



Katrina's Picks for Grades 9-12 Summer Reading 2020

Michigan vs. the Boys by Carrie S. Allen (Realistic Fiction/Sports)

This story follows Michigan Manning, a dedicated hockey player and high school junior. When the school cuts the girl's hockey team due to lack of funds, Michigan is left with only two options: give up hockey or try out for the boy's team. Timely and thoughtful, this novel takes a hard look at toxic masculinity, sportsman(or woman!)ship, and the importance of speaking up for yourself.

The Last True Poets of the Sea by Julia Drake (Realistic Fiction/Mental Health)

After her brother's suicide attempt, Violet finds herself back in the small town of Lyric, Maine, founded by her ancestors. To distance herself from the wild and reckless party lifestyle that was drowning her at home, she picks up a job at the local aquarium. New friends and an old mystery surrounding her ancestors define the next chapter in Violet's story. Full of rich language, realistic dialogue, and compelling characters, you won't be sorry you took this voyage with them.

Layoverland by Gabby Noone (Contemporary/Romance)

Bea is dead. When a car crash ends her life on Earth, she finds herself transported to a strange airport with a strange new job helping others move on. Wise-cracking, cynical, and fiercely protective of her younger sister, Bea is an intriguing character. Throw in an airport purgatory, a cute boy, and the tension of death and the unknown? Sold.

Not So Pure and Simple by Lamar Giles (Realistic Fiction)

This story follows Del on his quest for the unattainable Kiera. When he accidentally joins an abstinence club at his church just to be closer to her, he's got no choice but to keep up the charade. You would think this set-up sounds like a romance, but it's not. The often-humorous narrative dives into some deeper topics like toxic masculinity and peer pressure in a very relatable way. Recommended for anyone in high school trying to navigate the best they can, or anyone who is interested in current social issues.

Dear Haiti, Love Alaine by Maika & Maritza Moulite (Realistic Fiction)

After getting into some trouble at school, Alaine is sent to Haiti to work with her aunt's non-profit group for the spring semester of senior year. Told entirely through emails, journal entries, and news clippings, Alaine discovers more about her culture and herself. Rich with family drama and cultural history, Alaine's story is entertaining, thoughtful, and inspiring.

The Grace Year by Kim Ligget (Dystopian)

Every year, all 16-year-old girls in Garner County are banished for the entire year to release their dangerous magic into the wild. Some girls never come back. This year, Tierney and the rest of the girls head into the forest with no knowledge of what awaits them and plenty of fear to go around. An edgy, feminist, dystopian thriller with mature themes that will leave you with lots to think about.

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Jason Reynolds (Nonfiction)

Incredibly important and timely, Reynolds remixes Dr. Kendi's original work on the devastating history of racism in America in a very accessible way. Recommended for all readers, regardless of what color you are or what you think you know.

Laura Dean Keeps Breaking Up with Me by Mariko Tamaki (Graphic Novel/Romance)

Frederica Riley has a problem. Laura Dean may be her dream girl, but she is not a dream girlfriend. This graphic novel follows Freddy's ups and downs, chronicling her relationships (toxic and otherwise) with compassion and realism. Beautiful art accompanies this story about heartbreak and healing.

Truly Devious by Maureen Johnson (Mystery/Series)

When Stevie Bell is admitted to the prestigious, highly selective, and rather mysterious Ellingham Academy, she makes it her mission to solve a crime committed there decades earlier. But when Truly Devious strikes again, Stevie's cold case investigation gets much hotter. Recommended to anyone who loves a tightly plotted mystery, imperfect characters, and atmospheric settings.

The Good Luck Girls by Charlotte Nicole Davis (Dystopian/Fantasy)

Five young women all branded by the same cursed mark make a daring escape from the brothel they were sold to. In search of freedom and hotly pursued by evil men and evil beasts, this novel tells the story of their dangerous journey. Genre-bending and suspenseful with characters that shine, this is recommended for readers of adventure fantasy looking for a new twist.

Crown of Coral and Pearl by Mara Rutherford (Fantasy)

This story features a strong and likable heroine, dastardly political schemes, and textured world building. Set in a fantasy world ruled by unforgiving traditions and a cruel prince, twin sisters Zadie and Nor must go to great lengths to protect each other. With just a dollop of romance, this story is primarily about the challenges Nor faces, the mysteries she uncovers, and how she finds the strength to do it all.

Obviously: Stories from My Timeline by Akilah Hughes (Memoir)

Hilarious, hopeful, and occasionally heartbreaking, YouTuber and comedian Akilah Hughes pours her life onto the page in this memoir. Recommended for fans, those interested in the entertainment industry (specifically comedy), and readers who enjoy personal essays.

Loveboat, Taipei by Abigail Hing Wen (Realistic Fiction/Romance)

Aspiring dancer Ever Wong is in for a surprise when she finds out her parents are sending her to a cultural education summer program in Taiwan. Even more surprising is the real reputation of the camp as a “Loveboat”, since all the participants seem more interested in finding a romantic partner than learning Mandarin. Ever is swept away by her new-found freedom in Taiwan and sets out to fill the summer with rule-breaking, romance, and a whole lot of growing up.

What I Carry by Jennifer Longo (Realistic Fiction)

This story follows Muiriel, a girl abandoned at birth and raised in the foster care system. Just a few months away from “aging out” of the program and setting off on her own, she ends up in one last foster home. On a small island in the Puget Sound, Muir finds herself re-evaluating the strict rules she made for herself designed to keep everyone an arm’s length away. A hopeful story of personal growth, how childhood experiences shape us, and the meaning of chosen family.

Patron Saints of Nothing by Randy Ribay (Realistic Fiction)

This story follows high school senior Jason, born in the Philippines and raised in the Midwest, on a journey of discovery. After he finds out his cousin has been murdered, Jay takes it upon himself to return to the Philippines and investigate. Set against the current political backdrop of Duterte’s war on drugs, Jay grapples with how the Philippines seem both threatening and enchanting to him. Social justice, complex family relationships, and the interplay of grief and guilt are all main themes of this novel.

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo (Verse/Realistic Fiction)

Two young women both lose their father on a plane crash between New York and the Dominican Republic. It is only through his death that they learn they are both his daughters. Told from the perspective of both girls, this story follows how they cope with the loss of a complicated father and how they grapple with gaining a new sister.

