Brown Bag Book Review
Wednesday, October 11, 2023
12:00 PM-1:00 PM

Reviewers: Abby, El, Anna, Lauren S, Irina, Caitlin, Lee, Carl

Wrong Place Wrong Time by Gillian McAllister [Abby]
The Collected Regrets of Clover by Mikki Brammer [Abby]
Everyone Here is Lying by Shari Lapena [El]
Executive Privilege by Phillip Margolin [El]
The Last Invitation by Darby Kane [El]
One by One by Ruth Ware [El]
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Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia by Jeanette Winter [Lauren S]
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Solitaire by Alice Oseman [Lee]
Ace of Spades by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé [Lee]
We Are Okay by Nina LaCour [Lee]
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*All annotations are borrowed from Goodreads.com

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Wrong Place Wrong Time by Gillian McAllister  
Can you stop a murder after it’s already happened?

It is midnight on the morning of Halloween, and Jen anxiously waits up for her 18-year-old son, Todd, to return home. But worries about his broken curfew transform into something much more dangerous when Todd finally emerges from the darkness. As Jen watches through the window, she sees her funny, seemingly happy teenage son stab a total stranger. She doesn’t know who the victim is, or why Todd has committed such a devastating act of violence. All she knows is that her life, and Todd’s, have been shattered.

After her son is taken into custody, Jen falls asleep in despair. But when she wakes up... it is yesterday. The murder has not happened yet—and there may be a chance to stop it. Each morning, when Jen wakes, she is further back in the past, first weeks, then years, before the murder. And Jen realizes that somewhere in the past lies the trigger for Todd’s terrible crime...and it is her mission to find it, and prevent it from taking place.

[Abby]

The Collected Regrets of Clover by Mikki Brammer  
What’s the point of giving someone a beautiful death if you can’t give yourself a beautiful life?

From the day she watched her kindergarten teacher drop dead during a dramatic telling of Peter Rabbit, Clover Brooks has felt a stronger connection with the dying than she has with the living. After the beloved grandfather who raised her dies alone while she is traveling, Clover becomes a death doula in New York City, dedicating her life to ushering people peacefully through their end-of-life process.

Clover spends so much time with the dying that she has no life of her own, until the final wishes of a feisty old woman send Clover on a trip across the country to uncover a forgotten love story—and perhaps, her own happy ending. As she finds herself struggling to navigate the uncharted roads of romance and friendship, Clover is forced to examine what she really wants, and whether she’ll have the courage to go after it.

[Abby]
Everyone Here is Lying by Shari Lapena

William Wooler is a family man, on the surface. But he's been having an affair, an affair that ended horribly this afternoon at a motel up the road. So when he returns to his house, devastated and angry, to find his difficult nine-year-old daughter, Avery, unexpectedly home from school, William loses his temper.

Hours later, Avery's family declares her missing.

Suddenly Stanhope doesn't feel so safe. And William isn't the only one on his street who's hiding a lie. As witnesses come forward with information that may or may not be true, Avery's neighbors become increasingly unhinged.

Who took Avery Wooler?

Executive Privilege by Phillip Margolin

Private detective Dana Cutler receives a seemingly routine assignment to follow a young girl working on a challenger’s campaign against the incumbent U.S. president. To Cutler’s shock, she witnesses a rendezvous between the young woman and the president. The next morning the woman’s mutilated body is discovered, and Cutler is suddenly a suspect. How can she prove her innocence against someone who has the power of the presidency at his disposal?

Meanwhile, an associate in a law firm in Portland, Oregon, gets assigned the appeal of a serial killer on death row. The convicted felon claims he didn’t kill one of the victims—a young woman who was working for the state governor at the time—the same man who is now president. Could the president be a serial killer?

The Last Invitation by Darby Kane

They meet the second Tuesday of every month and vote…and then someone dies. Over the last few years, prominent people—a retired diplomat, beloved basketball coach, the CEO of an empire—have died in a series of fluke accidents and shocking suicides. There’s no apparent connection, no signs of foul play. Behind it all is a powerful group of women, the Sophie Foundation, who meet over wine and cheese to review files of men who behave very, very badly, and then mete out justice.

Jessa Hall jumped at the mysterious, exclusive invitation to this secret club. The invite comes when she’s at her lowest, aching for a way to take back control. After years of fighting and scratching to get ahead, she’s ready for a chance to make the “bad guys” lose. Jessa soon realizes, though, just how far she’s willing to go and how dangerous this game has become. Once in the group, it’s impossible to get out. She has nowhere to turn except former friend Gabby Fielding who is investigating the mysterious death of her ex-husband. Aligned in their goal to take down the Foundation, Gabby and Jessa need each other but working together doesn’t mean they trust each other...or that either will survive to tell the truth.
One by One by Ruth Ware

Getting snowed in at a beautiful, rustic mountain chalet doesn’t sound like the worst problem in the world, especially when there’s a breathtaking vista, a cozy fire, and company to keep you warm. But what happens when that company is eight of your coworkers…and you can’t trust any of them?

When an off-site company retreat meant to promote mindfulness and collaboration goes utterly wrong when an avalanche hits, the corporate food chain becomes irrelevant and survival trumps togetherness. Come Monday morning, how many members short will the team be?

An Unquiet Mind by Kay Jamison

The personal memoir of a manic depressive and an authority on the subject describes the onset of the illness during her teenage years and her determined journey through the realm of available treatments.

Living Ghosts & Mischievous Monsters by Dan SaSuWeh Jones

Dark figures in the night. An owl’s cry on the wind. Monsters watching from the edge of the wood.

Some of the creatures in these pages might only have a message for you, but some are the stuff of nightmares. These thirty-two short stories -- from tales passed down for generations to accounts that could have happened yesterday -- are collected from the thriving tradition of ghost stories from American Indian cultures across North America. Prepare for stories of witches and walking dolls, hungry skeletons, La Llorona and Deer Woman, and other supernatural beings ready to chill you to the bone.

Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia by Jeanette Winter

Luis loves to read, but soon his house in Colombia is so full of books there’s barely room for the family. What to do? Then he comes up with the perfect solution—a traveling library! He buys two donkeys—Alfa and Beto—and travels with them throughout the land, bringing books and reading to the children in faraway villages. Beautiful!

Complete with an author’s note about the real man on whom this story is based.

The Anatomist’s Wife by Anna Lee Huber

Scotland, 1830. Following the death of her husband, Lady Darby has taken refuge at her sister’s estate, finding solace in her passion for painting. But when her hosts throw a house party for the cream of London society, Kiera is unable to hide from the ire of those who believe her to be as unnatural as her husband, an anatomist who used her artistic talents to suit his own macabre purposes.

Kiera wants to put her past aside, but when one of the house guests is murdered, her brother-in-law asks her to utilize her knowledge of human anatomy to aid the insufferable Sebastian Gage—a fellow
guest with some experience as an inquiry agent. While Gage is clearly more competent than she first assumed, Kiera isn’t about to let her guard down as accusations and rumors swirl.

When Kiera and Gage’s search leads them to even more gruesome discoveries, a series of disturbing notes urges Lady Darby to give up the inquiry. But Kiera is determined to both protect her family and prove her innocence, even as she risks becoming the next victim...

[Irina]

Pines by Blake Crouch

Wayward Pines, Idaho, is quintessential small-town America—or so it seems. Secret Service agent Ethan Burke arrives in search of two missing federal agents, yet soon is facing much more than he bargained for. After a violent accident lands him in the hospital, Ethan comes to with no ID and no cell phone. The medical staff seems friendly enough, but sometimes feels...off. As days pass, Ethan's investigation into his colleagues' disappearance turns up more questions than answers:

Why can’t he make contact with his family in the outside world? Why doesn’t anyone believe he is who he says he is? And what’s the purpose of the electrified fences encircling the town? Are they keeping the residents in? Or Something else out?

Each step toward the truth takes Ethan further from the world he knows, until he must face a horrifying fact—he may never get out of Wayward Pines alive...

[Caitlin]

Murder in an English Village by Jessica Ellicott

1920: Flying in the face of convention, legendary American adventuress Beryl Helliwell never fails to surprise and shock. The last thing her adoring public would expect is that she craves some peace and quiet. The humdrum hamlet of Walmsley Parva in the English countryside seems just the ticket. And, honestly, until America comes to its senses and repeals Prohibition, Beryl has no intention of returning stateside and subjecting herself to bathtub gin.

For over three decades, Edwina Davenport has lived comfortably in Walmsley Parva, but the post-World War I bust has left her in dire financial straits and forced her to advertise for a lodger. When her long-lost school chum Beryl arrives on her doorstep--actually crashes into it in her red motorcar--Edwina welcomes her old friend as her new roommate.

But her idyllic hometown has a hidden sinister side, and when the two friends are drawn in, they decide to set up shop as private inquiry agents, helping Edwina to make ends meet and satisfying Beryl's thirst for adventure. Now this odd couple will need to put their heads together to catch a killer--before this sleepy English village becomes their final resting place...

This thrilling adventure—based on existing records of Bernard Cornwell’s ancestors—depicts a time when law and order were ripped violently apart by a pagan assault on Christian England, an assault that came very close to destroying England.

[Caitlin]
In case you’re wondering, this is not a love story.

My name is Tori Spring. I like to sleep and I like to blog. Last year – before all that stuff with Charlie and before I had to face the harsh realities of A-Levels and university applications and the fact that one day I really will have to start talking to people – I had friends. Things were very different, I guess, but that’s all over now. Now there’s Solitaire. And Michael Holden.

I don’t know what Solitaire are trying to do, and I don’t care about Michael Holden. I really don’t.

[Lee]

Ace of Spades by Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé

Welcome to Niveus Private Academy, where money paves the hallways, and the students are never less than perfect. Until now. Because anonymous texter, Aces, is bringing two students’ dark secrets to light.

Talented musician Devon buries himself in rehearsals, but he can’t escape the spotlight when his private photos go public. Head girl Chiamaka isn’t afraid to get what she wants, but soon everyone will know the price she has paid for power.

Someone is out to get them both. Someone who holds all the aces. And they’re planning much more than a high-school game...

[Lee]

We Are Okay by Nina LaCour

You go through life thinking there’s so much you need...Until you leave with only your phone, your wallet, and a picture of your mother.

Marin hasn’t spoken to anyone from her old life since the day she left everything behind. No one knows the truth about those final weeks. Not even her best friend, Mabel. But even thousands of miles away from the California coast, at college in New York, Marin still feels the pull of the life and tragedy she’s tried to outrun. Now, months later, alone in an emptied dorm for winter break, Marin waits. Mabel is coming to visit, and Marin will be forced to face everything that’s been left unsaid and finally confront the loneliness that has made a home in her heart.

[Lee]

The Tao of Pooh by Benjamin Hoff

The Wisdom of Pooh. Is there such thing as a Western Taoist? Benjamin Hoff says there is, and this Taoist's favorite food is honey. Through brilliant and witty dialogue with the beloved Pooh-bear and his companions, the author of this smash bestseller explains with ease and aplomb that rather than being a distant and mysterious concept, Taoism is as near and practical to us as our morning breakfast bowl.

Romp through the enchanting world of Winnie-the-Pooh while soaking up invaluable lessons on simplicity and natural living.

[Carl]
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https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/133935491-fairport-public-library
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