

Mrs. Fugal's List of Top Twenty Reading Recommendations

√ **The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963**

Written by Christopher Paul Curtis

Fourth grader Kenny and his African American family head south to Birmingham, toward one of the darkest moments in America's history. Historical fiction written with a delightfully humorous twist, a wonderfully funny family read. A Newbery Award winning book.

√ **Heatbeat**

Written by Sharon Creech

Told in free-verse poems, Annie relates the simple joy she feels from running, a wonderful solace from her troubles.

√ **Esperanza Rising**

Written by Pam Munoz Ryan

Esperanza thought she'd always live like a princess on their Mexican ranch, but disaster strikes, and her life starts over in the United States.

√ **Crispin**

Written by Avi

Breathlessly paced, beautifully written, and filled with details of life in the Middle Ages. A Newbery Award winning book

√ **Al Capone Does My Shirts**

Written by Jennifer Choldenko

The story of a 12-year old boy who moves to Alcatraz Island where his father is a guard. A Newbery Award winning historical fiction book (contains some mature content).

√ **Peter and the Starcatcher**

Written by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson

A prequel of sorts to the beloved Peter Pan stories, this is a fantastical pirate adventure, complete with talking porpoises, stinky rogues, possible cannibals, a flying crocodile, biting mermaids, and a much-sought-after trunk full of magical glowing green "starstuff".

✓ Maniac Magee

Written by Jerry Spinelli

The humorous yet poignant story of a super-athletic teenager who, in overcoming his own tragedies, unites his small town and bridges its racial divide. A Newbery Award winning book.

✓ Star Girl

Written By Jerry Spinelli

Stargirl enters public school in a burst of color and music, but soon finds herself shunned because of those very qualities. One of my all time favorites, a book for both boys and girls.

✓ Pictures of Hollis Woods

Written by Patricia Reilly Giff

Hollis Woods was abandoned as an infant, and runs away from every foster home. When elderly artist Josie takes her in, Hollis begins to thaw – just a bit. A Newbery Award winning fiction (contains some mature content).

✓ The Single Shard

Written by Linda Sue Park

Tree-ear, a young orphan in 12th-century Korea, accidentally breaks a pot, and his servitude to the potter begins a journey that changes his life. A Newbery Award winning fiction (contains some mature content).

✓ Chasing Vermeer

Written by Blue Balliett

Petra and Calder use their knowledge of Vermeer to solve a case that has left the FBI baffled. This book is a wonderful mix of mystery, puzzles, possibilities, and art.

✓ Percy Jackson & the Olympians

Written by Rick Riordan

In this hip and hilarious series, the adventures of the Greek gods get a whole new spin, as present-day kid Percy Jackson discovers he's actually the son of Poseidon. Series includes The Lightning Thief, The Sea of Monsters, The Titan's Curse, The Battle of the Labyrinth, and The Last Olympian.

√ Stormbreaker

Written by Anthony Horowitz

The pulse-quickening and rip-roaring adventures of 14-year old international spy Alex Rider. This series of books includes The Skeleton Key, Point Blank, Eagle Strike, Scorpio and Ark Angel. My husband loves every one of these books!

√ Eragon

Written by Christopher Paolini

Farm boy Eragon inadvertently finds a dragon's hatchling, and overnight he's thrust into a perilous world of destiny, magic, and power.

√ Schooled

Written by Gordon Korman

Cap was raised on a commune – no television, no phones, nothing. When he unexpectedly has to attend public school, he discovers his true differences. Our 7th graders are currently reading (and loving) it!

√ The Mysterious Benedict Society

Written by Trenton Lee Steward

After Reynie Muldoon responds to an advertisement recruiting "gifted children looking for special opportunities," he finds himself in a world of mystery and adventure. The 11-year-old orphan is one of four children to complete a series of challenging and creative tasks, and he, Kate, Constance, and Sticky become the Mysterious Benedict Society. Readers will challenge their own abilities as they work with the Society members to solve clues and put together the pieces of a mysterious puzzle.

√ The Wednesday Wars

Written by Gary D. Schmidt

On Wednesday afternoons, while his Catholic and Jewish schoolmates attend religious instruction, Holling Hoodhood, the only Presbyterian in his seventh grade, is alone in the classroom with his teacher, Mrs. Baker, who Holling is convinced hates his guts. He feels more certain after Mrs. Baker assigns Shakespeare's plays for Holling to discuss during their shared afternoons. Each month in Holling's tumultuous seventh-grade year is a chapter in this quietly powerful coming-of-age novel set in suburban Long Island during the late '60s.

√ Heir Apparent

Written by Vivian Vande Velde

All of the elements of a good fantasy are present in this adventure. Challenges range from barbarian attacks and peasant uprisings to a giant dragon. This adventure includes a cast of intriguing characters and

personalities. The feisty heroine has a funny, sarcastic sense of humor and succeeds because of her ingenuity and determination. This unique combination of futuristic and medieval themes will appeal to fans of fantasy and science fiction.

√ **The Bronze Bow**

Written by Elizabeth George Speare

The story is told in the time of Jesus in a village near where Jesus teaches those who come to hear him. Daniel, a young outcast, is sworn to fight the Romans with the goal of throwing them out of the land altogether. This is not a religious book. It is a book about life in the time, the unrest and resistance of many Jews to Roman rule, the confusion of many Jews looking for a military messiah trying to decide if Jesus could be that man. But more than that, it is like any other moral tale of any other time, a story of a man trying to decide what is the right thing for him to do. Our Fugal's Reader's Feast book of the month!

√ **Mississippi Trial, 1955**

Written by Chris Crowe

An eye-opening account of the tragic events leading up to the murder of Emmett Till, an African American boy from Chicago visiting relatives in 1950's Mississippi. This fictional story is based on true events and is told through the eyes of Hiram Hilburn, a white 16-year-old boy visiting his beloved grandfather in Mississippi for the summer. This story illustrates Hiram's inner struggle as he discovers difficult truths about the grandfather he loves, and comes face to face with the harsh and ugly realities of racism in the south.

