

A SUMMER READING LIST

We love books where sewing plays a role in the plot...or books about subjects who have influenced the fashions we love to sew. So what better time than summer to kick off our shoes and relax with a book that gives sewing its due?

THE FICTION SHELF

The Magical Dressmaking Series

by Melissa Bourbon

In the Summer 2012 issue of *Notions*, we reviewed the first two books in this series: "Pleating for Mercy" and "A Fitting End." The books weave together a bit of magic, a bit of intuition, and a lot of sewing lingo to create some fun, light reading about the adventures of Harlow Jane Cassidy. She's a talented designer who returns to her home town of Bliss, Texas and opens a custom dressmaking boutique. Now the author has added a third—"Deadly Patterns." In it, the backdrop for a murder is a holiday fashion show set in the town's most prominent historic mansion. A fourth book in the series, "A Custom-Fit Crime," is due out in July.

Penguin Group, 320 pages each, soft covers, \$7.99 each

The Time in Between

by Maria Duenas



A seemingly ordinary woman uses her courage and her talent for creating beautiful clothes to transform herself first into a prestigious couturier and then into an undercover agent for the Allies during World War II. The author skillfully integrates real life

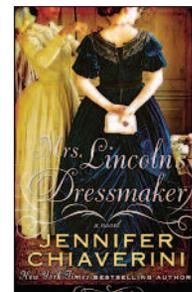
people who played a prominent role in the Spanish Civil War and WWII in Spain with her fictional characters.

Atria Books, 640 pages, soft cover, ISBN 978-1-45161-689-7, \$16

Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker

by Jennifer Chiaverini

The title character in this novel is Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley, a real person and a former slave who won her freedom by the skill of her needle, and the friendship of the First Lady by her devotion. Keckley made history by sewing for First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln within the White House and was a trusted witness to many private moments between the president and his wife.



Penguin Group, 352 pages, hard cover, ISBN 978-0-52595-361-6, \$26.95

The Southern Sewing Circle Mysteries

by Elizabeth Lynn Casey

The art of sewing is the backdrop for this mystery series set in Sweet Briar, S.C. The adventures in all the books (currently seven in the series) revolve around members of the Southern Sewing Circle, who use sewing as the catalyst to gather together for gossip and good times. Tori Sinclair, the new librarian in town, is the heroine of this series. In the first book, "Sew Deadly," Tori is suspected of a murder



and her newly found sewing sisters help her to stitch together the truth. By the most recent book, "Let It Sew,"

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Summer Reading

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Tori has a hometown fiancé and a deceased sewing circle friend with some mysteries in her past. As Tori gets closer to the truth, she discovers that just about everyone in town has notches on the naughty list this year. This last book also includes an easy stocking pattern to entice readers to sew a project, just like the Southern Sewing Circle. Other titles in the series: "Death Threads," "Pinned for Murder," "Deadly Notions," "Dangerous Alterations," and "Reap What You Sew."

Penguin Group, 288 pages each, soft covers, \$7.99 per book ("Pinned for Murder" \$6.99)

THE NON-FICTION SHELF Sleeping with the Enemy: Coco Chanel's Secret War

by Hal Vaughn

While sewers revere Coco Chanel for her couture talents, her politics are another matter entirely. Her life from 1941 to 1954 has long been shrouded in rumor and mystery. This author researched Chanel's wartime activities, including her long affair with playboy Baron Hans Günther von Dincklage—who ran a spy ring and reported directly to Goebbels. Vaughn pieces together how Chanel became a Nazi agent, escaped arrest after the war, joined her lover in exile in Switzerland, and—despite suspicions about her past—how she was able to return to Paris at age seventy and rebuild the House of Chanel.

Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 336 pages, soft cover, black & white photos, ISBN 978-0-30747-591-6, \$16.95

You Are What You Wear: What Your Clothes Reveal About You

by Jennifer Baumgartner

Ever wonder why you choose the clothes you do? Or what it is about a

particular pattern offering that makes your sewing heart beat faster? This author is a practicing clinical psychologist and also runs InsideOut, her own wardrobe consulting business—a killer combo when you are exploring wardrobe choices and their link between our internal selves and our external presentation to the world. The book begins with a quiz about your clothing choices; then, depending on your answers, directs you to specific chapters. She covers body image, overbuying, wardrobe cleansing, making the most of what you have, and creating a wardrobe that reflects your true self.

Da Capo Press, 270 pages, soft cover, ISBN 978-0-73821-520-4, \$16

Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion

by Elizabeth L. Cline

For so many people these days, shopping at discount stores, outlet malls, and cheap-but-trendy retailers has become the norm. Closets are crammed with flimsy, poorly-made garments that are out of style almost before they get out of the shopping bag. The ramifications for the envi-

ronment, for the workers who produce them, and for our economy—both personal and national—are serious. As the writer sets out to uncover the true nature of the cheap fashion juggernaut

with trips to China, Bangladesh, and the Dominican Republic, she also undergoes a personal transformation from a person who couldn't distinguish polyester from plissé to one who discovers the advantage of being able to repair, alter, and even sew some of the things she wears.

Penguin Group, 256 pages, hard cover, ISBN 978-1-59184-461-7, \$25.95

