

THE CHECKOUT

WINTER 2023/24

ISSUE #7

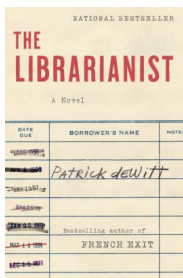
A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS



A PUBLICATION OF THE
KENMORE
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THE BOOK OF BOB

BY KAREN B.

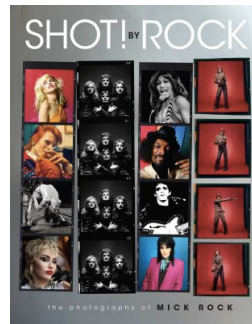


The Librarianist by Patrick deWitt

Bob Comet is a retired librarian or “librarianist” as his long-ago high school librarian called people engaged in the profession of “librarianism.” Dedicated to the lifelong pursuit and pleasures of voluminous and solitary reading in what he sees as an ordinary life, he learns in retirement that his own narrative is also worthy of remembrance. Growing up fatherless (by circumstance) and generally friendless (mostly by choice), Bob marches to the tune of his own drum, while seeming almost invisible to people around him. He quietly resists both his mother’s wish for him to have “fun” (like sleepovers with unknown people), as well as the urging of others who encourage him to be “more like a normal boy” (who gets girls pregnant and takes part in knife fights). He is who he is, in short. Along the way, however, he does run into quirky characters who influence him in lasting ways. These include the aging lady thespians who tell him the difference between melancholy (sad nostalgia) and sorrow (hopelessness), as well as an inadvertent friendship that blooms with another young man living a life very different from his own, and a woman who becomes his wife. Bookended by his initial unplanned volunteering and later friendships in a local nursing home, Bob’s past life journey ends up connecting him deeply with its current day residents. Filled with gentle humor (and some surprisingly hilarious dialogues), but also with undercurrents of deeper emotions, this novel will ultimately leave you smiling at the end.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY


BY NICOLE B.



Shot! by Rock by Mick Rock

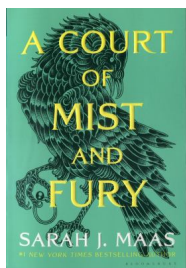
This is a gorgeous book for any music lover! Chock full of iconic photographs, it tells the tale of both professional photographer Mick Rock and the intimate history of rock & punk, from the 60s onward. The sheer amount of unforgettable photographs Mick took are breathtaking, and illustrate a man who had truly mastered his craft. The large format of the book makes the photos even more powerful, where turning each page immerses you in the world of David Bowie, Lou Reed, Debbie Harry, Iggy Pop, and so many others. Mick’s personal reflections in the photograph captions and chapter introductions are truly delightful, and show how he wasn’t just an observer, but an active participant and friend to many of the musicians and stars he photographed. Although he didn’t live to see the publication of the book (he passed away in 2021), it serves as a beautiful tribute to his life--highly recommended.

TITLE
LIBRARY TIP #1

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READ A BANNED BOOK

BY NICOLE M.,
GUEST REVIEWER



A Court of Mist and Fury

by Sarah J. Maas

Sarah J. Mass has published 14 books, and book 15 is heading our way at the end of January 2024! But we are here to specifically talk about **A Court of Mist and Fury**, which is honestly one of the best books she has ever written. It is the second entry into the Court of Thorns and Roses series, and it is paced well and draws you in with its attention to detail and character development. I describe it as well-paced instead of fast-paced because it always leaves you wanting more in nothing but the best way. What it makes you wait for, is worth the wait and is more poignant because of the waiting. I would be surprised if you read this book and it did not make it onto your shelf as a staple that you like to reread when you need something enjoyable to fall back on.

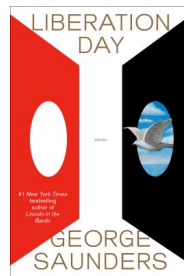
Even though this is a fantasy romance novel (also known as romantasy), it addresses some hard-hitting mental health issues like trauma, PTSD, anxiety, and dealing with abusive relationships. These issues are addressed by working through and acknowledging them, which the author pays careful attention to; the characters' problems cannot be solved by magic.

This book is worth your time not only because it is a well-told story, but because it is well-written with an attention to detail that comes to light as you continue to read the intricately-woven series.

THE CHECKOUT: WINTER 2023/24

MIRROR WORLD

BY MICHAELA M.



Liberation Day: Stories

by George Saunders

George Saunders has become known for his signature strange and satirical style and his knack for experimenting with language to bring readers into the heads of unlikely narrators. His latest collection of short stories, **Liberation Day**, is no different, but strikes me as even more reflective of our current world (in a funhouse mirror kind of way), with all of its isolation, emotional whiplash, and injustice. Make no mistake--these nine stories are also often poignant and funny. This is the case with one of my favorites, "Mother's Day," which follows two women who were once in love with the same man as they come to terms with their lives during a freak hailstorm. Another highlight is "Elliot Spencer," a story set in a world where impoverished people have their memories wiped and are then reprogrammed to be used as political protestors in a disturbing, theatrical fashion. No matter how bizarre the concept, Saunders always brings you back down to earth. For a sample, both stories mentioned (among several others) have previously appeared in *The New Yorker*.

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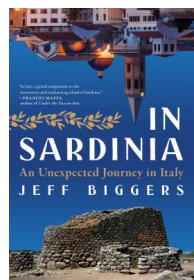


ARTWORK BY SUE K.

ISSUE #7

SPOTLIGHT SARDINIA

BY KEN W.



In Sardinia: An Unexpected Journey in Italy by Jeff Biggers

In this book, Sardinia is presented as a place of immense historical significance as well as a travel destination that exposes us to beautiful scenery, interesting people, and what promises to be wonderful food. He points out important contributions the Sardinian people have made to the island as well as to European culture. There is evidence of human settlement from over 18 thousand years ago and archaeological remains from before 4000 BCE. Mr. Biggers tells of various groups of people who landed there from ancient times and through various ages of civilization, all of whom left their mark on the island. The historical facts are mixed in with discussions of various travel adventures on the island. We get the feel for the sights of the present day as well as the historical significance of various places. His descriptions of the views and terrain seem vivid and comprehensive. In all, it is a great exposure to this Mediterranean Island and it's people. I found myself thinking of what a great adventure it would be to travel to this ancient Mediterranean island.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

BY HEATHER B.,
GUEST REVIEWER

Solito by Javier Zamora

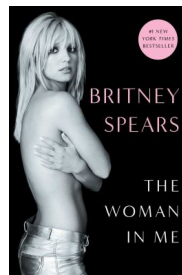
Trip. My parents started using that word about a year ago-- "one day, you'll take a trip to be with us. Like an adventure." **Solito** is the true story of the adventure that Javier Zamora set off on at age nine - a 3,000 mile journey from his birthplace in El Salvador, through Guatemala and Mexico, and across the U.S. border. He leaves behind his beloved grandparents and aunt, travels with a group of strangers and the coyote hired to lead them, and hopefully, will reunite with his parents, both already in the United States.

Instead of the story being told like most memoirs, an adult looking back on his life, Zamora writes in present tense in his 9-year-old voice which makes **Solito** even more affecting than it already would have been. I don't want to spoil anything about the journey, but it's heartbreaking, funny, scary, and just all around a little devastating. But as Zamora and some of the members of his traveling group form their own kind of family we're reminded that even in challenging times, kindness, humor, and even joy can still be present.

Solito doesn't get into politics and policy - it's simply one family's story - but it is a reminder that when we talk about immigrants, more often than not, we're talking about people who are just like us, with their own fears and dreams for themselves and their families. This is one of those rare books that I would make everyone read if I could.

ALL EYES ON BRITNEY

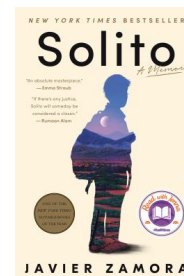
BY CHLOE S.



The Woman in Me by Britney Spears

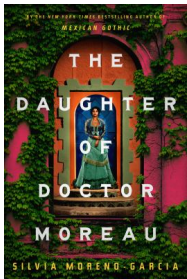
Free from a conservatorship run by her family, the legendary pop star finally speaks out in this memoir. Britney has been working since she was a child and quickly became a pop music icon, never losing her passion and artistry despite the many hardships she recounts here. From trouble with men to the 13-year-long conservatorship starting at the height of her fame that left her imprisoned simultaneously on the Vegas stage and in rehab facilities against her will, her resilience is inspiring.

What stands out the most is not the hardships she has faced, but her enduring optimism that is evident on every page. Despite everything, she lives her life to the fullest with her kids and the creative outlets she can partake in without the pressure of the past. Whether you were already a fan or simply curious about the hype, this is a must-read.



MEXICANA

BY KAREN B.



The Daughter of Doctor Moreau

by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

This novel is a very intriguing adaptation of an older legend of Doctor Moreau, the eccentric scientist who created new life forms by fusing animals and humans together. In this telling, Doctor Moreau still engages in this risky and unethical enterprise but he is no longer on an unknown island, he is in the jungles of Mexico. This tropical area is still isolated, but it is also situated on land that the native Mayans are fighting for against the Mexican state in 1877. The main narrative has also shifted from him to his daughter Carlota, their English assistant, and the “hybrids” the doctor has created with lives and personalities of their own. As the story starts, Carlota is a young girl of 14 who has led an unconventional and sheltered but nonetheless mostly contented life. Six years later, events conspire to break this happiness and usher in a new state of awareness for her about her father’s true motives in creating the hybrids and what her actual place in this world really is. Young men from the wealthy family who own the property and finance her father also enter the picture. Upheaval ensues, and the reader is left to ponder who the real monsters are. Vividly written, the action is amplified by compelling descriptions of daily life and cultural customs in this unique setting.

NO, I WILL NOT PLAY THE SONG FROM DELIVERANCE

BY STEPHEN C.,
GUEST REVIEWER



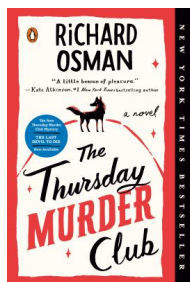
America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century

by Philip F. Gura & James F. Bollman

Calling the banjo America’s instrument implies that it was created out of whole cloth in this country, which is untrue. Thankfully this book does a wonderful job of tracing the histories of all the instruments that came before what we now know as the modern banjo without shying away from its darker origins. From the earliest string and gourd instruments brought to the Caribbean in the 17th century by enslaved Africans up to the more modern American mastercraft banjos of the 19th and 20th centuries, all are represented here. The book is lavishly illustrated with photographs of banjos rarely seen due to being held in private collections and also historically significant ones that have been passed down between the masters of the instrument. And if the photographs of the expertly crafted banjos aren’t enough, the reader is also treated to histories of the early American banjo industry, which was a much larger and fascinating business than you’d imagine. I’ve read through this book multiple times and always find something new that is worth further exploration. Whether you’re interested in general American history, early American industry, woodworking, stage acts of the 18th and 19th century, or simply the wonderful instrument that is the banjo itself, this book is an excellent read.

SERIES SPOTLIGHT

BY KEN W.



The **Thursday Murder Club** by Richard Osman is the first book in a series. The author credits Agatha Christie as a tremendous influence on his writing. Indeed Christie published a book called **The Tuesday Night Club**. As a fan of hers, I believe she would find his writing very enjoyable.

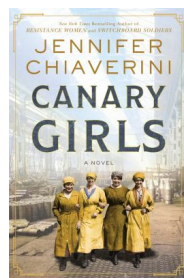
The book takes place in a retirement community. Among the residents is a group of individuals that decide to investigate unsolved mysteries that call themselves the Thursday Murder Club. In the process of looking into an unsolved case, they are confronted with a murder that happens very close to their community.

The group is composed of Elizabeth, a somewhat former government spy; Ron a former union activist; Joyce, a retired nurse; and Ibrahim, a psychiatrist. They manage to receive assistance from law enforcement agents and others who possess skills they are able to tap into to piece together all the puzzles that surround their investigation. Each of the 70-something-year-old members work diligently in carrying out the investigation.

This first installment established the characters and developed their relationship. It is a great read. Each new book that follows has proven to demonstrate Osman's skill in this genre. The maturation of the characters and their interaction pull this series steadily forward and makes for highly anticipated installments.

WOMEN DURING WAR

BY SUE K.



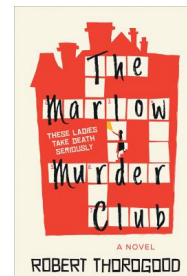
Canary Girls

by Jennifer Chiaverini

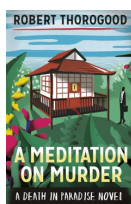
If you are a reader who loves learning some little-known history in the context of a great fiction with compelling characters, Jennifer Chiaverini's many books are for you. Jennifer writes exhaustively-researched historical fiction with characters that draw you deeply into the times. Her latest book, **Canary Girls**, takes a deep dive into the London of the First World War. She divides her chapters into the individual voices of three main characters, each in a different strata of English society. One is the wife of a famous footballer with two young children. One is gentry, married to the owner of a manufacturing plant turned munition plant with many Munitionette employees. The third is a maid, seeking to improve her finances and support her family. The horrors of the women's work with TNT, which causes huge health issues and the discoloring of their skin and hair, are poorly understood and slow to be addressed. The book takes a wide look at the many issues of suffrage, women's football teams, family life in the midst of bombing, the struggles to feed family, and the general inequities of women's employment that was sharply curtailed when the men returned. A hugely compelling read.

MURDER MURDER EVERYWHERE

BY REBECCA K.



I'm not ashamed to admit I'm a big fan of cozy mysteries. I've read, and watched, a lot of them but **The Marlow Murder Club** by Robert Thorogood was not on my radar until I happened to stumble on the book. This book has the essential elements of a cozy mystery but does not underestimate the reader's intelligence or skimp on the plot just to evoke warm and fuzzy feelings. First, we meet Judith an opinionated, reclusive, and outspoken crossword puzzle author who lives on the water outside the small town of Marlow. Everyone in town knows of her and her house, but she doesn't much bother with those in town. When she hears the murder of her neighbor, she is drawn to Marlow to investigate and meets dog walker, Suzie; the vicar's wife, Becks; and DS Tanika Malik. Par for the course, they form an unlikely bond and come together to solve the mystery. I enjoyed this quick and compelling read. In looking to see if there is a second book in the series (there is and it's called **Death Comes to Marlow**) I realized that I know some of author Robert Thorogood's other works. He is not only the creator of the BBC show **Death in Paradise** but he also wrote the first season of the acclaimed show. My entire family are big fans of **Death in Paradise** and I was excited to find out that Thorogood wrote books focusing on DI Richard Poole, the first detective in the series. I am always excited when I read and enjoy one book and that leads me to other books by the same author. Even more exciting, I found out that Masterpiece on PBS has adapted **The Marlow Murder Club** for television and it should air this winter. If you love this book and cannot wait for the premiere on PBS, check out **Death in Paradise** DVDs and books that are found in the Erie County library system.



HEALTHY CHANGE

BY NICOLE B.

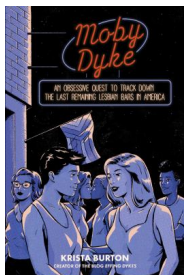
Eyes to the Wind : a Memoir of Love and Death, Hope, and Resistance
by Ady Barkan



Although to many the name Ady Barkan may not be familiar, to those with serious chronic illnesses fighting for change in our health system, he was a well-known advocate and activist. He recently died from complications of ALS at the age of 39, and has left behind a legacy of social justice and activism in the area of healthcare in the United States. His memoir, published in 2019, is a captivating and inspiring story of an ordinary person, husband, and father faced with extraordinary and devastating circumstances. Instead of falling into a perpetual despair after his diagnosis, Ady focused his energy to fight for justice and dignity for all those with chronic medical conditions. He used his background as a lawyer to advocate for change in our policy and government and did not stop even as his condition worsened. I would highly recommend reading this book and seeking out any interviews of Ady that you can. He was, and forever will be, an inspiration.

YOU HAD ME AT QUESO

BY JILL J.



Moby Dyke: An Obsessive Quest to Track Down the Last Remaining Lesbian Bars in America

by Krista Burton

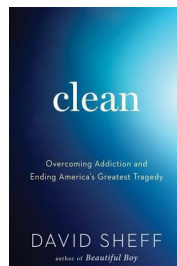
As of this book's publication in June 2023, there were fewer than two dozen lesbian bars in America. Gay bars, on the other hand, number in the high hundreds. **Moby Dyke** looks to answer the question of why there are so few remaining lesbian bars in the country, and seeks to define what specifically makes a bar a lesbian bar. Complicating matters is the fact that the author is a femme lesbian and her spouse is a trans man. Burton wonders if they'll be accepted in the various bars on their trip around the country, or if they'll be met with hostility or exclusion. Luckily, openness and acceptance are the overwhelming majority of responses.

Burton interviews bar owners and patrons alike, and these interviews not only shed light on some of the reasons for the seeming decline in lesbian bars, but also highlight what is being done to make these important community spaces more inclusive and bring them out of the shadows. Highlights include Walker's Pint in Milwaukee, WI, where Beetlejuice was playing on a big-screen TV and a crockpot full of homemade queso was offered free to patrons (this is my perfect bar experience); The Back Door in Bloomington, IN and its personable and generous owner, Smoove Gardner; and the hilarious ubiquity of "Goodbye Earl" at karaoke.

Moby Dyke is part travelogue, part memoir, and part meditation on the importance and evolution of queer community.

AMERICAN CRISIS

BY SHAWN S.,
GUEST REVIEWER



Clean: Overcoming Addiction and Ending America's Greatest Tragedy

by David Sheff

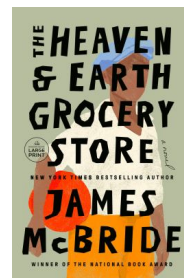
Clean is a great resource for anyone who has a loved one affected by addiction. It goes into depth on many different resources and types of treatment, as well as why some treatments work and some don't. But anyone who lives in today's world would benefit from Sheff's meticulous research, presenting a complete and thorough depiction of what addiction actually is and its prevalence. The statistics startled me, the personal stories broke my heart, and the deep dive into what it actually means to be an addict was extremely informative. I find it awe-inspiring that David Sheff chose to devote so much of his life to speaking with addicts and doctors to gather the information presented in this book after watching his own son go through the perils of addiction for years as a teenager.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

HEAVEN AND EARTH IN PENNSYLVANIA

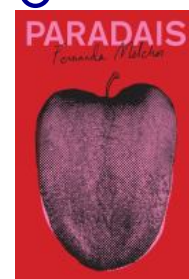
BY SUE K.



James McBride, past winner of the National Book Award, has reached new fictional heights with his latest book **The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store**, which is set in the fictional town of Pottstown, PA. The story can break your heart on every page, as it tells the fraught relationships between Jewish immigrant families, African American townspeople, and the white Christians who rule the town's politics and steel mills. The title refers to the store run by Chola, a very progressive and compassionate Jewish woman, married to the town's theatre owner. She quietly takes care of everyone, Black or White, as her husband books Black, Latino, and Jewish dance bands. Chola runs afoul of the White KKK-affiliated town doctor by calling him out by name as the head of the annual Klan parade. The tragedies compound from there, related with light touch and great quirky characters that make up the town. When Chola and her husband Moshe try to harbor a young, deaf Black teen from the local authorities, they set in motion a whole series of events which touch on every aspect of small-town life. McBride dedicates the book to the very real Sy Friend, the director of the Variety Club Camp for Handicapped Children in Worcester, PA. McBride worked there as a counselor for the four summers while he was a student at Oberlin College. He says in his acknowledgments, "Sy's lessons of inclusivity, love, and acceptance remained with me for the rest of my life." He continues, "It all boils down to the same thing. Love. Of a man. And the one principle he gave his life to: equality. Thus this tome." This is a book that embodies the Jewish principle of Tikkun Olam, one perhaps we can all take to heart especially in times of war and darkness.

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: FERNANDA MELCHOR

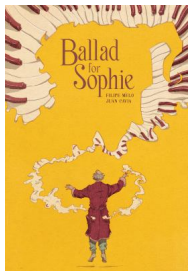
BY MICHAELA M.



Fernanda Melchor is a Mexican novelist who writes about her home country in all its different shades. Both her fiction and nonfiction work center on themes such as violence against women; poverty, class, and race dynamics; and corruption. Melchor's most recent novel, **Paradais**, follows two teenage friends living in a luxury housing complex--one is a rich kid obsessed with his older, married neighbor, and the other is the resident gardener who dreams of escaping his family and bleak circumstances. In their restlessness, they come up with a disturbing plan. **Hurricane Season**, shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2020, is about a group of children in a small Mexican village who discover a corpse that turns out to be the body of a woman known locally as "The Witch." The novel unravels the circumstances around her murder and the societal forces that led to it. One of Melchor's most recent works translated into English is **This Is Not Miami**, a collection of crónicas (narrative essays that blend journalistic reporting with fiction) set in Melchor's hometown of Veracruz, Mexico. These stories cover everything from UFO sightings to drug cartels. Melchor's writing, while compelling, is not for the faint of heart--it doesn't shy away from the darker aspects of humanity, but that's not surprising given the subject matter. Her style is forceful, fearless, and will leave you feeling like you've just breathlessly watched a thriller.

MOVING MUSIC

BY CHLOE S.



Ballad for Sophie by Filipe Melo

This graphic novel reads like a movie with multiple acts, following a young journalist named Sophie who is desperate to talk to a reclusive piano superstar named Julian Dubois. Dubois is dying from cancer and has never spoken to the public, but Sophie weasels her way into his home and gets him to open up for the first time. Through her interviews with him, he recounts his life starting in 1933 outside of a small French village where he grew up, to a pivotal piano competition that changed his life forever.

A visually stunning tale about jealousy, talent, war, and music, it has a twist at the end you will never see coming and brings up emotions you didn't think you could feel. You won't be able to put this down and the story will stay with you long after you turn the final page.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

THE CHECKOUT: WINTER 2023/24

SERIOUSLY GOOD SERIES

BY JILL J.



Union of the Rakes series by Eva Leigh

I used to be a snob about romance novels--only literary fiction or serious nonfiction works, please! I've since come around, and Eva Leigh's **Union of the Rakes** series showcases what I love about the genre. Yes, these are fluffy and sexy romances, but they're also self-aware and progressive in their gender politics; these two aspects combine to make a fulfilling and fun read throughout. The general premise is based on the classic movie *The Breakfast Club*, and each book contains countless other 80s pop culture references, including a reference to *Footloose* that had me cackling.

My Fake Rake introduces us to Lady Grace Wyatt, an intelligent society outcast who is on a mission to transform her friend Sebastian Holloway from an awkward academic to a dashing rake. Of course they fall in love--this is a romance novel, after all. But the fun is in the journey, not the destination. **Would I Lie to the Duke** features already rakish Noel, the Duke of Rotherby and Jess McGale, an entrepreneur trying to save her family business. Both are strong-willed, and their sizzling chemistry makes this my favorite title in the trilogy. Last in the series is **Waiting for a Scot Like You**, where the bold and eccentric widow Beatrice Sloane, the Dowager Countess of Farris, is escorted to an unconventional party by the serious war hero Duncan McCameron. (You'll never guess what happens.)

My only complaint with this series is a minor one: I would have enjoyed a book devoted to Rowe and Curtis, two members of the Union of the Rakes who fall in love with each other over the course of the books. Their story was sure to be as unique and delightful as the rest.

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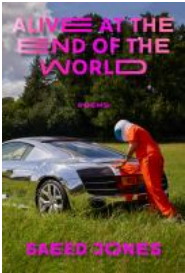


Libby.

ISSUE #7

POETRY FOR THE APOCALYPSE

BY JILL J.

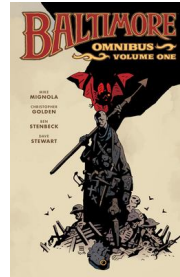


Alive at the End of the World by Saeed Jones

A beautiful and haunting meditation on grief, being a queer Black man in America, the many apocalypses (both large and small) that surround us at all times, and somehow having to carry on through it all. Saeed Jones is one of the best poets of our time, and while this volume is slim, it packs a punch (sometimes straight to the gut). The poems within are deeply sad, winkingly sly, always clever and skillfully written. Multiple entries are titled “Alive at the End of the World,” showcasing the many, sometimes simultaneous, ways the world seems to be ending around us through major world events and personal tragedies alike.

THINK THE ONLY BIT MISSING FROM WWI WAS VAMPIRES?

BY STEPHEN C.,
GUEST REVIEWER



Baltimore Omnibus Volume 1 by Mike Mignola & Christopher Golden

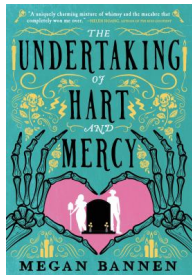
In the introduction to this volume, Hellboy creator Mike Mignola explains where the idea for this original story came from. In short, he watched what he described as a “really boring movie” that happened to be set in a European village in the early 1900s and realized he’d really like to draw something set in a cool-looking European village in the early 1900s. From those humble beginnings we have Lord Henry Baltimore, vampire hunter. Our action begins in 1916 when a mysterious plague suddenly brings World War I to an end, but before it ceases, all that fighting has woken an ancient race of vampires and set them loose on the world. To make matters worse, our hero Baltimore injures the powerful vampire Haigus on the battlefield, setting into motion a one-vampire mission to turn all of humanity into the undead while also taking very personal revenge on Baltimore. This volume follows Baltimore as he travels around Europe hunting Haigus while Baltimore himself is being hunted by the arm of an Inquisition determined to destroy what they see as a tainted man. Along the way Baltimore gains allies, makes new enemies, and kills a lot of vampires. Also, the 1900s European villages look really cool, so mission accomplished there.

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
LIBRARY TIP #2	
DID YOU KNOW THE KENMORE & KENILWORTH LIBRARIES NOW EACH HAVE A LIBRARY OF THINGS? YOU CAN CHECK OUT “THINGS” SUCH AS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A KARAOKE MACHINE • A PROJECTOR • A PAPER SHREDDER • A USB MICROPHONE • A CORDLESS GLUE GUN • AN EXTERNAL CD/DVD DRIVE 	
AND MUCH MORE!	
VISIT KENMORE OR KENILWORTH FOR DETAILS AND TO SEE THE COLLECTION!	



WHERE ROMANCE AND RIGOR MORTIS COLLIDE

BY LISA S.



The Undertaking of Hart and Mercy by Megan Bannen

Have you ever spent a perfectly cozy evening snuggled up on the couch watching a movie that will probably give you nightmares? That's what it's like to read **The Undertaking of Hart and Mercy**. This endearing fantasy romance is a loose retelling of the movie *You've Got Mail*, but instead of emailing a stranger, a lonely soul sends a letter into the abyss and fate intervenes. Set in a mythical world plagued by zombie-like creatures, Hart Ralston is a Marshall tasked with protecting the realms from harm. Hart too often (for his liking) requires the services of Mercy Birdsall, a deeply compassionate undertaker, who he finds equally beautiful and irritating. Our two main characters got off on the wrong foot and seemingly dig themselves deeper into disdain every time they meet. And like any serious rivalry, they have adorable nicknames for each other! 'Merciless' and 'Hartache' are both feeling suffocated by the building pressures in their lives, Hart as he struggles to combat the loneliness of his job, and Mercy as she tries to keep her family business afloat. The two find solace in an unexpected new pen pal that, unbeknownst to them, is the person that irks them the most. Follow this winding love story filled with self-revelations and enough whimsy to make you forget that zombies are around every corner.

REEL REVIEWS

The Shining (1980, directed by Stanley Kubrick)

STANLEY KUBRICK COLLECTION



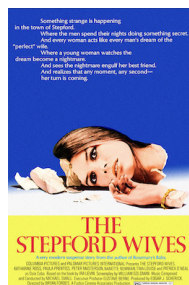
STANLEY KUBRICK'S
THE SHINING



Snowed in? Consider revisiting (or checking out for the first time) **The Shining**—a strangely perfect watch for the next Buffalo blizzard. This horror classic follows Jack Torrance, an aspiring writer and recovering alcoholic, who takes a position as the winter caretaker of the Overlook Hotel, and brings his wife, Wendy, and young son, Danny, who has burgeoning psychic abilities. As the family is trapped inside by a massive snowstorm and entranced by the dark history of the hotel, Jack begins to lose his grasp on reality.

(REVIEW BY MICHAELA M.)

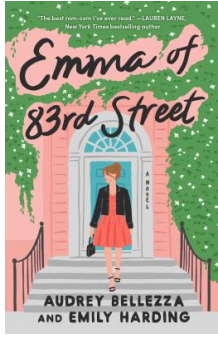
The Stepford Wives (1975, directed by Bryan Forbes)



Although a slow burn, the almost 50-year-old film, **The Stepford Wives**, is a must-see and definitely worth a re-watch if you've seen it years ago. I had always heard of it, and used the vernacular "Stepford Wives" to describe robotically happy women many times, but I never sat down and actually watched the iconic film. I was surprised how relevant it remains in regards to the roles and expectations of women in society, even all these years later. The main character, Joanna, knows something is not quite right about this cookie-cutter community, but she is patronized and belittled at every turn--gaslighting at its finest. You spend the movie rooting for her, hoping her persistence in finding answers will prevail, which is why the ending is a shock- and a dismal reflection of society. There's no doubt the film's message is sinister, yet it's one we could all still benefit from hearing.

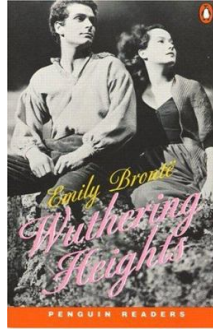
(REVIEW BY NICOLE B.)

QUICK TAKES



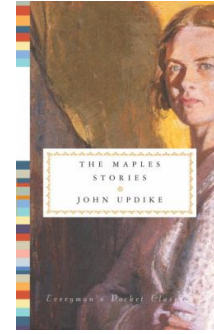
Emma of 83rd Street by Audrey Bellezza & Emily Harding

Do you love rom-coms? Do you love Jane Austen? Then you will enjoy this book. This takes the best parts of both and puts them together into a delightful read.



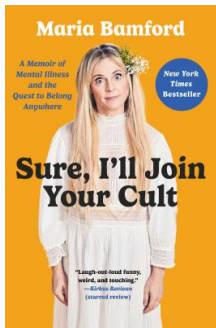
Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

A revenge tale that takes place on the Yorkshire moors that is equal parts haunting and whimsical.



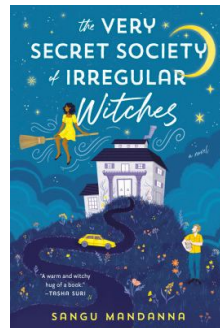
The Maples Stories by John Updike

This collection (written over the course of two decades) features 18 intimate and fascinating short stories that trace the relationship of a complicated couple, the Maples, from the beginning of their marriage to its eventual decline.



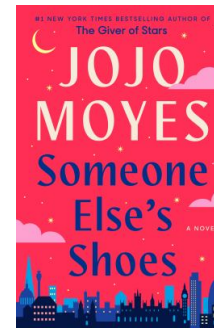
Sure, I'll Join Your Cult: A Memoir of Mental Illness and the Quest to Belong Anywhere by Maria Bamford

A delightfully funny, colorful, and honest memoir about mental illness from stand-up comedian, Maria Bamford, that recounts her lifelong search to find community in unlikely places.



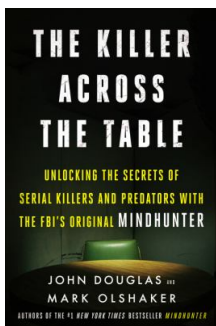
The Very Irregular Society of Witches by Sangu Mandanna

Mika Moon has built an entire online persona pretending to be a witch, except she's not pretending. One of the last witches in Britain, Mika's fame places her on a path to help three young, orphaned witches who struggle to control their magic. A charming tale of found family, breaking barriers, and forgiving those you love.



Someone Else's Shoes by Jojo Moyes

This is a fun and uplifting story about two women who are different in every way. Nisha is a wealthy socialite and Sam is just trying to keep her job and her family together. When they accidentally swap gym bags, both women are forced to see things from another perspective and learn what it really means to walk in someone else's shoes. This is the kind of book that will make you laugh, cry, and feel all warm and fuzzy at the end. Perfect for the holiday!



The Killer Across the Table: Unlocking the Secrets of Serial Killers and Predators with the FBI's Original Mindhunter by John E. Douglas

For true crime fans, this is a must-read. Deeply disturbing yet fascinating, this book profiles four serial killers and their crimes- delving into the origins of their behavior and their motivations for murder. John Douglas is an expert FBI profiler and provides many insights into the hows and whys of often inexplicable (and despicable) crimes.

A BEWITCHING READ

BY JILL J.



Her Majesty's Royal Coven

by Juno Dawson


Childhood best friends Helena, Elle, Leonie, and Niamh couldn't be more different, but they're forever joined by being members of Her Majesty's Royal Coven, a covert organization of British witches founded by Elizabeth I. Leonie has formed her own, more inclusive, coven called Diaspora which alienates her from the rest of the HMRC, now led by High Priestess Helena. Elle is the perfect housewife (with cheating husband to match), and Niamh uses her powers to heal sick animals as a country veterinarian. The friends are all still reeling from a civil war which made enemies of Niamh and her twin sister Ciara, and put the latter in a coma for the past nine years.

But now there's a new evil rising--the Sullied Child. Niamh, Elle, Leonie, and Helena are on a mission to stop the Sullied Child from bringing on the end of days, but all is not as it seems. The Sullied Child is just that--a child named Theo. Traumatized, mute, and imprisoned by those who think they're saving the world, Theo is a warlock with a secret that threatens the High Priestess and her increasingly twisted mission to preserve the principles of the HRMC.

And the ending of the book? It makes you want to read the sequel, The Shadow Cabinet, right away.

LIBRARY TIP #3

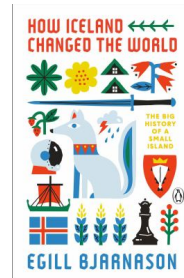
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT KENMORE'S LUCKY DAY COLLECTION? SOME OF THE MOST REQUESTED BOOKS IN THE SYSTEM ARE AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE CHECKOUT! (SORRY- NO REQUESTS OR HOLDS) VISIT US TODAY TO SEE IF YOU FIND A BOOK THAT MAKES IT YOUR "LUCKY DAY"!



THE CHECKOUT: WINTER 2023/24

LAND OF FIRE & ICE

BY KAREN B.



How Iceland Changed the World

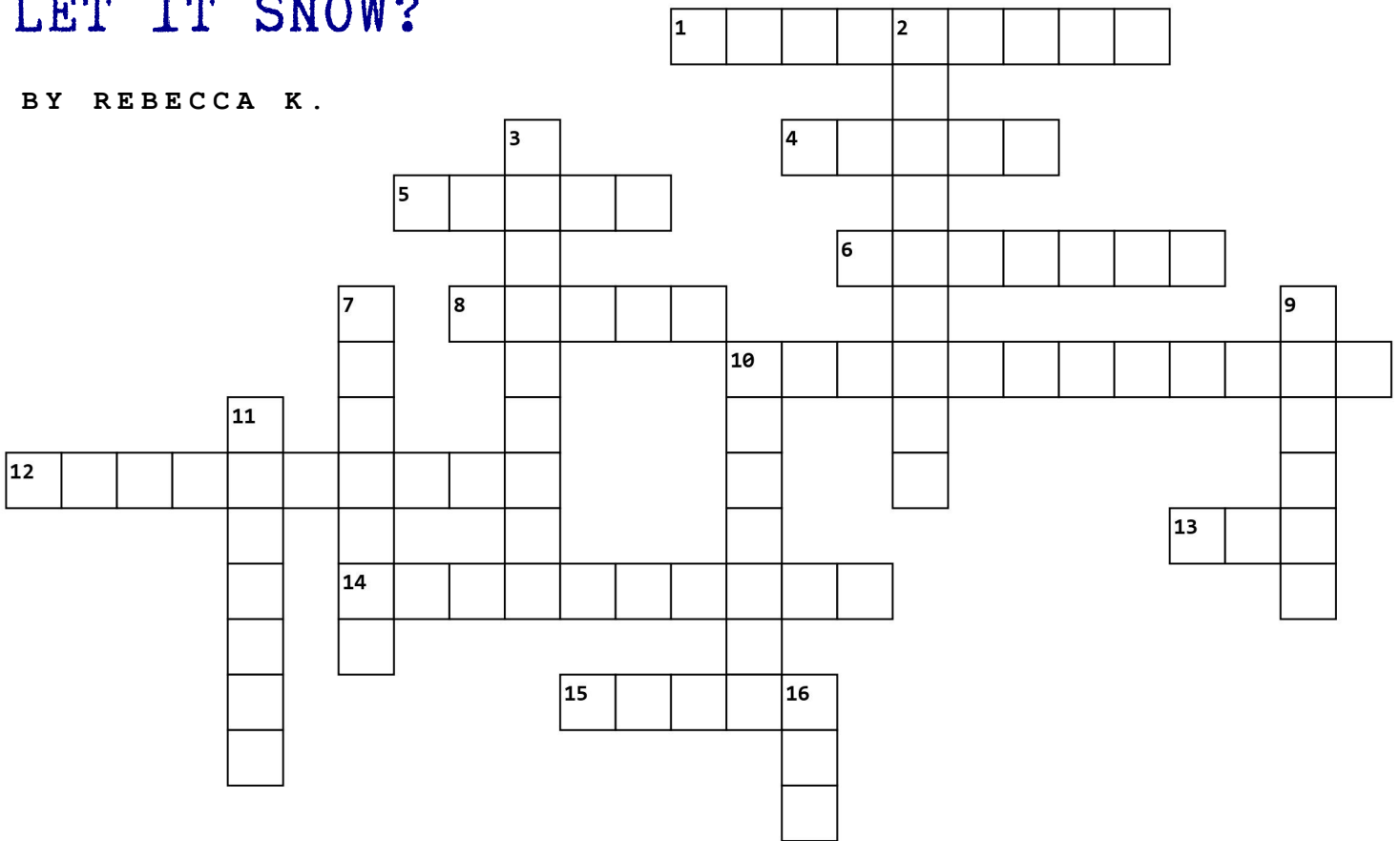
by Egill Bjarnason

Subtitled "The Big History of a Small Island," this compendium is an ode to the storied history of Iceland by a proud native son. Known by many people today both for its current volcanic activity and its Viking past, this book uncovers even further fascinating information about this distinctive country. It follows a chronological timeline that describes its various contributions in order of their happening. Starting with a tale of exile and discovery by Norwegian seafarers and early Celts, we learn about the Althing, the world's oldest surviving parliament. A significant medieval legacy of saga writing then captured its unique language history and mythology resulting in Iceland's greatest cultural contributions to the world. Modern contributions span world history (its strategically important geopolitical position between America and Europe in WWII), political geography (its deciding vote for the creation of Israel), science (its use for lunar landing practice), the environment (its use for the study of volcanos and glaciers), diplomacy (its use for détente in the Cold War), and gender equality (its election of the first female president as head of state in a direct vote and its socially progressive policies). Sprinkled with humor, self-deprecation, and amusing quotes, this book inspires both surprise and respect. Who knew the Islanders have such a deep and interesting history? With this book, now more of us will.

ISSUE #7

LET IT SNOW?

BY REBECCA K.

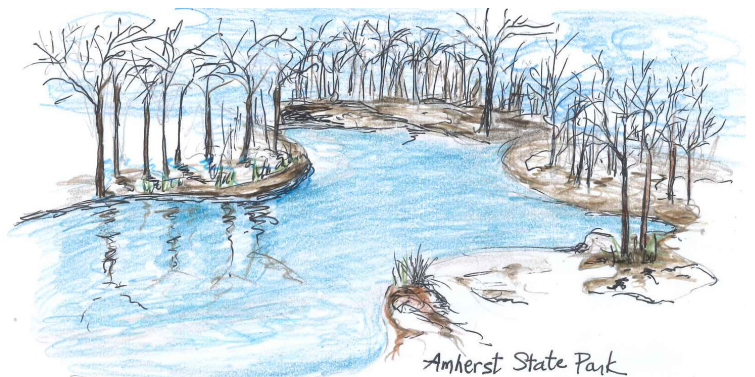


Across

1. What creates the "Real Feel" temperature
4. Fruit known as "Winter's Banana"
5. In Game of Thrones, which family's motto is "Winter Is Coming?"
6. Who composed "Winter," a concerto from "The Four Seasons"
8. This country has the snowiest city on Earth
10. Phobia known as an extreme fear of the snow
12. Ancient stone monument that's aligned with the winter solstice sunset
13. Reindeer that live above the Arctic Circle can ___ in the dark
14. Kubrick movie that makes you cold while you watch
15. Winter moose food

Down

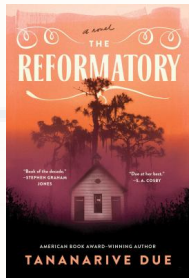
2. Zodiac sign for December 22nd to January 20th
3. Team that's won the most Stanley Cups
7. The tallest snow person was almost as tall as the Statue of _____
9. Author of "The Longest Winter"
10. Sport you play with stones
11. State with the largest number of ski resorts
16. A snowflake has how many sides



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

HAUNTED BY HISTORY

BY HEATHER B.,
GUEST REVIEWER



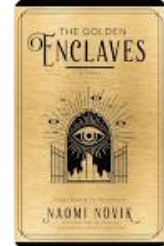
The Reformatory by Tananarive Due

It's the summer of 1950 and 12-year-old Robbie Stephens, Jr. and big sister Gloria meet Lyle McCormack on the side of the road. When Lyle, a white teen, touches Gloria and says some offensive things, Robbie kicks Lyle. Robbie, a black boy, is then sentenced to six months at the Gracetown School for Boys, a reformatory where prisoners sometimes disappear forever. Robbie is surprised to discover that he can see some of those dead boys. The ghosts don't hurt Robbie, but they do want his help in revealing the reformatory's violent history. Meanwhile, Gloria does everything she can to free her little brother, repeatedly butting up against systems that, even post-slavery, still treat black boys like property.

The Gracetown School for Boys is fiction, but it's inspired by the real and infamous Dozier School for Boys. Due doesn't shy away from the racism at the center of this story, and it's not hard to feel the echoes of some of the situations here in the current day United States. That said, *The Reformatory* never feels didactic, with any message wrapped up in a gripping and propulsive story. This book is such an interesting and powerful mix of fiction and history, supernatural horror and human horror, and our ability to devastate each other and also save each other. I thought about this book even when I wasn't reading it, and I read the last 100 pages in one gulp, up until 4:30 a.m. If it's not the best book I read this year, it's on the short list.

NOT YOUR KID'S HOGWARTS

BY SUE K.



Naomi Novik's Scholomance series of three books- *A Deadly Education*, *The Last Graduate* and *The Golden Enclaves* all tell the story of Scholomance, a wizard school built with evil means where all kinds of disgusting monsters lie in wait in the heat vents, under the lids of warming trays in the cafeteria, in dark halls and classrooms and mostly waiting in the Graduation Hall to pick off graduating seniors. It is a very dark story with brilliant characters beset literally on every side by the very real chance of dying. A very bleak Hogwarts.

CROSSWORD (ANSWERS)

ACROSS

1. Windchill
4. Apple
5. Stark
6. Vivaldi
8. Japan
10. Chionophobia
12. Stonehenge
13. See
14. TheShining
15. Twigs

DOWN

2. Capricorn
3. Canadiens
7. Liberty
9. Wilder
10. Curling
11. New York
16. Six

THE CHECKOUT STAFF

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

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