



Ramaz Upper School Library
Suggested Summer Reading List 2015

Adichie, Ngozi Chimamanda, *Americanah* (Historical Fiction)

Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion—for each other and for their homeland.

Albom, Mitch, *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, A Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson* (Non-Fiction)

Mitch Albom reconnects with his college professor Morrie Schwartz. It's been nearly twenty years since he saw Morrie. Mitch rediscovered him in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class": lessons in how to live.

Alexie, Sherman, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Diary Fiction)

Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, was born an outsider with water on his brain, lopsided eyes, and an IQ oppressed by extreme poverty and a mediocre reservation education. After switching to an all-white high school he realizes that though he'll never easily fit in, self-determination and a solid personal identity will give him the chance to both succeed and transcend.

Asimov, Issac, *I, Robot* (Science Fiction)

Science fiction classic in which a Robot, accused of murder, has his day in court.

Asimov, Issac, *The Caves of Steel* (Science Fiction)

An earth plain clothes policeman must work with a robot from another world to solve the murder of a Spacer on Earth.

Baldwin, James, *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (African American Fiction)

A semi-autobiographical novel about a fourteen-year-old boy's discovery of the terms of his identity as the stepson of the minister of a storefront Pentecostal church in Harlem in 1935.

Ballard, J.G., *Empire of the Sun* (War & Military Fiction)

Shanghai, 1941, the streets are full of chaos and corpses and a young British boy searches in vain for his parents. Imprisoned in a Japanese concentration camp, he is witness to the white flash of Nagasaki, as the bomb bellows the end of the war.

Carr, Caleb, *The Alienist* (Historical Fiction)

In New York City in 1896 a reporter John Moore, psychologist Dr. Laszlo Kreizler, and police secretary Susan Howard join forces to catch a serial murderer.

Carver, Raymond, *Cathedral* (Short Stories)

A collection of short stories that overflow with the danger, excitement, mystery and possibility of life. Stories included: "Feathers" "Chef's House" "Preservation" "The Compartment" "A Small, Good Thing" "Vitamins" "Careful" "Where I'm Calling From" "The Train" "Fever" "The Bridle" "Cathedral."

Carver, Raymond, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (Short Stories)

Presents seventeen short stories which include: "Why Don't You Dance" "Viewfinder" "Mr. Coffee and Mr. Fixit" "Gazebo" "I Could See the Smallest Things" "Sacks" "The Bath" "Tell the Women We're Going" "After the Denim" "So Much Water So Close To Home" "The Third Thing that Killed my Father Off" "A Serious Talk" "The Calm" "Popular Mechanics" "Everything Stuck to Him" "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" "One More Thing."

Chabon, Michael, *The Amazing Adventure of Kavalier & Clay* (Humorous Fiction)

Joe Kavalier has managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Prague, and now he must use his cunning wits to help rescue his family from Hitler's evil plans.

Chabon, Michael, *Summerland* (Baseball Fiction)

The ferishers, little creatures who ensure perfect weather for Summerland, recruit Ethan Feld, one of history's worst baseball players, to help them in their struggle to save Summerland, and ultimately the world, from giants, goblins, and other legendary, terrible creatures.

Cheever, John, *The Stories of John Cheever* (Short Stories)

A collection of sixty-one of Cheever's short stories published from 1946-1975.

Cisneros, Sandra, *Carmelo or, Puro cuento : a novel* (Domestic Fiction)

LaLa learns the stories of her awful grandmother and weaves them into a colorful family history. The "caramelo," a striped shawl begun by her great-grandmother, symbolizes their traditions.

Cisneros, Sandra, *La Casa en Mango Street* (Domestic Fiction)

A young girl living in an Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago ponders the advantages and disadvantages of her environment and evaluates her relationships with family and friends.

Cooney, Caroline B., *The Face on the Milk Carton* (Missing Children Fiction)

No one ever paid close attention to the faces of the missing children on the milk cartons. But as Janie Johnson glanced at the face of the little girl with her hair in pigtails, wearing a dress with a white collar – a three year old who had been kidnapped twelve years before from a shopping mall in New Jersey – she felt overcome with shock. She recognized the little girl – it was she.

Cunningham, Michael, *The Hours* (Domestic Fiction)

Cunningham 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.

DeLillo, Don, *Falling Man* (Psychological Fiction)

Keith Neudecker, a survivor of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, returns home from the ruins to his wife Lianne, from whom he had separated, and his young son Justin, and finds in the aftermath that he has become a very different man.

Diaz, Juno, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Rites and Ceremonies Fiction)

Overweight and nerdy Oscar lives with his Dominican American mother and sister in New Jersey and dreams of becoming a renowned author and finding true love, but unfortunately, a family curse stands in the way of his wishes.

Dobson, Joanne, *Quieter Than Sleep* (Mystery Fiction)

(author visit to Ramaz – Fall 2010)

English professor and Emily Dickinson expert Karen Pelletier is as unlikely a sleuth as you'll ever find, and you'd think that an elite college such as Enfield would be as safe, cozy, and insulated as its reputation. But Enfield College is shaken to its Puritan roots when star English professor Randy Astin-Berger tumbles out of a closet into Karen's arms at a faculty cocktail party, strangled to death with his own flashy necktie.

Doctorow, E.L. *Billy Bathgate* (Historical Fiction)

This is the story of Billy Bathgate, a boy who has insinuated himself into the inner circle of the notorious Dutch Schultz Gang to become apprentice and protege to one of the great murdering gangsters.

Dubus, Andre, *House of Sand and Fog* (Domestic Fiction)

Former colonel for the Iranian Air Force believes he can create a new life for himself and his family when he buys an attractive bungalow in the California countryside. When the cottage's former owner wants her house back, he is willing to do anything to keep it.

Eggers, Dave, *What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng : a novel* (Sudanese Fiction)

As a young boy Valentino witnessed Arab militia men destroy his village, hid from hungry lions, wandered through wasted, desert landscapes, and narrowly escaped fatal disease, capture, starvation, and enlistment. The will to survive displayed here is almost as miraculous as this Sudanese "Lost Boy's" ability to recount the harrowing genocide of home and people with such thoughtfulness and grace.

Eggers, Dave, *The Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (Non-Fiction)

A memoir in which the author discusses the unrelated deaths of his parents within a period of months, his newly acquired responsibility for his eight-year-old brother, and his creation of a satirical magazine.

Elmore, Leonard, *Swag* (Mystery Fiction)

The smallest of small-time criminals, Ernest Stickley Jr. figures his luck's about to change when Detroit used-car salesman Frank Ryan catches him trying to boost a ride from Ryan's lot. Frank's got some surefire schemes for getting rich quick—all of them involving guns—and all Stickley has to do is follow "Ryan's Rules" to share the wealth. But sometimes rules need to be bent, maybe even broken, if one is to succeed in the world of crime, especially if the "brains" of the operation knows less than nothing.

Elmore, Leonard, *Fire in the Hole* (Short Stories)

Originally published as *When the Women Came Out to Dance*, Elmore Leonard's extraordinary story collection, *Fire in the Hole* are nine riveting tales of crime and (sometimes) punishment—including the title story starring U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens, which was the basis for the smash hit TV series *Justified*.

Erdich, Louise, *Murdering Indians – A Documentary History of the 1897 Killing That Inspired Louise Erdrich's the Plague of Doves* (Non-Fiction)

In February of 1897 a family of six—four generations, including infant sons and their aged great grandmother was brutally murdered in rural North Dakota. The weapons used were a shotgun, an axe, a pitchfork, a spade and a club. Several North Dakota Indians from the nearby reservation were arrested, one was tried, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The conviction was reversed by the state supreme court, which ordered a new trial. However, a one week later an angry mob broke into the county jail dragged three of the five accused Indians out, and hanged them from a butcher's windlass.

Erdich, Louise, *The Plague of Doves* (Domestic Fiction)

In 1911, a farm family is killed in Pluto, North Dakota, and three Ojibwe are lynched for the murders even though there is no evidence of their guilt. Years later the events of the crime reverberate among the descendants of those involved.

Erdrich, Louise, *Love Medicine* (Historical Fiction)

It is the story of two Native American families, the Kashpaws and the Lamartines and a multi-generational portrait of strong men and women caught in an unforgettable drama of anger, desire, and the healing power that is love medicine.

Eugenides, Jeffrey, *Middlesex* (Domestic Fiction)

Three generations of a Greek American family find themselves plagued by a mutant gene which causes bizarre side effects in the family's teenage girls.

Foer, Jonathan Safran, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Domestic Fiction)

Oskar Schell, a gifted 9-year old, explores the mystery of his father's death during the 9/11 attack.

Gaines, Ernest, *A Lesson Before Dying* (Friendship Fiction)

Jefferson, a young black man is about to go to the electric chair for murder. When Jefferson's attorney states, "I would just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this," disillusioned teacher Grant Wiggins is sent into the penitentiary to help Jefferson gain a sense of dignity and self-esteem before his execution.

Grahame-Smith, Seth, *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* (Historical Fiction)

When Abraham Lincoln was nine years old, his mother died from an ailment called the "milk sickness." Only later did he learn that his mother's deadly affliction was actually the work of a local vampire, seeking to collect on Abe's father's unfortunate debts.

While Abraham Lincoln is widely lauded for reuniting the North with the South and abolishing slavery from our country, no one has ever understood his valiant fight for what it really was. That is, until Seth Grahame-Smith stumbled upon *The Journal of Abraham Lincoln*, and became the first living person to lay eyes on it in more than 140 years.

Using the journal as his guide and writing in the grand biographical style of Doris Kearns Goodwin and David McCullough, Green has reconstructed the true life story of our greatest president for the first time—all while revealing the hidden history behind the Civil War, and uncovering the massive role vampires played in the birth, growth, and near-death of our nation.

Green, John, *Looking for Alaska* (Fiction)

Miles "Pudge" Halter's life has been one big non-event, and his obsession with famous last words has only made him crave "the Great Perhaps" even more (Francois Rabelais, poet). He heads off to the sometimes crazy and anything-but- boring world of Culver Creek Boarding School, and his life becomes the opposite of safe. Because down the hall is Alaska Young. She is a gorgeous, clever, funny, self-destructive, screwed up, and utterly fascinating young woman. She pulls Pudge into her world, launches him into the Great Perhaps, and steals his heart.

Hamill, Pete, *Snow in August* (Domestic Fiction)

Eleven-year-old Irish Catholic, Michael Devlin and Rabbi Judah Hirsch form a wonderful, if unlikely, friendship in Brooklyn in 1947, but the actions of a group of anti-Semitic thugs soon have them trapped in a spiral of hate and hoping for a miracle.

Harbach, Chad, *The Art of Fielding* (Domestic Fiction)

At Westish College, a small school on the shore of Lake Michigan, baseball star Henry Skrimshander seems destined for big league stardom. But when a routine throw goes disastrously off course, the fates of five people are upended. Henry's fight against self-doubt threatens to ruin his future.

Heller, Joseph, *Catch 22* (War & Military Fiction)

His problem is Colonel Cathcart, who keeps raising the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. Yet if Yossarian makes any attempts to excuse himself from the perilous missions that he's committed to flying, he's trapped by the Great Loyalty Oath Crusade, the bureaucratic rule from which the book takes its title: a man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, but if he makes the necessary formal request to be relieved of such missions, the very act of making the request proves that he's sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved.

Hemingway, Ernest, *The Nick Adams Stories* (Short Stories)

Describes fictional character Nick Adams growing from child to adolescent, to soldier, veteran, writer, and parent.

Hemingway, Ernest, *The Sun Also Rises* (Fiction)

It is a story of a group of 'Lost Generation' Americans and Brits in the 1920s on a sojourn from Paris to Pamploma, Spain. The novel poignantly details their life as expatriates on Paris' Left Bank, and conveys the brutality of bullfighting in Spain.

Hornby, Nick, *About A Boy* (Fiction)

Will, a thirty-six-year-old London bachelor, undergoes a change in his outlook about marriage and children when he lies to join a single parents group in order to meet women, and becomes friends with a needy twelve-year-old named Marcus.

Hornby, Nick, *High Fidelity* (Humorous Fiction)

Recently dumped by his wealthy girlfriend, record store owner, Rob Fleming finds himself in financial trouble and sets out on a pilgrimage to ask his former girlfriends where their relationships went wrong and to learn where his life went off track.

Hosseini, Khaled, *The Kite Runner* (Betrayal Fiction)

Years after he flees Afghanistan, Amir, now an American citizen, returns to his native land and attempts to atone for the betrayal of his best friend before he fled Kabul and the Taliban.

Irving, John, *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (Domestic Fiction)

In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys who were 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.

Ishiguro, Kazuo, *Never Let Me Go* (Science Fiction)

Only special students are chosen to attend Hailsham, an exclusive boarding school tucked away in the English countryside. The chilling truth of their special nature slowly unfolds as we follow the stories of three former students.

Jackson, Shirley, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (Psychological Fiction)

Merricat Blackwood protects her sister, Constance, from the curiosity and hostility of the villagers after murders occur on the family estate.

Jin, Ha *Waiting* (Historical Fiction)

Lin Kong struggles to balance his life between the two women he loves and the country that is trying to rule his life.

Jones, Edward P., *The Known World* (Historical Fiction)

Henry Townsend, an African farmer and former slave, is befriended by the most powerful man in antebellum Virginia's Manchester County and becomes proprietor of his own plantation, as well as of his own slaves.

Junger, Sebastian, *The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea*

(Non-Fiction)

It was the storm of the century, boasting waves over one hundred feet high—a tempest created by so rare a combination of factors that meteorologists deemed it "the perfect storm." In a book that has become a classic, Sebastian Junger explores the history of the fishing industry, the science of storms, and the candid accounts of the people whose lives the storm touched?

Kerouac, Jack, *On the Road* (Non-Fiction)

Swings to the rhythms of fifties underground America, jazz, sex, generosity, chill dawns, and drugs, with Sal Paradise and his hero Dean Moriarty, traveler and mystic, the living epitome of Beat.

Kidd, Sue Monk, *Secret Life of Bees* (Domestic Fiction)

Searching for the truth about her mother's life and death, a grieving Lily finds the answers, love and acceptance where she least expects it.

King, Stephen, *On Writing: a memoir of the craft* (Non-Fiction)

Stephen King reflects on how his writing has helped him through difficult times and describes various aspects of the art of writing.

Kingsolver, Barbara, *Animal, Vegetable and Miracle* (Non-Fiction)

The author tells how she and her family relocated to southern Appalachia from Arizona in order to live a simpler life, grow their own food, and live among a community of local organic growers.

Kingsolver, Barbara, *The Poisonwood Bible* (Historical Fiction)

This intense family drama is set in Africa on the verge of independence and upheaval. In 1959, evangelical preacher Nathan Price moves his wife and four daughters from Georgia

to a village in the Belgian Congo, later Zaire. Their dysfunction and cultural arrogance proves disastrous as the family is nearly destroyed by war.

Kushner, Rachel, *The Flamethrower* (Domestic Fiction)

Reno, so-called because of the place of her birth, comes to New York intent on turning her fascination with motorcycles and speed into art. Her arrival coincides with an explosion of activity—artists colonize a deserted and industrial SoHo, stage actions in the East Village, blur the line between life and art. Reno is submitted to a sentimental education of sorts—by dreamers, poseurs, and raconteurs in New York and by radicals in Italy, where she goes with her lover to meet his estranged family.

Lahiri, Jhumpa, *The Lowland* (Historical Fiction)

Subhash, having left his family in Calcutta to pursue a career in science in the United States, returns home to look into what happened to his brother, Udayan, who had joined the Naxalite Movement, and try to rebuild his shattered family and help his brother's wife.

Larson, Erik, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* (Non-Fiction)

The 1893 Chicago World's Fair captured the imagination of the whole world, and also provided a playground for a cunning serial killer.

Larson, Erik, *In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin* (Non-Fiction)

The time is 1933, the place, Berlin, when William E. Dodd becomes America's first ambassador to Hitler's Nazi Germany. Dodd brings along his wife, son, and flamboyant daughter, Martha. At first Martha is entranced by the parties and pomp, and the handsome young men of the Third Reich with their enthusiasm for restoring Germany to a position of world prominence. Enamored of the "New Germany," she has one affair after another. But as evidence of Jewish persecution mounts, confirmed by chilling first-person testimony, her father telegraphs his concerns to a largely indifferent State Department back home. Dodd watches with alarm as Jews are attacked, the press is censored, and drafts of frightening new laws begin to circulate. As that first year unfolds and the shadows deepen, the Dodds experience days full of excitement, intrigue and ultimately, horror, when a climactic spasm of violence and murder reveals Hitler's true character and ruthless ambition.

LeCarre, John, *A Most Wanted Man: a novel* (Fiction)

In Hamburg, Annabel, a civil rights lawyer, works to prevent Issa, a Muslim who is in Germany for mysterious purposes, from being deported, but in doing so she risks her own career and personal safety, and when Tommy Brue, a sixty-year-old British private banker, gets involved, German Intelligence takes an active interest.

Lethem, Jonathan, *Dissident Gardens* (Family Life Fiction)

Rose Zimmer, the aptly nicknamed Red Queen of Sunnyside, Queens, is an unreconstructed Communist who savages neighbors, family, and political comrades with the ferocity of her personality and the absolutism of her beliefs. Her equally passionate and willful daughter, Miriam, flees Rose's influence for the dawning counterculture of Greenwich Village. Despite their differences, they share a power to enchant the men in their lives: Rose's aristocratic German Jewish husband, Albert; her feckless chess hustler cousin, Lenny; Cicero Lookins, the brilliant son of her black cop lover; Miriam's Irish folksinger husband, Tommy Gogan; and their bewildered son, Sergius.

Lethem, Jonathan, *Motherless Brooklyn* (Mystery Fiction)

Lionel Essrog, a victim of Tourette's syndrome, is rescued from the St. Vincent's Home for Boys, along with three other boys, by local tough guy, Frank Minna who molds the group into a fly-by-night detective agency. When Frank is knifed and tossed in a dumpster, Lionel is forced to become a real detective in order to find the killer.

Maguire, Gregory, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (Fantasy Fiction)

The Wizard of Oz retold from the point of view of Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West. You'll never think of Oz the same way again.

Maksik, Alexander, *A Marker to Measure Drift* (Psychological Fiction)

In the aftermath of Charles Taylor's fallen regime, a young Liberian woman named Jacqueline has fled to the Aegean island of Santorini. She lives in a cave accessible only at low tide. During the day, she offers massages to tourists, battling her hunger one or two euros at a time. Her pressing physical needs provide a deeper relief, obliterating her memories of unspeakable violence.

Martel, Yann, *Life of Pi* (Psychological Fiction)

Pi Patel, having spent an idyllic childhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper, sets off with his family at the age of sixteen to start anew in Canada, but his life takes a marvelous turn when their ship sinks in the Pacific, leaving him adrift on a raft with a 450-pound Bengal tiger for company.

McBride, James, *The Good Lord Bird* (Historical Fiction)

Henry Shackleford is a young slave living in the Kansas Territory in 1857, when the region is a battleground between anti- and pro-slavery forces. When John Brown, the legendary abolitionist, arrives in the area, an argument between Brown and Henry's master quickly turns violent. Henry is forced to leave town—with Brown, who believes he's a girl.

McCarthy, Cormac, *All the Pretty Horses* (Domestic Fiction)

This is the story of young John Grady Cole, the last of a long line of Texas ranchers, who, along with two companions, sets off on an idyllic, sometimes comic adventure, to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.

McCarthy, Cormac, *The Road* (Science Fiction)

After an apocalyptic catastrophe, a father and his young son embark on a grim and perilous quest following the road to the sea.

McCourt, Frank, *Angela's Ashes: a memoir* (Non-Fiction)

Frank McCourt was born in Depression-era Brooklyn to Irish immigrants and raised in the slums of Limerick, Ireland. Frank's mother, Angela, has no money to feed the children since Frank's father, Malachy, rarely works, and when he does he drinks his wages. Wearing rags for diapers, begging a pig's head for Christmas dinner and gathering coal from the roadside to light a fire, Frank endures poverty, near-starvation and the casual cruelty of relatives and neighbors—yet lives to tell his tale with eloquence, exuberance, and remarkable forgiveness.

Momaday, N. Scott, *House Made of Dawn* (Historical Fiction)

Abel, a young American Indian home from a foreign war, finds himself torn between his father's world on the reservation and the lure of industrial America.

Morrison, Tony, *Beloved* (Historical Fiction)

Sethe, an escaped slave living in post-Civil War Ohio, struggles to keep Beloved, an intruder, from gaining possession of her present while throwing off the legacy of her past.

O'Brien, Tim, *In The Lake of the Woods* (Domestic Fiction)

After John and Kathy realize that their marriage has been built on deception, Kathy mysteriously disappears in the Minnesota north woods.

Orwell, George, *1984* (Fiction)

Winston Smith, a worker at the Ministry of Truth in the future political entity of Oceania, puts his life on the line when he joins a covert brotherhood in rebelling against the Party that controls all human thought and action.

Patchett, Anne, *State of Wonder* (Fiction)

Dr. Marina Singh, a research scientist with a Minnesota-based pharmaceutical company, is sent to Brazil after the death of her friend and colleague, to take up his mission of finding Dr. Annick Swenson, a ruthless woman, now in her seventies, who has been conducting research among the Lakashi tribe on a reputed miracle drug, and refuses to let anything stand in her way.

Patchett, Anne, *Bel Canto* (Psychological Fiction)

A group of international guests, taken hostage by terrorists while attending a birthday party at the home of the vice president of a small South American country, form bonds with their captors and enter into an almost idyllic lifestyle, united by the music of Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano.

Proulx, E. Annie, *The Shipping News* (Domestic Fiction)

Quoyle and his two emotionally disturbed daughters return to the family ancestral home in Newfoundland to start new lives.

Rice, Anne, *Interview with a Vampire* (Horror Fiction)

The time is now. We are in a small room with a vampire, face to face as he confesses. His confessions are hypnotic and shocking.

Riggs, Ransom, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (Mystery Fiction)

As a kid, Jacob formed a special bond with his grandfather over his bizarre tales and photos of levitating girls and invisible boys. Now at 16, he is reeling from the old man's

unexpected death. Then Jacob is given a mysterious letter that propels him on a journey to the remote Welsh island where his grandfather grew up. There, he finds the children from the photographs--alive and well--despite the islanders' assertion that all were killed decades ago. As Jacob begins to unravel more about his grandfather's childhood, he suspects he is being trailed by a monster only he can see.

Roth, Philip, *The Plot Against America* (Fiction)

This is a fascinating alternate history that takes a hard look at one of America's legendary heroes, Charles Lindbergh, and at how bigotry and fear can shape politics.

Russo, Richard, *Empire Falls* (Domestic Fiction)

Miles Roby is called back from college to the small town of Empire Falls in Dexter County, Maine to take care of his ailing mother. He falls into a rut that keeps him trapped until years later when a series of revelations and tragedies jolts him back into an awareness of his life.

Satrapı, Marjane, *The Complete Persepolis* (Non-Fiction)

Marjane Satrapı's memoir of her childhood in Iran during the Islamic Revolution is beautifully rendered in this graphic novel series.

Shields, Carol, *The Stone Diaries* (Domestic Fiction)

This is the story of an ordinary woman's struggle to find a place for herself in her own life.

Skloot, Rebecca, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Non-Fiction)

Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells were taken without her knowledge in 1951. This became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance. This is a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew.

Smiley, Jane, *A Thousand Acres* (Domestic Fiction)

Dark truths and long-suppressed emotions come to the surface in 1979 when a successful Iowa farmer decides to cut one of his daughters out of his will.

Smith, Patti, *Just Kids* (Non-Fiction)

It was the summer Coltrane died, the summer of love and riots, and the summer when a chance encounter in Brooklyn led two young people on a path of art, devotion, and initiation. Patti Smith would evolve as a poet and performer, and Robert Mapplethorpe would direct his highly provocative style toward photography. They traversed the city from Coney Island to Forty-Second Street, and eventually to the celebrated round table of Max's Kansas City. In 1969, the pair set up camp at the Hotel Chelsea and soon entered a community of the famous and infamous—the influential artists of the day, the colorful fringe. It was a time of heightened awareness, when the worlds of poetry, rock and roll, art, and sexual politics were colliding and exploding. In this milieu, two kids made a pact to take care of each other.

Spiegelman, Art, *Maus I: a survivor's tale: my father bleeds history* (Non-Fiction)

Memoir about Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and about his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father, his story, and with history itself. Cartoon format portrays Jews as mice and Nazis as cats.

Stegner, Wallace, *Angle of Repose* (Domestic Fiction)

This is the story of four generations in the life of the Ward family, from America's western frontier to today.

Strauss, Lee and Elle Strauss, *East of Eden* (Non-Fiction)

Eden Kelley is the primary caregiver for her mother who's in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, and she's only twenty-four. Not what Eden planned to do when she left her husband for a new start with her four-year-old daughter in tow. She'd hoped for free babysitting, but instead she found a mystery. The discovery of an erroneous marriage document leads to more questions that Eden's mother can't answer because she doesn't remember.

Styron, William, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (Historical Fiction)

The story is told of the short-lived, bloody rebellion of slaves in Southampton, Virginia, in August, 1831, as seen through the eyes of the instigator, Nat Turner.

Tan, Amy, *The Valley of Amazement* (Historical Fiction)

An epic of two women's intertwined fates and their search for identity that moves from the parlors of Shanghai courtesans to the mountains of a remote Chinese village. Spanning more than forty years and two continents, pivotal episodes in history are resurrected from the collapse of China's last imperial dynasty, to the rise of the Republic, to the inner workings of courtesan houses and the lives of the foreign "Shanghailanders" living in the International Settlement, both erased by World War II.

Tart, Donna, *The Goldfinch* (Psychological Fiction)

Theo Decker, a 13-year-old New Yorker, miraculously survives an accident that kills his mother. Abandoned by his father, Theo is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. Bewildered by his strange new home on Park Avenue, disturbed by schoolmates who don't know how to talk to him, and tormented above all by his longing for his mother, he clings to the one thing that reminds him of her: a small, mysteriously captivating painting that ultimately draws Theo into the underworld of art.

Vonnegut, Kurt, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Historical Fiction)

A fourth-generation German-American is tortured by his memories of the firebombing of Dresden in 1944 which he witnessed while a prisoner of war.

Vonnegut, Kurt, *Welcome to the Monkey House: a collection of short works*

(Short Stories)

A collection of twenty-five short works by the American author written between 1950 and 1968 and originally printed in a wide range of publications including "The Atlantic Monthly," "Esquire," and "Ladies' Home Journal." "Where I Live" "Harrison Bergeron" "Who Am I This Time?" "Welcome to the Monkey House" "Long Walk to Forever" "The Foster Portfolio" "Miss Temptation" "All the King's Horses" "Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog" "New Dictionary" "Next Door" "More Stately Mansions" "The Hyannis Port Story" "D.P." "Report on the Barnhouse Effect" "The Euphio Question" "Go Back to your Precious Wife and Son" "Deer in the Works" "The Lie" "Unready to Wear" "The Kid Nobody Could Handle" "The Manned Missiles" "EPICAC" "Adam" "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow."

Walker, Alice, *The Color Purple* (Domestic Fiction)

The story is told of two African-American sisters: Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a child-wife living in the south, in the medium of their letters to each other and in Celie's case, the desperate letters she begins, "Dear God."

Waugh, Evelyn, *Brideshead Revisted: the sacred and profane memories of Captain Charles Ryder* (Classics Fiction)

The most nostalgic and reflective novel looks back to the golden age before the Second World War. It tells the story of Charles Ryder's infatuation with the Marchmains and the rapidly-disappearing world of privilege they inhabit. Enchanted first by Sebastian at Oxford, then by his doomed Catholic family, in particular his remote sister, Julia, Charles comes finally to recognize only his spiritual and social distance from them.

Williams, Tennessee, *The Glass Menagerie* (Fiction)

Amanda, a faded southern belle, abandoned wife, and dominating mother, hopes to match her daughter Laura with an eligible "gentleman caller" while her son Tom supports the family. Laura, lame and painfully shy, evades her mother's schemes and reality by retreating to the make-believe world of her glass animal collection. Tom eventually leaves home to become a writer but is forever haunted by the memory of Laura.

Zusak, Marcus, *The Book Thief* (Historical Fiction)

Living in Nazi Germany, young Liesel and her family choose to lie and steal to protect a Jewish refugee hiding in their basement. Narrated by Death, this is not your typical World War II story.