

UPPER KS3/KS4 Recommended Reading

December 2021

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

Laura Jarratt*Skin Deep**

After a car crash that leaves her best friend dead, Jenna is permanently scarred. She struggles to rebuild her life, but every stare from strangers in the street and every look in her mirror, Jenna wants to retreat further from the world. Until she meets Ryan. Ryan's a traveller. When he and his mother moor their narrow boat on the outskirts of a village, Jenna tells him he'll be welcomed but Ryan doesn't believe her; he can't imagine why this place shouldn't be as unwelcoming as the rest. But as Jenna and Ryan grow closer, repercussions from the crash continue to reverberate through the community. And then a body is found...

Elizabeth Acevedo*Clap When You Land**

Camino Rios lives for the summers when her father visits her in the Dominican Republic. But this summer, on the day when his plane is supposed to land, Camino arrives at the airport to see crowds of crying people. In New York City, Yahaira Rios is called to the principal's office, where her mother is waiting to tell her that her father, her hero, has died in a plane crash. Separated by distance - and secrets - the two girls are forced to face a new reality - when it seems like they've lost everything of their father, they learn of each other's existence...

Beth Garrod*Super Awkward*

Bella Fisher, thinks she's an absolute winner at failing at life. She once got her tongue stuck to a box of Calippos in a supermarket and accidentally called her geography teacher Mum. Twice. He wasn't impressed. She also considers herself a geek but in a secretly-caring-about-failing-maths-and-science way – she always fails maths and science. When she meets Zac whilst dressed as a cereal box, she's desperate to persuade him to go to the prom with her but in doing so must deal with a mega secret. What could go wrong? Oh yes, that's right. Absolutely everything.

Annabel Pitcher*Ketchup Clouds*

Fifteen-year-old Zoe has a secret - a dark and terrible secret that she can't confess to anyone she knows. But one day she hears of a criminal, Stuart Harris, locked up on death row in Texas. Like Zoe, Stuart is no stranger to secrets. Or lies. Or murder. Full of heartache yet humour, Zoe tells her story in the only way she can - in letters to the man in prison in America. Armed with a pen, Zoe takes a deep breath, eats a jam sandwich, and begins her tale of love and betrayal.

Meg Rosoff*The Great Godden**

This is the story of one family, one dreamy summer - the summer when everything changes. In a holiday house by the sea, our watchful narrator sees everything, including many things they shouldn't, as their brother and sisters, parents and older cousins fill hot days with wine and games and planning a wedding. Enter two brothers - irresistible, charming Kit and surly, silent Hugo. Suddenly there's a serpent in this paradise - and the consequences will be devastating.

Emma Smith-Barton*The Million Pieces of Neena Gill*

Neena's always been a good girl - great grades, parent-approved friends and absolutely no boyfriends. But since her brother Akash left, she's been slowly falling apart - and uncovering a new version of herself who is altogether more dangerous. As her wild behaviour spirals out of control, Neena's grip on her sanity begins to weaken too. And when her parents announce not one but two life-changing bombshells - including that they want her to have an arranged marriage - she finally reaches breaking point. But as Neena is about to discover, when your life falls apart, only love can piece you back together.

Theresa Breslin*The Medici Seal**

In Italy in 1502 we find a young boy, Matteo, who whilst on the run and fleeing for his life, is saved from drowning by mysterious men, who turn out to be companions of Leonardo da Vinci. From that moment on, Matteo finds himself working alongside Da Vinci as he carries out his incredible work. But Da Vinci's cruel and ruthless employer, Cesare Borgia, seems set to ruin Matteo's happiness, and as Da Vinci and Matteo travel across Italy on the Borgia's business, murder, deceit and revenge follow in their trail. For Matteo carries with him a secret - a life-changing secret that both the Borgia and Medici families would kill to obtain. A secret that must, finally, come to light for all to see.

Lois Duncan*Stranger with My Face*

Laurie Stratton has everything a sixteen-year-old girl could ever want but as her perfect summer comes to a close, her life is suddenly overshadowed by sinister occurrences. Firstly, her boyfriend breaks up with her because he sees her with another boy, and then her friends are lured into accidents. Laurie is forced to conclude that someone is out there, watching her. And then Laurie meets her long-lost sister who has spent years growing bitter and dangerous...

Susin Nielsen

*The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen**

Thirteen-year-old wrestling fanatic Henry used to have a normal life. Now, his therapist wants him to keep a journal so he can express his feelings about "what happened". Henry has moved with his dad to a new city where they hope for anonymity and a fresh start. He lives off a diet of pizza, whilst avoiding the comically overbearing neighbours and the bullies from his new school. But then Henry meets Farley and Alberta, social misfits who refuse to let him be alone and, bit by bit, the past begins to come out. Heart-breaking yet funny this is a story about the things that remain after your life has fallen to pieces.

R J Palacio

Wonder (a book for all ages that some may have missed)

Auggie wants to be an ordinary ten-year-old. He does ordinary things - eating ice cream, playing on his Xbox. He feels ordinary - inside. But ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. Ordinary kids aren't stared at wherever they go. Born with a terrible facial abnormality, Auggie has been home-schooled by his parents his whole life. Now, for the first time, he's being sent to a real school and he's dreading it. All he wants is to be accepted but can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, underneath it all?

Brigid Kemmerer

*Letters to the Lost**

Juliet Young has always written letters to her mother so even after her mother's death, she leaves letters at her grave. It's the only thing that helps Juliet cope. Declan Murphy is the sort of guy you wouldn't want to cross. In the midst of his court-ordered community service doing landscaping at the local cemetery, he is holding inside ghosts of his own past. When Declan finds a haunting letter left beside a grave, he can't resist the urge to write back. Soon, he is sharing his pain with a perfect stranger and he feels he might be helping her. Except they're not strangers, and when real life interferes with their secret life of letters, sparks fly as Juliet and Declan discover truths that might tear them apart.

Manjeet Mann

*Run, Rebel**

A verse novel that's either won or been on the shortlist of several book awards this is the story of a girl, Amber, who tries to escape the oppressively strict and abusive family life she experiences dominated by her alcoholic father. Amber is trapped - by her father's rules, by his expectations, by her own fears. Now she's ready to fight - for her mother, for her sister, for herself. But freedom always comes at a price...