



February 7-21, 2022

Dear Readers,

I am so delighted that *The Five Wounds* has been selected for OverDrive's Together We Read. I am an enthusiastic library member, and OverDrive is one of the most frequently used apps on my phone, so this honor makes me particularly happy.

Libraries, and the connections I've made through libraries, have always been really important to me. I moved a lot as a child, and the first order of business when we came to a new town was always to get a library card. The librarians always made me feel welcome. I was an avid and indiscriminate reader and remember the thrill of coming home with a stack of new books and the pleasing crinkle of their plastic-wrapped covers as I dove into a new story. Through library programs—story hours and summer reading programs and craft projects and nature talks—I made friends and began to feel a part of the community. As an adult, libraries are also one of my favorite places to write, with their packed shelves and hushed bustle.

Especially in the last two years, books and public libraries have been a lifeline for me. And reading in company is a particular pleasure. Sharing poems and stories and books with friends and discussing them made me feel connected during the pandemic isolation. So it is particularly meaningful that my novel is a part of a community reading program.

*The Five Wounds* is the story of a transformative and challenging year in the lives of one American family. For the Padillas, as with so many of us, family is a source of both pain and comfort. They keep coming back to each other for solace and care and connection—and they're also stuck with each other in ways that sometimes drive them nuts. My book is about the power of community and family to come together to heal old wounds.

My greatest hope is that a reader will come to care for my characters and root for them, and perhaps even come to think of the Padillas as members of their own community.

I know how precious a reader's time and attention are, and I'm so grateful to you for spending that precious time with my book.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Kirstin