

**Saint Francis High School**  
**Honors Great Books**  
**Summer Reading 2018**

**Honors Great Books students are required to read Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*. Check the ISBN when you purchase your copy so that you bring the correct edition to class: 1451678193. In the first week of school, you will be tested on your understanding of the novel.**

**For the 2nd book**—Choose one book from the list below. You will *not* be given an objective (i.e., multiple-choice) test in August on the choice novel assignment; however, you *may* be required to make an oral presentation and/or write an essay and/or complete some other sort of graded assignment based on your choice novel.

*And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie

This is among the most famous mystery novels, and all students enjoy this book. Ten strangers arrive at a secluded island in Devon in August after receiving a letter from someone they know. The millionaire who invited them is aware of their secrets. Will any character return to the mainland?

*I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai

Students interested in current events will enjoy this non-fiction book by a young woman who stood up to the Taliban. She describes life in one of the most conservative parts of Pakistan, where the language is Pashto (not English, not Urdu) and where females are not encouraged to be educated. She was attacked on October 9, 2012, when she returned from school on a bus.

*Girl With A Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier

This novel will appeal to students with a love for the visual arts. Griet is a young servant in the household of the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer. Readers learn the stories behind different Vermeer paintings, but one painting in particular takes center stage--the 1665 masterwork of a girl wearing a headscarf and a pearl earring.

*Candide* by Voltaire

Voltaire was a philosopher of the Age of Enlightenment. This satire published in 1759 helped paved the way for the French Revolution. The young Candide struggles with disillusionment as he experiences great hardships. He ends up adopting the attitude that "we must cultivate our garden" after rejecting the idea that "all is for the best" in the "best of all possible worlds."

*The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro

This novel is set mainly in the 1930s. The narrator is Stevens, a perfect butler in one of the stately homes of England, which means like a grand house in the *Downton Abbey* TV series. The butler has surprising reactions to events happening in the home, including the visit of Nazis and the dismissal of Jewish servants. After World War II, the

house is in decline despite a rich American purchasing it. **NOTE: this is one of the most challenging of the “choice” selections.**

*Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee

Pick this only if you love *To Kill A Mockingbird* and need to satisfy your curiosity about Harper Lee’s other novel. Making a visit to Maycomb in the 1950s, Jean Louise (“Scout”) at age 26 sees new sides of Atticus Finch, Uncle Jack, and Calpurnia. Be forewarned that this novel is not brilliant like *To Kill A Mockingbird*. In fact, it has been called a failed sequel. But here is your chance to learn what else Harper Lee has to say about these beloved characters.

*The Death of Ivan Ilyich* by Leo Tolstoy

Tolstoy’s reputation as a literary master is nearly as great as Shakespeare’s, but few people today make time for his huge novels, so try this short work as an introduction to a Russian master. The novella seems to be about death, asking if human perception changes as one approaches the end. Does one feel a progression toward something different? The book is really about living. You’ll be impressed by Gerasim, the butler who provides comfort during Ivan’s illness. **NOTE: this is one of the most challenging of the “choice” selections.**

*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson

This classic novella about good and evil tells the tale of Dr. Jekyll, an upstanding citizen. His discovery of a potion that unleashes evil leads to his struggle with good, evil, and temptation. After reading this, you’ll better understand the famous expression “a Jekyll and Hyde,” meaning a personality alternating between good and evil.

*Persuasion* by Jane Austen

This has the advantage of being short for a Jane Austen novel, and some readers view it as among her very best. The passage describing Louis Musgrove falling on the pavement on the Lower Cobb in Lyme Regis is immortal! Anne’s vain father is among literature’s greatest comic characters. **NOTE: due to the complex language, this is one of the most challenging of the “choice” selections.**

*The Ox-Bow Incident* by Walter Van Tilburg Clark

In this western novel with a setting in and around Reno, a mob of 28 men are determined to bring swift justice to men accused of stealing cattle--really they form a lynch mob. But a handful of characters realize that “mob justice” is an oxymoron, so they protest, but it is not easy for righteous individuals to stand up to a wrong-headed crowd.

*The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway's influence was huge in the 20th century. This novella, published in 1952, is about Santiago struggling with a giant marlin in the Gulf Stream. He is an impoverished fisherman living in Cuba. Jesus said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men...”--look for symbolism and Biblical allusions in Hemingway’s work. This was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953.

*Ethan Frome* by Edith Wharton

This novella published in 1911 gives an introduction to the author whom many consider America's greatest female writer of fiction. Readers learn a lot about what life was like in New England long ago. Your grandparents probably read this since *Ethan Frome* was once read by every high school student--a classic!

*Washington Square* by Henry James

Try this if you enjoyed *Daisy Miller* in English 9. Henry James is a master of language. Catherine Harrington falls for Morris Townsend and is happy until her father cruelly discourages Catherine from marrying this fortune hunter. Morris may be faking love for Catherine, but does that matter if Catherine is happy? Should she reject Morris just because he is more interested in her money than in her? She fears she is too plain to have any other chance at happiness.

*All Creatures Great and Small* by James Herriot

This book should appeal to animal lovers, Anglophiles, and readers who admire good writing. The setting is England's Yorkshire district, which is far from cities, during the 1930s. Wildly popular when published in 1972, the book is fiction, but the author drew from his many decades as a veterinarian, so you may view it as a mix of fiction and autobiography. This book is longer than other selections on this summer reading list.

*The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson

This covers race in America more than a century ago. It is realistic fiction by an African American writer--the "autobiography" in the title is part of the fiction. Our narrator undergoes good times and bad in America's post-Reconstruction era and in the early 20th century. After he witnesses a lynching, he decides to "pass" as a white man, thus securing safety and advancement. Look for wonderful passages about ragtime, Frederick Douglass, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Pullman cars, pre-war Berlin, and hymns sung at revival meetings.