

# Academic Honors Reading List

With Annotations from *Amazon* and *Barnes and Noble* web sites

▪ **The 5<sup>th</sup> Wave . . . Rick Yancey**

Cassie travels with just the essentials. First on the list: Luger, M-16, ammo, Bowie knife. Incidentals like food, water, sleeping bag, and nail clippers come further down. A nondescript 16-year-old, she is one of the very few people left alive on Earth. Aliens sent waves of destructive forces to eradicate humans: Cassie's family survived the 1st and 2nd Waves. Her mother died in the 3rd Wave (Pestilence) and her father in the 4th (Silencers). Her little brother may still be alive; he may even be safe in a military compound, as Cassie deals with the 5th Wave- a carefully orchestrated survival dance of kill or be killed. The aliens are never described in detail, and their reasons for wanting the humans gone are not clear. But they are ruthless and determined, and their methods for gaining control mean readers will never again see owls as the friendly, mail-delivering avians portrayed in the world of Harry Potter. The compelling story is told from the viewpoints of Cassie and Ben, who is now a soldier known as Zombie. Cassie crushed on Ben at school, but he never particularly noticed her. Now he has transformed from handsome high school sports star to focused paramilitary killer. Yancey's story is full of violent twists and turns, but character development continues along with nonstop action.

(Followed by the sequels *The Infinite Sea* and *The Last Star*)

▪ **The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian . . . Sherman Alexie**

Exploring Indian identity, both self and tribal, Alexie's first young adult novel is a semiautobiographical chronicle of Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, a Spokane Indian from Wellpinit, WA. The bright 14-year-old was born with water on the brain, is regularly the target of bullies, and loves to draw. He says, "I think the world is a series of broken dams and floods, and my cartoons are tiny little lifeboats." He expects disaster when he transfers from the reservation school to the rich, white school in Reardan, but soon finds himself making friends with both geeky and popular students and starting on the basketball team. Meeting his old classmates on the court, Junior grapples with questions about what constitutes one's community, identity, and tribe. The daily struggles of reservation life and the tragic deaths of the protagonist's grandmother, dog, and older sister would be all but unbearable without the humor and resilience of spirit with which Junior faces the world.

▪ **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer . . . Mark Twain**

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* remains a timeless classic for both mischievous children and nostalgic adults alike. Mark Twain, widely known as "the Lincoln of our Literature," penned this dreamlike world of summertime, hooky, pranks, villains, and desperate adventures, seen through the eyes of a boy who might have been the young Mark Twain himself.

(Read about the author in *Life on the Mississippi*)

▪ **The Alchemist . . . Paulo Coelho**

Paulo Coelho's enchanting novel has inspired a devoted following around the world, and this tenth anniversary edition, with a new introduction from the author, will only increase that following. This story, dazzling in its powerful simplicity and inspiring wisdom, is about an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. Along the way he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, all of whom point Santiago in the direction of his quest. No one knows what the treasure is, or if Santiago will be able to surmount the obstacles along the way. But what starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a discovery of the treasures found within. Lush, evocative, and deeply humane, the story of Santiago is an eternal testament to the transforming power of our dreams and the importance of listening to our hearts.

- **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking Glass...Lewis Carroll**

The Mad Hatter, the Ugly Duchess, the Mock Turtle, the Queen of Hearts, the Cheshire Cat—characters each more eccentric than the last, and that could only have come from Lewis Carroll, the master of sublime nonsense. In these two brilliant satires he created two of the most famous and fantastic novels of all time that not only stirred our imagination but revolutionized literature.

- **Amal Unbound...Aisha Saeed**

Life is quiet and ordinary in Amal's Pakistani village, but she had no complaints, and besides, she's busy pursuing her dream of becoming a teacher one day. Her dreams are temporarily dashed when—as the eldest daughter—she must stay home from school to take care of her siblings. Amal is upset, but she doesn't lose hope and finds ways to continue learning. Then the unimaginable happens—after an accidental run-in with the son of her village's corrupt landlord, Amal must work as his family's servant to pay off her own family's debt. Life at the opulent Khan estate is full of heartbreak and struggle for Amal—especially when she inadvertently makes an enemy of a girl named Nabila. Most troubling, though, is Amal's growing awareness of the Khans' nefarious dealings. When it becomes clear just how far they will go to protect their interests, Amal realizes she will have to find a way to work with others if they are ever to exact change in a cruel status quo, and if Amal is ever to achieve her dreams.

- **And Then There Were None...Agatha Christie**

First, there were ten—a curious assortment of strangers summoned as weekend guests to a private island off the coast of Devon. Their host, an eccentric millionaire unknown to all of them, is nowhere to be found. All that the guests have in common is a wicked past they're unwilling to reveal—and a secret that will seal their fate. For each has been marked for murder. One by one they fall prey. Before the weekend is out, there will be none. And only the dead are above suspicion. (also known as *Ten Little Indians*)

- **The Art of Racing in the Rain...Garth Stein**

If you've ever wondered what your dog is thinking, Stein's third novel offers an answer. Enzo is a lab terrier mix plucked from a farm outside Seattle to ride shotgun with race car driver Denny Swift as he pursues success on the track and off. Denny meets and marries Eve, has a daughter, Zoë, and risks his savings and his life to make it on the professional racing circuit. Enzo, frustrated by his inability to speak and his lack of opposable thumbs, watches Denny's old racing videos, coins koanlike aphorisms that apply to both driving and life, and hopes for the day when his life as a dog will be over and he can be reborn a man. When Denny hits an extended rough patch, Enzo remains his most steadfast if silent supporter.

- **The Battle of Jericho...Sharon Draper**

Sixteen-year-old Jericho is psyched when he and his cousin and best friend, Josh, are invited to pledge for the Warriors of Distinction, the oldest and most exclusive club in school. Just being a pledge wins him the attention of Arielle, one of the hottest girls in his class, whom he's been too shy even to *talk* to before now. But as the secret initiation rites grow increasingly humiliating and force Jericho to make painful choices, he starts to question whether membership in the Warriors of Distinction is worth it. How far will he have to go to wear the cool black silk Warriors jacket? How high a price will he have to pay to belong? The answers are devastating beyond Jericho's imagination.

▪ **Bomb...Steve Sheinkin**

In December of 1938, a chemist in a German laboratory made a shocking discovery: When placed next to radioactive material, a Uranium atom split in two. That simple discovery launched a scientific race that spanned 3 continents. In Great Britain and the United States, Soviet spies worked their way into the scientific community; in Norway, a commando force slipped behind enemy lines to attack German heavy-water manufacturing; and deep in the desert, one brilliant group of scientists was hidden away at a remote site at Los Alamos. This is the story of the plotting, the risk-taking, the deceit, and genius that created the world's most formidable weapon. This is the story of the atomic bomb.

▪ **The Book Thief...Markus Zusak**

Death himself narrates the World War II-era story of Liesel Meminger from the time she is taken, at age nine, to live in Molching, Germany, with a foster family in a working-class neighborhood of tough kids, acid-tongued mothers, and loving fathers who earn their living by the work of their hands. The child arrives having just stolen her first book—although she has not yet learned how to read—and her foster father uses it, *The Gravediggers Handbook*, to lull her to sleep when she's roused by regular nightmares about her younger brother's death. Across the ensuing years of the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Liesel collects more stolen books as well as a peculiar set of friends.

▪ **Bud, Not Buddy...Christopher Paul Curtis**

It's 1936, in Flint, Michigan. Times may be hard, and ten-year-old Bud may be a motherless boy on the run, but Bud's got a few things going for him: 1. He has his own suitcase filled with his own important, secret things. 2. He's the author of Bud Caldwell's *Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life* and *Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself*. 3. His momma never told him who his father was, but she left a clue: flyers of Herman E. Calloway and his famous band, the Dusky Devastators of the Depression! Bud's got an idea that those flyers will lead him to his father. Once he decides to hit the road and find this mystery man, nothing can stop him - not hunger, not fear, not vampires, not even Herman E. Calloway himself.

(Like this? Read *The Watsons Go To Birmingham, 1963*)

▪ **Call of the Wild...Jack London**

A classic story of survival from Jack London, published in 1903 and widely regarded as his masterpiece. *The Call of the Wild* is the story of a courageous dog, Buck, taken from pampered surroundings and shipped to the wilds of Alaska to be a sled dog. As Buck fights for survival, his primitive nature begins to emerge and he becomes more like the wolf from whom his breed is descended.

(Like this? Read *White Fang* by Jack London or *Woodson* by Gary Paulsen.)

▪ **Catharsis...D. Andrew Cambell**

One night after dinner Catarina Perez gets into an argument with her sister and parents and storms out of the restaurant to walk home and blow off steam. Waking up in an alley several hours later, Catarina can't remember anything that's happened to her after leaving her family. But worse than that is the realization that she's covered in blood. Someone else's blood. After fleeing the alley where she awoke, Catarina's body begins to undergo a transformation that she doesn't understand. All five senses have begun to reach new heights of sensitivity, too. Catarina is developing powers beyond her wildest dreams, but she is discovering that they come with some drawbacks. As Catarina slowly adjusts to her new powers and what she must do to keep them at bay, she realizes that sometimes you have to accept a little evil in your life in order to accomplish the greater good. For what's a little immeasurable power if all it will cost you is your soul?

(Followed by two sequels *Catalyst* and *Catastrophe*)

▪ **Catherine, Called Birdy...Karen Cushman**

Catherine feels trapped. Her father is determined to marry her off to a rich man—any rich man, no matter how awful. But by wit, trickery, and luck, Catherine manages to send several would-be husbands packing. Then a shaggy-bearded suitor from the north comes to call—by far the oldest, ugliest, most revolting suitor of them all. Unfortunately, he is also the richest. Can a sharp-tongued, high-spirited, clever young maiden with a mind of her own actually lose the battle against an ill-mannered, pig-like lord and an unimaginative, greedy toad of a father? Not if Catherine has anything to say about it!

(Like this? Read *The Midwife's Apprentice*)

▪ **The Chocolate War...Robert Cormier**

Does Jerry Renault dare to disturb the universe? You wouldn't think that his refusal to sell chocolates during his school's fundraiser would create such a stir, but it does; it's as if the whole school comes apart at the seams. To some, Jerry is a hero, but to others, he becomes a scapegoat--a target for their pent-up hatred. And Jerry? He's just trying to stand up for what he believes, but perhaps there is no way for him to escape becoming a pawn in this game of control; students are pitted against other students, fighting for honor--or are they fighting for their lives?

(Followed by a sequel: *Beyond the Chocolate War*)

▪ **Choosing Up Sides...John H. Ritter**

Set during Prohibition, Ritter's debut novel features a rural Kentucky dialect and a sympathetic hero "stuck smack between two worlds." Luke Bledsoe's conflicts with his father, a volatile fundamentalist preacher, take on a new dimension when the seventh-grade southpaw discovers his pitching power. Classmates who have seen Luke accidentally throw with what his father calls "the Devil's arm" urge Luke to join the local baseball team, but Luke's left-handedness is not the only trouble: participation in sports is strictly forbidden by his church.

▪ **Click...Various Authors**

It is difficult to imagine authors as diverse as Ruth Ozeki, Gregory Maguire, Eoin Colfer, and Linda Sue Park, among others, coming together to write a book for teens, and even more tricky to believe that the end result would be a seamless whole, a jigsaw that fits together so well that the individual pieces are indistinguishable. The constant thread running throughout is the character George "Gee" Keane, a photojournalist whose adventures and the lives of those who knew him provide a wealth of experiences for authors to mine. Park's contribution introduces Gee's grandchildren shortly after his death and provides a multitude of seeds for further chapters: a box of shells from different seas, photographs taken all over the world, and Gee's insight-bestowing camera equipment. The chapters vary, some revealing Gee's history, others showing the ripples of those events as they move through the lives of Gee's grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and beyond. Tender and beautiful but never saccharine, each chapter seems to affirm the beauty and goodness to be found in life, without denying the darkness that exists. The balancing act of light and dark inherent in photography is the perfect metaphor to showcase these themes. The most thoughtful readers will enjoy this revelation of the depth and complexities of human nature, but the mystery of watching lives unfold bit by bit-each story providing hints of what will come later-will engage even casual readers.

▪ **Climbing the Stairs...Padma Venkatraman**

Fifteen-year-old Vidya dreams of going to college - an unusual aspiration for a girl living in Britishoccupied India during World War II. Then tragedy strikes, and Vidya and her brother are forced to move into a traditional household with their extended family, where women are meant to be married, not educated. Breaking the rules, Vidya finds refuge in her grandfather's library. But then her brother does something unthinkable, and Vidya's life becomes a whirlwind of political and personal complications. The question is, will she be strong enough to survive?

▪ **Count of Monte Cristo...Alexandre Dumas**

Falsely accused of treason, the young sailor Edmund Dantes is arrested on his wedding day and imprisoned in the island fortress of the Chateau d'If. After staging a dramatic escape, he sets out to discover the fabulous treasure of Monte Cristo and catch up with his enemies. A novel of enormous tension and excitement, Monte Cristo is also a tale of obsession and revenge. Believing himself to be an 'Angel of Providence', Dantes pursues his vengeance to the bitter end, only then realizing that he himself is a victim of fate.

▪ **Countdown...Deborah Wiles**

Franny lives with her family in suburban Maryland just outside Andrews Air Force Base, circa summer of 1962. Kennedy and Khrushchev's duel on the world stage plays in the background while the fifth grader worries about her best friend's betrayal, adores her college-age sister, Jo Ellen, and fights with her saintly little brother, Drew. At its core, *Countdown* is a straightforward, no-surprises tale of historical fiction that at times reads like a memoir. Its unique format, however, is anything but run of the mill. In a successful effort to give readers a sense of the country's total preoccupation with all things nuclear and Communist during the height of the Cold War, Franny's narrative is punctuated by newspaper clippings, advertisements for bomb-shelter materials, news broadcasts, brief vignettes about famous figures, ephemera, and more. The overall result is somewhat frenetic but certainly effective readers are not only immersed in the era, but also experience a feeling of bombardment similar to that felt by Franny. (Followed by a sequel: *Revolution*)

▪ **Crossover . . . Kwame Alexander**

"With a bolt of lightning on my kicks . . . The court is SIZZLING. My sweat is DRIZZLING. Stop all that quivering. Cuz tonight I'm delivering," announces dread-locked, 12-year old Josh Bell. He and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood, he's got mad beats, too, that tell his family's story in verse, in this fast and furious middle grade novel of family and brotherhood from Kwame Alexander. Josh and Jordan must come to grips with growing up on and off the court to realize breaking the rules comes at a terrible price, as their story's heart-stopping climax proves a game-changer for the entire family.

▪ **Cut . . . Patricia McCormick**

Burdened with the pressure of believing she is responsible for her brother's illness, 15-year-old Callie begins a course of self-destruction that leads to her being admitted to Sea Pines, a psychiatric hospital the "guests" refer to as Sick Minds. Although initially she refuses to speak, her individual and group therapy sessions trigger memories and insights. Slowly, she begins emerging from her miserable silence, ultimately understanding the role her dysfunctional family played in her brother's health crisis.

▪ **A Day No Pigs Would Die . . . Robert N. Peck**

To a thirteen-year-old Vermont farm boy whose father slaughters pigs for a living, maturity comes early as he learns "doing what's got to be done," especially regarding his pet pig who cannot produce a litter.

(Followed by a sequel: *A Part of the Sky*)

▪ **The Disreputable History of Frankie-Landau Banks . . . E Lockhart**

Over the course of one summer, Frankie Landau-Banks, a somewhat geeky girl with an unassuming nature, has developed into a 15-year-old with a new figure, a new attitude, and sights set on making changes at her elite boarding school. The teenager also has a new boyfriend, a gorgeous senior who belongs to a long-standing secret society on campus—The Loyal Order of the Basset Hounds, known mostly for silly pranks and a history of male-only membership. With a witty, sharp, and intelligently scheming mind, Frankie manipulates the Loyal Order to do her bidding with pranks meant to make a political statement about the male-dominated and classist nature of the school.

▪ **Dorothy Must Die . . . Danielle Paige**

I didn't ask for any of this. I didn't ask to be some kind of hero. But when your whole life gets swept up by a tornado—taking you with it—you have no choice but to go along, you know? Sure, I've read the books. I've seen the movies. I know the song about the rainbow and the happy little blue birds. But I never expected Oz to look like this. To be a place where Good Witches can't be trusted, Wicked Witches may just be the good guys, and winged monkeys can be executed for acts of rebellion. There's still a road of yellow brick—but even that's crumbling. What happened? Dorothy. They say she found a way to come back to Oz. They say she seized power and the power went to her head. And now no one is safe. My name is Amy Gumm—and I'm the other girl from Kansas. I've been recruited by the Revolutionary Order of the Wicked. I've been trained to fight. And I have a mission: Remove the Tin Woodman's heart. Steal the Scarecrow's brain. Take the Lion's courage. And—Dorothy must die.

- **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde...R.L. Stevenson**

The idea for Robert Louis Stevenson's immortal masterpiece of psychological terror sprang from the deepest recesses of his own subconscious -- a nightmare from which his wife awakened him. He wrote it as a stark yet complex tale whose popularity has endured for more than a century, making the phrase "Jekyll and Hyde" synonymous with man's internal war between good and evil. Brilliantly anticipating modern psychology, Stevenson's story of the kindly scientist who drinks a potion that nightly transforms him into a stunted, evil version of himself is a tale of incomparable suspense and horror.

- **Dracula...Bram Stoker**

More than a century after its first publication, *Dracula* remains the ultimate horror story, thrilling readers with its hair-raising portrait of a bloodthirsty vampire set loose on an English port town. Spawning countless film adaptations and literary spin-offs, Stoker's novel - a patchwork of letters, diary entries, and newspaper clippings - was the first to capture vampire mythology as we know it. We can still trace its abiding influence among the cinemas, bookstores, and television programs of today.

- **Dragon's Gate...Lawrence Yep**

When he accidentally kills a Manchu, a fifteen-year-old Chinese boy is sent to America to join his father, an uncle, and other Chinese working to build a tunnel for the transcontinental railroad through the Sierra Nevada mountains in 1867.

- **Durango Street...Frank Bonham**

When Rufus Henry gets out of work camp for Grand Theft Auto, he has only one place to go—back to Durango Street. Almost right away, he gets on the wrong side of the Gassers, has to join the rival Moors— and starts running for his life. Years ahead of its time, *Durango Street*, like *The Outsiders*, shows that gang violence is, sadly, nothing new— and nothing glamorous. A starkly realistic, convincing, well-written teen novel.

- **Eleanor & Park...Rainbow Rowell**

Eleanor, 15, is the new girl at school and bullied because she's overweight and dresses in a flamboyant manner. Park is a half-Korean boy who has lived in Omaha, Nebraska, all his life but still feels like an outsider. This is a story of first love, which very slowly builds from the first day Eleanor sits next to Park on the school bus. First they ignore each other, and then they slowly become friends through their love of comic books and 1980s alternative music. Park is the only good thing in Eleanor's life. Her home life is a miserable exercise in trying to stay out of her abusive stepfather's way, and finding new ways to wear the same clothes repeatedly since there is no money for anything extra. Park adores everything about Eleanor, and she finds refuge at his house after school with his understanding parents. Things finally explode at Eleanor's house and Eleanor and Park's relationship is truly tested.

- **Ender's Game...Orson Scott Card**

Intense is the word for *Ender's Game*. Aliens have attacked Earth twice and almost destroyed the human species. To make sure humans win the next encounter, the world government has taken to breeding military geniuses -- and then training them in the arts of war... The early training, not surprisingly, takes the form of 'games'... Ender Wiggin is a genius among geniuses; he wins all the games... He is smart enough to know that time is running out. But is he smart enough to save the planet?

(Followed by a unique sequel, *Ender's Shadow*, and many others in the series)

▪ **Esperanza Rising...Pam Munoz Ryan**

Ryan uses the experiences of her own Mexican grandmother as the basis for this compelling story of immigration and assimilation, not only to a new country but also into a different social class. Esperanza's expectation that her 13th birthday will be celebrated with all the material pleasures and folk elements of her previous years is shattered when her father is murdered by bandits. His powerful stepbrothers then hold her mother as a social and economic hostage, wanting to force her remarriage to one of them, and go so far as to burn down the family home. Esperanza's mother then decides to join the cook and gardener and their son as they move to the United States and work in California's agricultural industry. They embark on a new way of life, away from the uncles, and Esperanza unwillingly enters a world where she is no longer a princess but a worker.

▪ **Eva... Peter Dickinson**

This novel is set in a future age. The planet is vastly overpopulated; wilderness areas have disappeared. Eva, the daughter of a zoologist working with laboratory chimpanzees, has been in a terrible car accident. Implanting her own 'neuron memory' into the brain and body of a now-dead female chimp scientists}regenerate Eva's own functions. Eva maintains her high human intelligence and instincts while gradually assimilating the mentality of a chimp. As the ruination of the planet is paralleled by the increasing disintegration of the people, Eva leads the chimps away from their human captors--to a remote island, where she uses her human reasoning to teach them the rudiments of survival.

▪ **Everlost...Neil Shusterman**

Following a fatal car accident, teenagers Nick and Allie collide with each other on the way toward the light and are shoved into an alternate state of existence. No longer living but not yet at the end of their journey, they land in Everlost, a color-bleached plane populated with child and teen spirits. There are rules in Everlost that new "greensouls" must learn to survive: keep moving, don't fall into a routine, don't seek the living, watch out for gangs, and steer clear of the McGill, Everlost's resident monster.

(Followed by sequels, *Everwild*, and *Everfound*)

▪ **Every Day...David Levithan**

In his *New York Times* bestselling novel, David Levithan introduces readers to what *Entertainment Weekly* calls a "wise, wildly unique" love story about A, a teen who wakes up every morning in a different body, living a different life. Every day a different body. Every day a different life. Every day in love with the same girl. There's never any warning about where it will be or who it will be. A has made peace with that, even established guidelines by which to live: Never get too attached. Avoid being noticed. Do not interfere. It's all fine until the morning that A wakes up in the body of Justin and meets Justin's girlfriend, Rhiannon. From that moment, the rules by which A has been living no longer apply. Because finally A has found someone he wants to be with—day in, day out, day after day. With his new novel, David Levithan, bestselling co-author of *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*, and *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*, has pushed himself to new creative heights. He has written a captivating story that will fascinate readers as they begin to comprehend the complexities of life and love in A's world, as A and Rhiannon seek to discover if you can truly love someone who is destined to change every day. (Followed by a companion, *Another Day*)



▪ **Evolution of Calpurnia Tate...Jacqueline Kelly**

The summer of 1899 is hot in Calpurnia's sleepy Texas town, and there aren't a lot of good ways to stay cool. Her mother has a new wind machine, but instead, Callie's contemplating cutting off her hair, one sneaky inch at a time. She's also spending a lot of time at the river with her notoriously cantankerous grandfather, an avid naturalist. But just when Callie and her grandfather are about to make an amazing discovery, the reality of Callie's situation catches up with her. She's a girl at the turn of the century, expected to cook and clean and sew. What a waste of time! Will Callie ever find a way to take control of her own destiny?

▪ **Fast Food Nation...Eric Schlosser**

In this fascinating socio-cultural report, Schlosser digs into the deeper meaning of Burger King, Jack-in-the-Box, Little Caesar's and myriad other examples of fast food in America. Frequently using McDonald's as a template, Schlosser, an Atlantic Monthly correspondent, explains how the development of fast-food restaurants has led to the standardization of American culture, widespread obesity, urban sprawl and more. In a perky, reportorial voice, Adamson tells of the history, economics, day-to-day dealings and broad and often negative cultural implications of franchised burger joints and pizza factories, delivering impressive snippets of information. (Young adult version available- *Chew On This*)

▪ **Forgive Me, Leonard Peacock...Matthew Quick**

Quick's books typically revolve around characters who don't fit in, don't understand their place in the world, and face daunting obstacles. Leonard Peacock is another such individual, a teenager who feels let down by adults and out of step with his sheep-like classmates. Foreseeing only more unhappiness and disappointment in life (and harboring a secret that's destroying him), Leonard packs up his grandfather's WWII handgun and heads to school, intending to kill his former best friend and then himself. First, though, he will visit the important people in his life: an elderly cinephile neighbor, a musically gifted classmate, the teacher of his Holocaust studies class, and a homeschooled girl who passes out religious tracts in the train station. Quick's attentiveness to these few key relationships and encounters gives the story its strength and razor-like focus. Its greatest irony is that, despite Leonard's commitment to his murder-suicide plan, he appreciates and values life in a way that few do. Through Leonard, Quick urges readers to look beyond the pain of the here and now to the possibilities that await.

▪ **Frankenstein...Mary Shelley**

The epic battle between man and monster reaches its greatest pitch in the famous story of FRANKENSTEIN. In trying to create life, the young student Victor Frankenstein unleashes forces beyond his control, setting into motion a long and tragic chain of events that brings Victor himself to the very brink. How he tries to destroy his creation, as it destroys everything Victor loves, is a powerful story of love, friendship ...and horror.

▪ **Ghostgirl...Tonya Hurley**

Charlotte User, an invisible loser, dies just before enacting a plan to catch the cutest guy in school and achieve popularity. She refuses to accept her fate (death by gummy bear) and returns as a ghost with a mission: to go to the Fall Ball with Damen and get a midnight kiss. Hurley combines afterlife antics, gothic gore, and high school hell to produce an original, hilarious satire. Charlotte ambles through death's door and remains a pitiable, selfish, and somewhat annoying heroine.

▪ **The Girl Who Drank the Moon...Kelly Barnhill**

Every year, the people of the Protectorate leave a baby as an offering to the witch who lives in the forest. They hope this sacrifice will keep her from terrorizing their town. But the witch in the Forest, Xan, is kind. She shares her home with a wise Swamp Monster and a Perfectly Tiny Dragon. Xan rescues the children and delivers them to welcoming families on the other side of the forest, nourishing the babies with starlight on the journey. One year, Xan accidentally feeds a baby moonlight instead of starlight, filling the ordinary child with extraordinary magic. Xan decides she must raise this girl, whom she calls Luna, as her own. As Luna's thirteenth birthday approaches, her magic begins to emerge—with dangerous consequences.

▪ **The Glory Field...Walter Dean Myers**

Spanning nearly 250 years of African American history, this emotionally charged saga of the Lewis family traces an ongoing battle for freedom and equality. Beginning with young Muhammad Bilal's journey from Africa in 1753 and ending with a 1990s family reunion set on the plantation where Muhammad was a slave, this series of resonant stories shows how each generation comes of age by taking a stand against oppression. All through the Civil War, Great Depression and civil rights movement, the family's strength and determination continue unabated.

▪ **Grace at Low Tide...Beth Webb Hart**

DeVeaux DeLoach is one of those precocious southern girls full of wisdom and charm. She serves as the wry witness when her dad's investments go sour and his proud family must decamp to their rundown plantation on the South Carolina island of Edisto. Various of Daddy's schemes to recoup his losses come to nothing, and he grows steadily more abusive; meanwhile, DeVeaux gives up her fancy private school and takes a job, her faith sustaining her.

▪ **The Graveyard Book...Neil Gaiman**

Neil Gaiman has created a charming allegory of childhood. Although the book opens with a scary scene--a family is stabbed to death by "a man named Jack" --the story quickly moves into more child-friendly storytelling. The sole survivor of the attack--an 18-month-old baby--escapes his crib and his house, and toddles to a nearby graveyard. Quickly recognizing that the baby is orphaned, the graveyard's ghostly residents adopt him, name him Nobody ("Bod"), and allow him to live in their tomb. Taking inspiration from Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, Gaiman describes how the toddler navigates among the headstones, asking a lot of questions and picking up the tricks of the living and the dead. In serial-like episodes, the story follows Bod's progress as he grows from baby to teen, learning life's lessons amid a cadre of the long-dead, ghouls, witches, intermittent human interlopers. A pallid, nocturnal guardian named Silas ensures that Bod receives food, books, and anything else he might need from the human world. Whenever the boy strays from his usual play among the headstones, he finds new dangers, learns his limitations and strengths, and acquires the skills he needs to survive within the confines of the graveyard and in wider world beyond.

▪ **Gospel According to Larry, The...Janet Tashjian**

Josh is bright, articulate, idealistic, and in love with Beth, the girl next door and his best friend since sixth grade. Afraid to declare himself—especially in light of Beth's flirtations with a socially connected but intellectually suspect football player— he pours his energy into a clever Web site, through which his alter ego, Larry, advocates introspection, tolerance, and anticonsumerism. Beth adores Larry, as do thousands of other teens and adults across the nation. Now Josh has a new problem: when and how does he reveal Larry's true identity to Beth? Also, all of his best intentions become subverted as more people embrace Larry's values and a media circus ensues as Josh's identity is revealed.

(Followed by the sequels *Vote for Larry* and *Larry and the Meaning of Life*.)

▪ **Half Broke Horses...Jeannette Walls**

For the first 10 years of her life, Lily Casey Smith, the narrator of this true-life novel by her granddaughter, Walls, lived in a dirt dugout in west Texas. Having been educated in fits and starts because of her parents' penury, Lily becomes a teacher at age 15 in a remote frontier town she reaches after a solo 28-day ride. Marriage to a bigamist almost saps her spirit, but later she weds a rancher with whom she shares two children and a strain of plucky resilience. Lily is a spirited heroine, fiercely outspoken against hypocrisy and prejudice, a rodeo rider and fearless breaker of horses, and a ruthless poker player. Assailed by flash floods, tornados and droughts, Lily never gets far from hardscrabble drudgery in several states—New Mexico, Arizona, Illinois—but hers is one of those heartwarming stories about indomitable women that will always find an audience.

▪ **The Hate U Give...Angie Thomas**

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what *really* went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

(Like this try her second book *One the Come Up*)

▪ **Hello, Universe...Erin Entrada Kelly**

In one day, four lives weave together in unexpected ways. Virgil Salinas is shy and kindhearted and feels out of place in his crazy-about-sports family. Valencia Somerset, who is deaf, is smart, brave, and secretly lonely, and she loves everything about nature. Kaori Tanaka is a self-proclaimed psychic, whose little sister, Gen, is always following her around. And Chet Bullens wishes the weird kids would just stop being so different so he can concentrate on basketball. They aren't friends, at least not until Chet pulls a prank that traps Virgil and his pet guinea pig at the bottom of a well. This disaster leads Kaori, Gen, and Valencia on an epic quest to find missing Virgil. Through luck, smarts, bravery, and a little help from the universe, a rescue is performed, a bully is put in his place, and friendship blooms.

▪ **The Hiding Place...Corrie ten Boom**

Corrie Ten Boom stood naked with her older sister Betsie, watching a concentration camp matron beating a prisoner. "Oh, the poor woman," Corrie cried. "Yes. May God forgive her," Betsie replied. And, once again, Corrie realized that it was for the souls of the brutal Nazi guards that her sister prayed. Here is a book aglow with the glory of God and the courage of a quiet Christian spinster whose life was transformed by it. A story of Christ's message and the courageous woman who listened and lived to pass it along — with joy and triumph!

▪ **Hound of the Baskervilles...Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

At Baskerville Hall on the grim moors of Devonshire, a legendary curse has apparently claimed one more victim. Sir Charles Baskerville has been found dead. There are no signs of violence, but his face is hideously distorted with terror. Years earlier, a hound-like beast with blazing eyes and dripping jaws was reported to have torn out the throat of Hugo Baskerville. Has the spectral destroyer struck again? More important, is Sir Henry Baskerville, young heir to the estate, now in danger? Enter Sherlock Holmes, summoned to protect Sir Henry from the fate that has threatened the Baskerville family. As Holmes and Watson begin to investigate, a blood-chilling howl from the fog-shrouded edges of the great Grimpen Mire signals that the legendary hound of the Baskervilles is poised for yet another murderous attack.

▪ **I am the Cheese...Robert Cormier**

Imagine discovering that your whole life has been a fiction, your identity altered, and a new family history created. Suddenly nothing is as it once seemed; you can trust no one, maybe not even yourself. It is exactly this revelation that turns 14-year-old Adam Farmer's life upside down. As he tries to ascertain who he really is, Adam encounters a past, present, and future too horrible to contemplate. Suspense builds as the fragments of the story are assembled--a missing father, government corruption, espionage--until the shocking conclusion shatters the fragile mosaic.

▪ **Jane Eyre...Charlotte Bronte**

Orphaned into the household of her Aunt Reed at Gateshead, subject to the cruel regime at Lowood charity school, Jane Eyre none the less emerges unbroken in spirit and integrity. How she takes up the post of governess at Thornfield Hall, meets and loves Mr. Rochester and discovers the impediment to their lawful marriage are elements in a story that transcends melodrama to portray a woman's passionate search for a wider and richer life than that traditionally accorded to her sex in Victorian society.

(Like this? Read *Jane Eyre* by her sister Emily Bronte)

▪ **Julie of the Wolves...Jean Craighead George**

To her small Eskimo village, she is known as Miyax; to her friend in San Francisco, she is Julie. When the village is not longer safe for her, Miyax runs away. But she soon finds herself lost in the Alaskan wilderness, without food, without even a compass to guide her. Slowly she is accepted by a pack of Arctic wolves, and she grows to love them as though they were family. With their help, and drawing on her father's teachings, Miyax struggles day by day to survive. But the time comes when she must leave the wilderness and choose between the old ways and the new. Which will she choose? For she is Miyax of the Eskimos - but Julie of the Wolves. (Followed by two sequels: *Julie* and *Julie's Wolf Pack*)

▪ **Legend...Marie Lu**

What was once the western United States is now home to the Republic, a nation perpetually at war with its neighbors. Born into an elite family in one of the Republic's wealthiest districts, fifteen-year-old June is a prodigy being groomed for success in the Republic's highest military circles. Born into the slums, fifteen-year-old Day is the country's most wanted criminal. But his motives may not be as malicious as they seem. From very different worlds, June and Day have no reason to cross paths- until the day June's brother, Metias, is murdered and Day becomes the prime suspect. Caught in the ultimate game of cat and mouse, Day is in a race for his family's survival, while June seeks to avenge Metias's death. But in a shocking turn of events, the two uncover the truth of what has really brought them together, and the sinister lengths their country will go to keep its secrets. (Followed by sequels: *Prodigy* and *Champion*)

▪ **Letters from Rifka...Karen Hesse**

This epistolary novel chronicles twelve-year-old Rifka's journey from Russia to America, interrupted in Poland when she almost dies of typhus and in Belgium when the ringworm she has contracted on a freight train prevents her from boarding the ship with her family. From then on and through her stay on Ellis Island, she is alone except for the letters she writes to her cousin in the blank pages of a book of Pushkin's poetry.

(Like this? Read *Out of the Dust* also by Karen Hesse)

▪ **Leviathan...Scott Westerfeld**

This is WWI as never seen before. The story begins the same: on June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife are assassinated, triggering a sequence of alliances that plunges the world into war. But that is where the similarity ends. This global conflict is between the Clankers, who put their faith in machines, and the Darwinists, whose technology is based on the development of new species. Deryn Sharp trains to be an airman with the British Air Service, she prays that no one will discover that she is a girl. She serves on the *Leviathan*, a massive biological airship that resembles an enormous flying whale and functions as a self-contained ecosystem. When it crashes in Switzerland, the two teens cross paths, and suddenly the line between enemy and ally is no longer clearly defined. Enhanced by Thompson's intricate black-and-white illustrations, Westerfeld's brilliantly constructed imaginary world will capture readers from the first page.

▪ **Life of Pi...Yan Martel**

The son of a zookeeper, Pi Patel has an encyclopedic knowledge of animal behavior and a fervent love of stories. When Pi is sixteen, his family emigrates from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes. The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi, whose fear, knowledge, and cunning allow him to coexist with Richard Parker for 227 days while lost at sea. When they finally reach the coast of Mexico, Richard Parker flees to the jungle, never to be seen again. The Japanese authorities who interrogate Pi refuse to believe his story and press him to tell them "the truth." After hours of coercion, Pi tells a second story, a story much less fantastical, much more conventional--but is it more true?

▪ **The Light in the Forest . . . Conrad Richter**

Though reared as a Lenni Lenape Indian, fifteen-year-old True Son, once called John Camera Butler, was ordered back to the white man. It was impossible for True Son to believe that his people were white and not Indian. He had learned to hate the white man. And now he learned to hate his new father, his new house, his new family. He hated the name John Butler. Where did he belong now—and where could he go?

▪ **Little Women . . . Louisa Mae Alcott**

It is no surprise that *Little Women*, the adored classic of four sisters and their enduring devotion to and protection of one another, was loosely based on Louisa May Alcott's own life. Alcott drew from her own personality to create a unique protagonist: Jo, willful, headstrong, and undoubtedly the backbone of the March family, is a heroine unlike any seen before. Follow the sisters from innocent adolescence to sage adulthood, with all the joy and sorrow of life in between, and fall in love with them and this endearing story.

▪ **The Looking Glass Wars . . . Frank Beddor**

Frank Beddor's clever novel puts Lewis Carroll's heroine—along with her loony, puzzle-riddled world—into a new and wholly satisfying frame. In this version, most of Alyss Heart's family and friends are ruthlessly killed by her evil Aunt Redd. Alyss escapes through the Pool of Tears, which is actually a portal between worlds, and winds up in Victorian England and is renamed Alice. At first, the child tries to tell ordinary humans about her world and the power imagination actually effects in Wonderlandia, but they gently chide her for telling stories. She believes that she's found a sympathetic ear in a young Oxford don who is a friend of her adopted family, but he turns her story into the travesty we all know as "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." Meanwhile, Hatter Madigan, a member of Wonderlandia's Millinery, who also escaped through the Pool, searches for Alyss across continents and time, until he finds her more than a dozen years later. Back home in Wonderlandia, the few who have escaped evil Redd's soldiers plot to retake the land.

▪ **Lord of the Flies . . . William Golding**

The classic tale of a group of English school boys who are left stranded on an unpopulated island, and who must confront not only the defects of their society but the defects of their own natures.

▪ **Lyddie . . . Katherine Paterson**

Her parents are gone, and her brother and sisters sent to live with other people. Lyddie Worthen is on her own. When Lyddie hears about the mill jobs in Lowell, Massachusetts, she heads there with the goal of earning enough money to reunite her family. Six days a week from dawn to dusk Lyddie and the other girls run weaving looms in the murky dust - and lint-filled factory. Lyddie learns to read - and to handle the menacing overseer. But when the working conditions begin to affect her friends' health, she has to make a choice. Will she speak up for better working conditions and risk her job - and her dream? Or will she stay quiet until it is perhaps too late?

(Like this? Read *Jip* also by Katherine Paterson)

▪ **The Magic Strings of Frankie Presto...Mitch Albom**

A Spanish war orphan born in a burning church and raised by a blind guitar teacher, Frankie Presto was gifted with extraordinary musical abilities that shape not only his life but the lives of those around him. At nine years old, Frankie meets the love of his life, Aurora; that same day, civil war tears apart his home and he is sent to America, smuggled in the bottom of a boat with only guitar and six strings imbued with the power to change lives. Relying on music to survive, Frankie's talent weaves him through the musical landscape of the twentieth century, from Detroit's jazz scene and the Grand Ole Opry, to Elvis mania and Woodstock—all the while searching for Aurora. As his fame grows, Frankie finds love, friendship, and celebrity. Even so, his gift becomes his burden, driving a wedge between him and his beloved Aurora—now his wife. Overwhelmed by life, loss, and the power of his strings, Frankie disappears for years, only to reemerge in a spectacular and mysterious farewell.

▪ **The Man Who Loved Clowns...June Rae Wood**

Delrita, 13, has recently moved to a small Missouri town with her parents and Punky, an uncle who has Down's syndrome. Delrita adores Punky, yet is also embarrassed by him. She easily accepts his childish ways at home, but avoids having visitors, and attending church in her new community causes the girl considerable anguish. Always a loner, Punky is befriended by the persistent Avanelle Shackelford, a classmate who also has familial shame--and a fabulous older brother. When disaster tears Delrita's life apart, her new friends' support fortifies her as does Punky's enduring love.

▪ **The Martian Chronicles...Ray Bradbury**

Bradbury's Mars is a place of hope, dreams and metaphor - of crystal pillars and fossil seas - where a fine dust settles on the great, empty cities of a silently destroyed civilization. It is here the invaders have come to despoil and commercialize, to grow and to learn - first a trickle, then a torrent, rushing from a world with no future toward a promise of tomorrow. The Earthman conquers Mars...and then is conquered by it, lulled by dangerous lies of comfort and familiarity, and enchanted by the lingering glamour of an ancient, mysterious native race.

▪ **Me and Earl and the Dying Girl...Jesse Andrews**

It is a universally acknowledged truth that high school sucks. But on the first day of his senior year, Greg Gaines thinks he's figured it out. The answer to the basic existential question: How is it possible to exist in a place that sucks so bad? His strategy: remain at the periphery at all times. Keep an insanely low profile. Make mediocre films with the one person who is even sort of his friend, Earl. This plan works for exactly eight hours. Then Greg's mom forces him to become friends with a girl who has cancer. This brings about the destruction of Greg's entire life. Fiercely funny, honest, heart-breaking—this is an unforgettable novel from a bright talent.

▪ **Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children...Ransom Riggs**

As a kid, Jacob formed a special bond with his grandfather over his bizarre tales and photos of levitating girls and invisible boys. Now at 16, he is reeling from the old man's unexpected death. Then Jacob is given a mysterious letter that propels him on a journey to the remote Welsh island where his grandfather grew up. There, he finds the children from the photographs--alive and well--despite the islanders' assertion that all were killed decades ago. As Jacob begins to unravel more about his grandfather's childhood, he suspects he is being trailed by a monster only he can see. A haunting and out-of-the-ordinary read, debut author Ransom Rigg's first-person narration is convincing and absorbing, and every detail he draws our eye to is deftly woven into an unforgettable whole.

(Followed by the sequels *Hollow City* and *The Library of Souls*)

▪ **Monster...Walter Dean Myers**

What if you were 16 years old, on trial for felony murder, and your degree of guilt had become confused within your own mind? How would you discover the truth? *Monster*, winner of the first Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature, is written as the screenplay that prisoner Steve Harmon creates during his incarceration and trial, in an attempt to reconstruct and reconfigure the events of the crime. (Like this? Read *Shadow of the Red Moon* and *Scorpions* and *Somewhere in Darkness* all by Walter Dean Myers)

▪ **The Monsterumologist...Rick Yancey**

With a roaring sense of adventure and enough viscera to gag the hardest of gore hounds, Yancey's series starter might just be the best horror novel of the year. Will Henry is the 12-year-old apprentice to Pellinore Warthrop, a brilliant and self-absorbed monstremologist--a scientist who studies (and when necessary, kills) monsters in late-1800s New England. The newest threat is the Anthropophagi, a pack of headless, shark-toothed bipeds, one of whom's corpse is delivered to Warthrop's lab courtesy of a grave robber. As the action moves from the dissecting table to the cemetery to an asylum to underground catacombs, Yancey keeps the shocks frequent and shrouded in a splattery miasma of blood, bone, pus, and maggots. Most effective of all, however, is the weirdly tender relationship between the quiet, respectful boy and his strict, Darwinesque father figure. "Snap to!" is Warthrop's continued demand of Will, but readers will need no such needling.

(Followed by two sequels: *Curse of the Wendigo* and *The Isle of Blood*)

▪ **A Monster Calls...Patrick Ness**

At seven minutes past midnight, thirteen-year-old Conor wakes to find a monster outside his bedroom window. But it isn't the monster Conor's been expecting-- he's been expecting the one from his nightmare, the nightmare he's had nearly every night since his mother started her treatments. The monster in his backyard is different. It's ancient. And wild. And it wants something from Conor. Something terrible and dangerous. It wants the truth. From the final idea of award-winning author Siobhan Dowd-- whose premature death from cancer prevented her from writing it herself-- Patrick Ness has spun a haunting and darkly funny novel of mischief, loss, and monsters both real and imagined.

▪ **Mosquitoland...David Arnold**

After the sudden collapse of her family, Mim Malone is dragged from her home in northern Ohio to the "wastelands" of Mississippi, where she lives in a medicated milieu with her dad and new stepmom. Before the dust has a chance to settle, she learns her mother is sick back in Cleveland. So she ditches her new life and hops aboard a northbound Greyhound bus to her real home and her real mother, meeting a quirky cast of fellow travelers along the way. But when her thousand-mile journey takes a few turns she could never see coming, Mim must confront her own demons, redefining her notions of love, loyalty, and what it means to be sane.

▪ **My Mother the Cheerleader...Robert Sharenow**

Louise Collins was pretty certain that nothing all that exciting would happen in the Ninth Ward of New Orleans, where she lived with her mother in their boarding house. But when desegregation begins, Louise is pulled out of school and her mother joins the Cheerleaders, a group of local women who gather every morning to heckle six-year-old Ruby Bridges, William Frantz Elementary's first African-American student. Then one day a Chevy Bel Air with a New York license plate pulls up to the house and out steps Morgan Miller, a man with a mysterious past. For the first time, Louise feels as if someone cares about what she thinks. But when the reason for Morgan's visit comes to light, everything Louise thinks she knows about her mother, her world, and herself changes, abruptly and irrevocably.



▪ **Mysterious Benedict Society, The...Trenton Lee Stewart**

After Reynie Muldoon responds to an advertisement recruiting "gifted children looking for special opportunities," he finds himself in a world of mystery and adventure. The 11-year-old orphan is one of four children to complete a series of challenging and creative tasks, and he, Kate, Constance, and Sticky become the Mysterious Benedict Society. After being trained by Mr. Benedict and his assistants, the four travel to an isolated school where children are being trained by a criminal mastermind to participate in his schemes to take over the world. The young investigators need to use their special talents and abilities in order to discover Mr. Curtain's secrets, and their only chance to defeat him is through working together. Readers will challenge their own abilities as they work with the Society members to solve clues and put together the pieces of Mr. Curtain's plan. In spite of a variety of coincidences, Stewart's unusual characters, threatening villains, and dramatic plot twists will grab and hold readers' attention.

(First in a series of books)

▪ **One Crazy Summer...Rita Williams-Garcia**

After Reynie Eleven-year-old Delphine is like a mother to her two younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern. She's had to be, ever since their mother, Cecile, left them seven years ago for a radical new life in California. But when the sisters arrive from Brooklyn to spend the summer with their mother, Cecile is nothing like they imagined. While the girls hope to go to Disneyland and meet Tinker Bell, their mother sends them to a day camp run by the Black Panthers. Unexpectedly, Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern learn much about their family, their country, and themselves during one truly crazy summer.

▪ **The Once and Future King...T. H. White**

The whole world knows and loves this book. It is the magical epic of King Arthur and his shining Camelot; of Merlin and Owl and Guinevere; of beasts who talk and men who fly, of wizardry and war. It is the book of all things lost and wonderful and sad. It is the fantasy masterpiece by which all others are judged.

▪ **Out of the Dust...Karen Hesse**

In a series of free verse poems, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression.

(Like this? Read *Letters from Rifka* also by Karen Hesse)

▪ **The Outsiders...S. E. Hinton**

The ruthlessly realistic and violent story of the Greasers and the Socs, rival gangs from very different sides of the railroad tracks, is narrated by Ponyboy Curtis, a smart, sensitive kid who has grown to become one of the most recognizable figures in the history of young adult literature. Any teen who has ever felt isolated or different can identify with Ponyboy, a kid forced to be tough on the outside, but who underneath is just as scared and needy as anyone.

(Like this? Read *That Was Then, This is Now* also by S.E. Hinton or *Durango Street* by Frank Bonham)

▪ **The Pearl...John Steinbeck**

For the diver Kino, finding a magnificent pearl means the promise of a better life for his impoverished family. His dreams blind him to the greed that the pearl arouses in him and his neighbors. Baring the fallacy of the American dream--that wealth erases all problems--Steinbeck's classic illustrates our fall from innocence.

(Like this? Read *Of Mice and Men* and *The Red Pony* also by John Steinbeck)

▪ **Peter and the Starcatchers...Dave Barry & Ridley Pearson**

Don't even think of starting this book unless you're sitting in a comfortable chair and have lots of time. A fast-paced, impossible-to-put-down adventure awaits as the young orphan Peter and his mates are dispatched to an island ruled by the evil King Zarboff. They set sail aboard the Never Land, a ship carrying a precious and mysterious trunk in its cargo hold-and the journey quickly becomes fraught with excitement and danger. Discover richly developed characters in the sweet but sophisticated Molly, the scary but familiar Black Stache, and the fearless Peter. Treacherous battles with pirates, foreboding thunderstorms at sea, and evocative writing immerse the reader in a story that slowly and finally reveals the secrets and mysteries of the beloved Peter Pan.

(Followed by numerous sequels)

▪ **Pictures of Hollis Woods...Patricia Reilly Giff**

Abandoned at birth, Hollis Woods has lived in about a half dozen homes and has always wished for a family. A foster caretaker describes her as "a mountain of trouble." When Josie Cahill, a retired art teacher, takes the 12-year-old into her home on Long Island, NY, the two bond almost immediately. Hollis draws pictures with colored pencils and Josie carves branches into people. However, it soon becomes clear that Josie has trouble remembering things, and Hollis becomes the caregiver.

▪ **Piecing Me Together...Renée Watson**

Jade believes she must get out of her poor neighborhood if she's ever going to succeed. Her mother tells her to take advantage of every opportunity that comes her way. And Jade has: every day she rides the bus away from her friends and to the private school where she feels like an outsider, but where she has plenty of opportunities. But some *opportunities* she doesn't really welcome, like an invitation to join Women to Women, a mentorship program for "at-risk" girls. Just because her mentor is black and graduated from the same high school doesn't mean she understands where Jade is coming from. She's tired of being singled out as someone who needs help, someone people want to fix. Jade wants to speak, to create, to express her joys and sorrows, her pain and her hope. Maybe there are some things she could show other women about understanding the world and finding ways to be real, to make a difference.

▪ **Rebecca...Daphne Du Maurier**

It's no wonder that the woman who becomes the second Mrs. de Winter (whose first name we never learn) eagerly accepts Maxim de Winter's offer of matrimony. She's young, orphaned, and employed as companion to a mean-spirited fading beauty. The handsome widower simply sweeps her off her feet. In a matter of days, the new bride accompanies her seemingly devoted husband to Manderley, his isolated home on the Cornish coast. From the first, the sinister housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, frightens the new bride with her chilling devotion to the dead first Mrs. de Winter, Rebecca. And, all too soon, the second Mrs. de Winter realizes that Maxim married her for her youth and warmth, hoping to use her as a shield against Rebecca's malignant presence -- a lingering evil that threatens to destroy them both from beyond the grave.

▪ **Red Rising...Pierce Brown**

*Red Rising* is the first book of a gritty, complex trilogy that blazes its own trail. On desolate Mars, the protagonist, Darrow, is caught in a class system that thrives on oppression and secrecy. He is a Red, the lowest member of society, born to toil in the bowels of the planet in service to the sovereign Golds. When Darrow suffers a devastating loss and betrayal he becomes a revolutionary, taking on a dangerous role in an attempt to bring about social justice. Questions of fate, duality, and loyalty, evolve in a cruel test of war between the sons and daughters of the ruling elite. By turns brutal and heartfelt, *Red Rising* is nonstop action with surprising twists and unforgettable characters. (Followed by the sequel *Golden Sun*)

▪ **The Red Pony...John Steinbeck**

Raised on a ranch in northern California, Jody is well-schooled in the hard work and demands of a rancher's life. He is used to the way of horses, too; but nothing has prepared him for the special connection he will forge with Gabilan, a hot-tempered pony his father gives him. With Billy Buck, the hired hand, Jody tends and trains his horse, restlessly anticipating the moment he will sit high upon Gabilan's saddle. But when Gabilan falls ill, Jody discovers there are still lessons he must learn about the ways of nature and, particularly, the ways of man.

(Like this? Read *Of Mice and Men* and *The Pearl* also by John Steinbeck)

▪ **Robopocalypse...Daniel Wilson**

In the not-too-distant future, robots have made our lives a lot easier: they help clean our kitchens, drive our cars, and fight our wars--until they are turned into efficient murderers by a sentient artificial intelligence buried miles below the surface of Alaska. *Robopocalypse* is a fast-paced sci-fi thriller that makes a strong case that mindless fun can also be wildly inventive. The war is told as an oral history, assembled from interviews, security camera footage, and first- and secondhand testimonies. (A film adaptation is already in pre-production, with Steven Spielberg in the director's chair and a release date slated for 2013.) *Robopocalypse* may not be the most unique tale about the war between man and machine, but it's certainly one of the most fun.

(Followed by the sequel *Robogenesis*)

▪ **Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry...Mildred D. Taylor**

A black family living in Mississippi during the Depression of the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which its children do not understand. Why is the land so important to Cassie's family? It takes the events of one turbulent year--the year of the night riders and the burnings, the year a white girl humiliates Cassie in public simply because she is black--to show Cassie that having a place of their own is the Logan family's lifeblood. It is the land that gives the Logans their courage and pride, for no matter how others may degrade them, the Logans possess something no one can take away.

(Like this? Read more about the Logan family in four other novels by Mildred D. Taylor)

▪ **Ryan White: My Own Story...Ryan White**

The terrible suffering and the shining courage of a hemophiliac who contracted AIDS from blood meant to sustain him are contending forces in this "as told to" account. In a natural, often heart-tugging style, White describes his small-city Indiana background, his early health problems, the effects of the AIDS diagnosis when he was 13, and his legal battle to be readmitted to school. Readers will applaud the young man's efforts to live a "normal" life and to experience teen enthusiasms and interests.

▪ **Scat...Carl Hiaasen**

Bunny Starch, the most feared biology teacher ever, is missing. She disappeared after a school field trip to Black Vine Swamp. And, to be honest, the kids in her class are relieved. But when the principal tries to tell the students that Mrs. Starch has been called away on a "family emergency," Nick and Marta just don't buy it. No, they figure the class delinquent, Smoke, has something to do with her disappearance. And he does! But not in the way they think. There's a lot more going on in Black Vine Swamp than any one player in this twisted tale can see. And Nick and Marta will have to reckon with an eccentric eco-avenger, a stuffed rat named Chelsea, a wannabe Texas oilman, a singing substitute teacher, and a ticked-off Florida panther before they *really* begin to see the big picture. That's life in the swamp, kids.

▪ **Scorpions...Walter Dean Myers**

Lately everybody's messing with Jamal. His teachers, the kids at school, even his dad. And now that Jamal's brother Randy's in the slam, Crazy Mack has a crazy idea. He wants Jamal to take control of the Scorpions and run crack. All the gang jive—Jamal has no use for it. Unless, like some say, it's the only way to cop the bread for Randy's appeal... The story of twelve-year-old Jamal, whose life changes drastically when he acquires a gun. Though he survives the experience, it's not without sacrificing his innocence and possibly his relationship with his best friend.

(Like this? Read *Monster* and *Shadow of the Red Moon* and *Somewhere in Darkness* all by Walter Dean Myers)

▪ **A Separate Peace...John Knowles**

Gene was a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas was a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happened between them at school one summer during the early years of World War II is the subject of *A Separate Peace*. A bestseller for over forty years, it is a starkly moving parable of the dark forces that brood over the tortured world of adolescence.

▪ **Shadow of the Red Moon...Walter Dean Myers**

In this extraordinary fantasy novel from Newberry Honor winning author Walter Dean Myers, 15-year-old Jon leaves his home in Crystal City on a journey through the Wilderness, where shocking truths are revealed.

(Like this? Read *Monster* and *Scorpions* and *Somewhere in Darkness* all by Walter Dean Myers)

▪ **Shoeless Joe...W.P. Kinsella**

"If you build it, he will come." The mysterious words of an Iowa baseball announcer lead Ray Kinsella to carve a baseball diamond in his cornfield in honor of his hero, the baseball legend Shoeless Joe Jackson. This is a book "not so much about baseball as it is about dreams, magic, life, and what is quintessentially American."

▪ **Speak...Laurie Halse Anderson**

Since the beginning of the school year, high school freshman Melinda has found that it's been getting harder and harder for her to speak out loud: "My throat is always sore, my lips raw.... Every time I try to talk to my parents or a teacher, I sputter or freeze.... It's like I have some kind of spastic laryngitis." What could have caused Melinda to suddenly fall mute? Could it be due to the fact that no one at school is speaking to her because she called the cops and got everyone busted at the seniors' big end-of-summer party? Or maybe it's because her parents' only form of communication is Post-It notes written on their way out the door to their nine-to-whenever jobs. While Melinda is bothered by these things, deep down only she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute.

(If you liked this, read *Catalyst* which is set in the same community)

▪ **Stargirl...Jerry Spinelli**

High school is a time of great conformity, when being just like everybody else is of paramount importance. So it is no surprise that Stargirl Caraway causes such excitement and confusion when she arrives at Mica High in Arizona. Initially, everyone is charmed by her unconventional behavior- she wears unusual clothing, she serenades the lunchroom with her ukulele, she practices random acts of kindness, she is cheerleader extraordinaire in a place with no school spirit. Naturally, this cannot last and eventually her individuality is reviled. The story is told by Leo, who falls in love with Stargirl's zany originality, but who then finds himself unable to let go of the need to be conventional.

(Followed by the sequel *Love, Stargirl*)

▪ **Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes...Chris Crutcher**

Sarah Byrnes and Eric have been friends for years. When they were children, his fat and her terrible scars made them both outcasts. Later, although swimming slimmed Eric, she stayed his closest friend. Now Sarah Byrnes -- the smartest, toughest person Eric has ever known -- sits silent in a hospital. Eric must uncover the terrible secret she's hiding, before its dark currents pull them both under.

▪ **Story Time...Edward Bloor**

A book filled with social satire, black comedy, fantasy/humor, and extreme situations. Eighth-grader Katie and her brilliant Uncle George, a sixth grader, find themselves mysteriously restricted and assigned to Whittaker Magnet School, which focuses entirely on excellence in standardized testing. The regimented kids are taught by regimented teachers in the basement of a haunted old library building and the school is run by a strange family obsessed with its own achievements, whether they are earned or not. All sorts of things are amiss at Whittaker, where elitism reigns; where dramatic deaths are hidden nearly as carefully as the dark secrets involving the building, the town, and the people who live there; and where appearances are paramount.

▪ **Summerland...Michael Chabon**

Ethan Feld, a less-than-mediocre Little League player, is recruited by Ringfinger Brown, an old-timer from the Negro Leagues, to play in the ball game of his life-and save the world. Ethan lives on Clam Island, WA, where a place called Summerland exists. It is a link to alternate worlds where fantastic creatures reside, ruled by the trickster Coyote, who has decided that he wants to put an end to the world. Ethan, an unlikely hero, begins his journey accompanied by his friends Jennifer T. Rideout and Thor Wignutt. Along the way, they face many obstacles (with outcomes often determined by baseball games) and are joined by all sorts of beings: a Sasquatch, a talking rat, a tiny giant, a major league ball player, and characters that readers may remember from legends and fairy tales.

▪ **The Swiss Family Robinson...Lois Wyss**

When the Robinson family is shipwrecked and cast away on a desert island, they have only the island's natural resources--and each other--to rely on. Making the most of what they find, they construct an elaborate tree house and struggle against the forces of nature in this treasured family classic.

▪ **Tangerine...Edward Bloor**

So what if he's legally blind? Even with his bottle-thick, bug-eyed glasses, Paul Fisher can see better than most people. He can see the lies his parents and brother live out, day after day. No one ever listens to Paul, though--until the family moves to Tangerine. In Tangerine, even a blind, geeky, alien freak can become cool. Who knows? Paul might even become a hero! Edward Bloor's debut novel sparkles with wit, authenticity, unexpected plot twists, and heart. The writing is so fine, the story so triumphant, that you just might stand up and shout when you get to the end. Hooray!

▪ **That Was Then, This is Now...S. E. Hinton**

Sixteen-year-old Mark and Bryon have been like brothers since childhood, but now, as their involvement with girls, gangs, and drugs increases, their relationship seems to gradually disintegrate.

(Like this? Read *The Outsiders* also by S.E. Hinton.)

▪ **The Thief Lord...Cornelia Funke**

Prosper and Bo are orphans on the run from their cruel aunt and uncle. The brothers decide to hide out in Venice, where they meet a mysterious character who calls himself the "Thief Lord." Brilliant and charismatic, the Thief Lord leads a ring of street children who dabble in petty crimes. Prosper and Bo relish being part of this colorful new family. But the Thief Lord has secrets of his own. And soon the boys are thrust into circumstances that will lead them, and readers, to a fantastic, spellbinding conclusion.

▪ **The Time Machine...H. G. Wells**

When the Time Traveler courageously stepped out of his machine for the first time, he found himself in the year 802,700 -- and everything has changed. In another, more utopian age, creatures seemed to dwell together in perfect harmony. *The Time Traveler* thought he could study these marvelous beings -- unearth their secret and then return to his own time -- until he discovered that his invention, his only avenue of escape, had been stolen.

▪ **To Be a Slave...Julius Lester**

A compilation, selected from various sources and arranged chronologically, of the reminiscences of slaves and ex-slaves about their experiences from the leaving of Africa through the Civil War and into the early twentieth century.

▪ **Touching Spirit Bear . . . Ben Mikaelson**

Within Cole Matthews lie anger, rage, and hate. Cole has been stealing, fighting, and lying for years. His attack on a classmate has left the boy with permanent physical and deep psychological damage and Cole in the biggest trouble of his life. To most, Cole seems beyond hope. But when he's offered a chance at an alternative path called Circle Justice, based on Native American tradition, Cole finds himself banished to a remote Alaskan island, where his rage and isolation lead him to another brazen attack.

▪ **Tree Girl . . . Ben Mikaelson**

"Every living human I had ever known was gone." Based on a true story, this disturbing novel of civil war in Guatemala tells of mass atrocity through the first-person narrative of Mayan teenager Gabriela Flores, who witnesses the Latino soldiers' torture, rape, and massacre of Indians, including her own family, before escaping to a refugee camp in Mexico. Without sentimentality or exploitation, the story brings readers up close as Gabriela finds the strength to face survivor guilt and stay alive to bear witness. The facts are never simplistic. Gabriela's world before the soldiers come is happy, but far from idyllic, and although she feels strongly about her heritage, she's "not imprisoned by it."

▪ **The Truth Machine . . . James Halperin**

Prepare to have your conception of truth rocked to its very foundation. It is the year 2004. Violent crime is the number one political issue in America. Now, the Swift and Sure Anti-Crime Bill guarantees a previously convicted violent criminal one fair trial, one quick appeal, then immediate execution. To prevent abuse of the law, a machine must be built that detects lies with 100 percent accuracy. Once perfected, the Truth Machine will change the face of the world. Yet the race to finish the Truth Machine forces one man to commit a shocking act of treachery, burdening him with a dark secret that collides with everything he believes in. Now he must conceal the truth from his own creation . . . or face his execution. By turns optimistic and chilling--and always profound--The Truth Machine is nothing less than a history of the future, a spellbinding chronicle that resonates with insight, wisdom . . . and astounding possibility.

▪ **Tuesdays With Morrie . . . Mitch Albom**

Mitch Albom takes his readers through a journey of love, friendship, life and death. This is a story that Morrie himself would have applauded. After seeing his favorite college professor, Morrie Schwartz, on "Nightline," Albom discovered his long-lost professor and friend was terminally ill. Having lost contact with the professor for sixteen years, Morrie caught Albom's eye on television, discussing with the world a disease that would not only take his life, but provide an opportunity to change the lives of those he encountered. This book is filled with lessons, not in a scholastic sense, but life lessons that must otherwise be learned the hard way. Through Mitch Albom, his final student, Morrie provides an in depth look at the lifestyle and attitudes of a man, dying happy.

▪ **Twisted . . . Laurie Halse Anderson**

Socially inept Tyler Miller thinks his senior year of high school is going to be a year like no other. After being sentenced to a summer of character building physical labor following a graffiti prank, his reputation at school receives a boost, as do his muscles. Enter super-popular Bethany Milbury, sister of his tormentor, Chip, and daughter of his father's boss. Tyler's newfound physique has attracted her interest and infuriated Chip, leading to ongoing conflicts at school. Likewise, Tyler's inability to meet his volatile father's demands to be an asset, not a liability adds increasing tension. All too quickly, Tyler's life spirals out of control. In the wake of an incident at a wild party that Bethany has invited him to attend, he is left feeling completely isolated at school and alienated at home, a victim of twisted perception.

▪ **Uglies...Scott Westerfeld**

Tally Youngblood lives in a futuristic society that acculturates its citizens to believe that they are ugly until age 16 when they'll undergo an operation that will change them into pleasure-seeking "pretties." Anticipating this happy transformation, Tally meets Shay, another female ugly, who shares her enjoyment of hoverboarding and risky pranks. But Shay also disdains the false values and programmed conformity of the society and urges Tally to defect with her to the Smoke, a distant settlement of simple-living conscientious objectors. Tally declines, yet when Shay is found missing by the authorities, Tally is coerced by the cruel Dr. Cable to find her and her compatriots—or remain forever "ugly."

(Followed by three sequels- *Pretties* and *Specials* and *Extras*)

▪ **Unwind...Neil Shusterman**

In a society where unwanted teens are salvaged for their body parts, three runaways fight the system that would "unwind" them Connor's parents want to be rid of him because he's a troublemaker. Risa has no parents and is being unwound to cut orphanage costs. Lev's unwinding has been planned since his birth, as part of his family's strict religion. Brought together by chance, and kept together by desperation, these three unlikely companions make a harrowing cross-country journey, knowing their lives hang in the balance. If they can survive until their eighteenth birthday, they can't be harmed -- but when every piece of them, from their hands to their hearts, are wanted by a world gone mad, eighteen seems far, far away.

(Followed by two sequels- *Unwholly* and *Unsouled*)

▪ **Walden...Henry David Thoreau**

Henry David Thoreau was a sturdy individualist and a lover of nature. In March, 1845, he built himself a wooden hut on the edge of Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts, where he lived until September 1847. *Walden* is Thoreau's autobiographical account of his Robinson Crusoe existence, bare of creature comforts but rich in contemplation of the wonders of nature and the ways of man.

▪ **Watership Down...Richard Adams**

First published in 1972, Richard Adam's extraordinary bestseller *Watership Down* takes us to a world we have never truly seen: to the remarkable life that teems in the fields, forests, and riverbanks, far beyond our cities and towns. It is a powerful saga of courage, leadership, and survival; and epic tale of a hardy band of Berkshire rabbits forced to flee the destruction of their fragile community and their trials and triumphs in the face of extraordinary adversity as they pursue a glorious dream called "home".

▪ **Watsons Go to Birmingham, 1963...Christopher Paul Curtis**

The year is 1963, and self-important Byron Watson is the bane of his younger brother Kenny's existence. Constantly in trouble for one thing or another, from straightening his hair into a "conk" to lighting fires to freezing his lips to the mirror of the new family car, Byron finally pushes his family too far. Before this "official juvenile delinquent" can cut school or steal change one more time, Momma and Dad finally make good on their threat to send him to the deep south to spend the summer with his tiny, strict grandmother. Soon the whole family is packed up, ready to make the drive from Flint, Michigan, straight into one of the most chilling moments in America's history: the burning of the Sixteenth Avenue Baptist Church with four little girls inside.

(Like this? Read *Bud, Not Buddy* also by Christopher Paul Curtis.)



▪ **We Were Liars . . . E. Lockhart**

Cadence Sinclair Easton comes from an old-money family, headed by a patriarch who owns a private island off of Cape Cod. Each summer, the extended family gathers at the various houses on the island, and Cadence, her cousins Johnny and Mirren, and friend Gat (the four "Liars"), have been inseparable since age eight. During their fifteenth summer however, Cadence suffers a mysterious accident. She spends the next two years—and the course of the book—in a haze of amnesia, debilitating migraines, and painkillers, trying to piece together just what happened. Lockhart writes in a somewhat sparse style filled with metaphor and jumps from past to present and back again—rather fitting for a main character struggling with a sudden and unexplainable life change. The story, while lightly touching on issues of class and race, more fully focuses on dysfunctional family drama, a heart-wrenching romance between Cadence and Gat, and, ultimately, the suspense of what happened during that fateful summer. The ending is a stunner that will haunt readers for a long time to come.

▪ **Wednesday Wars . . . Gary Schmidt**

Holling Hoodhood is really in for it. He's just started seventh grade with Mrs. Baker, a teacher he knows is out to get him. Why else would she make him read Shakespeare . . . outside of class? The year is 1967, and everyone has bigger things than homework to worry about. There's Vietnam for one thing, and then there's the family business. As far as Holling's father is concerned, nothing is more important than the family business. In fact, all of the Hoodhoods must be on their best behavior at all times. The success of Hoodhood and Associates depends on it. But how can Holling stay out of trouble when he has Mrs. Baker to contend with?

▪ **Whale Talk . . . Chris Crutcher**

There's bad news and good news about the Cutter High School swim team. The bad news is that they don't have a pool. The good news is that only one of them can swim anyway. A group of misfits brought together by T. J. Jones (the J is redundant), the Cutter All Night Mermen struggle to find their places in a school that has no place for them. T.J. is convinced that a varsity letter jacket—exclusive, revered, the symbol (as far as T.J. is concerned) of all that is screwed up at Cutter High—will also be an effective tool. He's right. He's also wrong. Still, it's always the quest that counts. And the bus on which the Mermen travel to swim meets soon becomes the space where they gradually allow themselves to talk, to fit, to grow. Together they'll fight for dignity in a world where tragedy and comedy dance side by side, where a moment's inattention can bring lifelong heartache, and where true acceptance is the only prescription for what ails us.

▪ **When Zachary Beaver Came to Town . . . Kimberly Willis Holt**

Nothing ever happens in Toby's small Texas town. Nothing much until this summer that's full of big changes. It's tough for Toby when his mother leaves home to become a country singer. And Toby takes it hard when his best friend Cal's older brother goes off to fight in Vietnam. But now their sleepy town is about to get an even bigger jolt with the arrival of Zachary Beaver, billed as the fattest boy in the world. Toby is in for a summer unlike any other, a summer sure to change his life.

▪ **The Wind in the Willows . . . Kenneth Grahame**

One of the true classics of English literature, here are the adventures of Mole, Water Rat, Badger, and Toad. Grahame's idyllic world is as fresh now as when they first discovered his enchanting tales—of Ratty sculling his boat on the River, Badger grumpily entertaining his friends in his comfortable underground home, and the exasperating Toad being driven into one tangle after another by his obsession with motor cars.

- **Witness . . . Karen Hesse**

Leanora Sutter. Esther Hirsh. Merlin Van Tornhout. Johnny Reeves . . . These characters are among the unforgettable cast inhabiting a small Vermont town in 1924. A town that turns against its own when the Ku Klux Klan moves in. No one is safe, especially the two youngest, twelve-year-old Leanora, an African-American girl, and six-year-old Esther, who is Jewish. In this story of a community on the brink of disaster, told through the haunting and impassioned voices of its inhabitants, Newbery Award winner Karen Hesse takes readers into the hearts and minds of those who bear witness.

- **Wonder . . . R.J. Palacio**

*Wonder* is a rare gem of a novel--beautifully written and populated by characters who linger in your memory and heart. August Pullman is a 10-year-old boy who likes Star Wars and Xbox, ordinary except for his jarring facial anomalies. Homeschooled all his life, August heads to public school for fifth grade and he is not the only one changed by the experience--something we learn about first-hand through the narratives of those who orbit his world. August's internal dialogue and interactions with students and family ring true, and though remarkably courageous he comes across as a sweet, funny boy who wants the same things others want: friendship, understanding, and the freedom to be himself. "It is only with one's heart that one can see clearly. What is essential is invisible to the eye."