

THE CHECKOUT

SPRING 2025

ISSUE #12

A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY
PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS



A PUBLICATION
OF THE
KENMORE
BRANCH
LIBRARY

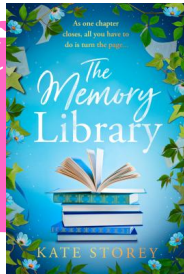
A LIBRARY OF MEMORIES

BY KAREN B.

The Memory Library

by Kate Storey

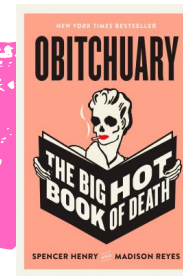
This pleasant read is sweet, bookish, escapist fiction at its finest. Written almost as an ode to book lovers, it tells the story of a mother and daughter's estrangement that is now heading towards reconciliation due to the presence of books. The mother, Sally, is a retired schoolteacher who has lived her life as a book lover to the fullest. Her daughter Ella, in contrast, left her early love of books behind over 20 years ago when evidence of her parents' unhappy marriage exploded.



A present-day health crisis brings Ella back to her childhood home along with new adult understandings of circumstances unknown to her before. All the while, a memory library kept growing. It consisted of books bought by Sally and inscribed with messages every year for Ella on her birthday. Sprinkled with quotations from famous works of literature, this novel is also filled with all manner of book-loving characters: a drag poet librarian, a lively second-hand bookseller, and a stalwart English professor friend of Sally's who re-emerges in her life. A gentle balm, this novel inspires hope that books can play an important role in lives well-lived.

DEATH, BUT FUN

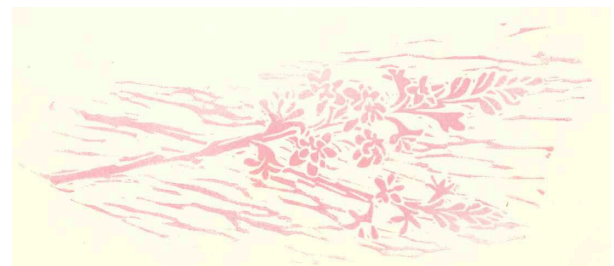
BY NICOLE B.



Obitchuary: The Big Hot Book of Death

by Spencer Henry & Madison Reyes

The cover of **Obitchuary** is what initially caught my eye (hats off to Patrice Sheridan on the book design!), and then the title absolutely sold it. And despite what you've been told, judging a book by its cover isn't a bad way to go. This book was a fun, quick read on all aspects of death- from what types of funerals you can have (did you know there are such a thing as funeral strippers?) and famous last words. I was fascinated by stories like that of La Pascualita in Mexico, an eerily realistic mannequin on display thought to be the mummified daughter of a past shop owner. Or the fact that some cultures rob the graves of young women so they can be "ghost brides" to unmarried men who have died. Yikes- desperate much? This book isn't for the faint of heart and definitely not for those who are sensitive to pretty explicit death-related topics, but for anyone curious about the great beyond who has a strong stomach and an even stronger sense of humor, this book is for you. Keep your phone nearby as you read it because you'll definitely be Googling some of the things the authors bring up- you can read the words, but seeing is believing! Bonus: the authors have a podcast by the same name so you can continue your ghastly journey even after you finish the book.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

LIBRARY TIP #1

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN RETURN OVERDUE LIBRARY MATERIAL WITHOUT GETTING A FEE?

THE BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY HAS BEEN FINE-FREE SINCE 2022, SO DON'T BE AFRAID TO RETURN THOSE LONG OVERDUE ITEMS!

FINE FREE!

Charges for lost or damaged materials will apply

HAUNTED HOUSE RULES

BY JULIE ANN D.



The September House (2023) by Carissa Orlando offers a hauntingly unique take on the haunted house genre. What if you loved your home so deeply that you were willing to live with the horrors lurking within? This is the choice Margaret and Hal make, but every September, the evil forces grow more intense. After four years of escalating threats from the spirits, Hal can no longer endure and decides to leave. Yet Margaret, shaped by Hal’s abuse and a dark past of pleasing her husband, has learned to adapt. She finds a way to coexist with the ghosts, respecting their strange quirks and avoiding their wrath, living by one simple rule: “You don’t give up on the things you love.” When Hal goes missing, their estranged daughter Katherine returns to search for him. Unbeknownst to her, she has no idea of the supernatural forces at play or how her mother has learned to navigate daily life amidst the ghosts. The tension builds as Katherine uncovers the terrifying truth of what Margaret has truly been living with. The ghosts are charming in their own way and the the main character is funny. Everything comes to a “head” (there’s a pun in there), and Margaret even ends up with a strong mother-daughter relationship. Orlando’s debut is perfect if you like psychological horror. It makes sense since she is a clinical community psychologist. Looking for more ghost stories in the same “vein?” Try **Mary: An Awakening of Terror** (2022) by Nat Cassidy.

LIBRARY TIP #2

INTERESTED IN A LITTLE GHOST HUNTING?

THE KENMORE BRANCH HAS A GHOST-HUNTING KIT YOU CAN BORROW! REQUEST IT TODAY USING THE QR CODE!

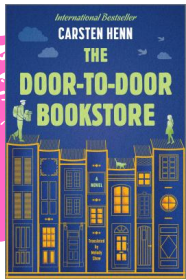


MODERN GERMAN FAIRY TALE

BY KAREN B.

The Door-to-Door Bookstore
by Carsten Henn

Quirky and whimsical, this modern-day story has the feel of a fairy tale about it. Perhaps it is the setting (an unnamed town in southern Germany) or the characters (a steadfast bookseller, a nine-year-old girl who can outwit adults, readers with nicknames from famous novels), or perhaps it is the plot (staying true to a course despite setbacks, obstacles, and other difficulties does bring about a happy ending). Or perhaps it is simply the way it is written with its matter-of-fact tone of wryness (too innocent to sound like either dry irony or heavy sarcasm) that makes everyday life seem humorous in its retelling.



Carl Kollhoff is a 72-year-old bookseller about to lose his job delivering books in person to customers. His customers are his friends in what he sees as a village of readers. They are all devoted readers in their unique ways, and are in turn devoted to Carl for his suggestions about what books they may enjoy. He fulfills their wishes as they request, but his routine is upended one day by Schascha, an inquisitive and charming girl who sees things he doesn’t in his readers’ requests. She sets in motion a series of lively events that improve all of their lives. By the book’s end, Carl’s world expands while still staying true to his efforts to spread enlightenment and joy through the magic of reading. One small man doing one small job can truly make a difference in the world. Highly recommended for anyone who believes in the power of books.

EVOCATIVE ILLUSTRATED MEMOIR

BY CHLOE H.

Brittle Joints

by Maria Sweeney



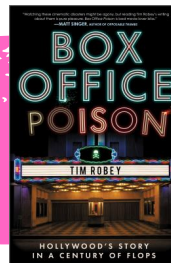
This graphic novel is a memoir about the author, who lives with Bruck syndrome. A rare and progressive condition, it gives her brittle bones and joint abnormalities that can make it difficult to do anything at times. Weaving in and out of the present day, through her college years and her adolescence, she illustrates what it is truly like to live with a chronic health condition. From meeting her partner, endless doctor visits, and just trying to count how many stairs she has until she can sit again, she captures how we can feel both grief and joy simultaneously while something serious is going on in our lives. This was also an eye-opening look at accessibility and how little of it there is even in our major cities, along with our complex healthcare system.



ARTWORK BY MIKE K.

STINKERS

BY SUE K.



I highly recommend Tim Robey's new book **Box Office Poison**, a highly entertaining romp through some of the worst (and most costly) movies of the last hundred years. Robey has been reviewing movies for various outlets for many years and his love for the medium shines through, even when covering the worst ideas ever floated in Hollywood. Most of the stinkers were sunk by a combination of hubris, bad timing, directorial subterfuge, and just plain poor judgement. The list of actors and directors going down on these sinking ships reads like Hollywood royalty- the Coen brothers, Halle Berry, Colin Farrell, Geena Davis, Chevy Chase, Katherine Hepburn, and Gloria Swanson. The inside look at the big studios is fascinating. Robey sets the losers next to the huge and unexpected successes which often came out right before or during their filming- think **Titanic**, **Star Wars**, and the Marvel Comics vehicles. Often the directors and actors in the stinkers suffered professional death or at least temporary banishment from the industry. The many poor decisions regarding location, underreported finances, and love triangles just add to the mix. Often the movies were just ahead of their time according to the hearts and minds of the movie-viewing public, like a cross-dressing Katherine Hepburn in **Sylvia Scarlett** or the bisexual Alexander the Great portrayed in **Alexander**, despite being directed by Oliver Stone in 2004. All in all, a great inside look at American filmmaking and unmaking!

THE BUZZ IN HORROR NOVELS

BY JULIE ANN D.

As a lover of all things horror, Nick Cutter does not disappoint. His newest book **The Queen** (2024) is a splatterpunk bug-fest filled with grotesque creepy-crawly imagery and haunting metaphors that will make him your new favorite horror author! (Not to mention, he hails from Toronto, so you may recognize some familiar locations.)

The Queen is a coming-of-age story with the challenge of modern times. It's about a high school student named Margaret who is dealing with heavy depression because her beloved best friend Charity went missing. One day Margaret gets mailed a phone with messages from her missing friend, leading her on a scavenger hunt that will unlock her disappearance. The pending doom builds like a nest.

Meanwhile, there's an unregulated billionaire using his clout to make one of his real-life fetishes come true- a wasp woman. He's playing God with genetic manipulation because of unresolved trauma, resulting in sheer lunacy.



This book explores the bodily changes that come with growing up, teen angst, and the unstable feral emotions of being a teenager, but also the class divide. Just like wasps, there's a leader/queen and workers. If you love a good creature feature, check out Cutter's other book **The Troop**, or any books from CJ Leede. If you don't like gore, but still want to check out this author, try **The Saturday Night Ghost Club**. It's a young adult book that he wrote under the name Craig Davidson. You'll be surprised to see Clifton Hill mentioned!

A COMPLEX HISTORY

BY SUE K.



The Stolen Lady by Laura Morelli is an eye-opening book, looking deeply into Leonardo da Vinci's painting Mona Lisa. This work of historical fiction reaches across two time periods and brings them both to life- first in the 1500s by discussing the actual Lisa as well as Leonardo's life, politics, and work ethic, then during the 1940s Nazi invasion of France and the protection of the paintings in the Louvre (including the Mona Lisa). The chapters alternate between the two eras with vivid details and colorful descriptions of both the characters involved in the works of Leonardo and the staff at the Louvre, many of whom were real everyday heroes. I never knew how troubled Leonardo was, hating the fact that paintings were the source of income for an opulent lifestyle, when what he preferred to do was create innovative inventions in water diversion, war machines, and pursue science in general. He developed a reputation as someone who left projects, abandoned painting contracts, and moved cities when politics got too complex or he failed in many of his scientific endeavors. Mona Lisa almost remained unfinished except that as his death approached and his hands became crippled, Leonardo seems to have become as obsessed with the painting as the public has always been by her enigmatic smile. The book gives a vivid portrait of Lisa herself, as well as her family and her life's tragedies. The alternating chapters also trace the character of Anne, a lowly archivist who helps keep the treasures of the Louvre out of Nazi hands in the 1940s. This book is a great read, demanding the reader's attention as it toggles back and forth amongst time periods and politics.

NEVER TAKE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AT FACE VALUE

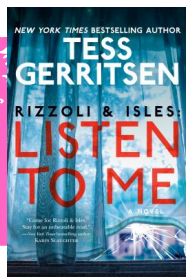
BY MARY ANNE B.

Listen to Me

by Tess Gerritsen

I knew when I started reading this book that the TV show Rizzoli & Isles was based on these characters. What I didn't know was how much different the book characters are from the TV characters!! It was probably not my brightest decision to read the last book of the series first. If I had read the books in order things might have made more sense to me.

However, I found the story to be an enjoyable read, even though in my mind I kept seeing the TV characters playing the book characters. It is your basic murderous whodunit, with the activities of the neighborhood thrown in and a kidnapping to boot! It was two mysteries for the price of one.



When a nurse starts asking questions about a patient, it was the wrong thing to do. A killing leads to asking more and more questions, with no answers until the very end. Add to that Angela (Jane Rizzoli's mom) butting into all the neighborhood activities, clearly something she should not have done, even after being told not to. It does help to show that our neighbors have a lot of secrets that we would never know unless we snooped, which in turn can help solve a murder. Just so you know, all the loose ends were tied up at the end of the book. And I have now decided to go and read book one, so I can see how this whole thing started. I guess there is a reason why people say you should always start at the beginning!

HOMETOWN...HERO?

BY ADAM P.



Wrestling With The Devil

by Lex Luger, John D. Hollis

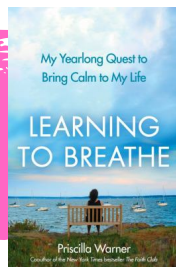
Professional wrestling has always been a main attraction for sports entertainment. It's even more interesting when someone who makes the big leagues is from your hometown. Lawrence Pfohl, better known as Lex Luger, is a professional football player and bodybuilder turned wrestler who was born in Buffalo and raised in Orchard Park. We learn about the life young Lawrence lived growing up in Western New York and his dreams of playing football. He eventually achieved that with a scholarship to Penn State and the opportunity to fulfill that dream in hopes of making it to the NFL. But life will change in an instant for anyone. Football may not have worked out, but learning a new skill like wrestling changed his life forever. "The Total Package" was born and his journey through multiple wrestling promotions to get to the top began. But of course, good times also come with bad times. And decisions. Drugs, alcohol, divorce...Luger was in a downward spiral. Would that end his wrestling career?



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

PROBLEMS WITH PANIC ATTACKS

BY KEN W.



Learning to Breathe: My Year-Long Quest to Bring Calm to My Life by Priscilla Warner is a type of biography/self help book. We are introduced to the author who states that she has suffered from panic attacks for most of her adult life. She is under tremendous stress and unhappy to be so dependent on the medications that make life bearable. She is at the point where she is unable to keep going forward unless something in her life changes. Warner's history of these attacks and the probable root of them is explored. She has self-medicated with vodka and been given prescription drugs by various physicians and therapists. When she decides that things need to be different, she is determined to find a way to make her life more livable. The first step taken is to become deeply involved with the practice of meditation. She goes to meeting after meeting, attending many meditation retreats and meeting various monks and gurus. Warner is introduced to Buddhist mentors that impart insights that help her reframe her perception of how best to engage in new practices. She faithfully adheres to her meditative process and begins to achieve some results. In addition, she tries spiritual chanting and meditative painting. Warner explores Jewish ritual baths and meets mystical rabbis who expose her to thoughts about becoming more centered and confident. These practices are used to help complement the insights she gains from therapy, and she begins to heal from psychological trauma experienced in her early years. It is an astounding amount of work and her perseverance is tenacious. Ultimately a great deal of progress is achieved and it appears that she has made amazing inroads to accomplishing her goal of a life without panic attacks. Her interpersonal relationships improve and the dependency on medication is resolved.

MEN VS. NATURE

BY JILL J.

Every Living Thing: The Great and Deadly Race to Know All Life

by Jason Roberts

The 18th century marked a period of exponential growth in scientific knowledge, and this book focuses on the highly hubristic quest by two men to identify and describe every organism on Earth. Author Jason Roberts explores the methods and beliefs of these two scientists and how they often found themselves at odds, both personally and professionally.

Carl Linnaeus was a Swedish-born doctor who struggled for acclaim, not to mention money, early on in his career. With a focus on botany, he eventually gained recognition for what we now call Linnaean taxonomy: a hierarchical system that names and classifies organisms in a strictly structured manner (think back to biology class and learning about genus and species). When he expanded his views to the human species, Linnaeus's beliefs led him and his myriad supporters to stereotypical and racist conclusions, the effects of which reverberate to this day.

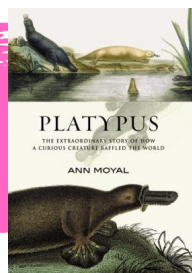


Georges-Louis de Buffon, in contrast to Linnaeus, was a member of pre-revolutionary French aristocracy and the lauded director of the Royal Botanical Gardens and Menagerie in Paris. Buffon acknowledged that life is complex and varied, and cannot always be placed in the tidy neat box of classification proposed by Linnaeus. His ideas were the precursor to genetics and the theory of evolution, and he was a staunch advocate for equality, eschewing the prejudicial beliefs and actions of Linnaeus.

From a modern lens, Buffon should have become the more popular and beloved of the two scientists, and Linnaeus a footnote of history. But once the French Revolution began, their fates were reversed. Few today know much about Buffon and his groundbreaking ideas, and Linnaeus's classification is still used in the scientific community.

THE LEAGUE OF BAFFLED, EUROPEAN WHITE GUYS

BY STEPHEN C.



Platypus: The Extraordinary Story of How a Curious Creature Baffled the World

by Ann Moyal

In 1798 Captain John Hunter, the Second Governor of New South Wales, sent back to Great Britain a pelt and the first sketches of the animal that would come to be known as the platypus. Having seen nothing like it, European naturalists, putting themselves greatly at risk of dislocating their racism muscle, initially assumed it was the work of “Asian hoaxers.” As the evidence of this thing being for real piled up, the world of science was forced to figure out what exactly was going on with this weirdo of the natural world.

Here begins about a century of European guys getting really mad at each other about eggs. It’s fascinating to see the lengths men of science went to in the 1700 and 1800s to avoid just asking, or in some cases, believing the indigenous people. Instead, thousands of platypus were shot, preserved in alcohol, and sent back to Europe for dissection. It took a disturbingly long time for a generation of naturalists to come along and decide to observe the platypus in its natural habitat, while alive and not pickled.

Among the things they “learned” a hundred years after aboriginals had initially told them, was the answer to the great egg debate. Yes, we have an egg-laying mammal on our hands, which is weird- but it gets weirder! They also have spurs on their webbed feet that release enough venom to kill a dog! They have a thing called electrolocation, which means they can detect the electromagnetic field given off by other animals! It was also recently discovered that a platypus will glow bluish-green when put under a black light! Why? Who knows?

Platypus: The Extraordinary Story of How a Curious Creature Baffled the World by Ann Moyal is a fascinating look at how far our understanding of the world we live in has come, and how far we still have to go.

DOUBLE CROSS TIMES TWO

BY SUE K.

Mai Corland’s two-book fantasy (with hopefully more to come) is a “dark adventure fantasy full of sharpened blades” as she writes in her introduction. Warning: that’s not even the half of it. Inspired by Corland’s love of Korean mythology, **Four Ruined Realms** contains so much double-crossing and secret agendas at times that it demands a high investment of attention to characters and detail. The main quintet of characters all have vendettas to carry out, revenge to seek, and terrible hardships to overcome all while lying freely to each other in pursuit of their mission.



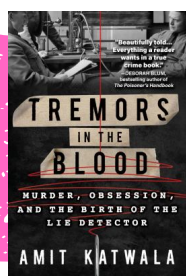
In spite of the lies, they come to trust(?) one another (sort of, and only at times), fall in love, and stab each other regularly. If this sounds like fun, this book series starting with **Five Broken Blades** and continuing with **Four Ruined Realms** is for you. In the first book, the five main characters are all tasked with a mission to steal the immortal crown from a corrupt king, but each character is not who they seem and one is definitely a double agent. Without spoiling the ending, of course there are complications. The second book finds one character in a deadly prison under a lake and the other four going onto a second task. The second book leaves you hanging off a cliff and ready for the third installment. So buckle up for a big bumpy ride into the **Four Ruined Realms**.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

YOU ARE NOT THE MURDERER... PROBABLY. BUT MAYBE, FOR SURE.

BY STEPHEN C.



Tremors in the Blood: Murder, Obsession and the Birth of the Lie Detector

by Amit Katwala

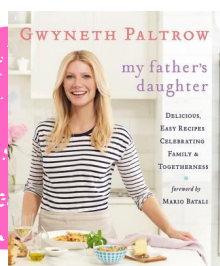
In **Tremors in the Blood: Murder, Obsession and the Birth of the Lie Detector**, author Amit Katwala does an excellent job summarizing the birth and ongoing, controversial life of the modern lie detector test. He does this through contemporary news reports, private letters, and partially by delving into two murder trials from the early 1900s. In one, a man is definitely (probably) responsible for the death of his wife, and in the other, a man is maybe (but by no means definitely) guilty of murdering an acquaintance. Can this newfangled test suss out the truth in either, or really any, case? The answer is probably not.

As we follow the careers of the three men most responsible for bringing the lie detector to life (and into courtrooms) we slowly begin to realize that the results of the test might say more about the tester than they do about the tested. Along the way, lives, careers, and friendships are all sacrificed on the chance that science may be able to tell us once and for all who the liars are among us.

Also included are historical methods by which lies have been “detected,” which are fascinating and hilarious. My favorite involved the suspected liar being forced to fill their mouth with dry rice. If, after spitting it out, the rice was still dry due to a parched mouth caused by a guilty conscience, the offender was convicted. I propose that the inevitable Maury Povich Show reboot go with this method when determining disputed paternity going forward.

COOKING WITH GOOP

BY CHLOE H.



My Father's Daughter: Delicious, Easy Recipes Celebrating Family and Togetherness

by Gwyneth Paltrow

If you know of Gwyneth and her ventures with her health empire Goop, you may think this book is full of pseudoscience and health nut recipes, but this cookbook is surprisingly accessible! There are multiple options for kids, vegans, and gluten-free folks, as well as ways to elevate staples. Written from the perspective of reconnecting with her food-loving father who has since passed away, what she learned while trying to help him eat better in light of his cancer diagnosis, and introducing foods to her children, she has a well thought out approach to eating seasonally and not compromising on favorite things by making healthier versions of them.

Three recipes I can vouch for are her fried zucchini spaghetti with rich parmesan sauce, Bruce Paltrow's famous buttermilk pancakes, and the fried rice with kale and scallions!

CURE YOUR LUNCH BLAHS

BY CHLOE H.



Modern Lunch: +100 Recipes for Assembling the New Midday Meal

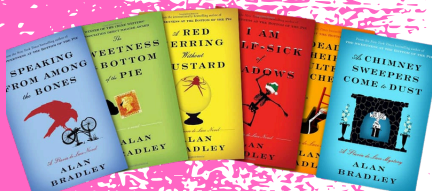
by Allison Day

Lunch is always the hardest meal for me- it's either leftovers that don't taste as good the next day, rushing out to grab something to eat quickly on my work break, or just simply feeling uninspired to do anything at all for that midday meal. This cookbook has some great tips on how to beat the lunch blahs, from a list of what should always be in your pantry, ways to mix and match to create various salads (love the mason jar idea presented here!), and how to use readily-available ingredients to make lunch yummy and easy. I love that the author includes two perspectives here- she works remotely and has a hard time getting up to make something in between her work, while her husband has an in-office job that prevents him from going out to get something at times on his break. She gives good tips on how to make both types of people happy- perfect for hybrid workers or anyone juggling a busy schedule. The key in the cookbook is easy to follow, with icons for vegan, gluten free, and prep time. Some recipes are more accessible than others for beginners, but overall this is a great place to start if you have no clue like me or if you are searching for ways to spice things up.

Recipes I can vouch for are the sweet potato noodle salad, butternut squash kale salad, and the cashew, coconut, and banana bars!

SERIES SPOTLIGHT: FLAVIA DE LUCE SERIES BY ALAN BRADLEY

BY KEN W.



A couple months ago I needed an English cozy mystery to break up a string of novels and biographies I had been reading. I find cozy mysteries act as a buffer when I get somewhat overwhelmed by these other types of books, as they usually require less diligent attention when reading.

A librarian directed me to this series and I decided I would try one. They take place around 1950 in an English country village on an estate of house poor aristocrats. For me the biggest departure from other British cozy books was the main character- an 11-year-old girl who lost her mom in infancy. When this was presented, I initially found it unappealing and reading the first 30 or 40 pages, it seemed that it was doomed to become an unfinished book. Strangely though, it seems the more pages I read, the less likely I was disposed to stop reading.

Eventually the book was so engrossing I never put it down- the character Flavia de Luce had grown on me.

Additionally, the fact that the 11-year-old had her own chemistry lab and had read all the current scientific literature and conducted chemical experiments was initially off-putting. (A deceased uncle had set up the laboratory in a wing of the estate and it was fully stocked with test tubes, beakers, and numerous scientific books that went unused until it provided her with an outlet for the lack of similarly-aged children to associate with.) Eventually, this also settled into my brain and seemed to work.

Flavia then goes on to conduct detective investigations with the help of unwitting adults, and even becomes on good terms with the local police detective and the minister of her church. So far every book in the series has required me to stick to it- each time I started I thought I would leave it unfinished. Having said that, there has not been one that I left unread- they need to be given a chance and will eventually become engrossing. This author has some knack in writing that makes the unlikely seem realistic.

If you want to give the series a try, start with **The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie**. I read them out of order but there are related events that make more sense if read in order.

WHAT IS ALL THIS TALK ABOUT MANGA?

BY CHRISTINA H.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines manga as “Japanese comic books and graphic novels collectively considered a genre.” Manga is an umbrella term used for a huge variety of comic books produced and published in Japan. It may look like anime (think Sailor Moon), but manga is print, whereas anime is animation. Manga is divided into five main subgenres based on intended audience:

- **Shonen:** Manga targeted at tween and teen boys. Themes are action, adventure, friendships, & coming-of-age.
- **Shojo:** Manga targeted at tween and teen girls. Themes are often romance, drama, and coming-of-age.
- **Seinen:** Manga targeted at adult men (18+).
- **Josei:** Manga targeted at adult women (18+).
- **Kodomo:** Manga targeted at young children. Themes are moralistic, cute, and fun. Think Pokémon.

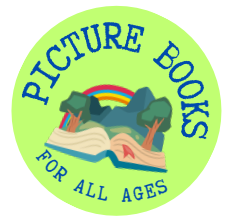
Okay, great. Phew. But what is all the buzz about? Manga offers a huge variety of topics and themes, pretty much ensuring that there is something for everyone! Also, phone apps make it super convenient and accessible to reach young adults. Some manga includes fantasy violence and can be deemed edgy, but any type of graphic novel/comic is accessible to every type of reader. There are many other reasons for the consistent popularity of manga, however, and I encourage you to see what you think for yourself. It's safe to say that graphic novels, and manga in particular, are worth some of the hype everyone is buzzing about!

There are so many amazing books in this genre available at the BECPL!! I recommend **Spy x Family** by Tatsuya Endo.



LOOKING FOR A LIGHT IN THE STORM

BY MELISSA F.



A Voice in the Storm

by Karl James Mountford

Get ready to cry, but in a satisfying way. Anyone who has dealt with (or is currently dealing with) anxiety, depression, or other mental health battles may find this book both validating and hopeful.

Rat is going through some difficult emotions, and the roiling dark clouds in the sky above appear to echo her sense of hopelessness. Rat doesn't want to bother anyone with her feelings, and the turmoil continues to build inside of her until suddenly Rat cannot help but flee, running desperately through the woods and unable to stop as she scrambles over rocks and tree trunks. She ventures ever deeper into the storm while trying to outpace the darkness surrounding her. The lightning and thunder grow fierce and frightening when an exhausted Rat finally pauses, unable to go another step. It is then that a large and lumbering friend appears through the mist and gloom.

This is a beautifully-illustrated depiction of the sense of isolation that can accompany mental health struggles, and how sometimes talking to a friend can provide a light in the storm.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

SPOTLIGHT ON: DAVID LYNCH

BY CHLOE H.

We lost a once-in-a-lifetime artist in January when David Lynch passed away. Known for his “Lynchian” dark and otherworldly style anchored in Americana, along with using his beloved actors like Laura Dern and Kyle McLachlan in multiple pieces of his work, he has made a lasting impact on our culture. You may have heard of his work on television with **Twin Peaks**, his adaptation of **Dune**, and his first film **Eraserhead** (with that strange alien baby), but if you want to seek something different from him or want to learn more about his artistic process check these out:

The Elephant Man (1980)



Loosely based on the life of Joseph Merrick, a man with significant physical deformities who lived in London in the late 19th century, the film chronicles his life, beginning in a Victorian freak show in the East End where he is kept against his will and thought to be intellectually disabled even though he is not. Doctor Frederick Treves (Anthony Hopkins) finds him there, begs the show to release him to take him to the hospital, and he is taken out, becoming part of the doctor's family. As he ventures out into high society to see theater shows and makes friends, questions of morality and the other issues come up through John Hurt's masterful portrayal of Merrick. I don't know anyone that has not been moved by this film and this is my personal favorite film of Lynch's- a must-watch!



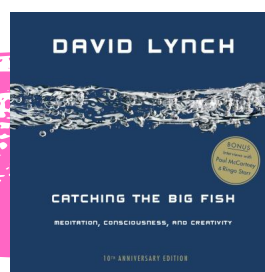
Image credit: <https://factoryinternational.org/whats-on/david-lynch-at-home/>

David Lynch: The Art Life (2016)



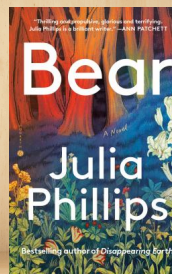
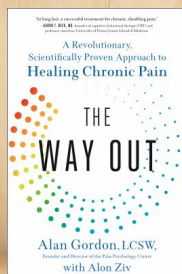
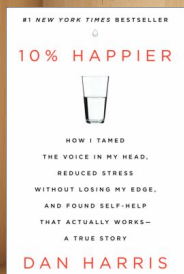
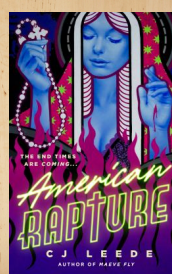
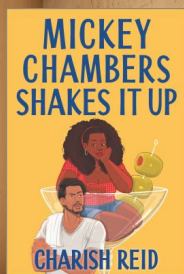
This documentary records over 20 conversations with Lynch at his home, where he offers insight into his upbringing in rural America, his move to Philadelphia to pursue his painting career, and eventually the beginning of his first film **Eraserhead**. In between the many cigarettes he smokes, this is a look into his ideas and thoughts on art, life, and philosophy.

Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity



Lynch practiced transcendental meditation, meditating for a minimum of 20 minutes each day. In this book, he talks about the benefits of it from a filmmaking, philosophical, and spiritual perspective. He uses the metaphor of diving and catching ideas in a big pond through meditation, and how that process can benefit others than yourself.

QUICK TAKES



Mickey Chambers Shakes It Up by Charish Reid

Struggling with bills and a bland teaching schedule, literature expert Mickey tries her hand at bartending. She's soon tangled up with the grumpy yet charming bar owner, Diego.

What Does It Feel Like by Sophie Kinsella

This semi-autobiographical novella about the author's recovery after the removal of a cancerous brain tumor is raw, sweet, and poignant, illustrating that those that you love and who love you back are what matters in the time we have on earth.

American Rapture by CJ Leede

Leede will drag you into an apocalyptic world of feverish feral lust inhabited by Sophie, who was raised by very conservative Catholic parents. She's on an adventure to find her disowned brother and along the way learns about life, friendship, and desire. But can they be saved?

10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works— a True Story by Dan Harris

Former ABC TV anchor Dan Harris writes a great memoir, humorously self-deprecating but enormously effective in getting the message across about how helpful meditation has been in improving his quality of life.

The Way Out: A Revolutionary Scientifically Proven Approach to Chronic Pain by Alan Gordon

A deep dive into what makes pain chronic, how our brains can perpetuate it, and the 50 million Americans struggling with it that are resisting all conventional treatment.

Bear by Julia Phillips

At their wit's end with dead-end jobs and caring for their ailing mother, two sisters encounter a bear on their property that sparks an obsession and has fatal consequences.

THIS BOOK GAVE ME CUTE AGGRESSION & NOW I WANT TO SQUISH ITS CHEEKS

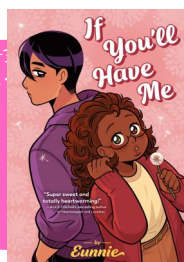
BY MELISSA F.

If You'll Have Me (graphic novel)
by Eunnie

Put on your fuzzy socks, get your favorite warm beverage, and curl up with this ridiculously adorable graphic novel about college, crushes, and meet-cutes.

Momo is a shy and kind-hearted people-pleaser who spent high school avoiding parties, getting straight As, and copying her class notes for friends (as well as some walking red flag classmates). Her first year of college starts out with the same old routine until Momo has a couple of random run-ins with PG, a tall and mysterious girl with a reputation as a bit of a player. Things slowly start to change for each of them as they tentatively build a new friendship. Despite Momo's overprotective friends and some moments of miscommunication that cause doubts on both sides, Momo and PG put in the effort to create their happily-ever-after.

All your favorite romance tropes abound in this colorful and vibrant graphic novel, featuring lovely artistic details and diverse characters. This is an awkward, funny, and sweet book that will likely be adored by fans of **Heartstopper** and **Mooncakes**.



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THE CHECKOUT: SPRING 2025

REEL REVIEW: A COMPLETE UNKNOWN

BY MARY M.



A Complete Unknown, directed by James Mangold, is a biographical drama that delves into Bob Dylan's formative years, from his arrival in New York City in 1961 with just a backpack and a guitar to his controversial electric performance at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival. Timothée Chalamet delivers a compelling portrayal of Dylan, capturing the enigmatic artist's life during this transformative period.

The film's musical sequences are a standout feature, with Chalamet performing several of Dylan's iconic songs, including "The Times They Are A-Changin'." His performances are remarkable for their authenticity and energy, and he effectively captures the spirit of the era. The movie also explores Dylan's sometimes volatile relationships with key figures in the folk music scene, such as Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Joan Baez. Dylan's artistic evolution, struggles with alcohol abuse, and controversies surrounding his shift to electric music are covered through the timeline of 1961-1965.

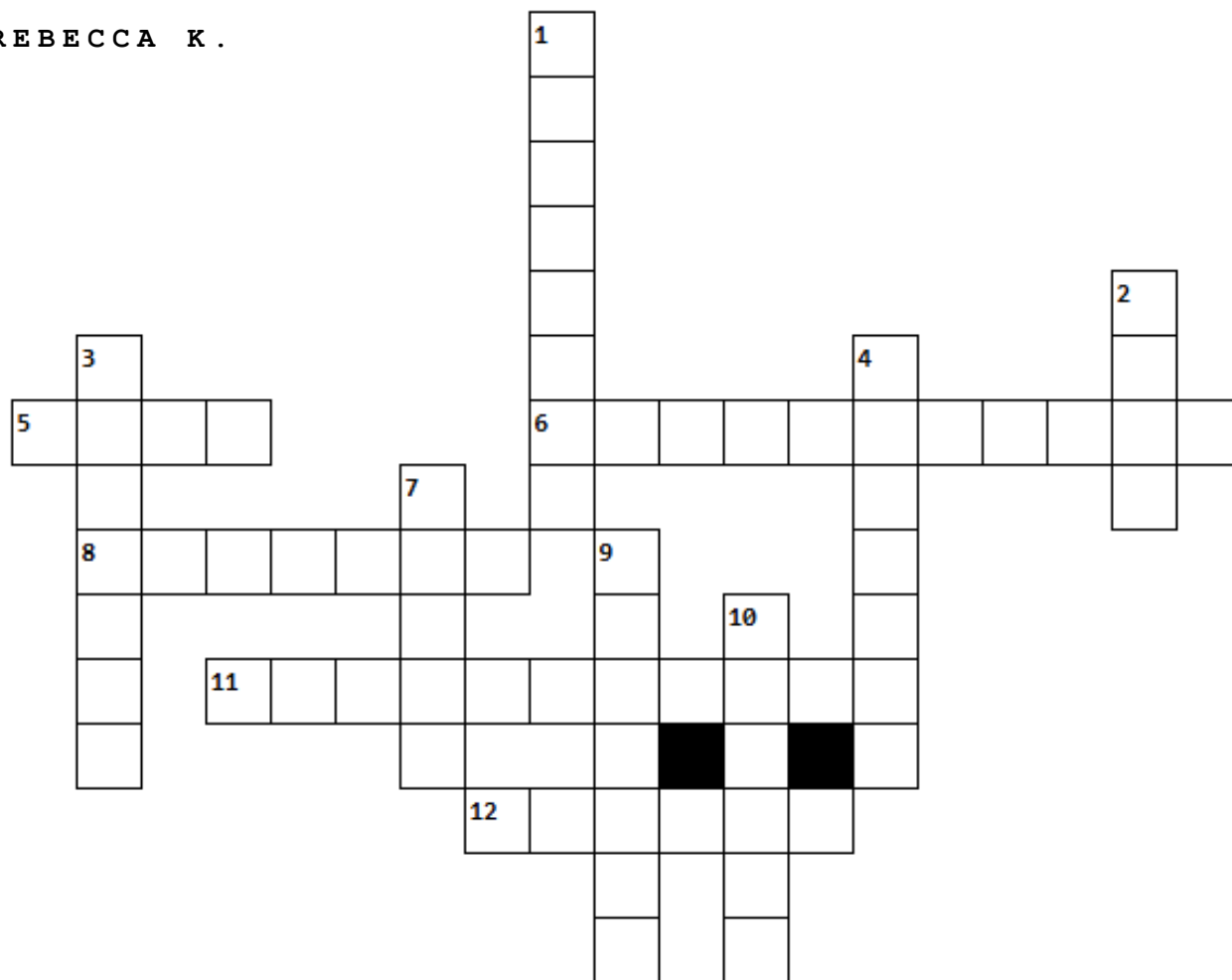
A Complete Unknown offers a compelling look into Bob Dylan's early career, bolstered by strong performances from Chalamet and Monica Barbaro (as Joan Baez). While it may not provide groundbreaking insights into Dylan's life, it successfully captures the essence of a pivotal time in music history. Whether you know a little or a lot about Bob Dylan, this movie will enthrall you and take you back in time to the 1960s.

ISSUE #12



HERE COMES SPRING, IT'S BEEN A LONG WINTER

BY REBECCA K.



ACROSS

- 5. Hindu festival of colors
- 6. The Ocean State
- 8. This "shines" for those born in April
- 11. Dan Brown summer bestseller that became a movie
- 12. It's the Easter _____, Charlie Brown

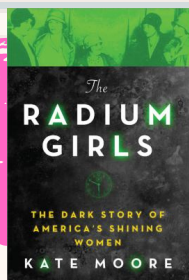
DOWN

- 1. Longest river in the US
- 2. Month of the Summer Solstice
- 3. Most popular BBQ meat
- 4. What children in Finland and Sweden dress up as for Easter
- 7. Birthplace of Mary Lennox, the heroine of Burnett's *The Secret Garden*
- 9. City which dyes its' river green every St. Patrick's Day
- 10. Main instigator of springtime allergies



GLOWING WATCH DIALS

BY KEN W.



We find out that eventually the company hired doctors to test the women and they found radium poisoning. They didn't want to acknowledge that they were sick and didn't want to have to lose money by stopping the production so they kept the information secret. Eventually the women got so sick they could not work, and tried to sue the company for their medical costs and inability to live a functioning life. However, the laws often failed to protect the health of the workers.

Because of a few women who persevered, as well as lawyers and public officials who kept working to change the laws, eventually the women were able to secure awards from the companies and laws did change. Many died before they could succeed, and some succeeded just before they died. Their perseverance eventually paved the way to improved standards that would make work environments safer.

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THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7PM AT
THE KENMORE LIBRARY

CROSSWORD (ANSWERS)

ACROSS

5. Holi, 6. Rhode Island, 8. Diamond, 11. Da Vinci Code, 12. Beagle

DOWN

1. Missouri, 2. June, 3. Hot dogs, 4. Witches, 7. India, 9. Chicago, 10. Pollen

THE CHECKOUT STAFF

Christina L., Chloe H., Jill J., Karen B., Ken W., Lisa S., , Nicole B., Rebecca K., Sue K., and Stuart R.

WANT TO SUBMIT A REVIEW?

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