



THE NEA BIG READ GERMANTOWN

An initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. The City of Germantown is one of 84 nonprofit organizations to receive an NEA Big Read grant to host a community reading program over the course of this year. This is the City's fifth NEA Big Read grant since 2015. The NEA Big Read in Germantown will focus on *Circe* by Madeline Miller. Free copies of the book will be available for pick up at Germantown Community Library beginning October 3. Read with us!

Book Club Resources

The NEA provides resources for book clubs and independent readers alike. A book review and synopsis, information about the author, discussion questions and a podcast are all available online at arts.gov/national-initiatives/nea-big-read/circe.

The NEA Big Read for Young Readers

Each year, Germantown Community Library staff members choose companion titles so that readers of all ages can participate in the Big Read. This year's companion titles include *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan (ages 10 to 14) and *Greek Myths* by Marcia Williams (ages 5 to 9).

**Pick up a free copy beginning
October 3 at the Open the
Book Celebration.**

Free while supplies last.



Overview

"Think a novel based on Greek mythology isn't for you? Just wait" (*People*). Madeline Miller's bestselling, critically acclaimed second novel *Circe*—about the goddess Circe—has been called "spellbinding" (*O Magazine*), "vivid, transporting" (*Entertainment Weekly*), "an epic page turner" (*Christian Science Monitor*), and "a romp, an airy delight, a novel to be gobbled greedily in a single sitting" (*Guardian*). Following her debut novel, *The Song of Achilles*, Miller takes on the world of gods, monsters, mortals and nymphs in this "bold and subversive retelling of the goddess's story that manages to be both epic and intimate in its scope, recasting the most infamous female figure from *The Odyssey* as a hero in her own right" (*New York Times*). Miller "paints an uncompromising portrait of a super heroine who learns to wield divine power while coming to understand what it means to be mortal" (*Publishers Weekly, Starred Review*). The myths have been retold many times "and yet in Miller's lush reimagining, the story feels harrowing and unexpected. The...fate that awaits Circe is at once divine and mortal, impossibly strange and yet entirely human" (*Washington Post*).

"The sun beat upon the horizon. It beat everywhere,
upon my back and arms and face. I wore no shawl.
I would not burn. I never did." - from *Circe*

NEA Big Read Germantown Events

Big Read Open the Book Celebration

Saturday, October 3, 10 a.m. to noon

Outdoors at Germantown Community Library, 1925 Exeter Road

All ages are invited to celebrate the kickoff event for this year's NEA Big Read. Learn to write your name in Greek, pick up a craft kit and visit with Farmer Jef Terry about the folklore of herbs and take home a plant to tend. Get your free book! Masks and social distancing required.

Circe New Myths Anthology for All Ages

Get creative and have your original work be part of a digital collection to be posted on social media. Write an original story or poem or create an original illustration featuring character(s) from Greek mythology or your own mythological character. Limit written submissions to 5,000 words or less. Submissions will be accepted throughout October. Drop off your work at Germantown Community Library or email it to gcl.reference@gmail.com. Be sure to include your name, age and contact information.

Germantown READS

Zoom Book Club

Monday, October 5, 12:30 p.m.

Join a friendly book discussion for adults, featuring the Big Read title, *Circe*, by Madeline Miller. To register, call (901) 757-7323 by 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 3. Participants will receive a Zoom link to join prior to the scheduled meeting.

Zoom Author Panel:

Tennessee—The Perfect 36!

Tuesday, October 6, 6 p.m.

What do *Circe* and Tennessee have in common? The story of *Circe* is about a woman's journey to self-determination. Much like the journey of American suffragists. In 1920, after a decades-long campaign, the 19th Amendment was passed, and women could finally vote! Join us in a

lively discussion as three Tennessee authors share the pivotal role our Tennessee State Legislature—and the women of Tennessee—played. And this is no myth! To register, call (901) 757-7323 by 3 p.m. on Monday, October 5. Those registered will receive a Zoom link to join before the program begins.

Panelists include:

Tennessee Statesman Harry T. Burn written by Burn's great grandnephew, Tyler L. Boyd. Upon receiving a letter from his mother, legislator Harry Burn cast the deciding vote to ratify the 19th Amendment.

Activist, scholar and co-founder of the Tennessee Woman Suffrage Trail, Paula F. Casey will also join the panel and is responsible for the publication of *The Perfect 36: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage* by the late Carol Lynn Yellin.

Why Can't Mother Vote? Joseph Hanover and *the Unfinished Business of Democracy* by Bill Haltom. Joseph Hannover was a Polish immigrant who moved to Memphis, became a Tennessee legislator and played a pivotal role in passage of the 19th Amendment.

Greek Myths Family Art Class

Saturday, October 17, 11 a.m.

The GROVE at Germantown Performing Arts Center, 1801 Exeter Road

Need an escape? Ready for adventure? Gather your family and explore a world of goddesses, gods, monsters, nymphs and all things Greek mythology. In partnership with the City of Germantown's Big Read program, Angi Cooper (mixed media and master teaching artist) will lead an outdoor art class for the whole family inspired by *Circe*, by Madeline Miller. Supplies are provided. A portion of the completed art project will be developed into a larger piece for display at Germantown Community Library. Registration is free but space is limited. Register online at GPACweb.com beginning October 1. For more information, email Emily Hefley at emily@gpacweb.com. Masks and social distancing required.

The Odyssey, A One Act Play

Check GTComePlay.org for performance date and time Bobby Lanier Farm

Park, 2660 Cross Country Drive

Kids ages 8 and up are invited to participate in Germantown Community Theatre's one-act production of *The Odyssey* performed at Bobby Lanier Farm Park. Rehearsals will be held Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays after school beginning September 14. Participation fee is \$50 and is due at time of registration. Contact christina@gctcomeplay.org to register. Space is limited to 12 performers. Bring your lawn chair to the performance. Masks and social distancing required.

Houston High to Welcome Madeline Miller

As part of Germantown's Big Read festivities, Ms. Miller will hold virtual book discussions of *Circe* with Latin and Mythology students from Houston High School. Madeline Miller's first novel, *The Song of Achilles*, was awarded the 2012 Orange Prize for Fiction and was a *New York Times* bestseller. Her second novel, *Circe*, was an instant #1 *New York Times* bestseller. Before she was a novelist, Madeline Miller earned her BA and MA in Classics from Brown University, and she taught and tutored Latin, Greek and Shakespeare to high school students for more than fifteen years.



NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS
arts.gov/neabigread
NEA BIG READ
Managed by Arts Midwest

