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Love Never Fails



THE
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email: Classifieds - classads@thebeacher.com
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Campbells Share Insight Into Their 30-Year Marriage

by Andrew Tallackson

Dion Campbell wasn't expecting that night to meet the woman who'd steal his heart.

He was just trying to avoid a prickly situation back in Indiana.

It was 1989. Having graduated from Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Dion was amid a three-year stint coaching men's basketball for his alma mater. A potential recruit unwisely angered a fraternity member, the issue revolving around said fraternity member's girlfriend. The fraternity decided to retaliate on his behalf.

"The word was out: They were going to get me," Dion recalled. The smart option, he figured, was to skip town until things died down.

Eastern Illinois University was 45 minutes away in Charleston, Ill. A friend of Dion's was a student there. EIU seemed as good a destination as any to flee the escalating drama in Terre Haute. So when Dion and his buddy entered EL Krackers, a popular eatery with live entertainment, he locked eyes with a beautiful EIU senior seated at a table with friends.



Dion and LaRonda Campbell are photographed by Andrew Tallackson at Michigan City Police Department



This undated photo shows Dion and LaRonda early in their relationship.

LaRonda Washington.

The woman he would marry just a few years later.

"I thought she was gorgeous," Dion said. "I was intimidated. But I had to grasp the moment."

LaRonda's first impressions? A smile curves across her face

"Honestly, I thought he was handsome, but

from across the room I was like, who was this Malcolm X-lookin' dude?," she says, laughing. "He was so striking and handsome."

Dion was tall and lean. About 180 pounds, he says. Wearing a suit jacket, T-shirt, black dress shorts and black dress shoes, he adds with a chuckle, "I thought I was really stylish."

LaRonda laughs, patting her husband's hand.

"It was so strange because we matched," she says. "I had on a white T-shirt and a black and white vest and black miniskirt and black flats. We matched perfectly."

Dion doesn't skip a beat.

"I thought you were the most beautiful girl I had ever seen," he admits. "I was like, oh my gosh."

Dion returned to Terre Haute, but returned to Charleston the next day to be with LaRonda.

"I enjoyed our conversations," he said. "We just hit it off. We just meshed. We had a lot of things to talk about. Our conversation was really really engaging. Her depth matched her beauty."

LaRonda was smitten.

"I could tell, this guy is really on the ball," she recalls, then looks her husband directly in the face. "I thought you were the total package. I thought, he is smart, he's a go-getter, he has a bright future ahead of him. I was just totally impressed by who you were, where you were going. I just loved that you were smart, that you were going somewhere."



This year marks 30 years of marriage for Dion and LaRonda. Like any couple, they've experienced the hills and valleys of marriage, learning how to adapt, to compromise, to take life's journey side by side as husband and wife.

Michigan City is their home. They've raised four children here — their youngest, Kayla, is now 16 — while Dion has risen through Michigan City Police Department's ranks to be named chief in 2020. LaRonda has balanced working and staying home

Continued on Page 4

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Campbells Share Continued from Page 3

with her family. She's even done modeling through Chicago's esteemed Elite Modeling Agency. Together, Dion and LaRonda have deepened their faith through ministry, one that evolved to where they mentor couples on matters of the heart and soul.

Marriage, to be precise.

Their own views on the subject were sculpted by their families. Dion, a native of Lafayette, La., had nine brothers and sisters. His father, by the way, was one of 16 children living in a small two-bedroom home.

When Dion was 1, the family moved to Benton Harbor, Mich. A year later, they moved to Michigan City. He attended St. Mary's School and graduated from Marquette High School. He attended Oklahoma State University for two years before switching to ISU. The career he has forged in law enforcement is impressive, starting at LaPorte County Jail and LaPorte County Sheriff's Office, then 22 years and counting with MCPD. Before becoming chief, his tenure with the department has spanned school resource officer, hostage negotiator, community oriented police officer, the detective bureau and patrol division. There also was the time, way back in his career, when he helped provide security at Oprah Winfrey's sprawling Rolling Prairie estate.

Ironically, Dion had no interest in law enforcement after graduating from ISU. His degree was in communications, with an emphasis in radio, television and film. One of his earliest jobs was working for local radio personality Ron Miller, providing color commentary for sports events. But with radio not providing enough income, he says, to pay the bills, he also found work at LaPorte County Jail, having known the warden there. The rest, as they say, is history.

LaRonda grew up in the Cicero suburb of Chicago before moving to Oak Park, Ill. She describes her mother as an "amazing single mom" who raised her, a brother and sister. She graduated from Rich East High School in Park Forest, Ill., and attended EIU. Initially, her interests veered toward business and marketing, but she eventually graduated with a degree in speech communications. She loved her time at EIU, serving as a resident assistant for three

years. She even was crowned "Miss Black EIU."

Dion and LaRonda were married in 1992. Before then, their courtship involved Dion driving to campus every weekend so they could be together. One New Year's Eve, LaRonda recalls, she was back home, he was in Terre Haute. She missed him so badly, she called at 8 p.m. saying she wanted to see him. He didn't think twice, making the 3 1/2 hour drive and arriving just before midnight. They rang in the new year together.

As a couple, Dion and LaRonda believe their four children have bared witness to their journey as husband and wife. Early in the marriage, Dion says he found a letter his wife wrote to God, asking why He brought Dion into her life.

"In my immaturity and how I was," he admits, "she was not very happy in the beginning stages of our marriage.

"The most important thing for our kids was they saw that. They saw the growth and development and our commitment to work through our issues and eventually get to a point where our marriage became better and better.

"She and I made some agreements from the beginning about how we were going to have our marriage as far as respecting one another, making sure we were unified. They saw the respect I've always

shown my wife. They got to see a strong woman and a caring father who make some mistakes, but got better over time."

LaRonda says the goal, the hope, was that their children would model themselves after what they saw at home. A clean life with no drinking. No vulgar language. Peaceful disagreements where family members acknowledge hurt feelings, give each other space and apologize.

"We tried to show our kids how to advocate for the things they need, to talk about it," LaRonda said. "Even if it starts one way, you can come back and have a thoughtful conversation and bring up points and the person says, 'I hear you.'

"Having teenagers, it can get tense, especially with boys. Being able to explain to your kids, this is why we did this, and helping them understand how we see things as a parent...they've learned how to think things through, process some things, that even though we disagree, we can come back and talk about it."



An undated family photo of the Campbells.

Today, their eldest son, Aaron, is 29. Michael is 27, followed by Hannah, who is 22. Kayla, who is 16, attends Michigan City High School.

Looking back, Dion says his parents shaped his perspective on marriage.

"I grew up in a very traditional household where my mother was a southern Belle," he said. "She was very submissive and my Dad, when he set down the rules, that's the way things were. But LaRonda wasn't like that. So I'm trying to make her fit into a mold that was my reality, but was not her reality, and that's sometimes where conflict would happen.

"We finally got to point — I finally got to a point — where I realized that I cannot build my marriage on what I saw my parents build, that she and I have to collectively build the marriage that is specifically designed for us and who we are.

"Once I understood that, I think things began to change. It allowed her to grow and prosper, and our marriage began to thrive. Once we allowed God to be the center of our marriage, we could take who we are and our strengths and build from there."

For many years, Dion and LaRonda were senior leaders at the faith-based organization Worldgate Centre for Life, 1916 E U.S. 20. They also were drawn to become certified in a marriage ministry,



LaRonda once enjoyed a modeling career through Chicago's Elite Modeling Agency.

Marriage on the Rock, which was conceived by the Rev. Jimmy Evans. The purpose, for the two, was to help empower people struggling in their marriage.

What they learned through Evans, the principles he stressed, are simple. Put your spouse first. Throughout your life, pursue your spouse with the same fervency from when you were dating. Merge your two lives into one. "Ours" takes precedence over what is "yours" and "mine." Respect each other. Never shame or disgrace your spouse. Communicate respectfully.

Ultimately, being on the same page, taking life's journey together as husband and wife, is the best advice Dion and LaRonda can give.

"The biggest danger in any marriage is that people don't do the journey together," Dion said. "You start off at one place. You fall in love with someone, and you learn to cherish and honor them...and you also have different experiences that change you.

"The couples we've counseled, over time, they become unrecognizable to each other. We can start to disappear from each other. So we've learned to journey together. Share with each other what's going on. That has been critical to our marriage, and for any marriage, to take it to the next level."



Just in Time for Valentine's Day! Seafood Sale

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each

SAM Free Family Concert

Duo Sequenza, a Valparaiso-based classical flute and guitar chamber-music ensemble, marks the next School of American Music Free Family Concert.

The duo features classical guitarist Paul Bowman and flutist Debra Silvert. The program, "Romantic Music for Flute & Classical Guitar," is at 2 p.m. EST Sunday, Feb. 13, at Converge Community Church, 601 W. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich. Tickets are free, but must be reserved at www.scho-lofamericanmusic.com or by calling SAM at (269) 409-1191. Donations are welcome.

"Duo Sequenza specializes in chamber music works by living American composers, many of which were written specifically for them," SAM Program Director Phil Bauman said in a press release. "It's contemporary music, but not avant-garde, just fresh and unique."

The concert of Romantic serenades will include works by Pujol, Hand, Holli-day, Muniz, Piazzolla and Ibert. Schubert's "Sonata



Duo Sequenza features flutist Debra Silver and classical guitarist Paul Bowman.

Arpeggione" will be featured.

Duo Sequenza released its first album, "Yes...It's a Thing!," on Navona Records in 2019. Referring to the unusual combination of flute and classical guitar, the title is reprised on the duo's second album, "Yes...It's Still a Thing!," which will be released on Navona later this year. Silvert also is known for being one of the few musicians to own a Laurent Crystal Flute, a glass instrument so rare, barely more than 150 exist.

Social distancing will be observed, and masks are required throughout the concert. The series is supported by donations and a Pokagon Fund grant. The next program, "Songs for the Soul," is at 3 p.m. EST March 20 at Converge Church.

It will feature tenor and SAM teacher Matthew Daniel, accompa-

nist Sharon Burke and a guest appearance by violinist Nic Orbovich.



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LCSO in the Spotlight



Elliott Yrastorza.

Editor's note — This weekly spotlight, provided by Tim King, LaPorte County Symphony Orchestra executive director, highlights its talented musicians.

Student apprentice Elliot Yrastorza, a LaPorte High School junior, has been playing percussion for six years and performs with the LPHS band.

He plans to attend music school after graduation, hopefully along the East Coast. Outside of music, he enjoys computers, theater, shoes, cats and cooking.

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STEM Fair Winners



Pictures are (from left) Abigail McClead, Wyatt Debald, Dei Oldenkamp and Alexis Gresham.

Barker Middle School staff have announced the winners in the 2022 STEM Fair.

Retired Barker teachers Maria Surma and Bruce Starek served as judges. Winners are:

- Third Place: eighth grade, Abigail McClead, "How does light pollution affect the number of visible stars in the sky?"
- Second Place: seventh grade, Wyatt Debald, "How does food type affect glucose content?"
- First Place: seventh grade, Dei Oldenkamp, "How do LED lights work together to affect a 3-D image?"
- Grand Champion: eighth grade, Alexis Gresham, "How does the location of soil affect the pH of that soil?"

"Dueling Pianos" Fundraiser

Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra will host its "Dueling Pianos" fundraiser at 7 p.m. EST Friday, Feb. 11, at The Mendel Center's Grand Upton Hall, 1100 Yore Ave., Benton Harbor, Mich.

The two musicians play musical favorites on two grand pianos while capitalizing on their comedic and musical talents. Monetary donations are included with each request, the tips benefitting SMSO. The repertoire includes classic rock, country, hard rock, show tunes, R&B and Top 40.

An optional buffet dinner is at 5:30 p.m. EST, with cocktails at 6:30 p.m. EST. A cash bar is planned. The cost is \$35 for the show or \$60 for the buffet and show. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the SMSO office at 513 Ship St., St. Joseph, Mich., calling (269) 982-4030 or at www.smso.org. Masks are required.

SMSO also will host a silent auction featuring gift certificates from local businesses.



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LaPorte County Public Library

LaPorte County Public Library has updated its curbside pickup service using meeScan.

New users can download the meeScan app through options such as Apple and Google Play. Then, place holds on items using a customer account. Once at the library, check in using the app and clicking Pick-up from the bottom of the screen (or calling the library location). An appointment no longer is needed. Add the parking space on the app if picking up from the main location. Enter information in the instructions box if picking up holds placed on more than one account, or if needing additional assistance. A staff member brings held items to the vehicle. Customers using the app receive updates as their requests are processed. Returns can be placed in book drops and be checked in within 24 to 72 hours. At this time, there is no limit to the number of items customers can reserve and pick up during curbside.

- Coolspring Branch: Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Main Library: Tuesday/Thursday (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) and Saturday (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).



The following programs are planned:

- **Stories & More from 10-10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 11.** The socially distanced storytime includes rhymes, music and activities.
- **Teen Anime Club from 4:30-6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 14, at the main library.** Meet other teen anime fans through the club. Register through the website.
- **Teen Advisory Board from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, in the Main Library Meeting Room B.** The board allows teens in seventh grade and older to share ideas and get involved. Register through the website.



LaPorte County Public Library is located at 904 Indiana Ave. The Coolspring Branch is located at 6925 W. County Road 400 North. Visit www.laportelibrary.org for more details, including programming through the Exchange building.

Michigan City Public Library

Michigan City Public Library's circulation/front lobby area is open to the public.

The front doors are open. Public seating is available, and the computer lab is open. Hours are: 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday and closed Sundays.

The following programs are scheduled:

- **Duneland Stamp Club at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10.** The club meets the second Thursday of each month. New members are invited.
- **Needle Arts Club at 5:30 p.m. Mondays, Feb. 14, 21 and 28.** Membership to the group, formerly known as the Knit Club, is open to anyone interested in needle arts such as crochet, needlepoint, cross-stitch, crewel, tatting and other hand stitching. All skill levels and ages are welcome.
- **Virtual Story Time with Take-Home Craft.** A new storytime video is posted at 10 a.m. Wednesdays on the library website and YouTube channel at www.mclib.org/parents/story-time/. Visit Youth Services to get the craft! The program is aimed at children through age 5. Contact the Youth Services department at (219) 873-3045 for more details.



Volunteers are needed for the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program at least one day a week during tax season (February-April). The IRS provides some training, and helpers must pass the VITA test through the intermediate level. Testing and training are online. Call (219) 873-3049 for more details.



Two new services are available:

- ComicsPlus offers unlimited access to thousands of digital comics, graphic novels and manga. Popular titles include Avatar: The Last Airbender & The Legend of Korra, Big Nate, Bone, Disney Princesses, Geronimo Stilton, Stranger Things, Locke & Key and American Gods. Patrons need a current library card and PIN.
- The app Library NewsStand includes 7,000 titles of digital magazines and newspapers in more than 60 language, including: *Newsweek*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes*, *The New Yorker*, *Reader's Digest*, *Elle* and *Esquire*. A library card is required.



Michigan City Public Library is located at 100 E. Fourth St. Visit www.mclib.org for more details.

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The 2022 ICS Sweetheart Contest is here!

Vote for your favorite Sweetheart through March 13th

Chatterbox



Cole



Link



Mandy



Minnie



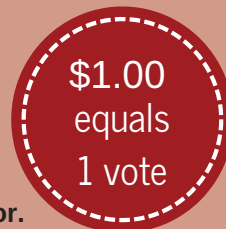
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How to vote:

- Submit your vote through PayPal on our website
- By mail: ICS, P.O. Box 735, Westville IN 46391
- Donate through the teams Facebook fundraiser

Be sure to include the name of the Sweetheart you are voting for.

Donations directly benefit all of the cats and kittens at ICS.



Each team will be having their own
mini event at the shelter as follows:

2/12 - Teams Mandy & Quincy 2/19 - Team Chatterbox
2/26 - Team Minnie 3/5 - Team Cole
3/12 - Team Link

Follow us on Facebook for more
information on the contest and for
upcoming events for each team.

For more information:

www.catsociety.org info@catsociety.org www.facebook.com/INCatSociety

Indiana Dunes National Park

Guided snowshoe hikes through Miller Woods are from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 12, 19 and 26, at the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education.

Take snowshoes, or pairs are available thanks to support from the Friends of Indiana Dunes. A traditional hike is offered if there isn't enough snow. No reservation is required. □

The National Park Service has approved an Indiana Dunes National Park entrance fee that begins March 31.

The new revenue will help fund the Marquette Greenway Bike Trail, visitor services, parking and transportation improvements for a park that has seen attendance increase from 1.7 million visitors to more than 3 million since its 2019 name change.

The fee only affects the national park, not Indiana Dunes State Park. Costs vary depending on the method used to enter:

- The per person/walk-in/bike-in/boat-in rate is \$15 (up to a maximum of \$25 per family).
- Motorcycle pass is \$20.
- One- to Seven-Day Vehicle Pass is \$25.
- Annual Pass is \$45.
- Commercial Fee for a Motor Coach (Bus): up to \$100.

Holders of the following federal land passes will not pay an entrance fee: Annual Pass, Senior Pass, Veterans, Military and Gold Star Family Pass, Fourth Grade Pass, Access Pass (for permanent disability) and Volunteer Pass.

The Entrance Pass (1-7 days) and Annual Pass will be available at: Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education, seasonally at West Beach Entrance Station or online at www.recreation.gov. The Annual Pass will be available March 1 and the Entrance Pass on the first day fees are collected: March 31. There are plans to have local vendors such as gas stations, or other retailers near the park sell passes. More information will be available when vendors are confirmed. Call (219) 395-1882 or visit www/nps.gov/indu for more detail. □

The National Park Service has created an audio version of Indiana Dunes National Park's official map and guide, making it accessible to visually impaired visitors.

The audio description can be accessed by visiting tinyurl.com/2p82t2rx, or by downloading the UniDescription mobile app for Apple and Android devices. Downloadable audio files are available as well. The apps target people who are blind, visually impaired, print dyslexic or who prefer learning through sound. Local and other park employees, including a legally blind staff member — facilitated the project alongside a fully blind, experienced volunteer who has assisted other national parks' audio-described brochures. □

The Visitor Center is at 1215 N. Indiana 49, Porter. The Paul H. Douglas Center is at 100 N. Lake St. in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Call (219) 395-1882 or visit www.nps.gov/indu for details.

Indiana Dunes State Park

The following program will be offered:

- **Superb-Owl Hike at 10 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 13.**

Before watching the Super Bowl, take a flat one-mile hike through owl habitats, learning about owl adaptations. If conditions allow, snowshoes will be offered for free on a first-come, first-served basis.

Indiana Dunes State Park is at 1600 N. County Road 25 East (the north end of Indiana 49), Chesterton. Call (219) 926-1390 to register for programs or for more information.



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LaPorte County Parks



All registrations/questions go through the Red Mill County Park Administrative Office, 0185 S. Holmesville Road, LaPorte. Call (219) 325-8315 or visit www.laportecountyparks.org for more details.

Nature's Tiny Tots

Designed for parents and grandparents, explore nature with toddlers and preschoolers through music, dancing, storytelling and, weather permitting, hiking.

The free program is from 10-11 a.m. at Luhr County Park, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Dates are Feb. 28, March 14 and 28, and April 11 and 18.

Masks are required for 3 and older. Call (219) 325-8315 at least one week in advance to register.

Joyful Movement Easy Exercises for All Ages

The free, low-impact program is at 8:30 a.m. Feb. 15 and 22, and March 1, 8 and 15 at Luhr Park Nature Center.

Participants can sit or stand for exercises that involve stretching, meditation and balance. Pre-registration is required one week in advance for each date to reserve a seat and avoid cancellation.

Parent & Child Discovery Days

The program includes arts and crafts, games and snacks. All activities are related to the topic. Programs are appropriate for children 3 to 8, with an adult required to participate. Times are from 6 to 7:15 p.m. at Luhr County Park. The cost is \$5 per child/per program. Pre-registration and payment are required at least one week in advance or until full, whichever comes first. The schedule is:

- Feb. 9 — Night Watch.
- Feb. 23 — Game Night.
- March 16 — Hop, Drop and Roll.
- Mar. 30 — Flower Power.

Feed the Birds this Winter

The free program, which involves making a bird feeder, is from 1-4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, at Luhr Park Nature Center.

No pre-registration is required. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Field Trips

Formal educators, Scout leaders and groups can schedule a free organized program for students or group at any county park. The programs on various topics meet state standards and patch requirements. Visit www.laportecountyparks.org for sample programs.

Email natureniki@csinet.net or call (219) 324-5855 for details.

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“Munich” Takes a Fictional, and Worthy, Look at Secret Opposition to Hitler

by Andrew Tallackson



Paul von Hartmann (Jannis Niewöhner, right), backed by longtime friend Hugh Legat (George MacKay), makes a plea to the British prime minister to reconsider its view of Hitler in “Munich — The Edge of War.”

As a spy thriller, the new Netflix film “Munich — The Edge of War” isn’t edge-of-your-seat riveting. Historical fiction based on Robert Harris’ 2017 novel, the emphasis is less cat-and-mouse espionage and more the routine elements of spy tales: hushed conversations, hidden documents — all set as Hitler’s atrocities commenced in full force.

And for all the film’s secret attempts to thwart Hitler, the foregone historical conclusion mutes the story’s suspense.

There is a reason, though, we need this film. Like 2008’s “Valkyrie,” it is a reminder that there were factions in Germany that not only found Hitler reprehensible, but tried to stop him. And, it introduces an intense young German actor, Tom Holland look-alike Jannis Niewöhner, whose feverish desperation infuses the proceedings with real tension.

Harris’ story introduces two fictional characters during a four-day period in September 1938 amid the Munich Agreement, which tried to stall inevitable war in Europe.

Hugh Legat (George MacKay, “1917”) and Paul von Hartmann (Niewöhner) once were friends, attending Oxford in 1932, but had a falling out over Paul’s belief that Hitler could restore pride to Germany. Now, in 1938, Hugh works as secretary to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (Oscar-winner Jeremy Irons) and Paul as a translator in Berlin’s foreign office.



“Munich — The Edge of War”

Running time: 130 minutes. Netflix. Rated PG-13 for some strong language, thematic elements, smoking and brief violence

Paul’s views toward Hitler have significantly changed since Oxford. The reason why is drenched in historical soap opera — a woman he and Hugh befriended in college hid her Jewish identity and was tortured for it — but it’s the means for having Paul enter secret opposition to overthrow Hitler.

German director Christian Schwochow, who helmed episodes in Season 3 of “The Crown,” alternates between scenes of Hugh’s allegiance to Chamberlain and Paul’s risky attempts to have Hugh introduce him to Chamberlain. The reason? He has classified documents that outline Hitler’s true intentions. No mention in any dialogue pertaining to the files eludes to concentration camps, but the fact that Hugh says he’s “appalled” by what he reads hints as such.

All spy movies have moments designed to spike the narrative with drama: nervous individuals hurriedly sharing information, key paperwork slipped from one hand to the next, people looking over their shoulders. “Munich” has those scenes in spades, but Schwochow is far more effective at the large-scale moments, especially street scenes where Nazi influ-

ence intensifies either through soldiers, banners or harassment.

As nothing seems to go Paul's way, the performance by Niewöhner becomes more persuasive. Every thought uttered by him appears to choke its way out, as if trying to break free of being muzzled by Nazi propaganda. Prone to outbursts, it's like he knows the clock is ticking, that time is of the essence. The desperation that oozes out of Niewöhner creates the film's one genuine feat of suspense: Paul's chance to assassinate Hitler in his office. Niewöhner's body language is one of restraint. His eyes tell another story: a man terrified by what happens next.

This guy can act. He's exceptional in these final scenes, as is MacKay, conveying Hugh's helplessness in the face of Paul's last-straw act of retaliation. And we appreciate what Irons brings to Cham-



Jeremy Irons is strong as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

berlain, creating a man who may very well believe in his own pomp and circumstance.

Whether or not Paul succeeds is not the crux of "Munich – The Edge of War." That he dares to try in the first place is what counts. His story is what demands the film be seen.

Contact Andrew Tallackson at drew@thebeacher.com

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WinterFest

The annual WinterFest, organized by LaPorte Park and Recreation Department, returned Jan. 28-30, with The Beacher's Bob Wellinski capturing as many images as possible. Offerings ranged from ice sculptures and an ice fishing derby to a Snowball Softball Coed Tournament and Snowman Contest.





“A Hero” is an Expertly Staged Downer

by Andrew Tallackson

Rahim (Amir Jadidi) tries to clear his debts, to end his prison sentence, in “A Hero.”

“A Hero” continues a trend in recent Oscar bait, following “The Power of the Dog” and “The Lost Daughter,” where the viewer is subjected to a long, drawn-out exercise in despair.

In sadness, we can find meaning. Take “Schindler’s List.” Our hearts might thoroughly break were it not for the idea that one man can make a difference. Or “What’s Love Got to Do With It?,” where a woman subjected to domestic abuse finds the courage to leave her abuser.

We need that, as moviegoers. A release from the pain. It’s only natural. Movies are our escape from reality. They speak to our yearning for hope amid anguish.

By the time this review appears in print, “The Hero” likely will have scored an Oscar nomination for Best International Feature Film. The Iranian picture won the Grand Prix at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival and topped many a critic’s top 10 list. Having just debuted on Prime, it looks to reach a greater audience.

I admire the skill with which it’s told, the sense you’re watching reality unfold before your eyes. But beyond that, like “The Lost Daughter” — a film I like less the more I think about — the point to it all

★ ★ 1/2

“A Hero”

Running time: 127 minutes. Prime. Rated PG-13
for some thematic elements and language

remains to be seen.

The writer and director is Asghar Farhadi, who likes to explore intimate stories of struggling individuals in films like “A Separation” (2011) and “The Salesman” (2016).

Here, we get a seemingly decent guy, Rahim (Amir Jadidi), who’s been in prison for failing to pay off a debt. What that obligation was is unclear at first: was it an earnest endeavor that somehow spoiled, or selfish acts like drugs or gambling? Again, it takes a while for a complete picture of him to be revealed.

During a two-day leave where he is allowed to be with family, Rahim believes he can clear his debts and not return to prison. His hopes are amplified when his secret girlfriend Farkhondeh (the stunning Sahar Goldoost) discovers a bag of coins that could pay off half his debt. Rahim goes along with it, until he decides the honest thing to do is post signs indicating the money has been found.

Eventually, the money is returned to a woman Rahim believes is the rightful owner. The story makes the local press, transforming him into a media celebrity. A charity group even rallies to his cause, offering to raise money to cover the other half of his debt.

At this point in "A Hero," it appears the film is headed toward gritty uplift. Everything about it has the feel of real life, from the unforced performance by Jadidi to the way Farhadi's camera trails him as if this is a documentary. There is no musical score beneath the images to modulate how we are supposed to feel, only the natural noises of the world in which Rahim tries to redeem himself.

Then, everything goes sour. Officials want proof of the woman to whom Rahim returned the money. The man demanding his money back from Rahim, Bahram (Mohsen Tanabandeh), isn't a monster, but a regular guy fed up with Rahim's excuses. When Rahim uses his stuttering son in public, and with the media, to generate sympathy, he is accused of being shameless. To some extent, the criticism is legitimate...until Rahim wakes up to his own selfishness.

And it's at this point in "A Hero" — it does generate some suspense as to whether Rahim can pull



Rahim's secret girlfriend, Farkhondeh (Sahar Goldoost), believes coins she found can help pay off his debt.

off his own release — that we question the point of the film. What is it, exactly? That life is cruel? That hope does not exist? That hope does exist by failure's inability to break us?

I'm still not sure. What is certain is that "The Hero" did not particularly move me, nor could I find meaning in it. Farhadi, himself, as writer and director, may not even know. His movie essentially is an expertly staged downer.

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New Kingsford Heights Boys & Girls Club Makes an Impact

Last October, Boys & Girls Clubs of LaPorte County partnered with LaPorte Community School Corp. to launch its fifth and newest club at Kingsford Heights Elementary School.

Just three months later, the club has become an important part of the weekday routine for many Kingsford Heights children.

Like BGCLPC's Michigan City and Westville locations, the Kingsford Heights club operates daily from the time school ends until 6 p.m. The schedule includes homework help, academic enrichment, arts and crafts and physical activities. The programming aims to complement the school day curriculum.

All programs are free. A \$20,000 donation by Dawn Dunifon, a former Kingsford Heights Elementary School



teacher, and her husband, Jeff, helped cover startup costs for the new location. The club's 2021-2022 programming expansion drew support from the Healthcare Foundation of LaPorte, Unity Foundation of LaPorte County and other community partners.

The Kingsford Heights club ended 2021 with 32 registered members in kindergarten through fourth grades. Due to high demand, BGCLPC expanded its staffing to add 10 additional club members and eliminate its waitlist.

"Our Kingsford Heights club is off to an amazing start," said Michelle Shirk, BGCLPC chief executive officer, in a press release. "Attendance is strong, and our club members are truly enjoying the programming."

Visit www.bgclpc.org for more details.



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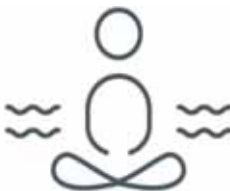
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Westchester Public Library has curbside pickup at its Thomas and Hageman branches.

Use a library card or go online to place holds on up to 10 items, including DVDs and CDs. Once notified the items are available, park in specially-numbered spaces at each branch during pickup hours.

While parked, call the library phone number posted on the numbered space sign, tell staff your library card number and he/she will check out the items and take them to a table at the parking space and walk away. Patrons then can step out of their vehicle to retrieve them. Curbside hours are Monday-Friday (1 to 6 p.m. at Thomas and Hageman) and Saturday (11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Thomas and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Hageman).

Hageman Library (219-926-9080) is located at 100 Francis St., Porter. Thomas Library (219-926-7696) is located at 200 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton. Westchester Township History Museum (219-983-9715) is located at 700 W. Porter Ave., Chesterton. The Baugher Center is located at 100 W. Indiana Ave., Chesterton.

Polish-American Cultural Society

Polish-American Cultural Society of Northwest Indiana, Michigan City Chapter, meets at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16, at St. Stanislaus Kostka School, 1506 Washington St.

The Rev. Wally Rakoczy explores the Polish language, customs and culture. There is no membership fee, and meetings are open to the public. Use the entrance between the church and school; signs direct people to the ground-level meeting room.

Call Theresa Child at (219) 464-1369 or email polamnwi@yahoo.com for more details.

Duneland Weavers Guild

The Duneland Weavers Guild meets from 10 a.m.-noon Saturday, Feb. 12, at Three Moons Fiberworks, 402 Broadway, Chesterton.

Kathy O'Neal and Margaret Jones will share hints gleaned from more than 70 combined years in weaving.

Meetings are open to the public. Visit www.dunelandweaversguild.org for more details.



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Chesterton Art Center



Cathy Feeman's "Formative Transcendence."

• **"Shadow, Mooring + Undercurrents," a new exhibit by Cathy Feeman, runs through March 26.**

Feeman's mixed-media works explore the relationship between histories, perceived histories and identities. Referencing physical geography, she names communities as placeholders and purveyors of individual and collective stories to be told, honored and not forgotten.

Due to COVID-19, all visitors are required to properly wear a mask.

• **"Finding (Me)aning," a new exhibit by the Teen Arts Group, runs Feb. 12–March 25, with an opening reception from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12, at Red Cup Café, 115 Broadway, Chesterton.**

The exhibit highlights the connection between the artist and his/her artwork. Pieces include painting, drawing and printmaking.

The Teen Arts Group is a free monthly program for those interested in pursuing professional arts experiences and strengthening visual art practices. Interested artists can contact programs@chestertonart.org for more details.



Chesterton Art Center is located at 115 S. Fourth St. Hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. Call the center at (219) 926-4711 or visit www.chestertonart.org for more details.

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not affect a current telephone number. In the case
of the Illinois (708) number, the 10-digit number
may have to use trunk code 1, which is known as
1+10-digit dialing, or national, format.Why is this required? According to the Federal
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American Red Cross

The American Red Cross LaPorte County Chapter will sponsor the following bloodmobiles:

- Queen of All Saints, 606 S. Woodland Ave., 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12.
- First Church of God, 2020 E. Lincolnway, LaPorte, noon-6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 14.

Donors must be in good general health and feeling well, at least 17 (16 with parental consent) and weigh at least 110 pounds. Call (800) 733-2767 or visit www.redcrossblood.org for more details.

Friends of Beverly Shores Bazaar

February hours for the Friends of Beverly Shores Bazaar are from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays at 100 Brown Ave., Suite 1, Chesterton.

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In the Area:

Feb. 10 — Duneland Stamp Club, 4 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Feb. 11-13, 18-20 — “Jerry’s Girls,” Footlight Theatre, 1705 Franklin St. Times: 7:30 p.m. Fri. & Sat./2 p.m. Sun. Tickets: \$15, \$10/children 12 & younger. Reservations: www.footlightplayers.org, (219) 874-4035, @ box office.

Feb. 14 — Valentine’s Day.

Feb. 14 — Teen Anime Club, 4:30-6 p.m., LaPorte County Public Library, 904 Indiana Ave. Info: www.laportelibrary.org

Feb. 14, 21, 28 — Needle Arts Club, 5:30 p.m., Michigan City Public Library, 100 E. Fourth St. Info: (219) 873-3049.

Feb. 15 — Joyful Movement Easy Exercises for All Ages, 8:30 a.m., Luhr Park Nature Center, 3178 S. County Road 150 West, LaPorte. Free. Info: (219) 325-8315, www.laportecountyparks.org

Feb. 16 — Polish-American Cultural Society of Northwest Indiana, Michigan City Chapter, 5 p.m., St. Stanislaus Kostka School, 1506 Washington St. Info: (219) 464-1369, polamnwi@yahoo.com

Through March 31 — Local artist Kristy Kutch, The Legacy Center Gallery @ Queen of All Saints Catholic Church, 1719 E. Barker Ave. Legacy Center hours: 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Mon.-Thur., 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Fri.-Sat., 6 a.m.-3 p.m. Sun.

First/Third Tuesday — Bingo, 5-6 p.m., Long Beach Community Center, Room 13, 2501 Oriole Trail. Free.

Saturdays — Turn Up Dance Fitness with Stacy G., 8:30-9:30 a.m., Long Beach Community Center, 2501 Oriole Trail. Cost: \$5 paid at class.

First and Third Mondays — Singing Sands Toastmasters Club, 6:30-8 p.m., Senior Health/Wellness Center (old hospital ER, Barker/Buffalo).

In the Region

Feb. 10 — Noon Time Talk Series, 12:20 p.m. EST, Midwest Museum of American Art, 429 S. Main St., Elkhart. Admission: \$5, members/free. Info: (574) 293-6660.

Feb. 11 — Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra “Dueling Pianos” fundraiser, 7 p.m. EST, The Mendel Center’s Grand Upton Hall, 1100 Yore Ave., Benton Harbor, Mich. Cost: \$35, \$60/buffet &

show. Reservations: SMSO office, 513 Ship St., St. Joseph, Mich., (269) 982-4030, www.smso.org

Feb. 12 — Duneland Weavers Guild, 10 a.m.-noon, Three Moons Fiberworks, 402 Broadway, Chesterton. Info: www.dunelandweaversguild.org

Feb. 12 — Valentine's Day Comedy with Kevin Downey Jr., 7:30 p.m. EST, Elkhart Civic Theatre @ Bristol (Ind.) Opera House, 210 E. Vistula St. Tickets: \$15. Reservations: (574) 848-4116, www.elkhartcivictheatre.org/vdcomedy

Feb. 12 — Valentine's Open Mic Night with host Patti Shaffner, 8 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. Free; donations accepted. Info: www.acornlive.org

Feb. 12, 19, 26 — Guided snowshoe hikes, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education, 100 N. Lake St., Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Info: www.nps.gov/indu, (219) 395-1882.

Feb. 12-March 25 — "Finding (Me)aning," Red Cup Café, 115 Broadway, Chesterton. Opening reception: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Feb. 12. Info: programs@chestertonart.org

Feb. 13 — School of American Music Free Family Concert, Duo Sequenza, 2 p.m. EST, Converge Community Church, 601 W. Buffalo St., New Buffalo, Mich. Free. Reservations: (269) 409-1191, www.schoolofamericanmusic.com

Feb. 13 — Superb-Owl Hike, 10 a.m., Indiana Dunes State Park, 1600 N. County Road 25 East, Chesterton. Info: (219) 926-1390.

Feb. 13 — The Backups, 4 p.m. EST, The Acorn, 107 Generations Drive, Three Oaks, Mich. General/\$10, \$35/reserved. Info: www.acornlive.org

Thursdays-Fridays in February — Friends of Beverly Shores Bazaar, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., 100 Brown Ave., Suite 1, Chesterton. Info: wagnercasa44@gmail.com, (219) 299-6998.

Through Feb. 15 — "Finding the Light in Dark Days: Works by the Duneland Photography Club," works by Samantha Purze, Art Barn School of Art, 695 N. County Road 400 East, Valparaiso. Info: (219) 462-9009, www.artbarnschool.org

Through March 26 — "Shadow, Mooring + Undercurrents," Chesterton Art Center, 115 S. Fourth St. Info: (219) 926-4711, www.chestertonart.org

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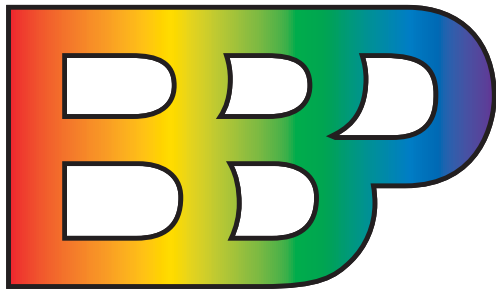


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THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On February 10, 1933, the Postal Telegraph Co. introduced the first “singing telegram” in New York.

On February 10, 1949, Arthur Miller’s long-running play, “Death of a Salesman,” opened at New York’s Morosco Theater.

On February 10, 1962, the Soviet Union exchanged captured American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers for Rudolph Ivanovich Abel, a Soviet spy held by the United States.

On February 10, 1968, Peggy Fleming of the United States won the gold in figure skating at the Winter Olympics in Grenoble, France.

On February 10, 1996, world chess champion Garry Kasparov lost the first game of a match in Philadelphia against an IBM computer dubbed “Deep Blue.”

On February 11, 1752, America’s first hospital, the Pennsylvania Hospital, opened in Philadelphia.

On February 11, 1808, in the Pennsylvania town of Wilkes Barre, hard coal was used for the first time as fuel for heating.

On February 11, 1869, Chicago was host to the Midwest’s first women’s suffrage convention.

On February 11, 1937, a sit-down strike ended at General Motors when the company agreed to recognize the United Automobile Workers as a legitimate union.

On February 11, 1975, Margaret Thatcher was elected to head England’s Conservative party, the first woman to head a major British political group.

On February 12, 1849, the Chicago Gas Light and Coke Co. (Chicago’s first gas company) received its charter from the Illinois legislature.

On February 12, 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded.

On February 12, 1914, ground was broken for Washington’s Lincoln Memorial.

On February 12, 1924, in New York’s Aeolian Hall, Paul Whiteman conducted a program in which the highlight was the first public performance of “Rhapsody in Blue,” with George Gershwin at the piano. The audience included such luminaries as John Philip Sousa, Walter Damrosch, Leopold Godowsky, Jascha Heifetz, Fritz Kreisler, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Leopold Stokowski, Mischa Elman and Igor Stravinsky.

On February 13, 1635, the Boston Latin School, the oldest public school in America, was established in Boston.

On February 13, 1719, the first magazine pub-

lished in America, *The American Weekly Mercury*, was printed in Philadelphia by Andrew Bradford.

On February 13, 1914, “Joseph in the Land of Egypt” opened with a new high for admission to a movie: 50 cents per person. Most of the nation’s major newspapers headlined moviegoers complaints about such exorbitantly high prices.

On February 13, 1960, France chose the Sahara Desert to explode its first atomic bomb.

On February 13, 1997, for the first time, the Dow Jones Industrial Average broke the 7,000 point barrier.

On February 14, 496, Pope Gelasius changed the ancient Roman Lupercalia Festival (which was celebrated on Feb. 15) to Valentine’s Day, and ordered that it be celebrated on Feb. 14. The name of the day is derived from any one of three Saint Valentines, each of whom — in one way or another — was associated with Feb. 14.

On February 14, 1778, the U.S.S. Ranger arrived in France, marking the first time that the Stars and Stripes had been carried to a foreign port.

On February 14, 1803, Moses Coats, of Downingtown, Pa., was granted a patent for an apple parer.

On February 14, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell and Elisha Gray both applied for patents relating to the telephone. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually ruled in favor of Bell.

On February 15, 1764, St. Louis was established as a fur-trading center.

On February 15, 1842, the first U.S. postage stamps with adhesive on the back were introduced by a private mail service in New York.

On February 15, 1958, Michigan City was “clobbered” by the biggest recorded snowfall in history. A slow breeze, picking up moisture over the length of Lake Michigan, dumped its entire load on just a few square miles of land. Three to five feet of snow (depending on who did the measuring) paralyzed the area for several days.

On February 15, 1980, Eric Heiden won the first of five gold medals at the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, N.Y.

On February 16, 1868, members of “The Jolly Corks,” a social and benevolent society, organized themselves into “The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.” The purpose of this new organization — as it is today — was to practice charity, justice, brotherly love and faithfulness.

On February 16, 1923, in Egypt’s “Valley of the Kings,” the treasure-laden tomb of Tutankhamen (“King Tut”) was opened by archaeologists.

On February 16, 1948, the first daily television news was broadcast on NBC.

On February 16, 1968, the nation’s first 911 emergency phone system was inaugurated in Haleyville, Ala.

On February 16, 1986, Mario Soares was elected Portugal’s first civilian head of state in 60 years.

NEWSletters



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Off the Book Shelf

by Sally Carpenter

The Magnolia Palace by Fiona Davis (hardcover, \$27 retail in bookstores and online; also available as an eBook and an audiobook. 334 pages.)

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

I don't think Mr. Dickens will mind my using his famous expression to introduce this story: not a tale of two cities, but a tale of two women separated by almost 50 years. And, it's a story of what can go right and what can go horribly wrong.

As with all of Fiona Davis' books, this one makes a famous New York City building the foundation around which the story is told. And this one involves the Guilded Age mansion of steel magnate Henry Clay Frick.

It's a beautiful building, now a museum, facing Central Park in Manhattan. Davis does a spectacular job weaving in a description of the mansion and the vast art collection for which the Frick family is famous.

The story switches back and forth between 1919 and 1966. Two women, bound by a building and family secrets that don't want to stay hidden...

In 1919, Lillian Carter is in a pickle. She's been living in an apartment owned by a lecherous landlord. In a rage one day, he kills his wife, and the police think Lillian is his amour and accomplice.

Problem is, Lillian is a famous artists' model going by the name of Angelica. Her face and perfect symmetry are on any number of sculptures around the city. Her mother was with her on all her sittings, but the morals of the day immediately cast her as the mistress, sure to have lead the landlord astray.

Several days later, still trying to avoid the police, Lillian's standing in front of the Frick mansion and mistakenly taken for an applicant for the job of private secretary to Miss Helen Frick, the daughter of the house. Her knowledge of art helps "Miss Lillian Carter" get the job with no one knowing about her life as Angelica.

Lillian thinks this is a great opportunity to save up some money and go out to Hollywood and pursue her dream of being an actor. Getting to know the family makes her more sympathetic to Miss Helen, whom she doesn't like much at first.

Lillian is invited to parties at the mansion, scared to death someone will recognize her as Angelica the model or Lillian Carter, the woman implicated in the murder.

Best laid plans, right? At Henry Frick's death, it

looks like poison might have taken his life, and later, at the funeral, something of great worth is missing...Guess who the finger of guilt is pointed at?

Now, move over to the winter of 1966. The Frick mansion is now a museum. Today, there will be a photo shoot for *Vogue*. Veronica Weber, an 18-year-old from England, will model along with a group of other young, aspiring models. She was "discovered" at her uncle's pawn shop, where she worked as a clerk. The trip to America, especially posing for *Vogue*, is a once-in-a-lifetime chance at starting a lucrative modeling career.

The photographer's ludicrous idea for the models to do snow angels in the backyard in flimsy, expensive dresses is too much for Veronica. She storms back to the dressing room, sure her days as a fashion model are doomed before they start.

Unfortunately for her, the shoot soon comes to an end and everyone leaves without checking on Veronica. Guess what? The doors cannot be opened from the inside, and there's no way for her to get out. A blizzard starts to blow and the lights go out!

Wandering the rooms, looking for a way out, Veronica hears footsteps and almost runs into a young black man. He says his name is Joshua

Lawrence, a college student interning as a docent. He fell asleep downstairs doing some research. They soon find they have a common interest in art, and Joshua shows her around the mansion with the aid of a lantern. They find some pieces of paper stuffed between pipes in the organ room. It looks like clues for a treasure hunt, and they follow them to a secret panel that holds something no one in the Frick family ever thought would be found again. Problem now is, what to do about it? The snow has stopped and the lights have come on....

The seamless blending of the two time periods with two strong women characters makes for a story you wish will would go on even further.

If this book sounds like your cup of tea, may I offer Davis' other book titles for your consideration: Dollhouse, about the Barbizon Hotel; Lions of Fifth Avenue, about the NYC Public Library; The Address, about the Dakota building; The Masterpiece, about the Grand Central Terminal; and, The Chelsea Girls, about the Chelsea Hotel.

You won't be disappointed with any of them.

Till next time, happy reading!





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