

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

**Alexie, Sherman, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Diary Fiction)**

Arnold Spirit, aka Junior, was born an outsider with water on his brain, lopsided eyes, and an IQ oppressed by extreme poverty and a mediocre reservation education. After switching to an all-white high school he realizes that though he'll never easily fit in, self-determination and a solid personal identity will give him the chance to both succeed and transcend.

**Asimov, Issac, *I, Robot* (Science Fiction)**

Science fiction classic in which a Robot, accused of murder, has his day in court.

**Asimov, Issac, *The Caves of Steel* (Science Fiction)**

An earth plain clothes policeman must work with a robot from another world to solve the murder of a Spacer on Earth.

**Carr, Caleb, *The Alienist* (Historical Fiction)**

In New York City in 1896 a reporter John Moore, psychologist Dr. Laszlo Kreizler, and police secretary Susan Howard join forces to catch a serial murderer.

**Carver, Raymond, *Cathedral* (Short Stories)**

A collection of short stories that overflow with the danger, excitement, mystery and possibility of life. Stories included: "Feathers" "Chef's House" "Preservation" "The Compartment" "A Small, Good Thing" "Vitamins" "Careful" "Where I'm Calling From" "The Train" "Fever" "The Bridle" "Cathedral."

**Carver, Raymond, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (Short Stories)**

Presents seventeen short stories which include: "Why Don't You Dance" "Viewfinder" "Mr. Coffee and Mr. Fixit" "Gazebo" "I Could See the Smallest Things" "Sacks" "The Bath" "Tell the Women We're Going" "After the Denim" "So Much Water So Close To Home" "The Third Thing that Killed my Father Off" "A Serious Talk" "The Calm" "Popular Mechanics" "Everything Stuck to Him" "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" "One More Thing."

**Chabon, Michael, *The Amazing Adventure of Kavalier & Clay* (Humorous Fiction)**

Joe Kavalier has managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Prague, and now he must use his cunning wits to help rescue his family from Hitler's evil plans.

**Chabon, Michael, *Summerland* (Baseball Fiction)**

The ferishers, little creatures who ensure perfect weather for Summerland, recruit Ethan Feld, one of history's worst baseball players, to help them in their struggle to save Summerland, and ultimately the world, from giants, goblins, and other legendary, terrible creatures.

**Cheever, John, *The Stories of John Cheever* (Short Stories)**

A collection of sixty-one of Cheever's short stories published from 1946-1975.

**Cisneros, Sandra, *Carmelo or, Puro cuento : a novel* (Domestic Fiction)**

LaLa learns the stories of her awful grandmother and weaves them into a colorful family history. The "carmelo," a striped shawl begun by her great-grandmother, symbolizes their traditions.

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

**Cisneros, Sandra, *La Casa en Mango Street* (Domestic Fiction)**

A young girl living in an Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago ponders the advantages and disadvantages of her environment and evaluates her relationships with family and friends.

**Cunningham, Michael, *The Hours* (Domestic Fiction)**

Cunningham draws inventively on the life and work of Virginia Woolf to tell the story of a group of contemporary characters struggling with the conflicting claims of love and inheritance, hope and despair. The narrative of Woolf's last days before her suicide early in World War II counterpoints the fictional stories of Richard, a famous poet whose life has been shadowed by his talented and troubled mother, and his lifelong friend Clarissa, who strives to forge a balanced and rewarding life in spite of the demands of friends, lovers, and family.

**DeLillo, Don, *Falling Man* (Psychological Fiction)**

Keith Neudecker, a survivor of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, returns home from the ruins to his wife Lianne, from whom he had separated, and his young son Justin, and finds in the aftermath that he has become a very different man.

**Dobson, Joanne, *Quieter Than Sleep* (Mystery Fiction)**

**(author visit to Ramaz – Fall 2010)**

English professor and Emily Dickinson expert Karen Pelletier is as unlikely a sleuth as you'll ever find, and you'd think that an elite college such as Enfield would be as safe, cozy, and insulated as its reputation. But Enfield College is shaken to its Puritan roots when star English professor Randy Astin-Berger tumbles out of a closet into Karen's arms at a faculty cocktail party, strangled to death with his own flashy necktie.

**Diaz, Juno, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Rites and Ceremonies Fiction)**

Overweight and nerdy Oscar lives with his Dominican American mother and sister in New Jersey and dreams of becoming a renowned author and finding true love, but unfortunately, a family curse stands in the way of his wishes.

**Doctorow, E.L. *Billy Bathgate* (Historical Fiction)**

This is the story of Billy Bathgate, a boy who has insinuated himself into the inner circle of the notorious Dutch Schultz Gang to become apprentice and protege to one of the great murdering gangsters.

**Dubus, Andre, *House of Sand and Fog* (Domestic Fiction)**

Former colonel for the Iranian Air Force believes he can create a new life for himself and his family when he buys an attractive bungalow in the California countryside. When the cottage's former owner wants her house back, he is willing to do anything to keep it.

**Eggers, Dave, *What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng : a novel* (Sudanese Fiction)**

As a young boy Valentino witnessed Arab militia men destroy his village, hid from hungry lions, wandered through wasted, desert landscapes, and narrowly escaped fatal disease, capture, starvation, and enlistment. The will to survive displayed here is almost as miraculous as this Sudanese "Lost Boy's" ability to recount the harrowing genocide of home and people with such thoughtfulness and grace.

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

**Eggers, Dave, *The Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (Non-Fiction)**

A memoir in which the author discusses the unrelated deaths of his parents within a period of months, his newly acquired responsibility for his eight-year-old brother, and his creation of a satirical magazine.

**Elmore, Leonard, *Swag* (Fiction)**

The smallest of small-time criminals, Ernest Stickley Jr. figures his luck's about to change when Detroit used-car salesman Frank Ryan catches him trying to boost a ride from Ryan's lot. Frank's got some surefire schemes for getting rich quick—all of them involving guns—and all Stickley has to do is follow "Ryan's Rules" to share the wealth. But sometimes rules need to be bent, maybe even broken, if one is to succeed in the world of crime, especially if the "brains" of the operation knows less than nothing.

**Elmore, Leonard, *Fire in the Hole* (Short Stories)**

Originally published as *When the Women Came Out to Dance*, Elmore Leonard's extraordinary story collection, *Fire in the Hole* are nine riveting tales of crime and (sometimes) punishment—including the title story starring U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens, which was the basis for the smash hit TV series *Justified*.

**Erdich, Louise, *Murdering Indians – A Documentary History of the 1897 Killing That Inspired Louise Erdirch's the Plague of Doves* (Non-Fiction)**

In February of 1897 a family of six—four generations, including infant sons and their aged great grandmother was brutally murdered in rural North Dakota. The weapons used were a shotgun, an axe, a pitchfork, a spade and a club. Several North Dakota Indians from the nearby reservation were arrested, one was tried, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The conviction was reversed by the state supreme court, which ordered a new trial. However, a one week later an angry mob broke into the county jail dragged three of the five accused Indians out, and hanged them from a butcher's windlass.

**Erdrich, Louise, *The Plague of Doves* (Domestic Fiction)**

In 1911, a farm family is killed in Pluto, North Dakota, and three Ojibwe are lynched for the murders even though there is no evidence of their guilt. Years later the events of the crime reverberate among the descendants of those involved.

**Erdrich, Louise, *Love Medicine* (Historical Fiction)**

It is the story of two Native American families, the Kashpaws and the Lamartines and a multi-generational portrait of strong men and women caught in an unforgettable drama of anger, desire, and the healing power that is love medicine.

**Eugenides, Jeffrey, *Middlesex* (Domestic Fiction)**

Three generations of a Greek American family find themselves plagued by a mutant gene which causes bizarre side effects in the family's teenage girls.

**Foer, Jonathan Safran, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Domestic Fiction)**

Oskar Schell, a gifted 9-year old, explores the mystery of his father's death during the 9/11 attack.

**Gaines, Ernest, *A Lesson Before Dying* (Friendship Fiction)**

Jefferson, a young black man is about to go to the electric chair for murder. When Jefferson's attorney states,

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

"I would just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this," disillusioned teacher Grant Wiggins is sent into the penitentiary to help Jefferson gain a sense of dignity and self-esteem before his execution.

**Grahame-Smith, Seth, *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter* (Historical Fiction)**

When Abraham Lincoln was nine years old, his mother died from an ailment called the "milk sickness." Only later did he learn that his mother's deadly affliction was actually the work of a local vampire, seeking to collect on Abe's father's unfortunate debts.

While Abraham Lincoln is widely lauded for reuniting the North with the South and abolishing slavery from our country, no one has ever understood his valiant fight for what it really was. That is, until Seth Grahame-Smith stumbled upon *The Journal of Abraham Lincoln*, and became the first living person to lay eyes on it in more than 140 years.

Using the journal as his guide and writing in the grand biographical style of Doris Kearns Goodwin and David McCullough, Green has reconstructed the true life story of our greatest president for the first time—all while revealing the hidden history behind the Civil War, and uncovering the massive role vampires played in the birth, growth, and near-death of our nation.

**Green, John, *Looking for Alaska* (Fiction)**

Miles "Pudge" Halter's life has been one big non-event, and his obsession with famous last words has only made him crave "the Great Perhaps" even more (Francois Rabelais, poet). He heads off to the sometimes crazy and anything-but-boring world of Culver Creek Boarding School, and his life becomes the opposite of safe. Because down the hall is Alaska Young. She is a gorgeous, clever, funny, self-destructive, screwed up, and utterly fascinating young woman. She pulls Pudge into her world, launches him into the Great Perhaps, and steals his heart.

**Hamill, Pete, *Snow in August* (Domestic Fiction)**

Eleven-year-old Irish Catholic, Michael Devlin and Rabbi Judah Hirsch form a wonderful, if unlikely, friendship in Brooklyn in 1947, but the actions of a group of anti-Semitic thugs soon have them trapped in a spiral of hate and hoping for a miracle.

**Harbach, Chad, *The Art of Fielding* (Domestic Fiction)**

At Westish College, a small school on the shore of Lake Michigan, baseball star Henry Skrimshander seems destined for big league stardom. But when a routine throw goes disastrously off course, the fates of five people are upended. Henry's fight against self-doubt threatens to ruin his future.

**Hemingway, Ernest, *The Nick Adams Stories* (Short Stories)**

Describes fictional character Nick Adams growing from child to adolescent, to soldier, veteran, writer, and parent.

**Hemingway, Ernest, *The Sun Also Rises* (Fiction)**

It is a story of a group of 'Lost Generation' Americans and Brits in the 1920s on a sojourn from Paris to Pamplona, Spain. The novel poignantly details their life as expatriates on Paris' Left Bank, and conveys the brutality of bullfighting in Spain.

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

**Hosseini, Khaled, *The Kite Runner* (Betrayal Fiction)**

Years after he flees Afghanistan, Amir, now an American citizen, returns to his native land and attempts to atone for the betrayal of his best friend before he fled Kabul and the Taliban.

**Hornby, Nick, *About A Boy* (Fiction)**

Will, a thirty-six-year-old London bachelor, undergoes a change in his outlook about marriage and children when he lies to join a single parents group in order to meet women, and becomes friends with a needy twelve-year-old named Marcus.

**Hornby, Nick, *High Fidelity* (Humorous Fiction)**

Recently dumped by his wealthy girlfriend, record store owner, Rob Fleming finds himself in financial trouble and sets out on a pilgrimage to ask his former girlfriends where their relationships went wrong and to learn where his life went off track.

**Irving, John, *A Prayer for Owen Meany* (Domestic Fiction)**

In the summer of 1953, two eleven-year-old boys who were best friends are playing in a Little League baseball game in Gravesend, New Hampshire. One of the boys hits a foul ball that kills the other boy's mother. The boy who hits the ball doesn't believe in accidents; Owen Meany believes he is God's instrument. What happens to Owen, after that 1953 foul ball, is extraordinary.

**Ishiguro, Kazuo, *Never Let Me Go* (Fiction)**

Only special students are chosen to attend Hailsham, an exclusive boarding school tucked away in the English countryside. The chilling truth of their special nature slowly unfolds as we follow the stories of three former students.

**Jackson, Shirley, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* (Fiction)**

Merricat Blackwood protects her sister, Constance, from the curiosity and hostility of the villagers after murders occur on the family estate.

**Jin, Ha *Waiting* (Historical Fiction)**

Lin Kong struggles to balance his life between the two women he loves and the country that is trying to rule his life.

**Jones, Edward P., *The Known World* (Historical Fiction)**

Henry Townsend, an African farmer and former slave, is befriended by the most powerful man in antebellum Virginia's Manchester County and becomes proprietor of his own plantation, as well as of his own slaves.

**Kidd, Sue Monk, *Secret Life of Bees* (Fiction)**

Searching for the truth about her mother's life and death, a grieving Lily finds the answers, love and acceptance where she least expects it.

**King, Stephen, *On Writing: a memoir of the craft* (Non-Fiction)**

Stephen King reflects on how his writing has helped him through difficult times and describes various aspects of the art of writing.

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

**Kingsolver, Barbara, *Animal, Vegetable and Miracle* (Non-Fiction)**

The author tells how she and her family relocated to southern Appalachia from Arizona in order to live a simpler life, grow their own food, and live among a community of local organic growers.

**Kingsolver, Barbara, *The Poisonwood Bible* (Historical Fiction)**

This intense family drama is set in Africa on the verge of independence and upheaval. In 1959, evangelical preacher Nathan Price moves his wife and four daughters from Georgia to a village in the Belgian Congo, later Zaire. Their dysfunction and cultural arrogance proves disastrous as the family is nearly destroyed by war.

**Lahiri, Jhumpa, *The Lowland* (Historical Fiction)**

Subhash, having left his family in Calcutta to pursue a career in science in the United States, returns home to look into what happened to his brother, Udayan, who had joined the Naxalite Movement, and try to rebuild his shattered family and help his brother's wife.

**Larson, Erik, *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America* (Non-Fiction)** The 1893 Chicago World's Fair captured the imagination of the whole world, and also provided a playground for a cunning serial killer.

**LeCarre, John, *A Most Wanted Man: a novel* (Fiction)**

In Hamburg, Annabel, a civil rights lawyer, works to prevent Issa, a Muslim who is in Germany for mysterious purposes, from being deported, but in doing so she risks her own career and personal safety, and when Tommy Brue, a sixty-year-old British private banker, gets involved, German Intelligence takes an active interest.

**Lethem, Jonathan, *Motherless Brooklyn* (Mystery Fiction)**

Lionel Essrog, a victim of Tourette's syndrome, is rescued from the St. Vincent's Home for Boys, along with three other boys, by local tough guy, Frank Minna who molds the group into a fly-by-night detective agency. When Frank is knifed and tossed in a dumpster, Lionel is forced to become a real detective in order to find the killer.

**Maguire, Gregory, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (Fantasy Fiction)**

The Wizard of Oz retold from the point of view of Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West. You'll never think of Oz the same way again.

**Martel, Yann, *Life of Pi* (Psychological Fiction)**

Pi Patel, having spent an idyllic childhood in Pondicherry, India, as the son of a zookeeper, sets off with his family at the age of sixteen to start anew in Canada, but his life takes a marvelous turn when their ship sinks in the Pacific, leaving him adrift on a raft with a 450-pound Bengal tiger for company.

**McCarthy, Cormac, *All the Pretty Horses* (Fiction)**

This is the story of young John Grady Cole, the last of a long line of Texas ranchers, who, along with two companions, sets off on an idyllic, sometimes comic adventure, to a place where dreams are paid for in blood.

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

**McCarthy, Cormac, *The Road* (Fiction)**

After an apocalyptic catastrophe, a father and his young son embark on a grim and perilous quest following the road to the sea.

**Momaday, N. Scott, *House Made of Dawn* (Historical Fiction)**

Abel, a young American Indian home from a foreign war, finds himself torn between his father's world on the reservation and the lure of industrial America.

**Morrison, Tony, *Beloved* (Historical Fiction)**

Sethe, an escaped slave living in post-Civil War Ohio, struggles to keep Beloved, an intruder, from gaining possession of her present while throwing off the legacy of her past.

**O'Brien, Tim, *In The Lake of the Woods* (Domestic Fiction)**

After John and Kathy realize that their marriage has been built on deception, Kathy mysteriously disappears in the Minnesota north woods.

**Orwell, George, *1984* (Fiction)**

Winston Smith, a worker at the Ministry of Truth in the future political entity of Oceania, puts his life on the line when he joins a covert brotherhood in rebelling against the Party that controls all human thought and action.

**Patchett, Anne, *State of Wonder* (Fiction)**

Dr. Marina Singh, a research scientist with a Minnesota-based pharmaceutical company, is sent to Brazil after the death of her friend and colleague, to take up his mission of finding Dr. Annick Swenson, a ruthless woman, now in her seventies, who has been conducting research among the Lakashi tribe on a reputed miracle drug, and refuses to let anything stand in her way.

**Patchett, Anne, *Bel Canto* (Fiction)**

A group of international guests, taken hostage by terrorists while attending a birthday party at the home of the vice president of a small South American country, form bonds with their captors and enter into an almost idyllic lifestyle, united by the music of Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano.

**Proulx, E. Annie, *The Shipping News* (Domestic Fiction)**

Quoye and his two emotionally disturbed daughters return to the family ancestral home in Newfoundland to start new lives.

**Rice, Anne, *Interview with a Vampire* (Horror Fiction)**

The time is now. We are in a small room with a vampire, face to face as he confesses. His confessions are hypnotic and shocking.

**Riggs, Ransom, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (Mystery Fiction)**

As a kid, Jacob formed a special bond with his grandfather over his bizarre tales and photos of levitating girls and invisible boys. Now at 16, he is reeling from the old man's unexpected death. Then Jacob is given a mysterious letter that propels him on a journey to the remote Welsh island where his grandfather grew up. There, he finds the children from the photographs--alive and well--despite the islanders' assertion that all

# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

were killed decades ago. As Jacob begins to unravel more about his grandfather's childhood, he suspects he is being trailed by a monster only he can see.

**Roth, Philip, *The Plot Against America* (Fiction)**

This is a fascinating alternate history that takes a hard look at one of America's legendary heroes, Charles Lindbergh, and at how bigotry and fear can shape politics.

**Russo, Richard, *Empire Falls* (Fiction)**

Miles Roby is called back from college to the small town of Empire Falls in Dexter County, Maine to take care of his ailing mother. He falls into a rut that keeps him trapped until years later when a series of revelations and tragedies jolts him back into an awareness of his life.

**Satrapi, Marjane, *The Complete Persepolis* (Non-Fiction)**

Marjane Satrapi's memoir of her childhood in Iran during the Islamic Revolution is beautifully rendered in this graphic novel series.

**Shields, Carol, *The Stone Diaries* (Domestic Fiction)**

This is the story of an ordinary woman's struggle to find a place for herself in her own life.

**Smiley, Jane, *A Thousand Acres* (Domestic Fiction)**

Dark truths and long-suppressed emotions come to the surface in 1979 when a successful Iowa farmer decides to cut one of his daughters out of his will.

**Smith, Patti, *Just Kids* (Non-Fiction)**

It was the summer Coltrane died, the summer of love and riots, and the summer when a chance encounter in Brooklyn led two young people on a path of art, devotion, and initiation. Patti Smith would evolve as a poet and performer, and Robert Mapplethorpe would direct his highly provocative style toward photography. They traversed the city from Coney Island to Forty-second Street, and eventually to the celebrated round table of Max's Kansas City. In 1969, the pair set up camp at the Hotel Chelsea and soon entered a community of the famous and infamous—the influential artists of the day, the colorful fringe. It was a time of heightened awareness, when the worlds of poetry, rock and roll, art, and sexual politics were colliding and exploding. In this milieu, two kids made a pact to take care of each other.

**Spiegelman, Art, *Maus I: a survivor's tale: my father bleeds history* (Non-Fiction)**

Memoir about Vladek Spiegleman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and about his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father, his story, and with history itself. Cartoon format portrays Jews as mice and Nazis as cats.

**Stegner, Wallace, *Angle of Repose* (Domestic Fiction)**

This is the story of four generations in the life of the Ward family, from America's western frontier to today.

**Styron, William, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (Historical Fiction)**

The story is told of the short-lived, bloody rebellion of slaves in Southampton, Virginia, in August, 1831, as seen through the eyes of the instigator, Nat Turner.



# Ramaz Upper School Library

## Suggested Summer Reading List 2014

**Tart, Donna, *The Goldfinch* (Fiction)**

Theo Decker, a 13-year-old New Yorker, miraculously survives an accident that kills his mother. Abandoned by his father, Theo is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. Bewildered by his strange new home on Park Avenue, disturbed by schoolmates who don't know how to talk to him, and tormented above all by his longing for his mother, he clings to the one thing that reminds him of her: a small, mysteriously captivating painting that ultimately draws Theo into the underworld of art.

**Vonnegut, Kurt, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Historical Fiction)**

A fourth-generation German-American is tortured by his memories of the firebombing of Dresden in 1944 which he witnessed while a prisoner of war.

**Vonnegut, Kurt, *Welcome to the Monkey House: a collection of short works* (Short Stories)**

A collection of twenty-five short works by the American author written between 1950 and 1968 and originally printed in a wide range of publications including "The Atlantic Monthly," "Esquire," and "Ladies' Home Journal." "Where I Live" "Harrison Bergeron" "Who Am I This Time?" "Welcome to the Monkey House" "Long Walk to Forever" "The Foster Portfolio" "Miss Temptation" "All the King's Horses" "Tom Edison's Shaggy Dog" "New Dictionary" "Next Door" "More Stately Mansions" "The Hyannis Port Story" "D.P." "Report on the Barnhouse Effect" "The Euphio Question" "Go Back to your Precious Wife and Son" "Deer in the Works" "The Lie" "Unready to Wear" "The Kid Nobody Could Handle" "The Manned Missiles" "EPICAC" "Adam" "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow."

**Walker, Alice, *The Color Purple* (Fiction)**

The story is told of two African-American sisters: Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Celie, a child-wife living in the south, in the medium of their letters to each other and in Celie's case, the desperate letters she begins, "Dear God."

**Williams, Tennessee, *The Glass Menagerie* (Fiction)**

Amanda, a faded southern belle, abandoned wife, and dominating mother, hopes to match her daughter Laura with an eligible "gentleman caller" while her son Tom supports the family. Laura, lame and painfully shy, evades her mother's schemes and reality by retreating to the make-believe world of her glass animal collection. Tom eventually leaves home to become a writer but is forever haunted by the memory of Laura.

**Zusak, Marcus, *The Book Thief* (Historical Fiction)**

Living in Nazi Germany, young Liesel and her family choose to lie and steal to protect a Jewish refugee hiding in their basement. Narrated by Death, this is not your typical World War II story.