

# Grades 11 & 12 English Summer Reading

Dear Carver Students & Parents:

Students entering the 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grades will be expected to read the following:

- a. 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade CP: one book from the choice list
- b. 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Honors: one book from the choice list and *The Power of One*

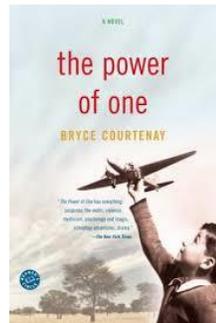
All of the following novels have to do with the topic of our EXISTENCE, a broad theme common to many of the 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade readings this year.

Upon your return to school in the fall, be ready to discuss and write about the following:

## Essential Question

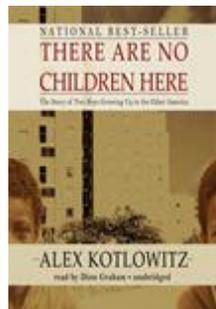
What forces within us, around us, or beyond us, give meaning to our lives?

## 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Honors



*The Power  
of One*

## Choice List for all 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> Graders



*There are no  
Children Here*

*There Are No Children Here*, the true story of brothers Lafayette and Pharoah Rivers, ages 11 and 9 at the start, brings home the horror of trying to make it in a violence-ridden public housing project. The boys live in a gang-plagued war zone on Chicago's West Side. "If I grow up, I'd like to be a bus driver," says Lafayette at one point. That's *if*, not *when*—spoken

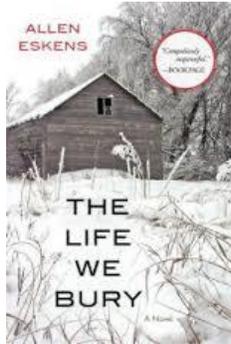
with the complete innocence of a child. The book's title comes from a comment made by the brothers' mother as she and author Alex Kotlowitz contemplate the challenges of living in such a hostile environment: "There are no children here," she says. "They've seen too much to be children."



*Girl with a  
Pearl Earring*

Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer represents one of the great enigmas of 17th-century art. His portrait of the anonymous *Girl with a Pearl Earring* has exerted a particular fascination for centuries—and it is this magnetic painting that lies at the heart of Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, which centers on Vermeer's prosperous Delft household during the 1660s. When Griet, the novel's quietly perceptive heroine, is hired as a servant, turmoil follows. First, the 16-year-old narrator becomes increasingly intimate with her master. Then Vermeer employs her as his assistant—and ultimately has Griet sit for him as a model. Chevalier vividly evokes the complex domestic tensions of the household, ruled over by the painter's jealous, eternally pregnant wife and his taciturn mother-in-law. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* does contain a final delicious twist. *from amazon.com*

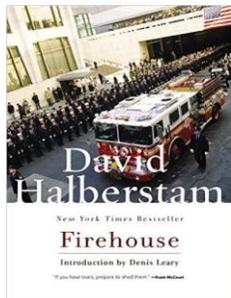
# Summer Choice list for Grades 11 & 12 cont.



## *The Life We Bury*

*The Life we Bury* tells the story of Joe Talbert, a junior at the University of Minnesota, who receives a class assignment to write a biography of someone who has lived an interesting life. At a nursing home he meets Carl Iverson, a man dying of cancer who has been medically paroled after spending thirty years in prison for the murder of a fourteen-year-old girl. Carl agrees to tell Joe his story, and Joe sets out to unravel the tapestry of the thirty-year-old murder.

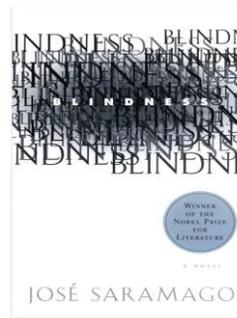
from [alleneskens.com](http://alleneskens.com)



## *Firehouse*

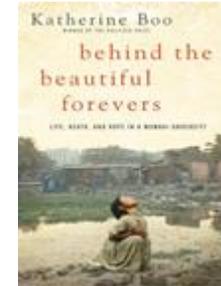
Halberstam's gripping chronicle of a company of Manhattan firemen on September 11 is moving without ever becoming grossly sentimental—an impressive achievement. Engine 40, Ladder 35, a

firehouse near Lincoln Center, sent 13 men to the World Trade Center, 12 of whom died. Through interviews with surviving colleagues and family members, Halberstam pieces together the day's events and offers portraits of the men who perished. Though he doesn't go into much detail about the technical challenges facing the fire department that day, Halberstam does convey the sheer chaos at the site and, above all, the immensity of the loss for fellow firefighters. from [publishersweekly.com](http://publishersweekly.com)



## *Blindness*

Winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Literature. A city is hit by an epidemic of 'white blindness.' The blindness spreads, sparing no one. Authorities confine the blind to a vacant mental hospital secured by armed guards. Inside, the criminal element among the blind hold the rest captive: food rations are stolen, women are raped. There is one eyewitness to this nightmare who guides seven strangers through the barren streets. The developments within this oddly anonymous group -- the first blind man, the old man with the black eye patch, the girl with dark glasses, the boy with no mother, and the dog of tears -- are as uncanny as the surrounding chaos is harrowing. from [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com)



## *Behind the Beautiful Forever*

Annawadi is a makeshift settlement in the shadow of luxury hotels near the Mumbai airport, and as India starts to prosper, Annawadians are electric with hope. Abdul, a reflective and enterprising Muslim teenager, sees “a fortune beyond counting” in the recyclable garbage that richer people throw away. Asha, a woman of formidable wit and deep scars from a childhood in rural poverty, has identified an alternate route to the middle class: political corruption. With a little luck, her sensitive, beautiful daughter—Annawadi’s “most-everything girl!”—will soon become its first female college graduate. And even the poorest Annawadians, like Kalu, a fifteen-year-old scrap-metal thief, believe themselves inching closer to the good lives and good times they call “the full enjoy.” from [randomhouse.com](http://randomhouse.com)

Here are links to reviews of each book:

- o [The Power of One](#)
- o [There are no Children Here](#)
- o [Girl with a Pearl Earring](#)
- o [The Life We Bury](#)
- o [Firehouse](#)
- o [Blindness](#)
- o [Behind the Beautiful Forever](#)