

**8th GRADE SUGGESTED SUMMER READING LIST**  
**SAINT ANN'S SCHOOL**  
**2004**

- Alvarez, Julia      How the Garcia Girls Got Their Accent: 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 from a pampered life of privilege on an island compound are plunged 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.
- Anderson, Laurie      Speak: A stunning and sympathetic tribute to the teenage outcast. The triumphant ending, in which Melinda finds her voice and loudly confronts her rapist, is cause for cheering. It will be hard for any teen to look at a class scapegoat again without some measure of compassion.
- Asimov, Isaac      Nightfall: The inhabitants of the Planet Kalgash behave much like humans, but their planetary system is not like earth. Kalgash's six suns leave it in almost perpetual night. As the daylight ends, you realize how completely alien this world can be.
- Avrich, Jane      A Winter Without Milk: Stories: 15 stories by Jane Avrich, your English teacher. I think you will really enjoy them. See if you recognize some of the characters.
- Bradbury, Ray      Fahrenheit 451: The system was simple. Everyone understood it. Books were for burning, along with the houses in which they were hidden. Guy Montag enjoyed his job burning books until he met two people who made him ponder about a world in which people are allowed to think for themselves.
- Card, Orson Scott      Ender's Game: Ender, who is the result of a genetic experiment, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against the alien enemy. There are more books in this series.
- Chute, Carolyn      The Beans of Egypt, Maine: In Egypt, Maine, the Beans are just about everywhere. They have always been there and almost everybody is related to them—some more closely than they would wish. Poverty from the ground up. A wild and hilarious book.
- Conroy, Frank      Stop Time: First published in 1967, this is a memoir of the author's boyhood and adolescence. Beginning with a lesson in brutality at a progressive boarding school, the story moves to a self-help settlement, a Connecticut mental hospital (where his mother and step-father are wardens), and to New York City where he lives at home – if somewhat dangerously.

- Cormier, Robert      The Chocolate War: A high school freshman discovers the devastating consequences of refusing to join in the school's annual fund raising drive and arouses the wrath of the school bullies.
- Cormier, Robert      After the First Death: The hijacking of a bus of children by terrorists seeking the return of their homeland is described from the perspective of a hostage, a terrorist, an Army general involved in the rescue operation, and his son. Very good.
- Crichton, Michael      The Andromeda Strain: The U.S. Government stands warned that the sterilization procedures for returning space probes may be inadequate to guarantee uncontaminated re-entry into the atmosphere. When a probe satellite falls to earth in a remote town in Arizona the bodies that lie heaped across the ground have a look of frozen surprise that marks the beginning of the terror.
- Denes, Magda      Castles Burning: In 1939 Magda Denes' father abandoned her family in war-torn Hungary. This book is her moving, unsparing, and often wickedly witty chronicle of her life hiding from the Nazis.
- Deaver, Julie R.      Say Goodnight Gracie: Well-drawn portrayal of the complex emotions of an adolescent's first confrontation with death. Morgan and Jimmy have been inseparable friends since birth. When Jimmy is killed by a drunk driver, Morgan's pain seems unbearable. The novel charts the range of Morgan's grief and her slow growth towards acceptance and maturity. The book opens with a mention of Jimmy's death, then jumps to before the accident as Morgan narrates the events leading up to and following it.
- Dumaurier, Daphne      Rebecca: At the great English estate of Manderley, Maxim de Winter and his mousy new wife try to live with the haunting legacy of Maxim's first wife, the beautiful Rebecca, who died in a sailing accident. Mrs. Danvers, the creepy housekeeper, worships her memory and will not let Rebecca's presence in the house die. A truly romantic and suspenseful novel.
- Dupreau, Jeanne      The City of Ember: Ember was built deep underground as a last refuge for the human race. Two hundred years later, the great lamps that light the city are beginning to flicker. When Lina finds part of an ancient message, she's sure it holds a secret that will save the city. She and her friend Doon must decipher the message before the lights go out on Ember forever!
- Farmer, Nancy      The House of the Scorpion: The story may be futuristic, but it hits close to home, raising questions of what it means to be human, what is the value of life, and what are the responsibilities of a society. A scientist brings to life one of 36 tiny cells, frozen more than 100 years ago. The result is the hero at the novel's center, Matt, a clone of a powerful drug lord, El Patron, the ruler of Opium, a country that lies between the United States and Aztlan, (formerly Mexico). Its vast poppy fields are tended by eejits, human beings who attempted to flee Aztlan, programmed by a computer chip implanted in their brains.
- Funke, Cornelia      Thief Lord: Welcome to the magical underworld of Venice, Italy, where hidden canals and crumbling rooftops shelter runaways and children with

incredible secrets... Prosper and Bo are orphans on the run for their cruel aunt and uncle. The brothers decide to hide out in Venice, where they meet a mysterious thirteen-year-old boy who calls himself "the Thief Lord." He invites them on a magical adventure to a land of forgotten mysteries that will change their lives forever. An exciting tale of fun, flight, and freedom is sure to keep readers guessing up until a breathtaking finale.

Gallo, Donald        Time-Capsule: A prolific anthologist presents 10 new stories, each set in a different decade of the 20th century. Each selection is prefaced by a list of its decade's major events and inventions, and each pairs a teenager with an issue or condition of the day: a horizon-expanding visit to the past century.

Guterson, David     Snow Falling on Cedars: Set on an island in Puget Sound, Washington, where everyone is either a fisherman or a berry farmer, the story is nominally about a murder trial. However, since it is shortly after World War II, internment camps and racism help fuel suspicion of a Japanese-American fisherman, a lifelong resident of the islands. Beautifully written.

Haddon, Mark        The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time: When Christopher discovers his neighbor's dog savagely stabbed to death and he is accused, he decides to use the deductive reasoning of his favorite detective to solve the crime. Employing Holmesian logic is not an easy task for even the cleverest amateur sleuth and, in the boy's case, it is particularly daunting. He suffers from autism, a disability that in his case causes, among other things, compulsive behavior; an inability to read others' emotions, an intolerance for noise, human touch, and unexpected events. He has learned to cope amazingly well with the help of a brilliant teacher who encourages him to write a book. This is his book--a murder mystery that is so much more.

Hinton, S.E.         That was Then This is Now: S.E. Hinton paints a richly textured portrait of two boys at a crossroads in their friendship. With careful, intimate strokes, Hinton reveals a boy struggling over whether to protect his best friend or whether to follow his own beliefs about right and wrong. The ending will surprise readers, challenging them to puzzle over Byron's dilemma in their own hearts.

Hornby, Nick         About a Boy: At 36, Will Lightman is a terminally hip Londoner, unmarried, hyper concerned with his coolness quotient, and blithely subsisting on his father's royalties. Will sees himself as entirely lacking in hidden depths. However, when all his friends are growing up and taking on the responsibilities of family life, he is increasingly left out in the cold. He indulges in some serious embroidery of the truth about being a single parent of a 12-year-old son, all of which leads to a hilarious story. This is a really warm, funny book.

Huxley, Elspeth     The Flame Trees of Thika: Elspeth Huxley recalls her childhood in Africa on a small farm in Kenya at the turn of the century. For a young girl it was a time of adventure and freedom. Huxley paints an unforgettable picture of growing up among the Masai and Kikuyu people.

- Isaacson, Judith M. Seed of Sarah: Memoirs of a Survivor: When Judith Isaacson was 13 years old, her family were totally assimilated into the Hungarian culture and society. When the Nazis arrived she continued her education and it was four years before she was deported to Auschwitz. After the liberation she emigrated to America where she now teaches.
- Jiang, Ji-Li Red Scarf Girl: A moving account of growing up in China during the Cultural Revolution when children rose up against their parents at the instigation of the Government.
- Junger, Sebastian The Perfect Storm: True account of the most extraordinary storm in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century--a tempest born from so rare a combination of factors, it was deemed perfect. It is also the story of the doomed fishing boat, helpless in the midst of a force beyond comprehension.
- Kantor, Melissa Confessions of a Not It Girl: Jan Miller is a fresh, funny, and real teen seeking her first romance during her senior year in high school. Her parents are New York intellectuals who seem only vaguely aware of what is going on with their children. Jan obsesses about the college applications she has not yet begun; the size of her butt; and Josh, who has returned after many years in Seattle with his father to live with his mother.
- Knowles, John A Separate Peace: An engrossing tale of love, hate, war and peace. Sharing a room at Devon, an exclusive New England prep school, in the summer prior to World War II, Gene and Phineas form a complex bond of friendship that draws out both the best and worst characteristics of each boy and leads ultimately to violence, a confession and the betrayal of trust.
- Lowry, Lois Messenger: A companion to *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue* this dark fantasy is set in a community that is changing its ways. Once a utopian community that prided itself on its welcome to strangers, Village will soon be closed to all outsiders. As one of the few people able to travel through the dangerous Forest, Matty must deliver the message of Village's closing and try to convince Seer's daughter to return with him before it's too late. But the Forest has become hostile to Matty as well, and he must risk everything to fight his way through it, armed only with an emerging power he cannot yet explain or understand.
- McDonald, Joyce Shades of Simon Gray: At the center of the town stands an ancient oak. Two hundred years ago a young man was summarily hanged there after a hasty trial. Now the tree marks the scene of another violent event. Simon Gray, 16, has crashed his '92 Honda Civic into the tree and is in a coma. None of the adults know that Simon hacked the school computer for three older kids who had bullied him into procuring advance copies of tests for them. As he lies in the coma, they worry about their secret, and in his mind, Simon is walking out of his body and out of time to meet the young murderer at the tree. A strange mystery-fantasy.
- Miller, Walter A Canticle for Leibowitz: The atomic flame deluge was over, the earth was dead. In a barren desert a humble monk unearths a fragile link 20<sup>th</sup> Century

civilization. He finds a note “pound pastrami, can of kraut, six bagels—bring home for Emma.” What to make of it? Wonderful science fiction.

Myers, Walter D.     Fallen Angels: A gripping novel about the price five young men pay for their tour of duty in Vietnam.

Nix, Garth            Abhorsen: A dazzling conclusion of The Abhorsen Trilogy begun with *Sabriel* and *Lirael*. The forces of evil from the Old Kingdom now take hold of even the outside world.

Nye, Naomi S.        Habibi: When Liyana is fourteen her father moves her family from St. Louis to his native Jerusalem. Before she knows it, Liyana is studying Arabic and baking bread with her Arab grandmother. Her search for identity inevitably becomes intertwined with Arab-Israeli tensions when she has a Jewish boy friend. A provocative and interesting story.

Nye, Naomi S.        The Space Between our Footsteps: "Poetry is a river / And solitude a bridge. / Through writing / We cross it, / Through reading / We Return." So writes Lebanese poet Kaissar Afif in Naomi Shihab Nye's aesthetically stunning anthology of poetry and paintings from the Middle East. Nye leads readers into a lush, vivid world in which more than 100 poets from 19 different Middle Eastern countries share their innermost feelings about place, family, war, and peace.

Paolini, Christopher   Eragon: A young farm boy finds a marvelous blue stone in a mystical mountain place. Before he can trade it for food to get his family through the hard winter, it hatches into a beautiful sapphire-blue dragon, a race thought to be extinct. Eragon bonds with the dragon, and when his family is killed by the marauding Ra'zac, he discovers that he is the last of the Dragon Riders, fated to play a decisive part in a coming war between the humans, dwarves, elves, the diabolical Shades and their Neanderthal Urgalls. Written by a 16-year-old home-schooled boy.

Sebold, Alice         The Lovely Bones: Susie tells the story from wherever she is—heaven (if you believe in it)-- watching over her family, the killer and her friends. Her father becomes determined to find the killer, her mother withdraws from life, her little brother, Buckley, attempts to make sense of the new hole in his family, and her younger sister Lindsay moves through the events of her teenage years with Susie riding shotgun from on high. An exploration of loss and mourning made even more powerful by a cast of convincing characters.

Sedaris, David        Me Talk Pretty one Day: Welcome to the curious mind of David Sedaris, where dogs outrank children, guitars have breasts, and French toddlers unmask the inadequacies of the American male. Sedaris inhabits this world as a misanthrope chronicling all things petty and small. In *Me Talk Pretty One Day* Sedaris is as determined as ever to be nobody's hero--he never triumphs, he never conquers--and somehow, with each failure, he inadvertently becomes everybody's favorite underdog. Very funny.

- Senna, Danzy      Caucasia: Birdie and Cole are the daughters of a black father and a white mother who are both intellectuals in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1970s. The two sisters find their close-knit relationship in jeopardy when their parents' marriage falls apart. Very good.
- Shandler, Sarah      Ophelia Speaks: A clever response to Mary Pipher's bestselling Reviving Ophelia. Shandler gives us a telling portrait of young girls in this compilation of essays, poems, and true-grit commentary from a cross section of teenage girls (or Ophelias), throughout the country. The book succeeds in that it gives voice to their deepest concerns and their too-often frenzied lives.
- Shusterman, Neal      Downsiders: When 14-year-old Lindsay meets Talon and discovers that the Downsiders world has evolved from the subway built in New York City in 1867 by Alfred Ely Beach, she and her new friend experience a clash of their two cultures.
- Stroud, Jonathan      The Amulet of Samarkand (The Bartolomeus Trilogy, book 1): A witty, gripping adventure story featuring a boy and his not-so-tame djinni. Nathaniel is a young magician's apprentice, taking his first lessons in the arts of magic. But when a devious hotshot wizard named Simon Lovelace ruthlessly humiliates Nathaniel in front of everyone he knows, Nathaniel decides to seek revenge and finds himself caught up in a whirlwind of magical espionage, murder, blackmail, and revolt. Set in a modern-day London spiced with magicians and mayhem, this extraordinary, funny, pitch-perfect thriller will dazzle the myriad fans of Artemis Fowl and the His Dark Materials trilogy.
- Wolff, Tobias      The Old School: Written in the form of a fictionalized memoir. Set in the 1960s. Wolff's novel is about a single academic year at an all-male East Coast prep school, in which the narrator and his book-obsessed classmates compete for a private audience with visiting writers, Robert Frost, Ayn Rand, and Ernest Hemingway by writing poetry and stories.
- Wolff, Virginia Euwer      True Believer: This is the sequel to *Make Lemonade* and the main character, LaVaughn, has matured. LaVaughn is fifteen now, and she's still fiercely determined to go to college. But that's the only thing she's sure about. Loyalty to her father bubbles up as her mother grows closer to a new man. The two girls she used to do everything with have chosen a path LaVaughn wants no part of. And then there's Jody. LaVaughn can't believe how gorgeous he is...or how confusing. He acts like he's in love with her, but is he?

*Happy Reading!*

