High School Battle of the Books List
2020-2021

Battle of the Books began as a program for middle school students, grades 6-8. The program has expanded to include the elementary and high school levels. Students at participating schools read books from a list established by the state Battle of the Books committees and then compete in quiz-bowl-style tournaments to test their knowledge of these books.

Teaching Resources Center, Joyner Library
A Selective Annotated Bibliography

Titles in the Teaching Resources Center are cataloged with Dewey call numbers and are preceded by Curric. Please ask someone at the Teaching Resources Service Desk if you need any assistance.

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Ever since she got pregnant freshman year, Emoni Santiago has been doing what has to be done for her daughter and her abuela. The one place she can let all that go is in the kitchen, where she adds a little something magical to everything she cooks, turning her food into straight-up goodness. She dreams of working as a chef after she graduates, but knows that is impossible. But once Emoni starts cooking, her only choice is to let her talent break free.

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New York City cop Barry Sutton investigates the devastating phenomenon the media has dubbed False Memory Syndrome--a mysterious affliction that drives its victims mad with memories of a life they never lived. Neuroscientist Helena Smith dedicated her life to creating a technology that will let us preserve our most precious moments of our pasts. If she succeeds, anyone will be able to re-experience a first kiss, the birth of a child, the final moment with a dying parent. Together they face a force that attacks not just our minds but the very fabric of the past. Memory makes reality--and the force is beginning to unmake the world as we know it.


Is it true that a hellish hound is haunting the lonely moors, hunting down the hapless Baskervilles through the generations? If anyone can put this chilling legend to rest, it's Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. It seems the body of the latest owner of the Baskerville estate has just been discovered in a ghastly condition, and Holmes has been called in on the case none too soon. The howls and moans that punctuate the elaborate twists of this Gothic tale will raise the hair on readers' necks and make converts of any who are not already fans of the famed detective.


Washington Black is an eleven-year-old field slave who knows no other life than the Barbados sugar plantation where he was born. When his master's eccentric brother chooses him to be his manservant, Wash is terrified of the cruelties he is certain await him. But Christopher Wilde, or "Titch," is a naturalist, explorer, scientist, inventor, and abolitionist. He initiates Wash into a world where a flying machine can carry a man across the sky; where two people, separated by an impossible divide, might begin to see each other as human; and where a boy born in chains can embrace a life of dignity and meaning. But when a man is killed and a bounty is placed on Wash's head, Titch abandons everything to save him. What follows is their flight along the eastern coast of America, and, finally, to a remote outpost in the Arctic, where Wash, left on his own, must invent another new life.
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1890, Atlanta. Jo Kuan works as a lady's maid for the cruel daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Atlanta. But by night she moonlights as the pseudonymous author of a newspaper advice column for the genteel Southern lady, "Dear Miss Sweetie." When her column becomes wildly popular, she uses the power of the pen to address some of society's ills, but she's not prepared for the backlash that follows when her column challenges fixed ideas about race and gender. A mysterious letter sets Jo off on a search for her own past and the parents who abandoned her as a baby, but her efforts put her in the crosshairs of Atlanta's most notorious criminal. Jo must decide whether she is ready to step into the light.


When blacksmith apprentice Fletcher discovers that he has the ability to summon demons from another world, he travels to Adept Military Academy. There the gifted are trained in the art of summoning. Fletcher is put through grueling training as a battlemage to fight in the Hominum Empire's war against orcs. He must tread carefully while training alongside children of powerful nobles. The power hungry, those seeking alliances, and the fear of betrayal surround him. Fletcher finds himself caught in the middle of powerful forces, with only his demon Ignatius for help. As the pieces on the board maneuver for supremacy, Fletcher must decide where his loyalties lie. The fate of an empire is in his hands.


In the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child -- not powerful, like her father, nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power -- the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves. Threatened, Zeus banishes her to a deserted island, where she hones her occult craft, tames wild beasts and crosses paths with many of the most famous figures in all of mythology, including the Minotaur, Daedalus and his doomed son Icarus, the murderous Medea, and, of course, wily Odysseus. But there is
danger, too, for a woman who stands alone, and Circe unwittingly draws the wrath of both men and gods, ultimately finding herself pitted against one of the most terrifying and vengeful of the Olympians.


Twelve Native Americans came to the Big Oakland Powwow for different reasons. Jacquie Red Feather is newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind in shame. Dene Oxendene is pulling his life together after his uncle's death and has come to work the powwow and to honor his uncle's memory. Edwin Frank has come to find his true father. Bobby Big Medicine has come to drum the Grand Entry. Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield has come to watch her nephew Orvil Red Feather. Orvil has taught himself Indian dance through YouTube videos, and he has come to the powwow to dance in public for the very first time. Tony Loneman is a young Native American boy whose future seems destined to be as bleak as his past, and he has come to the Powwow with darker intentions -- intentions that will destroy the lives of everyone in his path.


Jay Reguero learns that his Filipino cousin Jun was murdered as part of President Duterte's war on drugs, and no one in the family wants to talk about what happened. He travels to the Philippines, hoping to uncover more about Jun and the events that led to his death. Jay is forced to reckon with the many sides of his cousin before he can face the whole horrible truth -- and the part he played in it.


On September 5, a little after midnight, Death-Cast calls Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio to give them some bad news: They're going to die today. Mateo and Rufus are total strangers, but, for different reasons, they're both looking to make a new friend on their End Day. The good news: There's an app for that. It's called the Last Friend, and through it, Rufus and Mateo are about to meet up for one last great adventure--to live a
lifetime in a single day.


Laura Dean, the most popular girl in high school, was Frederica Riley's dream girl, but Freddy is learning she is not the best girlfriend, so she seeks help from a mysterious medium and advice columnists to help her through being a teenager in love.


Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag." In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard. Her father distrusted the medical establishment, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when an older brother became violent. When another brother got himself into college and came back with news of the world beyond the mountain, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. She taught herself enough mathematics, grammar, and science to take the ACT and was admitted to Brigham Young University. There, she studied psychology, politics, philosophy, and history, learning for the first time about pivotal world events like the Holocaust and the Civil Rights Movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

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