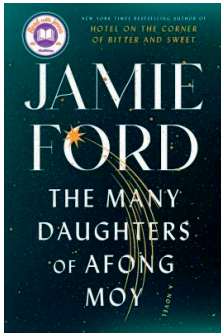


THE CHECKOUT

A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY
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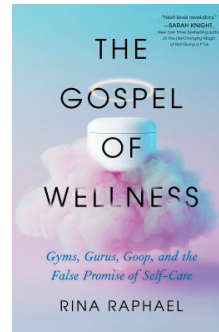
A PUBLICATION OF THE KENMORE BRANCH LIBRARY

NEW & NOTEWORTHY



The newest book by Jamie Ford, *The Many Daughters of Afong Moy*, is a challenging but very worthwhile read. I highly recommend all of Ford's earlier books especially *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*. Ford is uniquely placed to detail the experiences of Asian residents in the Pacific Northwest. He is the great-grandson of Min Chung, a Nevada mining pioneer who emigrated from China to San Francisco in 1865. His newest novel spans many generations of Chinese women from Afong Moy who landed in New York City in 1834, touring with various hucksters as *The Chinese Lady* to Annabel Moy, a poet living in the future 2086. Each portrait links the many mysterious ways the women repeat similar experiences throughout their lives with often tragic results. While it is sometimes difficult to follow the many women, Ford does help us with chapters listing the woman's name and the year. If you can just read into the flow of Ford's vivid writing, the end results are joy-filled and hopeful. His earlier book is much more accessible and a great introduction to Ford's writing and characters. Also vivid are his descriptions of Seattle, both past and possible future.

REVIEW & ARTWORK BY SUE K.



Wellness is a \$4.4 trillion industry--the "most powerful consumer force" in the U.S. Rina Raphael's *The Gospel of Wellness: Gyms, Gurus, Goop, and the False Promise of Self-Care* is an investigation of why American women have become so obsessed with the pursuit of wellness. The book argues that marketing promises from brands that sell us health rarely align with science or reality--and that many of the no-brainer truths we accept are, in fact, myths (i.e., there's no way to "detox" your body). Not unlike a religious framework, wellness tells us how to live and gives order to the chaos. In other words, it's a salve for feeling out of control due to, as Raphael says, a "poorly constructed medical system, tech overload, a tumultuous news cycle, [and] lack of community."

Raphael speculates that the onslaught of modern life has led to burnout and stress. And mothers, in particular, are bombarded with pressure to look a certain way and achieve personal success, all while juggling the lion's share of housework and childcare. What's more, the concept of self-care (the solution to this stress) has become intertwined with technology, which has proven to be anything but relaxing. Throughout, Raphael explores how the media has used "health" to disguise the same-old diet culture, how misinformation powers our collective confusion about nutrition, and how fitness fills a vacuum of community in an increasingly isolated society. (Did you know studies show Americans turn to fitness in stressful times, including 9/11 and the Covid-19 pandemic?) Those interested in the wellness phenomenon will have plenty to dive into in this entertaining, well-researched book.

REVIEW BY MICHAELA M.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Thank you to everyone who has been supporting our publication by reading and requesting books from our reviews! We really enjoy putting The Checkout together and hope that you've found some new favorites, and have ventured out of your usual reading genres to try new authors, titles, and subjects.

Although we love making the content, we'd also love to have more reviews from you, our fellow library patrons! Please feel free to send your own review of something you've really enjoyed--be it a book, audiobook, movie, TV series, musical album, or even a review of a library service you particularly enjoy. We'd love to hear what you would like to recommend to other library patrons!

Just a few guidelines:

- Review should be of material owned by our library system or attainable through our Interlibrary Loan service.
- Review should be no more than 200 words in length.
- Content of review should be nonpartisan and nonsectarian (not promoting any one political or religious group).
- Library reserves the right to edit or exclude submitted content as appropriate.

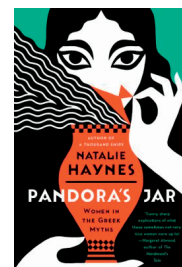
Send your reviews to knm@buffalolib.org with the subject line "The Checkout Submission". And for a little extra incentive, all submissions will be entered into a raffle for a \$25 Amazon gift card!

We look forward to hearing from you!

-NICOLE B.

WOMEN IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

BY KAREN B.



Pandora's Jar: Women in Greek Myths

by Natalie Haynes

Pandora, Jocasta, Helen, Medusa, the Amazons, Clytemnestra, Eurydice, Phaedra, Medea, and Penelope. These names evoke certain images to modern readers, both positive and negative. Natalie Haynes takes these myths and turns them on their head. She describes their origins, their differing versions, the reception they received in the ancient world, and the ways in which modern readers know of them and view them through contemporary media and art. What results is a vivid re-imagining of this cast of female characters. Pandora, for example, is generally thought of as the woman who let out all the ills of the world (famine, disease, war, hopelessness, suffering, etc.) by opening a forbidden box. In Haynes's examination of ancient sources, Pandora is not a woman with a choice, but rather a direct representation of Zeus's will to punish humankind for being given the gift of fire (who tips open a jar, incidentally, instead of opening a box). This understanding might be more authentic to the original intentions of the ancient Greek storytellers, with the version of the myth we know today representing our own time rather than theirs. If you are interested in learning more about Greek mythology and our contemporary understanding of it, this book is well worth your time.

WINNING IN THE NEW YEAR

BY CHRISTINA L.

Carrie Soto is Back

by Taylor Jenkins Reid



A new Taylor Jenkins Reid book is exciting for many readers and this one does not disappoint. Based on the life of a champion tennis player working to cultivate an unbelievable comeback, Soto is brutally honest and driven to win beyond any obstacle. I loved the main character and immediately felt her energy. With a determined father for a coach and a deep love for winning, the story follows Soto as she returns from retirement at age 37 to reclaim her title.

There is an interesting connection between being so self-assured (almost conceited) and the inability to form meaningful long-term relationships. There is more than a great sports story here. This book is about aging and strength. The power of being human and letting people into your life, even if it's uncomfortable. Simply, finding your resilience in the mess of it all. I finished this quick read and felt a nudge to find my own inner "Carrie Soto." A great way to stay motivated or reclaim a lost ambition with the start of a new year!

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: GAIL TSUKIYAMA



Image: <https://www.gailtsukiyama.com/index.htm>



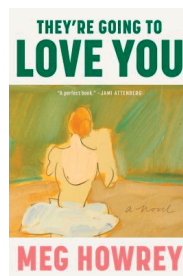
BY SUE K.

The author Gail Tsukiyama has long been a favorite of mine. Her newest novel, *The Color of Air*, is a must read as are her earlier novels, *The Samurai's Garden*, *The Street of a Thousand Blossoms* and *Women of the Silk*. I was fortunate to attend an author appearance with Gail on a recent trip to California. Her books give a unique perspective on the Asian experience. Born of Hawaiian Chinese and Japanese parents, each of her books takes as its theme from one of the many nuances of each of these cultures. *The Samurai's Garden* traces the recovery of a young Chinese man with tuberculosis at his family's summer cottage in Japan during the Second World War, when Japan was slowly taking over swathes of Chinese territory. *The Color of Air* takes as its theme the lives of many cultures living in Hawaii at the time of one of Mauna Loa's eruptions in 1935. Hawaii had an extensive plantation system, not unlike the American South, with the owners keeping the various groups segregated to repress them and prevent them from unionizing. The book tracks between the 1900s during the height of the endemic racism and the 1930s as locals try to decide whether to stay or evacuate as the lava flows closer to the village. Tsukiyama pays tribute to her childhood memories of time in Hawaii, growing up with her "Aunties," one of whom died during the work on the book. Her writing is always rich in colors, sights, smells, and sounds, taking you intimately into the lives of her characters.

THE CHECKOUT: SPRING 2023

BALLET & BETRAYAL

BY CHLOE S.

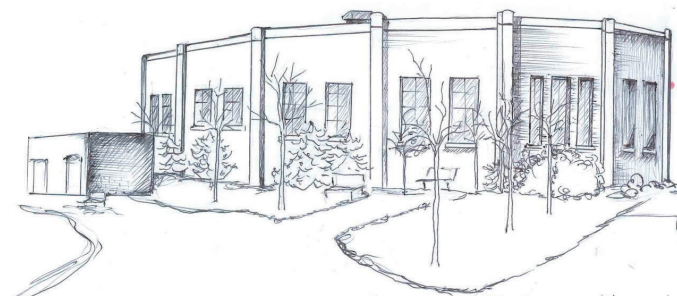


They're Going to Love You
by Meg Howrey

Carlisle Martin is the daughter of two ballet greats--her mother is a Balanchine ballerina and her father a founder of an independent ballet company. They divorce during her teen years, splitting her time between Ohio with her mother and New York with her father and his partner. Her desire to follow her parents' footsteps is great, but between the AIDS crisis devastating her father's community to a love affair that causes a rift years later, her life suddenly unravels.

This new release starts 19 years after she stops speaking to her father, when she suddenly gets a call that he is dying. Carlisle is not a ballerina, but a choreographer with the biggest break of her career on her heels when this call comes and disrupts her life again.

Meg Howrey writes a complex tale weaving in the ballet world with the intricacies of dysfunctional family life that many can understand. The price of being an artist coupled with reconciling with dreams that couldn't be achieved are things Carlisle struggles with that make this book a great read.



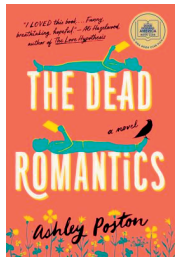
The Grosvenor Library books were moved to Central Library in 1963. Only the Cyclorama portion of the Grosvenor remains today.

ARTWORK BY SUE K.

ISSUE #4

PROJECT ROMANCE

BY CHRISTINA L.



The Dead Romantics

by Ashley Poston

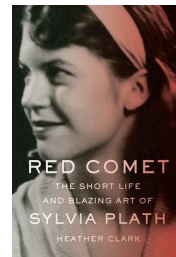
Can you fall in love with a ghost? Well, if your family owns a funeral home and you can communicate with the dead, why not? Ashley Poston brings love and romance right where it belongs...paranormal activity! This is the classic tale of an adorable romance author named Florence (seriously, why is the character always a writer? We should take a poll here: The most common occupation in contemporary romance books...wait for it...It's a writer! Or maybe a litterateur. That sounds swoon-worthy for sure).

Okay, back to the story. Florence swears off love forever and is headed back to her childhood home/mortuary to inevitably overcome challenges and find strength. Her irritating and adorably handsome boss, Ben, shows up back home as well. The only problem is he's not exactly...umm...well...alive.

This one is a great choice for those who are seeking that feel-good, light, comfortable read to ease us into the new year. I love the way this book uses death to move beyond grief and celebrate a life that was lived. It explores the transient nature of it all. Also, there are no pottery wheel scenes here. 😊. Just witty characters, some cool twists, and maybe a happy-ever-after in the afterlife. This unique plotline and heartwarming romance will give you all the "feels" we romance readers keep coming back for!

A COLOSSUS BIOGRAPHY

BY MICHAELA M.



Red Comet: The Short Life and Blazing Art of Sylvia Plath

by Heather Clark

What do you think of when you think of Sylvia Plath? Her tragic death by suicide, or her groundbreaking poetry? In this extraordinary new biography, author Heather Clark attempts to wrestle Plath's legacy away from her sensationalized image and reaffirm her as one of the most important writers of the 20th century. In *Red Comet*, Clark paints a "richer, more accurate, and less pathological portrait" of Plath using poems, prose, sketches, journals, letters, archives, and testimonials.

Plath grew up in Massachusetts, the daughter Aurelia, a teacher who sacrificed her own aspirations to be a housewife, and Otto, a Harvard professor and beekeeper who died when Sylvia was eight. Both her painful, complicated relationship with her mother and the shadow of her father's death had long-lasting impacts. Plath was by all accounts multifaceted--ambitious, brainy, and gregarious. Throughout her life and shaped by the expectations of 1950s America, she struggled to reconcile the tension between motherhood and creativity. Her traumatic experiences with psychiatric care following her first suicide attempt, as well as her relationship with fellow poet and husband Ted Hughes, also had a powerful influence on her writing.

While Plath did not see major literary success in her lifetime, she opened doors for other women writers and fulfilled her creative calling in a time that discouraged women from doing so. *Red Comet* also explores the often-unseen dimensions of Plath's work, including her interest in left-leaning politics, her satirical and surrealist impulses, and the literary impact of her final poems, which make up her most well-known collection, "Ariel." At over 900 pages, *Red Comet* is a daunting and dense but unquestionably rewarding read.

A STAR IS BORN

BY CHLOE S.



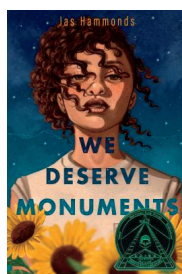
Natasha: The Biography of Natalie Wood
by Suzanne Finstad

Explosive and poignant, this biography is the definitive account of Natasha Gurdin, a Russian immigrant who climbed the Hollywood ladder to become Natalie Wood. Many know her name from the Christmas classic *Miracle on 34th Street* or as Maria in *West Side Story*, but no one is prepared for the amount of detail in this biography. Tracing back her mother's origins in Russia, where she was told by a fortune teller that her second child would be famous, readers find out that acting was never Natalie's dream to begin with and would cause her great mental distress. The intense pressure put on by her mother as well as her own ambition follows Natalie throughout her life, entirely chronicled in the book up to her untimely and mysterious death.

The author spent years investigating her life through her family, friends, and co-stars. It's impossible to put down and lets you in on who Natasha was, pulling back the covers of the star's facade.

YA FOR ALL

BY CHRISTINA L.



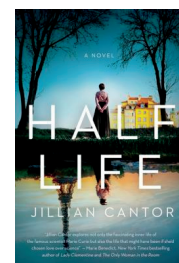
We Deserve Monuments
by Jas Hammonds

New YA...Yes Please! *We Deserve Monuments* tells the story of a high school senior named Avery who is forced to move back to her mother's childhood home in small-town Bardell, Georgia, to help care for her sick grandmother, Mama Letty. Tensions are high between the family as everyone tries to adjust to a new place with a long history of explicit racism, hegemony, and discriminatory behavior against LGBTQ+ people. This story is anything but predictable. Macmillan publishers call this book a place where family secrets, romance, and a slow-burn mystery collide. The family dynamic is real and messy. Avery falls hard for the girl next door, throwing in some swoon-worthy romance. A past murder continues to go unsolved. Debut author Jas Hammonds packed so much into this book. Although some may criticize the multi-layered themes of the story, I feel they are all done well, with beautiful, imperfect characters that ultimately win your heart.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

MARIE CURIE, A LIFE IMAGINED



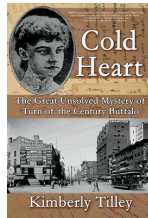
BY KAREN B.

Half Life
by Jillian Cantor

Can one choice you make irrevocably change the entire course of your life? That is a question this book seeks to explore through a semi-fictionalized account of the life of Marie Curie, the famous scientist who won a Nobel Prize in the early 1900s for her pioneering work with radium. The title, *Half Life*, refers both to scientific discovery and an imaginary alternative life that Marie could have lived, had she stayed in her native Poland and forgone an education in Paris for the sake of her first love. Born poor, the real Marie (Marya) went to work as a governess to a wealthy family and fell in love with the son, but was forced to part from him because his mother thought she would never amount to anything. She then left for Paris to study science at the Sorbonne, and the rest, as they say, is history. That plot line is followed in half the novel while the other half features the voice of Marya, a fictionalized version of Marie who stays in Poland and marries the son. Both versions of Marie must contend with conflicts between work and family, few professional opportunities for women, prejudice, and family tragedies. Yet different decisions yield different consequences. This novel offers an excellent way to ponder the "what ifs" in life.

HIGH SOCIETY MURDER

BY NICOLE B.

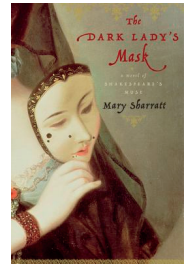


Cold Heart: The Great Unsolved Mystery of Turn of the Century Buffalo
by Kimberly Tilley

At times, historical accounts can seem like facts and figures, far removed from our current lives and surroundings. Author Kimberly Tilley has broken through that prototypical narrative with a highly-detailed and engrossing account of an infamous murder that took place in 1903 in the Elmwood district. At the turn of the century, “the Elmwood Avenue set” inhabited the grandiose houses around Millionaire’s Row and had a myriad of connections to local business, politicians, and high society. When one member of this elite group, Ed Burdick, was found brutally murdered in his Ashland Avenue home, suspects ranged from the family-friend-turned-paramour of his wife, Alice, to his very own mother-in-law. Through various accounts from newspapers, police interviews and court records, the author has deftly created a captivating tale of intrigue and deceit. As you continue through the book and learn more about the different suspects and the scene of the crime, I guarantee you will finish the book with strong opinions on who the murderer really was. Recommended for any true crime fan.

SHAKESPEARE'S DARK LADY

BY KAREN B.

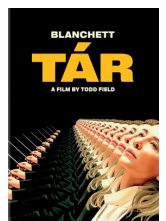


The Dark Lady's Mask: A Novel of Shakespeare's Muse
by Mary Sharratt

Aemilia Bassano Lanier has been identified as the first female poet in Renaissance England. Was she also Shakespeare's muse, known as “the Dark Lady” in his writing? It may be (with “dark” referring to her Italian ancestry). While not an aristocrat herself, Aemilia did receive a strong education in the humanities from her court musician father and from later female mentors. Her father may or may not have been Jewish, which adds to the mystery surrounding her and her family. In this story, she is imagined as a high-spirited woman, given to cross-dressing in her youth so that she could enjoy the freedom of movement that males enjoyed, along with writing, composing, and performing music. She becomes the courtesan of the Lord Chamberlain, but is cast aside when she becomes pregnant and forced into an unhappy marriage. When her husband seeks fortune in Ireland after spending her money, she escapes to Italy along with Shakespeare who becomes her lover. Together they write plays and have a baby who later dies, after Shakespeare spurns her. Back in England, she and her husband reconcile. She never sees Shakespeare again, but she writes and publishes her own book of poetry, dedicated to all women. For readers interested in historical fiction, this is a lively read that compellingly depicts Tudor times.

REEL REVIEW: TÁR

BY CHRISTINA L.



Oscar-nominated for Best Film, the movie *Tár* explores how people in power are uniquely positioned to exploit and control the lives of others. The film uncovers the story of a composer, Lydia Tár, on the brink of the performance of her career. After events from her past come creeping into light, the life that Tár has created may threaten her career and family. Cate Blanchett is extraordinary. Her performance is so plausible and well done, I initially thought the movie was based on a real person. Turns out it's a completely fictional character and story, but is it really? How many in the position of power, within their respective role and (at times) profoundly gifted, use their privilege only to the advantage of themselves and at the cost of others? It's eye-opening.

This is a real thinker movie. A flawless slow-burn story. It's one that sat with me and had me thinking several times after it was over. Check out *Tár* at the library soon! And if Blanchett doesn't get an Oscar for this one...I will mostly likely be in my living room yelling at the TV.

MORE REEL REVIEWS

The X-Files: Season One

(TV Series, 1993-2018, created by Chris Carter)



The hit Fox anthology stands the test of time and then some. David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson star as Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, two FBI agents brought together to work on the X-Files: investigations of the paranormal and unexplained. Dana is a doctor who firmly believes in science, while Fox believes that anything is possible.

Throughout their strange cases, more and more is revealed about the inner workings of the FBI and U.S. government. Could there be a larger conspiracy at play? What happened to Fox's sister all those years ago--was she really abducted by aliens? The truth is out there!

All 11 seasons as well as the two accompanying feature films are available at the library.

(REVIEW BY CHLOE S.)

Three Pines

(TV Series, 2022-, created by Emilia di Girolamo)



Amazon Prime has made a great series based on Louise Penny's Inspector Gamache books. Season 1 is now available with eight cliff-hanger episodes. Armand Gamache is a homicide detective with the Surete du Quebec, surrounded by a colorful group of coworkers, family, and residents of the tiny town of Three Pines in Quebec. The series is extremely faithful to the books, with an added plotline involving the many problems that Canada's First Nation tribes continue to experience in modern-day Canada. The series is beautifully filmed and though the cast is largely unknown in the States, they are a powerful team portraying complex reactions and emotions. I highly recommend any and all of Penny's books and am looking forward to season 2.

(REVIEW BY SUE K.)

Don't have Amazon Prime? Start by reading the 1st book in the series, *Still Life*, by using this QR code.



Father Stu

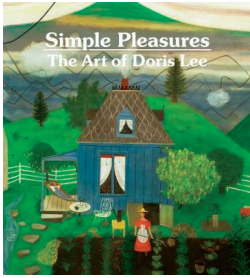
(2022, directed by Rosalind Ross)



Mark Wahlberg stars as Stuart Long, a former amateur boxer with a minor criminal record and no solid job prospects, who moves to Hollywood in pursuit of an acting career and finds his calling instead as a Catholic priest. Based on a true-life story, this movie asks viewers to ponder the meaning of life through the life of this man. Born into an unhappy and strained family, he loses his younger brother to disease at an early age. His alcoholic father leaves his family and his mother struggles. He finds some sense of belonging and self-worth through boxing, which is cut short by injuries that could become life-threatening. Wandering through life, unsure of himself, feeling that all the cards are stacked against him, he makes his way to Hollywood. He ends up working in the meat department of a supermarket where he meets a young Sunday school teacher. Undaunted by her initial rejection, he joins her church, and then finds himself being baptized and considering her words concerning God's presence in his life. After suffering a near death experience, he takes these words to heart, and sets out on a path to become a priest. Much ridicule and rejection follow, but his life in the ring has taught him the power to get up again. When he finally is allowed to join a seminary, he learns that he has a progressive muscular disorder that will kill him in short time. At this point, the diocese again wants to cut ties with him, but he persists and is eventually ordained a priest before he dies. It is his rendering of words that gives the other characters, as well as the audience, pause for thought. He tells the bishop, the congregation, jailed prisoners on an outreach program, and his own parents, that all lives have meaning, and that God has never given up on us. He begins to see his suffering as strength, as grace, as belief, as a load also carried by God. He shares that with others in ways that make everyone consider their own choices and how they view and treat others. He speaks in words that everyone understands and can relate to. This is a powerful message, and a powerful movie. Highly recommended.

(REVIEW BY KAREN B.)

QUICK TAKES



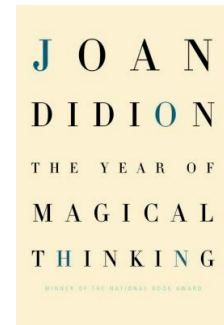
Simple Pleasures: The Art of Doris Lee by Doris Lee

A great collection of 60-plus pieces of her work during the 30s and 40s that showcases her early career American Scene paintings, drawings, and prints, as well as her commercial fabric and pottery designs.



The Vanishing Princess: Stories by Jenny Diski

Short stories that are mysterious, subversive, and feminist--from a storybook tale of a princess trapped in a tower to the inner thoughts of a housewife.



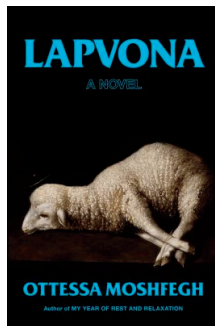
The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion

A heartbreaking personal experience by the celebrated writer investigates grief in its most raw form.



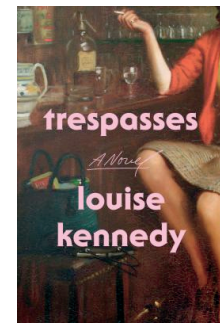
The World Record Book of Racist Stories by Amber Ruffin & Lacey Lamar

Can something be funny AND disturbing? Obviously comical to a point, this book is a stark reminder on how people of color truly are treated differently in ways both subtle and outwardly cruel.



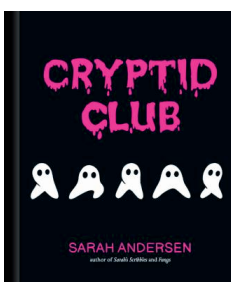
Lapvona by Ottessa Moshfegh

This disturbing but riveting story set in a bleak medieval fiefdom follows Marek, a poor shepherd boy, who captures the unlikely attention of the village's lord.



Trespasses by Louise Kennedy

Set against the backdrop of Northern Ireland during the Troubles, a young schoolteacher named Cushla begins an affair with an older, married barrister.

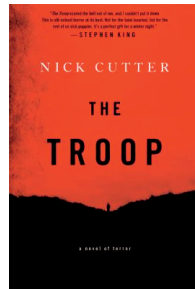


Cryptid Club by Sarah Anderson

A series of cryptid-based comics by artist and author Sarah Anderson, Cryptid Club features the most overwhelmingly adorable monsters you've ever seen. The Loch Ness Monster, Fresno Nightcrawlers, and the perennial favorite Bigfoot are all featured in these not-so-creepy vignettes.

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART...OR STOMACH

BY JILL J.



The Troop
by Nick Cutter

Heavily inspired by William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, *The Troop* is one of my favorite recent horror reads. The story follows a small Boy Scout troop and their leader as they camp out on a secluded island for the weekend. The boys themselves have complicated relationships with one another, growing together or apart as they grow older. Nick Cutter deftly explores the boys' psyches as they get situated on the island, but the action ramps up when a stranger washes up on the shore--emaciated, ravenously hungry, and contagious. After the stranger and the troop leader die, it's up to the boys to make it back home.

At times a deep exploration of boyhood relationships akin to Stephen King's *The Body*, a harrowing survival tale, and grotesque body horror, *The Troop* is a modern horror classic. Be aware of violence against people and animals, gore, child endangerment/death, and just plain grossness. If you can stomach it, *The Troop* is a worthy addition to the genre.

A SAGA OF A FAMILY

BY REBECCA K.

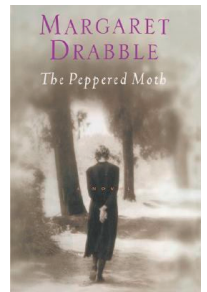
Kaleidoscope by Cecily Wong begins in a way that most books wouldn't dare to start and sets a tone. Siblings, sisters more precisely, and a set of parents who truly love each other and are working and coexisting together. Each member fulfilling and playing their assigned role, often one they don't always relish. Each doing their part to maintain the status quo and to be what they feel the other needs. This is how many families cope and live whether they realize it or not. The good daughter, the daughter that bucks the system, and parents working as a team so that life can continue to propel forward toward success. The Brighton family is this family: parents working toward their dream; the dutiful, older daughter always doing what is right and helping them along the way; and the younger daughter wanting to be her own person but also wanting to be supportive. The main character, Riley, struggles with maintaining her close relationships while dealing with feelings of inadequacy and balancing expectations versus doing what she desires. What happens to such a family when the unexpected happens and that careful balance is upended? Riley begins to struggle with what she knows and what she learns about herself, each of her family members, and their sometimes tenuous roles in the family. She struggles with grief and the freedom and disappointment of doing what is right for her and what is right for the family. Her parents, we come to realize, have the same struggles. Ultimately she, and everyone else, figures out what is right for them but not before a lot of soul-searching and unveiling of secrets.

IS DNA DESTINY?

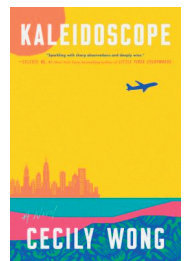
BY KAREN B.



The Peppered Moth
by Margaret Drabble

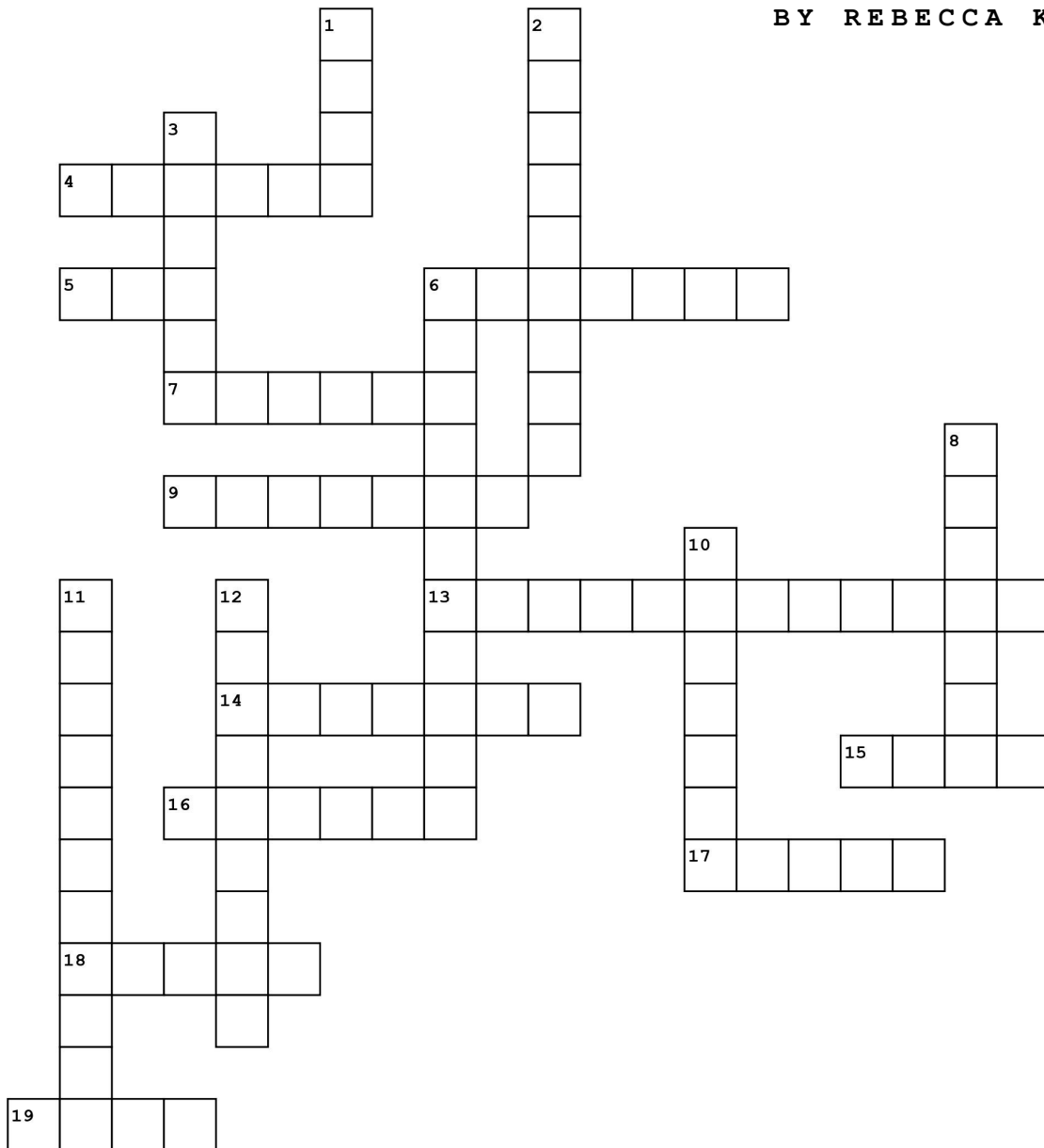


The title of this book refers to environmental adaption, which the author takes and applies to humans in a novelized form. It follows the lives of three women over the course of a century. Set in a bleak, industrialized small city in the northern part of England, it begins at the start of the 20th century with one woman. She is a gifted scholar who through dint of both hard work and talent makes it out of her hometown to Cambridge University. Forced through circumstances back to where she grew up, she starts her own family that continues its course. Her daughter grows up in other towns in the area, and her granddaughter is a bona fide Londoner, but both are invariably drawn back in many ways to the village where their ancestors have lived for centuries. Set against the backdrop of an 8000-year-old skeletal discovery, the granddaughter learns that she is a direct descendant of this prehistoric person through her matrilineal DNA. Her young adulthood must now grapple with questions of how different or how alike will she be to the generations who have gone before her, and will different choices make any difference in the long run.



LET'S GIVE IT A WHIRL

BY REBECCA K.



Across

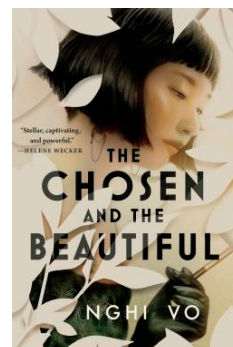
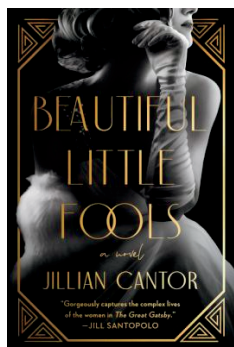
4. one-eyed, one-horned flying ____ people eater
5. Japanese currency
6. horse or car
7. number of time zones in Russia
9. horned mammal
13. name or action by imitation of natural sounds
14. "Inconceivable!"
15. largest organ
16. little ____ annie
17. who is "buried" in Grant's tomb
18. greatest Beethoven symphony
19. not a noun

Down

1. number of Great Lakes
2. four tennis championships
3. packed with vitamin c
6. Disney bounty hunter
8. Renaissance man
10. famous suffragette
11. show or national park
12. quoth the Raven

BETTER THAN A SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT

BY REBECCA K.



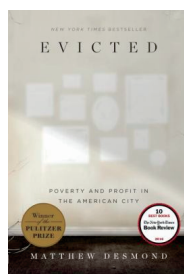
Like many people, I often forget which books I've requested from the library so when I get the pickup notice it's like a present. When I got a notice that two books were available, *Beautiful Little Fools* by Jillian Cantor and *The Chosen and the Beautiful* by Nghi Vo, I had completely forgotten that they use the same subject matter for the base of their stories. In this case, the subject matter is one of my personal favorites, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, so what was supposed to be just a pleasure read turned into an enjoyable exercise of comparing and contrasting texts. I won't bore you with any of my observations, though.

Beautiful Little Fools by Jillian Cantor reads like a whodunnit following three characters from the original Jordan Baker, Daisy Buchanan, and Catherine McCoy, the sister of Myrtle Wilson, and a detective hired by Mayor Wolfsheim to find out who killed Jay Gatsby. Since these female characters are just supporting players or in the case of Catherine, barely mentioned, in *The Great Gatsby* we don't know much about them. This novel gives them intricate backstories, told in the voice of each of the women, that are woven together and lead them to the events of that one fateful summer on Long Island. All three women are no longer just pretty little fools but people with wants, desires, messy lives, and real connections to Jay Gatsby. They are dynamic women wishing they can be more and have more than what 1920s society dictates. This novel does a very good job of delivering believable, empathetic characters and taking away some of the mystique of Jay Gatsby by making him even more flawed. The events of the original story are fleshed out in a new way and wrapped up at the end in a very feminist manner.

The Chosen and the Beautiful by Nghi Vo is done completely differently and a story that I liked, dare I say, more than *The Great Gatsby*. For this book I did something I don't normally do, I read the book but also listened to the audiobook when I was unable to pick up a book. Listening helped me to better engage with the story which focuses on one character in particular, Jordan Baker, my personal favorite, but Jordan with a twist. Instead of being just a white, southern lady from a wealthy family, she is the adopted Vietnamese, queer, magical daughter of a white, wealthy, southern family. She is an outsider and oddity in a very uptight, conventional community. Like the original character, she is very independent and likes to challenge the way a lady should act. The first focus in the book is the relationship between Jordan and Daisy which is definitely one-sided and very compelling. When she moves to New York City to live with her unconventional aunt, we see Jordan come into her own. This part of the story paints a mesmerizing tale of what everyone wants to believe the Jazz Age was all about with excess, nefarious dealings, love, reimagination, and reinvention. The author takes scenes and characters from *The Great Gatsby*, turns them upside down, flushes them out, and gives them greater life and meaning. She also adds captivating new experiences for the characters so they become more real and likable than they were in the original, especially Gatsby and Nick. Jordan's relationship with Nick especially becomes far more believable, absorbing, and poignant. As the story unfolds, Jordan engages in self-reflection as she comes in contact with other Asian people that really make her see and challenge how she has fit and will fit into her current society. This is a beautiful story and one of the best things I have read in a while

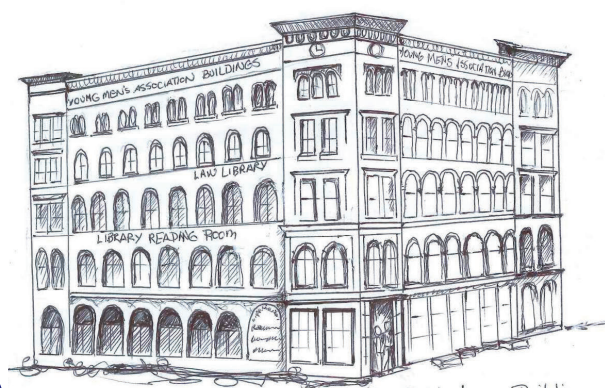
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

BY NICOLE B.



In anticipation of his upcoming book *Poverty, by America* (out March 2023), I read the Pulitzer Prize-winning and sociological classic *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond. Although published in 2016 and covering the years around the 2008 financial crisis, I found this book as timely and powerful as ever, maybe even more so since so many of us are currently feeling the pressure of the seemingly endless rise to the cost of living.

Desmond takes you into the lives of several people in Milwaukee who are experiencing unstable housing and eviction along with the landlords of the properties in question. We are with them as they live through unsanitary and unsafe housing conditions, as they see their belongings boxed up and put on the curb, and as they deal with the complex welfare and court system. You see fully the cruel cyclical nature of poverty and eviction and the complications eviction brings to so many aspects of daily living such as employment, health, child care, ownership of possessions, and family structures. It feels insurmountable and hopeless--that is until you understand real change can happen with refocused priorities in how we value and care for our fellow citizens. The epilogue and corresponding reflection by the author are essential for understanding where we can go from here to help establish housing as a basic human right. A great education on an important topic--highly recommended.



The Saint James Building
home of the original library
in Buffalo: The Young Men's Association

ARTWORK BY SUE K.

LET'S GIVE IT A WHIRL (ANSWERS)

ACROSS

4. purple
5. yen
6. mustang
7. eleven
9. narwhal
13. onomatopoeia
14. Vizzini
15. skin
16. orphan
17. noone
18. third
19. verb

DOWN

1. five
2. grand slam
3. orange
6. Mandalorian
8. DaVinci
10. Stanton
11. Yellowstone
12. nevermore

THE CHECKOUT STAFF

Christina L., Chloe S., Jill J., Karen B., Michaela M., Nicole B., Nicole D., Rebecca K., Sue K., and Stuart R.

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