day with her kids. She's not apologizing for a thing. Especially to Celeste, who plays her superior parenting against Wendy whenever she can. Who do Celeste and Wendy think they are? They're about to find out thanks to one freaky week. After a neighborhood potluck and too much sangria, they wake up--um, what?--in each other's bodies. Everything Celeste and Wendy thought they knew about the "other kind of mom" is flipped upside down--along with their messy, complicated, maybe not so different lives."

[The Therapist](#) by B. A. Paris

St. Martin's Press (July 13, 2021)

"When Alice and Leo move into a newly renovated house in The Circle, a gated community of exclusive houses, it is everything they've dreamed of. But appearances can be deceptive... As Alice is getting to know her neighbours, she discovers a devastating secret about her new home, and begins to feel a strong connection with Nina, the therapist who lived there before. Alice becomes obsessed with trying to piece together what happened two years before. But no one wants to talk about it. Her neighbors are keeping secrets and things are not as perfect as they seem..."

[Trejo: My Life of Crime, Redemption, and Hollywood](#) by Danny Trejo with Donal Logue

Atria Books (July 6, 2021)

"On screen, Danny Trejo the actor is a baddie who has been killed at least a hundred times. He's been shot, stabbed, hanged, chopped up, squished by an elevator, and once, was even melted into a bloody goo. Off screen, he's a hero beloved by recovery communities and obsessed fans alike. But the real Danny Trejo is much more complicated than the legend. Raised in an abusive home, Danny struggled with heroin addiction and stints in some of the country's most notorious state prisons—including San Quentin and Folsom—from an early age, before starring in such modern classics as Heat, From Dusk till Dawn, and Machete. Now, in this funny, painful, and suspenseful memoir, Danny takes us through the incredible ups and downs of his life, including meeting one of the world's most notorious serial killers in prison and working with legends like Charles Bronson and Robert De Niro. An honest, unflinching, and "inspirational study in the definition of character" (Kevin Smith, director and actor), Trejo reveals how

he managed the horrors of prison, rebuilt himself after finding sobriety and spirituality in solitary confinement, and draws inspiration from the adrenaline-fueled robbing heists of his past for the film roles that made him a household name. He also shares the painful contradictions in his personal life. Although he speaks everywhere from prison yards to NPR about his past to inspire countless others on their own road to recovery and redemption, he struggles to help his children with their personal battles with addiction, and to build relationships that last. Redemptive and painful, poignant and real, Trejo is a portrait of a magnificent life and an unforgettable and exceptional journey.”

***We Are the Baby-Sitters Club: Essays and Artwork from Grown-Up Readers* by Marisa Crawford,
Megan Milks & Foreword by Mara Wilson**

Chicago Review Press (July 6, 2021)

“A nostalgia-packed, star-studded anthology featuring contributors such as Kristen Arnett, Yumi Sakugawa, Myriam Gurba, and others exploring the lasting impact of Ann M. Martin’s beloved *Baby-Sitters Club* series. In 1986, the first-ever meeting of the Baby-Sitters Club was called to order in a messy bedroom strewn with RingDings, scrunchies, and a landline phone. Kristy, Claudia, Stacey, and Mary Anne launched the club that birthed an entire generation of loyal readers. Ann M. Martin’s *Baby-Sitters Club* series featured a complex cast of characters and touched on an impressive range of issues that were underrepresented at the time: divorce, adoption, childhood illness, class division, and racism, to name a few. In *We Are the Baby-Sitters Club*, writers and a few visual artists from the original BSC generation will reflect on the enduring legacy of Ann M. Martin’s beloved series, thirty-five years later—celebrating the BSC’s profound cultural influence.”



Book descriptions provided by publishers.

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