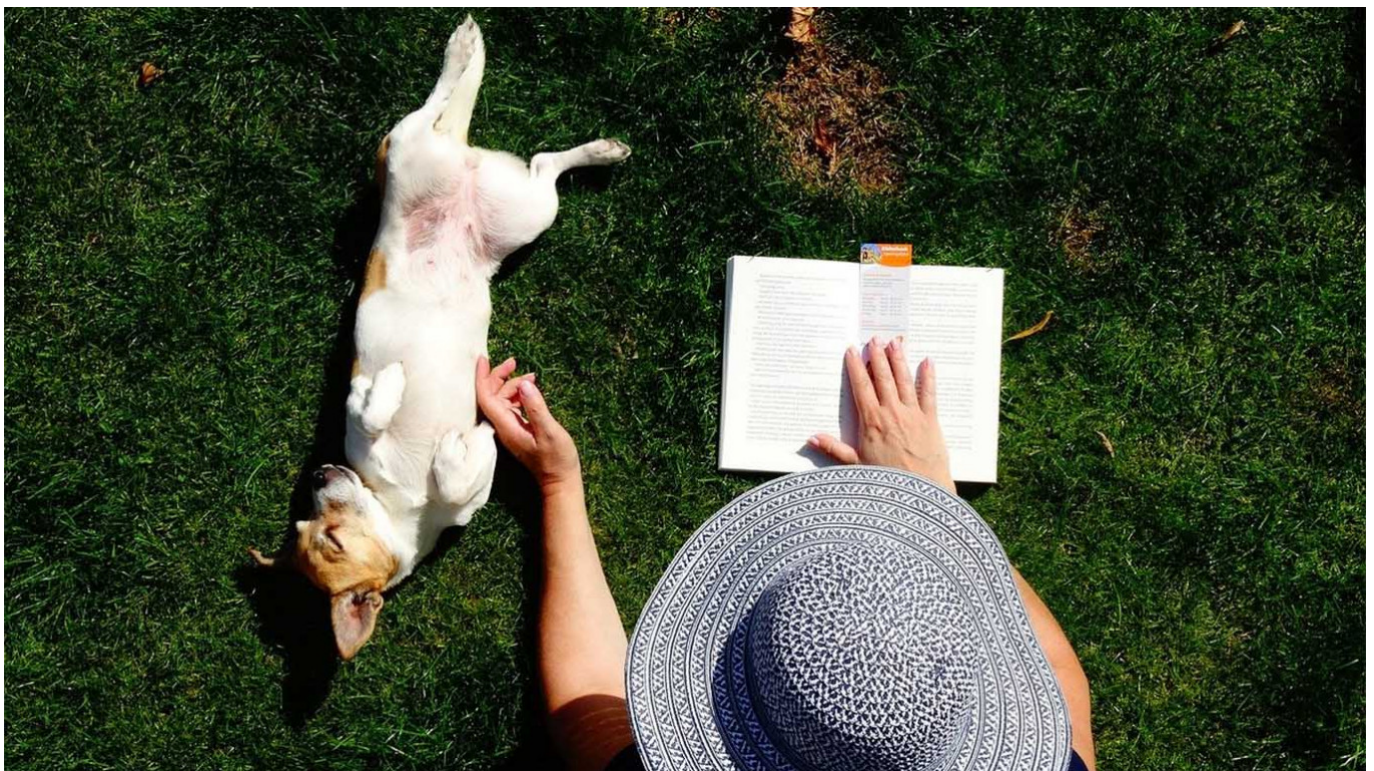


Change a Letter, Transform a Work of Russian Literature

A Twitter challenge lit up the Russian literature world

April 09, 2020



Pixabay

It all started with a tweet from the Department of Russian and Czech at the School of Modern Languages at the University of Bristol – or perhaps with a certain @fyodor76, who got a hat tip.

The challenge: improve a book by changing one letter of the title in Russian or English.

And a hundred bored Russian literature fanatics had a ball.

Embed:

Improve a Russian book by changing one letter of the title

Rules: You may play with English translated titles or Russian original titles.

- THE CHEERY ORCHARD by Anton Chekhov

A vaudeville performance about the joys of living in rural Russia in the early 1900s.

h/t [@fyodor76](#)

— BristolRussian&Czech (@BristolRuCz) [April 7, 2020](#)

Plays and short stories by Anton Chekhov proved particularly fertile territory.

The witty folks at Bristol suggested "Uncle Banya," in which Sonya and her uncle solve their existential gloom by visiting a bath house.

@Vcernohosrky proposed "Tree Sisters," a play in which siblings from a small town escape their calustrophobic house and start illegal logging and selling wood to China.

@CathyMcAteer1 changed the Russian title of "The Seagull" - "Chaika" - into "Laika," the name of the first dog who went into space. She writes: The play "Laika" is "Chekhov's most celebrated play. Provincial life and relationships are jolted by the symbolism of an innocent Jack Russell's fall from space.

Writer Olga Zilberbourg (@bowlga) remakes another play: "The Three Mistfers." A play about three gay men from Novosibirsk, who dream to emigrate to New York...

Embed:

The "Master Any Margarita" bartender's guide

— Carly Vo (@carlyvo) [April 8, 2020](#)

Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky were popular, too.

@georgebaz (Bazhenov) proposed: "Bar and Peace" by Leo Tolstoy, an epic tale of a disbarred lawyer who finds peace in country living. Its sequel "Война и пир" by the same author tells a tale of a restaurateur drafted to fight in 1812; he ends up cooking a feast (пир) for both armies.

@Rachel_Denber is relevant: "Anna Quarantina." Social distancing puts the kabbosh on Vronsky's and Anna Arkadyevna's fling. Old man Karenin gets to shop before 9 a.m. at the best St. Petersburg stores.

@DavidHenningham lightens up Dostoyevsky with "Totes From The Underground" - A comprehensive catalogue of tote bag distributed by the world's metro systems.

@RickAMoss went with "Prime and Punishment" by F. Dostoyevsky, a novel in which an

impoverished student discovers Amazon's range of BDSM products available with free, 2-day shipping.

@InstEconomist suggested "Crimea and Punishment" - failed post Soviet experiment realizes its illegal annexation was a big mistake. Hilarity ensues.

Embed:

Dead Soups, by Nikolai Gogol

An epic tale of failed culinary attempts while under quarantine.

— Russian Arts Theater (@theaterchekhov) [April 8, 2020](#)

But @MarkGaleotti got serious. Sort of.

Embed:

'Hat is to be Done,' Chernychevsky's didactic tale of Vera Pavlovna's utopian milliners collective, when she realises she hasn't completed all her orders. Lenin's favourite + the reason for his favouring caps (1 of many tips in his fashion guide, 'What Is To Be Donned')

— Mark Galeotti (@MarkGaleotti) [April 8, 2020](#)

Join in! There are about a thousand books waiting for a quarantine remake...

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