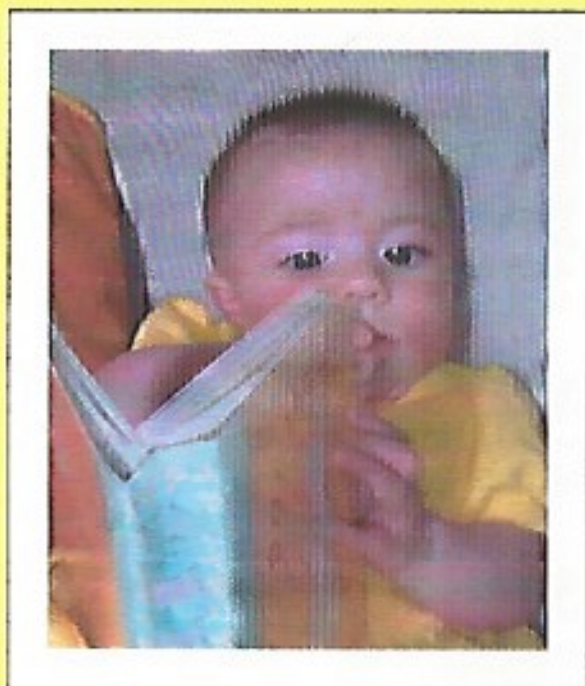


That's it for this year!

Let me know if you've got a great read to include in next year's list. And thanks to the folks who provided recommendations for this year's list.

Have a great summer and READ, READ, READ!!!



Special thanks to Miss Emma Chanley for appearing in this issue, and for taking long naps so her Mommy can read!

Amy Kilgus Chanley 2003



Amy's 5th* Annual Summer Reading List

Featuring the Best of the Past Five Years

with special assistance from Emma

*actually this is the sixth one I've done, but I'm not counting the first one because it was really just a compilation of other lists—and it had pretty limited distribution

10 FAVORITES FROM THE PAST 5 YEARS

Crossing to Safety — Wallace Stegner

A great book for discussion. It's the real and touching story of two couples. Wonderful!!! Also try *Angle of Repose*.

The Fall of the Sparrow — Robert Hellenga

A wonderful story about grief and food and the blues and growing up and relationships and Italian politics and academic politics and the humanities. It will make you want to go back to college, or to Italy.

The Group — Mary McCarthy

The post-college lives of a group of girls from Vassar, class of '33. I probably read this first when I was 15 and got 50%. I read it again in 1999 and got a lot more. If you haven't read it, read it. If you have, read it again.

I Capture the Castle — Dodie Smith

This is one of my favorite books of all time. It takes place in the '30's in a crumbling castle in England that Cassandra Mortmain's family has leased. Her father is somewhat unstable, her young stepmother is somewhat airy, and her sister is very romantic. Cassandra wants to be a writer and chronicles the unusual events of her life in her diary. Soon to be a major motion picture.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn — Betty Smith

I had forgotten how much I loved this book. It's right up there with *Harriet the Spy* and *I Capture the Castle*. It's about Francie Nolan, growing up in the shums of turn-of-the-century Brooklyn. She's smart and funny and romantic.

What are your favorites? Email me at chankeyB@insightbb.com.

The Professor and the Madman — Simon Winchester

The fascinating story of the development of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and one of its most unusual contributors.

Traveling Mercies — Anne Lamott

I love Anne Lamott. She's so earthy and spiritual (in a really practical, realistic way.) This is a collection of her essays from *Salo* magazine. They're just her reflections on life, and they're great.

Tender at the Bone — Ruth Reichl

Former *New York Times* restaurant critic (and current editor of *Gourmet*), Reichl writes engagingly about her life and food. Mouthwatering. Also try *Comfort Me With Apples*.

A Personal History — Katherine Graham

Katherine Graham died in 2001 after a long and illustrious life as daughter of, wife of and finally publisher of *The Washington Post* and this is her personal story. It's amazing that such a powerful woman could be so unassuming and likable, as well as such a great and honest writer.

Now, on to this year's list...

FICTION

Year of Wonders — Geraldine Brooks

The story of how the 17th-century plague affects a small English village and its inhabitants. The rector convinces the villagers to stay and isolate themselves from the rest of the world. It's got a bit of romance, too.

Watch Your Mouth — Daniel Handler

Daniel Handler is "Lemony Snicket," the children's author. This is a novel he wrote before embarking on *The Series of Unfortunate Events* series. It's a black comedy about incest, Judaism, and a variety of other things. He should stick to the kids books.

Dive from Clamsen's Pier — Ann Packer

When Carrie Bell's fiancé dives off a pier in Madison, Wisconsin and ends up paralyzed, Carrie has a lot of decisions to make. Does she stay with him, even though she was planning to break up with him before the accident? What does she really want? Over the course of the novel she learns a lot about herself and other people. And ultimately, I think she makes the wrong choice.

The Clothes They Stood Up In — Alan Bennett

This is really a novella about an upper class British couple who come home from the opera to find that their house has been completely stripped of all their possessions. They struggle with who they are without their stuff — and how do they get it back?

The Crimson Petal and the White — Michael Faber

I really enjoyed all 800+ pages of this novel about Victorian society. The main characters, a well-read prostitute named Segar and William Rackham, her gentleman benefactor, spend the novel trying to live within the confines of Victorian society, while still trying to have things their way. Just a note, it is about a prostitute, so there are some very graphic sections.

The Emperor of Ocean Park — Stephen Carter

A legal thriller from Carter, an African-American Yale law professor, about an African-American law professor. Deals with racism, academics and family relationships while working through a good mystery. Started out great, but became slightly confusing and tedious at the end.

The Lovely Bones — Alice Sebold

I put off reading this one for a long time — because who wants to read about a 14-year old girl who is brutally raped and murdered? But it's really about how people deal with grief, and how her family's relationships were affected by her death. The concept of the "afterlife" also reminded me of one of my favorite movies, *Truly, Madly, Deeply*.

Eva Moves the Furniture — Margot Livesey

The story of a girl from a small town in Scotland, the "companions" who are visible only to her and how they affect her life.

Child of My Heart — Alice McDermott

A beautiful 15-year old girl babysits for wealthy families in the Hamptons. She's a perfect babysitter, but she's also 15 — in the words of Britney Spears, "Not a girl, not yet a woman."

The Secret Lives of Bees — Sue Monk Kidd

Another young girl growing up in the South in the 60's. This time she's dealing with the circumstances of her mother's death and her difficult relationship with her father. She runs away from home and meets some fascinating sisters.

Joy in the Morning — Betty Smith

Not as good as *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, but a good read nonetheless. In 1927, Brooklynite Annie McGairy struggles through her first year of marriage to a law student at a Midwestern university. It's better than it sounds.

FAIRLY FLUFFY FICTION

Social Crimes — Jane Stanton Hitchcock
Jo Slater is a rich society woman whose husband dies and leaves everything to his mistress. Jo tries to get it all back by revealing the mistress to be a murderer. It reminded me of *Dominick Dunne*.

I Don't Know How She Does It — Allison Pearson
Bridget Jones grows up, gets married, has kids and a job and has a hard time balancing it all. This got slightly annoying.

Isabel's Bed — Elinor Lippman
When her long-term relationship fails, Harriet Naboney moves to Cape Cod to ghostwrite the autobiography of a wacky woman involved in a famous murder case.

Bookends — Jane Green
I think this is about a group of young British friends who start a bookstore, and find love. I really don't remember.

The Boy Next Door — Meggie Cabot
A series of emails from a New York gossip columnist to her friends and colleagues details the ins and outs of her relationship with the mysterious neighbor. Cute and quick.

Full House — Janet Evanovich
A slightly better than average (but still cheesy) romance novel, by the author of the Stephanie Plum mystery series. Not nearly as clever as the mysteries.

MYSTERIES & THRILLERS

Missing Susan — Sharyn McCrumb
An Elizabeth MacPherson mystery, in which she goes on a tour of famous murder sites in Great Britain, and mystery ensues. Cute.

Dead in the Water — Carola Dunn
Daisy Dalrymple is a liberated woman in 1920's Britain, who is constantly at the center of mysteries. This one involves the Thames Regatta.



A Grave Talent, To Play the Fool, With Child — Laurie King
A series about two San Francisco detectives. Kate Martinelli is a bit of a rookie, and a lesbian. Alonzo Hawkins is a brilliant but bitter veteran detective.

Absolute Certainty — Rose Connors
A very fast-paced "legal thriller" which takes place on Cape Cod. The protagonist is a single mother and assistant district attorney. Well written and very suspenseful.

The Cater Street Hangman — Anne Perry
I'm devouring this series of 22 mysteries set in Victorian London and featuring Charlotte Pitt, an upper-class woman married to a common policeman. What's really interesting is that the author, Anne Perry, used to be known as Juliet Marion Hulme, and in 1954 was convicted of helping to murder her friend's mother. She spent five years in prison in New Zealand. The film "Heavenly Creatures" is a slightly fictionalized account of her story.

Hard Eight — Janet Evanovich
If you're looking for quick, clever, funny mysteries, you can't go wrong with Janet Evanovich. Her latest in the Stephanie Plum series, *To the Nines*, is due out July 15.

NONFICTION

Mama Dear: Memoir of a Postwar Childhood in Europe — Christine Haidegger, Heidi J. Petermichl
Christine Haidegger is Inge, my father's Austrian cousin. The book is fascinating.

Great Dames: What I Learned from Older Women — Marie Brenner
Profiles of ten women "of a certain age," including Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Kay Thompson, Pamela Harriman, Clare Booth Luce, Kitty Carlisle Hart and others.

The Bitch in the House: 26 Women Tell the Truth About Sex, Solitude, Work, Motherhood, & Marriage — Cathi Hanauer
"What could have been a collective gripe about the day-to-day routine of holding a family or relationship together is instead a witty, and sometimes bitchy, read." *From Amazon*

The Orchid Thief — Susan Orleans
Learn more than you'd ever expect about orchids and the people who love/obsess over them.

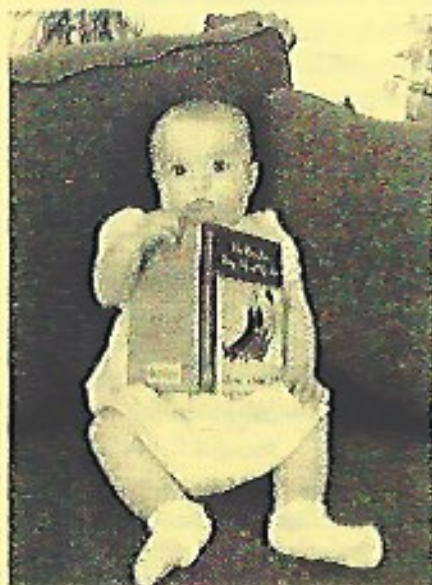
The Barefoot Contessa Family Style and The Barefoot Contessa Parties! — Ina Garten
Great, delicious, simple recipes and beautiful photos.

KIDS STUFF

The Little Prince — Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
We read this to Emma before she was born. Perhaps someday she'll tell us what it means.

The Carnivorous Carnival, (A Series of Unfortunate Events, Book 9) — Lemony Snicket
Will the Baudelaires ever escape Count Olaf? What is the YFD? And who is Lemony Snicket? We'll just have to keep reading to find out.

Dead Girls Don't Write Letters — Gael Giles
Sort of a young adult thriller about a girl whose sister dies in an apartment fire. Mysterious letters from the dead girl start appearing, and a woman claiming to be the dead girl shows up. It's got a surprise ending.



Books I Think I'll Read This Year

The Lives of the Muses: Nine Women & the Artists They Inspired - Francine Prose

"In *The Lives of the Muses*, Francine Prose writes a spirited and enlightening expose of nine women who fired the imaginations of some of the most imitable artists and thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries."

From Amazon

Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith - Jon Krakauer

"Krakauer constructs a multilayered, bone-chilling narrative of messianic delusion, savage violence, polygamy, and unyielding faith. Along the way, he uncovers a shadowy offshoot of America's fastest-growing religion, and raises provocative questions about the nature of religious belief." *From Amazon*

A Big Life in Advertising - Mary Wells Lawrence

"Spanning four decades in the world of advertising and the life of one of its star players, *A Big Life* oozes with juicy details and insider revelations."

From Amazon

Leap of Faith: Memoirs of an Unexpected Life - Queen Noor

Lisa Malaby was born in 1961 to a wealthy American family. In 1978 she married the King of Jordan and became Queen Noor.

What Should I Do With My Life - Po Bronson

Profiles of 50 people searching for their true callings.

The Quality of Life Report - Meghan Daum

A New York TV producer moves to the Midwest.

The Hazards of Good Breeding - Jessica Shattuck

"Shattuck's debut novel is a social comedy, with flashes of darker import, about an upper-crust Boston suburban family forced to come to terms with the pressures of contemporary life and the ways in which they succeed, or more frequently fail." *From Publishers Weekly*

Missing Persons - Margo Rabb

Book magazine calls her "the new Nancy Drew."

This book won't be out until July, I think. It's about two Jewish teenage girls who go off in search of mysteries.

Atonement - Ian McEwan

"On a hot summer day in 1935, thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis witnesses a moment's flirtation between her older sister, Cecilia, and Robbie Turner, the son of a servant and Cecilia's childhood friend. But Briony's incomplete grasp of adult motives—together with her precocious literary gifts—brings about a crime that will change all their lives." *From the book*

The Little Friend - Donna Tartt

The long-awaited second book from former literary wunderkind, Donna Tartt, author of *The Secret History*.

The Bobby Gold Stories, Bone in the Throat, Gone Bamboo - Anthony Bourdain

These are fiction works by chef/writer Anthony Bourdain, author of *Kitchen Confidential* and *A Cook's Tour*. If I wasn't happily married, I'd want him to be my boyfriend.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix - J.K. Rowling

It will be released on June 21. I pre-ordered my copy from Amazon UK ages ago.

Books I KNOW I'll Read this Year

Goodnight Moon - Margaret Wise Brown

Pat the Bunny - Dorothy Kunhardt

Where the Wild Things Are and In the Night Kitchen - Maurice Sendak

If you haven't read *In the Night Kitchen*, you must. It's one of my favorites and one of the only children's books you'll find with full frontal nudity.

Hippos Go Berserk, Pajama Time and Boynton's Greatest Hits, Volumes 1 & 2 - Sandra Boynton Wacky!

Guess How Much I Love You - Sam McBratney

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

The Very Hungry Caterpillar - Eric Carle

Olivia - Ian Falconer

Walter, the Farting Dog - William Kotzwinkle

How could you resist this title?

Emma's Pet, Emma's Vacation, and Fix-It - David McPhail

And any number of other delightful children's books!



YOUR SUGGESTIONS

Suggested by Carol Elmer

Big W - Mark Costello

Hamlet's Desire - Bob Smith

A House in Sicily - Daphne Phelps

Dirt Music - Tim Winton

The Impressionist - Hari Kunzru

Never Change - Elizabeth Berg

The Dream of Scipio - Iain Pears

Carol says, "Not an easy read, but I loved this book. It's a 'thinker'."

Life of Pi - Yann Martel

Prague - Arthur Phillips

Suggested by Joann Kigas

The Arcanum: The Extraordinary True Story - Janet Gleeson

Beginner's Luck - Laura Pedersen

Three Weeks in Paris - Barbara Taylor Bradford

Suggested by June Waller

Empire Falls - Richard Russo

Three Junes - Julia Glass

The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency - Alexander McCall Smith

Suggested by Kurt Austin

Middlesex - Jeffrey Eugenides

Set This House in Order - Matt Russ

Kurt says, "... about a guy with multiple personality disorder who falls in love with a woman with MPD. Wacky hilarity, no doubt, ensues."

Suggested by Kara Scanlon

My Year of Meats - Ruth L. Ozeki

Revere Beach Boulevard - Roland Merullo

Read a really good book this year?
Want to warn us about a really bad one?
Email Amy at chanleyB@insightbb.com.