

## Read-alikes for *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly

### Engaging works about space history:

**[Breaking the Chains of Gravity: The Story of Spaceflight Before NASA](#)** by Amy Shira Teitel (629.40973 Tei)

Digs into the roots of America's space program—the scientific advances, the personalities, and the rivalries within the U.S. military. After the Soviets launched Sputnik, getting a man in space suddenly became a national imperative, leading President Eisenhower to pull various pieces together to create the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

**[Rise of the Rocket Girls: The Women Who Propelled Us, from Missiles to the Moon to Mars](#)**

by Nathalia Holt (629.4072 Hol)

Traces the pivotal achievements of the elite female science recruits at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, where in the mid-20th century they transformed rocket design and enabled the creations of the first American satellites.

**[Rocket Men: The Epic Story of the First Men on the Moon](#)** by Craig Nelson (629.45 Nel)

Through interviews, 23,000 pages of NASA oral histories, and declassified CIA documents on the space race, *Rocket Men* presents a vivid narrative of the moon mission, taking readers on the journey to one of the last frontiers of the human imagination.

**[The Astronaut Wives Club: A True Story](#)**

by Lily Koppel (Large Type 629.45 Kop)

As America's first astronauts launched on death-defying missions, TV cameras focused on the brave smiles of their young wives. Overnight, these women were transformed from military spouses into American royalty. This intimate group portrait chronicles how they formed a support group and became a key behind-the-scenes resource of the space program's early years.

**[Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void](#)**

by Mary Roach (571.09 Roa)

What happens when you can't walk for a year? What happens if you vomit in your helmet during a spacewalk? Is it possible to survive a bailout at 17,000 mph? Roach expertly explores the irresistibly strange universe of space travel, answers questions about the toll the body takes after living in zero gravity, and explains how space simulations can provide a preview of life in space.

**[Apollo 8: The Thrilling Story of the First Mission to the Moon](#)** by Jeffrey Kluger (New Nonfiction 629.454 Klu)

Apollo 8 takes us from Mission Control to the astronaut's homes, from test labs to launch pad. The race to prepare an untested rocket for an unprecedented journey paves the way for the hair-raising trip to the moon. And when the mission is over, the impossible dream of walking on the moon suddenly seems within reach.

### Powerful stories of discrimination:

**[The Mercury 13: The Untold Story of Thirteen American Women and the Dream of Space Flight](#)**

by Martha Ackmann (629.45 Ack)

As NASA launched its first man into space in 1961, a group of women underwent secret testing in the hopes of becoming America's first female astronauts. They passed the same battery of tests as the men of Mercury 7, but were abruptly dismissed by the boys' club at NASA and on Capitol Hill. This is their story.

**[Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI](#)** by David Grann (New Nonfiction 976.6 Gra)

In the 1920s, the Osage Indian Nation became some of the world's richest after oil was discovered beneath their land. Then, one by one, the Osage began to be killed off. *New Yorker* staff writer David Grann details the troubles the local authorities had trying to solve the murders, and how an investigation by the relatively new FBI identified and charged the killers. Grann's own dogged detective work unearths yet another layer to the case that Hoover's men never exposed.

**[The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks](#)**

by Rebecca Skloot (616.0277 Skl)

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor Southern tobacco farmer, yet her cells—taken without her or her family's knowledge—have become one of medicine's most important and profitable tools. The Lacks family story is intricately linked to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans, the birth of bioethics, and the legal battles over whether or not we control the stuff we are made of.

**[Beyond Schizophrenia: Living and Working with a Serious Mental Illness](#)** by Marjorie L. Baldwin (331.5 Bal)

A compelling attempt to explain why, in spite of near-

More great read-alike suggestions on the next few pages →

miraculous advances in medication and treatment, persons with mental illness fare worse than almost any other disadvantaged group in the labor market. As an economics and disability researcher and mother of a schizophrenic son, the author speaks from both professional and personal experience.

### **[Hunger: A Memoir of \(My\) Body](#)**

by Roxanne Gay (*New Nonfiction* 306.4613 Gay)

With the refreshing candor, vulnerability, and power that have made her one of the most admired voices of her generation, Roxanne Gay's *Hunger* explores what it means to be overweight in a time when the bigger you are, the less you are seen.

### **[Black Man in a White Coat: A Doctor's Reflections on Race and Medicine](#)**

by Damon Tweedy, M.D. (610.92 Twe)

Examines the complex ways in which both black doctors and patients must navigate the difficult and often rocky terrain of race and medicine. Through his patients' stories, he illustrates the many factors at the heart of the health problems plaguing the black community—issues that take on even greater meaning when Tweedy himself is diagnosed with a chronic disease far more common among black people.

## **Richly detailed science writing:**

### **[Miracle Cure: The Creation of Antibiotics and the Birth of Modern Medicine](#)**

by William Rosen (*New Nonfiction* 615.79 Ros)

Traces the epic history of the birth of antibiotics. As late as the 1930s, doctors could set bones, deliver babies, and offer palliative care, but virtually no drug intended for sickness did any good. In less than a generation, that all changed. By 1955, the age-old relationship between humans and microbes had been transformed, trivializing once-deadly infections.

### **[The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood](#)**

by James Gleick (020.9 Gle)

From the invention of written alphabets to the long misunderstood "talking drums" of Africa, from the electronic transmission of code to the new information age with its flood of instant news and social media, James Gleick reveals how our understanding of information is transforming not only how we look at the world, but how we live.

### **[The Inkblots: Herman Rorschach, His Iconic Test, and the Power of Seeing](#)**

by Damion Searls

(*New Nonfiction* 616.89 Sea)

Documents the captivating, untold story of Herman Rorschach, the creator of the famous psychological test developed to reveal key aspects of human personality, sharing insights into how his inkblots were carefully designed to probe the human mind and rose to prominence after his early death.

### **[The Man Who Touched His Own Heart: True Tales of Science, Surgery, and Mystery](#)**

by Rob Dunn (612.17 Dun)

The wild, gory, spellbinding story of the heart, from the first "explorers" who dug up cadavers and plumbed their hearts' chambers, through the first heart surgeries—which had to be completed in three minutes before death arrived to the transplant patients, and the latest medical efforts to prolong our hearts' lives, almost defying nature in the process.

### **[The Radioactive Boy Scout: The True Story of a Boy and His Backyard Nuclear Reactor](#)**

by Ken Silverstein (621.48 Sil)

Traces a young boy's fascination with science and nuclear physics, which compelled him to misrepresent himself to the government and build a reactor in his backyard garden shed, causing an environmental catastrophe in his quiet Detroit town.

### **[Idiot Brain: What Your Head is Really Up To](#)**

by Dean Burnett (*New Nonfiction* 612.8 Bur)

It's happened to all of us. You walk into the kitchen, or flip open your laptop—and you suddenly haven't the foggiest idea what you're doing. In *Idiot Brain*, neuroscientist and blogger Burnett celebrates all the downright absurd things our minds do to us, while also exposing the many mistakes we've made in our quest to understand how our brains actually work.

## **Take off into these works of intergalactic fiction:**

### **[The Wanderers](#)** by Meg Howrey (*New Sci Fic How*)

Brilliantly inventive novel about three astronauts training for the first-ever mission to Mars, an experience that will push the boundary between real and unreal, test their relationships, and leave each of them—and their families—changed forever.

### **[Good Morning, Midnight](#)** by Lily Brooks-Dalton (*Sci Fic Bro*)

An astronaut who discovers that Mission Control communications have gone silent and an aging scientist who stays behind at a remote Arctic outpost after an evacuation order are haunted by love, memory, and regret as the world confronts an uncertain future.

### **[The Terranauts](#)** by T.C. Boyle (*Fic Boy*)

Sealed inside a glass enclosure designed as a prototype for a possible off-Earth colony, eight Terranauts in the 1990s Arizona desert test their skills in five biome environments—rainforest, savanna, desert, ocean, and marsh, which they must protect from skeptics who would sabotage the mission.

### **[Spaceman of Bohemia](#)** by Jaroslav Kalff (*New Fiction Kal*)

Orphaned as a boy and raised in the Czech countryside, Jakub Procházka has risen from small-time scientist to become the country's first astronaut. When a risky solo mission offers him both the chance at heroism he's dreamt of, and a way to atone for his father's sins, he boldly ventures into the unknown. But in doing so, he leaves behind a devoted wife, whose love, he realizes too late, he's sacrificed on the altar of his ambitions.

[\*\*The Time it Takes to Fall\*\*](#) by Margaret Lazarus Dean (*Fic Dea*)  
Dreaming of a future in space travel while growing up in 1980s Cape Canaveral, young Dolores Gray struggles with the harsh realities of her unstable home life and the devastating 1986 explosion of the space shuttle Challenger.

[\*\*The Martian\*\*](#) by Andy Weir (*Sci Fic Wei*)  
Six days ago, astronaut Mark Watney became one of the first people to walk on Mars. Now, he's sure he'll be the first person to die there. After a dust storm nearly kills him, forcing his crew to evacuate, Mark finds himself stranded with no way to signal Earth that he's alive. Drawing on his ingenuity, engineering skills and a relentless refusal to quit—he confronts one insane obstacle after the next in his quest to survive.

### **True tales of extraordinary women:**

[\*\*Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II\*\*](#)

by Liza Mundy (*New Nonfiction 940.5486 Mun*)  
Recruited by the military from small towns and elite colleges, more than 10,000 women served as codebreakers during World War II. Their efforts shortened the war, saved countless lives, and gave them access to careers previously denied to them. But a strict vow of secrecy nearly erased their efforts from history.

[\*\*Lab Girl\*\*](#) by Hope Jahren (*570.92 Jah*)  
Geobiologist Hope Jahren has spent her whole life studying trees, flowers, seeds, and soil. *Lab Girl* is her revelatory opus on plant life—but it is also a celebration of the lifelong curiosity, humility, and passion that drive every scientist.

[\*\*The Glass Universe: How the Ladies of the Harvard Observatory Took the Measure of the Stars\*\*](#)

by Dava Sobel (*New Nonfiction 522.194 Sob*)  
Elegantly written and enriched by excerpts from letters, diaries, and memoirs, *The Glass Universe* explores the little-known true story of the unexpected and remarkable contributions to astronomy made by a group of women working in the Harvard College Observatory from the late 1800s through the mid-1900s.

[\*\*The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women\*\*](#)

by Kate Moore (*New Nonfiction 363.1799 Moo*)  
Illuminates the story of hundreds of young, vibrant women who were sentenced to death by their employers. The "Radium Girls" painted luminescent faces on clocks and watches using paint containing radium. Instructed to "lip-point" their brushes, they absorbed high doses of radium, and as the fatal poison took hold, these brave women found themselves embroiled in a groundbreaking battle for workers' rights that would echo for years to come.

[\*\*A Different Kind of Daughter: The Girl Who Hid from the Taliban in Plain Sight\*\*](#)

by Maria Toorpakai (*796.343 Too*)  
A woman from an oppressive Pakistani tribal region, where women playing sports is forbidden, discusses how she

passed as a boy in order to play squash, the sport she loved, thus becoming a lightning rod of freedom in her country's fierce battle over women's rights.

[\*\*The Girls of Atomic City: The Untold Story of the Women Who Helped Win World War II\*\*](#)

by Denise Kiernan (*Large Type 976.873 Kie*)  
The town of Oak Ridge, Tenn., boomed on a U.S military-owned acreage. Its electricity usage matched that of NYC and its population reached 75,000—yet it didn't appear on a single map. Many new residents were women, recruited at top-dollar wages. Sworn to strict secrecy protocols, they were told only that their work would ensure a swift, final WWII victory. The nuclear blast at Hiroshima, at last, revealed their hidden roles.

### **Check out these out-of-this-world movies:**

[\*\*Hidden Figures\*\*](#) (DVD Drama/Action/Suspense Hid)

Based on the nonfiction book of the same name by Margot Lee Shetterly. Tells the story of the black female mathematicians who worked at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) during the Space Race.

[\*\*Apollo 13\*\*](#) (DVD Drama/Action/Suspense Apo)

NASA must devise a strategy to return Apollo 13 to Earth safely after the spacecraft undergoes massive internal damage, putting the lives of the three astronauts on board in jeopardy.

[\*\*Gravity\*\*](#) (DVD Drama/Action/Suspense Gra)

Two astronauts work together to survive after an accident leaves them stranded in space.

[\*\*The Right Stuff\*\*](#) (DVD Drama/Action/Suspense Rig)

The story of the original Mercury 7 astronauts and their macho, seat-of-the-pants approach to the space program. Adapted from the 1979 novel by Tom Wolfe.

[\*\*Interstellar\*\*](#) (DVD SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Int)

A team of explorers travel through a wormhole in space in an attempt to ensure humanity's survival.

[\*\*Passengers\*\*](#) (DVD SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Pas)

A spacecraft traveling to a distant colony planet and transporting thousands of people has a malfunction in its sleep chambers. As a result, two passengers are awakened 90 years early.

[\*\*The Martian\*\*](#) (DVD SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Mar)

An astronaut becomes stranded on Mars after his team assumes him dead, and must rely on his ingenuity to find a way to signal to Earth that he is alive. Adapted from Andy Weir's bestselling novel of the same name.

[\*\*In the Shadow of the Moon\*\*](#) (DVD 629.454 In)

Presents the story of NASA's Apollo program and the lunar landings made by American astronauts between 1968 and 1972. Features rare archival footage and interviews with surviving astronauts.