

# 9th Grade Summer Reading

## Honors Freshman Expository Writing

*Everything Sad is Untrue* by Daniel Nayeri

ISBN 978-1-64614-000-8

### Why are you reading this book?

- Through his autobiographical novel, Daniel Nayeri writes a story of his life that reflects his culture and background and life as an immigrant. He is a refugee from Iran, and his mother settles in Oklahoma where Nayeri recounts his experiences with classmates, who misunderstand him. Nayeri's "patchwork story" threads the pieces of his life into a larger tapestry. He tells his classmates and the reader stories of truth about his life experiences and incorporates Persian folklore in hopes of being heard.
- Identity is a theme that students will explore throughout their year in honors Freshman Expository Writing through their reading of literature, writing, and personal reflection. Nayeri's autobiographical novel is one account of how a person's identity is shaped.

### What to look for as you read:

- Throughout the entire novel, underline or highlight and annotate key moments/stories, specific phrases, or impactful statements that reflect Nayeri's view of being an outsider.
  - **Why does Nayeri feel like an outsider as a 12-year old boy?** What *makes* him an outsider to the people around him including his classmates, family, or others? What does he *experience* as an outsider? What does he *feel* as an outsider? What does he *hope* or *long* for?

### How will you be assessed on what you understood from this book when you return?

- Annotations
  - Annotations are not only key passages that are highlighted or underlined but also include written ideas that show your thinking during reading.
  - While reading, you should annotate by:
    - Highlighting or underlining at least 20-25 key passages that relate to:
      - Nayeri's experience of being an outsider
      - Through his life experiences, what he learns about himself, the world he lives in, and human nature.
      - Sections of the text that reveal what Nayeri believes about himself and/or what he desires people to understand is true about him.
    - Briefly comment in the margins or on a Post-it note:
      - Write thoughts or ideas connecting to the questions above
      - Make connections to human nature or the world we live in
      - Ask thought-provoking questions that help to clarify information or deepen discussion
  - See Example Annotation on the following page.
- A Socratic Discussion will occur during class to allow students to evaluate and analyze key themes and concepts.
- Students will be guided through the writing process to produce a typed, formal essay to conclude the unit.

Please email Kim Graham at [kgraham@wcastl.org](mailto:kgraham@wcastl.org) if you have any questions.

**A** LL PERSIANS ARE LIARS and lying is a sin.  
That's what the kids in Mrs. Miller's class think,  
but I'm the only Persian they've ever met, so I don't  
know where they got that idea.

My mom says it's true, but only because everyone has  
sinned and needs God to save them. My dad says it isn't.  
Persians aren't liars. They're poets, which is worse.

Poets don't even know when they're lying. They're just  
trying to remember their dreams. They're trying to remem-  
ber six thousand years of history and all the versions of all  
the stories ever told.

In one version, maybe I'm not the refugee kid in the back  
of Mrs. Miller's class. I'm a prince in disguise.

If you catch me, I will say what they say in the *1,001*  
*Nights*. "Let me go, and I will tell you the most interesting  
story I know."

That's how they always  
begin.

With a promise. I  
know and be known  
names anymore.

I'm not making them  
follow.

In the *1,001 Nights*,  
all the world's dreams  
so he would spare her.

everyone  
lies

he is a refugee

Nayeri is the only  
Persian his classmates  
know, but they all  
seem to think people  
like him lie.

He is an outsider  
because he is viewed  
as different at school  
and misunderstood.