Dear Rising 6th Graders,

Hi! I know I’ve met many of you in the hallways, but I wanted to introduce myself: my name is Ms. Vonnegut, and I have the pleasure of being your 6th grade English teacher. Before you head off into the haze of summer, I wanted to write I wanted to let you know what you’ll be reading this summer.

This summer, you are going to choose one (1) of the three Book Club books below to read, underline, and annotate over this summer.

**Book Club Choices:**
(blurbs courtesy of amazon.com)

*When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead

“When a fall-out with her best friend, sixth grader Miranda starts receiving mysterious notes, and she doesn’t know what to do. The notes tell her that she must write a letter—a true story, and that she can’t share her mission with anyone. It would be easy to ignore the strange messages, except that whoever is leaving them has an uncanny ability to predict the future. If that is the case, then Miranda has a big problem—because the notes tell her that someone is going to die, and she might be too late to stop it.”

*Summerland* by Michael Chabon

“Ethan Feld is having a terrible summer: his father has moved them to Clam Island, Washington, where Ethan has quickly established himself as the least gifted baseball player the island has ever seen. Ethan’s luck begins to change, however, when a mysterious baseball scout named Ringfinger Brown and a seven-hundred-and-sixty-five-year-old werefox enter his life, dragging Ethan into another world called the Summerlands. But this beautiful, winter-less place is facing destruction at the hands of the villainous Coyote, and it has been prophesized that only Ethan can save it. In this cherished modern classic, the *New York Times* bestselling, Pulitzer Prize winning author brings his masterful storytelling, dexterous plotting, and singularly envisioned characters to a coming-of-age novel for readers of all ages.”
“Zélie Adebola remembers when the soil of Orïsha hummed with magic. Burners ignited flames, Tiders beckoned waves, and Zélie’s Reaper mother summoned forth souls. But everything changed the night magic disappeared. Under the orders of a ruthless king, maji were killed, leaving Zélie without a mother and her people without hope. Now Zélie has one chance to bring back magic and strike against the monarchy. With the help of a rogue princess, Zélie must outwit and outrun the crown prince, who is hell-bent on eradicating magic for good. Danger lurks in Orïsha, where snow leoponaires prowl and vengeful spirits wait in the waters. Yet the greatest danger may be Zélie herself as she struggles to control her powers—and her growing feelings for an enemy.”

Since we will discuss the book when you return to school, you will underline and annotate so that (a) you are closely engaged with the novel, and (b) you have useful notes to refer to when you prepare for class discussions.

**Your guiding question is: What Strikes You?**

As you read, think of yourself as in written conversation in your book’s margins...

- with the characters about the plot and their journey.
- with the author about how she or he crafts this story.

**SO …**

Your underlinings and annotatings (margin notes) should simply be a recording of this conversation - of your reactions to and thoughts about what you’re reading.

**Now, get in there, and mark that book up!**