

All's Well That Ends Well

Betty J Roiger, Acquisitions Librarian

Welcome to the library. We've got books! When Sadie's brother Shane dies of an apparent heart attack in "The Wolf Wants In" by Laura McHugh, she has her doubts about how he really died. But in an economically damaged town ravaged by meth and opioid deaths, no one looks twice at a seemingly natural death. As Sadie asks questions, blocked at every point by Shane's not-grieving widow, Crystal, a child's skull is found in the area, and everyone's attention turns toward murder. I loved everything about this book. McHugh has the small Midwestern town setting down pat, the murder mystery is a wonderful slow burn, and she creates interesting characters: realistically grieving families, the lengths people will go to survive or escape, the tragedies that inform people's lives and intense family loyalty. Everything works. What else was I going to say? Oh, I know! What are you waiting for? It's time to place your hold.

If you are a fan of "The Walking Dead," the final issue of Robert Kirkman's graphic novel series, "Volume 32: Rest in Peace," has come out. And Kirkman took us all out with a bang. There's the usual tragedy and drama in the world of zombies, characters' fates are revealed, relationships are tied up, and there's a glimpse of what the future looks like. It was sad and brilliant and hopeful, a remarkable and decent end to an extraordinary series that has launched several television series and a huge fan base. One of the biggest surprises Kirkman had for fans was that he was calling it quits. He included a long, heartfelt letter at the end explaining his motives. I think he did justice to the series all the way to the finish line. Kudos to him as not every author goes out on such a high note or even finishes what he started. (Yeah, I'm calling you out, George R.R. Martin.) This one gets all the stars from me.

I spend a lot of time reading debut authors to try to discover the next big thing. So when I pick up a seasoned writer who I just had not been introduced to yet, well, that's exciting, too. In "City of Windows" by Robert Pobi there is a sniper in New York who is taking out law enforcement officers with deadly accuracy during one of the worst blizzards in history. Enter Dr. Lucas Page, one of the most interesting characters I have read in a long time. And I won't tell you why because I don't want to spoil it for you as he unfolds on the page. I will say he has a particular set of skills, and he is wonderfully sarcastic. The story is fast and fraught, and I enjoyed every second reading it. I talked it up so much that my husband started reading it while I was at work so we began juggling time with it, handing it back and forth like a hot potato, making sure we weren't disturbing each other's bookmarks. It's that good.

The water is five feet high around Myra's Nebraska home when she hears her daughter, Row, screaming for help, and looks out the window to see her husband swimming toward a boat with their little girl. Myra is pregnant with their second child, and even though she dives out the window, she isn't fast enough to catch the boat. Seven years later finds Myra and her daughter Pearl living on their boat, catching fish to trade at the few outposts still above ground in the Rockies and Andes mountain ranges. The dystopian novel "After the Flood" by Kassandra Montag takes off from the first page and never lets up. Surviving is always their number one concern; it means finding food, fresh

water, not drowning. But a chance meeting with a stranger lets Myra know her daughter Row is still alive and gives her a new direction. I didn't know what to expect with this book, but the author caught my attention, and I wasn't ready to put the book down until I found out what happened to Myra and her girls.

Emily has moved in with her sister to help out after an accident. One of her main jobs is chaperoning and chauffeuring her 14-year-old niece, Caitlin. Caitlin wants to be in the summer's local Renaissance Faire, but she can't without Emily volunteering. During registration Emily butts heads with Simon, the annoying guy in charge. In the weeks of preparation they continue to irritate each other, but when the faire finally opens a strange thing happens. Simon's pirate persona starts to flirt with Emily's tavern wench alter ego, and sparks fly. "Well Met" by Jen DeLuca was a delightful, romantic read that had me snort laughing several times. To quote the Bard, "The course of true love never did run smooth," but "All's Well That Ends Well."