

## Historical Fiction Titles for Incoming 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

<p><b><i>Soldier Boys</i></b> by Dean Hughes 790L</p>	<p>Spencer Morgan And Dieter Hedrick, one American, one German, are both young and eager to get into action in the war. Dieter, a shining member of the Hitler Youth movement, has actually met the Fuhrer himself and was praised for his hard work. Now he is determined to make it to the front lines, to push back the enemy and defend the honor of the Fatherland. Spencer, just sixteen, must convince his father to sign his induction papers. He is bent on becoming a paratrooper -- the toughest soldiers in the world. He will prove to his family and hometown friends that he is more than the little guy with crooked teeth. He'll prove to his father that he can amount to something and keep his promises. Everyone will look at him differently when he returns home in his uniform, trousers tucked into his boots in the paratrooper style. Both boys get their wishes when they are tossed into intense conflict during the Battle of the Bulge. And both soon learn that war is about a lot more than proving oneself and one's bravery. Dean Hughes offers young readers a wrenching look at parallel lives and how innocence must eventually be shed.</p>
<p><b><i>A Beautiful Lie</i></b> by Irfan Master 790L</p>	<p>"Everybody lies. We all do it. Many years ago I told one lie that has taken on a life of its own." In India in 1947 the country is coming apart--and so is thirteen-year-old Bilal's life. He is determined to protect his dying father from the news of Partition, news that he knows will break his father's heart. With spirit and determination, and with the help of his good friends, Bilal builds an elaborate deception, even printing false pages of the local newspaper to hide the signs of national unrest. All Bilal wants is for his father to die in peace. But that means Bilal has a very complicated relationship with the truth. This extraordinarily rich debut novel brings to life a key moment in history and touches on the importance of tolerance, love and family.</p>
<p><b><i>A Great and Terrible Beauty</i></b> by Libba Brary 760L</p>	<p>An interesting combination of fantasy, light horror, and historical fiction, with a dash of romance thrown in for good measure. On her 16th birthday, Gemma Doyle fights with her mother. She wants to leave India where her family is living, runs off when her mother refuses to send her to London to school, has a dreadful vision and witnesses her mother's death. Two months later, Gemma is enrolled in London's Spence School, still troubled by visions, and unable to share her grief and guilt over her loss. She gradually learns to control her vision and enter the "realms" where magical powers can make anything happen and where her mother waits to instruct her. Gradually she and her new friends learn about the Order, an ancient group of women who maintained the realms and regulated their power, and how two students unleashed an evil creature from the realms by killing a Gypsy girl. Gemma uncovers her mother's connection to those events and learns what she now must do. The fantasy element is obvious, and the boarding-school setting gives a glimpse into a time when girls were taught gentility and the importance of appearances. The author also makes a point about the position of women in Victorian society. Bray's characters are types-Felicity, clever and powerful; Ann, plain and timid; Pippa, beautiful and occasionally thoughtless; Gemma, spirited and chafing under society's rules-but</p>

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	<p>not offensively so, and they do change as the story progresses. The ending leaves open the likelihood of a sequel. Recommend this to fantasy fans who also like Sherlock Holmes or Mary Russell.-Lisa Prolman, Greenfield Public Library, MA Copyright 2004 Reed Business Information.</p>
<p><i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> by Charles Dickens 790L</p>	<p>When millions suffer under iron-fisted oppression, when anger and resentment boil into bloody insurrection, when triumph leads to savage vengeance — does one individual life matter? In <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>, Charles Dickens interweaves the intensely personal dramas of Lucie Manette, Charles Darnay, and Sydney Carton with the terror and chaos of the French Revolution. The result is a powerful story of love, sacrifice, and redemption amid horrific violence and world-changing events.</p> <p>Lucie struggles desperately to restore the health of a father driven mad by years of unjust imprisonment. Darnay, a passionate young idealist, must overcome his family’s evil past. The cynical, alcoholic barrister, Carton, finally finds someone worthy of love and devotion—but will his affections be returned? When Darnay braves the Reign of Terror to save a faithful servant from the guillotine, Lucie and her father rush to protect him, and Carton’s newfound feelings of love are put to the ultimate test.</p> <p>Flavored with such unforgettable characters as the Marquis St. Evrémonde, who sings the praises of repression after his coach has struck and killed a peasant child, and Madame Defarge, who attends calmly to her knitting as heads roll, <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> is a novel of stark contrasts, bitter ironies, and, ultimately, great hope.</p>
<p><i>All the Light We Cannot See</i> by Anthony Doerr</p>	<p>From the highly acclaimed, multiple award-winning Anthony Doerr, the beautiful, stunningly ambitious instant <i>New York Times</i> bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II.</p> <p>Marie-Laure lives with her father in Paris near the Museum of Natural History, where he works as the master of its thousands of locks. When she is six, Marie-Laure goes blind and her father builds a perfect miniature of their neighborhood so she can memorize it by touch and navigate her way home. When she is twelve, the Nazis occupy Paris and father and daughter flee to the walled citadel of Saint-Malo, where Marie-Laure’s reclusive great-uncle lives in a tall house by the sea. With them they carry what might be the museum’s most valuable and dangerous jewel.</p> <p>In a mining town in Germany, the orphan Werner grows up with his younger sister, enchanted by a crude radio they find. Werner becomes an expert at building and fixing these crucial new instruments, a talent that wins him a place at a brutal academy for Hitler Youth, then a special assignment to track the resistance. More and more aware of the human cost of his intelligence, Werner travels through the heart of the war and, finally, into Saint-Malo, where his story</p>

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	and Marie-Laure's converge.
<p><b><i>An Unlikely Friendship: A Novel of Mary Todd Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley</i></b> by Ann Rinaldi 740L</p>	<p><b>THE FIRST LADY</b> Mary Todd Lincoln, and her seamstress, Elizabeth Keckley, were close friends during Abraham Lincoln's presidency—and when he was assassinated, grief-stricken Mary only wanted Elizabeth by her side.</p> <p>But these women grew up in the years before the Civil War, in two very different worlds. Mary was born to a life of wealth and privilege, and Elizabeth was born a slave. They both suffered tumultuous childhoods and overcame incredible odds to achieve their dreams: Mary fell in love with Abraham Lincoln and moved to the White House when he was elected president, and Elizabeth Keckley eventually bought freedom for herself and her son and became one of the most sought-after seamstresses in Washington, D. C. At a time when America was deeply divided between black and white, these remarkable women found the courage to reach beyond their positions in life to embrace the power of the heart.</p>
<p><b><i>At the Water's Edge</i></b> by Sara Gruen</p>	<p>After disgracing themselves at a high society New Year's Eve party in Philadelphia in 1944, Madeline Hyde and her husband, Ellis, are cut off financially by his father, a former army colonel who is already ashamed of his son's inability to serve in the war. When Ellis and his best friend, Hank, decide that the only way to regain the Colonel's favor is to succeed where the Colonel very publicly failed—by hunting down the famous Loch Ness monster—Maddie reluctantly follows them across the Atlantic, leaving her sheltered world behind.</p> <p>The trio find themselves in a remote village in the Scottish Highlands, where the locals have nothing but contempt for the privileged interlopers. Maddie is left on her own at the isolated inn, where food is rationed, fuel is scarce, and a knock from the postman can bring tragic news. Yet she finds herself falling in love with the stark beauty and subtle magic of the Scottish countryside. Gradually she comes to know the villagers, and the friendships she forms with two young women open her up to a larger world than she knew existed. Maddie begins to see that nothing is as it first appears: the values she holds dear prove unsustainable, and monsters lurk where they are least expected. As she embraces a fuller sense of who she might be, Maddie becomes aware not only of the dark forces around her, but of life's beauty and surprising possibilities.</p>
<p><b><i>Code Name Verity</i></b> by Elizabeth Wein</p>	<p>Oct. 11th, 1943-A British spy plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France. Its pilot and passenger are best friends. One of the girls has a chance at survival. The other has lost the game before it's barely begun.</p> <p>When "Verity" is arrested by the Gestapo, she's sure she doesn't stand a chance. As a secret agent captured in enemy territory, she's living a spy's worst nightmare. Her Nazi interrogators give her a simple choice: reveal her mission or face a grisly execution.</p> <p>As she intricately weaves her confession, Verity uncovers her past, how she</p>

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	<p>became friends with the pilot Maddie, and why she left Maddie in the wrecked fuselage of their plane. On each new scrap of paper, Verity battles for her life, confronting her views on courage, failure and her desperate hope to make it home. But will trading her secrets be enough to save her from the enemy?</p> <p>A Michael L. Printz Award Honor book that was called "a fiendishly-plotted mind game of a novel" in <b>The New York Times</b>, <b>Code Name Verity</b> is a visceral read of danger, resolve, and survival that shows just how far true friends will go to save each other.</p>
<p><b><i>Copper Sun</i></b> by Sharon M. Draper 820L</p>	<p>This action-packed, multifaceted, character-rich story describes the shocking realities of the slave trade and plantation life while portraying the perseverance, resourcefulness, and triumph of the human spirit. Amari is a 15-year-old Ashanti girl who is happily anticipating her marriage to Besa. Then, slavers arrive in her village, slaughter her family, and shatter her world. Shackled, frightened, and despondent, she is led to the Cape Coast where she is branded and forced onto a "boat of death" for the infamous Middle Passage to the Carolinas. There, Percival Derby buys her as a gift for his son's 16th birthday. Trust and friendship develop between Amari and Polly, a white indentured servant, and when their mistress gives birth to a black baby, the teens try to cover up Mrs. Derby's transgression. However, Mr. Derby's brutal fury spurs them to escape toward the rumored freedom of Fort Mose, a Spanish colony in Florida. Although the narrative focuses alternately on Amari and Polly, the story is primarily Amari's, and her pain, hope, and determination are acute. Cruel white stereotypes abound except for the plantation's mistress, whose love is colorblind; the doctor who provides the ruse for the girls' escape; and the Irish woman who gives the fugitives a horse and wagon. As readers embrace Amari and Polly, they will better understand the impact of human exploitation and suffering throughout history. In addition, they will gain a deeper knowledge of slavery, indentured servitude, and 18th-century sanctuaries for runaway slaves.-Gerry Larson, Durham School of the Arts, NC Copyright 2005 Reed Business Information.</p>
<p><b><i>Flight</i></b> by Sherman Alexie 550L</p>	<p>The best-selling author of multiple award-winning books returns with his first novel in ten years, a powerful, fast and timely story of a troubled foster teenager — a boy who is not a “legal” Indian because he was never claimed by his father — who learns the true meaning of terror. About to commit a devastating act, the young man finds himself shot back through time on a shocking sojourn through moments of violence in American history. He resurfaces in the form of an FBI agent during the civil rights era, inhabits the body of an Indian child during the battle at Little Big Horn, and then rides with an Indian tracker in the 19th Century before materializing as an airline pilot jetting through the skies today. When finally, blessedly, our young warrior comes to rest again in his own contemporary body, he is mightily transformed by all he’s seen. This is Sherman Alexie at his most brilliant — making us laugh while breaking our hearts. Simultaneously wrenching and deeply humorous, wholly contemporary yet steeped in American history, <i>Flight</i> is irrepressible, fearless, and again, groundbreaking Alexie.</p>

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<p><b><i>Girl With a Pearl Earring</i></b> by Tracy Chevalier 770L</p>	<p>Tracy Chevalier transports readers to a bygone time and place in this richly-imagined portrait of the young woman who inspired one of Vermeer's most celebrated paintings.</p> <p>History and fiction merge seamlessly in this luminous novel about artistic vision and sensual awakening. <b>Girl with a Pearl Earring</b> tells the story of sixteen-year-old Griet, whose life is transformed by her brief encounter with genius . . . even as she herself is immortalized in canvas and oil.</p>
<p><b><i>Half Broke Horses: A True Life Novel</i></b> by Jeannette Walls</p>	<p>"<i>Those old cows knew trouble was coming before we did.</i>" So begins the story of Lily Casey Smith, in Jeannette Walls's magnificent, true-life novel based on her no-nonsense, resourceful, hard working, and spectacularly compelling grandmother. By age six, Lily was helping her father break horses. At fifteen, she left home to teach in a frontier town — riding five hundred miles on her pony, all alone, to get to her job. She learned to drive a car ("I loved cars even more than I loved horses. They didn't need to be fed if they weren't working, and they didn't leave big piles of manure all over the place") and fly a plane, and, with her husband, ran a vast ranch in Arizona. She raised two children, one of whom is Jeannette's memorable mother, Rosemary Smith Walls, unforgettably portrayed in <i>The Glass Castle</i>.</p> <p>Lily survived tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy. She bristled at prejudice of all kinds — against women, Native Americans, and anyone else who didn't fit the mold. <i>Half Broke Horses</i> is Laura Ingalls Wilder for adults, as riveting and dramatic as Isak Dinesen's <i>Out of Africa</i> or Beryl Markham's <i>West with the Night</i>.</p>
<p><b><i>In the Time of the Butterflies</i></b> by Julia Alvarez 910L</p>	<p>It is November 25, 1960, and three beautiful sisters have been found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental. It does not mention that a fourth sister lives. Nor does it explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of Gen. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship. It doesn't have to. Everybody knows of Las Mariposas—"The Butterflies."</p> <p>In this extraordinary novel, the voices of all four sisters—Minerva, Patria, María Teresa, and the survivor, Dedé—speak across the decades to tell their own stories, from hair ribbons and secret crushes to gunrunning and prison torture, and to describe the everyday horrors of life under Trujillo's rule. Through the art and magic of Julia Alvarez's imagination, the martyred Butterflies live again in this novel of courage and love, and the human cost of political oppression.</p> <p>Set during the waning days of the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960, this extraordinary novel tells the story the Mirabal sisters, three young wives and mothers who are assassinated after visiting their jailed husbands.</p>

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<p><b>Orphan Train</b> by Christina Baker Kline</p>	<p>Between 1854 and 1929, so-called orphan trains ran regularly from the cities of the East Coast to the farmlands of the Midwest, carrying thousands of abandoned children whose fates would be determined by pure luck. Would they be adopted by a kind and loving family, or would they face a childhood and adolescence of hard labor and servitude?</p> <p>As a young Irish immigrant, Vivian Daly was one such child, sent by rail from New York City to an uncertain future a world away. Returning east later in life, Vivian leads a quiet, peaceful existence on the coast of Maine, the memories of her upbringing rendered a hazy blur. But in her attic, hidden in trunks, are vestiges of a turbulent past.</p> <p>Seventeen-year-old Molly Ayer knows that a community-service position helping an elderly widow clean out her attic is the only thing keeping her out of juvenile hall. But as Molly helps Vivian sort through her keepsakes and possessions, she discovers that she and Vivian aren't as different as they appear. A Penobscot Indian who has spent her youth in and out of foster homes, Molly is also an outsider being raised by strangers, and she, too, has unanswered questions about the past.</p> <p>Moving between contemporary Maine and Depression-era Minnesota, <b>Orphan Train</b> is a powerful tale of upheaval and resilience, second chances, and unexpected friendship.</p>
<p><b>Riot</b> by Walter Dean Myers</p>	<p>The Civil War is raging and in a desperate effort to find more recruits, the Union begins a draft - a draft with a difference. The wealthy can pay \$300 to be released from their obligation, but the poor must go and fight and die. In New York City, the recently arrived Irish are the hardest hit by the draft and during the long hot days of July the city explodes in a rash of arson, marches, attacks, and lynchings, with the immigrant Irish taking out their anger on the black inhabitants of the city.</p> <p>Fourteen-year-old Claire, the daughter of an Irish mother and a black father, has never had to choose between the two sides of the family - she has never had reason to consider her own identity. When she learns that a friend of hers is in danger, she decides to go to her aid, but by venturing out on the streets, she puts her own life at risk.</p>
<p><b>Sarah's Key</b> by Tatiana De Rosnay HL610L</p>	<p>Paris, July 1942: Sarah, a ten year-old girl, is brutally arrested with her family by the French police in the Vel' d'Hiv' roundup, but not before she locks her younger brother in a cupboard in the family's apartment, thinking that she will be back within a few hours.</p> <p>Paris, May 2002: On Vel' d'Hiv's 60th anniversary, journalist Julia Jarmond is asked to write an article about this black day in France's past. Through her contemporary investigation, she stumbles onto a trail of long-hidden family secrets that connect her to Sarah. Julia finds herself compelled to retrace the girl's ordeal, from that terrible term in the Vel d'Hiv', to the camps, and beyond.</p>

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	<p>As she probes into Sarah's past, she begins to question her own place in France, and to reevaluate her marriage and her life.</p> <p>Tatiana de Rosnay offers us a brilliantly subtle, compelling portrait of France under occupation and reveals the taboos and silence that surround this painful episode.</p>
<p><b><i>The Book Thief</i></b> by Marcus Zusak 730L</p>	<p>The extraordinary #1 <i>New York Times</i> bestseller that is now a major motion picture, Markus Zusak's unforgettable story is about the ability of books to feed the soul.</p> <p>It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still.</p> <p>Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can't resist—books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement.</p> <p>In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of <i>I Am the Messenger</i>, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time.</p>
<p><b><i>The Good Lord Bird</i></b> by James McBride</p>	<p>Henry Shackleford is a young slave living in the Kansas Territory in 1857, when the region is a battleground between anti- and pro-slavery forces. When John Brown, the legendary abolitionist, arrives in the area, an argument between Brown and Henry's master quickly turns violent. Henry is forced to leave town—with Brown, who believes he's a girl.</p> <p>Over the ensuing months, Henry—whom Brown nicknames Little Onion—conceals his true identity as he struggles to stay alive. Eventually Little Onion finds himself with Brown at the historic raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859—one of the great catalysts for the Civil War.</p> <p>An absorbing mixture of history and imagination, and told with McBride's meticulous eye for detail and character, <i>The Good Lord Bird</i> is both a rousing adventure and a moving exploration of identity and survival.</p>
<p><b><i>The Guernsey Literary and Potato Pie Society</i></b> by Mary Ann Shaffer 930L</p>	<p><i>I wonder how the book got to Guernsey? Perhaps there is some sort of secret homing instinct in books that brings them to their perfect readers.</i>” January 1946: London is emerging from the shadow of the Second World War, and writer Juliet Ashton is looking for her next book subject. Who could imagine that she would find it in a letter from a man she's never met, a native of the island of Guernsey, who has come across her name written inside a book by Charles Lamb....</p>

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	<p>As Juliet and her new correspondent exchange letters, Juliet is drawn into the world of this man and his friends—and what a wonderfully eccentric world it is. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society—born as a spur-of-the-moment alibi when its members were discovered breaking curfew by the Germans occupying their island—boasts a charming, funny, deeply human cast of characters, from pig farmers to phrenologists, literature lovers all.</p> <p>Juliet begins a remarkable correspondence with the society’s members, learning about their island, their taste in books, and the impact the recent German occupation has had on their lives. Captivated by their stories, she sets sail for Guernsey, and what she finds will change her forever.</p> <p>Written with warmth and humor as a series of letters, this novel is a celebration of the written word in all its guises, and of finding connection in the most surprising ways.</p>
<p><b><i>The Invention of Wings</i></b> by Sue Monk Kidd 920L</p>	<p>Hetty “Handful” Grimke, an urban slave in early nineteenth century Charleston, yearns for life beyond the suffocating walls that enclose her within the wealthy Grimke household. The Grimke’s daughter, Sarah, has known from an early age she is meant to do something large in the world, but she is hemmed in by the limits imposed on women.</p> <p>Kidd’s sweeping novel is set in motion on Sarah’s eleventh birthday, when she is given ownership of ten year old Handful, who is to be her handmaid. We follow their remarkable journeys over the next thirty five years, as both strive for a life of their own, dramatically shaping each other’s destinies and forming a complex relationship marked by guilt, defiance, estrangement and the uneasy ways of love.</p> <p>As the stories build to a riveting climax, Handful will endure loss and sorrow, finding courage and a sense of self in the process. Sarah will experience crushed hopes, betrayal, unrequited love, and ostracism before leaving Charleston to find her place alongside her fearless younger sister, Angelina, as one of the early pioneers in the abolition and women’s rights movements.</p> <p>Inspired by the historical figure of Sarah Grimke, Kidd goes beyond the record to flesh out the rich interior lives of all of her characters, both real and invented, including Handful’s cunning mother, Charlotte, who courts danger in her search for something better.</p> <p>This exquisitely written novel is a triumph of storytelling that looks with unswerving eyes at a devastating wound in American history, through women whose struggles for liberation, empowerment, and expression will leave no reader unmoved.</p>
<p><b><i>The Stars Are Fire</i></b> by Anita Shreve</p>	<p>From the <i>New York Times</i> bestselling author of <i>The Weight of Water</i> and <i>The Pilot’s Wife</i> (an Oprah’s Book Club selection): an exquisitely suspenseful new</p>



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	<p>novel about an extraordinary young woman tested by a catastrophic event and its devastating aftermath — based on the true story of the largest fire in Maine’s history.</p> <p>In October 1947, after a summer long drought, fires break out all along the Maine coast from Bar Harbor to Kittery and are soon racing out of control from town to village. Five months pregnant, Grace Holland is left alone to protect her two toddlers when her husband, Gene, joins the volunteer firefighters. Along with her best friend, Rosie, and Rosie’s two young children, Grace watches helplessly as their houses burn to the ground, the flames finally forcing them all into the ocean as a last resort. The women spend the night frantically protecting their children, and in the morning find their lives forever changed: homeless, penniless, awaiting news of their husbands’ fate, and left to face an uncertain future in a town that no longer exists. In the midst of this devastating loss, Grace discovers glorious new freedoms — joys and triumphs she could never have expected her narrow life with Gene could contain — and her spirit soars. And then the unthinkable happens — and Grace’s bravery is tested as never before.</p>
<p><b><i>We Were the Lucky Ones</i></b> by Georgia Hunter</p>	<p>An extraordinary, propulsive novel based on the true story of a family of Polish Jews who are separated at the start of the Second World War, determined to survive — and to reunite.</p> <p>It is the spring of 1939 and three generations of the Kurc family are doing their best to live normal lives, even as the shadow of war grows closer. The talk around the family Seder table is of new babies and budding romance, not of the increasing hardships threatening Jews in their hometown of Radom, Poland. But soon the horrors overtaking Europe will become inescapable and the Kurcs will be flung to the far corners of the world, each desperately trying to navigate his or her own path to safety.</p> <p>As one sibling is forced into exile, another attempts to flee the continent, while others struggle to escape certain death, either by working grueling hours on empty stomachs in the factories of the ghetto or by hiding as gentiles in plain sight. Driven by an unwavering will to survive and by the fear that they may never see one another again, the Kurcs must rely on hope, ingenuity, and inner strength to persevere.</p> <p>A novel of breathtaking sweep and scope that spans five continents and six years and transports readers from the jazz clubs of Paris to Kraków’s most brutal prison to the ports of Northern Africa and the farthest reaches of the Siberian gulag, <i>We Were the Lucky Ones</i> demonstrates how, in the face of the 20th century’s darkest moment, the human spirit can find a way to survive, and even triumph.</p>
<p><b><i>What I Saw and How I Lied</i></b></p>	<p>When Evie's father returned home from World War II, the family fell back into its normal life pretty quickly. But Joe Spooner brought more back with him than</p>

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by Judy Blundell	just good war stories. When movie-star handsome Peter Coleridge, a young ex-GI who served in Joe's company in postwar Austria, shows up, Evie is suddenly caught in a complicated web of lies that she only slowly recognizes. She finds herself falling for Peter, ignoring the secrets that surround him . . . until a tragedy occurs that shatters her family and breaks her life in two.
<b>11/22/63</b> by Stephen King HL810L	<p>On November 22, 1963, three shots rang out in Dallas, President Kennedy died, and the world changed. What if you could change it back? In this brilliantly conceived tour de force, Stephen King—who has absorbed the social, political, and popular culture of his generation more imaginatively and thoroughly than any other writer—takes readers on an incredible journey into the past and the possibility of altering it.</p> <p>It begins with Jake Epping, a thirty-five-year-old English teacher in Lisbon Falls, Maine, who makes extra money teaching GED classes. He asks his students to write about an event that changed their lives, and one essay blows him away—a gruesome, harrowing story about the night more than fifty years ago when Harry Dunning’s father came home and killed his mother, his sister, and his brother with a sledgehammer. Reading the essay is a watershed moment for Jake, his life—like Harry’s, like America’s in 1963—turning on a dime. Not much later his friend Al, who owns the local diner, divulges a secret: his storeroom is a portal to the past, a particular day in 1958. And Al enlists Jake to take over the mission that has become his obsession—to prevent the Kennedy assassination.</p> <p>So begins Jake’s new life as George Amberson, in a different world of Ike and JFK and Elvis, of big American cars and sock hops and cigarette smoke everywhere. From the dank little city of Derry, Maine (where there’s Dunning business to conduct), to the warmhearted small town of Jodie, Texas, where Jake falls dangerously in love, every turn is leading eventually, of course, to a troubled loner named Lee Harvey Oswald and to Dallas, where the past becomes heart-stoppingly suspenseful, and where history might not be history anymore. Time-travel has never been so believable. Or so terrifying.</p>