

5 fantastic novels doctors recommend for your summer reading list

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Reading can boost your vocabulary, sharpen your reasoning, expand your intellectual horizons and improve memory. But reading for fun can also help in the battle against physician burnout.

That's why it's time for physicians to dust off that "to read" pile and grab some fiction to enjoy this summer as they take some well-deserved vacation time.

Whether doctors or medical students are in search of books to read to relax or learn more about a medical topic, the AMA "Shadow Me" Specialty Series—which offers advice directly from physicians about life in their specialties—provides some outstanding nonfiction recommendations.

"Read a book that brings you joy. Everything you read doesn't have to be about something that furthers your career or helps you be introspective," said Meena Davuluri, MD, a urologist. "A lot of times you just need a book that's a beach read that doesn't have any meaning, but it's just a fun story to help you relax. Plus, it gives you something to talk about."

Here, in alphabetical order by book author, are five novels that AMA members who have participated in the "Shadow Me" Specialty Series recommend reading.

Fahrenheit 451

By Ray Bradbury

"This book speaks to teen idealism and offers a wealth of wisdom about maintaining perspective, understanding history, valuing art and literature and remembering to live life," said Kanani Titchen, MD, a pediatrician and adolescent medicine physician.

The Red Tent

By Anita Diamant

Kimberly D. Warner, MD, an ob-gyn, recommends this novel because “it has important insights into how women support each other.”

The House of God**By Samuel Shem, MD**

“As a patient advocate with an interest in social justice,” this is one of the novels Dionne Hart, MD, a psychiatrist, recommends.

This book “is a must-read for all trainees. Good humor is needed these days in medicine,” said Alex Ding, MD, an interventional radiologist.

Cutting for Stone**By Abraham Verghese, MD**

The novel “offers a fantastic overview of a lifetime of missionary medicine in Ethiopia and then coming to terms with modern medicine in America,” said Barbara J. Arnold, MD, an ophthalmologist.

The book “is just a lovely piece of fiction,” said Rambod A. Rouhbakhsh, MD, an academic family physician. “There are many works of fiction I love, but I recommend this book to underscore how you can be an accomplished physician and still produce lovely creative work in a completely unrelated field.”

The Book Thief**By Markus Zusak**

“It’s important to stay well-rounded. Don’t just read medical books. This book is a gripping and moving story of resilience in the face of unimaginable hardship,” said James Jerzak, MD, a family physician.

For nonfiction recommendations, here are eight great books hand-picked by doctors for your reading list.

The AMA Specialty Guide simplifies medical students’ specialty selection process, highlights major specialties, details training information, and provides access to related association information. It is produced by FREIDA™, the AMA Residency & Fellowship Database®.