

THE CHECKOUT

SUMMER 2024

ISSUE #9

A REVIEW SOURCE WRITTEN BY LIBRARY
PATRONS FOR LIBRARY PATRONS



A PUBLICATION
OF THE
KENMORE
BRANCH
LIBRARY

NURSING HEROINE

BY CHLOE S.

The Women

by Kristin Hannah

"How did a woman go about opening up her world? How did one begin a journey when no invitation had been issued?"

Nobody does war, loss, and love like Kristin Hannah, and her latest novel doesn't disappoint. Frankie McGrath joins the Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War, following her brother who just left to join with the Navy. From the minute she reaches Saigon, she is quickly overwhelmed and her life both in Vietnam and state-side change forever.

Hannah chronicles McGrath and the lives she touches in this coming-of-age novel in such a moving way. She captures the political tensions and gender roles going on at the time while also demonstrating what all women have felt in their lives at pivotal moments.

There's quite a long waitlist for this one for a reason - try requesting through Libby to get your hands on it quicker!



REBOUND ROOMIES

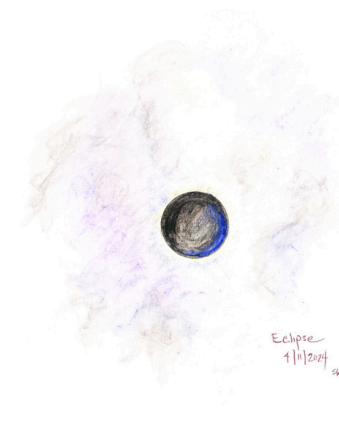
BY LISA S.



Funny Story

by Emily Henry

In Emily Henry's latest rom-com, **Funny Story**, Daphne and Miles find themselves as unexpected roommates after Daphne's fiancé decides he's in love with his lifelong "she's just a friend" bestie, who happens to be Miles's girlfriend. Both jilted and feeling lost, Daphne moves into Miles's recently-vacated apartment, and this conundrum becomes the backdrop of their love story. As a children's librarian, Daphne, newly single, lonely, and a bit humiliated, just needs to survive the next 100 days until her big library Read-A-Thon. New roomie Miles is determined to show Daphne how magical Michigan summers can be while she bides her time. In the process of exploring Lake Michigan and the surrounding areas, they grow closer as friends and a bit more. It doesn't help that they fibbed to their exes, sharing that they're actually dating and need to play out the ruse more often than they expected. Henry does an incredible job showing the growth these characters needed to tackle that was exposed as part of their recent breakups. Miles is struggling with deep people-pleasing tendencies and Daphne is faced with overcoming abandonment struggles. Read along while these two heal individually and weave together a future.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

LIBRARY TIP #1 BORROWER'S NAME



DID YOU KNOW THE KEN-TON FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY HAVE SEASONAL BOOK SALES AND ACCEPT DONATIONS ALL YEAR? THEY'RE LOCATED AT THE OLD KENMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL AT 155 DELAWARE RD., DOOR #8 AND ARE OPEN MOST SATURDAYS BETWEEN 10AM-12PM FOR DONATIONS AND TO BROWSE THEIR BOOK SALE AREA!

THE CHECKOUT: SUMMER 2024

ISSUE #9

INTO THE GLOSS

BY CHLOE S.



Glossy: Ambition, Beauty, and the Inside Story of Emily Weiss's Glossier

by Marisa Meltzer

Written by a beauty journalist, this book delves into Emily Weiss, founder of beauty brand Glossier, which defined the millennial generation and quickly became a billion-dollar business. Before developing a cult following that became synonymous with the color millennial pink, Emily was just a girl with a lot of ambition. The book follows how she got involved with beauty, from her days as an intern with Teen Vogue and Ralph Lauren, to creating the Into the Gloss backstage blog that eventually launched Glossier.

While this book gives a great overview into Emily's career and the beauty business overall, the author jumps around a bit and loses focus of the goal of the book frequently. She also frequently includes her opinion and viewpoint on things, making parts a bit biased. Take that with a grain of salt - it is still worth the read but worth noting if you are looking for a detailed account of Glossier or Emily's career.

AN UNFLINCHING LOOK AT EVIL

BY JILL J.

A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them

by Timothy Egan

Before picking up **A Fever in the Heartland**, the names D.C. Stephenson and Madge Oberholtzer meant nothing to me. After finishing this shocking work of narrative nonfiction, I was stunned at their story and how relevant it still is today.



In the 1920s in America, the Ku Klux Klan was back on the rise after 60 years, and this time they meant to stick around. Originally founded by racist Civil War Confederate veterans and their ilk in the South, the Klan of the 20s wanted to further its reach into the heartland of America and take over as many political offices and positions of power as possible. D.C. Stephenson was the power-hungry and strategic leader of Indiana's chapter of the Klan and one of the most influential men in America, and 28-year-old Madge Oberholtzer wanted to take him down. Unfortunately for Oberholtzer, her testimony against Stephenson would be on her deathbed.

With **A Fever in the Heartland**, Timothy Egan writes another stunning tale that reads more like a thriller than actual history. For another engaging work on a similarly bleak topic by Egan, read **The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl**.



LIBRARY TIP #2

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PROGRAM IS
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ADVENTURE BEGINS AT YOUR LIBRARY 1994-2024
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A LEG TO STAND ON

BY JILL J.

Leg: The Story of a Limb and the Boy Who Grew From It

by Greg Marshall

As a child, Greg Marshall was told by his parents that his limp was caused by tight tendons. Through worn-out shoes, wheelchairs, and leg surgeries, he accepted this as fact until he applied for his own health insurance in his late 20s and discovered that he actually had cerebral palsy - and that his parents and doctors knew the whole time. Where other memoirists would make this the focus of their story, Marshall writes eloquently about other facets of his life as well. Growing up gay in the Mormon stronghold of Utah during the George W. Bush administration shapes Marshall's story as much as his withheld illness and relationship with his family. We follow Marshall as he has his first sexual awakenings, comes out to his supportive and mostly nonchalant parents, navigates lying lovers, and everything else you'd come to expect from a memoir. The addition of some rightfully-earned hypochondria, a constantly cancer-ridden (and fentanyl patch-licking) mother, a dance machine of an autistic sister, and a father suddenly declining from ALS makes **Leg** stand out. And we still haven't gotten to the cerebral palsy of it all!



Leg paints such a vivid picture of Marshall and his relationships that you feel like you've known him his whole life. Who knew a picture labeled "Boob et Gregoire" on the last page would make me so emotional?

SWOON-WORTHY ROMANCE!

BY CHRISTINA L.



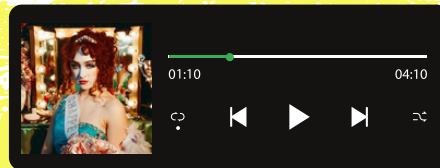
Red, White, and Royal Blue

by Casey McQuiston

What if the first son of the United States became public enemies with the prince of Britain? In **Red, White & Royal Blue**, Alex and Harry are forced to fake a friendship to solidify international relations and keep things positive in the public eye. When feelings start to develop, the two must find the balance between their own feelings and identities, and the public expectations as members of both the First Family and the Royal Family. Above all, this is a beautiful love story! The themes of being true to yourself, inclusivity, and acceptance are important takeaways. If you are in the mood for a romance that will make you laugh, gush, and feel warm and fuzzy all over, check this one out!

LISTEN TO THIS

BY IZZY B.



As a wise audience member in the comments section of one of Chappell Roan's music videos once said, "Her music makes me understand what it's like to be a Swiftie." Who am I even talking about? Good question, sorry. Chappell Roan is a pop star/drag musician who releases songs largely about love, embracing your own identity, and embracing LGBTQ+ culture, culminating in her most recent hit album **The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess**. Her unique stage outfits are a memorable signature of her performance, and she usually touches on her experience growing up in the Midwest as someone noticeably different, due in part to her struggles with her mental health and LGBTQ+ identity growing up. It's not often that a musician is able to capture the complexities of these issues with a fun, catchy beat to go along with it, and Chappell's ability to pour so much feeling into every lyric is palpable and moving. I'd absolutely recommend you give her music a listen! Chappell Roan has just played live in Buffalo Outer Harbor, and **The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess** is available right here at our library!

CELEBRATING THE POWER OF ART

BY HEATHER B.

IT WAS VULGAR & IT WAS BEAUTIFUL
HOW AIDS ACTIVISTS USED ART TO FIGHT A PANDEMIC
JACK LOWERY



In **It Was Vulgar & It Was Beautiful: How AIDS Activists Used Art to Fight a Pandemic**, Jack Lowery studies the work of art collective Gran Fury, a group of activists who fought back against government inaction, corporate greed, and public indifference during the early days of the AIDS crisis through protest, art, and propaganda. Lowery offers a touching and devastating portrait of a group of people, largely gay men, who fought to make the annihilation of their friends and families seen and felt. While I'm old enough to remember the peak of the AIDS crisis, reading again about pharmaceutical companies' price gouging of AIDS medications and government willingness to watch while AIDS decimated a community was heartbreaking and infuriating all over again.

With recent years seeing large public protests over issues like police brutality and genocide in Palestine, Gran Fury's story still feels sadly relevant today with many of their strategies still being used by activist-led groups.



While it would be ideal if their work wasn't quite so relevant, Gran Fury's story is an inspiring reminder of the power of a collective voice determined to be heard as well as the incredible power of an image to deliver a message in ways that words sometimes can't.

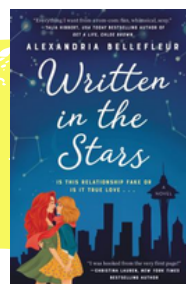
LOVE, LIES, AND ZODIAC VIBES

BY LISA S.

Written in the Stars

by Alexandria Bellefleur

Written in the Stars is a modern day take on Jane Austen's **Pride and Prejudice**, with two queer main characters that embody all the qualities we know and love about Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet. After the world's worst blind date, no-nonsense Darcy Lowell is determined to end her well-meaning brother's matchmaking attempts. Darcy is on a love hiatus after her last breakup and lies to her brother, claiming the date went so well that he could stop setting her up! Unfortunately, she forgot to tell her date about this plan. Enter Elle Jones, Darcy's polar opposite, free-spirited, astrology-loving blind date. Elle couldn't imagine a less compatible match than Darcy, but when Darcy approaches her with a fake relationship arrangement, Elle sees an opportunity to avoid another holiday season as the lone single family member.



The two navigate family drama and holiday chaos together, and find an unexpected connection along the way. Even though these two had a rocky start, and it may be against their better judgment, they can't seem to stay away from each other. Bellefleur takes you on a journey to discover that opposites can indeed attract, and that sometimes the most unlikely stories are written in the stars.



RALLY 'ROUND THE FAMILY WITH A BASKET FULL OF HEADS

BY STEPHEN C .

Basketful of Heads

by Joe Hill & Leomacs

In September of 1983, June Branch is visiting her boyfriend Liam, a summer hire for the local police, on Brody Island off the coast of Maine. As the two are attempting to plan their life together beyond the summer, they happen across a crime scene involving four escaped prisoners from Shawshank Prison. Despite being technically off the books, the Police Chief asks Liam to go to his home to make sure the Chief's family is safe and to wait there for further instructions.



As the night goes on, June and Liam find themselves alone in the house and, soon after, the escaped convicts break in and take Liam hostage. After hiding for hours, June emerges only to come face to face with one of the escapees and a scuffle ensues. From a collection of Norse artifacts belonging to the Police Chief, June pulls an ancient axe to defend herself and this is when the story (and heads) begin to roll. As all of this is happening, a storm descends and cuts off the island from the mainland as well as the phone lines.

Will June survive long enough to find Liam and will she be able to save him? Why was Liam kidnapped in the first place? And, most importantly, what's with the basketful of heads?

WE'RE GOING TO NEED A BIGGER HEAD RECEPTACLE

BY STEPHEN C .

Refrigerator Full of Heads

by Rio Youers & Tom Fowler

Nearly a year has passed since the summer of 1983 and the events of the first volume of this series. Our cast of (mostly) new characters descends upon Brody Island all in search of the Axe of Yggdrasil, an ancient Viking weapon with magical properties. Two tourists, on the island for the summer, are the first to rediscover the axe but quickly learn that a motorcycle gang is also extremely interested in the artifact. As the tourists begin to investigate what exactly is going on, we learn more about the motives of the motorcycle gang. While severed heads begin to spill information to our protagonists, the gang kidnaps the hero of last summer, June, in an attempt to locate the axe and complete a set of artifacts granting them unlimited power. It's up to the tourists to save June and prevent the bad guys from reuniting the artifacts and claiming the entire island, and possibly more, as their own.



Refrigerator Full of Heads is a fun sequel that, despite having a new writing/art team, carries on the spirit of the original while also exploring more in depth the mythology of the story. There's also some really cool stuff involving a great white shark that's stalking the island and those bits alone are worth giving this one a read.

LOVE IS COMPLICATED

BY SUE K.



The book **Picasso's Lovers** by Jeanne Mackin is a deep dive into the complicated personal life of Pablo Picasso through the eyes of a young aspiring art writer Alana in New York City 1953. The book tracks Picasso's elaborate and rather one-sided relationships with a number of women through the '20s up to Alana's story in the '50s. Picasso was certainly a genius but his relationships with both his wives, lovers, and offspring were very self-serving. There was an assumed duty of any woman who posed for him that it would include sleeping with him as well, followed by the inevitable abandonment when the artwork was completed. Reading about narcissistic men is always a bit troubling, whatever their genius. Picasso had no trouble at all abandoning lovers but was not emotionally equipped to be the one abandoned. All this makes for a great read, as Mackin has real skill probing the minds and hearts of all her characters, as well as dipping into the politics of the McCarthy era in terms of artists and students caught up in the purge of Communism.



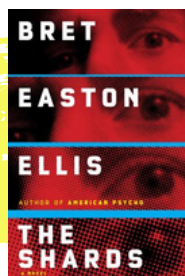
ARTWORK BY SUE K.

SEX, DRUGS, AND RITUAL MURDER!

BY JULIE ANN D.

Ready to read an unsettling thriller from author Bret Easton Ellis, notorious for writing **Less Than Zero** (1985) and **American Psycho** (1991)? His latest - and long awaited - book **The Shards** (2023) will immerse you in the world of early 1980s Los Angeles, where rich high schoolers' lives consist of pool parties, sex, and drugs. But just when these kids thought they could float through life, their comfortable world is torn away.

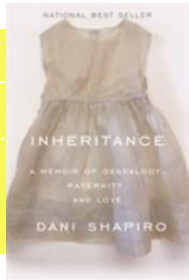
Written as a semi-autobiographical novel, Bret is the obsessive, anxiety-ridden, unreliable narrator that escapes hard situations with drugged numbness. He tries to play the part of devoted boyfriend, while on the cusp of adulthood, and his urges for secret sexual experimentation often get the best of him. When a local serial killer, dubbed the Trawler, begins harassing, abducting, and mutilating young girls and their pets, Bret takes note. He notices the attacks coincide with a new handsome classmate that is shrouded in mystery and is extremely enigmatic. The intricate animal mutilations and desecrated bodies could also be from a cult that's been known to break into homes. No one has been caught, but Bret's suspicions grow, and he makes connections in his mind.



The tense atmosphere is created with carefully selected clues and details, all within a 1980s pop culture backdrop. Part coming-of-age story, part crime novel, this book is not for the faint of heart! Most recently, **The Shards** has been optioned by HBO for a series.

A COMPLICATED MEMOIR

BY KEN W.



In **Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love**, Dani Shapiro writes about a totally unexpected discovery concerning her genetic background. At the urging of her husband, she sends a DNA sample to have it analyzed. The results she receives do not fit the understanding of herself she has embraced since childhood.

The test shows that the father she was raised by is not her biological father. She realizes that the physical traits that made her feel unlike any of her relatives were indeed because half her background was different than other family members. It answers questions she has always had as well as creates new dilemmas.

In the story that unfolds, we find out how an author who already published a work about her family's past needs to reassess this past and create a new understanding of self. It is a complicated story that shows how she puts the pieces of her life back together to form an integrated idea of who she really is. The complexities of this process and the developing story provide a view into the author's personality. The process is similar to that of a whodunit mystery without the death of any of the participants.



ANNIE BOT, THE REALISTIC ROBOT

BY JULIE
ANN D.



The debut novel, **Annie Bot** (2024), from writer Sierra Greer, is a modern interpretation of **The Stepford Wives** (1972) mixed with a bit of the **Frankenstein** (1818) tradition. Annie Bot is an AI “Cuddle Bunny” robot created by Doug, a self-conscious man, to satisfy his sexual needs. Made to his specs, she’s happy to do what he says, wear what he wants her to, and stay hidden. His friend pays a surprise visit, and with his prodding, Annie learns how to keep a secret. The secret weighs on her, and she begins making decisions on her own and thinking independently of Doug.

As expected, he is angry with Annie’s sentient developments and his loss of ownership. He punishes her, but the company that created her is thrilled with her evolution and rewards Doug. Despite this, he continues to force his ideals on her through abusive measures.

Meanwhile, everyone seems to want something from her, causing a shifting power dynamic. During her frustrating confinement, she finally realizes her worth and Doug eventually sees some of his insecurities. He realizes he’d rather build a human-like relationship with Annie Bot, than with an actual human. It has a quietly satisfying ending that leads to her freedom.

The world-building is lacking, but it emphasizes just how much the two characters revolve around each other, or more specifically, Annie Bot revolves around her owner. It’s compelling and relatable. It makes you think...what defines us as humans, how can we better treat women, and how can you change toxic masculinity?

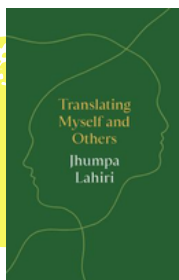
IMAGINING TRANSLATION

BY KAREN B.

Translating Myself and Others

by Jhumpa Lahiri

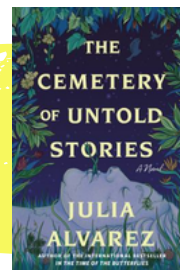
Jhumpa Lahiri is an accomplished writer and translator in English and Italian who spoke at a BABEL event in Buffalo in October 2023. This book is a collection of her personal essays devoted to the topic of what it means to be a translator and how it has played out in her own life. Born in London and raised in America in an immigrant Bengali family, she has been exposed to multilingualism all her life. Framing her own language learning activities as an adult learner of Italian, she reflects on how translation has changed her life as a novelist, as a reader, as a writer, and as a human being.



The essays include reflections on why she wanted to learn Italian as an adult, how she translated the novels of a contemporary Italian writer into English, how translating classical Latin texts helps her current thoughts about translation, and how (and why) she translated a novel she wrote herself originally in Italian into English. The self-translation essay in particular is a unique chapter because it captures the essence of her understanding of what translation can be. In her view, translation is not simply a literal, word-for-word replication of an original work into another language that represents only a secondary and less important expression of the author's work. Instead, translation is a highly conceptual means of producing a new version of the original that is equally as valid because it offers a new and different form to new readers. This is a thought-provoking book, well worth reading for any language lover.

RESURRECTION STORIES

BY SUE K.



Julia Alvarez's newest novel, **The Cemetery of Untold Stories**, is a quirky but wonderful book told through the eyes of multiple characters who all share the Dominican Republic as their birthplace and heritage. Like Alvarez's earlier book, **In the Time of the Butterflies**, this story gives us such a close look at the family dynamic unique to DR family life, especially the relationships between sisters. The added element of the DR diaspora in Nuevo York, or New York City, brings the characters to life. The main character is Alma, a lifelong successful author who, in her retirement, brings all her unfinished and unsuccessful manuscripts back to the Dominican Republic, and with the help of an artist and a local woman, inters them in a piece of derelict property she inherits from her Papi. The entrance to the cemetery is guarded by an intercom asking the visitor for a story as the key to entry. The caretaker is acutely sensitive to all the interred characters voices and listens to them tell their untold stories. The cemetery becomes a kind of community park, bringing together the motley cast of characters both living and dead in an unforgettable story.



ARTWORK BY SUE K.

MAPMAKER

The Mapmaker's Daughter

by Clare Marchant

BY KAREN B.



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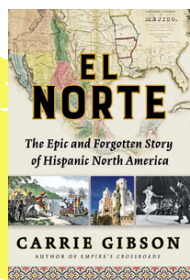
This dual-timeline novel follows the stories of two women in two different centuries who are connected by a map. The first woman, Freida, is the map's creator. A member of a famous Dutch mapmaking family, she barely escapes the Spanish Catholic invaders of the Netherlands in 1581 for religious freedom in Queen Elizabeth I's Protestant England. The second woman, Robyn, works in her father's map shop in 2022 Wales. She is recovering from the tragedy of losing her husband at sea, and is trying to put her life back together when she comes across a mysterious map. Using her dormant investigative research skills, Robyn learns Freida's story. Freida created the original map for the Tudor queen and the seafaring Francis Drake, as well as a second copy for her own Dutch husband, a privateer also fighting the Spanish at sea. At tremendous personal risk, Freida finishes the map and escapes the Spanish. Robyn, in modern times, pieces together this puzzle of Freida's survival as she comes to grips with the seven-year anniversary of her husband's disappearance and presumed death at sea. Looking to Freida's life as an inspiration for her own, Robyn manages to find the strength needed to carry on and move forward after life's tragedies. This is a compelling read for historical fiction enthusiasts.

AMERICA'S SPANISH HISTORY

El Norte: The Epic and Forgotten Story of Hispanic North America

by Carrie Gibson

BY KAREN B.



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The history of North America is not solely the story of the 13 original British colonies that most Americans know. (Case in point: How many Americans know that Spain was on the side of those colonies in the Revolutionary War?) The historical and cultural heritage of the United States today is complex and complicated, but it includes Spanish roots too. These roots infused the past and continue to influence the present. Four centuries of waxing and waning Spanish military and economic power changed the face of the continent. This book examines those changes and explores the different trajectories experienced over time by Mexicans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans alongside their Anglo counterparts. Spain's presence in North America encompassed the current American Southwest and Mexico, along with eastern bases in Florida and a northern outpost in Canada. The history of violent encounters, military massacres, and forced religious conversions described in these pages does not discount the seemingly primary goal of finding gold in the New World (later echoed in the California gold rush). This history also includes Spanish influences on American music, dance, architecture, and sports. It further reframes conventional American understandings of historical events like the Alamo, the sinking of the USS Maine, and even the American Civil War (in which escaped slaves making their way to Florida were freed by Spanish authorities). It also backgrounds the current immigration crises at the US/Mexican border. Less a forgotten story than one that is not widely known, this book offers readers a fascinating look at how American history can be more broadly understood as an intersection of many different influences over time that still resonate today.

BOOKISH ACRONYM AND TERM GUIDE

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?!?!

BY CHRISTINA L.

Are you peeking around social media to see what people thought of that amazing SJM book you just read? Does reading book reviews on Goodreads have you searching up the meaning of DNF? Well, this quick guide will help you brush up on the latest trends in our fellow world of readers. So snap a shelfie, grab a new book from your TBR pile, and enjoy!

ARC/eARC: Advanced Reader Copy. A book received before its publishing date to review. Also, it may be an unedited version.

Backlist: The entire catalog of an author. All of an author's books.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, Person of Color

Book hangover: When you are so greatly affected after finishing a book (positively or negatively) that you need time to process and decompress.

Book haul: A stack of books that you check out from a trip to the library.

Canon: When fans accept something as officially part of the story and the author confirms it. As opposed to "head canon," which is when you have an unconfirmed theory of what you think happened or will happen in a story.

Coverfished: When you pick up a low-quality book based on its super-amazing book cover.

CR: Currently Reading

CW/TW: Content Warning/Trigger Warning

DNF: Did Not Finish, meaning you decided that the book wasn't for you and you stopped reading it.

FTB: Fade To Black

GN: Graphic Novel

Goodreads: A review and book discovery site.

HEA and HFN: Happily Ever After and Happy For Now

Litjock: A person who is enthusiastic about reading and makes it a big part of their identity.

LFL: Little Free Library

MC: Main Character

MG: Middle Grade

MMPB: Mass Market Paperback

Mood reader: Meaning people who don't stick to a specific list of books, genre, or order. They pick their next read based on how they're feeling in the moment.

NA: New Adult

NRN: Not Right Now. Similar to a DNF, but you intend to come back to this book at a later time.

OOP: Out Of Print

OTP: One True Pairing. Basically, another way to say your "ship" (see below), but is often used in the context of friends.

Owned Voices/Own Voices: When the author is part of the same marginalized group as the main character in their book.

POV: Point Of View

SFF: Sci-Fi + Fantasy. Referring to the two genres together.

Shelfie: A picture of your shelf showing off a book collection or a traditional selfie with books in the background.

Ship: Two characters in a story that fans would like to see be together romantically.

SJM: This one stands for the popular author, Sarah J. Maas.

TBR: To Be Read. One of the most common acronyms that refers to a list of books you intend to read.

TPB: Trade Paperback

WIP: Work in progress. Writers use this to refer to their unfinished work.

YA: Young Adult

Sources:

<https://www.rd.com/article/book-terms/>

<https://bookstr.com/article/common-bookish-acronyms-words-every-reader-should-know/>

<https://www.booksaremythirdplace.com/articles/49-bookish-acronyms-and-phrases-you-need-to-know>

<https://bonafidebookworm.com/book-acronyms/>

TUMBLE FROM THE ALPS

BY CHLOE S.



Anatomy of a Fall
(2023, directed by Justine Triet)

At an isolated chalet in the French alps, a novelist named Sandra (Sandra Huller) faces trial for her husband Samuel's death with her blind son Daniel as the only witness. The film opens with Sandra being interviewed by a journalist while Samuel is upstairs, listening to music loudly while working in the attic. Daniel is out for a walk with his guide dog Snoop, and comes back to find Samuel dead on the ground from an apparent fall from the three-story attic window.

Throughout the investigation, we get an intimate view at the couple's life before and after Samuel's death. Sandra Huller gives a phenomenal performance, both tense and raw, as does Milo Machado-Graner, who plays Daniel and who out-acts people that are ten times his age. This Best Screenplay winner is the perfect pick for your next movie night!



BILLIONAIRE BIOPIC

BY CHLOE S.



The Aviator
(2005, directed by Martin Scorsese)

Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, this is a biopic of legendary director, aviator, and entrepreneur Howard Hughes. Following his life from the late 1920s and mid-1940s, the film shows both his highs and lows in his career and personal life. As the founder of the TWA airline, director of films with massive budgets and technical feats like **Hell's Angels**, and **Lothario** with the likes of Katherine Hepburn, Ava Gardner and other starlets, he suffered greatly in private with OCD, depression, and more.

Cate Blanchett won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Katherine Hepburn and the film won multiple Oscars for costume design, cinematography, and more. It's a long one, but a fun watch for fans of DiCaprio, old Hollywood, or just really well-done biopics.

BLOOD AND BANTER: A SERIAL KILLER ROMANCE

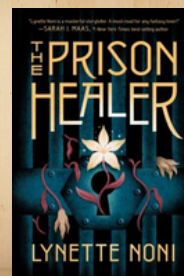
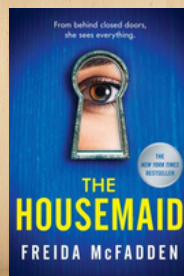
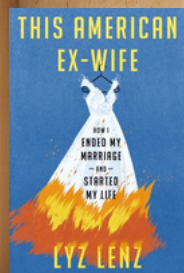
BY LISA S.

Butcher & Blackbird
by Brynne Weaver



If you enjoyed the show **Dexter**, this might be the dark romantic comedy for you. Sloan is a serial killer who kills other serial killers. Her world is turned upside down when she finds herself in a jam during one of her kills, and is rescued by Rowan, who happens to have the same deadly hobby. The two find a kindred spirit in one other, fostering a connection with someone who truly understands the dark side. Their shared passion for justice—albeit in an unconventional way—leads to an annual tradition of hunting a chosen killer together. As their murderous game evolves, they begin to feel more than just friendship, and struggle to see each other only once a year. Weaver draws you into this unconventional love story with so many dark twists and turns that you'll never be bored. You'll find yourself laughing out loud at a scene with some light cannibalism before your conscience has the time to kick in. This is such a worthwhile read if you're tired of the same old romance troupes, but still want a happy ending with great banter. If this dark romantic comedy sounds like your kind of story, you'll be excited to learn that the second book in the series, **Leather & Lark**, was just released! What's better than one serial killer love story? Learning there's a whole family of killers!

QUICK TAKES



This American Ex-Wife: How I Ended My Marriage and Started My Life

by Lyz Lenz

A more positive look at divorce and how it oftentimes releases women from traditional roles and obligations that have not kept pace with the modernization of society.

Bride

by Ali Hazelwood

Despite their differences, a vampire and werewolf enter into a risky marriage of convenience to keep their people safe, and come out with a love story.

The Dark Window

Two Twisted Crowns

duology by Rachel Gillig

These books are a fantastic blend of magic, friendship, and the risks of greed in seeking what we want. Each chapter starts with a short poem whose meaning comes clear as the stories weave around each other. "But nothing comes for free especially magic." Read on at your own risk!

The Familiar

by Leigh Bardugo

This is a stand-alone and a fantastic historical read set in the height of the Inquisition's power in Spain. Bardugo excels at the mixing of "ordinary" humans and those with magical talents. The protagonist in **The Familiar** is Luzia, a secret Jewish convert to Catholicism and a practitioner of simple magics who manages to come to the attention of the Inquisition. Trigger warning - this book has very vivid depictions of the torture methods used by the Inquisitors.

The Housemaid

by Frida McFadden

This book is a quick, page-turning, psychological thriller that you will not be able to put down. The story follows a young woman named Millie (with a criminal history) who is employed as a live-in housekeeper for an affluent family. As things quickly start to unravel we see that everyone in the home is suspicious, and uncovering who is safe and who is not will shock you.

The Prison Healer

by Lynette Noni

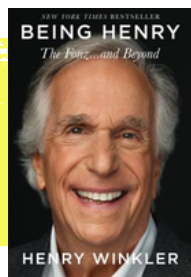
Kiva, imprisoned for most of her life as a traitor to the crown, is the sole healer at a notoriously brutal prison in her realm. When the Rebel Queen is captured and arrives at the prison needing life-saving care, Kiva is under pressure from both sides to keep the Rebel Queen alive, no matter the cost.

HAPPY DAYS

BY KEN W.

Being Henry: The Fonz and Beyond by Henry Winkler, is an autobiography that takes us into Henry's life for a closer look at the TV star. I quickly realized that there was a great deal of information that was new to me. Henry has struggled with dyslexia all his life, making reading a tremendous effort. Yet he found ways around these limitations and eventually co-authored several children's books. He is totally candid about this limitation and the complications it had for him his entire life. He also talks about being short and how that can impact someone who seeks a career in show business.

He expounds on the difficulty of being typecast in a role that made it exceedingly difficult to work as a more diverse actor. It took a long time for him to find a new direction for his acting skills. All autobiographies are self-promotional. Some are discussions of the self that would seem to be most interesting to the author. **Being Henry** comes across to me as a work that tells us about his life but isn't a total obsession of self-centered oratory. He presents himself in a realistic portrait of a man possessing both talent and limitations.



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FAMILY CRISIS

BY CHLOE S.



The Bee Sting

by Paul Murray

Generational trauma takes a whole new meaning in this book following an Irish family that just can't keep it together. Father Dickie Barnes has a car business that is going under, making the family the talk of the town. He copes by starting to build an apocalyptic bunker in his backyard while his wife Imelda watches from afar, dealing with her own crazy side of the family. Cass, their eldest child, is headed off to college and develops a drinking habit before even passing her exams. Their 12-year-old son PJ is somewhat of a bystander watching everyone fall apart and creates a plan to run away from their home.

Nothing can prepare you for how the story of the family ends. It is a tale of bad luck and misfortune that continues through the family tree. This book is definitely a slow burn and a longer read at 600+ pages, but is worth the investment.

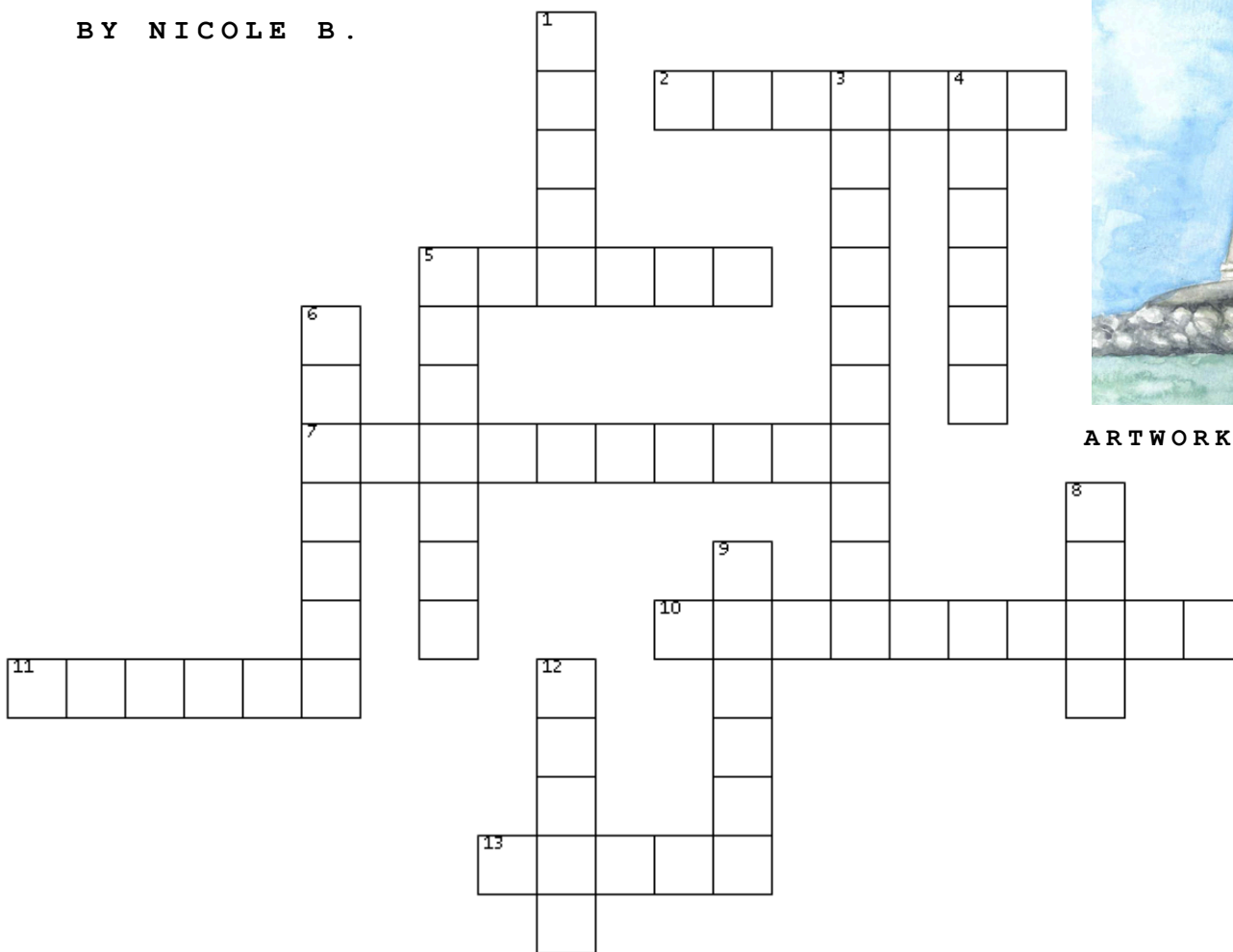


IT'S ALL SUN AND GAMES...

BY NICOLE B.



ARTWORK BY PATTY K.



ACROSS

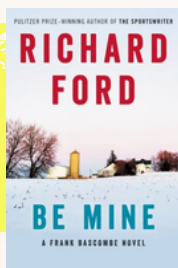
2. This fun summertime sports equipment originated from throwing a pie plate
5. The person who “July” is named in honor of, or the salad
7. This bouncy piece of play equipment is one of the top causes of summertime injuries
10. This summer treat is part of the cucumber, pumpkin, and squash family and consists of 92% water
11. The “Dog Star” that the “dog days of summer” is based on
13. This country was the scene for a summertime romance in Call Me By Your Name

DOWN

1. Only wear this color pants between Memorial Day and Labor Day
3. The best place in southern England to see the summer solstice
4. Due to the heat expansion of the metal, this famous French tower gets 6 inches taller in the summer
5. This summer insect is famous for the loud sounds produced by the vibrations of membranes in the male’s abdomen
6. Americans eat about 7 billion of these frilled favorites in the summer
8. National Ice Cream Month
9. This “Great” book is famous for its dazzling soirees during the summer of 1922
12. This Sisterhood of the Traveling _____ series hopefully didn’t wear a certain color after Labor Day

FATHER & SON

BY STUART R.



One of my favorite authors, Richard Ford (prolific novelist and short story writer), came out in 2023 with the fifth book in the Frank Bascombe series, *Be Mine*. Having read the four previous books beginning when Frank was in his 30s, I never thought there would be a fifth one. The series includes *The Sportswriter* (1986), *Independence Day* (1995), *The Lay of the Land* (2006), and *Let me be Frank With You* (2014).

The initial setting begins in Rochester, Minnesota at the Mayo Clinic where Frank is with Paul, his 47-year-old son, who is being treated for ALS and is terminally ill. Frank is now 74 years old. The son is a quirky character and Frank has had an up and down relationship with him for many years. This volume makes reference to their past history. Don't worry, however - it's not necessary for you to read the previous volumes although I would certainly not hesitate to recommend them.

The current volume chronicles father and son spending the beginning of Paul's final days together taking a motor trip from the Mayo Clinic to Mount Rushmore in western South Dakota. There is a lot of bickering between father and son but it is obvious that they have a strong bond and really love each other.

NEW THIS SUMMER!

kody & herren
thursday, june 27th 6:00pm

sally schaefer & tyler bagwell
wednesday, july 17th 6:00pm

vibrant strings
thursday, august 29th 6:00pm

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CROSSWORD (ANSWERS)

ACROSS

- 2. Frisbee
- 5. Caesar
- 7. Trampoline
- 10. Watermelon
- 11. Sirius
- 13. Italy

DOWN

- 1. White
- 3. Stonehenge
- 4. Eiffel
- 5. Cicada
- 6. Hot dogs
- 8. July
- 9. Gatsby
- 12. Pants

THE CHECKOUT STAFF

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

WANT TO SUBMIT A REVIEW?

SUBMISSIONS WILL BE POSTED PER DISCRETION OF THE LIBRARY.
SUBMISSIONS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT OR LENGTH.

