

From the Stacks

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Dunklin County Library

07/22/2026

Whether navigating cozy neighborhood dynamics, deadly family rivalries, or unexpected romantic entanglements, these new diverse novels explore the dramatic ways our relationships shape and sometimes threaten our lives. Each plot centers on the fragile boundaries of human connection, revealing how easily everyday routines can be upended by hidden motives, long-buried secrets, or sudden twists of fate. From the lighthearted charm of a Scottish street and the courtroom sparks of rekindled rivalries to the chilling tension of obsession and high-stakes murder investigations, these books delve into what happens when the truth behind our connections is finally brought to light.

Alexander McCall Smith latest novel, *Bertie's Theory of Ice Cream*, is a witty take on the nothing that happens at this Scottish address. As summer arrives at 44 Scotland Street, the familiar cast of quirky characters finds new adventures and unexpected challenges. Young Bertie is swept into Irish culture lessons, a class book club, and even a surprise wedding invitation while spending time with his best friend. Bruce's latest property renovation turns disastrous, while Matthew and the triplets attempt to adopt a dog with unusual dietary habits. Elsewhere, Sister Maria-Fiori dei Fiore Montagna makes a remarkable discovery connected to the legendary Stone of Scone. Filled with humor, charm, and eccentric characters, this latest installment celebrates friendship and finding joy in life's simple moments.

When the widely despised Pepper McKay is found murdered on his ranch, Sheriff Walt Longmire focuses his investigation on the victim's four estranged sons. A charmer, a journalist, a monk, and a ranch hand, each brother possesses a strong motive and a questionable alibi. As Walt digs into the family's deep-seated grudges, the discovery of a second body drastically raises the stakes. Suddenly, a raging wildfire sweeps through the canyon, trapping Walt in a desperate battle against both a ruthless killer and nature itself. *The Brothers McKay*, the twenty-second installment in the Longmire series by Craig Johnson, masterfully blends a murder mystery with a high-stakes survival thriller. Ultimately, this gripping novel tests the sheriff's sense of justice while paying a sly, modern homage to Dostoevsky's classic, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

After a charming but persistent fan becomes dangerously obsessed, debut author Arden Bowie survives a terrifying assault that changes her life. Seeking safety, she moves to a small Oregon town, hoping to leave the trauma behind and start over. As she rebuilds her life and befriends a retired detective, her stalker remains consumed by

his delusions despite being confined to a psychiatric facility. When his fixation turns even darker, Arden realizes her nightmare may not be over. This psychological thriller delivers suspense, tension, and the chilling consequences of obsession all in the deft skills of Nora Roberts. This novel is entitled, *The Final Target*.

Readers get two short novels in one book, *Rainy Day Meet Cute*, from #1 New York Times bestselling author Debbie Macomber featuring two classic, heartwarming romances. In *Love 'N' Marriage*, office assistant Stephanie Coulter is temporarily assigned to her notoriously grouchy boss, Jonas Lockwood. While he initially seems like a tyrant, Stephanie's romance-loving colleagues convince her that Jonas is just a lonely hero who needs her love. Meanwhile, *Jury of His Peers* follows Caroline Lomax as she reports for civic duty, only to be paired with her high school nemesis, Ted Thomasson. Ted quickly shocks Caroline by confessing he has always harbored feelings for her just as they are selected for the same trial. Together, these stories deliver Macomber's signature charm as unexpected sparks fly in both the workplace and the courtroom.