

## Maret School 10th Grade Recommended Summer Reading 2021

### Realistic & Historical Fiction

*Pride* by Ibi Zoboi. Zoboi puts a modern spin on the Jane Austen classic *Pride and Prejudice*. When Darius and his brother move into her gentrifying Brooklyn neighborhood, Zuri Benitez wants nothing to do with them, but her sisters have other ideas.

*Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds. Fifteen-year-old Will is faced with a dilemma when his older brother is shot and killed: Should he take revenge? This novel in verse charts a life-changing elevator ride in which Will uses encounters on each of the eight floors of his apartment building to decide that question.

*On the Come Up* by Angie Thomas. Bri's dreams of being a famous rapper unexpectedly become reality when her song protesting racial profiling by white security guards at the her high school goes viral. How will the sudden fame shape Bri's life?

*Juliet Takes a Breath* by Gabby Rivera. Juliet Milagros Palante is leaving the Bronx and headed to Portland, Oregon. She just came out to her family and isn't sure if her mom will ever speak to her again. But Juliet has a plan, sort of, one that's going to help her figure out this whole "Puerto Rican lesbian" thing. She's interning with the author of her favorite book: Harlowe Brisbane, the ultimate authority on feminism, women's bodies, and other gay-sounding stuff.

*Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay. A coming-of-age story about grief, guilt, and the risks a Filipino-American teenager takes to uncover the truth about his cousin's murder. Jay Reguero plans to spend the last semester of his senior year playing video games before heading to the University of Michigan in the fall. But when he discovers that his Filipino cousin Jun was murdered as part of President Duterte's war on drugs, and no one in the family wants to talk about what happened, Jay travels to the Philippines to find out the real story.

*I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika L. Sanchez. Julia is not your perfect Mexican daughter. That was Olga's role. Then a tragic accident on the busiest street in Chicago leaves Julia broken. Julia's mother seems to channel her grief into pointing out every possible way Julia has failed. With the help of her best friend Lorena, and her first kiss, first love, first everything boyfriend Connor, Julia is determined to find her way.

*Clap When You Land* by Elizabeth Acevedo. Camino Rios lives for the summers when her father visits her in the Dominican Republic. But this time, on the day when his plane is supposed to land, Camino arrives at the airport to see crowds of crying people... In New York City, Yahaira Rios is called to the principal's office, where her mother is waiting to tell her that her father, her hero, has died in a plane crash. Separated by distance—and Papi's secrets—the two girls are forced to face a new reality in which their father is dead and their lives are forever altered. And then, when it seems like they've lost everything of their father, they learn of each other.

*Love from A to Z* by S.K. Ali. When she gets suspended for confronting her teacher, and he begins investigating her activist friends, Zayneb heads to her aunt's house in Doha, Qatar, for an early start to spring break. Fueled by the guilt of getting her friends in trouble, she resolves to try out a newer, "nicer" version of herself in a place where no one knows her. Then her path crosses with Adam's, who since he got diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in November, has stopped going to classes, intent, instead, on perfecting the making of things. Intent on keeping the memory of his mom alive for his little sister.

*Like a Love Story* by Abdi Nazemian. It's 1989 in New York City, and for three teens, the world is changing. Reza is an Iranian boy who has just moved to the city with his mother to live with his stepfather and stepbrother. He's terrified that someone will guess the truth he can barely acknowledge about himself. Reza knows he's gay, but all he knows of gay life are the media's images of men dying of AIDS.

*The Vanishing Half* by Britt Bennett. The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Many years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined.

*Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu. Willis Wu doesn't perceive himself as a protagonist even in his own life: he's merely Generic Asian Man. Every day, he leaves his tiny room in a Chinatown SRO and enters the Golden Palace restaurant, where *Black and White*, a procedural cop show, is in perpetual production. After stumbling into the spotlight, Willis finds himself launched into a wider world than he's ever known, discovering not only the secret history of Chinatown, but the buried legacy of his own family, and what that means for him, in today's America.

*The Other Americans* by Laila Lalami. Late one spring night, Driss Guerraoui, a Moroccan immigrant living in California, is walking across a darkened intersection when he is killed by a speeding car. The repercussions of his death bring together a diverse cast of characters: Guerraoui's daughter Nora, a jazz composer who returns to the small town in the Mojave she thought she'd left for good; his widow, Maryam, who still pines after her life in the old country; Efraín, an undocumented witness whose fear of deportation prevents him from coming forward; Jeremy, an old friend of Nora's and an Iraq War veteran; Coleman, a detective who is slowly discovering her son's secrets; Anderson, a neighbor trying to reconnect with his family; and the murdered man himself.

*How Much of These Hills is Gold* by C Pam Zhang. It's the Gold Rush in the West but more than gold is being taken. When their Chinese American family is attacked, 12 year old Lucy and her androgenous 11 year old sibling Sam find themselves both on the run and on a quest to honor their father.

*The Chosen* by Chaim Potok. It is the now-classic story of two fathers and two sons and the pressures on all of them to pursue their Jewish faith in the way that is best suited to each. And as the boys grow into young men, they discover in the other a lost spiritual brother, and a link to an

unexplored world that neither had ever considered before. In effect, they exchange places, and find the peace that neither will ever retreat from again.

*Arabian Jazz* by Diana Abu-Jaber. A small, poor-white community in upstate New York becomes home to the transplanted Jordanian family of Matussem Ramoud: The widower Matussem loves American jazz, kitschy lawn ornaments, and, of course, his daughters. The characters regularly confront questions of identity. Are they American? Are they Arab? Should they marry and, if so, whom?

*Ladies Auxiliary* by Tova Mirvis. When free-spirited Batsheva moves into the close-knit Orthodox community of Memphis, Tennessee, the already precarious relationship between the Ladies Auxiliary and their teenage daughters is shaken to the core. In this extraordinary novel, Tova Mirvis takes us into the fascinating and insular world of the Memphis Orthodox Jews, one ripe with tradition and contradiction.

*Giovanni's Room* - James Baldwin. Baldwin's haunting and controversial second novel is his most sustained treatment of sexuality, and a classic of gay literature. In a 1950s Paris swarming with expatriates and characterized by dangerous liaisons and hidden violence, an American finds himself struggling to live the conventional life he envisions for himself. After meeting and proposing to a young woman, he falls into a lengthy affair with an Italian bartender and is confounded and tortured by his sexual identity as he oscillates between the two.

*Homeland Elegies* - Ayad Akhtar. Akhtar forges a new narrative voice to capture a country in which debt has ruined countless lives and our ideals have been sacrificed to the gods of finance, where a TV personality is president and immigrants live in fear, and where the nation's unhealed wounds of 9/11 wreak havoc around the world. Akhtar attempts to make sense of it all through the lens of a story about one family, from a heartland town in America to palatial suites in Central Europe to guerilla lookouts in the mountains of Afghanistan, and spares no one -- least of all himself -- in the process.

*A Place For Us* - Fatima Mirza. *A Place for Us* unfolds the lives of an Indian-American Muslim family, gathered together in their Californian hometown to celebrate the eldest daughter, Hadia's, wedding - a match of love rather than tradition. It is here, on this momentous day, that Amar, the youngest of the siblings, reunites with his family for the first time in three years. Rafiq and Layla must now contend with the choices and betrayals that lead to their son's estrangement - the reckoning of parents who strove to pass on their cultures and traditions to their children; and of children who in turn struggle to balance authenticity in themselves with loyalty to the home they came from.

*We the Animals* - Justin Torres. Three brothers tear their way through childhood — smashing tomatoes all over each other, building kites from trash, hiding out when their parents do battle, tiptoeing around the house as their mother sleeps off her graveyard shift. Paps and Ma are from Brooklyn — he's Puerto Rican, she's white — and their love is a serious, dangerous thing that makes and unmakes a family many times. From the intense familial unity felt by a child to the

profound alienation he endures as he begins to see the world, this beautiful novel reinvents the coming-of-age story in a way that is sly and punch-in-the-stomach powerful.

*The Romance Reader* - Pearl Abraham. Pearl Abraham—who grew up in a Hasidic community herself—presents the story of Rachel, a girl caught between the strictly controlled world of ultra Orthodox Judaism and the seductive yearnings of her own heart. Both a coming-of-age story and a brave, beautifully rendered expose of a hidden, insular world .

*Solar Storms* - Linda Hogan. *Solar Storms* tells the moving story of Angela Jenson, a troubled Native American girl coming of age in the foster system in Oklahoma, who decides to reunite with her family. At seventeen, Angela returns to the place where she was raised—a stunning island town that lies at the border of Canada and Minnesota—where she finds that an eager developer is planning a hydroelectric dam that will leave sacred land flooded and abandoned. Joining up with three other concerned residents, Angela fights the project, reconnecting with her ancestral roots as she does so.

*Caucasia: A Novel* - Danzy Senna. Birdie and Cole are the daughters of a black father and a white mother. Birdie appears to be white, while Cole is dark enough to fit in with the other kids at the Afrocentric school they attend. Then their parents' marriage falls apart. Their father's new black girlfriend won't even look at Birdie, while their mother gives her life over to the Movement.

*All Over Creation: A Novel* by Ruth Ozeki. Yumi Fuller hasn't set foot in her hometown of Liberty Falls, Idaho—heart of the potato-farming industry—since she ran away at age fifteen. Twenty-five years later, the prodigal daughter returns to confront her dying parents, her best friend, and her conflicted past, and finds herself caught up in an altogether new drama. The post-millennial farming community has been invaded by Agribusiness forces at war with a posse of activists, the Seeds of Resistance, who travel the country in a camping car, "The Spudnick," biofueled by pilfered McDonald's french-fry oil.

## **Science Fiction & Fantasy**

*The City We Became* by N.K. Jemison. It turns out that cities can come alive - and New York City is about to be born. But the birth can't happen without the help of six people, who must not only help the city come alive but also defend it from an ancient terrifying enemy force that lurks within. This is the first book of a planned trilogy.

*Ninth House* by Leigh Bardugo. Alex Stern is admitted to Yale for a reason that has nothing to do with grades. She has been selected because of her unique ability to fight against a dangerous dark magic being channeled by one of Yale's secret societies. Her quest leads to her to confront the nexus of magic, power, and privilege. This is the first book of a planned series.

*American War* by Omar El Akkad. Sarat Chestnut, born in Louisiana, is only six when the Second American Civil War breaks out in 2074. But even she knows that oil is outlawed, that Louisiana is half underwater, and that unmanned drones fill the sky. Sarat is befriended by a mysterious functionary, under whose influence she is turned into a deadly instrument of war.

*Song for a New Day* by Sarah Pinsker. This 2019 Nebula Award winner for Best Novel imagines an all-too-familiar scenario - mass gatherings have been banned but not only because of pandemics but also because of terrorist attacks. Singer-songwriter Luce, who remembers the Before Time, is determined to hold live concerts, even if they are illegal. She crosses paths with nineteen-year-old music-lover Rosemary, who begins to question the cost of fear as she seeks to discover music outside of her virtual bubble.

*Black Sun* by Rebecca Roanhorse. Inspired by the civilizations of the Pre-Columbian Americas and woven into a tale of celestial prophecies, political intrigue, and forbidden magic. A god will return when the earth and sky converge under the black sun. In the holy city of Tova, the winter solstice is usually a time for celebration and renewal, but this year it coincides with a solar eclipse, a rare celestial event proscribed by the Sun Priest as an unbalancing of the world.

*The Good Luck Girls* by Charlotte Nicole Davis. The country of Arketta calls them Good Luck Girls--they know their luck is anything but. When Clementine accidentally kills a man, the girls risk a dangerous escape and harrowing journey to find freedom, justice, and revenge in a country that wants them to have none of those things. Pursued by Arketta's most vicious and powerful forces, both human and inhuman, their only hope lies in a story passed from one Girl to another, a story that only the most desperate would believe.

*The Extraordinaries* by T.J. Klune. After a chance encounter with Shadow Star, Nova City's mightiest hero (and Nick's biggest crush), Nick sets out to make himself extraordinary. And he'll do it with or without the reluctant help of Seth Gray, Nick's best friend (and maybe the love of his life).

*A Song Below Water* by Bethany C. Morrow. In a society determined to keep her under lock and key, Tavia must hide her siren powers. Meanwhile, Effie is fighting her own family struggles, pitted against literal demons from her past. Everything changes in the aftermath of a siren murder trial that rocks the nation, when Tavia accidentally lets out her magical voice at the worst possible moment. To save themselves from drowning, their unbreakable sisterhood must prove to be the strongest magic of all.

*Legendborn* by Tracy Deonn. After her mother dies in an accident, sixteen-year-old Bree Matthews wants nothing to do with her family memories or childhood home. A residential program for bright high schoolers at UNC-Chapel Hill seems like the perfect escape--until Bree witnesses a magical attack her very first night on campus. Filled with mystery and an intriguingly rich magic system, Tracy Deonn's YA contemporary fantasy *Legendborn* offers the dark allure of *City of Bones* with a modern-day twist on a classic legend and a lot of Southern Black Girl Magic.

*Suicide Club* by Rachel Heng. Set in the near future of New York City where the pursuit of immortality is a top priority, Lea Kirino has the genetic potential to live forever if she does everything right and maintains the right balance of healthtech, rigorous juicing, and low impact exercise. But when she spots her estranged father on a crowded sidewalk, she is drawn into his world of the Suicide Club, a network of powerful individuals and rebels who reject society's pursuit of immortality. In this future world, death is not only taboo, it is also highly illegal.

*Lock In* by John Scalza. Fifteen years from now, a new virus sweeps the globe. 95% of those afflicted experience nothing worse than fever and headaches. Four percent suffer acute meningitis, creating the largest medical crisis in history. And one percent find themselves "locked in"--fully awake and aware, but unable to move or respond to stimulus. Chris, a lock-in, has a robot body and has just joined the FBI in DC to discover who is killing lock-ins and why.

*Exhalation* by Ted Chiang. In these nine stunningly original, provocative, and poignant stories, Ted Chiang tackles some of humanity's oldest questions along with new quandaries only he could imagine. In "The Merchant and the Alchemist's Gate," a portal through time forces a fabric seller in ancient Baghdad to grapple with past mistakes and second chances. In "Exhalation," an alien scientist makes a shocking discovery with ramifications that are literally universal. In "Anxiety Is the Dizziness of Freedom," the ability to glimpse into alternate universes necessitates a radically new examination of the concepts of choice and free will.

*Cemetery Boys* by Aiden Thomas. When his traditional Latinx family has problems accepting his true gender, Yadriel becomes determined to prove himself a real brujo. With the help of his cousin and best friend Maritza, he performs the ritual himself, and then sets out to find the ghost of his murdered cousin and set it free. However, the ghost he summons is actually Julian Diaz, the school's resident bad boy, and Julian is not about to go quietly into death.

*Riot Baby* by Tochi Onyebuchi. Ella has a Thing. She sees things that haven't happened yet. But when her brother Kev is incarcerated, Ella must decide what it means to watch her brother suffer while holding the ability to wreck cities in her hands. Riot Baby burns fearlessly toward revolution and has quietly devastating things to say about love, fury, and the black American experience. Ella and Kev are defined and destroyed by racism. Their futures might alter the world.

## Nonfiction & Memoir

*Apple: Skin to the Core* by Eric Gansworth. In this memoir-in-verse, Gansworth tells the story of his life, of an Onondaga family living among Tuscaroras, and of Native people in America, including the damaging legacy of government boarding schools—and in doing so grapples with the slur common in Native communities, for someone “red on the outside, white on the inside,” and reclaims it.

*Dragon Hoops*: Gene Luen Yang. Gene understands stories—comic book stories, in particular. Big action. Bigger thrills. And the hero *always* wins. But Gene doesn't get sports. He lost interest in basketball long ago, but at the high school where he now teaches, it's all anyone can talk about. Once Gene gets to know these young all-stars, he realizes that their story is just as thrilling as anything he's seen on a comic book page.

*Fun Home: A Family Tragicomedy* by Alison Bechdel. Bechdel, author of the long-running comic strip *Dykes To Watch Out For*, has produced a brilliant memoir of her childhood with her closeted gay father. She describes the triumphs and many tragedies of growing up with a grace and intimacy that draws the reader in immediately. Her use of her childhood diaries, writings, and illustrations make this almost an archival work of her family's story and reveals the emotional torment Bechdel endured.

*A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* by Bill Bryson. Back in America after twenty years in Britain, Bill Bryson decided to reacquaint himself with his native country by walking the 2,100-mile Appalachian Trail, which stretches from Georgia to Maine. The AT offers an astonishing landscape of silent forests and sparkling lakes--and endless opportunities to witness the majestic silliness of his fellow human beings. Bryson's acute eye is a wise witness to this beautiful but fragile trail, and as he tells its fascinating history, he makes a moving plea for the conservation of America's last great wilderness.

*All Boys Aren't Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto* by George M. Johnson. In a series of personal essays, prominent journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years in New Jersey and Virginia. From the memories of getting his teeth kicked out by bullies at age five, to flea marketing with his loving grandmother, to his first sexual relationships, this young-adult memoir weaves together the trials and triumphs faced by Black queer boys.

*Girl, Interrupted* by Susanna Kaysen. In 1967, after a session with a psychiatrist she'd never seen before, eighteen-year-old Susanna Kaysen was put in a taxi and sent to McLean Hospital. She spent most of the next two years in the ward for teenage girls in a psychiatric hospital as renowned for its famous clientele--Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, James Taylor, and Ray Charles--as for its progressive methods of treating those who could afford its sanctuary.

*When They Call You A Terrorist: a Black Lives Matter Memoir* by Patrisse Khan-Cullors. Khan-Cullors, one of the founders of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, was raised in a

family and community impacted by poverty. At age nine, she saw the police beat and arrest her brother Monte. This interaction, as well as her time at a predominantly white school, forced Khan-Cullors to see the different ways blacks and whites experience the world. This insightful firsthand account of the creation of BLM deftly exposes the injustices of the United States' social structures and calls for an end to a judicial system that leaves black men and women unprotected and their families broken.

*Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You* by Jason Reynolds. This adaptation of Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning title teaches readers to think critically about racism and antiracism in the United States and the Western world. Within short chapters and a chronological format, the authors discuss specific people and/or historical events to expand upon broader themes. The authors argue that people fit into three categories, some transitioning from one category to another: segregationists, assimilationists, and antiracists.

*Grunt: the Curious Science of Humans at War* by Mary Roach. With compassion and dark humor, Roach delves into the world of military scientists and their drive to make combat more survivable for soldiers. She often describes seemingly absurd tests and experiments. Military scientists are so committed to bringing soldiers home alive that they examine nearly every facet of life and death, researching such topics as diarrhea among Navy SEALs, body odors under stress, using maggots to heal wounds, and the "injuries collectively known as urotrauma."

*The 57 Bus* by Dashka Slater. It was late afternoon on Monday, November 4, 2013. Sasha was napping on the 57 bus in Oakland, California, when Richard, egged on by friends, set their gauzy skirt on fire. (Sasha is genderqueer and prefers the pronoun they.) Sasha survived, but sustained third-degree burns on their calves and thighs. The next day Richard was arrested for a hate crime and processed as an adult in the justice system. Slater goes beyond the headlines to tell the very human stories behind these individuals and their families.

*Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*. Born with deaf-blindness, Girma grew up with enough vision to know when someone was in front of her and enough hearing to know when someone close to her was talking. However, she had difficulty reading facial features or distinguishing people in group conversations. Relying on her own problem-solving skills, Girma overcame roadblocks while simultaneously obtaining her undergraduate and then law degree.

*Nothing Like I Imagined*: Mindy Kaling. In this hilarious collection, Mindy Kaling considers her new role as single mom, the perks of not having a husband, and her struggle with social anxiety. In between, the beloved actress, writer, and Hollywood power-bruncher gets Kanye West'd at her best friend's birthday, thwarts an "only in LA" crime, and learns what it means to have it all.

## Further Reading

Students may also consider books recommended from the following sources.

[Walter Awards](#)



[YALSA Book Awards](#)  
[YALSA Teen Book Finder Database](#)