



MPL 2023 Reading List

January: *Project Hail Mary, by Andy Weir*

Ryland Grace is the sole survivor on a desperate, last-chance mission--and if he fails, humanity and the earth itself will perish.

Except that right now, he doesn't know that. He can't even remember his own name, let alone the nature of his assignment or how to complete it.

All he knows is that he's been asleep for a very, very long time. And he's just been awakened to find himself millions of miles from home, with nothing but two corpses for company.

His crewmates dead, his memories fuzzily returning, Ryland realizes that an impossible task now confronts him. Hurling through space on this tiny ship, it's up to him to puzzle out an impossible scientific mystery--and conquer an extinction-level threat to our species.

And with the clock ticking down and the nearest human being light-years away, he's got to do it all alone.

Or does he?

February: *The Silent Patient, by Alex Michaelides*

Alicia Berenson's life is seemingly perfect. A famous painter married to an in-demand fashion photographer, she lives in a grand house with big windows overlooking a park in one of London's most desirable areas. One evening her husband Gabriel returns home late from a fashion shoot, and Alicia shoots him five times in the face, and then never speaks another word.

Alicia's refusal to talk, or give any kind of explanation, turns a domestic tragedy into something far grander, a mystery that captures the public imagination and casts Alicia into notoriety. The price of her art skyrockets, and she, the silent patient, is hidden away from the tabloids and spotlight at the Grove, a secure forensic unit in North London.

Theo Faber is a criminal psychotherapist who has waited a long time for the opportunity to work with Alicia. His determination to get her to talk and unravel the mystery of why she shot her husband takes him down a twisting path into his own motivations—a search for the truth that threatens to consume him....

March:

Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, by Taylor Jenkins Reid

Aging and reclusive Hollywood movie icon Evelyn Hugo is finally ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. But when she chooses unknown magazine reporter Monique Grant for the job, no one is more astounded than Monique herself. Why her? Why now?

Monique is not exactly on top of the world. Her husband has left her, and her professional life is going nowhere. Regardless of why Evelyn has selected her to write her biography, Monique is determined to use this opportunity to jump start her career.

Summoned to Evelyn's luxurious apartment, Monique listens in fascination as the actress tells her story. From making her way to Los Angeles in the 1950s to her decision to leave show business in the '80s, and, of course, the seven husbands along the way, Evelyn unspools a tale of ruthless ambition, unexpected friendship, and a great forbidden love. Monique begins to feel a very real connection to the legendary star, but as Evelyn's story near its conclusion, it becomes clear that her life intersects with Monique's own in tragic and irreversible ways.

April:

The Lincoln Highway, by Amor Towles

In June, 1954, eighteen-year-old Emmett Watson is driven home to Nebraska by the warden of the work farm where he has just served a year for involuntary manslaughter. His mother long gone, his father recently deceased, and the family farm foreclosed upon by the bank, Emmett's intention is to pick up his eight-year-old brother and head west where they can start their lives anew. But when the warden drives away, Emmett discovers that two friends from the work farm have hidden themselves in the trunk of the warden's car. Together, they have hatched an altogether different plan for Emmett's future.

Spanning just ten days and told from multiple points of view, Towles's third novel will satisfy fans of his multi-layered literary styling while providing them an array of new and richly imagined settings, characters, and themes.

May:

The Lessons in Chemistry, by Bonnie Garmus

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans; the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize nominated grudge-holder who falls in love with—of all things—her mind. True chemistry results.

But like science, life is unpredictable. Which is why a few years later Elizabeth Zott finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ("combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride") proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.

June:

A Death in Door County, by Annelise Ryan

Morgan Carter, owner of the Odds and Ends bookstore in Door County, Wisconsin, has a hobby. When she's not tending the store, she's hunting cryptids--creatures whose existence is rumored, but never proven to be real. It's a hobby that cost her parents their lives, but one she'll never give up on.

So, when a number of bodies turn up on the shores of Lake Michigan with injuries that look like bites from a giant unknown animal, police chief Jon Flanders turns to Morgan for help. A skeptic at heart, Morgan can't turn down the opportunity to find proof of an entity whose

existence she can't definitively rule out. She and her beloved rescue dog, Newt, journey to the Death's Door strait to hunt for a homicidal monster in the lake--but if they're not careful, they just might be its next victims.

July: *One Italian Summer, by Rebecca Serle*

When Katy's mother dies, she is left reeling. Carol wasn't just Katy's mom, but her best friend and first phone call. She had all the answers and now, when Katy needs her the most, she is gone. To make matters worse, their planned mother-daughter trip of a lifetime looms: two weeks in Positano, the magical town Carol spent the summer right before she met Katy's father. Katy has been waiting years for Carol to take her, and now she is faced with embarking on the adventure alone.

But as soon as she steps foot on the Amalfi Coast, Katy begins to feel her mother's spirit. Buoyed by the stunning waters, beautiful cliffsides, delightful residents, and, of course, delectable food, Katy feels herself coming back to life.

And then Carol appears—in the flesh, healthy, sun-tanned, and thirty years old. Katy doesn't understand what is happening, or how—all she can focus on is that she has somehow, impossibly, gotten her mother back. Over the course of one Italian summer, Katy gets to know Carol, not as her mother, but as the young woman before her. She is not exactly who Katy imagined she might be, however, and soon Katy must reconcile the mother who knew everything with the young woman who does not yet have a clue.

August: *Marrying the Ketchups, by Jennifer Close*

An irresistible comedy of manners about three generations of a Chicago restaurant family and the deep-fried, beer-battered, cream cheese-frosted love that feeds them all.

September: *The Recipe Box, by Viola Shipman*

Growing up in northern Michigan, Samantha "Sam" Mullins felt trapped on her family's orchard and in their pie shop, so she left with dreams of making her own mark in the world. But life as an overworked, undervalued sous chef at a reality star's New York bakery is not what Sam dreamed.

When the chef embarrasses Sam, she quits and returns home. Unemployed, single, and defeated, she spends a summer working on her family's orchard cooking and baking alongside the women in her life--including her mother, Deana, and grandmother, Willo. One beloved, flour-flecked, ink-smear recipe at a time, Sam begins to learn about and understand the women in her life, her family's history, and her passion for food through their treasured recipe box.

As Sam discovers what matters most she opens her heart to a man she left behind, but who now might be the key to her happiness.

October: *We Are the Brennans, by Tracy Lange*

When twenty-nine-year-old Sunday Brennan wakes up in a Los Angeles hospital, bruised and battered after a drunk driving accident she caused, she swallows her pride and goes home to her family in New York. But it's not easy. She deserted them all—and her high school sweetheart—five years before with little explanation, and they've got questions.

Sunday is determined to rebuild her life back on the east coast, even if it does mean tiptoeing

around resentful brothers and an ex-fiancé. The longer she stays, however, the more she realizes they need her just as much as she needs them. When a dangerous man from her past brings her family's pub business to the brink of financial ruin, the only way to protect them is to upend all their secrets—secrets that have damaged the family for generations and will threaten everything they know about their lives. In the aftermath, the Brennan family is forced to confront painful mistakes—and ultimately find a way forward, together.

November: *Killing Kennedy, by Bill O'Reilly*

The anchor of *The O'Reilly Factor* recounts in gripping detail the brutal murder of John Fitzgerald Kennedy—and how a sequence of gunshots on a Dallas afternoon not only killed a beloved president but also sent the nation into the cataclysmic division of the Vietnam War and its culture-changing aftermath.

In January 1961, as the Cold War escalates, John F. Kennedy struggles to contain the growth of Communism while he learns the hardships, solitude, and temptations of what it means to be president of the United States. Along the way he acquires a number of formidable enemies, among them Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, and Allen Dulles, director of the Central Intelligence Agency. In addition, powerful elements of organized crime have begun to talk about targeting the president and his brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

In the midst of a 1963 campaign trip to Texas, Kennedy is gunned down by an erratic young drifter named Lee Harvey Oswald. The former Marine Corps sharpshooter escapes the scene, only to be caught and shot dead while in police custody.

The events leading up to the most notorious crime of the twentieth century are almost as shocking as the assassination itself.

December: *The Santa Suit, by Mary Kay Andrews*

When newly-divorced Ivy Perkins buys an old farmhouse sight unseen, she is definitely looking for a change in her life. The Four Roses, as the farmhouse is called, is a labor of love—but Ivy didn't bargain on just how much labor. The previous family left so much furniture and so much junk, that it's a full-time job sorting through all of it.

At the top of a closet, Ivy finds an old Santa suit—beautifully made and decades old. In the pocket of a suit she finds a note written in a childish hand: it's from a little girl who has one Christmas wish, and that is for her father to return home from the war. This discovery sets Ivy off on a mission. Who wrote the note? Did the man ever come home? What mysteries did the Rose family hold?

Ivy's quest brings her into the community, at a time when all she wanted to do was be left alone and nurse her wounds. But the magic of Christmas makes miracles happen, and Ivy just might find more than she ever thought possible: a welcoming town, a family reunited, a mystery solved, and a second chance at love.