

# Grade 8 Summer Reading

## English Department 2021

All students entering Grade 8 in 2021 are required to read at least one novel in the summer months. You are, of course, encouraged to read many novels—both to broaden your literary understanding and for pleasure. However, you are required to read one of the following seven books and prepare a presentation. The seven books are: *Grey Eyes* by Christopher Busch, *Beatrice and Virgil* by Yann Martel, *Between Shades of Gray* by Ruta Sepetys, *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon, *Dear Martin* by Nick Stone, and *Romeo and/or Juliet* by Ryan North. You should choose the book that appeals to you the most.

**Please discuss your choice with your parents prior to reading your novel.**

**You may wish to purchase this book or check it out from the public library. There are also electronic and audio versions that are accessible via SORA. Alternatively, you may speak to Ms. Roy who has many copies of each book available to borrow over the summer.**

**Please discuss your choice with your parents prior to reading your novel.**

**When you return in August, you will be given an assignment based on the book you have chosen. You will be given class time to complete this assignment.**

The 'thumbnail' book descriptions that follow have been excerpted from amazon.ca

### ***Grey Eyes***

#### **Winner of the 2015 Burt Award for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Literature!**

In a world without time and steeped in ceremony and magic, walks a chosen few who hold an ancient power: the Grey Eyes. True stewards of the land, the Grey Eyes use their magic to maintain harmony and keep evil at bay. With only one elderly Grey-Eye left in the village of the Nehiyawak, the birth of a new Grey-Eyed boy promises a renewed line of defence against their only foe: the menacing Red-Eyes, whose name is rarely spoken but whose presence is ever felt. While the birth of the Grey-Eyed boy offers the clan much-needed protection, it also initiates a struggle for power that threatens to rip the clan apart, leaving them defenceless against their sworn enemy. The responsibility of restoring balance and harmony, the only way to keep the Nehiyawak safe, is thrust upon a boy's slender shoulders. What powers will he have, and can he protect the clan from the evil of the Red Eyes?

### ***Beatrice and Virgil***

***Henry's second novel, written, like his first, under a pen name, had done well.***

Yann Martel's astonishing new novel begins with a successful writer attempting to publish his latest book, made up of a novel and an essay. Henry plans for it to be a "flip book" that the reader can start at either end, reading the novel or the essay first, because both pieces are equally concerned with representations of the Holocaust. His aim is to give the most horrifying of tragedies "a new choice of stories," in order that it be remembered anew and in more than one way.

But no one is sympathetic to his provocative idea. *What is your book about?* his editor repeatedly asks. *Should it be placed in the fiction section of a bookstore or with the non-fiction books?* a bookseller asks. *And where will the barcode go?* To them, Henry's book is an unpublishable disaster. Faced with severe and categorical rejection, Henry gives up hope. He abandons writing, moves with his wife to a foreign city, joins a community theatre, becomes a waiter in a *chocolatería*. But then he receives a package containing a scene from a play, photocopies from a short story by Flaubert – about a man who hunts animals down relentlessly – and a short note: "I need your help."

Intrigued, Henry tracks down his correspondent, and finds himself in a strange part of the city, walking past a stuffed okapi into a taxidermist's workshop. The taxidermist – also named Henry – says he has been working on his play, **A 20th-Century Shirt**, for most of his life, but now he needs Henry's help to describe his characters: the play's protagonists are a stuffed donkey and a howler monkey named Beatrice and Virgil, respectively, and Henry's successful book was in part about animals. He wants help to finish his play and, we may suspect, free himself from it. And though his new acquaintance is austere, abrupt and almost unearthly, Henry the writer is drawn more and more deeply into Henry the taxidermist's uncompromising world.

The same goes for the reader. The more we read of the play within the novel, the more we find out about the lives of Beatrice and Virgil – in a series of initially funny, and then increasingly harrowing dialogues – the more troubling their story becomes. As we are drawn deeper into their disturbing moral fable, the relationship between the two faltering writers named Henry becomes more and more complex until it can only be resolved in an explosive, unexpected catastrophe.

Though **Beatrice & Virgil** is initially as wry and engaging as anything Yann Martel has written, this book gradually grows into something more, a shattering and ultimately transfixing work that asks searching questions about the nature of our understanding of history, the meaning of suffering and the value of art. Together it is a pioneeringly original and profoundly moving accomplishment, one that meets Kafka's description of what a book should be: the axe for the frozen sea within us.

### ***Between Shades of Gray***

From *New York Times* bestseller Ruta Sepetys, author of *Salt to the Sea*

A *New York Times* notable book

An International Bestseller

A Carnegie Medal Nominee

Fifteen-year-old Lina is a Lithuanian girl living an ordinary life--until Soviet officers invade her home and tear her family apart. Separated from her father and forced onto a crowded train, Lina, her mother, and her young brother make their way to a Siberian work camp, where they are forced to fight for their lives. Lina finds solace in her art, documenting these events by drawing. Risking everything, she imbeds clues

in her drawings of their location and secretly passes them along, hoping her drawings will make their way to her father's prison camp. But will strength, love, and hope be enough for Lina and her family to survive?

A moving and haunting novel for readers of *The Book Thief*

### ***Noughts and Crosses***

*'Stop it! You're all behaving like animals! Worse than animals - like blankers!'*

Sephy is a Cross: dark-skinned and beautiful, she lives a life of privilege and power. But she's lonely, and burns with injustice at the world she sees around her.

Callum is a nought: pale-skinned and poor, he's considered to be less than nothing - a blanker, there to serve Crosses - but he dreams of a better life.

They've been friends since they were children, and they both know that's as far as it can ever go. Noughts and Crosses are fated to be bitter enemies - love is out of the question.

Then - in spite of a world that is fiercely against them - these star-crossed lovers choose each other.

But this is love story that will lead both of them into terrible danger . . . and which will have shocking repercussions for generations to come.

Voted as one of the UK's best-loved books, Malorie Blackman's *Noughts & Crosses* is a seminal piece of YA fiction; a true modern classic.

### ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time***

A bestselling modern classic—both poignant and funny—narrated by a fifteen year old autistic savant obsessed with Sherlock Holmes, this dazzling novel weaves together an old-fashioned mystery, a contemporary coming-of-age story, and a fascinating excursion into a mind incapable of processing emotions.

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, Christopher is autistic. Everyday interactions and admonishments have little meaning for him. At fifteen, Christopher's carefully constructed world falls apart when he finds his neighbour's dog Wellington impaled on a garden fork, and he is initially blamed for the killing.

Christopher decides that he will track down the real killer, and turns to his favourite fictional character, the impeccably logical Sherlock Holmes, for inspiration. But the investigation leads him down some unexpected paths and ultimately brings him face to face with the dissolution of his parents' marriage. As Christopher tries to deal with the crisis within his own family, the narrative draws readers into the workings of Christopher's mind.

And herein lies the key to the brilliance of Mark Haddon's choice of narrator: The most wrenching of emotional moments are chronicled by a boy who cannot fathom emotions. The effect is dazzling, making

for one of the freshest debut in years: a comedy, a tearjerker, a mystery story, a novel of exceptional literary merit that is great fun to read.

### ***Dear Martin***

Raw, captivating, and undeniably real, Nic Stone joins industry giants Jason Reynolds and Walter Dean Myers as she boldly tackles American race relations in this stunning #1 *New York Times* bestselling debut, a William C. Morris Award Finalist.

Justyce McAllister is a good kid, an honor student, and always there to help a friend—but none of that matters to the police officer who just put him in handcuffs. Despite leaving his rough neighborhood behind, he can't escape the scorn of his former peers or the ridicule of his new classmates.

Justyce looks to the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for answers. But do they hold up anymore? He starts a journal to Dr. King to find out.

Then comes the day Justyce goes driving with his best friend, Manny, windows rolled down, music turned up—way up, sparking the fury of a white off-duty cop beside them. Words fly. Shots are fired. Justyce and Manny are caught in the crosshairs. In the media fallout, it's Justyce who is under attack.

"Vivid and powerful." -*Booklist*, Starred Review

"A visceral portrait of a young man reckoning with the ugly, persistent violence of social injustice."  
-*Publishers Weekly*

### ***Romeo and/or Juliet***

#### **Instant *New York Times* Bestseller**

Romeo loves Juliet. Or Rosaline. And Juliet loves Romeo. Or Viola. Or Orlando. It's Shakespeare as you've never played him before.

In this choose-your-own-path version of *Romeo and Juliet*, you choose where the story goes every time you read! What if Romeo never met Juliet? What if Juliet got really buff instead of moping around the castle all day? *What if they teamed up to take over Verona with robot suits?* Whatever your adventure, you're guaranteed to find lots of romance, lots of epic fight scenes, and plenty of questionable decision-making by very emotional teens.

All of the endings—there are over a hundred—feature beautiful illustrations by some of the greatest artists working today, including *New York Times* bestsellers Kate Beaton, Noelle Stevenson, Randall Munroe, and Jon Klassen.

Packed with exciting choices, fun puzzles, secret surprises, terrible puns, and more than a billion possible storylines, *Romeo and/or Juliet* offers a new experience every time you read it. You can choose to play as Romeo or Juliet (obviously) but you can also play as both of them, or as Juliet's nurse, or, if you're good, you can even unlock a fourth playable character! That's right. We figured out how to have unlockable characters in books.

