

FFOF Summer Reading List



Frankenstein

Mary Shelley

Fudan Fuzhong is a wonderful place to grow up and dream big. Whatever your ambitions are and wherever your destination is, don't forget the less fortunate and the less privileged. Giving and charity is a way of life whether you are an investment banker, a teacher, an entrepreneur or a government official. Big or small, there is always something one can do to make life better for someone else.

Category: Sci-fi Difficulty: Easy

刘翎 (1988届)

Why this book?

It might have been a fantasy when Mary Shelley concocted the sad story of Dr. Victor Frankenstein, but it is surprisingly relevant in the age of AlphaGo. Although it seemed that the method by which Frankenstein had created the body of his antagonist was so implausible, the mind and soul that came with the grotesque being were all too real and profound. While we read the beautiful prose and experience the agony of Frankenstein, one can't help but wondering what might happen when artificial intelligence that we are creating now in the modern world will ultimately become, will the computers — that can learn so smartly of any knowledge and logic also acquire the ability to understand feelings, purpose and belief? Maybe Mary Shelley's fiction is not too far from reality anymore?

Background:

Ling (also known as Ling Ma in her Fudan Fuzhong years) is one of the founders of the FDFZ Overseas Foundation and a board member since its inception. Currently, Ling is a managing director at Cathay Capital Group, a private equity group that invests in China. Ling also worked at Morgan Stanley in New York and Hong Kong, DTT Consulting in Hong Kong and Andersen Consulting in New York. Ling is a graduate of Columbia Business School (MBA'98) and SUNY Albany (BS'92). Ling resides in Greenwich, CT with her husband and four children.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou



Category: Autobiography

Difficulty: Moderate

曹業成 (2007届)

Why this book?

This is the book that won critical acclaim for Maya Angelou, a major civil rights activist and the 2010 recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Growing up in the civic turbulence of the mid-twentieth century, Angelou suffered from persistent sexist exploitation and racial discrimination. Angelou's reflection on her early adulthood affords us a vigorous engagement with the biases structural to the American society. Reality is tough, but Angelou's heartfelt narrative is imbued with unfailing humanitarianism. Readers would be encouraged to think about the crucial issues of racism, feminism, social justice, and above all, tolerance and compassion.

Background:

Cao Yecheng is a PhD Candidate focusing on Early Chinese Art and Archaeology at Princeton University. He grew up in Shanghai, then went to London for school. Yecheng was an undergraduate at the University College London and London School of Economics and Political Science, where he majored in Archaeology and Anthropology. In 2011 he received the Master of Studies in Archaeology from the University of Oxford. Under Professor Robert Bagley's supervision, his dissertation explores the indigenous bronze cultures in the mid-Yangtze River area in the late second millennium BCE. Outside the academic sphere, Yecheng is a keen museum-goer, and enjoys fencing and squashing.

The Odyssey

Homer

Why this book?

What is so charming about home, and how many miles is one willing to walk so as to return? In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus, the Greek hero who sacked the city of Troy, takes us on an epic journey tracing as far back to the remote shore of the Mediterranean as it draws us into ourselves. The gods that he has encountered on exotic islands—along with the fantastic beasts—add to the attraction of the world beyond one's hearth yet somehow fails to deter his venture homeward following the battle abroad. As Odysseus and his son Telemachus lead us across the wide sea, one is kept wondering whether it is really the fatherland or the world afar that lures them ahead. The founding canon of western literature echoed throughout history, Homer's *Odyssey* remains the invitation to the classical world for the bright and the brave.

Background:

Yingqi (fdz '11) is a current PhD student at Yale studying political theory. Her research features childhood and education as themes in intellectual history. Plants, Greek plays, and Platonic dialogues are among her chief diversions. Yingqi is the translator of a recent essay collection entitled *The Shipwrecked Mind: On Political Reaction*. She graduated from Barnard College in 2016 with a degree in philosophy.

Category: Classics | Literature | Poetry

Difficulty: Moderate

唐颖祺 (2011届)



Cod: A biography of the fish that changed the world

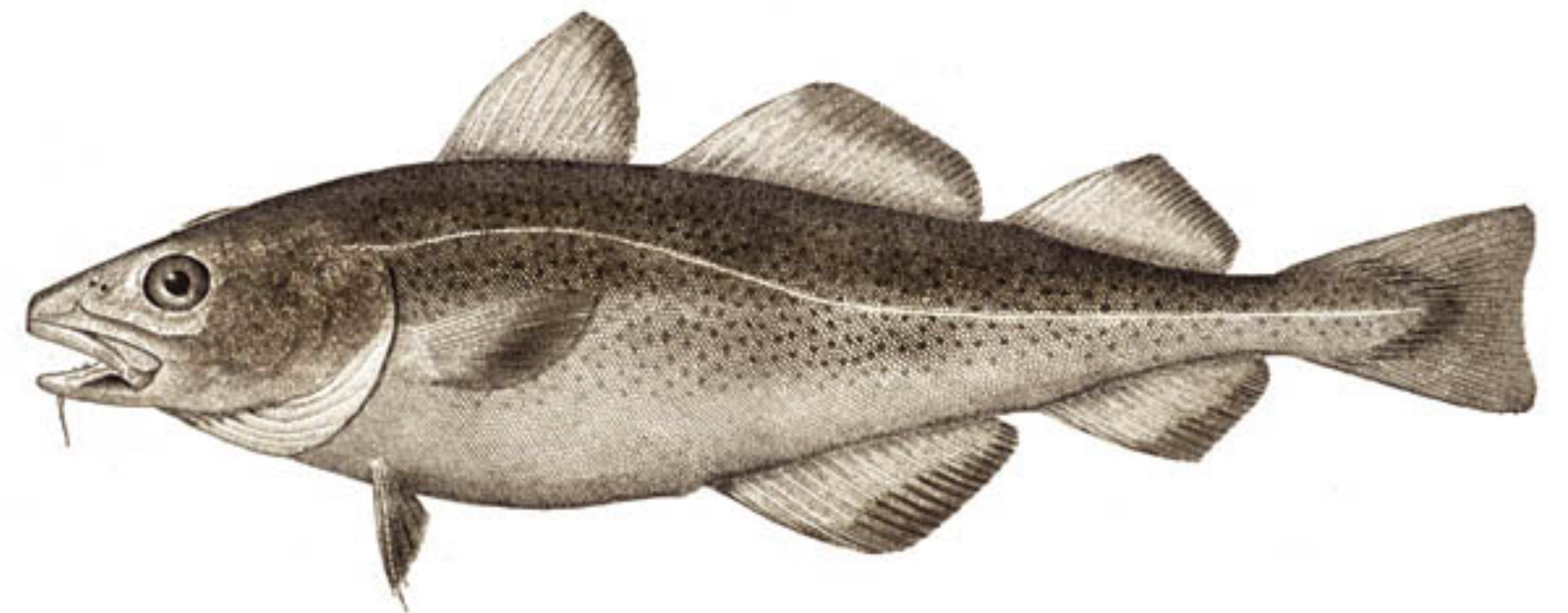
Mark Kurlansky

Why this book?

A fascinating read to understand the world of sea and land from an important species to human life. It provides an insightful perspective of how human and nutrition may evolve. You will appreciate cod more next time when eating it!

Background:

Yuan Zhang, graduated from FDFZ in 2007, a UMich Wolverine for life, dedicated to the career of clean energy, currently based in Shanghai with McKinsey & Co. I always wish I have more time to read, so enjoy your summer and spend more time reading :)



On the Road

Jack Kerouac

Why this book?

A defining novel of the Beat generation published in 1957, *On the Road* is based on the travels of Kerouac, a Columbia college drop-out, and his friends across the United States. They lead a counter-cultural life, against a backdrop of jazz and poetry. Many characters in the novel are based in real-life figures in the Beat movement, such as Allan Ginsberg. The Beat represents an attitude that defies traditional values, rejects materialism, and embraces spiritual quest. I recommend this novel because Kerouac has truly captured the spirit of that generation: defiant, energetic, irreverent, and confused. I can smell their desire and angst in every line that he writes, even though he is not officially trained. You can also find similar era of transgressive energy in the 80s in China.

Background:

Deng Tianyuan is an art history doctoral scholar and writer based in New York. She graduated from Fudan Fuzhong in 2008 and attained a bachelor degree in art history from the University of Chicago. Currently she is pursuing a PhD in art history at the Institute of Fine Art, NYU, focusing on modern art history and theory. A frequent publisher of art reviews, she is also translating her doctoral advisor Thomas Crow's book, *The Rise of the Sixties* (Yale University Press) into China. Her life goal is to bring people to see the value of art.

Category: Fiction Difficulty: Moderate

邓天媛 (2008届)



How Google Works

Eric Schmidt & Jonathan Rosenberg

Why this book?

How Google Works is an entertaining book about lessons that Google Executive Chairman and ex-CEO Eric Schmidt and former SVP of Products Jonathan Rosenberg learned as they led and helped build Google. The authors explain how technology has shifted the balance of power from companies to consumers, and that the only way to succeed in this ever-changing landscape is to create superior products and attract a new breed of multifaceted employees whom Eric and Jonathan dub "smart creatives." As tech companies are playing increasingly important roles in the world, I recommend this book for students who aspire a career in technology and startups.

Background:

Qizhao, a proud member of FDFZ class of 2008, graduated from Princeton University in 2013 with a B.S.E degree in Operations Research and Financial Engineering and a certificate in Japanese Language and Culture. During college, she was involved in Princeton Chinese Theatre, Smart Women Securities and an a cappella group called V-tone. After college, she worked for Citigroup in New York. She now lives in Los Angeles as an investment professional.

Category: Business | Technology

Difficulty: Easy

翁其钊 (2009届)



A Short History of Nearly Everything

Bill Bryson

Why this book?

This is one of the first books I read in college GE lessons and Bill Bryson immediately became one of my favorite authors. This is not an easy thing for a science writer to "achieve" since I'm a complete fiction novel lover! This book is a very comprehensive overview of the universe and our history, and Bill told it in such a funny way that made me laugh out countless times. Highly entertaining with easy readability, I would recommend this to everyone I know.

Background:

Yixin Xie graduated from UCLA with major in Art History and minor in Statistics, then received her M.A. degree in Art History from the Courtauld Institute of Art. She has worked in LA, London and Shanghai for pioneer contemporary art galleries, striving for promoting emerging Chinese artists. Currently, she works at a government-owned PE fund focused in investing culture-related companies. Yixin really cherished the time her spent in FDFZ with many lovely human beings, the many evenings in the radio station playing music and dreaming about all the possibilities. Believe her, "wasting time" (in books, music, art, and seemingly meaningless actions) is true luxury nowadays and does make good friends.

Category: History | Science
Difficulty: Easy

谢旖心 (2011届)

When Breath Becomes Air

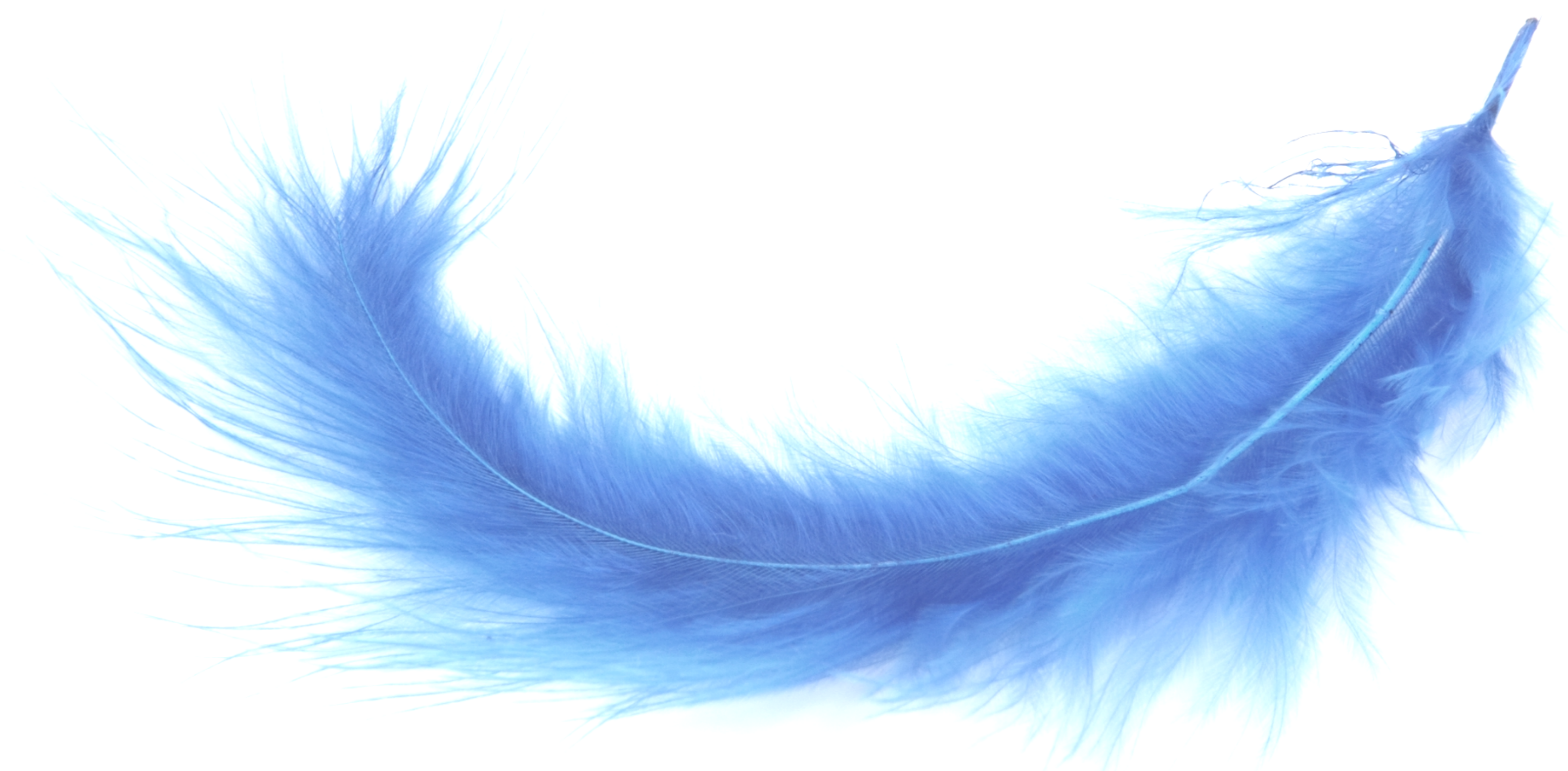
Paul Kalanithi

Why this book?

A book about disease, love, and death written by a neurosurgeon from Stanford University, Dr. Paul Kalanithi, as he faced a terminal cancer diagnosis, is inherently sad. But it's an emotional investment well worth making: a moving and thoughtful memoir of family, medicine, and literature. It is, despite its grim undertone, accidentally inspiring.

Background:

Jie Yu, a graduate of the class of 2006 at FDFZ, obtained his M.D from Shanghai Medical College of Fudan University. He completed his medicine residency at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, served as a chief medical resident, and spent years helping the most vulnerable groups of patients in the Windy City. Currently, Jie is a first-year gastroenterology fellow in Chicago with major interests in endoscopic procedures and inflammatory bowel disease.



Category: Autobiography
Difficulty: Moderate

余劼 (2006届)

The Conquest of Happiness

Bertrand Russell



Why this book?

Why are some people constantly unhappy? How would people suffer from sense of sin while still committing crime? What are the ways to live with minimum envy, boredom, fatigue, and fear of public opinion? While those questions may lead to very vague and philosophical arguments, Russell provides affirmative and practical solutions instead. By defining various emotions and determining reasons behind seemingly irrational decisions that lead to unhappiness, Russell wants his readers to “gradually learn to be indifferent to themselves and their deficiencies”. From his own experience of overcoming depression, he concludes that the way to be happy is to “centre one’s attention upon external objects: the state of the world, various branches of knowledge, individuals for whom one feels affection.” I would recommend this book to everyone who feels unhappy and wants to apply some methodologies to gain happiness.

Background:

Xiaotong is a rising senior at Northwestern University, majoring in Mathematical Methods in the Social Science (MMSS) and Mathematics. She served as a volunteer at FDFZ alumni association for three years, joined FFOF after graduation, and is now the co-chair of FFOF Education Team. She is also the developer of the game “复旦附中的三年/FDFZ Once More.” Xiaotong has been a keen reader since her first year at FDFZ. Her favorite picks include history and culture, dystopian literatures, science fictions, Hermann Hesse, and magic realism.

Category: Philosophy

Difficulty: Moderate

陈晓桐 (2015届)

The Handmaid's Tale

Margaret Atwood

Why this book?

Maybe only after experiencing extreme authoritarian control of one's mind, body and soul, can one truly appreciate the value of freedom and liberty. This science fiction which bears a resemblance to George Orwell's 1984, presents a world in which citizens lose all identity and personal expressions. While it may seem to be very depressing to live in such a regime, if you read deeply into the minds of the handmaids and all characters including the government officials, you will be surprised to find that where there is repression, there is resistance and where there is despair, there is hope. Enjoy the freedom to read such an intriguing story!

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