

UPPER KS3/KS4 Recommended Reading

December 2020

The following offers some suggestions for reading for girls 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 and can be reserved via an email to the librarian.

Happy Reading! From the Library and the English department

Lisa Williamson

*The Art of Being Normal**

Two boys. Two secrets. David Piper has always been an outsider. His parents think he's gay. The school bully thinks he's a freak. Only his two best friends know the real truth - David wants to be a girl. As for Leo Denton, on the first day at his new school his only goal is to be invisible. Attracting the attention of the most beautiful girl in year 11 is definitely not part of his plan. When Leo stands up for David in a fight, the two form an unlikely friendship. But things are about to get messy. Because at Eden Park School secrets have a funny habit of not staying secret for long ...

Alex Bell

*Frozen Charlotte**

Dunvegan School for Girls on the Isle of Skye was closed many years ago and was converted into a family home. It's where Sophie's cousins live now, and Sophie is going to spend the summer with them. Brooding Cameron with his scarred hand, strange Lillias with a fear of bones and Piper, who seems just a bit too good to be true. And then there's her other cousin. The girl with a room full of creepy antique dolls. The girl that shouldn't be there. The girl that died... She is scary... very scary...

Gayle Forman

If I Stay

For seventeen-year-old Mia, surrounded by a wonderful family, friends and a gorgeous boyfriend, decisions might seem tough, but they're all about a future full of music and love, a future that's brimming with hope. But life can change in an instant. A cold February morning ...a snowy road ...a crash...and suddenly all of Mia's choices are gone. Except one. As alone as she'll ever be, Mia must make the most difficult decision of all. Gripping, heartrending and ultimately life-affirming, "If I Stay" will make you appreciate all that you have, all that you've lost - and all that might be.

Julie Hearn

The Merrybegot

In a remote west-country village, all is not as it seems. The minister's daughters have taken to their beds, howling and spitting pins. Rumours of bad magic and witchcraft are spreading fast, the piskies are whispering in the orchard and an ill wind is blowing. Nell, the cunning woman's granddaughter, finds all the fingers of blame point to her. With Matthew Hopkins, the Witch-Finder General, on his way, Nell is alone, trapped and in mortal danger. Who can she trust? Who will save her? In years to come, Patience Madden, the minister's youngest daughter, has a confession to make. A confession that shows another side to what happened half a century before...

Katie Dale

*Someone Else's Life**

How can you face your future when your past is a lie? When Rosie Kenning's mother, Trudie, dies from Huntington's disease, her whole world falls apart. Not only does Rosie desperately miss her mum, but she has to face the fact that she could have inherited the fatal illness herself. Until she discovers that Trudie wasn't her biological mother at all ... Rosie is stunned. Is she grieving for a mother who wasn't even hers to lose? And if Trudie wasn't her mother, who is? As Rosie delves into her past to discover who she really is, she is faced with a heart-breaking dilemma - should she continue to live a lie, or reveal a truth that will shatter the lives of everyone around her?

K M Peyton

*Small Gains**

Set just after the Napoleonic wars, this book presents the story of Clara, a true heroine who struggles to keep her head above water in a time of poverty and prejudice. The rich, landowning Grover family care little for others and treat all, even their horse, with contempt. So, when Clara's sister Margaret falls for the younger Grover son, events soon spiral out of control for everyone, not least Clara...

Sophia Bennett

Love Song

Seventeen-year-old Nina doesn't understand why everyone is so obsessed with boy band "The Point" but when she averts a backstage disaster and is offered a job on their tour, she can hardly turn it down. Nina's ready for tantrums, paparazzi and drama – but soon discovers there's more to the band than guitars and girls – they really love to make music. But behind the scenes, the boys are on the verge of splitting up. Nina's determined to stick it out - and not fall for any of them ... A romance written with touches of dry humour.

Ruta Sepetys

Between Shades of Gray

One night in 1941, fifteen-year-old Lina, her mother and young brother are hauled from their home by Soviet guards, thrown into cattle cars and sent away. They are being deported to Siberia. An unimaginable and harrowing journey has begun. Lina doesn't know if she'll ever see her father or her friends again. But she refuses to give up hope. Lina hopes for her family. For her country. For her future. For love - first love, with the boy she barely knows but knows she does not want to lose ... Will hope keep Lina alive? Based on first-hand family accounts and memories from survivors.

Anne Cassidy*The Moth Girls*

They called them the Moth Girls because they were attracted to the house. They were drawn to it. Or at least that's what's written in the newspapers that Mandy reads. It's nearly five years since Petra Armstrong and Tina Pointer were intent on a dare to enter the dilapidated house on Princess Street. Nearly five years since the seventy-nine year old, retired owner was found dead. Nearly five years since the two girls simply vanished. As Mandy's concern over the disappearance of her two childhood friends is ignited once again, disturbing details will be revealed about the girls and the events of that night. Mandy is about to become ever more entwined within its mystery.

Tim Bowler*Storm Catchers*

Fin is devastated when his sister Ella is kidnapped. Poor frightened Ella, snatched away from the house in the middle of a storm. Fin will never forgive himself for leaving her on her own but at least they'll get her back when they've paid the ransom money. But the kidnapper has more than money on his mind. And as his plans unfold, all the members of the family are forced to confront their deepest, darkest secrets. A storm is breaking, and it's going to change everything ...

Theresa Breslin*Remembrance**

Scotland, 1915. A group of teenagers from two families meet for a picnic. Romance is on their minds, but the peace of their day is shattered by the sound of a plane flying overhead. All too soon, the horror of World War 1 will engulf them. So many lives will be affected. All will struggle to survive. From the horror of the trenches, to the devastating reality seen daily by those nursing the wounded, they struggle to survive. This is a story of how individuals and communities at home coped during those dark war years of physical and mental suffering.

Maria Farrer*Broken Strings**

Jess dreams of being a violinist, but when stage fright causes her to fail an audition for a place at music school, she cannot afford to keep playing. She is devastated, until the grandmother she didn't know existed shows up at her home and promises six months of tuition if Jess will move to live with her in London and abide by all her rules. Jess's life there changes more than she'd ever imagined but at the climax of her mysterious stay Jess uncovers her grandmother's secret. A secret which tore her family apart and links directly to Jess's own musical dream.