

# 10th Grade Accelerated Summer Reading Assignment

Students enrolled in 10 Accelerated English for the next school year must read two of the following four books. (All book descriptions are taken from Amazon.com)

## ***The Glass Castle* – Jeannette Walls**

Jeannette Walls grew up with parents whose ideals and stubborn nonconformity were both their curse and their salvation. Rex and Rose Mary Walls had four children. In the beginning, they lived like nomads, moving among Southwest desert towns, camping in the mountains. Rex was a charismatic, brilliant man who, when sober, captured his children's imagination, teaching them physics, geology, and above all, how to embrace life fearlessly. Rose Mary, who painted and wrote and couldn't stand the responsibility of providing for her family, called herself an "excitement addict." Cooking a meal that would be consumed in fifteen minutes had no appeal when she could make a painting that might last forever.

Later, when the money ran out, or the romance of the wandering life faded, the Walls retreated to the dismal West Virginia mining town -- and the family -- Rex Walls had done everything he could to escape. He drank. He stole the grocery money and disappeared for days. As the dysfunction of the family escalated, Jeannette and her brother and sisters had to fend for themselves, supporting one another as they weathered their parents' betrayals and, finally, found the resources and will to leave home.

What is so astonishing about Jeannette Walls is not just that she had the guts and tenacity and intelligence to get out, but that she describes her parents with such deep affection and generosity. Hers is a story of triumph against all odds, but also a tender, moving tale of unconditional love in a family that despite its profound flaws gave her the fiery determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms.

For two decades, Jeannette Walls hid her roots. Now she tells her own story. A regular contributor to MSNBC.com, she lives in New York and Long Island and is married to the writer John Taylor.

**Please note *The Glass Castle* contains some mature language and uncomfortable situations.**

## ***Moneyball* – Michael Lewis**

*Moneyball* is a quest for the secret of success in baseball. Following the low-budget Oakland Athletics, their larger-than-life general manager, Billy Beane, and the strange brotherhood of amateur baseball enthusiasts, Michael Lewis has written not only "the single most influential baseball book ever" (Rob Neyer, Slate) but also what "may be the best book ever written on business" (*Weekly Standard*).

Billy paid attention to [the] numbers —with the second lowest payroll in baseball at his disposal he had to—and this book records his astonishing experiment in finding and fielding a team that nobody else wanted. *Moneyball* is a roller coaster ride: before the 2002

season opens, Oakland must relinquish its three most prominent (and expensive) players, is written off by just about everyone, and then comes roaring back to challenge the American League record for consecutive wins.

In a narrative full of fabulous characters and brilliant excursions into the unexpected, Michael Lewis shows us how and why the new baseball knowledge works. He also sets up a sly and hilarious morality tale: Big Money, like Goliath, is always supposed to win...how can we not cheer for David?

## ***Killing Lincoln* – Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard**

...A riveting historical narrative of the heart-stopping events surrounding the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and the first work of history from megabestselling author Bill O'Reilly.

The anchor of *The O'Reilly Factor* recounts one of the most dramatic stories in American history—how one gunshot changed the country forever. In the spring of 1865, the bloody saga of America's Civil War finally comes to an end after a series of increasingly harrowing battles. President Abraham Lincoln's generous terms for Robert E. Lee's surrender are devised to fulfill Lincoln's dream of healing a divided nation, with the former Confederates allowed to reintegrate into American society. But one man and his band of murderous accomplices, perhaps reaching into the highest ranks of the U.S. government, are not appeased.

In the midst of the patriotic celebrations in Washington D.C., John Wilkes Booth—charismatic ladies' man and impenitent racist—murders Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre. A furious manhunt ensues and Booth immediately becomes the country's most wanted fugitive. Lafayette C. Baker, a smart but shifty New York detective and former Union spy, unravels the string of clues leading to Booth, while federal forces track his accomplices. The thrilling chase ends in a fiery shootout and a series of court-ordered executions—including that of the first woman ever executed by the U.S. government, Mary Surratt. Featuring some of history's most remarkable figures, vivid detail, and page-turning action, *Killing Lincoln* is history that reads like a thriller.

## ***The House on Mango Street* – Sandra Cisneros**

Acclaimed by critics, beloved by readers of all ages, taught everywhere from inner-city grade schools to universities across the country, and translated all over the world, *The House on Mango Street* is the remarkable story of Esperanza Cordero.

Told in a series of vignettes – sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous – it is the story of a young Latina girl growing up in Chicago, inventing for herself who and what she will become. Few other books in our time have touched so many readers.

***The House on Mango Street* should be read and studied as a work of poetry, not prose. Do not expect *The House on Mango Street* to follow a typical novel format; the book more closely resembles the seemingly random thoughts of a young teen growing up in a barrio.**

## ***The Heretic's Daughter* – Kathleen Kent**

Martha Carrier was one of the first women to be accused, tried and hanged as a witch in Salem, Massachusetts. Like her mother, young Sarah Carrier is bright and willful, openly challenging the small, brutal world in which they live. Often at odds with one another, mother and daughter are forced to stand together against the escalating hysteria of the trials and the superstitious tyranny that led to the torture and imprisonment of more than 200 people accused of witchcraft. *The Heretic's Daughter* is the story of Martha's courageous defiance and ultimate death, as told by the daughter who survived.

Kathleen Kent is a tenth generation descendent of Martha Carrier. She paints a haunting portrait, not just of Puritan New England, but also of one family's deep and abiding love in the face of fear and persecution.

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In order to keep track and remember what you have read, you should take notes on the setting, the main characters, plot, and themes. A test on the books will take place on the first Friday of school. The test will be a combination of true/false, matching, multiple choice, quotes, and essay. This evaluation will be your first grade for the first quarter. Please check the website as some of the above titles may have reading guides.