

Villiers School

Celebrating 200 Years

Summer Reading List 2021

Suggestions compiled by our Librarian, Julia Nicolas, with some added recommendations from staff and interesting endorsements from recent newspaper articles

Lighter reading for younger students

A Kind of Spark, by Elle McNicoll – 11-year-old Addie campaigns for a memorial to commemorate the witch trials that took place in her Scottish hometown. She knows there was more to these women's stories, just like there is more to hers. She fights to challenge the people's perceptions of them, of her, and her autism. But will they want to listen?

You Should See me in a Crown, by Leah Johnson – Liz is the only person in her town who is not obsessed by the prom. She focuses instead on her plan to get into an elite college and become a doctor. That is, until the financial aid she was counting on falls through. Her last hope: the Prom Queen scholarship. To get what she always wanted, will she be able to endure the public events and catty competitors?

The Falling in Love Montage, by Ciara Smyth – Saoirse, 17, is looking forward to a summer of freedom before university. But with a sick mother and a dad about to remarry, not everything is as joyful as she expected. Enter Ruby, all fun and beauty. But how long can the fun last?

Kick, by Mitch Johnson – During the long hours he spends making football boots, Budi dreams of being a star, playing for the greatest team on Earth. But his world and dreams are turned upside-down when he encounters the most dangerous man in Jakarta, the Dragon. Now, his primary concern is to survive.

Boy Queen, by George Lester – Robin Cooper dreams of an acting career but piles of rejection letters from drama schools litter his bedroom floor. Then, in the last place he expected to find a path – at a drag show, he discovers that he might be made for something more sparkly...

Loveless, by Alice Oseman – Georgia has never been in love, or even had a crush. University offers her all she hoped for, in the shape of an outgoing roommate and a place in the Shakespeare Society. But there's still something missing, and it starts wreaking havoc in her perfect life. Will she remain loveless? Or has she been looking for the wrong kind of love?

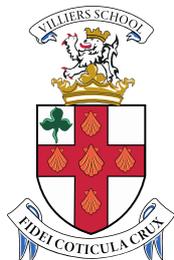
Parachutes, by Kelly Yang – Parachutes are these teenagers dropped off to live in the US and attend fancy private schools, while their wealthy parents remain in Asia. Claire Wang is one of them. She arrives in a stranger's house in California and for the first time in her life, doesn't have anyone to tell her what to do. What will she do with her newfound freedom?



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***Instructions for Dancing*, by Nicola Yoon** – An otherwise ordinary girl, Evie suddenly finds herself having visions of how people’s romances started, and will end. So love is not for her, she decides. She focuses instead of her dance lessons. But her partner, who is her polar opposite, is very hard to resist. Will her visions of heartbreak come in the way of her happiness?

***Ace of Spades*, by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé** – Freshly selected as part of the elite prefects, Devon and Chiamaka start Senior Year confidently. Until someone named Spades starts sharing secrets about Devon and Chiamaka’s pasts, which could endanger their carefully planned futures. What started as an annoying prank soon turns into a dangerous, and potentially deadly, game.

***Any Way the Wind Blows*, by Rainbow Rowell** – the finale in the ‘Simon Snow’ series. Simon, Baz, Penelope and Agatha are back in England with their families. But their adventures are far from over, with heart-wrenching and emotional decisions to take. As all finales, this book tells secrets, lays ghosts to rest, and shows how characters move on from the traumas of the past.

More mature themes for older students and parents / guardians

***Blood Moon*, by Lucy Cuthew** – When an insignificant accident involving a tiny amount of blood escalates into shaming and humiliating, Frankie loses all her confidence. Recovering it will take a lot of courage and will test the strength of her friendships.

***The Boy I Am*, by K. L. Kettle** – Think *Only Ever Yours* by Louise O’Neill but in reverse. In this world, it is young men who are auctioned to the female elite. The alternative is a lifetime spent in the mines. Until a boy named Jude fights to carve a new path while avenging the death of his best friend.

***Last One to Die*, by Cynthia Murphy** – A gory whodunit with a supernatural twist. 16-year-old Niamh arrives at her drama school in London where she meets incredibly cute Tommy. All is well until someone starts attacking girls who look an awful lot like Niamh...

***Excuse me while I Ugly Cry*, by Joya Goffney** – Quinn is someone who makes lists, of everything. One day, her journal goes missing and one of her secret lists appears on Instagram. More will appear if Quinn doesn’t do what her blackmailer demands. Quinn teams up with Carter and they embark on a quest to retrieve Quinn’s diary, and potentially more...

***What Love Looks Like*, by Jarlath Gregory** – Ben has everything he needs in life, except love. But modern-day gay dating doesn’t come naturally to him. Between friends who disappear on him and a bully who won’t leave him be, Ben has to somehow adapt, but can he?

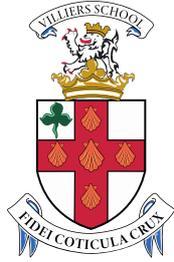
***Clap when you Land*, by Elizabeth Acevedo** – In the Dominican Republic, Camino Rios goes to the airport to meet her dad and instead find crowds of people crying. In New York City, Yahairo Rios is called into the principal’s office where her mother is waiting with horrible news. On that day, both girls lose one of the most important people in their lives, but they also learn about each other for the first time.



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***Felix Ever After*, by Kacen Alexander** – Felix Love is proud of his identity. But sometimes he worries that being black, queer and transgender will get in the way of his finding love. When an anonymous student starts bullying him online, Felix’s path to revenge will lead him somewhere unexpected...

***The Boy who Steals Houses*, by C. G. Drews** – 15-year-old Sam and his older brother, Avery have been abandoned by everyone they know. Sam takes care of them both by breaking into houses when the owners are away. One day, he’s caught by the family and in an unexpected twist, they take him in. Will they accept him and his shady past?

***Hamnet*, by Maggie O’Farrell** - O’Farrell’s finest novel yet is the story of Shakespeare’s family: his brutal father, his fiercely independent wife, and his children, especially his son, Hamnet, lost to the plague at 11 and the inspiration for his greatest tragedy. Atmospheric and down to earth, the book provides a window into Elizabethan society, as well as a timeless portrait of parental love and grief – with surprisingly timely resonances for a new era of epidemic.

***Actress* by Anne Enright**- A woman looks back on the glamorous, troubled life of her famous mother in the Booker winner’s sharp, emotionally acute tale of stardom, sex and motherhood.

***House of Glass* by Hadley Freeman** - The Guardian journalist spent years uncovering the varied, remarkable stories of her grandmother and great uncles, as her Jewish family endured the Holocaust.

***Sway: The Science of Unconscious Bias* by Pragya Agarwal** - An acute look by a behavioural scientist at the unconscious influences that affect our everyday decisions, including racism and bias against women.

***Diary of a Young Naturalist*, by Dara McAnulty** - An autistic mid-teenager has produced an astonishing, lyrical account of his joyous relationship with nature, and how it helped him get through a difficult year.

***The Midnight Library*, by Matt Haig** - A magical library offers endless chances to rewrite life for the better in the latest high-concept blockbuster from the author of *How to Stop Time*.

***The Death of Vivek Oji*, by Akwaeke Emezi** - From the Women’s prize-longlisted author of *Freshwater*, the surprising story of a Nigerian childhood.

***The Lamplighters*, by Emma Stonex** - Based on a real-life mystery, this stylishly written debut interweaves a range of voices to explore the disappearance of three Cornish lighthouse keepers in 1972. Both a slow-growing, atmospheric portrait of claustrophobic relationships and a relentless page-turner, this is a hugely satisfying read and a passionate love letter to the sea.

***How to Kidnap the Rich*, by Rahul Raina** - Written with enormous verve and energy, this crime caper satirising aspiration, inequality, and corruption in India centres on an “examinations consultant” who fraudulently acquires qualifications for the children of the wealthy. Fast, furious and lots of fun.

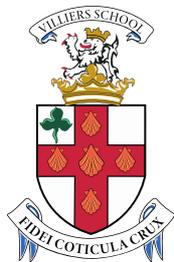
a family since 1821



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I Belong Here: A Journey Along the Backbone of Britain, by Anita Sethi - After she was subjected to a racist attack on a train, Mancunian writer Sethi was left anxious, claustrophobic and longing for open spaces. This account of her pilgrimage across the Pennines explores ideas of estrangement, home and belonging.

How to Make the World Add Up: Ten Rules for Thinking Differently About Numbers, by Tim Harford - Harford is a calm voice in the often confusing and clamorous world of statistics. With its 10 simple rules for understanding numbers, this book demystifies maths and gives its power back to the people, taking away the advantage from those who would use statistics to bamboozle us.

Explaining Humans: What Science can Teach us About Life, Love and Relationships, by Camilla Pang - A writer with autism spectrum disorder uses scientific concepts to help her understand human behaviour – and other humans have a lot to learn from her about both.

If I Was Your Girl, by Meredith Russo - A big-hearted novel about being seen for who you really are. Amanda Hardy is the new girl in school. Like anyone else, all she wants is to make friends and fit in. But Amanda is keeping a secret, and she's determined not to get too close to anyone. This is a universal story about feeling different and a love story that everyone will root for.

Bullet Train, by Kotaro Isaka - A bestseller in Japan, and soon to be a major film, this fast-paced thriller takes place aboard a bullet train, travelling from Tokyo to Morioka. On board are five killers: two thugs for hire, an innocent-looking schoolboy, the self-proclaimed “unluckiest assassin in the world” and an alcoholic former hitman. All are competing for a suitcase full of money. At once satirical and philosophical, this is a quirky and entertaining read.

Don't Touch My Hair, by Emma Dabiri - A first book, but the academic and TV host doesn't approach her subject matter like a novice. Black hair is personal and for her, this story begins with an upbringing in Ireland, where her hair was a “constant source of deep, deep shame”.

Happy Reading!



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