

# THE CHECKOUT

SPRING 2026

ISSUE #16

A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS



A PUBLICATION  
OF THE  
KENMORE  
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# GRIEF IS JUST LOVE WITH NO PLACE TO GO

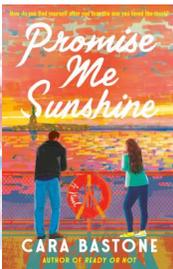
BY MELISSA F.

## Promise Me Sunshine

by Cara Bastone

Lenny hasn't been back to her apartment in nearly six months. She floats from one short-term nanny job to another, riding the ferry back and forth at night while pretending everything is fine even though she is actually a crumbling mess of unwashed hair, chip crumbs, and sadness. Sadness because her best friend Lou just died after a long battle with cancer, and now Lenny is left in a dark pit of grief clinging to a laminated list of "Things to Do to Live Again" that she can't bring herself to complete.

Enter Miles, the brother of Lenny's new client and owner of multiple grumpy expressions as well as a very comfortable hoodie collection.



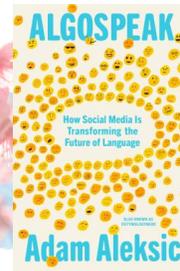
Lenny accepts his offer to be her partner in finishing all the tasks on Lou's list, and finds that Miles also understands how it feels to be left behind after losing someone you love. Miles and Lenny slowly begin to check off things on the "Live Again" list, accompanied by situations of mild chaos, new friends, and a wide range of snacks.

Humorous, heart-achy, and at times delightfully unhinged, this book offers an oddly fun journey through life after death.

**Content & Sensitivity:** This book's plot revolves around the recent deaths of loved ones and dealing with personal grief.

# WHAT LANGUAGE!

BY KARA K.



If you have watched a TikTok video and thought, "Kids these days speak a different language..." then this book is for you. In

**Algospeak: How Social Media is Transforming the Future of Language**, Adam Aleksic of Etymology Nerd explores how social media algorithms shape language and online culture, and how that bleeds into the "real world." The book connects today's coded internet slang to a rich history of bent and broken written and spoken language, inspired by the need to evade censorship or build in-group identities that represent shared experience and values. The book defines the almighty algorithm: the collective recommendation engines on which social media and marketing platforms run. Humans have always been consumers, but we have turned into the product as our attention is packaged, predicted, and sold. Algorithms capitalize on this by delivering not only what people clearly want to see, but what the engine calculates will keep them engaged, pushing language toward euphemisms, spellings, and symbols that perform well under system limits. The author discusses algorithmic technology's darker sides, ones that exploit the appeal of extreme and polarizing content. The alarming result that we all experience: destructive forms of racism, misogyny, and violence, shaped and accelerated by evolving language. Aleksic is a content creator and linguistics community influencer, well-positioned to explain how words and their meanings are shifting. To his credit, Aleksic has the self-awareness to admit to working with the algorithm to boost his subscriber count and views. Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase, "The medium is the message." Media and messages are now all a-jumble, with algorithms bringing a brand of order to the chaos. After reading this book, I wonder what McLuhan, who was active in the 1950s-70s, would have to say about language in this digital age.

# BEAUTY ALL AROUND US

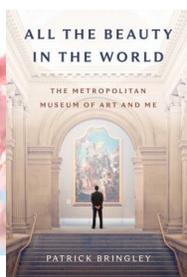
BY KAREN B.

## All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me

by Patrick Bringley

There is beauty in the world, as this charming book so eloquently attests. The author, a guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, made a life change when his brother died. He gave up a potential career at the prestigious New Yorker to become a museum guard because that is where he found beauty, serenity, and a needed stillness to his life that changed him for the better. This book is a reflection on his 10 years at the Met in this position, and what it taught him about learning from and about art.

At the Met, he absorbs art on his daily rounds in ways that allow him to make connections between his own life and the lives and times of people across many ages and cultures. These connections extend to the general public visiting the museum and to his fellow guards. He observes, notices, and muses every day. He surveys the art all around him and lets it wash over him, experiencing it without consciously trying to analyze at any deeper level.

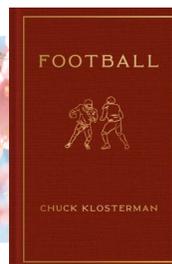


He notices the stories that art tells – seeing, for example, that the art in the American wing tells one American story while his colleagues, half of whom were born outside of the US, tell stories of a different America. He muses that jobs designated as unskilled can bring in people with many different skills. Who knew, for instance, that the Met guards produce their own monthly journal devoted to art, poetry, and prose?

This book is a sheer pleasure to read. I would recommend it for anyone looking to see the beauty that is all around us.

# LET'S GO SPORTS! OR BE AGGRESSIVE, B-E-A-G-G-R-E-S-S-I-V-E

BY STEPHEN C.



## Football

by Chuck Klosterman

I could lie to you and say that Chuck Klosterman's new book, **Football**, isn't really just about football. Sure, Klosterman goes to lengths to explain how the sport mirrors society (and also how the reverse is true) but if you have no interest in football it's a hard sell. The author is very aware of this fact and makes no apologies to his audience, which is admirable.

Klosterman has held a lifelong fascination with both the college and pro game which, coupled with his always unique perspective on any subject, makes for a fascinating read if you even have a passing curiosity about the game. At its core, Football is an immersive, entertaining history lesson, a sociological autopsy of the game, and a warning for what the future of the sport could hold. Early on, Klosterman lays out where he believes football is heading in 50 years and, just a couple of pages in, it seems ridiculous. Methodically though, a trail is laid out, and by the end of the book I found myself agreeing with his conclusion.

Along the way Klosterman takes us to Texas to try and understand the unique relationship the state has with both the high school game and "America's Team," the Dallas Cowboys; argues for his choice for the true greatest player of all time; examines the archetype of the football coach; and, most importantly examines the repercussions of the discovery of the causes of CTE and the outsized role the game plays in those diagnosed.

I highly recommend this book if you're even a little curious about football, or at the very least the effect it has on society, both positive and negative. Also, there are footnotes. I love footnotes.

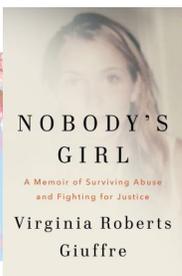
# A LIFE LIVED

BY REBECCA K.

Autobiographies are normally not my thing; I go in with the best of intentions, but often find myself bored with the subject halfway through, leading me to skim until the end. So I wasn't going into reading **Nobody's Girl** by Virginia Giuffre with an entirely open mind. I had seen the Netflix documentary about Jeffrey Epstein years ago and didn't really know much about Giuffre, except that she was one of his more vocal victims.

The candor and rawness of this book made me not only read it cover to cover, but also quickly. Her path of abuse started so young that by the time she escaped Jeffrey Epstein she was only 19 years old. The way she narrates her experiences makes the brutality of her abuse feel real and understandable, leaving me emotionally crushed. She never shies away from difficult topics and provided insights that were deeply impactful.

This book was so much more than an exposé of abuse. Giuffre shares her entire life story and her struggle to regain control of that life. She comes across as a victimized woman who was deeply flawed, striving to make connections and ensure that lives like hers matter. As honest as she is, you could sense more going on beneath the surface. The years of abuse and recovery left her emotionally and physically exhausted. Telling this story and reading this book help her life to matter, especially in the hope that it does not happen to others.



# ALL AGES CAN WORK TO SOLVE A MYSTERY

BY MARY ANNE B.

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## The Busybody Book Club

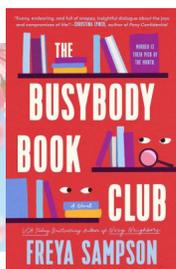
by Freya Sampson

What do an octogenarian (Arthur), a pushy woman in her 70s (Phyllis), a teenage boy (Ash), and a young woman (Nova) have in common? Their love of books!!! Each of these people have their own preferred genre, but when things start to happen in their small town of St. Tredock, they all band together to find answers. The other thing about this foursome is that they are all holding onto a secret.

It all begins with a meeting at the community center for their book discussion group. There is another member of this group, Michael, who also holds a secret as to why he attends the meetings. During their meeting, Michael abruptly leaves and that is when the trouble all begins. Nova, who should be preparing for her wedding, keeps running into problems and is trying to solve them with the "help" of her book club. While this odd group of people all love books, you must remember they each have their own genre they keep referring back to in order to help solve the mysteries.

As the story unfolds, you find out that there is nothing that will stand in the way of this group helping each other. I will tell you that all of the secrets are revealed, and when the biggest secret is revealed, it is done in the manner of an old fashioned whodunit, with a lot of flair.

Yes, the book does have a happy ending for some, but not for others! It is a light and enjoyable book. So, sit down with your pot of tea and a biscuit or two, and go across the pond to St. Tredock!



# PRANKS, DEAD BODIES, AND SUPERNATURAL MYSTERY? EH, KIDS WILL BE KIDS

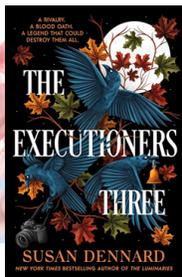
BY MELISSA F.



## The Executioners Three

by Susan Dennard

I picked up this book mainly because of the cover art and stayed for the '90s-era rivalry, high school prank wars, frenemy romance, and small-town folklore. Also, murder! Freddie is a teen sleuth investigating her small town's mildly worrisome history of dead bodies in the woods. One late night, amidst the suspicious chimes of a previously non-functional bell tower and the blood-curdling screams from deep in the trees, an alarmed Freddie calls the cops. And accidentally gets half the kids from the rival high school arrested for underage partying.



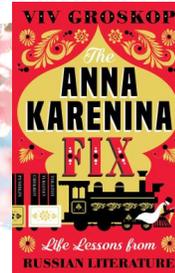
This launches her into a central role as part of her school's "Prank Squad" of cool kids. What follows is a back-and-forth of more pranks, more mystery, more dead bodies, and a fiercely thrilling romance with the infuriatingly handsome leader of the rival prank squad.

Freddie sets out to answer the haunting questions hanging over her town, including the secrets behind her own father's death years ago. School drama and supernatural forces collide in this 1999 throwback which will likely be enjoyed by Buffy and Sabrina fans.

**Content & Sensitivity:** Includes descriptions of gore, murder, and supernatural spookiness.

# RUSSOPHILE

BY KAREN B.



## The Anna Karenina Fix: Life Lessons from Russian Literature

by Viv Groskop

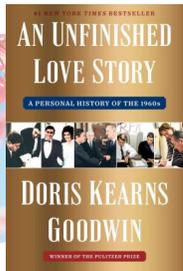
This unique book is part memoir, part self-help manual, and part ode to all things Russian. All these parts are wrapped up in a discussion of how reading and understanding Russian literature can be a force for the good in someone's life by making them more aware of what they find important. These important things could be to appreciate what you have, to not be consumed with jealousy, and to not judge others or yourself too harshly.

The author is a British woman who spent her teenage years learning Russian and then studying as a university student in St. Petersburg in the early 1990s. Looking back on her experiences 20 years later, she relates what she learned about life from reading Russian classics. Some of her lessons include how to know who you really are ("don't throw yourself under a train") from **Anna Karenina**, how to face up to whatever life throws at you ("don't leave your wife when she is pregnant") from **Doctor Zhivago**, and how to know what matters in life ("don't try to kill Napoleon") from **War and Peace**.

Woven in with her ruminations about the characters, plots, and settings of these novels are her own attempts to establish her inherent Russianness in terms of family identity. Acknowledging the fatalistic doom and gloom of Russian attitudes towards life in general, she nevertheless sees occasional hope and optimism among all the overcast skies. Recommended for anyone curious about looking at life through an unusual lens.

# AN INSIDER'S LOOK BACK

BY SUE K.



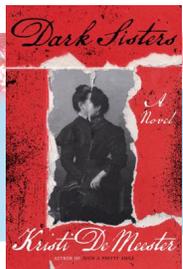
## An Unfinished Love Story: a Personal History of the 1960s

by Doris Kearns Goodwin

Any history reader would be familiar with Doris Kearns Goodwin. She is a Pulitzer-winning author of presidential histories, perhaps best known for **Team of Rivals** which is an insider's look at Abraham Lincoln's cabinet choices from among his political "enemies" and rivals, and her presidential biographies of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. Her newest memoir takes a very deep dive into her husband Dick Goodwin's papers and memories of his work in the John Kennedy years. From his unique perspective as JFK's speechwriter (together with Ted Sorensen) during his groundbreaking campaign and then later working intimately with Kennedy on policy, we get a privileged look into an era many of us were not old enough to have experienced. From the creation of the Peace Corps, through the ugly Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis, we have a front row seat to an era both filled with youthful idealism and ugly divisions over communism, civil rights and the Vietnam War. I find it heartening in a way to look at our country through the lens of history - the ebbs and flows of division, idealism, activism, and dissent. Instead of getting stuck in current cycles of hopelessness and division, it shows that we have always been capable of lifting ourselves free to be the change.

# FEMALE EMPOWERMENT THROUGH A CURSE?!

BY JULIE ANN D.



Similar to **Weyward** by Emilia Hart and **The Stepford Wives** by Ira Levin, with a touch of Mad Men's 1950s corporate aesthetic, **Dark Sisters** by Kristi DeMeester braids a generational witch narrative centered on three women bound by powerful secrets across time. Set in the gated community of Hawthorne Springs, **Dark Sisters** revolves around a church called The Path, where belief outweighs reason and logic. The church was founded on a stolen blood ritual tied to a dark entity that rewards men with prosperity while systematically oppressing women. Wives endure daily misogyny, rigid piety, and a profound lack of compassion, while daughters are raised in an atmosphere of fear and hatred that perpetuates deep-rooted generational trauma. The legend of the Dark Sisters - witch women who dwell in the woods - serves as a warning to any woman who strays from The Path. Her disobedience will be met with a curse. The novel builds toward a powerful reckoning as the strength of female friendship and the courage to embrace personal truth ignite long-suppressed feminine rage. This tension comes to a head when a small but defiant act by the leader's rebellious daughter destabilizes the entire congregation. Through its exploration of women's struggles for autonomy, **Dark Sisters** is a compelling and resonant read. Each interconnected timeline is equally engaging, reinforcing the novel's central message: women continue to be constrained by expectations designed to benefit men. Ultimately, the book is both unsettling and cathartic - one that may leave readers wanting to scream into the woods and then seek comfort in the embrace of a trusted girlfriend.

**Content & Sensitivity:** [abortion](#), [pedophiles](#), [misogyny](#), [purity culture](#), [religion](#).

# AND NOW FOR SOME EMOJI REVIEWS

BY MELISSA F.



## Violet Thistlewaite is Not a Villain Anymore

by Emily Krempholtz



Loved it. A cozy, magical adventure with some mystery, some drama, and some spice.



## The House of Quiet

by Kiersten White

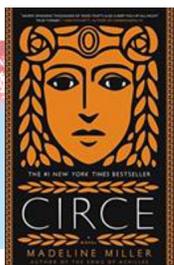


Liked it. Sort of like **The Hunger Games** meets the X-Men and crashes into a gothic fantasy via **The Fall of the House of Usher**.



## A RETELLING

BY CHRISTY H.



**Circe** is the most beautifully-written book I've read in some time. I loved **The Song of Achilles** by the same author, but this is on a whole new plane, probably because the titular character is a goddess. From the first chapter, you know you're in for something special. Circe's heart is laid before the reader on every page, from her time as an unwanted immortal in her sun god father's halls to her banishment on a remote island as the witch of Aea. The character of Circe is most known for her portrayal in Homer's **The Odyssey**, a villainess who turns Odysseus's men into pigs. This feminist retelling of many interwoven Greek myths features Circe as a misunderstood magic user who is trying to traverse her new, mortal world. The more I read this book, the more loathed I was to finish it because I never wanted it to end. The prose is extraordinary, definitively cementing Madeline Miller as one of my favorite authors.

# DELIGHTFUL COZY MYSTERY

BY DONNA D.

## A Most Agreeable Murder

by Julia Seales

Beatrice Steele has been harboring a dark secret: she is obsessed with true crime.

While other young women in the township of Swampshire, England in the early 1800s are busy with needlepoint and playing the pianoforte, Beatrice has been hiding upstairs in the turret reading her father's newspaper and following the cases of a famous London detective, secretly writing to him with her suggestions to help him solve the murders.

Unfortunately, the strict rules of decorum, as written in *The Lady's Guide to Swampshire* (Volume I, Volume II and the Travel Edition- "lest a woman find herself in an indecorous position while on the go") do not include an interest in crime. Besides, Beatrice's mother wants her oldest daughter to concentrate on finding a rich husband to save the family from becoming destitute.



When an eligible bachelor drops dead at a ball the Steele family is attending at Stabmort Park, Beatrice forms an alliance with a one-eyed detective to investigate and solve the crime. Mix a little Agatha Christie with a little Jane Austen and you get this first novel of Julia Seales, quirky and entertaining, funny from the very first page.

If you enjoy this novel, you will be happy to know there is a sequel. **A Terribly Nasty Business** picks up where **A Most Agreeable Murder** leaves off, following the adventures of Beatrice as she moves to London, not to look for a husband as her mother believes, but to become a partner in a new detective agency. Witty banter, unique characters, plot twists and turns, and some interesting social commentary make this book another fun and enjoyable read!

THE CHECKOUT: SPRING 2026

# FOR THE BOG WITCHES AND HISTORY NERDS ALIKE

BY MELISSA F.



## Bog Queen

by Anna North

I never knew I needed a book partially told from the perspective of moss, but here we are.

Agnes, an American forensic anthropologist, is called to examine a body discovered in a peat bog in northern England. Agnes – awkward, intelligent, and struggling to figure out her next move after finishing her post-doctorate in the UK – realizes quickly that the body in the bog is much older than anyone initially thought. Rather than the answer to the decades-old disappearance of a local woman, this body is its own much more ancient mystery. More than 2,000 years ago, someone buried this young woman in the bog, and Agnes is determined to shed light on her story.

This book moves through time, with alternating chapters from the point of view of the Iron-Age woman, a druid and healer, whose travels around the country offer an interesting perspective of the dawn of the Roman era in England. While navigating interactions with local peat-cutters as well as the activists who want the bog left alone, Agnes finds answers to her own life's questions as well as discoveries about the bog woman and how she may have died – though more importantly, how she lived.

While this story was somewhat under-developed and I would have loved to see more fleshing out of the characters and timelines, it was an enjoyable read!

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CHRISTY H. ! DON'T FORGET  
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ISSUE #16

# HIDDEN PAST

BY DONNA D.

## The Unseen World

by Liz Moore

Twelve-year-old Ada lives with her brilliant, eccentric father, David, who is the director of a computer science lab in 1980s Boston. Ada is home-schooled, spending each day with her father and his research associates in the lab, where he is attempting to develop software that mimics human thought and language. While Ada thrives in the lab with the scientists, she is a painfully-shy prodigy with no friends her own age.

When David starts to experience signs of dementia, Ada must move in with Liston, one of his beloved colleagues, and they begin to realize that David is not who he said he is. Using her own computer skills and a cryptic disc given to her by her father, Ada begins a search to uncover David's mysterious hidden past.

**The Unseen World** is a thoughtful coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of virtual reality and artificial intelligence.

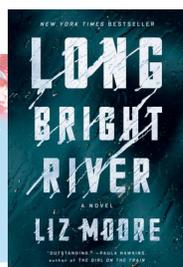
If you enjoy this book, consider reading these other novels by Liz Moore:

**Long Bright River** is a suspense novel about two estranged sisters, one of whom is a cop, and the other a victim of the opioid crisis in Philadelphia. I was a bit lukewarm about this one, but it was named best book of the year in 2020 by many major publications and was adapted into a Peacock television mini-series, so lots of folks enjoyed it!

Moore's most recent book, **The God of the Woods**, is set in the Adirondacks and explores the mysterious disappearance of a young girl from her wealthy family's summer camp. It has been named one of the best crime novels of the year by *The New York Times*. I am currently on a waiting list for this one and can't wait to read it!



My sister's librarian in Shelter Island, New York recommended a series by Margaret Mizushima. The first book of the *Timber Creek K-9 Mysteries* series, **Killing Trail**, introduces us to the team of Mattie Lu Cobb and her brand new K-9 partner, Robo. Fresh from the training academy, the team is immediately called out to investigate blood found at a hunting cabin by a forest ranger. The book is fast-paced, intricately researched, and full of intriguing emotionally-fraught characters. The author's husband is a veterinarian, which gives her an inside perspective on the character of Cole, the town's veterinarian who has the added baggage of a recent divorce and two young daughters to care for. The intricate details of K-9 training are on full display here as the plot progresses, based on the author's experience shadowing a retired K-9 officer/trainer, and her dog is named in honor of the officer's beloved late partner. I was delighted to discover that Mizushima has gone on to write many more books following her cast of characters as they serve and protect the people of the town of Timber Creek!



# K-9 TEAMWORK

BY SUE K.



# “DIABOLICALLY CUTE SIDEKICK” AWARDS GO TO A TALKING RAVEN NAMED MORPHEUS AND A WOODCHIPPER NAMED COOKIE MONSTER

BY MELISSA F.

**Tourist Season**  
by Brynne Weaver

Loved it, give me the rest of the series now. Cape Carnage definitely lives up to its name, and Harper Starling loves making sure that creepy, ill-intentioned tourists get a permanent invitation to stay, courtesy of her wood chipper. Harper has created a perfect life here, complete with a cozy cottage, beautifully fertilized gardens, an eyeball-loving backyard raven, and visits with her beloved, aging mentor whose progressive dementia is her main source of worry. Harper’s sense of peace is threatened when Nolan Rhodes arrives in town and immediately proves he isn’t a typical tourist. For one thing, he’s here to kill Harper. Rude. Nolan’s plans and similar murderous tendencies intertwine with Harper’s until suddenly they seem to be on the same team. Maybe? And Harper has been hiding some other dark secrets, too, much to Nolan’s surprise. Chaotic, messy, and bizarrely funny, this new series from Brynne Weaver is a must-read for fans of **Butcher & Blackbird** (and when you see the connection, you’ll scream). [Content & Sensitivity](#): Lots of murder. Lots of spice. Check the trigger warnings.



# PAPER & PEN LETTERS

BY KEN W.



**The Correspondent** by Virginia Evans is a story about a woman named Sybil. All of her life, she has sent written notes and letters to people in order to communicate with them, and has continued to do this in the age of email and texting. This book presents us with many of the letters she has written to people and their responses.

Sybil uses these letters to impart information, deal with problems, and share grief and joy. This is her way of carrying on everyday correspondence with family, friends, and other people she is intimately connected to. Sybil uses her letter-writing as a tool to interact with people and remain a participant in their lives.

This book rang true with me because, like Sybil, I often write pen and paper letters to people. Those who have received them have commented that there is an intimacy of communication, where you hold the words someone wrote in your hand and can keep it as a little part of themselves.

Anyone who reads this story will be moved by the personal interactions Sybil shares with her correspondents. You are able to follow the story of Sybil’s life through her letters; the magnitude of all the letters and the responses she receives give further insight. You see her sharing information, but also her dealing with problems and trying to figure out what is going on in her life.

While letters carry the bulk of the intended narrative, there are asides where Sybil is given the chance to think about them and what they mean. She weaves her many emotions and experiences into the notes and Sybil becomes enlightened and attempts to make amends for personal mistakes. The responses she receives also reflect this full range of personal interaction and emotional involvement. In addition, there is a correspondent to whom Sybil is writing that, for me, remained unknown until almost the end of the book.

These letters help you see Sybil in a way that dialogue might not otherwise fully portray, and this technique gives us a unique way to access this narrator than in a traditionally-told novel.

# GOOD OLD AMERICAN STORIES

BY MARY ANNE B.

## Something to Look Forward To

by Fannie Flagg

If you are looking for thrills and chills, or a whodunit, you will not find it in this book.

This is a collection of down-to-earth, hometown stories. Happy stories, where people help people, where sometimes the young people don't understand the old people.

There is one short story that does repeat itself throughout the book about young people trying to figure out when they can come and visit their grandmother. I have a feeling you will get the idea of where this story will go, but it is how they get to the end that makes it very modern day.

We have a couple of stories talking about reincarnation, and a story about how one man gets help and pays it forward to thank those that helped him.



There is murder in one of the stories (sorry, it's just a small whodunit), and it is well planned out and you never would have suspected how it is done.

A few of these stories involve what could be real-life situations. As I read this book, I found it to be comforting and written from the heart.

There is a two-part story about aliens observing our planet and then sending one of their kind to visit us, and what this alien finds amazing is not what you think. I do not want to describe all the stories in this book, because I want you to take the time to read it for yourself. Bottom line: don't take anything for granted!

ARTWORK BY SUE K.

# OUT ON THE BAYOU

BY CHLOE H.



## American Hippo

by Sarah Gailey

What would America be like if House Resolution 23261 was introduced in 1910? **American Hippo**, a collection of two action-packed novellas, paints that picture.

Based on the real-life bill that almost let hippos be introduced into the Mississippi River to resolve the meat shortage in the US, this story explores the early 20th-century America that could've been filled with hippo ranchers.

Outlaw Winslow Remington Houndstooth has been hired to take back the Southern waterways from the feral hippos, whose jaws can snap a man in half. Paired with his trusty non-feral Cambridge Black hippo Ruby he bred himself on his ranch, he teams up with fellow troublemakers Regina Archambault and Hero Shackleby to get the job done. The story gets more complicated than that, but revealing more would ruin the fun of this wild, John Wayne, **No Country For Old Men**-esque tale.



# I WILL KILL YOUR IMAGINARY FRIEND FOR \$200

BY JULIE ANN D.

This is the title of a new book by Robert Brockway, known for blending horror and comedy, as well as his podcast with the writers behind Cracked.com. **I Will Kill Your Imaginary Friend for \$200** is a wildly imaginative nostalgia ride packed with purple glitter and heart.

Ivan has a rare skill: he can see imaginary friends. He uses this gift to help adults untether themselves from the fictional companions that they've carried into adulthood. By freeing them from these lingering creations, Ivan helps his clients grow up, maintain steady jobs, and build healthy relationships - and it puts money in Ivan's pocket! He has one big rule though: he would never kill a child's imaginary friend because they use them to cope with the world. He knows this from personal experience.



But the imaginary friend bounty hunter finally meets his match in Eddie Video, the willed-into-reality video character made by a lonely girl named Kay. She's drawn away from her quiet home life by endless adventures in his imaginary world. Video increasingly gets more unhinged with meat crafts and tormenting to the point of manipulating Kay into self harm. Ivan sees himself in Kay and promises to help Kay's fierce but loving mother save her daughter. The story builds to a final showdown that proves "friends till the ends" aren't always necessary to live.

If you enjoyed **How to Sell a Haunted House** by Grady Hendrix, **Mister Magic** by Kiersten White, or the movie **Drop Dead Fred**, this book is for you.

# WINTER WONDER

BY CHLOE H.

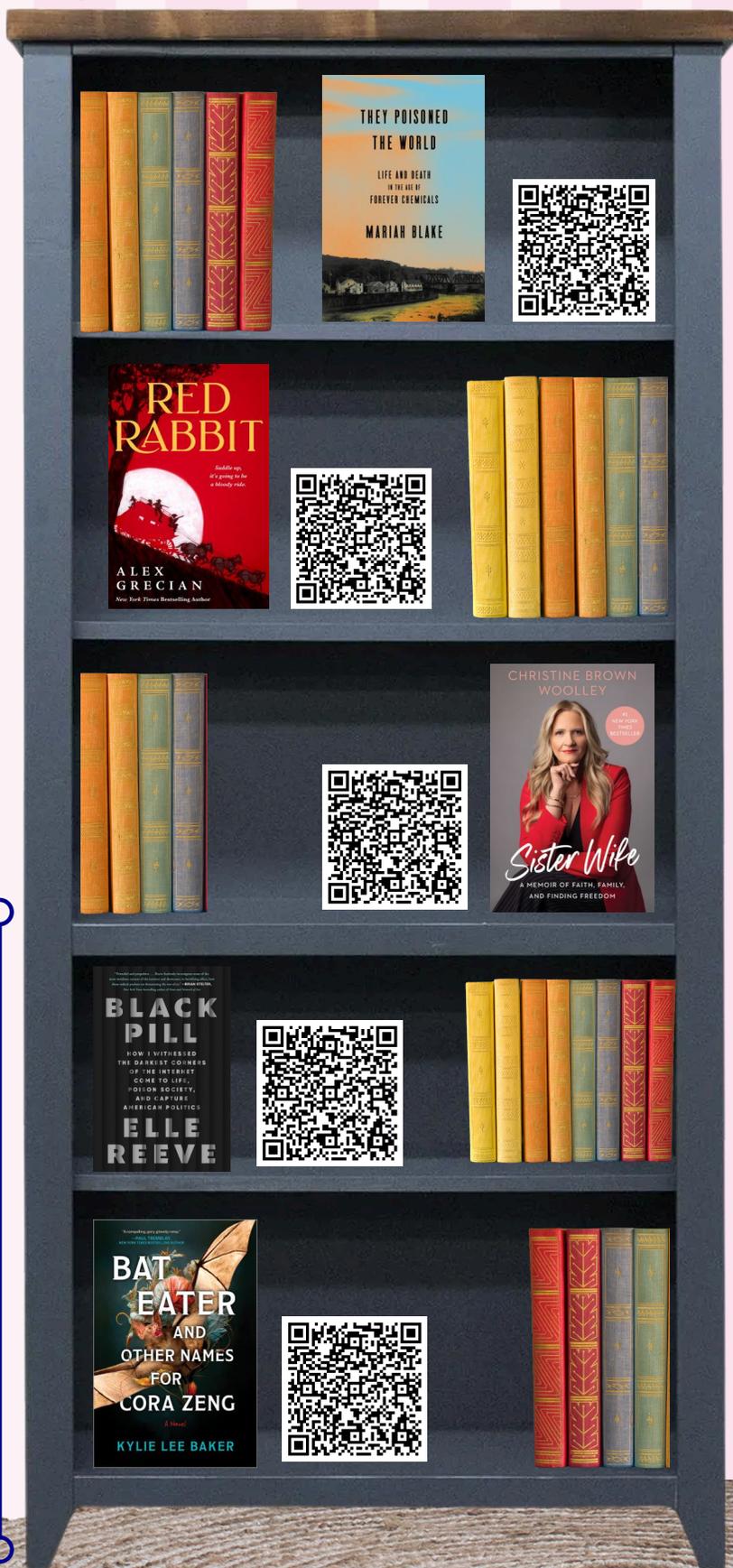


## How to Winter: Harness Your Mindset to Thrive on Cold, Dark, or Difficult Days

by Kari Leibowitz

As Buffalonians, we have all reached a point of despair at some point during winter. Whether it be a blizzard, the endless string of gray days in the pre-spring months, or the freezing cold, it can be tough! Psychologist and winter expert Kari Leibowitz challenges us to rethink how awful winter may seem by taking us with her to Norway, at one of the northernmost points in the world to see how the season impacts mental health in a place with long, tough winters. She ends up finding the opposite mindset amongst Trøms residents - they look forward to winter with enthusiasm and change their behaviors to match. Using this as the foreground for her research, she dives into how we can reframe what we think about winter in small, manageable ways to find things that make us appreciate the season without discrediting the hardships it may bring. One of the most interesting tidbits I took away from this was how humans tend to assume something is wrong because we feel more tired when the sun sets early or we experience changing moods, yet almost every living thing on Earth changes their habits completely during the season. Why should we expect to feel or work the same as we do during different seasons? I wrote down a ton of quotes and passages from this book to keep as a reminder to be more gentle to myself and to keep a more open mind about a season I would typically describe as horrid. I challenge you to read this and do the same!

# QUICK TAKES



## **They Poisoned the World: Life and Death in the Age of Forever Chemicals**

by Mariah Blake

A well-researched and sobering book that feels like an all-too-familiar tale: large companies seeking profit above the health of the community. This one outlines a health crisis due to industrial chemicals in Hoosick Falls, NY, but could easily apply to any manufacturing community in the United States. An important exposé on how companies and governments sometimes work hand-in-hand making our bodies and land unhealthy and oftentimes, deadly.

## **Red Rabbit**

by Alex Grecian

This novel is a horror western that begins with a witch with a bounty on her head. The story is woven together so well that there's a little of everything - shapeshifters, demons, cannibals, and ghosts - without it feeling forced. They travel across the western plains, and there's even a shoot-out. So saddle up - this is a fun ride!

## **Sister Wife: A Memoir of Faith, Family, and Finding Freedom**

by Christine Brown Woolley

A moving account of one of TLC's "Sister Wives" finding herself outside of the religion and practice she was born and raised in, proving it is never too late to find yourself.

## **Black Pill: How I Witnessed the Darkest Corners of the Internet Come to Life, Poison Society, and Capture American Politics**

by Elle Reeve

An examination of how the alt-right has taken over online spaces and radicalized young men. Disturbing and highly relevant.

## **Bat Eater and Other Names for Cora Zeng**

by Kylie Lee Baker

In New York City at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, crime scene cleaner Cora connects the deaths of Asian-American women to a serial killer. Haunted by the grief of her own murdered sister who may be taking the form of a hungry ghost, Cora and her co-workers try to discover who is behind the deaths before it's too late.

# FEEL GOOD FANTASY GEM

BY CHRISTINA L.

**The House in the Cerulean Sea** is one of those rare reads that sticks with you. This story takes you to the magical island of Marsyas, where a cozy orphanage for magical children is operating under the conscientious care of Arthur Parnassus. When an anxious, introverted government caseworker named Linus Baker is sent to the orphanage to assess its vitality, he finds an opportunity to step outside his predictable world and become acquainted with six enchanted and hilarious children (you will love them!). Linus is forced to report back to “extremely upper management” on the current state of the orphanage, and he must deal with the repercussions if he chooses to speak out and advocate for the magical children living in the margins. Can he find the strength to do what’s right in his heart?



This book will take you on a feel-good, fantastical journey that does not have to end! The second installment, **Somewhere Beyond the Sea**, was published in 2024.

## TITLE LIBRARY TIP #2

THE LIBRARY HAS  
FUN NEW LIBRARY  
CARD DESIGNS!  
STOP IN TO YOUR  
LOCAL LIBRARY  
AND GET YOURS  
TODAY!



THE CHECKOUT: SPRING 2026

# HELLO RABIES MY OLD FRIEND

BY STEPHEN C.



## Rabid: A Cultural History of the World's Most Diabolical Virus

by Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy

While perusing Libby for a good non-fiction book, I stumbled across this older title that I happened to have missed upon its release. I hadn't given rabies much thought for the last 35 years after being minorly consumed by the thought of it as a child (more on that later). Wasik and Murphy have put together a comprehensive, but still extremely readable, history of a horrifying viral disease that has haunted the human race for its entire existence.

The authors strike a neat balance between delving into the science of rabies while also sidetracking to examine the cultural effect the virus has had. Be it early Greek stories that one could chalk up to early outbreaks, to the modern infatuation with vampires, zombies, and the like, we slowly realize that this now entirely preventable virus has shaped our world in surprising ways.

Along the way we are also introduced to key players in the war against rabies, both ancient and modern, all of whom played an important role in defending man against a villain of which nightmares are made.

*Bonus Review:*

## The Value of Believing in Yourself: The Story of Louis Pasteur

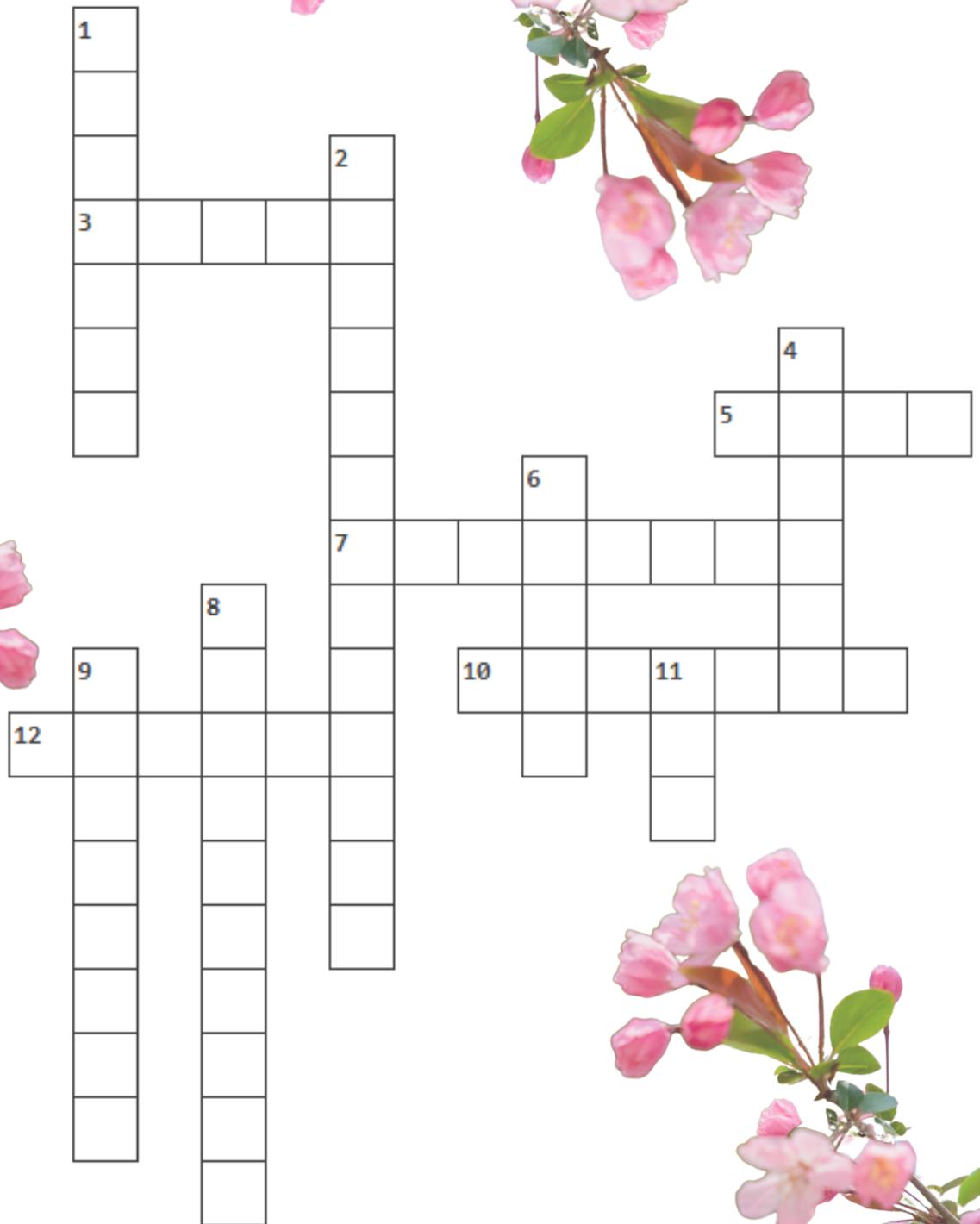
by Spencer Johnson

I read this book way too much as a kid. It was my absolute favorite. Something about the storytelling and especially the illustrations fascinated me. Mostly, I think the story centering around nine-year-old Joseph Meister, the first human recipient of Pasteur's rabies vaccine, really struck home. If this boy could be bitten by a rabid dog roughly 100 years previous to me reading his story, then surely the same could happen to me at any time...right? A frightening thought for an already anxious child, but at the same time I was comforted to know that Louis Pasteur had me covered. Vive la France!

ISSUE #16

# WHAT A RE-LEAF

BY REBECCA K.



## Across

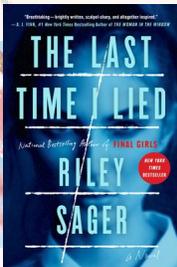
3. Name of the family in **Little Women**
5. Hindu holiday that takes place in spring
7. Sport that starts training in the spring
10. Country where the Easter Bunny originated
12. One of the zodiac signs of spring

## Down

1. April birthstone
2. In Japan, this tree signifies spring
4. Trigger of allergies
6. Spring \_\_\_\_\_ is a biological phenomenon
8. Greek goddess of spring
9. First flower of spring
11. Latest month Buffalo has gotten measurable snow

# SUMMER CAMP ONCE, BUT TWICE?

BY MARY ANNE B.



**The Last Time I Lied**  
by Riley Sager

Have you ever been to summer camp? And if you did, did girls go missing? This is a story that I could not wait to see how it ended.

The story starts with 13-year-old Emma going away to summer camp; she is reluctant to go, but is sent regardless. Welcome to Camp Nightingale!!

As Emma grows up, she cannot stop thinking about what happened at the camp, and those memories reflect in her paintings. But if Emma didn't like Camp Nightingale the first time, why would she go back? She wants to clear up the mystery around what happened the first time she was there.

When Emma goes back the second time, she is an adult who looks at things in a different perspective and who wants to search for the answers of what happened all those years ago. Along with Emma, a few other former campers from 15 years ago are there, along with a whole new group of girls, three of whom are her new cabinmates. Emma is at the camp to teach painting, but also to search for answers. And her new cabinmates may or may not stand in her way.

The story flips between the present time and what happened 15 years earlier. As the story goes on, you will learn a lot about the characters' past and how it affects them in the present.

Do people lie? Yes! If you lie, does it affect you? Yes! Does your lying affect others? Yes! Should you lie in order to save yourself?

Just remember...the truth will always come out!

# STRANDED IN THE OUTBACK

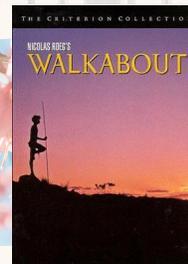
BY CHLOE H.



A wild start to a survival tale set in the Australian Outback: a geologist takes his son and daughter out for a picnic in the remote bush, pulls out a gun, and attempts to kill them both. They manage to avoid the fire, but are left stranded with nearly nothing as they are faced with having to walk back to where they came.

The harsh wilderness is not forgiving as the days roll on, and moments away from dehydration and starvation, they are saved by an Aboriginal boy. Learning the ways of his people while trying to get back to their home that couldn't be more different than the life they are living blurs the lines between nature and developed civilization.

Stunning cinematography and undertones of what it means to be human make this former Cannes Film Festival film an interesting watch.



INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR STAFF?  
MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 1ST THURSDAY OF  
THE MONTH AT 7PM AT THE KENMORE LIBRARY

## CROSSWORD (ANSWERS)

### ACROSS

3. March 5. Holi 7. Baseball 10. Germany 12. Taurus

### DOWN

1. Diamond 2. Cherry blossom 4. Pollen 6. Fever 8. Persephone  
9. Daffodil 11. May

# THE CHECKOUT STAFF

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

WANT TO SUBMIT A REVIEW?

SUBMISSIONS WILL BE POSTED PER DISCRETION OF THE LIBRARY.

SUBMISSIONS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT OR LENGTH.

