



Read-alikes compiled by Sioux City Public Library Staff

Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel

A novel that examines the collapse of civilization after a deadly flu wipes out most of the world's population. Moving gracefully from the first days of the plague to years before it and decades after, Arthur Leander, a famous actor who dies of a heart attack while playing King Lear on stage anchors the story. In this post pandemic time, people live in gas stations and motels, curate museums filled with cell phones and car engines, and treasure tabloids and comic books. One comic book gives the novel its title and captures the longing felt by the survivors for the world they have lost.

If you like Post-Apocalyptic Page Turners:

Once Second After by William Forstchen (Fic For). History Professor John Matherson struggles to save his family and his small North Carolina town after America is plunged into darkness when a high-altitude nuclear bomb unleashes a deadly electromagnetic pulse (EMP) that instantly disables almost every electrical device in the world.

The Passage by Justin Cronin (Fic Cro). When a secret project to create a super-soldier backfires, a virus leads to a plague of vampirelike monsters that wipes out most of humanity. A smart but shy sixyear old girl from Iowa becomes the hope for the survival of civilization.

The Dog Stars by Peter Heller (Science Fiction Hel). Nine years after a super-flu pandemic has killed off much of mankind, Hig, an amateur pilot living in Colorado, establishes a shelter with his dog, Jasper in an abandoned airport hangar where the only visitors are plague survivors who have descended into savagery. A random radio transmission compels him to risk his life to seek out other survivors and he gets more than he bargained for on his journey.

If you like lyrical works about death:

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (Fic-Zus). When Death tells a story, you pay attention. Trying to make sense of the horrors of World War II, Death relates the story of Liesel--a young, orphaned, German girl who's book-stealing and story-telling talents help sustain her foster family, the Jewish fugitive they are hiding, as well as their neighbors.

The Probable Future by Alice Hoffman (Fic-Hof). In colonial Massachusetts, Rebecca Sparrow was tried as a witch and drowned because of her physical inability to feel pain. Her present-day descendants possess extraordinary gifts. Elinor, the dying matriarch, has the ability to discern liars. Her estranged daughter, Jenny Avery, can divine other people's dreams. And Jenny's 13-year-old daughter, Stella, knows how and when people will die. Struggling to cope with her unwanted ability to see the future, Stella must confront her legacy when her father is jailed, wrongly accused of homicide. Stella joins forces with her grandmother and mother to not only uncover the truth, but to clear her father's name.

Sing Them Home by Stephanie Kallos (Fic-Kal). Everyone in Emlyn Springs knows the story of Hope Jones, the physician's wife whose big dreams for their tiny town were lost along with her in the tornado of 1978. This novel is a portrait of three siblings who have lived in the shadow of unresolved grief since their mother's disappearance. Now, 25 years later, Hope's children must gather for their father's funeral after he's killed by a lightning strike, forcing each sibling to revisit the childhood tragedy that has defined their lives.

If you like survival stories featuring strong female characters:

The Girl with All the Gifts by M.R. Carey (New Science Fic Car). Melanie is a ten year old genius imprisoned in a facility where she and other children are routinely experimented upon and killed for dissection; they are second-generation zombies, but they can still somehow think and feel. After escaping an attack on the facility, Melanie discovers the state of the outside world. In the midst of the ongoing war between "hungries" and humans, Melanie alone sees a glimpse of hope for the future of humanity.

Divergent by Veronica Roth (Teen Rot). Tris lives in a society in which people are divided into factions based on their greatest strengths. Although she chooses Dauntless, Tris has discovered that she is a "Divergent" and does not fit into just one group, a fact which she must keep secret for her own safety. Yet, using her abilities as a Divergent may be the only way to save the ones she loves.

The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood (Science Fic Atw). In the totalitarian state of Gilead, Offred is forced to live as a "handmaid", whose role in society is to bear children for powerful men, due to her rare fertility in a world of declining birth rates. As she copes with her status and the ache she feels for her long-lost husband and daughter, she must decide whom she can trust and whether there is any hope for a better future.

If you like stories about flawed characters yearning for love and companionship:

Amherst by William Nicholson (New Fic-Nic). Londoner Alice Dickinson (no relation) is a young executive who takes time off to work on a screenplay. Her topic is the scandalous real-life love affair between Mabel Loomis Todd, a young faculty wife, and the much older Austin Dickinson, Amherst College treasurer and Emily Dickinson's brother. Alice travels to the U.S. to do research and is invited to stay with Nick Crocker, a middle-aged married academic from England. As Alice begins uncovering unexpected facts about the long-ago relationship, she begins her own love affair with Nick.

Our Souls at Night by Kent Haruf (New Fic-Har). One day, elderly widow Addie Moore boldly invites her neighbor and fellow widower Louis Waters to sleep over. Thus begins this story of an unlikely friendship, an antidote to their shared loneliness and longing for companionship. As their relationship deepens, they must withstand the small-town gossip, meddling disapproval from their children, and an unexpected houseguest.

Landline by Rainbow Rowell (Fic-Row). TV writer Georgie McCool has just been offered the deal of a lifetime when the show she has pitched gets picked up by a network—the only catch—she and her writing partner must turn in four episodes by the holidays. Forced to tell her husband Neal that she can't go with him and their kids to Omaha for Christmas, Georgie knows he'll be upset. What she doesn't expect is for him to pack up the kids and go without her. Reeling, Georgie repeatedly calls Neal, but he seems to be dodging all of her calls until she starts phoning the old rotary phone in her mother's house—and finds an odd connection to the past.