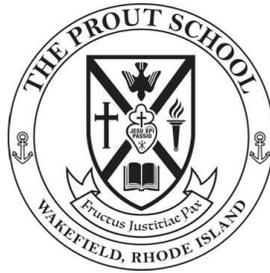


Prout School Summer Reading 2017



Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Prout School encourages students and families to continue reading during the summer months. Literacy research has shown that students often tend to experience the “summer slide” which is a slowing down in reading abilities, vocabulary, comprehension, and focus. This phenomenon is a tendency for students to lose some of the achievement gains they made the previous school year by not reading over the summer. This summer slide will frequently cause students to be less prepared for the academic expectations for the next school year. We want ALL students to have the same chance for academic success from the very first day of school!

Summer reading matters in other ways, too. “Reading empowers critical thinking skills. It can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves, and it can help us appreciate other points of view”. (California Library Association) When parents/guardians are able to read the books their children have been assigned for summer reading, the experience can foster wonderful family discussions and build great reading memories. Familial modeling the importance of year round reading will encourage teenagers in becoming lifelong readers.

Reading is an important part of everyday life! The more our students read, the better readers they will be. If you have any questions pertaining to the summer reading, please feel free to contact Miss Mary Hoyt: mhoyt@theproutschool.org.



SUMMER READING 2017 ENGLISH GRADE NINE HONORS

Ethan Frome (Edith Wharton)

The Martian Chronicles (Ray Bradbury)

**READ THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOOKS AND THE GUIDING QUESTIONS
BEFORE YOU BEGIN READING EACH BOOK.**

Keep the questions at hand as you read and take notes in the books, if they are yours, or on paper. **Answers to the questions SHOULD NOT be written out.** Guiding questions are just to help students with more effective comprehension.

Assessment – first full day of classes:

You will be asked to respond to short answer questions related to the Guiding questions.

Ethan Frome (Edith Wharton)



Edith Wharton (1862-1937) was born into a tightly controlled society at a time when women were discouraged from achieving anything beyond a proper marriage. Born into a very wealthy, high society family in New York, Edith spent much of her childhood in Europe, mainly France, Germany, Italy, developing both her gift for languages and a deep appreciation for beauty – in art, architecture and literature.

Wharton broke through these strictures to become one of America's greatest writers. Author of *The Age of Innocence*, *Ethan Frome*, and *The House of Mirth*, she wrote over 40 books in 40 years, including authoritative works on architecture, gardens, interior design, and travel. She was the first woman awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, an honorary

Doctorate of Letters from Yale University, and a full membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Edith married and spent a great deal of time in Newport, RI. In 1901, eager to escape Newport, Wharton bought 113-acres in Lenox, then designed and built The Mount, a home that would meet her needs as designer, gardener, hostess, and above all, writer. Every aspect of the estate—including its gardens, architecture, and interior design—evokes the spirit of its creator.

In 1914, when World War I broke out, Edith Wharton was wealthy, famous, recently divorced, and living in her favorite city, Paris. Instead of withdrawing to the safety of England or returning to the United States, Wharton chose to stay and devote herself to creating a complex network of charitable and humanitarian organizations.

Wharton established workrooms for unemployed seamstresses, convalescent homes for tuberculosis sufferers, hostels for refugees, and schools for children fleeing war-torn Belgium. As a writer, Wharton was intent on witnessing the realities of war and was one of a handful of journalists and writers allowed on the front lines. In 1916, Wharton received the French Legion of Honor for her war work.

She died on August 11, 1937, age 75 at Pavillon Colombe. She is buried, in the Cimetière des Gonards in Versailles. (adapted from <http://www.edithwharton.org/discover/edith-wharton/>)

Summary Overview

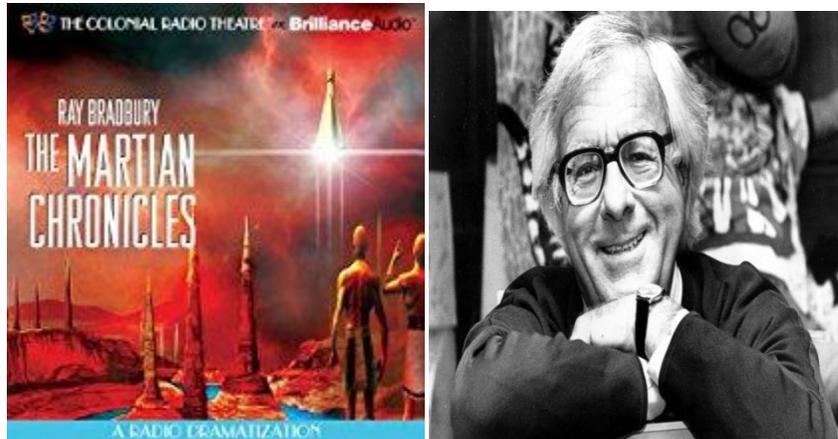
“*Ethan Frome* takes place against a backdrop of the cold, gray, bleakness of a New England winter. Ethan Frome is an isolated farmer trying to scrape out a meager living, while also tending to his frigid, demanding and ungrateful wife, Zeena. A ray of hope enters Ethan's life of despair when his wife's cousin Mattie arrives to help. His life is transformed as he falls in love with Mattie, but their fate is doomed by the stifling conventions of the era. Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* is a classic of American Literature, with compelling characters trapped in circumstances from which they seem unable to escape. The novel was published in 1911, set in the fictitious town of Starkfield, Massachusetts, whose naming is a subtle overture to the book's mood.” (from: <https://americanliterature.com/author/edith-wharton/book/ethan-frome/summary>)

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What moral dilemma does the protagonist in the story have ? What do you think leads him to make the ultimate decision?
2. Reflect on the character of Mattie in the story. What are her personality traits? Do you feel she is, in any way, to blame for the tragedy in the story ? Why or why not ?

3. Think about the name of town the story is set in : Starkfield. Reflect on why this title would be an appropriate one to mirror what is going on in the novel thematically.
4. “Though she was but seven years her husband’s senior, and he was only twenty-eight, she was already an old woman.” How would you interpret this reference and why is it important in understanding the sad life that Zeena deals with.

***The Martian Chronicles* (Ray Bradbury)**



“Author Ray Douglas Bradbury was born on August 22, 1920, in Waukegan, Illinois, to Leonard Spaulding Bradbury, a lineman for power and telephone utilities, and Ester Moberg Bradbury, a Swedish immigrant. Bradbury enjoyed a relatively idyllic childhood in Waukegan. He later incorporated his childhood into several semi-autobiographical novels and short stories. As a child, he was a huge fan of magicians, and a voracious reader of adventure and fantasy fiction. Bradbury decided to become a writer at about age 12 or 13. He later said that he made the decision in hopes of emulating his heroes, and to "live forever" through his fiction.

After graduation from high school in 1938, Bradbury couldn't afford to go to college, so he went to the local library instead. "Libraries raised me," he later said. "I believe in libraries because most students don't have any money. When I graduated from high school, it was during the Depression, and we had no money. I couldn't go to college, so I went to the library three days a week for 10 years."

In 1950, Bradbury published his first major work, *The Martian Chronicles*, which detailed the conflict between humans colonizing the red planet and the native Martians they encountered there.

Famously prolific, Bradbury wrote for several hours every day throughout his entire life, allowing him to publish more than 30 books, close to 600 short stories, and numerous poems, essays, screenplays and plays.

Though Bradbury won many honors and awards throughout his life, his favorite was perhaps being named "ideas consultant" for the United States Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair. "Can you imagine how excited I was?" he later said about the honor. "'Cause I'm changing lives, and that's the thing. If you can build a good museum, if you can make a good film, if you can build a good world's fair, if you can build a good mall, you're changing the future. You're influencing people, so that they'll get up in the morning and say, 'Hey, it's worthwhile going to work.' That's my function, and it should be the function of every science fiction writer around. To offer hope. To name the problem and then offer the solution. And I do, all the time. He died in 2012." (adapted from: <https://www.biography.com/people/ray-bradbury-9223240>)

Guiding Questions

1. Although written in 1946, the stories investigate the issues of technology. Reflect on the specific issues/concerns presented to the cultures of both the Earth and Mars in relationship to technological factors. In what ways do current issues in technology parallel those in the Bradbury's work?
2. As a writer and an individual member of society, Bradbury was extremely concerned with the concept of censorship. Reflect on the ways in which this issue is demonstrated and explored in the stories.
3. Throughout the stories, what seems to be Bradbury's perceptions on human nature? What qualities/characteristics does Bradbury seem to attribute to humans and the way they treat the planet, themselves, and other creatures?
4. "The predominant theme throughout much of the novel is the catastrophic effects of invasions and colonization of foreign cultures. During the novel, the invasion of Mars by humankind destroys the Martian landscape by building vast cities of non-native materials, burning of the landscape with rocket fires, and the redecoration of the entire planet by Earthlings attempting to make a copy of their world back home. The invasion also kills nearly the entire Martian race, as the foreign disease of chicken pox is brought to the planet by explorers from Earth. The disease, however, acts differently in the metabolism of Martians, burning their bodies, and destroying nearly all the native population. Also responsible for the death of three expeditions of men, the invasion leads to anger, frustration, and jealousy in the Martian populations, and the murder of the explorers." (from: <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-martian-chronicles/themes.html#gsc.tab=0>)

In reviewing the above opinion quote, reflect on the issues of one culture "taking over" – or colonizing – another culture. What does Bradbury appear to be indicating about this issue that we have seen throughout history, and throughout the world today.



“Remember: Plot is no more than footprints left in the snow after your characters have run by on their way to incredible destinations.”

—Ray Bradbury