

The Reader



at Literary Leftovers Bookstore

Issue 9

Nov./Dec. 2025

LETTER FROM THE PROPRIETRESS Holidays' Wishes

Heather Erwin, proprietress



As the golden leaves make their graceful descent and the brisk winds of November begin to weave their familiar patterns through Battle Ground, we find ourselves filled with that peculiar blend of reflection and anticipation only autumn can inspire. After all, it's such a cozy season—a time when a well-loved book, a steaming cup of tea, and a comfy corner of our humble shop conspire together to make even the grayest days rather splendid.

As Thanksgiving approaches, our hearts brim with gratitude for your continued patronage and support, your repeat visits with children, family, and friends, and your shared stories of discovery among the shelves. Each time you find a forgotten treasure tucked between the spines, or pass along a favorite novel to a friend, you continue the grand tradition upon which our little shop was founded: stories being shared and savored, passed from one reader to the next like a cherished heirloom.

December, of course, brings its own delights—the sparkle of lights reflected in our windows, the rustle of gift wrap around precious books, and the joyful hum of neighbors seeking the perfect tale to tuck beneath the tree. There is no greater pleasure than helping a customer choose just the right book. Books are bridges between hearts, companions through long winters, and reminders that imagination is the truest form of magic; what better way to keep the magic alive?

And speaking of time's passage—how swiftly it has flown! We find ourselves on the threshold of a marvelous milestone: in January, Literary Leftovers celebrates its **twenty-fifth anniversary**. A quarter of a century! How many pages have turned since our first day, how many readers have crossed our threshold, and how many stories—real and imagined—have found a home here, or been shared far and wide? It humbles and delights us in equal measure. We shall, of course, have a proper celebration. Details are forthcoming (for now we keep a touch of the mystery alive), but expect laughter, community, perhaps a toast or two, and certainly a few surprises tucked between the shelves.

As you prepare your holiday tables and light your candles, know that you are thought of fondly here at Literary Leftovers. You are the heartbeat of our story, the reason our lights glow warmly even on the darkest days. May your homes be filled with comfort, your hearts with gratitude, and your bookshelves with adventure.

With affection, appreciation, and literary cheer,
Your devoted booksellers at Literary Leftovers

POETRY CORNER

Night Snow

Carol Hayes



Carol Hayes is a life-long writer and poet. She currently lives in the Pacific Northwest on five acres with her husband of 18 years and their horse, dog and two cats. Carol enjoys observing the world around her and interpreting it through her poetry and writing.

Snow
from the quiet dark
lies across the morning,
draping the ordinary
in sparkling, blinding splendor.

Children
and dog-friends romp
through fields grown soft and unfamiliar,
and in their glorious
unbounded joy,
they embrace the wonder of change.



BOOKSELLER'S REVIEW

The Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey

reviewed by Lucy Wakefield,
bookseller



"We never know what is going to happen, do we? Life is always throwing us this way and that. That's where the adventure is. Not knowing where you'll end up or how you'll fare. It's all a mystery, and when we say any different we're just lying to ourselves. Tell me, when have you felt most alive?"

The Snow Child, Eowyn Ivey's debut novel, showcases her natural talent for writing, especially world building. Because of the slow-paced nature of the narrative, it's not a book I would normally choose for myself, but this winter season, it was a perfect story to round out my year of reading.

Set in the 1920s, married couple Mabel and Jack are in their fifties and have lived the better part of two decades trying for a child, with no success. To escape this unbearable truth, the couple embark on a journey to create a new life for themselves, moving deep into the Alaskan wilderness to build a homestead and live off of the land. The love they have for one another is sincere, but struggling, as they face intense grief and the hardness of the land, particularly in winter. One night, in a spontaneous moment of whimsy and longing, Jack and Mabel build a figure out of snow: a little girl. When they wake the next morning, the snow figure is gone, and out of the forest comes a girl, wild and mysterious, named Faina. The story spans the course of the next seven years of their lives, as Mabel and Jack get to know the child, and learn to love her as their own.

Not only is this a significant story about family, it is also a story of friendship, and the meaning of companionship. The backdrop of picturesque, harsh Alaskan wilderness is described accurately and beautifully by an author who has lived there all her life.

Inspired by the classic Russian fairytale, *The Snow Maiden* (*Snegurochka*), *The Snow Child* will be most enjoyed by readers of historical fiction and magical realism. The story itself is slow-paced, but packed with gorgeous imagery, captivating prose, and a lovable cast of characters.

BOOKSELLER'S COLUMN

Hunting Season

Eily McIlvain, bookseller

Only the evergreens will keep their coats. A thick pad of autumn color covers the ground. The morning and nights chill, and cumulus fog hangs over the highway and the fields. Birds in their formations stream through the sky. Watch as they pass over big-box stores and stands of birch, over Main Street with its little park, over a small town settling into winter. Stay behind here for a moment; in this town, a woman pulls the chain on a lighted sign that glows out the window of a little bookshop. A bell tinkles. Inside, music plays softly. It's warm. A cat lies on the rug.

Bookselling in winter is different from other seasons. Some days are glacial, with few visitors or sales, and we can pass more than an hour alone, shelving or wiping dust from the books, listening to the rain drum the roof. Other times, browsers and regulars and families visiting from afar are out in force, and the bookshop is so crowded and lively it feels like we've invited everyone and their mother to hang out in our living room. These are the fickle rhythms of hunting season.

In late November and into December, some gift-hunters begin prowling the shop in a purposeful orbit, circling the shelves like sharks, then peeling off and darting towards us, the booksellers, to ask targeted questions. *Where are the...? Do you have any...?* This is an opportunity for the bookseller to display fast knowledge of her stock, and point out relevant selections the gift-hunter may have missed on their first hawk-eyed pass.

If you aren't this methodical, assertive hunter, then you are probably the other: the scrambler. The scrambler usually cleaves to a very specific idea of their eventual trophy (which will be difficult to find), or else has no idea at all. The scrambler has waited too long, or has had a nervy precognitive vision of waiting too long. This adds urgency to his cause. Unlike the fairly self-sufficient gift-hunter, he needs to lean more heavily on the instincts of the bookseller. For the bookseller, this means a hunt of her own.

The hunt of the used bookseller is quite different from the new bookseller's. We stock some new books and merchandise, particularly around this season, but it's a fraction of the discoverable field. We don't have the luxury of selling you any and all books we know would suit your purposes; we have to snare a suitable book that we are blessed by fortune and providence to actually have in our forest of shelves at the time you need it. To prepare us for our hunt, you provide an idea of books you (or your loved one, coworker, or relatively unknown in-law) have recently read, dreamt about, hated, heard of in the news, and so forth. We divine between those lines for the book that has been waiting for you.

We curate our stock with this process in mind. We picture you, reader, who will one day purchase the books that pass through our hands. Successfully bringing you to mind, we set the book on the shelf so it can acquire vintage. And then—as you're telling us about your pet-sitter or the book about a dog with the green cover by a writer, last name ending in 'R'?—a bolt strikes us. Why, it's you. That patron we imagined all that time ago, here in the flesh. And here's your book.

Or, I suppose you could order something online.

The Little Reader



"Someday you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again."
C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*

THE LUCY CHRONICLES

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

Corrie Albertson, Children's Program manager

Lucy was a bookstore cat and had been for as long as she could remember. Her days were filled with the tinkling of the bell on the door, announcing customers as they came in and out of the shop. She loved to greet each one with a purr or gentle nuzzle. Most customers left with a book, but she knew the real reason they came was to see her. She had been told by more than one that she was a most splendid and beautiful creature.

Lucy took her job very seriously, intuitively knowing what each customer needed. A small human might need her gentleness, an older one might need a lap companion. Some came to see her perform her acrobatic skills, others had secrets they could only divulge to her.

She often wondered what it was that was so special about the books they carried in and out of the shop, but her paws made it quite impossible for her to open them up and see. At night when the bookstore was empty she would often walk around and look at the covers, smelling each one to see if she could guess at its contents, imagining what might be inside. One night as Lucy made her usual rounds before she lay down to rest, she discovered a book had been left out in the children's section. Now this would not have been unusual, except that this book had been left open. Lucy peered at the pages with their squiggly lines, dots, and dashes but could not make sense of it. Disappointed, she curled up and fell asleep right on top of the book.

Her eyes couldn't have been closed for more than a few seconds when she became quite cold—freezing, in fact! Her eyes opened wide and she sprung to her feet. She wasn't in the bookstore anymore. She was in the middle of a forest, and everything was covered in snow!

"Where am I?"

"Why, you're in Narnia," replied a funny-looking creature called a faun, half goat and half man.

"You can understand me?" asked Lucy, startled.

"Of course I can!"

"Where I'm from, no one can understand me when I talk."

"Well, here animals can talk, and even some of the trees."

"How wonderful!" declared Lucy.

"It would be, except there is a White Witch who has cast a spell over Narnia, making it always winter but never Christmas, and she turns creatures into stone who don't do as she says."

"How horrible," whispered Lucy, suddenly feeling quite nervous.

"Our only hope is Aslan," said the faun with great reverence.

"Who is Aslan?" asked Lucy.

"A lion, and the rightful King of Narnia!"

"I've been told that I have lions in my family," said Lucy proudly.

Suddenly, from somewhere in the woods, they heard bells ringing

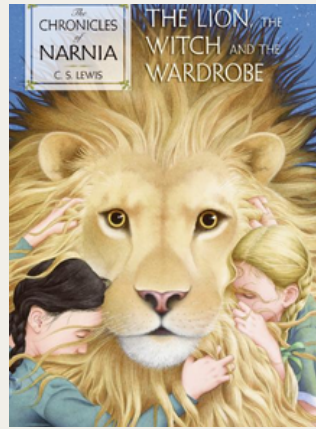
"What's that," asked Lucy?"

"It's the witch! Quick, hide!" shouted the faun.

Lucy startled awake. She found herself back in the bookstore, still lying on top of the open book. She was glad to be home, but she couldn't help but wonder: had it all been a dream? She wanted to know what happened to the faun. Would Aslan save Narnia?



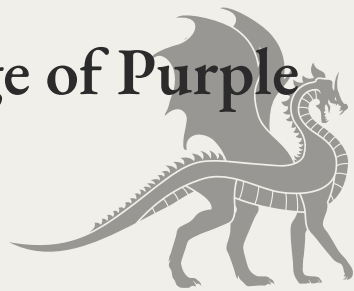
If you know, please come and tell Lucy how it ends. Or if you'd like to find out, please read: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis.



YOUTH FICTION

The Revenge of Purple Spike

by Elliot Rice, age 10



At the library, Amber the Dragon King was reading a scroll, when suddenly the windows Shattered all at once. The wind whistled loudly, tiles fell from the roof, and he rushed out the door to see what was going on. He saw there were fires everywhere and dragons dashed into their houses. He wanted to know who was causing this disaster, so he decided to go on a journey to the Ruined Castle, which is where trouble usually comes from. A couple of days later he ran out of food, so he had to look for more. The problem was he was in a desert and he was thirsty too. He cut open some cacti to get some water to drink. After that, he finally made it out of that sandy desert. He made it to the Ruined Castle after a few weeks, starving and exhausted. He saw Purple Spike standing there, looking at him, as if waiting for a fight. So he prepared for the fight by drinking water he had been saving along the way, and the food he had brought along just for this moment. Then they started to fight. They fought and fought and fought. They fought until Amber was very weak, but Purple Spike was not. Amber had not gotten a single strike on Purple Spike, but Purple Spike had gotten a lot on him. Who was going to win? What was going to happen.
To be continued....

YOUTH REVIEW

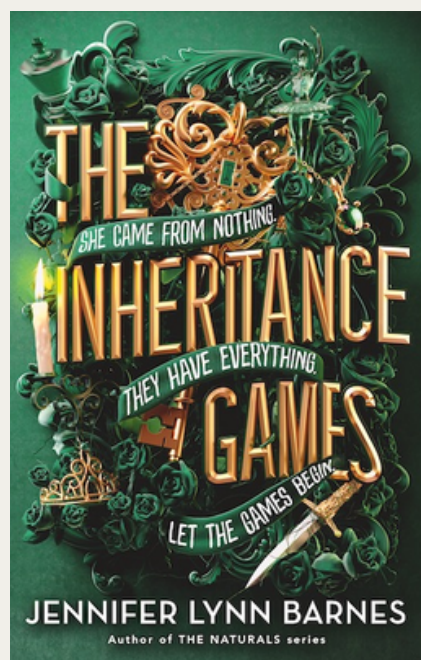
The Inheritance Games

by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

reviewed by Ainsley Albertson, age 18



The Inheritance Games is an engaging mystery series that follows seventeen year-old Avery Grambs, a poor nobody high school student who is suddenly



transformed into a billionaire overnight. She is mysteriously given a large inheritance from a man she doesn't know and must figure out why she has been chosen to inherit his money instead of his four grandsons.

Once you pick this series up you won't be able to put it down. I loved it and give it 4.5 stars.

CAREER INVESTIGATIONS

Felix Kalvels, Entrepreneur,



Every Tuesday, Miss Corrie leads **Storytime with Corrie** from 11-11:30am, right after Lego Club. Once a month, Storytime hosts a special guest; a local professional or experienced enthusiast to talk to the children about their work and read a related story. In this issue, Felix Kalvels, the 8-year-old founder of Gold Eagle is interviewed by another young entrepreneur, Adele Anaya, also aged 8.

What is your business?

My business is called Gold Eagle and I make notebooks and sell them.

What motivated you to start this?

I actually have no idea, I just started it. I made them with lined paper and a staple at first. The new version is a lot more complicated with a hole puncher and binding.

What is the biggest challenge?

Making a lot at one time and doing it on my own.

Is there anything you don't like about it?

Counting!

What do you do with the money you earn?

I put some money into my bank account, some in my wallet, and some to buy materials. I donate some of the profit to Shriner's Hospital in Portland.

Schedule

LEGO CLUB

at 10am Tuesdays & 4pm Thursdays.

STORYTIME WITH CORRIE

with special guests once a month at 11am Tuesdays, right after Lego Club.

K-12 ART EXHIBITION

& 2026 CALENDAR DEBUT

November 13, 6-7pm

ANNUAL PJ's & POLAR EXPRESS PARTY

December 6, 9-11am

Upcoming

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 6, 4-5pm at the shop

BOOK CLUBS ON HIATUS

NOV. THROUGH DEC.

We return in January

SHOP CLOSED DECEMBER 21- JANUARY 1

We take a winter break, and will reopen January 2

Accepting submissions!

Tues.-Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-5

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