2019 Reading Challenge for Adults

September: Translations & Retellings

Looking to broaden your horizons, or see an old story from a new point of view? Then this month's challenge is for you! The possibilities are endless, but take a look at this list as a starting point!

This month, when you read your book you'll be given a raffle ticket to enter our raffle AND to vote on November's category. We decided to celebrate election season by asking for your input, so make sure you read and vote!

Pick up a reading log at the Circulation or Reference Desk, and commit to reading or listening to one book. When you've finished the book, visit us to get your log stamped and claim your reward for the month—a grab bag of international sweets!
**September: Books in translation and retellings**

*This list is for ideas only. Chosen book should fit the theme, but no specific titles are required to participate in the reading challenge. Please enjoy!*

**Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafón**
Barcelona, 1945: A city slowly heals in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, and Daniel, an antiquarian book dealer’s son, finds solace in a mysterious book by one Julián Carax. When he sets out to find the author’s other works, he discovers someone has been systematically destroying every copy of every book Carax has written. Soon Daniel’s seemingly innocent quest opens a door into one of Barcelona’s darkest secrets.

**My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante**
Beginning in the 1950s in a poor but vibrant neighborhood on the outskirts of Naples, this first in Ferrante’s four-volume story spans almost sixty years, as its protagonists, Lila and Elena, become women, wives, mothers, and leaders, all the while maintaining a complex friendship.

**The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho**
Paulo Coelho’s masterpiece tells the mystical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure. Santiago’s journey teaches us about the wisdom of listening to our hearts, of recognizing opportunity and learning to read the omens strewn along life’s path, and, most importantly, to follow our dreams.

**Austenland by Shannon Hale**
Jane is a young New York woman who can never seem to find the right man—perhaps because of her secret obsession with Mr. Darcy. When a wealthy relative bequeaths her a trip to an English resort catering to Austen-obsessed women, Jane’s fantasies of meeting the perfect Regency-era gentleman suddenly become more real than she ever could have imagined.

Annotations adapted from publisher, Amazon.com, BookRags.com, BN.com, Publisher’s Weekly, & NY Times Book Review.
Vinegar Girl by Anne Tyler
Kate Battista feels stuck. How did she end up running house and home for her eccentric scientist father and uppity, pretty younger sister Bunny? Plus, she’s always in trouble at work – her pre-school charges adore her, but their parents don’t always appreciate her unusual opinions and forthright manner. Meanwhile, people keep asking more and more from her...

A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley
A wealthy Iowa farmer decides to divide his farm between his three daughters, and when the youngest objects, she is cut out of his will. This sets off a chain of events that brings dark truths to light and explodes long-suppressed emotions.

My Plain Jane by Cynthia Hand
Prepare for an adventure of Gothic proportions, in which a certain gentleman is hiding more than skeletons in his closets, and as orphan Jane Eyre, aspiring author Charlotte Brontë, and supernatural investigator Alexander Blackwood are about to be drawn together on the most epic ghost hunt this side of Wuthering Heights.

Jane and the Waterloo Map by Stephanie Barron
Henry Austen, high-flying banker, is about to declare bankruptcy—dragging several of his brothers down with him. The crisis destroys Henry’s health, and Jane flies to his London bedside, believing him to be dying. But her visit takes a startling turn when Jane stumbles upon a body—sprawled on the carpet in the Regent’s library.

The Dinner by Herman Koch
This is a tale of two families struggling to make the hardest decision of their lives—all over the course of one meal. It’s a summer's evening in Amsterdam, and between mouthfuls of food, the conversation remains a gentle hum of polite discourse. But behind the empty words, terrible decisions are being made, and with every forced smile and every new course, the knives are being sharpened.

Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez
In their youth, Florentino and Fermina fall passionately in love. When Fermina eventually chooses to marry a wealthy doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic. Fifty years, nine months, and four days after he first declared his love for Fermina, he will do so again.

Annotations adapted from publisher, Amazon.com, BookRags.com, BN.com, Publisher’s Weekly, & NY Times Book Review.
Death is Hard Work by Khaled Khalifa
Abdel Latif, an old man from the Aleppo region, dies peacefully in a hospital bed in Damascus. His final wish, conveyed to his youngest son, Bolbol, is to be buried in the family plot in their ancestral village of Anabiya. What would normally be a simple 2 hour drive is anything but as Syria is embroiled in civil war.

After Alice by Gregory Macguire
Ada is off to visit her friend Alice, but arrives a moment too late—and tumbles down the rabbit-hole herself. Ada brings to Wonderland her own imperfect understanding of cause and effect as she embarks on an odyssey to find Alice and see her safely home from this surreal world below the world.

Great by Sara Benincasa
A teenage girl becomes entangled in the romance and drama of a Hamptons social circle and is implicated in a scandal that shakes the summer community. When Naomi Rye arrives in the Hamptons to spend the summer with her socialite mother, she finds herself unexpectedly drawn to her mysterious and beautiful next-door neighbor, Jacinta.

The Hag Seed by Margaret Atwood
Felix is at the top of his game, or so he thought. Instead, after an act of unforeseen treachery, Felix is living in exile in a backwoods hovel, haunted by memories of his beloved lost daughter, Miranda. He plots revenge, which, after twelve years, arrives in the shape of a theater course at a nearby prison.

Cinder by Marissa Meyer
Humans and androids crowd the raucous streets of New Beijing as a deadly plague ravages the population. From space, a ruthless lunar people watch, waiting to make their move. No one knows that Earth’s fate hinges on one girl.

Dorothy Must Die by Danielle Paige
Oz has turned into a savage dystopia under Dorothy’s rule—and now a new girl from Kansas must take her down. Amy Gumm been recruited by the Revolutionary Order of the Wicked. Her mission: Remove the Tin Woodman’s heart. Steal the Scarecrow’s brain. Take the Lion’s courage. And—Dorothy must die.
**Circe by Madeline Miller**
One of the most fascinating women in Greek mythology gets her due in this intoxicating epic of family rivalry, palace intrigue, and love and loss.

**The Odyssey by Emily Wilson**
This highly praised new translation of *The Odyssey* sings with a voice that echoes Homer’s music; matching the number of lines in the Greek original, the poem sails along at Homer’s swift, smooth pace.

**Eugene Onegin by Alexander Pushkin**
Set in 1820s Russia, this verse novel follows the fates of three men and three women. Ultimately, it is the story of a bored dandy who learns some painful life lessons.

**Convenience Store Woman by Sayaka Murata**
Keiko Furukura has worked at a convenience store for 18 years, comfortable in the patterns and norms of the store and its customers, but aware of her family and society’s general disappointment in her. When a young man enters her life she has the chance to change everything—if she wants to.

**The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera**
The story of a young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing and that of one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover—this novel juxtaposes geographically distant places; brilliant and playful reflections; and a variety of styles to take its place as perhaps the major achievement of one of the world’s truly great writers.

**The Three-Body Problem by Cixin Liu**
Set against the backdrop of China’s Cultural Revolution, a secret military project sends signals into space to establish contact with aliens. An alien civilization on the brink of destruction captures the signal and plans to invade Earth.

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The Looking Glass Wars by Frank Beddor
The Myth: Alice was an ordinary girl who stepped through the looking glass and entered a fairy-tale world invented by Lewis Carroll in his famous storybook.
The Truth: Wonderland is real. Alyss Heart is the heir to the throne, until her murderous aunt Redd steals the crown and kills Alyss’ parents.

The Steep and Thorny Way by Cat Winters
1920s Oregon is not a welcoming place for Hanalee Denney, the daughter of a white woman and an African American man. She has almost no rights by law, and the Ku Klux Klan breeds fear and hatred. Her father, Hank, died a year ago, hit by a drunk-driving teenager. Now the killer is out of jail and back in town, and he’s claiming that Hanalee’s father’s death wasn’t an accident at all. Instead, he says it happens to be Hanalee’s new stepfather.

The Story of My Teeth by Valeria Luiselli
A man named Highway’s obsession is collecting the teeth of famous people. Join him on his journey of collecting and bartering for more! This weird and witty novel was written as a collaborative project with a series of workers at a contemporary art gallery in Mexico City. (The art gallery plays an important role in the novel, too.)

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Fever Dream by Samanta Schweblin
A young woman named Amanda lies dying in a rural hospital clinic. A boy named David sits beside her. She’s not his mother. He’s not her child. Together, they tell a haunting story of broken souls, toxins, and the power and desperation of family.

Across a Star Swept Sea by Diana Peterfreund
Centuries after wars nearly destroyed civilization, the two islands of New Pacifica stand alone, a terraformed paradise where even the Reduction—the devastating brain disorder that sparked the wars—is a distant memory. Yet there’s still rebels in places and their weapon of choice is a drug that damages their enemies’ brains, and the only hope is rescue by a mysterious spy known as the Wild Poppy.

Norse Mythology by Neil Gaiman
In Gaiman’s retelling, these gods emerge with their fiercely competitive natures, their susceptibility to being duped and to duping others, and their tendency to let passion ignite their actions, making these long-ago myths breathe pungent life again.

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