

# 9-12 Reading List

(Descriptions are from Amazon and author websites)

Alcott, Louisa May      *Little Women*      472 pages      10+

Alcott's semi-autobiographical classic, set in Boston during and just after the Civil War, follows the four March sisters as they struggle to overcome poverty and grow into proper young ladies. Meg, the oldest, is pretty but swayed by material temptations; Jo is a good-hearted tomboy and writer; Beth is a shy, sweet music lover; and Amy, the youngest, is a little selfish but very social and elegant. Even as the girls bicker like all siblings, they keep their loving home together as they wait for their father to return from the war.

Auchter, Mary Jane      *Ashes of Roses*      256 pages      12+

Sixteen-year-old Rose Nolan and her family are grateful to have finally reached America, the great land of opportunity. Their happiness is shattered when part of their family is forced to return to Ireland. Rose wants to succeed and stays in New York with her younger sister Maureen. The sisters struggle to survive and barely do so by working at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Then, just as Rose is forming friendships and settling in, a devastating fire forces her, Maureen, and their friends to fight for their lives. Surrounded by pain, tragedy, and ashes, Rose wonders if there's anything left for her in this great land of America.

Babbitt, Natalie      *Goody Hall*      192 pages

An out-of-work actor, Hercules Feltwright, stumbles into a job tutoring Willet Goody, the only child of a widow living in a large, lonely house. Willet quickly involves his tutor in the search to discover the truth about his father. The mystery unfolds with the discovery of hidden treasure, a gypsy séance, and the frightening exploration of the tomb of Midas Goody.

Baker, Betty      *Walk the World's Rim*      254 pages

A 14-year old Indian joins Cabeza de Vaca's 16th-century expedition through the Southwest. A vivid portrait of Mexican life and the harsh conditions of a primitive Indian tribe.

Beatty, Patricia      *Charlie Skedaddle*      186 pages      10+

Fighting is important to Charley Quinn, 12, a street-tough New York Bowery Boy who runs away from his Irish-Catholic home to join the Union forces in Virginia. But war proves much more horrible than he'd thought so terrible, in fact, that he deserts, giving himself the disparaging name "Skedaddle." Afterward, Charley takes refuge in the mountains with Granny Bent, a midwife with her own secret loyalties. This well-crafted, somewhat episodic novel makes the point that fighting brings honor, and cowardice, shame.

Blair, Susan Barry      *Adventures on the High Seas*      88 pages

A young girl and her family set out for the adventure opportunity of a lifetime. It's an exciting story about a family's life onboard a 38-foot sailboat and their many experiences along the way. They embark on a year-long voyage beginning in England with proposed stops in Spain, the Canary Islands, the Caribbean and Bermuda. Nothing ever goes as planned and their journey detours to Africa and later to America where they eventually settled.

Blos, Joan      *A Gathering of Days*      144 pages

The journal of a fourteen-year-old girl, kept the last year she lived on the family farm, records daily events in her small New Hampshire town, her father's remarriage, and the death of her best friend. Received the 1980 Newberry Award.

Blyton, Enid      *The Enchanted Wood*      213 pages

Jo, Bessie and Fanny move to the country and find an Enchanted Wood right on their doorstep! And in the wood stands the magic Faraway Tree, and in that tree live the magical characters that soon become their new friends - Moon-Face, Silky the fairy, and Saucepan Man. Together they visit the strange lands (the Roundabout Land, the Land of Ice and Snow, Toyland and the Land of Take What You Want!) which lie at the top of the tree and have the most exciting adventures - and narrow escapes!

Tim and Sam's father. With the war soon raging, Tim know he'll have to make a choice -- between the Revolutionaries and the Redcoats . . . and between his brother and his father.

Conrad, Patricia      *Stonewords: A Ghost Story*      130 pages      10+

Zoe was overjoyed to find a playmate already in residence when she came to live in her grandparents' old house. The girls shared everything, toys, a playhouse, even the same name--everything except time: Zoe Louise is a visitor from another century. As Zoe grows up she begins to wonder about Zoe Louise's strange behavior. She follows her back in time to learn the terrible truth--that only she can prevent her soulmate's untimely death.

Cowley, Marjorie      *Dar and the Spear Thrower*      128 pages

On the verge of the ceremony that will initiate him into manhood, young Dar, a Cro-Magnon boy, faces the conflicts in his life: his demanding uncle who has no tolerance for his nephew's desire to carve, his grandmother's growing frailty, and his own fears. When he wanders farther than usual one day to check some snares, he meets a man from a different tribe. The man, Toreg, has a device that enhances the distance he can throw his spear. Determined to trade for it, Dar leaves his tribe and begins a journey that will change life for his entire clan.

Cushman, Karen      *Catherine, Called Birdy*      176 pages

Catherine one day hopes to become a painter, a Crusader, a peddler, a minstrel, a monk, a wart charmer . . . anything besides being sold like a cheese to the highest bidder. Winner of the Newbery Honor award.

Dahl, Roald      *Matilda*      240 pages

Matilda is a little girl who is far too good to be true. At age five-and-a-half she's knocking off double-digit multiplication problems and blitz-reading Dickens. Even more remarkably, her classmates love her even though she's a super-nerd and the teacher's pet. But everything is not perfect in Matilda's world. For starters she has two of the most idiotic, self-centered parents who ever lived. Then there's the large, busty nightmare of a school principal, Mrs. ("The") Trunchbull, a former hammer-throwing champion who flings children at will and is approximately as sympathetic as a bulldozer. Fortunately for Matilda, she has the inner resources to deal with such annoyances: astonishing intelligence, saintly patience, and an innate predilection for revenge.

DeAngeli, Marguerite      *The Door in the Wall*      128 pages      10+

This Newbery Medal winning story, set in medieval times, is about a boy who learns his own strength when he saves the castle and discovers there is more than one way to serve his king.

DeFelice, Cynthia      *Weasel*      128 pages

A ruthless villain known as Weasel commits unspeakable atrocities in the frontier wilderness. When 12-year-old Nathan's family is victimized, the boy is determined to avenge the wrongs on his own. A masterfully told, riveting tale sure to inspire strong discussion about moral choices.

DeJong, Meindert      *Shadrach*      192 pages

Even after Davie had had the little black rabbit, Shadrach, for several weeks, it was still almost unbelievable. Every morning when Davie woke up it was a miracle all over again -- there in his grandfather's barn sat a wriggle black rabbit, and it was *his*. David had never been happier...until the day Shadrach slipped through the stats of his hutch and disappeared.

DiCamillo, Kate      *Because of Winn Dixie*      192 pages

Because of Winn-Dixie, a big, ugly, happy dog, 10-year-old Opal learns 10 things about her long-gone mother from her preacher father. Because of Winn-Dixie, Opal makes new friends among the somewhat unusual residents of her new hometown, Naomi, Florida. Because of Winn-Dixie, Opal begins to find her place in the world and let go of some of the sadness left by her mother's abandonment seven years earlier. With her newly adopted, goofy pooch at her side, Opal explores her bittersweet world and learns to listen to other people's lives.

Field, Rachel      *Calico Bush*      224 pages      10+

In 1743, thirteen-year-old Marguerite Ledoux travels to Maine as the indentured servant of a family that regards her as little better than the Indians that threaten them, but her strength, quick thinking and courage surprise them all.

Giff, Patricia Reilly      *Lily's Crossing*      208 pages

When Lily meets Albert, a refugee from Hungary, during the summer of 1944, they begin a special friendship. However, Lily and Albert have both told lies, and Lily has told a lie that may cost Albert his life.

Gray, Elizabeth J.      *Adam of the Road*      320 pages

Eleven-year-old Adam loved to travel throughout thirteenth century England with his father, a wandering minstrel, and his dog, Nick. But when Nick is stolen and his father disappears, Adam suddenly finds himself alone. He searches the same roads he traveled with his father, meeting various people along the way. But will Adam ever find his father and dog and end his desperate search?

Hesse, Karen      *Letters from Rifka*      176 pages      10+

Rifka knows nothing about America when she flees from Russia with her family in 1919. But she dreams she will at last be safe from the Russian soldiers and their harsh treatment of the Jews in the new country. Throughout her journey, Rifka carries with her a cherished volume of poetry by Alexander Pushkin. In it, she records her observations and experiences in the form of letters to her beloved cousin she has left behind. Strong-hearted and determined, Rifka must endure a great deal: humiliating examinations by doctors and soldiers, deadly typhus, separation from all she has ever known and loved, murderous storms at sea—and as if this is not enough, the loss of her glorious golden hair. And even if she does make it to America, she's not sure America will have her.

Horvath, Polly      *Everything on a Waffle*      176 pages      10+

Primrose Squarp simply knows her parents did not perish at sea during a terrible storm, but try convincing the other residents of Coal Harbour on that score. For all practical purposes, at least for the time being, Primrose is an orphan, and there's no great clamoring of prospective adopters. The town council is able to locate a relative, Uncle Jack, who reluctantly takes Primrose into his care. Primrose does warm up to living with him and in his home, despite the eerie noises resembling a hockey game that haunt her in the night. But true sanctuary can always be found at a restaurant called The Girl in the Swing, where everything—including lasagna—is served on a waffle, and where the proprietor, Miss Bowzer, offers a willing ear, as well as sage advice. Through a mixture of eccentric humor and probing philosophy, Primrose's search for peace and understanding is a most memorable one.

Kalashnikov, N.      *The Defender*      138 pages

One man in Siberia has the courage to protect the endangered wild rams that share his mountain peak.

Kelly, Eric P.      *The Trumpeter of Krakow*      224 pages      10+

There was something about the Great Tarnov Crystal....Wise men spoke of it in hushed tones. Others were ready to kill for it. Now a murderous Tartar chief is bent on possessing it. But young Joseph Charnetski was bound by an ancient oath to protect the jewel at all costs. When Joseph and his family seek refuge in medieval Krakow, they are caught up in the plots and intrigues of alchemists, hypnotists, and a dark messenger of evil. Will Joseph be able to protect the crystal, and the city, from the plundering Tartars?

Kelly, Jacqueline      *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate*      444 pages      10+

Twelve-year-old Calpurnia (the only girl of seven siblings) is interested in science rather than cooking and sewing. She would much rather spend her time exploring the river with her grandfather, a naturalist and a loner, who has given her a copy of *The Origin of the Species*. The results are humorous when Callie's mother attempts to prepare her for her place in society by giving her cooking and knitting lessons in contrast to her natural tendencies to be outside studying grasshoppers and other phenomena of nature. Will Callie ever learn those hideous domestic skills in time for her debut? Is the plant that she and her grandfather discovered actually a new species?

MacDonald, George      *The Princess and the Goblin*      272 pages

When a peaceful kingdom is menaced by an army of monstrous goblins, a brave and beautiful princess joins forces with a resourceful peasant boy to rescue the noble king and all his people. The lucky pair must battle the evil power of the wicked goblin prince armed only with the gift of song, the miracle of love, and a magical shimmering thread.

MacLachlan, Patricia      *Journey*      112 pages

Journey is eleven the summer his mother leaves him and his sister, Cat, with their grandparents. He is sad and angry, and spends the summer looking for the clues that will explain why she left. Journey searches photographs for answers. He hunts family resemblances in Grandma's albums. Looking for happier times, he tries to put together the torn pieces of the pictures his mother shredded before her departure. And he also searches the photographs his grandfather takes as the older man attempts to provide Journey with a past. In the process, the boy learns to look and finds that, for him, the camera is a means of finding things his naked eye has missed—things like inevitability of his mother's departure and the love that still binds his family.

Martin, Ann      *A Corner of the Universe*      189 pages

The summer Hattie turns 12, her predictable smalltown life is turned on end when her uncle Adam returns home for the first time in over ten years. Hattie has never met him, never known about him. He's been institutionalized; his condition involves schizophrenia and autism. Hattie, a shy girl who prefers the company of adults, takes immediately to her excitable uncle, even when the rest of the family -- her parents and grandparents -- have trouble dealing with his intense way of seeing the world. And Adam, too, sees that Hattie is special, that her quiet, shy ways are not a disability.

McGraw, Eloise J.      *Moccasin Trail*      256 pages      12+

A pioneer boy, brought up by Crow Indians, is reunited with his family and attempts to orient himself in the white man's culture.

McGraw, Eloise J.      *The Golden Goblet*      256 pages      12+

Ranofer struggles to thwart the plottings of his evil brother, Gebu, so he can become master goldsmith like their father in this exciting tale of ancient Egyptian mystery and intrigue. *Newbery Honor Book*

Merrill, Jean      *The Toothpaste Millionaire*      144 pages

Likable, clever, and inventive sixth-graders Rufus Mayflower and Kate Mackinstrey develop and sell toothpaste to become millionaires in just one year! This fun, breezy story includes many real-life mathematical problems which the characters must solve to succeed in their budding business..

Montgomery, L. M.      *Anne of Green Gables*      374 pages

When eleven-year-old Anne Shirley arrives at Green Gables with nothing but a carpetbag and an overactive imagination, she knows that she has found her home. But first she must convince the Cuthberts to let her stay, even though she isn't the boy they hoped for. The loquacious Anne quickly finds her way into their hearts.

Nesbit, Edith      *Five Children and It*      240 pages

While exploring the environs of their summer home, five brothers and sisters find a Psammead, or Sand-fairy, in a nearby gravel pit: "Its eyes were on long horns like a snail's eyes, and it could move them in and out like telescopes; it had ears like a bat's ears, and its tubby body was shaped like a spider's and covered with thick soft fur; its legs and arms were furry too, and it had hands and feet like a monkey's." The Psammead is magical and, every day, the ancient and irritable creature grants each of them a wish that lasts until sunset. Soon, though, they find their wishes never seem to turn out right and often have unexpected—and humorous—consequences. But when an accidental wish goes terribly wrong, the children learn that magic, like life, can be as complicated as it is exciting.

Pennac, Daniel                      *Eye of the Wolf*                      112 pages

Born worlds apart: a wolf from the Far North and a boy from Yellow Africa...The wolf has lost nearly everything on his journey to the zoo, including an eye and his beloved pack. The boy too has lost much and seen many terrible things. They stand eye-to-eye on either side of the wolf's enclosure and, slowly, each makes his own extraordinary story known to the other...Master storyteller Daniel Pennac weaves a tale that is magical, mysterious and utterly unforgettable. Look into the Eye of the Wolf and you will be captivated.

Pitt, Paul                      *Racing the Sun*                      150 pages

Brandon, 12, is happily ensconced in UGA (Underachieving Goof-offs of America) with his best friend Ham, content to live the middle-class life his father has carved out for his family. Then Brandon's Navajo grandfather comes to live with them, bringing his smoky smell, his chants and his ample dignity and charm. His very presence disrupts the family, reminding them of reservation life, but Brandon is drawn to him. Their gentle, loving bond, based on Brandon's learning "the important things" from his grandfather, changes the boy in believable, positive ways.

Preus, Margi                      *Heart of a Samurai*                      336 pages                      10+

In 1841 a Japanese fishing vessel sinks. Its crew is forced to swim to a small, unknown island, where they are rescued by a passing American ship. Japan's borders remain closed to all Western nations, so the crew sets off to America, learning English on the way. Manjiro, a 14-year-old boy, is curious and eager to learn everything he can about this new culture. Eventually the captain adopts Manjiro and takes him to his home in New England. The boy lives there for some time and then heads to San Francisco to pan for gold. After many years, he makes it back to Japan, only to be imprisoned as an outsider. With his hard-won knowledge of the West, Manjiro is in a unique position to persuade the emperor to ease open the boundaries around Japan; he may even achieve his unlikely dream of becoming a samurai.

Rankin, Louise                      *Daughter of the Mountains*                      192 pages

Momo has always wanted a Lhasa terrier—a dog like the ones the Tibetan Buddhist priests hold sacred in their temples. When a trader brings Pempa to her parents' teahouse, Momo's dream comes true. Then a band of robbers steals the valuable dog, and to recover him, Momo must make a dangerous journey she may not survive. A Newbery Honor Book.

Raskin, Ellen                      *The Westing Game*                      192 pages                      10+

When an eccentric millionaire dies mysteriously, sixteen very unlikely people are gathered together for the reading of the will...and what a will it is!

Rawls, Wilson                      *Where the Red Fern Grows*                      208 pages                      10+

Billy and his precious coonhound pups romp relentlessly through the Ozarks, trying to "tree" the elusive raccoon. In time, the inseparable trio wins the coveted gold cup in the annual coon-hunt contest, captures the wily ghost coon, and bravely fights with a mountain lion. When the victory over the mountain lion turns to tragedy, Billy grieves, but learns the beautiful old Native American legend of the sacred red fern that grows over the graves of his dogs.

Reisman, Michael                      *Simon Bloom, The Gravity Keeper*                      320 pages

Sixth-grader Simon Bloom can't believe his luck when he finds a book that enables him to control the laws of physics. By simply reciting the formulas it contains, he can cancel gravity to fly around his bedroom, or decrease friction so he can slide down the street as if he were on Rollerblades. When two thugs with evil intentions come after Simon, he must use the formulas to save himself and the book from falling into their hands.

Richter, Conrad                      *The Light in the Forest*                      128 pages                      12+

Though reared as a Lenni Lenape Indian, fifteen-year-old True Son, once called John Camera Butler, was ordered back to the white man. It was impossible for True Son to believe that his people were white and not Indian. He had learned to hate the white man. And now he learned to hate his new father, his new house, his new family. He hated the name John Butler. Where did he belong now--and where could he go?

Perhaps the best-loved nineteenth-century American novel, Mark Twain's tale of boyhood adventure overflows with comedy, warmth, and slapstick energy. It brings to life an array of irresistible characters—the awesomely self-confident Tom, his best buddy Huck Finn, indulgent Aunt Polly, and the lovely, beguiling Becky—as well as such unforgettable incidents as whitewashing a fence, swearing an oath in blood, and getting lost in a dark and labyrinthine cave. Below Tom Sawyer's sunny surface lurk hints of a darker reality, of youthful innocence and naïveté confronting the cruelty, hypocrisy, and foolishness of the adult world—a theme that would become more pronounced in Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

The Citadel. It stands unconquered, the last great summit of the Alps. Only one man has ever dared to approach the top, and that man died in his pursuit. He was Josef Matt, Rudi Matt's father. At sixteen, Rudi is determined to pay tribute to the man he never knew, and complete the quest that claimed his father's life. And so, taking his father's red shirt as a flag, he heads off to face the earth's most challenging peak. But before Rudi can reach the top, he must pass through the forbidden Fortress, the gaping chasm in the high reaches of the Citadel where his father met his end. Rudi has followed Josef's footsteps as far as they will take him. Now he must search deep within himself to find the strength for the final ascent to the summit — to plant his banner in the sky.

Like the rest of his family, Louis is a trumpeter swan. But unlike his four brothers and sisters, Louis can't trumpet joyfully. In fact, he can't even make a sound. And since he can't trumpet his love, the beautiful swan Serena pays absolutely no attention to him. Louis tries everything he can think of to win Serena's affection—he even goes to school to learn to read and write. But nothing seems to work. Then his father steals him a real brass trumpet. Is a musical instrument the key to winning Louis his love?

It's 1735. Forrest Harper's life inside the Tower of London consists of three ways to pass the time: chores, chores, and more chores. His only friends are the spirited ravens he tends with his father. So when vicious Scottish Rebels are captured, Forrest can't wait to prove himself by standing guard. If only Forrest's prisoner hadn't turned out to be the noble and daring Maddy. And if only Maddy wasn't about to be executed. . . . Now, as Forrest chooses between friendship and family, safety and escape, he and Maddy must flee, somehow navigating the cold, dank corridors of the Tower.

A mysterious rowboat transports five adventurous kids back in time to the eve of the Battle at Trenton where they experience the American Revolution. Through encounters with Hessian soldiers, revolutionaries, and even George Washington himself, Matthew, Quentin, Hooter, Tony, and Katie watch history unfold before their eyes as they see first-hand, the grim realities of war and the cost of freedom.