

UPPER KS3/KS4 Recommended Reading

July 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

Robin Talley

*Lies We Tell Ourselves**

It's 1959. The battle for civil rights is raging. And it's Sarah's first day of school as one of the first black students at previously all-white Jefferson High. No one wants Sarah there. Not the Governor. Not the teachers. And certainly not the students - especially Linda, daughter of the town's most ardent segregationist. But the more time Sarah and Linda spend together, the less their differences matter. And both girls start to feel something they've never felt before. Something they're determined to ignore. Because it's one thing to stand up to an unjust world - but another to be terrified of what's in your own heart.

Dodie Smith

I Capture the Castle

Seventeen-year old Cassandra is practising her writing skills by keeping a diary. Through her eyes – sometimes naïve, sometimes humorous and witty – we follow the lives of her eccentric family as they struggle to survive in genteel poverty in a ramshackle old English castle. Her family consists of her father who is a writer, her step-mother who models for nude paintings and communes with nature, and her older sister Rose, who is beautiful but vain and bored. However, all their lives are turned upside down when the American heirs to the castle arrive and Cassandra finds herself falling in love for the first time.

Nicola Yoon

Everything, Everything

This is the story of the thrill and heartbreak that can ensue when we do crazy, sometimes death-defying things for love. Madeline Whittier is allergic to the outside world. So allergic, in fact, that she has never left the house in all of her seventeen years. But when Olly moves in next door, and wants to talk to Maddy, tiny holes start to appear in the protective bubble her mother has built around her. Maddy is certainly going to fall in love with Olly. It's almost certainly going to be a disaster.

Lindsey Barraclough

Long Lankin (some readers find this VERY scary)

When Cora and her little sister Mimi are sent to stay with their elderly aunt in an isolated village, they sense immediately that they're not welcome. They don't know that the last time two young girls were at Guerdon Hall, the visit ended in a mysterious, violent tragedy and their aunt is simply desperate to protect her nieces. Something dark and evil has haunted the village for centuries. Now it has set eyes on its next victim, and it will stop at nothing to lay claim to her. With the help of local boys Roger and Peter, Cora must uncover deeply buried horrifying secrets - before it is too late for Mimi...

Matt Killeen*Orphan Monster Spy **

Sarah has played many roles. Dutiful daughter. Talented gymnast. Persecuted Jew. Lost orphan. But now she faces her most challenging role of all. Because there's only one way for a Jewish orphan spy to survive at a school for the Nazi elite. And that's to become a monster like them. The powers that be think she's just a little girl. But she is the weapon they never saw coming... with a mission to destroy them all.

Karen M Mcmanus*We are all Made of Molecules **

Meet Stewart. He's geeky, gifted and sees things a bit differently to most people. His mum has died, and he misses her all the more now he and Dad have moved in with Ashley and her mum. Meet Ashley. She's sees things very differently to her new family. Her dad has come out and moved out. And now she has to live with a freaky stepbrother. Stewart can't quite fit in at his new school, and Ashley can't quite get used to her totally awkward home. And things are about to get a whole lot more mixed up when these two very different people attract the attention of school hunk Jared...

Sophia Bennett*The Cousins **

The Story own the largest property on their East Coast island, they are rich, beautiful and envied. Until it all falls apart. The four Story children are suddenly dropped by their mother with a single sentence: "You know what you did." They never hear from her again. Years later, when 17-year-old cousins Aubrey, Milly and Jonah Story receive a mysterious invitation to spend the summer at their grandmother's resort, they have no choice but to go. The entire family is built on secrets...it's the Story legacy but the teenagers are determined to discover the truth at the heart of their family. Sadly, some secrets are better left alone.

Laura Wood*A Sky Painted Gold*

Growing up in a sleepy Cornish village, dreaming of being a writer, seventeen-year-old Lou has always wondered about the grand Cardew house which has stood empty for years. And when the owners arrive for the summer of 1929, Lou is swept off her feet and into a world of moonlit cocktail parties and glamour beyond her wildest dreams. Will she find her feet before the summer ends... or lose her heart?

Sarah Crossan

One

Grace and Tippi don't like being stared and sneered at, but they're used to it. They're conjoined twins – they have but one body joined at the waist but with two beating hearts and minds, they have two lives and two dreams. What they want is to be looked at in turn, like they truly are two people. They want real friends. And what about love? But everything they have known and dare to plan for is plunged into insignificance when they have to make a heart-wrenching decision. One that could change their lives more than they ever asked for...

Claire Mcfall

Ferryman

When Dylan pulls herself free from a train crash, she thinks she is the sole survivor and calls upon the help of a passing teenage boy called Tristan. But Dylan is actually the only fatality and Tristan is a 'ferryman,' sent to guide her to her after-life. As the pair journey across dangerous wraith-infested wastelands they fall deeply in love and Tristan promises to cross over with Dylan when they reach the other side. But when she steps across the threshold and turns back, he is not there. Confronted with life without Tristan, Dylan vows to find him...

Ruta Sepetys

Salt to the Sea

When the German ship the Wilhelm Gustloff was sunk in port in early 1945 it had over 9000 civilian refugees, including children, on board. Nearly all were drowned. Ruta Sepetys imagines the story of a handful of these people as they trek across Germany, bound together by their desperation to reach the ship that can take them away from the war-ravaged land. From the gentle wisdom of the old man known as the Shoe Poet to the bravery of Emilia, the Polish girl who struggles onwards hiding a dark secret, this is a band of unforgettable characters.

Annabel Pitcher

Silence is Goldfish

Fifteen-year-old Tess doesn't mean to become mute. She simply stops speaking in a kind of protest at first. Who wouldn't be shocked if they discovered their whole life had been a lie? It's a pretty big deal and but it gets harder and harder for Tess to use her voice as she sets out to find the truth of her identity and more about a secret that could ruin multiple lives. But will that secret ever be voiced? Will Tess ever be able to ask for help?