

12 Academic English

Summer Reading Choices.

Pick 2

Anansi Boys by Neil Gaiman

When Fat Charlie's dad named something, it stuck. Like calling Fat Charlie "Fat Charlie." Even now, twenty years later, Charlie Nancy can't shake that name, one of the many embarrassing "gifts" his father bestowed -- before he dropped dead on a karaoke stage and ruined Fat Charlie's life.

Mr. Nancy left Fat Charlie things. Things like the tall, good-looking stranger who appears on Charlie's doorstep, who appears to be the brother he never knew. A brother as different from Charlie as night is from day, a brother who's going to show Charlie how to lighten up and have a little fun ... just like Dear Old Dad. And all of a sudden, life starts getting very interesting for Fat Charlie.

Because, you see, Charlie's dad wasn't just any dad. He was Anansi, a trickster god, the spider-god. Anansi is the spirit of rebellion, able to overturn the social order, create wealth out of thin air, and baffle the devil. Some said he could cheat even Death himself.

American Gods by Neil Gaiman

Released from prison, Shadow finds his world turned upside down. His wife has been killed; a mysterious stranger offers him a job. But Mr. Wednesday, who knows more about Shadow than is possible, warns that a storm is coming -- a battle for the very soul of America . . . and they are in its direct path.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

A father and his son walk alone through burned America. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. It is cold enough to crack stones, and when the snow falls it is gray. The sky is dark. Their destination is the coast, although they don't know what, if anything, awaits them there. They have nothing; just a pistol to defend themselves against the lawless bands that stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food—and each other.

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet by Jamie Ford

In 1986, Henry Lee joins a crowd outside the Panama Hotel, once the gateway to Seattle's Japantown. It has been boarded up for decades, but now the new owner has discovered the belongings of Japanese families who were sent to internment camps during World War II. As the

owner displays and unfurls a Japanese parasol, Henry, a Chinese American, remembers a young Japanese American girl from his childhood in the 1940s—Keiko Okabe, with whom he forged a bond of friendship and innocent love that transcended the prejudices of their Old World ancestors. After Keiko and her family were evacuated to the internment camps, she and Henry could only hope that their promise to each other would be kept. Now, forty years later, Henry explores the hotel's basement for the Okabe family's belongings and for a long-lost object whose value he cannot even begin to measure. His search will take him on a journey to revisit the sacrifices he has made for family, for love, for country.

Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America by Barbara Ehrenreich

Millions of Americans work full-time, year-round, for poverty-level wages. In 1998, Barbara Ehrenreich decided to join them. She was inspired in part by the rhetoric surrounding welfare reform, which promised that any job equals a better life. But how can anyone survive, let alone prosper, on \$6-\$7 an hour? To find out, Ehrenreich moved from Florida to Maine to Minnesota, taking the cheapest lodgings available and accepting work as a waitress, hotel maid, house cleaner, nursing home aide, and Wal-Mart salesperson. She soon discovered that even the "lowliest" occupations require exhausting mental and physical efforts. And one job is not enough; you need at least two if you intend to live indoors.

The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon by David Grann

A grand mystery reaching back centuries. A sensational disappearance that made headlines around the world. A quest for truth that leads to death, madness or disappearance for those who seek to solve it. *The Lost City of Z* is a blockbuster adventure narrative about what lies beneath the impenetrable jungle canopy of the Amazon.

After stumbling upon a hidden trove of diaries, New Yorker writer David Grann set out to solve "the greatest exploration mystery of the 20th century": What happened to the British explorer Percy Fawcett & his quest for the Lost City of Z?

In 1925, Fawcett ventured into the Amazon to find an ancient civilization, hoping to make one of the most important discoveries in history. For centuries Europeans believed the world's largest jungle concealed the glittering kingdom of El Dorado. Thousands had died looking for it, leaving many scientists convinced that the Amazon was truly inimical to humans. But Fawcett, whose daring expeditions inspired Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, had spent years building his scientific case. Captivating the imagination of millions round the globe, Fawcett embarked with his 21-year-old son, determined to prove that this ancient civilization--which he dubbed Z--existed. Then his expedition vanished. Fawcett's fate, & the tantalizing clues he left behind about Z, became an obsession for hundreds who followed him into the uncharted wilderness.

For decades scientists & adventurers have searched for evidence of Fawcett's party & the lost City of Z. Countless have perished, been captured by tribes or gone mad. As Grann delved ever

deeper into the mystery surrounding Fawcett's quest, & the greater mystery of what lies within the Amazon, he found himself, like the generations who preceded him, being irresistibly drawn into the jungle's green hell. His quest for the truth & discoveries about Fawcett's fate & Z form the heart of this complexly enthralling narrative.