

Coming to you live from the sunny (and brain-meltingly hot) beaches of Delaware! This time of year is my favorite to relax with a good book and an ice cold adult beverage. While on vacation with my family - all avid bookworms - we spend evenings relaxing in our comfortable rental house and sunny days tanning on the beach, with books as our constant companions. And what better way to beat the heat than with a cold beer, a chilled glass of white wine, or a creative cocktail mixed to perfection? Following in the footsteps of such clever mixology books as *Tequila Mockingbird* and *Gone with the Gin*, I have started pairing my summer reads with appropriate drinks based on the feelings I want to evoke while reading. From light summer reads to tongue-in-cheek fiction, there is a cocktail and book combination fit for everyone.

Summer brings back feelings of nostalgia for everyone, remembering childhood days spent outdoors (for some) or curled up inside with a book avoiding the heat (for many others). Rediscovering childhood favorites or, even better, reading a continuation of a book series I loved as a child is one of my favorite ways to feel nostalgic. If you grew up fascinated with the world of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy or discovered it more recently through the HBO series, you can dive back in with Pullman's newest trilogy, *The Book of Dust*. The first two books (*La Belle Sauvage* and *The Secret Commonwealth*) are currently out, with the third due later in 2023. This new trilogy serves as both prequel and sequel to the original, giving us a unique look at the characters we loved as younger readers. Pair this nostalgic choice with a whiskey sour (bourbon, lemon juice, simple syrup, and an orange wheel) while you try to decide what your daemon, the animal-shaped embodiment of a person's soul in Pullman's books, would be.

If you are looking for a lighter and more mature choice, you may already be familiar with Emily Henry's work. These perfect beach reads - in fact, one option is titled *Beach Read* - are easy to digest and the ideal companion for any vacation. Her most recent addition, *Happy Place*, follows a group of friends on their annual trip to a Maine island and how this year's trip is vitally important to all of them. If you are vacationing somewhere warm, a limoncello spritz (limoncello liqueur, sparkling wine, soda water, and mint) is the ideal companion for a day in the sun. The light bubbles of your drink will complement the light-hearted nature of Henry's words and will leave you feeling relaxed.

Looking for both a book and cocktail that is a bit stronger? Richard Russo is known for his fictionalized takes on academia and small town life with a particularly witty cadence to his writing. *Straight Man* is no exception, telling the tale of an English department chair who is plagued by misfortune at a pivotal time in his career. In the course of just one week, Hank Devereaux worries his wife is leaving him and that his daughter is destitute, accidentally goads a colleague into hitting him in the face, and threatens a goose on live television. If that description doesn't invoke comedy, don't worry - Russo's unique voice and wry attitude towards the world will have you laughing through to the end. To get in the spirit (pun intended) of it all, make yourself a Manhattan to enjoy with *Straight Man* - rye whiskey, sweet vermouth, Angostura bitters, and a brandied cherry.

Imbibing in a themed drink is a great way to turn an evening of reading into its own event. For any non-drinkers out there, any of these options can easily be turned into a mocktail. The next time you stop into the Kirkland Town Library, say hello at the front desk and let me know which book and cocktail pairing you have invented this summer!