



## Summer Reading List

### GOOD READS

#### *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom

This true story about the love between a spiritual mentor and his pupil has soared to the bestseller list for many reasons. For starters: it reminds us of the affection and gratitude that many of us still feel for the significant mentors of our past. It also plays out a fantasy many of us have entertained: what would it be like to look those people up again, tell them how much they meant to us, maybe even resume the mentorship?

#### *Bad Boy: A Memoir* by Walter Dean Myers

This superb memoir begins simply with an account of Myers's family history and his boyhood. Vivid detail makes the Harlem of the '40s come alive, from the music and children's games to the everyday struggle for survival. As Myers grows older, however, his story also grows in complexity.

#### *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by 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 is regularly the target of bullies and loves to draw. 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.

#### *Same Difference* by Siobhan Vivian

Emily is ready for a change. She's been in the same town with the same friends for a long time...and none of them really understand her art. But when she goes to Philadelphia for a summer art institute, she suddenly finds like-minded people. One in particular, Fiona, intrigues and challenges her. But there are some things Emily is going to have to find out for herself -- like what the balance is between life and art, and which is more important when push comes to shove.

#### *Speak* by 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. 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 she knows the real reason why she's been struck mute...

## CHALLENGING READS

### *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

It is the story of eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove -- a black girl in an America whose love for its blond, blue-eyed children can devastate all others -- who prays for her eyes to turn blue: so that she will be beautiful, so that people will look at her, so that her world will be different. This is the story of the nightmare at the heart of her yearning, and the tragedy of its fulfillment.

### *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold

This novel works as an odd yet affecting coming-of-age story. Susie struggles to accept her death while still clinging to the lost world of the living, following her family's dramas over the years like an episode of *My So-Called Afterlife*. Her family disintegrates in their grief: her father becomes determined to find her killer, her mother withdraws, her little brother Buckley attempts to make sense of the new hole in his family, and her younger sister Lindsey moves through the milestone events of her teenage and young adult years with Susie riding spiritual shotgun.

### *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer

After graduating from Emory University in Atlanta in 1992, top student and athlete Christopher McCandless abandoned his possessions, gave his entire \$24,000 savings account to charity and hitchhiked to Alaska, where he went to live in the wilderness. Four months later, he turned up dead. His diary, letters and two notes found at a remote campsite tell of his desperate effort to survive, apparently stranded by an injury and slowly starving.

### *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

*The Namesake* is a tender, moving account of an immigrant Indian family's struggle to integrate with American life, while at the same time respecting the traditions of Bengali culture. Focusing primarily on the experiences of the American-born Gogol Ganguli, the novel consists of a series of key moments - minutely observed, delicately constructed episodes that force him to address questions of loyalty and belonging.

### *The Shining* by Stephen King

First published in 1977, *The Shining* quickly became a benchmark in the literary career of Stephen King. This tale of a troubled man hired to care for a remote mountain resort over the winter, his loyal wife, and their uniquely gifted son slowly but steadily unfolds as secrets from the Overlook Hotel's past are revealed.

### *Dracula* by Bram Stoker

An apparently routine business venture becomes a battle for a young man's very soul. Almost too late, Jonathan Harker realizes that the charismatic and seductive Count Dracula of Transylvania has come to England with a purpose much more sinister than merely to purchase an English estate. Will the Count succeed in his quest to create a race of blood-lusting creatures of the night? Which will prove the stronger—superstition or science?

**\*PLP READS** (Note: Only students with prior approval from Mrs. Weinberg or Mrs. Taylor may read books from this list)

*There's a Girl In My Hammerlock* by Jerry Spinelli

Maisie Potter knows what she wants, she knows why, and she knows how to get it. So when her teenage hormones begin acting up around Eric Delong, she abandons girls' field hockey for cheerleading. And when she doesn't make the squad, she patiently waits for next season's sports to begin, and to the horror of almost everyone in the school, tries out for wrestling. Of course, this is an all boys' team, and Eric Delong is one of those boys. Maisie makes the team and surprises everyone with her endurance and skill. She also makes more than her share of enemies, including Lizard Liz Lamplly, Eric's aggressive girlfriend, and Holly, her fickle best friend. But Maisie has heart and determination--she's a female Maniac Magee with an intact, nurturing family, and she picks up more well-wishers along the way, as pockets of strength appear in refreshingly whole supporting characters.

*This Place Has No Atmosphere* by Paula Danzinger

It's the year 2057 and students take classes in ESP, people live in malls, there aren't any parks left, and thanks to an airtight dome, there is a colony on the moon. Fourteen-year-old Aurora couldn't be happier--she's part of the "in" crowd, her best friend is a celebrity, and Matthew has asked her to Homecoming. But Aurora's parents have new jobs on the moon, and she and her little sister must leave their friends and schools to go with them. Aurora is sure she will hate life on the moon, because there are only 750 people in the whole colony. What if none of them is a boy her age?

*Wolf Rider* by Avi

In this psychological thriller, Avi explores the dilemma of 15-year-old Andy, who is convinced that the crank call that he has received is the confession of a murderer. His father thinks that he's lying. The school counselor warns him against "crying wolf." Finding that the supposed victim is still very much alive only increases Andy's determination to unmask the would-be killer if he can find him. Andy's heightening confusion and fear, and his increasing alienation from the adults in his world, are conveyed convincingly in an understated style with lots of dialogue. Unfortunately the adult characters' behavior is not as believable. Andy's father and the counselor seem too ready to distrust his story, and the mysterious caller's motive and behavior are not explained.

*Who Killed My Daughter? The True Story of a Mother's Search for Her Daughter's Murderer* by Lois Duncan

On July 16, 1989, Kaitlyn Arquette, a part-time college student and the author's daughter, was shot as she drove home in Albuquerque, N.M. She died the next day. The police department initially suspected that she had been the victim of a random shooting. The police ineptly handled developments in the case, charges Duncan, not because of incompetence, but due to laziness and stubborn adherence to the theory of the moment. Duncan's appeals to the FBI for help went unheeded. She turned to psychics, who offered leads, and to a private detective, who was ineffectual. Gradually it surfaced that the naive Kait had become involved through her live-in Southeast Asian boyfriend with a Vietnamese gang of drug smugglers who also dealt in insurance fraud, a gang that probably used Mexican Americans as hit men. The case is still unsolved, according to the author, and there are clues galore to be pursued.

*Slam!* by Walter Dean Myers

Seventeen-year-old Greg "Slam" Harris can do it all on the basketball court. He's seen ballplayers come and go, and he knows he could be one of the lucky ones. Maybe he'll make it to the top. Or maybe he'll stumble along the way. Slam's grades aren't that hot. And when his teachers jam his troubles in his face, he blows up. Slam never doubted himself on the court until he found himself going one-on-one with his own future, and he didn't have the ball.

*Stardust* by Neil Gaiman

In the sleepy English countryside of decades past, there is a town that has stood on a jut of granite for six hundred years. And immediately to the east stands a high stonewall, for which the village is named. Here in the town of Wall, Tristran Thorn has lost his heart to the hauntingly beautiful Victoria Forester. One crisp October night, as they watch, a star falls from the sky, and Victoria promises to marry Tristran if he'll retrieve that star and bring it back for her. It is this promise that sends Tristran through the only gap in the wall, across the meadow, and into the most unforgettable adventure of his life.