



Taking Joy Where You Can Find It

June 2022

Vol. 243

Dear ones,

I'm writing you from my kitchen table today. I am nibbling on a bowl of blueberries, plotting out my day, staring out into the backyard, and reveling in the peace of nature. The cardinals swoop and dance on the feeder. There must be a bird of prey around for one is in the trees, calling in panicked bursts as relentless as a ticking clock. In the past few days, we've entertained the doe who was born in the yard last year and her twin brother (with his teensy antlers ☐), a very pudgy groundhog, myriad birds, chipmunks, and squirrels, and a lone hummingbird—truly my greatest triumph of the past decade. The old house did not attract hummingbirds regardless of my diligence with the feeder; this lone ranger fills me with an obscene amount of joy.

Things are going well here. It's been a cooler spring than normal, and I've taken advantage to write on the porch as often as I can, just for the change of scenery. And despite regular vaccinations and great diligence, we have just escaped a three-week bout of COVID. That horrible low-lying buzz of anxiety that's been with me since late 2019 is gone; I didn't realize how stressed I was trying to avoid catching the plague. Like so many of you, fear and avoidance have been hampering my efforts to do many things, and now that it's over, I could not be more grateful. Stories are flowing again (I will absolutely have Taylor #9 details next newsletter) and I'm deep in the [#1000wordsofsummer](#) challenge, in which thousands of writers band together for two weeks in June to write 1000 words a day. As any professional career author will tell you, that's a Tuesday... but there's something very invigorating about having public accountability with a large group of people who are all striving toward the same goal.

So while it's been a quiet month, one filled with fevers and coughs and rewatches of Game of Thrones—(Oh, the foreshadowing...it is a sublime experience on rewatch, unlike the shock of the first go-round)—there have also been words, and get-togethers with friends (finally!), books enjoyed and projects finished. I am so grateful to be able to write you today, while the birds chitter and chirp around me, and share a bit of my world with you. There is a lot

happening, including [a special this week on TEAR ME APART](#), one of my favorite books. More on that below. Onward!

📖 Bookish News



In very exciting news, [TEAR ME APART](#) is only \$2.99 for a limited time! This is the powerful story of a mother willing to do anything to protect her daughter, even as their carefully constructed world unravels around them. If you haven't had a chance to read this standalone, now is your moment!

Get yours here:

[Amazon](#) | [Nook](#) | [Apple Books](#) | [Kobo](#) | [Google Play](#)

I also had a fun interview with Hank Garner of the Story Craft Café. This is a deep dive into how I build characters, and how characters affect my plots. You might enjoy it!



Monthly Poll

Ask me anything, and I'll answer
it next newsletter!

SUBMIT

Read All About It...



[BOOK LOVERS](#) by Emily Henry

I decided half way through May that I needed a new mantra: Read Happy. That means rom coms, fabulous, quippy, banter-filled love stories, star crossed enemies to lovers being one of my favorite tropes. BOOK LOVERS has it all, with a literary agent and an editor at its heart. This is a special one. Great to read or listen!

[WHEN I MAKE LOVE TO THE BUG MAN](#) by Laura Benedict

This collection of stories from one of the finest writers out there is simply fantastic. Laura always knows just the right twist to make a story shocking, yet inevitable. The titular story is one of her finest efforts, too.

[PRODUCTIVITY FOR AUTHORS](#) by Joanna Penn

I have a LOT of writing coming up, and I am a sucker for a good productivity book. This one is short, to the point, and starts with a quote from my favorite, Cal Newport, so I was all in from page one.

[NEVER COMING HOME](#) by Hannah Mary McKinnon

McKinnon clearly had a blast devising this tale of revenge and comeuppance, and the reader benefits from this creepy glee. Fans of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* will devour this well-written, engrossing story.

☐☐ June Recipe: French Onion Soup



I've shared this recipe before, but I made it last week and did a video reel of the process [here](#)! I watched the new show "Julia" with my husband and immediately went to the tapes to see the great doyenne's method. She uses cognac and white wine whereas I use red wine and sherry, but the end results were the same. This is an easy, yummy, hearty recipe that will satisfy all.

ALL HAIL THE FRENCH CHEF!

You can find all of my recipes [here](#), on the bright and shiny new Recipes website. And if you want some wine to go with the meals, [The Wine Vixen](#) has

you covered.

□ Contest

Every month, I draw a name from those of you who open the newsletter and send that lovely person a \$30 gift card to the bookstore of their choice. It's my way of saying thanks for being here. Congrats to last month's winner: Anne C!

And don't forget to enter this month's drawing below!

[I WANT THAT GIFT CARD!](#)

I hope you get a chance to spend a little time outdoors this month. As the lovely [Aimee Nezhukumatathil](#) says in her book *WORLD OF WONDERS*, if you stop and watch, you'll be amazed at what you'll see.

Peace and hugs,



Are you still here?

Here's a kitten for your troubles!



Did you like this newsletter? Share it with a friend!



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