

UPPER KS3/KS4 Recommended Reading

March 2020

The following offers some suggestions for reading for girls returning to school in year 9 and above, bearing in mind that books at senior level will have been classified as such due to their reading age/interest and/or content. Books below, marked with a * may have a more “contentious” content than some e.g. they might include some bad language, violence, or sexual references. However, they are all good examples of the best books currently available, both old and new (excluding standard classic titles which the girls should be reading additionally). All are available from the School Library.

Happy Reading! From the Library and the English department

Sarah Crossan*Toffee*

Allison has run away from home and with nowhere to live finds herself hiding out in the shed of what she thinks is an abandoned house. But the house isn't empty. An elderly woman named Marla, with dementia, lives there - and she mistakes Allison for an old friend from her past called Toffee and invites Allison in. Allison is used to hiding who she really is and so, Toffee is who she becomes. After all, it means she has a place to stay. There are worse places she could be. But as their bond grows, and Allison discovers how much Marla needs a real friend, she begins to ask herself - where is home? What is a family? And most importantly, who am I...really?

Sophie Mckenzie*All My Secrets*

The shocking reality behind an unexpected inheritance turns Evie Brown's world on its head. Devastated by her family's lies and desperate to discover more about a secret which overshadows her past, Evie ends up at Lightsea - an institute on an island for troubled teens - where she meets the gorgeous but enigmatic Kit. Rumour has it that Lightsea is haunted and soon Evie senses a strange presence following her. As she is drawn deeper into the island's mysteries, Evie realises that it's not just the past, or the dead, that she has to fear. Trusting the wrong person could cost her life.

Patrick Ness*A Monster Calls **

This is an extraordinarily moving novel about coming to terms with loss. It's the story of Conor who has the same dream every night, ever since his mother first fell ill, ever since she started the treatments that don't quite seem to be working. It's a dream with darkness, wind and screaming. But tonight is different. Tonight, when he wakes, there's a visitor at his window. It's ancient, wild, a force of nature. And it wants the most dangerous thing of all from Conor. It wants the truth.

Melvin Burgess*Loving April*

For those who want a moving powerful love story, try this one about two very different people who on the face of it are worlds apart. Abandoned by his father to a life of poverty, Tony is angry with everyone, and desperately lonely. April Dean, the deaf girl, needs friends too. But their growing relationship arouses deep prejudices which threaten to engulf not only Tony and April but the whole village.

Juno Dawson*Grave Matter*

Written for those who don't like long books – the library copy has 140 pages – this is gripping and atmospheric. Samuel has been heartbroken since the crash in which his girlfriend Eliza died. He needs to find a way to go on with his life but his desperation to see his love again is overwhelming... and so he ventures into the strange, terrifying world of Hoodoo. Samuel is about to make a pact with powers he cannot comprehend, let alone control... A chilling gothic novella of love, obsession and the supernatural.

Jennifer Donnelly*Stepsister*

A strong stomach is initially needed for this one as some elements are a little gory. Once over that *Stepsister* takes up where Cinderella's tale ends. We meet Isabelle, the younger of Cinderella's two stepsisters. Ella is considered beautiful; Isabelle is not. Isabelle is fearless, brave, and strong-willed but those qualities are not valued in a girl. Others have determined what is beautiful, and Isabelle does not fit their definition. Cinderella is about a girl who was bullied; Stepsister is about the bully. We all root for the victims, we want to see them triumph. But what about the bullies? Is there hope for them? Can a mean girl change? Can she find her own happily ever after?

Blundell, Judy*What I Saw and How I Lied*

Summer's ending, Evie's stepfather is finally home from the Second World War, and Evie is tired of her glamorous mother treating her like a little girl. Then a mysterious stranger appears: a handsome ex-GI who served with Evie's stepfather. Slowly, Evie realizes that she is falling in love with him - but he has dark secrets and a strange control over her parents. When a sudden tragedy occurs Evie's world is shattered. Torn between her family and the man she loves, Evie must betray someone. The question is ...who?

Elizabeth Acevedo*The Poet X**

When it comes to standing her ground in her poor Harlem neighbourhood, Xiomara lets her fists and her fierceness do the talking. But she has a softer side and isn't the person she initially seems. She has many secrets and records them in poetry, in a notebook which she hides under her bed. She writes about her life growing up with her family and her innermost feelings for a boy in her class. However her secrets are thrust into the spotlight when Xiomara is drawn into a slam poetry club. Because in spite of a world that might not want to hear her, Xiomara suddenly refuses to stay silent.

Karen Mcmanus

One Of Us Is Next * (Sequel to *One of Us is Lying* – read my many and on a previous recommended reading list)

Welcome back to Bayview High . . . It's been a year since the events of *One Of Us Is Lying*. But nothing has settled for the students of Bayview. Not now someone has started playing a sinister game of truth or dare. Choose truth? You must reveal your darkest secret. Choose dare? Well, that could be even more dangerous. Even deadly. When the game takes an even darker turn, no one at Bayview High knows who to trust. But they need to find out who is behind the game, before it's too late.

Louisa Reid

*Black Heart Blue**

Sixteen year old twins Hephzi and Rebecca are about as different from each other as they could be; Hephzi is beautiful and bold, Rebecca suffers from disfigurement and is shy. But the twins are united in a dreadful fate and their attempts to escape from it. The daughters of a vicar, they both suffer a life of abuse and torment at his hands. A torment with no end. When Hepzi dies, Rebecca is alone for the first time in her life and she knows she must find a way out. If she doesn't, she'll end up like her sister. In intertwined stories, each girl tells a part of this poignant whole.

Keren David

The Disconnect

Another for those who want a quick but satisfying read. Could you disconnect from your phone for six weeks? An eccentric entrepreneur has challenged Esther's year 11 group to do just that, and the winners will walk away with £1,000. For Esther, whose dad, sister and baby nephew live thousands of miles away in New York, the prize might be her only chance to afford flights for a visit ... But can she really stay disconnected for long enough to win?

Marcus Sedgwick

Blood Red, Snow White

Set at the time of the Russian Revolution this is the true story of the writer Arthur Ransome who was accused of being a spy. It tells the history of the riches, excesses and glory of the Russian nobility – Tsar Nicholas II, his wife Tsarina Alexandra and their haemophiliac son, Alexei, notorious Rasputin, Lenin and Trotsky. It is also the story of Ransome's love for both Russia and a Russian woman called Evgenia. A mix of romance, espionage and adventure.