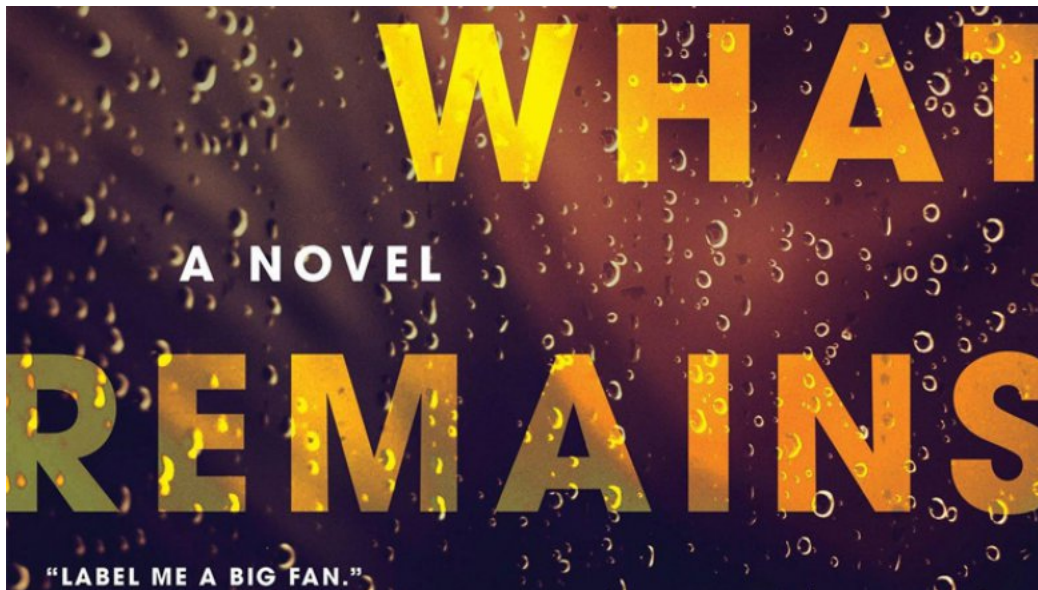


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## MARCH 2016 SEAL OF EXCELLENCE

Mon, 03/21/2016 - 11:47am — [RT Book Reviews](#)

Each month the *RT* editors select one book that is not only compelling, but pushes the boundaries of genre fiction. This book stands out from all the others reviewed that month, in the magazine issue and on the website. March 2016's *RT* Seal of Excellence — the editors' pick for best book of the month — is awarded to

[Alison Gaylin's](#) *What Remains of Me*.

I've been a fan of Alison Gaylin for years. Her mysteries are always twisty, and leave me breathlessly wondering whodunit without ever letting me find out until the very, very end. And *What Remains of Me*

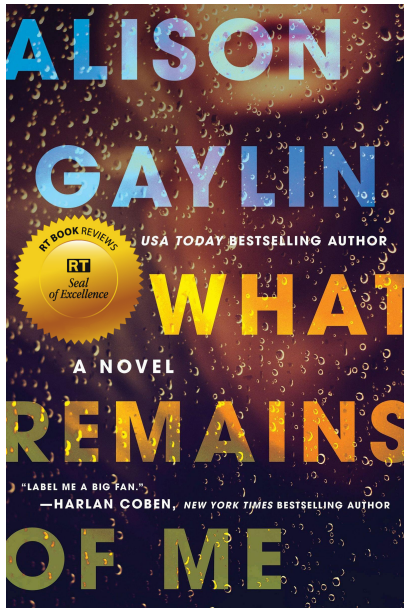
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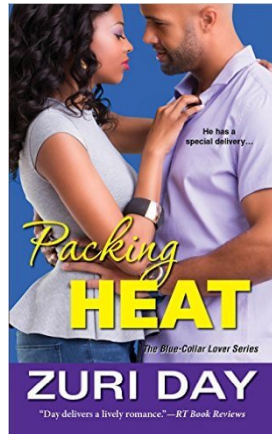


is her twistiest mystery yet! Kelly Lund is a character you'll spend hundreds of pages trying to figure out, and you'll never know for certain if you want to love her or hate her a little bit, whether you believe her or think she's a liar. And that confusion, that mix of feelings, is the best thing about Gaylin's novel. I know some people love to figure out the mystery as soon as possible, but with a Gaylin novel, even the best amateur sleuths won't be able to pick out the red herrings from the real clues. And that alone is worth the read. The fact that Gaylin makes all of her characters fully fleshed-out and three-dimensional, from the good guys to the bad guys to everyone in between, is just the icing on the cake of this delicious mystery. — *Jennifer Peters*

*What Remains of Me* sucked me in and held me prisoner from the very first page. The story unfolds across two different decades, switching between teenage killer Kelly Lund's new life outside of prison and her experiences in the 1980s that

landed her there. It's hard for me to gush about this book without spoilers, but I can tell you this — I was so enthralled by the story that I read the entire book across two (working) days and I ignored my fiancé's pleas to watch TV with him for most of it. Throughout most of the story I truly could not decide if Kelly was innocent or guilty (and we don't find out for sure until the very, very end!). It's worth the wait, I swear! — *Kristin Wise*

Whoa, Nelly! This book has some serious twists — and one line at the end that will haunt me until the end of my days. I'm not always a fan of alternating time lines, it feels like a bait-and-switch maneuver, but Gaylin makes it work by giving us enough of each decade's plot to make sure we're satisfied throughout. There are many POVs represented here, but they all feel individual, and, as is often required in a great mystery, truly screwed up. Tweet me when you're done, and we'll talk spoilers. — *Elissa Petruzzi*



If any of you had told me a month ago that I'd enjoy a romance about postal workers, I'd have laughed in your face. I mean, I haven't seen a ton of smoldering looks or sexual tension happening on those occasions I've had to chase down an errant package, so ... I was skeptical. But: Brava, *Zuri Day*! Not only is this blue-collar romance sexy and sweet, *Packing Heat* packs a message about creative fulfillment, body positivity and self-acceptance. In honor of Doug and Jan, I'll try to be a little more generous of spirit to my local post office employees. — *Regina Small*

[RT Convention 2016 Recap: A Seat At The Table](#)

[RT Exclusive Excerpt: A Totally Awkward Love](#)

[Forewords — The Books Before the Buzz](#)

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#### RECENT REVIEWS



**CRAVING**  
by Helen Hardt



**IN THE DARK**  
by Lila Rose



**HIS FIRST CHOICE**  
by Tara Taylor Quinn



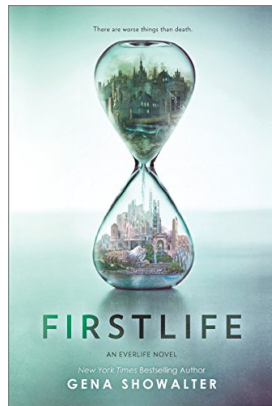
**THE GOOD FATHER**  
by Tara Taylor Quinn



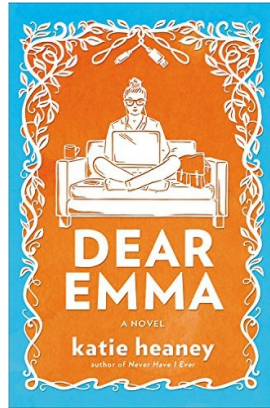
**SEEK AND FIND**  
by Dana Mentink



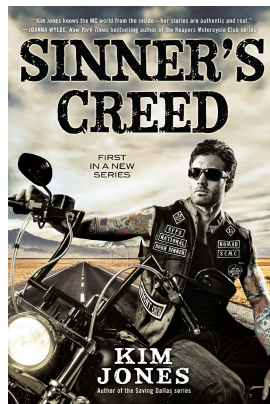
Just look at this adorable cover! Who wouldn't want these two to get back together? I love second-chance-at-marriage books, there's something so enticing about starting the book with two people who have already tied the knot. Like, *what're you going to do now, author?* Well, what **Merline Lovelace** does in "*I Do*" ... *Take Two* is wring your heartstrings but good as you root for these two crazy kids to work it out. With a swoony special forces hero and a heroine who is no one's pushover you'll be glad you said "I do" too. — *Elissa Petruzzi*



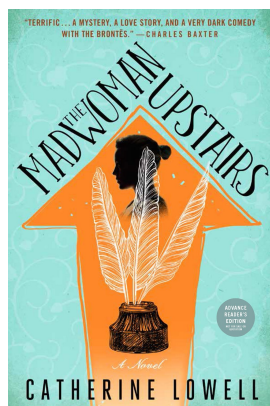
YA aficionados will love **Gena Showalter**'s unique first entry in her Everlife series, *Firstlife*. Ten Lockwood is locked away by her parents when she refuses to let them pick what will happen to her ... after she dies. There are two warring factions to choose from, and if she dies before pledging herself, there's no saying what could happen to her soul. Ten's decision could turn the tides of war, and the two sides will stop at nothing to sway her. Showalter's novel is engaging and readers will love the banter between the two male leads, sent to convince Ten to join their cause. If you can handle a few gory scenes, then you'll love this worldbuilding treat. — *Emily Walton*



*Dear Emma* will remind you of your college days — scoping out your campus crush, side-eyeing the girl interfering with said crush, all while dishing the play-by-play to our beloved roommates. Watching **Katie Heaney**'s heroine's life intertwine with her pseudonymous newspaper column is nothing short of entertaining and charming — a read-in-one-sitting type of book that goes perfectly with a sunny day at the park. — *Danielle Valente*



Listen, there was a lot of controversy surrounding this book's distinct lack of HEA. I feel you, this book totally broke my heart ... but I also could not put it down. Dirk and Saylor are perfect together. She is the bright beam of light to his dark, brooding exterior. I cannot tell you how badly I wanted their happily ever after! For a split second I totally considered taking a foray into fan fiction because these two are meant to be! In the end, I cried ... a lot ... on the subway. We all need a Dirk in our life! Keep a box of tissues handy, you'll thank me later. — *Kristin Wise*



**Catherine Lowell** delivers an impressive mainstream fiction tale with a dash of mystery and a touch of classic literature in *The Madwoman Upstairs* — a perfect combo of literary elements. She tells the story of Samantha Whipple, the last living Brontë descendant, who's supposedly heir to the family's fortune, which she believes to be as fictional as Mr. Rochester. But mysteries from the past resurface when Samantha begins Oxford, and everything seems to change. What will she — with the help of her hunky professor — discover? This is a debut that deserves all of the praise it has received. Reader, I loved it!

— *Danielle Valente*

**Congratulations to the winner and all of the nominees! You can find all of our Seal of Excellence winners [here](#).**

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Bella Love — I loved Sidebarred by Emma Chase!

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Debs — All of the covers are gorgeous, but Laura Kaye's Hard Ride has my vote!

GHOST GIFTS

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Kate Hearn — This sounds quite good! Must add to my summer list...thank you :)

Shadowhunters Recap: S1, E 13: Spring Awakening

1 comment • 20 days ago

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Tania Stanwood — I think this is not a bad show. I like the fantasy genre so I like this series. Although I don't watch much TV I prefer to read. I am reading Ben ...

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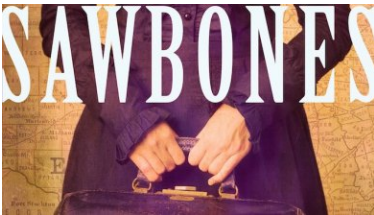
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ROMANCE



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March 2016 Seal of Excellence

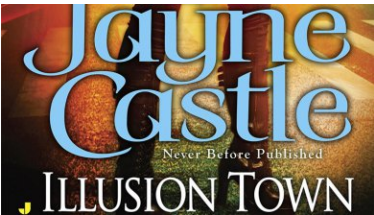
Cover Reveal: Lynn Cahoon's A Story To Kill

February 2016 Seal of Excellence

Exclusive Excerpt: Ann A. McDonald's The Oxford Inheritance

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PARANORMAL



Cover Breakdown: Jayne Castle's Illusion Town

We're back in the office after an awesome convention and ready to get this week going with an insightful cover breakdown! We have to admit...

Cover Breakdown: Magic Binds by Ilona Andrews


Cover Breakdown: Molly Harper's Big Vamp On Campus

Exclusive Excerpt: Runaway Vampire by Lynsay Sands

Dear Romanswer: The Seasons of Love

Exclusive Cover Reveal: Cari Z's Where

YOUNG ADULT



RT Exclusive Excerpt: A Total Awkward Love Story

Life and Death with Lurlene McD:

RT 2016 Convention: YA Spooky Slumber Party

Shadowhunters Recap: S1, E 13: Morning Star

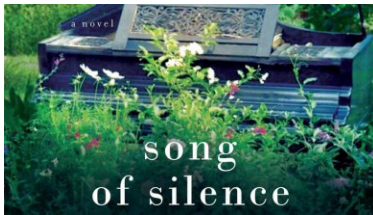
Shadowhunters Recap: S1, E 12: I

Cover Breakdown: Alessandra To Moonshot

More Young A

[There's a Will](#)[More Paranormal »](#)

## INSPIRATIONAL



Profiling Love Interests: Cynthia Ruchti's *Song Of Silence*

We romance fans live fo

Fun Facts: Siri Mitchell's *Flirtation Walk*

Cover Breakdown: Wanda & Jean Brunstetter's *The Missing Will*

December 2015 Seal of Excellence

Love and Fiction Collide in James L. Rubart's *The Five Times I Met Myself*

2015 RT Reviewers' Choice Award Nominees — Inspirational, Young Adult, New Adult and Multicultural

[More Inspirational »](#)

## MAINSTREAM



Cover Breakdown: Amy E. Reichert's *Luck, Love & Lemon Pie*

It's Tuesday and we're getting ready to kick off the first official day here at the RT Booklover's Convention in Las Vegas!

Debut Author Spotlight: Catherine Lowell's *The Madwoman Upstairs*

January 2016 Seal of Excellence

Exclusive Excerpt: Jacqueline Sheehan's *The Center Of The World*

Cover Reveal: Someone Else's Love Letter by Deborah Blumenthal

Cover Reveal: Lauren Baratz-Logsted's *Falling for Prince Charles*

[More Mainstream »](#)

## SCIENCE FICTION



Cover Reveal and Giveaway: J.A. Rock's *The Silvers*

Feel like a cover reveal, or winning an e-advanced copy? Who wouldn't?! Today we're taking a peek at J.A.

Author Q&A: Helen Lowe on *Earthquakes, Prussian Generals and Rocking on the Porch*

Cover Breakdown: Taylor Anderson's *Blood In The Water*

2015 RT Reviewers' Choice Award Nominees — Science Fiction/Fantasy/Paranormal

Cover Breakdown: *Ring of Fire IV* by Eric Flint

July Seal of Excellence

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## EROTICA



RT 2016 Convention: Beyond BDSM: Top Five Tips For Writers

The RT Booklovers' Convention is swing and besides having an absolutely amazing time at all the fabulous parties, we are l

Exclusive Excerpt: Maya Banks's *Dominated*

Exclusive Excerpt: Kylie Scott's *Dilemma*

Sneak Peek: Sylvia Day's *One with a View* Book Trailer

Exclusive Excerpt: Monica Murphy's *Never Let You Go*

Exclusive Excerpt: Violetta Rand's *Possession*

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