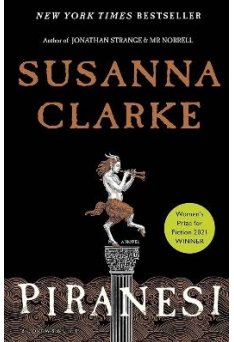


Proposed Core Literature Titles

The following Summary is provided by the California Department of Education's "Recommended Literature List". And the top three Google searches of the book title and author name (e.g., title by author) that produced a description of the title.

<u>Piranesi</u> Proposed Grade Level: 12	
	<p>Title: Piranesi Author: Susanna Clarke First Published: 2020</p> <p>Proposed Grade Level: 12 Lexile Measurement: Unassigned</p>
California Department of Education, Recommended Literature List:	
Descriptions From Top 3 Google Searches:	
<p>https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/50202953-piranesi</p> <p>Piranesi's house is no ordinary building: its rooms are infinite, its corridors endless, its walls are lined with thousands upon thousands of statues, each one different from all the others. Within the labyrinth of halls an ocean is imprisoned; waves thunder up staircases, rooms are flooded in an instant. But Piranesi is not afraid; he understands the tides as he understands the pattern of the labyrinth itself. He lives to explore the house.</p> <p>There is one other person in the house—a man called The Other, who visits Piranesi twice a week and asks for help with research into A Great and Secret Knowledge. But as Piranesi explores, evidence emerges of another person, and a terrible truth begins to unravel, revealing a world beyond the one Piranesi has always known</p>	

<https://www.amazon.com/Piranesi-Susanna-Clarke/dp/1635577802>

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There is one other person in the house—a man called The Other, who visits Piranesi twice a week and asks for help with research into A Great and Secret Knowledge. But as Piranesi explores, evidence emerges of another person, and a terrible truth begins to unravel, revealing a world beyond the one Piranesi has always known.

For readers of Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* and fans of Madeline Miller's *Circe*, *Piranesi* introduces an astonishing new world, an infinite labyrinth, full of startling images and surreal beauty, haunted by the tides and the clouds.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/sep/17/piranesi-by-susanna-clarke-review-an-elegant-study-in-solitude>

Piranesi is a tenebrous study in solitude. It is also newly mysterious. Its narrator, though deprived of both company and reliable memories, seems curiously content with his lot. He wanders empty halls and courtyards, cataloguing in his meticulous journal entries their bewildering array of statuary. He documents with satisfaction – and with no trace of despair – how he has sustained himself with meagre catches of fish and staved off the cold by burning dried seaweed. Piranesi does evince at least some curiosity, not least about who he really is; he was given that name by the Other and cannot remember his own. He wonders, too, about the identities of the dead, but subsumes even these pressing questions into acts of tranquil devotion, bringing offerings of water lilies to the forlorn remains of “the Folded-Up Child”. These moments are touching, though related with affectless decorum, but Piranesi’s peculiar equanimity comes to seem unsettling.

So too does his abject gratitude for the Other’s occasional gifts. The various items – multivitamins, a sleeping bag, plastic bowls – are as incongruous in this setting as the “shining device” that the Other carries, but it takes more momentous events to disturb Piranesi’s obliviousness. These begin when he finds signs of another visitor to the House. Enthralled, he relates the news to the Other, whose habitual cold indifference gives way to stern warnings: Piranesi must keep away from this other person at all costs; his very sanity could be in danger.

It would be a disservice even to hint at the revelations that follow, revelations that not only upend Piranesi’s world but confront the reader with some truly onerous moral uncertainties. What can be said, though, is that at least the contours of the truth are encoded in this novel’s architecture. Here it is worth

reflecting on the subject of Clarke's overt homage. The historical Piranesi, an 18th-century engraver, is celebrated for his intricate and oppressive visions of imaginary prisons and for his *veduta ideate*, precise renderings of classical edifices set amid fantastic vistas. Goethe, it is said, was so taken with these that he found the real Rome to be greatly disappointing. Clarke fuses these themes, seducing us with imaginative grandeur only to sweep that vision away, revealing the monstrosities to which we can not only succumb but wholly surrender ourselves.

The result is a remarkable feat, not just of craft but of reinvention. Far from seeming burdened by her legacy, the Susanna Clarke we encounter here might be an unusually gifted newcomer unacquainted with her namesake's work. If there is a strand of continuity in this elegant and singular novel, it is in its central preoccupation with the nature of fantasy itself. It remains a potent force, but one that can leave us – like Goethe among the ruins – forever disappointed by what is real.