

# RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020

Welcome to the NOVEMBER 2020 issue of RTC LIBRARY E-NEWSLETTER

In this issue: Recommended Reads: Madness, One Hundred years of Solitude, Station Eleven.

## Recommended Reads from the RTC community

### Madness by Roald Dahl

Madness is a collection of ten short stories, which are domestically familiar, yet highlights a much darker side of human nature. The most “maddening” tales for me were “Edward The Conqueror” and “William and Mary.” In “Edward the Conqueror”, Edward, the husband, ends up killing a cat because of its curious behavior towards music and his wife’s affection towards the cat. One could say, that he felt the cat to be a threat to his relationship with his wife or that he believed his wife was going to go mad if she kept insisting that the cat had a musical ear. In either case, the man killed a cat and believed his wife was the one going mad.

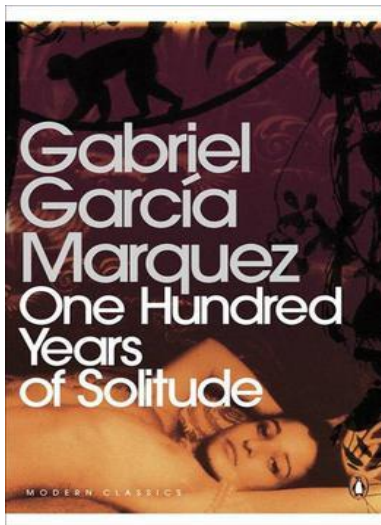
“William and Mary” is a tale of revenge. Mary the wife has been always overshadowed and dominated by her husband, William. So, when the husband dies, she learns through a letter left by her husband that he had signed up for a medical experiment, where his brain is kept alive even after his death. Hence, she goes to visit her husband who is now nothing more than a slimy grey blob of a brain floating in a basin, with a pair of eyes in another bowl of water (through which he could see). The sight makes Mary pleasantly happy considering William could no longer control her life and tell her what not to do. So there she stood, taking a puff of her cigarette, which was not allowed before and, in his eye, she could see the rage and fury of being disobeyed. Thus, Mary having been wronged by him decides to take revenge on her husband by taking him back home and doing everything she was never allowed to.

There are other stories, which depict an even darker side of the human nature, which we mostly keep under control. Other stories consist of a landlady who never let her guests leave, a man who unintentionally takes his own life due to greed, and a boy whose love for pork gets him astray. In short, Dahl understood human nature’s darkest secrets, fear and desires which every person would be guilty of carrying, if not all but some in them.

**Thank You**  
**Tenzin Om**  
**BA Pol & Soc**

## One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

The book is a fictional story within which magic, wonders and imagination are so vividly portrayed that you find yourself living in the story almost like one of the characters. The novel begins with the creation of Maconda city, by Jose Arcadio Buendia and his wife, Ursula, with a group followers who build the village by degrading a very dense forest only to find that they were on an island. So, this village is located on an island with a very small population who creates a civilization and a community there. Maconda is exposed to other parts of the world when the government of Columbia discovers the town and decides to paint the houses blue. Until then, the only outsiders to visit the town were the gypsies who would visit once every year and introduce the people to new technologies and inventions like ice, the telescopes and once even a flying carpet that could take them to places in the world they didn't know about. It is a solitary and isolated place where violence and war is not present until the start of civil wars that are the result of political battles between the old conservative parties and the newer conception of liberal party.



Although Colonel Aureliano Buendía, the son of José Arcadio Buendía, the founder of Maconda city goes to war for the victory of liberty, he and his people don't really have a clear idea of what they are fighting for, because the idea of liberty is still not very clear to them, apart from the knowledge that liberty brings equality and legalization of illegitimate children. After years of civil wars, Aureliano realizes that the only reason for him to go to war was because of his pride and nothing more. This pride is a characteristic that all men and women in the Buendia family would possess throughout the seven generations. The book showcases seven generations of the Buendia family where certain events are repeated in each generation such as incest, the tragic deaths of the characters, and haunting ghosts of people the characters have known.

The novel smoothly portrays how Maconda, a solitary town goes through stages of war, first due to political matters and second due to capitalism of banana plantation. The second war is also an event taken from the actual Banana Massacre in Columbia that took place in 1928 as a result of a workers' strike on the plantation until proper working conditions were given to them. What actually begins the war is the coming of railroads in Maconda, which brings foreign settlers into the town, and newer technology. White capitalists, after hearing about the great fertility of the land and the better production of bananas, decides to build their own plantation a little further from the town. They exploit the people of Maconda as workers in the plantation, but they go on a strike that demands for better working condition which leads to a government sponsored war or massacre.

The massacre brings about heavy destruction to Maconda, and heavy rain that starts to fall the very night of the massacre and doesn't stop for five years, leaving the town thoroughly impoverished. This results in Maconda going back to its original state of being solitary and undeveloped. Eventually the town is abandoned by most of its residents and the remaining characters die of old age, leaving only Aureliano Babilonia, of the sixth generation of the Buendia lineage, and his aunt Amaranta Ursula with whom he has an incestuous relationship, resulting in a son who is born with a pigs tail, as had been feared throughout the novel by Amaranta Ursula

In the end, Aureliano Babilonia is the only remaining person in Maconda after the death of Amaranta Ursula during child birth, and due to his negligence towards his son, the son dies after birth and is eaten by ants, thereby proving the prophecy of Melquíades' a gypsy that, "The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants." He finds some scrolls that Melquíades' had left behind and translates them, whereby he learns that the fate of Maconda had been predicted from the beginning of time and that it wouldn't get another chance of revival. Right after that a strong wind blows in that washes away any evidence of there ever being a town in the area.

**Thank you**  
**Tenzin Om**  
**BA Pol & Soc**

**Location: FIC 863.6 MAR**

## Station Eleven by Emily St John Mandel

It did not seem like a great idea to read a novel about the world after a major pandemic causes the collapse of civilization right now. This book may be a little too close to home for our current times. Yet I can't recommend it more. Yes, the early chapters that describe how the hospitals fill quickly with dying people while others attempt to hoard drinking water, feel a little too familiar but this is also a thoughtful, beautifully told story. The plot follows a group of loosely interconnected characters who either died in the early days of the flu or are now navigating this gritty new world particularly a wandering group of actors and musicians who perform classical music and stage Shakespeare plays for other survivors. Moving effortlessly between different characters, their past and their "present" the novel weaves together a multi-layered meditation about what could survive the end of the world including art, literature and human connection (Thankfully email does not survive and one of the most delightful passages in the novel has two characters recollect with genuine wonder all the ridiculous email-speak that we use to convey efficacy and productivity).

**Thank You**  
**Dr. Dolma Choden Roder**  
**Associate Professor**  
**Social Sciences**

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