

# All Iowa Reads Program Resources

The 2022 All Iowa Reads selection for adults is *The Butterfly Effect* by Rachel Mans McKenny.

## About the Book

Is there such a thing as an *anti*-social butterfly? If there were, Greta Oto would know about it--and totally relate. An entomologist, Greta far prefers the company of bugs to humans, and that's okay, because people don't seem to like her all that much anyway, with the exception of her twin brother, Danny, though they've recently had a falling out. So when she lands a research gig in the rainforest, she leaves it all behind.

But when Greta learns that Danny has suffered an aneurysm and is now hospitalized, she abandons her research and hurries home to the middle of nowhere America to be there for her brother. But there's only so much she can do, and unfortunately just like insects, humans don't stay cooped up in their hives either--they buzz about and... socialize. Coming home means confronting all that she left behind, including her lousy soon-to-be sister-in-law, her estranged mother, and her ex-boyfriend Brandon who has conveniently found a new non-lab-exclusive partner with shiny hair, perfect teeth, and can actually remember the names of the people she meets right away. Being that Brandon runs the only butterfly conservatory in town, and her dissertation is now in jeopardy, taking that job, being back home, it's all creating chaos of Greta's perfectly catalogued and compartmentalized world. But real life is messy, and Greta will have to ask herself if she has the courage to open up for the people she loves, and for those who want to love her.

*The Butterfly Effect* is an unconventional tale of self-discovery, navigating relationships, and how sometimes it takes stepping outside of our comfort zone to find what we need the most.

## Book Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the author meant to convey that Greta had Autism Spectrum Disorder? Why or why not?
2. What makes Greta a realistic protagonist?
3. Danny's fiancé, Meg, is almost the exact opposite of Greta in many ways. Why does Greta dislike her so much?
4. Would the relationship between Max and Greta (and therefore, Max and Meg) been different had Max told Greta about his mom?
5. The book explores several different neurological issues (ASD, brain injury, addiction and synesthesia). What did the book get right? What did it get wrong?
6. Have you known anyone who has suffered from a brain injury, for any reason? What challenges does a nonvisible injury present versus an obvious physically problem, like a broken leg? Is there a correlation to their experience and Danny's?
7. What do butterflies symbolize in this story? What about ants? Why do you think the author chose these insects?
8. The book is separated into four parts (seasons). Why do you think the author chose to distinguish the passing of time in this way?
9. Regarding Chapter 26: What do you think would have happened if Greta had stayed-in the US? In Costa Rica?
10. This setting of this story is real. If you've visited Reiman Gardens, how did this book change your impression of the place? If you've never been there, are you interested in going now? Why or why not?

## About Author Rachel Mans McKenny

Rachel Mans McKenny is a humorist, essayist, and fiction writer from the Midwest. Her work can be found in *The New York Times*, *Elle*, *The Washington Post*, and other publications. *The Butterfly Effect* is her first novel. You can find more about her at [rachelmansmckenny.com](http://rachelmansmckenny.com) or on Twitter [@rmmckenny](https://twitter.com/rmmckenny).



## Reviews and Interviews

Reviews and interviews with Rachel Mans McKenny and other information about *The Butterfly Effect*:

- Iowa Public Radio, Talk of Iowa: *New Novel "The Butterfly Effect" Brings Readers to Ames*, December 15, 2020, Charite Nebbe interviewer: [New Novel "The Butterfly Effect" Brings Readers To Ames | Iowa Public Radio](#)
- Radio Iowa: "ISU author's book chosen for All Iowa Reads Program", November 18, 2021, by Matt Kelley: [ISU author's book chosen for All Iowa Reads Program - Radio Iowa](#)
- The Debutante Ball (online publication): Interview with Rachel Mans McKenny, author of *The Butterfly Effect*, November 4, 2020, by Ehsaneh: [Interview with Rachel Mans McKenny, author of THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT – The Debutante Ball](#)
- "A warm, winning debut from a talented new Midwestern voice." – J. Ryan Stradal, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*.
- "*A Man Called Ove* meets *The Rosie Project* in this "delightfully off-kilter" tale of a grumpy introvert, her astonishing lack of social skills and empirical data-driven approach to people and relationships." -- Rachel Yoder, award-winning author of *Nightbitch*.

## Find Copies of *The Butterfly Effect* to Borrow

Find out which Iowa libraries have copies of *The Butterfly Effect* to borrow, or find out how to request sets for discussion groups.

### Find in Iowa Libraries:

- **Locate Iowa libraries** that have copies to lend.

### Find on Bridges: Iowa's eLibrary:

- **Borrow the audiobook**
- **Borrow the ebook**

### Multiple Copies for Discussion Groups:

- **For individuals:** To request a discussion group book set, contact your local public library to arrange access.
- **For libraries:** Each of the six District Offices for the State Library offers copies for libraries to borrow. **Contact your local district office** to reserve a set.