SCSHS ENGLISH TEXT BOOKS

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BRIDGE TO WISEMAN’S COVE BY JAMES MOLONEY

When Carl Matt’s mother Kerry disappears, he and his brother Harley are sent to Wattle Beach to live with their aunt Beryl. During his stay at Wattle Beach, Carl works in a barge, employed by an old colleague of Carl’s grandfather Skip Duncan. Carl does not know that his grandfather was involved in an accident that killed Graham, Skip’s 8-year-old son, and badly crippled his leg.

Carl is initially withdrawn; he does not convey his worries about his missing mother, nor the anxiety that he feels over his rebellious younger brother, who is constantly in centrelink. However, during the course of the novel he learns to ‘open up’ and share his feelings with those who care about him.

In the end, it is discovered that Kerry Matt died in a bus accident when she was trying to get home to her children, Sarah, Harley and Carl. Once this is unearthed, Carl returns home to find that Aunt Beryl has run off in true Matt spirit to join her boyfriend, Bruce. Because Carl has nowhere else to stay, Joy Duncan invites him to come and live with them at Wiseman's Cove with his brother, Harley, who has already claimed the Duncans as his surrogate family.

Their sister Sarah left them and flew to another country to get a chance at her own life.


TOMORROW WHEN THE WAR BEGAN BY JOHN MARSDEN

When Ellie and her friends return from a camping trip in the Australian bush, they find things hideously wrong — their families are gone. Gradually they begin to comprehend that their country has been invaded and everyone in their town has been taken prisoner. As the reality of the situation hits them, they must make a decision — run and hide, give themselves up and be with their families, or fight back.


BOYS OF BLOOD AND BONE BY DAVID METZENTHEN

Henry is heading up to stay with friends at Saint Helena Bay when his car breaks down just outside a country town. Forced to stay over in the town while his car is fixed, Henry is befriended by two local teenagers, Trot & Janine, & the enigmatic & very old Cecilia. Henry looks exactly like Andy Lansell, her fiancé who left to fight in the Great War eighty years ago & never returned. She shares with Henry her memories of Andy & lends him Andy’s diary. His car fixed, Henry heads off to Saint Helena Bay for a week of sailboarding with his friends, but his head is full of Andy’s story, which begins to unfold in parallel to Henry's story.

ANGELA BY JAMES MOLONEY

Angela and Gracey were going to be "best friends forever" and make it into the same university as carefree first year students. But for Gracey, her Aboriginal heritage takes on a new significance. While Angela falls in love for the first time, Gracey is drawn into black politics and their friendship drifts apart.


DEADLY, UNNA? BY PHILLIP GWYNNE

Fourteen-year-old Gary Black's life in Australia centres around his large family and footy (Australian football), until he becomes friends with an Aborigine boy and realizes how horrible prejudice can be.

Notes: strong language, strong sexual references, death, drugs, alcohol


NUKKIN YA BY PHILLIP GWYNNE

Nukkin Ya is the sequel to Deadly, Unna?. Fifteen-year-old Gary Black, 'Blacky', isn't sure what he wants or where he is going. The one thing he does know is that he wants to escape the small country town he's grown up in.

Notes: strong language, strong sexual references, death, drugs, alcohol


LOOKING FOR ALIBRANDI BY MELINA MARCHETTA

For as long as Josephine Alibrandi can remember, it's just been her, her mom, and her grandmother. Now it's her final year at a wealthy Catholic high school. The nuns couldn't be any stricter—but that doesn't seem to stop all kinds of men from coming into her life.

Caught between the old-world values of her Italian grandmother, the no-nonsense wisdom of her mom, and the boys who continue to mystify her, Josephine is on the ride of her life. This will be the year she falls in love, the year she discovers the secrets of her family's past—and the year she sets herself free.

Told with unmatched depth and humour, this novel—which swept the pool of Australian literary awards and became a major motion picture—is one to laugh through and cry with, to cherish and remember.

Notes: youth suicide, strong language, sexual references

The most iconic love story of all time, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet is an epic-scale tragedy of desire and revenge. Despite the bitter rivalry that exists between their families, Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet have fallen madly in love. But when the long-running rivalry boils over into murder, the young couple must embark on a dangerous and deadly mission to preserve their love at any cost.

Notes: Youth suicide, violence, murder, sexual references

YEAR 11 ENGLISH NOVEL UNIT (TERM 3)

ANIMAL FARM BY GEORGE ORWELL

Tired of their servitude to man, a group of farm animals revolt and establish their own society, only to be betrayed into worse servitude by their leaders, the pigs, whose slogan becomes: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others." This 1945 satire addresses the socialist/communist philosophy of Stalin in the Soviet Union.


OF MICE AND MEN BY JOHN STEINBECK

The tragic story of the complex bond between two migrant labourers in Central California. They are George Milton and Lennie Small, itinerant ranch hands who dream of one day owning a small farm. George acts as a father figure to Lennie, who is a very large, simple-minded man, calming him and helping to rein in his immense physical strength.


YEAR 11 ENGLISH PLAY UNIT (TERM 2)

THE CRUCIBLE BY ARTHUR MILLER

"I believe that the reader will discover here the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history," Arthur Miller wrote of his classic play about the witch-hunts and trials in seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts. Based on historical people and real events, Miller's drama is a searing portrait of a community engulfed by hysteria. In the rigid theocracy of Salem, rumours that women are practicing witchcraft galvanize the town's most basic fears and suspicions; and when a young girl accuses Elizabeth Proctor of being a witch, self-righteous church leaders and townspeople insist that Elizabeth be brought to trial. The ruthlessness of the prosecutors and the eagerness of neighbour to testify against neighbour brilliantly illuminate the destructive power of socially sanctioned violence.

Written in 1953, THE CRUCIBLE is a mirror Miller uses to reflect the anti-communist hysteria inspired by Senator Joseph McCarthy's "witch-hunts" in the United States. Within the text itself, Miller contemplates the parallels, writing, "Political opposition... is given an inhumane overlay, which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized behaviour. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence."

YEAR 12 ENGLISH NOVEL UNIT (TERM 2)

**TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD BY HARPER LEE**

The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, To Kill A Mockingbird became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic.

Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, To Kill A Mockingbird takes readers to the roots of human behaviour - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humour and pathos. Now with over 18 million copies in print and translated into forty languages, this regional story by a young Alabama woman claims universal appeal. Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American literature.

Notes: references to incest; racism


YEAR 12 ENGLISH PLAY UNIT (TERM 3)

**OTHELLO BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

In Othello, Shakespeare creates a powerful drama of a marriage that begins with fascination (between the exotic Moor Othello and the Venetian lady Desdemona), with elopement, and with intense mutual devotion and that ends precipitately with jealous rage and violent deaths. He sets this story in the romantic world of the Mediterranean, moving the action from Venice to the island of Cyprus and giving it an even more exotic colouring with stories of Othello’s African past.

Shakespeare builds so many differences into his hero and heroine—differences of race, of age, of cultural background—that one should not, perhaps, be surprised that the marriage ends disastrously. But most people who see or read the play feel that the love that the play presents between Othello and Desdemona is so strong that it would have overcome all these differences were it not for the words and actions of Othello’s standard-bearer, Iago, who hates Othello and sets out to destroy him by destroying his love for Desdemona. As Othello succumbs to Iago’s insinuations that Desdemona is unfaithful, fascination—which dominates the early acts of the play—turns to horror, especially for the audience. We are confronted by spectacles of a generous and trusting Othello in the grip of Iago’s schemes; of an innocent Desdemona, who has given herself up entirely to her love for Othello only to be subjected to his horrifying verbal and physical assaults, the outcome of Othello’s mistaken convictions about her faithlessness.

MACBETH BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Probably composed in late 1606 or early 1607, MACBETH is the last of Shakespeare’s four great tragedies, the others being HAMLET, KING LEAR and OTHELLO. It is a relatively short play without a major subplot, and it is considered by many scholars to be Shakespeare's darkest work. LEAR is an utter tragedy in which the natural world is amorally indifferent toward mankind, but in MACBETH, Shakespeare adds a supernatural dimension that purposively conspires against Macbeth and his kingdom. In the tragedy of LEAR, the distraught king summons the goddess of Chaos, Hecht; in MACBETH, Hecate appears as an actual character.

On the level of human evil, Shakespeare's Scottish tragedy is about Macbeth's bloody rise to power, including the murder of the Scottish king, Duncan, and the guilt-ridden pathology of evil deeds generating still more evil deeds. As an integral part of this thematic web is the play's most memorable character, Lady Macbeth. Like her husband, Lady Macbeth's ambition for power leads her into an unnatural, phantasmagoric realm of witchcraft, insomnia and madness. But while Macbeth responds to the prophecies of the play’s famous trio of witches, Lady Macbeth goes even further by figuratively transforming herself into an unnatural, desexualized evil spirit. The current trend of critical opinion is toward an upward re-evaluation of Lady Macbeth, who is said to be re-humanized by her insanity and her suicide. Much of this reappraisal of Lady Macbeth has taken place in discussions of her ironically strong marriage to Macbeth, a union that rests on loving bonds but undergoes disintegration as the tragedy unfolds.

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