

Parish Episcopal Upper School Summer Reading

All Parish Upper School students should read 2 books this summer.*

1. All students must read the novel or play assigned to their entering grade level. Students will be evaluated on this novel by their English teacher.

9th Grade – *Of Mice and Men* by **John Steinbeck** (ISBN: 0140177396)

10th Grade – *Gilgamesh* by **Nancy K. Sandars** (translator) (ISBN: 014044100X)

11th Grade – *Beowulf* by **Seamus Heaney** (ISBN: 0393320979)

12th Grade – *The Glass Menagerie* by **Tennessee Williams** (ISBN: 0811214044)

2. All students must choose their 2nd book from the provided lists. Some books have been denoted as recommended if taking certain classes. A short essay over this book (details on following page) will be turned in to the student's English teacher during the first week of classes.

* Students admitted to Parish after August 15th are required to read only the grade level book.

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT
Summer Reading – Book of your choice

Your essay assignment is based on the novel you chose to read and should follow the criteria below.

The Audience: Your audience is an English teacher familiar with the novel.

The Length: At least 2 full pages

The Format: Double-space your essay, use 12 point Times New Roman font, and maintain 1 inch margins. Write in third person and use literary present tense.

The Due Date: Friday, August 27, 2010

The Topic: Your essay should show your understanding of the novel. In order to help you organize your essay, you should address the following.

1. Identify the main idea or theme of the novel.
2. How does the work accomplish the main idea? In other words, how does the author use language, conflict, plot, and/or characters to develop the main idea or theme?
3. Why is the main idea or theme significant to a reader?

The support for your essay's thesis must come from direct reference to the text, but you should avoid mere summary. Be aware that a penalty will be assessed on all late papers. Plagiarism is an honor code violation and will be dealt with according to guidelines in the Parish Student Handbook.

Suggested Reading List for Ninth and Tenth Grades

***Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**

With his first foray into teen literature, acclaimed author Sherman Alexie packs a punch in this absorbing novel about a Native American boy searching for a brighter future. At once humorous and stirring, Alexie's novel follows Junior, a resident of the Spokane reservation who transfers out of the reservation's school -- and into a nearby rich, all-white farm school -- in order to nurture his desire to become a cartoonist. Junior encounters resistance there, a backlash at home, and numerous family problems -- all the while relaying his thoughts and feelings via amusing descriptions and drawings. Having already garnered a National Book Award for Young Adult Literature, this moving look at race and growing up is definitely one to pick up.

***Alive* by Piers Paul Read**

On October 12, 1972, a plane carrying a team of young rugby players crashed into the remote, snow-peaked Andes. Out of the forty-five original passengers and crew, only sixteen made it off the mountain alive. For ten excruciating weeks they suffered deprivations beyond imagining, confronting nature head-on at its most furious and inhospitable. And to survive, they were forced to do what would have once been unthinkable.

***Always Looking Up* by Michael J. Fox**

In May 2000, when Michael J. Fox quit *Spin City*, the television sitcom he'd made famous, the degenerative effects of Parkinson's disease left this world-famous actor without an arena or a profession. "I found myself," Fox writes, "struggling with a strange new dynamic: the shifting of public and private personas. I had been Mike the actor, then Mike the actor with PD. Now was I just Mike with PD? Parkinson's had consumed my career and, in a sense, become my career. But where did all of this leave me?" *Always Looking Up* is the answer of an incurable optimist to that question. An exemplar memoir of living with a disability.

***The Art of Racing In the Rain* by Garth Stein**

Enzo, the dog of professional race car driver Denny Swift, recalls the memories of his life and shares his insight into the human condition that he learned from observing his owner.

***At Risk* by Alice Hoffman**

A small New England community is rocked when it is revealed that the young daughter of one of the families has AIDS.

***The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* by Barack Obama**

"We worship an awesome God in the Blue States, and we don't like federal agents poking around in our libraries in the Red States. We coach Little League in the Blue States, and yes, we've got some gay friends in the Red States. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq, and there are patriots who supported the war in Iraq." On July 27, 2004, U.S. Senate candidate Barack Obama riveted a nationwide television audience with his Democratic National Convention keynote speech. In this stirring volume, President Obama shares his thoughts about healing the divisions in our country.

***Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Siffe**

Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress is an enchanting tale that captures the magic of reading and the wonder of romantic awakening. An immediate international bestseller, it tells the story of two hapless city boys exiled to a remote mountain village for re-education during China's infamous Cultural Revolution. There the two friends meet the daughter of the local tailor and discover a hidden stash of Western classics in Chinese translation. As they flirt with the seamstress and secretly devour these banned works, the two friends find transit from their grim surroundings to worlds they never imagined.

***The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver**

Taylor Greer grew up poor in Kentucky in the '60s and '70s, managed to avoid pregnancy through high school, and earned enough money to buy a Volkswagen that would take her west.

***Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett**

A novel that is as lyrical and profound as it is unforgettable, *Bel Canto* engenders in the reader the very passion for art and the language of music that its characters discover. "A strange, terrific, spellcasting story." --"San Francisco Chronicle."

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

Set during World War II in Germany, Markus Zusak's groundbreaking new novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist -- books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her

neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau. This is an unforgettable story about the ability of books to feed the soul.

Colors of the Mountain by Da Chen

Colors of the Mountain is a classic story of triumph over adversity, a memoir of a boyhood full of spunk, mischief, and love, and a welcome introduction to an amazing young writer.

Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton

Cry, the Beloved Country is a beautifully told and profoundly compassionate story of the Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son Absalom, set in the troubled and changing South Africa of the 1940s.

Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

Christopher Boone is taking his A-level mathematics exams, does not tell jokes, will not eat any food that is yellow or black, and creates flow charts to make decisions. He is a typical fifteen-year-old, but one diagnosed with autism. Finding a murdered dog in his neighbor's front yard prompts him to begin investigating and writing a book as if he was Sherlock Holmes.

Days of Grace by Arthur Ashe

A remarkable and inspiring memoir by a remarkable and inspiring human being: Arthur Ashe, embodiment of courage and grace in every aspect of his life, from his triumphs as a great tennis champion and his determined social activism to his ordeal in the face of death, a casualty of AIDS.

Death Be Not Proud by John Gunther

Johnny Gunther was only seventeen years old when he died of a brain tumor. During the months of his illness, everyone near him was unforgettablely impressed by his level-headed courage, his wit and quiet friendliness, and, above all, his unflinching patience through times of despair. This deeply moving book is a father's memoir of a brave, intelligent, and spirited boy.

A Dog's Life by Peter Mayle

The bestselling author of *A Year in Provence* and *Hotel Pasis* now surveys his territory from a different vantage point: the all-fours perspective of his dog, Boy--"a dog whose personality is made up of equal parts Boswell and Dr. Johnson, Mencken and A. A. Milne" (*Chicago Sun-Times*).

Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us by Daniel Pink

Pink examines three elements of motivation and describes how to put them into action in order to achieve high performance and satisfaction in the workplace, school, and at home.

The Elegance of the Hedgehog by Muriel Barbery

Renee, a secretly cultured concierge at an elegant apartment building in the middle of Paris, meets Paloma, an intelligent twelve-year-old who behaves like a mediocre pre-teen until a wealthy Japanese man arrives at the building, causing Paloma and Renee to recognize each other's secrets.

Endurance by Alfred Lansing

Ernest Shackleton defined heroism in 1915 when his ship, *The Endurance*, was trapped in ice and then destroyed on its way to Antarctica. This tense week-by-week, month-by-month reconstruction charts the incredible journey undertaken by his crew of 27 men through 850 miles of the southern Atlantic's heaviest seas.

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11. This seemingly impossible task will bring Oskar into contact with survivors of all sorts on an exhilarating, affecting, often hilarious, and ultimately healing journey.

Flags of our Fathers by James Bradley

In this unforgettable, #1 *New York Times* bestselling chronicle of perhaps the most famous moment in American military history, Bradley (*Flyboys*) captures the glory, the triumph, the heartbreak, and the legacy of the six men who raised the flag at Iwo Jima.

***The Game of My Life: A True Story of Challenge Triumph, and Growing Up Autistic* by Jason McElwain**

The novel is an incredible true story of one high school student's determination to triumph against the challenges of autism-and his opponents on the basketball court. With four minutes and nineteen seconds left on the clock, and his team nursing a comfortable lead, the coach sent Jason McElwain-an autistic student and the team manager-into the game. Jason scored twenty points, including a school record six three-pointers. J-Mac, as McElwain became known, was carried off the court on his teammates' shoulders.

***Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho* by Jon Katz**

Geeks are the leaders of the new computer-reliant economy—they're the people who know the mechanics and workings of machines and programs. But that doesn't mean the world shows them respect. When parents, politicians, or pundits attack the Internet and other aspects of geek culture, the group is constantly misrepresented, ridiculed, and looked upon as corks about to pop.

***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows**

Juliet Ashton, a thirty-year-old author, writes to her publisher expressing her desire to stop covering the aftermath of WWII, but Guernsey farmer Dawsey Adams invites neighbors to write to Juliet with their stories, which puts her off at first but eventually helps her find inspiration for her next book, and her life.

***The Help* by Kathryn Stockett**

Skeeter returns home to Mississippi from college in 1962 and begins to write stories about the African-American women that are found working in white households, which includes Aibileen, who grieves for the loss of her son while caring for her seventeenth white child, and Minny, Aibileen's sassy friend, the hired cook for a secretive woman who is new to town.

***The Heretic's Daughter: A Novel* by Kathleen Kent**

Martha Carrier was one of the first women to be accused, tried and hanged as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts. Like her mother, young Sarah Carrier is bright and willful, openly challenging the small, brutal world in which they live. Often at odds with one another, mother and daughter are forced to stand together against the escalating hysteria of the trials and the superstitious tyranny that led to the torture and imprisonment of more than 200 people accused of witchcraft. This is the story of Martha's courageous defiance and ultimate death, as told by the daughter who survived. Kathleen Kent is a tenth generation descendent of Martha Carrier. She paints a haunting portrait, not just of Puritan New England, but also of one family's deep and abiding love in the face of fear and persecution.

***The Hot Zone* by Richard Preston**

The true story of how a deadly virus from the central African rain forest suddenly appears in a Washington, D.C., animal test lab. In a matter of days, 90% of the primates exposed to the virus are dead, and secret government forces are mobilized to stop the spread of this exotic "hot" virus.

***House of Abraham: Lincoln and the Todds, a Family Divided* by Stephen Berry**

This book traces the story of Mary Todd Lincoln's family, who were split between North and South during the Civil War, and describes how the war affected them and how the Todd family's divided loyalties impacted Abraham Lincoln's presidency.

***House Rules* by Jodi Picoult**

Emma Hunt's son Jacob, who has Asperger's syndrome and occasionally tries helping the police with his unique forensic analysis abilities, falls under suspicion when a murder occurs in town, reminding Emma of society's--and the legal system's--misunderstanding with regard to the behavioral cues associated with Asperger's.

***I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou**

Superbly told, with the poet's gift for language and observation, Angelou writes the autobiography of her childhood in Arkansas.

***Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer**

In April 1992, a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. He had given \$25,000 in savings to a charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet and invented a life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. Jon Krakauer brings Chris McCandless' uncompromising pilgrimage out of the shadows and illuminates it with meaning in this mesmerizing and heart-breaking tour de force.

***Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer**

A childhood dream of someday ascending Mount Everest, a lifelong love of climbing, and an expense account all propelled writer Jon Krakauer to the top of the Himalayas. His powerful, cautionary tale of an adventure gone horribly wrong is a must-read.

***It's Not about the Bike* by Lance Armstrong**

Multiple Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong is a winner in the game of life itself: He has survived cancer, found love, and become a father. In the pages of his memoir, Armstrong tells his own moving and inspiring story, writing in his signature down-to-earth Texas style. This is an amazing tale of recovery in the face of tragedy and victory against overwhelming odds.

***Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* by Mark Mathabane**

Mark Mathabane was weaned on devastating poverty and schooled in the cruel streets of South Africa's most desperate ghetto, where bloody gang wars and midnight police raids were his rites of passage. Like every other child born in the hopelessness of apartheid, he learned to measure his life in days, not years. Yet Mark Mathabane, armed only with the courage of his family and a hard-won education, raised himself up from the squalor and humiliation to win a scholarship to an American university. This extraordinary memoir of life under apartheid is a triumph of the human spirit over hatred and unspeakable degradation. For Mark Mathabane did what no physically and psychologically battered "Kaffir" from the rat-infested alleys of Alexandra was supposed to do — he escaped to tell about it.

***Last of the Breed* by Louis L'Amour**

It is the compelling story of U.S. Air Force Major Joe Mack, a man born out of time. When his experimental aircraft is forced down in Russia and he escapes a Soviet prison camp, he must call upon the ancient skills of his Indian forebears to survive the vast Siberian wilderness. Only one route lies open to Mack: the path of his ancestors, overland to the Bering Strait and across the sea to America. But in pursuit is a legendary tracker, the Yakut native Alekhin, who knows every square foot of the icy frontier—and who knows that to trap his quarry he must think like a Sioux.

***The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams* by Darcy Frey**

It ought to be just a game, but basketball on the playgrounds of Coney Island represents the only hope of escape from a life of crime, poverty, and despair for many young men. Here is the intimately-told story of dreams and cynicism--of the often painfully naive hopes of youth played out against the realities of SATs, the NCAA, and the brutal world of college recruitment.

***Leading with the Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life* by Mike Krzyzewski**

Leading with the Heart chronicles Coach K's background in a Polish Chicago neighborhood, where he was guided by parents who demanded honesty and integrity. From his days at the U.S. Military Academy playing under Coach Bobby Knight, Krzyzewski first learned that coaching meant more than showing players what to do and how to do it. It meant building an emotional bond of trust that gives his players the confidence and freedom to succeed both on and off the court.

***Left for Dead: My Journey Home from Everest* by Beck Weathers**

Candid and uncompromising, this is a deeply compelling saga of crisis and change and of the abiding power of love and family. On May 10, 1996, nine climbers perished in a blizzard high on Mount Everest, the single deadliest day ever on the peak. The following day, one of these victims was given a second chance. His name is Beck Weathers.

***A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah**

By now, nearly every habitual news watcher knows that child soldiers are being used as human pawns in dozens of conflicts around the world. Indeed, the figures are staggering: As many as 300,000 children are currently fighting in wars. Behind these distressing figures, of course, are real-life children, some as young as 8. Journalistic reconstructions can take us only so far into the lives of these boys; we had to wait for this firsthand account by Sierra Leone native Ishmael Beah to truly understand this ghastly, life-shattering practice.

***The Lost Symbol* by Dan Brown**

Harvard symbolologist Robert Langdon, at the U.S. Capitol Building to deliver a lecture, is drawn into a desperate search through the hidden tunnels and temples of Washington, D.C., when his mentor Peter Solomon, a prominent Mason and philanthropist, is kidnapped and the only clue to Solomon's whereabouts lies in an ancient invitation to a long-lost world of esoteric wisdom.

***The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett**

It's a treasure worth killing for. Sam Spade, a slightly shopworn private eye with his own solitary code of ethics. A perfumed grafter named Joel Cairo, a fat man name Gutman, and Brigid O'Shaughnessy, a beautiful and treacherous woman whose

loyalties shift at the drop of a dime. These are the ingredients of Dashiell Hammett's coolly glittering gem of detective fiction, a novel that has haunted three generations of readers.

March by Geraldine Brooks

From Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Brooks has taken the character of the absent father, March, and has added adult resonance to portray the moral complexity of war and a marriage tested by the demands of extreme idealism.

Mountains Beyond Mountains by Tracy Kidder

This story chronicles the life of Paul Farmer, focusing on his efforts to diagnose and cure infectious diseases and to bring modern medicine to the countries and people who need them most.

Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell

The author explores why some people are high achievers and others are not, citing culture, family, and upbringing as possible reasons some people are not as successful as others.

People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks

In 1996, Hanna Heath, an Australian rare-book expert, is offered the job of a lifetime: analysis and conservation of the famed *Sarajevo Haggadah*, which has been rescued from Serb shelling during the Bosnian war. Priceless and beautiful, the book is one of the earliest Jewish volumes ever to be illuminated with images. When Hanna, a caustic loner with a passion for her work, discovers a series of tiny artifacts in its ancient binding—an insect wing fragment, wine stains, salt crystals, a white hair—she begins to unlock the book's mysteries. Inspired by a true story, *People of the Book* is at once a novel of sweeping historical grandeur and intimate emotional intensity, an ambitious, electrifying work by an acclaimed and beloved author.

Prey by Michael Crichton

In the Nevada desert, an experiment has gone horribly wrong. A cloud of nanoparticles—micro-robots—has escaped from the laboratory. This cloud is self-sustaining and self-reproducing. It is intelligent and learns from experience. For all practical purposes, it is alive. It has been programmed as a predator. It is evolving swiftly, becoming more deadly with each passing hour. Every attempt to destroy it has failed. And we are the prey.

A River Runs Through It and other stories by Norman MacLean

From its first sentence to the last, this novella by Norman Maclean will captivate readers with its vivid images of the Blackfoot River, its tender yet realistic renderings of Maclean's father and brother and its uncanny blending of fly fishing with the affections of the heart.

The Samurai's Garden by Gail Tsukiyama

The Japanese invasion of China during the late 1930s as a somber backdrop for an unusual story about a 20-year-old Chinese painter named Stephen who is sent to his family's summer home in a Japanese coastal village to recover from a bout with tuberculosis. Here he is cared for by Matsu, a reticent housekeeper and a master gardener. Over the course of a year, Stephen learns Matsu's secret and gains not only physical strength but also profound spiritual insight. Matsu is a samurai of the soul, a man devoted to doing good and finding beauty in a cruel and arbitrary world, and Stephen is a noble student, learning to appreciate Matsu's generous and nurturing way of life and to love Matsu's soul mate, gentle Sachi, a woman afflicted with leprosy.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd

Living on a peach farm in South Carolina with her harsh, unyielding father, Lily Owens has shaped her entire life around one devastating, blurred memory - the afternoon her mother was killed, when Lily was four. Since then, her only real companion has been the fierce-hearted, and sometimes just fierce, black woman Rosaleen, who acts as her "stand-in mother."

Shoeless Joe by W.P. Kinsella

The inspiration for the movie *Field of Dreams*, *Shoeless Joe* is the ultimate baseball novel.

Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan by Greg Mortenson

Greg Mortenson describes his efforts to promote peace throughout the world, and details how he was able to establish over 130 schools--mostly for girls--in remote regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan with the backing of the Central Asia Institute--a nonprofit organization.

***Strength in What Remains* by Tracy Kidder**

The author relates his experiences speaking and traveling with an African refugee named Deo, who escaped genocide and earned his doctorate degree in medicine from Columbia University, to Burundi, where Deo built a hospital and reflected on the many deaths in the region.

***Talking God* by Tony Hillerman**

A grave robber and a corpse reunite Navajo Tribal Police Lt. Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee. As Leaphorn seeks the identity of a murder victim, Chee is arresting Smithsonian conservator Henry Highhawk for ransacking the sacred bones of his ancestors. As the layers of each case are peeled away, it becomes shockingly clear that they are connected, that there are mysterious others pursuing Highhawk, and that Leaphorn and Chee have entered into the dangerous arena of superstition, ancient ceremony, and living gods.

***Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen**

As a young man, Jacob Jankowski was tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. It was the early part of the great Depression, and for Jacob, now ninety, the circus world he remembers was both his salvation and a living hell. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was there that he met Marlena, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great gray hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and, ultimately, it was their only hope for survival.

***Waiting* by Ha Jin**

Waiting is a story of long-suffering love between a dutiful married doctor, Lin Kong, and an unmarried nurse, Manna Wu, he meets while working in a Chinese army hospital. Lin wants to divorce his wife, Shuyu, and marry Manna. He approaches his wife about a divorce several times, but each time she refuses. A loophole in Chinese law will allow Lin to divorce her, without her consent, if they are separated for 18 years. The "waiting" for Lin's divorce is the focus of the story.

***Where the Heart Is* by Billie Letts**

Abandoned by her boyfriend at a Wal-Mart in Oklahoma, Novalee Nation, 17 years old and seven months pregnant, soon discovers the treasures hiding in this small Southwest town.

***Zorro* by Isabel Allende**

A swashbuckling adventure story that reveals for the first time how Diego de la Vega became the masked man we all know so well.

Suggested Reading List for students taking AP U.S. History

***The Meaning of Independence: John Adams, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson* by Edmund S. Morgan**

Americans did not at first cherish the idea of political severance from their mother country. In just a few years, however, they came to desire independence above all else. What brought about this change of feeling and how did it affect the lives of their citizens? To answer these questions, Edmund S. Morgan looks at three men who may fairly be called the "architects of independence," the first presidents of the United States. Anecdotes from their letters and diaries recapture the sense of close identity many early Americans felt with their country's political struggles.

Suggested Reading List for students taking AP European History

***The Return of History And The End of Dreams* by Robert Kagan**

Hopes for a new peaceful international order after the end of the Cold War have been dashed by sobering realities: Great powers are once again competing for honor and influence. Nation-states remain as strong as ever, as do the old, explosive forces of ambitious nationalism. The world remains “unipolar,” but international competition among the United States, Russia, China, Europe, Japan, India, and Iran raise new threats of regional conflict. Communism is dead, but a new contest between western liberalism and the great eastern autocracies of Russia and China has reinjected ideology into geopolitics. Finally, radical Islamists are waging a violent struggle against the modern secular cultures and powers that, in their view, have dominated, penetrated, and polluted their Islamic world. The grand expectation that after the Cold War the world would enter an era of international geopolitical convergence has proven wrong.

For the past few years, the liberal world has been internally divided and distracted by issues both profound and petty. Now, in *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, Robert Kagan masterfully poses the most important questions facing the liberal democratic countries, challenging them to choose whether they want to shape history or let others shape it for them.

Suggested Reading List for Eleventh and Twelfth Grades

***Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**

With his first foray into teen literature, acclaimed author Sherman Alexie packs a punch in this absorbing novel about a Native American boy searching for a brighter future. At once humorous and stirring, Alexie's novel follows Junior, a resident of the Spokane reservation who transfers out of the reservation's school -- and into a nearby rich, all-white farm school -- in order to nurture his desire to become a cartoonist. Junior encounters resistance there, a backlash at home, and numerous family problems -- all the while relaying his thoughts and feelings via amusing descriptions and drawings. Having already garnered a National Book Award for Young Adult Literature, this moving look at race and growing up is definitely one to pick up.

***Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic* by John De Graaf, David Wann, and Thomas H. Naylor**

In chapters with titles like "Swollen Expectations" and "A Rash of Bankruptcies," *Affluenza*, from the producer of the award-winning TV specials *Affluenza* and *Escape from Affluenza*, uses the whimsical metaphor of a disease to tackle a very serious subject: the damage done — to our health, our families, our communities, and our environment — by the obsessive quest for material gain. The authors examine the origins, evolution, and symptoms of the affluenza epidemic. But more importantly, they explore cures and suggest strategies for rebuilding families and communities and for restoring and respecting the earth.

***Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors* by Piers Paul Read**

On October 12, 1972, a plane carrying a team of young rugby players crashed into the remote, snow-peaked Andes. Out of the forty-five original passengers and crew, only sixteen made it off the mountain alive. For ten excruciating weeks they suffered deprivations beyond imagining, confronting nature head-on at its most furious and inhospitable. And to survive, they were forced to do what would have once been unthinkable.

***Always Looking Up* by Michael J. Fox**

In May 2000, when Michael J. Fox quit *Spin City*, the television sitcom he'd made famous, the degenerative effects of Parkinson's disease left this world-famous actor without an arena or a profession. "I found myself," Fox writes, "struggling with a strange new dynamic: the shifting of public and private personas. I had been Mike the actor, then Mike the actor with PD. Now was I just Mike with PD? Parkinson's had consumed my career and, in a sense, become my career. But where did all of this leave me?" *Always Looking Up* is the answer of an incurable optimist to that question. An exemplar memoir of living with a disability.

***The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael Chabon**

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay, is a mid-century story of comic books, superheroes, and real-world survival. When Joe Kavalier, having recently fled Nazi-occupied Prague, teams up with comic book visionary and Brooklyn native Sammy Clay in New York City in 1939, the result is the comic book hero The Escapist. Thus begins Joe and Sammy's own flight into the world of a burgeoning new form of art and expression. Eventually, however, the reality of the war in Europe becomes unavoidable for even these masters of fantasy, setting the scene for an epic novel of great depth, humor, and wisdom.

***The Art of Racing In the Rain* by Garth Stein**

Enzo, the dog of professional race car driver Denny Swift, recalls the memories of his life and shares his insight into the human condition that he learned from observing his owner.

***The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* by Barack Obama**

"We worship an awesome God in the Blue States, and we don't like federal agents poking around in our libraries in the Red States. We coach Little League in the Blue States, and yes, we've got some gay friends in the Red States. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq, and there are patriots who supported the war in Iraq." On July 27, 2004, U.S. Senate candidate Barack Obama riveted a nationwide television audience with his Democratic National Convention keynote speech. In this stirring volume, President Obama shares his thoughts about healing the divisions in our country.

***Autobiography of a Face* by Lucy Grealy**

After a childhood illness and surgery left her jaw disfigured, it took the author twenty years of living with a distorted self-image and more than thirty reconstructive procedures before coming to terms with her appearance. The novel is a poignant, powerful, and ultimately liberating memoir.

***Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie**

In 1971 Mao's campaign against the intellectuals is at its height. Our narrator and his best friend, Luo, distinctly unintellectual but guilty of being the sons of doctors, have been sent to a remote mountain village to be "re-educated." The kind of education

that takes place among the peasants of Phoenix Mountain involves carting buckets of excrement up and down precipitous, foggy paths, but the two seventeen-year-olds have a violin and their sense of humor to keep them going. Further distraction is provided by the attractive daughter of the local tailor, possessor of a particularly fine pair of feet. Their true re-education starts, however, when they discover a comrade's hidden stash of classics of great nineteenth-century Western literature - Balzac, Dickens, Dumas, Tolstoy and others, in Chinese translation.

***Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett**

Somewhere in South America, at the home of the country's vice president, a lavish birthday party is being held in honor of Mr. Hosokawa, a powerful Japanese businessman. Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano, has mesmerized the international guests with her singing. It is a perfect evening -- until a band of gun-wielding terrorists breaks in through the air-conditioning vents and takes the entire party hostage. But what begins as a panicked, life-threatening scenario slowly evolves into something quite different, as terrorists and hostages forge unexpected bonds and people from different countries and continents become compatriots.

***Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo A. Anaya**

Antonio Marez is six years old when Ultima enters his life. She is a curandera, one who heals with herbs and magic. "We cannot let her live her last days in loneliness," says Antonio's mother. "It is not the way of our people," agrees his father. And so Ultima comes to live with Antonio's family in New Mexico. Soon Tony will journey to the threshold of manhood. Always, Ultima watches over him. She graces him with the courage to face childhood bigotry, diabolical possession, the moral collapse of his brother, and too many violent deaths. Under her wise guidance, Tony will probe the family ties that bind him, and he will find in himself the magical secrets of the pagan past—a mythic legacy equally as palpable as the Catholicism of Latin America in which he has been schooled.

***The Bonesetter's Daughter* by Amy Tan**

The novel weaves together two separate narratives: the story of LuLing, a young girl in 1930s China, and that of LuLing's daughter, Ruth, as a middle-aged woman in modern San Francisco. Ruth is a ghostwriter chafing under the weight of a stagnant relationship and coming to terms with the growing senility of her formidable mother. A widow for four decades, LuLing struggles to raise Ruth while battling the demons that chased her from her childhood in China to her new life in America. She longs for her beloved Precious Auntie, whose restless spirit wanders the world because her dead body was thrown off a cliff, not buried.

***Brimstone* by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Childs**

Art critic Jeremy Grove is found dead, his face frozen in a mask of terror. His body temperature is grotesquely high; he is discovered in a room barricaded from the inside; the smell of brimstone is everywhere, and the unmistakable imprint of a claw is burned into the wall. As more bodies are discovered--their only connection the bizarre but identical manner of death--the world begins to wonder if the Devil has, in fact, come to collect his due. Teaming with Police Officer Vincent D'Agosta, Agent Pendergast is determined to solve this case that appears to defy everything except supernatural logic.

***Colors of the Mountain* by Da Chen**

In 1962, as millions of Chinese citizens were gripped by Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution and the Red Guards enforced a brutal regime of communism, a boy was born to a poor family in southern China. *Colors of the Mountain* is a story of triumph, a memoir of a boyhood full of spunk, mischief, and love. The young Da Chen is part Horatio Alger, part Holden Caulfield; he befriends a gang of young hoodlums as well as the elegant, elderly Chinese Baptist woman who teaches him English and opens the door to a new life.

***A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole**

Awarded the Pulitzer Prize, *A Confederacy of Dunces* was not published until a decade after the death of the author. This wildly inventive and amusing novel features one of the most unforgettable characters in modern fiction: Ignatius Reilly. He's a mammoth misfit Medievalist hilariously at odds with the world of the twentieth century, and his adventures take him "way down" to New Orleans' lower depths.

***The Confessions of Max Tivoli* by Andrew Sean Greer**

When Max Tivoli is born in 1871, his parents are shocked to find that his body is that of an elderly man. Such is the beginning of Max's life in reverse: As he grows older, his body grows younger. At the end of his life, he finds himself in the body of an 11-year-old boy, writing his memoirs from the safety of a playground sandbox. Framing his second novel with this unusual device, Andrew Sean Greer has penned a love story: the story of Max's love for one woman, Alice, and the chances he has to act on that love.

***Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* by Daniel Pink**

Pink examines three elements of motivation and describes how to put them into action in order to achieve high performance and satisfaction in the workplace, school, and at home.

***East of Eden* by John Steinbeck**

This sprawling and often brutal novel, set in the rich farmlands of California's Salinas Valley, follows the intertwined destinies of two families--the Trasks and the Hamiltons--whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel.

***The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by Muriel Barbery**

Renee, a secretly cultured concierge at an elegant apartment building in the middle of Paris, meets Paloma, an intelligent twelve-year-old who behaves like a mediocre pre-teen until a wealthy Japanese man arrives at the building, causing Paloma and Renee to recognize each other's secrets.

***Everything Matters* by Ron Currie Jr.**

Junior Thibodeau comes of age in the 1980s with the knowledge that the world will end upon his thirty-sixth year, a prophecy revealed to him in utero, which forces him to have an existential crisis while dealing with his life and family.

***Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Saffron Foer**

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11. This seemingly impossible task will bring Oskar into contact with survivors of all sorts on an exhilarating, affecting, often hilarious, and ultimately healing journey.

***The Game of My Life: A True Story of Challenge Triumph, and Growing Up Autistic* by Jason McElwain**

The novel is an incredible true story of one high school student's determination to triumph against the challenges of autism-and his opponents on the basketball court. With four minutes and nineteen seconds left on the clock, and his team nursing a comfortable lead, the coach sent Jason McElwain--an autistic student and the team manager--into the game. Jason scored twenty points, including a school record six three-pointers. J-Mac, as McElwain became known, was carried off the court on his teammates' shoulders.

***Girl with the Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier**

History and fiction merge seamlessly in this luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* tells the story of sixteen-year-old Griet, whose life is transformed by her brief encounter with genius ... even as she herself is immortalized in canvas and oil.

***The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Walls**

Gossip columnist Jeanette Walls dishes the dirt on her own troubled youth in this remarkable story of survival against overwhelming odds. The child of charismatic vagabonds who left their offspring to raise themselves, Walls spent decades hiding an excruciating childhood filled with poverty and shocking neglect. But this is no pity party. What shines through on every page of this beautifully written family memoir is Walls's love for her deeply flawed parents and her recollection of occasionally wonderful times.

***The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer & Annie Barrows**

Juliet Ashton, a thirty-year-old author, writes to her publisher expressing her desire to stop covering the aftermath of WWII, but Guernsey farmer Dawsey Adams invites neighbors to write to Juliet with their stories, which puts her off at first but eventually helps her find inspiration for her next book, and her life.

***The Help* by Kathryn Stockett**

Skeeter returns home to Mississippi from college in 1962 and begins to write stories about the African-American women that are found working in white households, which includes Alibeen, who grieves for the loss of her son while caring for her seventeenth white child, and Minny, Alibeen's sassy friend, the hired cook for a secretive woman who is new to town.

***The Heretic's Daughter: A Novel* by Kathleen Kent**

Martha Carrier was one of the first women to be accused, tried and hanged as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts . Like her mother, young Sarah Carrier is bright and willful, openly challenging the small, brutal world in which they live. Often at odds with one

another, mother and daughter are forced to stand together against the escalating hysteria of the trials and the superstitious tyranny that led to the torture and imprisonment of more than 200 people accused of witchcraft. This is the story of Martha's courageous defiance and ultimate death, as told by the daughter who survived. Kathleen Kent is a tenth generation descendent of Martha Carrier. She paints a haunting portrait, not just of Puritan New England, but also of one family's deep and abiding love in the face of fear and persecution.

***The Hot Zone: A Terrifying True Story* by Richard Preston**

The true story of how a deadly virus from the central African rain forest suddenly appears in a Washington, D.C., animal test lab. In a matter of days, 90% of the primates exposed to the virus are dead, and secret government forces are mobilized to stop the spread of this exotic "hot" virus.

***The Hours* by Michael Cunningham**

In *The Hours*, Michael Cunningham, widely praised as one of the most gifted writers of his generation, draws inventively on the life and work of Virginia Woolf to tell the story of a group of contemporary characters struggling with the conflicting claims of love and inheritance, hope and despair. The narrative of Woolf's last days before her suicide early in World War II counterpoints the fictional stories of Richard, a famous poet whose life has been shadowed by his talented and troubled mother, and his lifelong friend Clarissa, who strives to forge a balanced and rewarding life in spite of the demands of friends, lovers, and family.

***House of Abraham: Lincoln and the Todds, a Family Divided by War* by Stephen Berry**

This book traces the story of Mary Todd Lincoln's family, who were split between North and South during the Civil War, and describes how the war affected them and how the Todd family's divided loyalties impacted Abraham Lincoln's presidency.

***House Rules* by Jodi Picoult**

Emma Hunt's son Jacob, who has Asperger's syndrome and occasionally tries helping the police with his unique forensic analysis abilities, falls under suspicion when a murder occurs in town, reminding Emma of society's--and the legal system's--misunderstanding with regard to the behavioral cues associated with Asperger's.

***Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer**

In April 1992, a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. He had given \$25,000 in savings to a charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet and invented a life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. Jon Krakauer brings Chris McCandless' uncompromising pilgrimage out of the shadows and illuminates it with meaning in this mesmerizing and heartbreaking tour de force.

***Into Thin Air* by Jon Krakauer**

A childhood dream of someday ascending Mount Everest, a lifelong love of climbing, and an expense account all propelled writer Jon Krakauer to the top of the Himalayas. His powerful, cautionary tale of an adventure gone horribly wrong is a must-read.

***Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* by Mark Mathabane**

Mark Mathabane was weaned on devastating poverty and schooled in the cruel streets of South Africa's most desperate ghetto, where bloody gang wars and midnight police raids were his rites of passage. Like every other child born in the hopelessness of apartheid, he learned to measure his life in days, not years. Yet Mark Mathabane, armed only with the courage of his family and a hard-won education, raised himself up from the squalor and humiliation to win a scholarship to an American university. This extraordinary memoir of life under apartheid is a triumph of the human spirit over hatred and unspeakable degradation. For Mark Mathabane did what no physically and psychologically battered "Kaffir" from the rat-infested alleys of Alexandra was supposed to do — he escaped to tell about it.

***The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini**

Despite their class differences, Amir, the son of a wealthy businessman, and Hassan, his devoted sidekick and the son of Amir's household servant, play together, cause mischief together, and compete in the annual kite-fighting tournament -- Amir flying the kite, and Hassan running down the kites they fell. But one day, Amir betrays Hassan, and his betrayal grows increasingly devastating as their tale continues. Amir will spend much of his life coming to terms with his initial and subsequent acts of cowardice and finally seek to make reparations. Hosseini's depiction of the cruelty children suffer at the hands of their "friends" will break your heart. And his descriptions of Afghanistan both before and after the war will haunt readers long after they've read the last page.

***The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams* by Darcy Frey**

Darcy Frey's landmark and heart-breaking story of a year in the life of four high school seniors from the Coney Island projects who are led down the primrose path of college scholarships and a possible life in the NBA. Unscrupulous coaches, shady recruiting policies, and winking sneaker companies are all put under the harsh light of this superb, disturbing book.

***Leading with the Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life* by Mike Krzyzewski**

Leading with the Heart chronicles Coach K's background in a Polish Chicago neighborhood, where he was guided by parents who demanded honesty and integrity. From his days at the U.S. Military Academy playing under Coach Bobby Knight, Krzyzewski first learned that coaching meant more than showing players what to do and how to do it. It meant building an emotional bond of trust that gives his players the confidence and freedom to succeed both on and off the court.

***Left for Dead: My Journey home from Everest* by Beck Weathers**

Candid and uncompromising, this is a deeply compelling saga of crisis and change and of the abiding power of love and family. On May 10, 1996, nine climbers perished in a blizzard high on Mount Everest, the single deadliest day ever on the peak. The following day, one of these victims was given a second chance. His name is Beck Weathers.

***A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy* by Ishmael Beah**

By now, nearly every habitual news watcher knows that child soldiers are being used as human pawns in dozens of conflicts around the world. Indeed, the figures are staggering: As many as 300,000 children are currently fighting in wars. Behind these distressing figures, of course, are real-life children, some as young as 8. Journalistic reconstructions can take us only so far into the lives of these boys; we had to wait for this firsthand account by Sierra Leone native Ishmael Beah to truly understand this ghastly, life-shattering practice.

***The Lost Symbol* by Dan Brown**

Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon, at the U.S. Capitol Building to deliver a lecture, is drawn into a desperate search through the hidden tunnels and temples of Washington, D.C., when his mentor Peter Solomon, a prominent Mason and philanthropist, is kidnapped and the only clue to Solomon's whereabouts lies in an ancient invitation to a long-lost world of esoteric wisdom.

***Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son* by Kevin Jennings**

Mama's Boy, Preacher's Son is that rare memoir that is both a riveting personal story and an inside account of a critical chapter in our recent history. Creating safe schools for teenagers is now a central part of the progressive agenda in American education. Like Paul Monette's landmark *Becoming a Man*, Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*, and Rick Bragg's *All Over but the Shoutin'*, Kevin Jennings's poignant, razor-sharp memoir will change the way we see our contemporary world.

***Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden**

Clearly Golden, a 40-something American male, has never lived anything remotely similar to the experiences of a geisha coming of age in the '30s, the glory days of Kyoto's Gion pleasure district. Yet it is precisely this vanished world that he re-creates with subtlety, sensuality, and supreme authority, bringing to life characters so complete and idiosyncratic — so fully sprung from the era he has evoked — that his novel ultimately overwhelms us, as seductive and beguiling as the geisha of its title.

***Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder**

This story chronicles the life of Paul Farmer, focusing on his efforts to diagnose and cure infectious diseases and to bring modern medicine to the countries and people who need them most.

***My Losing Season* by Pat Conroy**

My Losing Season charts the complete arc of Conroy's athletic history, focusing on his years at the Citadel in Charleston, South Carolina, and in particular on his senior season of 1966–67, when his demoralized team -- the Citadel Bulldogs -- lost 17 games out of 25. The narrative is dominated by a series of vivid, play-by-play accounts of the high and low points of an alternately inspiring and dispiriting season.

***My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult**

The complex and emotionally wrenching narrative unfolds from the alternating perspectives of a large cast of intriguing and likable characters. Picoult, who has handled such delicate topics as teen suicide and euthanasia in previous novels, proves equally adept with this sensitive and emotionally charged subject matter. In *My Sister's Keeper*, the author has crafted a compelling story that is heart-breaking and literate in equal measure.

***The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri**

Jhumpa Lahiri's quietly dazzling new novel, *The Namesake*, is that rare thing: an intimate, closely observed family portrait that effortlessly and discreetly unfolds to disclose a capacious social vision. In chronicling more than three decades in the Gangulis'

lives, Ms. Lahiri has not only given us a wonderfully intimate and knowing family portrait, she has also taken the haunting chamber music of her first collection of stories and reorchestrated its themes of exile and identity to create a symphonic work, a debut novel that is as assured and eloquent as the work of a longtime master of the craft.

Next by Michael Crichton

Devilishly clever, *Next* blends fact and fiction into a breathless tale of a new world where nothing is what it seems, and a set of new possibilities can open at every turn. *Next* challenges our sense of reality and notions of morality. Balancing the comic and bizarre with the genuinely frightening and disturbing, *Next* shatters our assumptions and reveals shocking new choices where we least expect.

Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult

Nineteen Minutes is a startling and poignant story about the devastating aftermath of a small-town tragedy. On one level, it's a thriller, complete with dismaying carnage, urgent discoveries and 11th-hour revelations, but it also asks serious moral questions about the relationship between the weak and the strong.

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

The novel tells the story of the rise and fall of the mythical town of Macondo through the history of the Buendia family. It is a rich and brilliant chronicle of life and death and the tragicomedy of humankind. In the noble, ridiculous, beautiful, and tawdry story of the Buendia family, one sees all of humanity, just as in the history, myths, growth, and decay of Macondo, one sees all of Latin America.

The Other Wes Moore: One Name Two Fates by Wes Moore

The author, a Rhodes scholar and combat veteran, analyzes the various sociocultural factors that influenced him as well as another man of the same name and from the same neighborhood who was drawn into a life of drugs and crime and ended up serving life in prison, focusing on the influence of relatives, mentors, and social expectations that could have led either of them on different paths.

Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood

Jimmy, perhaps the last living human unaltered by science, struggles for survival in a post-apocalyptic world as he tries to make sense of how everything went wrong, mourning the loss of his beloved Oryx, a girl he met through a website.

Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell

The author explores why some people are high achievers and others are not, citing culture, family, and upbringing as possible reasons some people are not as successful as others.

People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks

In 1996, Hanna Heath, an Australian rare-book expert, is offered the job of a lifetime: analysis and conservation of the famed *Sarajevo Haggadah*, which has been rescued from Serb shelling during the Bosnian war. Priceless and beautiful, the book is one of the earliest Jewish volumes ever to be illuminated with images. When Hanna, a caustic loner with a passion for her work, discovers a series of tiny artifacts in its ancient binding—an insect wing fragment, wine stains, salt crystals, a white hair—she begins to unlock the book's mysteries. Inspired by a true story, *People of the Book* is at once a novel of sweeping historical grandeur and intimate emotional intensity, an ambitious, electrifying work by an acclaimed and beloved author.

Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett

What makes *The Pillars of the Earth* extraordinary is the time—the twelfth century; the place—feudal England; and the subject—the building of a glorious cathedral. Follett has re-created the crude, flamboyant England of the Middle Ages in every detail. The building of the cathedral, with the almost eerie artistry of the unschooled stonemasons, is the center of the drama. Around the site of the construction, Follett weaves a story of betrayal, revenge, and love, which begins with the public hanging of an innocent man and ends with the humiliation of a king.

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys - best friends - are playing in a Little League baseball game in Gravesend, New Hampshire. One of the boys hits a foul ball that kills the other boy's mother. The boy who hits the ball doesn't believe in accidents; Owen Meany believes he is God's instrument. What happens to Owen, after that 1953 foul ball, is extraordinary and terrifying.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

A nameless man and a boy wander through a decimated landscape searching for means of survival and a reason for hope as barbaric hordes of people roam the streets and ash falls from the sky.

The Samurai's Garden by Gail Tsukiyama

The Japanese invasion of China during the late 1930s is a somber backdrop for an unusual story about a 20-year-old Chinese painter named Stephen who is sent to his family's summer home in a Japanese coastal village to recover from a bout with tuberculosis. Here he is cared for by Matsu, a reticent housekeeper and a master gardener. Over the course of a year, Stephen learns Matsu's secret and gains not only physical strength but also profound spiritual insight.

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams

It is a short list of 20th-century American plays that continue to have the same power and impact as when they first appeared - *A Streetcar Named Desire* is one of those plays. The story of the fading and desperate Blanche DuBois and how her sensuous and brutal brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski, pushes her over the edge is now classic.

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd

Living on a peach farm in South Carolina with her harsh, unyielding father, Lily Owens has shaped her entire life around one devastating, blurred memory - the afternoon her mother was killed, when Lily was four. Since then, her only real companion has been the fierce-hearted, and sometimes just fierce, black woman Rosaleen, who acts as her "stand-in mother."

Stones into School: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan by Greg Mortenson

Greg Mortenson describes his efforts to promote peace throughout the world, and details how he was able to establish over 130 schools--mostly for girls--in remote regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan with the backing of the Central Asia Institute--a nonprofit organization.

Strength in What Remains by Tracy Kidder

The author relates his experiences speaking and traveling with an African refugee named Deo, who escaped genocide and earned his doctorate degree in medicine from Columbia University, to Burundi, where Deo built a hospital and reflected on the many deaths in the region.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a breathtaking story set against the volatile events of Afghanistan's last thirty years -- from the Soviet invasion to the reign of the Taliban to post-Taliban rebuilding -- that puts the violence, fear, hope and faith of this country in intimate, human terms.

Under the Weight of Heaven: Writing from the Abbey of Gethsemani by John B. Lee (Editor)

The Abbey of Gethsemani is one of the most famous monasteries in the world. In this new Black Moss anthology, poet John B. Lee has pulled together a remarkable collection of writing about the Abbey by authors who have stayed there and by monks who have lived there. Against the backdrop of this writing is the presence of the late poet and philosopher Thomas Merton who made this Abbey famous with his book *Seven Storey Mountain*.

Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen

As a young man, Jacob Jankowski was tossed by fate onto a rickety train that was home to the Benzini Brothers Most Spectacular Show on Earth. It was the early part of the great Depression, and for Jacob, now ninety, the circus world he remembers was both his salvation and a living hell. A veterinary student just shy of a degree, he was put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It was there that he met Marlena, the beautiful equestrian star married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. And he met Rosie, an untrainable elephant who was the great gray hope for this third-rate traveling show. The bond that grew among this unlikely trio was one of love and trust, and, ultimately, it was their only hope for survival.

Waiting by Ha Jin

Waiting is a story of long-suffering love between a dutiful married doctor, Lin Kong, and an unmarried nurse, Manna Wu, he meets while working in a Chinese army hospital. Lin wants to divorce his wife, Shuyu, and marry Manna. He approaches his wife about a divorce several times, but each time she refuses. A loophole in Chinese law will allow Lin to divorce her, without her consent, if they are separated for 18 years. The "waiting" for Lin's divorce is the focus of the story.

The Well and the Mine by Gin Phillips

"After she threw the baby in, nobody believed me for the longest time. But I kept hearing the splash." So begins *The Well and the Mine*, a magnificent debut novel set in 1930s Alabama. The place is Carbon Hill, a small coal-mining community, in the midst of

the Depression. The Moore family, a loving brood of five, is better off than most, generous to their less fortunate neighbors. But darkness arrives at their doorstep when a mysterious woman throws a baby down the Moores' well, and the story slowly unfolds, through the alternating voices of nine-year-old Tess (who witnessed the crime); her older sister, Virgie; her brother, Jack; and her parents, Albert and Leta.

***West with the Night* by Beryl Markham**

Markham's *West with the Night* was originally published in the early 1940s and disappeared, only to be rediscovered and reprinted in the 1980s when it became a smash hit. This latest incarnation is a lavishly illustrated edition. Though Markham is known for setting an aviation record for a solo flight across the Atlantic from East to West-hence the title-she was also a bush pilot in Africa, sharing adventures with Blor Blixen and Denys Finch-Hatton of *Out of Africa* fame. Hemingway, who met Markham during his safari days, dubbed the book "bloody wonderful."

***The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga**

English-language Asian writers have adopted all manner of styles in the last three decades -- Raj nostalgia, magic realism, Zola-like fatalism - in their attempts to encapsulate India. What makes this much trumpeted debut novel by Aravind Adiga such a triumph is the strikingly contemporary voice with which it skewers its subject: a beguiling mix of pitch-black humor and devastating cynicism that feels both refreshingly modern and bracingly direct. As India rushes with careless abandon towards its longed-for status as an economic superpower, and as the gap between rich and poor grows ever wider, the country has found in Adiga an acerbic commentator more than capable of chronicling its often grotesque inequalities.

***Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee**

Plunged into a world of accusations, dishonesty, and pain, Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* paints a story of a harsh, problematic couple and their encounters with a seemingly perfect young pair. Set in the house of Martha and George on a college campus, Nick and Honey are innocently invited over after a party. Unfortunately, they are ignorant of the woes and anguish of the George and Martha relationship. They are shocked and almost disgusted by the devastatingly hurtful way Martha and George treat each other. Throughout the novel the reader is subjected to an all too realistic modern world where relationships are full of hate and spite and are familiarized with the virtues that have been lost for decades.

***A Year in Provence* by Peter Mayle**

This lyrical, witty ode to Provence has become the template for scores of travel essays by Mayle admirers. None of them, however, can match the blend of lighthearted humor and sensuous detail that Mayle offers his readers in *A Year in Provence*. The chronicle of a former advertiser who undertakes the renovation of a ancient French farmhouse, *A Year in Provence* introduces readers to a wealth of quirky characters, luscious meals, and innumerable mishaps as the author and his wife settle into the Provençal lifestyle.

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