

## A Few Series to Escape the Snowy Months by Dennis May

After a few weeks of unseasonably warm weather this November, it is now starting to finally feel like autumn. I don't know about you, but fall is definitely my favorite season. I love the cooler weather, the colors of the leaves, and any excuse to wear a sweater. The change in the weather comes a few things I don't love: raking the leaves, excessive wind, and the torture of knowing that on any morning in upstate New York I can wake up to snow on my lawn. Don't get me wrong, I like snow...for the first week. After that I begin to dread it. I know what you're thinking: "Dennis, isn't your feeling of impending dread and snowy mornings a bit premature? Wasn't it just a few days ago that we experienced consecutive 70 degree days?" You're probably right, but if this Georgia native has learned anything about the climate in central New York, it's that the weather can change at the drop of a hat. For me, the first heavy snowfall begins the "staying in season." Luckily for me, there are millions upon millions of books, music, video games, and projects to keep me busy while I wait for the spring thaw.

If you also choose to stay inside throughout the winter, I recommend fully dedicating yourself to a trilogy or a series. There are countless media that can fit this category: there are book series, movie series, and even connected albums. The no-brainers are *The Harry Potter* series (books and movies), *The Hunger Games* series (books and movies), *The Godfather* trilogy (movies), *Star Wars* saga (books and movies), *Game of Thrones* epic (books and TV series), James Bond (books and movies), etc. These titles deserve their rightful places on the list of great franchises, but there are hundreds more out there that are practically begging to be part of your snowy months.

The Coughlin Trilogy by Dennis Lehane is full of history, organized crime, and characters with whom you will fall in love. *The Given Day*, featuring police officer Danny Coughlin and Luther Laurence, a Black former baseball player, as they navigate the 1919 police strike and racial tensions in Boston, kicks off the trilogy with a bang. The second novel, *Live By Night*, takes a dramatic turn when Coughlin's little brother, Joe, works to climb the ladder of organized crime in Ybor City, Florida. The trilogy's third installment, *A World Gone By*, follows an aging Joe, now a crime kingpin living in Tampa, who learns that a bounty has been put on him. Lehane's trilogy is a masterclass in historical fiction and suspense.

Nananana, Batman! The caped crusader is probably the most popular comic book character of all time, but in the mid 90s, Batman fell from grace when three movies critically bombed. I'm talking about *Batman Returns* (1992), *Batman Forever* (1995) and *Batman & Robin* (1997). *Batman Returns*, featuring the vile Penguin and a revengeful Catwoman, is the darkest of the four despite its Christmas time setting. After this film, the franchise takes a campier and more absurd turn, with screenplays full of puns, over-the-top costumes, a neon fluorescent Gotham City, and larger-than-life villains. These movies are beyond entertaining, comforting, and definitely pair well with a cold night spent inside.

My final suggestion is a trilogy(ish) that is probably my favorite so far. Patrick Rothfuss's *The Kingkiller Chronicles* flies under the radar compared to other famous fantasy series, but that has

nothing to do with the quality of the story or the writing. Beginning with *The Name of the Wind*, the story follows Kvothe, a young actor who discovers that he has mystical powers after his family's theatre troupe is murdered by a group led by the world's most formidable wizard. We follow Kvothe's journey as he develops from a lost boy searching for a home to the best student in the city's wizard university. The story is romantic, gut wrenching, and often humorous. The second book, *A Wise Man's Fear*, is even more epic and beautiful. Unfortunately, this can't count as a trilogy quite yet, as the last installment is still being written and the release date is seemingly forever delayed (a la George R.R. Martin and *Game of Thrones*). Don't let that deter you, though! After reading the first two novels, you will be longing to return to Rothfuss's world and find out how the hero's journey ends.

There is so much to enjoy from these stories that it will be easy to forget you are stuck in the snowy reality of central New York. Whether you want to laugh, cry, feel warm and cozy, or just get lost in great storytelling, I believe that these will do just the trick. There are countless other series and trilogies that should make the list of all time greats - the *Toy Story* series, *The Lord of the Rings*, *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, and *The Broken Earth* - and you can find many options at the Kirkland Town Library!