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NOVEL TITLES AND SUMMARIES FOR ENG 2D CPT

✓ **Acceleration (McNamee)** - Seventeen-year-old Duncan hates his summer job in the lost-and-found department of the Toronto Transit Commission. In his office below the subway tunnels, Duncan sorts through and retrieves items lost on buses and trains: a golf club, sunglasses, giant thong underwear, umbrellas, and cell phones. When he looks through a lost diary and finds a would-be murderer's plans for his first victim, he decides to hunt him down. Having failed recently in an attempt to save a drowning girl, he sees this as a chance to redeem himself and stop his nightmares. Enlisting his wise-guy friends, Vinny and Wayne, he follows the stalker and finds himself in over his head. The creepy, morgue-like setting and the friendship among the teenaged boys are well-drawn, with a fair amount of humour to balance the chills. Though readers may wonder why Duncan fails to consider certain obvious points along the way, this is a well-written, read-it-in-one-gulp thriller.

✓ **And in the Morning (Wilson)** - Although this novel focuses on World War I, it's a timely reflection on the realities of war that presents a powerful, timeless anti-war argument. Jim Hay is just shy of 16 when his father enlists in Britain's Highland Light Infantry. To chronicle the war and record his father's exploits, Jim begins a diary, but within weeks he finds himself writing about his father's death in France and his mother's subsequent insanity. Then Jim joins his father's regiment, and he experiences war for himself--in the trenches, on patrol, and in the Battle of the Somme--setting down his own reactions, which range from excitement to horror to guilt, for his sweetheart back home. Mock-ups of newspaper clippings provide background to the events, and the diary form lends immediacy and intimacy to the gripping story, which Wilson has based on actual diaries kept by members of the Highland Light Infantry.

✓ **Angeline (Bradford)** - Angeline can hardly bear the blistering heat, the noise, the sea of faces crowding in upon her in the teeming Egyptian market. But most of all, she cannot believe that she is being sold as a slave to one of the great princes of Cairo. It was only a short time ago that she left her small village in France to follow Stephen, a shepherd boy whose vision led him to mount a children's Crusade to the Holy Land. But now they have been tricked, and, doomed to a life of slavery in a foreign land, even Stephen has lost all hope. Karleen Bradford returns to the Crusades and vividly recreates medieval Cairo, a rich and cultured city where Muslims, Christians and Jews live peacefully, side by side.

✓ **Another Kind of Cowboy (Juby)** - For Alex Ford, dressage is an oasis. In the stable, he can slip into his riding pants, shed the macho cowboy image, and feel like himself for a change. For Cleo O'Shea, dressage is a fresh start. She's got a new boarding school, absentee parents and best of all no one to remember her past... They're an unlikely pair. Cleo's looking for love, but Alex has a secret he's not ready to give up, and a flirtation with Cleo is the last thing on his mind. But you can't find romance before you know real friendship, and sometimes the last person you'd ever think of as a friend ends up being the one you need the most.

✓ **The Blue Helmet (Bell)** - Lee wants to be a Tarantula - a member of the biggest, most powerful gang in his neighbourhood. But when his initiation goes wrong and the police catch him robbing an auto supply store, Lee's father sends him to live with his aunt in New Toronto. Lee feels more lost than ever. His mother's death from cancer, and his father's constant absence working two jobs mean he has practically had to raise himself. But though he initially resists his Aunt Reena and the customers of her café, Lee gradually learns to open himself up to his new surroundings. When Lee strikes up an unlikely friendship he is suddenly confronted by the ravages of violence, and is forced to face the consequences of his own aggression.

✓ **Blue Highway (Tullson)** - When Truth was eight, a truck hit her, and her friend Skye brought her back to life with a shake. Now Skye is bringing Truth down, both with her drinking and with the eye she has cast on Truth's secret love, Ryan. Teens will see much that is familiar here, especially the way drinking can get out of hand. Although it's Skye who starts out with the drinking problem, it's Truth who suffers. Truth's father says there are no accidents, only a series of mistakes, and this story recounts one after another, making it something of a morality tale. The characters are viable, especially the needy Vale whom the girls latch on to as a designated driver. The tragic ending may shock a few kids, but if it shocks them into looking more closely at their own drinking habits, this will be a worthwhile read.

✓ **The Bonemender (Bennett)** - Gabrielle knows that she must be present on the battlefield, but she never could have predicted why. *The man stared at her and his brow cleared. He smiled with a kind of wonderment. "You're a healer." A statement, not a question. "I never hoped to find such a one in a place like this."* Gabrielle is a bonemender of extraordinary talent. Between her work as a healer and her duties as one of the royal family of Verdeau, her life is busy, comfortable and predictable--until the day a stranger arrives at her gate, desperately seeking help for his injured friend. To Gabrielle's wonder, they are Elves, a people not seen in Verdeau in many years. And they bring news of a coming invasion that threatens the freedom of the entire Krylian basin, human and Elvish alike. As Verdeau arms for war, Gabrielle must mobilize the bonemenders and prepare herself for the nightmarish work of battlefield healing. But what awaits her on that bloody field is worse than anything she has imagined. And what is she to do with the love in her heart?

✓ **Borderline (Stratton)** - Life's not easy for Sami Sabiri since his dad stuck him in a private school where he is the only Muslim kid. But it's about to get a lot worse. When Sami catches his father in a lie, he gets suspicious...He's not the only one. In a whirlwind, the FBI descends on his home, and Sami's family becomes the center of an international terrorist investigation. Now Sami must fight to keep his world from unraveling. An explosive thriller ripped from today's headlines, Borderline is the story of a funny, gutsy Muslim-American teen determined to save his father, his family and his life.

✓ **Chanda's Secrets (Stratton)** - The horror and desperation of the AIDS epidemic is seen through the eyes of 16-year-old Chanda whose stepfather infects her mother with the disease in their sub-Saharan home. This moving story of love and courage in the face of tremendous odds gives readers a glimpse into another world and insight into the treatment of AIDS victims in Africa. Chanda's education allows her to understand the situation and care for her dying mother.

✓ **Cheeseburger Subversive (Scarsbrook)** - This novel follows Dak Sifter from grade seven to university, as he deals with his parents, his precocious sister, dirt bike-riding bullies, frenzied school bus riders, snarling attack dogs, a menacing pickle-factory foreman, a kid who thinks he's in contact with aliens, a religious-fanatic con-man, a manipulative used-car salesman, an ex-hippie English teacher, a control-freak art gallery curator, a spiteful McDonald's counter-boy, an obsessive-compulsive roommate and a bunch of drunken engineering students in Hugh Hefner costumes, all while doggedly pursuing Zoe Perry, the girl of his dreams, who always seems to be one step ahead of him. From an out-of-control lawn tractor, to an anemic little mini-bike, to a 1966 Pontiac Laurentien with an explosive engine, Dak's growth from boy to man is, literally, a wild ride.

✓ **Daughter of War (Skrypuch)** - Based on firsthand accounts of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey during World War I, the novel recounts the story of two young lovers named Kevork and Marta. Beginning with their forced separation at the beginning of the novel, the reader follows their many hardships and their enduring struggle to survive and be reunited once again.

✓ **The Dirt Eaters (Foon)** - This outstanding first title in a trilogy should have readers eagerly anticipating the next installment. Foon lays the foundation for a compelling dystopian novel featuring Roan, a 15-year-old boy thrust into a hero's journey after his peace-loving village is destroyed. He and his younger sister, Stowe, are the only survivors. She is taken to the City and used for nefarious purposes that will presumably be explained in later books. Roan, at first, seems to have been saved by a man named Saint, the leader of a small band of warriors. When the teen uncovers the truth about Saint, he fees into the polluted, devastated wilderness. He is befriended by another teen who shows him how to survive. They journey into various villages, meeting people who will help them on their quest. There's a lot more going on in this well-written adventure. Readers will be reminded of Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993) and *Gathering Blue* (assigned jobs and isolated, barbaric civilizations post-disaster), Rodman Philbrick's *The Last Book in the Universe* (pollution, disease, and illiteracy), and even Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (aversion to books and independent thought). In addition, older readers will notice biblical references, Buddhist elements, Eastern ideas, and metaphysical concepts. All in all, an entertaining and promising start.

✓ **Dooley Takes the Fall (McClintock)** - Ryan Dooley is no stranger to trouble. He's got a criminal record and to make matters worse he's living with his retired cop uncle until he can get his life straightened out. When he discovers the lifeless body of a young kid who he recognizes from his own school he knows that things don't look good for him.

✓ **The Droughtlanders (Mac)** - Twin brothers Seth and Eli Maddox are Keylanders - sons of the Chancellor's Chief Regent, brought up within the privileged and protected Eastern Key. Keylanders, the boys are told, must keep within their walls to avoid the filth and disease spread by the Droughtlanders- those who struggle to survive on the parched land between the Keys. But when Eli sees their mother helping one of the wretched Droughtlanders, a chain of terrible events begins to unravel their world. As Seth commits himself to the Keylander army to rid his land of the scourge of the Droughtlanders, Eli determines himself to learn the truth about his family and the segregated world they live in. Thus begins his search for the legendary Triskelia, home to the Droughtlander rebels. The brothers' paths are destined to cross but with what tragic outcome?

✓ **The End of the World As We Know It (Choyce)** - "I hate the world and everything in it. And that includes me." Asked to write something for English class that expresses who he really is, 16 year old Carson takes pleasure in blistering the page with hate for everything in his life. Stuck in a private school for kids who have repeatedly flunked out elsewhere, Carson knows he's got nowhere lower to sink. Then he meets someone who has dropped out altogether.

✓ **Esther (McKay)** - Told as fiction, *Esther* portrays the remarkable, nearly incredible life and times of Esther Brandeau, a young girl who lived in the eighteenth century, and who was the first Jew to set foot in New France. That she did so disguised as a boy, and that the eventual discovery of her deceit became an international incident, is but one part of Esther's dramatic story. With an emerging Canadian nation as its backdrop, Esther's story encompasses the quest for gender equality and the larger quest for freedom—as real to a teenager in 1735 as it is today.

✓ **The First Stone (Aker)** - At seventeen, Reef is an embittered young offender who is barely able to contain his anger at the world over the death of his grandmother, the only person who had ever shown him love. Leeza is mourning the death of her older sister from cancer. When Reef, in a moment of rage, hurls a stone off an overpass into traffic, it shatters both their lives and throws them together in the most unexpected way—and offers them both a chance at healing.

✓ **Flames of the Tiger (Wilson)** - A story about World War II told from a German family's perspective. Dieter, 13, is impressionable and eager to emulate his older brother, whose arrogant bigotry shines through as a new member of the SS. Their parents are presented as a voice of reason and clandestine opposition to Hitler's movement and demonstrate concern and disgust for what they feel will ruin their country. When they are killed in a Russian raid, Dieter and his younger sister begin to walk in the direction of the Canadian army where they hope to surrender and become refugees. Dieter tells his story to a wounded Canadian soldier who is waiting for his unit to rescue him. Wilson paints a devastating and destructive picture of Germany's conditions and how average citizens struggled through their own losses. He uses the concept of youthful susceptibility to outline the enormous willing response

that Nazi recruitment received. The author demonstrates the cruel and murderous treatment of the Jews through the willful destruction of a Jewish owner's business and the arrest of his family. Another scene at the 1936 Olympics and Hitler's infamous rude behavior toward Jesse Owens is also included.

Four Steps to Death (Wilson)- It is 1942. The Battle of Stalingrad, one of the bloodiest in history, is underway. Three participants -- two fighters and a boy -- are caught in its horrors. Their story is told over seven days of fierce and deadly street-by-street fighting. *Vasily* is a patriotic Russian soldier determined to rid his country of the hated Nazi invaders -- if he can stay alive long enough. *Conrad* is a German tank officer, part of the seemingly unstoppable force sweeping eastward over the steppe, expecting a quick victory over Stalin's ill-trained and badly equipped army. Between them is eight-year-old *Sergei*, whose home is the maze of rubble that used to be the city of Stalingrad. None of them can know that their fates will be intertwined as the cataclysm engulfs them.

Getting the Girl (Juby)- Harewood Tech High School has the typical cliques: the jocks, the scholars, the preps, but it also has one group that everyone is determined to avoid -- the Defiled. No one knows how or why it started but once a girl's name and picture get posted with a D written beside it, she's as good as invisible. Sherman thinks he knows who the next target is going to be and he is determined to save her reputation even if it means going undercover. At times suspenseful and humorous.

Gravity Brings Me Down (Ghent) - Sioux Smith is sharp, funny, and wry, and is pretty certain that she sees the world of high school differently from everyone else - a belief that is cemented when she makes an uneasy discovery about one of her school's "popular" teachers. And while she feels alone at her high school and in her unique slant on small-town life, Sioux finds a kindred spirit in the most unlikely of people: an elderly stranger, a woman who has more insight, despite her progressing dementia, than anyone else in Sioux's life. What Sioux and "Miss Marple" discover about each other over tea, illicitly gotten wine, and *Coronation Street*, makes for a novel with heart and grit in equal measure.

Gravity Journal (Sobat) - When she is hospitalized for anorexia, Anise has no one to turn to for support. Her parents seem oblivious to her struggle and her brother is in the process of seriously messing up his own life. Her only outlet is her journal. Here she records her observations about her family, the world around her, and her own desperate struggle to find some purpose to life.

Grist (Waldorf) - When everyone around her seems preoccupied with their own lives, Charlie makes the decision to spend the summer at the lake with her Grams. It is here that she unexpectedly falls both in love and into trouble in ways she never anticipated. The summer becomes an experience rich with 'grit' for her writing.

Hearts at Stake (Harvey) - Turning sixteen is exciting enough for anyone, but for Solange Drake it's a little more eventful than just birthday cake and a driver's license. In a world where most vampires are made by the usual methods, the Drake family is different -- they are born as humans, but undergo the bloodchange on their sixteenth birthday. All of Solange's older brothers have undergone the painful and potentially deadly process, and now it's her turn... but the bloodchange itself isn't the only thing that could potentially kill her. Female genetic vampires are extremely rare, and an ancient prophecy speaks of one who will become the ruler of all the vampire clans... and the current Queen is none too pleased to think that someone might usurp her power.

Keturah and Lord Death (Leavitt) - Sixteen year old Keturah lives in a small cottage with her grandmother. Although she is a gifted storyteller, her friends have strong doubts when she tells them the story of meeting the dark figure of Death himself in the forest. It is there that she is forced to bargain for her life and enter an agreement with Death. Her task is to find her one true love before sunset. Should she fail she forfeits not only her own life but the lives of all those she loves.

Me and the Blondes (Toten) - Sophie Kandinsky thinks she is the only one with a crazy family and she has spent the last six years trying to keep her family secrets undiscovered. As she moves to yet another school, she devises a new plan to blend in and achieve popularity. She will infiltrate the most exclusive group in the school -- the Blondes. This time nothing can go wrong!

Monkeyface Chronicles (Scarsbrook) - Philip's aphorism-toting grandfather used to say "Shallow men believe in luck. Strong men believe in cause and effect," and Philip is about to embark on a life journey of payback that has everything to do with cause in effect. Philip's journey takes him through the most unusual family circumstances, where no one was really who they seemed to be, whether it was his reclusive scientist father, or his Citizen Kane-like grandfather.

More Than You Can Chew (Tokio) - Seventeen year old Marry has always been a fighter. During her rehab she keeps a record of her eight-month confinement at "Camp Eat-a-Lot" a treatment centre for people with anorexia and bulimia. She is brilliant, bitter, and funny, with a marvelous flair for description and irony and a determination to control her body. Her scorn and disappointment, coupled with a begrudging but accurate ability to assess herself and others, creeps heartbreakingly toward acceptance. Readers feel what she feels. The novel presents a riveting portrayal of this illness.

Mountain Girl, River Girl (Yee) - Driven by dreams of adventure, Pan-pan and Shui-lian, teenage girls born in rural China, decide to leave home for a better life. As they try to make their way to Beijing they are beset with challenges and hardships that shake their courage and determination. Are their dreams strong enough to keep them moving forward?

Shattered (Bell) - Ian is almost sixteen, rich and bored. As part of his Civic's course - a part he must complete to pass - he must do community service. His choice, to do volunteer work at 'The Club' doesn't turn out as well as he'd hoped. The Club is a soup kitchen for street people. As he reluctantly puts his time in he gets to know one of the street people, a man who was a former soldier who had served as a peacekeeper in Rwanda. Through this man Ian becomes aware of the genocide that took place in that African country. Both discover things about themselves that might help them to reclaim their present and future.

- ✓ **Shoulder the Sky (Choyce)** - Martin Emerson's family, friends, and even his therapist have trouble figuring him out. He never showed much of a reaction to the death of his mother, and his behaviour of late has been getting more and more bizarre. And yet, his website - Emerso.com - has made him something of a cult figure to followers who believe that, if not having all the right answers, "Emerso" at least has all the right questions. *Shoulder the Sky* is a rarity among young adult novels - it challenges the reader with philosophical thought and complex observations.
- ✓ **The Song of Kahunsha (Irani)** - It is 1993 and Bombay is on the verge of being torn apart by racial violence. Ten-year old Chamdi has rarely moved beyond the high walls of the orphanage in which he lives. But when he devises a plan to be reunited with his long lost father, Chamdi is thrust into the terrifying chaos of the streets. Without possessions he is forced to survive on the harsh streets of the city where the daily war between the strong and the weak claims more victims.
- ✓ **Swim the Fly (Calame)** - Fifteen-year-old Matt Gratton and his two best friends, Coop and Sean, always set themselves a summertime goal. This year's? To see a real-live naked girl for the first time - quite a challenge, given that none of the guys has the nerve to even ask a girl out on a date. But catching a girl in the buff starts to look easy compared to Matt's other summertime aspiration: to swim the 100-yard butterfly (the hardest stroke known to God or man) as a way to impress Kelly West, the sizzling new star of the swim team. In the spirit of Hollywood's blockbuster comedies, screenwriter-turned-YA-novelist Don Calame unleashes a true ode to the adolescent male: characters who are side-splittingly funny, sometimes crude, yet always full of heart.
- ✓ **The Thought of High Windows (Kositsky)** - Superb, wrenching Holocaust fiction. Esther is a Jewish teen snatched out of Germany at the beginning of WWII by the Swiss Red Cross to live briefly in Belgium and later in a castle in France, under the nose of the Vichy government. Lice and other discomforts are made worse by cold torment from peers who consider Esther "old Jewish" (because she's fat and her family spoke Yiddish and went to shul). After a stint in a holding camp, Esther lives in two different French towns under false identities, eventually (and initially unwillingly) joining the Resistance. Swirling through the story is her tumultuous, ever-changing relationship with mercurial peer Walter. Esther is plagued with guilt and self-hatred as well as terror of dying in the looming Holocaust. Kositsky deftly describes the twisted pains of war, genocide, and cruelty. Kositsky's poetic and piercing language honors Esther's severe loneliness and the horrors she witnesses.
- ✓ **Theories of Relativity (Haworth-Attard)** - Kicked out to make way for his mom's latest lover, Dylan is on the streets. He's warier than many of the other teens he meets--he knows that offers of "a party, a beer, a snort of coke, a joint, a night of warmth" usually come with strings attached. After a disappointing attempt to contact his long-out-of-touch grandfather, Dylan starts feeling less scrupulous. Will he wind up as some thug's creature, hustling for drugs and necessities, or will he take steps to redirect his life? Dylan's brainy inclinations (he totes a biography of Einstein in his backpack) serve mostly to attract concerned adults, but more effective characterization comes from ties to his younger brothers and his bitterness toward those who have failed him: "My theory of relativity is that all relatives suck." This is indisputably a problem novel, but it's one that shows the realities of the streets (not every homeless teen depicted finds a mentor, as Dylan does, in a corporate executive) while suggesting brighter times ahead for its strong-willed protagonist.
- ✓ **Three Songs for Courage (Trottier)** - In this powerful novel for mature readers, Maxine Trottier transports the reader to the summer of 1956, and the small town of Erie View, a haven for teenagers. Summer jobs are plentiful, and there's always action on the beach or the main drag. Life is cool. But Erie View is a town of shifting layers. They drift by turns, scarcely touching, then jarring painfully: fathers and grandfathers try to adjust to quiet lives after an eternity of action overseas, women struggle to remake marriages and return to their kitchens, and teenagers with far too much freedom live the secret lives of youth. This is sixteen-year-old Gordon Westley's world. But it's about to change once tragedy strikes his family and forces Gordon to explore the darkest, as well as the sweetest, side of human emotions. Part mystery, part love story, acclaimed author Maxine Trottier weaves a spellbinding portrait of small-town Ontario dealing with its loss of innocence and coming of age in a changed world.
- ✓ **Throwaway Daughter (Yee)** - This novel tells the dramatic and moving story of Grace Dong-mei Parker, a typical Canadian teenager until the day she witnesses the Tiananmen massacre on television. Horrified, she sets out to explore her Chinese ancestry, only to discover that she was one of the thousands of infant girls abandoned in China since the introduction of the one-child policy, strictly enforced by the Communist government. But Grace was one of the lucky ones, adopted as a baby by a loving Canadian couple. With the encouragement of her adoptive parents, she studies Chinese and travels back to China in search of her birth mother. She manages to locate the village where she was born, but at first no one is willing to help her. However, Grace never gives up and, finally, she is reunited with her birth mother, discovering through this emotional bond the truth of what happened to her almost twenty years before.

Tom FINDER (Leavitt) – This riveting story is about a fifteen-year old boy who, as the story opens, realizes he has no idea who he is—beyond his first name—or what has led to his loss of memory. From the outset, he's on the run, a street kid thrust out on his own, living by his wits and involved in a quest to find another lost teenager whose First Nations father is desperate for news of his son. In the process, he learns to survive and begins to get a sense of his strengths and character.

Wondrous Strange (Livingston) – Seventeen year-old actress Kelley Winslow thinks that playing the role of the fairy queen Titania in a production of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* could be her lucky break – if she can pull it off. But when she meets the handsome Sonny Flannery, Kelley has to face the shocking realization that the world of Faeries is all too real and that she is an unwilling part of this world.

The Worst Thing She Ever Did (Kuipers) - All Sophie wants is to forget what happened last summer. But that's not easy when people keep asking if she's okay, and her mother locks herself behind closed doors for hours at a time. And now her best friend, Abigail, cares more about parties and boys than hanging out with Sophie.

Lost in memories of the life she once had -- before that terrible day -- Sophie retreats into herself. But it's only so long before she must confront the tragedy of her past so she can face the future.

The Uninvited (Wynne-Jones) – Miriam Shapiro decides she definitely needs to get away from New York and so she takes advantage of the fact that her father has a cottage located in northern Canada. Imagine her surprise when she gets there and finds that someone she has never met before is living there! Events get stranger when an unknown intruder begins to steal things from the cottage and Miriam and Jay start blaming each other. *The Uninvited* is part thriller and part complex family drama. It is a definite page turner.

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