

Library Ladies Column, April 2010: Re-told Classics

Classics. Those books that have long lasting appeal, or which were assigned at some point in our school career. Sometimes the books call us to re-read them, sometimes we never want to crack that cover again. Well, how about livening up those titles with a new version? A contemporary sequel, new translation or even adding zombies to the mix will surely spice up your favorite classic!

*H.: The Story of Heathcliff's Journey Back to Wuthering Heights*, by Lin Haire-Sargeant. 1992.

Lin Haire-Sargeant, a nineteenth century literary scholar, transports readers back to the moors of *Wuthering Heights* and revisits the epic passion and tragedy shared between Cathy and Heathcliff. This version, however, centers on a letter written from Heathcliff to Cathy that describes his three lost years, between the time he fled the Heights to seek his fortune and his return to win Cathy. Readers will recognize haunting themes from Emily Bronte's original tale, along with enough surprises to make this a thrilling retelling!—Katy Willis

*Sea of Trolls Trilogy*, by Nancy Farmer. 2004. Grades 5 and up. Jack, a young apprentice bard, and his sister Lucy, are captured and carried away when their village in Anglo-Saxon England is raided by Vikings. The story blends elements from Norse mythology with fast-paced adventure, all tied together by the familiar nursery rhyme Jack and Jill. *The Land of the Silver Apples* (2006) and *The Islands of the Blessed* (2009) follow Jack, Lucy and their friends to a satisfying conclusion, and provide a fresh, gripping take on the heroic journey. – Amadee Ricketts

*The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer; a retelling by Peter Ackroyd. 2009.

Ackroyd's version of the *Canterbury Tales* is guided more by the spirit of the stories than a strict translation, and gives these well-known chestnuts a fresh and sometimes surprising snap. As explained in the introduction, the common English vernacular which replaces the anachronistic language can sometimes be jarring. These were bawdy tales after all, composed with all the wit, sarcasm, opinion, bias and vulgarity intact. A quick, insightful snapshot of the times, this volume carries a nice bonus of some delicate pencil sketches by Nick Bantock.—Russell Miller

*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith. 2009.

The subtitle, *the classic regency romance-now with ultraviolent zombie mayhem*, describes this book perfectly. In this re-telling of *Pride and Prejudice*, Seth Grahame-Smith introduces a mysterious disease and a bevy of the walking dead into the English countryside. The Bennett sisters are expert swordswomen, and Lizzie is determined to eliminate the zombie menace. The juxtaposition of “zombie mayhem” and the staid language of the original lends an air of hilarity to this very popular book. If you read and enjoy this Austen retelling, keep a lookout for the sequel *Jane Bites Back*, in which Austen turns herself into a vampire!—Julie Pavri