



# Sensational Summer Reads – 2007



Compiled by the Bloomingdale School District 13

## Fiction:

### Five People You Meet in Heaven written by Mitch Aboum

Eddie is an old man who has lived an uninspired life. A tragic accident kills him as he tries to save a little girl from a falling cart in an amusement park. Eddie's five people revisit their connections to him on earth, revealing the mysteries of his "meaningless" life and the secret behind the question: "Why was I here?"

### For One More Day written by Mitch Aboum

A story about a mother and a son, and a relationship that covers a lifetime and beyond. It explores the question: What would you do if you could spend one more day with a lost loved one?

### Simple Genius written by David Baldacci

Secret Service Agent, Michelle Maxwell instigates a fight local bar and lets herself be beaten unconscious, her partner, Sean King, suggests she voluntarily commit herself to a psychiatric facility. King investigates the suicide of a scientist found on the grounds of Virginia's Camp Peary, a mysterious CIA facility.

### We Are All Welcome Here written by Elizabeth Berg

Pregnant Paige Dunn was felled by a severe case of polio. After her husband abandoned and divorced her, she raised her daughter, Diana, alone. Diana, now 13, has taken over the night shift of her mother's round-the-clock nursing care.

### Nights of Rain and Stars written by Maeve Binchy

In a tiny Greek seaside village, tourists enter a hilltop tavern, alone and in pairs, for a casual lunch. But a sudden tragedy in the harbor below brings them together, changing perfect strangers into unlikely friends.

### The Double Bind written by Chris Bohjalian

Laurel Estabrook, a young social worker living in Vermont, becomes obsessed with a box of photographs that belonged to a deceased homeless man, Bobbie Crocker.

### The Lady and the Unicorn written by Tracy Chevalier

Giving life to the men who designed tapestries' creation and made them, as well as the wives, daughters, and servants who exercised subtle (and not so subtle) influences over their men.

### Ireland written by Frank Delaney

In 1951, a storyteller asks for a bed and a warm meal and begins to tell formative stories of Ireland's history. Ronan, a 9-year-old boy, grows so entranced by the storytelling that, when the old man leaves, the boy devotes himself to finding him again.

### The Red Tent written by Anita Diamant

Jacob's daughter, Dinah, and Jacob's four wives, all served as Dinah's mother at some point in time. Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah all bring their own unique gifts and influences to bear on Dinah's life.

### The Memory Keepers Daughter written by Kim Edwards

In 1964, Dr. David Henry delivers his own twins. His son is perfectly healthy. When his daughter is born, he sees immediately that she has Down's Syndrome. Rationalizing it as a need to protect his wife, he asks his nurse to take the baby away to an institution and never to reveal the secret. But Caroline, the nurse, cannot leave the infant. Instead, she disappears into another city to raise the child herself.

### Finding Noel: A Novel written by Richard Evans

Mark's life is falling apart when he meets Macy, a young woman with her own share of troubles. Together, they overcome their problems and go on a quest to find Macy's long-lost sister, Noel.

### The Saving Graces written by Patricia Gaffney

For 10 years, Rudy, Emma, Isabel, and Lee have shared a bond of affection, support, and understanding that gives each of them the strength to deal with the many ups and downs in their lives.



**Babyville written by Jane Green**

Julia, a television producer appears to have the picture-perfect life. Stuck in a loveless relationship with her boyfriend, Julia thinks a baby is the answer, but she may want a baby more than she wants her boyfriend.

**The Last Juror written by John Grisham**

Longhaired 23-year-old college dropout Willie Traynor purchased a bankrupt Mississippi newspaper, The Ford County Times, in the 1970s. As editor and publisher, Willie's eyes are opened to many issues, including the brutal rape and murder of a young widow.

**Leeway Cottage written by Beth Gurcheon**

Not long after American Sydney becomes pregnant, Laurus, her husband, leaves her to return to Europe to help save Denmark's Jews. After the war, Laurus returns to America; the marriage is resilient but forever changed.

**The Kite Runner written by Khaled Hosseini**

A poignant tale of two motherless boys growing up in a city named Kabul that is teetering on the brink of destruction at the dawn of the Soviet invasion.

**A Thousand Splendid Suns written by Khaled Hosseini**

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate and marriage of the same abusive man.

**Angry Women Eating Bon Bons written by Lorna Landvik**

The women of Freesia Court have come together at life's table, fully convinced that there is nothing that good coffee, delectable desserts, and a strong shoulder can't fix. Laughter is the glue that holds them together—the foundation of a book group they call AWEB—Angry Wives Eating Bon Bons—an unofficial "club" that becomes much more.

**Sleeping with Schubert written by Bonnie Marson**

Schubert's soul and extraordinary gift has taken up residence in the body of a lawyer Liza Durbin. A mediocre pianist, Liza can suddenly pound out concertos and compose masterly music. How can Liza explain what's happened to her without everyone thinking she's gone off the deep end?

**With or Without You written by Carole Matthews**

After her boyfriend, dumps her for an Angelina Jolie look-alike who climbs Mt. Everest, Lyssa Allen decides maybe a little adventure of her own can win him back. Her month-long journey teaches Lyssa that her horizons are bigger than she knew and the man of her dreams far different than she thought.

**The Time Traveler's Wife written by Audrey Niffenegger**

Henry DeTamble, a dashing, adventuresome librarian who travels involuntarily through time, and Clare Abshire, an artist whose life takes a natural sequential course captures the two lovers in an impossibly romantic trap.

**Cross written by James Patterson**

Alex Cross witnessed the drive-by slaying of his wife, Maria. He is living his life together with his grandmother and children, continuing his work as a high-stakes psychologist. A request from his former partner, John Sampson, asks Cross to help solve a case with indirect links to Maria's murder.

**My Sister's Keeper written by Jodi Picoult**

13-year-old Anna Fitzgerald has decided to sue her parents to stop them from using her as "spare parts" for her older sister, Kate, who suffers from leukemia.

**Vanishing Acts written by Jodi Picoult**

As Delia plans her wedding, she is plagued by flashbacks of a life she can't recall...until a policeman knocks on her door, revealing a secret about herself that changes the world as she knows it — and threatens to jeopardize her future.

**Snow Flower and the Secret Fan written by Lisa See**

19th-century China details the deeply affecting story of lifelong, intimate friends Lily and Snow Flower, their imprisonment by rigid codes of conduct for women and their betrayal by pride and love.



### The Wedding written by Nicholas Sparks

After 30 years, Wilson Lewis, is forced to admit that the romance has gone out of his marriage. Wilson himself is a man unable to express how he truly feels. With the distractions of his daughter's upcoming wedding he is forced to realize how close he is to losing his own wife Jane.

### The Bonesetter's Daughter written by Amy Tan

Set in San Francisco and in a Chinese village, LuLing Young, who searches for the name of her mother, the daughter of the famous Bonesetter from the Mouth of the Mountain.

### The Joy Luck Club written by Amy Tan

In 1949, four Chinese women begin meeting in San Francisco for fun. Nearly 40 years later, their daughters continue to meet as the Joy Luck Club.

### The Passion of Artemisia written by Susan Vreeland

A fictional story about the life of painter Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1652), the first major female figure in the history of art who had fierce passion and tension of a great painting.

### Devine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood written by Rebecca Wells

In 1932, Vivi and the Ya-Yas were disqualified from a Shirley Temple Look-Alike Contest for unladylike behavior. Sixty years later, they're 'bucking 70' and still making waves.

### **Nonfiction:**

### The Short History of Nearly Everything written by Bill Bryson

Taking as territory everything from the Big Bang to the rise of civilization, Bryson seeks to understand how we got from there being nothing at all to there being us.

### Chronicles, Volume 1 written by Bob Dylan

The book deals with Dylan's desperate desire not to be anyone's spokesperson, let alone everyone's and focuses loosely around Dylan's arrival in New York in 1961, his retreat to Woodstock to escape the public eye, and the recording of *Oh Mercy* in the late '80s.

### Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire written by Rafe Esquith

In a Los Angeles plagued by guns, gangs, and drugs, Room 56, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom that are first-generation immigrants who live in poverty and speak English as a second language. They also play Vivaldi, perform Shakespeare, score in the top 1 percent on standardized tests, and go on to attend Ivy League universities.

### Blink: The power of Thinking Without Thinking written by Malcolm Gladwell

The author shows how the difference between good decision making and bad has nothing to do with how much information we can process quickly, but rather with the few particular details on which we focus.

### Marley & Me: Love and Life of the World's Worst Dog written by John Grogan

Marley grew into a 97-pound steamroller of a Labrador retriever. He crashed through screen doors, gashed through drywall, and stole women's undergarments. Obedience school did no good.

### Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America written by Erik Larson

A vivid account of the tragedies and triumphs of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the concurrent depravities of America's first serial killer

### The Glass Castle written by Jeanette Walls

Gossip columnist Jeanette Walls dishes the dirt on her own troubled youth in this remarkable story of survival against overwhelming odds.

### In an Instant: A family's Journey of Love and Healing written by Lee and Bob Woodruff

While Bob was embedded with the military in Iraq, an explosive device went off near the tank he was riding in. He and his cameraman, Doug Vogt, were hit, and Bob suffered a traumatic brain injury that nearly killed him. A story of how Bob and Lee's lives came together, were blown apart, and then were miraculously put together again-and how they persevered.