



# Cardinal Mooney Catholic High School

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Welcome to English Honors II. It's going to be an exciting year. You will learn so much about literature, written expression, grammar, and vocabulary. We will kick off our curriculum with our summer assignment in Gothic literature.

**Your assignment is to read the “Beginnings” section of *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield** (pages 1-143). You should purchase a **paper copy** of the book. The novel follows Margaret Lea, a young writer who is summoned to a remote mansion to conduct an interview with Vida Winter, a reclusive author with a dark and mysterious past. Both of their stories intertwine into a tangled web of ghosts, twins, and family secrets.

Once you return to school we will have several class discussions and a comprehension quiz about “Beginnings.” On our first block day we will have timed writing with topic choices from the novel. You will be given the choice of topics ahead of time, so you can aptly prepare.

Here are some guiding questions that will help prepare you for our discussions, quiz, and writing:

- What is the significance of the novel's title?
- Books and storytelling play important roles in *The Thirteenth Tale*. Discuss Lea's and Winter's relationships to books and stories. Can you relate to them? What is your relationship to books? Do you agree with Winter that stories can reveal truth better than simply stating it?

- The two houses in *The Thirteenth Tale*—Angelfield and Winter's estate—are prominent in the story. How do the houses reflect the characters who live in them? What do you think they represent?
- Why do you think Lea obeys Winter's summons?
- Winter asks Lea if she would like to hear a ghost story. Who are the ghosts in the story? In what ways are different characters haunted (Margaret, Winter, Aurelius)?
- Why do you think Lea's sister's death affects her so profoundly?

I hope you enjoy this novel as much as my other students have. I always look forward to reading it again and again. It is the type of story that you will always remember and a good introduction to gothic literature. I look forward to meeting and getting to hear your thoughts on our summer reading.

Sincerely,

*Ms. Schiebel*

Honors English Teacher