

*Shady Side Academy Senior School
Summer Reading 2018*



Summer Reading is an opportunity for you to explore some contemporary or classic books, challenging yourself with new ideas or becoming immersed in a gripping plot. You should choose a book that appeals to you and enjoy the process of reading. This is not the time to choose the shortest book or scurry onto the internet for a bland and superficial summary; this is not a time to follow someone else's expert recommendation. Rather, this is a time for you to lose yourself in a story, under a tree or near a body of water, basking in the beautiful summer. Dig in and enjoy!

You will read two (2) books over the summer. You are required to read a book from the lower-form (III and IV) list or upper-form (V and VI) list as your form in the fall dictates, plus a second book of your own choosing that you have not previously read. This second book can be a work of non-fiction or fiction, and all literary genres are welcome. The only requirement is that the selection be age-appropriate — nothing for much younger readers, please. Upon returning to school, students will be asked to deliver a short talk on this book in their English classes during the first week or so. This talk must include a brief summary, but it should focus primarily on an evaluation of the book — what about it was most and least effective, enjoyable, confusing, inspiring, etc., supported by specific evidence. More information on the presentations will be provided in the fall, but students should know in advance that each talk will last approximately five minutes and be followed by a short question-and-answer session. The presentation will also be graded as a minor assessment.

For the book selected from the lists below, you should think about questions that arise naturally from the text. What issues are raised by the text that you would like to talk about with other students? Formulate a discussion question for the book that will allow you to explore one of those issues, then respond to your own question in a 1- to 2-page typed response, using specific references to and quotations from your book where appropriate. Keep in mind that the focus of this piece should be on the exploration of an *issue* or *idea* raised in the book rather than on recounting *plot* or describing *characters*. So that these questions and responses can be used to fuel the Summer Reading Day book discussions in the fall, your write-up will be your ticket for admission to the discussion session. Be sure to put your fall English instructor's name on the write-up, and hand it to your discussion leader (who is unlikely to be your instructor) on the Summer Reading discussion day.

LOWER FORMS (III and IV)

Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda

By Becky Albertalli

Simon Spier is a seventeen-year-old with a secret – well, with several secrets. Some are his (he is gay and has not yet come out); some are the secrets of the people he cares most about (who is Blue, with whom he has been carrying on a romance by email?). When a classmate threatens to blackmail Simon, he has to decide who he is, who he wants to be, and what matters most to him. A funny, engaging novel about identity, friendship, love, and taking risks, *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* explores the fear and freedom of being yourself. Note: I will be giving a brief quiz at the beginning of our book discussion to weed out those who decided to watch "Love, Simon" rather than reading *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*.

Feed

By M. T. Anderson

In a future world where internet connections feed directly into the consumer's brain, thought is supplemented by advertising banners, and language has gone into a steep decline, a little love story unfolds. Titus, an average kid on a weekend trip to the moon, meets Violet, a brainy girl who has decided to try to fight the feed. Assaulted by a hacker who interrupts their connection, they struggle to understand what has happened to them – and to everyone around them. In his National Book Award Finalist *Feed*, M. T. Anderson has created a not-so-brave new world – and a smart, savage satire that has captivated readers with its view of an imagined future that veers unnervingly close to the here and now. (From M. T. Anderson's blog)

Dr. Mütter's Marvels: A true tale of intrigue and innovation at the dawn of modern medicine

By Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz

Imagine undergoing an operation without anesthesia, performed by a surgeon who refuses to sterilize his tools – or even wash his hands. This was the world of medicine when Thomas Dent Mütter began his trailblazing career as a plastic surgeon in Philadelphia during the mid-nineteenth century. Although he died at just forty-eight, Mütter was an audacious medical innovator who pioneered the use of ether as anesthesia, the sterilization of surgical tools, and a compassion-based vision for helping the severely deformed, which clashed spectacularly with the sentiments of his time. Brilliant, outspoken, and brazenly handsome, Mütter was flamboyant in every aspect of his life. He wore pink silk suits to perform surgery, added an umlaut to his last name just because he could, and amassed an immense collection of medical oddities that would later form the basis of Philadelphia's renowned Mütter Museum. (Description from Amazon.com)

Anxiety Sucks! A Teen Survival Guide (Volume 1)

By Natasha Daniels

and

Mindfulness for Teen Worry: quick and easy strategies to let go of anxiety, worry, and stress

By Bernstein, Jeffrey, PhD

Is anxiety overwhelming you? Are you tired of boring, long self-help books that do anything but help? Are you annoyed by suggestions that show the author doesn't really get anxiety? Until you have lived it – you will never understand anxiety's insidious moves. Anxiety is no fun! *Anxiety Sucks! A Teen Survival Guide* is short and to the point. Teens don't want to read long, boring books on anxiety. This book offers a

death blow to the anxiety dictator living in your head.

Mindfulness for Teen Worry will show you how living in the moment will dissolve worry and help you stay grounded in the here and now. You'll learn powerful and easy-to-use mindfulness skills to manage the four most common worry struggles teens face: school pressure, coping with friendship and relationship problems, improving body image, and handling family conflicts. You'll discover why you worry and the long-term destructive impacts worry can have on your life. And most importantly, you'll be introduced to simple, effective techniques to help you become more mindful – like harnessing the power of the breath and how to relax your body in times of stress. (Descriptions from Amazon.com)

The Binti Trilogy: *Binti*; *Binti: Home*; and *Binti: The Night Masquerade*

By Nnedi Okorafor

Okorafor is one of the leading writers of Afrofuturism, and if you enjoyed the film *Black Panther*, you should enjoy this series. The first novella in this trilogy won both the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award, and the third volume has just recently been published. Here's the Amazon description of the first volume to give you a sense of the trilogy's scope:

"Her name is Binti, and she is the first of the Himba people ever to be offered a place at Oomza University, the finest institution of higher learning in the galaxy. But to accept the offer will mean giving up her place in her family to travel between the stars among strangers who do not share her ways or respect her customs. Knowledge comes at a cost, one that Binti is willing to pay, but her journey will not be easy. The world she seeks to enter has long warred with the Meduse, an alien race that has become the stuff of nightmares. Oomza University has wronged the Meduse, and Binti's stellar travel will bring her within their deadly reach. If Binti hopes to survive the legacy of a war not of her making, she will need both the the gifts of her people and the wisdom enshrined within the University, itself — but first she has to make it there, alive."

The Shipping News

By Annie Proulx

This novel focuses on the life of Quoye, a lumpy, unattractive and vulnerable man whose life seems to crumble at every turn. He is forced to move with his two daughters to Flour Sack, Newfoundland, to live with a strange, maiden aunt. There, family secrets await – but also redemption and romance. This novel has moments of outrageous hilarity but also moments of “the good kind of sad.” There are a myriad of strange and fascinating characters who populate this small town and stunning descriptions of dramatic landscape for readers to enjoy as we learn to love and appreciate and cheer on the unfortunate but intrepid Quoye.

Family Life

By Akhil Sharma

This recent novel focuses on the Mishras, immigrants to the United States in the late 1970s. At first, the parents of this Indian family can hardly believe their good luck – they are awed by the everyday conveniences of American life and the promise of a successful future for their eldest son, Birju. Tragedy strikes, however, when Birju suffers a terrible accident. Narrated by Ajay, Birju's younger brother, Akhil Sharma's novel focuses on the family's response to a sudden change in fortune. Described as “an immigrant story like no other: funny and dark, unrelenting and above all, true” (Nell Freudenberger), this semi-autobiographical novel took its author twelve years to write, yet is brief and compelling enough to read very quickly. As Edmund White describes it, “*Family Life* is a terse, devastating account of growing up as a brilliant outsider in American culture. It is a nearly perfect novel.”

Once There Was a War

By John Steinbeck

In 1943 John Steinbeck was on assignment for *The New York Herald-Tribune*, writing from Italy and North Africa, and from England in the midst of the London blitz. In his dispatches he focuses on the human-scale effect of the war, portraying everyone from the guys in a bomber crew to Bob Hope on his USO tour and even fighting alongside soldiers behind enemy lines. Taken together, these writings create an indelible portrait of life in wartime. (From Goodreads.com)

Dracula

By Bram Stoker

Stoker crafts the definitive vampire tale that includes all your favorites: bites to the neck, stakes through the heart, and bats in the night. Stay up late and give yourself a good scare as you read this novel that's told through the letters of Count Dracula's victims and the reports of his hunters.

Love in the Driest Season

By Neely Tucker

In this memoir, foreign journalist Neely Tucker and his wife, Vita, live and work in Zimbabwe during the late 1990's. Through their volunteer work in an orphanage and in the city of Harare, where the AIDS epidemic has left many Zimbabwean children without parents, the Tuckers begin to care for Chipu, a sick baby girl who is discovered alone in a field. The Tuckers become foster parents to Chipu, and as they lovingly nurse her back to health they form an unbreakable bond with the small child. Their story reveals the struggles and obstacles they face as they try to legally adopt Chipu in a country that doesn't traditionally approve foreign adoptions.

Slaughterhouse-Five

By Kurt Vonnegut

Slaughterhouse-Five is the story of Billy Pilgrim, a decidedly non-heroic man who has become "unstuck in time." He travels back and forth in time, visiting his birth, death, and all the moments in between repeatedly and out of order. The novel is framed by Chapters One and Ten, in which Vonnegut himself talks about the difficulties of writing the novel and the effects of Dresden on his own life. In between, Billy Pilgrim's life is given to us out of order and in small fragments. This novel delves into the human toll that World War II has taken on the generation of Kurt Vonnegut.

UPPER FORMS (V and VI)

We Should All Be Feminists and Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in 15 Suggestions

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

We Should All Be Feminists (2015), a thought-provoking TED Talk turned essay, explores what it means to be a feminist in the 21st century and argues that we still have much introspection and cultural change to attend to in order to achieve “A fairer world. A world of happier men and happier women who are truer to themselves.” In *Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in 15 Suggestions* (2017) Adichie takes her observations and beliefs and turns them into practical suggestions for a friend who asked how to raise a feminist daughter in today’s world. In both essays, Adichie is humorous and disarming yet blunt about the impact that gender roles and expectations have on everyone in society and what we can all do about it.

The Power

By Naomi Alderman

This novel imagines a world much like ours in which women discover that they have "the power," an electrical charge that comes from a strip of muscle running along their collarbones. This electrical charge allows them to zap whatever they want, giving them physical dominance in this world. We see this society turned upside down through the eyes of Roxy, the daughter of a British crime boss; Allie, a young girl who escapes abuse in her Alabama foster home; Margot, a rising politician who is the mayor of a city in the United States; and Tunde, a young male journalist from Nigeria. Alderman's book, which has some scenes of physical and sexual violence, asks us to consider the corrupting nature of power and whether it is possible to have power and not abuse it.

Beartown

By Fredrik Backman

People say Beartown is finished. A tiny community nestled deep in the forest, it is slowly losing ground to the ever-encroaching trees. But down by the lake stands an old ice rink, built generations ago by the working men who founded this town. And in that ice rink is the reason people in Beartown believe tomorrow will be better than today. Their junior ice hockey team is about to compete in the national semi-finals, and they actually have a shot at winning. All the hopes and dreams of this place now rest on the shoulders of a handful of teenage boys. Being responsible for the hopes of an entire town is a heavy burden, and the semi-final match is the catalyst for a violent rape that will leave a young girl traumatized and a town in turmoil. Accusations are made and, like ripples on a pond, they travel through all of Beartown, leaving no resident unaffected. *Beartown* explores the hopes that bring a small community together, the secrets that tear it apart, and the courage it takes for an individual to go against the grain. In this story of a small forest town, Fredrik Backman has found the entire world. (From Amazon.com)

Something Wicked This Way Comes

By Ray Bradbury

Read a tale of chilling October this summer! Two fourteen-year-old boys, best friends, hear the call of the calliope from a mysterious carnival that lures its attendees with delights that satisfy darker desires than a hunger for cotton candy. The challenge tests their friendship and draws out a distant father as they resist the allure of the carousel to round and round and round . . .

Norse Mythology

By Neil Gaiman

Acclaimed fantasy author Neil Gaiman offers a fresh retelling of the major stories from the pantheon of Norse gods, giants, elves, Valkyries, and many other mystical beings. For those who don't have the patience for the *Prose Edda* and *Poetic Edda*, Gaiman takes the original tales and creates a more accessible narrative out of them, as Edith Hamilton once did with Greek mythology, with great success. Unlike the Marvel comic and film franchises, Gaiman takes few liberties with the adventures of his characters; he merely puts them together in ways that are more readable for modern audiences. If you have been curious about the original versions of Odin, Thor, Loki, and the rest of the Norse gang, here's your chance to find out.

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI

By David Grann

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI by David Grann is a non-fiction book that examines the murders of some of the wealthiest Americans during the 1920s. These millionaires were Native Americans of the Osage tribe living in the state of Oklahoma. At the close of the Wild West, the Osage found themselves sitting on top of a gold mine – black gold: that is, oil. The crude oil soon made them some of the richest people in the world. They built mansions, rode in chauffeured cars and sent their children to school in Europe. Their fortune, however, soon turned to grief as over twenty members of the tribe were murdered. Anyone who dared to investigate these homicides turned up murdered also. Eventually, the newly created Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) took on the case, one of the first homicide investigations in the agency's history. This true-life murder mystery will keep you on the edge of your seat trying to figure out who was behind these heinous crimes.

The Nightingale

By Kristin Hannah

In this historical fiction novel, Kristin Hannah tells the story of sisters Vianne and Isabelle and their struggle to survive under Nazi occupation in France during WWII. While Isabelle takes a more active stance against the Germans by joining the resistance, Vianne is forced to make difficult choices regarding the enemy in order to save her family. There is some violence and sexual content.

Soccernomics (2018 World Cup Edition): Why England Loses; Why Germany, Spain, and France Win; and Why One Day Japan, Iraq, and the United States Will Become Kings of the World's Most Popular Sport

By Simon Kuper and Stefan Szymanski

As former England striker and current football pundit Gary Lineker once said, "Football is a simple game; 22 men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans win." *Soccernomics*, by author Simon Kuper and economist Stefan Szymanski, is an attempt to explain why that happens. Kuper and Szymanski analyze historical trends and economic patterns to explain English failure, German and Spanish dominance, and the increased success of Asian teams, bringing a "Moneyball" approach to the beautiful game. The newly updated 2018 World Cup edition features sections on the recent exposure of FIFA corruption and Iceland's international success, while still making the case for why soccer truly is America's sport of the future. If you are planning to watch the World Cup this summer (or even if you aren't!) and want to learn more about the favorites, the underdogs, and the future of the global game, this is the book for you. **NOTE:** There are older editions of the book (first published 2009), but please read the new 2018 World Cup Edition (red rather than green cover) for the updated content.

I Love Capitalism! An American Story

By Ken Langone

Iconoclastic entrepreneur and New York legend Ken Langone tells the compelling story of how a poor boy from Long Island became one of America's most successful businessmen. Ken Langone has seen it all on his way to a net worth beyond his wildest dreams. A pillar of corporate America for decades, he's a co-founder of Home Depot, a former director of the New York Stock Exchange, and a world-class philanthropist (including \$200 million for NYU's Langone Health). In this memoir he finally tells the story of his unlikely rise and controversial career. It's also a passionate defense of the American Dream—of preserving a country in which any hungry kid can reach the maximum potential of his or her talents and work ethic. (From Amazon.com)

How Democracies Die

By Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt

Democracies can die in all sorts of ways. Military coups and revolutions are the most obvious, but rarely do democracies meet that kind of death today. Instead, they now die with a whimper. Harvard professors Levitsky and Ziblatt have both studied the breakdown of democracies in Europe and Latin America and ask here the startling question: is American democracy in danger?

Love in the Time of Cholera

By Gabriel García Márquez

Written by the Nobel Prize-winning Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez, this engrossing novel describes an unusual romance between the characters Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza. When Fermina opts to marry a wealthy doctor, Florentino waits his turn – for over fifty years! – until the time becomes right to again profess his love. One of the classic works of “magical realism” for which Márquez is justly famous, this novel should appeal to rising seniors who enjoyed their experience of Márquez in Literature of South America or Nobel Laureates. At the same time, it’s also a great pick for any reader who wants to get lost in a spellbinding setting peopled with colorful and unusual characters.

Goodbye Sarajevo: A True Story of Courage, Love and Survival

By Atka Reid and Hana Schofield

In May of 1992, Hana is twelve years old and she is put on one of the last UN evacuation buses fleeing the besieged city of Sarajevo. Her twenty-one-year-old sister, Atka, staying behind to look after their five younger siblings, is there to say goodbye. Thinking that they will be apart for only a few weeks, they make a promise to each other to be brave. But as the Bosnian war escalates and months go by without contact, their promise to each other becomes deeply significant. Set in the middle of the bloodiest European conflict since the Second World War, this book is a moving and compelling true story of courage, hope and extraordinary human kindness. (From Amazon.com)

Gates of Fire

By Steven Pressfield

In 480 B.C.E., an invading Persian army, two million strong, came to the mountain pass of Thermopylae in eastern Greece. Led by King Xerxes, they were met by the finest three hundred Spartan warriors where the rocky confines were so narrow that the Persian multitudes and their cavalry would be at least partially neutralized. Here, the Greek loyalists hoped, the elite force could hold off, at least for a short while, the invading millions. Narrated by the sole survivor of the epic battle – a squire in the Spartan heavy infantry – *Gates of Fire* is a depiction of one man's indoctrination into the Spartan way of life and death, and of the legendary men and women who gave the culture an immortal gravity. Culminating in the electrifying

and horrifying epic battle, *Gates of Fire* weaves history, mystery, and heartbreaking romance into a literary page-turner that brings the Homeric tradition into the 21st century. (from Barnes and Noble overview)

Grocery: the Buying and Selling of Food in America

By Mark Ruhlman

This well-written book provides not only a history of the American grocery store, but it also provides a look at how we shop for food. How has grocery shopping changed over the last 50 years? What is a healthy way to shop for food today? What are the driving forces behind what is placed on our grocery shelves? These questions and more are answered! As you may soon be buying food for yourself, you will want to learn more so that you can be an educated consumer.

An Anthropologist on Mars

By Oliver Sacks

Brilliant neurologist Oliver Sacks leads his readers through seven of his case studies of patients who face neurological impairment with the optimism and creativity that speaks of the best of humanity. His clients include artists, a blind fiancé who longs to see his bride, and the brilliant Temple Grandin. Sacks is a lyrical, even poetic, writer who brings science to the non-scientists and humanity to the scientists. This non-fiction text reads like a collection of short stories as it teaches about the brain and the many ways that people perceive the world around us.

Hellhound on His Trail

By Hampton Sides

On April 23, 1967, Prisoner #416J, an inmate at the notorious Missouri State Penitentiary, escaped in a breadbox. Fashioning himself Eric Galt, this nondescript thief and con man – whose real name was James Earl Ray – drifted through the South, into Mexico, and then Los Angeles, where he was galvanized by George Wallace's racist presidential campaign. On February 1, 1968, two Memphis garbage men were crushed to death in their hydraulic truck, provoking the exclusively African American workforce to go on strike. Hoping to resuscitate his faltering crusade, King joined the sanitation workers' cause, but their march down Beale Street, the historic avenue of the blues, turned violent. Humiliated, King fatefully vowed to return to Memphis in April. With relentless storytelling drive, Sides follows Galt and King as they crisscross the country, one stalking the other, until the crushing moment at the Lorraine Motel when the drifter catches up with his prey. Against the backdrop of the resulting nationwide riots and the pathos of King's funeral, Sides gives us a riveting cross-cut narrative of the assassin's flight and the sixty-five-day search that led investigators to Canada, Portugal, and England – a massive manhunt ironically led by Hoover's FBI. Magnificent in scope, drawing on a wealth of previously unpublished material, this nonfiction thriller illuminates one of the darkest hours in American life – an example of how history is so often a matter of the petty bringing down the great. (from the jacket cover)

Enough As She Is

By Rachel Simmons

For many girls today, the drive to achieve is fueled by brutal self-criticism and an acute fear of failure. Though young women have never been more "successful" – outpacing boys in GPAs and college enrollment – they have also never struggled more. On the surface, girls may seem exceptional, but in reality, they are anxious and overwhelmed, feeling that, no matter how hard they try, they will never be smart enough, successful enough, pretty enough, thin enough, popular enough, or sexy enough. Rachel Simmons has been researching young women for two decades, and her research plainly shows that girl

competence does not equal girl confidence – nor does it equal happiness, resilience, or self-worth. Backed by vivid case studies, Simmons warns that we have raised a generation of young women so focused on achieving that they avoid healthy risks, overthink setbacks, and suffer from imposter syndrome, believing they are frauds. As they spend more time projecting an image of effortless perfection on social media, these girls are prone to withdraw from the essential relationships that offer solace and support and bolster self-esteem. Deeply empathetic and meticulously researched, *Enough As She Is* offers a clear understanding of this devastating problem and provides practical parenting advice – including teaching girls self-compassion as an alternative to self-criticism, how to manage overthinking, resist the constant urge to compare themselves to peers, take healthy risks, navigate toxic elements of social media, prioritize self-care, and seek support when they need it. *Enough As She Is* sounds an alarm to parents and educators, arguing that young women can do more than survive adolescence. They can thrive. *Enough As She Is* shows us how. (From Amazon.com)

Wild

By Cheryl Strayed

At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother’s death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State – and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her. (From Strayed's website: http://www.cherylstrayed.com/wild_108676.htm.)

The Shadow of the Wind

By Carlos Ruiz Zafón

Barcelona, 1945: A city slowly heals in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. Daniel, an antiquarian book dealer’s son who mourns the loss of his mother, finds solace in what he finds in the “cemetery of lost books,” a mysterious book entitled *The Shadow of the Wind*, by one Julián Carax. But when he sets out to find the author’s other works, he makes a shocking discovery: someone has been systematically destroying every copy of every book Carax has written. In fact, Daniel may have the last of Carax’s books in existence. Soon Daniel’s seemingly innocent quest opens a door into one of Barcelona’s darkest secrets – an epic story of murder, madness, and doomed love. (From Penguin Random House)