



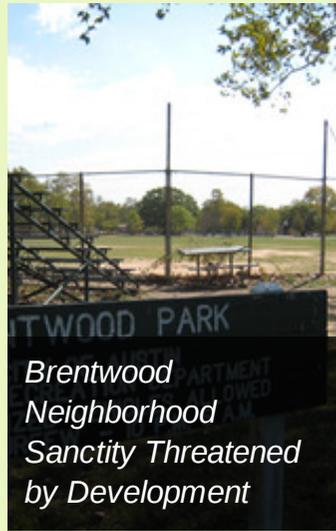
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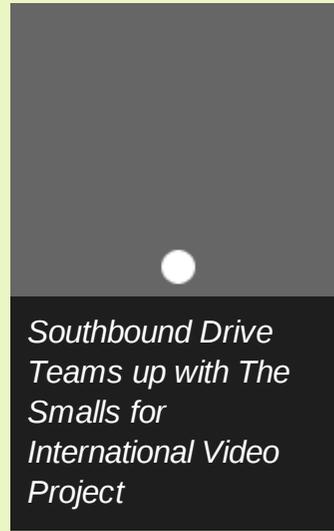
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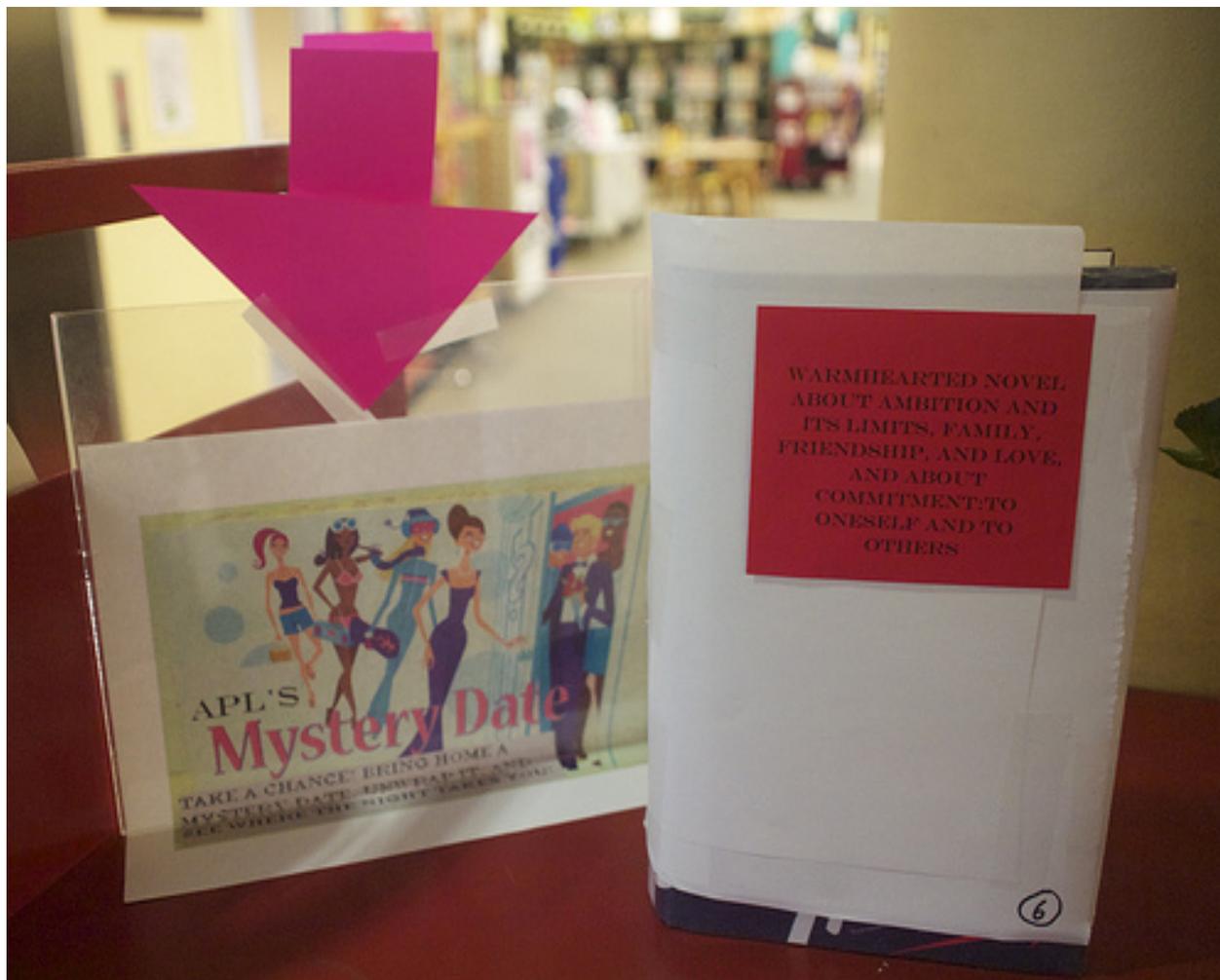


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Austin Public Library Branch Offering Mystery Book Dates!





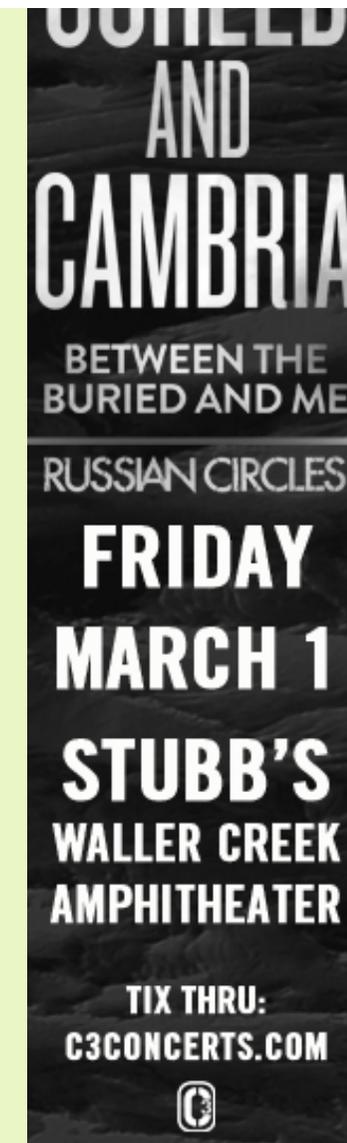
It often seems that the way we celebrate Valentine's Day in this country is all about making single people feel bad and getting couples to spend money on each other. It gets old. But in a swell paradigm-shift for Valentine's Day, the [Yarborough branch](#) of the Austin Public Library is offering patrons the opportunity for a free "Mystery Date."

No, this is not a human-to-human dating service brought to you by the public library, it's about going on a blind date with a [book!](#)

On a red (!) library cart near the circulation desk is an offer to the reading public. A big pink arrow entices patrons towards potential literary hook ups:

"Take a chance: Bring home a mystery date. Unwrap it and see where the night takes you!"

Beside and underneath the sign are books covered in plain white wrappers, with cryptic descriptions on red



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paper affixed to the top of them. The books' original dust jackets are not visible. You won't know what you are taking home unless you cheat and slip off the paper cover beforehand!

On Valentine's week, descriptions on the books in the project included the following:

"Warmhearted novel about ambition and its limits, family, friendship and love. And about commitment to oneself and to others."

"Lifelong friendship and the book that rescued them."

"Now a TV show on HBO!"

"A perfect curio. A ramshackle assortment of strange characters."

The "Mystery Date" book program is the brainchild of Krista Schreiber, 35, who is currently enrolled in the library school at the University of North Texas. Schreiber said she was inspired by a similar project at another library.

The project started last week, featuring 20 books with wrappers and descriptions. Another ten books were added to the project just before Valentine's Day, as many of the original books had already been checked out.

"People seem to think it's a cute idea," Schreiber said in a phone interview. It's not clear how long the "Mystery Date" book project will be up, but Schreiber would like it to continue past the holiday. "I'd like to do it all month," Schreiber said.

If you want to take one of these "Mystery Dates," home with you, all you'll need is a City of Austin library card!

Also, if you visit the [Yarborough branch library](#) this month, you might notice the display of vintage paper Valentine's, from the personal collection of Diane Palan, regional branch operations manager.

While it's impossible to know what the future will bring, Hollywood tropes have us wondering if some couple will meet cute as they are both eyeballing their potential "Mystery Dates."

If there's a meet cute at the library over these "Mystery Date" books, feel free to reference the 1983 **Elvis Costello** song below while chatting each other up.

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