

**Senior IB Summer Reading:**  
*Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev  
“The Thousand and One Nights” by Jorge Louis Borges

The first work is a Russian novel that was a major point of debate in the mid-nineteenth century among Russian society. The Russian literary landscape is full of famous names and massive tomes that have been referred to with a kind of reverence. This particular work of literature by Turgenev is every bit as Russian in that sense as Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Pushkin, and Chekhov. Your assignment is to do the one most important thing: *read the novel*. As you read you will need to be familiar with two very Russian ideas. One of them is the concept of the “superfluous man”: a man of wealth and plenty but who has no calling or sense of meaning in his life. The other concept is the philosophy of Nihilism. There is a particularly useful bit of writing on page 197 of your copies of the work that provide a background to this philosophy. These two ideas drive the novel and inform our understanding of the two rebels: Arkady and Bazarov.



After reading the novel, I want you to find a passage from it that is roughly 40 lines in length and mark it up. You can color mark, annotate, write in the margins, re-write it on a document to analyze, etc. This passage is one that you feel is integral to the novel as a whole. It needs to speak to you on a personal level, as well. When we return in the fall, we will use these passages as starting points for our discussion and further work.

The second work I am giving you is an 8-page article written by the Argentinean author, Jorge Louis Borges. This article is a rumination and recounting of the famed work, *The Thousand and One Nights*. There are some beautiful passages in here and some important thoughts on the work of a translation and how it comes to be. Because we are reading a work that has been translated from the Russian and deals with the tensions of a Western world and a seemingly Eastern one, I think this article is a wonderful companion piece. You again are being asked to simply read the article and then mark particular parts that you found to be interesting or particularly insightful.

These two assignments are meant to get you thinking about the work of literature in our lives and how interconnected we all are when it comes to the most important of human behaviors: storytelling.

Happy Reading!

Feel free to contact me over the summer as needed: [meredithsternberg@smsd.org](mailto:meredithsternberg@smsd.org)