

# Friends Read

Booklist

February 13, 2025

## *Alien Clay* by Adrian Tchaikovsky

They travelled into the unknown and left themselves behind . . .

Professor Arton Daghddev has always wanted to study alien life in person. But when his political activism sees him exiled to the planet Kiln, condemned to work under an unfamiliar sky until he dies, his idealistic wish becomes a terrible reality.

Kiln boasts a ravenous, chaotic ecosystem. Its monstrous alien life means Arton will risk death on a daily basis – if the camp’s oppressive regime doesn’t kill him first. But, if he survives, Kiln’s lost civilization holds a wondrous, terrible secret. It will redefine life and intelligence as he knows it – and might just set him free.

## *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt

The anxious generation After more than a decade of stability or improvement, the mental health of adolescents plunged in the early 2010s. Rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicide rose sharply, more than doubling on many measures. Why?

In *The Anxious Generation*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt lays out the facts about the epidemic of teen mental illness that hit many countries at the same time. He then investigates the nature of childhood, including why children need play and independent exploration to mature into competent, thriving adults. Haidt shows how the “play-based childhood” began to decline in the 1980s, and how it was finally wiped out by the arrival of the “phone-based childhood” in the early 2010s. He presents more than a dozen mechanisms by which this “great rewiring of childhood” has interfered with children’s social and neurological development, covering everything from sleep deprivation to attention fragmentation, addiction, loneliness, social contagion, social comparison, and perfectionism. He explains why social media damages girls more than boys and why boys have been withdrawing from the real world into the virtual world, with disastrous consequences for themselves, their families, and their societies.

Most important, Haidt issues a clear call to action. He diagnoses the “collective action problems” that trap us, and then proposes four simple rules that might set us free. He describes steps that parents, teachers, schools, tech companies, and governments can take to end the epidemic of mental illness and restore a more humane childhood.

Haidt has spent his career speaking truth backed by data in the most difficult landscapes—communities polarized by politics and religion, campuses battling culture wars, and now the public health emergency

faced by Gen Z. We cannot afford to ignore his findings about protecting our children—and ourselves—from the psychological damage of a phone-based life.

***Cher: Part One: The Memoir*** by Cher After more than seventy years of fighting to live her life on her own terms, Cher finally reveals her true story in intimate detail, in a two-part memoir.

Her remarkable career is unique and unparalleled. The only woman to top Billboard charts in seven consecutive decades, she is the winner of an Academy Award, an Emmy, a Grammy, and a Cannes Film Festival Award, and an inductee to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame who has been lauded by the Kennedy Center.

She is a lifelong activist and philanthropist.

As a dyslexic child who dreamed of becoming famous, Cher was raised in often-chaotic circumstances, surrounded by singers, actors, and a mother who inspired her in spite of their difficult relationship.

With her trademark honesty and humor, *Cher: The Memoir* traces how this diamond in the rough succeeded with no plan and little confidence to become the trailblazing superstar the world has been unable to ignore for more than half a century.

*Cher: The Memoir, Part One* follows her extraordinary beginnings through childhood to meeting and marrying Sonny Bono—and reveals the highly complicated relationship that made them world-famous, but eventually drove them apart.

*Cher: The Memoir* reveals the daughter, the sister, the wife, the lover, the mother, and the superstar.

It is a life too immense for only one book.

***The House in the Cerulean Sea*** by T.J. Kune

Linus Baker is a by-the-book case worker in the Department in Charge of Magical Youth. He's tasked with determining whether six dangerous magical children are likely to bring about the end of the world.

Arthur Parnassus is the master of the orphanage. He would do anything to keep the children safe, even if it means the world will burn. And his secrets will come to light.

*The House in the Cerulean Sea* is an enchanting love story, masterfully told, about the profound experience of discovering an unlikely family in an unexpected place—and realizing that family is yours.

***If Hooks Could Kill*** by Betty Hechtman

The television crime show *L.A. 911* has taken over Tarzana, making cinematic backdrops out of the town's most mundane locations, including the yard of Kelly Donahue, the newest member of the Tarzana Hookers.

And at the end of the day, the TV shoot isn't all that's wrapped. It seems someone silenced Kelly— permanently—and no one heard a thing. Without any leads, Molly and her pals must stitch together the clues to catch the killer—before someone else dials 911.

Delicious recipes and crochet patterns included!

***The Thursday Murder Club*** by Richard Osman

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet weekly in the Jigsaw Room to discuss unsolved crimes; together they call themselves the Thursday Murder Club.

When a local developer is found dead with a mysterious photograph left next to the body, the Thursday Murder Club suddenly find themselves in the middle of their first live case.

As the bodies begin to pile up, can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer, before it's too late?

***We Solve Murders*** by Richard Osman

Steve Wheeler is enjoying retired life. He still does the odd bit of investigation work, but he prefers his familiar routines: the pub quiz, his favorite bench, his cat waiting for him at home. His days of adventure are over. Adrenaline is daughter-in-law Amy's job now.

Amy Wheeler thinks adrenaline is good for the soul. Working in private security, every day is dangerous. She's currently on a remote island protecting mega-bestselling author Rosie D'Antonio, until a dead body and a bag of money mean trouble in paradise. So she sends an SOS to the only person she trusts . .

As a thrilling race around the world begins, can Amy and Steve outrun and outsmart a killer?

Solving murders. It's a family business.