

LGBTQ+

Recommended Reads

A list of just some of the LGBTQ+ books recommended by staff and friends of the West Haven Library.

All books are available physically or digitally through WHPL or the LION Consortium.

Books are listed alphabetically by author.

Descriptions are adapted from publishers' notes.

***Fairyland* by Alysia Abbott (Nonfiction)**

In this vibrant memoir, Abbott recounts growing up in 1970s San Francisco with Steve Abbott, a gay, single father during an era when that was rare. Reconstructing their time together from a remarkable cache of Steve's writings, Alysia gives us an unforgettable portrait of a tumultuous, historic period in San Francisco as well as a moving account of a father's legacy and a daughter's love.

***Call Me By Your Name* by Andre Aciman**

The story of a sudden and powerful romance that blossoms between an adolescent boy and a summer guest at his parents' cliffside mansion on the Italian Riviera. Each is unprepared for the consequences of their attraction. Recklessly, the two verge toward the one thing both fear they may never truly find again: total intimacy.

***Transition: The Story of How I Became a Man* by Chaz Bono (Nonfiction)**

Chaz Bono's groundbreaking and candid account of a 40-year struggle to match his gender identity with his physical body and his transformation from female to male.

***A Queer History of the United States* by Michael Bronski (Nonfiction)**

A book that radically challenges how we understand American history. Drawing upon primary-source documents, literature, and cultural histories, scholar and activist Michael Bronski charts lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history from 1492 to the 1990s.

***Rubyfruit Jungle* by Rita Mae Brown**

A landmark coming-of-age novel that remains a transformative work more than 40 years after its original publication. It's the story of Molly Bolt, who boldly forges her own path. Molly finds that women are drawn to her wherever she goes—and she refuses to apologize for loving them back. The work continues to resonate with its message about being true to yourself and, against the odds, living happily ever after.

***Pages for Her* by Sylvia Brownrigg**

Twenty years after their brief but passionate affair, chronicled in Brownrigg's earlier novel *Pages for You*, Flannery has the chance once again to meet Anne, who opened young Flannery up to the possibility of

love—then left her heartbroken. An exhilarating, passionate work that explores marriage, sexuality, and the transformative power of love over time.

***Tell the Wolves I'm Home* by Carol Rifka Brunt**

In this striking literary debut, Brunt unfolds a moving story of love, grief, and renewal as two lonely people become the unlikeliest of friends and find that sometimes you don't know you've lost someone until you've found them.

***Lust and Wonder* by Augusten Burroughs (Nonfiction)**

Burroughs' story began in *Running with Scissors*, endured through *Dry*, and continues here. Funny, sweet, alarming, and ultimately moving and tender, *Lust & Wonder* is an experience of a book that will resonate with anyone who has loved and lost and loved again.

***Some of the Parts* by T Cooper**

In sparse, evocative prose, Cooper tells the story of four fractured lives lived in various forms of exile eventually join to re-forge a definition of family from the ashes.

***A Home at the End of the World* by Michael Cunningham**

The story of boyhood friends: Jonathan, lonely, introspective, and unsure of himself; and Bobby, hip, dark, and inarticulate. In New York after college, Bobby moves in with Jonathan and his roommate, Clare. Bobby and Clare fall in love, scuttling the plans of Jonathan, who is gay, to father Clare's child. Then, when Clare and Bobby have a baby, the three move to a small house upstate to raise "their" child together and create a new kind of family.

***Untamed* by Glennon Doyle (Nonfiction)**

For many years, Glennon Doyle denied her own discontent. Then, while speaking at a conference, she looked at a woman across the room and fell instantly in love. Three words flooded her mind: There She Is. Glennon decided to quit abandoning herself and to instead abandon the world's expectations of her. She quit being good so she could be free.

***Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistlestop Cafe* by Fannie Flagg**

The classic novel of two women in the 1930s: gray-headed Mrs. Threadgoode telling her life story to Evelyn, who is in a slump. Her tale is about the irrepressible tomboy Idgie and her friend Ruth, who back in the '30s ran a café in Whistle Stop, AL, a café with good barbecue, good coffee, love and laughter, and even an occasional murder.

***Maurice* by E.M. Forster**

Set in the elegant Edwardian world of Cambridge, the novel introduces us to Maurice Hall when he is fourteen. We follow him through public school and Cambridge University, and into his father's firm. In a highly structured society, Maurice is a conventional young man in almost every way—except that his is homosexual. Written during 1913 and 1914, but not published until 1971, Maurice was ahead of its time in its theme and in its affirmation that love between men can be happy.

***Less* by Andrew Sean Greer**

Who says you can't run away from your problems? You are a failed novelist about to turn 50. A wedding invitation arrives in the mail: your boyfriend of the past nine years is engaged to someone else. You can't say yes—it would be too awkward—and you can't say no—it would look like defeat. On your desk

are a series of invitations to half-baked literary events around the world. QUESTION: How do you arrange to skip town? ANSWER: You accept them all. What would possibly go wrong?

***The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall**

Stephen is an ideal child of aristocratic parents—a fencer, a horse rider, and a keen scholar. Stephen grows to be a war hero, a bestselling writer, and a loyal, protective lover. But Stephen is a woman, and her lovers are women. As her ambitions drive her, and society confines her, Stephen is forced into desperate actions. The book was banned for obscenity when published in 1928. It became an international bestseller, and for decades was the single most famous lesbian novel.

***The Price of Salt* by Patricia Highsmith**

A chance encounter between two lonely women leads to a passionate romance in this cult classic. Therese, a struggling young sales clerk, and Carol, a homemaker in the midst of a bitter divorce, abandon their oppressive daily routines for the freedom of the open road, where their love can blossom. But their newly discovered bliss is shattered when Carol is forced to choose between her child and her lover.

***Girls Will Be Boys: Cross-Dressed Women, Lesbians, and American Cinema, 1908-1934* by Laura Horak (Nonfiction)**

Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo, and Katharine Hepburn all made lasting impressions with the cinematic cross-dressing they performed onscreen. What few may realize, however, is that these seemingly daring performances of the 1930s actually came at the end of a long wave of gender-bending films that included more than 400 movies featuring women dressed as men. Horak scoured film archives, looking at American films made 1908 to 1934. What she found could revolutionize our understanding of gender roles in the early 20th-century.

***Me* by Ricky Martin (Nonfiction)**

International superstar Ricky Martin, who has sold more than 60 million albums worldwide, opens up about memories of his early childhood, experiences in the boy band Menudo, struggles with his identity during the "Livin' la Vida Loca" phenomenon, reflections on coming to terms with his sexuality, relationships that allowed him to embrace love, and life-changing decisions like devoting himself to helping children around the world and becoming a father. An intimate memoir about the liberating, spiritual journey of a pop icon.

***Taking Chances* by Erin Mckenzie**

Children's librarian Valerie Cruz has worked hard to make a comfortable life for herself since aging out of the foster care system. She avoids intimate connections—life has taught her that she can only count on herself. When she gets the opportunity to become a foster parent, she takes the leap. When foster care caseworker Paige Wellington meets Valerie, she is drawn to her in a way she can't explain. When they clash over what is in the best interest of the children in Valerie's care, the children may be the only ones who can convince them that it's worth taking chances for love.

***Fighting to Serve: Behind the Scenes in the War to Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"* by Alexander Nicholson (Nonfiction)**

A no-holds-barred account of backstage strategies and negotiations surrounding the repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, revealing how various LGBT organizations, the Congress, the Pentagon, and the White House often worked at cross-purposes. In the end, it was the pressure brought by active veterans,

a court ruling out of California, and a few courageous senators, representatives, and military leaders that ended the policy.

***When Katie Met Cassidy* by Camille Perri**

Katie is living the New York dream. She's engaged to a charming art curator, has a successful law career, and has a hold on two apartments. But the rug is swept from under her when she is suddenly dumped, leaving her completely lost. On a whim, she agrees to have a drink with Cassidy Price, a self-assured, sexually promiscuous woman she meets at work. The two form a newfound friendship, which soon brings into question everything Katie thought she knew about sex—and love.

***Crossroads* by Radclyffe**

Dr. Hollis Monroe specializes in short-term relationships, typically eight months or less. As an obstetrician dealing with high-risk pregnancies, she spends all her time and energy in caring for women until she delivers their babies and can walk away. Pregnant Annie Colfax is alone and barely making ends meet—she didn't plan on starting a family by herself, but she's determined to succeed. Neither woman wants a relationship, but fate brings them together at a crossroads that will change their lives forever.

***It Gets Better: Coming Out, Overcoming Bullying, and Creating a Life Worth Living* by Dan Savage (Nonfiction)**

Many young people face daily tormenting and bullying, and this is especially true for LGBT kids and teens. In response to suicides by LGBT students, columnist and author Dan Savage uploaded a video to YouTube with his partner. Their video launched the It Gets Better Project and initiated a worldwide phenomenon. This is a collection of original essays and expanded testimonials written to teens from celebrities, political leaders, and everyday people.

***Transgender 101: A Simple Guide to a Complex Issue* by Nicholas M. Teich (Nonfiction)**

A readable and thorough primer on the history, terminology, types, politics, and medical and social realities of the transgender population.

***Lot: Stories* by Bryan Washington**

In the city of Houston—a sprawling, diverse American microcosm—the son of a black mother and Latino father is coming of age. He's working at his family's restaurant, weathering his brother's blows, resenting his older sister's absence. And discovering he likes boys.

***Tipping the Velvet* by Sarah Waters**

Nan King, an oyster girl, is captivated by the music hall phenomenon Kitty Butler, a male impersonator extraordinaire in Canterbury. Through a friend at the box office, Nan manages to visit all her shows and finally meet her heroine. She soon becomes Kitty's dresser and they head for the bright lights of Leicester Square where they begin a glittering career as music-hall stars in an all-singing and dancing double act. At the same time, behind closed doors, their affair begins.