

## SWAMPSCOTT HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER READING LIST FOR SENIORS: 2010

The English department is pleased to present this year's summer reading list for seniors. Please read the list carefully for appropriate titles of the course you will be taking next school year. All teachers will collect your assignments the first day of class. Students taking **140** must read the required text plus three additional choice books from the first list provided. Students taking **141** must read the required text and two additional choice books from either list. Students taking the **145, 146, 147, or 148** courses must read any two books from either list provided. They have no required book. Students must complete the **dialectic journal assignment for the required novel**. They must complete a creative project from the list provided for each additional novel. Students taking **145, 146, 147, or 148** must complete one dialectic journal and one creative project. Students enrolling after August 15 will have a two-week grace period for the reading. Books are available at the following locations: the Swampscott Public library, Borders (Peabody) and Borders Express (Swampscott), and Barnes and Nobles (Peabody).

### STUDENTS TAKING ENGLISH 140 OR 141

#### REQUIRED:

*Blindness* by Jose Saramago: Winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Literature. A city is hit by an epidemic of 'white blindness.' The blindness spreads, sparing no one.

#### CHOICE BOOKS:

*The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink: This mesmerizing novel is a story of love and secrets, horror and compassion, unfolded against the haunted landscape of post World War II Germany.

*God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy: 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.

*The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant: Author Anita Diamant, in the voice of Dinah, gives an insider's look at the details of women's lives in biblical times and a chronicle of their earthy stories and long-ignored histories.

*Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett: Somewhere in South America, at the home of the country's vice president, a lavish birthday party is being held in honor of Mr. Hosokawa, a powerful Japanese businessman. Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano, has mesmerized the international guests with her singing. It is a perfect evening -- until a band of gun-wielding terrorists breaks in through the air-conditioning vents and takes the entire party hostage.

*The Sound of Waves* by Yukio Mishima: Set in a remote fishing village in Japan, *The Sound of Waves* is a timeless story of first love. A young fisherman is entranced at the sight of the beautiful daughter of the wealthiest man in the village. They fall in love, but must then endure the calumny and gossip of the villagers.

*The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel: *Life of Pi* is a masterful and utterly original novel that is at once the story of a young castaway who faces immeasurable hardships on the high seas and a meditation on religion, faith, art and life that is as witty as it is profound.

*Waiting* by Ha Jin: This is the story of Lin Kong, a man living in two worlds, struggling with the conflicting claims of two utterly different women as he moves through the political minefields of a society designed to regulate his every move and stifle the promptings of his innermost heart

*Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro: From the Booker Prize-winning author of *The Remains of the Day* comes a devastating new novel of innocence, knowledge, and loss. As children Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy were students at Hailsham, an exclusive boarding school secluded in the English countryside. It was a place of mercurial cliques and mysterious rules where teachers were constantly reminding their charges of how special they were.

*In the Time of the 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.

*The Aguero Sisters* by Christina Garcia: Garcia's magisterial work opens with a murder. In Cuba's shimmering Zapata Swamp, Blanca Aguero turns in time to see her naturalist husband, Ignacio, point a gun at her and pull the trigger. At the heart of the novel that then unfolds are the two daughters of the ill-fated couple.

*High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby: *High Fidelity* is the story of Rob, a pop music junkie who runs his own semi-failing record store. His girlfriend Laura has just left him for Ian from the flat upstairs. Rob is both miserable and relieved. After all, could he have spent his life with someone who has a bad record collection?

*The History of Love* by Nicole Krauss: *The History of Love* spans a period of over 60 years and takes readers from Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe to present day Brighton Beach. At the center of each main character's psyche is the issue of loneliness, and the need to fill a void left empty by lost love.

*When the Crocodile Eats the Sun: A Memoir of Africa* by Peter Godwin In 1996 when his father suffers a heart attack, Godwin returns to Africa and sparks the central revelation of the book—the father is Jewish and has hidden it from Godwin and his siblings. As his father's health deteriorates, so does Zimbabwe.

*Annie John* by Jamaica Kincaid: With *Annie John*, the story of a young girl coming of age in Antigua, Kincaid tears open the theme that lies at the heart of all her fierce, incantatory novels: the ambivalent and essential bonds created by a mother's love.

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini: With his second novel, Khaled Hosseini proves beyond a shadow of doubt that "The Kite Runner" was no flash in the Afghan pan. Once again set in Afghanistan, the story twists and turns its way through the turmoil and chaos that ensued following the fall of the monarchy in 1973, but focuses mainly on the lives of two women, thrown together by fate.

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen: Few have failed to be charmed by the witty and independent spirit of Elizabeth Bennet. Her early determination to dislike Mr. Darcy is a prejudice only matched by the folly of his arrogant pride. Their first impressions give way to true feelings in a comedy profoundly concerned with happiness and how it might be achieved.

*The Commitments* by Roddy Doyle: "Dublin soul" is what the lads call it. Obsessed with James Brown, Percy Sledge and other rhythm-and-blues greats from across the ocean, young Jimmy Rabbitte organizes the "world's hardest working band," made up of fellow Dubliners, and sets out to teach the town a lesson about soul.

*Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie and Ina Rilke: This beautifully presented novella tracks the lives of two teens, childhood friends who have been sent to a small Chinese village for "re-education" during Mao's Cultural Revolution. Sons of doctors and dentists, their days are now spent muscling buckets of excrement up the mountainside and mining coal.

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Steig Larsson: The book is a thriller on many levels: It is the mystery about what happened to the heiress of Swedish family, the Vangers, it is about a journalist's crusade to redeem his reputation, and it is about a computer-genius named Lisabeth who enacts vendettas and struggles to interact with other humans.

### **CHOICES FOR SENIORS TAKING 141, (145) Film Studies, (146) Pop Lit., (147) Graphic Novel, or (148) Crime in Literature**

*Bridget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding: *Bridget Jones Diary* follows the fortunes of a single girl on an optimistic but doomed quest for self-improvement.

*The Reader* by Bernard Schlink: This mesmerizing novel is a story of love and secrets, horror and compassion, unfolded against the haunted landscape of post World War II Germany.

*Lucky* by Alice Sebold: One night near the end of her freshman year at Syracuse University, Alice Sebold was raped while walking home through a park. From that experience comes *Lucky*, an account of the rape and the year that followed it.

*Black Water* by Joyce Carol Oates: The senator. The girl. The accident. Oates creates an unforgettable allegory about power, morals, and ambition.

*Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi: *Persepolis* is Marjane Satrapi's wise, funny, and heartbreaking memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution.

*So Far From God* by Ana Castillo: Sofia and her fated daughters, Fe, Esperanza, Caridad, and la Loca, endure hardship and enjoy love in the sleepy New Mexico hamlet of Tome, a town teeming with marvels where the comic and the horrific, the real and the supernatural, reside.

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night* by Mark Haddon: Despite his overwhelming fear of interacting with people, Christopher, a mathematically-gifted, autistic fifteen-year-old boy, decides to investigate the murder of a neighbor's dog and uncovers secret information about his mother.

*High Fidelity* by Nick Hornby: *High Fidelity* is the story of Rob, a pop music junkie who runs his own semi-failing record store. His girlfriend Laura has just left him for Ian from the flat upstairs. Rob is both miserable and relieved. After all, could he have spent his life with someone who has a bad record collection?

*Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia* by Marya Hornbacher: Based on research and her own battle with anorexia and bulimia, which left her with permanent physical ailments and nearly killed her, Hornbacher's book explores the mysterious and ruthless realm of self-starvation, which has its grip firmly around the minds and bodies of adolescents all across this country.

*A Million Little Pieces* by James Frey: James Frey's memoir of drug addiction and recovery was a bestseller even before Oprah Winfrey picked it for her book club in 2005, but the subsequent revelations about discrepancies between the story and the author's real life touched off a national debate about the line between fact and fiction.

*Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt: Despite impoverishing his family because of his alcoholism, McCourt's father passed on to his son a gift for superb storytelling. He told him about the great Irish heroes, the old days in Ireland, the people in their Limerick neighborhood, and the world beyond their shores.

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*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith: This novel is a mash-up of the original story of the Bennett sisters who at the mercy of the world they live in, balance their desire to be loved with the need to make an economically good marriage AND some awesome zombie-killing!

*The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides: Eugenides's tantalizing, macabre first novel begins with a suicide, the first of the five bizarre deaths of the teenage daughters in the Lisbon family; the rest of the work, set in the author's native Michigan in the early 1970s, is a backward-looking quest as the male narrator and his nosy, pals describe how they strove to understand the odd clan of this first chapter.

*All Souls* by Michael Patrick MacDonald: In this plainly written, powerful memoir, MacDonald, now 32, details not only his own story of growing up in Southie, Boston's Irish Catholic enclave, but examines the myriad ways in which the media and law enforcement agencies exploit marginalized working-class communities. MacDonald was one of nine children born (of several fathers) to his mother, Helen MacDonald, a colorful woman who played the accordion in local Irish pubs to supplement her welfare checks.

*The Double Bind* by Chris Bohjalian: Readers will be startled to learn early on that the heroine of this engrossing puzzle, 26-year-old Laurel Estabrook, was born in West Egg. Wait a minute, wasn't West Egg where Jay Gatsby lived? Laurel works in a Burlington, Vt., homeless shelter and is trying to overcome mental and physical scars incurred from a brutal assault some six years earlier.

*Sarah's Key* by Tatiana de Rosnay: Sarah Starzynski, a ten-year-old Parisian girl born to Jewish parents, is captured in the round-up of June 16, 1942, and imprisoned with almost 10,000 others in an indoor cycling arena, the Vélodrome d'Hiver, awaiting transportation to Auschwitz. When the police arrive, she has just time to hide her younger brother in a concealed closet in their apartment, locking him in and promising to return. Sixty years later, Julia Jarmond, an American journalist married to a Frenchman, researching for a story on the "Vél d'Hiv," stumbles on the trail of Sarah's family, and becomes obsessed with trying to discover her fate.

*The Coldest Winter Ever* by Sister Souljah: Winter Santiago, the 17-year-old daughter of big-time drug dealer Ricky Santiago, is spoiled and pampered, intoxicated by the power of her name and her sexuality. Riding high on the trade, Santiago moves the family out of the Brooklyn projects to a mansion on Long Island where things start to disintegrate.

*The Body of Christopher Creed* by Carol Plum-Ucci: The often-tortured class weirdo has disappeared, leaving an enigmatic note on the school library computer. Is he a runaway, a suicide, a murder victim?