



Deep Work, Dirty Rice, and More Books For You To Love!

October/November 2021

Vol. 235

Hello GentleReader,

Happy belated Halloween! I hope your ghoulish weekend was a lot of fun. It was for me... in addition to seeing all the adorables in their costumes, Rachel and I released a novelette in the Jayne Thorne cosmere as a treat, not a trick! If you want it for free, you can sign up for the [Joss Walker newsletter](#). If you want to pay for it, you can buy it [here](#). And if you haven't read TOMB OF THE QUEEN yet, it's [on a special intro promotion](#) all month long!

And if you'd rather never hear about Jayne Thorne again...well, sorry. Can't help you there. With multiple books under contract and a pretty stellar plan for another mini-series within the world, writing fantasy it's going to take up part of my writing year. BUT! That means the other part of the year is dedicated to thrillers. Standalones, for sure, and a series title or two here and there to liven things up. Like this: I'm hoping to get Taylor #9 out to you sometime in late spring!! Then the next big standalone is slated for late February 2023. It's a whopper of a book, and I can't wait for you to read it. So worry not. Lots of thrilling crime fiction reads to come.

(You know I'm never fully happy unless I'm writing with my hair on fire... ☹️. Now I'm just adding fairy wings, too. ☹️♀️)

And if you've been in my sphere for more than ten seconds, you know I am a big fan of productivity. But not the kind of productivity that means scheduling out every second of every day in order to do 40x more work, though sometimes, it might look like that [[see above]]. I'm a fan of the other kind of productivity, the kind that is deliberate, that involves planning your way to success.

For example, my business Fridays. I try very hard, and usually succeed, in doing non-fiction work on Friday mornings. I write blogs and newsletters (yes, it is Friday as I write this), I caption social media photographs, I clear out my inbox.

I find this weekly touchstone both soothing and freeing. Everyone around me knows Friday mornings are when we do the business end of the job, and that knowledge makes it easier on all of us. I first got in the habit back in 2005, when my Friday [Murderati](#) column would run. There was no way for me to stay focused on writing and be available to answer questions on the blog. (Yes, there used to be a lively conversation on blogs, pre-Facebook. With the advent of META and the downstream implication of how our social media is changing, those days could return soon--and if they do, I will resurrect mine.)

Point is, I miss the conversation on Fridays. Intellectual challenge is important to creatives, and discussing work with our peers is vital to our growth.

I got to interview one of my favorites in this sphere a couple of weeks ago, Cal Newport. [DEEP WORK](#) is something everyone should read at least once, especially creatives. It will give you permission to step away from the things that are distracting you (oh, funny...autocorrect wrote that as DISTORTING, which is another very interesting aspect of social media, how it distorts our perceptions of one another...) Stepping away from what isn't serving you, and doing it without guilt or concern, is a huge, fabulous thing. DEEP WORK is well worth your time. It might even change how you approach your work and life, and now, with our offices inside our homes, this work/life balance is especially fraught.

You might also notice this is a combo October/November newsletter. My October was one for the record books, with a perfect storm of interviews, reads, deadlines, and physical therapy sessions. The good news is all of this is behind me (except the deadlines – heavens, do they EVER end???)

As we're speeding toward the new year, I'm considering how best to spend the rest of 2021. I haven't had a real social media sabbatical for a couple of years, and so I'm taking one. The first few weeks of November, Rachel is changing my passwords and I am out of luck if I want to log in and check on y'all. Content has been curated, Rachel will be there to hang out and chat with everyone, and of course, if you need me, she will relay the message. But it's time for me to do my best impression of a startled turtle and pull back into my shell for a bit. I'll be back around Thanksgiving, refreshed and hopefully with more words on the Taylor novel.

And with that ... onward!

[□ Read All About It...](#)



LAST GIRL GHOSTED by Lisa Unger

Staggering. Unsettling. Vivid and intense. Lisa Unger is our most inventive suspense author, and she's created another fascinating, timely, and searingly good story with LAST GIRL GHOSTED. Wren Greenwood is one of Unger's most nuanced characters, and her story, her life, her secrets, explode off the page. Clear your calendar and lock the doors. You will not be able to stop reading. Insanely good.

THE ORPHAN WITCH by Paige Crutcher

Mystical, magical, and wildly original, THE ORPHAN WITCH is a great story from an exciting new voice in fantasy. Persephone May is a witch for the ages, a tough, uncompromising, powerful time walker with a wicked gaze and a heart of gold. Her journey to find her family and herself and the lost witches of Wile Ilse is both rollicking adventure and intimate exploration. If Alice Hoffman and Sara Addison Allen had a witchy love child, she would be Paige Crutcher. Do not miss this beautifully realized debut!

LITTLE PIECES OF HOPE by Todd Doughty

Your job for today - buy LITTLE PIECES OF HOPE: Happy—Making Things In A Difficult World by Todd Doughty. Set it upon your desk. At random moments throughout your work day, open the book and read a page. Trust me when I say, it will make you so very happy.

BEYOND THE POINT by Claire Gibson

I've held onto this amazing book by Nashville treasure Claire Gibson for so long, waiting for the right moment to read it. As it happens, I started it just as we began the draw down out of Afghanistan. Talk about a full-circle tale. I can't recommend this enough: a beautifully written story of the family we choose, the power of female friendships, and the unassailable courage of our West Point cadets and all our troops. Just spectacular.

☐☐ October Recipe: Dirty Rice



While I am more than happy to feed the thrillerkittens chicken livers, I am not a fan. While most traditional Dirty Rice recipes have this (um) delicacy to thicken and flavor, I do not. You're welcome. This modified version is delicious, spicy, flavorful, and can be made with any ground protein you like. A wonderful cold weather comfort food dinner...

[I WANT THAT SPICY GOODNESS!](#)

You can find all of my recipes [here](#). And if you want some wine to go with the meals, [The Wine Vixen](#) has you covered.

☐ Bookish News

Judas Kiss Has A New Cover!



**It was a murder made
for TV...**

Available Now

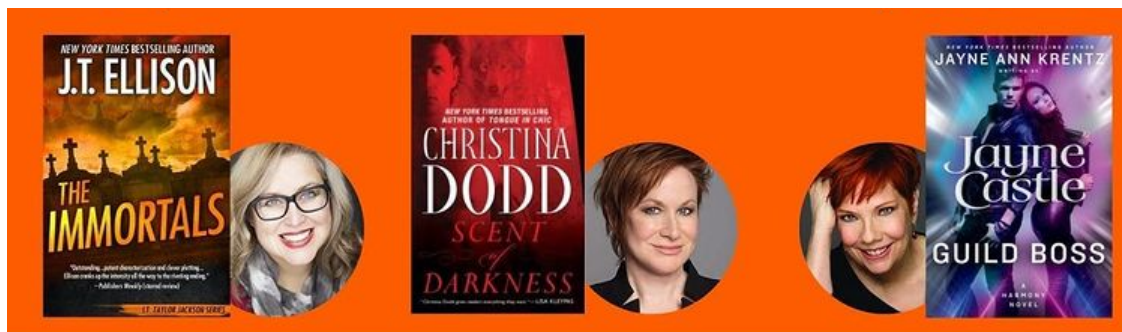
Next up in the rebranding of the [Taylor Jackson series](#) is [Judas Kiss](#). What do you think?

The Eighth Road Is Here!



Sign up for [Joss Walker's newsletter](#) to read it for free, or check it out on [Amazon!](#)

A Spooky Book Chat



Jayne Ann Krentz, Christina Dodd, and I had a great time chatting about spooky reads! Check out our Zoom chat [here!](#)

□ 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: Jim B! And don't forget to enter for this month's drawing by clicking below!

I WANT THAT GIFT CARD!

We're heading into the season of gratitude, and I am grateful for you. Have a wonderful, peaceful Thanksgiving, and I'll see you next month.

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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