

## Daily Dragon 2022 Staff Picks

### Book Picks

#### Olga Dies Dreaming - Xochitl Gonzales

Rating : ★★★★★☆



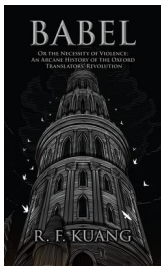
*Olga Dies Dreaming* is a tale of Mexican gothic meets New York City. Both Pedro, a congressman trying to fight gentrification and Olga, a florist and wedding planner for the ultra elite, have to grapple with a family secret, the return of their mother, and a

hurricane on its way to Puerto Rico. This part love

story, part social critique, part mystery, will keep you engaged for the entire read. It calls into question the reality of the “American Dream” and the perils of assimilation. The characters are complex and incredibly well written. Gonzalez’s writing style is fluid and detailed, and her storytelling ability is captivating. If you are interested in a story about immigration and female empowerment, this book is for you.

#### Babel - R.F Kuang

Rating : ★★★★★☆



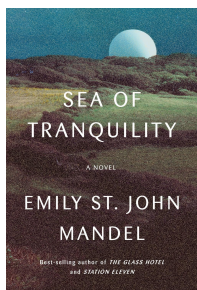
*Babel*, or the Necessity of Violence by R. F Kuang, is a historical fantasy novel set in an alternate reality of Victorian England where magical silver powers the world. Babel's protagonist is Robin Swift, an orphan from Canton, China, who is brought to England and adopted by an Oxford professor.

Robin spends his childhood studying Latin, Greek, and Mandarin to eventually become a translator for Oxford's prestigious school of translation, Babel. But Babel, and England, aren't what they seem.

Robin is soon forced to reckon with his role in the British empire. For lovers of linguistics, this book is a delight to read, filled to the brim with pages on the etymology of words and the moral questions of translation. The world-building crafted from Kuang’s intense research makes the book feel incredibly immersive and easy to imagine. Babel is also very heavy-handed in its commentary on colonialism and imperialism. With witty and informational footnotes, charming and relatable friendships, and a compelling plot, Babel is well worth your time.

#### Sea of Tranquility - Emily St. John Mandel

Rating : ★★★★★☆



*Sea of Tranquility* by Emily St. John Mandel follows the lives of an exiled 18 year old in 1912, a Mars colony resident in the distant plague ridden future, a detective, and a mysterious violinist. Each character's stories are weaved together in a strange tale of time travel

and the supernatural. With touches of historical fiction, fantasy, and sci-fi, this book's unique writing style and story line is captivating. In this untraditional pandemic novel, this book is less centered on the illness and more the way humanity stretches generations. The book will keep you questioning exactly what's going on, but it ends with a beautiful reflection on humanity and the mystical power of music and time.

### Finding Me - Viola Davis

Rating: ★★★★★

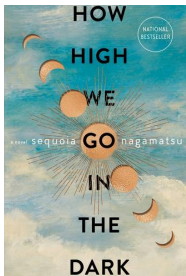


In her new memoir, *Finding Me*, Viola Davis takes us through her journey to self love and discovery. Davis is an Oscar and Emmy award winning actress who has been in over 80 movies and shows. But in her memoir, she starts at the beginning, from growing up in poverty and living in an abusive household. She

details her experience in Hollywood as a black woman and the colorism that she experienced in the industry for being “too dark”. Her story is one of empowerment, of self realization, and pride. She is an incredible role model, and this book is truly an insight into how incredible of a person Davis is. If you are interested in a story of bravery and resistance in the film industry, this is definitely the book for you.

### How High we Go in the Dark by Sequoia Nagamatsu

Rating : ★★★★★☆

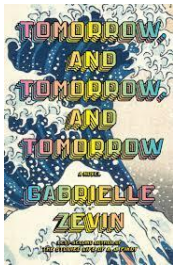


*How High We Go in the Dark*, by Sequoia Nagamatsu, is the story of a not so distant future where a plague frozen the Arctic Ice had been released by global warming. This book explores human nature and the way we interact with each other in times of disaster and darkness. Each chapter is the story of a new character and their experience with the plague, and the Nagamatsu weaves together their lives in such a way that

we can't help but be reminded how connected we all truly are. The book can get quite dark, and it was slightly disturbing to read sections that were so relatable, given our own experience with the COVID-19 pandemic and yet, rather dystopian. The author's commentary on global warming and corporate greed is scorchingly cynical. The thing that strikes me most from this book, however, is the humanity that Nagamatsu imbues in every character he writes. The heart wrenching beauty of Nagamatsu's writing is what makes this book so incredible.

### Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow -

Rating : ★★★★★☆



This is the kind of story that will stick with you long after you turn the final page. It follows the story of Sadie and Sam, who meet in a hospital ward and bond over a love for video games. Once in college, they reconnect and collaborate to design video games, creating stories and words alike. Sadie and Sam's unspoken

attraction to each other is overpowered by their choice to prioritize their professional partnership, which is romantic in its own unique way. The book is an interesting commentary on media, gaming, and gender, like when the two have to make certain decisions about the marketing of their game or partnership to please consumers. This book depicts the beauty of world making, and the escapism that video games offer.

## Movie Picks

### Everything Everywhere All at Once

Rating : ★★★★★



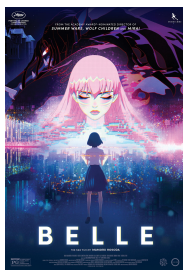
*Everything Everywhere All at Once* directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert is a superhero movie like no other. It centers the lives of a first generation immigrant and her experience in America. The movie starts off with the main character, Evelyn Quan Wang,

portrayed by the incredible actress Michelle Yeoh, as she struggles to pay taxes and relate to her daughter, Joy. However, her entire life changes when she is introduced to the multiverse by an alternate version of her husband who asks for her help to save the universe. She must make the difficult decision to choose to deal with her own life's problems or help everyone else in the

multiverse. This movie is hilarious and moving. It's an interesting and original take on the multiverse, and makes us question how the choices we make shape our lives. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is clearly an action movie, but it doesn't overlook the importance of character development, humor, and depth. The relationship between Evelyn and Joy is particularly moving, illustrating the power of mother and daughter relationships, and the ways in which prejudice can be overcome in favor of love. One of the most beautiful things about this movie is that no singular character is good or bad, everyone is flawed and human. This movie emphasizes that so much of our lives is unknown, and we can't be everywhere or do everything, all at once, so we may as well just live it and see where it takes us.

### Belle - Mamoru Hosoda

Rating: ★★★★★☆



*Belle*, directed by Mamoru Hosoda, is an animated film about a shy girl named Suzu who finds solace in a virtual reality universe. The game allowed her to grow into herself and she became a global singing sensation. As she juggles the challenges of stardom, grief,

and social anxiety, she is faced with a new challenge. A user enters the VR universe intent on destroying it, and she makes it her mission to discover who they are and what their motivation is. The animation is superb, pulling from both

traditional and modern anime styles. The styles are especially effective when contrasting the provincial town Suzu lives in and the extravagant virtual reality universe she occupies. The show addresses the expectations of social media and beauty standards, the issue of anonymity in online mediums, and VR escapism. It also illustrates the way music can be a unifying medium and demonstrates the way music can unite people and bring out their humanity. Even if you've never watched anime, this is a highly enjoyable film with deep relevance to our relationship with the growing online world.

### Turning Red - Domee Shi

Rating : ★★★★★☆



*Turning Red* is Pixar's newest animated film, and an authentic portrayal of tween girlhood. It follows the life of Mei, a dutiful daughter, who suddenly begins to transform into a giant red panda when she experiences strong emotions. She is torn

between family responsibility and friendship, tradition and self expression. It's a

beautiful story of growing up and balancing family expectations and your own passions. Mei's friend group is an honest portrayal of what middle school life truly is. Middleschoolers are dorky, excitable, and boyband obsessed. The movie also doesn't shy away from the difficulties of tween life, without disregarding them or labeling them as immature. It's heartwarming, hilarious, and if you stay for the credits, you're in for a fun surprise.

### Aftersun - Charlotte Wells

Rating: ★★★★★☆

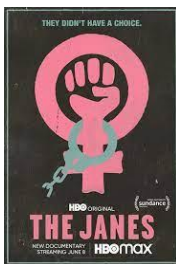


*Aftersun* is a heartbreaking and deeply moving portrayal of parenthood and remembrance. It centers Sophie, who reflects on the vacation she spent with her father when she was eleven years old. Now 31, she uses her memories of this vacation to try and reconcile with the father she thought she had and the things

about him she hadn't understood at the time. We also glimpse her teen years as we begin to understand more about the struggles her father faced and his life outside of Sophie's immediate recollections. The sound track is exceptional and the multiple styles of filming create a cool distinction between the time periods of Sophie's life. It deals with the hard truths of mental illness and how children remember their parents.

### THE JANES - Tia Lessin and Emma Pildes

Rating : ★★★★★☆



During the pre-Roe v. Wade era, when abortion was outlawed, and the Catholic Church condemned it, women in the Chicago area built an underground network of female activists known as 'Jane.' *The Janes* is a documentary about women who risked their reputations to support people

with unwanted pregnancies. They provided low-cost and even free abortions to an estimated 11,000 people. This film showcases interviews with previous Jane members, highlighting the

dangerous positions they were willing to put themselves in to protect reproductive liberties. The complex planning and secretive communication between Jane and the women with unwanted pregnancies shows the intense atmosphere of the pre-Roe v. Wade world. Without Jane, tens of thousands of women would attempt dangerous and life threatening abortions. The documentary manages to clearly describe the way Jane ran while also displaying the emotional stress abortions have on women. This is a must watch, especially in a time where our reproductive rights are at risk.

## The Banshees of Inisherin - Martin McDonagh

Rating: ★★★★★☆



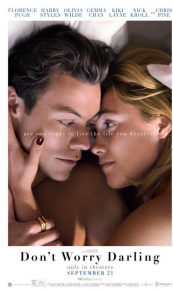
The story of *The Banshees of Inverness*, taking place on an fictional island off the coast of Ireland in 1923, follows the relationship between ex-friends Colm and Padraic. Colm is a tortured artist and Padraic is a cow herder. They had been friends for as long as anyone

could remember, until Colm inexplicably ended his friendship with Padraic. Padraic refuses to accept that it is the end and makes multiple attempts to get

back in Colm's good graces, even as Colm insists that he doesn't want to waste his time with Padraic anymore. This movie, while initially humorous, takes a dark turn when Colm starts to make threats when Padraic won't leave him alone. The cinematography is stunning and idealistic, and inspires longing for the pastoral picturesque. Their story is a subtle metaphor for the conflict on the Irish mainland, but it's also an interesting depiction of friendship, loneliness, and mental illness.

## Don't Worry Darling

Rating : ★★★★★☆



*Don't Worry Darling*, is one of the best horror films of 2022. Most people were a bit apprehensive about singer Harry Styles playing one of the lead roles in the film, given his shallow pool of previous movies. Expectations for this film were lower than other horror films recently released like *Megan*, or *The*

can say with great delight that I recommended *Don't Worry Darling*. The complexity of shots and scenes is impressive. Harry Styles and Florence Pugh, the two main actors, were exceptional in their respective roles. The actors' dynamic with each other is particularly admirable, especially the ways they carry their emotional protraits. The movie's twists and turns pulled me in and had me on the edge of my seat, I never really knew what would happen next. Definitely recommend!

Menu, both of which I thoroughly enjoyed. But I

## Nope - Jordan Peele

Ratings : ★★★★★☆



*Nope*, directed by Jordan Peele is a thriller about a family trying to keep their horse ranch running while being attacked by a mysterious supernatural entity. This movie is a perfect blend of suspense and humor. The cinematography is brilliantly done, adding to the creepy

atmosphere. *Nope* explored our generation's obsession with media and its and the dangers of focusing on ownership of information over the value of the actual information. The supernatural phenomenon is a metaphor for Hollywood idealism, which inevitably causes trauma and death to those that pursue it. If you liked director Peele's *Us* or *Get Out*, you'll definitely like *Nope*.



**Puss in Boots: The Last Wish - Joel Crawford and Januel Mercado**

**Rating :** ★★★★★



DreamWorks has once again produced a spectacular film, one that beats Avatar 2's weekend earnings at the UK box office on release. *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish*, directed by Joel Crawford and co-directed by Januel Mercado, is one of 2022's best-animated films. The sequel

film follows Puss in Boots, running on the last of his nine lives, as he travels with his companions, fighting against time to regain his former life by wishing upon the Last Wishing Star. The movie contains heavy topics such as the fragility of life and the certainty of death. *Puss in Boots* tackles

this theme well through the well-written assortment of antagonists, animation, and inner conflict. Accurate portrayals of fear and anxiety, paired with stellar animation creates stunning, relatable scenes. The antagonists are fun to watch, a mixture of classic and modern villainy, and fairy tale characters that blends traditional and fresh ideas. The character designs and movements are vivid and fluid, taking inspiration from the animation style of *Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse*. This movie is ripe with hilarious and heartfelt moments, always captivating the audience. *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* is a fun family experience you will not want to miss! Go watch it in theaters while it's still around!

**Thor : Love and Thunder - Taika Waititi**

**Rating :** ★★★★★



*Thor: Love and Thunder* is a superhero action movie, directed by Taika Waititi. It's the fourth movie in a series that features Thor, the Norse god of thunder, as the main protagonist. It can easily be enjoyed by both hardcore Marvel fans and newbies to the Marvel cinematic universe. It

stars Chris Hemsworth as Thor, Natalie Portman as Jane Foster, Christian Bale as Gorr the God Butcher, Tessa Thompson as Valkyrie, and Taika

Waititi as Korg. The movie starts off with Thor trying to retire as a superhero and live a peaceful life. However, his pursuit of a quiet life is interrupted when he receives a call to action. He embarks on a journey to save the gods. Along the way, he joins forces with some of his old friends, and even old enemies. Even Though this movie is a continuation of the series, *Thor: Love and Thunder* feels unique as it takes viewers through worlds never seen before in the Thor series.

## TV Show Picks

### Derry Girls - Caroline Leddy and Liz Lewin

Rating: ★★★★★☆



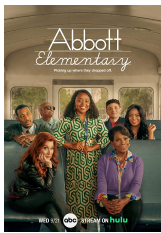
Derry Girls is the perfect balance of humor, introspective reflection, and social commentary. The much anticipated third and final season of Derry girls came out in 2022. This sit-com follows the lives of Erin, Orla, Claire, Michelle, and James (Michelle's English cousin)

who are ordinary teenagers growing up in Londonderry, Ireland during The Troubles. The Troubles was a 30 year period of conflict in Northern Ireland between the Irish Catholics and

the Irish Protestants. But the show focuses less on the political turmoil of the Irish fight for independence, and more on the way these teens navigate life. The show creates beautiful and hilarious juxtapositions between the ridiculous and relatable challenges of teenage life, and tense political climate. It reminds us that even in times of war and unrest, teenagers are still teenagers, and it humanizes their experience. This show is perfect if you're interested in social and political analysis, or just a good laugh.

### Abbott Elementary - Randall Einhorn

Rating: ★★★★★★



*Abbott Elementary* is undeniably hilarious. In *Abbott Elementary*, a group of passionate teachers deal with the struggles that come with working in an underfunded public school in Philadelphia. They navigate problems with their

students, and more importantly, problems with each other. *Abbott Elementary* is a comedy for every generation. There's heartfelt moments, hilarious mishaps, gorgeous actors, and a little bit of romance. I would suggest this show to literally anyone.

### Heartstopper - Euros Lyn

Rating: ★★★★★☆



The first season of *Heartstopper* came out on Netflix in mid April. Based on a graphic novel series by Alice Oseman, the show follows the friendship and eventual romance between Nick and Charlie, two teenagers at a British all-boys school. The show is a

beautiful and authentic LGBTQ coming of age story, with great lead characters and great supporting characters. This 8 episode series follows the development of Nick and Charlie's relationship, while also focusing on great side characters like Darcy and Tara, a lesbian couple

who goes to the all-girls school with Charlie's friend Elle. The show's take on visual effects is unique, using them to imitate the comic book feel. Nick Nelson played on screen by the wonderful Kit Connor is a great character. We get to see his journey of coming out to himself and his loved ones. Along with the great characters and sweet plotline, the show's soundtrack excels with artists like Frankie Cosmos, Girl in Red, Beabadoobee, and Baby Queen. Overall, *Heartstopper* is a feel good show with a great cast. Though it may not have been the most popular show of 2022, it is definitely worth the watch!

### Spy x Family - Tatsuya Endo

Rating: ★★★★★☆



Ever wanted to watch an anime with spies, assassins, and plots to create a war between countries...along with a psychic girl and her dog that predicts the future? Well, *Spy x Family*, created by Tatsuya Endo and directed by Kazuhiro Furuhashi, is the perfect choice. *Spy x Family* is a comedic action/spy anime about Agent Twilight, a spy sent on a mission to prevent a war from breaking out. How does he do this? He must fabricate a family! With Yor Briar (a secret

assassin), a telepathic orphan girl named Anya, and a dog named Bond that sees the future, the ideal family is formed...with a few complications, of course. The animation and opening music are wild and spectacular, and the fights range from action-packed to comedic. Anya's over-the-top, zany misadventures support the show's light tone, mixed with Twilight's high-stakes spy missions. The characters in the show complement each other well, covering for the weaknesses of the others and supporting them, almost like a real family. If you want an action-filled comedy to watch, *Spy x Family* is available on Hulu or Crunchyroll.

### Stranger Things - The Duffer Brothers

Rating: ★★★★★☆



Almost three years after Stranger Things season 3 came out, Stranger Things season 4 was released in two parts. The first volume came out in May of 2022, and the second volume was released in July. This season took us back and forth from Hawkins to California, between 2 timelines, and across the three main stories of our favorite characters. A new villain is introduced, Vecna, the mind that controls the Upside Down. He causes trouble in Hawkins, but with El and Will in

California, Dustin, Lucas, and the rest of the gang struggle to keep things under control. In California, El tries her best to fit in with the kids at her school but she isn't able to make any friends. So, when Dr. Owens gets word of the trouble in Hawkins, he brings El to a secret facility in Nevada, where she trains to battle Vecna. As all of this is happening, Joyce and Murray are on their own quest to save Hopper. Season 4 brings us a new set of adventures that reveals secrets about the Upside Down and ties all four seasons together. As much as the fourth season felt like the perfect ending, there's talk of a fifth season coming out as early as 2024.

### Rings of Power - Gennifer Hutchison

Rating: ★★★★★☆



*The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* is a long awaited addition to the Lord of the Rings universe. The first season consists of eight total episodes, packed with lore and immersion. The Rings of Power series takes place thousands of years before the events of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, seemingly setting the stage for the events that take place in those stories. *The Rings of Power* switches between character perspectives, with unique setting and

style for each. It follows a group of nomadic Harfoots as they encounter a strange man that came from the stars. An elf as she searches for the last traces of evil and encounters a prosperous island of humans, with one human being especially important. A second elf, who guards a remote watchtower near a town of humans, and encounters the stem of evil. Finally, a third elf, who attempts to save the elven race, while making amends with the dwarven kingdom. This spellbinding series is full of twists and turns, and will have you second guessing characters and anxiously anticipating the next season.



### **Wednesday - Tim Burton**

**Rating:** ★★★★★☆



Wednesday follows the story of a teenage Wednesday Adams, played by Jenna Ortega, through her experience at a new boarding school. During her stay, she investigates the recent string of monster killings that take place in her school's town. In the duration of stay, Wednesday deals with mystery, romance, friendship, and feeling out of place. The show received two Golden Globe nominations: Best Television Series and Best Actress & Television

Series Musical or Comedy. Within three weeks of its release, it became the second most watched show on Netflix. Reboots have recently become harder and harder to make. With poor plots and modern takes, many fans and viewers feel disconnected from these cash grabs, but Wednesday is different. This TV show embraces everything that made the Adams Family good. A campy, fun plot, backed by a dark goth aesthetic. The reboot is able to both stand on its own and feel like a fitting addition to Cemetery Ridge.

### **Moon Knight - Mohamed Diab**

**Rating:** ★★★★★☆



Are you a Marvel fan who loves the comics and wish the movies were more like them? Well do I have the perfect show for you. Moon Knight, released in March of 2022, and directed by Mohamed Diab, is about Steve Grant and Marc Spector, who are gifted the powers of an Egyptian moon god and investigate the mysteries of Egyptian gods through that same body. Actor Oscar Isaac does a wonderful job of portraying the main character, who had identity disorder. One thing many MCU fans don't like about Marvel movies is how far they stray from the original comics. Moon Knight, does an incredible job at keeping the

storyline and cinematography within the bounds of the comic. If you've never seen a Marvel film before watching this show, you're all good, because the show has its own storyline and doesn't rely on the other Marvel movies for its plot. This show is incredible, with lots of deep dive into Egyptian mythology and has lots of symbolism within the show. The cinematography is captivating as it takes the viewer into the minds of Steven and Marc, as we witness them navigate their newly found 'gift.' This show does an amazing job of balancing overwhelming suspense and with 'edge of your seat' action scenes.

## Music Picks

### De Todas Las Flores

Rating : ★★★★★



De Todas las Flores by Natalia Laforcade, which translates to ‘All the Flowers’ is an incredible album that explores loss, vulnerability and love; the album takes us through

Laforcade’s experience and emotional journey after the end of a relationship. The album combines traditional Mexican folk, classical orchestral, bossa, and pop rock styles. I recommend listening to ‘Vine solita’, ‘Mi Manera de

Querer”, and “Que te vaya bonito Nicolás”, to get a sense of the breadth of styles that she incorporates into her music. Laforcade’s voice is raw and lamenting, and you can’t help but be sucked in by her sound. Laforcade also writes poetic texts filled with metaphors and stories with duplicate meaning, particularly ones that connect to the natural world. For this, I recommend checking out ‘De todas las Flores’ and ‘Pajarito Colibrí’. This album is truly a work of art, and each song flowers to the next to create a beautiful story.

### Florist - Florist

Rating: ★★★★★☆



Florist’s music has a melancholic touch to it, an intricate blend of rock, acoustic, and folk. The biggest themes of this album are growing up, family dynamics, and earthly beauty, portrayed by vocalist

Emily Sprague’s minimalistic lyrical style. Songs like *Red Bird Pt.2* and *Dandelion* are some of my personal favorites, particularly because of the balance Sprague strikes with the other

instrumentalists. Their music feels like sitting outside in the early morning and listening to the earth wake up. Florist incorporates sounds from nature into their music, blending them into an enveloping, ambient experience. Songs like *June 9th Nighttime* and *Duet for Guitar and Rain* are excellent examples that I recommend checking out. Some of their work is very experimental and abstract like the three part *Bells*, while other songs are more standard and straightforward. This album is perfect for studying or a walk outside.

### Laurel Hill - Mitski

Rating: ★★★★★



In Laurel Hell, Mitski definitely embraces Pop music more than she ever has. This is ironic because this entire album seems to be a manifestation of how tired she is of the music industry. She has earlier said

that the music world was “shaving away (her) soul little by little.” There are consistent themes of feeling intense pressure and being burnt out, the best example of that is the second song on the album “Working for the Knife,” the title of which, I think, is self-explanatory. Every beat in

this album is mechanical, almost as if making music has become mechanical, robotic, and repetitive for her. Laurel Hell seems to be a midlife crisis of sorts, with lyrics like “I used to think I’d be done by 20. Now at 29, the road ahead appears the same” or “I didn’t know that I was young. I didn’t know what it would take” or “I guess, I guess, I guess this is the end. I’ll have to learn to be somebody else.” As usual, there are songs about heartbreak and lost love, but that’s all in the vein of typical Mitski. I think this is a great album, but next to Mitski’s other works, it’s not as groundbreaking or as heartwrenching or as genuine.

## Midnight - Taylor Swift

Rating: ★★★★★☆



*Midnights*, released on October 21, 2022. However, *Midnight's* 3 a.m. edition was released later on, at 3 a.m. This is a testament to Swift's creativity within song writing, signing and producing her work. She never fails to add

her own spin to her work, dropping unforeseen easter eggs and teasers. Her latest album *Midnights* is an example of this. In my opinion, *Midnights* had one of the most controversial drops in Taylor Swift's history. Critics went to twitter to complain about how "mundane", "boring" and "untaylor swift like" the album was.

The album takes a different approach to Swift's carefully crafted pop princess identity. Songs featured follow a slow beat and always have what Swift is perhaps most known for, a very catchy chorus. Most songs seem to have a common theme, sleepless nights. A personal favorite song of mine is "Paris" released in Swift's 3 a.m. album. "Paris" is unlike most of the other songs as it has a faster beat and swifter coming lines. The opening lines are some of the catchiest and unique lines I have heard. I enjoyed how Swift utilized a narrative element in this song, and I thought that this was a creative spin on a typical conversation Swift may have encountered.

## Renaissance - Beyonce

Rating: ★★★★★★



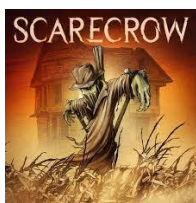
*Renaissance* is very Beyonce. It has her classic touches, her speak-singing, her riffs, and her layered vocals. But there is something distinctly new-age about it. This is a little pre-emptive, but I think this

album could be the blueprint for the future of pop. If that is true, I'm very excited for the coming years. This album contains more dance beats and electro-pop elements, which Beyonce has definitely included before but to this extent. This is great club music, but would also be amazing for a workout, a study session, or a car ride. The album's reminiscent of Azealia Banks, stylistically, but

has been fully adopted and elevated by Beyonce. Definitely Beyoncified. She utilizes Afro-beats, something many western Black artists have been doing in recent years, and it always sounds fantastic. The album cover is perfect because it depicts her god-like and above all, which is the theme of many of her songs. This album is an acknowledgment that she is a pop revolutionary and has changed the music industry forever. As her third song is titled, she really is the "ALIEN SUPERSTAR." Some songs feel more "classically" Beyonce and classically pop, like "CUFF IT" or "PLASTIC OFF THE SOFA" This album should've won album of the year, no contest.

## Scarecrow - Citizen Soldier

Rating: ★★★★★☆



Alternative Rock comes in many shapes and forms, one of which is in Citizen Soldier. Citizen Soldier is a rock band whose music focuses on mental health, depression, anxiety, and abuse. Released on December 14th,

2022, *Scarecrow* contains a brand new collection of 18 songs, such as "Monster Made of Memories,"

"Limit," "Let Me Let Go," "Golden Weather," "I Hate Myself," and more, culminating in the namesake of the album, "Scarecrow." These songs discuss topics such as PTSD, reaching limits, and invalidation. For those who want to let out their trauma with vigor and passion, Citizen Soldier is the band for you. You can find *Scarecrow* and all of Citizen's Solider's previous albums free on Spotify

## emails i can't send - Sabrina Carpenter

Rating: ★★★★★☆



Last year, Sabrina Carpenter released her fifth studio album titled *emails i can't send* with Island Records. The album has 13 songs, and is generally consistent with a pop style.

However, in an interview with Travis Mills, she said she wanted the album to be genreless. Sabrina Carpenter explained that she worked on the album for three years in an, and said it helped her heal through a tough time in her life and understand herself. The song ranges from

upbeat feel good songs like *Read Your Mind* and *Already Over*, to slower ballads like *emails i can't send* and *how many things*. Sabrina incorporates guitar, piano, and synth to vary the styles of each of her songs and give them a unique sound.

“Nonsense” is just a fun song with synth and vocals, and is her most popular song on the album.

In a Genius interview, Carpenter said all of the lyrics she wrote for “Nonsense” were literally nonsense and how it’s about falling in love. My favorite lyric is, “Lookin’ at you got me thinkin’ nonsense.”