September 17: Reading Round Up!

Please join us as we check in each other and recap what we’ve read since we last met (at least the memorable ones!)

October 15: The Madman’s Daughter

Sixteen-year-old Juliet Moreau has built a life for herself in London — working as a maid, attending church on Sundays, and trying not to think about the scandal that ruined her life. After all, no one ever proved the rumors about her father’s gruesome experiments. But when she learns he is alive and continuing his work on a remote tropical island, she is determined to find out if the accusations are true. Inspired by H. G. Wells’s classic The Island of Dr. Moreau, this is a dark and breathless Gothic thriller about the secrets we’ll do anything to know and the truths we’ll go to any lengths to protect.

November 19: A Very Large Expanse of Sea by Tahereh Mafi

It’s 2002, a year after 9/11. It’s an extremely turbulent time politically, but especially so for someone like Shirin, a sixteen-year-old Muslim girl who’s tired of being stereotyped. Shirin is never surprised by how horrible people can be. She’s tired of the rude stares, the degrading comments - even the physical violence - she endures as a result of her race, her religion, and the hijab she wears every day. So she’s built up protective walls and refuses to let anyone close enough to hurt her. Instead, she drowns her frustrations in music and spends her afternoons break-dancing with her brother. But then she meets Ocean James. He’s the first person in forever who really seems to want to get to know Shirin. It terrifies her - they seem to come from two irreconcilable worlds - and Shirin has had her guard up for so long that she’s not sure she’ll ever be able to let it down.

December 17: Shadow and Bone by Leigh Bardugo

Surrounded by enemies, the once-great nation of Ravka has been torn in two by the Shadow Fold, a swath of near impenetrable darkness crawling with monsters who feast on human flesh. Now its fate may rest on the shoulders of one lonely refugee. Alina Starkov has never been good at anything. But when her regiment is attacked on the Fold and her best friend is brutally injured, Alina reveals a dormant power that saves his life—a power that could be the key to setting her war-ravaged country free. Wrenched from everything she knows, Alina is whisked away to the royal court to be trained as a member of the Grisha, the magical elite. Yet nothing in this lavish world is what it seems. With darkness looming and an entire kingdom depending on her untamed power, Alina will have to confront the secrets of the Grisha . . . and the secrets of her heart.

January 21: With the Fire on High by Elizabeth Acevedo

With her daughter to care for and her abuela to help support, high school senior Emoni Santiago has to make the tough decisions, and do what must be done. The one place she can let her responsibilities go is in the kitchen, where she adds a little something magical to everything she cooks, turning her food into straight-up goodness. Still, she knows she doesn’t have enough time for her school’s new culinary arts class, doesn’t have the money for the class’s trip to Spain — and shouldn’t still be dreaming of someday working in a real kitchen. But even with all the rules she has for her life — and all the rules everyone expects her to play by — once Emoni starts cooking, her only real choice is to let her talent break free.
February 18: Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell

Eleanor is the new girl in town, and with her chaotic family life, her mismatched clothes and unruly red hair, she couldn't stick out more if she tried. Park is the boy at the back of the bus. Black T-shirts, headphones, head in a book - he thinks he's made himself invisible. But not to Eleanor... never to Eleanor. Slowly, steadily, through late-night conversations and an ever-growing stack of mix tapes, Eleanor and Park fall for each other. They fall in love the way you do the first time, when you're young, and you feel as if you have nothing and everything to lose.

March 18: Scythe by Neal Schusterman

A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery. Humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.

April 15: I'll Give You The Sun by Jandy Nelson

At first, Jude and her twin brother Noah, are inseparable. Noah draws constantly and is falling in love with the charismatic boy next door, while daredevil Jude wears red-red lipstick, cliff-dives, and does all the talking for both of them. Years later, they are barely speaking. Something has happened to change the twins in different yet equally devastating ways... but then Jude meets an intriguing, irresistible boy and a mysterious new mentor. The early years are Noah's to tell; the later years are Jude's. But they each have only half the story, and if they can only find their way back to one another, they'll have a chance to remake their world. This radiant, award-winning novel from the acclaimed author of The Sky Is Everywhere will leave you breathless and teary and laughing—often all at once.

May 20: Watch Us Rise by Renee Watson

Jasmine and Chelsea are sick of the way women are treated even at their progressive NYC high school, so they decide to start a Women's Rights Club. They post everything online—poems, essays, videos of Chelsea performing her poetry, and Jasmine's response to the racial macroaggressions she experiences—and soon they go viral. But with such positive support, the club is also targeted by online trolls. When things escalate, the principal shuts the club down. Jasmine and Chelsea will risk everything for their voices—and those of other young women—to be heard.