

Featured Reviews

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Book reviews by our library patrons

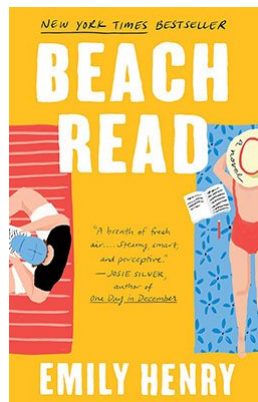
Have you read any good books lately? **Submit** a review of a book you'd like to share with others! Reviews may be published here and on social media accounts.



***Beach Read* by Emily Henry (Review by Vicki)**

This book was the perfect summer read. It has a grumpy, anti-romantic male character and a bubbly, sunshine, romantic female main character. Except neither of them were feeling like their normal selves due to different life events. It was fun to read how the romance writer and gloomy fiction writer came together and each taught each other hope.

Find "[Beach Read](#)" today in our catalogue.



***Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands* by Kate Beaton (Review by Heather)**

If there ever was a book that each Canadian man, woman and child over 12 should read, then *Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands* is that book. There is a reason it was voted Canada Reads book of 2023... it is breathtaking. There is an intimacy and familiarity to the main character, or should I say the author as this is a non-fiction book that at times reads like a novel... a graphic novel.

Kate Beaton has given us a look inside the working world of thousands of young and old, Canadian women and mostly men who travelled from their homes to the northern reaches of Alberta and beyond. As citizens of this country and as friends and relatives of many of those who have taken these jobs, we owe it to them to get a glimpse into that lonely, harsh yet lucrative life.

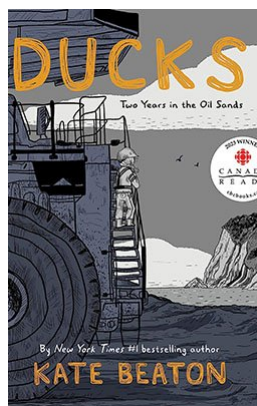
The book mainly deals with the misogyny, harassment and sexual assault that Kate had to endure during her time in the oil sands between 2005-2008. She also includes people who were kindness personified as well as true friends and allies. The drawings are so emotive that at times no words are needed.

Though almost 20 years ago, the stories are familiar to any woman who has worked in any male dominated industry. Shout out to those employed in the trades, on construction sites and even in the kitchens of restaurants across the country. I like to hope that in the past 2 decades things have changed, but the

rhetoric and hatred that is now an integral part of social media indicates that perhaps it has not.

Read this book then get everyone you know to read it. Kate's message is powerful.

[Find "Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands" today in our catalogue.](#)



***The First Ladies* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray (Review by Beth)**

This novel is a fictional account of the relationship between First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945), and Mary McLeod Bethune, an African American educator and civil rights activist. Mrs. Bethune was known as "The First Lady of The Struggle" because of her commitment to promote better lives for African Americans.

Mrs. Bethune was born in 1875 to formerly enslaved parents and decided as a child that the only difference between white and colored people was the ability to read and write. She became only one in her family to attend school.

She founded a training school for girls which under her leadership became Bethune-Cookman University, a co-ed private, historically Black university in Daytona Beach, Florida. She also held leadership positions in many African American women's organizations.

Through her acquaintance with Mrs. Roosevelt, Mrs. Bethune became a national advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt whom she worked with to create the Federal Council on Colored Affairs, also known as the Black Cabinet.

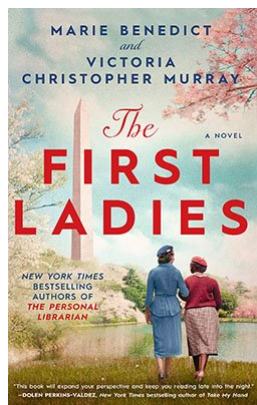
Mrs. Roosevelt was born into wealthy American family and was the niece of President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909). She became a political figure: the first presidential spouse to hold regular press conferences, write a daily newspaper column and a monthly magazine column, host a weekly radio show, speak at a national party convention and a civil rights activist African Americans.

Though some of the contacts between the two women in the novel are “imagined encounters” (p372 Historical Note), much of the novel is based in fact on the successes and failures of their shared goals for the desegregation of American white and Black society.

It is a very readable and well-written book with short chapters that alternate between the thoughts and activities of these two prominent women.

“The First Ladies” is recommended to people who would enjoy learning about history and two of the historically prominent women whose civil rights goals are still being espoused today worldwide.

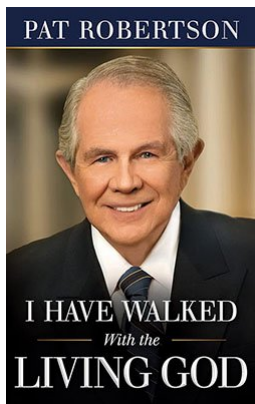
Find ["The First Ladies"](#) today in our catalogue.



***I Have Walked With the Living God* by Pat Robertson (Review by Terry)**

It took me a while to read/listen to this book because there was so much thought worthy content in it. I started out listening to it on audiobook via Hoopla. I enjoyed listening to about 50 chapters as they were read by one of my favourite actors, Kevin Sorbo. Then, I checked it out as an eBook and finished reading it myself. I was so challenged to live a life pleasing to God and others by this stirring autobiography of a godly man. He has recently passed away, so it was captivating to learn and read about well loved public figure who left a 93-year legacy to his family and many followers on public television. I thoroughly recommend this read, as it inspires you to also want to live a life of heroism and faith, to “Walk With the Living God,” as Pat Robertson so amazingly has done.

Find ["I Have Walked with the Living God"](#) today on [Libby](#) or [Hoopla](#).



***The Spoon Stealer* by Lesley Crewe (Review by Jean)**

This was a book club selection in Bridgetown, N.S. The book is set in rural Nova Scotia before the Great War and in England. Emmeline tells the story of her amazing life to a small group of friends. Only one know her secret. She steals spoons! Her best friend Vera is a small white dog who is an excellent conversationalist. I could not put this book down, and even reread the letters at the end of the book.

It is the best book I have read this summer—funny, poignant, and just plain heartwarming. Five Stars!

[Find "The Spoon Stealer" today in our catalogue.](#)



Teen book reviews

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***The Bodyguard* by Katherine Center (Reviewed by DP)**

I've been looking for a romance book and stumbled across "*The Bodyguard*" in the Port Colborne Public Library. This book is about a bodyguard named Hannah who is a personal protection agent or a bodyguard. She is assigned to protect a famous movie star, Jack Stapleton from a stalker. As the assignment goes its way, Jack and Hannah have to pretend to be in a relationship, to distract Jack's family from the threats shown. She isn't ready for what's next.

It felt good for the roles to have been switched, the female being the bodyguard and the guy needing the protection. I will say, at first, I was skeptical about this book, one of my first romance books, I didn't even research the book, and didn't look at the novel's ratings. But by the first chapter, I was hooked on the book. I loved the novel, from going to laughing and grinning at the book, to finishing the whole novel. By the end, I want to go back in time and open this book as if it's my first time again. A great novel to read that's filled with sweet moments and fun times. It's not a spicy romance, but it brings that fuzzy feeling to your stomach without the visual scenes. The novel gives the perfect comforting feeling when you're reading it.

This book is perfect for a rainy day and you just need to read something calm and funny. I would recommend this book to someone who is looking for a good read and romance.

[Find "The Bodyguard" today in our catalogue.](#)



***Caraval* by Stephanie Garber (Reviewed by CS)**

Full of mystery, magic, and lies, *Caraval* reminds readers to remember: It's only a game.

Join the magical world of *Caraval* as Scarlett, Donatella, and Julian compete in one of the world's most notorious games. After being invited to *Caraval*, Scarlett and Julian travel to *Caraval* where they are supposed to meet Donatella. However, when Julian and Scarlett arrive at where the event is being held, Donatella is nowhere to be found. Julian and Scarlett are forced to continue on without her and learn the rules of the game; Nothing is real and it is all a game. Soon the pair learn that Donatella is part of this year's game. Both of them must now work together to win the game and find Scarlett's sister. As she keeps searching though, she finds out that things really aren't as they seem and that perhaps the people around aren't who they say they are. Scarlett has to find out what is really going on at this year's legendary event before it ends.

I gave this book 5/5 stars. It was so good I read it in one day. I loved the plot of this book and the characters. The world of *Caraval* was magical and well-written. There is a little bit of mystery as well, revolving around the creator of the event, Legend and the origin of *Caraval*. The characters were very likable and had realistic dialogue. I loved reading the characters' interactions. The plot twist at the end was also very fun to read. It was definitely unexpected. This book is now one of my favorites. *Caraval* is almost like a fun house world that plays with your mind. I think it would be really cool in real life.

I would recommend this book to anyone who likes fantasy, mystery, and solving puzzles.

[Find "Caraval" today](#) in our catalogue.



***Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (Reviewed by RV)**

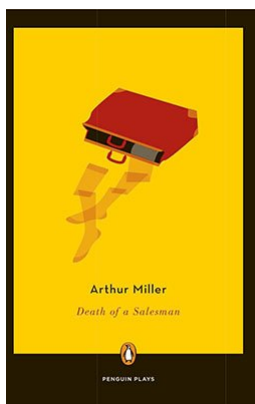
Over the summer, I was looking forward to reading a great family play. Then, one of my friends recommended *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller. I will never regret reading this play because it brings out many emotions in its readers, such as happiness, sadness, disgust, shame, guilt, and empathy.

Death of a Salesman stands out because its fantastic storyline is relatable to everyone, even today. The characters in the play face numerous circumstances and obstacles they must overcome that eventually lead to the tragic death of Willy, the play's protagonist. The Loman family, consisting of Willy, Linda, Biff, and Happy, showcases resilience in different ways to better their family life and manage societal pressures. This play illuminates the challenge of achieving dreams and the tragedy of failing. Miller also depicts the characters' difficulties in accepting failures and reality in life, eventually leading to their inability to attain the American Dream.

The play showcases the story of an unsuccessful salesman who fails to attain the American Dream because he sets expectations too high for him to achieve. Willy dreams of becoming rich and living a luxurious lifestyle, but none of this eventually happens. His brother, Ben, dramatically influences his dreams. Ben became successful at a young age, which causes Willy to become severely greedy. This theme is the most important in the play because the entire story is built upon the hardships humans face in life as they try to achieve their dreams of success. Willy also wishes for the prosperity of his sons, but they, too, fail to achieve success. Willy's inability to overcome mental obstacles and attain the success he deserves after years of hard work results in his tragic decision at the end of the play.

Death of a Salesman is a well-written family drama built with emotions and tension. I recommend it to readers above 13 due to its relevance. The play teaches us the importance of creating healthy standards for our dreams and achieving them with patience, hard work, and effort.

[Find "Death of a Salesman" today in our catalogue.](#)



***The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (Reviewed by PS)**

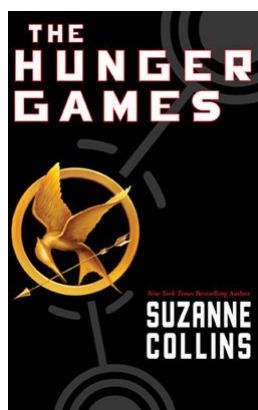
The thrilling adult dystopian novel, *The Hunger Games* written by Suzanne Collins includes all the elements of a great book that you should read: drama, tension, and romance.

The story is set in Panem, a nation made up of 12 districts and its capital, in a not-too-distant future. Two teenage tributes are selected each year from each district to take part in the Hunger Games, a public death match. Katniss Everdeen, who is the main character, is a sixteen-year-old District 12-dweller who volunteers to stand in for her sister as a tribute when her name is called.

A well-written, action-packed book that keeps the reader interested from start to finish. Collins has built a universe that is both realistic and shockingly believable, and it's easy to get lost in. In particular, Katniss, who is a strong and capable young woman, is one of the more complex and well-developed characters. Her creativity is her biggest asset, and she constantly amazes the reader with her clever solutions to problems. The book is dark and occasionally graphic, but it never feels unnecessary or meaningless. Instead, the bloodshed shows how evil the Hunger Games are and how desperate those who take part in them are. The mixture of action, romance, and political intrigue in the book is excellent.

The Hunger Games is a fantastic book that will leave readers craving more. Anyone who likes dystopian novels and a variety of elements in their books—from fighting to politics to romance—should read this book, in my opinion.

[Find "The Hunger Games" today in our catalogue.](#)



***Jackaby* by William Ritter (Reviewed by SA)**

I have been looking for an entertaining book to read during the summer and I found the *Jackaby* book in the teen fiction section at my local library and picked up an interest in the book.

The first book in the series of *Jackaby* was a wonderful adventure and mystery book. It was set in 1892 where a girl named Abigail Rook is searching for a job and ends up finding a strange man named Jackaby, an investigator who is known in the town to see supernatural beings and sees things others don't or can't. She ends up being the perfect assistant for Jackaby since she can find the normal, but important details that might be overlooked by others. They work together to solve the mystery of a newly discovered serial killer on the loose working with the local authorities to figure out what is happening.

I would give this book 5/5 stars, I loved the story a lot and very much enjoyed reading it. I loved being able to follow along and figure out the mystery and that it all made sense in the end. I would definitely recommend reading it if you're into mystery novels, fantasy novels or if you just like to figure out the mysteries in books. The author paid a lot of attention to detail and wrote the story very well. Lots of things happening that are very entertaining to read.

The only thing I would say is that if you are only reading the book because you want the mystery element with *Jackaby* you have to wait till a little later in the book to find it.

[Find "Jackaby" today in our catalogue.](#)



***Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (Reviewed by RV)**

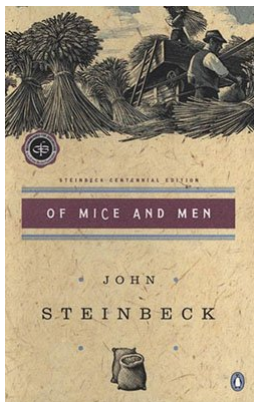
Of Mice and Men is one of my favourite books that I have read. I enjoyed reading this book because it helps us understand more about the historical situations during the era after the Great Depression. During the Great Depression, the stock market crashed, people went bankrupt, unemployment rates were high, and many were left homeless. This novel does a great job of revealing the hardships that people faced after the Depression times.

In John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, George and Lennie are the pivotal characters who are ranch hands trying to make it through the awful decade after the Great Depression. Lennie is an intellectually disabled man incapable of

understanding and controlling his strength. So, George takes care of Lennie as per the plea of Aunt Clara, Lennie's Aunt. Throughout the novel, George and Lennie share an adult-child relationship because Lennie is a physically grown person who behaves like a child. Their dream is to save enough money to buy a farm and house for themselves, but unfortunately, the dream is not fulfilled due to the tragic incidents that unfold later. Their wish is to live an independent quality of life, but Lennie unintentionally causes problems throughout the novel, which impacts George's dreams. Still, George saves Lennie from trouble and continues to work hard to attain their dream. They believe everything will be alright even when barriers like racism, discrimination, stereotypes, and disability hinder their efforts to achieve their goals.

Likewise, many other characters try to fight against the odds of racism, discrimination, disability, stereotypes, and gender inequality to achieve their dream. A great example from the book is Curley's wife, who does not have a name. Steinbeck refers to her as Curley's wife, signifying that she is the possession of her husband. Throughout the novella, we see Curley treat his wife as his object and possession, as he does not want her talking to the other ranch hands. During this period, women were mistreated and not considered equal to men. Curley's treatment of his wife was common during this time due to how society viewed women. *Of Mice and Men* is a great book which explores many themes, such as inhumanity, inequality, friendship, the American dream, and the fragility of dreams. I recommend it to readers above 13 because each character from this novel is exciting and has different problems that affect them living their life to the fullest. It reinforces that we must persevere and overcome circumstances that hinder us from achieving our dreams. I hope you try this one out and enjoy it as much as I did!

[Find "Of Mice and Men" today in our catalogue.](#)



***A Storm of Swords* by George R. R. Martin (Reviewed by PS)**

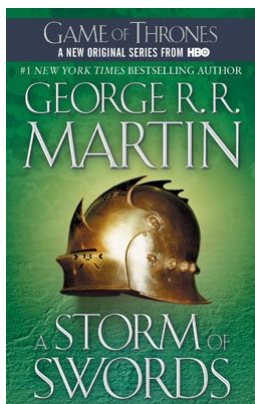
The third volume in the "*A Song of Ice and Fire*" series by George R.R. Martin, "*A Storm of Swords*," is nothing short of epic. The conflict for the Iron Throne

between many noble houses is the focus of the plot, which is placed in the Westerosian universe. The book is jam-packed with action, shady dealings on the political front, and shocking turns that will have readers on the edge of their seats. In this book, the characters develop in a genuinely spectacular way. Even minor characters are well-developed by Martin, who gives them personality and a sense of reality.

Eddard Stark, the main character, is presented with morally challenging decisions that put his allegiance and integrity to the test. It is through these decisions that we are able to determine Eddard Stark's actual character. The most well-known character in the series, Tyrion Lannister, is similarly proving to be a shrewd and effective player in the game of thrones. Martin's talent for creating intricate and multi-layered political intrigue is one of the factors that contribute to this series' high level of interest. He sets the stakes even higher in "*A Storm of Swords*," as a number of groups compete for dominance. In this world, alliances are formed and broken, trust is a scarce resource, and everyone is engaged in a struggle for life.

Therefore, I believe this book deserves nothing less than a 4 out of 5. It just delivers on everything you want in a book. Finally, I just can't wait to continue reading the rest of the series.

Find "[A Game of Thrones](#)" today in our catalogue.



***Throne of Glass* by Sarah J. Maas (Reviewed by CB)**

When a chance for freedom presents itself, Celaena Sardothien must fight. However, when strange things start happening, Celaena must figure out what is happening and who she is fighting for.

This story follows Celaena Sardothien as she fights towards freedom. After spending a year in a slave camp, Celaena is given the chance to compete in a competition to be the Adarlan Kings Champion and assassin. Known in a previous life as Adarlan's Assassin, she accepts and thinks it will be an easy way

to secure her freedom. That is until strange things start happening around the castle. Magic was banished ten years ago, but there is no other explanation for what is happening. As Celaena investigates more, she realizes that there are greater things going on. Things that could endanger the lives of thousands. Celaena must fight for her own freedom while she fights to save others and figure out the truth.

I would give this book 4.5 out of 5 stars because it is not my favourite book in the *Throne of Glass* series. I absolutely love Sarah J. Maas books and will read almost anything she writes. Her world building is absolutely amazing. She goes into a lot of detail and all of her books have maps in the front for the reader to use as a visual aid when comparing where certain places are located from each other. She manages to keep things interesting with her plot twists and different story lines. The characters have flaws and deal with their emotions in different ways, which really helps the reader to sympathize with them. Everything in the story helps build up to the end and there isn't any time wasted on dead end storylines. Celaena is a strong character who will fight for what's right and uses her strength rather than cowering from an enemy. This is something I really admire about her because she chooses to throw herself in the line of fire instead of waiting for other people to do it.

I would recommend this book if you like strong protagonists, fantasy, and are willing to read the entire series which starts with *The Assassin's Blade* to learn more about Celaena's past.

Find "[Throne of Glass](#)" today in our catalogue.



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2. Then email or submit your book reviews to us.

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