"When Streaming is Too Stressful…"   by Dennis May, KTL staff

While I love books, I consider myself to be more of a movie buff than a bibliophile. With today's streaming services with an unlimited supply of movies to watch, it's easier than ever to find something to watch. Or is it a chore? I can't tell you how much time I waste scrolling through dozens of queues containing hundreds of movies trying to find the perfect movie that suits my current mood. Yes, I'm a movie buff, but I am also very picky. Every time I sit down on the couch and turn on the television, I open one of our many streaming apps and spend fifteen minutes browsing list after list of movies until I give up, turning to another streaming app only to browse another set of lists for another ten minutes until I finally find the one perfect movie (or, sometimes, never find it and switch the TV to a baseball game instead). The main reason I spend close to half an hour looking for a movie to watch is that I want to answer the following question: Do I want to spend my evening visiting an old favorite, indulging in a guilty pleasure, or finally watching that one movie I keep telling myself that I'll get to?

Luckily for us, we don't have to go through all of this trouble. While the Kirkland Town Library's movie collection is extensive, it isn't as daunting and exhausting as browsing through millions of titles. The collection houses something for everyone and, to help relieve your indecision anxiety, I'll share with you one of my old favorites, one guilty pleasure, and that one movie that's been sitting in my queue forever.

"Vertigo" (1958) has been a favorite of mine for years. Nobody can dispute Alfred Hitchcock's mastery of suspense, and it's on full display in this one. The late great Jimmy Stewart stars as a former detective who turned private investigator after developing a fear of heights. Stewart's character follows the wife of an old acquaintance to discover why she is behaving "strangely" -- and, yes, you might have guessed that all is not as it seems. It's suspenseful, jarring, but because it stars everyone's favorite classic movie star Stewart, it is also very comforting. I especially like to watch this film in the early stages of fall. This movie can be found in the KTL's classic section.

My definition of a guilty pleasure movie is one that may not have received critical praise, but you find yourself watching more than once a year because it's both nostalgic and comforting. That movie for me is "Legally Blonde" (2001). This feel-good story starring Reese Witherspoon as a bubbly sorority girl following her ex-boyfriend to Harvard Law School is hilarious, colorful, romantic, and charming. I especially like to watch Witherspoon's Elle Woods navigate her way from a joke to a judicial hero after I've had a gloomy day; I dare you to attempt to watch this movie without a smile on your face from beginning to end. You can find "Legally Blonde" among KTL's collection.

Nicolas Cage has become synonymous with over the top acting and, of late, terrible movies. "The Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent" (2022), I've heard, is the exception. What looks fun about this one is that Cage, starring as Nic Cage, is parodying himself as a struggling actor who can't land his next big role. After accepting a grand sum to attend the birthday party of one of his superfans, things take a disastrous turn when he is recruited by the CIA to take down an arms dealer. Word of mouth says that this movie is a must watch, and I'll be checking it out very soon from KTL's new movie collection.

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If you are like me and spend more time deciding on a movie to watch than actually enjoying the film, I invite you to join me on an experiment. Close those streaming apps, throw your smart television's remote to the other side of the couch, take a quick visit to your library, and randomly choose three or four DVDs from their vast collection. We might end up finding a few brand new favorites.