

From the Stacks
By Julie Orf
Dunklin County Library

A book's dust jacket is more than just a cover; it is the first impression and a critical sales tool. Acting as the book's initial critic, the designer crafts an eye-catching visual that entices browsers. Once a book grabs attention, the jacket's back and flaps offer vital information about the author and a synopsis, ultimately helping to sell the book.

Beyond its marketing role, the dust jacket often provides the sole source of color and art for most publications, transforming visually dull books into appealing objects. This aesthetic importance can even elevate a book's value: some otherwise worthless books become collectible simply because of a beautiful or rare dust jacket.

With a vivid royal blue and gold spiral staircase cover, Daniel Silva's *Inside Job* is a tale of murder, greed, and corruption. While restoring a painting in Venice, art restorer Gabriel Allon discovers a mysterious woman's body, thrusting him into a desperate search for a lost Leonardo da Vinci masterpiece. This valuable portrait, long misattributed and hidden in the Vatican, vanishes during a suspicious power outage. Only the ruthless thieves and the enigmatic dead woman know of the Leonardo's existence and disappearance. Allon's investigation propels him from the art world of London to the opulent French Riviera, culminating in a shocking climax in St. Peter's Square, where the Pope's life hangs by a thread.

Francesca Giannone's award-winning novel, *The Letter Carrier* (translated by Elettra Pauletto), poses a compelling question: What happens when you meet your soulmate, but they are already married? Set in the Italian village of Lizzanello, the story introduces Anna, a woman from the North who arrives with her husband, Carlo. Anna quickly stands apart from the local women. She is a fiercely independent spirit who defies tradition by shunning gossip and church, reading unconventional books, and advocating for women's rights—even wearing pants. With few opportunities for someone of her progressive views, Anna takes on the unprecedented role of the town's letter carrier. In this position, she becomes the unseen link connecting the community, delivering secret messages between lovers, news to families anxious about loved ones at war, and even assisting those who cannot read.

Colette Marceau has lived by her family's code, stealing from the cruel to help the needy, a tradition rooted in their work funding the French Resistance during WWII. In 1942, Germans arrested her mother, and Colette's four-year-old sister, Liliane, vanished with a diamond bracelet sewn into her nightgown. Her mother was executed, and Liliane's body was found, but the bracelet remained missing. Seventy years later, Colette, having "redistributed" \$30 million in jewels to worthy causes, finds her past

resurfacing when the long-lost bracelet appears in a Boston museum exhibit. This is a chance to uncover Liliane's fate. Yet, Colette is not the only one seeking answers from the bracelet. Against all odds, Colette might finally bring a murderer to justice, but only if she can bravely face her own enduring grief. *The Stolen Life of Colette Marceau* by Kristen Harmel is a sweeping historical drama with heartbreak and bravery.

The Love Fix by Jill Shalvis is number eight in the Summer Cove Series. With her life crumbling, Lexi Clark reluctantly returns to Sunrise Cove, dreading confronting her past, stepsister Ashley, and childhood nemesis-turned-crush, Heath Bowman. A cynical art appraiser, Lexi does not believe in love or happy endings, a stark contrast to Ashley's vibrant spirit. Despite her reluctance, Lexi agrees to Ashley's plea to honor their late, gambling-addicted mother's final wish: to make amends with those she wronged. With Heath, the estate's executor, in tow, Lexi embarks on a road trip to repay her mother's debts.