

Book List for the English Multicultural Book Report

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1. Author: Adiga, Aravind Title: *The white tiger*: a novel

Summary:

Balam Halwai is a complicated man. Servant. Philosopher. Entrepreneur. Murderer. Over the course of seven nights, by the scattered light of a preposterous chandelier, Balam tells the terrible and transfixing story of how he came to be a success in life-- having nothing but his own wits to help him along.

Reading Level: Adults

What makes an entrepreneur in today's India? Bribes and murder, says this fiercely satirical first novel. Balam Halwai is a thriving young entrepreneur in Bangalore, India's high-tech capital. China's Premier is set to visit, and the novel's frame is a series of Balam's letters to the Premier, in which he tells his life story. Balam sees India as two countries: the Light and the Darkness. Like the huddled masses, he was born in the Darkness, in a village where his father, a rickshaw puller, died of tuberculosis. But Balam is smart, as a school inspector notices, and he is given the moniker *White Tiger*. Soon after, he's pulled out of school to work in a tea shop, then manages to get hired as a driver by the Stork, one of the village's powerful landlords. Balam is on his way, to Delhi in fact, where the Stork's son, Mr. Ashok, lives with his Westernized wife, Pinky Madam. Ashok is a gentleman, a decent employer, though Balam will eventually cut his throat (an early revelation). His business (coal trading) involves bribing government officials with huge sums of money, the sight of which proves irresistible to Balam and seals Ashok's fate. Adiga, who was born in India in 1974, writes forcefully about a corrupt culture; unfortunately, his commentary on all things Indian comes at the expense of narrative suspense and character development. Thus he writes persuasively about the so-called Rooster Coop, which traps family-oriented Indians into submissiveness, but fails to describe the stages by which Balam evolves from solicitous servant into cold-blooded killer. Adiga's pacing is off too, as Balam too quickly reinvents himself in Bangalore, where every cop can be bought. An undisciplined debut, but one with plenty of vitality. Kirkus Review

2. Author: Alvarez, Julia Title: *In the time of the butterflies* / Julia Alvarez.

Publisher: New York : Plume(Penguin Books), 1995.

Pages: 325 p. ; 23 cm.

Subject: Mirabal, María Teresa, 1935-1960 -- Fiction.

Mirabal, Minerva, 1926-1960 -- Fiction.

Mirabal, Patria, 1924-1960 -- Fiction.

Women revolutionaries -- Dominican Republic -- Fiction.

Dominican Republic -- History -- 1930-1961 -- Fiction.

Summary: " *Butterflies* is based on the lives of the four Mirabel sisters (code name: "Mariposas," that is, butterflies), three of whom were martyred in 1960 during the liberation of the Dominican Republic from the dictator Trujillo. Through the surviving sister, Dede, as well as memories of Minerva, Patria, and Maria Teresa, we discover the compelling forces behind each sister's role in the struggle for freedom. As Alvarez says "A novel is not, after all, a historical document, but a way to travel through the human heart." Though murder, torture, and imprisonment are ever-present, she wisely chooses to focus on the personal lives of these young wives and mothers, full of love, beauty, and, especially, hope. Highly recommended for its luminescence and relevance." Amazon.com.

3. Author: Alvarez, Julia
Title: Before we were free

Summary:

In the early 1960s in the Dominican Republic, twelve-year-old Anita learns that her family is involved in the underground movement to end the bloody rule of the dictator, General Trujillo.

Reading Level:Teens

Min./Max. Grade Level: 7-Adult

By the morning of her 12th birthday, in December, 1960, Anita de la Torre's comfortable childhood in her home in the Dominican Republic is a thing of the past. The political situation for opponents of the dictator Rafael Trujillo has become so dangerous that nearly all of her relatives have emigrated to the U.S., leaving only her uncle, Tío Toni, somewhere in hiding, and her parents, still determined to carry on the resistance. Over the next year, the girl becomes increasingly aware of the nature of the political situation and her family's activities. Once her father's cotorrita, or talkative parrot, she grows increasingly silent. When the dictator is assassinated, her father and uncle are arrested, her older brother is sheltered in the Italian Embassy, and Anita and her mother must go into hiding as well. Diary entries written by the child while in hiding will remind readers of Anne Frank's story. They will find Anita's interest in boys and her concerns about her appearance, even when she and her mother can see no one, entirely believable. Readers will be convinced by the voice of this Spanish-speaking teenager who tells her story entirely in the present tense. Like Anita's brother Mundín, readers will bite their nails as the story moves to its inexorable conclusion. School Library Review

4. Author: Allende, Isabel
Title: City of the beasts

Summary:

When fifteen-year-old Alexander Cold accompanies his individualistic grandmother on an expedition to find a humanoid *Beast* in the Amazon, he experiences ancient wonders and a supernatural world as he tries to avert disaster for the Indians

Reading Level:Teens

Min./Max. Grade Level: 7-Adult

Gr. 9-12. Acclaimed author Allende's first YA novel, part thrilling survival adventure, part coming-of-age journey, blends magical realism with grim history and contemporary politics in a way that shakes up all the usual definitions of savagery and civilization. Alex, 15, has been wrenched from the safe boundaries of his California home to accompany his journalist grandmother, Kate, on an International Geographic Expedition deep into the heart of the Amazon jungle. They are searching for a legendary *beast*, a gigantic, possibly humanoid creature that has been glimpsed in the area. The setting is more than background here: it's the heart of the story. The Indian People of the Mist, who have lived in the region since the Stone Age, are now threatened by adventurers and entrepreneurs who want the land and its riches. There's some plot contrivance as Alex and a local girl each go on a vision quest to save the Indians; and some expedition members seem like caricatures--the buffoon anthropologist, the idealistic physician, the hard grandma. But the characters are also funny, angry, and needy, and they surprise even themselves. Caught by the young characters and their wild adventures, readers will race through this for the story, then stop and think about the issues of wildness, survival, and the nature of *beasts* and humans. (Reviewed November 15, 2002) -- Hazel Rochman

5. Badami, Anita Rau,
Author:
Title: Tamarind mem / Anita Rau Badami.

Publisher: Toronto : Penguin, 1998, c1996.

Pages: 297 p. ; 18 cm.

Subject: Mother and daughter relations
 Canadian fiction -- Family relations
 Authors, Canada. -- Canadian Literature.
 India -- Family

Summary: The story perfectly illuminates the bonds that exist between mothers and daughters, the sweet and sour sides of a multi-faceted and complex relationship. Mixture mystery and domesticity into a story about the life of a young woman growing up in India.

Author: Badami, Anita Rau

Title: The hero's walk : a novel

Publisher: Toronto : Knopf Canada : 2000.

Pages: 359 p. ; 21 cm.

Subject: Canadians -- India -- Fiction
 Orphans -- Fiction
 India -- Fiction

Summary: In the seaside town of Toturpuram on the Bay of Bengal, Sripathi Rao, a disenchanted copywriter, lives in his crumbling ancestral home, uncomfortably aware that the modern world is fast encroaching. He is woken up one morning with the news that his long estranged daughter and her husband have been killed in Canada and their 7 year old daughter is about to become his reluctant ward.

6. Author: Bernardo, José Raúl

Title: The wise women of Havana / José Raúl Bernardo.

Publisher: New York : Rayo, c2002.

Pages: viii, 323 p. ; 25 cm.

Subject: Women -- Cuba -- Fiction.
 Female friendship -- Fiction.
 Havana (Cuba) -- Fiction

Summary: Set against the exotic background of Cuba in 1938, *The Wise Women of Havana* is the deeply moving, lyrical, and yet earthy story of three remarkable women whose lives are suddenly intricately intertwined. When Marguita, a beautiful and voluptuous young girl, marries Lorenzo, they find their dream home in a cozy apartment in Havana. But that dream is soon shattered. Lorenzo's once-wealthy parents, now in dire need of financial help because of the Great Depression, ask the newlyweds to move into the family's crumbling mansion with them. Marguita is hardly settled with her in-laws when Lorenzo's older sister, the spinster Lolo, behaves in a shocking way toward the young couple, seriously injuring Marguita's sense of honor and causing a dangerous rift between the two. In despair, Marguita, flees to her mother, Dolores, a truly wise woman, whose love, generosity, and resourcefulness provide the glue that promises to mend the break.

7. Author: Bosse, Malcolm

Title: Tusk and stone

Summary:

After a criminal gang attacks his caravan and he loses his identity as a Brahmin, Arjun resigns himself to his new life as a soldier, becomes an elephant driver, and searches for his kidnapped sister.

Reading Level:

Teens

Min./Max. Grade Level: 6-Adult

this story of a young Brahman of seventh-century India. Fourteen-year-old Arjun is traveling with his younger sister and uncle when their caravan is attacked by bandits. Arjun escapes the slaughter, only to be sold into the army, where he becomes an elephant driver of great renown. When his beloved elephant is killed in battle, Arjun is captured and becomes a slave, but he eventually develops a new life and talent as a master stonecutter of religious sculptures. This is a deeply spiritual novel that challenges the readers to contemplate large issues--fate, God, and one's place in the world. It is also an exciting story, a seamless blend of fiction and history that skillfully incorporates the complex social, political, and religious structures of ancient India. Arjun's struggle to make sense of the random disasters of his life will speak eloquently to teens seeking their own *raison d'etre*. Booklist Review

8. Author: Boyden, Joseph,

Title: Three day road : a novel / Joseph Boyden.

Publisher: Toronto : Viking Canada, 2005.

Pages: 354 p.

Subject: Indians of North America -- Canada -- Fiction
World War, 1914-1918 -- Fiction
Authors, Canadian -- Canada

Summary: "In part inspired by the legend of Francis Pegamagabow, the great sniper of World War One, Three Day Road is a mesmerizing novel told through the eyes of Niska, the last Canadian Oji-Cree woman living off the land, and her nephew Xavier. At the urging of his only friend, Elijah, a Cree boy raised in reserve schools, Xavier joins the war effort. The boys are not only marginalized from the Canadian soldiers by their native appearance and hand-sewn moccasins, but by the fine marksmanship that years of hunting has taught them. Their reputation as snipers builds. But while Xavier struggles to understand the purpose of the war and to come to terms with his conscience for the many lives he has ended, Elijah becomes obsessed with killing, taking great risks to become the most accomplished and renowned sniper. Intertwined with this account, cradling it, is the story of Niska, who takes in her wounded nephew and who herself has borne witness to a lifetime of death the death of her people." (Chapters.ca)

9. Author: Choy, Wayson,

Title: The jade peony : a novel

Publisher: Vancouver, B.C. : Douglas & McIntyre, c1995.

Pages: 238 p. ; 23 cm.

Subject: Chinese -- Canada -- Fiction.
Chinatown (Vancouver, B.C.) -- Fiction.
Vancouver (B.C.) -- Fiction.

Summary: Told through the eyes of three Chinese Canadian siblings, Choy's first novel gives readers a historical glimpse at life in Vancouver's Chinatown during the 1930s and 1940s. Jook-Liang, the only sister in a family of three boys; Jung-Sum, the second adopted son; and Sek-Lung (Sekky), the sickly youngest son are searching for their identities, each presenting a moving account of love and loss that combine to tell the story of their family. Although Choy's work is fictional, it realistically echoes the difficult life struggles of early Chinese Cantonese immigrants. This book was a number-one best seller in Canada and co-winner of the Trillium Prize for the best book of 1995. Highly recommended. Library Journal

10. Author: Courtemanche, Gil.

Title: A Sunday at the pool in Kigali

Publisher: Toronto : A.A. Knopf Canada, c2003.

Pages: 258 p. ; 23 cm.

Subject: Authors, Canadian -- Fiction.
Ethnic conflict -- Rwanda.

Add. Entries: Claxton, Patricia.

Note: Translation of: Un dimanche la piscine Kigali.

Summary: The novel of the year is how La Presse billed this extraordinary book, winner of the Prix des Libraires du Quebec in 2000. Now Knopf Canada brings this bestseller -- a story of love and humanity at its limits -- to English-language readers in a masterful translation by Patricia Claxton, twice winner of the Governor General's Award. The swimming pool of the Mille-Collines hotel is a magnet for a discrete group of Kigali residents: aid workers, Rwandan bourgeoisie, expatriates and prostitutes. Among these patrons is the hotel waitress Gentille, a beautiful Hutu often mistaken for a Tutsi, who has long been admired by Bernard Valcourt, a foreign journalist. As the two slide into a love affair, civil unrest in Rwanda makes insidious progress, while the people around the pool take on the menacing guises of war. This landmark novel -- penned by a journalist who spent several years in Africa -- confronts the nightmare that ravaged Rwanda in April 1994, when the Hutu-led government orchestrated genocide against the Tutsi people. With profound compassion and consummate control, Courtemanche navigates a world about to be wrested apart, where the faces of the aggressors could easily be those of our neighbours, our friends, our families. A solemn denunciation of poverty, ignorance, global apathy and media blindness, this stirring hymn to humanity asks at its heart, like all great literature, the only question that matters: How are we to live our lives, and how to die?." Amazon.com.

11. Author Courtenay, Bryce,

Title: **The power of one / Bryce Courtenay.**

Publisher: Toronto : McArthur&Company, c1989.

Pages: 518 p.

Subject: World War, 1939-1945 -- South Africa -- Fiction.
Children -- South Africa -- Fiction.

Summary: In 1939, hatred took root in South Africa, where the seeds of apartheid were newly sown. There a boy called Peekay was born. He spoke the wrong language English. He was nursed by a woman of the wrong color black. His childhood was marked by humiliation and abandonment. Yet he vowed to survive he would become welterweight champion of the world, he would dream heroic dreams. But his dreams were nothing compared to what awaited him. For he embarked on an epic journey, where he would learn the power of words, the power to transform lives, and the mystical power that would sustain him even when it appeared that villainy would rule the world: The Power of One. Amazon.ca.

12. Author Danticat, Edwidge,

Title: **Breath, eyes, memory**

Publisher: New York : Vintage Books, 1995.

Pages: 234 p. ; 21 cm.

Series: Vintage contemporaries

Subject: Haitian Americans -- Travel -- Fiction. -- Haiti.
Authors, foreign -- 20th century. -- Great Britain.
Haitian Americans -- Fiction. -- New York (State) -- New York.
Women -- Fiction. -- New York (State) -- New York.

Summary: At the age of 12, Sophie Caco is sent from her impoverished Haitian village to New York, to be reunited with a mother she barely remembers. There she discovers secrets that no child should ever know, and a legacy of shame that can only be healed when she returns to Haiti.

13. Author Desai, Kiran,

Title: **The inheritance of loss**

Publisher: Toronto : Penguin Book, c2006.

Pages: 357 p. ; 21 cm.

Subject: Grandparent and child -- Fiction.

Judges -- Retirement -- Fiction.
 Tutors and tutoring -- Fiction.
 Ethnic relations -- Fiction.
 Teenage girls -- Fiction.
 Grandfathers -- Fiction.
 Older men -- Fiction.
 Orphans -- Fiction.
 Psychological fiction.
 Domestic fiction.
 Kanchenjunga (Nepal and India) -- Fiction.

Summary: The judge's chatty cook watches over her, but his thoughts are mostly with his son, Biju, hopping from one New York restaurant job to another, trying to stay a step ahead of the INS, forced to consider his country's place in the world. When a Nepalese insurgency in the mountains threatens Sai's new-sprung romance with her handsome Nepali tutor and causes their lives to descend into chaos, they, too, are forced to confront their colliding interests. The nation fights itself. The cook witnesses the hierarchy being overturned and discarded. The judge must revisit his past, his own role in this grasping world of conflicting desires--every moment holding out the possibility for hope or betrayal. Amazon.ca.

14. Author **DeSoto, Lewis.**

Title: **A blade of grass**

Publisher: New York : Ecco, HarperCollins, c2003.

Pages: 389 p. ; 24 cm.

Subject: Farm life -- Fiction.

Women, White -- Fiction.

Women farmers -- Fiction.

Race relations -- Fiction.

South Africa -- Fiction.

Summary: Set on the border between South Africa and an unnamed country, *A Blade of Grass* is the taut story of two women, one white and one black, who struggle to save their farm and, ultimately, their lives. Märit, a young woman of British descent, recently orphaned and newly wed, comes to live with her husband, Ben, on their new farm. Despite its Edenic setting, the land explodes in violence and tragedy, and Märit finds herself caught in a tug of war between the local Afrikaner community and the black workers who live on her farm. Frightened, she turns to the only person who can help her, a young woman who is now also alone in the world her maid, Tembi. As the novel builds to its devastating climax, it unfolds a tale both terrifying and hopeful, moving beyond its own time and place to become a universal story of the price of freedom. Chapters.

WWW: <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/hc041/2003044957.html>

15. Author **Fraser, John,**

Title: **Stolen China : a novel**

Publisher: Toronto : McLelland and Stewart, c1996.

Pages: 251 p. ; 24 cm.

Subject: China -- Fiction

Summary: The story of greed, politics, and human frailty in the East and West. A tale of the upheavals in China in the years following Mao Tse Tung's death.

16. Author: Galloway, Steven
Title: The cellist of Sarajevo

Summary:

While a *cellist* plays at the site of a mortar attack to commemorate the deaths of twenty-two friends and neighbors, a woman sniper secretly protects the life of the *cellist* as her army becomes increasingly threatening.

Reading Level:

Adults

A bread line in besieged *Sarajevo*. A mortar lobbed by Serb soldiers on the hill. Death for 22 people. A *cellist* sees it all and determines to honor the dead—and perhaps assuage his own pain—by playing Albinoni's Adagio on the spot for 22 days. And so Galloway opens his first novel, inspired by true events, weaving together four lives to tell the awful story of *Sarajevo's* devastation. Aside from the *cellist*, there's Kenan, who risks his life every few days to carry plastic canisters to the brewery and retrieve water for his family. Dragan, who got his family out before the bombs started falling, works at the bakery for, literally, his daily bread. Both must cower on street corners and watch those who risk crossing get shot or killed. Arrow, who uses an alias, is a sniper desperate to defend her city and just as desperate not to compromise her humanity by hating the men who rain death down on the city. In the end, each takes a stand, small or large, to assure that the "*Sarajevo* that [they want] to live is alive again." Galloway writes simply and affectingly, occasionally resorting to cliché and just as often hitting a sweet, clear note that makes the siege of *Sarajevo* very real. *Library Journal Review*

17. Author Golden, Arthur,

Title: Memoirs of a geisha : a novel / Arthur Golden.

Publisher: New York : Vintage Books, 1999.

Pages: 434 p. ; 20 cm.

Subject: Geishas -- Japan -- Fiction.
 Japan -- History -- 20th century.

Note: Originally published: New York : Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., c1997.

Summary: "I wasn't born and raised to be a Kyoto geisha....I'm a fisherman's daughter from a little town called Yoroido on the Sea of Japan." How nine-year-old Chiyo, sold with her sister into slavery by their father after their mother's death, becomes Sayuri, the beautiful geisha accomplished in the art of entertaining men, is the focus of this fascinating first novel. Narrating her life story from her elegant suite in the Waldorf Astoria, Sayuri tells of her traumatic arrival at the Nitta okiya (a geisha house), where she endures harsh treatment from Granny and Mother, the greedy owners, and from Hatsumomo, the sadistically cruel head geisha. But Sayuri's chance meeting with the Chairman, who shows her kindness, makes her determined to become a geisha. Under the tutelage of the renowned Mameha, she becomes a leading geisha of the 1930s and 1940s. After the book's compelling first half, the second half is a bit flat and overlong. Still, Golden, with degrees in Japanese art and history, has brilliantly revealed the culture and traditions of an exotic world, closed to most Westerners. *Amazon.com*.

18. Author Gordimer, Nadine.

Title: A sport of nature : a novel

Publisher: London : Penguin Books, 1988, c1987.

Pages: 354 p. ; 23 cm.

Subject: Anti-apartheid movements -- Fiction. -- South Africa.
 Authors, foreign -- 20th century. -- South Africa.

Summary: Gordimer achieves a remarkable imaginative integration of private and public experience in this powerful novel, which traces the life of a beautiful South African woman from childhood to early middle age. Born to white privilege but abandoned by her mother, who bequeaths her a rich sexuality; reared by two aunts, who embody the opposing worlds of material comfort and social

consciousness; on her own by 17, and soon immersed in the first of a series of relationships whose direction no one could have predicted. Hillela is passionately grounded in her own feelings as she becomes increasingly involved in the black struggle, nationally and internationally. Yet she remains elusive, transcending simple definition even as her story, shaped by intense moral concerns, reaches a climax of stunning grandeur. A brilliant, engrossing novel. Amazon.com.

19. Author: Gratz, Alan
Title: Samurai shortstop

Summary:

While obtaining a Western education at a prestigious Japanese boarding school in 1890, sixteen-year-old Toyo also receives traditional *samurai* training which has profound effects on both his baseball game and his relationship with his father.

Reading Level: Teens

Min./Max. Grade Level: 8-Adult

Commodore Perry sailed into Yokohama harbor in 1853, and only a few years later, in 1870, baseball was introduced into Japan, along with many other Western influences. Out of this clash of cultures comes this story of 16-year-old Toyo, making his way in an elite boarding school, trying to get over the ritual suicide of his old *samurai* Uncle Koji, fearing his father may be next and eventually seeing baseball as a way to meld East and West, traditional *samurai* values and the game of "besuboru." Debut novelist Gratz covers much ground in this baseball story that's really about the transition of Japan from a feudal society to a westernized industrial power. The graphic opening chapter makes this for older readers, who will find it an unusual take on the American (and Japanese) pastime. Kirkus Review.

20. Author Hosseini, Khaled.

Title: A thousand splendid suns

Publisher: Toronto : Viking Canada, c2007.

Pages: 372 p. ; 24 cm.

Subject: Family -- Afghanistan -- Fiction.

War and family -- Fiction.

Women -- Afghanistan -- Social conditions -- Fiction.

Afghanistan -- Fiction.

Summary: Chronicles the lives of two Afghan women who struggle to survive, raise a family, and find happiness in war-torn Afghanistan.

21. Author: Jansen, Hanna;
Title: Over a thousand hills I walk with you

Summary:

Jeanne and her family, who are Tutsis living in Rwanda during a time of civil war, flee their home in hopes of evading Hutu soldiers as political events threaten to overtake them.

Reading Level:

Teens

Min./Max. Grade Level:

7-Adult

—The patient encouragement of the author to help her adopted daughter, Jeanne d'Arc Umubyeyi, come to terms with her memories provides the frame for this account of genocide in Rwanda in 1994. When Jeanne was eight, Hutu neighbors massacred her family and destroyed her home; she witnessed the murder of her mother and brother, as well as other Tutsis, strangers and family friends. Beautifully crafted and smoothly translated, this searing novel *is* all the

more remarkable for the sense of place it conveys through vividly remembered details of an African world where the mundane experiences of daily life were cataclysmically interrupted by a few months of unimaginable violence. Jeanne's courage, will to live, and understandable anger come through clearly, leading readers to wonder how a person or a country can ever recover from such events. The young woman's adoptive mother's childhood memories, mentioned in one of the chapter introductions, make explicit the connection between Rwanda and Germany. The title, taken from a story Jeanne's grandmother told, also reminds readers of the importance of human connections and continued trust. Painful to read, but unforgettable, this *book* will provoke thought and discussion. School Library Journal

22. Author: Jiang, Ji-li
Title: Red scarf girl: a memoir of the Cultural Revolution

Summary:

Provides the story of Ji-li Jiang a twelve-year-old *girl* growing up in China in 1966, the year that Chairman Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, and the changes it brought to her and her family.

Reading Level:Teens

Min./Max. Grade Level:Adult-Adult

A child's nightmare unfolds in Jiang's chronicle of the excesses of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution in China in the late 1960s. She was a young teenager at the height of the fervor, when children rose up against their parents, students against teachers, and neighbor against neighbor in an orgy of doublespeak, name-calling, and worse. Intelligence was suspect, and everyone was exhorted to root out the "Four Olds"--old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. She tells how it felt to bum family photographs and treasured heirlooms so they would not be used as evidence of their failure to repudiate a "black"--i.e., land-owning--past. In the name of the revolution, homes were searched and possessions taken or destroyed, her father imprisoned, and her mother's health imperiled--until the next round of revolutionaries came in and reversed many of the dicta of the last. Jiang's last chapter details her current life in this country, and the fates of people she mentions in her story. It's a very painful, very personal--therefore accessible--history. Kirkus Review

23. Author: Kincaid, Jamaica
Title: Annie John

Summary:

The theme of lost childhood remains constant in this short fictional narrative of rebellious *Annie John's* coming of age on the small island of Antigua.

Reading Level:

Adults

Episodes from the young life of *Annie John*, aged 10 to 17, as she grows up on the Caribbean island of Antigua. This is a magical coming-of-age tale, ripe with the special ambience of its tropical setting and sustained by *Annie's* far from naïve awareness of the world around her. Death, illness, and poverty intrude on the narrator's perceptive sensibility from time to time, but even these experiences instruct her and expand her understanding of life and its shifting reality. Although *Annie* leaves Antigua at the end of the novel for a new role as a student in England, the hollowness she feels at her departure is balanced by the new self that awaits her as she begins the search for her own identity. A poetic and intensely moving work from the author of *At the Bottom of the River*.

24 Author Manicka, Rani.**Title: The rice mother**

Publisher: London : Sceptre, 2002.

Pages: 468 p. ; 24 cm.

Subject: Women -- Malaysia -- Fiction.

Mothers and daughters -- Fiction.

Authors, foreign -- 20th century -- Malaysia.

Malaysia -- Fiction.

Summary: 'Manicka's first novel is a big, sprawling, absorbing multigenerational saga set in Malaysia. At the age of 14, Lakshmi is married off to Ayah, a man more than twice her age. Led to believe Ayah is rich, Lakshmi is surprised to learn he is actually a clerk wholly lacking any sort of ambition. Lakshmi makes the best of her situation, bearing six children, including a set of twins, in five years. But Lakshmi is dogged by a prophecy that predicts heartbreak from her oldest son and the loss of one of her other children. She is a ferociously protective mother, and when the Japanese invade Malaysia during World War II, she hides her three daughters away. At the end of the occupation, part of the prophecy comes true, permanently splintering Lakshmi's family. Manicka tells her story from many of the characters' point of views; they tell each other's stories as often as they tell their own. Graceful, engrossing, and peopled with memorable characters, this novel is sure to attract a wide audience." .Amazon.ca

25. Author: Markandaya, Kamala**Title: Nectar in a sieve**

Summary:

Featuring a new introduction, this critically acclaimed novel tells the story of India and its people through the eyes of one woman and her experiences *in* one peasant family *in* a primitive Indian village.

Reading Level: Adults

An affecting chronicle of life *in* a South Indian village is told with simplicity and compelling wisdom. Rukmani, daughter of a village headman, came to tenant farmer Nathan with a plain face and tender heart, and after the devoted white doctor Kenny, who uneasily inhabited two worlds, had seen to her health, their marriage was blessed with tenderness, a daughter, and sons. The coming of the tannery changes the life of the villagers and despite increased work complicated the struggle against starvation. It brings the death of a son and departure of other sons and even the loss of land as the factory engulfs it. Nathan and Rukmani journey to the city to live with a son they do not find; and they join quarry diggers to earn the rupees for their homeward trip. Only Ruckmant lives to return to the remainder of her family, for she leaves Nathan *in* a gentle death far from his beloved land. With her she brings the diseased and wily street boy she accepts as her son. There is an epic quality *in* this short *book* that emanates from the character of Rukmani and Nathan; from their patience and their acceptance of a fierce fate so far from Western conception (Kenny upbraids them for it), *in* the story of personal lives told with insight and compassion and humor, *in* the transcendence of the spirit over the terrible world of man and nature's making. Kirkus Review

26. Author Márquez, Gabriel García

Title: Love in the time of Cholera .

Publisher: New York : Alfred A.Knopf, 1988.

Pages: 348 p. ; 23 cm.

Subject: Love stories

Authors, foreign -- 20th century. -- Colombia.

Summary: Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza consummate their passion at *the* beginning *of the* 20th century after having waited over 50 years.

Reading Level: Adults

While delivering a message to her father, Florentino Ariza spots *the* barely pubescent Fermina Daza and immediately falls *in love*. What follows is *the* story of a passion that extends over 50 years, as Fermina is courted solely by letter, decisively rejects her suitor when he first speaks, and then joins *the* urbane Dr. Juvenal Urbino, much above her station, *in* a marriage initially loveless but ultimately remarkable *in* its strength. Florentino remains faithful *in* his fashion; paralleling *the* tale *of the* marriage is that *of* his numerous liaisons, all ultimately without *the* depth *of love* he again declares at Urbino's death. *In* substance and style not as fantastical, as mythologizing, as *the* previous works, this is a compelling exploration *of the* myths we make *of love*. Library Journal

27. Author Mistry, Rohinton,

Title: Family matters

Publisher: Toronto : McClelland & Stewart, 2002.

Pages: 487 p. ; 24 cm.

Subject: Parkinson's disease -- Patients -- Fiction.

Reminiscing in old age -- Fiction.

Parent and adult child -- Fiction.

Apartment houses -- Fiction.

Authors, Canada. -- Canadian literature

Stepfamilies -- Fiction.

Older men -- Fiction.

Bombay (India) -- Fiction.

Summary: Family Matters is Rohinton Mistry's eagerly anticipated third novel, following the success of his highly acclaimed A Fine Balance (1995), which won several major literary awards internationally. This new novel takes us to Bombay in the mid-1990s. Nariman Vakeel is a seventy-nine-year-old Parsi widower and the patriarch of a small discordant family. Beset by Parkinson's disease and haunted by memories of the past, he lives in a once-elegant apartment with his two middle-aged stepchildren Coomy, bitter and domineering, and her brother, Jal, mild-mannered and acquiescent. When Nariman's illness is compounded by a broken ankle, Coomy plots to turn his round-the-clock care over to Roxana, his sweet-tempered sister. She succeeds, but not without cost, and eventually Nariman takes up residence with Roxana, her husband, Yezad, and their two young sons. The effect of the new responsibility on Yezad, who is already besieged by financial worries, pushes him into a scheme of deception involving Vikram Kapur, his eccentric, often exasperating employer at Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium. This sets in motion a series of events a great unravelling an.

28. Author: Nafisi, Azar**Title: Reading Lolita in Tehran: a memoir in books**

Summary:

The author describes growing up *in* the Islamic Republic of Iran and the group of young women who came together at her home *in* secret every Thursday to read and discuss great

Nafisi taught English literature at the University of Tehran from 1979 to 1981, when she was expelled for refusing to wear the veil, and later at the Free Islamic University and Allameh Tabatabai *in* Tehran. *In* 1997, she and her family left Iran for the United States. This riveting memoir details Nafisi's clandestine meetings with seven hand-picked young women, who met *in* her home during the two-year period before she left Iran to read and discuss classic Western novels like *Lolita*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Pride and Prejudice*. The women, who at first were suspicious of one another and afraid to speak their minds, soon opened up and began to express their dreams and disappointments as they responded to the books they were *reading*. Their stories reflect the oppression of the Iranian regime but also the determination not to be crushed by it. Nafisi's lucid style keeps the reader glued to the page from start to finish and serves both as a testament to the human spirit that refuses to be imprisoned and to the liberating power of literature

29. Author Nattel, Lilian,**Title: The River Midnight**

Publisher: Toronto : A.A. Knopf Canada, 1999.

Pages: 414 p. ; 21 cm.

Subject: Canadian literature

Jews -- Poland -- 19th century.

Man-woman relationships -- Fiction -- Poland.

Authors -- Canada

Summary: The story has been set in a fictional village-shtetl in 1894 Poland. The author has resurrected a vanished Yiddish world that explores the tensions between men and women, and celebrates the wordless bonds of friendship in a way that is simply unparalleled.

30. Author Oz, Amos.**Title: Elsewhere, perhaps.**

Publisher: New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, [1973].

Pages: viii, 309 p. ; 21 cm.

Subject: Fictions -- Israel.

Fiction -- Collective settlements -- Israel.

Jewish literature -- Israel.

Love stories.

Authors, foreign -- Israel.

Add. Entries: Makom aher. English.

Note: "A Helen and Kurt Wolff book."

Translation of Makom aher.

Summary: Oz's fictional community of Metsudat Ram is a microcosm of the Israeli frontier kibbutz, where, held together by necessity and menace, the kibbutz-niks share love and sorrow under the guns of their enemies and the eyes of history. Translated by Nicholas de Lange in collaboration with the Author. Amazon.com.

31. Author Paton, Alan

Title: Cry, the beloved country.**Publisher:** New York : C. Scribner's Sons, 1948.**Pages:** 283 p. ; 20 cm.**Subject:** Race relations -- Fiction
Authors, foreign -- 20th century. -- South Africa
South Africa -- Fiction**Summary:** As Kumalo searches for his son, Absalom, in the city of Johannesburg, the character of South Africa is revealed. The land, its people and its racial ferment are visible behind the story of the tragic influences of the city upon the native son.**32. Author: Ricci, Nino****Title: The book of saints****Summary:** When young Vittorio's mother has an affair with a mysterious stranger, the child becomes aware of subtle changes in the way his family is treated by the villagers.

There's talk in Valle del Sole, a small Italian village lost in the Apennines: talk about the pregnant Cristina who lives with her seven-year-old son and his crippled grandfather, talk about her husband, who has lived in Canada for many years; and talk about Cristina's encounter with a snake--its evil presence is seen as proof of Cristina's doomed soul. Her son, Vitto just old enough to sense the disapproval of his peers, begins to bow under the weight of the shame his mother should be feeling. Teased at school and scared by stories of a snake-headed baby, he betrays his friend, Fabrizio, when his own conscience and fear incapacitate him. The village rivalries, gossip, and church pressure crowd around the mother and her son, and even Cristina's final act of rebellion--escaping with Vitto to America--ends tragically when she dies at sea during childbirth. *Ricci's* first novel is enlivened by the Italian storytelling tradition; Vitto's priest, his teacher, and his grandfather supply rich texture with their talk of village history and patron saints. A sobering view of the suffocating influence of religion and superstition on the life of a young boy

33. Author: See, Lisa**Title: Snow flower and the secret fan: a novel****Summary:** A story of friendship set in nineteenth-century China follows an elderly woman and her companion as they communicate their hopes

Reading Level: Adults

Novelist Categories: [Adult books for young adults](#)**Booklist Review:**

Mystery writer See, author of *The Interior* (1999) and *Dragon Bones* (2003), takes readers to nineteenth-century China to explore a complex friendship between two women. Lily is *the* daughter of a farmer in Puwei Village, and *Snow Flower* is *the* daughter of a respectable family from Tongkou, and though *the* two girls have very different backgrounds, Madame Wang pairs *the* two as laotong, or "old sames," a bond that will last them a lifetime. *The* two begin to exchange messages in nu shu, a *secret* language known only to women. Their friendship is cemented during their youth and then put to *the* test when *the* girls prepare for marriage and Lily discovers a startling *secret* about *Snow Flower's* family. As Lily solidifies her place in her new family, *Snow Flower* suffers in her marriage, and *the* two grow apart as Lily's pride in her position swells. See's writing is intricate and graceful, and her attention to detail never wavers, making for a lush, involving reading experience. This beautiful tale should have wide appeal. -- Kristine Huntley (BookList, 07-01-2005, p1901)

34. Author: Selvadurai, Shyam**Title: Funny boy: a novel****Summary:**

A *boy* growing up in an upper middle class family in Sri Lanka struggles with his own gay identity while the world around him disintegrates as a result of growing racial tension and civil

Reading Level:Adults

Although this falls into the crowded coming-of-age category, Selvadurai adds the foreign, *funny*, and unusual in a novel that is as personal as it is political. While growing up in Sri Lanka amid Tamil and Sinhalese conflicts, Arjie, a young *boy* who likes to play with dolls and girls, observes the social constraints abhorred and perpetuated within his own family and in society at large. Through the details of family life, the intimacies and exchanges, Selvadurai, much like E. M. Forster, reveals truths subtly, with poignancy and grace. Selvadurai has created an endearing character in Arjie, an impish *boy* who is always in trouble with his rigid parents, yet gains the confidence of "outsiders," those attempting to rebel against foolish social injustices: an aunt almost ready to reject family and social pressure by marrying a Sinhalese man; a schoolboy who is sexually abused by the head prefect and who wants to disclose his own homosexuality. Arjie's witnessing of prejudice and violence shatters his security by degrees, awakening him to the acceptance of his own gay identity and his isolation from both his family and conventional society. Booklist Review.

35. Author Stratton, Allan.

Title: *Chanda's secrets*

Publisher: Toronto : Annick Press, c2004.

Pages: 193 p. : ill. ; 19 cm.

Subject: AIDS (Disease) -- Africa -- Juvenile fiction.

Teenagers and death -- Juvenile fiction.

Secrecy -- Juvenile fiction.

Shame -- Juvenile fiction.

Canadian literature -- Authors, Canadian -- Canada.

Note: Teacher's guide available.

Summary: "Chanda, 16, remembers the good times, when she lived with both parents on a cattle post in sub-Saharan Africa and even later on when her family moved to Bonang. Her family's troubles began after her father was killed in the diamond mines. Her first stepfather abused her; the second died of a stroke; the third is a drunken philanderer. Although Chanda lives in a world in which illness and death have become commonplace, it is not one in which AIDS can be mentioned. The horror and desperation of families facing this disease is brought home when her latest stepfather's sister dumps the dying man in front of their shantytown house. Before Chanda can get help from the hospital caseworker, he disappears and the wagon that brought him is burned. Her mother leaves to visit her family on the cattle post and Chanda is forced to give up her dream of further education to care for her younger sister and brother. Slowly she comes to realize that her mother has AIDS, and that she might be infected herself. But Chanda's education serves her well as she faces the disease head-on. In a sad but satisfying ending, she rescues her mother so that she can die at home and she and her siblings get themselves tested. Smart and determined, Chanda is a character whom readers come to care for and believe in, in spite of her almost impossible situation. The details of sub-Saharan African life are convincing and smoothly woven into this moving story of poverty and courage, but the real insight for readers will be the appalling treatment of the AIDS victims. Strong language and frank description are appropriate to the subject matter" Amazon.com.

Audience: 14+.

Awards: Editor's Choice 2004, Booklist.

36. Author Tan, Amy

Title: *The bonesetter's daughter*

Publisher: New York : G.P. Putnam's, b2001.

Pages: 353 p. ; 24 cm.

Summary: The story begins when Ruth Young, a ghostwriter of self-help books, comes across a clipped stack

of papers in the bottom of a desk drawer. Young has been caring for her ailing mother, LuLing, who is beginning to show the unmistakable signs of Alzheimer's disease. Written in Chinese by LuLing years earlier, when she first started worrying something was wrong with her memory, the papers contain a narrative of LuLing's life as a girl in China, and the life of her own mother, the daughter of the Famous Bonesetter from the village of Xian Xin - Immortal Heart - near the Mouth of the Mountain. Within the calligraphed pages Ruth finds the truth about a mother's heart, what she cannot tell her daughter yet hopes her daughter will never forget. With her latest novel Amy Tan explores the changing place one has in a family of names that were nearly forgotten. Just as she herself has done, Tan shows Ruth finding the secrets and fragments of her mother's past - its heartfelt desires, its deepest wounds, its most profound hopes - and with each new discovery reconfiguring her assessment of the woman who shaped her life, who is in her bones. The extent to which Tan's newest novel mixes pure fiction with elements of autobiography is made clear by Tan herself. In acknowledgements of *The Bonesetter's Daughter* she writes, "The heart of this story belongs to my grandmother, its voice to my mother."

37. Author **Tan, Amy.**

Title: **The Joy Luck Club**

Publisher: New York : Vintage Books, 1991.

Pages: 288 p. ; 21cm.

Series: Vintage contemporaries

Subject: Chinese Americans -- Fiction.

Mothers and daughters -- United States -- Fiction.

Note: Originally published: New York : Putnam's, c1989.

Summary: Four mothers, four daughters, four families whose histories shift with the four winds depending on who's "saying" the stories. In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, begin meeting to eat dim sum, play mahjong, and talk. United in shared unspeakable loss and hope, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Rather than sink into tragedy, they choose to gather to raise their spirits and money. "To despair was to wish back for something already lost. Or to prolong what was already unbearable." Forty years later the stories and history continue. With wit and sensitivity, Amy Tan examines the sometimes painful, often tender, and always deep connection between mothers and daughters. As each woman reveals her secrets, trying to unravel the truth about her life, the strings become more tangled, more entwined. Mothers boast or despair over daughters, and daughters roll their eyes even as they feel the inextricable tightening of their matriarchal ties. Tan is an astute storyteller, enticing readers to immerse themselves into these lives of complexity and mystery. Amazon.ca.

38. Author **Vassanji, M. G.**

Title: **The in-between world of Vikram Lall**

Publisher: New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.

Pages: 369 p. ; 25 cm.

Subject: East Indians -- Kenya -- Fiction.

Brothers and sisters -- Fiction.

Friendship -- Fiction.

Authors, Canadian -- Fiction. -- Canada.

Kenya -- Fiction.

Summary: "In this novel set among Kenya's Indian diaspora, two ill-fated loves Vikram Lall's for a young English girl, his sister's for a young African man symbolize their family's tenuous social position as neither privileged oppressor nor righteous oppressed. Vikram, now in exile in Canada, recounts Kenya's painful process of decolonization and his own role laundering money for government officials, an activity that he justifies as the survival tactic of one considered "inherently disloyal" because of his race. Vikram's chilly amorality pervades this tautly written novel somewhat to its detriment. Although the narrative builds to the thawing of Vikram's frozen conscience, his

professions of remorse are pro forma, and his return to Kenya in search of redemption feels forced. Still, the book admirably captures the tenor of the postcolonial period: the predicament of the Asian minority, the corruption that marred Kenya's fledgling independence, and the individual tragedies that were the cost of revolution." Amazon.com.

39. Author Waysman, Dvora.

Title: The pomegranate pendant : a historical novel

Publisher: Jerusalem, New York : Feldheim Publishers, 1995.

Pages: 223 p. ; 23 cm.

Subject: Domestic fiction.

Historical fiction.

Authors, foreign -- 20th century. -- Israel.

Israel -- History -- Fiction. -- 20th century.

Note: Includes bibliographical references.

Summary: When Mazal and Ezra ben-Yichya embarked in 1882 on their long journey from Sana'a to the Holy Land, their young hearts were filled with dreams of the glory they were sure awaited them in Jerusalem. But those dreams were quickly dispelled by the reality they encountered: dark, towering walls of stone and a community of pious but impoverished Jews with customs foreign to them. How would the ben-Yichyas find their place in this new world peopled by European Torah scholars, and who would buy the exquisite jewelry they fashioned? This stirring saga spans four generations of a family of Yemenite goldsmiths at the vortex of history in the Land of Israel. Their tragedies and triumphs, their sorrows and joys, and most of all, the heroine's profound love for the Holy City, create a vivid and lasting image of an ancient land rising from two millennia of slumber to an era of splendor. Amazon.com.
