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## **Reading for Escape: A Thought-provoking Book List**

By Calie Wrona

Everyone craves an escape—a moment when the noise quiets, the deadlines fade, and the weight of the world lifts, if only for a little while. Books offer that refuge, a doorway to distant lands, new lives, and unexpected adventures. They soften reality's edges, letting you disappear into a story where time slows and burdens lighten.

Some escapes are fleeting—a coffee break spent lost in a paragraph. Others, though, stay with you, shifting the way you see the world long after the final page. If you're looking for books that will pull you in so deeply you forget where you are, start here.

### **A Darker Shade of Magic – V.E. Schwab**

Sometimes the world feels too predictable—its rhythms familiar, its colors faded. You start to wonder: what else could be out there? What if another version of your world existed—then another, and another?

In *A Darker Shade of Magic*, V.E. Schwab answers that question with a spellbinding premise. Kell is one of the last Antari, rare magicians able to travel between four parallel Londons. Red London thrives with magic, Grey London has long forgotten it, White London is power-hungry and dangerous, and Black London—well, no one speaks of Black London anymore. When Kell smuggles something forbidden between the worlds, his controlled existence spirals into chaos, dragging a clever thief named Lila Bard along with him.

Schwab doesn't just craft a world—she conjures four, each more vivid and textured than the last. The first book offers a tantalizing glimpse, but the sequels—*A Gathering of Shadows* and *A Conjuring of Light*—are impossible to resist, pulling you deeper into a realm where magic is as intoxicating as it is dangerous.

### **The Song of Achilles – Madeline Miller**

Some stories grip you gently, leading you along winding paths. Others seize you by the throat, leaving you gasping by the end. *The Song of Achilles* is the latter.

A retelling of the Trojan War through the eyes of Patroclus, a prince exiled from his homeland, this novel is more than just history revisited. It is love and longing, destiny and defiance, a tragedy painted with words so stunning you almost forget to breathe.

At its core, this book is about finding a home—not in a place, but in a person. It's about the inevitability of fate, the weight of war, and the agony of watching something beautiful slip through your fingers. And yes, you will cry. Possibly loudly.

Madeline Miller spent a decade crafting this novel, and it shows in every whisper of mythology woven seamlessly into human emotion. If you fall into its pages and aren't ready to leave, *Circe*, her next novel, waits to pull you into another mythic tale.

### **The Secret History – Donna Tartt**

Escape doesn't always lead you somewhere lighter. Sometimes, it drags you into the dark. *The Secret History* is an invitation into obsession, an unraveling of morality disguised as an intellectual pursuit.

Richard Pape, an outsider to wealth and privilege, finds himself ensnared in an elite classics program at a prestigious New England college. His classmates are brilliant, untouchable, and utterly reckless. What begins as an intoxicating immersion into beauty and knowledge soon twists into secrecy, manipulation, and ultimately, murder.

Tartt's writing is lush and hypnotic, her prose wrapping around you like ivy, creeping into your thoughts long after you've put the book down. It's a novel that lingers, a slow-burning descent into the intoxicating grip of power and the consequences of devotion gone too far.

### **The Productive Power of Disappearing**

It might feel counterintuitive—to slip into fiction when your to-do list is overflowing and the world demands your full attention. But sometimes, the most productive thing you can do is leave for a while.

Escaping into a story doesn't mean turning your back on reality. It means widening your view of it. Fiction teaches you to think in metaphors, to follow threads, to sit inside

someone else's skin for a few hundred pages. It builds empathy, sparks ideas, and restores the kind of quiet focus that's hard to find in the noise.

So the next time life feels too loud or heavy, pick up a book. Let it pull you away for a while. You might just find that when you return, you see your world with new eyes.