Questions about summer reading texts and assignments should be directed to the grade-specific faculty member listed below.

**Grades 7 & 8:**

Sean Ball  
Kathy Dozier  
Andy Lemieux  

grades 7 & 8:

Kathy Dozier  
Andy Lemieux

**Grade 9:**

*World Literature I*

Noel Dougherty  
Camela Giraud

**Grade 10:**

*World Literature II*

Camela Giraud

**Grade 11:**

*American Literature*

Andy Lemieux

**Grade 12:**

*British Literature*

Noel Dougherty  
L’Tanya Evans

**Grade 12:**

*AP Literature and Composition*

L’Tanya Evans
Information on Book Editions

Please see the list below for information regarding the correct editions of required texts for Upper School English classes. Please make every effort to purchase and read the editions listed below.

**Grade 9: World Literature I**
Required Text:
*Catcher in the Rye*, J.D. Salinger  
ISBN: 9780316769174  
Publisher: Little, Brown and Co.

**Grade 10: World Literature II**
Required Text:
*Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon  
ISBN: 9781400032716

Additionally, for Honors 10th grade only
*The Gangster We Are All Looking For* by le thi diem thuy  
ISBN: 978-0-375700026

**Grade 11: American Literature**
Required Text:
*The Dante Club*, by Matthew Pearl  
ISBN: 034549038X  
Publisher: Random House

**Grade 11: AP Language & Composition**
Required Text:
*Narrative of the Life of F. Douglass*  
ISBN: 1593080417  
Publisher: Barnes and Noble

**Grade 12: British Literature**
Required Text:
*Dracula*, by Bram Stoker  
ISBN:978- 0393970128  
Publisher: Signet Classics

**Grade 12: AP Literature & Composition**
Required Text:
*Dubliners*, by James Joyce  
ISBN: 0-679-73990-4  
Publisher: Vintage International
Book Order Information

There are several sources you can utilize to locate and purchase your summer reading texts:

1. Classbook.com*
   We have requested that this web-based company order and stock the proper editions of our summer reading selections for your convenience. You can purchase your summer reading books, as well as assigned texts for next year’s classes by visiting http://www.classbook.com.

2. Circle Books*
   Circle Books, located on St. Armand’s Circle, has ordered copies of our assigned summer reading texts. Their address is 478 John Ringling Blvd., and they can be reached by phone at (941) 388-2850.

3. Little Bookworms*
   Little Bookworm’s, located on Main Street in Lakewood Ranch, has ordered copies of our assigned summer reading texts. Their address is 8111 Lakewood Main Street, and they can be reached by phone at (941) 907-3808.

4. Your local bookstore
   Many bookstores, including online retailers such as Amazon, regularly stock our summer reading titles, and may have the proper editions on their shelves.

*Because the above retailers are private companies not affiliated with The Out-of-Door Academy, we can not guarantee the consistency and accuracy of their service.

Middle School
Required Texts and Assignments

Grade 7 English

As students enter middle school, the learning pace begins to increase. They will be asked to handle a more challenging curriculum and take on more independent projects. Students are expected to read three books this summer. The following book is required:

*The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Students may select their second and third books from the following list:

*The Goats* by Brock Cole
*Sniper* by Theodore Taylor
*One Fat Summer* by Robert Lipsyte
*The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien
At the beginning of the year, students will be expected to write essays for the required book, and will have a quiz on their second and third choice text.

**Grade 8 English**

In eighth grade English, it is our hope that we will keep student’s minds in bloom all year long with a variety of stimulating activities. Students are expected to read three books. The following book is required:

*The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Students may select their second and third books from the following list:

- *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson
- *Ender’s Shadow* by Orson Scott Card
- *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Gathering Blue* by Lois Lowry

At the beginning of the year, students will be expected to write essays for the required book, and will have a quiz on their second and third choice text.

**Upper School**

**Required Texts and Assignments**

**General Instructions**

Students in grades 9 and 10 will be required to read *three* books.

Students in grades 11 and 12 are required to read *four* books.

If a student is enrolled in an Advanced Placement class with a required summer reading text or assignment, that book may be considered one of the four required summer texts. Assigned texts for Advanced Placement Classes can be found on pages that follow. AP assignments indicate whether their text counts towards the four required summer reading texts. Please note that students are expected to read what the English Department has set forth in this packet of information, in addition to what he/she may be assigned in other classes.

*Students enrolled in either AP Language and Composition or AP Literature and Composition will be required to complete assignments for their assigned texts. See pages the pages that follow for these additional assignments.*

Your English class has one required book. Please select the appropriate book for the class in which you are enrolled.

We have provided an extensive, annotated list of novels, plays, and short fiction collections from which you may choose your additional required texts. You are encouraged to read through the list and descriptions so that you can find books that are appealing to you. Please note, this list is made up of classic novels, novels that fit comfortably in the literary canon, which means that most high school students enrolled in college preparatory programs will have read or are expected to read them. Further, there are some charming, witty, contemporary, and interest-specific books on the list, as well. The asterisk (*) placed before some of the titles indicates that these novels are more accessible for younger readers.

You must complete your Summer Reading and any accompanying assignments by the first day of classes, Wednesday, August 26, 2009.
Grade 9 English: World Literature I

Required Text:
_Catcher in the Rye_ by J.D. Salinger

Please note Salinger's classic coming-of-age story portrays one young man's funny and poignant experiences with life.
Be prepared to discuss this novel in class. You will have an assignment specific to this book once school begins.

Students entering Grade 9 must also select two texts from the Annotated List located on the following pages. Students will use these texts to complete timed writing assignments at the beginning of the school year.

Grade 10 English

World Literature II & World Literature II Honors

Required Text:
_Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time_, by Mark Haddon

Christopher Boone is a fifteen year old young man who has Asperger’s, a form of autism. He knows a great deal about math and very little about human beings. When he finds out his neighbor’s dog is murdered he sets out on a terrifying journey which will turn his world upside down.

Students entering Grade 10 must also select two texts from the Annotated List on the following pages.
Students in Honors English 10 will also read

_The Gangster We are all Looking For_, by le thi diem thuy

This acclaimed novel reveals the life of a Vietnamese family in America the knowing eyes of a child finding her place and voice in a new country.

Students will use this text(s) to complete a writing assignment at the beginning of the school year.

Grade 11 English: American Literature

Required Text:
_The Dante Club_, by Matthew Pearl

_The Dante Club_, by Matthew Pearl
from RANDOM HOUSE PUBLISHING: In 1865 Boston, the members of the Dante Club — poets and Harvard professors Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, and James Russell Lowell, along with publisher J.T. Fields — are finishing America’s first translation of The Divine Comedy and preparing to unveil Dante’s remarkable visions to America... As they struggle to keep their sacred literary cause alive, the plans of the Dante Club are put in further jeopardy when a serial killer unleashes his terror on the city. Only the scholars realize that the gruesome murders are modeled on the descriptions from Dante’s _Inferno_ and its account of Hell’s torturous punishments. With the lives of the Boston elite and Dante’s literary future in America at stake, the Dante Club must find the killer before the authorities discover their secret.
Note: You must select and read three additional books from the annotated list on the following pages and be prepared to write about these texts on the first day of school.

Grade 11 English: AP Language & Composition

Required Text:

* Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, by Frederick Douglass *

Required Text: * Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, by Frederick Douglass *

No book except perhaps * Uncle Tom’s Cabin * had as powerful an impact on the abolitionist movement as * Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass *. But while Stowe wrote about imaginary characters, Douglass’s book is a record of his own remarkable life. Born a slave in 1818 on a plantation in Maryland, Douglass taught himself to read and write. In 1845, seven years after escaping to the North, he published *Narrative*, the first of three autobiographies. This book calmly but dramatically recounts the horrors and the accomplishments of his early years—the daily, casual brutality of the white masters; his painful efforts to educate himself; his decision to find freedom or die; and his harrowing but successful escape. An astonishing orator and a skillful writer, Douglass became a newspaper editor, a political activist, and an eloquent spokesperson for the civil rights of African Americans. He lived through the Civil War, the end of slavery, and the beginning of segregation. He was celebrated internationally as the leading black intellectual of his day, and his story still resonates in ours.

Required Assignment for * Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave *

Write a five-page memoir comparable to that of Douglass. Consider his approach to his subject, his purpose in ordering the narrative as he did, his word choice, tone and what imbues his text with such power.

Note: You must select and read three additional books from the annotated list on the pages that follow and be prepared to write about these texts on the first day of school.

Grade 12 English: British Literature

Required Text:

* Dracula, by Bram Stoker *

Required Text: * Dracula, by Bram Stoker *

A true masterwork of storytelling, * Dracula * has transcended generation, language, and culture to become one of the most popular novels ever written. It is a quintessential tale of suspense and horror, boasting one of the most terrifying characters ever born in literature: Count Dracula, a tragic, night-dwelling specter who feeds upon the blood of the living, and whose diabolical passions prey upon the innocent, the helpless, and the beautiful. But Dracula also stands as a bleak allegorical saga of an eternally cursed being whose nocturnal atrocities reflect the dark underside of the supremely moralistic age in which it was originally written -- and the corrupt desires that continue to plague the modern human condition.

Note: You must select and read three additional books from the annotated list on the pages that follow and be prepared to write about these texts on the first day of school.
Grade 12 English: AP Literature & Composition

Required Text:
Dubliners, by James Joyce

Required Assignment for Dubliners:
You are required to keep a reading/writing journal in AP English Literature. It should be at least 8.5 by 11 inches in size. You will begin this summer with your summer reading selections. In addition to reading you will handwrite at least five (5) entries for Joyce’s Dubliners. Dubliners is a series of short stories and they can be divided by the stages of life; youth, adulthood, public life, and the end of life. You will want to read the stories with this in mind.

Please note: you will complete five or more journal entries for each of the literary works you read from the annotated list as well.

Date the entry. State the title of the selection. There are two standard AP questions about every piece of writing: What is the author trying to accomplish (questions of purpose, theme, audience) and how is the author accomplishing it (questions of structure, rhetoric, voice, literary devices, etc.) Include brief summaries of the selections, but, most importantly, include YOUR reaction/responses to it/questions about it/ connections with other works and ideas. Offer concise/precise summaries and time line of events, if relevant. Share if it reminds you of something else you have seen, read, heard, or experienced. Are there lines of passages that stand out? If so, quote them and explain why you find them significant. Are there literary devices and/or techniques that influence the What? and How? of your selection? Write about lines or portions you do not understand or disagree with. Leave some space for you to add information about the selection and new insights you have gained through further reading and discussion and also for my comments.

Please Note: Your journal should be valuable to you as a place to store critical reading analysis on the literature that you study.

Note: You must select and read three additional books from the annotated list on the pages that follow and be prepared to write about these texts on the first day of school.

Advanced Placement Chemistry

Instructor: Nicole Schroeder
Contact: nschroeder@oda.edu

Required Text:
Advanced Placement Chemistry Summer Work
Textbook: Chemistry Seventh Edition by Zumdahl and Zumdahl

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Chapter Title</th>
<th>Readings and Practice Problems</th>
<th>Problems to be Graded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Atoms, Molecules, and Ions</td>
<td>1. Read and outline pages 39-67&lt;br&gt;2. Practice Problems: pgs 70-73 [25-69 odd] answers can be found in the appendix of the textbook</td>
<td>Pages 73-74 [72-88 even]&lt;br&gt;Page 74 [92]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Three | Stoichiometry | 1. Read and outline pages 77-112  
2. Practice Problems: pgs 117-122  
[27-105 odd] answers can be found in the appendix of the textbook | Pages 122-123 [108-122 even]  
Pages 123-124 [124-142 even] |
|-------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Seven | Atomic Structure and Periodicity | 1. Read and outline pages 275-318  
2. Practice Problems: pgs 321-326  
[31-109 odd] answers can be found in the appendix of the textbook | Pages 325-327 [112-130 even]  
Page 327 [138 and 140] |

This text counts towards your four required summer reading texts.

**Advanced Placement European History**

Instructor: Keith Lindsley  
Contact: klindsley@oda.edu

**Required Text:**  
*The History of Modern Europe*  
John Merriman

This text counts towards your four required summer reading texts.

AP European History students should read the first three chapters (pages 1-133) of their text listed above. Students are expected to take extensive and careful notes on the reading and learn important terms and themes. These notes will be checked on Tuesday, August 25, and you are required to be completed that day for continued enrollment in the class. These chapters will be reviewed during the first two weeks of school and will be the focus of our first unit test.

**Advanced Placement Latin**

Instructor: Nicole Fafalios  
Contact: nfafalios@oda.edu

**Required Text:**  
Virgil, *The Aeneid*  
translated by David West  
ISBN: 0140449329  
Publisher: Penguin

This text counts towards your four required summer reading texts.

**Required Assignment:**  
Students enrolled in Advanced Placement Latin must come to class having already read this text, created a character list and created a detailed summary for each book of *The Aenied* to help them review throughout the year.
Advanced Placement Physics

Instructor: Jim Kennon
Contact: jkennon@oda.edu

Required Text:
College Physics, by Serway & Faughn
ISBN: 0-03-023798X

This text counts towards your four required summer reading texts.

Required Assignment:
Students enrolled in Advanced Placement Physics must come to class in August having already read and comprehended chapters 2-8 in the required text.

Advanced Placement American History

Instructor: Rodney Woods
Contact: rwoods@oda.edu

Required Text:
America, Past and Present, ed. Divine
ISBN: 0321243803

This text counts towards your four required summer reading texts.

Required Assignment:
Students enrolled in AP American History must come to class in August having already read, taken thoughtful notes, and comprehended chapters 1-4 in the required text.
Upper School Annotated Choice Reading List

Texts are listed alphabetically by Title

* Denotes books that are more accessible and directed toward students in grades 9 and 10.
§ Denotes books that are designated AP Literature & Composition texts.

1984 by George Orwell
Winston Smith is a low-ranking member of the ruling Party in London, in the nation of Oceania. Everywhere Winston goes, even his own home, the Party watches him through telescreens; everywhere he looks he sees the face of the Party’s seemingly omniscient leader, a figure known only as Big Brother. The Party controls everything in Oceania, even the people’s history and language. Currently, the Party is forcing the implementation of an invented language called Newspeak, which attempts to prevent political rebellion by eliminating all words related to it. Even thinking rebellious thoughts is illegal. Such thoughtcrime is, in fact, the worst of all crimes. George Orwell’s prophetic, nightmarish vision of “Negative Utopia” is timelier than ever-and its warnings more powerful.

§ A Bend in the River by V.S. Naipaul
In the “brilliant novel” (The New York Times) V.S. Naipaul takes us deeply into the life of one man — an Indian who, uprooted by the bloody tides of Third World history, has come to live in an isolated town at the bend of a great river in a newly independent African nation. Naipaul gives us the most convincing and disturbing vision yet of what happens in a place caught between the dangerously alluring modern world and its own tenacious past and traditions.

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 to ‘way down, to New Orleans’ lower depths.

§ A Doll’s House by Henrik Ibsen
Ibsen’s best-known play displays his genius for realistic prose drama. An expression of women’s rights, the play climaxes when the central character, Nora, rejects a smothering marriage and life in “a doll’s house.”

§ A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway
The best American novel to emerge from World War I, A Farewell to Arms is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse. Hemingway’s frank portrayal of the love between Lieutenant Henry and Catherine Barkley, caught in the inexorable sweep of war, glows with an intensity unrivaled in modern literature, while his description of the German attack on Caporetto -- of lines of fired men marching in the rain, hungry, weary, and demoralized -- is one of the greatest moments in literary history. A story of love and pain, of loyalty and desertion, A Farewell to Arms, written when he was 30 years old, represents a new romanticism for Hemingway.

A Gathering of Old Men by Ernest J. Gaines
Set on a Louisiana sugarcane plantation in the 1970s, A Gathering of Old Men is a powerful depiction of racial tensions arising over the death of a Cajun farmer.

§ The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton
Deeply moving study of the tyrannical and rigid requirements of New York high society in the late 19th century and the effect of those strictrures on the lives of three people. Vividly characterized drama of affection thwarted by a man’s sense of honor, family, and societal pressures. This is a long-time favorite with readers and critics alike.

*A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines
Set in a small Cajun community in the late 1940s, *A Lesson Before Dying* is an “enormously moving” novel of one man condemned to die for a crime he did not commit and a young man who visits him in his cell. In the end, the two men forge a bond as they both come to understand the simple heroism of resisting—and defying—the expected.

*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll
*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* is one of the most exciting and original books in world literature. Lewis Carroll’s tale of childhood whimsy has something to offer anyone with a curiosity to follow Alice down the rabbit-hole.

*Aloft* by Chang-rae Lee
At 59, Jerry Battle is coasting through life. His favorite pastime is flying his small plane high above Long Island. Aloft, he can escape from the troubles that plague his family, neighbors, and loved ones on the ground. But he can’t stay in the air forever. Only months before his 60th birthday, a culmination of family crises finally pull Jerry down from his emotionally distant course. Written with a captivating urgency, *Aloft* is a witty social critique of contemporary suburban America and a deft portrait of a man struggling to balance his responsibilities with his freedoms. It is the story of Jerry Battle learning to cope with life’s messy details, and the redemption he finds when he finally chooses to immerse himself in them.

§*An American Tragedy* by Theodore Dreiser
The classic depiction of the harsh realities of American life, the dark side of the American Dream, and one man’s doomed pursuit of love and success.

§*Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy
Anna Karenina is the wife of a prominent Russian government official. She leads a correct but confining upper-middle-class existence. She seems content with her life as a proper companion to her dignified, unaffectionate husband and an adoring mother to her young son, until she meets Count Vronsky, a young officer of the guards. He pursues her and she falls madly in love with him. Her husband refuses to divorce her, so she gives up everything, including her beloved son, to be with Vronsky. After a short time, Vronsky becomes bored and unhappy with their life as social outcasts. He abandons her, returns to the military and is immediately accepted back into society. Anna, a fallen woman, shunned by respectable society, throws herself under a train.

§*The American* by Andrew Britton
The titular character of 24-year-old Britton’s debut thriller is no patriot. Jason March, a blond al-Qaeda operative with a ferocious grudge against the U.S.A., kicks off an orgy of revenge by blowing up Senate Majority Leader Daniel Levy’s motorcade, slaughtering the senator, his aide and assorted Secret Service personnel. Assigned to hunt down this killer is ex-CIA agent Ryan Kealey, March’s former commanding officer when they were both Special Forces soldiers in the U.S. Army. While on a secret mission years before, March wounded Kealey and murdered everyone else on the team. Now, Langley sends the uniquely qualified Kealey-along with CIA counterterrorism expert Naomi Kharmai-after the unstoppable killing machine. Other than the mildly interesting March, there’s little original material. The evil characters are numbingly familiar-al-Zarqawi and bin Laden loom large—and the usual Arab minions and murderers play out their predictable fictional roles. The writing never rises above the pedestrian: “The sands of the endless desert south of Kabul burned beneath the fiery orb above.”

§*A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster
A group of English visitors want to see the “real” India, and in Dr. Aziz they find a highly civilized companion. During a visit to the Marabar caves, one of the women accuses Dr. Aziz of sexually assaulting her, triggering a chain of events that will change the lives of people on both sides of this complex conflict.
§ A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce
A masterpiece of subjectivity, a fictionalized memoir, a coming-of-age prose-poem, this brilliant novella introduces Joyce’s alter ego, Stephen Daedelus, the hero of Ulysses, and begins the narrative experimentation that would help change the concept of literary narrative forever.

*A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
Set at a boys’ boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II, *A Separate Peace* is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence. Gene is a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas is a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happens between the two friends one summer, like the war itself, banishes the innocence of these boys and their world.

§A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams
The play reveals to the very depths the character of Blanche du Bois, a woman whose life has been undermined by her romantic illusions, which lead her to reject—so far as possible—the realities of life with which she is faced and which she consistently ignores. The pressure brought to bear upon her by her sister, with whom she goes to live in New Orleans, intensified by the earthy and extremely “normal” young husband of the latter, leads to a revelation of her tragic self-delusion and, in the end, to madness.

§ A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
*A Tale of Two Cities* is one of Charles Dickens’s most exciting novels. Set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, it tells the story of a family threatened by the terrible events of the past. Doctor Manette was wrongly imprisoned in the Bastille for eighteen years without trial by the aristocratic authorities. Finally released, he is reunited with his daughter, Lucie, who despite her French ancestry has been brought up in London. Lucie falls in love with Charles Darnay, another expatriate, who has abandoned wealth and a title in France because of his political convictions. When revolution breaks out in Paris, Darnay returns to the city to help an old family servant, but there he is arrested because of the crimes committed by his relations. His wife, Lucie, their young daughter, and her aged father follow him across the Channel, thus putting all their lives in danger.

*A Thousand Cranes* by Yasunari Kawabata
A melancholy tale uses the classical tea ceremony as a background for the story of a young man’s relationships to two women, his father’s former mistress and her daughter.

A Woman in Jerusalem by A.B. Yehoshua
A woman in her forties is a victim of a suicide bombing at a Jerusalem market. Her body lies nameless in a hospital morgue. She had apparently worked as a cleaning woman at a bakery, but there is no record of her employment. When a Jerusalem daily accuses the bakery of “gross negligence and inhumanity toward an employee,” the bakery’s owner, overwhelmed by guilt, entrusts the task of identifying and burying the victim to a human resources man. This man is at first reluctant to take on the job, but as the facts of the woman’s life take shape—she was an engineer from the former Soviet Union, a non-Jew on a religious pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and, judging by an early photograph, beautiful—he yields to feelings of regret, atonement, and even love. At once profoundly serious and highly entertaining, A. B. Yehoshua astonishes us with his masterly, often unexpected turns in the story and with his ability to get under the skin and into the soul of Israel today.

§As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner
The story revolves around a grim yet darkly humorous pilgrimage, as Addie Bundren’s family sets out to fulfill her last wish: to be buried in her native Jefferson, Mississippi, far from the miserable backwater surroundings of her married life. Told through multiple voices, it vividly brings to life Faulkner’s imaginary South, one of the great invented landscapes in all of literature, and is replete with the poignant, impoverished, violent, and hypnotically fascinating characters that were his trademark.
**Baudilino** by Umberto Eco

It is April 1204, and Constantinople, the splendid capital of the Byzantine Empire, is being sacked and burned by the knights of the Fourth Crusade. Amid the carnage and confusion, one Baudolino saves a historian and high court official from certain death at the hands of the crusading warriors and proceeds to tell his own fantastical story. Born a simple peasant in northern Italy, Baudolino has two major gifts—a talent for learning languages and a skill in telling lies. When still a boy he meets a foreign commander in the woods, charming him with his quick wit and lively mind. The commander—who proves to be Emperor Frederick Barbarossa—adopts Baudolino and sends him to the university in Paris, where he makes a number of fearless, adventurous friends. Spurred on by myths and their own reveries, this merry band sets out in search of Prester John, a legendary priest-king said to rule over a vast kingdom in the East—a phantasmagorical land of strange creatures with eyes on their shoulders and mouths on their stomachs, of eunuchs, unicorns, and lovely maidens.

*The Beekeeper’s Apprentice, or,*  
*on the Segregation of the Queen* by Laurie R. King.

Retired Sherlock Holmes meets his intellectual match in 15-year-old Mary Russell, who challenges him to investigate yet another case.

§**Billy Budd** by Herman Melville

Aboard the warship Bellipotent, the young orphan Billy Budd was called the handsome sailor. Billy was tall, athletic, noble looking; he was friendly, innocent, helpful and ever-cheerful. He was a fierce fighter and a loyal friend. All the men and officers liked him, all but one: Master-at-Arms Claggart. Envious, petty Claggart plotted to make Billy’s life miserable. But when a fear of mutinies swept through the fleet, Claggart realized he could do more than just torment the Handsome Sailor...he could frame Billy Budd for treason.

*Bless me, Ultima* by Rudolfo 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. At each turn in his life there is Ultima who will nurture the birth of his soul.

**Blindness** by Jose Saramago

In an unnamed city in an unnamed country, a man sitting in his car waiting for a traffic light to change is suddenly struck blind. But instead of being plunged into darkness, this man sees everything white, as if he “were caught in a mist or had fallen into a milky sea.” A Good Samaritan offers to drive him home (and later steals his car); his wife takes him by taxi to a nearby eye clinic where they are ushered past other patients into the doctor’s office. Within a day the man’s wife, the taxi driver, the doctor and his patients, and the car thief have all succumbed to blindness. As the epidemic spreads, the government panics and begins quarantining victims in an abandoned mental asylum—guarded by soldiers with orders to shoot anyone who tries to escape. A horrific novel, detailing the total breakdown in society that follows upon this most unnatural disaster.

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

The setting is contemporary San Francisco and a Chinese village where Peking Man is unearthed. 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. She longs for her beloved Precious Auntie, whose restless spirit wanders the world because her dead body was thrown off a cliff, not buried. Ruth reads LuLing’s diary of her early life at the Mouth of the Mountain, a hamlet outside of Peking, beginning with an account of LuLing’s almost idyllic childhood as the daughter of a prosperous ink merchant and as the charge of the tender Precious Auntie.

§ Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
“Community, Identity, Stability” is the motto of Aldous Huxley’s utopian World State. Here everyone consumes daily grams of soma, to fight depression, babies are born in laboratories, and the most popular form of entertainment is a “Feelie,” a movie that stimulates the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. Though there is no violence and everyone is provided for, Bernard Marx feels something is missing and senses his relationship with a young women has the potential to be much more than the confines of their existence allow. Huxley foreshadowed many of the practices and gadgets we take for granted today—let’s hope the sterility and absence of individuality he predicted aren't yet to come.

§ The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky
A brilliantly told crime story and a passionate philosophical debate. The dissolute landowner Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov is murdered; his sons are all at some level involved. Bound up with this intense family drama is Dostoevsky’s exploration of many deeply felt ideas about the existence of God, the question of human freedom, the collective nature of guilt, the disastrous consequences of rationalism. The novel is also richly comic: the Russian Orthodox Church, the legal system, and even the author’s most cherished causes and beliefs are presented with a note of irreverence, so that orthodoxy and radicalism, sanity and madness, love and hatred, right and wrong are no longer mutually exclusive.

Buddenbrooks by Thomas Mann
With consummate skill, Mann draws a rounded picture of middle-class life: births and christenings; marriages, divorces, and deaths; successes and failures. These commonplace occurrences, intrinsically the same, vary slightly as they recur in each succeeding generation. Yet as the Buddenbrooks family eventually succumbs to the seductions of modernity—seductions that are at variance with its own traditions—its downfall becomes certain. In scope, richness of detail, and humanity, Buddenbrooks surpasses all other modern family chronicles; it has, indeed, proved a model for most of them.

§ Candide by Francois Marie Arouet de Voltaire
Candide is the story of a gentle man who, though pummeled and slapped in every direction by fate, clings desperately to the belief that he lives in “the best of all possible worlds.” On the surface a witty, bantering tale, this eighteenth-century classic is actually a savage, satiric thrust at the philosophical optimism that proclaims that all disaster and human suffering is part of a benevolent cosmic plan.

§ Cannery Row by John Steinbeck
Cannery Row tells the story of the local characters living and working around an area of defunct canning factories, set in the 1940’s. It feels like the biography of a small town, with the setting and emotions, as characters. This stands out from other stories because it feels gritty, but it is not a sad, disgusting or gritty, it is more a melancholy, sleepy sort of gritty. The story has the feeling of a perpetual Sunday morning, being laid back, but without the worries of Monday.

Cat’s Eye by Margaret Atwood
This is the story of Elaine Risley, a controversial painter who returns to Toronto, the city of her youth, for a retrospective of her art. Engulfed by vivid images of the past, she reminisces about a trio of girls who initiated her into the fierce politics of childhood and its secret world of friendship, longing, and betrayal. Elaine must come to terms with her own identity as a daughter, a lover, an artist, and a woman -- but above all she must seek release from her haunting memories. Disturbing, hilarious, and compassionate, Cat’s Eye is a breathtaking novel of a woman grappling with the tangled knot of her life.

§ Catch-22 by Joseph Heller
**Catch-22** is like no other novel. It has its own rationale, its own extraordinary character. It is outrageously funny and strangely affecting. It is totally original. Set in the closing months of World War II in an American bomber squadron off Italy, *Catch-22* is the story of a bombardier named Yossarian, who is frantic and furious because thousands of people he hasn't even met keep trying to kill him. *Catch-22* is a microcosm of the twentieth-century world as it might look to someone dangerously sane. It is a novel that lives and moves and grows with astonishing power and vitality -- a masterpiece of our time.

§

**The Cherry Orchard** by Anton Chekhov

An upper-class, Russian family with an estate surrounded by beautiful cherry trees. Because of financial debts the estate is auctioned, and the buyer cuts down all the cherry trees. The family leaves without being able to save their beloved orchard or their memories. This play is disappointing because there is no happy ending. The author is successful in creating the relationships that he does, but the play should be about what it takes to save the orchard that the characters love not losing it all and having to let go of all their most cherished memories. The painful theme is that letting go of the past is hard.

**Closely Watched Trains** by Bohumil Hrabalby

Hrabal’s postwar classic about a young man’s coming of age in German-occupied Czechoslovakia. *Closely Watched Trains* is the subtle and poetic portrait of Milos Hrma, a timid young railroad apprentice who insulates himself with fantasy against a reality filled with cruelty and grief. Day after day as he watches trains fly by, he torments himself with the suspicion that he himself is being watched and with fears of impotency. Hrma finally affirms his manhood and, with a sense of peace and purpose he has never known before, heroically confronts a trainload of Nazis.

*Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier

Based on local history and family stories passed down by the author’s great-great-grandfather, *Cold Mountain* is the tale of a wounded soldier Inman, who walks away from the ravages of the war and back home to his prewar sweetheart, Ada. Inman’s odyssey through the devastated landscape of the soon-to-be-defeated South interweaves with Ada’s struggle to revive her father’s farm, with the help of an intrepid young drifter named Ruby. As their long-separated lives begin to converge at the close of the war, Inman and Ada confront the vastly transformed world they’ve been delivered.

§

**The Color Purple** by Alice Walker

Celie is a poor black woman whose letters tell the story of 20 years of her life, beginning at age 14 when she is being abused and raped by her father and attempting to protect her sister from the same fate, and continuing over the course of her marriage to “Mister,” a brutal man who terrorizes her. Celie eventually learns that her abusive husband has been keeping her sister’s letters from her and the rage she feels, combined with an example of love and independence provided by her close friend Shug, pushes her finally toward an awakening of her creative and loving self.

**The Constant Gardner** by John le Carre

Frightening, heartbreaking, and exquisitely calibrated, John le Carre’s novel opens with the gruesome murder of the young and beautiful Tessa Quayle near northern Kenya’s Lake Turkana, the birthplace of mankind. Her putative African lover and traveling companion, a doctor with one of the aid agencies, has vanished from the scene of the crime. Tessa’s much older husband, Justin, a career diplomat at the British High Commission in Nairobi, sets out on a personal odyssey in pursuit of the killers and their motive. What he might know and what he ultimately learns make him suspect among his own colleagues and a target for the profiteers who killed his wife.

**The Crisis of Islam** by Bernard Lewis

In his first book since *What Went Wrong*? Bernard Lewis examines the historical roots of the resentments that dominate the Islamic world today and that are increasingly being expressed in acts of terrorism. Brilliantly disentangling the crosscurrents of Middle Eastern history from the rhetoric of its manipulators, Bernard Lewis helps us understand the reasons for the increasingly dogmatic rejection of modernity by many in the Muslim world in favor of a return to a sacred past.
§ Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton
Cry, the Beloved Country is the deeply moving story of the Zulu pastor Stephen Kumalo and his son, Absalom, set against the background of a land and a people riven by racial injustice. Remarkable for its lyricism, unforgettable for character and incident, Cry, the Beloved Country is a classic work of love and hope, courage and endurance, born of the dignity of man.

§ David Copperfield by Charles Dickens
In this story of an innocent orphan making his way in an uncaring world, Dickens draws a gallery of memorable characters into young David's life, such as jovial Mr. Micawber and the sniveling, sinister Uriah Heep. David Copperfield, with its message of hope amidst harsh reality, has been called the greatest growing-up book ever written.

§ Death Comes to the Archbishop by Willa Cather
Willa Cather's 1927 novel traces the friendship and adventures of Bishop Jean Latour and vicar Father Joseph Vaillant as they organize the new Roman Catholic diocese of New Mexico.

Death in Venice by Thomas Mann
Death in Venice tells about a ruinous quest for love and beauty amid degenerating splendor. Gustav von Aschenbach, a successful but lonely author, travels to the Queen of the Adriatic in search of an elusive spiritual fulfillment that turns into his erotic doom. Spellbound by a beautiful Polish boy, he finds himself fettered to this hypnotic city of sun-drenched sensuality and eerie physical decay as it gradually succumbs to a secret epidemic.

* Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller
Willy Loman, the protagonist of Death of a Salesman, has spent his life following the American way, living out his belief in salesmanship as a way to reinvent himself. But somehow the riches and respect he covets have eluded him. At age 63, he searches for the moment his life took a wrong turn, the moment of betrayal that undermined his relationship with his wife and destroyed his relationship with Biff, the son in whom he invested his faith. Willy lives in a fragile world of elaborate excuses and daydreams, conflating past and present in a desperate attempt to make sense of himself and of a world that once promised so much.

Digital Fortress by Dan Brown
In most thrillers, “hardware” consists of big guns, airplanes, military vehicles, and weapons that make things explode. Dan Brown has written a thriller for those of us who like our hardware with disc drives and who rate our heroes by big brainpower rather than big firepower. It’s an Internet user’s spy novel where the good guys and bad guys struggle over secrets somewhat more intellectual than just where the secret formula is hidden--they have to gain understanding of what the secret formula actually is.

Dispatches from the Edge by Anderson Cooper
Writing with the same emotional intensity that distinguishes his news broadcasts, CNN journalist Anderson Cooper describes his powerful personal reaction to the tragic events of 2005 -- a year that brought a tsunami to Asia, escalating violence to Iraq, famine to Africa, and two devastating hurricanes to the United States.

Distant View of a Minaret and Other Stories by Alifa Rifaat
A collection of short stories told from the perspective of Arabic women chronicling what it is like to be a woman in their culture and defying the stereotypes traditionally placed on Arabic women.

Domain by Steve Alten
For those who never leave home without a copy of the prophecies of Nostradamus tucked in their hip pocket, Steve Alten's new thriller is just the ticket. Domain focuses its doomsday scenario on an ancient Mayan myth and sets up an intriguing pair of saviors in Dominique Vasquez, a psych grad student who's an intern at a Florida psychiatric facility, and
Mick Gabriel, her first patient. Mick, the son of two famous archaeologists, has languished in the Miami asylum for over a decade after attacking the man who publicly humiliated his father and who now happens to be the American secretary of state. The elder Gabriel believed he had unearthed the riddle surrounding the origins of Stonehenge, the Great Pyramid of Giza, the desert glyphs of the Nazca desert, the temples of Angkor Wat, and the Mayan ruins of the Yucatan peninsula—and that the answer pointed inexorably to the doom of humanity.

§ Don Quixote by Miguel de Cervantes
Don Quixote has become so entranced by reading chivalry romances that he determines to turn knight-errant himself. In the company of his faithful squire, Sancho Panza, these exploits blossom in all sorts of wonderful ways. While Quixote's fancy often leads him astray -- he tilts at windmills, imagining them to be giants -- Sancho acquires cunning and a certain sagacity. Sane madman and wise fool, they roam the world together -- and together they have haunted readers' imaginations for nearly four hundred years.

§ Emma by Jane Austen
Emma is the story of Emma Woodhouse, a young girl from a good home that does not need the financial support of a husband and is determined not to marry. Emma however is not opposed to the idea of marriage for others and is determined to play matchmaker between several of the local citizens. In spite of Emma's resolve not to marry she finds herself attracted to several men throughout the book and considers the prospect of marriage. Emma is the story of 19th century romance and relationships and is a timeless classic from the era. Will Emma marry or will she remain a single girl? Read this classic and discover for yourself.

§ Ethan Frome by Edith Wharton
Set against the bleak winter landscape of New England, Ethan Frome tells the story of a poor farmer, lonely and downtrodden, his wife Zeena, and her cousin, the enchanting Mattie Silver. In the playing out of this short novel’s powerful and engrossing drama, Edith Wharton constructed her least characteristic and most celebrated book. In its unyielding and shocking pessimism, its bleak demonstration of tragic waste, it is a masterpiece of psychological and emotional realism.

The Eyre Affair: A Thursday Next Novel by Jasper Fforde
Welcome to a surreal version of Great Britain, circa 1985, where time travel is routine, cloning is a reality (dodos are the resurrected pet of choice), and literature is taken very, very seriously. England is a virtual police state where an aunt can get lost (literally) in a Wordsworth poem, militant Baconians heckle performances of Hamlet, and forging Byronic verse is a punishable offense. All this is business as usual for Thursday Next, renowned Special Operative in literary detection, until someone begins kidnapping characters from works of literature. When Jane Eyre is plucked from the pages of Bronte’s novel, Thursday must track down the villain and enter the novel herself to avert a heinous act of literary homicide.

The Farming of Bones by Edwidge Danticat
It is 1937, the Dominican side of the Haitian border. Amabelle, orphaned at the age of eight when her parents drowned, is a maid to the young wife of an army colonel. She has grown up in this household, a faithful servant. Sebastien is a field hand, an itinerant sugarcane cutter. They are Haitians, useful to the Dominicans but not really welcome. There are rumors that in other towns Haitians are being persecuted, even killed. But there are always rumors. Amabelle loves Sebastien. He is handsome despite the sugarcane scars on his face, his calloused hands. She longs to become his wife and walk into their future. Instead, terror enfolds them. But the story does not end here: it begins. The Farming of Bones is about love, fragility, barbarity, dignity, remembrance, and the only triumph possible for the persecuted: to endure.

Faust by Johann Goethe
Goethe’s enduring and original legend of the old philosopher who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. It explores the many levels of existence and may be a metaphor as well for the human disposition. We crave something greater then we have, leading to treachery, dishonestly, lust and greed.

Foucault’s Pendulum by Umberto Eco
Three clever editors have spent too much time reviewing crackpot manuscripts. On a lark, the editors begin randomly feeding bits of knowledge into an incredible computer capable of inventing connections between all their entries. What
they believe they are creating is a lazy game—until the game takes over. A superb cerebral entertainment about three editors who cook up a hoax-involving the Templar Knights, Stonehenge, the Cabala, and Brazilian voodoo, among other things—that suddenly becomes all too real.

§ *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway
In 1937 Hemingway arrived in Spain to cover the Civil War for the North American Newspaper Alliance. He filed his dispatches, but the real fruit of those years was *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The story of Robert Jordan, an American fighting with anti-fascist guerillas in the mountains of Spain, it tells of loyalty and courage, love and defeat, the tragic death of an ideal. It lives for us because of the great disillusionment that grew out of WW II, a war fought with such high hopes and concluded so cynically with a former ally gobbling up half of the Europe we hoped to liberate. Great in power, broad in scope, intensely emotional, it stands as one of the best war novels of all times.

§ *Ghosts* by Henrik Ibsen
A play of stinging contemporaneity—about religious and societal hypocrisy, guilt that feeds on innocence, the terror of the inevitable, and the battle between truth and darkness, freedom and constraint.

*The Gifts of the Jews* by Thomas Cahill
The *Gifts of the Jews* is the latest exploration of the historical foundations of Western civilization from Thomas Cahill. Cahill’s premise is simple but bold: to show how the religious, moral, philosophical, and political systems developed by the Jews -- descendants and followers of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Saul, and David --profoundly shaped the world we know today.

*Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier
A teenage girl becomes a maid in the household of Vermeer, in Delft in the mid-17th century. She has a deep connection to the great painter and his work and finds herself in several complicated relationships.

*The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy
The *God of Small Things* heralds a voice so powerful and original that it burns itself into the reader’s memory. Set mainly in Kerala, India, in 1969, it is the story of Rahel and her twin brother Estha, who learn that their whole world can change in a single day, that love and life can be lost in a moment. Armed only with the invincible innocence of children, they seek to craft a childhood for themselves amid the wreckage that constitutes their family. Sweet and heartbreaking, ribald and profound, this is a novel to set beside those of Salman Rushdie and Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

§ *Go Tell it on the Mountain* by James Baldwin
*Go Tell It On The Mountain*, first published in 1953, is Baldwin’s first major work, a novel that has established itself as an American classic. With lyrical precision, psychological directness, and a rage that is at once unrelenting and compassionate, Baldwin chronicles 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 one Saturday in March of 1935. Baldwin's rendering of his protagonist's spiritual, sexual, and moral struggle of self-invention opened new possibilities in the American language and in the way Americans understand themselves.

§ *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
Although it follows the movement of thousands of men and women and the transformation of an entire nation, *The Grapes of Wrath* is also the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads, who are driven off their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into Haves and Have-Nots, Steinbeck created a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision.

§ *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
*Great Expectations* tells the story of Pip, a poor orphaned boy who wishes to transcend his humble upbringing. He finds himself unexpectedly given the opportunity to live a life of wealth and respectability but learns as his life advances that his money is tainted and the girl he loves cannot return his affections. He is forced by circumstance to learn to seek
happiness in the very things he gave up in the pursuit of a place in city life. With its famous cast including Miss Havisham, Mrs. Joe Gargery and Jaggers, this is one of Dickens’ most renowned and pleasurable novels.

**The Great Santini** by Pat Conroy
A tyrannical father, a military “ace” brutalize his family and particularly his oldest son, interpreting humanity as weakness in this unsparing novel. Tragedy is the outcome. Any person who reads *The Great Santini*, might possibly find themselves connecting to the book and understanding the adversity that families endure. This novel confirms that not every family is ideal and in spite of everything, worship your family no matter how many times you differ with their opinions.

§ **The Handmaid’s Tale** by Margaret Atwood
In the world of the near future, who will control women’s bodies? Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offred and the other Handmaids are only valued if their ovaries are viable. Offred can remember the days before, when she lived and made love with her husband Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone now.

§ **Heart of Darkness** by Joseph Conrad
Horror awaits Marlow, a seaman assigned by an ivory company to retrieve a cargo boat and one of its employees, Mr. Kurtz who is stranded in the heart of the Africa, deep in the Belgian Congo. Marlow’s journey up the brooding dark river soon becomes a struggle to maintain his own sanity as he witnesses the brutalization of the natives by white traders and discovers the enigmatic Mr. Kurtz. Kurtz, once a genius and the company’s most successful representative, has become a savage. His compound is decorated by a row of human heads mounted on spears. The demonic mastermind, liberated from the conventions of European culture, has traded his soul to become ruler of his own horrific dominion.

§ **Hedda Gabler** by Henrik Ibsen
Dark psychological play by “father of modern drama” follows its reckless, manipulative heroine to her tragic end.

§ **Henderson the Rain King** by Saul Bellow
Bellow’s novel portrays many sides of a complex man and the drastic changes that occur to Eugene Henderson when he leaves the comfort of his million dollar artificial life in America, and ventures into the unspoiled regions of Africa. Leaving behind his crass attitude and all the miseries he brought upon himself and his family, he begins to have the signs of a midlife crisis and decides to venture into Africa. Once starting upon the journey in Africa, Henderson slowly begins to realize what he really wants to achieve in his life and comes out of the adventure with a greater sense of who he really is, and his new ambitions.

**The Hotel New Hampshire** by John Irving
Hoteliers, pet-bear owners, friends of Freud (the animal trainer and vaudevillian, that is), and playthings of mad fate, the Berry family “dreams on” in a funny, sad, outrageous, and moving novel. *The Hotel New Hampshire*, the story of an eccentric family that sets up house in various unlikely hotels here and abroad, is a hectic gaudy saga with the verve of a Marx Brothers movie.

§ **The House of Mirth** by Edith Wharton
Lily Bart, heroine of *The House of Mirth*, is typical of these heroines, in that her determination to live as a modern woman and her need to conform to social standards produce such conflict that she is ultimately undone by it.

§ **The House of Seven Gables** by Nathaniel Hawthorne
Hawthorne’s tale about the brooding hold of the past over the present is a complex one, twisting and turning its way back through many generations of a venerable New England family, one of whose members was accused of witchcraft in 17th century Salem. More than 200 years later, we meet the family in its decaying, gabled mansion, still haunted by the presence of dead ancestors: Hepzibah, an elderly gentlewoman fallen on had times; her ineffectual brother, Clifford; and
young Phoebe, a country maiden who cheerfully takes it upon herself to care for her two doddering relations. There’s also Holgrave, a free-spirited daguerreotypist, who makes a surprising transformation into conventional respectability at the story’s end.

§ The House of Spirits by Isabel Allende
The House of the Spirits is the magnificent epic of the Trueba family -- their loves, their ambitions, their spiritual quests, their relations with one another, and their participation in the history of their times, a history that becomes destiny and overtakes them all.

How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent by Julia Alvarez
It’s a long way from Santo Domingo to the Bronx, but if anyone can go the distance, it’s the Garcia girls. Four lively latinas plunged from a pampered life of privilege on an island compound into the big-city chaos of New York, they rebel against Mami and Papi’s old-world discipline and embrace all that America has to offer.

How the Irish Saved Civilization by Thomas Cahill
This narrative tells the story of how Europe evolved from the classical age of Rome to the medieval era. Without Ireland, this transition could not have taken place. Irish monks and scribes maintained records of Western civilization and brought their uniquely Irish world-view to the task.

If on a winter’s night a traveler by Italo Calvino
If On a Winter's Night a Traveler, Italo Calvino's inventive discourse, is a genuine masterpiece of convolution, evolution and conversation; a work of synthesis that draws upon traditional narrative and then revises, creating and recreating images and perspectives on reading, writing, perception and reflection in the postmodern world. Particularly insightful is Chapter Eight which contains the diaries of a writer in doubt and poised on the brink of a novel; the entire work, however, explodes readership in a fresh and fascinating way. An immensely tantalizing read, this book can be as irksome as a fly behind your ear or as softly appealing as a lover’s kiss. It is, above all a deeply satisfying and brilliantly original book and one that cuts through the excesses of fiction like a lawn mower cutting through new spring grass

§ The Iliad by Homer
The epic song of Ilion (an old name for Troy), The Iliad recreates a few dramatic weeks near the end of the fabled Trojan War, ending with the funeral of Hector, defender of the doomed city. Through its majestic verses stride the fabled heroes Priam, Hector, Paris, and Aeneas for Troy; Achilles, Ajax, Menelaus, Agamemnon, Patroclus, and Odysseus for the Greeks; and the beautiful Helen, over whom the longstanding war has been waged. Never far from the center of the story are the quarreling gods: Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. A beloved fixture of early Greek culture, the poem found eager new audiences when it was translated into many languages during the Renaissance. Its themes of honor, power, status, heroism, and the whims of the gods have ensured its enduring popularity and immeasurable cultural influence.

Interview with the Vampire by Anne Rice
Here are the confessions of a vampire. Hypnotic, shocking, and chilling, this is a novel of mesmerizing beauty and astonishing force--a story of danger and flight, of love and loss, of suspense and resolution, and of the extraordinary power of the senses.

In the Time of Butterflies by Julia Alvarez
Set during the waning days of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960, this extraordinary novel tells the story the Mirabal sisters, three young wives and mothers who are assassinated after visiting their jailed husbands.

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’s 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 powerful, cautionary tale of adventure gone horribly wrong, Into Thin Air became an instant bestseller upon publication. A childhood dream of some day ascending Mt. Everest, a lifelong love of climbing, and an expense account all propelled writer Jon Krakauer to the top of the Himalayas in May 1996. With a guide claiming “We’ve got the mountain wired,” Krakauer found that for 65 grand, you could climb the world’s tallest peak. This hubris, and a freak storm, claimed the lives of seven members of his expedition, and narrowly avoided killing Krakauer and many more.

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison
Invisible Man is a milestone in American literature, a book that has continued to engage readers since its appearance in 1952. A first novel by an unknown writer, it remained on the bestseller list for sixteen weeks, won the National Book Award for fiction, and established Ralph Ellison as one of the key writers of the century. The nameless narrator of the novel describes growing up in a black community in the South, attending a Negro college from which he is expelled, moving to New York and becoming the chief spokesman of the Harlem branch of “the Brotherhood,” and retreating amid violence and confusion to the basement lair of the Invisible Man he imagines himself to be. The book is a passionate and witty tour de force of style, strongly influenced by T.S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land,” Joyce, and Dostoevsky.

Invitation to a Beheading by Vladimir Nabokov
Anti-utopian novel set in a mythical totalitarian country, which presents the thoughts of Cincinnatus, a former teacher who has been convicted of “gnostic turpitude” for being different from his mediocre fellow countrymen. Sentenced to be executed at an unknown date, Cincinnatus sits in his prison cell and records in his diary his private thoughts and intuitions about an ideal world that he considers to be his “true” home. He sees the world around him as delusional and himself as the only “real” person in the universe. As the ax falls and he is executed, he, or his spirit, rises toward other beings like himself.

The Island of the Day Before by Umberto Eco
Swept overboard in a violent storm, Roberto dell Griva pulls himself aboard another ship anchored in the bay of a beautiful island. The ship is fully provisioned, but the crew is missing. As Roberto explores the hold, he remembers chapters from his youth: his imaginary evil brother; the loss of his father; lessons on fencing, love, and blasphemy; the salons of Paris; and more.

The Jane Austen Book Club by Karen Joy Fowler
In California’s Central Valley, five women and one man join together to discuss Jane Austen’s novels. Over the six months they meet, marriages are tested, affairs begin, unsuitable arrangements become suitable, and love happens. Dedicated Austen readers will delight in unearthing the echoes of Austen that run through this novel, but many readers will simply enjoy the vision and voice that, despite two centuries of separation, unite two writers of social comedy.

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte
Orphaned into the household of her Aunt Reed at Gateshead, subject to the cruel regime at Lowood charity school, Jane Eyre nonetheless emerges unbroken in spirit and integrity. She takes up the post of governess at Thornfield, falls in love with Mr. Rochester, and discovers the impediment to their lawful marriage in a story that transcends melodrama to portray a woman’s passionate search for a wider and richer life than Victorian society traditionally allowed. With a heroine full of yearning, the dangerous secrets she encounters, and the choices she finally makes, Charlotte Bronte’s innovative and enduring romantic novel continues to engage and provoke readers.
**Jazz** by Toni Morrison

In the winter of 1926, when everybody everywhere sees nothing but good things ahead, Joe Trace, a middle-aged waiter who moonlights as a door-to-door salesman of Cleopatra beauty products, shoots his teenage lover to death. At the funeral, Joe's wife, Violet, attacks the girl's corpse. This story of love and obsession by Toni Morrison brings us back and forth in time, as a narrative is assembled from the emotions, hopes, fears, and deep realities of black urban life.

**Jude the Obscure** by Thomas Hardy

Because of its frank treatment of human sexuality and its unflinching fatalism, *Jude the Obscure* aroused such a storm of controversy upon its publication in 1895 that, partly in response, Thomas Hardy abandoned the art of novel-writing altogether and devoted the rest of his life to poetry. Though we have come a long way in our social attitudes in the ensuing century, nothing about Hardy's masterpiece has lost its power to shock us and disturb our dreams.

**King Lear** by William Shakespeare

*King Lear* is William Shakespeare's most magnificent and deliciously diabolical plays of ingratitude, the intoxicating promise of power and position, and the ultimate sacrifice of love. Lear's two daughters Regan and Goneril are two monstrously malevolent women of Britain who perpetuate their father's decreasing sanity, in order to maintain power in Britain. Lear's youngest daughter Cordelia, a compassionate, loyal, kind, and wonderfully woman who is a tremendous contrast to her evil sisters Goneril and Regan. Cordelia is, an angel of goodness who is a spectacular influence and characterization of what a daughter should give and mention to her father, not out of appetite but out of conscience. The line between good and evil is faultlessly drawn in this spectacular play by one of the most ingenious writers of the human condition who ever lived.

**The Kitchen God's Wife** by Amy Tan

Winnie and Helen have kept each other's worst secrets for more than fifty years. Now, because she believes she is dying, Helen wants to expose everything. And Winnie angrily determines that she must be the one to tell her daughter, Pearl, about the past—including the terrible truth even Helen does not know. So begins Winnie's story of her life on a small island outside Shanghai in the 1920s, and other places in China during World War II. This work traces the happy and desperate events that led to Winnie's coming to America in 1949.

**Lady Chatterley's Lover** by D.H. Lawrence

Inspired by the long-standing affair between Frieda, Lawrence's German wife, and an Italian peasant who eventually became her third husband, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is the story of Constance Chatterley, who, while trapped in an unhappy marriage to an aristocratic mine owner whose war wounds have left him paralyzed and impotent, has an affair with Mellors, the gamekeeper.

**The Lake House** by James Patterson

Six extraordinary children are trying to lead normal lives in the Rocky Mountain countryside. They live in different homes, with different families, but there is something powerful that connects them. Something that puts them in terrible danger. The only time they've ever felt safe was when they were together in the waterfront cabin they call the Lake House. And the only people they've ever trusted are Frannie and Kit, the couple who rescued them from unimaginable evil once before. When that evil resurfaces, the kids reconnect with Frannie and Kit and set off on an astonishing adventure. They flee to the Lake House, but even that haven may no longer be safe. Dr. Ethan Kane is chief of surgery at Liberty General Hospital, one of the most esteemed hospitals in the nation. It is here that terrible secrets lie, secrets that will change the world for all of us.

**Les Miserables** by Victor Hugo

In this story of the trials of the peasant Jean Valjean - a man unjustly imprisoned, baffled by destiny, and hounded by his nemesis, the magnificently realized, ambiguously malevolent police detective Javert - Hugo achieves the sort of rare imaginative resonance that allows a work of art to transcend its genre.
**The Life and Loves of a She-Devil** by Fay Weldon
A scathing satire of an image-conscious society, Fay Weldon’s *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* is the story of Ruth, an graceless, unattractive woman. Trapped in a loveless marriage with a cruelly indifferent, philandering husband named Bobbo, Ruth finds herself sinking under the weight of crushed expectations and neglect.

**Like Water for Chocolate** by Laura Esquivel
Each chapter of screenwriter Esquivel’s utterly charming interpretation of life in turn-of-the-century Mexico begins with a recipe—not surprisingly, since so much of the action of this exquisite first novel (a bestseller in Mexico) centers around the kitchen, the heart and soul of a traditional Mexican family.

* **Little Women** by Louisa May Alcott
One of American Literature’s most loved novels, this is a story of family, of hope, of dreams, and of growing up as four devoted sisters search for romance and find maturity in Civil-War era 19th century New England.

**Lolita** by Vladimir Nabokov
Nabokov’s most famous and controversial novel, which tells the story of the aging Humbert Humbert’s obsessive, devouring, and doomed passion for the nymphet Dolores Haze. Lolita is also the story of a hypercivilized European colliding with the cheerful barbarism of postwar America. Most of all, it is a meditation on love—love as outrage and hallucination, madness and transformation.

§ **Long Day’s Journey into Night** by Eugene O’Neill
O’Neill’s painful view of his own life forms the core of *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*, one of the greatest of all American plays. The Tyrone family (father James, mother Mary, and sons Edmund and Jamie) of the play is a surrogate for O’Neill’s own family and, through them, the playwright wrestles with his past demons. Covering a single day and night, O’Neill’s play traces the impact on the family relapse into a drug addiction and younger son Edmund’s being institutionalized for consumption. These events reopen old wounds and resentments and initiate a harrowing series of accusations and recriminations that threaten to tear apart the family.

§ **Lord Jim** by Joseph Conrad
At its heart, this classic novel is a book about the sea. Published in 1900, *Lord Jim* was originally intended as a short story. It grew to a full-length book as Conrad explored in great depth the perplexing dilemmas of lost honor and guilt, expiation and heroism. An English boy from a simple village has bigger dreams than most around him, so he embarks at an early age into a sailor’s life. Haunted by guilt over an act of cowardice, Jim becomes an agent at an isolated East Indian trading post. There, his feelings of inadequacy and responsibility are played out to their logical and inevitable end.

§ **Madame Bovary** by Gustave Flaubert
*Madame Bovary* is the story of a beautiful young woman who marries a luckless and loutish country doctor. She attempts to escape the narrow confines of her life through a series of passionate affairs, hoping to find in other men the romantic ideal she has always dreamed about. Her recklessness comes back to haunt her, however, and the strong-willed and independent Emma finds herself in a desperate fight for existence.

§ **Major Barbara** by George Bernard Shaw
Fabian socialist and ardent proselytizer, George Bernard Shaw viewed his role as a playwright as far more than that of an entertainer. His audiences heard fully articulated sermons on moral and economic issues, a potentially dry theatrical experience enlivened by Shaw’s genius for creating vital characters and scintillating dialogue. *Major Barbara* offers a sparkling example of its author’s unique gift for presenting social theories in an engaging format. The eponymous heroine, an officer in the Salvation Army, is the daughter of Andrew Undershaft, a wealthy armsments manufacturer. When the Army accepts donations from Undershaft and a whiskey distiller, whose money Barbara regards as tainted, she resigns in disgust, but eventually sees the truth of her father’s reasoning that social iniquity derives from poverty; it is only through accumulating wealth and power that people can help each other.
**Man and Superman** by George Bernard Shaw

“A comedy and a philosophy,” *Man and Superman* is based on the Don Juan theme and, using all the elements from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, Shaw reordered them so that Don Juan becomes the quarry instead of the huntsman.

**The Man Who Was Thursday** by G.K. Chesterton

Widely considered as Chesterton’s masterpiece, *The Man Who Was Thursday* defies classification. Subtitled “A nightmare” by Chesterton, on one level it is a fast-moving and surreal detective story. Drawing on contemporary fears of anarchist conspiracies and bomb outrages, it is firmly rooted in time and place—turn-of-the-century London—but it also defies temporal boundaries. Police Detective Syme finds himself drawn into a world that seems to have gone beyond humanity when he is elected ‘Thursday’, one of the members of the Central European Council of seven monarchs.

**The Master and Margarita** by Mikhail Bulgakov

Surely no stranger work exists in the annals of protest literature than *The Master and Margarita*. Written during the Soviet crackdown of the 1930s, when Mikhail Bulgakov’s works were effectively banned, it wraps its anti-Stalinist message in a complex allegory of good and evil. Since we see this narrative from so many different points of view, who is truly its author? Given that the Master’s novel and this one end the same way, are they in fact the same book? These are only a few of the many questions Bulgakov provokes in a novel that reads like a set of infinitely nested Russian dolls: inside one narrative there is another, and then another, and yet another. Bulgakov’s masterwork was not published until 1967.

**Medea** by Euripides

Euripides was one of the most popular and controversial of all Greek tragedians, and his plays are marked by an independence of thought, ingenious dramatic devices, and a subtle variety of register and mood. He is also remarkable for the prominence he gave to female characters, whether heroines of virtue or vice. This new translation does full justice to Euripides’s range of tone and gift of narrative. A lucid introduction provides substantial analysis of each play, complete with vital explanations of the traditions and background to Euripides’s world.

**Meg** by Steve Alten

In a top-secret dive into the Pacific Ocean’s deepest canyon, Jonas Taylor found himself face-to-face with the largest and most ferocious predator in the history of the animal kingdom. The sole survivor of the mission, Taylor is haunted by what he’s sure he saw but still can’t prove exists -- Carcharodon megalodon, the massive mother of the great white shark. Taylor refuses to forget the depths that nearly cost him his life. With a Ph.D. in paleontology under his belt, Taylor spends years theorizing, lecturing, and writing about the possibility that Meg still feeds at the deepest levels of the sea. But it takes an old friend in need to get him to return to the water, and a hotshot female submarine pilot to dare him back into a high-tech miniature sub. Diving deeper than he ever has before, Taylor will face terror like he’s never imagined, and what he finds could turn the tides bloody red until the end of time.

**Middle March** by George Eliot

George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* is one of the classic novels of English literature and was admired by Virginia Woolf as “one of the few English novels written for grown-up people.” The complex main plot and many subplots revolve around Dorothea Brooke, an ardent young woman, and her relationship to three men: Casaubon, a clergyman and scholar twice her age; Lydgate, an ambitious young doctor who shares Dorothea’s enthusiasm for reform but whose flaws compromise his ambitions; and Will Ladislaw, a young man of mysterious origins, romantic temperament, and artistic inclinations. A
female Bildungsroman and a study of character and society in the realistic mode pioneered by Balzac, *Middlemarch* is also an historical novel that offers a panorama of English society in an era of social reform and political agitation.

**§ Moby Dick** by Herman Melville
One of the most widely-read and respected books in all American literature, *Moby Dick* is the saga of Captain Ahab and his unrelenting pursuit of Moby Dick, the great white whale who maimed him during their last encounter. A novel blending high-seas romantic adventure, symbolic allegory, and the conflicting ideals of heroic determinism and undying hatred, *Moby Dick* is also revered for its historical accounts of the whaling industry of the 1800’s.

**Monster** by Walter Dean Myers
The suspenseful, emotionally charged story of a 16-year-old arrested for murder. Winner of the ALA Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature.

**The Moon and the Sixpence** by W. Somerset Maugham
Based on the life of Paul Gauguin, this book examines how each of us pursues our dreams. Maugham, one of the most popular English writers of our century, looks at the choices we make and forsake, as well as the consequences to those around us. On a trip to research French artist Paul Gauguin, Maugham sailed into Tahiti’s Papeet harbor, where he imagined an exotic tale of the ultimate outsider, one who rejects his entire way of life to pursue an obsession. The result of his efforts is a story of rebellion and escape from civilization which continues to attract and captivate readers to this day.

**§ Mrs. Dalloway** by Virginia Woolf
Heralded as Virginia Woolf’s greatest novel, this is a vivid portrait of a single day in a woman’s life. When we meet her, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway is preoccupied with the last-minute details of party preparation while in her mind she is something much more than a perfect society hostess. As she readies her house, she is flooded with remembrances of faraway times. And, met with the realities of the present, Clarissa reexamines the choices that brought her there, hesitantly looking ahead to the unfamiliar work of growing old.

**My Antonia** by Willa Cather
*My Ántonia* is a soulful and rich portrait of a pioneer woman’s simple yet heroic life. The spirited daughter of Bohemian immigrants, Ántonia must adapt to a hard existence on the desolate prairies of the Midwest. Enduring childhood poverty, teenage seduction, and family tragedy, she eventually becomes a wife and mother on a Nebraska farm. A fictional record of how women helped forge the communities that formed a nation, *My Ántonia* is also a hauntingly eloquent celebration of the strength, courage, and spirit of America’s early pioneers.

**The Name of the Rose** by Umberto Eco
In seven days of apocalyptic terror, a killer strikes seven times—and seven monks die. The year is 1327. The place is a wealthy abbey in Italy. And the crimes committed there are beyond the wildest imaginings. It will be the task of English Brother William of Baskerville to decipher secret symbols and dig into the eerie labyrinth of abbey life to solve the mystery. Within the mystery is a tale of books, librarians, patrons, censorship, and the search for truth in a period of tension between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire.

**§ Native Son** by Richard Wright
Bigger Thomas is doomed, trapped in a downward spiral that will lead to arrest, prison, or death, driven by despair, frustration, poverty, and incomprehension. As a young black man in the Chicago of the ’30s, he has no way out of the walls of poverty and racism that surround him, and after he murders a young white woman in a moment of panic, these walls begin to close in. There is no help for him—not from his hapless family; not from liberal do-gooders or from his well-meaning yet naïve friend Jan; certainly not from the police, prosecutors, or judges. Bigger is debased, aggressive, dangerous, and a violent criminal. As such, he has no claim upon our compassion or sympathy. And... Wright’s genius was that, in preventing us from feeling pity for Bigger, he forced us to confront the hopelessness, misery, and injustice of the society that gave birth to him.

**The Natural** by Bernard Malamud
Biting, witty, provocative, and sardonic, Bernard Malamud’s *The Natural* is widely considered to be the premier baseball novel of all time. It tells the story of Roy Hobbs—an athlete born with rare and wondrous gifts—who is robbed of his prime playing years by a youthful indiscretion that nearly costs him his life. But at an age when most players are considering retirement, Roy reenters the game, lifting the lowly New York Knights from last place into pennant contention and becoming an instant hero in the process. Now all he has to worry about is the fixers, the boss, the slump, the jinx, the fans…and the dangerously seductive Memo Paris, the one woman Roy can’t seem to get out of his mind.

§

*Nausea* by Jean-Paul Sartre

*Nausea* is the story of Antoine Roquentin, a French writer who is horrified at his own existence. In impressionistic, diary form he ruthlessly catalogues his every feeling and sensation. His thoughts culminate in a pervasive, overpowering feeling of nausea which “spreads at the bottom of the viscous puddle, at the bottom of our time—the time of purple suspenders and broken chair seats; it is made of wide, soft instants, spreading at the edge, like an oil stain.” Roquentin’s efforts to come to terms with life, his philosophical and psychological struggles, give Sartre the opportunity to dramatize the tenets of his Existentialist creed.

§

*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.

*The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency* by Alexander McCall Smith

The No.1 Ladies’ Detective Agency, located in Gaborone, Botswana, consists of one woman, the engaging Precious Ramotswe. A cross between Kinsey Millhone and Miss Marple, this unlikely heroine specializes in missing husbands, wayward daughters, con men and imposters. When she sets out on the trail of a missing child she is tumbled headlong into some strange situations and not a little danger. Deftly interweaving tragedy and humor to create a memorable tale of human desires and foibles, the book is also an evocative portrait of a distant world.

§

*No Exit* by Jean-Paul Sartre

This play, set in a room with only a single door, is an existential portrayal of Hell. The three sinners in the room expect to be tortured, but realize that they are there to torture each other.

*On the Road* by Jack Kerouac

*On the Road*, the most famous of Jack Kerouac’s works, is not only the soul of the Beat movement and literature, but one of the most important novels of the century. Like nearly all of Kerouac’s writing, *On the Road* is thinly fictionalized autobiography, filled with a cast made of Kerouac’s real life friends, lovers, and fellow travelers. *On the Road* chronicles Jack Kerouac’s years traveling North America with his friend Neal Cassady, “a sideburned hero of the snowy West.” As “Sal Paradise” and “Dean Moriarty,” the two roam the country in a quest for self-knowledge and experience. Kerouac’s love of America, his compassion for humanity, and his sense of language as jazz combine to make *On the Road* a work of lasting importance.

§

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Márquez

The novel tells the story of the rise and fall of the mythical town of Macondo through the history of the Buendía 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 Buendía family, one sees all of humanity, just as in the history, myths, growth, and decay of Macondo, one sees all of Latin America. Love and lust, war and revolution, riches and poverty, youth and senility -- the variety of life, the endlessness of death, the search for peace and truth -- these universal themes dominate the novel. Whether he is describing an affair of passion or the voracity of capitalism and the corruption of government, Gabriel García Márquez always writes with the simplicity, ease, and purity that are the mark of a master.

§

*One of Ours* by Willa Cather

Willa Cather explores the dissonance between Claude’s attitudes and his physical reality and studies how this conflict affects him. Drawing on her own family’s experience of the war through her cousin G. P. Cather, who fought in World War
I, Cather observes how an otherwise misdirected young man could find purpose and meaning in war and how his death would affect his family’s memories of him. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1922, *One of Ours* paints Claude as a young man who seeks an escape from a conventional and unfulfilling life through the realization of “something splendid” in his military experience in Europe.

**The Optimist's Daughter** by Eudora Welty
Laurel Hand, long absent from the South, comes from Chicago to New Orleans, where her father dies after surgery. With Fay, the stupid new young wife of her father, Laurel returns to her former Mississippi home and stays a few days after the funeral for reunions with old friends. In a night alone in the house she grew up in, she confronts elements of the past and comes to a better understanding of it and of herself and her parents.

*Oranges Aren't the Only Fruit* by Jeannatte Winterson
Jeanette is a bright and rebellious orphan who is adopted into an evangelical household in the dour, industrial North of England and finds herself embroidering grim religious mottoes and shaking her little tambourine for Jesus. But as this budding missionary comes of age, and comes to terms with her unorthodox sexuality, the peculiar balance of her God-fearing household dissolves. Jeanette’s insistence on listening to the truths of her own heart and mind - and on reporting them with wit and passion - makes for an unforgettable chronicle of an eccentric, moving passage into adulthood.

§**Orestia** by Aeschylus
The most famous series of ancient Greek plays, and the only surviving trilogy, is the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, consisting of Agamemnon, Choephoroe, and Eumenides. These three plays recount the murder of Agamemnon by his queen Clytemnestra on his return from Troy with the captive Trojan princess Cassandra; the murder in turn of Clytemnestra by their son Orestes; and Orestes’ subsequent pursuit by the Avenging Furies (Eumenides) and eventual absolution.

*Our Town* by Thornton Wilder
*Our Town* was first produced and published in 1938 to wide acclaim. This Pulitzer Prize-winning drama of life in the town of Grover's Corners, an allegorical representation of all life, has become a classic. It is Thornton Wilder's most renowned and most frequently performed play.

§**Paradise Lost** (selections) by John Milton
A poem of epic scale, conjuring up a vast, awe-inspiring cosmos and ranging across huge tracts of space and time. And yet, in putting a charismatic Satan and naked Adam and Eve at the center of this story, he also created an intensely human tragedy on the Fall of Man. Written when Milton was in his fifties - blind, bitterly disappointed by the Restoration and briefly in danger of execution – *Paradise Lost* has an apparent ambivalence towards authority which has led to intense debate about whether it manages to “justify the ways of God to men,” or exposes the cruelty of Christianity.

*Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida*, by Victor Martinez
For Mexican American teen Manuel, the main challenge in life, whether he always realizes it or not, is to find a reason to survive amid the negativity and emptiness that pervade his growing up in a city project. Winner of the 1996 National Book Award for Young People’s Fiction.

*Pawn of Prophecy* by David Eddings
David Eddings is a crafty, witty writer of plot and dialogue, and he weaves an enthralling tale of fantasy and magic in this novel. Long ago, the Storyteller claimed the evil god Torak drove men and Gods to war. But Belgarath the Sorcerer led men to reclaim the Orb that protected men of the West. So long as it lay at Riva, the prophecy went, men would be safe. But Garion did not believe in such stories. Brought up on a quiet farm by his Aunt Pol, how could he know that the Apostate planned to wake dread Torak, or that he would be led on a quest of unparalleled magic and danger by those he loved?
**The Persistence of Memory** by Tony Eprile
Paul Sweetbread, a young boy in Johannesburg’s northern suburbs, discovers that he is endowed with the “poisoned gift” of a perfect memory. His teachers spout the government’s sanitized version of history, and most of the white population seek safety in what Paul describes as the “national dysmnesia, the art of the rose-colored recall. By remembering, Paul finds himself unwittingly revealing the cruelties that underlie the pleasant blandness of suburban life in a time of political upheaval, the difficulties of being Jewish under Afrikaner nationalism, and the dark secret behind his father’s tragic death. He is soon at odds with his authoritarian teachers, his schoolfellows, and even his doting mother, a character seemingly plucked out of a Chekhov story.” Following the completion of high school, Paul is conscripted into the South African army, and is soon plunged into the secret wars in the deserts between Namibia and Angola.

**The Piano Lesson** by August Wilson
At the heart of the play stands the ornately carved upright piano which, as the Charles family’s prized, hard-won possession, has been gathering dust in the parlor of Berniece Charles’s Pittsburgh home. When Boy Willie, Berniece’s exuberant brother, bursts into her life with his dream of buying the same Mississippi land that his family had worked as slaves, he plans to sell their antique piano for the hard cash he needs to stake his future. But Berniece refuses to sell, clinging to the piano as a reminder of the history that is their family legacy. This dilemma is the real “piano lesson,” reminding us that blacks are often deprived both of the symbols of their past and of opportunity in the present.

**Pilgrim’s Progress** by John Bunyan
Often rated second in importance to the Bible as a Christian document, this famous story of man’s progress through life in search of salvation remains one of the most entertaining allegories of faith ever written. Set against realistic backdrops of town and country, the powerful drama of the pilgrim’s trials and temptations follows him in his harrowing journey to the Celestial City. Along a road filled with monsters and spiritual terrors, Christian confronts such emblematic characters as Worldly Wiseman, Giant Despair, Talkative, Ignorance, and the demons of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. But he is also joined by Hopeful and Faithful. An enormously influential seventeenth-century classic, universally known for its simplicity, vigor, and beauty of language, *Pilgrim’s Progress* remains one of the most widely read books in the English language.

§

**Plainsong** by Kent Haruf
*Plainsong* is the marvelous story of how seven extraordinary members of a tiny prairie community come together, in the face of great difficulties, to form a most appealing extended family.

**The Prince of Tides** by Pat Conroy
Spanning forty years, this is the story of turbulent Tom Wingo, his gifted and troubled twin sister Savannah, and the dark and violent past of the extraordinary family into which they were born. With passion and a rare gift of language, the author moves from present to past, tracing the amazing history of the Wingos from World War II through the final days of the war in Vietnam and into the 1980s, drawing a rich range of characters.

**The Prodigal** by Derek Walcott
*The Prodigal* is a journey through physical and mental landscapes, from Greenwich Village to the Alps, from Pescara to Milan, from Germany to Cartagena. But always in “the music of memory, water” abide St. Lucia, the author’s birthplace, and the living sea. In his new work, Derek Walcott has created a sweeping yet intimate epic of an exhausted Europe studded with church spires and mountains, train stations and statuary, a place where the New World is an idea, a “wavering map,” and where History subsumes the natural history of his “unimportantly beautiful” island home. Here the wanderer fears that he has been tainted by his exile, that his life has become untranslatable, and that his craft itself is rooted in the betrayal of the vivid archipelago to which he must return for the sustenance of life.

**The Professor and the Madman** by Simon Winchester
Part homage to the greatest reference work of all time, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, part mystery, part intellectual history of Victorian England, *The Professor and the Madman* tells the parallel stories of the dictionary's genius editor and one of his most prolific contributors, an insane American doctor committed to an asylum for murder.

§*Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw
*Pygmalion* follows the adventures of phonetics professor Henry Higgins as he attempts to transform cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle into a refined lady. The scene in which Eliza appears in high society with the correct accent but no notion of polite conversation is considered one of the funniest in English drama. Like most of Shaw’s work, *Pygmalion* wins over audiences with wit, a taut morality, and an innate understanding of human relationships.

**The Quiet American** by Graham Greene
While the French Army in Indo-China is grappling with the Vietminh, back at Saigon a young and high-minded American begins to channel economic aid to a “Third Force.” As young Pyle’s policies blunder on into bloodshed, the older man finds it impossible to stand aside as an observer. But Fowler’s motives for intervening are suspect, both to the police and to himself: for Pyle has robbed him of his Vietnamese mistress.

**Raptor Red** by Dr. Bob Bakker
Having lost her mate in a botched hunting attack, Red (so-named because of the red stripe on her snout distinguishing her from other raptor species) joins forces with her sister and her sister’s three chicks to survive in a world of hostile natural forces. Bakker manages to mix scientific theories, some of which are definitely on the cutting edge, with a rip-roaring narrative. Perhaps even more miraculously, he has created a sympathetic nonhuman heroine without anthropomorphizing her into a Disney character. This astonishing and successful novel will appeal to a wide audience and belongs in all fiction collections.

§*The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane
Published thirty years after the Civil War, this “impressionistic” American classic tells a war story in a thoroughly modern way - without a trace of romanticizing. Through the eyes of ordinary soldier Henry Fleming, we follow his psychological turmoil, from the excitement of patriotism to the bloody realities of battle and his flight from it. In the end, he overcomes his fear and disillusionment, and fights with courage.

**The Red Tent** by Anita Diamant
Few stories can evoke a time and place as vividly as Anita Diamant’s compelling tale sprung from the pages of the Old Testament. *The Red Tent* is the story of Jacob’s daughter, Dinah, and Jacob’s four wives, who all served as Dinah’s mother at some point in time. Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah all bring their own unique gifts and influences to bear on Dinah’s life. As Diamant explores the trials and triumphs of ancient women, she brings a foreign yet beautiful world to life as seen through the emotional filter of Dinah’s eyes. This lush, evocative tale transcends time and brings new life to the Old Testament, lending a feminine touch to the mighty word of God.

§*The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro
A tragic, spiritual portrait of a perfect English butler and his reaction to his fading insular world in post-war England. A wonderful, wonderful book.

**Riders in the Chariot** by Patrick White
Patrick White’s 1961 novel, set in an Australian suburb, intertwines four deeply different lives. An Aborigine artist, a Holocaust survivor, a beatific washerwoman, and a childlike heiress are each blessed - and stricken - with visionary experiences that may or may not allow them to transcend the machinations of their fellow men.

**The Rise of Silas Lapham** by William Dean Howells
Silas Lapham is a rough-hewn entrepreneur who has made his fortune in mineral paint. Socially ambitious for their daughters, Lapham and his wife encourage the suit of Tom Corey, son of an aristocratic Boston family, whose own parents are appalled by his consorting with vulgar upstarts. But which Lapham girl does Tom really love: the pretty blonde
Irene or her bookish sister Penelope? As the romantic confusion is sorted out, Lapham suffers calamities that threaten both his financial and personal integrity. His rise is ultimately a moral one. The first major American novel to centre on a businessman.

**The Roaring Boy** by Edward Marston
Westfield’s Men are one of the leading Elizabethan theater companies, and their reputation rests on high tragedy and romantic comedy. A mysterious stranger named Simon Chaloner appears at the Queen’s Head during a celebration after their latest performance. He follows Bracewell and playwright Edmund Hoode home and presses upon them a manuscript called The Roaring Boy, refusing to reveal the true author of the work. The play is based on events surrounding the savage murder of a hapless mathematician, and Hoode sets about rewriting it for the stage. When they stage the new play, the performance draws a crowd and causes a riot. The playwright is imprisoned for seditious libel, and the whole future of Westfield’s Men is in jeopardy. To save his beloved company, Nicholas Bracewell has to solve the murder on which the play is based.

**The Robber Bride** by Margaret Atwood
Set in Canada in the early 1970s, *The Robber Bride* continues Atwood’s satiric exploration into sex and empowerment. Three women and the femme fatale who unites them are set against a backdrop of draft dodgers and the resurgence of feminism. Atwood is an astute observer of contemporary misinformation, and references to tarot, auras, astrology, and more abound. Despite some wonderful passages, however, the narrative thrust consists of self-contained vignettes that do not easily lend themselves to audio. The histories of these women are intense and distinctive, but the superficial present in which they do little more than move from restaurant to restaurant blurs them to the point of being interchangeable.

**The Satanic Verses** by Salman Rushdie
Just before dawn one winter’s morning, a hijacked jumbo jet blows apart high above the English Channel. Two figures fall to the sea, later washing up, alive, on a beach. It was an ambiguous miracle, for both seem to have acquired curious changes. Both have been chosen as opponents in the eternal wrestling match between Good and Evil.

**Seize the Day** by Saul Bellow
This is arguably Bellow’s most profound and moving work. It captures the world of West Side New York, and is filled with remarkable portraits of stunning minor characters. Its hero, Wilky, is a failed salesman, the poor losing-his-last-cent-son of the prosperous Dr. Adler. He is the hippotamus-like failed actor whose contradictory and broken heart fails him in his struggle to make sense of his life. The book is written with a precise Yiddish-English and rare humor. The final scene in which Wilky comes to a funeral cortege and weeps copiously, but not for the dead person but for himself is tremendously painful and poignant. This is a great book, a book about failure and success, the American dream in one Jewish version of it. I believe anyone who cares for Literature will love this book.

**Sense and Sensibility** by Jane Austen
This first of Jane Austen’s published novels is the story of two starkly different English sisters: Elinor Dashwood, the epitome of prudence and self-control, and her younger, more impetuous sister Marianne, who embodies emotion, openness, and sheer enthusiasm. Both struggle to maintain their integrity and find happiness in the face of a competitive marriage market.

**Shipping News** by Annie Proulx
When Quoyle’s two-timing wife meets her just desserts, he retreats with his two daughters to his ancestral home on the starkly beautiful Newfoundland coast, where a rich cast of local characters and family members all play a part in Quoyle’s struggle to reclaim his life. As Quoyle confronts his private demons — and the unpredictable forces of nature and society — he begins to see the possibility of love without pain or misery. A vigorous, darkly comic, and at times magical portrait of the contemporary North American family, *The Shipping News* shows why Annie Proulx is recognized as one of the most gifted and original writers in America today.
**Shizuko's Daughter** by Kyoko Mori
In the years following her mother's suicide, Yuki develops the inner strength to cope with her distant father, her resentful stepmother, and her haunting, painful memories.

*Shoeless Joe* by W. P. Kinsella
“If you build it, he will come.” The mysterious words of an Iowa baseball announcer lead Ray Kinsella to carve a baseball diamond in his cornfield in honor of his hero, the baseball legend Shoeless Joe Jackson. This is a book “not so much about baseball as it is about dreams, magic, life, and what is quintessentially American.”

**Silas Marner** by George Eliot
This 19th-century classic is a tale of betrayal, gold, and love, encased in the elegant symmetrical structure so popular in traditional English fiction, featuring Marner, the weaver, who is framed for theft by his best friend and becomes a recluse, focusing his strong affections only on the store of golden coins he receives in payment for his work.

**Sister Carrie** by Theodore Dreiser
When small-town Carrie Meeber arrives in 1890s Chicago, she cannot know what awaits. Callow, beautiful, and alone, she experiences the bitterness of temptation and hardship even as she sets her sights on a better life. Drawn by the seductive desire to rise above her social class, Carrie aspires to the top of the acting profession in New York, while the man who has become obsessed with her gambles everything for her sake and draws near the brink of destruction.

**Slouching Toward Bethlehem** by Joan Didion
The classic collection of essays in social change -- from Haight-Ashbury to our own inner landscapes -- by the author of *A Book of Common Prayer, Salvador,* and *Miami.* Upon its publication in 1968, Slouching Towards Bethlehem confirmed Joan Didion as one of the most prominent writers on the literary scene. Her unblinking vision and deadpan tone have influenced subsequent generations of reporters and essayists, changing our expectations of style, voice, and the artistic possibilities of nonfiction.

**The Solace of Open Spaces** by Gretel Ehrlich
Gretel Ehrlich is the kind of writer who teaches you that prose can be poetry. In *The Solace of Open Spaces* she writes about coming to terms with the death of the man she loves, about her life in Wyoming, and about what it means to live in wide spaces and interact primarily with animals. Each of these essays is a piece unto itself; sentence after sentence can be savored like hard candy until every bit of flavor comes out. There is much to learn about Wyoming here; Gretel Ehrlich has a mind for details and the reader comes away fully educated about sheep herding, rodeos, cabin fever, and the value of water. But it is how Gretel Ehrlich writes as much as what she writes that makes her work exceptional.

**Song of Solomon** by Toni Morrison
Milkman Dead was born shortly after a neighborhood eccentric hurled himself off a rooftop in a vain attempt at flight. For the rest of his life he, too, will be trying to fly. With this novel, Nobel Prize laureate Toni Morrison transfigures the coming-of-age story. As she follows Milkman from his rustbelt city to the place of his family’s origins, Morrison introduces an entire cast of strivers and seeresses, liars and assassins, the inhabitants of a fully realized black world.

**Sons and Lovers** by D.H. Lawrence
The story of a young man, raised by a weak, alcoholic father and a strong, loving mother, who finds himself, in his search for a soul mate, torn between two very different women. A brilliant, painstaking character study with strong autobiographical overtones.

**Sula** by Toni Morrison
Two girls who grow up to become women. Two friends who become something worse than enemies. In this novel, Toni Morrison tells the story of Nel Wright and Sula Peace, who meet as children in the small town of Medallion, Ohio. Their devotion is fierce enough to withstand bullies and the burden of a dreadful secret. It endures even after Nel has grown up to be a pillar of the black community and Sula has become a pariah. But their friendship ends in an unfortunate betrayal - or does it end?
Stone Diaries by Carol Shields
The Stone Diaries is the story of one woman’s life; a truly sensuous novel that reflects and illuminates the unsettled decades of our century. Born in 1905, Daisy Goodwill drifts through the chapters of childhood, marriage, widowhood, remarriage, motherhood and old age. Bewildered by her inability to understand her own role, Daisy attempts to find a way to tell her own story within a novel that is itself about the limitations of autobiography.

§The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner
First published in 1929, Faulkner created his “heart’s darling,” the beautiful and tragic Caddy Compson, whose story Faulkner told through separate monologues by her three brothers—the idiot Benjy, the neurotic suicidal Quentin and the monstrous Jason.

§The Stranger by Albert Camus
Written in 1946, Camus’ compelling and troubling tale of a disaffected, apparently amoral young man has earned a durable popularity in part because it reveals so vividly the anxieties of its time. Alienation, the fear of anonymity, spiritual doubt—all could have been given a modern inflection in the hands of a lesser talent than Camus, who won the Nobel Prize in 1957 and was noted for his existentialist aesthetic. The remarkable trick of The Stranger, however, is that it’s not mired in period philosophy. A young Algerian, Meursault, afflicted with a sort of aimless inertia, becomes embroiled in the petty intrigues of a local pimp and, somewhat inexplicably, ends up killing a man. Once he’s imprisoned and eventually brought to trial, his crime, it becomes apparent, is not so much the arguably defensible murder he has committed as it is his deficient character. The trial’s proceedings are absurd, a parsing of incidental trivialities—Meursault, for instance, seemed unmoved by his own mother’s death and then attended a comic movie the evening after her funeral—so that the eventual sentence the jury issues is both ridiculous and inevitable.

§A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
A Tale of Two Cities is one of Charles Dickens’s most exciting novels. Set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, it tells the story of a family threatened by the terrible events of the past. Doctor Manette was wrongly imprisoned in the Bastille for eighteen years without trial by the aristocratic authorities. Finally released, he is reunited with his daughter, Lucie, who despite her French ancestry has been brought up in London. Lucie falls in love with Charles Darnay, another expatriate, who has abandoned wealth and a title in France because of his political convictions. When revolution breaks out in Paris, Darnay returns to the city to help an old family servant, but there he is arrested because of the crimes committed by his relations. His wife, Lucie, their young daughter, and her aged father follow him across the Channel, thus putting all their lives in danger.

§Tess of the D’UBervilles by Thomas Hardy
Using richly poetic language to frame a shattering narrative of love, seduction, betrayal, and murder, Hardy tells the story of Tess Durbeyfield, a beautiful young woman living with her impoverished family in Wessex, the southwestern English county immortalized by Hardy. After the family learns of their connection to the wealthy d’Urbervilles, they send Tess to claim a portion of their fortune. She meets and is seduced by the dissolute Alec d’Urberville and secretly bears a child, Sorrow, who dies in infancy. A very different man, Angel Clare, seems to offer Tess love and salvation, but he rejects her—on their wedding night—after learning of her past. Emotionally bereft, financially impoverished, and victimized by the self-righteous rigidity of English social morality, Tess escapes from her vise of passion through a horrible, desperate act.

The Thief and the Dogs by Naguib Mahfouz
A tale of the haunted, hunted Mahran, an ex-con whose daughter refuses to see him upon his release. It is a feverish and suspenseful tale and a complex psychological portrait of a man hell-bent on ruining himself.

§Three Plays: Desire Under the Elms, Mourning Becomes Electra, and Strange Interlude by Eugene O’Neill
These three plays exemplify Eugene O’Neil’s ability to explore the limits of the human predicament, even as he sounds the depths of his audiences’ hearts.

§To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf
A landmark of modern fiction and Virginia Woolf’s most popular novel, first published in 1927, To the Lighthouse explores the subjective reality of the everyday life of the Ramsay family of the British Hebrides islands. A ‘feminine’ book, filled with
irony, sadness, and doubts about life, *To the Lighthouse* is one of the greatest literary achievements of the 20th century and the author’s most popular novel. The serene and maternal Mrs. Ramsay, the tragic yet absurd Mr. Ramsay, together with their children and assorted guests are holidaying on the Isle of Skye. From the seemingly trivial postponement of a visit to a nearby lighthouse, Virginia Woolf constructs a remarkable and moving examination of the complex tensions and allegiances of family life, and the conflict between male and female principles. The work is one of her most successful and accessible experiments in the stream-of-consciousness style.

§*Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding
Reacting against the sentimentality and moralism of the earliest English novels, Henry Fielding chose to create a work whose main character contains all the complexities of a real human being: the foundling Tom Jones. Tom has been raised by the Squire Allworthy to love virtue, and he truly wants to do good. But Tom’s inability to control his temper and his hearty appetite for food, drink, and the opposite sex get him kicked out of Allworthy’s estate – and separated from his one real love, Sophia Western. So he begins a journey from the English countryside to the teeming city of London. Along the way he meets a parade of colorful characters, enjoys a series of bawdy, comic adventures, eventually discovers his true parentage, triumphs over the villainous Blifil, and rejoins the beautiful Sophia.

*The Trench* by Steve Alten
The Meg (Carcharodon megalodon, a really, really big shark) is back in this sequel to Meg, which picks up right where Alten’s last killer thriller left off (in the second chapter there’s even a two-page synopsis recapping the previous action and plot to bring new readers up to speed). Angel, the female offspring of the Meg killed last time around, is being held in captivity and displayed by hero Jonas Taylor and aquarium-owner Masao Tanaka. But Angel is huge and deadly; when she escapes from the aquarium, the predictable rock ‘em-sock ‘em mayhem ensues. So Jonas must face death and his own fears once again and return to the Marianas Trench in another attempt to rid the world of this prehistoric menace. Nearly a carbon-copy of Meg, this action-packed technothriller reads like a movie script and won’t provoke many thoughts but will satisfy fans of Meg and Peter Benchley.

§*The Trial* by Franz Kafka
This disturbing and vastly influential novel has been interpreted on many levels of structure and symbol; but most commentators agree that the book explores the themes of guilt, anxiety, and moral impotency in the face of some ambiguous force. Joseph K. is an employee in a bank, a man without particular qualities or abilities. He could be anyone, and in some ways he is everyone. His inconsequence makes doubly strange his arrest by the officer of the court in the large city where K. lives. He tries in vain to discover how he has aroused the suspicion of the court. His honesty is conventional; his sins, with Elsa the waitress, are conventional; and he has no striking or dangerous ambitions. He can only ask questions, and receives no answers that clarify the strange world of courts and court functionaries in which he is compelled to wander. The plight of Joseph K., consumed by guilt and condemned for a crime he does not understand by a court with which he cannot communicate, is a profound and disturbing image of man in the modern world. There are no formal charges, no procedures, and little information to guide the defendant. One of the most unsettling aspects of the novel is the continual juxtaposition of alternative hypotheses, multiple explanations, different interpretations of cause and effect, and the uncertainty it breeds. The whole rational structure of the world is undermined.

*Tristam Shandy* by Laurence Stern
No one description will fit this strange, eccentric, endlessly complex masterpiece. It is a fiction about fiction-writing in which the invented world is as much infused with wit and genius as the theme of inventing it. It is a joyful celebration of the infinite possibilities of the art of fiction, and a wry demonstration of its limitations.

§*The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James
The classic tale of an impressionable young governess put in charge of two apparently angelic children soon turns into one of the most riveting and controversial ghost stories ever written.

§*Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare
Twins Viola and Sebastian are shipwrecked. Believing her brother drowned, and determined to survive alone, Viola disguises herself as a boy. As ‘Cesario’ she enters the service of Orsino and is sent by him to woo Olivia.” But Olivia isn’t
interested and ‘Cesario’ is swept into a merry-go-round world of unrequited love, mistaken identities, high comedy, low tricks and desperate passion.

_Ulysses_ by James Joyce

_Ulysses_ is the most important contribution that has been made to fictional literature in the twentieth century. It is likely that there is no one writing English today that could parallel Mr. Joyce’s feat, and it is also likely that few would care to do it were they capable. In an almost maniacal homage to human consciousness as it interprets itself through the most inventive and poetic language imaginable, Joyce delivers us into the minds of the novel’s often-comic hero, Leopold Bloom; his earthy wife, Molly; and intellectual son-surrogate, Stephen Daedalus, as all three experience a day of interaction with one another and with their rich Dublin world June 16, 1904, to be exact (now known throughout the literary world as Bloomsday).

_The Unbearable Lightness of Being_ by Milan Kundera

A young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing; one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover -- these are the two couples whose story is told in this masterful novel. In a world in which lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and by fortuitous events, a world in which everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence, we feel “the unbearable lightness of being” not only as the consequence of our pristine actions but also in the public sphere, and the two inevitably intertwine.

_Under the Banner of Heaven_ by Jon Krakauer

At the core of his book is an appalling double murder committed by two Mormon Fundamentalist brothers, Ron and Dan Lafferty, who insist they received a revelation from God commanding them to kill their blameless victims. Beginning with a meticulously researched account of this “divinely inspired” crime, Krakauer constructs a multilayered, bone-chilling narrative of messianic delusion, savage violence, polygamy, and unyielding faith. Along the way, he uncovers a shadowy offshoot of America’s fastest-growing religion, and raises provocative questions about the nature of religious belief.

_The Vampire Lestat_ by Anne Rice

Lestat, a creature of the darkest and richest imagination, is the vampire hero of Anne Rice’s enthralling novel. Once an aristocrat in the heady days of pre-revolutionary France, now a rock star in the demonic, shimmering 1980s, he rushes through the centuries in search of others like him, seeking answers to the mystery of his eternal, terrifying existence. His is a mesmerizing story--passionate, complex, and thrilling.

_When the Wind Blows_ by James Patteron

After the mysterious death of her husband several years before, Frannie retreated to an isolated life in her Colorado practice. But a series of bizarre events suddenly disrupts her lonely routine. On a personal level, she is shaken by her new tenant--Kit Harrison. Kit’s too handsome and too friendly and he’s a hunter (or so Frannie thinks). He’s also recovering from a devastating personal tragedy, and, as Frannie eventually learns, he’s really an FBI agent using his vacation to follow a crucial lead. But Kit isn’t the one that’s got Frannie concerned. As she says after stopping her Suburban one night to check out something on the side of the road: “The little girl’s arms were folded back in a peculiar way, but when she lifted them--feathers fanned out.” The girl is Max, and the mystery of her wings leads Frannie and Kit into a massive conspiracy involving secret genetic research and the scientific manipulation of the human species.

§_White Noise_ by Don Delillo

This is the story of a college professor and his family whose small Midwestern town is evacuated after an industrial accident. . . . Jack Gladney is a professor of Hitler studies at the College-on-the-Hill. This is an America where no one is responsible or in control; all are receptors, receivers of stimuli, consumers. Some join Simuvac, which signs up local school children as volunteer victims in simulated evacuations. Gladney’s wife, Babette, a low-key and adaptable faculty wife who reads tabloids to the blind and teaches senior citizens’ classes in posture, is distinguished by her forgetfulness and her preoccupation with death.

_Wide Sargasso Sea_ by Jean Rhys

A sensual and protected young woman, Antoinette Cosway grows up in the lush, natural world of the Caribbean. She is sold into marriage to the coldhearted and prideful Rochester, who succumbs to his need for money and his lust. Yet he
will make her pay for her ancestors’ sins of slaveholding, excessive drinking, and nihilistic despair by enslaving her as a prisoner in his black British home.

*Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula Le Guin
This is a tale of wizards, dragons, and shadows, played in an archipelago of imagined islands. The young boy Sparrowhawk becomes apprentice to a Master Wizard; but impatience to learn faster takes him far from home to Roke Island, where he enters the School for Wizards. As a student of magic, Sparrowhawk exceeds his years in accomplishment, but pride and jealousy drive the boy to try certain dangerous powers too soon. A terrible evil is let loose in the land.

§*The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston
A Chinese American woman tells of the Chinese myths, family stories and events of her California childhood that have shaped her identity.

The World According to Garp by John Irving
*The World According to Garp* is a comic and compassionate coming-of-age novel that established John Irving as one of the most imaginative writers of his generation. A worldwide bestseller since its publication in 1978, Irving’s classic is filled with stories inside stories about the life and times of T. S. Garp, novelist and bastard son of Jenny Fields - a feminist leader ahead of her time. “In the world according to Garp, we’re all terminal cases.”

§*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë
A somber tale of consuming passions and vengeance played out against the lonely moors of northern England, the book proved to be one of the most enduring classics of English literature. The turbulent and tempestuous love story of Cathy and Heathcliff spans two generations -- from the time Heathcliff, a strange, course young boy, is brought to live on the Earnshaw’s windswept estate, through Cathy’s marriage to Edgar Linton and Heathcliff’s plans for revenge, to Cathy’s death years later and the eventual union of the surviving Earnshaw and Linton heirs.