

TO: 2016-2017 EvCC English Students
FROM: Mr. Nelson, room 631
RE: Summer Reading
DATE: June 10, 2016

WELCOME TO 2016-2017 EVCC ENGLISH!

I look forward with you to an excellent class as we read some of the world's most significant literature and discuss ideas that will both challenge and reward you in many different ways. My goal is to make this class both fun and challenging. However, this course is rigorous, so you must be willing to make a significant effort; a strong work ethic is essential. Your reward? Significant learning *and* an opportunity to emerge from your senior year with up to ten (10) college credits for two semesters of college-level English. *This is an amazing opportunity to get ready for college and to gain a head start!*

Summer reading has been a tradition for College in the High School and AP courses and is a way to engage your thinking and to keep your brain active in June, July, and August. This summer, I am asking you to read *Songs of Willow Frost* by *New York Times* bestselling author, Jamie Ford. You can purchase this novel for \$15 new, and much less for a used edition, or check out a copy from the CHS library. This novel will be our opening unit together in September.

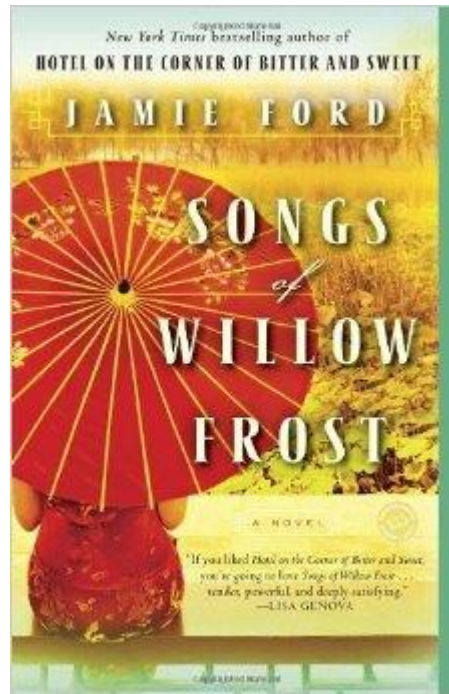
If you want a head start on our second unit (to begin in mid-September), read *Beowulf*, the oldest and longest surviving poem in Old English. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at school before you leave for summer break. You may also reach me at my home e-mail address at any time: blake.w.nelson@gmail.com.

--Mr. Nelson ☺

Working Together, Learning Together!
Have a great summer!



Songs of Willow Frost



Here Are Some Questions To Consider While Reading . . .

1. William's life at Sacred Heart is, he feels, a hard one. Do you agree? In the long run, do the caregivers at Sacred Heart do more to help or harm their young wards?
2. The orphans at Sacred Heart share a collective "birthday," one for boys and one for girls. What would it be like to celebrate such an event? Would it feel less special without a focus on the individual, or even more joyful to share it with a community?
3. On May 4, 1931, the first bookmobile hit the streets of Seattle, where it did indeed visit the historical Sacred Heart Orphanage (as well as Boeing Field). Why do you think there was such a need to bring the library to its patrons, rather than allowing those patrons to visit the library as they chose?
4. What qualities does Liu Song share with her mother? How are their lives similar or different?
5. Does Liu Song's mother represent strength, weakness, or a little of both? Do you think she knew she was a second wife?
6. Why doesn't Liu Song study Cantonese Opera instead of pursuing a career on film and stage?

7. What do you think happened to Mr. Butterfield after the loss of his music store? Personally and professionally, how would he react to receive Liu Song's newfound fame as Willow?
8. Imagine that you are Liu Song and pregnant under her circumstances. What would you do? Who might you tell? And would you keep the baby?
9. The novel explores the subject of abandonment, whether by willful desertion or by circumstance. What forms does such abandonment take among contemporary families?
10. In the time period the novel is set in, economic and social classes were clearly defined and while change was desired by some, it was feared by others. Do you think we live in a more just and fair era today, or are we in fact worse off?
11. The social worker, Mrs. Peterson, represents an outside authority at a time when mothers had fewer rights to their children than fathers. When did that begin to change and why?
12. During the early years of the silent film era, studios and production companies could be found in most states. So why had much of the film industry congregated in Hollywood a decade later?
13. What factors contributed to the eventual demise of the grand movie palaces of the 1920s and 1930s?
14. Willow always knew where her son was, so why didn't she come back sooner, especially as she gained success?
15. Why does Willow die in all of her films?
16. How do you think Charlotte's death impacted Sister Briganti?
17. In the end Willow comes back for William. What do you think happened to them after the novel's conclusion? What happened to her career?
18. Overall, do you think the story is one of hope and promise or suffering and sacrifice?

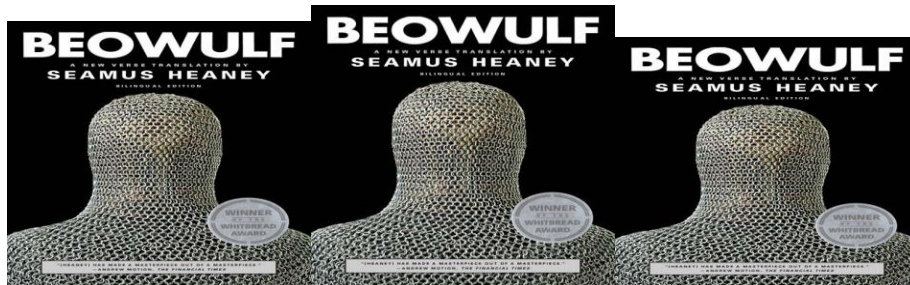
Optional Summer Reading: *Beowulf*

Purchase (or check out from the public library) *Beowulf*, translated with an introduction and commentary by Howell D. Chickering, Jr. or the Seamus Heaney version. *Beowulf* may be purchased online for around \$10 (used editions for less); a Kindle version is also available. We will begin our study of *Beowulf* early in the year, so your advanced preparation will have benefits and allow you to get ahead. In your reading, consider the following themes and where these themes are developed in the progression of the story:

- **Loyalty**
- **Reputation**
- **Generosity and Hospitality**
- **Envy**
- **Revenge**

Here Are Some Questions To Consider While Reading *Beowulf* . .

1. Why is Hrothgar's lineage given?
2. Why is Grendel's lineage given?
3. What is Herot?
4. Why did Hrothgar build Herot?
5. Why did Herot lay empty for 12 years?
6. Why did Grendel attack Herot?
7. Why hasn't Hrothgar rid Herot of Grendel?
8. Why does Beowulf come to Denmark?
9. Why does the sentry personally lead Beowulf and his men to Herot after hearing their reason for coming to Denmark?
10. Why does Wulfgar, the herald, urge Hrothgar to see Beowulf?
11. How does Hrothgar know of Beowulf?
12. What information does Beowulf's greeting to Hrothgar include?
13. What are the activities of the feast?
14. How does Unferth taunt Beowulf?
15. What is Beowulf's response to Unferth's taunts?
16. How does Welthow react to Beowulf?
17. Why does Beowulf meet Grendel bare-handed?
18. What are the details of Grendel's attack on Herot?
19. Why are the Geats' weapons useless when they rush to Beowulf's aid?
20. What is done with the prize of the battle?
21. Why do the crowds come to Herot?
22. What is the song of Siegmund?
23. Who is Hermod?
24. How does Hrothgar express his gratitude to Beowulf?
25. How does Beowulf describe his battle with Grendel when speaking to Hrothgar?
26. What is the song of Finn?
27. What is it Welthow tells Hrothgar when the songs are finished?
28. What does she say to Beowulf?
29. What is to happen to Herot once the feast is over?
30. What are the soldiers' sleeping arrangements?
31. What happens the first night the Danes return to sleep in Herot?
32. Why does Grendel's mom flee from Herot?
33. Why does Hrothgar send for Beowulf?
34. How does Beowulf respond to Hrothgar's request?
35. Where does Hrothgar lead Beowulf?
36. What are the descriptive details of the lake containing Grendel's mother and her lair?
37. Why is Beowulf careful to wear his armor?
38. How does Unferth's behavior toward Beowulf change now?
39. How does Beowulf attempt to save his life when he realizes his weapons and helmet are ineffective?
40. What are Hrothgar and his soldiers doing while Beowulf battles Grendel's mother?
41. What is the sign of victory Beowulf gives to Hrothgar?



42. How does Beowulf feel his life was saved?
43. What does Hrothgar do when Beowulf gives him the sword hilt?
44. What happened to the magical giants who made the sword?
45. What is the story of Hermod?
46. What specifically, is Hrothgar warning Beowulf about in telling this story?
47. What promises does Beowulf make as he takes his leave of Hrothgar?
48. Hrothgar says he is pleased with Beowulf for what reasons?
49. Why does Hrothgar weep?
50. How are the Geats greeted once they arrive home?
51. How long does Beowulf rule peacefully?
52. What breaks the peace in Beowulf's kingship?
53. How did the tower come to be the dragon's lair?
54. Why does the dragon burn down the Geats' homes?
55. What is Beowulf's reaction to this?
56. What does he order made for his battle with the dragon?
57. How is Hermod killed?
58. What does Beowulf say in his farewell speech to his followers?
59. How does Beowulf call the dragon?
60. How does the dragon respond to this?
61. Why does Beowulf lose the battle?
62. Where are his followers as he is losing the battle?
63. Why does Wiglaf go to Beowulf's aid?
64. How is Beowulf mortally wounded?
65. How do the two men kill the dragon?
66. What does Beowulf ask Wiglaf to do after he is wounded?
67. When Wiglaf returns from fulfilling Beowulf's request, what further request is made of him by Beowulf?
68. What does Wiglaf say to Beowulf's followers when they return?
69. What is it the warriors see that causes them to weep?
70. According to Wiglaf, what are Beowulf's post-mortem instructions?
71. Who is to bring wood to Beowulf's funeral?
72. Why does Wiglaf bring the seven noblest Geats to the dragon's treasure?
73. What is done with the dragon's corpse?
74. What description is provided of the Geatish king's funeral pyre?
75. What do the Geats do as the fire is burning?
76. How long does it take to build the tomb Beowulf has requested?
77. Why do the twelve (12) bravest Geats ride around the tower?
78. In the closing lines of the poem, how does the poet describe Beowulf?

