



# BALMORAL HALL SCHOOL

## SUMMER READING LIST FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 11 SEPTEMBER, 2010

FROM THE FOLLOWING SUMMER READING LIST, PLEASE READ THE **REQUIRED TITLE** AS LISTED PLUS TWO ADDITIONAL WORKS. BE PREPARED TO OFFER ORAL OR WRITTEN RESPONSES WHEN SCHOOL RESUMES IN THE FALL.

**REQUIRED READING:** ENGLISH 30S LITERARY FOCUS:

HOSSEINNI, K. **THE KITE RUNNER**

This beautifully written first novel presents a glimpse of life in Afghanistan before the Russian invasion and introduces richly drawn, memorable characters. Quiet, intellectual Amir craves the attention of his father, a wealthy Kabul businessman. Kind and self-confident Hassan is the son of Amir's father's servant. The motherless boys play together daily, and when Amir wins the annual kite contest, Hassan offers to track down the opponent's runaway kite as a prize. When he finds it, the neighborhood bullies trap and brutalize him, as Amir stands by too terrified to help. Their lives and their friendship are forever changed, and the memory of his cowardice haunts Amir as he grows into manhood. Hassan and his father return to the village of their ancestors, and later Amir and his father flee to Los Angeles to avoid political persecution. Amir attends college, marries, and fulfills his dream of becoming a writer. When Amir receives word of his former friend's death under the Taliban, he returns to Kabul to learn the fate of Hassan's son. This gripping story of personal redemption will capture readers' interest.

ADDITIONAL CHOICES. READ **TWO** BOOKS.

ALBOM, MITCH. **TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE: AN OLD MAN, A YOUNG MAN, AND LIFE'S GREATEST LESSON.**

Mitch Albom's Tuesday night visits with his dying sociology professor, Morrie, offer valuable lessons about the art of living and dying with dignity.

DONNELLY, JENNIFER. **A NORTHERN LIGHT** (CARNEGIE MEDAL WINNER)

Donnelly's characters ring true to life and the meticulously described setting forms a vivid backdrop to this finely crafted story. In an intelligent colloquial voice that speaks with a writer's love of language and an observant eye, Mattie details the physical particulars of people's lives as well as deeper issues of race, class, and gender as she strains against family and societal expectations.

FITZGERALD, F. SCOTT. **TENDER IS THE NIGHT**

Set on the French Riviera in the late 1920s, *Tender Is the Night* is the tragic romance of the young actress Rosemary Hoyt and the stylish American couple Dick and Nicole Diver. A brilliant young psychiatrist at the time of his marriage, Dick is both husband and doctor to Nicole, whose wealth goads him into a lifestyle not his own, and whose growing strength highlights Dick's harrowing demise. A profound study of the romantic concept of character.

**KINGSOLVER, BARBARA. THE BEAN TREES**

Taylor Greer leaves Kentucky and heads west to find a new life. When a baby is abandoned in her car, she learns that responsibilities and independence are not mutually exclusive in this story of family and community.

**LAWSON, MARY. CROW LAKE (ALEX AWARD)**

For generations, learning has been the valued goal in Kate's family, but when her parents die, oldest brother Luke's college acceptance must be put aside so that he can keep the family together. Real help comes from their community in Rural northern Canada, and the initial efforts of the two oldest brothers make it possible for the younger children, including seven-year-old Kate, to remain in a household filled with love and humor. As an adult, however, Kate, a professor of environmental science in Toronto, looks back with a sense of tragedy and loss, not so much for her parents, but for her brother Matt. The reader knows that something terrible is going to happen, although which of the dire events is deemed worst is based on the child Kate's values and judgment. Lawson achieves a breathless anticipatory quality in her surprising adept first novel, in which a child tells the story, but tells it very well indeed.

**McCARTHY, CORMAC. THE ROAD (Pulitzer Prize)**

A man and a boy, father and son, "each the other's world entire," walk a road in "the ashes of the late world." In this stunning departure from his previous work, McCarthy (*No Country for Old Men*, 2005) envisions a postapocalyptic scenario. The man remembers the world before; as his memories die, so, too, dies that world. The boy was born after everything changed. The book's spare, precise language is rich with hope in the face of hopelessness, the ephemeral nature of our existence, and the vanishing worlds we all carry within us. McCarthy evokes Beckett, using repetition and negation to crushing effect, showing us by their absence the things we will miss. Though the focus never leaves the two travelers, they carry our humanity, and we can't help but feel the world hangs in the balance of their hopeless quest. A masterpiece.

**MCCOURT, FRANK. ANGELA'S ASHES**

Frank McCourt recollects his "miserable Irish Catholic childhood" in the squalor of Limerick. Absent any support from his glib, but shiftless, alcoholic father, the family suffered hunger, cruelty, disease, and the death of children.

**STEINBECK, JOHN. THE MOON IS DOWN (REQUIRED FOR STUDENTS TAKING WORLD ISSUES)**

Occupied by enemy troops, a small peaceable town comes face to face with evil imposed from the outside- and betrayal born within the close-knit community. As he delves into the motivation and emotions of the enemy commander and the quisling traitor, Steinbeck uncovers profound often unsettling truths about war- and about human nature.

WALLS, Jeanette. **THE GLASS CASTLE: A MEMOIR**

Walls, who spent years trying to hide her childhood experiences, allows the story to spill out in this remarkable recollection of growing up. From her current perspective as a contributor to MSNBC online, she remembers the poverty, hunger, jokes, and bullying she and her siblings endured, and she looks back at her parents: her flighty, self-indulgent mother, a Pollyanna unwilling to assume the responsibilities of parenting, and her father, troubled, brilliant Rex, whose ability to turn his family's downward-spiraling circumstances into adventures allowed his children to excuse his imperfections until they grew old enough to understand what he had done to them--and to himself. His grand plans to build a home for the family never evolved: the hole for the foundation of the "The Glass Castle," as the dream house was called, became the family garbage dump, and, of course, a metaphor for Rex Walls' life. Shocking, sad, and occasionally bitter, this gracefully written account speaks candidly, yet with surprising affection, about parents and about the strength of family ties--for both good and ill

**HISTORICAL FICTION**

HOLEMAN, LINDA. **SEARCH OF THE MOON KING'S DAUGHTER**

Emmaline's mother becomes a drug addict and sells her son as a chimney sweep. Will Emmaline ever find her brother? A powerful love story set in Victorian England.

KOGAWA, JOY. **OBASAN**

Naomi Nakane is six when the Japanese Canadians are deported from the coast to the interior of British Columbia and then to the sugar-beet fields of Alberta.

**SHORT STORY ANTHOLOGIES**

BOOK, RICK. **NECKING WITH LOUISE**

Seven interlinked stories chronicle sixteen-year-old Eric's encounters with love, life, and loss, as this robust but sensitive teenager stretches to become an adult.

MUNROE, ALICE. **RUNAWAY**

Alice Munro's superb new collection contains stories about women of all ages and circumstances, from a young woman who wants to leave her husband and a country girl who takes a job at a resort hotel to a woman who can foresee the future and its consequences. Alice Munro writes incomparable short stories. This compelling and empathetic collection gathers the lives of (primarily) girls and women, their secret betrayals, longings, and musings and presents them vividly and smartly.

**BIOGRAPHY/MEMOIRS**

ANGELOU, MAYA. **I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS**

In this first of five volumes of autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence. Sent at a young age to live with her grandmother in Arkansas, Angelou learned a great deal from this exceptional woman and the tightly knit black community there. These very lessons carried her throughout the

hardships she endured later in life, including a tragic occurrence while visiting her mother in St. Louis and her formative years spent in California--where an unwanted pregnancy changed her life forever. Marvelously told, with Angelou's "gift for language and observation," this "remarkable autobiography by an equally remarkable black woman from Arkansas captures, indelibly, a world of which most Americans are shamefully ignorant."

MILFORD, NANCY. **ZELDA: A BIOGRAPHY**

Zelda Sayre began as a Southern beauty, became an international wonder, and died by fire in a madhouse. With her husband, F. Scott Fitzgerald, she moved in a golden aura of excitement, romance, and promise. This book traces the inner disintegration of a gifted, despairing woman, torn by the clash between her husband's career, and her own talent.