

Literature and Composition
Mrs. Hensel
Fall of 2024

Summer Reading Choices for Grade 8

Gossamer Fantasy
Lois Lowry

Littlest One is a tiny creature slowly learning her job of giving dreams to humans. Each night she and her teacher, Thin Elderly, visit an old woman's home, where the Littlest One softly touches beloved objects, gathering happy memories and sounds. Littlest One pieces these bits together and presents them to the sleeping human in the form of pleasant dreams. But the dreaded Sinisteeds – dark fearsome characters that plague their victims with nightmares – are always at work against the dream-givers.

When the old woman takes in John, an angry foster child with a troubled past, the Sinisteeds go after him with their horrifying nightmares. John has faced so much pain in his short life. Can Littlest One, with her touch light as gossamer, protect John's heart and soul from the nightmare of a dark past?

Moon Over Manifest Historical Fiction
Clare Vanderpool

Abilene Tucker feels abandoned. Her father has put her on a train, sending her off to live with an old friend for the summer while her works on a railroad job. Armed only with a few possessions and her list of universals, Abilene jumps off the train in Manifest, Kansas aiming to learn about the boy her father once was.

Having heard stories about Manifest, Abilene is disappointed to find that it's just a worn-out old town. But her disappointment quickly turns to excitement when she discovers a hidden cigar box full of mementos including some old letters that mention a spy known as the Rattler. These mystery letters send Abilene and her new friends, Lettie and Ruthanne, on an honest-to-goodness spy hunt, even though they were warned to "Leave Well Enough Alone."

Abilene throws all caution aside when she heads down the mysterious Path of Perdition to pay a debt to the reclusive Miss Sadie, a diviner who only tells stories from the past. It seems the Manifest's history is full of colorful and shadowy characters – and long held secrets. And as those secrets are laid bare one by one, Abilene begins to weave her own story into the fabric of the town. Powerful in its simplicity and rich in historical detail, *Moon Over Manifest* is a gripping story of loss and redemption.

No Promises in the Wind Historical Fiction
Irene Hunt

America in 1932 was an America whose dreams were simple. A job, food to fill you, a place to sleep, and shoes without holes – for millions of people these simple needs were nothing more than dreams. At fifteen years of age, Josh had to make his own way through a country of angry and frightened people. *No Promises in the Wind* is a story of a young man's struggle to find a life for himself in the turbulent thirties.

Silent to the Bone Mystery
e.l. konigsburg

Connor is sure his best friend, Branwell, couldn't have hurt Branwell's baby half sister, Nikki. But Nikki lies in a coma, and Branwell is in a juvenile behavioral center suspected of a horrible crime and unable to utter the words to tell what happened.

Connor is the only one who might be able to break through Branwell's wall of silence. But how can he prove Branwell didn't commit the unspeakable act of which he is accused – when Branwell can't speak for himself?

The Dreamer Fiction
Pam Munoz Ryan and Peter Sis

Naftali is a dreamer. He loves words and stories, collecting treasures, and listening to the rain. He wants to write and help people who can't speak for themselves. But Naftali's father ridicules his dreams and has his own plans for Naftali's future. With a bravery he never knew he had, Naftali sets out on an inspiring journey of self-discovery that will transform his life and, ultimately, the world.

Tristen Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky Fantasy / Mythology
Kwame Mbalia

Seventh grader Tristen Strong feels anything but strong ever since he failed to save his best friend when they were in a bus accident together. All he has left of Eddie is the journal his friend wrote stories in. Tristen is dreading the month he's going to spend on his grandparent's farm in Alabama, where he's being sent to heal from the tragedy.

On his first night there, a sticky creature shows up in his bedroom and steals Eddie's journal. Tristen chases it – is that a doll? – through the forest, and a tug-of-war ensues by his grandmother's mysterious and off-limits Bottle Tree. In a last attempt to wrestle the journal out of the creature's hands, Tristen punches the tree, accidentally ripping open a chasm into MidPass, a volatile place with a burning sea, haunted bone ships, and iron monsters that are hunting the inhabitants of this strange world.

Tristen finds himself in the middle of a battle that has left Black American gods, John Henry and Brer Rabbit, exhausted. In order to get back home, Tristen and these new allies will need to entice the god Anansi, the Weaver, to come out of hiding and seal the black hole in the sky. But bartering with the trickster Anasi always comes at a price. Can Tristen save this world before he loses more of the things he loves?

Where the Lilies Bloom Drama / Romance
Vera and Bill Cleaver

Mary Call is as strong as the mountains, as strong, as proud, and as stubborn. She has promised her dying father to keep her brother and sisters together forever on the mountain, and never to take any help from strangers. Mary is determined to keep her word. No matter what. At first she is sure she can manage. Romey, Ima Dean, and Devola help gather herbs to sell in town; the riches of the mountain will surely keep the family clothed and fed. But when winter comes, fast and furious, Mary Call has to learn that the land where lilies bloom is also a cruel and unforgiving place, and it may take more than a promise to keep her family together.

