

A Piece of the World

By Christina Baker Kline

To Christina Olson, the entire world was her family's remote farm along the coast of Maine. Born in the home her family had lived in for generations, and increasingly incapacitated by illness, Christina seemed destined for a small life. Instead, for more than 20 years, she was host and inspiration for the artist Andrew Wyeth, and became the subject of his mysterious and iconic painting *Christina's World*.

October 2017 WITCC Lifelong Learning Book Club Read

Read-alikes compiled by Sioux City Public Library Staff

Tales of Biographical Fiction:

[*I Always Loved You*](#) by Robin Oliveira (*Fic Oli*)

Mary Cassatt never thought moving to Paris after the Civil War to be an artist was going to be easy, but when her submission to the Paris Salon is rejected, Mary's fierce determination falters. A chance meeting with Edgar Degas changes her life forever.

[*Georgia*](#) by Dawn Clifton Tripp (*Large Type Fic Tri*)

A tale inspired by the great romance between painter Georgia O'Keeffe and photographer Alfred Stieglitz, *Georgia* describes how a young O'Keeffe becomes the married photographer's mistress and muse as her star rises in the art world in spite of criticism about her role as the subject of Stieglitz's infamous nudes.

[*The Other Einstein*](#) by Marie Benedict (*New Fic Ben*)

Mitza Maric has always been a little different from other girls. Most 20-year-olds are wives by now, not studying physics at an elite Zurich university. She's smart enough to know that, for her, math is an easier path than marriage. But then fellow student Albert Einstein takes an interest in her, and completely turns her world upside down.

[*The Painted Kiss*](#) by Elizabeth Hickey (*Fic Hic*)

Gustav Klimt, one of Austria's great painters takes center stage in this passionate and atmospheric debut novel, which reimagines the tumultuous relationship between the Viennese painter and Emilie Flöge, the woman who posed for his masterpiece *The Kiss*, and whose name he uttered with his dying breath.

[*Miss Emily*](#) by Nuala O'Connor (*Fic OCo*)

When Irish maid Ada is hired by the respected but eccentric Dickinson family, she strikes up an unlikely friendship with Miss Emily. But Emily's passion for words soon begins to dominate all aspect of her life. When Ada's safety and reputation are threatened, Emily must summon the courage to venture outside the comfort of home and the safe confines of her mind to help her friend.

Character Driven Historical Fiction:

[*Cold Mountain*](#) by Charles Frazier (*Fic Fra*)

After Inman escapes from a war hospital in 1864 and starts walking to Cold Mountain, Ada struggles to save her mountain farm with the help of Ruby, an illiterate but efficient farmer.

[*The Light Between Oceans*](#) by M.L. Stedman (*Fic Ste*)

After distinguished service in World War I, Tom Sherbourne takes up work as a lighthouse keeper in a remote area of Australia with his new bride, Isabel. Four years later, after Isabel has suffered two miscarriages and a stillbirth, a boat washes ashore with a dead man and a living child. Guilt and mistrust haunt the couple's decision to keep the child.

[*Before We Were Yours*](#) by Lisa Wingate (*New Fic Win*)

A complex novel about two families, two generations apart, linked by a notorious true-life scandal of the Tennessee Children's Home Society—a real-life orphanage that profited from taking children from poor families, mistreating them, and placing them with prominent people.


[*Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague*](#)

by Geraldine Brooks (*Fic Bro*)

A novel based on the actual lead-mining village of Eyam, Derbyshire, whose residents voluntarily quarantined themselves for a year when their town was struck by the Bubonic Plague in 1665. This harrowing story is told from the perspective of 18-year-old Anna, a widow and mother of two young boys.

[*The Kitchen House*](#) by Kathleen Grissom (*Fic Gri*)

In 1791, Lavinia, a young orphan, becomes a white indentured servant on a tobacco plantation owned by Capt. James Pyke. Belle, the Captain's illegitimate daughter, reluctantly oversees Lavinia and as a result becomes close to the slaves working the kitchen house. At 17, Lavinia marries Marshall, the Captain's son. As she tries to win favor with the family and the big house, racial tensions boil over.

More great read-alike suggestions on the back 



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Read-alikes compiled by Sioux City Public Library Staff Continued

Novels of Personal Struggle:

[*Alias Grace*](#) by Margaret Atwood (*Fic Atw*)

Based on real events, 16-year-old Grace Marks is sentenced to life in prison for the murder of her employers, although she claims to have no memory of the crime. Grace's life of hardship is revealed during interviews with a young psychiatrist who helps her to recover her memories.

[*My Brief History*](#)

by Stephen Hawking (*Nonfiction 921 Hawki, S Haw*)

Diagnosed with ALS at the age of 21, the brilliant physicist recounts how fear of death motivated him to push himself intellectually towards scientific breakthroughs.

[*The Story of Beautiful Girl*](#) by Rachel Simon (*Fic Sim*)

In this novel describing the institutionalization and mistreatment of people with disabilities, Linnie, a white intellectually-disabled white woman, and Homan, a deaf African American man, escape together from the School for the Feebleminded, are soon separated, and then spend the next 40 years trying to find each other again.

[*Lock In*](#) by John Scalzi (*Science Fiction Sca*)

In the near future, a viral epidemic called Haden's syndrome leaves millions completely paralyzed but fully conscious. Technological advances allow them to temporarily transfer their minds to robot bodies or trained human hosts called integrators. After an integrator is used to commit murder, newly-minted F.B.I. agent and Haden-sufferer Chris Shane is tasked with solving the case.

[*Wintergirls*](#) by Laurie Halse Anderson (*Teen And*)

Haunted by the death of her best friend from bulimia, Lia struggles with her own eating disorder and feelings of failure in a harrowing journey through anorexia.

Stories with a Lyrical Writing Style:

[*A Gentleman in Moscow*](#) by Amor Towles (*New Fic Tow*)

Deemed unrepentant by a Bolshevik tribunal in 1922 for writing a poem believed to encourage revolt, Count Alexander Rostov is sentenced to house arrest in a hotel across the street from the Kremlin, where he lives in an attic room as some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history unfold.

[*The Stars Are Fire*](#) by Anita Shreve (*New Fic Shr*)

Based on the true story of the largest fire in Maine's history, *The Stars Are Fire* tells the story of Grace Holland, a young expectant mother who is left alone to protect her children after her husband becomes a volunteer firefighter to help combat the nearly uncontrollable fires that have broken out all along the coast of Maine after a summer-long drought.

[*Manhattan Beach*](#) by Jennifer Egan

(*Audiobook CD-New Ega*)

Anna Kerrigan is nearly 12-years-old when she accompanies her father to meet slick mobster Dexter Styles. Years later, her father has disappeared and the country is at war. Finding work at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, Anna becomes the first female diver—the most dangerous and exclusive of jobs. One evening, she meets Styles again and begins to better understand the complexity of her father's life and the real reasons he may have vanished.

[*Lisette's List*](#) by Susan Vreeland (*Fic Vre*)

Young Lisette Roux is exiled to Provence to take care of her husband's ailing grandfather during the Vichy regime, but she soon discovers that despite the horrors of war, the paintings of Cezanne, Pissarro, Chagall, and Picasso bring to life the landscape around her and allow her to once again to experience love.

[*Sea of Poppies*](#) by Amitav Ghosh (*Fic Gho*)

Preparing to fight China's Opium Wars, a motley crew of sailors and passengers—including a bankrupt rajah, a widowed tribeswoman, an American freedman, and a free-spirited French orphan—establish family-like ties that end up spanning continents, races, and generations.