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mystery book recommendations

MURDER MYSTERY MUSIC

The Coydog Murders

The Seal, Unsealed

Theatre Review: THE 39 STEPS

Sweet and Unsuspicious Shortbread

BREAKING NEWS: MYSTERIOUS PODS APPEAR IN THE HOMER BABBDIDGE LIBRARY
MURDER MYSTERY MUSIC

some songs to get you in the sleuthing headspace, featuring:

no body, no crime
Taylor Swift

Smooth
Criminal
Alien Ant Farm

Working for the Knife
Mitski

scan here!!!!
The Coydog Murders
Mia Ruefenacht

Many secrets are hidden in the UConn Forest, in the deep groves where the full light of the sun never penetrates. Among these, there is one that fascinates me above all: a fenced-in area of concrete cages, now coated in graffiti, covered in weeds, and lying in a general state of disrepair. And if the stones could speak, what a story they would tell.

It all begins with a graduate student named Alice Moon, who was doing research on interbreeding coyotes with domestic dogs to study their genetic inheritance and behavior. It must be said that it is rather fortuitous for a researcher interested in canines to bear the surname Moon, but this may easily be dismissed as coincidence. After eleven years of study, she had produced several generations of these lanky, big-eared hybrids. It seems everything was going well until September 20th, 1983, when the dead body of a third-generation coydog was discovered in the back of a truck one mile away from the cages where they had been kept. The animal's worth was reported as $340,000; that's a staggering $910,000 in today's money. Besides the creature's monetary worth, the great amount of time required to breed it ensured that its loss would set back the experiment by at least a year, rendering it doubtful that the could be finished by 1985, when Moon would graduate with her doctorate.
For these reasons, the coydog's killing immediately sparked a police investigation. By October 4th they had arrested two suspects, Steven McEnerney and David Pervier, and charged them with larceny, trespassing, and animal cruelty. In the student's version of events, it was a drunken prank got wrong: upon entering the animal's cage, McEnerney was bitten and attacked the coydog with his bare hands in self-defense. Moon disputed these claims, believing the animal had been struck with a weapon in a premeditated killing.

Since that incident, thirty-eight years have passed. It's difficult to tell if the two students ever faced justice for their alleged crimes; in any case they are both now in their fifties and living free. Alice Moon published an article called "The Ontogeny of Expression of Communicative Genes in Coyote–Beagle Hybrids" in *Behavior Genetics* in 2011. The remains of the coydog cages continue to rot away, deep within the UConn woods. And the truth of what went down that fateful night shall remain forever shrouded in mystery.
mystery book recommendations

Do you love suspense, thrills, and following clues to solve mysteries? Enjoy these mystery book recommendations from an English major!

**Truly Devious by Maureen Johnson**

The *Truly Devious* series (yes—there's four books!) follows Stevie Bell, an expert in true crime, through her first year at the famous and private Ellington Academy. With the help of some new friends, Stevie attempts to solve the infamous "Truly Devious" cold case mystery, but things get more complicated and more dangerous when a murder occurs at Ellington Academy, supposedly committed by Truly Devious themselves. Follow Stevie as she tries to solve the case—and stay alive!

**The Girl From Widow Hills by Megan Miranda**

Arden, "the girl from Widow Hills," is known for surviving being missing for days when a terrible storm hit her town when she was a child. She changed her name to Olivia when she got older to avoid the fame and stalkers, but her past comes rushing back when she awakes from a night terror to find herself in her backyard with a dead body below her. Olivia is plunged back into the spotlight as she tries to figure out what happened and if she is to blame.
A Good Girl's Guide to Murder by Holly Jackson

This young adult mystery follows Pip as she investigates the five year old murder of popular high school senior Andie Bell. Pip decides to reexamine the closed case as a high school senior, doubting the conclusion of the case. Her investigation leads her into dark places and even puts her own life at risk as she attempts to uncover what really happened to Andie Bell.

And Then There Were None by Agatha Christie

This classic mystery story begins when 10 people are invited to an isolated island by a mysterious and anonymous host. As the island guests begin to share their dark pasts and secrets with one another, guests begin dying one by one. This dark tale will have you guessing to the very end as you wonder if anyone will make it off the island alive!

The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

When Avery is left the entire fortune of an eccentric billionaire, she has no idea why; she didn't even know the man! But she is thrust into the mansion she has inherited and must deal with the family of the dead man, all of whom are wondering why they weren't left the fortune. The house is filled with secrets, and soon Avery is caught up in a deadly game where she is left to discover how far everyone, including herself, will go to keep the fortune.
The Seal, Unsealed

By Chris Gayda

What happened to the seal over that fateful summer last year? It seems to us at the Honors Humanities and the Arts Collective that previous research conducted by a dear alumnus may not simply remain in the annals of HArCoZINE history.
The University of Connecticut’s iconic seal — inspired by the namesake of "The Nutmeg State"— was removed prior to the beginning of this school year. The Fairfield Way mainstay has been somewhat replaced by a sizeable husky seal towards the Student Union.

These events are certainly not a product of coincidence. HArCoZINE has published a litany of exposés surrounding the tunnels below the university as well as the secret of the missing Oat Blenders from McMahon Dining Hall. Now, a new conspiracy is afoot.

Why? The answer is less simple than you may think. The seal was a harbinger of doom for anyone unlucky enough to walk over it. With it gone, students are less apprehensive about consecrating that sacred ground near the library. This is just what UConn's executives want.
For, dear reader, the curse is still cast upon the ground; merely the giant, circular sign of doom has been erased. Unwitting students are not resigned to graduating later from the university. What conclusion can we draw from this?

It's no mystery, for once. A less conspicuous means of getting students to hand over more tuition money allows the university to rake in extra cash. The husky seal replacement is merely a ploy, a cover to throw inquisitive students off the trail.

One final consideration: the sudden resignation of former president TomKat in June. This arose following tension between him and the university for his "Connecticut Commitment" plan to help lower-income families pay for tuition.

With all of this in mind, it's no mystery:

the seal's disappearance is a consequence of the university's greed.
Theatre Review: THE 39 STEPS

"Absolutely delightful!" - HArCo

The CT Rep's rendition of The 39 Steps was a joy through and through. Although the first ten minutes were a slightly confusing, The 39 Steps hit its stride and delivered a hilariously effective show. The four actors marvelously transitioned between characters, made more impressive by the fact that they all wore masks the whole time, and built a full world around their story. They also somehow pulled off a brief interlude of crossed swords river dancing, which was unexpected and definitely a unique experience. The enemies to lovers plotline within the murder mystery was a particular favorite, and the revolving set design was very well executed. Nothing but a rave for The 39 Steps!! We can't wait to see what these actors do next.
open house horror
It was a white afternoon. Mid-March. The low-tide brine flavored the light dissipating mist, twisting and swirling behind the red Volvo ahead of me on the road. The woman driving this beast of a vehicle— I saw her ample heap of hair silhouette her headrest through the tinted back window – was following each gentle bend towards the shore with maddening precision. I glanced at my speedometer. We were moving at ten miles an hour. Christ.

“In 200 feet, turn right onto Walter Avenue.”

Finally. The private street sign was almost entirely hidden by the bones of a hydrangea, but I knew where I was. Before leaving the previous house, I checked Google Maps for the birds-eye of the neighborhood.

“Turn right.”

The red Volvo pulled ahead, and I flicked my signal, sliding the steering wheel loosely around to the right, arcing the turn wider than necessary. It was number 83, one door before the dead end. The white mist thickened as I rolled down the street, becoming denser around my car. Water drops were sweating down my windshield. My side mirrors distorted with squiggled lines of condensation. I drummed my fingernails against my chin. The mailboxes were getting harder to read.

79, 81, 83...

I lifted my phone from the cupholder and double checked the number on Zillow. 83. I missed the driveway. The mailbox must not have been planted by the curb. No one was parked on the street, but there was the dead end, tall hedges prohibiting a drive straight through to the rock beach. Through the window, I could hear the tired crash of waves beating against jagged stone and chunks of concrete. I pulled over to park along the hedge line.

My leather purse was near-empty. It slouched on the passenger seat, and even as I tossed my keys, phone, wallet, and lipstick in, it stayed as deflated as a back-alley basketball. Of course, these things would have fit in a much smaller reticule, but it was important to be holding a bag at least the mass of a toddler at these things. It was essential for the image. A handbag of this size suggests that I might have dog-eared wedding magazines stuffed in for perusal during a hair appointment, stacks of florist receipts, neatly organized business cards of photographers and caterers, and, of course, contact solution. Combined with the black pencil skirt, sports coat, conservative earrings, and unintimidating heel height, my face would be impossible to remember, just another in a small crowd of similarly dressed women. No one would look closely enough to see that my shoes were slightly too big, my eyes a bit too alert, and my skin a little too young. I slipped the silver band off the right hand of my middle finger and onto my left ring finger, and turned off the car.
There! The driveway was definitely well-hidden from the main road, but from the opposite angle it was apparent. The white gates were open, pivoted on brick pillars, and a narrow cobblestone path led straight back. Taped to the gate was a damp, sagging paper sign: “OPEN HOUSE. SUNDAY.” What it did not say: ‘Serious Inquiries Only.’ Stiffening my ankles – so I wouldn’t roll one of my Goodwill heels in the gravel - I stepped through the opening and looked up at the house.

It rose above the mist like a feudal Gaelic castle. Gothic peaks and terraces iced the grey roof and drew my eyes downward to four distinct layers of thin, pointed windows and heavy storm shutters bolted to the brick. The grey, choppy surface of the sea was visible through a neat line of elms that lined the right edge of the property, standing at a still attention, guarding a small private beach and a messy grove that appeared to be shared with the neighboring mansion. Attached on the left face, a tall greenhouse wrapped around to the obscured back of the building. The glass panels were opaque, as the warmth inside steamed against the cool afternoon mist. I could only make out the flat shadows of wide fronds and clumps of long, hanging vines melting off thick, leaning branches. In front of the house was a low stone wall, lined with small concrete pots at about a yard’s interval, each holding a small twig skeleton. Two identical black SUVs sat in a row where the driveway curled around to circle a small, dry fountain. The front door was, jarringly, open.

I chewed my lip. This was going to be harder than I thought. The pictures online showed only the interior, the one that I had dressed for. My suit, the bag, the ring, the lipstick, it all neatly painted a newly engaged 20-something heiress who found the spacious, well-lit kitchen overlooking the bay and master bedrooms, with their staged four-post beds, compelling enough to visit but ultimately not commit to. Yet here in the flesh, this was obviously no run-of-the-mill mansion. It was a manor, pure and undiluted by mimicry. It oozed old money, stiff whiskey, brown wood, and servant secrets. A royalty that money could not buy, however engaged and endowed. I pulled the comb out of my French roll, letting my hair fall down my back, and transferred the ring back onto my middle finger. I would be an assistant, then.

I leaned into the tall door frame to lift the brass knocker, and let it fall. As it collided with the door, it boomed, echoing down the long, dark hallway leading deeper into the house. A grandfather clock at the base of a wide, gradual spiral staircase ticked ten seconds. Thirty. A minute. Nothing. I stared at an oil portrait of a man in an old navy uniform, bald, with a magnificent white beard cascading down the front of his lapel. He stared back, thin blue eyes peeking out below thick, wiry eyebrows. I took another step in, heel muffled by a lush red floral carpet.

“Hello?” I called up the staircase. Again, nothing.
It was time to leave. There was something horrible about this, something unsettling about the small ripple in the carpet, the dissymmetry of the candelabras below the painting, the stillness of the yard outside. My calves tingled; my pulse pounded in my throat. I pivoted and crossed back across the foyer as fast as my pencil skirt would allow. And just as I cleared the center, I felt a drop on my shoulder.

I tilted my head up the ceiling and clamped my hands over my mouth. The force of my muffled scream rattled through my teeth.

A woman was thrown across the crystal chandelier, swinging slightly, suspended from a ceiling three flights of stairs above my head. Her face was purple, eyes red and bugged out and neck slit in a thin black line. Brown hair, patchy and matted, parted to show her ear had been bitten off. One of her feet was missing, her other, shoeless, a perfect pedicure showing through her tan tights. And pinned to the tattered pieces of her green dress, a blood-streaked nametag.

Somewhere upstairs, a door slammed shut.

I bolted. I was out on the lawn, in full sprint, before the grandfather clock ticked again. My thighs ripped the whole side seam of the skirt in one violent shriek and it flapped open behind me as I leaped the stone wall. I caught the edge of a pot and it tipped, crashing open on the ground. I rolled, my left knee skidding against the driveway, and in a second, I was back up again, tearing past the single SUV parked next to the fountain.

My bag was gripped under my left arm, and I tried to wrench open the zipper. I was almost to the gate, I was reaching in, feeling for my phone’s smooth, cool edges. There! My knuckle brushed the glass, and my wrist twisted to pull it out. And just as it emerged, CRACK! I was falling backwards, the elm branches above me spinning. My heel had caught the edge of the cobblestone and I felt it snap as I landed, twisted in a pile of limbs. The phone bounced out of my hand, landing in the grass alongside the driveway.

I wheezed, my lungs unable to suck in any air. My vision blurred, then cleared, then blurred again, as I flopped to my side. My ankle was white hot, spiking heat up my calf. Gasping, I tried to focus, pulling my arms beneath me, curling to face the exit. Was that... the gates were closing! I swayed to my knees, then to one foot. I wasn’t going to make it. I flung myself forward in a desperate, frantic hop and fell again, unable to hold my balance. Five feet away. I army crawled, bruising my forearms and scrambling against the edge of the stones to pull myself forwards. It was four feet from closing, three, two...

I swung the leather bag around to catch the gate. But it was too empty, too deflated, it just bent under the motor’s torque and I heard the unmistakable snap-click of my lipstick tube breaking, and the gate’s deadbolt sliding shut.

by ellie fitzgerald
artwork by Alesia Ballij
The plants you are least likely to kill in your dorm room

1) aloe vera because it is low maintenance and useful

2) spider plants because they like cooler temps

3) ORHIDS CAUSE THEY'RE PRETTY
Sweet and Unsuspicious Shortbread

ingredients

40 tbsp unsalted butter
2 cups confectioner's "sugar"
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
6 cups all purpose flour
2 teaspoons kosher salt

instructions

I. Use a mostly working stand mixer to beat the butter up.
II. Put in the "sugar" and salt... Mix until combined.
III. Add the flour.
IV. Shape it into a firm rectangular prism. Wrap in plastic wrap and put in the freezer for at least an hour, or until it stops fighting back.
V. Preheat oven to a toasty 350. Use your sharpest knife to slice the prism into slabs.
VI. Indent any pattern or secret message into the top with a fork.
VII. Bake for 10 minutes.
VIII. Serve piping hot.
All I was looking for was the truth
Mine, hers, a secret kept by a rusted God
It stays locked up behind nicotine-stained teeth
And hollow concrete giants, immortal symbols of societal psychosis
They drip neon into the mud and trash and gleaming shards
From dirty highball glasses slammed into the back of some poor sap’s skull
The tinge of whiskey lingering as they bleed their lies onto the cold dead street
In the end, we vanish into smoke all the same
Beaten down by brass knuckles and lounge singers who we can never hold
A far off tune in a minor key, falling like leaves from our broken jaws

E. Chatham
BREAKING NEWS: MYSTERIOUS PODS APPEAR IN THE HOMER BABBIDGE LIBRARY

Students hoping to study in the Homer Babbidge Library in Storrs, Connecticut were shocked this week to find that five "pods" had appeared overnight. The five "pods": two orange, two yellow, and one blue, suddenly occupied the comfortingly empty corners on Levels B, P, and 1. Especially jarring was the insertion of the blue pod into the employee area of Level B. What is going on?

According to our sources, these "pods" are supposed to be spaces for students, faculty, and staff to step away from the hustle and bustle and have private virtual meetings and phone calls. However, after some in-depth screaming-based research by our intrepid reporters, these pods are, in fact, not sound proof. This begs the question: what are their real purpose?

Another nugget of curiosity lies in the fact that these pods have small signs taped to their doors, asking for name suggestions for each of these pods. This, in and of itself, is not alarming. However, could it be a PR move, designed to imbue students with warm, fond feelings towards the pods? To trust the pod? Why is it so urgent for the mysterious engineers of this event to gain the trust and complacency of the student body?

These questions have no answer. For now, all we at the HArCo News Network can say is: keep your eyes open and be cautious. Who may know what a pod-filled future holds for the University of Connecticut.
OPEN MIC NIGHT

Friday, December 10th
7PM–10PM ITE C80

MUSIC – SPOKEN WORD POETRY – STAND UP

sign up to perform at:
bit.ly/WHUSandHArCoopenmic
THANKS FOR READING

LOVE, HArCo

ATTENTION
If you need to update your address in our mailing list records, and don't have access to the shared google sheet, please email us so we can sort it out :) uconnharco@gmail.com

ALUM!!!!

amazing new HArCo logo by Grace Kennedy

veritatem inveniens, quid iacet sub signum