

ASPIRE 2020

Upper School Book Blurbs

Read through the following blurbs, making a list of several choices, and then sign up using the Google Forms link that will be emailed to you on **THURSDAY, MAY 14**. [You will receive a copy of the Google Form you submit; this is the confirmation of the book you will be responsible for reading.](#) A reminder email will be sent out later this summer. You may purchase the book in whatever format (digital or print) you desire.

PARENTS: We encourage you to investigate each work further to make your own determination about its suitability for your student. Specifically note those titles with an asterisk () as they contain mature content or themes. **STUDENTS MAY NOT CHOOSE A TITLE PREVIOUSLY READ.****

Manage Your Day-to-Day: Build Your Routine, Find Your Focus, & Sharpen Your Creative Mind Edited by Jocelyn K. Gleib

Sponsor: Elle Ashworth

Should you answer that email, or answer your calling? Tune into social media, or tune in to your own voice? Respond to other people's needs, or actively set your own agenda? When it comes to creative work, every decision, every day, matters. With wisdom from 20 leading creative minds, 99U's *Manage Your Day-to-Day* will equip you with pragmatic insights for using your time wisely and making your best work.

*****In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote**

Sponsor: Edsel Baker

“On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues.

As Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, he generates both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. *In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence” (Amazon).

***What the Buddha Taught* by Walpola Rahula**

Sponsor: John Bamford

“This indispensable volume is a lucid and faithful account of the Buddha’s teachings. For years,” says the *Journal of the Buddhist Society*, the newcomer to Buddhism has lacked a simple and reliable introduction to the complexities of the subject. Dr. Rahula’s *What the Buddha Taught* fills the need as only could be done by one having a firm grasp of the vast material to be sifted. It is a model of what a book should be that is addressed first of all to the educated and intelligent reader.’ Authoritative and clear, logical and sober, this study is as comprehensive as it is masterly” (Goodreads).

*****Turtles All The Way Down* by John Green**

Sponsor: Suzanne Beekman

“Sixteen-year-old Aza never intended to pursue the mystery of fugitive billionaire Russell Pickett, but there’s a hundred-thousand-dollar reward at stake and her Best and Most Fearless Friend, Daisy, is eager to investigate. So together, they navigate the short distance and broad divides that separate them from Russell Pickett’s son, Davis.

Aza is trying. She is trying to be a good daughter, a good friend, a good student, and maybe even a good detective, while also living within the ever-tightening spiral of her own thoughts.

In his long-awaited return, John Green, the acclaimed, award-winning author of *Looking for Alaska* and *The Fault in Our Stars*, shares Aza's story with shattering, unflinching clarity in this brilliant novel of love, resilience, and the power of lifelong friendship" (Amazon).

*****Ordinary Grace* by William Kent Krueger**

Sponsor: Jessica Calandra

"New Bremen, Minnesota, 1961. The Twins were playing their debut season, ice-cold root beers were selling out at the soda counter of Halderson's Drugstore, and *Hot Stuff* comic books were a mainstay on every barbershop magazine rack. It was a time of innocence and hope for a country with a new, young president. But for thirteen-year-old Frank Drum it was a grim summer in which death visited frequently and assumed many forms. Accident. Nature. Suicide. Murder.

Frank begins the season preoccupied with the concerns of any teenage boy, but when tragedy unexpectedly strikes his family—which includes his Methodist minister father; his passionate, artistic mother; Juilliard-bound older sister; and wise-beyond-his-years kid brother—he finds himself thrust into an adult world full of secrets, lies, adultery, and betrayal, suddenly called upon to demonstrate a maturity and gumption beyond his years.

Told from Frank's perspective forty years after that fateful summer, *Ordinary Grace* is a brilliantly moving account of a boy standing at the door of his young manhood, trying to understand a world that seems to be falling apart around him. It is an unforgettable novel about discovering the terrible price of wisdom and the enduring grace of God" (Amazon).

***Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie**

Sponsor: Margaret Carraway

"Set in an exotic Eastern landscape peopled by magicians and fantastic talking animals, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* inhabits the same imaginative space as *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Alchemist*, *The Arabian Nights*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. Twelve-year-old Haroun sets out on an adventure to restore his father's gift of storytelling by reviving the poisoned Sea of Stories. On the way, he encounters many foes, all intent on draining the sea of all its storytelling powers.

In this wondrously delightful story, Salman Rushdie gives us an imaginative work of extraordinary power and endearing humor that is, at its heart, an illumination of the necessity of storytelling in our lives" (Amazon).

***The Ten Thousand Doors Of January* by Alix E. Harrow**

Sponsor: Stephanie Cardillo

"In the early 1900s, a young woman embarks on a fantastical journey of self-discovery after finding a mysterious book in this captivating and lyrical debut.

In a sprawling mansion filled with peculiar treasures, January Scaller is a curiosity herself. As the ward of the wealthy Mr. Locke, she feels little different from the artifacts that decorate the halls: carefully maintained, largely ignored, and utterly out of place.

Then she finds a strange book. A book that carries the scent of other worlds, and tells a tale of secret doors, of love, adventure and danger. Each page turn reveals impossible truths about the world and January discovers a story increasingly entwined with her own.

Lush and richly imagined, a tale of impossible journeys, unforgettable love, and the enduring power of stories awaits in Alix E. Harrow's spellbinding debut--step inside and discover its magic" (Goodreads).

***Talking to Strangers* by Malcolm Gladwell**

Sponsor: Carl Carlson

"How did Fidel Castro fool the CIA for a generation? Why did Neville Chamberlain think he could trust Adolf Hitler? Why are campus sexual assaults on the rise? Do television sitcoms teach us something about the way we relate to each other that isn't true? Something is very wrong, Gladwell argues, with the tools and strategies we use to make sense of

people we don't know. And because we don't know how to talk to strangers, we are inviting conflict and misunderstanding in ways that have a profound effect on our lives and our world" (Amazon).

*****Dry* by Neal Shusterman**

Sponsor: Ginger Chapman

"The drought—or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it—has been going on for a while now. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't fill up your pool, don't take long showers.

Until the taps run dry.

Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbors and families turned against each other on the hunt for water. And when her parents don't return and her life—and the life of her brother—is threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if she's going to survive" (Amazon).

*****Sula* by Toni Morrison**

Sponsor: Ryan Clements

"Nel Wright has chosen to stay in the place where she was born, to marry, raise a family, and become a pillar of the black community. Sula Peace has rejected the life Nel has embraced, escaping to college, and submerging herself in city life. When she returns to her roots, it is as a rebel and a wanton seductress. Eventually, both women must face the consequences of their choices. Together, they create an unforgettable portrait of what it means and costs to be a black woman in America" (Goodreads).

*****Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens**

Sponsor: Michele Cole

"Both a coming-of-age story and a mysterious account of a murder investigation told from the perspective of a young girl...Through Kya's story, Owens explores how isolation affects human behavior, and the deep effect that rejection can have on our lives."—Vanity Fair

...Kya Clark is a young woman growing up practically on her own in the wild marshes outside Barkley Cove, a small coastal community in North Carolina. In 1969, local lothario Chase Andrews is found dead, and Kya, now 23 and known as the "Marsh Girl," is suspected of his murder. As the local sheriff and his deputy gather evidence against her, the narrative flashes back to 1952 to tell Kya's story. Abandoned at a young age by her mother, she is left in the care of her hard-drinking father. Unable to fit in at school, Kya grows up ignorant until a shrimper's son, Tate Walker, befriends her and teaches her how to read. After Tate goes off to college, Kya meets Chase, with whom she begins a tempestuous relationship. The novel culminates in a long trial, with Kya's fate hanging in the balance. Kya makes for an unforgettable heroine. Owens memorably depicts the small-town drama and courtroom theatrics, but perhaps best of all is her vivid portrayal of the singular North Carolina setting" (Aug.) Publishers Weekly

*****Watch Us Rise* by Renee Watson**

Sponsor: Enaye Englenton

"Jasmine and Chelsea are best friends on a mission--they're sick of the way women are treated even at their progressive NYC high school, so they decide to start a Women's Rights Club. They post their work online--poems, essays, videos of Chelsea performing her poetry, and Jasmine's response to the racial microaggressions she experiences--and soon they go viral. But with such positive support, the club is also targeted by trolls. When things escalate in real life, the principal shuts the club down. Not willing to be silenced, Jasmine and Chelsea will risk everything for their voices--and those of other young women--to be heard.

These two dynamic, creative young women stand up and speak out in a novel that features their compelling art and poetry along with powerful personal journeys that will inspire readers and budding poets, feminists, and activists" (Amazon).

***This Was Never About Basketball* by Craig Leener**

Sponsor: Donna Fowler

“In this coming-of-age novel, seventeen-year-old high school basketball star Ezekiel “Zeke” Archer has it all: a sweet jump shot, a full-ride scholarship to a Midwestern basketball powerhouse, and the brightest future. But when Zeke’s temper gets the better of him in the city championship, he is expelled from school, has to forfeit his scholarship, and is left to ponder his once-hopeful future. While finishing his final high school days in the California educational system’s version of purgatory, Zeke makes a stunning discovery. With the help of a young autistic classmate Zeke befriends, he learns that the mysterious 7th Dimension, which brought basketball to Earth more than a century ago, has decided to take the game away for good — all because of the ugly event Zeke set into motion in his final game! As he embarks on the ultimate cross-country road trip to save basketball, Zeke must confront his unsettled past — including a father he’s not heard from in years and a brother fighting in a war half a world away — in order to set his life on the right path and rescue the game he loves” (Amazon).

***No Matter The Wreckage* by Sarah Kay**

Sponsor: Mia Franz

“Following the success of her breakout poem, “B”, Sarah Kay, in collaboration with illustrator Sophia Janowitz, releases her debut collection of poetry featuring work from the first decade of her career. *No Matter the Wreckage* presents readers with new and beloved poetry that showcases Kay’s talent for celebrating family, love, travel, and unlikely romance between inanimate objects (“The Toothbrush to the Bicycle Tire”). Both fresh and wise, Kay’s poetry allows readers to join her on the journey of discovering herself and the world around her. It is an honest and powerful collection”

“Sarah Kay is a fearsomely open and generous talent. In this collection she will give you moments so intimate and beautifully rendered you will come to know them as your own. An unalloyed joy from beginning to end.”--Lin-Manuel Miranda, Tony Award-winning composer-lyricist of Broadway’s *In the Heights*”(Amazon).

***The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row* by Anthony Ray Hinton**

Sponsor: Lisa Harman

“In 1985, Anthony Ray Hinton was arrested and charged with two counts of capital murder in Alabama. Stunned, confused, and only twenty-nine years old, Hinton knew that it was a case of mistaken identity and believed that the truth would prove his innocence and ultimately set him free.

But with no money and a different system of justice for a poor black man in the South, Hinton was sentenced to death by electrocution. He spent his first three years on Death Row at Holman State Prison in agonizing silence—full of despair and anger toward all those who had sent an innocent man to his death. But as Hinton realized and accepted his fate, he resolved not only to survive, but find a way to live on Death Row. For the next twenty-seven years he was a beacon—transforming not only his own spirit, but those of his fellow inmates, fifty-four of whom were executed mere feet from his cell. With the help of civil rights attorney and bestselling author of *Just Mercy*, Bryan Stevenson, Hinton won his release in 2015.

With a foreword by Stevenson, *The Sun Does Shine* is an extraordinary testament to the power of hope sustained through the darkest times. Destined to be a classic memoir of wrongful imprisonment and freedom won, Hinton’s memoir tells his dramatic thirty-year journey and shows how you can take away a man’s freedom, but you can’t take away his imagination, humor, or joy” (Amazon).

*****No Country for Old Men* by Cormac McCarthy**

Sponsor: Rosa Harwell

“In his blistering [2006] novel, Cormac McCarthy returns to the Texas-Mexico border, setting of his famed *Border Trilogy*. The time is our own, when rustlers have given way to drug-runners and small towns have become free-fire zones. One day, a good old boy named Llewellyn Moss finds a pickup truck surrounded by a bodyguard of dead men. A load of heroin and two million dollars in cash are still in the back. When Moss takes the money, he sets off a chain reaction of

catastrophic violence that not even the law—in the person of aging, disillusioned Sheriff Bell—can contain. As Moss tries to evade his pursuers—in particular a mysterious mastermind who flips coins for human lives—McCarthy simultaneously strips down the American crime novel and broadens its concerns to encompass themes as ancient as the Bible and as bloodily contemporary as this morning’s headlines. *No Country for Old Men* is a triumph” (Amazon).

***The Name of the Wind* by Patrick Rothfuss**

Sponsor: Amanda Helip-Wooley

“This is the riveting first-person narrative of Kvothe, a young man who grows to be one of the most notorious magicians his world has ever seen. From his childhood in a troupe of traveling players, to years spent as a near-feral orphan in a crime-riddled city, to his daringly brazen yet successful bid to enter a legendary school of magic, *The Name of the Wind* is a masterpiece that transports readers into the body and mind of a wizard” (Amazon).

*****Recursion* by Blake Crouch**

Sponsor: MaryBeth Hill

“Memory makes reality.

That’s what New York City cop Barry Sutton is learning as he investigates the devastating phenomenon the media has dubbed False Memory Syndrome—a mysterious affliction that drives its victims mad with memories of a life they never lived.

That’s what neuroscientist Helena Smith believes. It’s why she’s dedicated her life to creating a technology that will let us preserve our most precious memories. If she succeeds, anyone will be able to re-experience a first kiss, the birth of a child, the final moment with a dying parent.

As Barry searches for the truth, he comes face-to-face with an opponent more terrifying than any disease—a force that attacks not just our minds but the very fabric of the past. And as its effects begin to unmake the world as we know it, only he and Helena, working together, will stand a chance at defeating it.

But how can they make a stand when reality itself is shifting and crumbling all around them?” (Goodreads).

***Descendant of the Crane* by Joan He**

Sponsor: Stacia Hottle

“Tyrants cut out hearts. Rulers sacrifice their own.

Princess Hesina of Yan has always been eager to shirk the responsibilities of the crown, but when her beloved father is murdered, she’s thrust into power, suddenly the queen of an unstable kingdom. Determined to find her father’s killer, Hesina does something desperate: she engages the aid of a soothsayer—a treasonous act, punishable by death... because in Yan, magic was outlawed centuries ago.

Using the information illicitly provided by the sooth, and uncertain if she can trust even her family, Hesina turns to Akira—a brilliant investigator who’s also a convicted criminal with secrets of his own. With the future of her kingdom at stake, can Hesina find justice for her father? Or will the cost be too high?

In this shimmering Chinese-inspired fantasy, debut author Joan He introduces a determined and vulnerable young heroine struggling to do right in a world brimming with deception” (Goodreads).

*****Basket Case* by Carl Hiaasen**

Sponsor: Kim Jago

“Jack Tagger’s years in exile at the obituaries desk of a South Florida daily haven’t dulled his investigative reporter’s nose for a good story. When Jimmy Stoma, the infamous front man of Jimmy and the Slut Puppies, dies in a fishy scuba accident, Jack sees his ticket back to page one—if only he can figure out what really happened. Standing in his way are, just for starters, his ambitious young editor, who hasn’t yet fired anyone but plans to “break her cherry” on Jack; the rock

star's pop-singer widow, who's using the occasion of her husband's death to relaunch her own career; and the soulless, profit-hungry owner of the newspaper, whom Jack once publicly humiliated at a stockholders' meeting. Following clues from the late rock singer's own music, Jack tries to unravel the lies surrounding Jimmy Stoma's strange fate" (Amazon).

***The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town* by John Grisham**

Sponsor: Jennifer Keller

"In the town of Ada, Oklahoma, Ron Williamson was going to be the next Mickey Mantle. But on his way to the Big Leagues, Ron stumbled, his dreams broken by drinking, drugs, and women. Then, on a winter night in 1982, not far from Ron's home, a young cocktail waitress named Debra Sue Carter was savagely murdered. The investigation led nowhere. Until, on the flimsiest evidence, it led to Ron Williamson. The washed-up small-town hero was charged, tried, and sentenced to death—in a trial littered with lying witnesses and tainted evidence that would shatter a man's already broken life, and let a true killer go free.

Impeccably researched, grippingly told, filled with eleventh-hour drama, *The Innocent Man* reads like a page-turning legal thriller. It is a book no American can afford to miss" (Amazon).

***Twisted* by Laurie Halse Anderson**

Sponsor: Janet Laine

"High school senior Tyler Miller used to be the kind of guy who faded into the background—average student, average looks, average dysfunctional family. But since he got busted for doing graffiti on the school, and spent the summer doing outdoor work to pay for it, he stands out like you wouldn't believe. His new physique attracts the attention of queen bee Bethany Milbury, who just so happens to be his father's boss's daughter, the sister of his biggest enemy—and Tyler's secret crush. And that sets off a string of events and changes that have Tyler questioning his place in the school, in his family, and in the world.

In *Twisted*, the acclaimed Laurie Halse Anderson tackles a very controversial subject: what it means to be a man today. Fans and new readers alike will be captured by Tyler's pitch perfect, funny voice, the surprising narrative arc, and the thoughtful moral dilemmas that are at the heart of all of the author's award-winning, widely read work" (madwomanintheforest.com).

*****Ordinary Hazards: A Memoir* by Nikki Grimes**

Sponsor: Erin Mona

"Growing up with a mother suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and a mostly absent father, Nikki Grimes found herself terrorized by babysitters, shunted from foster family to foster family, and preyed upon by those she trusted. At the age of six, she poured her pain onto a piece of paper late one night - and discovered the magic and impact of writing. For many years, Nikki's notebooks were her most enduring companions. In this accessible and inspiring memoir that will resonate with young readers and adults alike, Nikki shows how the power of those words helped her conquer the hazards - ordinary and extraordinary - of her life" (Amazon).

***Wilder Girls* by Rory Power**

Sponsor: Noel Monea

"It's been eighteen months since the Raxter School for Girls was put under quarantine. Since the Tox hit and pulled Hetty's life out from under her.

It started slow. First the teachers died one by one. Then it began to infect the students, turning their bodies strange and foreign. Now, cut off from the rest of the world and left to fend for themselves on their island home, the girls don't dare wander outside the school's fence, where the Tox has made the woods wild and dangerous. They wait for the cure they were promised as the Tox seeps into everything.

But when Byatt goes missing, Hetty will do anything to find her, even if it means breaking quarantine and braving the horrors that lie beyond the fence. And when she does, Hetty learns that there's more to their story, to their life at Raxter, than she could have ever thought true" (itsrorypower.com).

***Originals* by Adam Grant**

Sponsor: Donald Morrison

How can one become an original thinker? How can all of us capitalize on our own ideas, instead of relying only on others' beliefs? "Originals" claims that every person has the capacity to be creative, to be a leader, and to effect change in ourselves and others.

***Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World--and Why Things Are Better Than You Think* by Anna Rosling Rönnlund, Hans Rosling, and Ola Rosling**

Sponsor: Alfredo Pereira

"[Factfulness] throws down a gauntlet to doom-and-gloomers in global health by challenging preconceptions and misconceptions [and] is a fabulous read, succinct and lively... This magnificent book ends with a plea for a factual world view. Rosling was optimistic that this outlook will spread, because it is a useful navigational tool in a complex world, and a genuine antidote to negativity and hopelessness." —Nature | "Factfulness by Hans Rosling, an outstanding international public health expert, is a hopeful book about the potential for human progress when we work off facts rather than our inherent biases." - Former U.S. President Barack Obama

*****The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas**

Sponsor: Kevin Plummer

"Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what *really* went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life" (Amazon).

***Why Fish Don't Exist* by Lulu Miller**

Sponsor: Barry Parks

"David Starr Jordan was a taxonomist, a man possessed with bringing order to the natural world. In time, he would be credited with discovering nearly a *fifth* of the fish known to humans in his day. But the more of the hidden blueprint of life he uncovered, the harder the universe seemed to try to thwart him. His specimen collections were demolished by lightning, by fire, and eventually by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake—which sent more than a thousand of his discoveries, housed in fragile glass jars, plummeting to the floor. In an instant, his life's work was shattered.

Many might have given up, given in to despair. But Jordan? He surveyed the wreckage at his feet, found the first fish he recognized, and confidently began to rebuild his collection. And this time, he introduced one clever innovation that he believed would at last protect his work against the chaos of the world.

When NPR reporter Lulu Miller first heard this anecdote in passing, she took Jordan for a fool—a cautionary tale in hubris, or denial. But as her own life slowly unraveled, she began to wonder about him. Perhaps instead he was a model for how to go on when all seemed lost. What she would unearth about his life would transform her understanding of history, morality, and the world beneath her feet.

Part biography, part memoir, part scientific adventure, *Why Fish Don't Exist* reads like a fable about how to persevere in a world where chaos will always prevail" (Goodreads).

***The Truth Machine* by James Halperin**

Sponsor: KK Quah

“It is the year 2004. Violent crime is the number one political issue in America. Now, the Swift and Sure Anti-Crime Bill guarantees a previously convicted violent criminal one fair trial, one quick appeal, then immediate execution. To prevent abuse of the law, a machine must be built that detects lies with 100 percent accuracy.

Once perfected, the Truth Machine will change the face of the world. Yet the race to finish the Truth Machine forces one man to commit a shocking act of treachery, burdening him with a dark secret that collides with everything he believes in. Now he must conceal the truth from his own creation . . . or face his execution” (PenguinRandomHouse).

***Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* By Malcolm Gladwell.**

Sponsor: Doug Smith

“The landmark book that has revolutionized the way we understand leadership and decision making - from number-one best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell.

In his landmark bestseller *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell redefined how we understand the world around us. Now, in *Blink*, he revolutionizes the way we understand the world within. *Blink* is a book about how we think without thinking, about choices that seem to be made in an instant, in the blink of an eye, that actually aren't as simple as they seem. Why are some people brilliant decision makers, while others are consistently inept? Why do some people follow their instincts and win, while others end up stumbling into error? How do our brains really work, in the office, in the classroom, in the kitchen, and in the bedroom? And why are the best decisions often those that are impossible to explain to others?

In *Blink* we meet the psychologist who has learned to predict whether a marriage will last, based on a few minutes of observing a couple; the tennis coach who knows when a player will double-fault before the racket even makes contact with the ball; the antiquities experts who recognize a fake at a glance. Here, too, are great failures of "blink": the election of Warren Harding; "New Coke"; and the shooting of Amadou Diallo by police. *Blink* reveals that great decision makers aren't those who process the most information or spend the most time deliberating, but those who have perfected the art of "thin-slicing", filtering the very few factors that matter from an overwhelming number of variables.

Drawing on cutting-edge neuroscience and psychology and displaying all of the brilliance that made *The Tipping Point* a classic, *Blink* changes the way you understand every decision you make. Never again will you think about thinking the same way” (Amazon).

*****Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah**

Sponsor: Brian Sarkozy

“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, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa’s tyrannical 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.

Born a Crime is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man’s relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.

The stories collected here are by turns hilarious, dramatic, and deeply affecting. Whether subsisting on caterpillars for dinner during hard times, being thrown from a moving car during an attempted kidnapping, or just trying to survive the life-and-death pitfalls of dating in high school, Trevor illuminates his curious world with an incisive wit and unflinching honesty. His stories weave together to form a moving and searingly funny portrait of a boy making his way through a damaged world in a dangerous time, armed only with a keen sense of humor and a mother’s unconventional, unconditional love”(Amazon).

***Something Wicked This Way Comes* by Ray Bradbury**

Sponsor: Chris VanDyck

“Few American novels written this century have endured in the heart and mind as has this one--Ray Bradbury's incomparable masterwork of the dark fantastic. A carnival rolls in sometime after the midnight hour on a chill Midwestern October eve, ushering in Halloween a week before its time. A calliope's shrill siren song beckons to all with a seductive promise of dreams and youth regained. In this season of dying, Cooger & Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show has come to Green Town, Illinois, to destroy every life touched by its strange and sinister mystery. And two inquisitive boys standing precariously on the brink of adulthood will soon discover the secret of the satanic rare-show's smoke, mazes, and mirrors, as they learn all too well the heavy cost of wishes -- and the stuff of nightmare.” (Bradbury, Ray. *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. William Morrow, 2001).

***The Wave* by Todd Strasser**

Sponsor: Connor West

“*The Wave* is based on a true incident that occurred in a high school history class in Palo Alto, California, in 1969.

The powerful forces of group pressure that pervaded many historic movements such as Nazism are recreated in the classroom when history teacher Burt Ross introduces a "new" system to his students. And before long "The Wave," with its rules of "strength through discipline, community, and action," sweeps from the classroom through the entire school. And as most of the students join the movement, Laurie Saunders and David Collins recognize the frightening momentum of "The Wave" and realize they must stop it before it's too late” (Amazon).

***Finding Chika* by Mitch Albom**

Sponsor: Chelsea Wieloszynski

“From the #1 New York Times bestselling author of Tuesdays With Morrie comes Mitch Albom's most personal story to date: an intimate and heartwarming memoir about what it means to be a family and the young Haitian orphan whose short life would forever change his heart.” (Amazon)

***A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle**

Sponsor: Brian Williams

“Madeleine L'Engle's groundbreaking science fiction and fantasy classic, soon to be a major motion picture. This movie tie-in audiobook includes an introduction read by director Ava DuVernay, a foreword read by the author, and an afterword read by Madeleine L'Engle's granddaughter Charlotte Jones Voiklis.

Meg Murry, her little brother Charles Wallace, and their mother are having a midnight snack on a dark and stormy night when an unearthly stranger appears at their door. He claims to have been blown off course and goes on to tell them that there is such a thing as a "tesseract", which, if you didn't know, is a wrinkle in time. Meg's father had been experimenting with time travel when he suddenly disappeared. Will Meg, Charles Wallace, and their friend Calvin outwit the forces of evil as they search through space for their father?” (Amazon)