

2025-26 Incoming 9th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

The Assignment

What We Fed to the Manticore, by Talia Lakshmi Kolluri

Support your local bookstore when you buy your copy and complete the following three steps:

1. Annotations:

As you read, you will need to **annotate your text**—documenting your thinking along the way. You will **show evidence of a close reading** by using the following annotations to mark the text:

Underline key ideas and details & **highlight** new vocabulary

* = passages that make you connect

! = passages that make you react

? = passages that make you question

2. Journal Entries:

In a journal or notebook*, create at least three responses from each of the nine short stories.

As the stories shift between narrators and locations, see how you can respond to the events that unfold, the character interactions that take place, the themes that reveal themselves, the language that is used to tell the story, etc. I am most interested in having you capture your unique reading experience in your journal, so act as if it were a close friend or a pet and write your entries to that person/pet specifically. For example, my 16-year-old dog's name is Scout, and she loves a great story!

Kolluri's collection offers a variety of stories and perspectives across an international landscape, so be sure to preface each of your responses with a little bit of context to aid in your recall. Engage with the text and pull some passages from the book that elicit a strong reaction from you and share what about that passage is sticky. What are you thinking? What are you wondering? What connections are you making? Pepper your text with annotations and remember to aim for at least three responses from each of the nine short stories.

Please bring your annotated text and journal of responses to class with you on our first day.

*If you require accommodations, feel free to adapt as needed!

3. Mixtape

Finally, in the same journal, you will **compose a mixtape** of sorts to mirror the events and/or characters of each story. Your playlist can consist of songs from any era and any genre. **Include the song title and artist, and a brief explanation of why you selected this song and what from the book it connects to.** Aim for at least nine songs, one for each story in the book.

I hope you enjoy your summer break, and I look forward to meeting each of you at the beginning of the school year.

Read on,

Brittany Bergin-Foss

Please contact Matt Norrdin, English Faculty Chair, with any questions this summer. // mnorrdin@crms.org