



AUTUMN TERM

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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss McGarr

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Campaigners Save Brontës' Birthplace

Campaigners have raised £30,000 in donations and grants to preserve the birthplace of the Brontë sisters, Emily, Anne, and Charlotte. All three sisters were born at 72-74 Market Street in Thornton, Bradford which, thanks to crowdfunding has now been purchased by a group called The Brontë Birthplace Community. The group want to preserve the building and turn it into a cultural and education centre, as well as a tourist attraction much like Haworth Parsonage, where the Brontës lived together for the majority of their short lives.



The Thornton house was initially inherited by Charlotte's husband when the rest of the family passed away, and, as none of the Brontë

siblings had children, it was passed down through his family to his cousin Florrie, and subsequently to her son. The property then changed hands several times. Nigel West, Florrie's grandson has made a significant contribution to the crowdfunding appeal. He said of his father's transferred ownership that: "[He] was 37 at the time, and the property wasn't thought to be worth much, so he passed it on to the church." West said he made the donation partly to honour his father, who passed away two years ago, and also because he is passionate about the idea of the house being used to educate children, particularly those in Bradford which contains some of the most deprived wards in the country.

[Click here to read the original Guardian article by David Barnett](#)



Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë

Charlotte Brontë tells the story of orphaned Jane Eyre, who grows up in the home of her heartless aunt, enduring loneliness and cruelty. This troubled childhood strengthens Jane's natural independence and spirit - which prove necessary when she finds employment as a governess to the young ward of Byronic, brooding Mr Rochester. As her feelings for Rochester develop, Jane gradually uncovers Thornfield Hall's terrible secret, forcing her to make a choice. Should she stay with Rochester and live with the consequences, or follow her convictions - even if it means leaving the man she loves? A novel of intense power and intrigue, Jane Eyre dazzled readers with its passionate depiction of a woman's search for equality and freedom.

Glass Town by Isabel Greenberg

Glass Town is an original graphic novel by Isabel Greenberg that encompasses the eccentric childhoods of the four Brontë children—Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne. The story begins in 1825, with the deaths of Maria and Elizabeth, the eldest siblings. It is in response to this loss that the four remaining Brontë children set pen to paper and created the fictional world that became known as Glass Town. This world and its cast of characters would come to be the Brontës' escape from the realities of their lives. Within Glass Town the siblings experienced love, friendship, war, triumph, and heartbreak. Through a combination of quotes from the stories originally penned by the Brontës, biographical information about them, and Greenberg's vivid comic book illustrations, readers will find themselves enraptured by this fascinating imaginary world.

On This Day in History... Moby-Dick is Published in the USA, 14th November 1851



Moby-Dick; or, The Whale is an 1851 novel by American writer Herman Melville. The book is the sailor Ishmael's narrative of the maniacal quest of Ahab, captain of the whaling ship Pequod, for vengeance against Moby Dick, the giant white sperm whale that bit off his leg on the ship's previous voyage. While writing the novel, Melville took inspiration from his experience as a sailor from 1841-1844. The eponymous white whale was modelled after Mocha Dick, a real and notoriously difficult to catch albino sperm whale that lived in the Pacific Ocean in the 1800s. Mocha Dick was rumoured to have been killed by whalers in 1838, however a decade later a sighting of the whale was reported in the Arctic Ocean.

Moby-Dick is full of detailed and realistic descriptions of whale hunting, as well as life aboard ship among a culturally diverse crew. Melville's literary influences include Shakespeare and the Bible, which can be seen in the various literary devices used throughout his novel such as songs, poetry, soliloquies and asides.

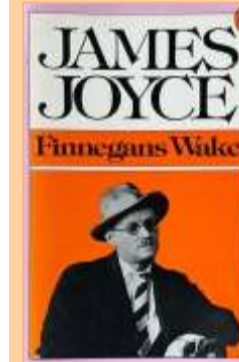
Moby-Dick was first published as *The Whale* in London in October 1851, and subsequently published in the USA a month later under its definitive title, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*.



Moby-Dick by Herman Melville

In part, *Moby-Dick* is the story of an eerily compelling madman pursuing an unholy war against a creature as vast and dangerous and unknowable as the sea itself. But more than just a novel of adventure, more than an encyclopaedia of whaling lore and legend, the book can be seen as part of its author's lifelong meditation on America. Written with wonderfully redemptive humour, *Moby-Dick* is also a profound inquiry into character, faith, and the nature of perception.

Book Club Finishes Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* After 28 Years



In 1995, Californian Gerry Fialka set up a book club in his local library to exclusively read James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. The book is notoriously difficult to read and understand - in fact it is considered by some scholars to be the most difficult work of literature ever published in the English language. With this in mind, the group (between 10-30 people, varying by session) began by reading two pages per month, and eventually slowed to reading just one page. After 28 years, they reached the final page of the book in October of this year. Sam Slate, a Joyce expert at Trinity College Dublin said that the amount of time the club took to read *Finnegan's Wake* "could well be a record." Slate's own book club dedicated to the novel is on track to finish the book within a 15-year timeframe. James Joyce spent 17 years of his life working on *Finnegan's Wake* and died shortly after it was published, meaning he had no opportunity to explain its content. He did say however that, "the demand [he] make[s] of [his]

reader is that he should devote his entire life to reading [Joyce's] works", and the California book club may have come the closest to fulfilling this request.

[Read the original Guardian article by Lois Beckett here.](#)

Ulysses by James Joyce

James Joyce's astonishing masterpiece, *Ulysses*, tells of the diverse events which befall Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus in Dublin on 16 June 1904, during which Bloom's voluptuous wife, Molly, commits adultery. Initially deemed obscene in England and the USA, this richly allusive novel, revolutionary in its Modernistic experimentalism, was hailed as a work of genius by W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway. Scandalously frank, wittily erudite, mercurially eloquent, resourcefully comic and generously humane, *Ulysses* offers the reader a life-changing experience.



2023 Goodreads Choice Awards Open



The first round of the 15th annual Goodreads Choice Awards has opened for voting. The yearly awards program launched in 2009 and consists of 15 categories, including Young Adult Fiction, Romantasy, Memoir & Autobiography, and Romance. Goodreads users determine the winners in each category by voting for their favourites. To be eligible for an award, a book must have been released during the past year. There are several rounds of voting, narrowing down the nominees in each category with each round. The final round of voting sees Goodreads users choosing from the top 10 books in each category. Past winners include *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Charbonnet, which won in the fiction category in 2022, and *Queen of Nothing* by Holly Black which won in the Young Adult Fantasy category in 2020. See below some of this year's nominated books that are available in the library.

[View the full list of nominees here.](#)

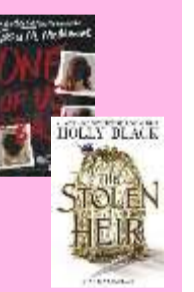
The Davenport by Krystal Marquis

In 1910, the Davenports are one of the few Black families of immense wealth and status in a changing United States, their fortune made through the entrepreneurship of William Davenport, a formerly enslaved man who founded the Davenport Carriage Company years ago. Now the Davenports live surrounded by servants, crystal chandeliers, and endless parties, finding their way and finding love—even where they're not supposed to. The first book in a breathless new series, *The Davenports* offers a glimpse into a period of African American history often overlooked, while delivering a totally escapist, swoon-worthy read.



One of Us is Back by Karen M. McManus

Ever since Simon died in detention, life hasn't been easy for the Bayview Crew. First the Bayview Four had to prove they weren't killers. Then a new generation had to outwit a vengeful copycat. Now, it's beginning again. At first the mysterious billboard seems like a bad joke: Time for a new game, Bayview. But when a member of the crew disappears, it's clear this 'game' just got serious - and no one understands the rules. Everyone's a target. And now that someone unexpected has returned to Bayview, things are starting to get deadly. The thing is, Simon was right about secrets—they all come out, eventually. And Bayview has a lot it's still hiding.



The Stolen Heir by Holly Black

Eight years have passed since the Battle of the Serpent. But in the icy north, Lady Nore of the Court of Teeth has reclaimed the Ice Needle Citadel. Suren, child queen of the Court of Teeth, and the one person with power over her mother, fled to the human world. There, she lives feral in the woods. Lonely, and still haunted by the merciless torments she endured in the Court of Teeth, she bides her time by releasing mortals from foolish bargains. She believes herself forgotten until the storm hag, Bogdana chases her through the night streets. Suren is saved by none other than Prince Oak, heir to Elfham, to whom she was once promised in marriage and who she has resented for years. Now seventeen, Oak is charming, beautiful, and manipulative. He's on a mission that will lead him into the north, and he wants Suren's help. But if she agrees, it will mean guarding her heart against the boy she once knew and a prince she cannot trust, as well as confronting all the horrors she thought she left behind.

15th November – Day of the Imprisoned Writer



Each year PEN International, a worldwide association of writers, holds a Day of the Imprisoned Writer on the 15th of November. The day intends to recognise and support writers who "resist repression of the basic human right to freedom of expression and who stand up to attacks made against their right to impart information."

Another function of the day is to increase the public's awareness of persecuted writers in general. PEN International uses the day to direct attention to several specific persecuted or imprisoned writers and their individual circumstances. Each writer chosen comes from a different part of the world, and each case "represents circumstances of repression that occur when governments or other entities in power feel threatened by what writers have written."

This year's highlighted writers are: Maria Cristina Garrido Rodriguez from Cuba, who is imprisoned for criticising the Cuban government and taking part in peaceful protests; Gö Sherab Gyatso from Tibet, who is imprisoned for "inciting separatism"; Iryna Danylovykh from Ukraine, who is imprisoned on allegedly fabricated charges of handling explosives; and Soulaïman Raïssouni from Morocco, who is imprisoned on allegedly fabricated charges of sexual assault. PEN International is calling for urgent international action to release and protect these authors.

The third and final function of the day is to commemorate all of the writers killed since the previous year's Day of the Imprisoned Writer. On the right are some books we have in the library by previously imprisoned authors.

[Click here to visit PEN International's website.](#)

[Click here to learn more about Day of the Imprisoned Writer.](#)

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe

Imprisoned for: Criticising the government
Daniel Defoe relates the tale of an English sailor marooned on a desert island for nearly three decades. An ordinary man struggling to survive in extraordinary circumstances, Robinson Crusoe wrestles with fate and the nature of God.

Notes from the Underground by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Imprisoned for: Reading and circulating banned political essays
One of the most remarkable characters in literature, the unnamed narrator is a former official who has defiantly withdrawn into an underground existence. In complete retreat from society, he scrawls a passionate, obsessive, self-contradictory narrative that serves as a devastating attack on social utopianism and an assertion of man's essentially irrational nature.

Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe

Imprisoned for: Atheism
Faustus, a brilliant scholar, sells his soul to the devil in exchange for limitless knowledge and powerful black magic, yet remains unfulfilled. He considers repenting, but remains too proud to ask God for forgiveness. His indecision ultimately seals his fate. Marlowe thoughtfully examines faith and enlightenment, nature and science—and the terrible cost of the objects of our desire.

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde

Imprisoned for: Homosexuality
Cecily Cardew and Gwendolen Fairfax are both in love with the same mythical suitor. Jack Worthing has wooed Gwendolen as Ernest while Algernon has also posed as Ernest to win the heart of Jack's ward, Cecily. When all four arrive at Jack's country home on the same weekend the "rivals" to fight for Ernest's undivided attention and the "Ernests" to claim their beloveds pandemonium breaks loose. Only a senile nursemaid and an old, discarded hand-bag can save the day!

On This Day in History... The Birth of Margaret Atwood, 18th November 1939



Margaret Atwood is a Canadian writer who is perhaps best known for her dystopian 'social science fiction' novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*. She is a prolific author, and since 1961 has published 18 books of poetry, 18 novels, 11 non-fiction books, 9 short story collections, 8 children's books, and 2 graphic novels. In addition to producing a significant amount of work, Atwood is incredibly well respected and has won numerous awards and accolades for her writing including two Booker Prizes, the Arthur C Clarke Award, and the National Book Critics and PEN Center USA's Lifetime Achievement Awards.

In her personal life, Atwood is an activist and campaigner for numerous causes, particularly those that are political and environmental, with a strong focus on animal rights. One of her best-known novels, *Oryx and Crake*, concerns the genetic modification and alteration of humans and animals, resulting in hybrid species. Through this work, Atwood questions the limits and ethics of science & technology where animals are concerned. The theme of animal rights is explored through some of her other works too, for example the ethics of consuming animals is discussed in her novels *Surfacing* and *Cat's Eye*. Other topics Atwood is passionate about, and therefore can be seen running through many of her works, include gender & identity and climate change.

The Penelopiad by Margaret Atwood

(Recommended for Older Readers)
Penelope. Immortalised in legend and myth as the devoted wife of the glorious Odysseus, silently weaving and unpicking and weaving again as she waits for her husband's return. Now Penelope wanders the underworld, spinning a different kind of thread: her own side of the story - a tale of lust, greed and murder.



The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood

(Recommended for Older Readers)
Offred is a Handmaid in the Republic of Gilead. She may leave the home of the Commander and his wife once a day to walk to food markets whose signs are now pictures instead of words because women are no longer allowed to read. She must lie on her back once a month and pray that the Commander makes her pregnant, because in an age of declining births, Offred and the other Handmaids are valued only if their ovaries are viable. Offred can remember the years before, when she lived and made love with her husband, Luke; when she played with and protected her daughter; when she had a job, money of her own, and access to knowledge. But all of that is gone.



The Blind Assassin by Margaret Atwood

(Recommended for Older Readers)
Told in a style that magnificently captures the colloquialisms and clichés of the 1930s and 1940s, *The Blind Assassin* is a richly layered and uniquely rewarding experience. It opens with these simple, resonant words: "Ten days after the war ended, my sister drove a car off the bridge." They are spoken by Iris, whose terse account of her sister Laura's death in 1945 is followed by an inquest report proclaiming the death accidental. But just as the reader expects to settle into Laura's story, Atwood introduces a novel-within-a-novel. Entitled *The Blind Assassin*, it is a science fiction story told by two unnamed lovers who meet in dingy backstreet rooms. When we return to Iris, it is through a 1947 newspaper article announcing the discovery of a sailboat carrying the dead body of her husband, a distinguished industrialist.