

To the Students of Crossroads,

You are not the only one facing the task of reading and preparing to discuss a summer novel. The teachers at both Crossroads North and South also face this assignment. We decided to share some of the recommendations from a few teachers at Crossroads South. These notations can be located after the novel listing and description. Perhaps their perception will help you decide which novel you will choose to read this summer!

Remember, if you wish to purchase the book from school, you have until June 6th. Simply give your money (checks are preferred) and order form to one of your language arts teacher in a clearly marked envelope. Please make sure your name and unit are written neatly on your order form as well. Within a week you can expect to have your book delivered to your unit. Quick and easy shopping with no worries! The only concern you may have right now is perhaps which book you wish to read. So, it's time to read through the recommendations and make a decision! Good luck choosing a great book to read!

BUD, NOT BUDDY

Christopher Paul Curtis

When his mother dies in 1936, Bud hits the road convinced that a poster of a jazz band will help him find his father.

Mr. Miracle wins the most-recommendations award! Read how many novels he has read!

Bud, Not Buddy-- A very funny and insightful book. Bud is the kind of kid you just keep cheering for.

Mrs. Broder remembers:

This was a wonderful story that combined the needs of a young boy with the culture of the time. Loved it!

Awesome! *Mr. Edwards* tells all!

Bud, Not Buddy is one of those books that is both funny and sad at the same time. Bud is growing up in hard times during the 1930's. Bud has lived in an orphanage since his mother died, and one day he decides to go on an adventure to look for the man he believes is his father.

Mrs. Behn sounds excited about this book!

Would you be brave enough travel far from home by yourself and to walk across the state of Michigan to find your long lost father? That's what Bud Caldwell does in the book Bud Not Buddy. This historical fiction novel takes place during the Great Depression and gives us a glimpse into that era. We can relate to Bud because he's a regular kid, even if he finds himself in extraordinary circumstances. He takes us on a journey, not only to find his father, but to also learn a little more about himself. While reading this novel I was introduced to the world of four early Jazz musicians and what their lives were like. Most of all I enjoyed Bud Caldwell's "Rules and Things for Having a Funner Life and Making a Better Liar Out of Yourself" This book is a "great read" and doesn't have the typical happy ending you might expect.

CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS

Rudyard Kipling

Pampered young Harvey Cheyne learns respect and responsibility after spending a season fishing the Grand Banks.

Mrs. Jones comments on Captains Courageous:

Just a few notes to you on Captains Courageous - Good story line, but very challenging reading for most students in this age group. Mostly geared for boys. Great example of how the main character changes and grows from the start of the book to the end of the book.

CITY OF THE BEASTS

Isabel Allende

Fifteen-year-old Alexander Cold has the chance to take the trip of a lifetime. Parting from his family, Alexander joins his fearless grandmother on an expedition to the dangerous, remote world of the Amazon.

Mrs. Behn comments on City of Beasts:

Secrets are hidden in the heart of the Amazon...and you will discover what they are if you read City of Beasts. In this fictional account of a journey through the Amazon, we are introduced to a "normal" fifteen year old boy and his eccentric and unusual traveling partner. Most teenaged boys don't travel with their grandmother, but this is an expedition to track down the Yeti and besides, Alexander Cold doesn't really have a choice about going on this trip. This tale is full of adventure, mystery, and fantasy all wrapped up in a delicious banquet of rainforest canopy and culture. With chapter titles like The Nightmare, The Plot, People of the Mist, and The Invisible Village, you can't go wrong reading City of the Beasts.

Mrs. Mauer gives us her critique!

I highly recommend Isabel Allende's novel City of the Beasts. It is a wild adventure steeped in Magical Realism, a genre which transports the reader and the characters to a world which combines magic (in this case, a fantastical Beast and people of the Mist) with reality (archaeologists in the Amazon). The book also piques the interest of young adults and parents since it deals with the developing relationship of its main character and his family, particularly his kooky thrill-seeking grandmother. I love this book and I like that Allende, an incredible adult fiction writer, has taken a risk to write young adult fiction. She was actually inspired by and challenged by J.K. Rowling of Harry Potter fame to attempt this genre. Happy Reading!!!

A mystery writer writes in:

City of the Beasts is a beautiful example of magical realism in the vein of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. This is the first young adult book of Isabelle Allende, the award winning adult author. She does a great job of involving a cool, 21st century boy in the very magical world of the Amazon jungle when he travels there with his Grandmother. They are unlikely travel companions

but their experiences with the supernatural in the jungle will keep you reading. Very well written!

THE CITY OF EMBER

Jeanne Duprau

The City of Ember was built as a last refuge for the human race. Now the lights of the city are beginning to flicker. Lina and her friend Doon must decipher the message she finds before the lights go out forever!

Mrs. Zavaglia enjoyed THE CITY OF EMBER!

I FOUND THIS BOOK TO BE ONE THAT I DID NOT WANT TO PUT DOWN UNTIL I FINISHED IT. I WENT RIGHT OUT AND BOUGHT THE BOOK THAT FOLLOWS AND READ IT ALSO.

Mr. Miracle comments:

The City of Ember- Mysterious and adventurous. Keeps you turning the pages to find out what happened to this underground city.

Mrs. Broder read this too:

This was fascinating, so intriguing! The children face unraveling a mystery that controls their lives. Clever!

Mrs. Gibbard thought this book was thought-provoking!

For as long as anyone can remember, the great lights of Ember have kept the endless darkness at bay. But now the lights are beginning to flicker....

Imagine a civilization who has never seen the light of day. A mystery with a cliffhanger ending, I'm reading the sequel this summer!

Mystery send-in:

City of Ember is one of those books I couldn't put down. I especially like stories about dystopian societies as told through the eyes of young people in that society. This also has an environmental twist, with the possibility of the light going out forever. If you liked The Giver or The House of the Scorpion, then you should try this book.

CRISPIN: THE CROSS OF LEAD

Avi

This story, set in 14th Century England, centers on the frantic flight of an orphaned outcast who gets pegged for murder.

Mr. Miracle read this too!

Crispin: The Cross of Lead-- If you enjoyed the Lord of the Rings or the Narnia books, you'll love Crispin. A lot of sword-play and intrigue.

DEATH BE NOT PROUD

John Gunther

This is a true story of a teenage boy who bravely faces death.

Mrs. Demetrious shares:

A great book that teaches valuable life lessons such as optimism and perseverance despite extreme hardships. This book is based on a true story about a brilliant seventeen - year old boy who struggles to overcome his malignant brain tumor. You will love reading this book!!

Mrs. Broder remembers:

This may be a sad story, but it is unmatched where friendship is concerned.

DUNK

David Lubar

While hoping to work in an amusement park dunk tank on the New Jersey shore, Chad faces his best friend's serious illness, hassles with police, and must also deal with the girl that got away.

Mr. Miracle again:

Dunk-- Anyone who's ever lost all their money playing games on the boardwalk down at the shore will relate to this book. Very funny.

Mystery writer declares:

I loved Dunk because it beautifully describes life at the Jersey Shore. Lubar's characters are very real. Chad's relationship with the "Bozo" - the dunk tank clown" is one of those believable connections which makes for a very interesting read.

FORBIDDEN CITY

William Bell

Seventeen-year-old Alex Jackson accompanies his father, a TV cameraman, to China in 1989 where he is caught up in the Tiananmen Square student revolt.

Mrs. Zavaglia also enjoyed FORBIDDEN CITY:

THIS BOOK KEPT MY INTEREST THROUGHOUT IT. IT GAVE ME SOME MORE UNDERSTANDING OF A TIME THAT I WAS A PART OF. THE CHARACTER ALEX COULD HAVE BEEN ANY ONE OF A NUMBER OF STUDENTS THAT I HAVE TAUGHT. GREAT READ!!!

A GIFT OF MAGIC

Lois Duncan

This is the story of a girl whose family is "gifted" with talents. Nancy is gifted with ESP.

Mrs. O'Donnell shares:

I absolutely loved it! This is my favorite summer reading book, not only because it's an amazing story about a girl who receives the gift of ESP from her grandmother, but it's a story I could really connect with. In my own family, my mom has a few extra sensory abilities. I've always wished that I could have some kind of ability to predict the future, or read minds, and I got to live that wish through the main character. The author made it very easy to picture what

it must be like to have a "gift" completely different from those around you. This is a book I would definitely recommend to anyone who loves stories about things unexplained. Since I love ghost stories, mysteries, and other tales of the supernatural, A Gift of Magic was perfect for me.

HABIBI

Naomi Shihab Nye

Liyana Abboud moves from St. Louis to her father's hometown in Israel and has to deal not only with a change of lifestyle but also the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict.

Mrs. Tartaglia writes:

"You'll love **HABIBI**! It's the story of a fourteen-year-old Arab-American girl named Liyana who moves from St. Louis to her father's homeland in Jerusalem. Liyana, used to living as an American, has to now follow the household rules of her extended Palestinian family. She has a hard time getting used to her new life, and misses her friends back home. However, romance is soon in the air when Liyana's first kiss is with a Jewish boy. Will their cultural differences tear them apart, or will love prevail? Will Liyana learn to acclimate to her new home in Jerusalem while still maintaining her sense of American identity? Find out more! Read this fascinating, exciting book!

Mr. Miracle says:

Habibi-- One of my favorite books for young adults. Puts a human face on a current complicated issue. Highly recommended.

MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN

Jean George

Written as a diary, the story of a boy who runs away to live in the Catskill Mountains becomes one of survival.

Mr. Yopez shares his feelings about MY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN:
AN ADVENTURE THAT WILL LIVE WITH YOU FOREVER. LIVE WITH YOUNG SAM IN THE WILDS OF THE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS AS HE ATTEMPTS TO SURVIVE LIFE ALL ALONE WITH NOTHING MORE THAN HIS INGENUITY AND WILL. DOES HE SURVIVE? A HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BOOK FOR KIDS AGES 10 - 90. I COULD NOT PUT IT DOWN.

Mrs. Broder remembers teaching this too!

What a great adventure! This young man must learn to live in the wilderness but the author shares so many cool details about what he needs to do to survive. Fascinating!

Miss Kleid loved this one!

Do you crave extreme adventure? Wish you could try your hand at living off the land? Want to leave civilization behind and reconnect with wilderness? Then My Side of the Mountain is for you!

My Side of the Mountain is a book that has stayed with me since I read it as a middle school student. If you've ever wished to run away from all of society's stress and live off of the land and your own wits, then this book is for you! Sam does just this and lives in the forests of upstate New York, exploring the Catskill Mountains. His adventures, struggles, and discoveries about life (and himself) kept me glued to this book. Sam experiences that which I've only been brave enough to dream about. Jean Craighead George speaks to readers who understand and appreciate the importance of connecting to nature. I highly recommend spending some time this summer escaping to the wilderness with Sam and his pet falcon!

NO MORE DEAD DOGS

Gordon Korman

Eighth grade football hero, Wallace Wallace, is sentenced to a detention of attending rehearsals of the school play where, in spite of himself, he becomes wrapped up in a production that changes his life.

Final “*mystery*” comment:

Gordon Korman is a very funny author. No More Dead Dogs is about a student who is tired of reading all those stories about the dog that dies in the end. He is not your typical hero, but his way of making his punishment into something positive and creative is hilarious. If you like funny, try this book!

REDWALL

Brian Jacques

When the peaceful life of Redwall Abbey is shattered by the arrival of an evil rat and his villainous hordes, the inhabitants of Redwall are determined to destroy the enemy.

Mrs. Broder gives this two thumbs up (and more if she had them)!

Do you know how intelligent the animals are that live in our world? Can you imagine what their lives are like? Take yourself back to medieval times through the battles of the furry creatures you may think of as a simple unattractive rodent.

TAKING SIDES

Gary Soto

Being the only Hispanic-American on the basketball team is hard enough, but Lincoln faces a racist coach and a game against the team from his old neighborhood.

Mr. Miracle suggests:

Taking Sides-- Highly recommended, even if you aren't a boy who likes basketball. Anyone who has ever been the new kid, or had a falling out with old friends, will relate to this novel.

THE THIEF LORD

Cornelia Funke

Two runaway brothers find shelter with Venice's Thief Lord, while a detective hired by their aunt pursues them. An exciting tale follows.

Mrs. Stanislawczyk loved The Thief Lord:

If you would like to travel to the beautiful Venice, Italy this summer, but it's not in your vacation plans, read The Thief Lord! It is a story of intrigue, adventure, surprise twists and turns, and an amazing setting! Ciao and happy reading!

Mr. Miracle's concise response:

The Thief Lord—A lot of adventure and excitement.

Mrs. Broder loved this awesome tale!

You are kept on the edge, never sure about what may happen next.

THE VIEW FROM SATURDAY

E. L. Konigsberg

This is a tale about a team, a class, a school, and a series of contests that asks important questions about life.

Mrs. Maurer shares:

I recall A View from Saturday as a lovely story about children who enter an Olympics of the Mind type of contest and also bond with grandparents through the ritual of taking tea in the afternoon.

Mrs. Elkin also contributes:

I would definitely recommend it for summer reading. It is a wonderful story of friendship!

THE WANDERER

Sharon Creech

Thirteen-year-old Sophie crosses the Atlantic as a member of the crew of a sailing boat to visit her grandfather in England. This is the story of her adventure.

Mrs. DeMarco was intrigued!

Do you have a need to be out on the open sea? In The Wanderer, by Sharon Creech, Sophie gets to be part of a great adventure across miles to see Bompie, her grandfather. This book is a double diary of Sophie and Cody, cousins who learn a great deal about each other during their time together navigating the ocean. If you're into reading about sailboating and how a family helps us get through the tough times in life, then this book is for you!

Mrs. Stanislawczyk read The Wanderer and recommends it for those who like to read adventures about traveling in a sailboat on the high seas! This book was unique in its point of view, which alternated between two cousins on the same voyage. It's fascinating how two people who experience the same events see things very differently! The crew members must overcome major

obstacles and are in for a big surprise when they get to England. Bon voyage and happy reading!

THIEF OF HEARTS

Laurence Yep

Stacy Palmer realizes for the first time her true heritage and finally understands what it means to be Chinese-American.

TIGER WOODS: THE MAKINGS OF A CHAMPION

Tim Rosaforte

A non-fiction account of the life of the youngest individual to win the Masters Tournament, Tiger Woods has golf and sports fans all over captivated by his amazing abilities.

A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA

Ursula K. LeGuin

A boy, an apprentice to a wizard, becomes a man while trying to subdue evil.

Here's one for A Wizard of Earthsea from *Mrs. Olson*:

If you are a fan of Harry Potter, Eragon and Lord of the Rings, you'll love A Wizard of Earthsea. The book is filled with magic, adventure and dragons! I read this book three years ago and loved it so much that I read three more books in the series: The Tombs of Atuan, The Farthest Shore, and Tehanu.

Mr. Flume offers:

The Wizard of Earthsea is an exciting adventure full of mystery and enchantment. If you like The Lord of the Rings series or Harry Potter, then this book might be just what you're looking for to pass the summer away!

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