



BALMORAL HALL SCHOOL

SUMMER READING LIST FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 12 SEPTEMBER, 2010

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

REQUIRED READING: ENGLISH 40S LITERARY FOCUS:

ATWOOD, MARGARET. **THE EDIBLE WOMAN**

Ever since her engagement, the strangest thing has been happening to Marian McAlpin: she can't eat. First meat. Then Eggs, vegetables, cake, pumpkin seeds—everything! Worse yet, she has the crazy feeling that she's being eaten. Marian ought to feel consumed with passion, but she really just feels...consumed. A brilliant and powerful work rich in irony and metaphor, *The Edible Woman* is an unforgettable masterpiece by a true master of contemporary literary fiction.

REQUIRED READING: ENGLISH 42S ADVANCED PLACEMENT - **TWO** BOOKS

1. ATWOOD, MARGARET. **THE EDIBLE WOMAN**

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2. FOSTER, THOMAS C. **HOW TO READ LITERATURE LIKE A PROFESSOR**

In this practical and amusing guide to literature, Thomas C. Foster shows how easy and gratifying it is to unlock those hidden truths and discover a world where a road leads to a quest, a shared meal may signify a communion; and rain, whether cleansing or destructive, is never just rain. Ranging from major themes to literary models, narrative devices, and form, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* is the perfect companion for making your reading experience more enriching, satisfying, and fun.

ADDITIONAL CHOICES. READ TWO BOOKS.

ADAMS, DOUGLAS. **HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY**

Join Douglas Adams's hapless hero Arthur Dent as he travels the galaxy with his intrepid pal Ford Prefect, getting into horrible messes and generally wreaking hilarious havoc. Dent is grabbed from Earth moments before a cosmic construction team obliterates the planet to build a freeway. You'll never read funnier science fiction; Adams is a master of intelligent satire, barbed wit, and comedic dialogue.

ATWOOD, MARGARET. **ALIAS GRACE**

In 1843, at the age of 16, Grace Marks, a recent Irish émigré to Canada, was sentenced to life in prison as an accomplice in a vicious double murder. Atwood draws a compelling portrait of what might have been.

BROWN, DAN. **DA VINCI CODE**

An exhaustively researched page-turner about secret religious societies, ancient cover-ups and savage vengeance. The action kicks off in modern-day Paris with the murder of the Louvre's chief curator, whose body is found, laid out in symbolic repose at the foot of the Mona Lisa.

BURGESS, ANTHONY. **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**

A first person account of a juvenile delinquent who undergoes state-sponsored psychological rehabilitation for his aberrant behaviour. A fantasy set in Orwellian future- a brilliant witty satire.

CHEVALIER, T. **GIRL WITH THE PEARL EARRING**

Set in 17th-century Delft, this historical novel intertwines the art of Johannes Vermeer with his life and that of a maiden servant in his household. From the few facts known about the artist, Chevalier creates the reality of the Netherlands. The parallel themes of tradesman/artist, Protestant/Catholic, and master/servant are intricately woven into the fabric of the tale. The painters of the day spent long hours in the studio, devising and painting re-creations of everyday life. The thrust of the story is seen through the eyes of Griet, the daughter of a Delft tile maker who lost his sight and, with it, the ability to support his family. Griet's fate is to be hired out as a servant to the Vermeer household. She has a wonderful sense of color, composition, and orderliness that the painter Vermeer recognizes. This is a completely absorbing story with historical authenticity and artistic intuition.

DAVIS, AMANDA. **WONDER WHEN YOU'LL MISS ME**

Faith was a fat girl, but after a suicide attempt keeps her hospitalized for seven months, she returns to school thinner, more attractive, and optimistic that things will get better. Not only do they stay the same, but the "fat girl" inside her is still serving as a gluttonous, pessimistic shadow and vocal instigator, trying to persuade her to skip town and to take revenge on her enemies. Davis's writing is at its finest when the protagonist is struggling through the constant trials with her distant mother, her ineffectual teachers, and her one true friend's suicide. Girls like Faith, and the reason for her suicide attempt, are well known in both fact and fiction. The author succeeds in making this character unique, with flaws that teens will relate to.

ESQUIREL, LAURA. **LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE**

A poignant, funny, story of forbidden romance for the youngest of three daughters. According to family tradition, she is to remain single to care for her mother in her old age, but eventually has two men who love her and must make her choice in life.

FLINN, ALEX. **BREATHING UNDERWATER**

Sent to counseling for hitting his girlfriend, Caitlin, and ordered to keep a journal, sixteen-year-old Nick recounts his relationship with Caitlin, examines his controlling behaviour and anger, and describes living with his abusive father.

GOLDEN, ARTHUR. **MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA**

Go behind the rice-paper screen of the geisha house to a vanished floating world of beauty and cruelty, from a poor fishing village in 1929 to the decade of the 1940s.

HADDON, MARK. **THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME**

Christopher has two mysteries to solve: who killed Wellington the dog, and what happened to his mother. But Christopher, who has Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism, approaches these mysteries and the world itself in a unique and special way.

ISHIQURO, K. **NEVER LET ME GO**

Come into the world of Hailsham, a British boarding school for “special” students”. The reminiscence is told from the point of view of Kathy H. as she and her friends try to unravel the mystery of their technical existence. But it is the reader who pieces together the meaning of their shared fate guided by a masterful author.

KESEY, KEN. **ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO’S NEST**

The counterculture embraced this allegory of individualism versus the establishment, which, as a film, gave Jack Nicholson one of his more memorable roles. Cowed by sadistic Nurse Ratched, the inmates of a mental hospital are galvanized by a new patient, the free-spirited McMurphy, who enters a pitched battle of wills with the nurse.

KIDD, SUE MONK. **SECRET LIFE OF BEES.**

This sweeping debut novel tells the tale of a 14-year-old white girl named Lily Owen who is raised by the elderly African American Rosaleen, after the accidental death of Lily's mother. Following a racial brawl in 1960s Tiburon, SC, Lily and Rosaleen find shelter in a distant town with three black bee-keeping sisters. While racial tensions simmer around them, the women help Lily accept her loss and learn the power of forgiveness. There is a wonderful sense of the strength of female friendship and love throughout the story.

MARTEL, Y. **LIFE OF PI** (Winner of the 2002 Man Booker Prize)

Pi Patel, a young man from India, tells how he was shipwrecked and stranded in a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger for 227 days. "I was alone and orphaned, in the middle of the Pacific, hanging on to an oar, an adult tiger in front of me, sharks beneath me, a storm raging about me." This deceptively complex three-part novel is ultimately about memory as a narrative and about how we choose truths.

MEYERS, KENT. **WORK OF WOLVES** (Alex Award)

In this unforgettable story of horses, love, and life, Carson and the entire ensemble of characters learn, in very different ways, about the strong bonds that connect people to each other and to the land on which they live.

SARAMAGO, JOSE. **BLINDNESS**

To describe as allegory this story of unnamed characters in an unnamed city who are struggling with an undiagnosed epidemic of "white blindness" is both too simple and too complex. Beyond any emblematic purpose, the characters act out life with all its paradoxes and hidden truths. Ultimately, the greater meaning here is the simple story of human frailty and community in the modern world. In searing prose, both complex and minimal, all this and nothing more is revealed. No wonder Saramago won the Nobel prize.

SEBOLD, A. **LOVELY BONES**

Sebold has taken a grim, media-exploited subject and fashioned from it a story that is both tragic and full of light and grace. Sebold's narrator, Susie Salmon, announces, "I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973." Susie is taking a shortcut through a cornfield when a neighbor lures her to his hideaway. The description of the crime is chilling, but never vulgar, and Sebold maintains this delicate balance between homely and horrid as she depicts the progress of grief for Susie's family and friends. In Susie's every observation and memory is the reminder that life is sweet and funny and surprising.

TAN, AMY. **THE KITCHEN GOD'S WIFE**

An absorbing story about the lives of a Chinese mother and her adult American-born daughter. Pressured to reveal to the young woman her secret past in war-torn China in the 1940s, Winnie weaves an unbelievable account of a childhood of loneliness and abandonment and a young adulthood marred by a nightmarish arranged marriage. Winnie survives her many ordeals because of the friendship and strength of her female friends, the love of her second husband, and her own steadfast courage and endurance. At the conclusion, her secrets are uncovered and she shares a trust/love relationship with her daughter, Pearl, that was missing from both their lives.

TOEWS, MIRIAM. **A COMPLICATED KINDNESS**

A 16-year-old rebels against the conventions of her strict Mennonite community and tries to come to terms with the collapse of her family in this insightful, irreverent coming-of-age novel. Canadian author Toews, who grew up in a similar community, raises a number of fascinating, beautifully dramatized questions about the toll unquestioning faith can take on the human spirit.

BIOGRAPHY

SOBEL, DAVA. **GALILEO'S DAUGHTER**

The extraordinary life and character of Galileo, touchingly illuminated by the surviving letters from his beloved daughter.

WAGNER-MARTIN, LINDA. **SYLVIA PLATH: A LITERARY LIFE, SECOND EDITION**

This book, part of a useful series that focuses on writers' working lives, reminds readers that, Plath's well-known personal suffering notwithstanding, "to read autobiographically...is to dismiss the artistry Plath demands of her writing, and often achieves in it." Thus, this study marks a cutting away of the inessential and a consolidation of the best that is known. Readers who want to know more about its personal and professional contexts would do well to begin with this succinct, commonsensical study.

NONFICTION

DIAMOND, JARED. **GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL**

The author offers a convincing explanation of the way the modern world came to be and stunningly dismantles racially based theories of human history.

SACKS, OLIVER. **THE MAN WHO MISTOOK HIS WIFE FOR A HAT: And Other Clinical Tales**

A collection of twenty true tales of individuals stricken with astonishing neurological disorders.

5/31/08