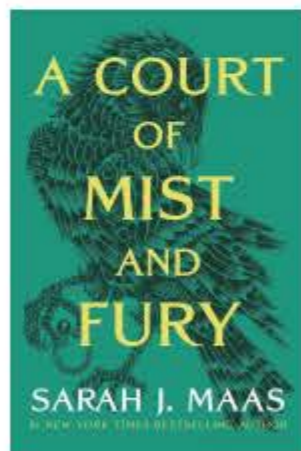


Between the Covers

September: Fantasy

By Aubrey Bower

A Court of Mist and Fury by Sarah J. Maas



This series is what got me back into reading after a lengthy reading slump. I had heard about it online and decided to just go ahead and buy it. As soon as I started reading I was hooked and

ordered the rest of the series as soon as I finished the first book. This book, the second in the ACOTAR series, is my favorite by far. It's where we see the main couple come together, we're introduced to the friends, and it creates the most connections between all the characters. We follow the main character as she grows into herself and finds out who she really is with the help of everyone around her. All in all, Maas created probably my favorite world I've read in a fantasy, and some of the deepest connections I've had with characters and relit my love for reading within these pages. I think this is a great read for those into fantasy who want a classic enemies to lovers, powerful female main character, and comedic characters with dark pasts.

The rest of the world faded to mist as the words sank in. "You are jealous."

He shook his head, stalking to the little table against the far wall and knocking back a glass of amber liquid. He braced his hands on the table, the powerful muscles of his back quivering beneath his shirt as the shadow of those wings struggled to take form.

"I heard what you told him," he said. "That you thought it would be easy to fall in love with him. You meant it, too."

"So?" It was the only thing I could think of to say.

"I was jealous—of that. That I'm not...that sort of person. For anyone. The Sun Court has always been neutral; they only showed backbone during those years Under the Mountain. I spared Tarquin's life because I'd heard how he wanted to even out the playing field between High Fae and lesser fairies. I've been trying to do that for years. Unsuccessfully, but...I spared him for that alone. And Tarquin, with his neutral court...he will never have to worry about someone walking away because the threat against their life, their children's lives, will always be there. So, yes, I am jealous of him—because it will always be easy for him. And he will never know what it is to look up at the night sky and wish."

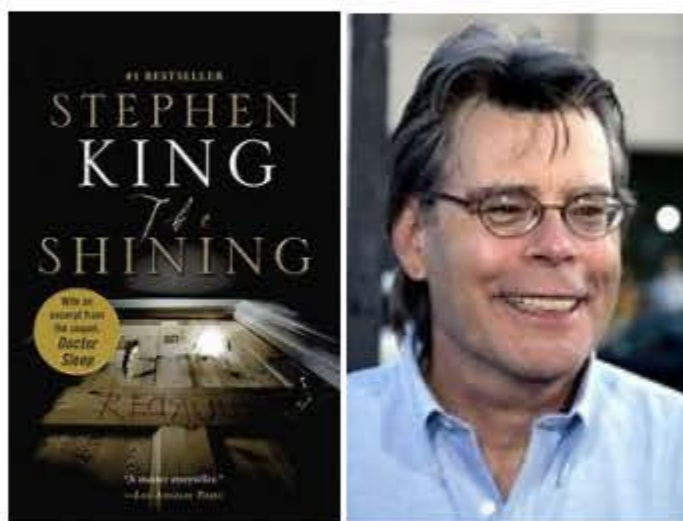
The Court of Dreams.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

OCTOBER: HORROR

By Katie Glidewell

THE SHINING BY STEPHEN KING



The Shining was one of the first classic horror novels that I read, and, since then, I have loved reading horror and mystery novels over any other genre. I have always loved Halloween and the idea of ghosts and scary things, but I am not good at watching horror movies and walking through haunted houses. Reading horror stories allows for me to experience the spooky elements that I am interested in without having to actually see it in front of me. Some day, I hope to watch the movie version of this book, as I enjoyed the book and know that *The Shining* movie is one of the most iconic horror movies ever. *The Shining* focuses on themes of family struggles, academic achievement, and solitude, and all of these themes combine in the hauntings that the Torrance family experiences in the Overlook. There is also blurring between the horror being part of Jack's mental state or the hotel being actually haunted, which makes the book much more horrific. I recommend this book as a great first introduction into classic horror for this Halloween or winter season.

Somewhere in the maze of corridors behind him, the elevator came to a stop. There was a metallic, rattling crash as the gate was thrown back. And then a voice - not in his head now but terribly real - called out: "Danny? Danny, come here a minute, will you? You've done something wrong and I want you to come and take your medicine like a man. Danny? *Danny!*"

Obedience was so strongly ingrained in him that he actually took two automatic steps toward the sound of that voice before stopping. His hands curled into fists at his sides.

(Not real! False face! I know what you are! Take off your mask!)

"*Danny!*" it roared. "*Come here, you pup! Come here and take it like a man!*" A loud, hollow boom as the mallet struck the wall. When the voice roared out his name again it had changed location. It had come closer.

In the world of real things, the hunt was beginning.

Danny ran. Feet silent on the heavy carpet, he ran past the closed doors, past the silk figured wallpaper, past the fire extinguisher bolted to the corner or the wall. He hesitated, and then plunged down the final corridor. Nothing at the end but a bolted door, and nowhere left to run.

But the pole was still there, still leaning against the wall where Daddy had left it.

Danny snatched it up. He craned his neck to stare up at the trapdoor. There was a hook on the end of the pole and you had to catch it on a ring set into the trapdoor. You had to-

There was a brand-new Yale padlock dangling from the trapdoor. The lock Jack Torrance had clipped around the hasp after laying his traps, just in case his son should take the notion into his head to go exploring up there someday.

Locked. Terror swept him.

Behind him it was coming, blundering and staggering past the Presidential Suite, the mallet whistling viciously through the air.

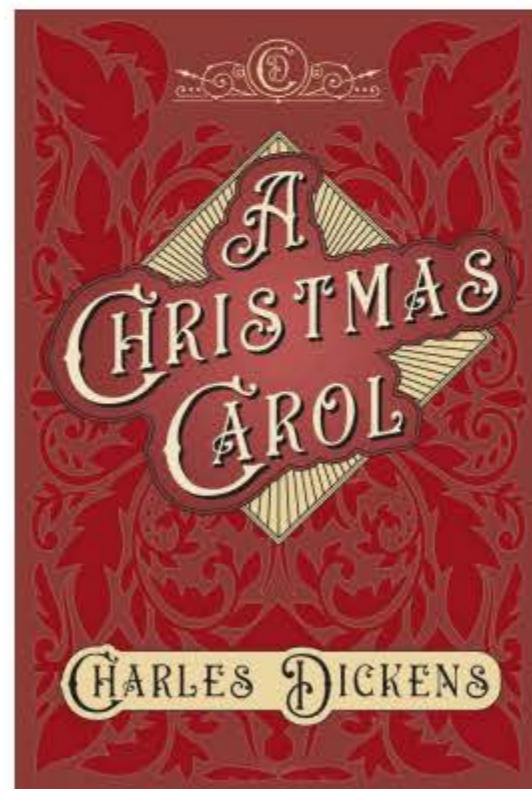
Danny backed up against the last closed door and waited for it.

Between The Covers

December: Holiday

Contribution By: J.T. Wozniak

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens



Because of its strong themes of hope, generosity, and redemption, *A Christmas Carol* has long been one of my favorite holiday books. The novel follows Ebenezer Scrooge, a heartless penny-pincher whose life is forever changed when he receives visits from the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come, in *A Christmas Carol*. Dickens clearly depicts the negative effects of selfishness and the transforming power of compassion through these visits. It's a timeless message that it's never too late to make a difference, even in your own life is what makes this tale relevant to this day. Scrooge's transformation from anger to happiness serves as a reminder that even seemingly insignificant things we do can have a significant impact on other people's lives.

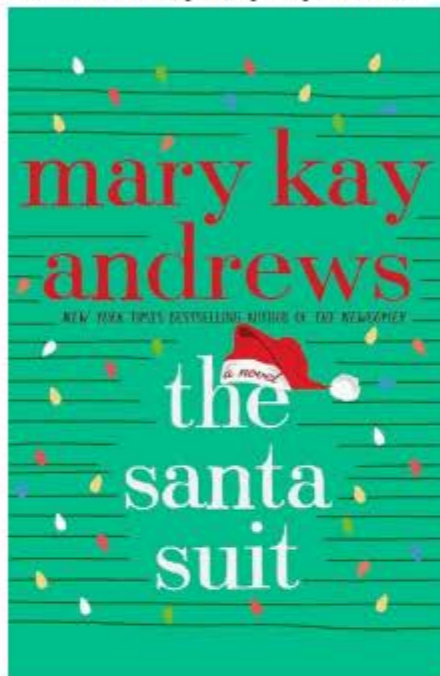
Ebenezer Scrooge

"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach!"

This is a story for anyone looking to rediscover the true meaning of the holidays and the joy of second chances.

Between the Covers - NEHS Contribution
December: Holiday
Charlotte Chen

The Santa Suit by Mary Kay Andrews



I love the small-town setting and close relationship all the townspeople have. I loved the romance between Ivy and her real estate agent Ezra. This book reminded me of the song "Christmas Tree Farm" by Taylor Swift. However, this book was less focused on mystery than I expected, but more on developing relationships between the townspeople which I found interesting. It's the perfect comfort read if you want to get in the holiday spirit.

"I found a note. In the pocket of Mr. Rose's Santa suit, from this little girl named Carlette, asking Santa to bring her father home safely. From the war. It... touched me.

"Wish I could help you," Mr. Schoonover said. He puffed out his chest a little. "I'm an old Navy man myself." He tapped some keys on his computer, nodded, and looked up. "Okay. You're all squared away here. Have yourself a good Christmas, you hear?"

It had started to warm up while she was in the courthouse, so Ivy decided to check out the town square. There was a fountain in the middle, near the soldier's memorial statue, and she'd noticed it had a special spigot, close to the ground, for dogs. Now that Punkin was a legal resident, she'd bring him along on her next visit to town.

She sat on a bench near the memorial, enjoying the feel of the winter sun on her face as she took inventory of the shops around the square. From here she spotted a hardware store and a gift shop, the café where she'd had lunch, a candy shop, and a florist.

"Hi!"

The young woman stood a few feet away. She was in her early twenties, Ivy thought, with dark, expressive eyes, long, wavy brown hair, and a shy smile, and she looked vaguely familiar.

"Hi," Ivy said.

"Don't think I'm weird, but I work in the clerk's office, and I couldn't help but overhear you just now, asking Mr. Schoonover about someone named Carlette? My name's Phoebe Huddleston, by the way."

"Hi, Phoebe, I'm Ivy Perkins. You don't seem too weird to me. What's up?"

"The thing is, my mom's best friend's name growing up, was Carlette. She almost named me that, but anyway, it's not a real common name, so I thought--"

"Maybe your mom knew Carlette? And her family?" Ivy asked eagerly.

"Mom lives over in Rockdale, but I'm going over there this weekend, so I could ask, if you want. Or maybe you could come with me and ask her yourself. She loves having company."

Ivy thought about everything she needed to accomplish at Four Roses Farm before the moving trucks with her belongings arrived. There were more closets and cupboards to be emptied, the broken window in her bedroom needed to be replaced, and she wanted to walk her new property and check out the old chicken coop. Her to-do list was long and time was short.

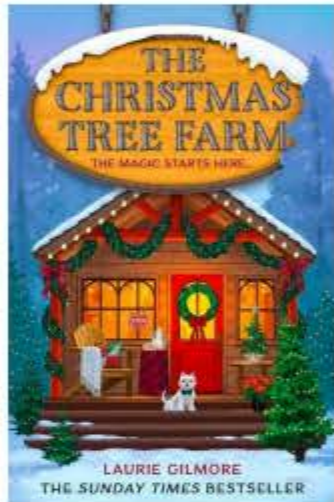
But. The prospect of discovering the fate of Carlette's father was irresistible. She took out a scrap of paper and scribbled her phone number on it. "Here's how to reach me. I would love to meet your mom and ask about Carlette."

Between the Covers - NEHS Contribution

December: Holiday

By Sophia Finnegan

The Christmas Tree Farm by Laurie Gilmore



When the holidays come around, nothing's better than a cheesy Christmas love story. These stories are a favorite in my house, specifically the movies where a girl comes back to her hometown to find herself, then to her surprise, but to our anticipation, falls in love. Although I love these movies, it's a bit too early to start watching them with family. So, in search of that warm holiday feeling I picked up this book. The novel perfectly captured the cozy holiday nostalgia with a story of a city girl who comes back to her family's Christmas tree farm to find belonging in her family and stumble upon a connection with her old lover. She must handle change in herself and her hometown while growing as a person and navigating new beginnings. Overall, this book is your typical holiday feel-good story that will leave the reader feeling warm and festive.

Holly

...It's warmer out here than I thought it would be; Kira said, wiping her brow and sitting back in the dirt next to him. 'It's nice. I feel like I'm finally defrosting after that winter.'

He chuckled. 'And just think of all the pickles you can line up in jars or whatever, if all these grow.'

She smiled at him, and she looked absurd in her gardening hat with dirt streaked across her cheek, but he'd never seen anyone so beautiful. It was how he always felt about her. First thing in the morning, covered in dirt, sweaty from that insane hot yoga she did; in any and all ways, he found this woman to be gorgeous.

'Thanks for making this...' She gestured toward the garden he'd dug out behind the house earlier in the spring where they were currently planting cucumbers. The radishes were already sprouting, and he was hoping to get some small tomato plants to add soon.

Kira had a stockpile of glass jars just ready to be filled. Over the course of the winter, she'd shown him some of her homesteading inspiration and he had to admit it was all very appealing.