

New Authentic Texts for High School Readers

November 21, 2016

Each month, we at Fluence add new, authentic texts to our Content Bank. Recently, we have been concentrating on the needs and interests of high-school readers. The following lists and describes just a few of the selections that we are excited about:

Excerpt from *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (E16660)

By Sherman Alexie

Grades 9-10: Fiction

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian is the first young-adult novel written by established author Sherman Alexie (Spokane). Alexie's coming-of-age tale introduces readers to Arnold Spirit, Jr., a Native-American teenager growing up on the Spokane Indian reservation and going to school off-reservation in a predominantly white town. This excerpt includes two sections of the novel. In the first, Arnold explains his interest in cartooning and its purpose in his life. The second section is a conversation between Arnold and his teacher as they discuss Arnold's sister and her interest in writing. Readers learn how creating art can uplift and sustain, but also how it can bring risk and uncertainty.

Excerpt from *The Gods Of Heavenly Punishment: A Novel* (E16754)

By Jennifer Cody Epstein

Grades 11-12: Fiction

Epstein's novel is set in the United States and Japan and follows the lives of several American and Japanese people before and after World War II. This excerpt centers on two young people, Cam and Lucy. In 1935, prior to the war, they meet and discuss their feelings for each other. In the process, Cam comes to a consequential realization. *The Gods of Heavenly Punishment* received the Honor Award for Fiction in the 2014 Asian/Pacific American Awards for Literature.

Excerpt from *Delicious Foods* (E16757)

By James Hannaham

Grades 11-12: Fiction

Hannaham's 2015 novel features Eddie, an African American 18 year old. Eddie has left a family tragedy in the South and traveled to Minnesota to embark on a career as a self-employed handyman—despite the fact that he has no hands. This excerpt describes how Eddie fashions prostheses that enable him to do his work. The descriptive details of Eddie's tools and his repair projects mirror the contrast between tangible, fixable things with things that which can't be fixed or undone. The second half of the excerpt takes a look at Eddie's interactions with his customers and reveals insights into both.

“the gift of words” from *Under the Mesquite* (E16753)

By Guadalupe Garcia McCall

Grades 9-10: Poetry

McCall’s free verse novel describes a high school age Mexican-American girl, her family obligations, and how she copes with loss. In the excerpted poem, a father encourages his young daughter to learn English before she leaves Mexico for the United States. *Under the Mesquite* received the 2012 Pura Belpré Author Award .

Excerpt from *The Girl in the Garden* (E16758)

By Kamala Nair

Grades 11-12: Fiction

Nair’s novel describes the journey of a young Indian woman, Rakhee, who grew up in Minnesota. One summer, when Rakhee was a child, her mother takes her to visit her ancestral home in Kerala, India. During this visit, Rakhee learns about her mother’s past life and Indian culture. The experience leads her to question the notion of love and trust.

Excerpt from *Marina* (E16755)

By Carlos Luis Zafón

Grade 9-10: Fiction

This is a novel by Spanish writer Carlos Luis Zafón. It takes place in Barcelona, and the plot has elements of magic realism. The story is narrated by Oscar Draí, a fifteen-year-old boy student at a boarding school. One day while exploring an old part of the city, he comes across an old mansion where a beautiful girl named Marina and her father live. His encounter with mysterious and witty Marina leads him into a fascinating and mysterious journey through the city’s Gothic neighborhood.