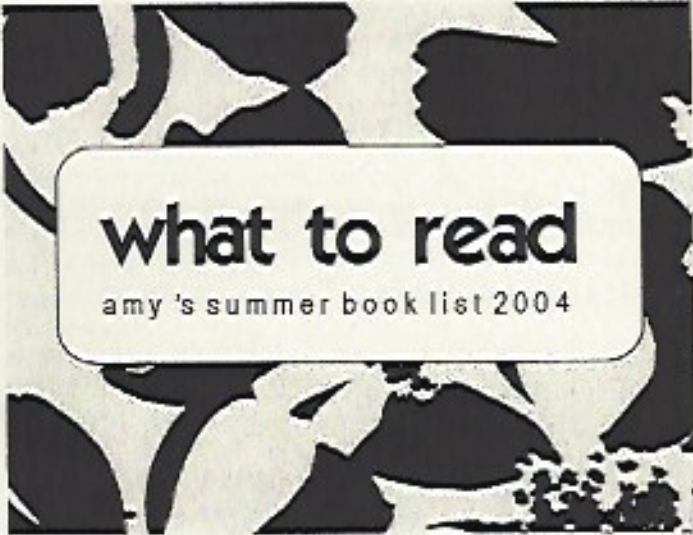




what to read

amy's summer book list 2004

fiction

Atonement – Ian McEwan

Six months after Emma was born I was finally able to really dive into a book again. And I'm glad it was this one. In the summer of 1935, thirteen year old Briony Tallis witnesses (or thinks she witnesses) an event which will forever change her life and the lives of her family. One of those books that you want to end so you find out how everything turns out, but you don't want to end because then it will be over.

The Da Vinci Code – Dan Brown

Did anyone NOT read this?

Tiger in a Trance – Max Ludington

An interesting perspective on the Grateful Dead scene of the mid to late-eighties. I think this novel accurately portrays what the experience of following the band from show to show was like for some folks. Most people took it less seriously than this. While it brought back great memories of hanging out in the parking lot at Soldier Field, it was also sort of depressing. I have to add that I might have read this book very differently in 1992 as a 22-year old college dropout, living at home and spending money on hair wraps and hippie skirts than I did as a 33 year old mother of a toddler. Times change.

The Birth of Venus – Sarah Dunant

Having been to Florence in March, this was a must-read. Set in 15th century Florence at the end of the Medici years of art and luxury. The protagonist is a 16 year old daughter of a wealthy fabric merchant who falls in love with a painter, but is married off to a much older man. I accomplished nothing else while I was reading this book.

The Bobby Gold Stories – Anthony Bourdain

I'd read anything Anthony Bourdain wrote. This was an okay novel about a disenchanted minor gangster. It does take place in a restaurant, so there's a little bit of food writing, which is really Bourdain's forte.

nonfiction

Cheaper by the Dozen – Frank B. Gilbreth and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey

Another one of those books that I first read when I was about twelve and liked, but enjoyed so much more this time around. (Others in that category include **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** and **The Group** – maybe I'll re-read **Marjorie Morningstar** this summer!) The memoir of the Gilbreth family in the early 20th century. Mr. and Mrs. Gilbreth are efficiency experts and they have 12 children. Mostly this book is about how charmed the children were by their bigger-than-life father. Bears almost no resemblance to the recent movie of the same name.

Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith –

Jon Krakauer

Krakauer examines a murder committed by brothers, members of a devout sect of fundamentalist Mormons. He also explores the history and current status of Mormonism. Fascinating.

Live From New York: An Uncensored History of Saturday Night Live, As Told by Its Stars, Writers, and Guests –

James A. Miller and Tom Shales

Who knew that Chevy Chase was such a jerk?!

Fargo Rock City: A Heavy Metal Odyssey in Rural North Dakota – Chuck Klosterman

One young man's account of his discovery of the magic that is 80's Heavy Metal music. I bought it for my brother for his birthday, but read and annotated it first. It's actually pretty funny.

Educating Esme: Diary of a Teacher's First Year – Esme Raji Codell

A charming book about a woman's first year teaching in an inner-city Chicago elementary school. She's unconventional, she butts heads with authority, etc., etc. I read it on the train to Venice. (Doesn't that sound fancy?)

How to Lose Friends and Alienate People – Toby Young

Young's memoir of working for *Vanity Fair* magazine. He skewers the New York magazine publishing industry. If you read *Vanity Fair* and are familiar with the names Graydon Carter and Tina Brown you might like this one.

Pledged: The Secret Life of Sororities – Alexandra Robbins

An inside look at what goes on in sorority houses. It bears only a slight resemblance to my own experience. Robbins also wrote a book about Yale's Skull and Bones club which sounds interesting.

Style, Occasions, and Manners – Kate Spade

Three books which are like a cross between Emily Post, the **Preppy Handbook** and **My Favorite Things** (by Dorothy Rodgers.)

what I'll be reading this summer

fiction

The Dirty Girls Social Club – Alisa Valdes Rodriguez
My daughter gave this to me for my birthday.

Eventide – Kent Haruf
Could this be as good as *Plainsong*? I doubt it.

The Right Address – Carrie Karasyov & Jill Kargman
Because you just can't read enough books about Manhattan socialites.

Good Faith – Jane Smiley
I tend to like every other book Jane Smiley writes.

Amanda Bright@home – Danielle Crittenden
A former working woman stays home with her two children, learns to navigate playdates and baby dolls and hilarity and poignancy ensue.

Little Children – Tom Perrotta
The description on Amazon talks about "suburban angst", and the cover has Goldfish crackers. Looks like a must-read.

Elegance – Kathleen Tessaro
A woman finds a 40-year old style manual called *Elegance* by Madame Dariaux, in a second-hand bookstore and transforms her life. Oddly enough I actually have the book on which this novel is based.

American Woman – Susan Choi
A fictionalization of the Patty Hearst kidnapping.

Also,
Middlesex – Jeffrey Eugenides
Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix – J.K. Rowling
Because they were both on my list last year and I still haven't read them.

nonfiction

Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness – and Liberalism – to the Women of America – Myrna Blyth
A former woman's magazine editor reveals how women's magazines promote a fantasy life. Is this news to anyone?

Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith – Kathleen Norris
It just looked interesting.

Family Circle: The Boudins and the Aristocracy of the Left – Susan Braudy
Recently paroled after serving a 20-year sentence, Kathy Boudin was a member of the Weather Underground.

what the wall street journal says to read

fiction

Crossing California – Adam Langer
"The lives of three Chicago families intertwine – complete with pop culture references and the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis."

Eventide – Kent Haruf
See previous column. The author used to live in Murphysboro, IL and now lives in Salida, CO – so he must have gotten a pretty good advance

A Good Year – Peter Mayle
More about Provence.

Olivia Joules and the Overactive Imagination – Helen Fielding
She wrote *Bridget Jones's Diary*

The Queen of the South – Arturo Perez-Reverte
"It's John Le Carré meets Gabriel Garcia Marquez"

You Remind Me of Me – Dan Chaon
"Adoption, abduction, drugs and mental illness all figure in this story of intersecting lives of ordinary Midwestern folks who seem doomed from the start." Sounds depressing.

nonfiction

Alexander Hamilton – Ron Chernow
I've heard the author interviewed and it sounded fascinating.

Blue Blood – Edward Conon
A real NYPD detective "intertwines his own life story...with a chronicle of several generations in law enforcement..."

Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim – David Sedaris
YES! I would read David Sedaris' grocery lists.

The Iraq War – John Keegan
I'm probably not going to read this one.

Shadow Divers – Robert Kurson
This is about a sunken U-boat. Not on my short list, either.

Truth & Beauty – Ann Patchett
I read the excerpt of this in *New York* magazine and it was vaguely creepy – but engaging at the same time.

suggestions from:

joann & wally

Our little book club has read or is going to read:

The Elegant Gathering of White Snobs - Kris Radish

The Group - Mary Mc Carthy

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn - Betty Smith

One Hundred Years of Solitude - Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Reading Lolita in Tehran - Azar Nafisi

Some of the books I read this past year:

Rabbit Proof Fence - Doris Pilkington

The Language Police - Diane Ravitch

Devil in the White City - Erik Larson

The Kitchen Boy: A Novel of the Last Tzar - Robert Alexander

Educating Esme - Esme Raji Codell

Five Sisters (The Langhorne of Virginia) - James Fox

Daniel Silva Mystery Series - suggested by Wally

kristin keeline hipwell

Janet Evanovich's Stephanie Plum series

"I would give a resounding thumbs down to her new series 'Blast Off, Blast whatever'. It is terrible."

cari rich

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time - Mark Haddon

Good in Bed - Jennifer Weiner

Strip City: A Stripper's Farewell Journey Across America - Lily Burana

carole ulmer

The Secret Life of Bees - Sue Monk Kidd

Pompeii: A Novel - Robert Harris

The Leopard - Giuseppe Di Lampedusa

In Her Shoes - Jennifer Weiner

Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books - Azar Nafisi

Middlesex - Jeffrey Eugenides

The Birth of Venus - Sarah Dunant

Don't Bet on the Prince - Gilda Carle

Alexander Hamilton - Ron Chernow

june waller

The Time Traveler's Wife - Audrey Niffenegger

The Boy Who Loved Windows: Opening the Heart and Mind of a Child Threatened by Autism - Patricia Stacey

The Sparrow - Mary Doria Russell

mysteries & thrillers

Night Work - Laurie King

Another in the Kate Martinelli mystery series.

Plain Truth - Jodi Picoult

A mystery set among the Amish. A page-turner.

I'm still trying to finish Anne Perry's Charlotte Pitt series, which starts with **The Cater Street Hangman**.

Kara Scanlon McKinn recommends **The Narrows**, which is a Harry Bosch mystery and the sequel to **The Poet**.

kid stuff

books I can recite from memory

Moo, Baa, La La La - Sandra Boynton

The Going to Bed Book - Sandra Boynton

But Not the Hippopotamus - Sandra Boynton

All the Hippos Go Berserk - Sandra Boynton

Goodnight Moon - Margaret Wise Brown, Clement Hurd

Bears in the Night - Jan & Stan Berenstain

Each Peach Pear Plum - Allan & Janet Ahlberg

Pat the Bunny - Dorothy Kunhardt

books I've read more than 5 times in a day

All Tutus Should Be Pink - Sheri Brownrigg, Meredith Johnson

Best Friends Wear Pink Tutus - Sheri Brownrigg, Meredith Johnson

Last Night I Dreamed a Circus - Maya Gottfried, Robert Rahway Zakanitch

Jump Frog, Jump - Robert Kalan, Bryan Barton

young adult

Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging: Confessions of Georgia Nicolson

On the Bright Side I'm Now the Girlfriend of A Sex God

Knocked Out By My Nunga Nungas

Dancing in My Nuddy Pants

All by Louise Rennison

Georgia Nicolson is the 14 year old version of Bridget Jones - she's British, she writes in her diary, and she's all about boys.

Kara Scanlon McKinn recommends the *His Dark Materials Trilogy* by Phillip Pullman, beginning with **The Golden Compass**.

Thanks to everyone who suggested books this year. It always makes the list much more interesting!



guest editor's corner

janis' top ten classic books for girls

This list includes those books which belong in every girl's library, to be read and re-read throughout her entire life. On the first read, each of these books is a classic story, full of interesting characters to whom interesting things happen, in interesting places. As our girl-reader grows older, she will find that the girls in these books are not that dissimilar to her, and that many of the interesting things that happen, in fact, also happen to her in some fashion. Still older, our girl-reader will return to these books as well-loved friends, who grew up with her, and with whom she shares wonderful memories.

As a mother, our reader finds that she wants to share these friends with her daughters, and see the stories, characters, and places through fresh eyes.

Little House on the Prairie (series), Laura Ingalls Wilder – Even though the books take place in “olden times,” Laura is every-girl. Commonplace events become exciting when compared to what the reader knows in her own life. Places which sound familiar become exotic because they are so different from the way they are “today.” Yet, the people, places, and events are familiar, because they are so real.

The Secret Garden, Frances Hodgson Burnett – Mary is a very different little girl than Laura, but still exhibits the “every-girl” feelings and actions which bring this book to the list. The locations, the circumstances, and the events encountered in the book are not universal, but the people are.

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank – Anne Frank was a most extraordinary girl, living in extraordinary times. Her story is one which likely will not bear any similarity to the reader's life, at any age. Still, the emotions kindled by this book are strong, and it's important historically as well as personally for girls to experience those emotions.

Anne of Green Gables (series), L. M. Montgomery – Again, this Anne is every-girl, through her feelings and actions more so than her life circumstances.

The Miracle Worker, William Gibson – Another extraordinary girl is found in Helen Keller. Her story shows that a girl can overcome unbolivable adversity, if she has someone who believes in her – an important lesson for every girl...and every woman.

Little Women, Louisa May Alcott – Simply, timeless. The sisters in this book, more than any other book on this list, become lifelong friends to the girl-reader.

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Scott O'Dell – This book made the list for several reasons, not the least of which is because my list is overwhelmingly white-bread, and I think it's important for a girl to read about girls who may not look like her but who share the same feelings. Plus, it's such a great story, and so well-written. This is definitely a book which stands the timelessness test.

Charlotte's Web, E. B. White – Friendship, and love, and the unimportance of appearance, and the importance of good spelling. This book probably leans most toward the “nostalgia” aspect of any book on the list. Still, it travels well across the reader's life, and will remain relevant at any age.

Harriet the Spy, Louise Fitzhugh – This book is a study of people, particularly Harriet herself. A girl-reader will recognize herself in Harriet, and older girl-readers will find the other characters of the book intriguing as well.

A Wrinkle in Time, Madeleine L'Engle – This is a coming-of-age book, in a genre not usually associated with girls. Time-travel, and good v. evil, and not-quite-fitting in. There is plenty of religious allegory, but it isn't as heavy-handed as **The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe**.

Originally from Circle, Montana, Janis O'Brien Comer now lives and works in Indianola, Iowa. She is the mother of three charming daughters, Audrey, Julia and Olivia. Yet somehow she still has time to read (and discuss) books.

You, too, could be a guest editor!

Submit your list of ten books with a rationale as to why you chose them. They could be the ten best books you read on vacation; your ten favorite cookbooks; ten great books about music; ten favorite kids books; whatever!

(This list can't just always be about me, you know.)

Send your guest editor list (or any other suggestions you might have) to:

chamley8@insightbb.com or Amy Kilgus Chamley, Senior Editor, 2115 Mayfair, Champaign, IL 61821.

And, thank you, for indulging me once again!

amy kilgus chamley 2004