



SHOW, DON'T TELL

**The Rhetorical Power of Storytelling
in Conversations on Abortion**

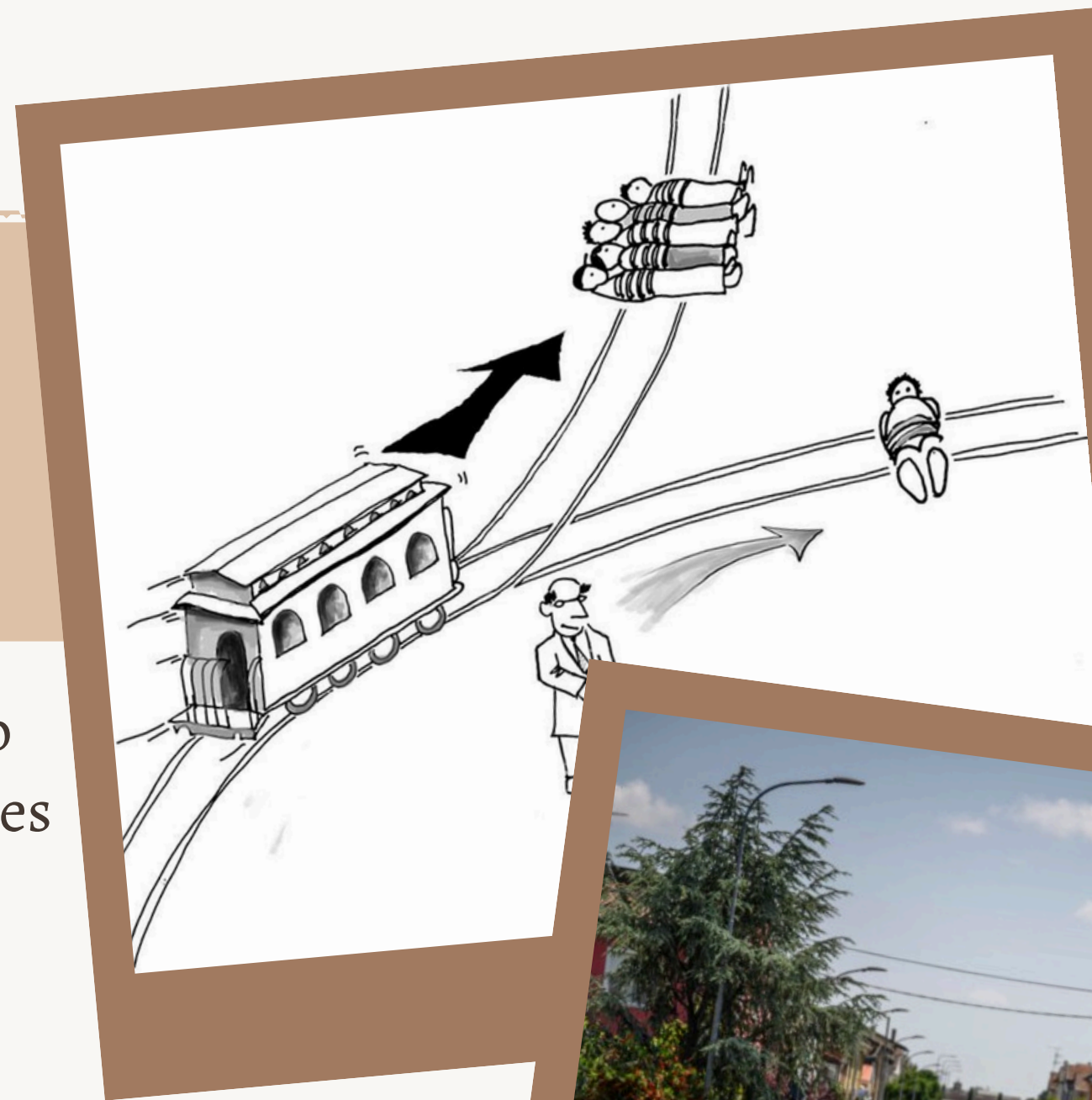
McKenna Anderson

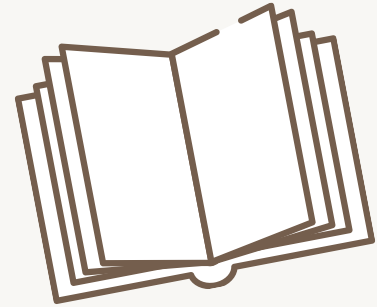
Early Inspirations

- It was important to my dad that I was exposed to new ideas and experiences, something that stories could provide me
- Various classes at CLU, including:
 - The Inklings with Dr. Carlson
 - Imagining Climate Crisis with Dr. Rasmussen.
 - Philosophy courses

Stories aid in “de-abstracting”:

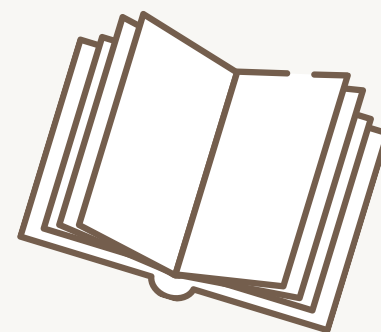
Causing otherwise normalized/abstracted issues to be seen in a new light, bridging the gap between the facts and cognition





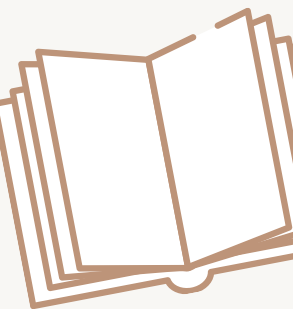
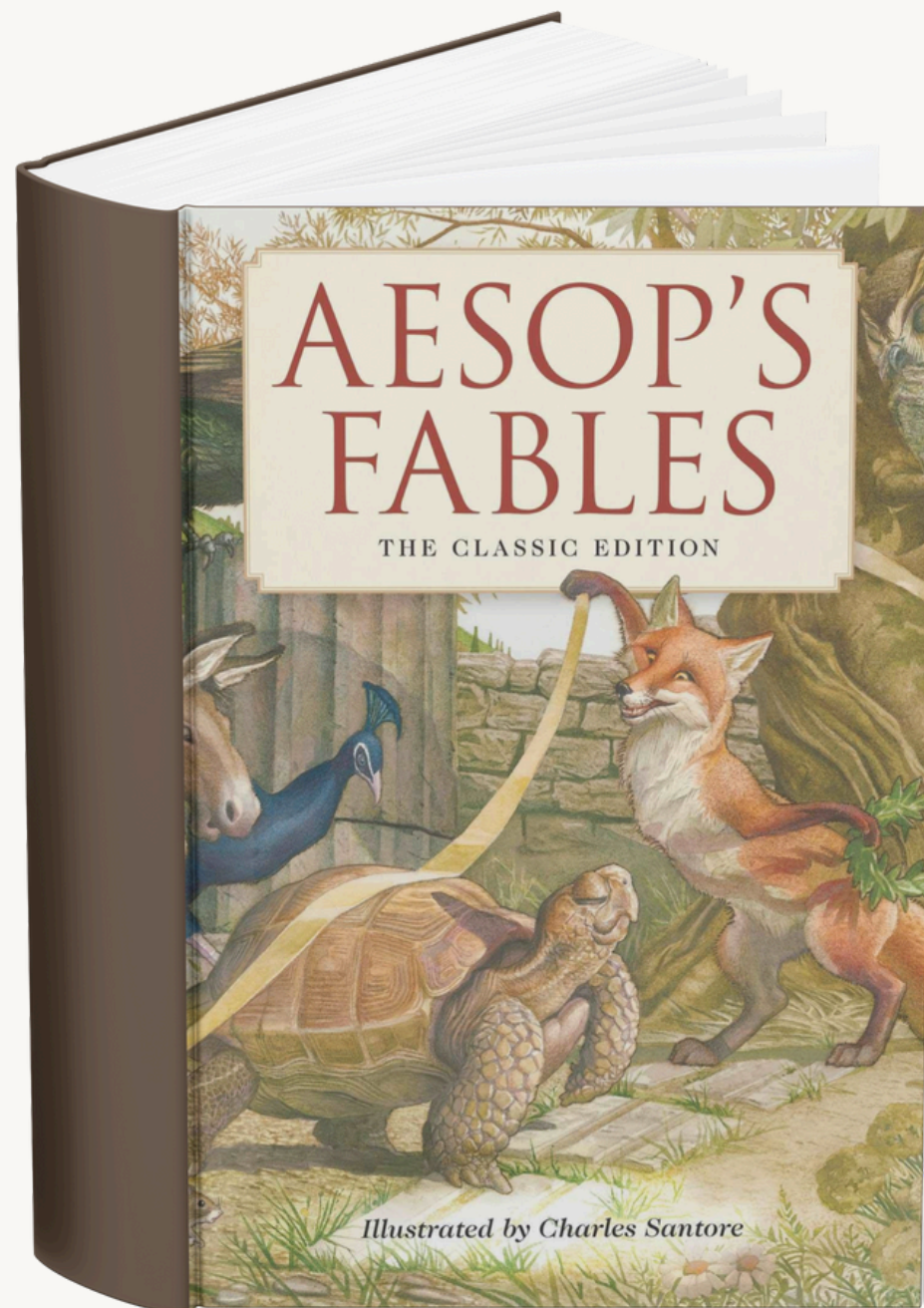
Erin Morgenstern, *The Night Circus*

“From the mundane to the profound. You may tell a tale that takes up residence in someone's soul, becomes their blood and self and purpose. That tale will move them and drive them and who knows what they might do because of it, because of your words.”

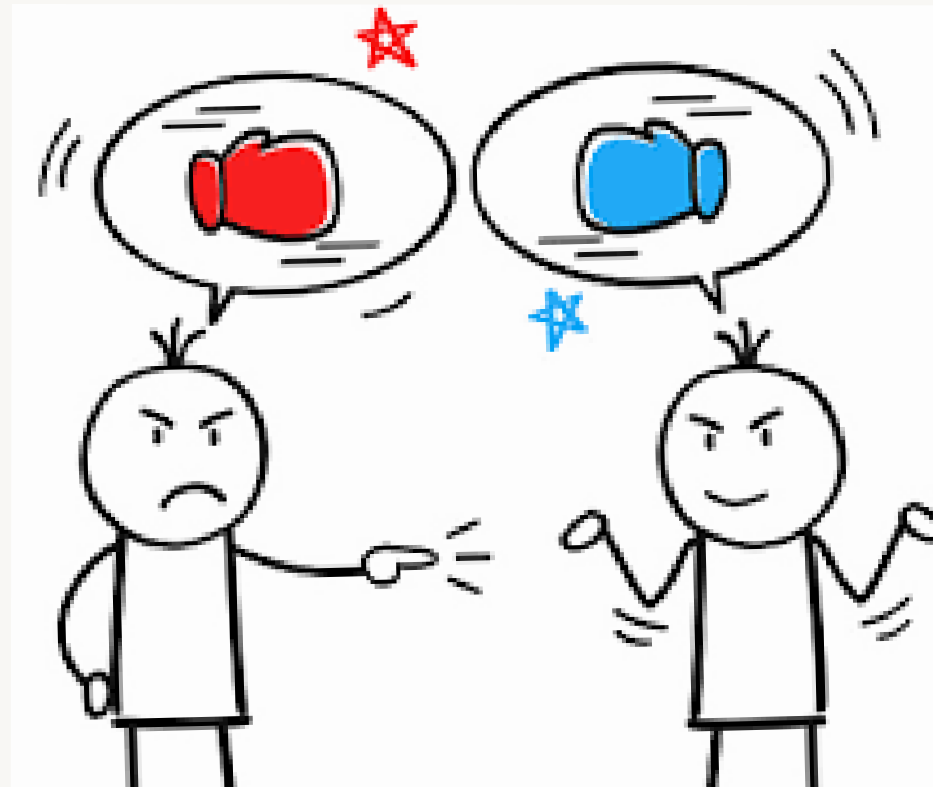


Aesop's Fables

~ teaching lessons through stories ~



Political Hyper-polarization



Stories can and do serve as an empathetic, accessible, and rhetorically powerful way in on these types of conversations. Stories help bridge the gap between the facts and cognition of otherwise large, abstracted issues like abortion.



Storytelling in the Classroom

according to psychologist Melanie Green

Purposes of storytelling


- Create interest
- Easier to remember
- Familiar and accessible mode of learning
- Improve relationship between the student and teacher



The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood

handmaid's tale abortion


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 Arizona Mirror

'I don't want 'The Handmaid's Tale': Abortion access drives AZ delegates to get out the vote

Democrats in Arizona view the fight over reproductive rights as a key to victory in November. The strategy is front and center at the Democratic National...

Aug 21, 2024





 The New Republic

Georgia Restores Abortion Ban After Judge's "Handmaid's Tale" Warning

The Georgia Supreme Court has reinstated the state's draconian abortion ban. A woman wearing an outfit from The Handmaid's tale stands on the...

1 month ago





 The Independent

Georgia judge invokes The Handmaid's Tale while striking down state's six-week abortion ban

Judge Robert McBurney's stunning order states that 'women are not some piece of collectively owned community property' to be legislated.

1 month ago




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 The Hill

Texas's Handmaid's Tale gives everyone but women reproductive control

A recent Texas case is testing just how much control a woman actually has over her body in a world without a constitutional right to abortion.

May 13, 2024



 The Atlantic

I Invented Gilead. The Supreme Court Is Making It Real.

I thought I was writing fiction in The Handmaid's Tale.

May 13, 2022



 Idaho Statesman

'Women are not free': Idaho protesters rally in Boise with 'Handmaid's Tale' costumes

National Organization for Women members protested against Idaho abortion laws in downtown Boise on anniversary of reversal of Roe v. Wade.

Jun 24, 2024



A message from Margaret Atwood on 11/1/24, shared via X

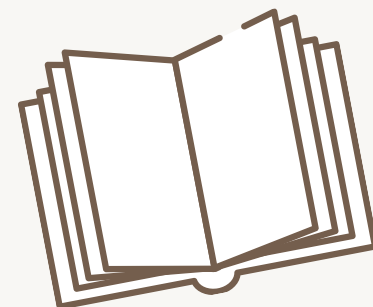
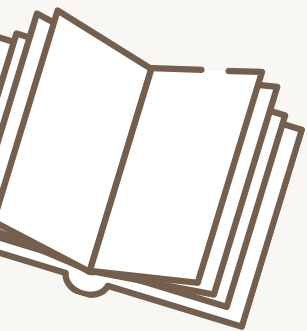




Brandon Sanderson



“It’s about writing something that makes my readers feel what it’s like to be someone else. It’s about dreaming, about imagination, and about making you—for a short time—be someone else and experience their world... Maybe those who read our books will be a little more kind and understanding to those they meet who are from different segments of the population.”





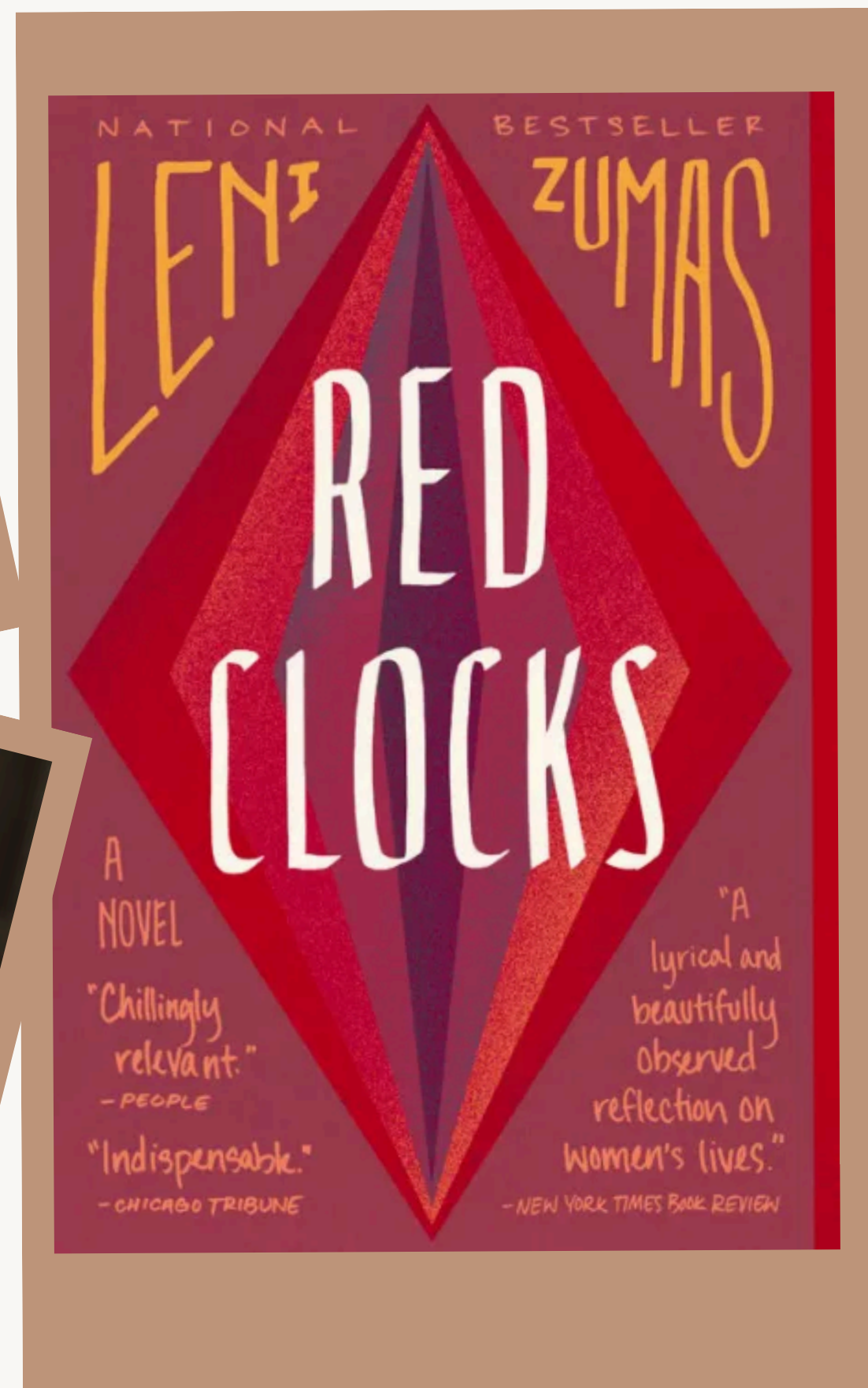
Fictional storytelling

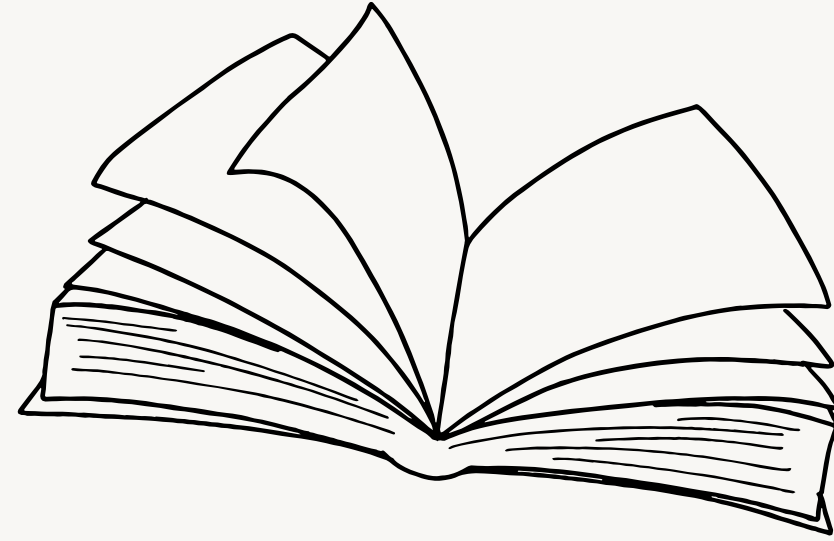
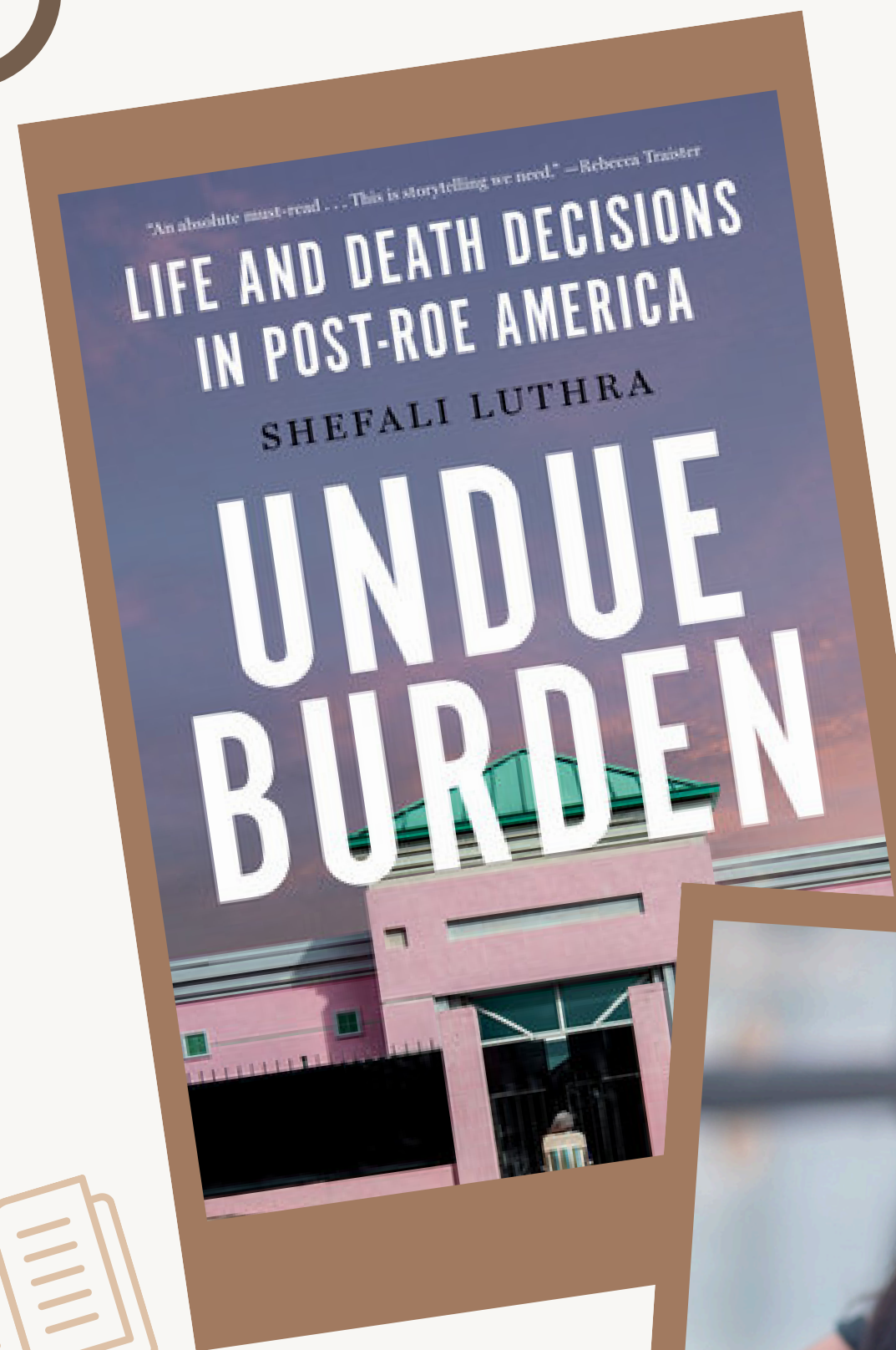
Setting:

“abortion is illegal, in vitro fertilization is banned, and the Personhood Amendment grants rights of life, liberty, and property to every embryo.”

Follows the stories of 5 women affected in different ways by the Personhood Amendment

One of these women is Mattie, a sixteen year-old girl dealing with an unplanned and unwanted pregnancy





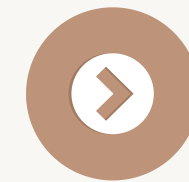
Weaving facts and stories



"...there were too many patients left, and the lawyers had told them every procedure had to be done by midnight"



When Senate Bill 8 went into effect, "overnight, they had become not just abortion providers, but also grief counselors"

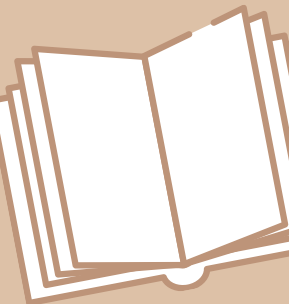


Facts, real experiences, and emotions all need to coexist.



Key Points

- Storytelling and the humanities are **important**!!
- Bridges the gap between abstract ideas, facts, and human experiences
- Allows people to step into another's shoes and increases empathy and understanding





THANK YOU