

Librarian's Shelf by Rachelle McPhillips

Travel the World with Library Resources

One of the things I love about reading is how it can transport me to another place and time. A good story can whisk me away to places I will likely never visit. This vicarious travel connects me to other landscapes, people and cultures. A great story will leave me wanting to know more about these faraway places.

Fortunately, technology makes the world a little smaller, bringing those faraway places to my desktop and the palm of my hand. Columbus Public Library has several resources that aid in my search for more information about other countries and cultures.

This month, the CPL book discussion group read and discussed the young adult novel, "Between Shades of Gray" by Ruta Sepetys. In this story, a fifteen-year-old Lina is ousted from her home in Lithuania during the Soviet occupation. Sepetys draws from the personal stories of Lithuanian refugees to recount the horrors they endured during the Soviet occupation. Lina's group is fortunate in that one of their members can understand and speak Russian to the guards that are transporting them away from their home. More than one character learns Russian over the course of the story and the acquisition of a new language is a survival skill. I am thankful I will probably never need to learn a new language in a hurry in order to survive, but if I am curious how to pronounce some of the Russian Sepetys includes in her novel, Mango Languages is an excellent resource that is available to CPL cardholders from anywhere there is an internet connection. Sign in and learn how to say "hello" and "good day." Or, check out Mango Languages lessons on Russian slang. This resource includes cultural references, is rich with audio and visual cues, and allows users to create accounts to track progress through language lessons.

"Between Shades of Gray" inspired curiosity about Lithuania and CPL has a resource for that, too. AtoZ the World has in-depth information on countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Library cardholders can learn all about Lithuania's climate, landscapes, and some brief national history. AtoZ the World includes information about education, money, popular culture, famous people, and much, much more. On the "Points of Interest" page for Lithuania, there are many national landmarks listed and in several cases, external links to official websites are included for places like the Lithuanian Art Museum – a place that would have been of particular interest to young Lina in Sepetys's story.

This young adult novel is available in e-book and audiobook format on the library's Overdrive service. The Overdrive collection includes more than 28,000 audiobooks and e-books that cardholders can download and enjoy for one to three weeks. Using Overdrive, travel from Lina's Lithuania to Iran in "If You Could Be Mine" by Sara Farizan, or Germany in Marcus Zusak's "The Book Thief" and connect with those places through fiction and fact using CPL's digital library.

Find Mango Languages, AtoZ the World, Overdrive, and more at

<http://columbusne.us/digitallibrary>. For help with any of our digital resources visit the library on the second Tuesday each month from 6-8p.m. or call 402-564-7116, option 2.