

PEOPLE

Profiles, Family News, Features

Book Buzz Reviews



Keep warm by
the fire with
these books

Recommendations from Scenic Regional Library Staff (and Santa)

"The Girl from the Hidden Forest"
by Hannah Linder

Christian Fiction, Mystery, Suspense, Romance
Adult, Medical Thrillers, Domestic Fiction
by Freida McFadden

"Never Lie"

by Freida McFadden

"The Girl from the Hidden Forest"

by Hannah Linder

Christian Fiction, Mystery, Suspense, Romance

When Eliza Ellis is abruptly taken from the only life she has ever known in the depths of Bal-four Forest, she can't help but fight against her captor, Felton Northwood, the man who claims to know her true identity — one she has long since forgotten. Haunted by nightmares from her forgotten past and the terrifying accusations Felton speaks of, Eliza is faced

with murder-ous lies that destroyed her peaceful life in the forest and secrets she can no longer distinguish from the truth. Yet when answers emerge from the darkness, Eliza must decide what is most important — her life or the man she loves?

I've loved all of Hannah Linder's books, but "The Girl from the Hidden Forest" might have topped all of them. From the first page, I was drawn in by the poetic writing style and magnificent characters presented. Seasoned beautifully with a gripping, fast-paced plot, this book absolutely stole my heart from the first page and held me captive beyond the last. I stayed up far too late reading it, and when I had to put it down, the story feasted on my mind, making me wonder what would happen next and look forward to my next chance to read again.

If you're a fan of regency novels, I can't recommend Linder enough, especially "The Girl from the Hidden Forest." Similarly, if you're looking for an edge-of-your-seat tale sewn together with a murder mystery and sweet romance, this book should undoubtedly be your next read. From well-developed characters to a plot that will have you gasping at every turn, Eliza and

Felton's story will be right up your alley. A rich setting and outstanding plot will keep you glued, even if the genre isn't your typical go-to;



"The Boyfriend"

by Freida McFadden

Adult, Mystery, Thriller, Suspense

If you're a Freida fan, "The Boyfriend" will NOT disappoint. If you're new to the author, this will have you hooked. This fast paced, twisty-turny thriller will have you guessing until the end. The Queen of Twists holds true to the title with her newest installment. It's told from two points of view: the present view of our main character, Sydney Shaw, and a glimpse at the past of the mysterious Tom Brewer. Sydney has never had the best taste in men, that is, until she meets the perfectly dreamy Dr. Brewer (as he saves her from an attack from one of these tasteless men).

But soon, a series of local murders comes to a head when one victim hits just a little too close to home for Sydney's comfort. At this point, every woman in NYC is fair game, and Sydney could be next. And as perfect as Tom is, Sydney can't shake the notion that something seems a little off about him. Maybe she's just experienced one too many bad apples while living in the Big Apple ... or maybe it's something else ... Tom has some strange quirks, major commitment issues, and a past that gets murkier the deeper you go. Can you figure it out before it's too late?

I didn't.

I'm a huge fan of Freida McFadden. She has a very fast paced, suspenseful writing style that will always have some surprise twists you never saw coming. I started with her recent "Housemaid" series and fell down the rabbit hole. This newest re-

"Never Lie"

by Freida McFadden

Adult, Medical Thrillers, Domestic Fiction

I've been a fan of Freida McFadden ever since I read her book *The Housemaid*. McFadden is a woman who only knows how to write home-runs and as such I expect nothing but jaw-dropping twists from her. You'd think I would eventually catch on to her tricks and expect the unexpected, but nope, she gets me every time. I'm left grasping at straws till the very last page.

She succeeded once again in her book "Never Lie;" my jaw was on the FLOOR for the whole second half of the book. I cannot recommend giving this one a read enough, it's definitely a five-star book. In "Never Lie," McFadden switches point of views all throughout in the most gravitating way. She jumps from voice to voice, starting with a young couple who have been stranded in an abandoned house. The house used to belong to a renowned psychiatrist — who happens to have disappeared, supposedly murdered, years ago. The only problem: they never found her body or her ex-boyfriend.

When stuff starts moving around and the wife finds a mysterious room in the house, you begin to wonder if all is as it seems. Then, McFadden gives us the point of view of said psychiatrist and her patients in the past, leaving one to wonder: did the psychiatrist ever really leave the house? Or is she still there? I was wondering how it all tied together, tossing accusations right and left, trying to figure out who is the killer here? Is it him or her? Is she actually dead? By the time I thought I had it all figured out, piecing together the puzzle, McFadden's book decided to kick me while I was down and toss the aforementioned puzzle out the window. You think you know how her book is going to end? Guess again.

Chances are, you're wrong — the twist at the end is one you'll never see coming until it's too late.

Genevieve Alexander —
Sullivan branch, Adult
Programmer



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I'm a huge fan of Freida McFadden. She has a very fast paced, suspenseful writing style that will always have some surprise twists you never saw coming. I started with her recent "Housemaid" series and fell down the rabbit hole. This newest release did not fail to keep me on the edge of my seat and I devoured it in one sitting. I don't usually like to jump on the "hype train" for books, but I'm glad I hopped on the bandwagon for this one. I 10 out of 10 recommend!

Casie Busch — Children's Programmer, New Haven branch



a murder mystery and sweet romance, this book should undoubtedly be your next read. From well-developed characters to a plot that will have you gasping at every turn, Eliza and

Felton's story will be right up your alley. A rich setting and outstanding plot will keep you glued, even if the genre isn't your typical go-to; topped with Linder's gorgeously unique writing style, "The Girl from the Hidden Forest" does not disappoint.

Leah Matlock — Library Assistant, Union branch



"The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science"

by *Kate McKinnon*

Children's fiction (ages 9+), Action and Adventure

If you recognize the author's name, you may be a fan of SNL or maybe you saw her as Weird Barbie in the Barbie movie. She's the rather slight blond who can twist her body and face for laughs, playing quirky characters, and changing her voice to do sometimes rather irreverent impersonations.

With that being said, you might expect this book to be a bit quirky and even scattered – you would NOT be wrong, or disappointed ... Beginning with the forward that sets the tone, you're in for the ride of your life throughout the 243 pages – I've included the Acknowledgements, because they, too, are fun. The book explores individuality, and embraces the sisters' unique traits, while also challenging the traditional etiquette and gender roles in society. "The Millicent Quibb School of Etiquette for Young Ladies of Mad Science," which I will heretofore refer to as "The School" or "the book" for obvious reasons, follows the lives of three high-spirited, non-biological sisters, who were orphaned at a very young age, and now live with their "Aunt" Desdemona and "Uncle" Ansel in the town of Antiquarium – a rather quirky little town, where everyone goes to etiquette school. The Porch Sisters, Eugenia, Gertrude and Dee-Dee, just don't fit the etiquette school mold, and find themselves suspended out of the very last one in town ... well, until they get a mysterious invitation from a Ms. Quibb. Ms. Quibb recruits the girls to help her with a very special mission.

They need to find a way – a scientific way – to save the town from the likes of the nefarious Krenetics Research Association. They are hoping to free their founder, Talon Sharktuth, from his vault, where he has bred a kyrgalops, a vicious stone – and puppy – chomping worm, which may destroy the entire town. I wonder who the heroes will be – those snooty girls at those other schools, or our Porch Sister and Millicent Quibb. You really need to find out for yourself – and don't skip over those footnotes. Kate's footnotes aren't the boring kind.

When reading this book, you may be reminded of the Lemony Snicket's series, but as an older reader, I picked up on some of the humor that reminded me of "MAD" magazine – I was a huge fan. While written for middle grades, I thoroughly enjoyed Kate's debut into the realm of writing her own brand of literature for those of us who crave a good laugh, and another, and another. I look forward to a possible sequel, and if we're lucky, maybe a series to rival the laughs Dav Pilkey gave us that made the youngest of struggling readers want more.

Go Kate!

Judy Walter — Library Assistant, St. Clair branch

• See Books on 2B



Books

• Continued From 1B



“Curious Tides” by *Pascale Lacelle*

Young Adult

“Curious Tides” is a Young Adult fantasy novel that follows Emory and Baz, students at Aldryn College for Lunar Magics. Emory and Baz are trying to navigate their lives after a tragic accident resulting in their classmates’ deaths, including Romie, Emory’s best friend and Baz’s sister.

Emory is plagued with guilt from being the only survivor from the ritual that took Romie’s life.

Baz is struggling from the loss of his sister and his own friend, Kai, while battling the lonely life of an Eclipse Born.

I was happily surprised when I decided to step out of my comfort zone and try something that was labeled as a dark academia fantasy. Normally when I try to read dark fantasies, they seem to have a security blanket to make the story more lighthearted. “Curious Tides” has no such security blanket. It is raw, emotional, and heart wrenching with terror that feels incredibly realistic.

This first installment of the “Drowned Gods” duology left me wanting for more by the end instead of feeling like the story could have simply ended where it was.

The magical system in the world of “Curious Tides” is very intriguing, basing each person’s powers off of the phase of the moon and tide level the day they were born. Those born during an eclipse hold rare and darker forms of magic. There are fewer Eclipse Born than others, which causes a ripple of fear through those who consider themselves to be “normal”. Eclipse Born are considerably more powerful due to the ability to use their magic no matter what moon is in the sky. They are also at risk of “collapsing” causing catastrophic events to occur, whereas those born under other moon phases. This makes for a very dramatic and suspenseful story.

I think this book is an excellent read for anyone who enjoys dark academia, fantasy, a rising despotic antagonist, and would like to experience something new.

Shea Voss — Children’s Programmer, Union branch

“Before We Were Us” by *Denise Hunter*

Contemporary Christian Romance

This is an achingly beautiful story about love lost and found. Jonah and Lauren are deeply in love and planning their wedding. Both of them are looking forward to a life together forever. That is, until an accident leaves Lauren with no remembrance of their love — only the memories of when they first met and despised each other.

Faced with his heartbreaking, new reality, Jonah has to learn how to live with loving a woman who doesn’t even like him. I absolutely loved this book. It was a perfect fall read. The setting was at a resort in New Hampshire, which made for a beautiful backdrop to a beautiful story. While it had all the common feel-



“LuLa Dean’s Little Library of Banned Books” by *Kirsten Miller*

Adult, Humor, Domestic Fiction, Political fiction
I’ve always been fascinated by the idea of banned books, so when I saw this title, I had to read it. It is a very funny, irreverent and poignant story that will make you laugh one minute and cry the next. While I don’t necessarily agree with all of the author’s ideas, I found the story very worthwhile reading.

The setting is in a little town in Georgia called Troy and Lula Dean is the resident busybody, gossip and moral compass (or so she believes) and she is “hellbent” on getting rid of all the filthy books in the school libraries. She is waging a war against the school board president and she is bound and determined to win. In order to set a good example and offer an alternative to the unwholesome books being checked out at the library, she sets up her own little lending library in her front yard. Some of the titles include: “Our Confederate Heroes,” “The Southern Belle’s Guide to Etiquette” and “The Art of Crocheting.”

When a local troublemaker discovers Lula’s library, he and the school board president’s daughter





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Faced with his heartbreaking, new reality, Jonah has to learn how to live with loving a woman who doesn't even like him. I absolutely loved this book. It was a perfect fall read. The setting was at a resort in New Hampshire, which made for a beautiful backdrop to a beautiful story. While it had all the cozy feels of a romance, it wasn't just a fluffy read. I felt like this was a different take on a second chance romance trope. There were truly moments that tugged at my heartstrings and made me feel all the feels.

Jonah was such a wonderful male lead. He was a hard worker, devoted to his family, thoughtful, and only wanted the best for Lauren. My heart ached for him, having to navigate through loving a woman who didn't remember him as anything more than someone who rubbed her the wrong way. I loved Lauren as the female lead. She was passionate and hardworking, always striving for her dreams. She had a lot of baggage, not just relating to her accident, and this one definitely delivered on that.

As the book takes place on a family-run resort, Jonah's family played a fairly large part in the book as well. It was obvious to tell that his family loved Lauren as well and while they ached for Jonah, they wanted what was best for Lauren. I especially liked his sister, Meg.

This book literally had me smiling and crying throughout. And the part where the title of the book comes into play ... so good! I highly, highly recommend this book.

Bekah Houston — *Children's Programmer, Pacific branch*



"LuLa Dean's Little Library of Banned Books"

by Kirsten Miller

Adult, Humor, Domestic Fiction, Political fiction

I've always been fascinated by the idea of banned books, so when I saw this title, I had to read it. It is a very funny, irreverent and poignant story that will make you laugh one minute and cry the next. While I don't necessarily agree with all of the author's ideas, I found the story very worthwhile reading.

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When a local troublemaker discovers Lula's library, he and the school board president's daughter, home from college, decide to replace Lula's books with banned books. Stripping off of the covers, they re-glue the covers onto books like, "Are You There, God? It's me, Margaret," "Rivals and Lovers" and "All Boys Aren't Blue." What ensues is funny and touching. Every person who borrows a book from her lending library, receives a book that moves them and makes them think. Her little wooden box becomes incredibly popular and no one says anything about the switched books.

There are great themes in this book about intellectual freedom, redemption, respecting those who do not think or live the way we do, race relations and more. I highly recommend that everyone reads this book.

Lori Jane Perdue — *Branch Manager, Pacific branch*