



The Book of Speculation: A Novel

Erika Swyler

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One of BuzzFeed's 24 Best Fiction Books of 2015

"As Simon, a lonely research librarian, searches frantically for the key to a curse that might be killing the women in his family, he learns strange and fascinating secrets about their past. A tale full of magic and family mystery, *The Book of Speculation* will keep you up all night reading."—Isaac Fitzgerald, BuzzFeed

Simon Watson, a young librarian, lives alone in a house that is slowly crumbling toward the Long Island Sound. His parents are long dead. His mother, a circus mermaid who made her living by holding her breath, drowned in the very water his house overlooks. His younger sister, Enola, ran off six years ago and now reads tarot cards for a traveling carnival.

One June day, an old book arrives on Simon's doorstep, sent by an antiquarian bookseller who purchased it on speculation. Fragile and water damaged, the book is a log from the owner of a traveling carnival in the 1700s, who reports strange and magical things, including the drowning death of a circus mermaid. Since then, generations of "mermaids" in Simon's family have drowned--always on July 24, which is only weeks away.

As his friend Alice looks on with alarm, Simon becomes increasingly worried about his sister. Could there be a curse on Simon's family? What does it have to do with the book, and can he get to the heart of the mystery in time to save Enola?

In the tradition of Sara Gruen's *Water for Elephants*, Erin Morgenstern's *The Night Circus*, and Elizabeth Kostova's *The Historian*, *The Book of Speculation*--with two-color illustrations by the author--is Erika Swyler's moving debut novel about the power of books, family, and magic.

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