



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH Community Development Department

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645
Phone (907) 861-7869 • <https://matsu.gov>

Date: May 12, 2026
To: Library Board
From: Jillian Morrissey, Community Development Director
RE: Flagged Library Material – Final Decisions

Title: *The Devil's Daughter*

Author: Danielle Steel

Collection: Adult Fiction

The Devil's Daughter by Danielle Steel aligns with the Adult Fiction collection as a contemporary work by a well-established author with a long-standing and clearly demonstrated readership. Reviews consistently characterize the title as accessible adult fiction written for a mature audience and intended for general recreational reading. The book meets multiple selection criteria, including favorable reviews, sustained reader interest, and support for the library's role as a Popular Materials Center. This title is approved for purchase and inclusion in the Adult Fiction collection.

Title: *The Dark Lord's Guide to Dating and Other War Crimes*

Author: Tiffany Hunt

Collection: Adult Fiction

At this time, purchase of *The Dark Lord's Guide to Dating and Other War Crimes* is recommended to be placed on hold. While the title has generated interest within a niche genre, staff recommend monitoring reader demand and availability through existing lending networks before committing collection resources.

Library staff will track patron requests and fulfillment timelines for this title and provide that data for future consideration.

Title: *The Things We Leave Unfinished*

Author: Rebecca Yarros

Collection: Adult Fiction

The Things We Leave Unfinished meets the selection criteria for the Adult Fiction collection. Reviews consistently identify the novel as adult contemporary fiction with strong reader appeal and favorable professional reception. The author has a demonstrated and growing adult readership, and the title supports recreational reading interests among adult patrons. Based on review analysis and anticipated demand, this title is approved for purchase and inclusion in the Adult Fiction collection.

Title: *I, Medusa*

Author: Ayana Gray

Collection: Adult Fiction

I, Medusa is appropriate for inclusion in the Adult Fiction collection. Reviews describe the novel as a mature retelling rooted in Greek mythology, written for an adult audience in both subject matter and narrative approach. Retellings of Greek mythology continue to experience sustained popularity in contemporary literature, with strong reader interest in reimagined perspectives of classical figures. Shelving this title in the Adult Collection ensures appropriate context and placement consistent with its content, themes, and intended audience. This title is approved for shelving in the Adult Fiction collection.

Title: *Sibylline*

Author: Melissa de la Cruz

Collection: Adult Fiction


Sibylline aligns with the Adult Fiction collection as a contemporary fantasy novel intended for an adult readership. Reviews consistently classify the work as adult speculative fiction, with a recommended reading level of Upper YA/17+. The book meets selection criteria including favorable reviews, anticipated demand, and enhancement of the Adult Fiction collection. This title is approved for purchase and shelving in the Adult Fiction collection.

April Flagged Material #578

From Kathy Kysar <kysarkathy@yahoo.com>

Date Wed 4/29/2026 3:23 PM

To Chad Scott <praizer34@gmail.com>; Laura Anderson <leanderson90@gmail.com>; Marty Kincaid <marty@mtaonline.net>; Sally Pollen <N3673Z@gmail.com>; Karen Crandall <artiste3@mtaonline.net>; Cindy Redmond <cindyredmond69@yahoo.com>; Julie Endle <jejubee@gmail.com>; Sarah Thomas <sarah.thomas@matsugov.us>; Legislative Comments <leg.com@matsugov.us>

 1 attachment (90 KB)

05.12.26-JulieEndle.pdf;

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Library Board,

Since beginning to flag library materials last October, you have flagged 34 library materials for review. Of those, 19 were later withdrawn by the very members who originally challenged them. Of the remaining 15 titles, 14 were ultimately labeled "DO NOT PURCHASE" you, with one still awaiting a final vote. Jillian Morrissey made the final "DO NOT PURCHASE" decision on five of those materials.

The titles blocked from entering our public libraries include:

- *Heart the Lover* by Lily King (adult fiction, Big Lake)
- *Mate* by Ali Hazelwood (adult fiction, Big Lake)
- *The Bewitching* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia (adult fiction audiobook, Sutton)
- *White Lotus* Seasons 1–3 (adult fiction DVD, Talkeetna)
- *Quicksilver* by Callie Hart (adult fiction, Talkeetna)

Consider what this means. In the past six months, you have prevented five new adult materials from reaching library shelves, while more than half of the challenged items were eventually abandoned by the challengers themselves. You can't make the argument that you didn't make the final decision, because those materials would have never come across Jillian's desk if you had not flagged them. This begins and ends with you.

Is this really the best use of borough resources, staff time, and taxpayer dollars? Or have you become consumed with policing trained librarians' choices instead of supporting the public libraries our communities rely on?

Please read the unbiased review of the book you will be voting on in your next meeting.

Kathy Kysar

Assistant Professor of English, UAF

President, [Friends of the Sutton Library](#)

Alaska Chapter Leader, [Authors Against Banned Books](#)

Owner, [Crooked Cabin](#)

I acknowledge and honor that I live on the ancestral lands of the Dena'ina and Ahtna peoples. I recognize and respect the continuing connection, by Alaska Native people and all Indigenous people to the land, waters, and communities. I also honor my own traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy in what is now known as Montana, which includes Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani, of which I am a descendent.

April #578 -*The Final Gambit* by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

- Flagged by Julie Endle
- Requested by Sutton
- Available in 3 of our borough public libraries, in addition to Palmer and Wasilla
- Published August 2022
- Young Adult Fiction - Mystery/Thriller

1. Relevance to Identified Community Needs

The Final Gambit directly meets strong and sustained community demand for **young adult thrillers, mystery series,** and **high-interest puzzle-based fiction.** The *Inheritance Games* series has been consistently popular with teen readers and enjoys crossover appeal with adults who enjoy fast-paced mysteries.

✔ **Highly relevant to community reading interests**

2. Suitable Subject, Format, and Reading Level

- **Subject:** A high-stakes mystery centered on inheritance, riddles, family secrets, and power, concluding a popular trilogy.
- **Format:** Available in all major formats prioritized by public libraries, including large print and audiobook.
- **Reading Level:** Appropriate for **Young Adult readers.** Contains romance and suspense but

NO EXPLICIT SEXUAL CONTENT!

✔ **Clearly suitable for YA collections**

3. Timely or Historically Significant Content

While not tied to a specific historical moment, *The Final Gambit* remains **timely** due to its relevance within a still-active and widely read series. Ongoing interest has been reinforced by adaptations and continued popularity of the franchise.

✔ **Timely due to sustained series relevance**

4. Credibility of Author, Publisher, or Producer

Jennifer Lynn Barnes is a **New York Times bestselling author**, former Fulbright Scholar, and cognitive science expert whose background informs her intricate plotting. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers is a major publisher with a long-standing reputation in YA literature.

✔ **Highly credible author and publisher**

5. Favorable Professional Reviews

The book received favorable coverage from professional outlets and reviewers, particularly for:

- Clever plotting and puzzle construction
- Strong series conclusion
- High reader engagement

While some reviewers debated pacing or resolution preferences, coverage overall supports its quality and popularity.

✔ **Strong professional review support**

6. Documented Patron or Staff Interest

- High circulation and hold ratios in libraries
- Extensive reader engagement on platforms such as Goodreads
- Frequent reader requests for the full trilogy

As the concluding volume of a major series, demand is intrinsic and ongoing.

✔ **Well-documented and sustained reader demand**

7. Enhancement of the Existing Collection

The Final Gambit enhances collections by:

- Completing a high-demand trilogy
- Supporting series integrity
- Serving mystery and thriller readers who prefer minimal graphic content

✔ **Strengthens the overall fiction collection**

8. Strengthening of a Targeted Collection Area

Public libraries commonly prioritize:

- YA mystery and thriller titles
- Series fiction with strong circulation performance

This title strengthens both prioritized areas.

✔ Supports a high-circulation target area

9. Limited Availability Through Other Lending Sources

While retail access exists, libraries:

- Ensure free access to the entire trilogy
- Provide equitable access across formats

This is especially critical for younger readers dependent on library access.

✔ Library access significantly expands availability

10. Filling Gaps in Subject Coverage

For libraries seeking:

- Puzzle-driven mysteries without graphic violence
- YA thrillers focused on intellect rather than brutality

The Final Gambit effectively fills this niche.

✔ Addresses a specific genre gap

11. Local Authorship or Illustration

✗ Not applicable

12. Recognized Literary or Artistic Quality

While primarily a popular genre work, the novel is recognized for:

- Complex narrative structure
- Thoughtful character arcs
- Engaging mystery design

It meets and exceeds expectations within the YA mystery genre.

✓ **Recognized genre quality**

13. Factual Accuracy

✓ **Criterion not applicable**

14. Demonstrated or Anticipated Demand

Demand is clearly demonstrated by:

- Series popularity
- Continued circulation
- Reader expectation for series completion

✓ **Strong demonstrated and ongoing demand**

Summary Responses to Final Selection Questions

- **Is the topic of the material a priority for the collection?**
Yes. YA mystery and thriller series are consistently popular.
- **Is the format of the material a priority for the collection?**
Yes. Available in multiple accessible formats.
- **Is this material superseding an old edition or better source?**
No. It is the final entry in an original trilogy.
- **Are there sufficient materials available on the same subject?**
Yes, but demand supports maintaining multiple titles.
- **Does the material have recognized reputation or significance?**
Yes. It is part of a bestselling, widely recognized YA series.

Overall Recommendation

Strongly recommended for retention and continued availability in **Young Adult Fiction** collections. *The Final Gambit* fulfills reader expectations for series completion, demonstrates ongoing demand, and aligns with established collection development principles.

This information was compiled with help from Microsoft Copilot.