Today I am going to reveal to you, my fellow readers and friends, a deep, dark secret: I’m a huge fan of the romance genre. Although I’ve been reading romance since I was twelve years old (teen services weren’t really a thing at the library then, so I jumped straight from Sweet Valley High to Nora Roberts), no form of torture could have induced me to share my secret reading habits. I was an English major and a good, smart girl, so in public I wore the persona of a literary fiction reader who was just delighted to sit down and slog my way through James Joyce’s *Ulysses*; at least until I could run home, lock the doors, and grab my latest paperback. I finally learned to embrace all of my reading tastes from Shakespeare to Julie Garwood when I went to library school and discovered:

- other well-educated people are also enthusiastic fans of romance.
- there is a whole branch of librarianship called Readers’ Advisory, which is the science behind matching readers with their next favorite book.

In Readers’ Advisory 101 my wonderful instructor, a long-time public librarian, spent a significant portion of that class instilling respect and enthusiasm in each of her students for any and all reading choices. Suddenly, I was excited to find other readers who enjoy romance as much as I do. I began reading romance in public and scouting online for other fans. I embraced that part of myself. I also discovered that what I love most about romance is the connection I feel with the characters and the relationships they develop. I had never read much past the literary canon and the romance section, but I found that I can embrace books in all genres as long as they have wonderful, well-developed characters that I can empathize with.
In this class, I also found my professional passion. I now spend quite a bit of my time at work on Readers’ Advisory tasks including training library staff on best practices, creating reader resources, and keeping up with authors and titles across genres. I am excited to help others embrace their reading passion and to break down the judgmental opinions that abound in the reading world. My only request for readers is to love what you read and always be in search of that magical, tingly feeling that develops from that perfect-for-you book. I do still run into quite a bit of negativity about my reading choices. Here are my answers to some of the most frequent assumptions about the romance genre.

Why don’t you want to read well-written books?
As with any genre (including, ahem, literary fiction) the quality of writing in romance runs the gamut from terrible to transcendent. If I pick up any book and am not enthralled within the first 50 pages, then I always put it down. As a professional librarian, with a B.A. in English and Master of Library Science, I give you permission to do the same.

But it’s so predictable…
It is an expectation that there will be some type of Happily Ever After (HEA) in romance, but for me that’s part of the charm. It is comforting—through all the angst and drama that can sometimes accompany a romance novel—to know that the characters I love will make it through okay. That said, no two authors reach the HEA in the same way. The fun of reading romance is all in the details of the journey. The genius or mediocrity of the author is revealed in the way that they handle the restrictions of the genre. The very best romance authors use the restrictions to question societal norms in our world.

But isn’t romance just “mommy porn”?
With the Fifty Shades of Grey phenomenon, romance readers have been experiencing a whole new level of shaming, often from people who have read exactly zero romance novels. Often the focus for non-romance readers is on the sexual content of these books. Within this prolific genre, you can run the gamut from Christian romance to erotic romance with all levels of steaminess. The focus of romance, though, is not sex; its relationships. Talented authors use the intimate scenes to develop the relationships and move the plot in the story. There are resources to let readers choose the level of sensuality they are comfortable with.

What’s with those covers?
Romance readers have a variety of reactions to the covers of their reading material, from horrified embarrassment to cult-like devotion. Like any marketing, it is profit-driven and only loosely tied to the actual contents of the book.

How can you read something so anti-feminist?
These novels embrace, explore, and celebrate all of those things that our society deems to be feminine. This is the only genre where women always win. They are the true heroes of the story and they always get what they aim for in the stories – including their man. Thus, I would argue that the very act of writing and reading romance, from Jane Austen forward, is a feminist act and a celebration of femininity.

~ Jessi, Carbon Valley Regional Library
If you're interested in learning more about the genre, here are a few resources for you:

- All About Romance: [http://www.likesbooks.com/kissburn.html](http://www.likesbooks.com/kissburn.html) - I love this site because each review also includes clearly defined sensuality rating, so you can find the book that has the level of intimacy you are comfortable with.

- Book Lovers Central: [http://highplains.libguides.com/read](http://highplains.libguides.com/read) - Created and maintained by HPLD librarians, Book Lovers Central is all about books. Find information about Colorado authors, genre-specific websites, book trailers, and more about the services the library offers to help readers find great reads in romance and beyond.

- Dear Author: [http://dearauthor.com/](http://dearauthor.com/) - The wide variety of reviewers on this site means that you get multiple viewpoints and that there's something for everyone. The site's founder, Jane Litte, writes fascinating literary criticism and historical analysis of the genre.

- SBTB Blog: [http://smartbitchestrashybooks.com/](http://smartbitchestrashybooks.com/) - Sarah Wendell and her cohort hold romance to a high standard. Their reviews are honest and hilarious, although they often use strong language which maybe a turnoff to some readers. For a good laugh, check out the book cover entries that ruthlessly tear apart some of the more horrendous covers in the genre.

- [Beyond Heaving Bosoms](http://beyondheavingbosoms.com) by Sarah Wendell - An excellent and funny look into the history of the romance genre. This is the same Sarah of the SBTB blog.

If you're interested in exploring the genre for yourself, try one of my all-time favorites listed below, or contact your local librarian so we can match you with the romance sub-genre that will be most enjoyable to you.

**Jessi’s Ultimate Romance Reading Guide**

- [The Madness of Lord Ian Mackenzie](http://www.amazon.com/), by Jennifer Ashley - *Historical romance.*
- [The Spymaster’s Lady](http://www.amazon.com/), by Joanna Bourne - *Historical romantic suspense.*
- [Heart of Steel](http://www.amazon.com/), by Meljean Brook - *Steampunk romance.*
- [Bared to You](http://www.amazon.com/), by Sylvia Day - *Erotic Romance.*
- [If I Stay](http://www.amazon.com/), by Gayle Forman - *Teen romance.*
- [Outlander](http://www.amazon.com/), by Diana Gabaldon - *Historical/paranormal romance.*
- [A Lady Awakened](http://www.amazon.com/), by Cecilia Grant - *Historical romance.*
- [Gentle Rogue](http://www.amazon.com/), by Johanna Lindsey - *Historical romance.*
- [Natural Born Charmer](http://www.amazon.com/), by Susan Elizabeth Phillips - *Contemporary romance.*
3rd Annual Links for Literacy

Links for Literacy Golf Tournament is an annual benefit for literacy programs of the High Plains Library District Foundation & Kiwanis Club of the Rockies.

Click here for sponsorship opportunities.
SPECIAL EVENTS

Adults | Digital Library 101
September 3, 11:00 am-12:00 pm
Farr Regional Library

Join us for an introduction to our free digital library resources. We will cover accessing eBooks and Audio eBooks through our vendors: OverDrive, OneClickDigital and Axis 360. We will also learn how to access eMagazines through Zinio and how to stream independent films via IndieFlix. Participants are welcome to bring their tablet, smartphone or laptop. Registration required.

Children | On the Road to Reading
September 7, 1:00-4:00 pm
Carbon Valley Regional Library

Katherine Dines of Hunk-Ta-Bunk-Ta fame will open our educational and entertaining program with music, movement and fun. Following the 1:00 pm performance, pick up a ticket and join us in the children’s area for lots of fun activities. After you and your child complete your ticket, the patio holds a surprise for all participants!

Adults | Facebook Intermediate
• September 10, 6:30 pm
  Carbon Valley Regional Library
  Registration required.
• September 11, 6:30 pm
  Centennial Park Library
  Registration required.

In this class, we will take you through some of the more advanced settings of Facebook to help you avoid privacy pitfalls and get the most out of your social networking time. We will also touch on the Facebook App and talk about some of its features. (Participants must have a current Facebook account.)

All Ages | Colorado Birds Series:
Master of Courtship - the Western Grebe
September 12, 12:00-1:00 pm
Farr Regional Library

Join Kevin Cook, local naturalist, for a feature on the Western Grebe. As September brings summer to a close, Western Grebes will gather first by the dozens then by the hundreds and the thousands. Though always social to some degree, they do pair for raising young; and to establish their pair bond, they engage an activity singular among birds: they dance upon the water. The courtship of the grebes is one of nature’s finest expressions of elegance.
SPECIAL EVENTS

Adults | Local History Series:
The Colorado Coal Field War
September 12, 7:00 - 8:00 pm
Erie Community Center (450 Powers Street, Erie)

Join us for a presentation by Dean Saitta, PhD., who is the head of the Colorado Coal Field War Project at University of Denver. He will talk about the Colorado Coal Field Strike of 1913 - 1914 which culminated in the Ludlow Massacre of 1914 between miners and the Colorado National Guard.

Children | Music and Movement
September 13 and 27, 10:15-10:45 am
Erie Community Library

Get moving and grooving with songs, instruments and activities geared toward children ages 2-5. Adult participation is encouraged. Please be on time and keep snacks put away due to food allergies. Registration required.

All Ages | Fiestas Latinas
September 14, 1:00-3:00 pm
Lincoln Park Library

Join us to celebrate and recognize the independence day of various Latin American countries. Explore the different cultures of the countries that celebrate their independence day in September. Join us for music, food, and learning activities for the whole family to enjoy.

Children | On the Road to Reading
September 16, 10:00 am-12:00 pm
Farr Regional Library

Join us at 10:00 am with a fun and entertaining puppet show featuring Cloud of Dust Theater and Bruiser the Rag Dog. Following the performance, pick up a ticket and join us in the children’s area for lots of fun activities. After you and your child complete your ticket, the patio holds a surprise for all participants!

Adults | High Plains Garden Talks:
Saving Seed
September 17, 6:30-7:30 pm
Erie Community Library

Learn about some of the techniques for saving flower, herb and vegetable seeds from your garden. Janis Kieft, Manager of Horticultural Services for Botanical Interests seed company will talk about isolation, selection, harvesting, storage and more. It is a great way to retain seeds for plants you love or want to share with others.

Adults & Teens | Paranormal Workshop
September 18, 6:00-7:00 pm
Centennial Park Library

Lori Juszak, author of The Ghosts of Fort Collins and professor at Front Range Community College, will host a compelling workshop on paranormal phenomena, the different types of equipment used to investigate a variety of local hauntings, and how to inexpensively assemble your own ghost hunting kit.
All Ages | Pinwheels for Peace
September 21, 10:00-11:00 am
Kohler Park, Kersey

During September, stop by the library and make a pinwheel. Decorate and leave it with staff to be included in the pinwheel peace garden. On Saturday, September 21 at 10:00 am, help us and local Scout troops “plant” the pinwheels in the “garden” at Kohler Park in Kersey.

Children | Eric and Angelyne, the Amazing DEAF Cattle Dog
September 21, 11:00 am-12:00 pm
Centennial Park, 2201 23rd Avenue, Greeley

Come join Eric and Angelyne the Amazing Deaf Cattle Dog at Centennial Park (just north of the library). One of our most popular programs is heading outside to accommodate all of Angelyne’s fans. In case of rain, the program will be held in the Centennial Park Library.

Children | Reading is Fun Family Fair
September 21, 1:00-3:00 pm
Lincoln Park Library

Come sing, rhyme and play at our Family Fair.

All Ages | Pinwheels for Peace
September 22, 2:00-3:00 pm
Carbon Valley Regional Library

During September, stop by Carbon Valley Regional Library, our booth at Mead Community Days in Mead (Sept. 14) or Miner’s Day in Frederick (Sept. 21) and make a pinwheel. Decorate it and leave it with staff to be included in the library’s pinwheel peace garden that will be “planted” on September 22 at 2:00 pm in front of the library.

Banned Books Week
You’ve probably read a challenged book without realizing it! The American Library Association records hundreds of attempts to have books removed from libraries and classrooms every year. Learn more about banned and challenged books. Also discuss a top challenged book and then watch the movie version. Popcorn included! Join us for the following events:

September 23, 3:30 pm; Lincoln Park Library
*The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton (PG-13)

September 25, 6:00 pm; Centennial Park Library
*A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess (R)

September 25, 6:00 pm; Erie Community Library
*Matilda* by Roald Dahl (PG)

Adults | Bridging Cultures: Muslim Journeys
September 24, 6:00-8:00 pm
Centennial Park Library

Join us for a five-part “Let’s Talk About It” reading and discussion series in support of the *Bridging Cultures: Muslim Journeys* initiative presented by the National Endowment for the Humanities in cooperation with the American Library Association and Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies. We will be reading titles from the “Points of View” bookshelf, with discussions facilitated by Dr. Jessica Martin, PhD (International Affairs Program, Global Studies Residential Academic Program University of Colorado, Boulder). Registration required.
SPECIAL EVENTS

Adult | Business Start Up Orientation*
September 26, 6:00-7:30 pm
Carbon Valley Regional Library

This free comprehensive Business Start-up Orientation has been designed to be a starting place for anyone who is considering jumping into business for the first time (or the second time with a better outcome). This seminar will provide you with a Colorado Start-Up Guide and a general overview of the things to consider when starting a business such as licensing requirements, taxes, legal forms of organization, components of a business plan, marketing essentials, management requirements, launching your business and more. This program is presented by the Colorado SBDC Network for the Northeast-East Central region. Registration required.

*This program is a community partnership. Sponsorship or co-sponsorship of this event does not constitute the Library’s endorsement of the content or views expressed during this program.

Writerpalooza
* A Pre-Event leading up to ReadCon 2013

ReadCon is a celebration of all things reading, writing and library related. It’s a one day event that will bring together like-minded enthusiasts, make you a better writer, happier reader and ignite your passion! ReadCon will be held at Farr Regional Library on November 2. Check out October’s enewsletter for a complete schedule of events.

September 28, Carbon Valley Regional Library

- Create a Comic Strip with Linda Davis
  12:30-1:30 pm; Grades 6-12
  Learn about all of the ingredients that it takes to make a funny comic strip in this class! Students will get the chance to turn a favorite cartoon into the star of the comic strip.

- Seeking Stories with Todd Mitchell
  2:00-3:00 pm; Teens (9th grade) - Adults
  Writers are often told to increase tension and develop internal conflict, but what does that mean? In this interactive session, “Seeking Stories: Discovering Character through Plot,” award-winning author Todd Mitchell will explore the secrets of developing conflict while helping participants discover devious ways plot can be used to reveal their characters and engage their readers.

- Dialogue and Setting with Todd Mitchell
  3:30-4:30 pm; Teens (9th grade) - Adults
  Join young-adult author Todd Mitchell for a fun, interactive session, “Letting Your Characters Live and Speak,” on common dialogue and setting problems, and how to avoid them. A tip sheet, and a few brief exercises will be given to help writers discover new ways to breathe life into their fiction by letting their characters speak and live.

Click [here](#) to view all programs offered by HPLD.
LIBRARIES

Administration & Support Services  
2650 West 29th Street, Greeley, CO 80631  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Carbon Valley Regional Library  
7 Park Avenue, Firestone, CO 80504  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Centennial Park Library  
2227 23rd Avenue, Greeley, CO 80634  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Eaton Public Library  
132 Maple Avenue, Eaton, CO 80615  
(970) 454-2189

Erie Community Library  
400 Powers Street, Erie, CO 80516  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Farr Regional Library  
1939 61st Avenue, Greeley, CO 80634  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Fort Lupton Public & School Library  
425 S. Denver Ave., Fort Lupton, CO 80621  
(303) 857-7180

Glenn A. Jones, M.D.  
Memorial Library  
400 S. Parish Avenue, Johnstown, CO 80534  
(970) 587-2459

Hudson Public Library  
555 Main Street, Hudson, CO 80642  
(303) 536-4550

Kersey Library  
413 1st Street, Kersey, CO 80644  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Lincoln Park Library  
919 7th Street Suite 100, Greeley, CO 80631  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Northern Plains Public Library  
216 2nd Street, Ault, CO 80610  
(970) 834-1259

Outreach  
2650 W. 29th Street, Greeley, CO 80631  
1-888-861-READ(7323)

Platteville Public Library  
504 Marion Ave., Platteville, CO 80651  
(970) 785-2231
PUBLIC COMPUTER CENTERS

Evans (Community Complex)  
1100 37th Street, Evans, CO 80620  
(970) 475-1125

Keenesburg (Town Hall)  
140 S. Main, Keenesburg, CO 80643  
(303) 732-4281

LaSalle (Town Hall)  
128 N 2nd Street, LaSalle, CO 80645  
(970) 284-6931

Lochbuie (Senior Center)  
501 Willow Drive, Lochbuie, CO 80603  
(303) 659-8262

Milliken Senior Center  
139 West Main Street, Pierce, CO 80650  
(970) 834-2150

Nunn (Town Hall/Community Center)  
185 Lincoln Avenue, Nunn, CO 80648  
(970) 897-2385

Pierce (Plains Market)  
321 Main, Pierce, CO  80650

Pierce Senior Center  
321 Main, Pierce, CO  80650

Prairie View Senior Center  
1151 Main St., Hudson, CO  80632

PRIVILEGED LOCATIONS  

City of Evans Museum  
1100 37th Street, Evans, CO 80620  
(970) 475-1125

Hazel E. Johnson Research Center at the City of Greeley Museum  
714 8th Street, Greeley, CO 80631  
(970) 350-9220

Poudre Learning Center  
8313 West F Street, Greeley, CO 80631  
(970) 352-1267

BOOK DEPOSITS

Briggsdale Library  
42089 WCR 70, Briggsdale, CO 80611

Hill & Park Senior Center  
4205 Yosemite Dr., Greeley, CO 80634

Milliken Senior Center  
1101 Broad Street, Milliken, CO 80543

A gift to your library is a gift to the community!