

Orange is the New Black by Piper Kerman

Follows the author's incarceration for drug trafficking, during which she gained a unique perspective on the criminal justice system and met a varied community of women living under exceptional circumstances.

A Prison Diary by Jeffrey Archer

The author recounts his incarceration in a high-security prison after committing perjury, a period during which he became suicidal, lost his mother, and was targeted due to his celebrity status.

Running the Books: The Adventures of an Accidental Prison Librarian by Avi Steinberg

A Harvard graduate and lapsed Orthodox Jew chronicles his stint as a librarian in a tough Boston prison, where he met such inmates as a pimp who enlisted his help writing a memoir and a gangster who dreamed of hosting a cooking show.

White Oleander by Janet Fitch

The struggle to build an authentic identity lies at the heart of Astrid's life as a foster child in Los Angeles after her poet mother, who has kept Astrid isolated from the world, is imprisoned for murder.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey

McMurphy, a criminal who feigns insanity, is admitted to a mental hospital where he challenges the autocratic authority of the head nurse.

Alias Grace by Margaret Atwood

Takes readers into the life and mind of Grace Marks, one of the most notorious women of the 1840s, who is serving a life sentence for murders she claims she cannot remember.

Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing by Ted Conover

The author, a former guard at Sing Sing prison, looks back on his rookie year in the prison as he attempts to balance basic human decency with the rigors of the prison system.

Something Like Hope by Shawn Goodman

Long-time juvenile detention inmate Shavonne finds a helpful advocate in a counselor who encourages her to open up about her troubled past and her self-destructive behavior, a situation that compels her to help other troubled kids and prepare for a responsible future.

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos

The author relates how, as a young adult, he became a drug user and smuggler, was arrested, did time in prison, and eventually got out and went to college, all the while hoping to become a writer.

Fellside by M.R. Carey

Confronting the possibility that she might be forced to spend the rest of her life in a maximum security prison on the edge of the Yorkshire Moors, Jess Moulson discovers that the prison is haunted by the ghost of a little boy who imparts a chilling message.