

**INDEPENDENT READING LIST  
ARDSLEY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
2009 - 2010**

Your independent reading selections must be made from the list below, unless you receive approval directly from your teacher. Feel free to select other titles by the authors listed.

For the list below, the accompanying numbers indicate the relative complexity of language and maturity of content.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3  
Most accessible Most Challenging

**Contemporary Fiction**

**Alexander, Robert. The Kitchen Boy (2):** The imagined tragic ending to the Russian royal family, the Romanovs' lives, as seen by a fictional servant.

**Allende, Isabel. Daughter of Fortune (3):** The heroine of this sprawling historical novel encounters the 1849 California Gold Rush.

**House of Spirits (3):** A portrait of the Trueba family—with its deep loves and hates—from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the violent days of the 1970s.

**Alvarez, Julia. How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents (1):** In this humorous novel, sisters from the Dominican Republic struggle to assimilate in 1960s New York City without completely losing their ethnic and cultural identity.

**In the Time of the Butterflies (1):** This novel gives a fictionalized account of four sisters in the Dominican Republic under the dictatorship of General Trujillo.

**Atwood, Margaret. Cat's Eye (3):** A middle-aged woman confronts a devastating rejection by friends.

**The Handmaid's Tale (2):** Set in the near future, America has become a puritanical theocracy and Offred tells her story as a Handmaid under the new social order

**Auster, Paul. New York Trilogy (3):** Three stories of mystery and depth.

**Baldacci, David. The Camel Club (2):** After witnessing a murder with ties to a prestigious businessman's club, Harry Stone steals a crucial piece of evidence from the crime scene and is pursued by a dangerous member of the club.

**The Collectors (2):** The Camel Club, a quartet of eccentrics dedicated to finding out what's really going on in America's government, becomes embroiled in an intriguing and dangerous mystery when the assassination of the U.S. Speaker of the House is linked to the death of the director of the Library of Congress's rare books room.

**Total Control (2):** Perception manager Dick Pender is asked by arms dealer Nicolas Creel to create a lie that will convince the world it is on the brink of war, and sets in motion a chain of events that will link three strangers and bring the world to the edge of destruction.

**Banks, Russell. The Sweet Hereafter (2):** Russell Banks tells a story that begins with a school bus accident. Using four different narrators, Banks creates a small-town morality play that addresses one of life's most agonizing questions: when the worst thing happens, whom do you blame?

**Bohjalian, Christopher. Midwives (2):** Cut off from the hospital and rescue squad by an ice storm, midwife Sibyl Danforth makes the decision to perform a cesarean section on a patient she believes has died of a stroke during labor, but when her assistant tells police the mother was alive during the surgery, Sibyl and the entire community are drawn into a gripping trial.

**Bloom, Amy. Away (2):** Away is story of young Lillian Leyb, a dangerous innocent, an accidental heroine. When her family is destroyed in a Russian pogrom, Lillian comes to America alone, determined to make her way in a new land.

**Brooks, Geraldine. The Year of Wonders (2):** A woman's experience in a plague-ridden English town in the dark days of the past.

**March (3):** A novel based on Alcott's classic novel *Little Women*, in which the author imagines what happens to the March girls' father as he ministers to soldiers during the Civil War.

**Byrne, Rhona. The Secret (2):** Supporters will hail this New Age self-help book, finding validation in its thesis that one's positive thoughts are powerful magnets that attract wealth, health, happiness. Detractors will be appalled by the argument that fleeting negative thoughts are powerful enough to create terminal illness, poverty and even widespread disasters.

**Chabon, Michael. The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay (3):** A Jewish escape artist flees Nazi-invaded Prague to work with his Brooklyn cousin on a comic book. Along the way, they meet with romance and opportunity.

**Chevalier, Tracy. Girl With a Pearl Earring (2):** A tale of a serving girl whose eye for color and composition attracts the attention of her employer, Johannes Vermeer, 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch master, and leads to a life-altering event.

**The Virgin Blue (3):** A young wife, newly relocated to rural France with her husband, meets an intriguing man as she researches her ancestry.

**Cisneros, Sandra. The House on Mango Street (1):** Esperanza's friends, family, and neighbors wander in and out of her stories; through them all Esperanza sees, learns, loves, and dreams of the house she will someday have, her own house, not on Mango Street.

**Coelho, Paulo. The Alchemist (2):** The charming tale of Santiago, a shepherd boy, who dreams of seeing the world, is compelling in its own right, but gains resonance through the many lessons Santiago learns during his adventures.

**Delinsky, Barbara. The Secret Between Us (2):** Deborah and her daughter, Grace, are driving home from a party when their car hits a man running in the dark. Grace was at the wheel, but Deborah sends is determined to shoulder the blame for the accident. Her decision then turns into a deception that takes on a life of its own and threatens the special bond between mother and daughter.

- DeMille, Nelson. The Lion's Game (2):** Sharply plotted story of a determined cop and his love interest or other titles by this author.
- Dorris, Michael. Yellow Raft on Blue Water (2):** The saga of three generations of Native-American women.
- Dunant, Sarah. The Birth of Venus (2):** The artistic daughter of wealthy family in Renaissance Florence anticipates an arranged marriage, but feels true passion for her family's commissioned artist-in-residence.
- Ebershoff, David. The Danish Girl (3):** Based on a true story of a trans-gender pioneer whose tender relationship survives great trials.
- Edwards, Kim. The Memory Keeper's Daughter (2):** In 1964, Dr. David Henry is forced by a blizzard to deliver his own twins. When his daughter is born with Down's Syndrome, he makes a split-second decision that will alter all of their lives forever.
- Erdrich, Lousie. The Crown of Columbus (2):** A couple's exploration takes them on an adventure as they seek the lost diaries of Christopher Columbus.
- Esquivel, Laura. Like Water for Chocolate (2):** Written in the style of magic realism, *LWFC* tells the story of a young girl's true love, who, when prevented from marrying the protagonist, marries her sister, instead, only to remain close to his love.
- Eugenides, Jeffery. Middlesex (3):** The troubles of a hermaphrodite whose condition, unknown to her for some time, is brought on by her Greek grandparents' genetic history and mysterious past.
- Evans, Nicholas. The Horse Whisperer (2):** A woman brings her wounded daughter and her horse to seek help from a man with an uncanny gift.
- Fergus, Jim. One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd (3):** Based on an actual US government project that was proposed, but never approved, in which women are sent to a Native American tribe as a gesture of governmental goodwill...with fascinating results.
- Fielding, Helen. Bridget Jones' Diary (2):** A racy tale of a single girl's adventures in contemporary London.
- Fitch, Janet. White Oleander (2):** A daughter is forced to live with the repercussions of her overbearing mother's passionate spirit.
- Foer, Jonathan Safran. Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (2):** A boy, the son of a 9/11 victim, searches for clues to his lost father's life; when his father dies in the World Trade Center collapse, Oskar shifts his boundless energy to a quest for answers. He finds a key hidden in his father's things that doesn't fit any lock in their New York City apartment; its container is labeled "Black."
- Everything is Illuminated (2):** Oskar Schell is not your average nine-year-old. A budding inventor, he spends his time imagining wonderful creations. He also collects random photographs for his scrapbook and sends letters to scientists.
- Fowler, Karen Joy. The Jane Austen Book Club (3):** A group of various women share their life stories over chats about Jane Austen and her characters

- Franzen, Jonathan. The Corrections (3):** This family saga is both hilarious and disturbing, as it veers in focus from siblings to parents.
- Frazier, Charles. Cold Mountain (2):** In this Civil War epic, two separated lovers meet a variety of deadly challenges during their odyssey apart.
- Frey, James. A Million Little Pieces (3):** A recovering drug user recounts the horrific details of his rehabilitation.
- Gaardner, Jostein. Sophie's World: A Novel About History and Philosophy (3):** A young girl, Sophie, becomes embroiled in a discussion of philosophy with a faceless correspondent. At the same time, she must unravel a mystery involving another young girl, Hilde, by using everything she's learning. The truth is far more complicated than she could ever have imagined.
- Gaines, Ernest. A Lesson Before Dying (2):** A moving portrait of courage in the face of discrimination and death.
- Gibbons, Kaye. Charms for the Easy Life (2):** A war-time story of resilient American women.
- Ellen Foster (2):** The title character is an 11-year-old orphan who refers to herself as "old Ellen," an appellation that is disturbingly apt. Ellen is an old woman in a child's body; her frail, unhappy mother dies, her abusive father alternately neglects her and makes advances on her, and she is shuttled from one uncaring relative's home to another before she finally takes matters into her own hands and finds herself a place to belong.
- Gold, Glen David. Carter Beats the Devil (2):** This novel has a mustachioed villain, chase scenes, a lion, miraculous escapes and even pirates. By turns suspenseful and moving, this is a historical novel with entertainment value.
- Goldberg, Myla. Bee Season (2):** A champion speller, a young girl, gains sudden attention from her fragmented family in this novel with some unexpected turns.
- Golden, Arthur. Memoirs of a Geisha (3):** A Japanese woman recalls her difficult, yet fascinating life story during the last years of the traditional geisha's social prominence.
- Gregory, Philippa. The Other Boleyn Girl (2):** A retelling of the story of Anne Boleyn and the toll her family's ambition takes.
- Gruen, Sara. Water for Elephants (2):** A down-on-his-luck orphan has to join the circus in order to survive.
- Guterson, David. Snow Falling on Cedars (3):** A World War II crime drama set in the Northwest, this novel serves as a memorable love story of a young couple separated by bigotry and paranoia.
- Hage, Rawi. De Niro's Game (2):** Childhood friends Bassam and George are forced to make drastic choices as they decide what their future holds in war-torn Beirut.
- Hambly, Barbara. The Emancipator's Wife (3):** Based on the life of Mary Todd Lincoln, who was committed to an asylum.
- Hamill, Pete. Snow in August (2):** The friendship of an Irish Catholic boy and a Czechoslovak rabbi in Brooklyn during the late 1940's.

- Harris, Mark. Bang the Drum Slowly (2):** Centers around a pair of ballplayers for the fictionally fabled New York Mammoths--the novel's narrator, pitcher Wiggen, and Bruce Pearson, his tag-along catcher and best friend.
- Hegi, Ursula. Stones from the River (3):** This unusual tale of a little person during the time of Nazi Germany is both beautiful and tragic, a memorable novel.
- Hillerman, Tony. The Wailing Wind (2):** A thriller in which a long-retired Native American police lieutenant must re-live an earlier search to find an elusive culprit.
- Hoffman, Alice. Turtle Moon (2):** In this suspenseful book, a divorced woman's son disappears under suspicious circumstances.
- Hornby, Nick. About a Boy (2):** A self-serving, narcissistic Londoner learns to care about someone other than himself, despite his best intentions.
- High Fidelity (2):** This funny novel is obsessed with music; Hornby's narrator is an early-thirty-something English guy who runs a London record store. He sells albums recorded the old-fashioned way--on vinyl--and is having a tough time making other transitions as well, specifically adulthood.
- Hosseini, Khaled. Kite Runner (3):** This moving tale covers two "brothers" of different classes, their traumatic separation and difficulties in Iran and America.
- A Thousand Splendid Suns (3):** A novel set against the three decades of Afghanistan's history shaped by Soviet occupation, civil war, and the Taliban, which tells the stories of two women, Mariam and Laila, who grow close despite their nineteen-year age difference and initial rivalry as they suffer at the hand of a common enemy: their abusive husband.
- Ihimaera, Witi. The Whale Rider (1):** This sweet, but sad tale involves a family drama, morality and the law.
- Irving, John. A Prayer for Owen Meany (2):** Owen Meany is a dwarfish boy with a strange voice who accidentally kills his best friend's mom with a baseball and believes--accurately--that he is an instrument of God, to be redeemed by martyrdom.
- The World According to Garp (3):** This coming-of-age novel, unique in style and content, tells the story of TS Garp and the many fascinating characters in his life.
- Jiles, Paulette. Enemy Women (3):** A frontier-woman meets with many adventures during her fight for survival during the Civil War.
- Jones, Edward P. The Known World (3):** An enlightening story of a former slave's struggle to establish economic security and safety for his family.
- Jones, Lloyd. Mister Pip (2):** On an island called Bougainville in the early 1990s, civil war rages. All the whites have fled except one: Mr. Watts, a New Zealander married to a local woman. He offers to replace the departed teacher and reopen the village school; on the second day of class, he begins to read *Great Expectations* aloud
- Kaysen, Suzanna. Girl, Interrupted (2):** This is a startling account of Kaysen's two-year stay at a Boston psychiatric hospital 25 years ago. Kaysen's lucidity in sorting out a maelstrom of contrary perceptions. Her observations about hospital life are deftly rendered.

**Kincaid, Jamaica. Annie John (1):** Annie John tells the tale of a family's disintegration. Told from the perspective of Annie, 10, when the novel starts and a young adult by its end, the story revolves around Annie's transformation from an adoring, obedient child to rebellious, hardheaded outcast within her own home. It's a classic mother-daughter love-hate tale where balance is somehow lost and animosity and divisiveness come to rule the day.

**Kingsolver, Barbara. Poisonwood Bible (3):** In the Belgian Congo in 1959, Nathan, a Baptist preacher, has come to spread the Word in a remote village reachable only by airplane. They arrive in the middle of political upheaval as the Congolese seek to wrest independence from Belgium.

**Animal Dreams (2):** A woman returns to her hometown in Arizona to confront her distant father and mixed heritage.

**Poisonwood Bible (3):** A zealous missionary takes his family to Africa where they grow in different ways.

**Khadra, Yasmina. The Attack (3):** Dr. Amin Jaafari is an Arab-Israeli surgeon at a hospital in Tel Aviv. As an admired and respected member of his community, he has carved a space for himself and his wife, Sihem, at the crossroads of two troubled societies.

**Kosinski, Jerzy. The Painted Bird (3):** A harrowing story that follows the wanderings of a boy abandoned by his parents during World War II; it is a dark masterpiece that examines the proximity of terror and savagery to innocence and love.

**Lahiiri, Jhumpa. The Namesake (3):** A young man born of Indian parents in America struggles with issues of identity from his teens to his thirties.

**Unaccustomed Earth (3):** Eight stories that take us from Cambridge and Seattle to India and Thailand as they explore the secrets at the heart of family life.

**Lamb, Wally. She's Come Undone (3):** This book is about the possibly healing effects we can have as friends and the potentially destructive power we have as family. It is about the undeniable value of positive self-image and the brutal consequences of inappropriate guilt. It is about divorce, it is about AIDS, it is about obesity, and it is about rape and abortion. It is about hope, love, and a woman simply trying to survive.

**Lawson, Mary. Crow Lake (3):** Narrated in flashback mode, this is a story of four children living in northern Ontario who struggle to stay together after their parents die in an auto accident in Lawson's fascinating debut, a compelling and lovely study of sibling rivalry and family dynamics in which the land literally becomes a character.

**Lehane, Dennis. Mystic River (3):** The past comes back to haunt three men who shared a friendship as children when Sean Devine, now a policeman, is assigned to investigate the murder of Jimmy Marcus's teenager daughter, a crime the third member of their group, Dave Boyle, is suspected of committing.

**Lent, Jeffrey. In the Fall (3):** After a white Union soldier nearly dies in the war, he marries his savior, a black woman and former slave; they return to his Vermont home to meet with suspicion from the neighbors.

- Lott, Brett. Jewel (2):** The life of Jewel Hilburn, a mother living with her husband and children in the backwoods of Mississippi in 1943, undergoes a drastic change when her sixth child, Brenda Kay, is born without the gift of common sense.
- Ludington, Max. Tiger in a Trance (3):** As a young man tours with the Grateful Dead, he meets loss and the darker side of himself.
- Maguire, Gregory. Lost: a Novel (3):** A children's novelist flees her Boston-area home to pay a visit to her distant cousin who is nowhere to be found. As eerie symbols appear and inexplicable noises issue from the chimney space, events turn otherworldly.
- Markandaya, Kamala. Nectar in a Sieve (2):** The story of a young girl's family struggle with drought, poverty and the caste system of an Indian village.
- Martell, Yan. Life of Pi (2):** The lone survivor of a shipwrecked family and its zoo is trapped in the middle of an ocean with a tiger as his only company.
- Matar, Hisham. In the Country of Men (2):** This is the story of the impact of small revolutions, not on the men and women who participate in the upheavals, but on the children who barely understand the world in which they find themselves.
- Maupin, Armistad. Maybe the Moon (3):** A Californian little person struggles to find acting roles and love in this humorous and touching tale.
- McCarthy, Cormac. Road (3):** Traces the journey of a father and his son as they walk alone after a great fire has consumed the nation and left everything in ashes.
- MacDonald, Ann-Marie. Fall on Your Knees (3):** Traces the lives and experiences of four sisters telling of their bonds, secrets, and love for each other.
- McBride, James. The Color of Water (2):** A multi-racial man from Brooklyn explores his unusual mother's life and its impact on his own.
- McEwan, Ian. Saturday (2):** A London neurosurgeon goes through his normal Saturday activities, including a weekly squash game, but his unease grows as he makes his way through anti-war protesters clogging London's streets, until a minor car accident with the petulant Baxter begins a series of events that erupts into violence.
- McLaughlin, Emma. The Nanny Diaries (1):** An absolutely addictive peek into the utterly weird world of child rearing in the upper reaches of Manhattan's social strata. Based on the real-life experiences of two nannies!
- McMurtry, Larry. Lonesome Dove (2):** McMurtry's eloquent writing and vivid characterizations create a warmly humorous look at human relationships and the history of the American West.
- Miller, Sue. While I Was Gone (2):** A married woman revisits her college past and relives the time in which a roommate's life was taken brutally.
- Mistry, Rohinton. A Fine Balance (3):** The government of India in 1975 has just declared a State of Emergency, which, coupled with a housing shortage, compels four people to share an apartment. Their common need leads them to forge a lasting friendship that sees them through the bad times.

- Mitchard, Jacquelyn. The Deep End of the Ocean (3):** The sudden disappearance of her child sends a family into the most terrible turmoil.
- Mitchell, David. Black Swan Green (2):** Novel of a young boy on the cusp of adulthood follows a single year in the life of thirteen-year-old Jason Taylor as he grows up in what is for him the sleepiest village in Worcestershire, England, in 1982.
- Moggach, Deborah. Tulip Fever (2):** Characters' dreams and destinies are caught up in the Dutch market's craze for tulips in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Monk Kidd, Sue. The Secret Life of Bees (2):** 4-year-old Lily Owen, neglected by her father and isolated on their Georgia peach farm, spends hours imagining a blissful infancy when she was loved and nurtured by her mother, Deborah, whom she barely remembers. These consoling fantasies are her heart's answer to the family story that as a child, in unclear circumstances, Lily accidentally shot and killed her mother.
- Moore, Christopher. A Dirty Job (3):** Charlie Asher is a pretty normal guy with a normal life, married to a bright and pretty woman who actually loves him for his normalcy. They're even about to have their first child. Charlie's doing okay—until people start dropping dead around him, and everywhere he goes a dark presence whispers to him from under the streets. Charlie Asher, it seems, has been recruited for a new position: as Death.
- Morris, Mary McGarry. The Lost Mother (3):** A mother abandons her family, leaving her children in distressing circumstances during the Great Depression.
- Mosley, Walter. Fortunate Son (2):** The lives of two stepbrothers, one from a life of privilege and the other in a life of hardship, explore the true meaning of fortune when they are reunited after years being apart.
- Napoli, Donna Jo. Zel (1):** This retelling of the story of Rapunzel is no simple fairy tale retold for the entertainment of children. Instead, it is a searing commentary on the evil that can result from human longings gone awry.
- Ozeki, Ruth. All Over Creation (2):** A woman must return to her land-bound family and readjust to a lifestyle that did not suit her in her youth. During her experiences, she meets environmentalists whose radicalism unexpectedly agrees with her family.
- Paluhniak, Chuck. Survivor (3):** The main character survives the demise of the cult to which he belongs.
- Fight Club (3):** A surreal tale of a confused protagonist who imagines an alter ego capable of taking on the world.
- Patchett, Ann. Bel Canto (3):** Joined by no common language except music, 58 international hostages, including a famous soprano, and their captors forge unexpected bonds.
- Picoult, Jodi. My Sister's Keeper (2):** Anna was genetically engineered to be a perfect match for her cancer-ridden older sister. Since birth, the 13-year-old has donated platelets, blood, her umbilical cord, and bone marrow as part of her family's struggle to lengthen Kate's life.
- Nineteen Minutes (2):** The people of Sterling, New Hampshire, are forever changed after a shooting at the high school leaves ten people dead, and the judge presiding over the trial tries to remain unbiased, even though her daughter witnessed the events and was friends with the assailant.

**The Pact (2):** Teenage suicide is the provocative topic addressed here. Popular high-school swimming star Chris Harte and talented artist Em Gold bonded as infants; their parents have been next-door neighbors and best friends for 18 years. When they fall in love, everyone is ecstatic. Everyone, it turns out, except for Em, who finds that sex with Chris feels almost incestuous.

**Quindlen, Anna. Blessings (2):** An abandoned child who is subsequently recovered creates enormous change in several lives.

**Rees, Celia. The Soul Taker (1):** The words "I'd give anything" are not to be spoken lightly. Overweight, uncool Lewis finds this out the hard way when he inadvertently promises his soul to a toy maker who hires him as an assistant.

**Robbins, Tom. Jitterbug Perfume (3):** A saga must have a hero, and the hero of this one is a janitor with a missing bottle. The bottle is blue, very old, and embossed with the image of a goat-horned god. If the liquid in the bottle is actually the secret essence of the universe, it had better be discovered soon because it is leaking and there is only a drop or two left.

**Roth, Philip. The Plot Against America (3):** A novel that imagines what might have happened in America, particularly to one Jewish family in Newark, New Jersey, had Charles Lindbergh won the 1940 presidential election rather than Franklin Roosevelt and acted upon his anti-Semitic leanings.

**Russo, Richard. Empire Falls (3):** In this comic and compelling ensemble piece, forty-something Miles Roby, proprietor of the local greasy spoon and recently divorced father of a teenage daughter, leads a large cast of secondary characters, drawn from every social stratum of his depressed New England mill town.

**Schlink, Bernhard. The Reader (3):** A German teen boy is seduced by an older woman with a grave past.

**Sebold, Alice. The Lovely Bones (2):** When a young girl is murdered, she retains the ability to watch her family's plight and track her killer.

**Almost Moon (2):** For years Helen Knightly has given her life to others. When she finally crosses a terrible boundary, her life comes rushing in at her in a way she never could have imagined.

**Shaara, Michael. The Killer Angels (3):** The late Shaara's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel (1974) concerns the battle of Gettysburg and is the basis for the 1993 film *Gettysburg*.

**Shreve, Ann The Pilot's Wife (2):** A woman discovers the hidden side of her husband's life.

**Silko, Leslie. Ceremony (3):** Tayo is a half-white Laguna Indian emotionally stricken by white warfare and almost destroyed by his experiences as a World War II prisoner of the Japanese. Unable to find a place among Native American veterans who are losing themselves in rage and drunkenness, Tayo discovers his connection to the land and to ancient rituals with the help of a medicine man, and comes to understand the need to create ceremonies, to grow and change, in order to survive.

**Singer, Katie. The Wholeness of a Broken Heart (2):** A baffled daughter cannot understand why her mother, once supportive and loving, turns cold and distant.

**Sittenfeld, Curtis. Prep (3):** A teenage girl from Indiana surprises herself by accepting a scholarship to an elite prep school and encounters some class-related issues there.

- Smith, Alexander McCall. The No 1 Ladies Detective Agency (1):** The charming series starring detective Precious Ramotswe in her African village is a true crowd-pleaser.
- Smith, Zadie. White Teeth (3):** A young Jamaican-Englishwoman deals with the travails of racism and zealotry in this disturbing, yet comic, celebrated debut novel.
- Spiotta, Dana. Eat the Document (3):** A woman caught up in the turbulent anti-war protests of the 1960s makes a fatal error that changes the direction of her life.
- Tan, Amy. Bonesetter's Daughter (2):** San Francisco ghostwriter Ruth Young finally begins to understand her Alzheimer's-afflicted mother LuLing's preoccupation with ghosts and curses when she reads Luling's writings of her dark backwoods childhood in 1920s China.
- The Joy Luck Club (2):** In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, begin meeting to eat dim sum, play mahjong, and talk. United in shared unspeakable loss and hope, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Rather than sink into tragedy, they choose to gather to raise their spirits and money.
- Tey, Josephine. The Daughter of Time (2):** While Inspector Grant of Scotland Yard looks for a way to make his convalescence in a hospital bed less tedious, his eye falls on a portrait of Richard III. Grant's schoolboy memory of the king who murdered his two nephews suddenly sparks another line of reasoning for the misdeed, and the reader is treated to a new answer to the killings in the Tower.
- Thomas, Piri. Down These Mean Streets (3):** As a dark-skinned Puerto Rican, born in 1928, Piri Thomas faced with painful immediacy the absurd contradictions of America's racial attitudes (among people of all colors) in a time of wrenching social change
- Thompson, Hunter S. Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (3):** In Hunter Thompson's wacky tale of the American Dream, he takes his attorney, Gonzo, on a twisted trip to Las Vegas to cover the Mint 400, a bike and dune buggy race sponsored by a casino owner. Then they try and cover a meeting of cops and district attorneys who are meeting in Las Vegas to figure out how to deal with the drug problem in the United States.
- Trigiani, Adriana. Lucia, Lucia (2):** A fictional life story of Lucia Sartori of Greenwich Village. The bulk of the novel is a flashback to her younger years as a woman in the fashion industry of the 1950s, and her interaction with her traditional Italian family.
- Tyler, Anne. The Accidental Tourist (2):** A hysterical book about Macon Leary, a travel writer who hates both travel and anything out of the ordinary. He is grounded by loneliness and an unwillingness to compromise his creature comforts when he meets Muriel, a deliciously peculiar dog-obedience trainer who up-ends Macon's insular world—and thrusts him headlong into a remarkable engagement with life.
- Digging to America (2):** Story of two families who meet at the airport when they are adopting Korean infants. The Donaldson family is as all-American as they come. The Yazdan's are Iranian immigrants. Digging to America uses the story of the families' growing friendship to explore what it means to be American
- Updike, John. Terrorist (2):** Eighteen-year-old Ahmad Ashmawy Mulloy, son of an Irish-American mother and an Egyptian father, feels alienated from his New Jersey classmates, making him an easy target for the unscrupulous iman of the local mosque who steers Ahmad in the direction of a terrorist cell planning an attack on the Holland Tunnel.

- Walker, Margaret. Jubilee (2):** A story of a free spirit who triumphs over bondage. This is the life story of Vvry, daughter of the houseslave and the "master," from "slavery-time" through the Civil War. Dr. Margaret Walker, respected African-American poet and scholar, heard this story as a child from her own grandmother, Vvry's daughter.
- Waters, Sarah. Fingersmith (3):** A thief in Victorian London intends to aid her friend by duping an heiress into marriage. Surprising twists result.
- Weisberger, Lauren. The Devil Wears Prada (1):** A reluctant assistant to a major fashion industry CEO learns to prioritize the important matters in life.
- Wells, Rebecca. Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood (2):** A daughter returns to her Southern family to learn the secrets of her mother, with whom she has a strained relationship.
- Winston, Lolly. Good Grief (2):** A young woman cannot believe that her husband has died. Somehow, Winston manages to find the humor in even tragic circumstances, as the heroine climbs out of depression and learns to live again.
- Wolizer, Meg. The Position (3):** The daughter of an unorthodox couple must survive the legacy of their "how-to" sex book.
- Wolfe, Tom. The Bonfire of the Vanities (2):** Both his cynical irony and sense of the ridiculous are perfectly suited to his subject: the roiling, corrupt, savage, ethnic melting pot that is New York City. Ranging from the rarefied atmosphere of Park Avenue to the dingy courtrooms of the Bronx, this is a totally credible tale of how the communities uneasily coexist and what happens when they collide.
- Yolen, Jan. Briar Rose (1):** Yolen takes the story of Briar Rose (commonly known as Sleeping Beauty) and links it to the Holocaust--a far-from-obvious connection that she makes perfectly convincing. Rebecca Berlin, a young woman who has grown up hearing her grandmother Gemma tell an unusual and frightening version of the Sleeping Beauty legend, realizes when Gemma dies that the fairy tale offers one of the very few clues she has to her grandmother's past.