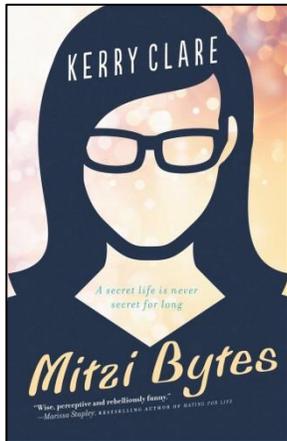


# Spotlight on Books



With the recent news concerning Cambridge Analytica and stories surrounding Facebook's role in the 2016 election, social media is finally starting to have its Big Tobacco moment: people are discussing the detrimental effects on society. These are some of the more obvious ways but social media has also had some real insidious ramifications in our day to day lives, in our relationships.

In *Mitzi Bytes*, Kerry Clare explores one of the earlier forms of social media telling a fictional story about a popular blogger whose real identity is suddenly under threat of exposure. Keeping a daily online record of her everyday life, Sarah Lundy, as Mitzi has grown quite a following over the years, even getting a book deal in the process. Though she's also kept the identity of her friends and acquaintances disguised in her blog posts, it was still just a matter of time that someone recognized herself. Not always portraying everyone in a favorable light and not shying away from controversial opinions, it was also not surprising that such a reader would be offended.

Especially important in this novel is the notion on online anonymity, provoking readers to question the freedom it provides as well as the responsibilities.

Of course, author Kerry Clare (a blogger herself) could have delved into this discussion as a non-fiction investigation but that wouldn't have been nearly as compelling. *Mitzi Bytes* works largely in the first in the first half of the book as a mystery novel. There are many potential blackmailers and figuring out the culprit and his or her motivation will likely keep most readers hooked.

Credit should also be given to Clare's deft hand at portraying flawed characters in authentic situations. No one comes across as completely innocent and there are no hard or fast answers given. It nonetheless provides great fodder to reconsider how the way we behave online.

John Mutford, Library Manager

April 13, 2018