

Synopses of Novels for 2017 Secondary Outside Reading List, Grades 7-8

7th Grade:

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis—Four adventurers step through a wardrobe door and into the land of Narnia—a land enslaved by the power of the White Witch. But when almost all hope is lost, the return of the Great Lion, Aslan, signals a great change—and a great sacrifice.

Far North by Will Hobbs—When the engine of their float plane fails during a water landing near the head of Canada's monumental Virginia Falls, what began as a sightseeing detour turns into a survival mission for two high-school students and their elderly companion.

Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George—To her small Eskimo village, she is known as Miyax; to her friend in San Francisco, she is Julie. When her life in the village becomes dangerous, Miyax runs away, only to find herself lost in the Alaskan wilderness.

Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli—From the day she arrives at quiet Mica High in a burst of color and sound, the hallways hum with the murmur of “Stargirl, Stargirl.” She captures Leo Borlock’s heart and sparks a school-spirit revolution with just one cheer. The students of Mica High are enchanted. At first.

The Maze Runner by James Dashner—Thomas wakes up in an elevator, remembering nothing but his own name. He emerges into a world of about 60 teen boys who have learned to survive in a completely enclosed environment, subsisting on their own agriculture and supplies from below. A new boy arrives every 30 days.

Summer of the Monkeys by Wilson Rawls—The last thing a boy expects to find along an old Ozark river bottom is a tree full of monkeys.

The Story of My Life by Helen Keller—When she was 19 months old, Helen Keller (1880–1968) suffered a severe illness that left her blind and deaf. Not long after, she also became mute. In this classic autobiography, first published in 1903, Miss Keller recounts the first 22 years of her life, including the magical moment at the water pump when, recognizing the connection between the word “water” and the cold liquid flowing over her hand, she realized that objects had names.

Boy by Roald Dahl--Where did Roald Dahl get all of his wonderful ideas for stories? From his own life, of course! As full of excitement and the unexpected as his world-famous, best-selling books, Roald Dahl's tales of his own childhood are completely fascinating and fiendishly funny.

8th Grade:

The Devil’s Arithmetic by Jane Yolen—Hannah thinks tonight's Passover Seder will be the same as always. Little does she know that this year she will be mysteriously transported into the past where only she knows the horrors that await.

****Little Women*** by Louisa May Alcott—Follow the March girls in the age-old conflict between obligation to others and personal freedom.

Monster by Walter Dean Myers—“Sometimes I feel like I have walked into the middle of a movie. Maybe I can make my own movie. The film will be the story of my life. No, not my life, but of this experience. I'll call it what the lady prosecutor called me... **Monster.**”

Soldier Boys by Dean Hughes—At the age of fifteen, Dieter's blind devotion gets him promoted from Hitler Youth into the German army.

Gathering Blue by Lois Lowry—Kira, an orphan with a twisted leg, lives in a world where the weak are cast aside. When she is given a task that no other community member can carry out, Kira realizes that she is surrounded by mysteries and secrets—and finds that she possesses an extraordinary power.

Romiette and Julio by Sharon Draper—When Romiette Cappelle meets Julio Montague, she feels as though she has met the soul mate who can rescue her, but Romiette is African-American and Julio is Hispanic, and the Devildogs, a dangerous local gang, violently oppose their interracial relationship.

Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream by Tanya Lee Stone—What does it take to be an astronaut? Excellence at flying, courage, intelligence, resistance to stress, top physical shape — any checklist would include these. But when America created NASA in 1958, there was another unspoken rule: you had to be a man.

Maus: A Survivor’s Tale by Art Spiegelman--A story of a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe and his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father's story and history itself.

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