



Libby.

The library reading app.



Libby READS

March 26 - April 9

Dear book club friends,

I can still remember the first time I visited the public library in my hometown of Bangor, Maine. It is a grand old stone building, the sort of place where footsteps echo as you enter and the air is cool in summertime, even without air conditioning. Back in those days a polished wooden card catalog lined one wall, an oaken monument to knowledge.

It was a serious place, but the seriousness felt like a form of respectful welcome. Of course the librarians, stern at first blush, were warm and helpful and encouraging. If a kid wanted to smuggle in a hot chocolate on a winter's day and curl up on a chair to read, they would pretend not to see it.

Those experiences left me with a lifelong appreciation for libraries and what they represent. Nowadays the library in Bangor, like so many, plays an even larger role in the community than before, with programs and activities that help people in need and bring us together in an era of dislocation. I value libraries more than ever—and so I am honored to be part of the Libby Reads program and delighted that you chose to read *Meet the Neighbors*.

Back when my book was still a fledgling of an idea, I thought it was going to be about the science of animal intelligence. That's still a big part of it, but *Meet the Neighbors* became much more. It's also a celebration of nature; a reflection on how we think about nature and about animals; and ultimately an invitation to weave a deeper awareness of other animals into your experience of the world around you.

I hope you come away from it with a richer, more joyful connection to all your neighbors, human and nonhuman alike.

Thank you for reading,

Brandon Keim