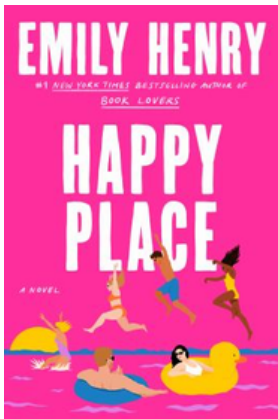


THE CHECKOUT

A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY
PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE KENMORE BRANCH LIBRARY

NEW & NOTEWORTHY



BY LISA S.

Happy Place follows the story of Harriet, a brilliant surgical resident whose wit is only outmatched by her drive to do good, and her ex-fiancé Wyn, a steadfast Montanan who struggles with the world's perception of him as simple and light-hearted. After calling off their engagement, the two delayed sharing the news in hopes of avoiding reality for as long as possible. They're now forced to navigate an annual trip to an idyllic Maine town with their beloved college friend group under the guise that they're still engaged. If you were playing New England summer bingo, this coastal Maine setting would fill every square. Endless fried seafood? Check. Fair rides that make you question that seafood? Check. Portrait-worthy landscapes everywhere you look? Check. Taffy, ice cream, and sweets galore? Check. Grumpy locals? Check. **Happy Place** has it all!

Henry alternates between past and present to paint the whole picture of Harriet and Wyn's love story from its beautiful beginning to its agonizing end. The present week is filled with loads of silly adventures and chemistry filled moments that make the two question their decision, but reality outside of this summer time capsule is never fully out of mind. A treat of a read that has you rooting for Harriet and Wyn to both discover and define their own needs, while figuring out if their changing lives will lead them back to each other or farther apart.



BY JILL J.

Warning: I won't be able to do this book justice with this review, but you should take my lack of eloquence as proof of this memoir and Lamya H's brilliance.

Hijab Butch Blues isn't framed as a traditional queer memoir that follows the now-familiar coming out narrative: realization of one's difference, internal struggle, burgeoning acceptance, coming out to family and friends, backlash/acceptance by loved ones, and finally acceptance and love of oneself. These are present in this memoir, but the story told isn't so linear or cut-and-dry.

Lamya, a hijabi Muslim immigrant, explores her queerness through close readings of the Quran. While in the midst of a crush on a female teacher, Lamya reads the surah of Maryam and interprets her as a lesbian. She explores the potential nonbinary identity of Allah, reassesses the wisdom of continuing to fight losing battles through the story of Yunus, and leaps into the unknown like Nuh with his ark. Being queer and Muslim (or religious in any way) may seem at-odds for some, but Lamya H interrogates and celebrates her multitudinous identities.

Hijab Butch Blues is an exceptional memoir--intelligent, accessible, and highly readable.

READ A BANNED BOOK

BY NICOLE B.



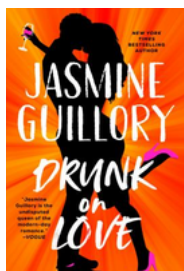
Gender Queer
by Maia Kobabe

One of the most banned books in the country, this graphic memoir is the author's honest portrayal of eir* journey through understanding eir gender expression and sexual orientation. This is a personal story, told from the viewpoint of someone who spent a majority of eir lifetime feeling that the binary limits of "boy" and "girl" did not define em. Despite what those who want to ban books will tell you, Gender Queer is nothing to be afraid of. Kobabe's story can help others who are questioning their identity or have gone through similar experiences, while also helping to foster empathy and understanding towards those who may have had a different journey to gender than your own.

*e, em, eir are gender-neutral pronouns used by Maia Kobabe

PROJECT ROMANCE

BY CHRISTINA L.

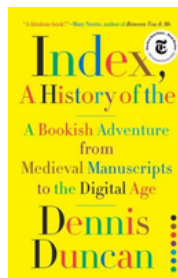


Drunk on Love
by Jasmine Guillory

Drunk on Love follows the story of an ambitious young entrepreneur named Margot who is focused on running her family's growing winery alongside her brother. Margot is determined to put a crazy evening out with the girls behind her, only to find out that the guy named Luke she met the night before was just hired to work for her at the winery! How can she stay professional with so much chemistry between them? By the looks of the cover (turn the fan on please!) they struggle to stay apart for long. This new Jasmine Guillory read was so fun and it pairs well with...you guessed it...Wine. :)

ADVENTURES IN BOOK HISTORY

BY KAREN B.



Index, A History of the: A Bookish Adventure from Medieval Manuscripts to the Digital Age
by Dennis Duncan.

This clever and amusing book packs a lot of history into telling the story of how the lowly index came to be. Rather than an afterthought, the author makes the case that an index is a useful and necessary tool for quickly locating pieces of information and topics covered in a book. He also makes the case that creating a good subject index still requires human intervention because it is more than a computer-generated list of word appearances. The framework he uses for telling this story is that all book changes have come with grumbling and cries of laziness on the parts of both readers and teachers. Beginning with the ancient Greeks who thought that reading a book instead of reciting it by memory would weaken the brain, he then moves to professors thinking that students would never sit and read (and ponder) a book in full anymore if they could just quickly scan an index to see what it is about. Along the way, he injects a fair amount of humor about how indexes have been used as ways to satirize one's literary enemies and mock adversaries. Educational, enjoyable, artsy, and imaginative, this book will appeal to many readers.



Looking down Broadway
Buffalo Public Library on right
Lyceum theatre on left.

ARTWORK BY SUE K.



THEY'RE QUEEEER

AUTHENTIC PUNK



BY JILL J.

Loving horror movies is complicated when you're queer--villains are often steeped in transphobia and homophobia, not to mention the misogyny that permeates so many films of the genre. But part of the fun of being queer is subverting and reimagining the world into what we want it to be, including those once-harmful tropes that are so often the standbys of horror movies.

It Came From the Closet is a collection of 25 essays written by trans and/or queer authors about reclaiming elements of the horror genre into their own stories. Like any compilation, there are hits and misses, but even the misses still have something interesting to say and reconfigure well-known movies into something new.

Standout essays include Carmen Maria Machado's "Both Ways," which (correctly!) claims the new camp classic *Jennifer's Body* for the LGBTQ+ community, and "Notes on Sleepaway Camp" by Viet Dinh, who, in a move inspired by Susan Sontag, argues for putting the camp back in *Sleepaway Camp*. Other favorites are "Indescribable" by Carrow Narby (*The Blob and Society*), "Loving Annie Hayworth" by Laura Maw (*The Birds*), and "A Demon-Girl's Guide to Life" by S. Trimble (*The Exorcist*).

While it helps to be familiar with the movies discussed in *It Came From the Closet*, the essays are all well-written enough that even casual horror fans will come away with hopefully a new understanding and appreciation for a genre that hasn't always done right by the LGBTQ+ community.



BY IZZY B, GUEST WRITER

Most of the memoirs I read are relatively brief and contain some level of separation--I usually already know the celebrities I'm reading about. I can expect a bit of what they're going to talk about, and by the end of the book my perception changes drastically, forming someone who's different but also the same. Obviously, that's the point. But when I picked up Laura Jane Grace's *Tranny*, it was the opposite. I really only knew the Laura Jane Grace of now, from her more recent music. Her punk rock music struck me as vibrant, vivid, and catchy. But following the path of her life, picking up the bits and pieces that led to the slow formation of Laura Jane Grace, made for a really surprising and captivating read. She details how both her dysphoric childhood and misfit attitude inspired her to get involved with the punk rock scene and anarchist politics. Through the trials, tribulations, and very rare triumphs of her famous band, *Against Me!*, we learn how even a music industry built upon community under anarchy can be influenced by the promise of success. And Grace describes how she learns to reconcile her identity as a loving parent, a driven punk rocker, and a proud trans woman, all in the self-titled "Confessions of Punk Rock's Most Infamous Anarchist Sellout." I only regret that I didn't find out that the audiobook version of this memoir is narrated by the author earlier, since I'm sure the story is much more poignant told by Grace herself. Now that I'm listening to more of her discography, I'd have to say my favorite two songs are "I Was a Teenage Anarchist" and "True Trans Soul Rebel."

LISTEN TO
THE
AUDIOBOOK
ON



Libby.

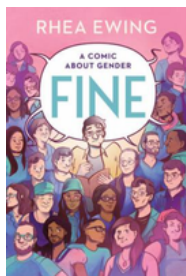
YA GRAPHIC NOVEL MUST READ



BY CHRISTINA L.

Aiden is a 14-year-old Filipino American searching to find himself during the chaotic middle-to-high school years. Aiden finds himself spending the summer at scout camp where he is confronted with abuse, bullying, and toxic masculinity. This self-autobiographical story by Mike Curato sheds light on the experience gay youth are forced to endure on their road to self-identity. If you are wondering what all the graphic novel buzz is about (or you may already be well aware) this is the one you should read sooner than later. The story with its stark black and white images has the ability to pull you in and feel every bit of emotion right along the way. Beyond all of this is the sheer importance of the message: what acceptance can do for a young person learning their way, and just what are the costs of denying young people the simple right to find their identity in the mess of this crazy beautiful world.

EVERYONE IS...



BY NICOLE B.

"What if we root acceptance and belonging in the simple fact that we are human beings...that we are living creatures who deserve acceptance and deserve love?"

The above quote, taken directly from one of the people interviewed for this book, is a good summary of what will stay with you after you read this powerful graphic novel. Rhea Ewing has gathered years' worth of interviews and their own self-reflection to give a good primer on gender expression and identity. This book is a way to better inform yourself about issues of gender, beyond the hyped-up controversies the media and politicians present. The stories are varied and deftly show the wide spectrum of gender expression and the real people behind each experience. This is an important book for anyone looking to broaden their understanding, compassion, and empathy.

THERE'S NO RIGHT TIME FOR LOVE



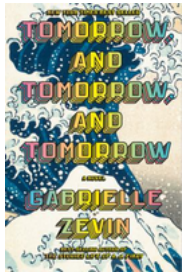
BY LISA S.

One Last Stop
by Casey McQuiston

Mostly a love story with a splash of sci-fi, *One Last Stop* follows 23-year-old August, a college student and recent New York City transplant. Having perfected a life of keeping others at arm's length, August has little to unpack when she arrives in her new Brooklyn apartment other than her deep-rooted trust issues. No one is more surprised than August when she starts to build an open and trusting community with her new roommates. Her new friends include a particularly gifted transgender psychic and a recluse tattoo artist hopelessly in love with their accountant by day and legendary drag queen by night neighbor. Having a new support system is critical because August may have accidentally fallen in love with a leather-clad punk rocker named Jane on the subway. Under normal circumstances, this would be terrifying but lovely--it's just the unfortunate fact that Jane is actually from the 1970s and has unintentionally time traveled to the present day. Oh, and she's physically stuck on the Q Train indefinitely. Relationships are...complex.

One Last Stop is chockablock full of the beautiful moments that so frequently pass most of us by, but mean so much to those who have limited time together. McQuiston lets you into this precious space as August and Jane work to solve the puzzle of how Jane came to be stuck and slowly discover more of themselves and each other. All good things must come to an end when August finds out the Q Train will be closing at the end of the summer. The quest is on, not only to figure out how Jane came to be, but what the future could look like for Jane and August together. Can they find a way to keep Jane in the present, and if so, is that where she belongs?

A GAME OF FRIENDSHIP



BY LISA S.

Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow
by Gabrielle Zevin

“This life is filled with inescapable moral compromises. We should do what we can to avoid the easy ones.”

Tomorrow is a story of friendship and how beautiful, painful, and deeply human it can be. Zevin immerses you in a coming-of-age story about Sam and Sadie, two childhood friends who become icons of the video gaming industry. Sam and Sadie meet by chance in a Los Angeles hospital waiting room as 11-year-olds and immediately bond over the joy that is Super Mario Brothers. After a falling out, the two reconnect on the other side of the country in the bowels of a Boston MBTA station while Sam attends Harvard and Sadie attends MIT. Their friendship re-sparks and they collaborate on creating a video game that kicks off their journey as prominent and respected leaders in gaming.

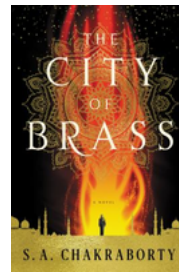
The next two decades showcase the struggle of artistic collaboration as Sam and Sadie build a company together and continue to produce powerhouse videogames. The strain of notoriety pushes Sam further into the limelight, while Sadie retreats into her own world, focusing on art rather than fame. Zevin allows you into the minds of two brilliant and complex characters that struggle with understanding their relationship to one another, gender norms, racial inequity, loss, shame, forgiveness, and how to wake up each day and still choose to move forward. No videogame knowledge needed to enjoy this novel, and plenty of 80s and 90s pop culture references to meet your nostalgia quota.



Ives branch
hooused in the Dom
Polski Building on Brantway

THE CHECKOUT: SUMMER 2023

FANTASTICAL FICTION



BY SUE K.

Two recent discoveries in the fantasy/sci-fi categories are well worth a look but for very different reasons and subject. S.A. Chakrabarty's Daevabad Trilogy is a complex complete world unto itself which demands a high level of attention but will reward you for your efforts with great characters and cultures. Set loosely around a sort of Middle Eastern djinn theme, the author creates five different magical societies each with its own cultures and grievances. The main three characters of the first book, *City of Brass*, each hail from combinations and intermarriages among the five tribes. Wars and grudges last centuries here and relationships are played out against ancient and current prejudices. Vividly written on every page, the trilogy will stay in your heart and mind a long time.

The second author, Charlaine Harris, is probably best known for her Sookie Stackhouse novels which were the basis for the HBO series *True Blood*. The trilogy I discovered is her *Gunnie Rose* series, worthy of a series in itself. The title character is a gunnie, a person paid to protect people and cargo in a dystopian USA, which has reverted to a very lawless Wild West after its governmental downfall. In the series, Tsar Nicholas and his family escape Russia and set up a home in the general area of California and Oregon, complete with their Rasputin-style wizards. If this all sounds pretty bizarre, suspension of disbelief will work you well into the plots before you actually stand back and say...Huh?...Trust me, it's worth the plunge!

The Daevabad Trilogy is in order: *The City of Brass*, *The Kingdom of Copper*, and *The Empire of Gold*. The *Gunnie Rose* series is: *An Easy Death*, *A Longer Fall*, and *The Russian Cage*.



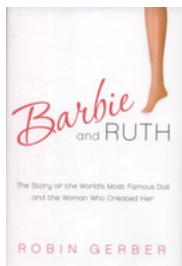
ARTWORK BY SUE K.

ISSUE #5

LIFE IN PLASTIC

BY CHLOE S.

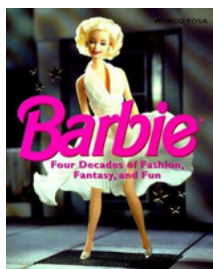
Who else is stupid excited for Greta Gerwig's *Barbie*, starring Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, coming out this summer? Check out the following picks to get ready for it:



Barbie and Ruth: The Story of the World's Most Famous Doll and the Woman Who Created Her

by Robin Gerber

This is a biography of Ruth Handler, creator of Barbie and co-founder of the toy company Mattel. One of the first women in the corporate toy world, the book details the start-to-finish journey of Barbie's development and Ruth's personal life struggles throughout. Modeling Barbie and Ken off her children of the same name, her life wasn't always as picture-perfect as Barbie's Dreamhouse.



Barbie: Four Decades of Fashion, Fantasy, and Fun

by Marco Tosa

Part coffee table book and part essay commentary, this goes into detail about Barbie's cultural impact on fashion and women. From the details of her designs replicating top fashion houses like Chanel and Dior, to the impact the first Black doll Christie made, this is a great overview of how the doll is more than just meets the eye.



Barbie: All Dolled Up: Celebrating 50 Years of Barbie

by Jennie Damato

A fun, scrapbook-style book to flip through and pull out taking you through the icon's style evolution. Perfect to read through with kids!

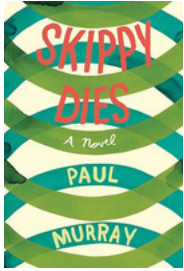
THE TIES THAT BIND

BY REBECCA K.



Pineapple Street by Jenny Jackson is not the typical romantic comedy where a middle-class girl from Rhode Island marries into an elite Brooklyn family and after a big faux pas, everyone lives happily ever after. The novel focuses primarily on Sasha and her two sisters-in-law, Darley and Georgiana, and their relationships with each other, their parents, spouses, and boyfriends. It's about expectations and how to manage your own along with those of others. Especially when one of the expectations is to stay within the few-block enclave that your ancestors have lived in for decades and maintain the status quo. Sacha is a successful artist who is trying to manage a world that she loves and a world in which she is considered an outsider. Darley married for love and gave up a career for motherhood because that was what was expected. Georgiana, the youngest, begins to start her adult life when her eyes are opened to life outside of her privilege. Societal norms and relationships are challenged and strengthened when healthy dialogue begins. It's a wonderful book about love, family, and acceptance.

SOMETHING EPIC



BY MICHAELA M .

Skippy Dies by Paul Murray

The title holds nothing back--within the first few pages, Daniel "Skippy" Juster, the 14-year-old boy at the center of this book, indeed dies on the floor of a local donut shop. But nothing can truly ruin or spoil the rest of this captivating story from Irish writer Paul Murray, which traces exactly what led to those shocking opening moments. *Skippy Dies* takes place at a boarding school in Dublin, Seabrook College, and revolves around not only the titular protagonist, but the many people who cross his path. Readers will quickly get sucked into a world with a colorful cast of characters--from Skippy's best friend Ruprecht, an overweight prodigy obsessed with string theory, to the "Automator," the headmaster who rules the school with an iron fist, to Carl, the troubled drug dealer vying with Skippy for their shared crush, Lorelei. At its heart, *Skippy Dies* is an epic comedy, and at over 600 pages, it covers a lot of ground. Don't let the length discourage you; I was invested in each and every storyline and found it to be a very human and entertaining, and, yes, tragic exploration of the difficulties of adolescence.

WOMEN HELPING WOMEN

BY KAREN B .

The Lost Apothecary by Sarah Penner

Poisons and murder, not my usual cup of tea. This novel puts both of these elements to good use, however, in a dual timeline plot. The earlier timeline takes places in 1791 London and follows the first-person narratives of a female apothecary and her young visitor who becomes a friend. The apothecary dispenses poison in the form of herbal salves and medicinal tinctures to women who want to rid themselves of abusive men in their lives. She engages in this work as a way to help other women because of earlier ills done to herself. Along the way, she records their names and circumstances in a hidden register meant to memorialize them so that the lives of ordinary women will be remembered down the ages too. The modern-day timeline follows a woman trying to unravel this history against the backdrop of her own troubled marriage and frustrated attempts to redefine her own life as an aspiring historian and researcher. Sprinkled with historical details and a little magic, the three women come to terms in their separate ways with how best to live their own lives. Both heartbreaking and inspiring, this fast-paced historical novel offers readers a new perspective on lives of women both past and present.

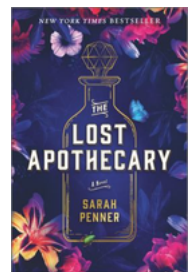
AMERICAN MADE



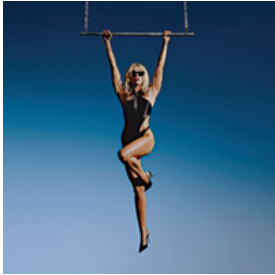
BY NICOLE B .

Is poverty an unfortunate but unavoidable consequence of society or is it a condition that's been constructed by deliberate policy and discrimination? In *Poverty, by America*, writer Matthew Desmond argues the latter, and gives solid reasons why. He calls on all of us to be "poverty abolitionists" and to reject the notion that America is a land of scarce resources unable to provide help to those in need. Simple solutions like clamping down on tax avoidance & evasion by the top 1% of households and mega corporations, and the regulation of companies that pay low wages while counting on welfare and food stamps to supplement their employees income, could dramatically change the lives of the majority of Americans. Better schools, safer communities, and more stable families could result from just a few changes... so why don't we do it? In an economy based on greed and power and with a populace stoked with fear of scarcity, it's our mindset that needs to change first. This book was eye-opening and will help you think differently about what we accept as normal in our country. Highly recommended.

[Want to broaden your understanding of the scarcity and zero sum mindset? Read *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee](#)



LISTEN TO THIS



BY CHLOE S .

Endless Summer Vacation Miley Cyrus

Miley has come out with one of her best albums yet with a perfect blend of what she does best--pop and rock. "Flowers" has been a viral hit with its catchy chorus and public speculation on how it is a play on her and ex-husband Liam Hemsworth's wedding song, but there's much more (and quite honestly better) songs on this record. "River" and "Violet Chemistry" are fun, show-stopping pop anthems made for dancing on the table. "Jaded" is a sing-with-the-roof-down tune on how she has moved on without being bitter after a series of life changes. The closing ballad "Wonder Woman" was written days after she lost some special people in her life and subsequently moves you to tears.

You can never predict where Miley will head next, and that's the beauty of her artistry. After being born into the spotlight, becoming a Disney Channel icon, and her fair share of media controversies afterwards, this record is mature where it needs to be while simultaneously weaving in her zest for life.

MEMORABLE MEMOIR

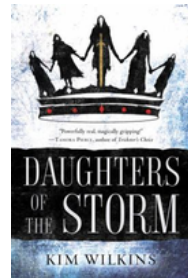
BY MICHAELA M .

The Copenhagen Trilogy: Childhood, Youth, Dependency by Tove Ditlevsen

Tove Ditlevsen was a Danish writer who wrote novels, short stories, and poetry but is most remembered for her astounding memoirs, collectively known as *The Copenhagen Trilogy*. Each entry in the trilogy captures a stage of Ditlevsen's life, which was fraught with tragedies and contradictions but also a lifetime love of words. Raised in Copenhagen in the early 20th century, Ditlevsen grew up in a working-class family as an isolated and sensitive child. *Childhood*, the first volume, covers these early years, along with the emergence of her love of poetry, her idiosyncratic parents, and an intense friendship with a friend named Ruth. *Youth* traces Ditlevsen's experiences as a young woman trying to gain independence and navigate low-paying jobs as a struggling writer, as well as formative romantic encounters. The final part, *Dependency*, is almost certainly the darkest of the three. It covers Ditlevsen's four marriages, her relationship with being a mother, and battle with severe drug addiction. She gained posthumous critical attention and respect for her writing, particularly in Denmark, after she died in 1976. Despite knowing nothing about Ditlevsen, I was blown away by the incisive writing and found her story to be haunting, immersive, and impossible to put down.

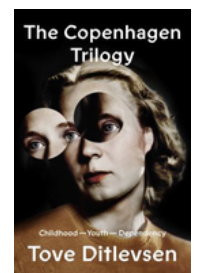
For an interesting overview of her work, check out this New York Time's article on Ditlevsen's legacy: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/07/obituaries/tove-ditlevsen-overlooked.html>

DAUGHTERS AND SISTERS



BY SUE K .

I love discovering authors who have a great many books to their credit. I see those authors as future reassurance when the book well runs dry. A recent experience with Kim Wilkins's two-part series *Daughters of the Storm* and *Sisters of the Fire* ends on an incomplete note so hopefully a third book is in the offing. The genre is fantasy/sci-fi and beautifully written. The five main characters are all very different daughters of the king, in a kingdom roiled with strife. They improbably come together to save their father's life but at great personal costs, unique to each daughter. The second book in the series fleshes out all the consequences of each sister's choices in terms of their personal destinies and that of their kingdom. As one of six daughters in my family, I found the conflicts and challenges drawn with a clear stroke and with beauty even in moments of greatest conflict. I hope Kim has another book in store.



REEL REVIEW



BY CHRISTINA L.

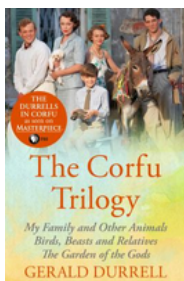
The Durrells in Corfu
(TV Series, 2016-2019)

PBS Masterpiece aired this film adaptation of Gerald Durrell’s classic memoirs back in 2016. Set in the 1930s in the Southwest region of England, the show begins with a struggling widow with four children, Louisa, who decides to move the family to the Greek island of Corfu to improve their lives. Louisa and her small group of rebellious children quickly fall into a love/hate relationship with the beautiful beaches and scenery of their new home. All very different and equally hilarious, the four kids begin to find their way and win over your heart. Her youngest kiddo, Gerry, only wants to be friends with animals, while her oldest son, Larry, is working hard (or hardly working) on writing the next literary masterpiece that will make him famous. Leslie is obsessed with being a brute man and repeatedly tries to solidify his place as the “man of the house”. Finally, there is Margo (by far my favorite character), who is obsessed with becoming a glamorous woman, mirroring the images she sees in magazines. Louisa is just trying to keep everyone alive and somewhat happy while keeping her own sanity in the process. If you are looking for something heartwarming, funny, and filled with lovable characters (Ted Lasso is ending people!), this is a great series to pick up on DVD at the library.

Also interested in the books? The library has those for you too!

Check out the memoirs Gerald Durrell wrote. They are available in eBook on the Libby app and offer an enchanting experience where nature, animals, and people collide.

READ IT ON



FINDING HOME AGAIN



BY LISA S.

All Rhodes Lead Here
by Mariana Zapata

This book shares the story of Aurora De La Torre, a gifted songwriter who recently parted ways with her long-time boyfriend and country music icon. After staying behind the scenes for years and supporting his career (read: writing all his songs), Aurora is discarded by her boyfriend and his overbearing family and decides to return to her childhood home in the mountains of Colorado. Steadfast in piecing together a new life in a place she hasn’t visited since the loss of her mother, trials and tribulations ensue. A critical part of building a new life is finding a place to lay your head at night, and luckily Aurora snags one of the last apartment rentals of the summer. Things are off to a chaotic start when she finds out the apartment owner, Rhodes, didn’t know his above-garage apartment was listed and booked. A hairbrained scheme to make money for a new guitar, Rhodes’s teenage son, Amos, listed and rented the apartment without his knowledge. Aurora is allowed to stay, but her new landlord is not happy about it. Zapata takes you on Aurora’s healing journey as she creates a foundation for this chapter of her life, rekindling friendships from the past, and challenging herself with new experiences. It doesn’t take long for Aurora to become a warm and welcomed presence in the lives of Rhodes and Amos. Aurora sees a good in Rhodes that brings awareness to the amount of manipulation in her past relationship and helps her see her own strength, value, and gumption. The grumpiest of grumps, Aurora helps Rhodes process a lot of limiting fears he’s lived by up to this point, and creates a few cracks in his grumpy facade. The lines start to blur between landlord and tenant the more time they spend in each other’s company, and Aurora needs to figure out if she’s going to let her past dictate her future, or if she’s found her home again in Colorado and with Rhodes.

THIS BOOK IS NOT AVAILABLE IN OUR CATALOG, BUT YOU CAN CHECK IT OUT THROUGH INTERLIBRARY LOAN



BOUND IN A NUTSHELL

BY SUE K.



On a recent trip I finished the quiet sleeper of a book *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. This book is an insider's education into the Communist Party's historical takeover of a country with a long and complicated monarchical past. Most people are familiar with the tragedy of the final Tsar and his family, but this novel follows a gentleman born to wealth and privilege, caught up in the frenzied aftermath of that tragedy and the beginning of another. The clumsy early Communists swept up lives and livelihoods, imprisoning and killing anyone they chose to. The title character is given house arrest in the attic of a luxury hotel on the whims of the Moscow upstarts, merely for having been born wealthy. The book is a mostly joyful account of how he makes the most of his circumstances, by befriending hotel staff and guests alike, creating a rich small world within the confines of the hotel. This is a book rich in people, friendships, risks, and re-creation, and in the end triumph over straightened circumstances.

A WAND-ERFUL READ

BY CHLOE S.

Beyond the Wand: The Magic and Mayhem of Growing Up a Wizard
by Tom Felton

What could a 35-year-old possibly write a memoir about at such a young age? I would agree with you, but Tom Felton is not just any 35-year-old-- he is a wizard. Felton chronicles his early life and his foray into acting, including his half-haphazard introduction to one of the most famous franchises on the planet. What is most interesting though is his life post-Harry Potter, where his number one enemy is addiction rather than the boy who lived. Written like he is having an open conversation with you along with a fantastic prologue written by Emma Watson, this is a must-read for any Harry Potter fan.

TIME TRAVEL MEETS BEES

BY KAREN B.



Go Tell the Bees that I Am Gone
by Diana Gabaldon

This novel is the latest book in the *Outlander* series that follows the adventures of modern-day Claire Randall from England with 18th-century Jamie Fraser from Scotland. For fans of both the miniseries and the books, this latest installment will not disappoint. Claire and Jamie are now in 1779 North Carolina, during the Revolutionary War. Their daughter, Brianna, and her husband, Roger, and their two children, have joined them there from the 20th century. Up on Fraser's Ridge, life goes on amidst the preparations for war. Jamie's nephew Ian, both Mohawk and Scottish, and his Quaker wife, Rachel, are there as well starting their family. All these characters get caught up in ongoing adventures regarding incidents from their pasts that have current repercussions in a growing political storm. Lord Grey also appears in this book, having been sent to the colonies to help suppress rebellion on behalf of the English Crown. Jamie's son William is in the middle of all this. The bees in the title refer to a new hive set up by Claire for medicinal purposes that was gifted to her from a traveling mountain man. He tells her that bees are social creatures that can bond with humans, if humans can talk to them and tell them their thoughts. Claire puts this advice to good use as tensions in the backcountry mount.



NOTES & OBSERVATIONS

BY STUART R.

Recently ran into an old friend who grew up in Kenmore and now lives in the Elmwood Village. Still comes to the Kenmore Library exclusively. Reason why? Great staff!! Great collection!!

Staff reorganized the Kenmore magazine selection. Looks fantastic! Wide variety of items--includes *The New York Times Magazine* and the *New York Times Book Review*.

Recommended biographies of famous Buffalonians:

- *Newsroom Confidential* by Margaret Sullivan--former Executive Editor of the Buffalo News.
- *Life's Work* by David Milch--creator of the Hill Street Blues and NYPD Blue and many other hits.

The Last Trial (fiction) by Scott Turow. A courtroom thriller--author makes every character come alive. Also *One L* (non-fiction). Mr. Turow writes about his first year experience at Harvard Law School--couldn't put it down--discusses the highs and lows and everything in between at one of the top law schools in the U.S.

The Way They Were by Robert Hofler. Remember one of the great romance movies of all times--*The Way We Were* (1972)? Get a behind-the-scenes look at the making of this classic and the challenges of dealing with superstars Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford.

Love to read but not interested in a traditional book club where everyone is reading the same book? Consider getting a group of book lovers together at an agreed-upon interval to have an informal chat about what they're reading. My experience is that this is stimulating and a great way to bond with like-minded people.

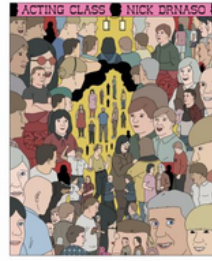
REVERBERATIONS THROUGH TIME

BY KAREN B.

Hester
by Laurie Lico Albanese

This novel tells the re-imagined story of Hester Prynne in her own words. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *A Scarlet Letter*, she is the person who is forced to wear a red A on her clothing to signify adultery in Puritan Massachusetts. In this current re-telling, Hester is embodied in the person of Isobel, a young Scottish woman newly come to Salem, Massachusetts in 1829. Her abusive husband is off at sea. The writer Nat Hathorne becomes enamored of the stories of her ancestress who was accused of witchcraft but escaped, and her ability to see colors in people's voices and in words that she embroiders. Isobel, in turn, is drawn to Nat by his tortured reaction to his ancestor's role in bringing about the deaths of the women purported to be witches in Salem in 1692. They come together as descendants of both accused and accuser in another tumultuous time, that of pre-Civil War America where slave catchers operate to find and return escapees while others help them find refuge. To me, it was an eye-opening read on how women make sense of their own lives in times of extreme crisis, and how they must have courage to survive.

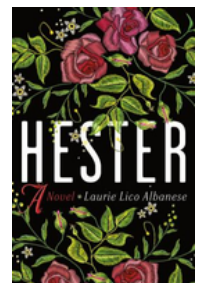
...AND, SCENE



BY MICHAELA M.

Acting Class
by Nick Drnaso

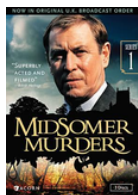
A group of ten outsiders, each joined by their sense of alienation, are brought together for a free acting class led by John Smith, an eccentric and untrustworthy teacher. This is the premise of the latest graphic novel, *Acting Class*, from author Nick Drnaso (who previously wrote *Sabrina*). The strangers are made up of a young single mother trying to stay afloat, a couple who have hit a snag in their marriage, a grandmother trying to get her granddaughter outside her comfort zone, an ex-convict, and more. Despite their differences, these characters are alike in feeling misplaced for different reasons, desperate to shake up their routines. As they go further into the acting class and its increasing demands, the lessons and scenes begin to seep into their own lives. The line between reality and imagination blurs. While this novel gripped me, some readers may find that many of the characters start to look similar because of the odd style of the panels. Still, it is an overall interesting take on a psychological thriller in graphic form that is eerie, unsettling, and surreal.



REEL REVIEWS

Midsomer Murders

(TV Series, 1997-, created by Caroline Graham)



Looking for a good who-done-it anthology? **Midsomer Murders** is the perfect choice.

The series is based on the Caroline Graham novels detailing Chief Inspector Tom Barnaby's investigations into the crimes occurring in the picturesque English countryside of Midsomer. The show is the UK's longest-running contemporary detective drama for a reason. No matter what episode you are watching, you will always be guessing who it is until the very end.

Far from CSI or 48 Hours, the charm of the show lies within its whimsy and dark humor from Barnaby and his partners.

ALSO

AVAILABLE ON



(REVIEW BY CHLOE S.)

The Rocky and Creed Movies

(1976-, various directors)



With the recent release of Creed III, I was inspired to go back and watch all the Rocky and Creed movies in order. The Rocky movies have often misleadingly been remembered in abstracts--catchphrases and scenes--and not for the quality of the movies themselves. I found each of the Rocky movies endearing in their own way. The scenes of Philadelphia were gritty and real, and the dialogue felt authentic, often ad-libbed. Are there parts that are goofy (i.e. the robot companion to Paulie in Rocky IV)? Of course, but these moments are part of the fun. The Creed movies have continued the tradition with a new audience and Michael B. Jordan and Tessa Thompson give stellar performances in the leading roles. I would recommend taking the Rocky "journey" like I did--if it's been a while since you've seen a Rocky movie, or if you've never watched a Creed movie, I think you may be pleasantly surprised by what you find.

(REVIEW BY NICOLE B.)

Decision to Leave

(2022, directed by Park Chan-wook)



Decision to Leave, by South Korean director Park Chan-wook, is the 2022 movie that has stayed with me the longest. It follows Hae-Jun, a detective who is investigating a young woman, Seo-Rae, for the possible murder of her husband. Despite being married, Hae-Jun is quickly enamored by his suspect, and their relationship becomes more than professional. What follows is a gorgeous crime-mystery-drama that leaves the audience guessing until the final moments. At the center is the complex but obsessive relationship between Hae-Jun and Seo-Rae, and the enigmatic, unexpected twists and turns it takes. **Decision to Leave** does not spell everything out in an obvious way--it jumps through time and trusts you to put the pieces together. The cinematography, which I don't always notice, makes every scene look like an oil painting. Beautiful, thrilling, and melodramatic (in the best way), I strongly recommend **Decision to Leave**, particularly if you have enjoyed Park Chan-wook's previous movies (including *Oldboy* and *The Handmaiden*) or thrillers in general.

(REVIEW BY MICHAELA M.)

Agatha Raisin: Series 1-4

(TV Series, 2014-present)



This funny and entertaining cozy British mystery series is based on the novels by M.C. Beaton. Agatha Raisin is a London PR guru who decided to give up life in the fast lane for the quiet of the Cotswolds and becomes an amateur sleuth. If you are familiar with the novels, the episodes stay pretty true to the books. If you aren't, you'll still love the quirky cast of characters and crimes to be solved.

(REVIEW BY REBECCA K.)

QUICK TAKES



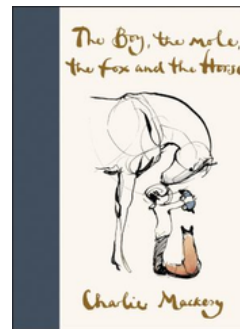
Small Things Like These by Claire Keegan

Set in a small, insular town in 1980s Ireland, this short but powerful story centers on one family man's life-altering discovery about the influence of the local church.



The Longing for Less: Living with Minimalism by Kyle Chayka

An insightful exploration of the contemporary "minimalist" trend and how minimalism began as a philosophical, spiritual, and artistic movement.



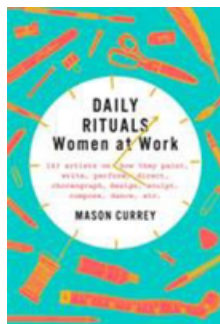
The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy

This is a graphic novel that is so much more than what you would think. It is a lesson for life that everyone should read multiple times to keep them on a path to being empathetic humans.



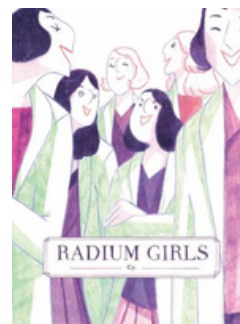
Scorched Grace by Margaret Douaihy

To paraphrase Stefan from SNL: this book has everything! Nuns, tattoos, New Orleans, arson, Catholicism, spoiled rich kids, punk rock, MURDER?



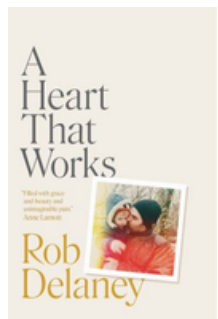
Daily Rituals Women at Work by Mason Currey

Flip through vignettes of 143 artists' methods of working--from Carole King to Virginia Woolf.



Radium Girls by Cy

A graphic novel done entirely in colored pencil about the Radium Girls, who were instrumental in the US workers' rights movement in 1918.

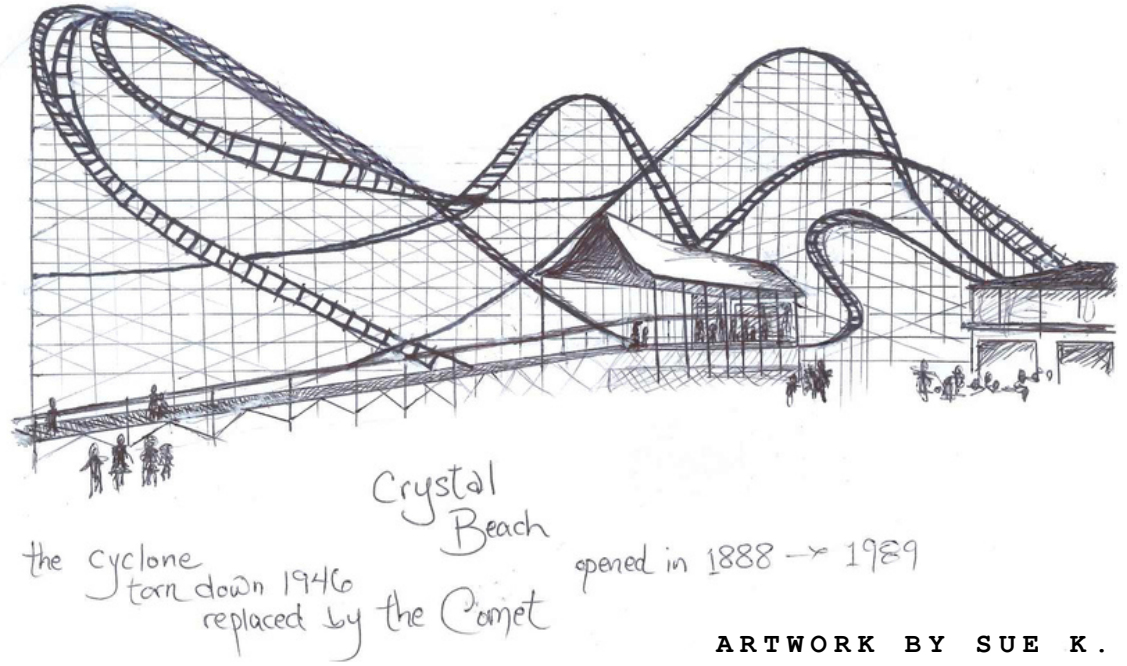


A Heart That Works by Rob Delaney

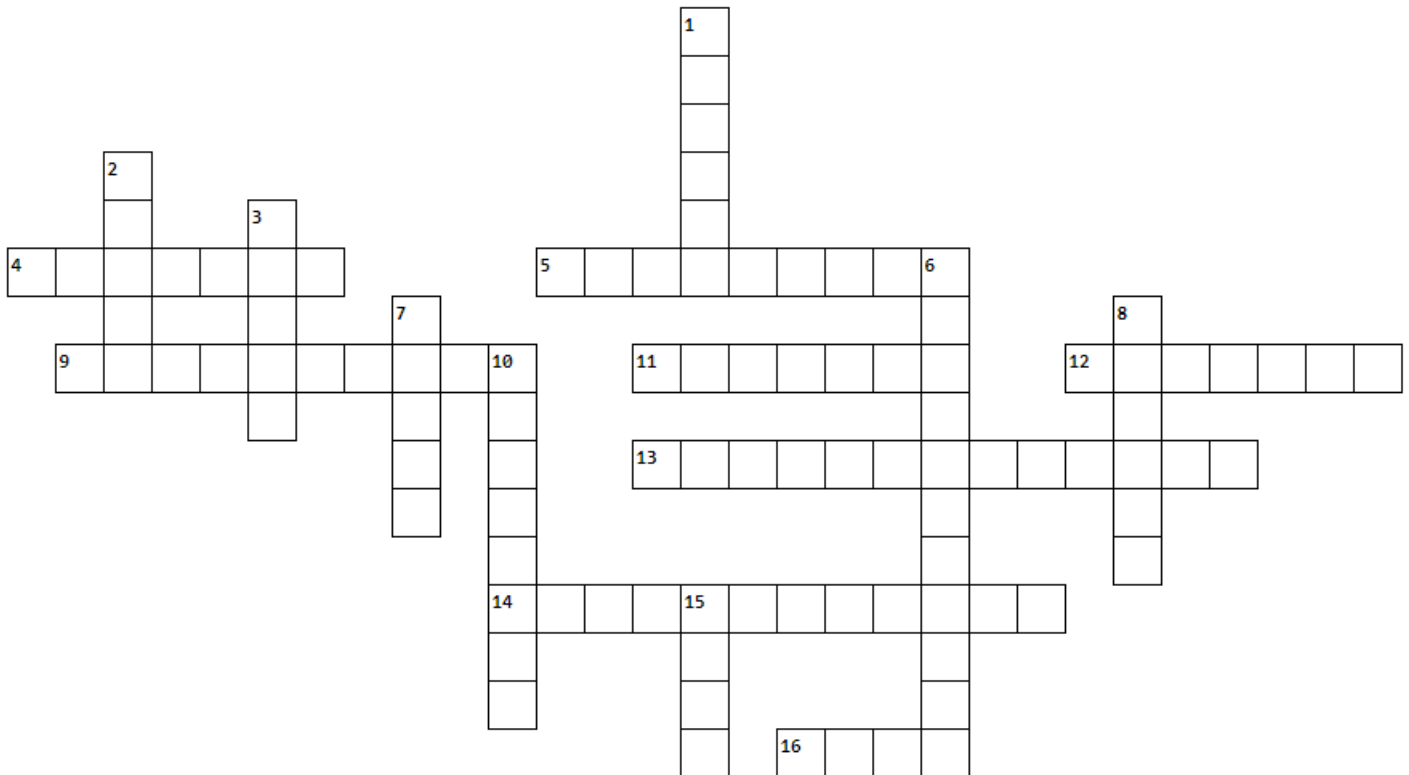
A deeply personal memoir about the sickness and death of Delaney's young son. As depressing of a topic as this is, the story is not a spiral of misery. Life and loss are laid bare in a touching, heart-wrenching, and funny way so by the end you come away knowing grief but also the continuing love of a father for his son.

SUMMERTIME

BY REBECCA K.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.



Across

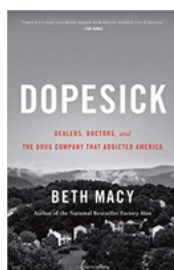
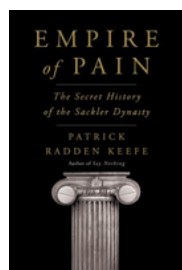
- 4. Skittles, Taste the _____
- 5. home of the Bard
- 9. what do april showers bring
- 11. state with the hottest average temperature
- 12. _____ never say die
- 13. Summertime chanteuse
- 14. racing capital of the world
- 16. July birthstone

Down

- 1. what country has the most coastline in the world
- 2. where did fireworks originate
- 3. I'd like to teach the _____ to sing
- 6. place of the hottest temperature ever recorded
- 7. John Wick
- 8. a warm canine
- 10. longest day of the year
- 15. door-to-door makeup company

ADDICTION TOUCHES EVERYTHING

BY NICOLE B.



2023 PULITZER
PRIZE WINNER
IN FICTION

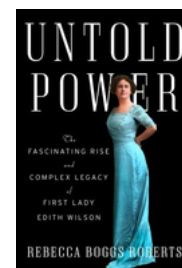
Sometimes I find myself gravitating toward themes in what I check out from the library, and it wasn't until I finished the new book by Barbara Kingsolver, *Demon Copperhead*, that I realized the following books/series are a compelling combination if you are interested in knowing more about the opioid crisis, its origins, and the continuing aftermath. I started with the *Empire of Pain* by Patrick Radden Keefe. This book is essential to understanding the opioid crisis and its nefarious roots in corporate greed and control. Raddon Keefe's research is meticulous and compelling, and you cannot help but be horrified at the influence one family and company (the Sacklers, Purdue Pharma) had in creating so much death and destruction.

Following that book, I watched the series *Dopesick*, based on the book *Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors and the Drug Company that Addicted America* by Beth Macy. While only available on Hulu, if you cannot watch the series I would highly recommend this book as well. This is a powerful series (and book) that combines stories of families and medical practitioners affected by this crisis, along with the politics and corporate interests involved. After this, I guarantee you will never look at the "pain scales" in your doctor's office the same again.

And finally, set in southern Appalachia, *Demon Copperhead* is an epic journey into the life of Damon, a boy who grows up in poverty, deals with the impact of his mom's addiction, and is thrown into the often brutal and uncaring foster care system. This book was beautiful, heart wrenching, and funny--all while remaining empathetic to the backgrounds and experiences of the characters. What was refreshing was its treatment of other subjects (racial discrimination, LGBTQIA+ issues) with care and respect, which is often missing in books set in the southern United States. While this is a work of fiction, I came away with an understanding of what a full life, from birth to adulthood, may be like when addiction is a constant and nefarious presence.

SECRETS OF THE PRESIDENCY

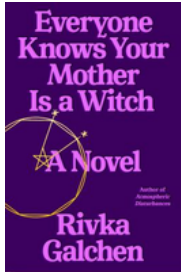
BY SUE K.



One title for history buffs that might surprise you is the story of Woodrow Wilson's wife, Edith, in *Untold Power: The Fascinating and Complex Legacy of First Lady Edith Wilson* by Rebecca Boggs Roberts. In our era of excess in all kinds of access to media, the fact that Edith Wilson could keep even Wilson's closest advisors in the dark as to the President's dire health following his stroke was fascinating and even fairly terrifying. Edith was authorizing decisions on her husband's behalf, even though she was never elected by the American people. There have been many examples of press "blackouts," such as the willingness of the press to never photograph the immobilized legs and limited mobility of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Edith's brazen use of her power, while totally predictable and in keeping with her dominating personality, has a rather darker implication for American Democracy. She rose up from humble Virginian roots to become a wealthy widow and business owner before she caught the eye of a politician grieving the death of his beloved wife. She was the first woman to have a driver's license in DC and was famous for her carefree and reckless driving in her electric car. She outlived her husband long enough to see the Kennedy presidency. Some surprises come out in the book. Though Woodrow was famously a Princeton professor, he also hailed from the South and both he and Edith were fairly racist and surprisingly not really supportive of women's voting rights. All in all, a fascinating opening of history in the early 1900s.

THE WITCH BEFORE THE ASTRONOMER

BY KAREN B.



Everyone Knows Your Mother is a Witch
by Rivka Galchen

No one wants to read a story about an old woman, a character in this novel is told toward the end of this tale. Modern readers might want to ignore that advice. This story of a 74-year-old woman accused of witchcraft in Germany in 1616 is a surprisingly entertaining read. While at first the title put me off, this same statement is used very casually by the main character herself in everyday conversation. This story takes that sentiment, sets it against the backdrop of the Thirty Years War, and shows us the humanness of both that period and our own. It follows a sequence of actions following that accusation in a small town on the precipice of a religious war. The townspeople comprise those who see both the worst and the best in others, and those who plot and scheme, but who also often try to do the right thing. The tone is wry, filled with folk humor that is cynical, ironic, and often downright humorous. The main character, Katharina, was the real-life mother of Johannes Kepler, an astronomer who was a contemporary of Galileo, and who is credited with discovering the rotation of planets. Her story gets a fresh take in this page turner.

A LIFE IN THE SHADOWS

BY NICOLE B.



I'm Still Alive
by Robert Saviano

This is a stunning graphic novel about an author and incident I previously knew nothing about. Robert Saviano is an Italian journalist and writer who focused much of his work on organized crime and its negative impact on the people of Italy. After he published *Gomorra: A Personal Journey into the Violent International Empire of Naples' Organized Crime System*, he started receiving death threats and has been in hiding and under police protection since 2006. The graphic novel follows his struggle to create a life under extraordinary and isolating circumstances. It's a sad reminder of the high price of speaking out against injustice where those who are corrupt are the ones in power.

SUMMERTIME (ANSWERS)

ACROSS:

4. Rainbow 5. Stratford 9. Mayflowers 11. Florida
12. Goonies 13. Billie Holiday 14. Indianapolis 16. Ruby

DOWN:

1. Canada 2. China 3. World 6. Death Valley 7. Keanu
8. Hotdog 10. Solstice 15. Avon

THE CHECKOUT STAFF

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

WANT TO SUBMIT A REVIEW?

SEND TO KNM@BUFFALOLIB.ORG, SUBJECT LINE "THE CHECKOUT SUBMISSION." SUBMISSIONS WILL BE POSTED PER DISCRETION OF THE LIBRARY. SUBMISSIONS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT OR LENGTH.