

From the Stacks
By Julie Orf
Dunklin County Library

Suspenseful novels create a sense of uncertainty and anticipation. This uncertainty, whether it is the character's fate or the solution to a mystery, keeps readers on the edge of their seats and drives them to keep turning pages. As readers we become detectives, piecing together clues, identifying red herrings, and trying to predict the outcome, the satisfaction of figuring it out or being surprised by a clever twist makes for a rewarding experience.

The Locked Ward by Sarah Pekkanen is a psychological thriller told from alternating perspectives. Estranged twin sisters, Georgia and Amanda, were separated at birth. The plot kicks off when Georgia, the adopted daughter of a wealthy Southern family, is accused of murdering her biological sister, Annabelle. While she awaits trial, Georgia is placed in a secure psychiatric institution. When her twin sister Amanda, who had no idea of Georgia's existence, visits, Georgia pleads for her help, claiming she is innocent and is being framed by her powerful family. Amanda, though skeptical and initially untrusting, is drawn into the mystery. She begins to investigate the sinister secrets of the Cartwright family, while Georgia, from inside the eerie and dangerous psychiatric ward, tries to communicate with her.

Twenty years ago, a double murder shattered the idyllic college town of Wyatt Valley and sent Beckett Bowery's life spiraling. Her roommate disappeared, and Beckett fled, vowing to never look back. However, the past has a way of catching up. When her daughter, Delilah, is accepted to Wyatt College on a full scholarship, Beckett is forced to return to the town she swore off. She will soon discover that the secrets buried long ago are still very much alive, and she might not be the only person with a reason to fear Wyatt Valley. Megan Miranda delivers another thriller with twists and surprises in *You Belong Here*.

In Tanya Scott's debut thriller, *Stillwater*, a man's attempt to outrun his criminal past fails, leading him into a deadly confrontation with the life he tried to leave behind. Gus, a ruthless crime boss, turned a young orphan named Jack Quinn into a perfect weapon. But, Jack was smart enough to get out, and he did, forging a new identity as Luke Harris. Seven years of peace later, Luke is living a normal life, but his past is about to catch up to him. When Gus's underworld collides with Luke's world, the bodies he left behind come back to haunt him. To survive, Luke must resurrect his dormant skills and become the dangerous man he once was.

Randy Wayne White continues his Doc Ford series with the 28th installment, *Tomlinson's Wake*, that has a superb plot and is terrific escapism. After a devastating hurricane, Doc

Ford races to Honduras to find his friend, Tomlinson, who has crashed his sailboat. Tomlinson claims that he was saved from the shipwreck by a mysterious orphan boy, the last descendant of an ancient Mayan king. Corrupt politicians want the boy dead, fearing he will spark a revolution. Now, Tomlinson and the boy have gone underground, and Ford must track them through a dangerous, unpredictable landscape, all while a catastrophic earthquake threatens to destroy everything in their path.