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2013 Adult Summer Reading List

Created by Library Media Specialists from the Howard County Public School System & Librarians from Howard County Library

Autobiography, Biography

Caro, Robert. *The Passage of Power*. 2012. The time span covered here is short, opening with Lyndon Johnson's unsuccessful try for the 1960 Democratic presidential nomination and closing with his 1964 State of the Union address mere weeks after JFK's assassination. Caro's focus is on those seven weeks between the assassination and the address. He again alters our view of Johnson by illuminating how, even in the earliest moments of confusion and grief following the assassination, he moved beyond the humiliations of his years as vice president and, with a genius for public leadership buttressed by behind-the-scenes manipulation of the levers of power, ensured the success in Congress of JFK's dormant economic and civil rights programs while establishing himself, however briefly, as a triumphant president, fulfilling his lifetime ambition. *Library Journal*

Isaacson, Walter. *Steve Jobs*. 2011. Now we all know how the story ends. But that only adds a certain frisson to this biography of the man who was determined to make a dent in reality. Shaping reality was what Jobs was about, not only in his extraordinary vision of how personal computers could remake the world but also in his personal life. The book is filled with examples of projects that seemed impossible to complete but were completed and goals that appeared unachievable but were achieved all because Jobs insisted it could be done. *Booklist*

Lynch, Jane. *Happy Accidents*. 2012. Actress Jane Lynch shares the moments that shaped her life, discussing her childhood in Illinois, her battle with alcoholism, her early years as an actress, her efforts to get her life together, her successful film roles, her part on the television show "Glee," her support of gay and lesbian causes, her marriage, and other related topics. *The publisher*

Spitz, Bob. *Dearie; The Remarkable Life of Julia Child*. 2012. Spitz takes us beyond the image of Julia as the tall, eccentric woman with a funny voice who taught America how to cook, to establish her as a genuine rebel and beloved icon, a woman who redefined herself in middle age, helped to change the role of women in America, set the standard for how to create a public personality in the modern media world, and altered the way America eats and thinks of food. There might not be a Food Network or even a PBS if Julia had not blazed the trail. Spitz chronicles Julia's friendships, her struggles, her heartwarming romance with Paul, and, of course, the story of the publication of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* and her triumphant TV career. A thorough, surprising, affectionate and extraordinarily entertaining account of a truly remarkable life. *The publisher*

Steinberg, Avi. *Running the Books: The Adventures of an Accidental Prison Librarian*. 2011. This book will validate the reasons most of us became librarians—the impulse to seek and share information, to support learning, to build and sustain communities. Few folks in this book are, well, admirable (they are felons after all). But they are certainly memorable. *School Library Journal*

Fiction

Albom, Mitch. *The Time Keeper*. 2012. Avery Hilfigton was talented, tenacious, and spent a lot of time, thinking about time. She'd lost her father at sea, and was determined to solve the problem of longitude before she lost the only other man she loved – a man who wanted nothing to do with her anymore, and a man that she swore had broken her heart for the last time. Sir Luc Rees, Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, had one goal – to win back the heart of his best childhood friend. He had turned away from her for four years, and now he had to make her understand why. Of course between her sleuthing for answers and chasing down thieves, the opportunities for courting were slim. With winter holidays fast approaching, he wished for one thing only – the gift of time to win her love. *Amazon.com*

Freudenberger, Nell. *The Newlyweds: A Novel*. 2012. In *The Newlyweds*, we follow the story of Amina Mazid, who at age twenty-four moves from Bangladesh to Rochester, New York, for love. A hundred years ago, Amina would have been called a mail-order bride. But this is an arranged marriage for the twenty-first century: Amina is wooed by-and woos-George Stillman online. For Amina, George offers a chance for a new life and a different kind of happiness than she might find back home. For George, Amina is a woman who doesn't play games. But each of them is hiding something; someone from the past they thought they could leave behind. It is only when they put an ocean between them-and Amina returns to Bangladesh-that she and George find out if their secrets will tear them apart, or if they can build a future together. This is a surprising, suspenseful story about the exhilarations-and real-life complications-of getting, and staying, married. *The publisher*

McCall Smith, Alexander. *A Conspiracy of Friends*. 2012. The novels in the *Corduroy Mansions* series, of which *A Conspiracy of Friends* is the third, are not really mysteries, except in the sense of probing the mystery that ever constitutes the nature of our fellow human beings. But wait – to specify "humans" is limiting, since the series features two important nonhuman characters: a resourceful canine named Freddie de la Hay and a yeti named – well, if recollection serves, he's just called Yeti. The entertainment McCall Smith generates from this unique cast of characters is positively endless! *Roberta Rood*

McCall Smith, Alexander. *The Dog Who Came in from the Cold*. 2010. *The Dog Who Came in from the Cold* is constructed as a series of stories in which the lives of the residents of an apartment complex in London – Corduroy Mansions – play out in unique and interesting ways. The adventures and misadventures of each of the characters are all to some degree engaging, but Freddie de la Hay, the feckless little canine who gets recruited by British intelligence (MI 6), pretty much steals the show! *Roberta Rood*

Trigiani, Adriana. *The Shoemaker's Wife*. 2012. This page turning novel is a sweeping saga that stretches across the World Wars, from Italy to America and back again. More than an epic romance, Trigiani's work pays homage to the tribulations of the immigrant experience, and the love that makes the journey and hardships worthwhile. *Publishers Weekly*

Fiction - Historical Fiction

Leroy, Margaret. *The Soldier's Wife*. 2011. Vivienne struggles to keep her two daughters safe on the island of Guernsey as it is invaded by Germans during World War II. She finds unexpected love with a German officer living next door, and unexpected courage helping prisoners housed in camps on the island. Great imagery of the island, and wonderful descriptions of complex mother/daughter relationships make this book stand out. *Deb Finley*

Mantel, Hilary. *Bring Up the Bodies*. 2012. As in *Wolf Hall*, Hilary Mantel continues her depiction of the turbulent reign of King Henry VIII, as seen through eyes of his secretary, Thomas Cromwell. Although of lowly birth, Cromwell has risen to a state in which he is indispensable to his sovereign. First - in *Wolf Hall* - Cromwell facilitates the king's divorce from Katherine of Aragon and his subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn. In *Bring Up the Bodies*, we see Cromwell again busily at work. But this time, Anne is in his cross hairs, and her fate promises to be far more dire than that of her predecessor. *Roberta Rood*

Mantel, Hilary. *Wolf Hall*. 2009. England, early 1500's. We are at the court of King Henry VIII. The king is trying to rid himself of his current wife Katherine of Aragon, so that he may marry his current love, Anne Boleyn, who might possibly provide him with the male heir he desires. The principal character in this drama is the King's secretary Thomas Cromwell, a mercurial and cunning man. He can be gracious and kind within the precincts of his domestic circle, but he is utterly ruthless when it comes to working the will of his sovereign. *Wolf Hall* is a wild and harrowing ride, but ultimately a fantastic read. *Roberta Rood*

Mclain, Paula. *The Paris Wife: A Novel*. 2012. This story of ambition and betrayal portrays the love affair and marriage between Ernest Hemingway and Hadley Mower from their Chicago meeting in 1920 to their lives during the Jazz Age in Paris, but as Ernest struggles to find his literary voice, Hadley tries to define her role in their relationship as wife, friend, and muse. *The publisher*

Moehring, J.R. *Sutton*. 2012. They called bank robber Willie Sutton (1901-1980) "The Actor" because he committed many of his robberies in costume. Although he spent half of his adult life in prison, Sutton had one of the longest, most successful criminal careers ever, with crimes spanning 40 years and netting \$2 million in unrecovered funds. The public loved him; Willie robbed banks, not people, and banks weren't all that popular during the Depression. *Library Journal*

Moriarty, Laura. *The Chaperone*. 2012. Moriarty's engrossing work of historical fiction centers around Cora Carlisle, a woman selected to accompany aspiring entertainer Louise Brooks to New York City from Wichita, KS. Louise, who would become one of Hollywood's biggest stars in the 1920s and 1930s, here is only 15 years old but already well aware of how to use her beauty to her advantage. For Cora, a traditional, married mother of two who is a stranger to Louise at the beginning of the journey, the trip represents an opportunity to learn more about her own ambiguous past. *Library Journal*

Otsuka, Julie. *When the Emperor Was Divine*. 2012. In *When the Emperor Was Divine*, Julie Otsuka tells the story of the internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War by relating the experience of a

single family consisting of two parents, an eleven-year-old daughter, and an eight-year-old son. The place is Berkeley, California; the year is 1942. As the novel opens, the father has already been arrested and imprisoned in New Mexico. Now, the mother barely has time to pack before she and her children must board the train. Their destination: a prison-like facility in the bleak Utah desert. Once resettled there, their existence is drab and circumscribed; one day is very much like the next. What have they done to merit this fate? That is the question with which they, and we the readers, must grapple. *Roberta Rood*

Fiction - Mystery, Suspense, Science Fiction

Cronin, Justin. *The Passage: A Novel*. 2010 & 2012. End of the world - of course by government experiment gone bad. "Virals" infect the world (zombie/vampire with maybe a little memory of their humanity?) and the remaining few people try to survive. Actually very good with wonderful characters and a sweeping story. Reminded me of Stephen King's *The Stand*, but better. *Deb Finley*

Cline, Ernest. *Ready Player One*. 2011. In the year 2044, a geeky kid named Wade Watts, like much of humanity, chooses to escape reality and spends his waking hours in the limitless, utopian virtual world of the OASIS, but when Wade stumbles upon the first of the fiendish puzzles set up by OASIS creator James Halliday, he finds he must compete with thousands of others—including those willing to commit murder—in order to claim a prize of massive fortune. The story is full of science fiction, video game, technology, and 80s musical and movie references. *The publisher*

Flynn, Gillian. *Gone Girl: A Novel*. 2012. Nick and Amy Dunne are celebrating their fifth anniversary when Amy vanishes, leaving bloody evidence behind suggesting that her disappearance wasn't voluntary. Following the clues in her traditional anniversary gift hunt, Nick and the police uncover evidence that points squarely to Nick as the person who is responsible for her fate. But is he? This psychological thriller will keep you turning pages as the plot twists and turn. The story is told in two voices, Nick's and Amy's, and, if you're an audio book lover, the audio version of this novel is read by two people. *Carol Creed*

Flynn, Gillian. *Sharp Objects: A Novel*. 2007. Stephen King calls this debut book from the author of *Gone Girl* a "relentlessly creepy family saga," and I would call it a dark drama filled with serial killers, cutting, amusing dialog, and southern hospitality. It's a good read. *Gwyneth Jones*

Gallagher, Stephen. *The Bedlam Detective: A Novel*. 2012. In 1912, London-based Sebastian Becker, who works as the special investigator to the Masters of Lunacy, looking into cases involving any "man of property" whose sanity is under question, travels to the rural countryside to investigate a mass murder and the disappearance of two young girls. He finds himself face to face with immense danger, madmen, and dark forces. *The publisher & Publisher's Weekly*

King, Stephen. *Under the Dome*. 2009. On a gorgeous day the world comes to a screeching end for a small town in Maine when a forcefield or dome slams down, cutting the town - and the people trapped inside off from the outside world. Life under the dome gets dirty quickly and violent right away. But it's so fascinating to see how soon the facade of society will break down. Where did the dome come from, will it ever go away, will the stink kill them before they lose breathable oxygen? *Gwyneth Jones*

Landay, William. *Defending Jacob: A Novel*. 2012. When a 14-year-old boy is stabbed to death in an upper-class Boston suburb, Assistant District Attorney Andy Barber is removed from the case when a bloody fingerprint on the victim's clothing is that of Barber's own 14-year-old son, Jacob. Barber is torn between loyalty and justice as facts come to light that lead him to question how well he knows his own son. *The publisher*

Lovesey, Peter. *Cop To Corpse*. 2012. Someone - a ruthless and highly skilled shooter - is systematically murdering officers of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. The entire force, led by the highly skilled if somewhat eccentric and unorthodox Chief Superintendent Peter Diamond, are in a desperate race to find the sniper and put a stop to his deadly rampage. Although the action is very much in the present, the history of this storied region of England enriches the narrative at many points. *Roberta Rood*

Memoirs

Marton, Katie. *Paris: A Love Story*. 2012. This is a memoir for anyone who has ever fallen in love in Paris, or with Paris; it is for anyone who has ever had their heart broken or their life upended. Award-winning journalist and distinguished author Kati Marton narrates an impassioned and romantic story of love, loss, and life after loss. Paris is at the heart of this deeply moving account. Marton paints a vivid portrait of an adventuresome life in the stream of history. Inspirational and deeply human, *Paris: A Love Story* will touch every generation. *Amazon.com*

Strayed, Cheryl. *Wild*. 2012. Grieving for her recently deceased mother and a failed marriage, Strayed slipped into heroin addiction and a destructive lifestyle before deciding on a whim to hike the grueling Pacific Crest Trail at age 26. Part memoir and part adventure story, Strayed's chronicle of her 1100-mile hike describes her suffering through blisters and bruises, threats from rattlesnakes, extreme thirst, bears, a predatory hunter, and intense loneliness, all while carrying her huge pack nicknamed "Monster." *Library Journal*

Umrigar, Thrity. *First Darling of the Morning*. 2008. Thrity Umrigar provides insight into how circumstances can be very different, but things are still the same. The daughter of a prosperous family and a destructive mother, Ms Umrigar shows us that family dynamics in Bombay are very much as they are anywhere else. This is a quick read and an ordinary story made extraordinary by Thrity Umrigar's wonderful writing. *Carol Creed*

Nonfiction

Cain, Susan. *Quiet: The Power of Introverts*. 2012. Cain, whose work on introversion has appeared in newspapers and magazines, questions the modern American business culture that overlooks the positive characteristics of introverts such as persistence, reflection, and sensitivity to others' feelings. *Reference and Research Book News*

Duhigg, Charles. *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*. 2012. According to Duhigg (investigative reporter, *New York Times*), if people can understand how behaviors became habits, they can restructure those patterns in more constructive ways. He presents information on habit formation and change from academic studies, interviews with scientists and executives, and research conducted in dozens of companies. *Library Journal*

Sandel, Michael J. *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*. 2012. Sandel takes on one of

the biggest ethical questions of our time: Is there something wrong with a world in which everything is for sale? If so, how can we prevent market values from reaching into spheres of life where they don't belong? What are the moral limits of markets? Sandel provokes an essential discussion that we, in our market-driven age, need to have: What is the proper role of markets in a democratic society--and how can we protect the moral and civic goods that markets don't honor and that money can't buy? *The publisher*

Schwalbe, Will. *The End of Your Life Book Club*. 2012. Schwalbe and his mother, Mary Anne, always had a bond forged with books, and after she was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer, they strengthened that bond by forming a "book club" together. Throughout this memoir, Schwalbe and his mother discuss characters and themes from the books they read, and Schwalbe considers these same characters and themes in relation to his mother, who, as an administrator at Harvard and the Dalton School in New York City and a widely admired humanitarian, tirelessly strove to help others. *Library Journal*

Summerscale, Kate. *Mrs. Robinson's Disgrace; The Private Diary of a Victorian Lady*. 2012. Summerscale traces the story of a scandalous trial that rocked Victorian England, describing how Isabella Robinson recorded sexual fantasies in her private diary, which was discovered and read by her husband, who petitioned for divorce on the grounds of adultery. *The publisher*

Tough, Paul. *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*. 2012. Debunking the conventional wisdom of the past few decades that disadvantaged children need to develop basic reading and counting skills before entering school, Tough argues that they would be better served by learning such skills as grit, conscientiousness, curiosity, and optimism. It boils down to a debate about precognitive versus noncognitive skills of self-regulation or, simply put, character. *Booklist*

French, Paul. *Midnight in Peking: How the Murder of a Young Englishwoman Haunted the Last Days of Old China*. 2012. In the last days of old Peking, where anything goes, can a murderer escape justice? Peking in 1937 is a heady mix of privilege and scandal, opulence and opium dens, rumors and superstition. The Japanese are encircling the city, and the discovery of Pamela Werner's body sends a shiver through already nervous Peking. Is it the work of a madman? One of the ruthless Japanese soldiers now surrounding the city? Or perhaps the dreaded fox spirits? Two detectives—one British and one Chinese—race against the clock to solve the crime before the Japanese invade, and Peking, as they know it, is gone forever. Historian and China expert Paul French at last uncovers the truth behind this notorious murder, and offers a rare glimpse of the last days of colonial Peking. *Amazon.com*

Kunstler, James Howard. *Too Much Magic: Wishful Thinking, Technology, and the Fate of the Nation*. 2012. In *Too Much Magic*, James Howard Kunstler bewails the state of, well, pretty much everything. Although his primary concern is the profligate use of energy, which he sees as a finite resource, shale gas and shale oil notwithstanding, he also excoriates the financial system, land use, misplaced faith in technology, and a veritable host of other missteps and misapprehensions that have, of late, been all too commonly seen in humanity in general and in Americans in particular. You may not agree with all of Kunstler's assertions, but they'll stimulate your thinking nonetheless. *Roberta Rood*