

PERIODICALLY DRAMATIC

THE HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

A LOVE OF HISTORY THROUGH THE ART OF FICTION

*CAN YOU GUESS THE
FASHION DECADE?*

PG 16

*DIVERSE READS,
GREEK MYTHOLOGY,
FANTASY SHOWS,
AND MORE!*



PRIDE MONTH

READ ABOUT QUEER AMERICAN HISTORY ON PAGE 4

ISSUE 5 | JUNE 2021

PERIODICALLY DRAMATIC

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Reader,

This was quite an issue. With every publication, there are significant changes. I dedicate my time and effort to make this little magazine feel as much yours as it does mine. This is the most amount of writers I've had for an issue and I cannot tell you how much it warms my heart. It continues to become everything I dreamed of and more and that's because of every eager reader and writer that has passed through here. Our community will only continue to grow. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for stopping by. This magazine is for both you and me. I hope you enjoy it.

Stay safe,



Marina Hill, Editor-in-Chief

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Picture: Shannyn / @personally.speaking

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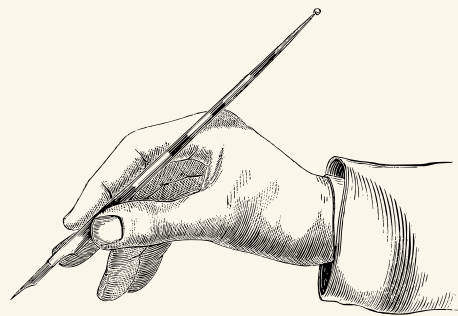
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OUR FAVORITE DRESSES!



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A favorite of @timeperiodfilm's



A favorite of @personally.speaking's



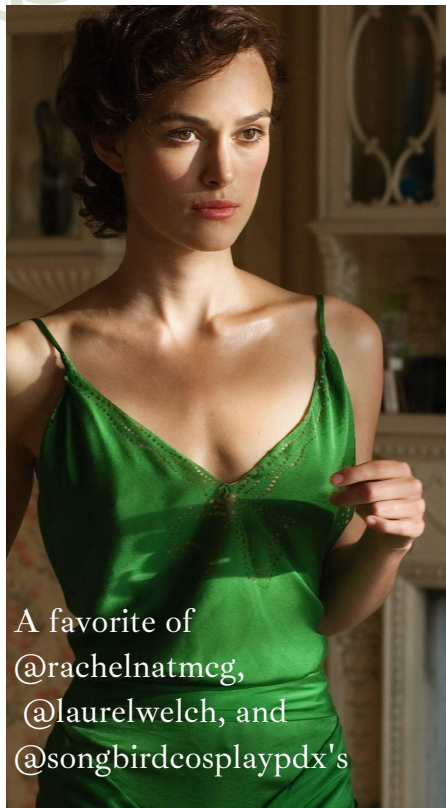
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A favorite of @ell_anna_de_plume's



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BY GRACE MCADAM

QUEER AMERICAN HISTORY

The United States during the 1960s is characterized as incredibly tough for LGBTQ+ people. At this time, homosexuality is outright illegal and categorized as a mental illness. It is near impossible to make a living and be openly queer. LGBT activism in the '60s is limited, but still present. The 'Mattachine Society' is the most prominent gay rights organization and a riot at the Compton Café in 1966 predates the events in New York. The story of Stonewall, which is commonly referred to as the origin of gay rights, is more of a starting point to look at the celebration of Pride Month, and a turning point in the timeline of protest.

The Stonewall Inn, located in Greenwich Village, New York City is a gay-friendly bar, particularly popular with people of color and drag queens. Though frequently raided by law enforcement, the June 28th, 1969 raid ends up being anything but routine. As the police close the bar, patrons gathered outside are targeted. Lack of documentation makes it near impossible to create a fully accurate account of events. Most agree that a lesbian, struck by a police officer, pleads with the crowd to “do something!” In response, pennies and other objects are thrown to incite a riot. Cops hide inside the empty bar and no deaths or serious injuries are reported the first night. This rebellion continues over six more days and numbers only grow. This also results in new organizations forming, namely the 'Gay Liberation Front'. This group takes an intersectional approach to issues that face many in the community and is one of

the firsts to publicly campaign for equal rights.

The LGBT community across the US sees this moment as a time to ramp up campaigns in the public eye. During these years, we see the development of Pride Month elements we see today. Brenda Howard, the 'mother of Pride', organizes the 'Christopher Street Liberation Parade' in 1970 to commemorate the events at the Stonewall Inn. They set off from the bar as a group of 2,000 people and end in Central Park with 20,000. Crowds chant “*say it clear, say it loud, gay is good, gay is proud.*” Attendee Fred Sargent notes police stood with backs to the crowd. After apprehensive beginnings, the festivity of this parade sets a tone of unapologetic protest and demand for public space. Similar happenings are seen across major cities that day. The word *pride* itself for the movement is coined by Craig Schoonmaker in that same year. In the Allusionist Podcast, he explains: “There’s very little chance for people in the world to have power. People did not have power then; even now, we only have some. But anyone can have pride in themselves, and that would make them happier as people and produce the movement likely to produce change.” In 1978, Gilbert Baker creates a new rainbow flag for the San Francisco Gay Freedom Parade. What he creates is now the most commonly used symbol for the LGBTQ+ community. Each color has its own meaning, but together the rainbow symbolizes the diverse community as a whole. However, the development of Pride has not always been so unified. By the mid-'70s, single-issue protests took over radical groups, (*cont.*)

despite vital contributions. Figures such as Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson who champion transgender rights are not appreciated or are ignored by fellow leaders. Many people from the LGBTQ+ community feel excluded due to their gender, class, or race, despite the struggle for acceptance that Pride represents. The struggle for cultural equality in society is not only with the straight majority but also within their own community.

The first televised program which looks into the Gay Rights movement airs in 1991. Reviews note the difficulty of compressing LGBT history and issues into under an hour but are still hailed as important. In the '80s and '90s, the AIDS epidemic hits, and the government's response results in politics returning to the heart of the Pride movement. Celebrities also start to voice public support and even come out of the closet themselves! Actor Sir Ian McKellen cofounds the British charity Stonewall in 1988. Many legal and cultural changes come with the new millennium. In 1999, President Bill Clinton officially declares the month of June as 'Gay and Lesbian Pride Month', despite gay marriage remaining illegal at this time. At this point, the Pride movement is global. This can be seen in organizations like 'InterPride'. From the early years, a few cities such as London and Berlin hold Pride events. However, at the turn of the century, events and protests are held across the globe at all times of the year.

The legalization of same-sex marriage is passed on June 26, 2015.



“The fight is far from over, but as the dancing during the Stonewall riots would show, the concept of being simply and joyously LGBT is a key element in getting to where we are today.”

On the 50th Anniversary of Stonewall, over five million people gather in New York City. Today, we see politics taking the stage again during Pride as internet activism allows information concerning all aspects of the community to spread easily. Pride month today is sometimes nicknamed 'Gay Christmas'. However, it is still illegal to *be* gay in over 70 countries and various equalities are still denied everywhere. The fight is far from over, but as the dancing during the Stonewall riots would show, the concept of being simply and joyously LGBT is a key element in getting to where we are today. Festivities of pride do not, as some would argue, ignore or cover up the deeply political past of the LGBTQ+ movement or vice versa. In fact, they complement each other. ■



STRIKE A POSE

BY MONICA MORALES-GARCIA

Pose follows the iconic and legendary mothers of the 1980s and 1990s underground ball scene. Not only has the FX series made history with the largest cast of transgender actors as series regulars, including MJ Rodriguez, Dominique Jackson, Indya Moore, and Hailie Sahar, the series makes sure to have trans people in the writers' room, on set as PAs, and as choreographers and consultants. The show doesn't just pay lip service to visual representations, but it puts its money where its mouth is and creates new pathways for trans and gender non-conforming people to not only be the centers of stories but also play a *part* in telling those stories.

The show premiered its last season on May 2nd, ending with Blanca thinking of going to nursing school, Elektra involved with the Mafia, and Papi finding out he has a long-lost son. In the classic style of Ryan Murphy, the show introduces new plot points before tying up loose ends or

or just completely forgoing subplot points. Yet, regardless of the chaos that the show's plot goes through, where else on television can we see several trans women of color as centers of a narrative? And yes, the critiques about the limits of representation and respectability have a truth, but don't these characters deserve to feel joy? Blanca, for example, is such a good person—honestly an angel; it's hard to recall another television heroine who is consistently kind, giving, and virtuous—without the backstory of a superhero. Blanca's kindness is a radical act in a world where HIV, violence, and poverty have devastated her and the people she loves. *Pose* is about the people who are surviving in a time where youth are suffering a death President Regan couldn't even mention by name. The blatant erasure and destruction of a community are at the hand of the state and society, and still, these characters are surviving.

The show understands in a way that many shows set during the same era don't, (*cont.*)

that there is no way to talk about New York City in the '80s without talking about the omnipresent threat of HIV and AIDs. *Pose* is determined to tell the recent history that has been erased from our collective memory yet has left a painful legacy in the queer community. The show makes sure that the audience doesn't get swept away in the glamour and *Sex In the City*-esque clothing montages, without reeling you back into the real-life death and heartbreak that occurs. The last season pivots away some from the ballrooms, as the landscape changes from houses competing for status to houses competing for cash prizes.



Pose is not perfect, but there is no virtue in putting all the responsibility of telling a story correctly on one show, or one person for that matter. The lack of stories represented in the media is not the fault of one show or one person. This is a larger systemic problem, something that *Pose*

brings up again and again. I think when more than 250 anti-LGBTQ bills are under consideration in state legislatures across the country, and 120 of them are directly targeting transgender people, *Pose* is not only groundbreaking but is necessary.

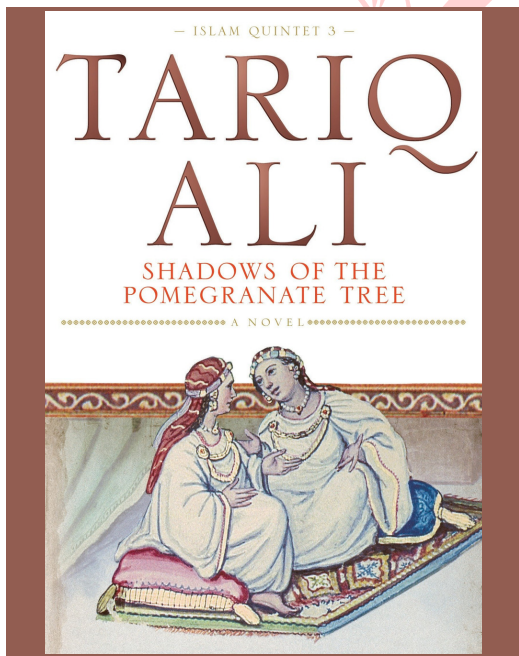
“Pose is not perfect, but there is no virtue in putting all the responsibility of telling a story correctly on one show, or one person for that matter.”

I only wish that the last season didn't end so quickly. In season one, we met these new characters through eight episodes and season two leaves us wanting more after a total of ten episodes. This last season we are only getting seven. I am not expecting the show to be tied up in a neat bow—but I am expecting a lavish Mafia money wedding! ■



THE SHADOWS OF HOME

BY RACHEL MCGLONE



As someone who has studied history both academically and as a voracious reader of historical fiction, it is unavoidably obvious that the market is primarily dominated by tales that are *A.* set in the twentieth century; *B.* centered on the white experience; or *C.* based in the nobility or royalty. *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* by Tariq Ali is a refreshing counter to all three points.

He is likely better known for his non-fiction, particularly focused on the political history of both western Asia and its interactions with the far west. Yet, in the 1990s and early 2000s, he turned his hand to penning a series of historical fictions called *The Islam Quintet*, which would focus on encounters between Islamic and Christian cultures. Ranging from the rise of Saladin in the twelfth century, to the fall of the Ottoman Empire circa the twentieth century, all the way to the present day, the quintet starts in a setting that is both familiar yet not – that murky period around 1500.

Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree follows the Banu Hudayl, a Muslim family following the fall of Granada (1492) – the last Islamic foothold in the Iberian Peninsula – and leading up to the First Rebellion of the Alpujarras (1499). We enter a world where rumors of the Spanish Inquisition begin to circulate, with tales of forced conversion to Christianity, as well as the growing restrictions on the Muslim population of Spain. Particularly, we see this world through the eyes of the eldest son, Zuhayr, and the youngest, Yazid. Zuhayr begins to chafe under the restrictions his family is subjected to, whereas Yazid offers an insight into the child's perspective – a small boy who sees the political machinations of the country like the chessboard he plays with. The third prominent perspective we get is from Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo, the removed villain whose decrees set the story's plot into motion. The titular pomegranate tree is located in the Hudayl home and acts as a recurring image that anchors the plot to the landscape; conversations happen beneath it, relationships are forged. The age of the tree gives the family their sense of belonging in Spain when external forces continue to pressure them to leave.

It was incredibly moving to read this story, as the narrative we are often taught in the Western world is from the side of the Spanish Inquisition. We are given statistics and details of their atrocities, but the human element is removed. In forging a connection with the Banu Hudayl, the reader is taken on the heart-breaking journey of their loss and decline due to the surge of Christianity, a fifteenth-century colonization process. Indeed, at university, we studied the (*cont.*)



eighth-century foundations of Muslim Spain, or Al-Andalus, and its principles as a tolerant multicultural society under the Umayyads, but by the time we reached the fifteenth century, the narrative switched, and instead focused on the ‘triumphant’ Isabella of Aragon and Ferdinand of Castile, and then onto the Spanish conquest of the Americas. The shadows of colonialism are still perpetuated in the histories we are taught today, and this book does incredible work to reverse that perspective.

I think *Shadow of the Pomegranate Tree*, and books like it, are incredibly important to read. Without these perspectives, it is very easy to form a romanticized view of the past, centered on the rich culture of the royalty – particularly British royalty. To my eternal chagrin, the world’s obsession with the Tudors just will not die.

Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree brings the reader to another culturally rich landscape that is more diverse and does not shy away from humanity’s brutality.

Not that there are no points of light in this novel – it paints a beautiful picture of a family, its intergenerational ties, and the descriptions of some of the food are delectable. I also really enjoyed some of the more philosophical questions that are raised throughout the course of the story, but that could just be me and my preferences!

“To my eternal chagrin, the world’s obsession with the Tudors just will not die.”

This book will not be for everyone. It is not escapist in the slightest, but it is important that these narratives are promoted and are incorporated into our discussions. This was published in the 1990s and the fact that the historical fiction genre still struggles with its commitment to diversity is troubling. Every country has a rich and vibrant history, why is historical fiction still centered on Britain and America? The stories are out there if one is only willing to look for them. ■

“This was published in the 1990s and the fact that the historical fiction genre still struggles with its commitment to diversity is troubling.”

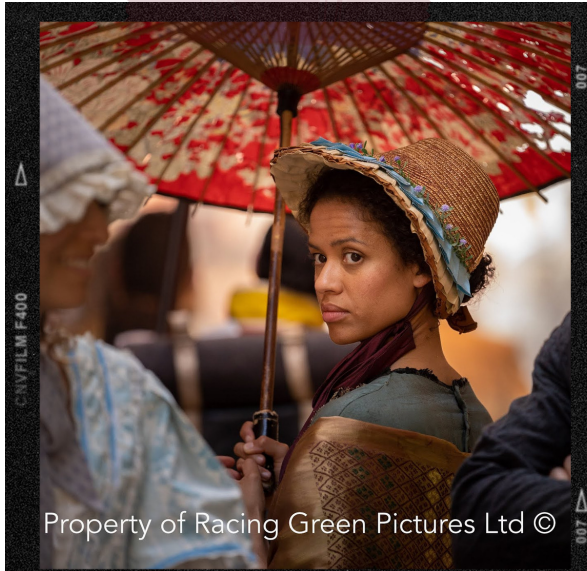


Upcoming Period Dramas!



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Seacole is a biopic about Mary Seacole, a Scottish-Jamaican nurse during the Crimean War. *Passing* is an adaption of Nella Larsen's novel. Netflix acquired distribution rights of *Passing* early this year and will likely be released in late 2021. *Anne Boleyn* is a psychological thriller about the famous wife of King Henry VIII. *The Harder They Fall* is a western film that will be releasing on Netflix later in the year.

**THE HARDER THEY
FALL**

BY CASEY BORSILLI

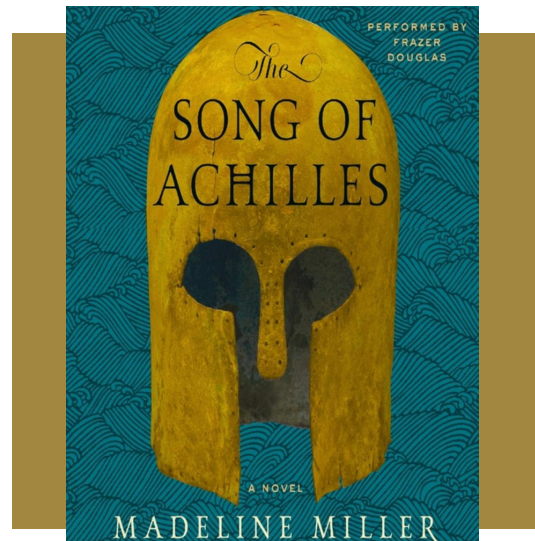
WARNING: SPOILERS OF THE CLASSIC TALE AHEAD!

If your scrolling habits are anything like mine, then BookTok has consumed your TikTok 'for you' page and inundated you with enough book recommendations to last a lifetime. While scrolling through TikTok late one night, I stumbled upon a clip of a sobbing person clutching a gorgeous teal paperback with a bronze helmet on the cover. Intrigued, I browsed the comments to see many similar responses: "this book ruined me," "I'll never forget this book," or "this is a must-read!". The book in question was *The Song of Achilles*, the debut novel of Madeline Miller. This 2012 novel takes classic characters and events from Homer's *Iliad* and weaves them into an engaging and tragic love story that Arachne herself would marvel at (Ha! Get it? That's a Greek mythology pun!). Seriously though, if you remember anything at all about the Greek myths you may have been taught in English or history class, then I promise you will eat *The Song of Achilles* up.

The story begins in Opus -- in the kingdom of Menoetius. Patroclus is the son of Menoetius and he is the one telling us his story through intimate first-person narration. Patroclus is exiled by his father to the Kingdom of Peleus in Phthia. Here is where Patroclus meets Achilles (son of Peleus) and the two soon after developing a relationship. Patroclus describes himself as ordinary, unathletic, and reserved. He describes Achilles as beautiful, athletic, and charismatic. In Homer's *Iliad*, Achilles is described as stubborn and vainglorious, but Miller gives a kinder and more vulnerable face to the hero, through Patroclus' eyes.

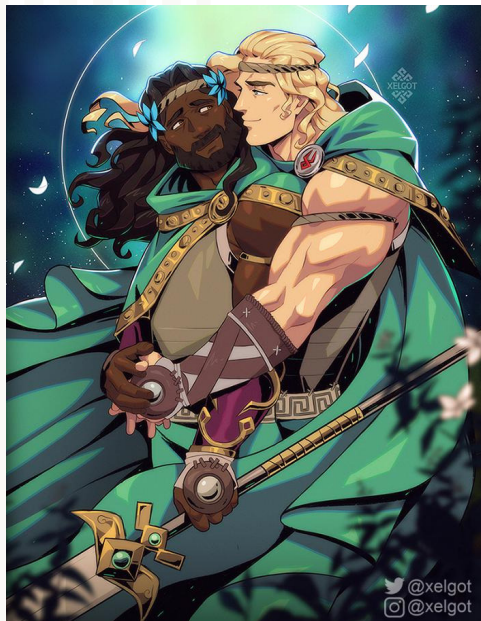
Now we step aside from the story summary to dive ever-so-slightly into the origins of the Trojan War. Very simply put -- it starts when

SING A SONG OF ACHILLES



Helen (daughter of King Tyndareus) is kidnapped by her husband Menelaus, king of the Spartans. When Helen is a young girl, her father Tyndareus hosts suitors from across the land in an effort to find her a suitor. Odysseus is among the suitors and instead wishes to marry Helen's cousin Penelope. In exchange for Penelope's hand in marriage, Tyndareus (charged with Penelope's care) asks that Odysseus and the rest of Helen's suitors swear an oath to defend Helen and her chosen husband, Menelaus. Patroclus, our protagonist, is present at this event. Here he is brought forth as a potential suitor for Helen and this is where we come back to my summary and review of *The Song of Achilles...* (cont.)

When the oath of Helen’s suitors is called upon, Patroclus and Achilles collect the Myrmidons (warriors from Phthia under Achilles’ command) and are off to join the rest of the armies in their journey toward Troy. The chapters move quickly from here and as time passes on, small battles are won and Achilles can prove to be the hero his mother and the Greeks want him to be. The final act of the novel follows our protagonists in the last year of the decade-long Trojan war. If you are unfamiliar with Homer’s *Iliad* or the story of Achilles and Patroclus, I am sorry to tell you that this story does not end happily. *The Song of Achilles* is such an exciting and romantic take on an ancient tale. I have no doubt you will hungrily finish it in hours.



PATROCLUS AND ACHILLES

Miller makes changes to these stories and their characters in a way that makes sense to modern readers; she does little in taking away from the actual history. She is, after all, a teacher of both Greek and Latin and has studied the classics. Miller’s prose shows an understanding of the bond that Patroclus and Achilles share and

she writes of it with such beautiful and descriptive language that readers feel as if they are there in the cave on Mount Pelion, or on the ship to Troy, or on the battlefield as Achilles falls to the ground for the first and last time.



“Miller makes changes to these stories and their characters in a way that makes sense to modern readers; she does little in taking away from the actual history.”

There are moments throughout the novel where I feel immense joy, or anxiety that pounds in my chest and gives me pins and needles in my fingers, or sadness so deep I cry for love I have never experienced. The reader sees Patroclus and Achilles grow up together and learn so much as young men. We get so attached to them that, by the time they meet their early demise, that we can’t help but feel as if we’ve just lost two dear friends.

Books have always provided an escape, a chance to experience a life other than your own, and *The Song of Achilles* was just the escape I needed this month. ■

Art of Patroclus and Achilles by [Xel Got](#).
Can be found in the following links:
<https://www.instagram.com/xelgot/>
<https://twitter.com/xelgot>
<https://www.artstation.com/xelgot>

THE BONES OF ENTERTAINMENT

BY KATLYN LANDES

I became a fan of the fantasy book genre during lockdown; it provides a completely unrecognizable escape from the shit storm we know as reality. Young adult fiction has always been a guilty pleasure for me, an indulgence when I want to feel something, but not fall apart. Daily life is consuming enough of my mind and soul; let my hobbies be easy to digest. *Shadow and Bone*, the Netflix series, was a pseudo-political commentary on greed in greyscale with some magic to maintain my interest. There is evidence of extensive world-building and societal organization within the book series, but that does not translate to the screen for me. There are only the briefest moments of levity, which may have left me feeling a bit too detached. I've been craving some light to balance out the dark, even if the story is set in a dystopian society. The characters may not all be human, but I feel it is too unrealistic to find any one of them altogether bad or good. I cannot claim to be a super fan; I have never read the books. When it came to writing this review, I decided that, perhaps, watching the show before reading the books would give me a more objective perspective. I wouldn't feel so protective of the characters and the world I'd envisioned in Katlyn's production of *Shadow and Bone*.

The first episode leaves me feeling optimistic that I will grow to enjoy the characters and root for them on their journies. However, as the show progresses, I never connect with the characters as I hoped. I appreciate several of them conceptually, but some character development would have provided dimension. Inej is arguably my favorite character, and I

attribute that to her growth and tenacity. Amita Suman explores the character's background, morality, and capacity to evolve very efficiently in her screen time. I am unsure whether Inej's character portrayal is made more multi-faceted by the acting or the screenwriting.



I keep waiting to feel anything besides awkward sexual tension from Alina and Mal. I appreciate a slow burn, but the constant long stares feel a bit forced after they intend to communicate their feelings in their lost letters. The idea of each of these characters individually is admirable, but I crave more depth. It is as though the adaption micro-dosed the viewers with droplets of golden-hued backstories in an effort to prove the two friends have always been committed. However, the warmth referenced in the flashbacks rarely revives itself in the present day. I had high hopes for *The Darkling* after several book clubs shared GIFs depicting women fanning themselves and (*cont.*)

lots of wiggling eyebrows when referencing this character. I expected a person-you-love-to-hate type, with dark glares and several days' worth of beard growth. I wanted brooding, but I get aloof and pompous. Any intended, albeit deceptive, physical attraction between The Darkling and Alina translates as creepy, for lack of a better word. This is, of course, an accurate interpretation of General Kirigan, but the story seems to present their relationship as the development of a (brief) love triangle. There is never a moment of wanting the bad guy; he has always been bad, and there is nothing intriguing about it. Alina's physical involvement with him seems nothing more than a direct result of her lack of communication with Mal. I wish there are more layers revealed. There is, however, a clear and very disturbing similarity between The Darkling and someone in our *own* world. When he tells Alina they're going to change the world, and he doesn't answer her reply of destroying the Fold, a certain innovator came to mind. I'm looking at you, Elon Musk.

The introduction of Jesper is a welcome reprieve from Ravka, if not a bit cliché. The Crows need his ridiculousness to balance out the icy stares and simmering rage of Kaz and Inej. My fondness for these characters is a shy one -- Kaz is not easy to like. He feels comprised of only shadows and contempt, with the dimmest flickers of his hidden desire and obvious admiration for Inej. I want to root for them as underdogs in the cruelest competition in all of Kerch, but there is never going to be a happy ending. The character arc of this group as a whole is my favorite aspect of the series. The savage hunt for Alina



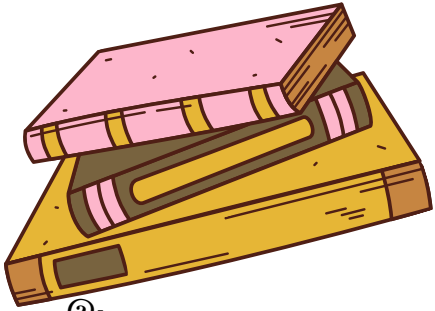
ultimately showcases their humanity and renews their faith in each other.

The relationship between Nina and Matthias is just a chef's kiss of a trope. The enemies-to-lovers evolution is outrageously and wonderfully predictable. Nina's overacting does not even bother me because I am too busy waiting for Matthias to stop denying his obvious attraction toward her. And then, like a gift from the YA gods, they naturally have to share a bed to stay warm. Isn't that always the way? Despite the utter platitude of these two, I am perhaps most looking forward to the continuation of their storyline next season. Ultimately, *Shadow and Bone*, the Netflix series, feels rather flat to me. I wanted more from the characters to humanize them, to relate to them, even if only on the smallest level. The story does feel rushed to me within the eight episodes, so perhaps the television series medium is to blame for the lack of character development. Despite the overwhelmingly average acting and cliché storylines, I am still intrigued. The show is thin on emotion and reason, which makes it very easy to fit into your average weekday evening. I process it easily because very little is left open to interpretation. Come season two, I'll be giving it approximately 75% of my undivided attention! ■

The Book Nook



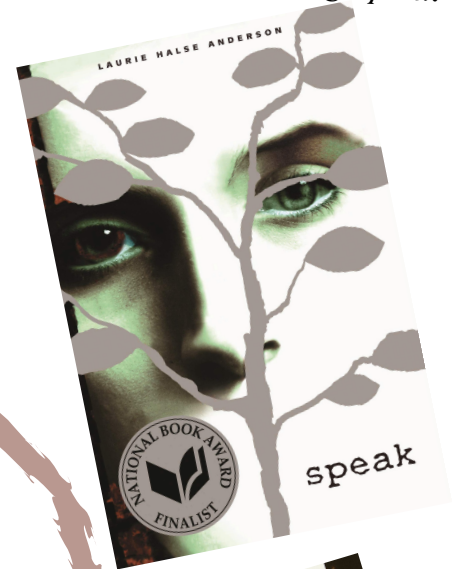
*What have we
been reading?*



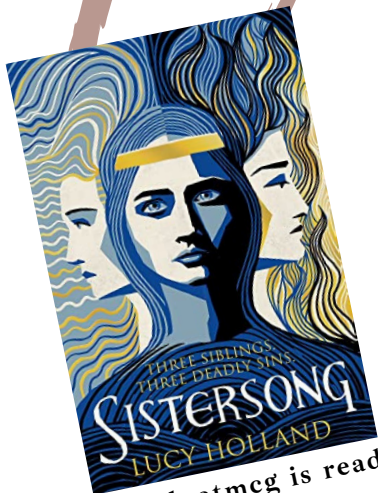
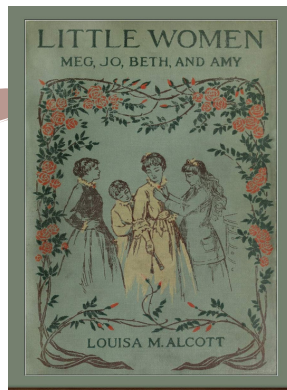
@periodicallydramatic is reading *These Violent Delights!*



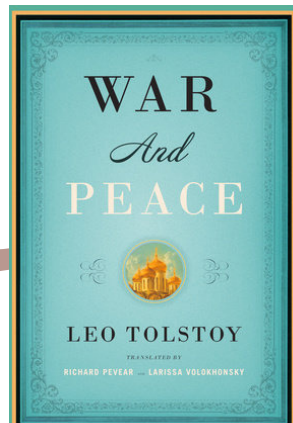
@timeperiodfilm is reading *Speak!*



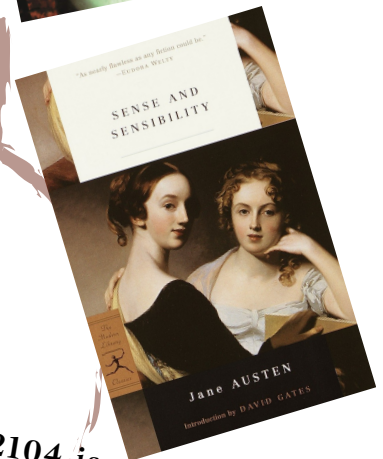
@linguipixie is reading *Little Women!*



@rachelnatmeg is reading
Sistersong!



@ihateemilyfawcett is
reading *War and Peace!*



@refinnej2104 is reading *Sense &
Sensibility!*

CAN YOU GUESS?



Can you guess the exact decade of this fashion plate?

Check page 23 to see if you're right!

IRREGULAR FRIENDS, IRREGULAR LIFE

BY LAUREN KARPYN

The Irregulars chronicles the adventures of a gang of five teenagers and their battles with the occult in Victorian London after being selected by Dr. Watson to do his investigations into the strange goings-on in London. The show's basic plotline is a loose interpretation of the Baker street irregulars which are featured in some of the original Sherlock Holmes stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In the original novel, the irregulars are a group of boys that Holmes employs to gather intelligence on the streets of London, similar to the homeless underground featured in the 2010 BBC interpretation, *Sherlock*.

The Irregulars, like most Netflix-produced period dramas, is entertaining. It has many of the components that a good period drama requires: class conflict, intragroup tension, tragic backgrounds, and of course romance, how could a period drama forget? The show also adds a new layer to the classic stories of Sherlock and Watson by adding a supernatural element to it. While the show has all of these components, it fails to stitch them together in a seamless manner, especially when looking at the supernatural attacks on the city of London.

The show focuses mainly on Beatrice, or Bea for short, and Jessie, sisters who stick together through their battles against the supernatural forces that grip London, the mystery of their mother's disappearance, and their lineage. Spike and Billy, long-term friends and roommates of Bea and Jessie, work through the shadows of their past, the romance that they hope for, and in Billy's case, dealing with unrequited love when Bea declines him for Prince Leopold—the eighth child of Queen Victoria, who joins the group after escaping the palace and seventeen years of



solitude because of his hemophilia.

John Watson in this interpretation of the classic duo is much morally darker than many of the interpretations that have occurred thus far. He is rather manipulative, egotistical, and very protective of the drug-addicted and grief-ridden Sherlock.

The plotline of the entire show feels rushed as if the show needed two more episodes in order to get out everything they want to include in the show. Because of this, some of the major plot catalysts feel vague and almost watered down. Like many of the recent Netflix shows, it feels as if it is trying to fit an algorithm rather than a creative process. A culprit for this is the fact that there are eight main (*cont.*)

“The set and overall design of the show are very well done and show the massive class divides that exist in Victorian England and especially Victorian London.”

characters all with their own set of problems, emotions, and motives for what they do in life. This means that the audience has to keep up with eight subplots as well as the main plot itself. This makes the show confusing at times and pushes the main plot under the characters' subplots.

That being said this show does sport a semi-diverse cast for Netflix standards. The leader of the irregulars is played by Thaddea Graham, a Chinese Irish actress. Spike is played by Mckell David and Watson is played by Royce Peterson, both black British actors. The main antagonist, the Linen Man is also played by an American black actor, Clarke Peters. There are a couple of other minor characters who are people of color. One thing that I did *not* enjoy was casting the Linen Man as a black man since I see too many black villains. In a show that is making some sort of effort to include diversity, it seems like an ignorant move.

The set and overall design of the show are very well done and show the massive class divides that exist in Victorian England and especially Victorian London. However, the material accuracy of the show stopped there. The costumes in the show are as inaccurate as it gets, and beyond that, are ill-fitting and unattractive. While the costuming of the irregulars themselves isn't horrible -- Beatrice wearing pants is the biggest inaccuracy -- the scene where Prince Leopold attends a party in Buckingham Palace, the guests of high English society are wearing some of the worst costumes I have ever seen in a period drama, next to perhaps the abysmal dresses in *Bridgerton*, another Netflix-produced period drama.

Class conflict is a key component of this story as well. The show portrays it in a way that is creative but constantly mentioned. Three of the main characters, Beatrice, Jessie, and Billy, all spent time as children in the workhouse. The workhouse, which has its origins in the aftermath of the black death in the 1300s, is an institution that became synonymous with Victorian England. Workhouses are a prison-like system in which the poor would be worked for profit and be kept within the system for as long as possible. Children, orphaned or otherwise unwanted, made up the majority of the Victorian workhouses inhabitants and were subjected to horrific abuses and malnutrition within them. The show highlights these abuses, especially of Beatrice, within the workhouses of children. This doesn't always happen in modern television, so it's a nice change. However, the show relies on this institution to be a tragic *backstory* for three characters, but it is still prevalent to the issues occurring within the group during the show.

The Irregulars is not the most amazing period drama I have yet seen, but it is far from the worst. It is entertaining and fun to watch! *The Irregulars* is not the first period drama that we see of its kind and it will not be the last. ■

EVERLASTING SUNSHINE

BY CAMILLE C. / @BELLE.EYRE ON INSTAGRAM

As a devoted fan of both period dramas and Korean entertainment, I have always wanted to talk about *Mr. Sunshine*, the acclaimed historical (Sageuk) K-drama that released on Netflix in 2018. Because, for me, it will always be a groundbreaking experience. Especially because that there are so many nuances to it. So if you love history, politics, romance, and action, you will absolutely love this show.

One thing about the show that struck me was how witty, credible, and natural the dialogue is. It's not just there to serve the characters; it makes the show enjoyable to watch. Although there are some sensual allusions, it's still very prude and thus, charming because you don't see this kind of romance often in Western period dramas. In the latter shows, desire is always heavily implied -- and sometimes superficially -- but in *Mr. Sunshine*, it's implicit. It makes you think and consider the double meanings behind the innocent, sarcastic, and audacious lines of some characters. This is why I love that the show allows the audience to use its critical thinking, imagination, and intelligence. It, in the end, doesn't insult the spectators.

The plot is a fascinating one because of how well it allows -- and in an impressive way -- so many genres and messages to be displayed on the screen. Set at the beginning of the 20th century, in Joseon -- Korea before the Japanese occupation -- *Mr. Sunshine* tells the story of three men and two women who were all born as Joseon citizens but forced to embrace the nationalities and cultures of their Western invaders in order to survive. So, in a ruthless world where their homeland has always been



EDIT BY @BELLE.EYRE

doomed to be invaded by Western and Japanese forces, they thus try to find a way to fight against the colonization. Complicated romances come in their ways and intertwine with personal convictions. So, as the Americans, who start to conquer the territory at the end of the 19th century, arrive, Joseon starts to modernize itself. And since Western forces like Russia, France, and Great Britain are fighting for this naturally resourceful territory, along with the Japanese Empire, colonization is the major plot device and we all know that it is not supposed to be fun. But the scriptwriter cleverly uses love as a universal language to tell the world this hidden side of the international, political, and social history of early modern Korea. This show demonstrates this intriguing and fascinating mix of Western and East Asian cultures. As everything is so beautifully done, from the stunning cinematography and action scenes (*cont.*)

to the costumes, to the storylines of the characters, everything is completely created from scratch for the show. Even though the characters and their stories are not based on a book, it's still fascinating because you don't see a lot of completely fictional period dramas. Usually, period dramas are either based on books, may it be historical fiction or classic novels, or on historical facts and characters. But with *Mr. Sunshine*, it is not the case. You don't see a lot of American and British period dramas that are integrally fictional. The only fictional and historical show that I can think of is *Downton Abbey*, with all the characters and the intrigues completely invented for the series. And there are not a lot of examples like these two period dramas. *Mr. Sunshine*, which is nothing like a soap opera, clearly uses fictional characters as a way to tell the early Japanese occupation of Korea at the beginning of the 20th century. It is thus powerful for Korean audiences, but also for the Western ones because of its universal messages.

The show's cultural mix between Western and East Asia has always fascinated and impressed me. For example, you can see the female -- privileged -- characters in the show wearing Japanese (kimono) or Korean (hanbok) outfits, but then, you can see them having a Western (French) wardrobe, and... you simply don't recognize them. When both women, the pure yet fierce and empowering Lady AeShin, and the classy yet determined owner of the Glory Hotel Kudo Hina, are wearing Oriental outfits, they look younger and infantilized, but when they're wearing Western clothes, it's completely

different. They look empowered, confident, and mature. As Lady AeShin learns English in a school for girls, she wants to know more about this Western language for both love and emancipation. Language learning is another important part of the show that makes it both stimulating and entertaining, as most of the main characters can at least speak two languages fluently. The Korean, Japanese, English, and -- though less present -- French languages are heard in the show.

Thus, as Lady AeShin embraces the culture that is colonizing hers, this scene showed well how the two forces -- the Japanese and Joseon one -- encounter each other, through the interactions of both of these female characters. When I realize this metaphor, my mouth drops. When Hina is implanting the Western accessory in AeShin's hair, it represents the implantation of the Western culture in Joseon, as Japanese and American soldiers begin to settle in the territory after numerous sacrifices and terrible civil wars.

The visual language in this show is very efficient in showing the conflict between the characters, who are personifications of the countries invading Joseon. It is really interesting to me to see how the Joseon women start to emancipate themselves thanks to the Western culture and clothes that came with it. Ironically though, women from the Western world were not as emancipated as Joseon women either, but you can see that the cultural differences are huge. Lady AeShin, for example, is a young (*cont.*)

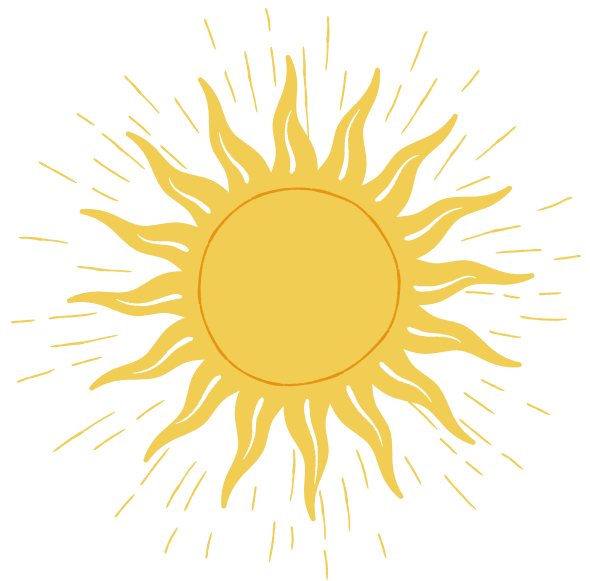


woman in her mid-20s, but when you see her, she looks younger. But as soon as she starts embracing the Western culture and using it as a way to protect her country from the invaders, she beautifully executes femininity and strength at the same time. I think that's a quite clever and impressive way to empower the female audience without making femininity look weak.

Here, these clever female characters are feminine *and* empowering at the same time. This strong femininity is rare to see in Western period dramas because often, the feminine characters are submitted by the social conventions or by men, as they are not always portrayed as powerful women with any agency over their lives.

As for the male main characters in the show, the untouchable butcher and swordsman Go Dong Mae, the wealthy son of an aristocratic family Kim Hee-Sung and the low-born self-made man Eugene Choi, they all respect the female leads and support them. Although the desires of these men are subtly shown through tense facial expressions and glances, they all appear as emotionally vulnerable as the women, putting them

on an equal footing on screen. And it's so *rare* to see this kind of non-toxic masculinity on Western TV. To me personally, this kind of emotional conflict and representation adds so much more realism and authenticity to the show. It's almost as if the women in the show had power over the men and their emotional struggles. It reverses the usual representation of women suffering and men consolidating and shielding them. Here, the men show real masculinity through their respect for women and acknowledgment of their flaws. Men who appear mature and respectful are much more pleasing to watch than the usual toxic and stereotypically virile ones. On the contrary, the men in *Mr. Sunshine* know when to be protective and strong and when the women want to help themselves without them mansplaining. All the main leads support each other in an incredibly gentle and genuine way and I think that's beautiful. ■



GET A SNEAK PEAK OF THE YET-TO-BE RELEASED NEW CHAPTER OF *WHERE PATHS MEET!*

Katherine smiled, then laughed when he caught her wrist and pulled her in. The chilling water relieved the heat on her skin immediately. They splashed each other and she even dunked him. His dark brown, almost black, hair matted to his head and he swished water across her face when he shook his head to rid the water in his face. She closed her eyes and giggled.

Jonas pulled her close and her heart thundered at the proximity of their bodies. His stomach breathed in and out and butterflies swarmed her heart at the realization of their closeness.

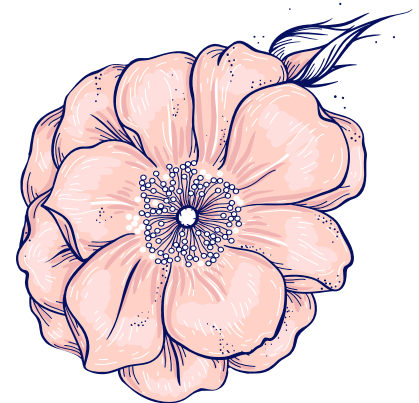
"I think I love you, Miss Collins," he whispered on her lips.

She flustered, her hands tightening on his wet shoulders. "I think I love you, too, Mister Edgar."

She closed the distance between them, their lips returning home in passionate kisses. Her touch slid into his soaked locks as he gripped her body close. Tingling crawled down her core at his tongue sliding into her mouth. Katherine arched into him and lifted her left leg. Anything to be as close to him as possible.



Where Paths Meet is a mid-nineteenth century love story between a maid and her employer's wealthy friend. It's perfect for fans of Jane Austen.





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