Directions for Incoming Freshmen and Transfer Students:

1. Browse the list for books that interest you. You will only sign up for ONE BOOK, but you may read as many as you like.
2. The admissions office will send an email with a link to sign up on (or about) June 7.
3. Groups will fill up on a first come first served basis. If you cannot select your first choice on the form, that means the group is full. Browse the list again and pick a different option.
4. If your name does not appear on the drop down menu, email Mr. Venker (tvenker@gprep.org) your top four book choices. He will assign you to a group.

Note: Groups fill up on a first come, first served basis. Please sign up in a timely fashion and no later than July 1.

Directions for Returning Rising Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors:

1. Browse the books in this list and select 3-5 that would interest you (you will end up selecting only one but have choices in case groups become full).
2. On May 19th, our sign-up form will become live. Your English teacher will post the link and/or email it to your class.
3. Enjoy your book!

Note: Groups fill up on a first come, first serve basis. Please sign up in a timely fashion if you would like to get into your first choice book group.

"Teenagers need to read during summer months to maintain current reading levels. Reading just 4-5 books during the summer can prevent a decline in a student’s fall reading scores”

~ James Kim, Harvard University

We encourage students to read and enjoy many books over the course of the summer. We find a strong correlation between regular reading – of any kind – and academic success in the humanities. Regular readers build strong vocabularies, understand complex texts, and build the reading stamina required for college readiness. Regular readers also tend to be the most fluent and talented writers. Read often!

In addition to required reading for courses, the Georgetown Prep Summer Reading program asks students to join with a few fellow students and a faculty member to read a book for pleasure.
I Came As A Shadow By John Thompson

Group Leaders: Erin Johnston and Dacque Tirado

John Thompson was never just a basketball coach and I Came As A Shadow is categorically not just a basketball autobiography.

After five decades at the center of race and sports in America, Thompson—the iconic NCAA champion, Black activist, and educator—was ready to make the private public at last, and he completed this autobiography shortly before his death in the historically tumultuous summer of 2020. Chockful of stories and moving beyond mere stats, Thompson’s book drives us through his childhood under Jim Crow segregation to our current moment of racial reckoning.

Thompson’s mother was a teacher who had to clean houses because of racism in the nation’s capital. His father could not read or write. Their son grew up to be a man with his own larger-than-life statue in a building that bears his family’s name on a campus once kept afloat by the selling of 272 enslaved Black people.

Educated By Tara Westover

Group Leader: John Krambuhl

Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara’s older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she’d traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

Beartown By Fredrick Backman

Group Leader: Leah Hepburn

People say Beartown is finished. A tiny community nestled deep in the forest, it is slowly losing ground to the ever-encroaching trees. But down by the lake stands an old ice rink, built generations ago by the working men who founded this town. And in that ice rink is the reason people in Beartown believe tomorrow will be better than today. Their junior ice hockey team is about to compete in the national semi-finals, and they actually have a shot at winning. All the hopes and dreams of this place now rest on the shoulders of a handful of teenage boys.

Being responsible for the hopes of an entire town is a heavy burden, and the semi-final match is the catalyst for a violent act that will leave a young girl traumatized and a town in turmoil. Accusations are made and, like ripples on a pond, they travel through all of Beartown, leaving no resident unaffected.

Unstoppable By Joshua Greene

Group Leader: Rob Begin

Unstoppable is the ultimate immigrant story and an epic David-and-Goliath adventure. While American teens were socializing in ice cream parlors, Siggi was suffering beatings by Nazi hoodlums for being a Jew and was soon deported along with his family to the darkest place the world has ever known: Auschwitz. Siggi used his wits to stay alive, pretending to have trade skills the Nazis could exploit to run the camp. After two death marches and near starvation, he was liberated from camp Mauthausen and went to work for the US Army hunting Nazis, a service that earned him a visa to America. On arrival, he made three vows: to never go hungry again, to support the Jewish people, and to speak out against injustice. He earned his first dollar shoveling snow after a fierce blizzard. His next job was laboring in toxic sweatshops. From these humble beginnings, he became President, Chairman and CEO of a New York Stock Exchange-listed oil company and grew a full-service commercial bank to more than $4 billion in assets.
For 12,000 years the Galactic Empire has ruled supreme. Now it is dying. But only Hari Sheldon, creator of the revolutionary science of psychohistory, can see into the future, to a dark age of ignorance, barbarism, and warfare that will last 30,000 years. To preserve knowledge and save mankind, Sheldon gathers the best minds in the Empire, both scientists and scholars, and brings them to a bleak planet at the edge of the Galaxy to serve as a beacon of hope for a future generations. He calls his sanctuary the Foundation.

But soon the fledgling Foundation finds itself at the mercy of corrupt warlords rising in the wake of the receding Empire. Mankind’s last best hope is faced with an agonizing choice: submit to the barbarians and be overrun or fight them and be destroyed.

This is NOT a history book. This is a book about the here and now. A book to help us better understand why we are where we are. A book about race.

The construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, to create dynamics that separate and silence. This remarkable reimagining of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi’s National Book Award-winning Stamped from the Beginning reveals the history of racist ideas in America, and inspires hope for an antiracist future. It takes you on a race journey from then to now, shows you why we feel how we feel, and why the poison of racism lingers. It also proves that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited.

Through a gripping, fast-paced, and energizing narrative written by beloved award-winner Jason Reynolds, this book shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas—and on ways readers can identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their daily lives.

Written when Ernest Hemingway was thirty years old and lauded as the best American novel to emerge from World War I, A Farewell to Arms is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse. Set against the looming horrors of the battlefield—wary, demoralized men marching in the rain during the German attack on Caporetto; the profound struggle between loyalty and desertion—this gripping, semiautobiographical work captures the harsh realities of war and the pain of lovers caught in its inexorable sweep.
The Librarian of Auschwitz by Antonio Iturbe

Based on the experience of real-life Auschwitz prisoner Dita Kraus, the award-winning *The Librarian of Auschwitz* by Antonio Iturbe is the incredible story of a girl who risked her life to keep the magic of books alive during the Holocaust.

As a young girl, Dita is imprisoned by the Nazis at Auschwitz. Taken from her home in Prague in 1939, Dita does her best to adjust to the constant terror of her new reality. But even amidst horror, human strength and ingenuity persevere. When Jewish leader Fredy Hirsch entrusts Dita with eight precious volumes the prisoners have managed to sneak into the camp, she embraces the responsibility—and so becomes the librarian of Auschwitz.

From one of the darkest chapters in history comes this extraordinary story of courage and hope.

Killing Pablo by Mark Bowden

On July 22, 1992, Colombian druglord Pablo Escobar walked out of the luxurious prison he built for himself and disappeared into the Colombian jungle. His audacious escape destroyed the nation’s tenuous cease-fire with its infamous narcos, and pushed it into open war with the Medellin drug cartel.

Over the coming days and weeks, the United States launched a joint military and intelligence operation with the Colombian government, assembling a team of expert personnel and an arsenal of state-of-the-art weaponry and surveillance technology the likes of which the world had never seen. Their mission: to track down Pablo.

But this time, they knew it would not be enough to just capture Escobar. This time, they would have to finish the job. This time, they were going to kill him.

Truly Devious by Maureen Johnson

Ellingham Academy is a famous private school in Vermont for the brightest thinkers, inventors, and artists. It was founded by Albert Ellingham, an early twentieth century tycoon, who wanted to make a wonderful place full of riddles, twisting pathways, and gardens. “A place,” he said, “where learning is a game.”

Shortly after the school opened, his wife and daughter were kidnapped. The only real clue was a mocking riddle listing methods of murder, signed with the frightening pseudonym “Truly, Devious.”

It became one of the great unsolved crimes of American history.

True-crime aficionado Stevie Bell is set to begin her first year at Ellingham Academy, and she has an ambitious plan: She will solve this cold case. That is, she will solve the case when she gets a grip on her demanding new school life and her housemates: the inventor, the novelist, the actor, the artist, and the joker. But something strange is happening. Truly Devious makes a surprise return, and death revisits Ellingham Academy. The past has crawled out of its grave. Someone has gotten away with murder.

Flash Boys by Michael Lewis

In Michael Lewis’s game-changing bestseller, a small group of Wall Street iconoclasts realize that the U.S. stock market has been rigged for the benefit of insiders. They band together—some of them walking away from seven-figure salaries—to investigate, expose, and reform the insidious new ways that Wall Street generates profits. If you have any contact with the market, even a retirement account, this story is happening to you.

In this riveting exposé, Lewis follows the traders at high-frequency trading firms, who have developed incredibly sophisticated computers that can weed through millions of transactions each second and make the difference between billions of dollars. He profiles the inventors who developed the technology, the lawyers and accountants who designed the business models, and the proliferation of the machines themselves as they gobble up market share and American business. But with each innovation comes a threat, and the story becomes one of the greatest races in history: a true cat-and-mouse game.

Flash Boys shatters the illusion of a fair market and transforms the way we think about the economy.
David Sedaris' move to Paris from New York inspired these hilarious pieces, including the title essay, about his attempts to learn French from a sadistic teacher who declares that every day spent with you is like having a caesarean section. His family is another inspiration. You Can't Kill the Rooster is a portrait of his brother, who talks incessant hip-hop slang to his bewildered father. And no one hones a finer fury in response to such modern annoyances as restaurant meals presented in ludicrous towers of food and cashiers with six-inch fingernails.

How to Avoid Climate Disaster By Bill Gates

15. Group Leader: Marcos Poole

Bill Gates has spent a decade investigating the causes and effects of climate change. With the help of experts in the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, political science, and finance, he has focused on what must be done in order to stop the planet's slide to certain environmental disaster. In this book, he not only explains why we need to work toward net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases, but also details what we need to do to achieve this profoundly important goal. He gives us a clear-eyed description of the challenges we face. Drawing on his understanding of innovation and what it takes to get new ideas into the market, he describes the areas in which technology is already helping to reduce emissions, where and how the current technology can be made to function more effectively, where breakthrough technologies are needed, and who is working on these essential innovations. Finally, he lays out a concrete, practical plan for achieving the goal of zero emissions—suggesting not only policies that governments should adopt, but what we as individuals can do to keep our government, our employers, and ourselves accountable in this crucial enterprise.

Where the Crawdads Sing By Delia Owens

16. Group Leader: Tom Venker

For years, rumors of the "Marsh Girl" have haunted Barkley Cove, a quiet town on the North Carolina coast. So in late 1969, when handsome Chase Andrews is found dead, the locals immediately suspect Kya Clark, the so-called Marsh Girl. But Kya is not what they say. Sensitive and intelligent, she has survived for years alone in the marsh that she calls home, finding friends in the gulls and lessons in the sand. Then the time comes when she yearns to be touched and loved. When two young men from town become intrigued by her wild beauty, Kya opens herself to a new life—until the unthinkable happens.

Where the Crawdads Sing is at once an exquisite ode to the natural world, a heartbreaking coming-of-age story, and a surprising tale of possible murder. Owens reminds us that we are forever shaped by the children we once were, and that we are all subject to the beautiful and violent secrets that nature keeps.
A work of remarkable prescience, *Empire As A Way of Life* is influential historian William Appleman Williams's groundbreaking work highlighting imperialism—“empire as a way of life”—as the dominant theme in American history. Analyzing U.S. history from its revolutionary origins to the dawn of the Reagan era, Williams shows how America has always been addicted to empire in its foreign and domestic ideology. Detailing the imperial actions and beliefs of revered figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, this book is the most in-depth historical study of the American obsession with empire, and is essential to understanding the origins of our current foreign and domestic undertakings.

Trevor Noah’s unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of The Daily Show began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents’ indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa’s white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

In this beautiful and lucid guide, Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh offers gentle anecdotes and practical exercise as a means of learning the skills of mindfulness—being awake and fully aware. From washing the dishes to answering the phone to peeling an orange, he reminds us that each moment holds within it an opportunity to work toward greater self-understanding and peacefulness.

What Is the What is the epic novel based on the life of Valentino Achak Deng who, along with thousands of other children—the so-called Lost Boys—was forced to leave his village in Sudan at the age of seven and trek hundreds of miles by foot, pursued by militias, government bombers, and wild animals, crossing the deserts of three countries to find freedom. When he finally is resettled in the United States, he finds a life full of promise, but also heartache and myriad new challenges. Moving, suspenseful, and unexpectedly funny, What Is the What is an astonishing novel that illuminates the lives of millions through one extraordinary man.
Wild by Cheryl Strayed

At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, Wild powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her.

Dune by Frank Herbert

Set on the desert planet Arrakis, Dune is the story of the boy Paul Atreides, heir to a noble family tasked with ruling an inhospitable world where the only thing of value is the “spice” melange, a drug capable of extending life and enhancing consciousness. Coveted across the known universe, melange is a prize worth killing for....

When House Atreides is betrayed, the destruction of Paul's family will set the boy on a journey toward a destiny greater than he could ever have imagined. And as he evolves into the mysterious man known as Muad'Dib, he will bring to fruition humankind’s most ancient and unattainable dream.

Fearless by Eric Blehm

When Navy SEAL Adam Brown woke up on March 17, 2010, he didn't know he would die that night in the Hindu Kush Mountains of Afghanistan—but he was ready. In a letter to his children, not meant to be seen unless the worst happened, he wrote, "I'm not afraid of anything that might happen to me on this earth, because I know no matter what, nothing can take my spirit from me."

Fearless is the story of a man of extremes, whose courage and determination were fueled by faith, family, and the love of a woman. It's about a man who waged a war against his own worst impulses, including drug addiction, and persevered to reach the top tier of the U.S. military. In a deeply personal and absorbing chronicle, Fearless reveals a glimpse inside the SEAL Team SIX brotherhood, and presents an indelible portrait of a highly trained warrior whose final act of bravery led to the ultimate sacrifice.

The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle by Stuart Turton

Aiden Bishop knows the rules. Evelyn Hardcastle will die every day until he can identify her killer and break the cycle. But every time the day begins again, Aiden wakes up in the body of a different guest at Blackheath Manor. And some of his hosts are more helpful than others. With a locked room mystery that Agatha Christie would envy, Stuart Turton unfurls a breakneck novel of intrigue and suspense.

For fans of Claire North, and Kate Atkinson, The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle is a breathlessly addictive mystery that follows one man's race against time to find a killer, with an astonishing time-turning twist that means nothing and no one are quite what they seem.

From the author of The Devil and the Dark Water, Stuart Turton delivers inventive twists in a thriller of such unexpected creativity it will leave readers guessing until the very last page.
As a boy, Claude Rawlings looks up through the grated window of his basement apartment to watch the world go by. Poor, lonely, supported by a taxi-driver mother whose eccentricities spin more and more out of control, he faces the terrible task of growing up on the margins of life, destined to be a spectator of that great world always hurrying out of reach. But there is an out-of-tune piano in the small apartment, and in unlocking the secrets of its keys, as if by magic, Claude discovers himself. He is a musical prodigy.

**Body & Soul** is the story of a young man whose life is transformed by a gift. The gift is not without price—the work is relentless, the teachers exacting—but the reward is a journey that takes him to the drawing rooms of the rich and powerful, private schools, a gilt-edged marriage, and Carnegie Hall. Claude moves through this life as if he were playing a difficult composition, swept up in its drama and tension, surprised by its grace notes. Music, here, becomes a character in its own right, equaled in strength only by the music of Frank Conroy's own unmistakable and true voice.

Gifty is a sixth-year PhD candidate in neuroscience at the Stanford University School of Medicine studying reward-seeking behavior in mice and the neural circuits of depression and addiction. Her brother, Nana, was a gifted high school athlete who died of a heroin overdose after an ankle injury left him hooked on OxyContin. Her suicidal mother is living in her bed. Gifty is determined to discover the scientific basis for the suffering she sees all around her. But even as she turns to the hard sciences to unlock the mystery of her family's loss, she finds herself hungering for her childhood faith and grappling with the evangelical church in which she was raised, whose promise of salvation remains as tantalizing as it is elusive.

**Transcendent Kingdom** is a deeply moving portrait of a family of Ghanaian immigrants ravaged by depression and addiction and grief—a novel about faith, science, religion, love. Exquisitely written, emotionally searing, this is an exceptionally powerful follow-up to Gyasi's phenomenal debut.

Welcome to The Club -- Golf's Valhalla -- where all that's necessary for admission is an intense love of the game. Here you'll watch the greatest players replay their victories...and their defeats...as they search for golf's hidden and seemingly inaccessible meaning.

Like W.P. Kinsella's Shoeshoe Joe -- the basis for the movie *Field of Dreams* -- *Follow the Wind* is sports fantasy at its finest and most poignant. A young man following an errant shot into the woods emerges on a totally unfamiliar golf course. The first person he encounters is the legendary Ben Hogan, feverishly practicing for something special.

As Links weaves his tale, introducing such golfing greats as Walter Hagen, Bobby Jones, Alister MacKenzie, and the famous nineteenth century Scottish champions Old and Young Tom Morris, he recreates the most momentous events in golfing history and captures the magic that has lured millions to the fairway. For fans of Harvey Penick's books and for everyone who has searched for inspiration on the golf course, *Follow the Wind* offers the satisfaction of a perfect shot that soars for the flagstick.

Have you ever seen a town fall? Ours did. Have you ever seen a town rise? Ours did that, too.

A small community tucked deep in the forest, Beartown is home to tough, hardworking people who don't expect life to be easy or fair. No matter how difficult times get, they've always been able to take pride in their local ice hockey team. So it's a cruel blow when they hear that Beartown ice hockey might soon be disbanded. As the tension mounts between the two adversaries, a newcomer arrives who gives Beartown hockey a surprising new coach and a chance at a comeback.
In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe.

Then, one by one, the Osage began to be killed off. The family of an Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, became a prime target. One of her relatives was shot. Another was poisoned. And it was just the beginning, as more and more Osage were dying under mysterious circumstances, and many of those who dared to investigate the killings were themselves murdered.

As the death toll rose, the newly created FBI took up the case, and the young director, J. Edgar Hoover, turned to a former Texas Ranger named Tom White to try to unravel the mystery. White put together an undercover team, including a Native American agent who infiltrated the region, and together with the Osage began to expose one of the most chilling conspiracies in American history.

WHO GETS IN AND WHY BY JEFFREY SELINGO

Getting into a top-ranked college has never seemed more impossible, with acceptance rates at some elite universities dipping into the single digits. In Who Gets In and Why, journalist and higher education expert Jeffrey Selingo dispels entrenched notions of how to compete and win at the admissions game, and reveals that teenagers and parents have much to gain by broadening their notion of what qualifies as a “good college.”

Hint: it’s not all about the sticker on the car window.

One of the most insightful books ever about “getting in” and what higher education has become, Who Gets In and Why not only provides an usually intimate look at how admissions decisions get made, but guides prospective students on how to honestly assess their strengths and match with the schools that will best serve their interests.

UNSETTING TRUTHS BY MARK CHARLES AND SOONG-CHAN RAH

You cannot discover lands already inhabited. Injustice has plagued American society for centuries. And we cannot move toward being a more just nation without understanding the root causes that have shaped our culture and institutions. In this prophetic blend of history, theology, and cultural commentary, Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah reveal the far-reaching, damaging effects of the "Doctrine of Discovery." In the fifteenth century, official church edicts gave Christian explorers the right to claim territories they "discovered." This was institutionalized as an implicit national framework that justifies American triumphalism, white supremacy, and ongoing injustices. The result is that the dominant culture idealizes a history of discovery, opportunity, expansion, and equality, while minority communities have been traumatized by colonization, slavery, segregation, and dehumanization. Charles and Rah aim to recover a common memory and shared understanding of where we have been and where we are going.
The Nibelungenlied
Translated By William Whobrey

Filled with portrayals of deception, love, murder, and revenge—yet defying traditional medieval epic conventions for representing character—the Nibelungenlied is the greatest and most unique epic in Middle High German. The Klage, its consistent companion text in the manuscript tradition, continues the story, detailing the devastating aftermath of the Burgundians' bloody slaughter. William Whobrey's new volume offers both—together for the first time in English—in a prose version informed by recent scholarship that brilliantly conveys to modern readers not only the sense but also the tenor of the originals.

Sing, Unburied, Sing
By Jesmyn Ward

Jojo is thirteen years old and trying to understand what it means to be a man. He doesn't lack in fathers to study, chief among them his Black grandfather, Pop. But there are other men who complicate his understanding: his absent White father, Michael, who is being released from prison; his absent White grandfather, Big Joseph, who won't acknowledge his existence; and the memories of his dead uncle, Given, who died as a teenager.

His mother, Leonie, is an inconsistent presence in his and his toddler sister's lives. She is an imperfect mother in constant conflict with herself and those around her. She is Black and her children's father is White. She wants to be a better mother but can't put her children above her own needs, especially her drug use. Simultaneously tormented and comforted by visions of her dead brother, which only come to her when she's high, Leonie is embattled in ways that reflect the brutal reality of her circumstances. When the children's father is released from prison, Leonie packs her kids and a friend into her car and drives north to the heart of Mississippi and Parchman Farm, the State Penitentiary. At Parchman, there is another thirteen-year-old boy, the ghost of a dead inmate who carries all of the ugly history of the South with him in his wandering.
Mona Mireles is a quintessential overachiever: a former spelling bee champion and valedictorian of her college class, she has a sterling résumé and a wall of plaques and medals in her bedroom that stretches floor to ceiling. She's also broke, unemployed, back at home with her parents, and completely adrift in life and love. Mona is seven months out of college and desperately trying to reassemble the pieces of her life after the Wall Street job she had waiting for her post-graduation dissolves in the wake of the Great Recession. When her reaction to losing her job goes viral and she is publicly branded the "Sad Millennial," Mona begins a downward spiral into self-pity, bitterness, and late-night drunken binges on cat videos. Mona's the sort who says exactly the right thing at absolutely the wrong moments, seeing the world through a cynic's eyes.

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a foundering life raft. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

Mona at Sea By Elizabeth Gonzalez James

Mona is seven months out of college and desperately trying to reassemble the pieces of her life after the Wall Street job she had waiting for her post-graduation dissolves in the wake of the Great Recession. When her reaction to losing her job goes viral and she is publicly branded the "Sad Millennial," Mona begins a downward spiral into self-pity, bitterness, and late-night drunken binges on cat videos. Mona's the sort who says exactly the right thing at absolutely the wrong moments, seeing the world through a cynic's eyes.

No-No Boy tells the story of Ichiro Yamada, a fictional version of the real-life "no-no boys." Yamada answered "no" twice in a compulsory government questionnaire as to whether he would serve in the armed forces and swear loyalty to the United States. Unwilling to pledge himself to the country that interned him and his family, Ichiro earns two years in prison and the hostility of his family and community when he returns home to Seattle. As Ozeki writes, Ichiro's "obsessive, tormented" voice subverts Japanese postwar "model-minority" stereotypes, showing a fractured community and one man's "threnody of guilt, rage, and blame as he tries to negotiate his reentry into a shattered world."

The Boys in the Boat By Daniel James Brown

Daniel James Brown's robust book tells the story of the University of Washington's 1936 eight-oar crew and their epic quest for an Olympic gold medal, a team that transformed the sport and grabbed the attention of millions of Americans. The sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the boys defeated elite rivals first from eastern and British universities and finally the German crew rowing for Adolf Hitler in the Olympic games in Berlin, 1936.

The emotional heart of the story lies with one rower, Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not for glory, but to regain his shattered self-regard and to find a place he can call home. The crew is assembled by an enigmatic coach and mentored by a visionary, eccentric British boat builder, but it is their trust in each other that makes them a victorious team. They remind the country of what can be done when everyone quite literally pulls together—a perfect melding of commitment, determination, and optimism.
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**Hillbilly Elegy**

From a former marine and Yale Law School graduate, a powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America's white working class.

Hillbilly Elegy is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis—that of white working-class Americans. The decline of this group, a demographic of our country that has been slowly disintegrating over forty years, has been reported on with growing frequency and alarm, but has never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck.

**Wait Till Next Year**

Set in the suburbs of New York in the 1950s, *Wait Till Next Year* re-creates the postwar era, when the corner store was a place to share stories and neighborhoods were equally divided between Dodger, Giant, and Yankee fans.

We meet the people who most influenced Goodwin's early life: her mother, who taught her the joy of books but whose debilitating illness left her housebound; and her father, who taught her the joy of baseball and to root for the Dodgers of Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Pee Wee Reese, Duke Snider, and Gil Hodges. Most important, Goodwin describes with eloquence how the Dodgers' leaving Brooklyn in 1957, and the death of her mother soon after, marked both the end of an era and, for her, the end of childhood.

**A Gentleman in Moscow**

In 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal, and is sentenced to house arrest in the Metropol, a grand hotel across the street from the Kremlin. Rostov, an indomitable man of erudition and wit, has never worked a day in his life, and must now live in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history are unfolding outside the hotel's doors: Unexpectedly, his reduced circumstances provide him entry into a much larger world of emotional discovery.

Brimming with humor, a glittering cast of characters, and one beautifully rendered scene after another, this singular novel casts a spell as it relates the count's endeavor to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a man of purpose.

**Silent Spring**

Rachel Carson's Silent Spring was first published in three serialized excerpts in the New Yorker in June of 1962. The book appeared in September of that year and the outcry that followed its publication forced the banning of DDT and spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water. Carson's passionate concern for the future of our planet reverberated powerfully throughout the world, and her eloquent book was instrumental in launching the environmental movement. It is without question one of the landmark books of the twentieth century.
Pino Lella wants nothing to do with the war or the Nazis. He’s a normal Italian teenager—obsessed with music, food, and girls—but his days of innocence are numbered. When his family home in Milan is destroyed by Allied bombs, Pino joins an underground railroad helping Jews escape over the Alps, and falls for Anna, a beautiful widow six years his senior.

In an attempt to protect him, Pino’s parents force him to enlist as a German soldier—a move they think will keep him out of combat. But after Pino is injured, he is recruited at the tender age of eighteen to become the personal driver for Adolf Hitler’s left hand, General Hans Leyers, one of the Third Reich’s most mysterious and powerful commanders.

Now, with the opportunity to spy for the Allies inside the German High Command, Pino endures the horrors of the war and the Nazi occupation by fighting in secret, his courage bolstered by his love for Anna and for the life he dreams they will one day share.

In 2012, on his third tour of duty, an improvised explosive device left Dan Crenshaw’s right eye destroyed and his left blinded. Only through the careful hand of his surgeons, and what doctors called a miracle, did Crenshaw’s left eye recover partial vision. And yet, he persevered, completing two more deployments. Why? There are certain stories we tell ourselves about the hardships we face—we can become paralyzed by adversity or we can adapt and overcome. We can be fragile or we can find our fortitude.

Crenshaw delivers a set of lessons to help you do just that. Most people’s everyday challenges aren’t as extreme as surviving combat, and yet our society is more fragile than ever: exploding with outrage, drowning in microaggressions, and devolving into divisive mob politics. The American spirit—long characterized by grit and fortitude—is unraveling. We must fix it. That’s exactly what Crenshaw accomplishes with Fortitude. This book isn’t about the problem, it’s about the solution. And that solution begins with each and every one of us. We must all lighten up, toughen up, and begin treating our fellow Americans with respect and grace.
The Only Rule Is It Has To Work By Ben Lindbergh and Sam Miller

It's the ultimate in fantasy baseball: You get to pick the roster, set the lineup, and decide on strategies -- with real players, in a real ballpark, in a real playoff race. That's what baseball analysts Ben Lindbergh and Sam Miller got to do when an independent minor-league team in California, the Sonoma Stompers, offered them the chance to run its baseball operations according to the most advanced statistics. Their story in The Only Rule is it Has to Work is unlike any other baseball tale you've ever read.

We tag along as Lindbergh and Miller apply their number-crunching insights to all aspects of assembling and running a team, following one cardinal rule for judging each innovation they try: it has to work. We meet colorful figures like general manager Theo Fightmaster and boundary-breakers like the first openly gay player in professional baseball. Even José Canseco makes a cameo appearance.

Homeland Elegies By Ayad Akhtar

A deeply personal work about identity and belonging in a nation coming apart at the seams, Homeland Elegies blends fact and fiction to tell an epic story of longing and dispossession in the world that 9/11 made. Part family drama, part social essay, part picaresque novel, at its heart it is the story of a father, a son, and the country they both call home.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Ayad Akhtar forges a new narrative voice to capture a country in which debt has ruined countless lives and the gods of finance rule, where immigrants live in fear, and where the nation's unhealed wounds wreak havoc around the world. Akhtar attempts to make sense of it all through the lens of a story about one family, from a heartland town in America to palatial suites in Central Europe to guerrilla lookouts in the mountains of Afghanistan, and spares no one—least of all himself—in the process.
Pushed to the edge by grief, a teen heads to the Montana wilderness to confront his inner demons. But then he meets a real one. Mike Whittaker’s little brother has drowned, dragging the high school senior into an abyss of grief. But when he learns what really happened at the Lawson town pool, despair turns to rage, and he brings a gun to school. Mike’s near-deadly assault on a classmate has him headed for juvenile detention, and his only leverage is the truth about his brother’s death—a dark secret that threatens the most powerful family in Lawson. A legal gambit sends Mike to a wilderness therapy program instead of prison, where he and his unlikely companions face their demons at an isolated mountain lodge under the guidance of tough-love mentors. Just two weeks in, however, a suspicious accident leaves the boys stranded and unsupervised. They soon discover a menace within their group, and what began as a struggle for redemption becomes a fight for survival deep in the Montana wilderness.

In 1962, fresh out of business school, Phil Knight borrowed $50 from his father and created a company with a simple mission: import high-quality, low-cost athletic shoes from Japan. Selling the shoes from the trunk of his lime green Plymouth Valiant, Knight grossed $8,000 his first year. Today, Nike’s annual sales top $30 billion. In an age of startups, Nike is the *ne plus ultra* of all startups, and the swoosh has become a revolutionary, globe-spanning icon, one of the most ubiquitous and recognizable symbols in the world today.

Four weeks after Navy SEALs had killed Osama bin Laden, the President of the United States stood in Arlington National Cemetery. In his Memorial Day address, he extolled the courage and sacrifice of the two young men buried side by side in the graves before him: Travis Manion, a fallen US Marine, and Brendan Looney, a fallen US Navy SEAL. Although they were killed three years apart, one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan, these two best friends and former roommates were now buried together—"brothers forever."

Award-winning journalist Tom Sileo and Travis’s father, former Marine colonel Tom Manion, come together to tell this intimate story, from Travis’s incredible heroism on the streets of Fallujah to Brendan’s anguished Navy SEAL training in the wake of his friend’s death and his own heroism in the mountains of Afghanistan. *Brothers Forever* is a remarkable story of friendship, family, and war.
When it comes to relationships, Colin Singleton’s type is girls named Katherine. And when it comes to girls named Katherine, Colin is always getting dumped. Nineteen times, to be exact. On a road trip miles from home, this anagram-happy, washed-up child prodigy has ten thousand dollars in his pocket, a bloodthirsty feral hog on his trail, and an overweight, Judge Judy–loving best friend riding shotgun—but no Katherines. Colin is on a mission to prove The Theorem of Underlying Katherine Predictability, which he hopes will predict the future of any relationship, avenge Dumpees everywhere, and finally win him the girl. Love, friendship, and a dead Austro-Hungarian archduke add up to surprising and heart-changing conclusions in this ingeniously layered comic novel about reinventing oneself.

Johnny Smith awakens from a five-year coma after his car accident and discovers that he can see people’s futures and pasts when he touches them. Many consider his talent a gift; Johnny feels cursed. His fiancée married another man during his coma and people clamor for him to solve their problems.

When Johnny has a disturbing vision after he shakes the hand of an ambitious and amoral politician, he must decide if he should take drastic action to change the future.

Fifty years after its original publication, Catch-22 remains a cornerstone of American literature and one of the funniest—and most celebrated—books of all time. In recent years it has been named to “best novels” lists by Time, Newsweek, the Modern Library, and the London Observer.

Set in Italy during World War II, this is the story of the incomparable, malingering bombardier, Yossarian, a hero who is furious because thousands of people he has never met are trying to kill him. But his real problem is not the enemy—it is his own army, which keeps increasing the number of missions the men must fly to complete their service. Yet if Yossarian makes any attempt to excuse himself from the perilous missions he's assigned, he'll be in violation of Catch-22, a hilariously sinister bureaucratic rule: a man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, but if he makes a formal request to be removed from duty, he is proven sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved.

First published in 1959, Shirley Jackson’s The Haunting of Hill House has been hailed as a perfect work of unnerving terror. It is the story of four seekers who arrive at a notoriously unfriendly pile called Hill House: Dr. Montague, an occult scholar looking for solid evidence of a “haunting”; Theodora, the lighthearted assistant; Eleanor, a friendless, fragile young woman well acquainted with poltergeists; and Luke, the future heir of Hill House. At first, their stay seems destined to be merely a spooky encounter with inexplicable phenomena. But Hill House is gathering its powers—and soon it will choose one of them to make its own.