

PEABODY VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Summer Reading Book Synopses 2009-2010

Grade 9

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Jacobs, Harriet.

Published in 1861, this was one of the first personal narratives by a slave and one of the few written by a woman. Jacobs (1813-97) was a slave in North Carolina and suffered terribly, along with her family, at the hands of a ruthless owner. She made several failed attempts to escape before successfully making her way North, though it took years of hiding and slow progress. Eventually, she was reunited with her children.

Treasure Island. Stevenson, Robert Louis.

Set sail to the heart of adventure with cabin boy, Jim Hawkins, aboard the ship with the legendary scoundrel, Captain Long John Silver. A secret treasure map becomes the key to heart-pounding thrills, danger and swashbuckling action as a boy faces the high seas and the grandest pirate of all in the adventure of a life time.

****The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime***. Haddon, Mark.

2004 Alex Award winner, 2004 ALA Best Books for Young Adults
Christopher Boone is fifteen and has Asperger's, a form of autism. He knows a great deal about math and very little about human beings. When he finds his neighbors's dog murdered, he sets out on a terrifying journey which will turn his world upside down.

****Sold***. McCormick, Patricia.

2006 National Book Award Finalist, 2007 ALA Best Books for Young Adults
As this heartbreaking story opens, 13-year-old Lakshmi lives an ordinary life in Nepal, going to school and thinking of the boy she is to marry. Then her gambling-addicted stepfather sells her into prostitution in India. Refusing to "be with men," she is beaten and starved until she gives in.

Ender's Game. Orson Scott Card.

Set in the future, imperiled humankind has survived two invasions by the alien Formics. In preparation for a third invasion, Ender Wiggin and others of the world's most talented children are sent to the Battle School to learn the arts of war and train to be future fleet commanders. As Ender and his group learn the arts of war through increasingly difficult games, his genius as a tactician is revealed. This book won both the Hugo and Nebula Awards in 1985 and its expanded version won them in 1986.

Faithful. Stephen King and Stewart O'Nan.

Hugo and O. Henry Awards winner Stephen King teams up with another diehard Red Sox fan to chronicle the 2004 Red Sox season.

**This book contains mature subject matter.*

GRADE 10:

Tuesdays With Morrie. (NF) Mitch Albom

A young man regularly visits an old man suffering from degenerative disease (ALS) through to his last days in this poignant story of life's greatest lessons. This inspirational story has been the basis for many award-winning films.

Eddie Would Go. (NF) Stuart Holmes Coleman

The author charts the too short life of Eddie Aikau, legendary Hawaiian lifeguard and champion surfer. Aikau was known for his daring and heroic exploits in saving surfers and swimmers on Hawaii's North

Shore and his untimely disappearance while helping others launched Hawaii's largest ever air-sea rescue search. This book won the 2004 Elliot Codes Award for Literature, the U.S.C. Waring Award and the Excellence in Writing Non-Fiction Award from Hawaii Book Publishers.

Cold Sassy Tree. Olive Ann Burns.

Winner of the 1988 National Book Award and the Book Sense Book of the Year Award.

Will Tweedy, age 14, stumbles into adulthood after his grandfather remarries a younger woman only three weeks after his wife's death. Set in Georgia at the turn of the century, this novel looks at the world through a young boy's eyes on the verge of becoming a man. (Published in 1984, this book sold over one million copies worldwide.)

The Book of Lost Things. John Connolly

We are never too old for fairy tales. Twelve year old David feels alienated after his father remarries and his new wife is expecting a baby. Finding a portal into another realm, David finds himself on a quest of Arthurian magnitude as he fights beasts and dragons to get home, learning through the experience the meaning of honor, loyalty and courage. This book won the 2007 ALA Alex Award, the 2007 Printz Award and was a nominee for the 2007 Irish Novel of the Year.

I Have Lived a Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust. (NF) Livia Bitton Jackson

Jackson chronicles the life of a young girl interned in a women's concentration/labor camp during World War II. While she reports the horrifying conditions of this genocide, her unconquerable spirit shines through the difficulties and pain. This book won the 2000 Oklahoma Sequoyah Book Award, the Christopher Award, the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian Award and the 2008 Leafy Award.

***Dawn**, written by Elie Weisel

Written in 1960 by a Pulitzer Prize and 1986 Nobel Peace Prize winner, **Dawn** presents Elisha, a young Israeli Freedom Fighter, as he is forced to examine his own thoughts while he waits to execute a British soldier in retribution for the killing of a Jewish prisoner. "**Dawn** is an eloquent meditation on the compromises, justifications, and sacrifices that human beings make when they murder other human beings."

**This book contains mature subject matter.*

GRADE 11:

The Dew Breaker. Edwidge Danticat

Spun from a series of stories set in Haiti under the brutal Duvalier regime, this novel reveals the truth about the past of a Haitian immigrant to the United States. Through his viewpoint and those of his artist daughter and others, his story is slowly unwound as we learn about his "work" in Haiti and its undying effects on his victims, no matter where they live – in basement apartments in Brooklyn, NY, Florida or anywhere their troubled pasts follow. This winner of the American Book Award, the 1989 National Book Critics Circle Award and nominee for the PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction explores the effects of past experiences on the present.

Advanced Placement Students: See the teachers for book information.

GRADE 12:

Escape From Slavery. (NF) Francis Bok

Set in Sudan with its present "civil war" and refugee camps in Darfur, Francis Bok, a Black African Christian, tells the story of his capture as a boy by an Islamic Arab raider who enslaves him for 10 years. At age 17, Bok escapes, finding his way to Darfur, and tells the story of the horrifying conditions there and his eventual rescue and emigration to the United States. Mr. Bok has been a speaker at PVMHS. This

autobiography won the Boston Freedom Award and the 2003 Books for a Better Life/Suze Orman First Book Award.

The Alchemist. Paulo Coelho

A young hero, Santiago, goes on a far-reaching journey in quest of a great treasure and his purpose in life. This journey leads him away from all family expectations, often endangers him and has him encounter all kinds of people as he finds friends, enemies, mentors and the love of his life. This novel won the Best Fiction Corinne International Award in 2002.

***Dean Koontz's Frankenstein. Book I: Prodigal Son.** Dean Koontz and Kevin Anderson

In this first of three planned novels, Koontz and Anderson revisit the classic Mary Shelley novel with the question *what if Dr. Frankenstein and his Monster were still alive today and living in New Orleans?* The authors write an action-based detective novel full of references to "monster" movies and literature. His two tough detectives face solving strange serial murders and questions of money, power, autism, cloning and what it means to be human in today's society. Can the monsters be tamed today? Nominated in 1995 for the Prometheus Award for Best Novel, this book won the 2005 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award.

***The Geography of Bliss: One Grump's Search for the Happiest Places in the World.** (NF) Eric Weiner

In this contemporary book, NPR foreign correspondent and 1994 Peabody Award winner Eric Weiner sets out to visit some of the likeliest and unlikeliest places in the world to find the keys to happiness. In his travels, he explores the nature of happiness as it applies in each culture and looks for a definition that could be applicable to all humankind. As the title implies, some of his discoveries and experiences reveal his grumpiness and some show his capacity for pleasant surprises; some lead him to thought-provoking conclusions about cultures with which some readers may disagree.

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