

Hello lovely Seniors,

Greetings and salutations! I hope you are finding your summer break refreshing and full of adventure. In moments of leisure this summer, you will find yourself **reading** *The Two Towers* by J.R.R. Tolkien, and advisedly re-reading/reviewing *The Fellowship of the Ring*. See if you can assign cardinal virtues to each race in the fellowship: men, elves, hobbits, dwarfs. We are going to be considering: society, government, kingship, authority, and law this year, so I suggest paying attention to how Tolkien wrestles with power and leadership. Mark passages you love to share in class. Get to know the characters; may Treebeard, Faramir, Theoden, Eomer, and Eowyn become your friends.

There is minuscule value in watching the movies largely to learn names of people and places that are otherwise quite foreign. After all, you did not grow up in Middle Earth. In the films, they do get some narrative details correct, but they are not trying to tell the same story as Tolkien. So, don't be fooled. Peter Jackson does not love God. Alas, they miss the mark with Frodo completely!!! There are other troubling bits, so keep your guard up, if you do indeed choose to watch them.

If you want to read something purely pleasurable *Leave it to Psmith* by P.G. Wodehouse or *Strong Poison* by Dorothy Sayers would fit the bill. My current two enjoyable reads: *The Book of the Dun Cow* and *The Awakening of Miss Prim* are also startlingly charming.

If you have already mastered Tolkien, and want some challenging reads, then *Concise History of the 20th Century* by Martin Gilbert, *Henry V* by William Shakespeare, or *Strange New World* by Carl Trueman would be fitting suggestions.

If you want to pre-read something for the year: *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength* by C.S. Lewis, or *The Temple* by George Herbert would be my suggestions. They demand multiple readings!

Perhaps you are not planning to read forty books this summer... I just discovered a book about literature that changed the way I think about the world. If you like reading and want a theological defense of it or if you wished you liked reading and could use some supportive logos, I recommend: *Lit!* by Tony Reinke (there is even a pdf online of it).

Day One: Come prepared to **share** noble or beautiful passages from *The Two Towers*.

Do you have a summer **Bible** reading plan? I am planning to read the New Testament and do a deep dive into: Ecclesiastes and Ephesians. It would be fun to have a common lens coming into the school year.

Summer musts:

- 1) Ride a bike
- 2) Eat buttered toast
- 3) Laugh so hard you cry
- 4) Write a poem
- 5) Taste a new food
- 6) Drive with the windows down
- 7) Do the dishes

May this summer inspire, challenge, convict, and encourage you until we meet again!

Grace and Peace,
Miss Hartke

PS- There are some books that I am planning to provide for you, but if you would like to have your own annotatable copies you may choose to purchase them. I have indicated which are optional purchases on the Amazon List.