



Following are the fiction titles included in the most recent edition of **Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners**, prepared every five years by the young Adult Services Association (YALSA) of the American Library Association. Criteria used by the selection committee include: readability, cultural and ethnic diversity, balance of points of view, contemporary and classical works, different genres, and availability. Annotations were prepared by members of the committee.

*All books are available in the Adult Fiction area of the Ridgefield Library unless otherwise noted.*

Agee, James. **A Death in the Family**. 1957. The enchanted childhood summer of 1915 suddenly becomes a baffling experience for Rufus Follet when his father dies.

Allison, Dorothy. **Bastard Out of Carolina**. 1992. Bone confronts poverty, the troubled marriage of her mother and stepfather, and the stigma of being considered "white trash" as she comes of age in South Carolina.

Alvarez, Julia. **In the Time of Butterflies**. 1994. Dede, the only survivor of the four Mirabel sisters, code named Mariposas or butterflies, reveals their role in the liberation of the Dominican Republic from the dictator Trujillo.

Anaya, Rudolfo. **Bless Me, Ultima**. 1972. Ultima, a wise old mystic, helps a young Hispanic boy resolve personal dilemmas caused by the differing backgrounds and aspirations of his parents and society.

Atwood, Margaret. **The Handmaid's Tale**. 1986. In Gilead, a Christian fundamentalist dystopia, fertile lower-class women serve as birth-mothers for the upper class.

Butler, Octavia. **Parable of the Sower**. 1993. Lauren Olamina, who suffers from a hereditary trait called "hyperempathy" that causes her to feel others' pain physically, journeys north along the dangerous highways of twentieth-first century California. (*Science Fiction*)

Card, Orson Scott. **Ender's Game**. 1985. In a world decimated by alien attacks, the government trains young geniuses like Ender Wiggin in military strategy with increasingly complex computer games. (*Science Fiction*)

Chopin, Kate. **The Awakening**. 1899. Edna Pontellier, an unhappy wife and mother, discovers new qualities in herself when she visits Grand Isle, a resort for the Creole elite of New Orleans.

Cisneros, Sandra. **The House On Mango Street**. 1991. In short, poetic stories, Esperanza describes life in a low-income, predominantly Hispanic neighborhood in Chicago.

Dostoyevsky, Fyodor. **Crime and Punishment**. 1866. A sensitive intellectual is driven by poverty to believe himself exempt from moral law.

Ellison, Ralph. **Invisible Man**. 1952. A young African American seeking identity during his high school and college days, and later in New York's Harlem, relates his terrifying experiences.

Emecheta, Buchi. **Bride Price**. 1976. Aku-nna, a very young Ibo girl, and Chike, her teacher, fall in love despite tribal custom forbidding their romance.

Faulkner, William. **The Bear**. 1931. Ike McCaslin's hunting trips for the legendary bear, Old Ben, are played out against opposing ideas of corruption and innocence. (May be found in the short story collection entitled *The Big Woods*)

Frazier, Charles. **Cold Mountain**. 1997. Inman, a wounded Civil War soldier, endures the elements, The Guard, and his own weakness and infirmity to return to his sweetheart, Ada, who is fighting her own battle to survive while farming the mountainous North Carolina terrain.

Gaines, Ernest. **A Lesson Before Dying**. 1993. When Jefferson's attorney states, "I would just as soon put a hog in the electric chair as this," disillusioned teacher Grant Wiggins is sent into the penitentiary to help this slow learner gain a sense of dignity and self-esteem before his execution.

Gardner, John. **Grendel**. 1971. In a unique interpretation of the Beowulf legend, the monster Grendel relates his struggle to understand the ugliness in himself and mankind in the brutal world of fourteenth-century Denmark.

Gibbons, Kaye. **Ellen Foster**. 1987. Casting an unflinching yet humorous eye on her situation, eleven-year-old Ellen survives her mother's death, an abusive father, and uncaring relatives to find for herself a loving home and a new mama.

Heller, Joseph. **Catch-22**. 1961. In this satirical novel, Captain Yossarian confronts the hypocrisy of war and bureaucracy as he frantically attempts to survive.

Hemingway, Ernest. **Farewell to Arms**. 1929. World War I is the setting for this love story of an English nurse and a wounded American ambulance officer.

Hesse, Hermann. **Siddhartha**. 1951. Emerging from a kaleidoscope of experiences and tasted pleasures, Siddhartha transcends to a state of peace and mystic holiness in this strangely simple story.

Huxley, Aldous. **Brave New World**. 1932. In a chilling vision of the future, babies are produced in bottles and exist in a mechanized world without soul.

Keneally, Thomas. **Schindler's List**. 1982. Oskar Schindler, a rich factory owner, risks his life and spends his personal fortune to save Jews listed as his workers during World War II.

King, Laurie R. **The Beekeeper's Apprentice, or, on the Segregation of the Queen**. 1994. Retired Sherlock Holmes meets his intellectual match in 15-year-old Mary Russell, who challenges him to investigate yet another case. (*Mystery*)

Kosinski, Jerzy. **Painted Bird**. 1965. An abandoned dark-haired child wanders alone through isolated villages of Eastern Europe in World War II.

Lee, Harper. **To Kill a Mockingbird**. 1960. A young girl tells of life in a small Alabama town in the 1930s and her father's defense in court of an African American accused of raping a white woman.

LeGuin, Ursula. **The Left Hand of Darkness**. 1969. First envoy to the technologically primitive world of Winter, Al must deal with a hostile climate; a suspicious, bickering government; and his own conventional sexual mores. (*Science Fiction*)

McCullers, Carson. **The Member of the Wedding**. 1946. A young Southern girl is determined to be the third party on a honeymoon, despite all advice.

McKinley, Robin. **Beauty**. 1978. Love is the only key to unlocking a curse and transforming the Beast into a man. (*Young Adult*)

Malamud, Bernard. **The Fixer**. 1966. Victim of a vicious anti-Semitic conspiracy, Yakov Bok is in a Russian prison with only his indomitable will to sustain him.

Markandaya, Kamala. **Nectar In A Sieve**. 1954. Natural disasters, an arranged marriage, and industrialization of her village are the challenges Rukmani must face as the bride of a peasant farmer in southern India.

Mason, Bobbi Ann. **In Country**. 1985. After her father is killed in the Vietnam War, Sam Hughes lives with an uncle whom she suspects suffers from the effects of Agent Orange, and struggles to come to terms with the war's impact on her family.

Mori, Kyoko. **Shizuko's Daughter**. 1993. In the years following her mother's suicide, Yuki develops the inner strength to cope with her distant father, her resentful stepmother, and her haunting, painful memories.

Morrison, Toni. **Beloved**. 1987. Preferring death over slavery for her children, Sethe murders her infant daughter who later mysteriously returns and almost destroys the lives of her mother and sister.

O'Brien, Tim. **The Things They Carried: A Work of Fiction**. 1990. These stories follow Tim O'Brien's platoon of American soldiers through a variety of personal and military encounters during the Vietnam War.

O'Connor, Flannery. **Everything That Rises Must Converge**. 1965. Stories about misfits in small Southern towns force the reader to confront hypocrisy and complacency.

Potok, Chaim. **The Chosen**. 1967. A baseball injury brings together two Jewish boys, one Hasidic, the other Orthodox, first in hostility but finally in friendship.

Power, Susan. **The Grass Dancer**. 1994. Ending in the 1980s with the love story of Charlene Thunder and grass dancer Harley Wind Soldier, this multigenerational tale of a Sioux family is told in the voices of the living and the dead.

Shaara, Michael. **Killer Angels**. 1974. Officers and foot soldiers from both the Union and Confederacy steel themselves for the bloody Battle of Gettysburg.

Steinbeck, John. **The Grapes of Wrath**. 1939. An Oklahoma farmer and his family leave the Dust Bowl during the Great Depression to go to the promised land of California.

Uchida, Yoshiko. **Picture Bride**. 1987. Taro journeys to America in the early 1900s to marry a man she has never met.

Watson, Larry. **Montana 1948**. 1993. The summer he is 12, David watches as his family and small town are shattered by scandal and tragedy.

Wright, Richard. **Native Son**. 1940. For Bigger Thomas, an African American man accused of a crime in the white man's world, there could be no extenuating circumstances, no explanations and only death.

Yolen, Jane. **Briar Rose**. 1992. Disturbed by her grandmother Gemma's unique version of Sleeping Beauty, Rebecca seeks the truth behind the fairy tale.