

From the Stacks
By Julie Orf
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In Annie Dillard's novel, *The Living*, she writes, "She read books as one would breathe air, to fill up and live." Ms. Dillard implies that books are essential to survival but how can books be vital to living and breathing? Books are more than just words on a page; they have the power to resonate with our emotions, shape our understanding, and provide both amusement and a welcome break from the everyday. They can offer a mental refresh, a temporary diversion, and even transport us to other realities. Books educate and inform, nurturing our ideas, imagination, and creativity – all crucial for a satisfying life. The books we choose to keep often paint a vivid portrait of who we are. Our bookshelves can act as a personal memoir, each volume marking a particular time and interest in our lives.

Using the old mantra "what's best for the family", Trisha Sakhlecha takes her readers on a twisty family reunion only to have it end in murder not loving goodbyes in her latest novel, *The Inheritance*. The Agarwal family has gathered for a reunion on a secluded, luxurious Scottish island where patriarch Raj plans to announce his company's succession. However, beneath the surface of this long-awaited gathering, each family member harbors significant secrets: matriarch Shalini desires her husband's attention, daughter Myra is secretly bankrupt, son Aseem is conflicted between love and duty, youngest daughter Aisha intends to cause trouble and daughter-in-law Zoe's perfect online life hides a lie. As their secrets threaten to surface, the reunion is poised to be dramatic, potentially destroying their family unity.

Blood Ties by Jo Nesbo is a tense, compulsively readable tour de force about loyalty, family ties, and powerful, destructive love. In the small town of Os, brothers Carl, a spa and hotel manager, and Roy, a gas station owner with ambitious plans, face ruin when a new highway threatens to isolate their town. Desperate, they consider underhanded methods to save their livelihoods, hinting at a past familiarity with such tactics. Simultaneously, the town sheriff utilizes new technology to re-examine unsolved murders, including his father's. As his investigation begins, the body count rises, suggesting a dangerous chain of events has been set in motion.

With a complex plot, humor, and a cool hero, James Byrne has delivered another thrilling novel, *Chain Reaction*, in his Dez Limerick series. Although each could novel stand alone, the main character just gets better with publication. Desmond "Dez" Limerick, a retired "gatekeeper" with a mysterious past and unique skills, is a capable man to have on your side. While traveling the country as a guitarist, he's called to the Liberty Center on the East Coast by a friend needing his musical talents. However, Dez quickly finds himself in the middle of a terrorist attack, with thousands of hostages at

risk. Reluctantly aided by a skilled thief, Dez takes on the daunting task of fighting the terrorists. He soon discovers that someone with an unsettling knowledge of his past and abilities brought him there, suggesting a deeper, and more personal plot.

Tess Gerritson follows her last novel that started the Martini Club with *The Summer Guests* and a chilling mystery of a missing teen. Former spy Maggie Bird sought a peaceful life in Purity, Maine, but her past soon caught up with her. Surviving thanks to her ex-CIA book club, the Martini Club, their actions led to an uneasy partnership with police chief Jo Thibodeau. When a teenager disappears and Maggie's neighbor is the prime suspect, Maggie investigates to clear his name, facing pressure from the girl's wealthy family. The discovery of an old corpse in a nearby pond adds another layer to the mystery, revealing ties to long-held secrets. As Jo juggles these two cases, the Martini Club races to uncover the truth behind the shadows before more lives are threatened.