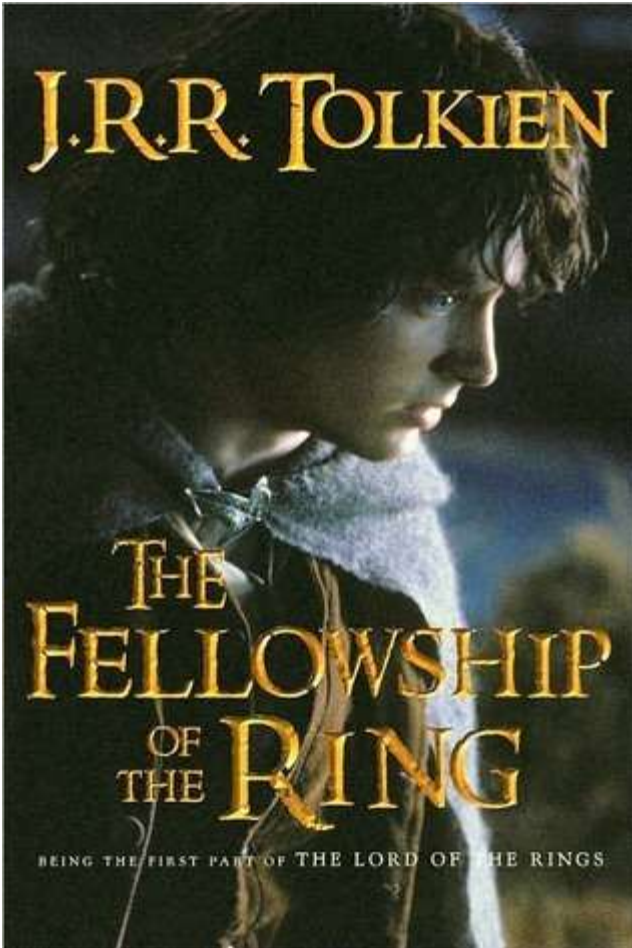


## Wootton English Honor Society

### Book Recommendations 2024-2025



The book is about a hobbit and a troop of his friends on an adventure to destroy an evil ring that, in the wrong hands, could end their world as they know it. Working together, despite differing backgrounds, they must fight off the evil forces of Sauron who are trying to bring the ring to their evil master. Elves, dwarves, humans and hobbits must come together to protect the ring along the dangerous path to Mordor.

I love this book and the series because it's so unique. I enjoy the attention to detail and careful thought that the author puts in to create such a cohesive and immersive world. I like how such a creative backstory is made for each character and how it plays such a huge role in their dialogue, mannerisms and their actions.

--Senior Naina Giare

Tolkien's *Fellowship of the Ring* follows the journey of the hobbit Frodo Baggins, who ventures outside the bubble that he's lived his whole life comfortably in. He, along with his friend Sam, take the all-powerful One Ring that belonged to his uncle Bilbo Baggins, to destroy it in the fires of Mordor. In this first section of the trilogy, we are introduced to the Fellowship of the Rings, a group of diverse people, who banded together to help Frodo along his journey to Mordor.

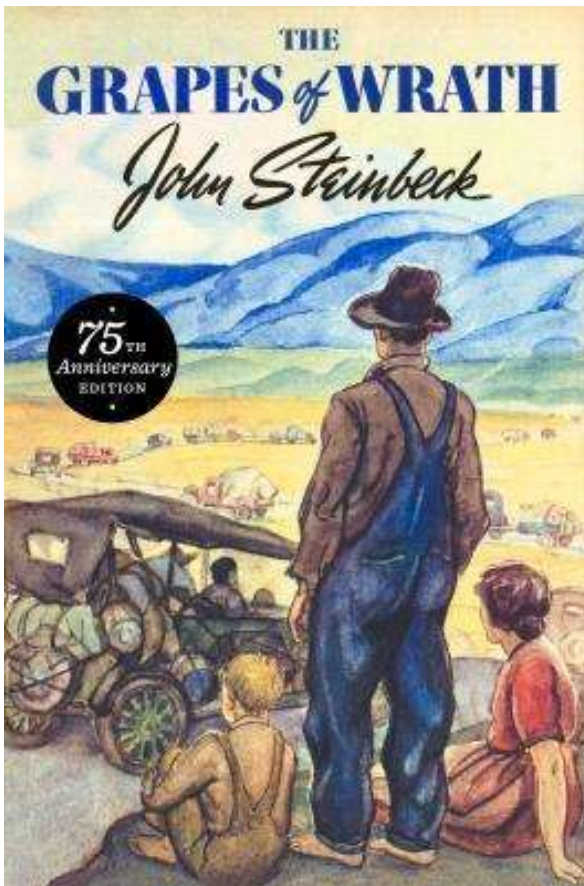
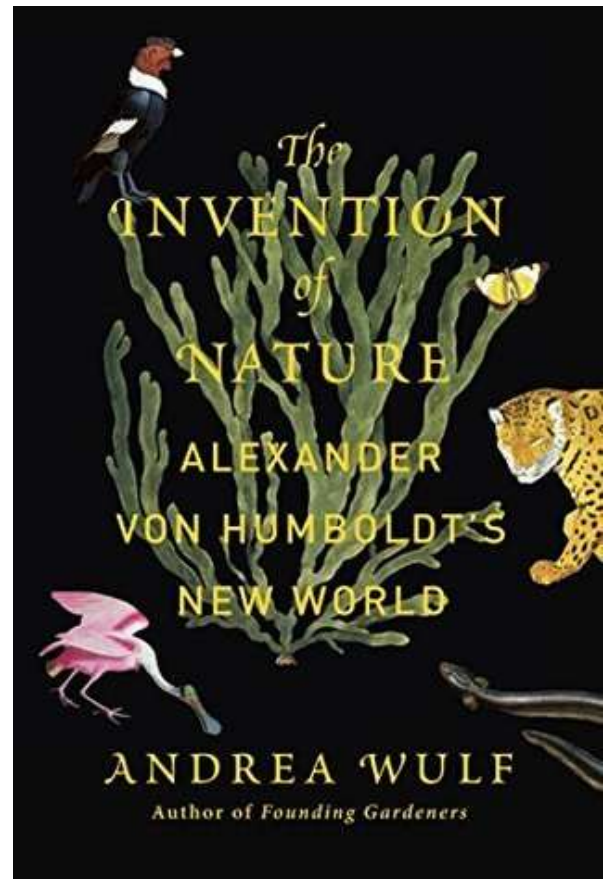
The whole universe that Tolkien created is so interesting; the idea of Middle Earth is so intricate and just offers so much to the reader. In my opinion, the most interesting part of this book was seeing the evolution of Boromir. Being one of my favorite characters, his evolution from being perhaps the most enticed by the ring, to saving Merry and Pippin from Orcs was an amazing character arc.

--Senior Jaya Sauter

This book details the life of the man Alexander von Humboldt. It goes in to depth of his upbringing and various adventures around the world in investigation of the life within it, as well as his interactions with others who share his interests. The book ends with his death and his impacts on the world that he cherished.

I really liked the descriptions of the nature and everything around him, which were so detailed that I felt as if I was travelling alongside him. I also liked how the author didn't only focus on Humboldt and also talked about those he inspired. Overall, Humboldt had a very interesting life, which was captured splendidly by the author.

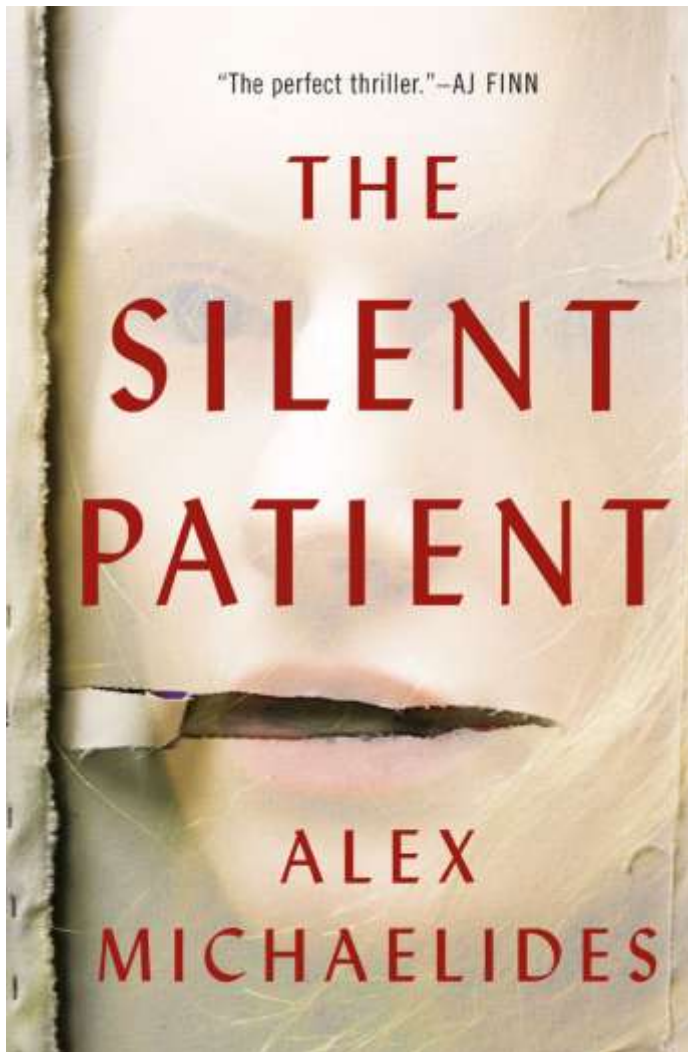
--Junior Felicia Wang



The book is about a family heading to California in search of jobs and a better life. It takes place during the Oklahoma Dust Bowl, and the focus character Tom Joad has just been released from prison for killing someone. He and his family go through many struggles on the way to and in California, which are detailed in the book.

I liked the historical details and each character was believable and interesting. Although the story progressed slowly, the details and pacing of it helped add to the depth and realism of the book. I also liked the theme of hope throughout the book.

--Junior Felicia Wang



This book is about a woman who is thought to have murdered her husband. They were always considered the “perfect couple”, yet one day, she shoots her husband and kills him quite gruesomely. Afterwards she goes mute, and becomes almost lifeless. A therapist becomes obsessed with her story and is determined to uncover what her motives were and what led her to killing her husband.

This book starts off by giving you very little information about the main characters and their lives and family. As the book progresses, more and more information about their past is given and we start getting to know them. Throughout the book, it felt like everyone could be the murderer and had something to hide, whether important or not. Not only that, near the end of the book, I found the way the author switched between times extremely interesting. One of the main characters was almost constantly switching between present and past, as if he is recounting memories.

--Junior Veronica Chunikhin

*The Silent Patient* is about a psychiatrist who joins the staff of a mental institution with the intention of getting to know a specific patient, a famous artist who killed her husband and subsequently went completely mute. Through her paintings and his diary entries, we learn more about her life and her crime, while simultaneously learning details about his past and current life as well. At the book's climax, we see the two connected, learning that SPOILER ALERT his own actions and struggles led to the events which caused her to kill her husband.

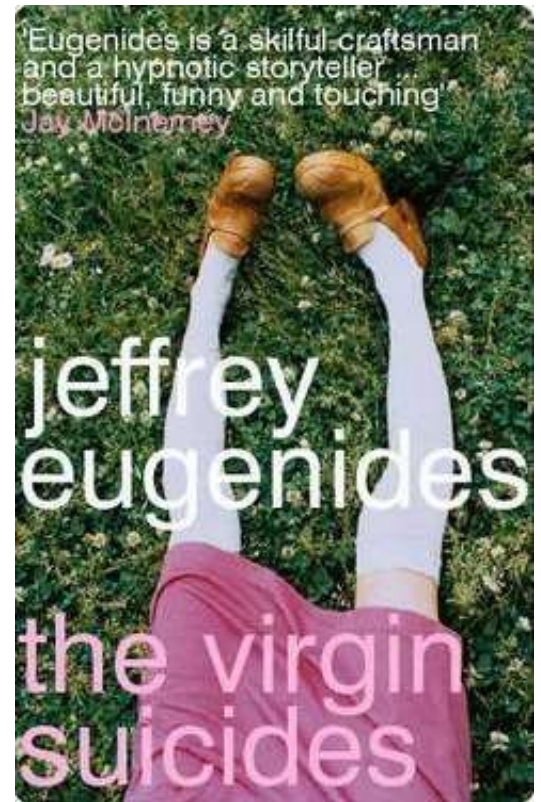
I found many things interesting about this book, first and foremost the way it relates its subject and narrator. For most of the book, it is apparent there must be some connection, because why else would we be given so many details about the narrator's personal life when the book is focused on his work. It then toys with the idea of unreliable narration when we eventually have the connection revealed, and subsequently the reader can go back through the book to find small clues or indicators in the narration. Additionally, I liked how it developed extremely complex characters, never really categorizing anybody as definitively bad or good, because I find that grey area of morality much more interesting.

--Junior Avni Koenig

Five sisters, a group of neighborhood boys who can't help but be in love with them, suicide, and no explanations. After the suicide of the youngest Lisbon sister, *The Virgin Suicides* recalls the events of the year following, told from the first person plural perspective of the neighborhood boys who watch the Lisbon sisters from afar- totally enchanted with them and ever-pondering why they were the way that they were. Set in Michigan during the 1970s, *The Virgin Suicides* never disappoints and is a great first psychological mystery.

Each page keeps you on your toes; there's not one point in the book when you have to convince yourself to turn the page. Everything is unpredictable and has you jaw-dropped, wondering what horrible thing could possibly happen next. It's also such an interesting perspective for the story to be told from- not from the perspective of the depressed mother or one of the girl's friends, but from the boys of the neighborhood who were completely enamored and fascinated by the Lisbon sisters.

--Senior Kirsten French



The book is told from the perspective of Celie, who is a black woman in Georgia in the early 1900s, and who writes letters to god and her sister Nettie which the audience reads. Celie suffers lots of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse from various men in her life, including her father and husband. She mostly withstands this treatment because she is weary and feels numb, thus having no inclination to fight for her dignity or happiness. When her husband brings home his mistress, Celie begins to fall in love with her and strike up a relationship which ultimately makes her feel more empowered and gain self-respect. With this newfound self-esteem, she pushes back on her husband's abuse and moves away with the mistress to make herself a new life. When she returns a while later, she eventually inherits her childhood home and her sister—along with others—comes to live with her.

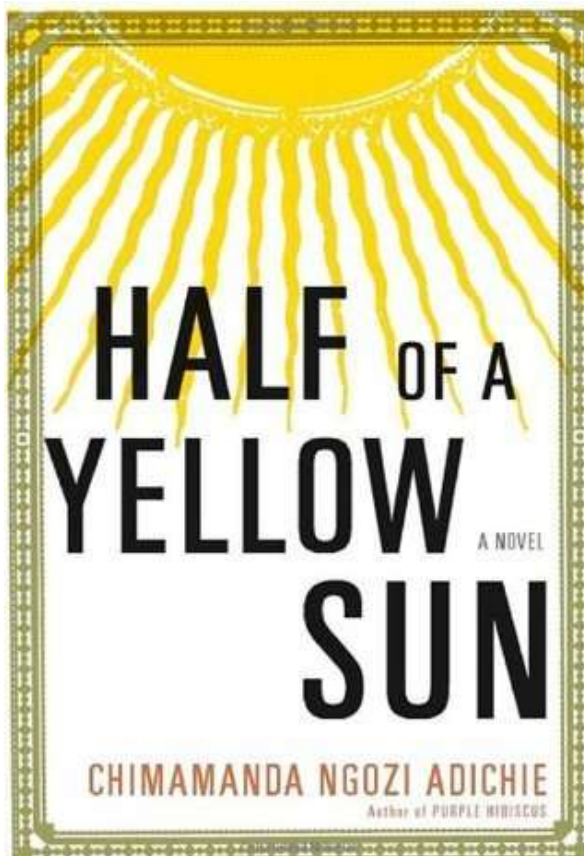
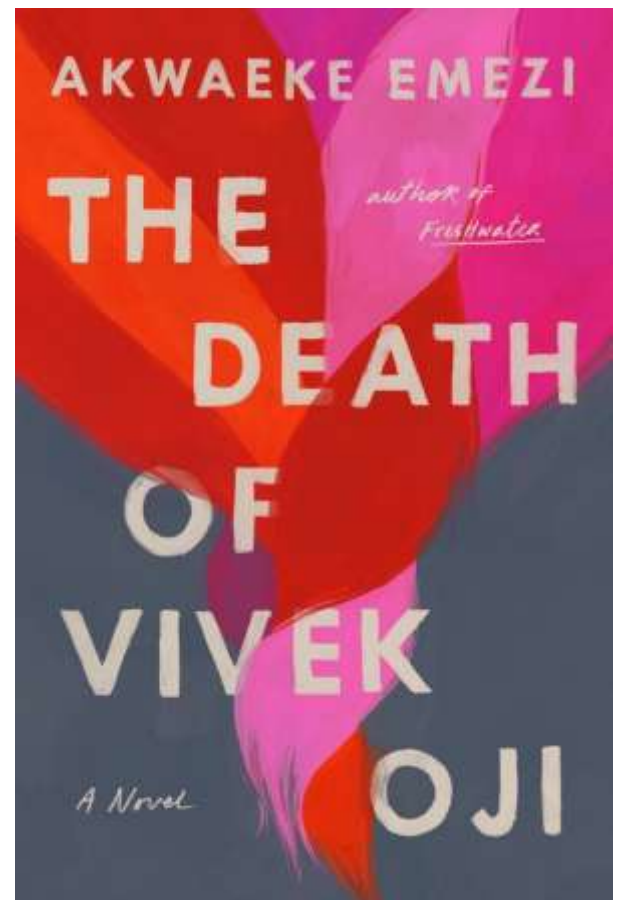
The book is very focused on the ways in which certain systems and cycles of oppression perpetuate themselves. For example, Harpo, Celie's stepson, does not want to beat his wife Sofia initially, but ends up doing so at the encouragement of his father, who does the same thing to Celie. Instances like these are interesting to me because they show the societal role in reproducing the harms of things like sexism or racism. I think this is still relevant today, and so it struck a particularly poignant chord when I read the book.

--Junior Avni Koenig

The novel follows the story of the vex from his childhood until his death, as he explores his identity and sexuality as a young man in Nigeria. Zack is the charming character who experiences dissociative blackouts which leave them confused about his life. He primary find solace in his friendship with a group of Children who all have Nigerian, dad's and foreign mothers like himself.

I find the story interesting because it slowly reveals the impact that his death had on those around him and though we know that he was going to die throughout the entire book, it is still jampacked with unexpected plot twist. The novel is truly thought-provoking as it sheds light on the challenges, faced by individuals who don't conform to society on norms. Vivek himself is an extremely interesting character he highlights how the multifaceted nature of intersectionality impact that was an individual is perceived and how they are treated in the world.

--Senior Teemo Taiwo



This book tells the story of love and war in Nigeria, the 1960s. As a Civil War breaks out in Nigeria, the lives of these characters we become into twined with the conflict. Then all looks towards the devastating impact of worn individuals and families as well as the political and social tensions that led to the conflict.

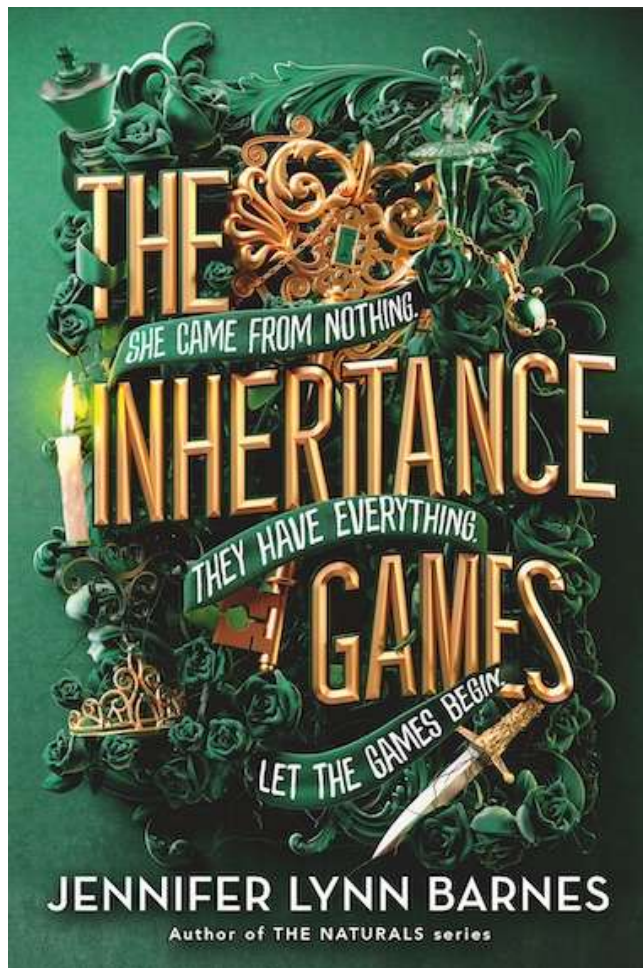
This book is very interesting as the author uses the perspective of five drastically different characters from a young boy from a rural village to professors, to nepotism babies. Through the eyes of these characters, the author brings to life the horrors of war, the resilience of humans, and the enduring power of love. This novel is a powerful moving story that Due to historical accuracy, still creating a vivid and complex story.

--Senior Teemo Taiwo

The story focuses on a young girl, Lottie, whose mom is forcing her to stay with her stepsister, Jade in a cabin that's in the middle of the woods while Lottie's mom and Jade's dad are on their honeymoon. While Lottie and Jade are hanging out, there is a massive blackout caused by a solar flare. During the blackout, a stranger named Alex shows up at their door, claiming to be lost and in need of shelter. While Lottie is suspicious of Alex, a fire forces the three out into a blizzard, where they must rely on each other to survive.

I enjoyed the suspense in this book—I felt like I was always on the edge of my seat and I never knew what characters to trust. It was interesting to see the dynamic of the characters and their character development. Overall, the book was intriguing to read given all the challenges thrown at the characters.

--Junior Eva Eisenman



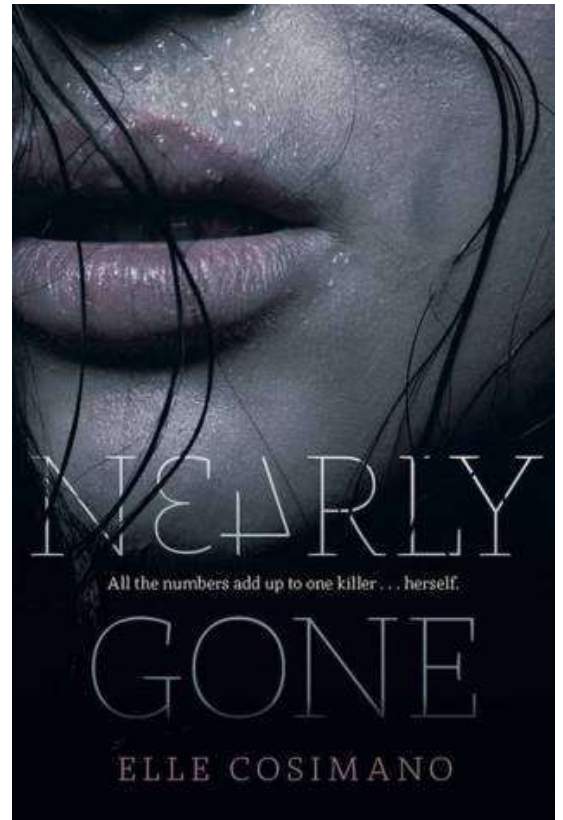
This book is about a teenage girl, Avery, who is financially struggling but is suddenly left with the inheritance of the richest man in Texas, Tobias Hawthorne. This is the first book of a trilogy and in this book, Avery and Tobias' four grandsons try to figure out why Tobias left his entire fortune for Avery, who he has no relationship with instead of one of them. Tobias was notorious for his obsession with games and riddles, and Avery soon realizes that with the help of two of the grandsons, James and Grayson, as they uncover multiple riddles Tobias left behind for Avery to decipher. By the end of the book, Avery and the grandsons uncover many hidden truths about their family, each step leading them closer to figuring out why Avery was chosen for Tobias' inheritance.

I found the entire plot to be very interesting as it keeps you on the edge throughout the book with its plot twists and mystery. I also liked this book because the main character, Avery, is a high school student which made her perspectives relatable and easy to picture. The most interesting part about this book is that all the challenges and riddles Avery and the grandsons try to solve are left by Tobias, which meant that he had his games planned prior to his death. Although this book is about solving one main mystery, there are subplots with its own sub mysteries throughout the book making the plot intense and captivating.

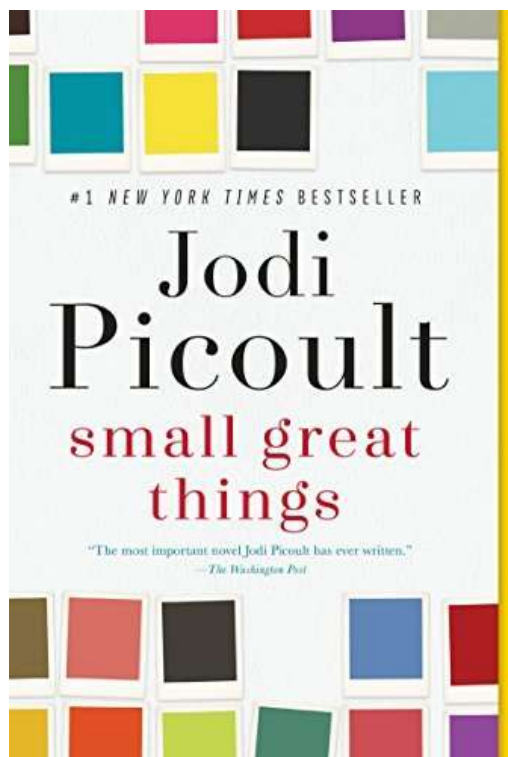
--Junior Janhita Chakravarty

This book is about Nearly Boswell, a high schooler who is financially unstable who has a unique way of reading people; She is able to read people's emotions if she touches them. In this book, a serial killer starts killing her fellow classmates and leaving cryptic messages behind in the ad section of newspapers, which Nearly regularly checks. As more murders take place, Nearly is soon able to decipher the riddles left by the serial killer and realizes that all the dead students are connected to her. While figuring all this out, she becomes friends with a new student Reece, who is a narc surveilling her for the police in order to stay out of jail. Throughout this book, Nearly is constantly trying to stay one step ahead of the killer so that no other murders take place, but also so that she can find the real killer and keep herself from getting framed.

I found this book interesting because when I first picked up the book, I did not expect it to be a murder mystery as the book started off with Nearly going through her every day life, nothing special. But after a few chapters, the plot picks up and soon becomes a murder mystery and all the loose ends that were dispersed throughout the beginning chapters soon start making sense and connecting together. The most interesting thing about this book for me was the riddles left by the serial killer as they were all physics based riddles, which allowed me to try and decipher them myself alongside Nearly. Overall, this book was very hooking and kept me interested throughout all its plot twists and riddles and the end of the book is not what most expect.



--Junior Janhita Chakravarty



Ruth, an African American labor and delivery nurse is not allowed to touch a patient's newborn due to the parents being white supremacists. The baby goes into cardiac arrest when Ruth is alone in the nursery so she decides to preform CPR. The baby ultimately dies and the parents charge her with murder. This book goes in depth on the trial, as well as the lives of both Ruth and the couple, while tackling topics such as race, family, and religion.

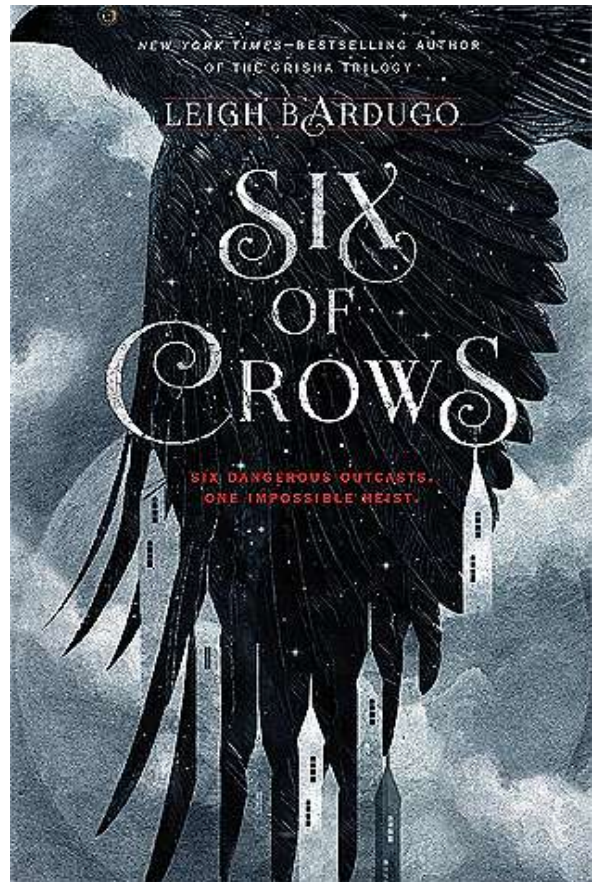
I thought it was interesting how the author chose to switch perspectives depending on the chapter. Some chapters were from the lawyers perspective, some from Ruth's, and others from each of the parents of the baby. This gave a more well-rounded understanding of the situation and made it an overall more enjoyable read.

--Junior Molly Eisenfeld

The book follows Kaz Brekker, a criminal prodigy, who is offered a chance at a deadly heist that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams. He assembles a rag-tag crew with their own unique backgrounds and talents before setting off to break into one of the most secure prisons in the world. If the heist goes to plan, they could all become rich and save the world from corruption. That is, if they don't die first.

The author does an amazing job of world building without it being overwhelming for the reader. Each location in the book is described so vividly, each character is given so much life, and the writing itself is so beautiful. I love fantasy, and this book incorporated fantasy, action, and romance so well together while still keeping the plot incredibly engaging.

--Junior Natalie Pak



Two organizations are at war, and Red and Blue are agents from each organization whose job is to travel through time and space to change the future to favor their own faction. However, they start leaving hidden messages to each other: initially taunting, but then gradually developing into friendship, then flirtation, then something more. But when their organizations start to become suspicious of them, their lives are on the line.

The relationship between the two characters unfolds in such a poetic and poignant way. Through rich, descriptive, and melodic language, the book focuses solely on the two characters and their love that literally withstands time and space. It's the ultimate enemies-to-lovers and forbidden romance story.

--Junior Natalie Pak

This book follows Daisy Jones as she gets recognized by The Six, a band started by Billy and Graham Dunne in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The book includes the relationship between frontman Billy and Daisy and the various love interests of each of the characters, adding additional drama to captivate readers. The setbacks and triumphs of the band are compellingly articulated, for example, going from touring today to having challenging dynamics among the group. Overall, Daisy Jones and the Six tells the story of one of the most successful bands in 1970s.

The book is told through the perspective of each of the band members which I found cool because I enjoyed seeing character's opinions and views throughout the book. Additionally, pieces of the book are told by Julia, the daughter of Camila (Billy's ex-wife) which allows her to have a unique outlook on several events in the book and allowed for an unexpected twist. Further, the book is speculated to be about Fleetwood Mac which caused me to examine this book closer in order to see the parallels. Adding to this, Daisy Jones and The Six was later made into a mini series, so I enjoyed also seeing the parallels between the series and the book.

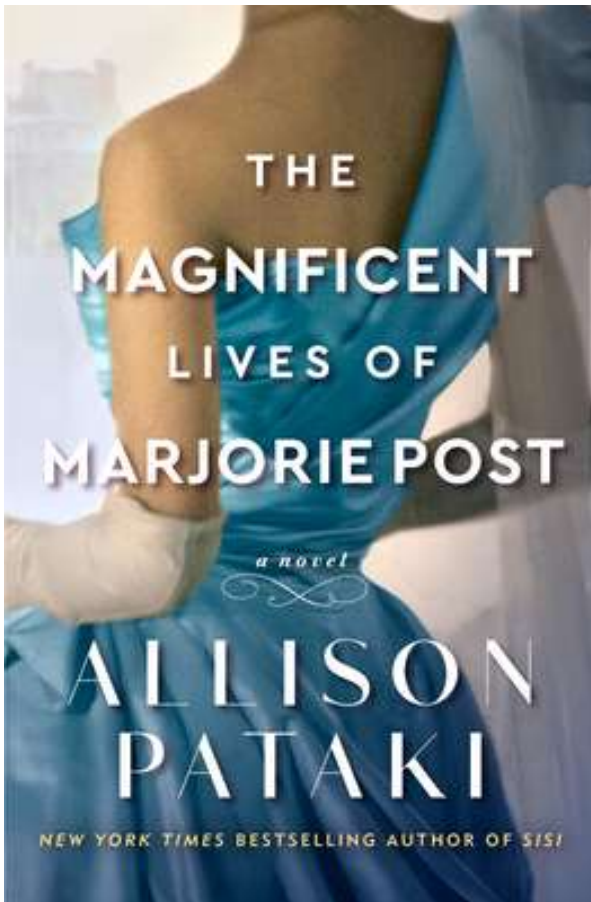
--Junior Hayley Gottesman



Daisy Jones grows up on sunset strip her parents are rich, she is beautiful and she has a gifted voice, but her parents don't pay attention to her. The Dunne brothers start a band, Billy as lead they become famous along with Daisy, who eventually joins the band. Billy encounters drug abuse and mental health issues while denying his feelings for Daisy.

I loved the tension in this book, along with the female lead. I also loved how each character got their moment and chapters it wasn't focused on just one character. There was also so many real life things that people battle with it was very realistic and had accurate representation of 1970 pop culture.

--Junior Sophia Shapiro



This book followed the life of Marjorie Post, who grew up in Battle Creek, Michigan and helped her father build his company, C.W. Post Cereal outside in their barn. Later, the Post Cereal empire became General Mills as well as increasingly popular. Through her families wealth, many opportunities opened up for her. During her several marriage, she build Mar-a-Lago, Hillwood Gardens, had a passion for philanthropy, and developed a deep appreciation for Russian art during her time assisting with diplomatic work in Moscow.

Marjorie Post was an individual I initially knew nothing about, so through *The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post*, I was able to learn about her unique life. More, her story was particularly interesting because she went from living a pretty normal life to a much more extravagant life so this progression was particularly captivating, Additionally, this was a time period I didn't know a lot about and through her glamorous life, I got a better idea of the norms of that time period. A couple years ago, I visit Hillwood Gardens, so being about to hear in detail and how she constructed/designed it was especially cool.

--Junior Hayley Gottesman

*Nothing Like the Movies* is the second book in the series. It's about these two kids who finally started dating the summer after senior year. They were next door neighbors for all there life. However they were supposed to go to college together, but a lot of familial issues in Wes life caused him to stop everything and end his relationship with Liz. Liz was confused and heartbroken, but she couldn't let him go. When they all came back for break she found out that wes "cheated on her" so that why he broke up. Fast forward to Liz being more settled in college , she is thriving a content creator for ucla sports, she isn't obbessed with love anymore, and she has lot of friends . Wes has sorted his problem and has come back to UCLA to play baseball, he has a side mission of winning her back.

The character development from the first book to this book is night and day. You can see the maturity of them . Also I love that this show like real life issue with relationship and romance .

--Senior Maddy Mathew





PENGUIN CLASSICS

JANE AUSTEN

*Emma*

*Emma* is about the main character Emma Woodhouse who is a self-made matchmaker for friends. She attempts to set up her friend Harriet Smith with her different men, but Harriet declines and doesn't want any of them. Emma ends up marrying Mr. Knightley and Harriet with a farmer.

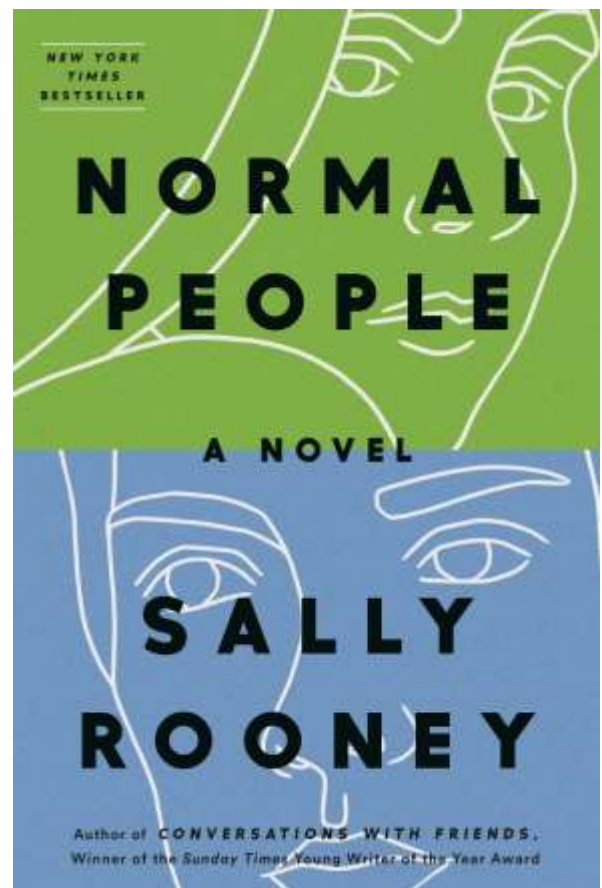
I liked this book because it had a clear emphasis on Emma as a feminist during that time. She fought against misogynistic men and their comments about her life. It's also a very entertaining book with funny anecdotes.

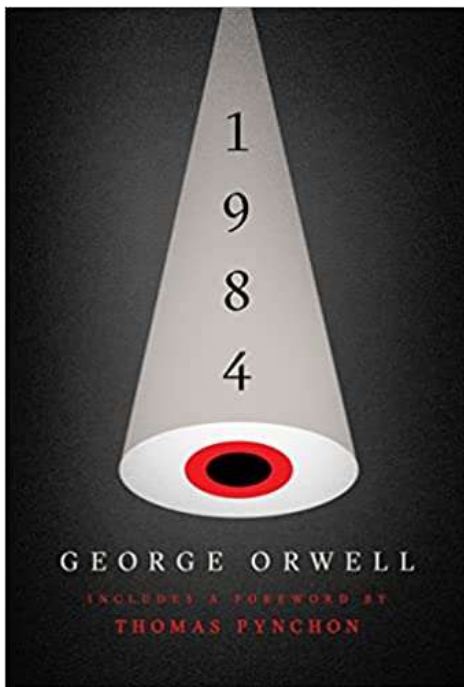
--Senior Elizabeth Griffin

This book follows the lives of Marianne and Connell from high school to adulthood. Connell is popular and well-liked whereas Marianne is more of an introvert and keeps to herself. Despite their differences, their connection throughout high school and after maintains strong and they are always drawn back to each other.

I really enjoyed how humanizing this book is. It takes a deep dive into human relationships and really focuses on the characters themselves. There is so much emotional intensity that it brings so much to the story.

--Junior Rebekah Buchman





A man lives in a society where everything is controlled by one man called Big Brother. He is a dictator and has created a society where there is a new language a better version of English called Newspeak. On top of this all history is rewritten to make him right of all predictions and many other things which are very crazy. The book follows a man named Winstont who is against all big brother stand for but cannot speak out due to the fear of vanishing.

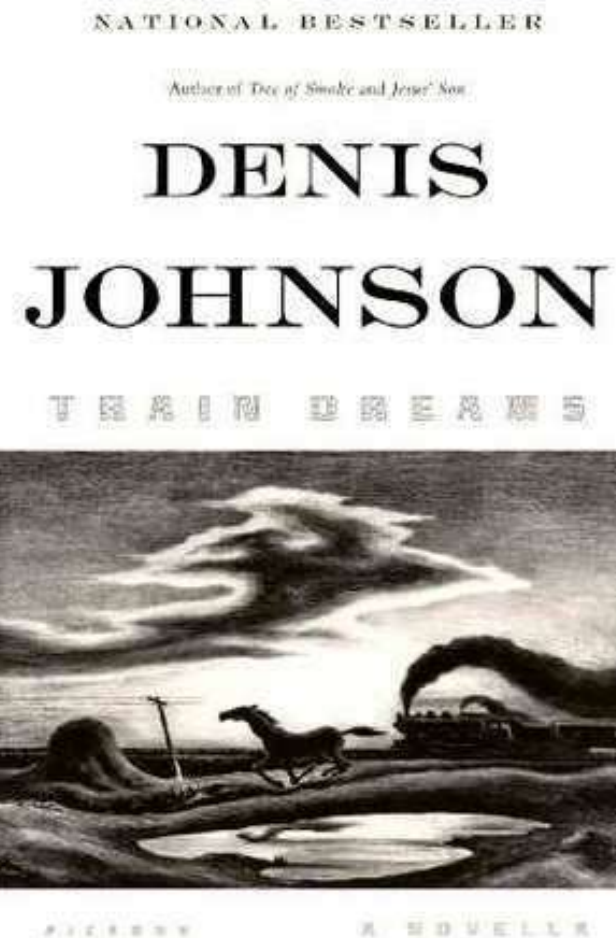
I find most interesting about this book the way the author created this dystopian society from his mind. It's very creative and we a look into winstonts day to day life and how it is impacted by society. There is also thrill and mystery in this book around big brother which makes it all the more interesting

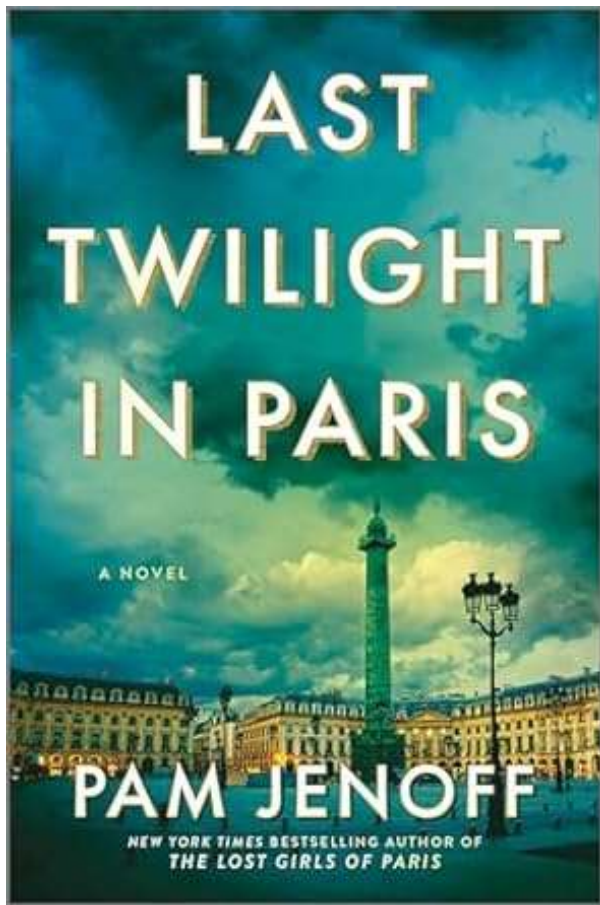
--Junior Sophia Shapiro

*Train Dreams* is a novella set during the closure of the American West, following railroad labor Robert Grainier and his reclusive life. It hones in on railroads as a leader of technological change and end of the pioneering attitude. Grainier's story is one of isolation but manages to be mystical and folk-like all the same, and Johnson observes the changing landscape through the lens of his life.

I found it interesting that Johnson focused on the end of the closing of the American frontier instead of the phase preceding it, which was marked by iconic cowboys of the ranching industry and became romanticized in media as the "Wild West." Instead of cattle ranching and shootouts, like in Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy, *Train Dreams* observes one man who grapples with the weight of an ending era. I enjoyed the strange, natural elements incorporated into the story, along with the overarching observation of a time forever lost.

--Senior Allison Zhang





*Last Twilight in Paris* goes back and forth between World War II in Paris and the 1950's. In London 1953, Louise discovers a necklace that has ties to her past and sends her to Paris in search of answers. She learns that the necklace is connected to a department store, Levitan, during World War II. It served as a Nazi prison and we then learn the story of Helaine, who was imprisoned in this department store during the war and how she is connected to the necklace.

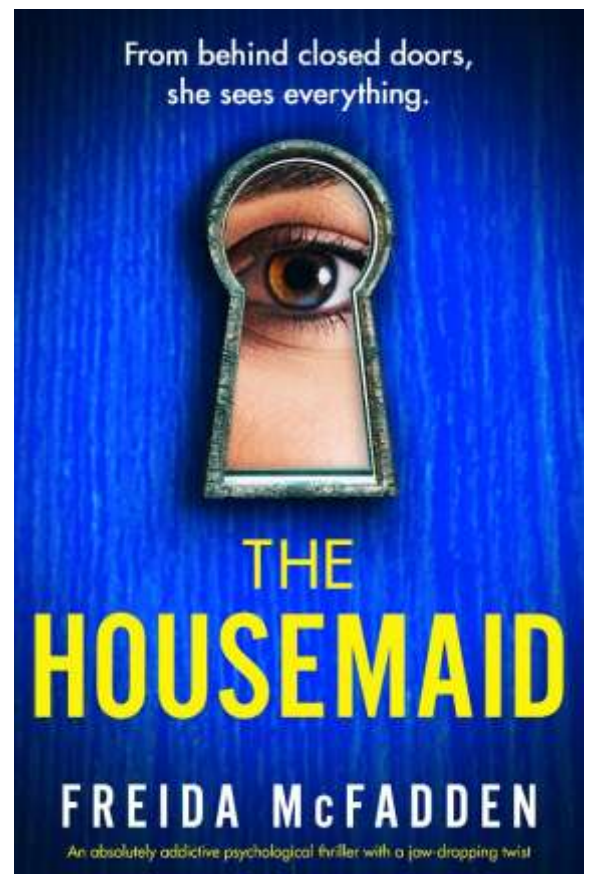
I found the book interesting because it described what it was like living in Paris during World War II as a Jew. I have learned about the horrors of concentration camps but never have heard of people being held as prisoners in a department store in the middle of Paris during World War II while people went about town. Pam Jenoff shows the reader a different aspect of how people suffered in Paris during WWII. In addition, I liked how *Last Twilight in Paris* showed the good side of people during times of war.

--Senior Jenna Goldberg

This book is a psychological thriller about Millie, a young woman living out of her car who becomes a housemaid for a wealthy family. She discovers things are not as they seem. Her employer, Nina leaves her unsettled and confused. As time goes on, Millie begins to realize she is trapped in a bad situation. The Housemaid will keep you on the edge of your seat!

I had a hard time putting *The Housemaid* down. I was constantly wanting to know what happened next. Without giving away anything, I found the book face-paced and full of twists and turns. Everything I thought I knew was not the case! This is a must read and the twist at the end is crazy!

--Senior Jenna Goldberg



This book is about young baron Cosimo who resolves to live in the trees forever after an argument with his family. He befriends bandits and has a changing reputation in the village Ombrosa, evolving from humiliation to recognition. His dedication to an arboreal lifestyle endures until the very end.

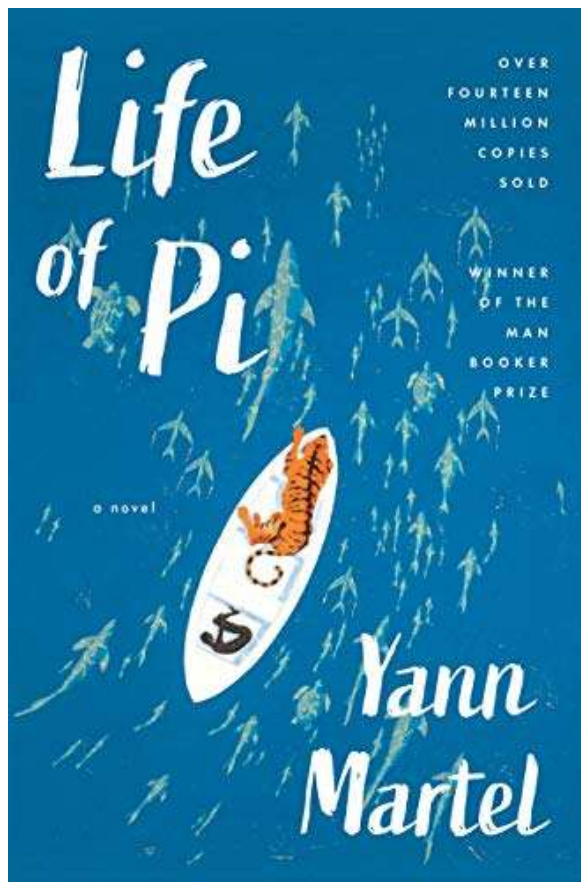
I thought the plot and setting was uniquely mystical and unfamiliar. The premise seems ridiculous but the narrator, one of Cosmo's brothers, touched on important themes like the community versus individual, coming of age, and nature in civilization. The historical background is also densely informative of the 18th century and its intellectual movements.

--Senior Alison Zhang

## The Baron in the Trees



italo  
calvino



*Life of Pi* is about a boy named Pi Patel who is stranded in the Pacific Ocean after a shipwreck, with only a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker as his companion. As he fights for survival, he must find food, water, and a way to coexist with the dangerous animal. The story explores themes of faith, resilience, and the power of storytelling, ultimately challenging the reader to question what is real and what is imagined.

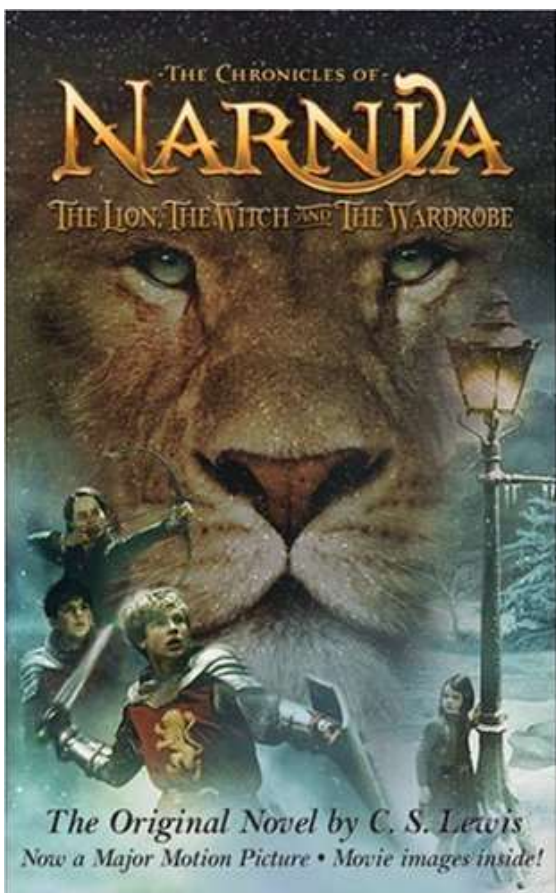
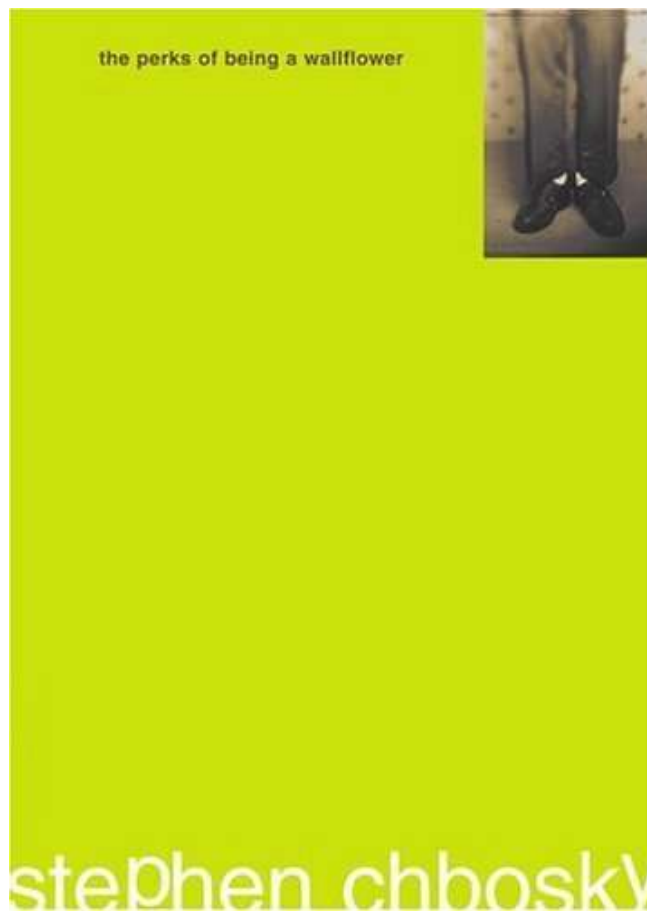
One of the most interesting parts of the book is the complexity of the plot. At first the book seems like a made-up story, the tension between Pi and the tiger adding to the excitement, but by the end of the book, the truth comes out and makes the reader look at the whole story through a different lens. I also thought that it was very interesting how the author integrated multiple religious practices throughout the book. It made Pi look very relatable as he questioned everything but also it made his character more complex and mysterious.

--Junior Veronica Chunikhin

*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is about a young boy named Charlie who is starting his freshman year in high school. He struggles with making friends before he finds a group that he fits in with. The book goes through the year with him and his friends as they discover themselves.

What I found interesting about this book was that it talked about a lot of serious issues such as mental health. The main character Charlie struggled with mental health and the book also brought up suicide. Another aspect of the book that I liked was its depiction of nostalgia as a teenager because it was very relatable.

--Junior Rebekah Buchman



The book follows the journey of four siblings: Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy. Lucy finds a magical wardrobe, that transports her into an alternate world, where she meets Mr. Tumnus. Edmund is the second child into the wardrobe, where he unfortunately falls under the White Witch's spell. Susan and Peter follow suit, and its prophesied that the siblings will defeat the Witch, which does end up occurring at the end of the novel.

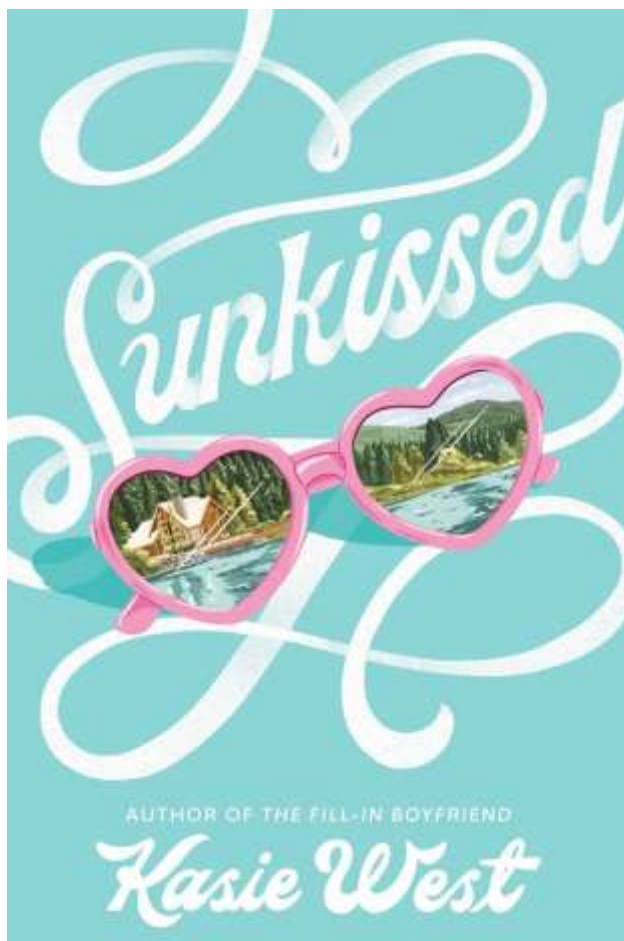
I love the relationship between the siblings, and the evolution of Edmund throughout the novel. I also love the concept of the wardrobe transporting these siblings into this whole new world. It's also interesting to meet all the new characters, which are all talking animals, in this novel. It also sets up the rest of the series of the *Chronicles of Narnia*.

--Senior Jaya Sauter

The story is told from the perspectives of two teenage boys. Ben, who grew up in New York and has recently broken up with his ex-boyfriend and Arthur, who is working in New York for the summer. They first meet at a post office in New York City but are soon separated by a flash mob and fail to exchange information. They eventually find each other and spend the summer together and fall for one another.

I found it interesting that this book was about an LGBTQ couple. Not many romance books are about homosexual couples and it was refreshing to read a story about it. I also liked how the book alternated perspectives because I was able to learn what each character was thinking and how they interpreted different interactions with one another.

--Senior Nicole Cohen



This book is about Avery, a 17 year old girl who is dragged by her parents to family camp for two months after she had just been betrayed by her best friend Shay. While she is there, she meets Brooks, a mysterious charming boy, a staff member meaning he was off limits. As Avery begins a journey of self discovery Brooks offers her the chance of a lifetime.

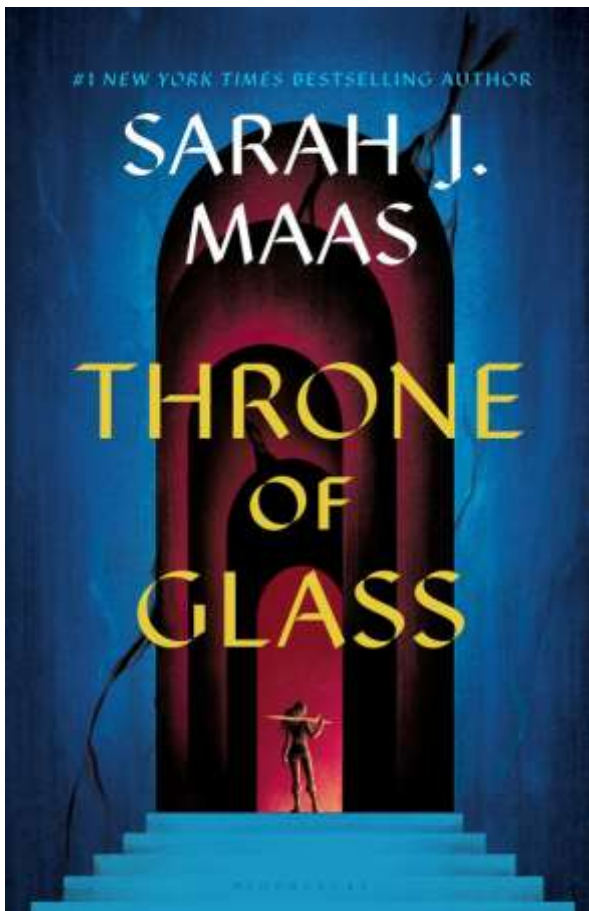
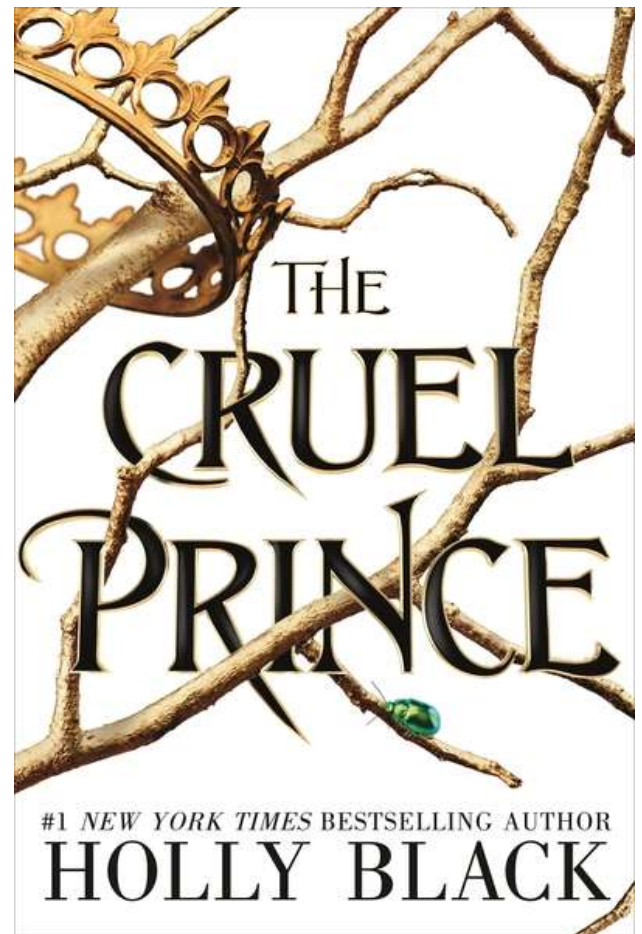
I found it interesting that Avery falls for a boy she met on a trip she didn't want to go on. This shows that experiencing new things is important and worth it because you never know what might happen. I also found the comprehensive imagery displayed throughout the book very interesting. It gave me a good image in my head of what the camp looked like.

--Senior Nicole Cohen

*Cruel Prince* is about a mortal girl Jude who lives in a magical world called Elfame. A faerie slaughtered her parents because her older sister was his child and he was here to take her back, but he ended up taking the older sister Vienne, Jude, and her twin sister Taryn. Jude and Taryn are always in danger because their mortal and faerie people like to trick them. Jude hates feeling powerless and she is determined to be Madoc's (new father) knight, despite being human. She always stands up against the prince Cardan who despises her. Despite not being able to get knighthood she becomes a spy for one of the older princes. She learns how to fight, how to be immune to poison, etc. All the siblings are fighting for a throne. The throne giving ends in the whole royal family being slaughtered and Cardan is the only relative able to put the crown on his eldest brother's head. Jude instead protects him and then tricks him in making a deal with her. She put Cardan on the throne and she will secretly rule the kingdom. He is furious because he didn't want to be a ruler.

I found this book interesting because the plot is very well done. The female lead is very strong and she is focused on trying to make her way. I also love fantasy and I like how it's kind of an underdog story. Jude character is very strong and resilient person. I admire her wittiness and grit.

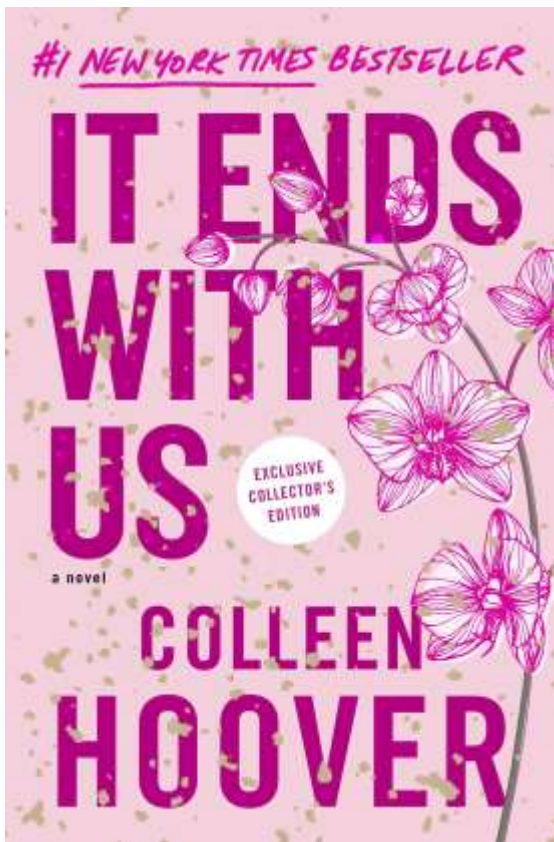
--Senior Maddy Mathew



This book follows the story of Selena Sardothien, a skilled assassin in a corrupt kingdom. She becomes imprisoned in a brutal labor camp, and after about a year, she is offered a chance at freedom by competing in the Kings games to be his champion. As she goes through the competition, she uncovers dirty secrets about the kingdom's motives, and supernatural threats, and grapples with her own past identity. This book is the first in the series that set up her story and who is meant to be.

I found many things interesting in this book. The setting and the world Sarah J. Mass creates it's very descriptive and detailed. I really like Celena she is a strong female character with a morally gray past. I like how she is an assian but we see parts of her that reveal that she is more kind then what people think. I like the supernatural aspect we see in the book.

--Senior Maddy Mathew



This book is about Lily Bloom, a young woman who moves to Boston to start a new chapter in her life. She meets a neurosurgeon named Ryle, and they quickly fall into a meaningful relationship. As the story continues, Lily is forced to confront traumatic memories from her past and make difficult decisions about love, strength, and breaking cycles of abuse.

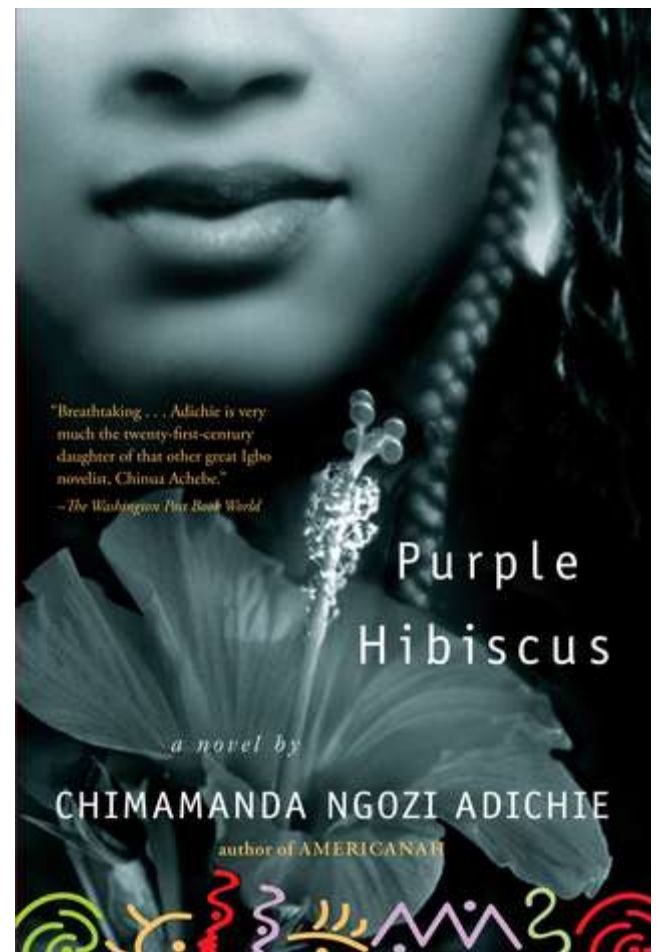
One thing I found interesting was how the book explored serious topics like domestic violence and emotional trauma while still telling a heartfelt love story. Lily's character is incredibly strong, and her growth throughout the novel is powerful and emotional. It made me think about how love isn't always simple, and that sometimes the hardest decisions are the most important ones.

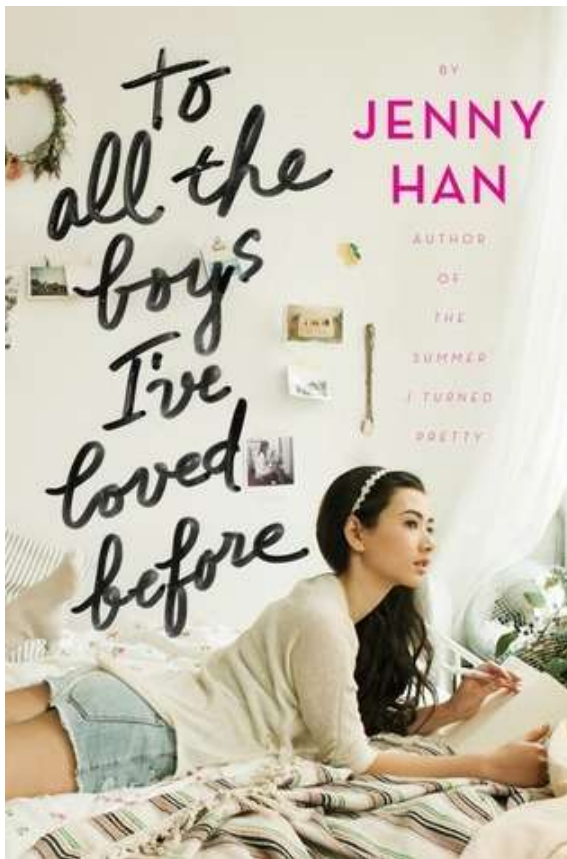
--Junior Jilli Nalibotsky

*Purple Hibiscus* follows an upper middle-class teenager in Nigeria named Kambili. In the novel Kambili navigates religion, identity, and familial relationships amidst her abusive household. Her father Eugene is a devout catholic, pillar of the community, and abuser, in direct contrast to his kind spirited sister Ifeoma. Ifeoma exposes Kambili and her brother to a less constrained way of living, transforming their perspective.

I find the book interesting as it it sheds light on the political and social climate of post colonial Nigeria. It also exemplifies the potentially malicious duality of an individual. Illustrating how people, particular political figures, are never really who they seem on the surface. Further, the book illustrates the coming of age of a young girl in an insightful and impactful way.

--Senior Teemo Taiwo





Lara Jean Song-Covey is a hopeless romantic, she dreams of one day being swept off her feet by a loving suitor. In reality, she watches *Golden Girls* with her sister and crushes on her sister's boyfriend. When she has a crush, she writes a letter to them and hides it away in a box. One day the letters get mailed out and Lara Jean has to deal with the consequences of her love.

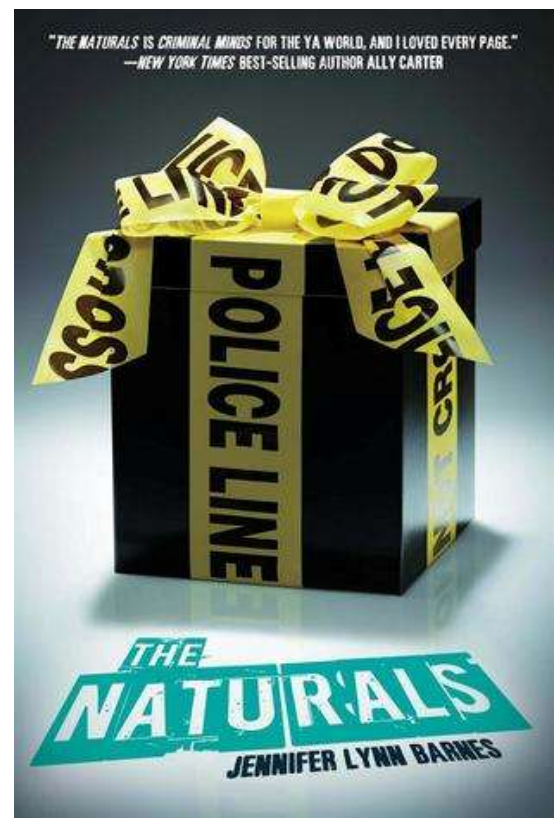
This book is a great start to a 3-book long series by Jenny Han plus 3 more movies on Netflix. The relationship between Lara Jean and her sisters is comforting to see in a YA novel. There are some portions of the book that can feel very cringe worthy but it redeems itself with good communication between the characters.

--Senior Evelyn Wan

What would you do if the FBI wanted you to join a special task force of teens to track down criminals? *The Naturals* follows five teens, each with a special set of skills, as they track down cold case criminals and murderers who are after their own members. Each member of the task force must overcome their own challenges to help the team achieve their mission before it's too late.

This is definitely a top book for me, whenever I have free time I reach for my copy to read again. It's a great book for those who loved *A Good Girl's Guide to Murder* or *One of Us is Lying*. This book has multiple twists in it and each following book in the series expands on the characters we meet in the first book. There is a romance subplot with a small love triangle which can be off putting for some, but the main focus is the task force and the characters abilities.

--Senior Evelyn Wan





Inspired by *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *I Am Not Jessica Chen* follows the story of 17-year-old artist Jenna Chen, who, as you can tell by her name, is NOT her perfect Harvard-bound cousin Jessica. After being rejected by the entire Ivy League and falling short, once again, of her Asian immigrant parents' expectations, a desperate wish leads Jenna to wake up the next day in Jessica's body. Finally getting the life she's always dreamed of Jenna soon learns the truth behind "perfection" and what it really means to be the top student at the elite Havenwood Private Academy. But when everyone starts forgetting whether Jenna Chen ever existed- including her parents and childhood friend and golden boy, Aaron Cai- Jenna must ask herself how much she is willing to sacrifice and how far she'll lose herself for the chase of success.

Going into my senior year and as a big fan of coming to age novels, I think this book is a must-read for anyone who's ever struggled with feelings of comparison and being painfully average. Ann Liang always delivers in creating such in depth, relatable characters that also perfectly capture the Asian-American experience, and the pressures that come with growing up in such a culture. This book in particular, as a senior, felt incredibly relatable after also going through the grueling college application and rejection process. *I Am Not Jessica Chen*

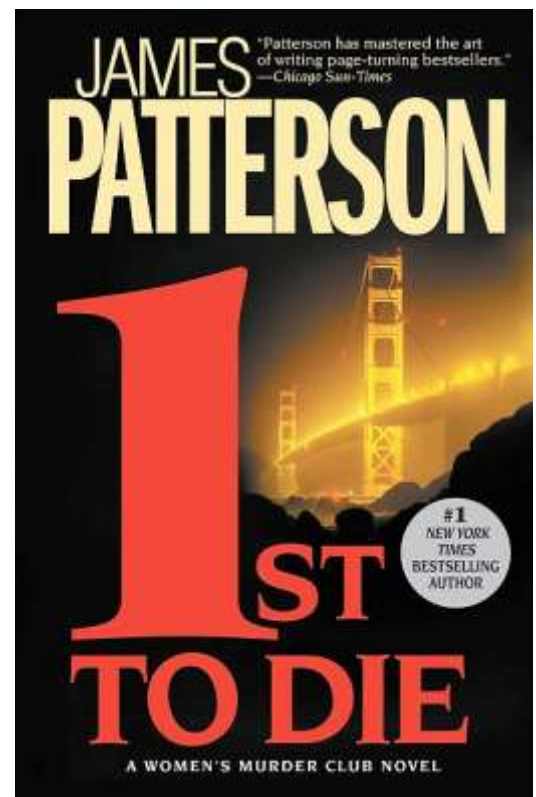
highlights some of the rawest but most common struggles of growing up and figuring out who we are and who we want to be and is definitely a read that provokes you to reflect on your own life and priorities.

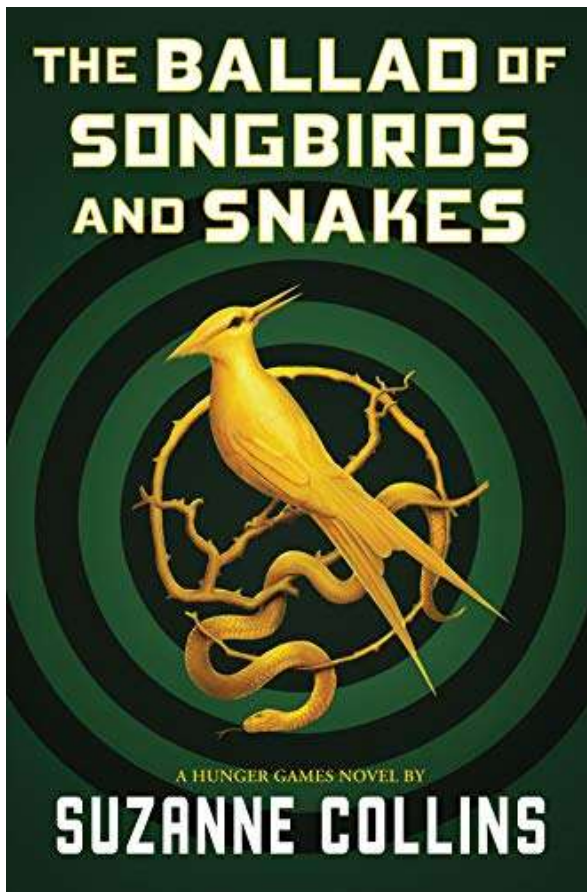
--Senior Shulammite Chen

As the first book in James Patterson's renowned, best-selling crime series, the *Women's Murder Club*, *1st to Die* follows the formation of the club, as four separate women working different occupations build unexpectedly close friendships with each other amidst a growing murder mystery. When a serial killer terrorizes San Francisco, gruesomely targeting happy newly-weds, the 4 of them must collaborate outside of the box and regulations of their jobs that hold them back in order to stop the killer from continuing on with their killing spree. Racing against time, an unknown foe, and even their own health, in a shocking conclusion, they'll soon find out that everything they know is wrong.

Unlike most of the other mystery books I've read before, *1st to Die* takes you into the minds of both the killer and the detective, letting you know their most intimate desires and sorrows and the person they are beyond their actions. Patterson's use of dramatic irony drills up the tension in the book to a whole other level and will have you on the edge of your seat, screaming at the pages as you watch the women try to piece together an answer you already know. The lives of the characters feel raw and real, leaving you no other choice but to cheer with them and cry with them too as you watch them take on this formidable battle, solving what seems to be an unsolvable case. Additionally, I'd also like to give bonus points for having strong, empowered independent women as the main protagonists.

--Senior Shulammite Chen





This book is a prequel to *The Hunger Games*, illustrating how the games first began. The first half of the book focuses on young President Snow's life before the games and his preparation to be a mentor in the games. The second half of the book is about Snow's experience after the games shut down. Throughout the whole book, the reader is able to witness the relationship between Snow and the tribute he was assigned to (from district 12).

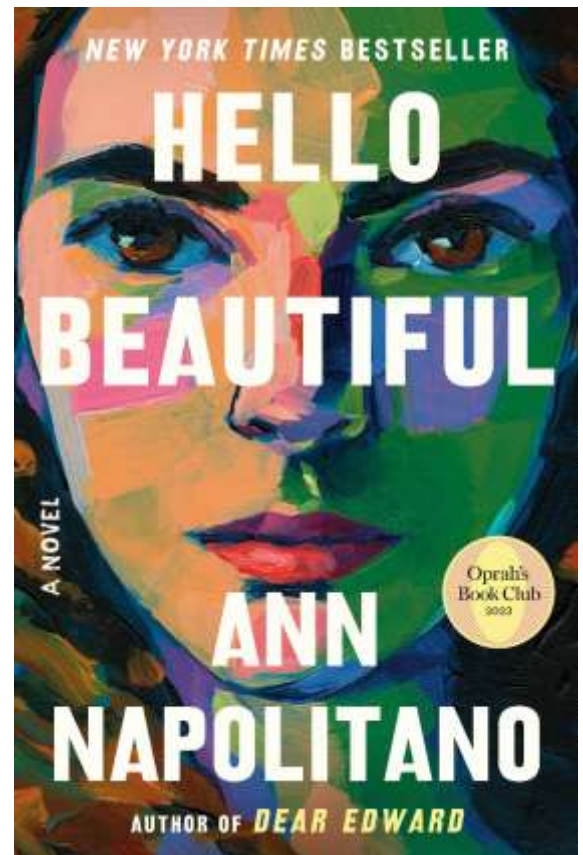
I thought that the connections between this book and the regular *Hunger Games* series was very interesting. For example, you find out that one of the songs in the *Hunger Games* was created by a character in this book. I also enjoyed seeing the changes in Snow throughout the book and his progression (in terms of viewpoint) from the beginning as a regular student to him as the future President by the end of the book.

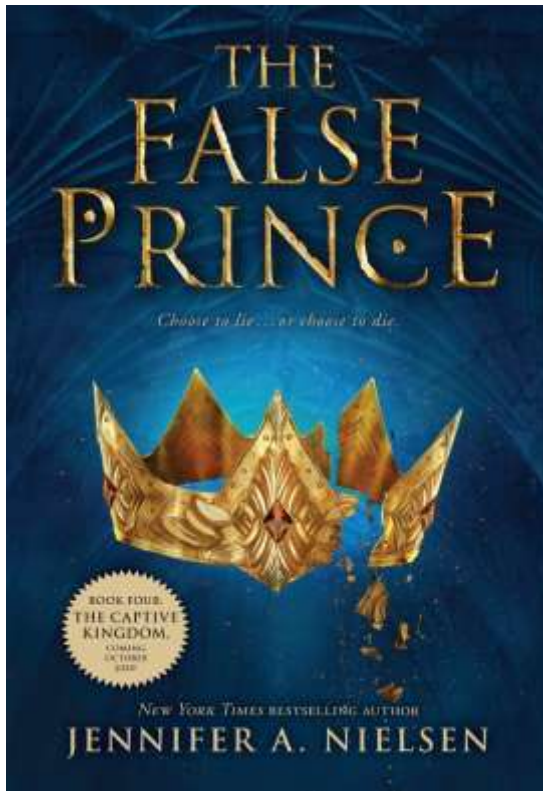
--Junior Molly Eisenfeld

The book follows four sisters as they are adults and figuring out life. It also follows William the oldest sister Julia's husband. The book is meant to be a take on *Little Women*. It explores the relationships each sister has with each other and their parents. It shows how love can be a healing force for the sisters and William, but it can also cause immense pain such as how their father loved their mother.

I liked how the book gave the different perspectives of the sisters as well as William. I also liked how it explored the different ideas about love and how it can shape a person. I also liked how it showed the different generations of the family and how it grew/changed over time.

--Junior Kirsten Sinkler





A nobleman named Carter makes a plan in order to stop a civil war from happening in the kingdom. The plan consists of taking four orphans and training them to act like the king and queens long lost son. One of the four orphans looks just like the son, and he is trained to act just like him. He later finds out that he is in fact the lost son and had been taken from his parents.

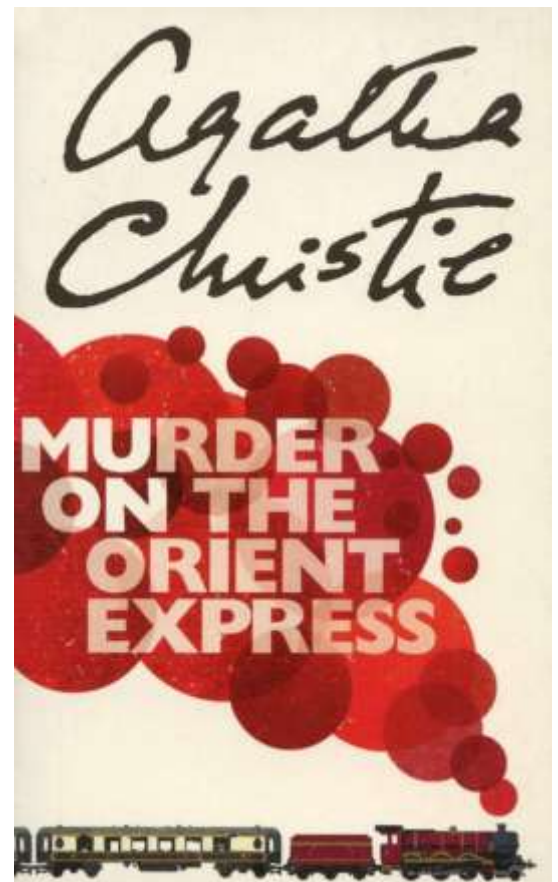
I liked that the book had a lot of mystery and it was hard to try and figure out what was happening next. I also liked how the plot twists weren't obvious and that the author didn't write the book like a cliché. I also thought it was interesting to read the book from the different characters perspectives.

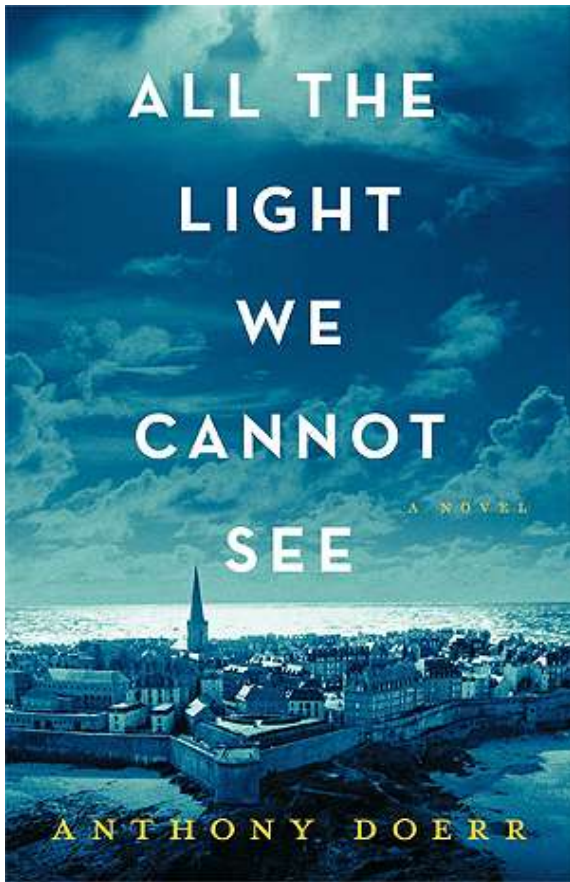
--Junior Kirsten Sinkler

This book involved the main character Hercule Poirot, a detective, to solve the murder of a man on a train in Europe. The book takes you through the steps that Poirot takes to investigate the passengers and collect evidence in order to find the killer on the snow-trapped train. Each chapter represents a different step in the investigation and readers follow along with the clues given to find the murderer.

This book was interesting because unlike other mystery novels the reader is given each piece of evidence alongside the main character, Hercule Poirot. In this way the reader can try and solve the murder while reading the book, but the twist at the end was jaw-dropping! The twists and turns of the book kept me up late reading to find the truth behind the murder. At the end of the book all the clues came together to find the murderer in a fascinating and fun way. I also loved the way Agatha Christie made each character fall perfectly in place with the plot of the story!

--Junior Emory Scofield





This book takes on the lives of a young blind French girl and a young German boy during WW2. The French girl lives with her father who is tasked with protecting a famous jewel from Nazi art hunters during the war. She moves from Paris to the coastal town of Saint-Malo with her great uncle Entienne. Here she lives and has to protect the jewel once her father disappears from the art collectors. The German boy is gifted with machinery and is accepted into an elite school to teach German boys to be Nazis. He is then tasked with using his radio detective technology to find resistance groups and enemies in France. He is forced to watch his crew kill innocent civilians and murder resistance members. The two stories cross paths as Werner and Marie-Laure are both in Saint-Malo and the war is coming to an end as American troops take France back.

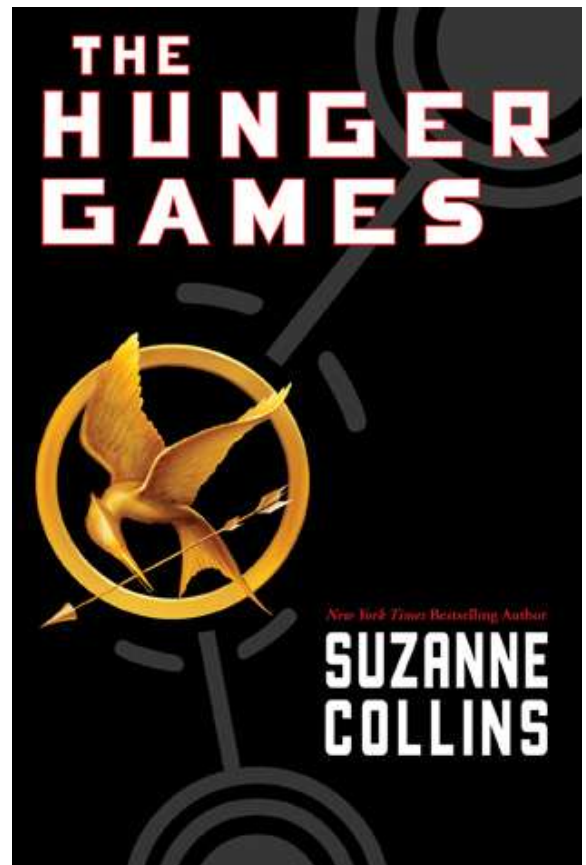
One of my favorite parts about this book was the powerful writing technique and style of Anthony Doerr. Each chapter was short but the cliffhangers always made me want to read more to find out what happened next. The detailed stories of each character was interesting to read and follow along with as the characters faced each challenge. I especially liked reading the plot of Marie-Laure because it was interesting to see how Anthony Doerr depicted her struggles as a blind girl in wartime. Overall, through the details I felt connected to these characters and could even picture the events unfolding which made this book a great read.

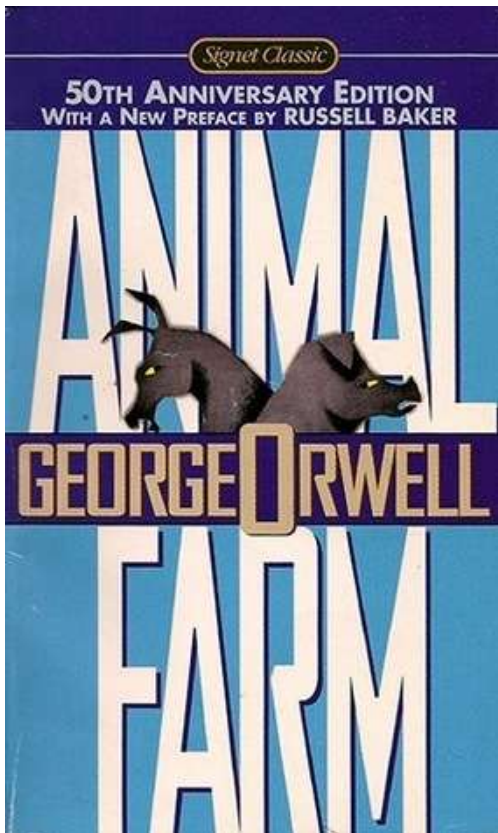
--Junior Emory Scofield

The book is about a teenage girl set in a post apocalyptic world from district 12. Panel hosts the Hunger games annually where one boy and one girl are chosen from each district to fight to the death until one person is left. Katie's Everdeen bravely volunteers to take her sisters place in the games.

I find it interesting that the book is set in a world where killing each other is encouraged and made into a game instead of the usual negative views on violence. The book also has tributes of all ages competing so it's not just a select age group, which allows anyone to be chosen as a tribute. I also find it interesting that a girl from one of the poorest districts in her city was able to completely change and rise up against the corrupt government in the series.

--Junior Elizabeth Allen





*Animal Farm* depicts the Russian Revolution of 1917 through purposefully crafted animal characters that are meant to mirror their real-life human counterparts. The two main characters are pigs; there is Snowball, who represents Leon Trotsky, and Napoleon, who represents Joseph Stalin. While the animals of the farm start off with the common goal of defeating their cruel human owners, the leaders of the regime (the pigs) begin to become more and more similar to the villains they set out to defeat.

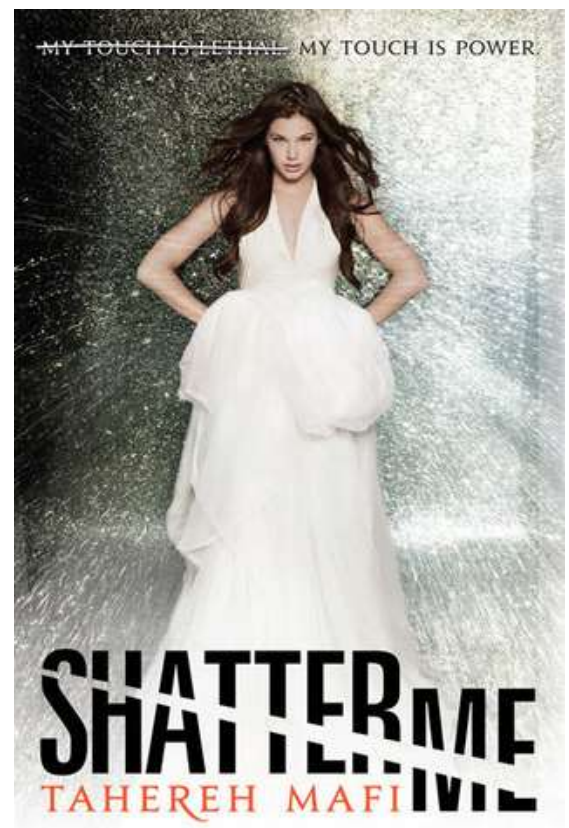
I found the satirical tone of this book to be especially interesting. For instance, the depiction of Trotsky and Stalin as pigs is quite ironic, as the selection of such an animal to represent the two historical figures in itself is a mockery of their authority from Orwell. Furthermore, the narrative ends with a tragic, yet almost expected ending, as the pigs become ensnared in the throws of corruption – a common pattern seen in human politicians as well.

--Junior Victoria Olanrewaju

A 17 year old girl is imprisoned for accidentally killing a boy by touching him and reunites with an old friend who changes her life. Because her touch is deadly she is isolated from civilization. It is set in a dystopian world where people are called by The Reestablishment.

I think this book is really interesting because it mixes oppression with a love story. The fact that Juliette's touch can kill someone is cool and symbolizes how people are scared of her and her power. The Reestablishment is portrayed as the controlling power trying to suppress everyone else's lives.

--Junior Elizabeth Allen



The Runaway #1 British Bestseller

# Eats, Shoots & Leaves



The Zero Tolerance  
Approach to Punctuation

!

LYNNE TRUSS

It's basically a british lady writing a whole book of examples of bad grammer she sees on the day to day. I used it to brush up on my grammar rules before taking the SAT and I also just found it funny and engaging.

I found it funny and lighthearted, like there was no pressure to finish it super fast or stick with it super long, it was just something I could pick up, read a chapter of, forget about it for a month, and return to it after.

--Charlie Kringel

It was exactly as the title says, a history of censorship in the west. It explores ideas about how in some aspects of society we are being censored in a way we don't notice anymore and when its compared to censorship in ghr past or in other parts of the world the censorship becomes obvious.

I found it to be a relaxing read, I enjoy history and this book was just a very well written conversation about one aspect of history. Also, even with it being a mote academic leaning book, it doesn't overuse advanced vocabulary and ideas to prove an intellectual conversation is being had, which makes it feel more relaxed and like a reliable read.

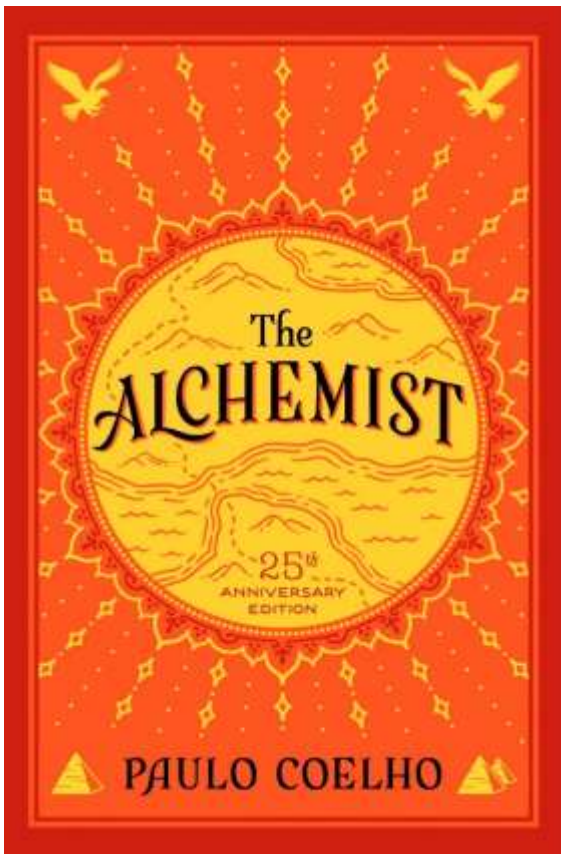
--Junior Charlie Kringel

# DANGEROUS IDEAS

A BRIEF  
HISTORY OF  
**CENSORSHIP**  
IN THE WEST,  
FROM THE  
ANCIENTS  
TO FAKE NEWS



*Eric Berkowitz*



*The Alchemist* is about a young shepherd named Santiago who dreams of finding a treasure in Egypt. He leaves his home in Spain to go on a journey filled with challenges, lessons, and new people. Along the way, he learns that the true "treasure" lies in following his personal goals or purpose in life. The story encourages readers to trust their hearts and pursue their dreams with courage.

What I found interesting about *The Alchemist* is how it makes a simple story to have deep, meaningful life lessons. Santiago's journey feels personal, even though it's set in a faraway land which reminding us that everyone has their own path to follow. I especially liked how the book shows that the answers we seek are often already within us.

--Junior Ryan Shin