



What Is It?
How Does It Work?
And Should **YOU** Be On It?

Who I Am

- On Substack since September 2025
- Grew from 0 to 217 subscribers
- Have managed 3 WordPress websites, plus other websites

Download these slides at
jeremypmadsen.com/substack



What is Substack?

~~A new social media site~~

What is Substack?

~~A new social media site~~

~~The magic new thing that will finally
help you make millions overnight.~~

What is Substack?

A ready-out-of-the-box combined blog and newsletter platform that has built-in paid subscription capabilities, podcasting hosting capability, and social discoverability features.

Blogging platform

- Posts are the “backbone” of your Substack site
- Like Wordpress, Medium, or Wix

Past the Dragon

Home Notes Archive About



100 Most Influential Fantasy Titles of All Time

An exhaustively researched work in progress . . .

JAN 4 • CLIFFORD STUMME

Latest Top Discussions

The Most Disappointing Fantasy Novel to Ever Break the Genre

And How It Insults Modern Fantasy Readers

DEC 1, 2024 • CLIFFORD STUMME



jeremypmadsen@precep

Subscribe

Recommendations

A Work Of Fiction

Hanna Delaney

Falden's Forge

Eric Falden

Is Tolkien Old-Fashioned? What Happens when Substackers Dissect "On Fairy-Stories." Pt. 5: Highlights from the Community

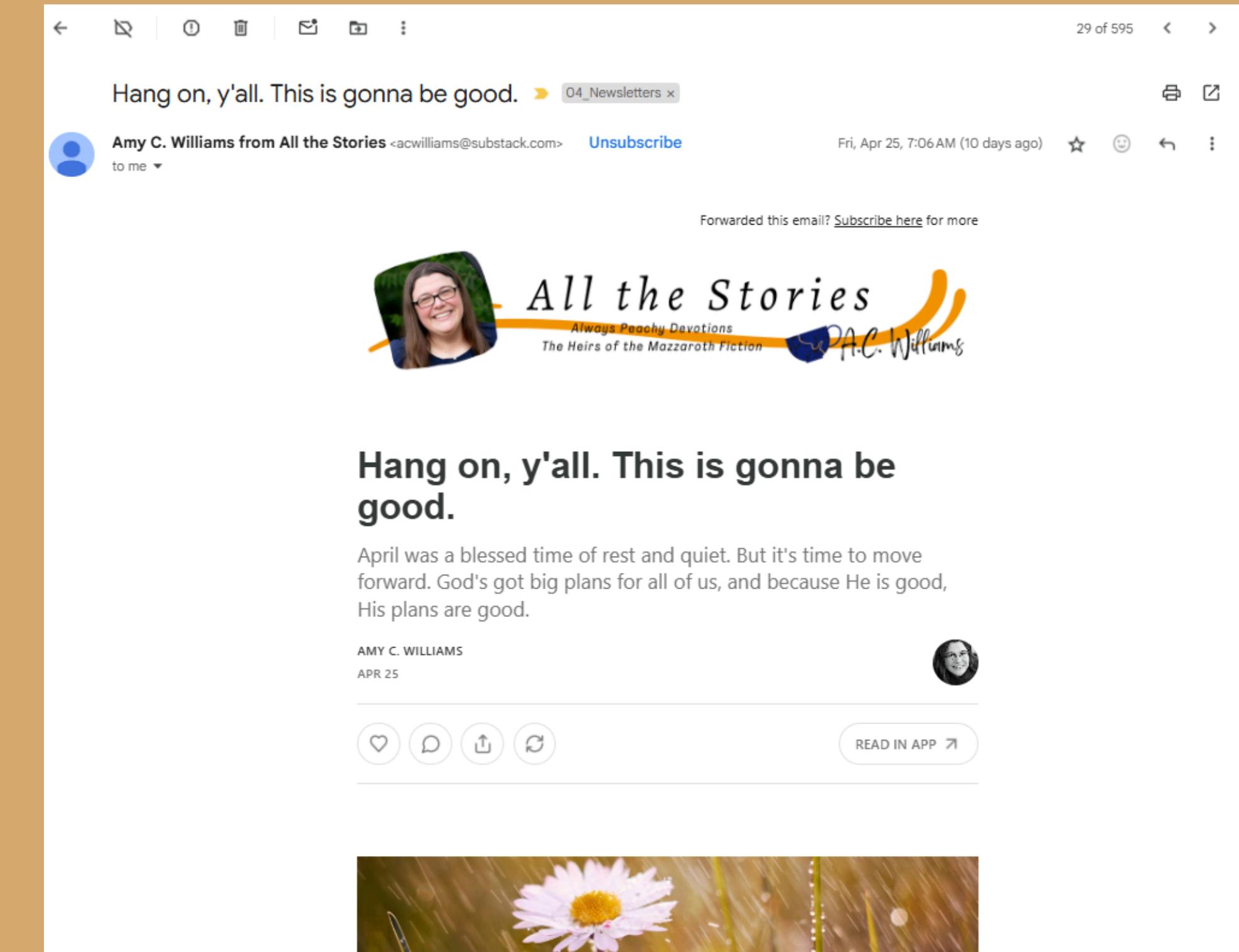
PUBLISHED ON FALDEN'S FORGE • OCT 30, 2024

Tolkien Gives George R. R. Martin the Smack



Email newsletter platform

- When you publish a post, your post is sent as an email to your subscribers

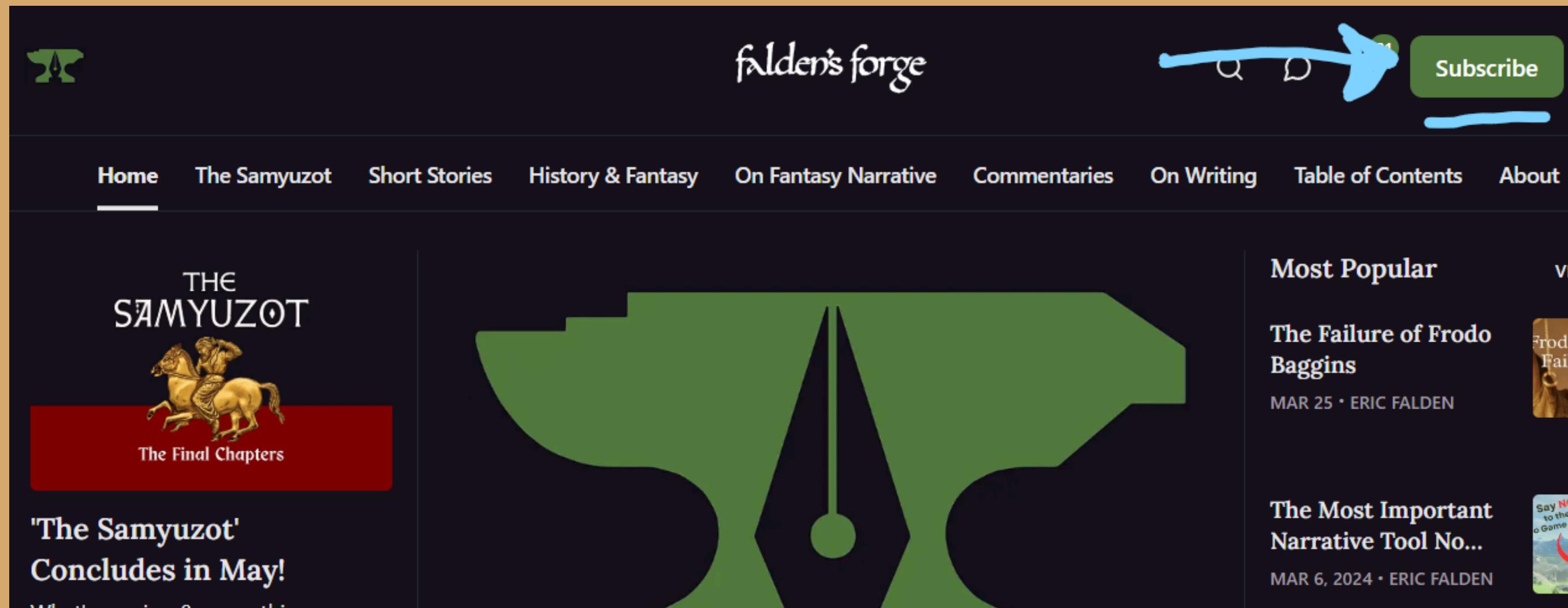


The screenshot shows an email interface with the following details:

- Subject:** Hang on, y'all. This is gonna be good. (29 of 595)
- From:** Amy C. Williams from All the Stories <acwilliams@substack.com> (Unsubscribe)
- Date:** Fri, Apr 25, 7:06 AM (10 days ago)
- Text Preview:** Hang on, y'all. This is gonna be good.
- Image:** A portrait photo of Amy C. Williams with the text "All the Stories" and "Always Peachy Devotions The Heirs of the Mazzaroth Fiction" below it, and "A.C. Williams" with a signature flourish.
- Text Content:** Hang on, y'all. This is gonna be good.
April was a blessed time of rest and quiet. But it's time to move forward. God's got big plans for all of us, and because He is good, His plans are good.
- Author Information:** AMY C. WILLIAMS (APR 25)
- Interaction Buttons:** Heart, Reply, Forward, Refresh.
- Read In App:** READ IN APP
- Image at the bottom:** A close-up photo of a white daisy flower with water droplets.

Built-in subscription features

- Subscribe button on every page



Built-in subscription features

- Pop-up sign-up form for new website visitors

falden's forge



Where I hammer out my stories. Join this ragtag fellowship to explore the intersection of history, narrative, and the fantasy genre. Adventure awaits.

By Eric Falden · Over 1,000 subscribers

Type your email...

By subscribing, I agree to Substack's [Terms of Use](#) and acknowledge its [Information Collection Notice](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

[Let me read it first! >](#)

"Insightful essays on writing fantasy and historical fiction with stories to go along side."

Redd Oscar, [ReddOscarWrites - Fantasy, SciFi, and Horror](#)

"Eric is a brilliant writer, mixing history with fantasy...not only entertaining us, but bringing new life and depth to the genre we love! Subscribe!!"

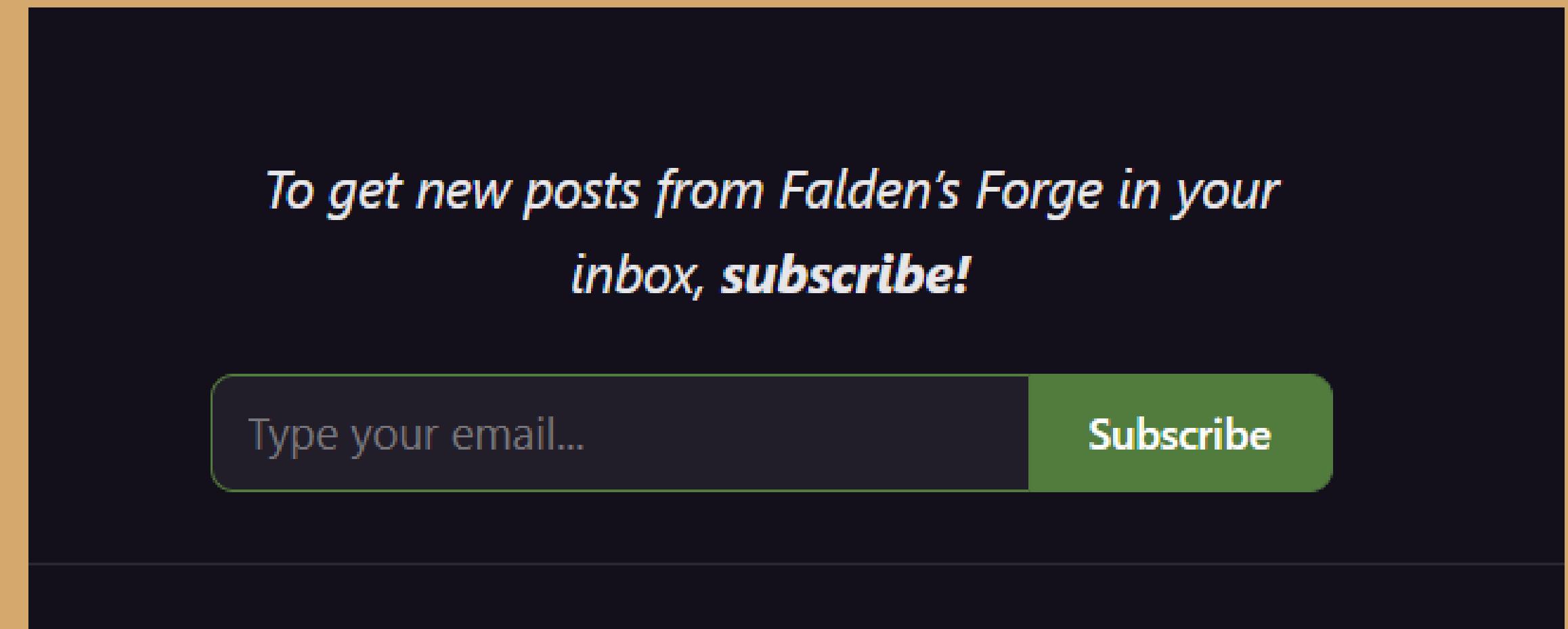
Jaime Buckley, [Life of Fiction](#)

"Profound essays on Fantasy narrative, history, and genre as well as Fantasy stories themselves! Eric especially likes to talk about Tolkien and Medieval history's impact on Fantasy."

Clifford Stumme, [Past the Dragon](#)

Built-in subscription features

- In-line subscribe buttons in your posts



Podcast hosting

- Super easy to add a podcast
- Podcast episodes pushed out as emails to your subscribers, just like other posts
- RSS pushed out to all the major podcast distributors (Spotify, Apple Podcasts, YouTube, Amazon Music, etc.)

The screenshot shows a Substack podcast episode page. At the top, there's a header with the author's photo, name, and a search bar. The main content area features a large image of a winged creature, likely a griffin, with its wings spread wide. Below the image, the episode title is displayed: "The Pyromancer's Scroll - Chapter 18: To Think on One's Feet". The episode is set to play at 1x speed, with a 15-second skip button and a 30-second fast-forward button. The play button is in the center. A progress bar shows the episode is at 0:00 of a 14:54 duration. To the right of the main image, there are social sharing icons for heart, comment, and share, each with a count of 3, 12, and 3 respectively. Below these icons is a "Share" button and a "Transcript" button. At the bottom of the main content area, there are buttons for "Chapter 17: Unexpected Cargo" and "All Chapters". To the right of the main content, there's a sidebar with a summary of the story: "The Pyromancer's Scroll - A clean serialized epic fantasy novel. A fantasy world with an afterlife. A fire mage who finds out he's headed for the wrong side of it. Read by the author. New chapters released every Tuesday morning. This story is appropriate for all audiences PG and up." At the very bottom right, there are links for "Listen on" with icons for Substack App, Spotify, RSS Feed, and Email mobile setup link.

Paid Subscriptions

- You can activate paid subscriptions and monetize your content
- You can put some or all of your content behind this paywall
- You set the price (\$5/month minimum)
- You can set up to 3 paid tiers

Choose a subscription plan

Individual

Group

Gift

Monthly

\$5/month

- Subscriber-only posts and features
- Post comments and join the community

Select

Annual

\$50/year (\$4.17/month)

- Subscriber-only posts and features
- Post comments and join the community
- 17% cheaper than subscribing monthly

Select

Founding Member

\$ 150 / year

- Subscriber-only posts and features
- Post comments and join the community
- Personal updates on the policy and political work you are supporting at TLP

Select

None

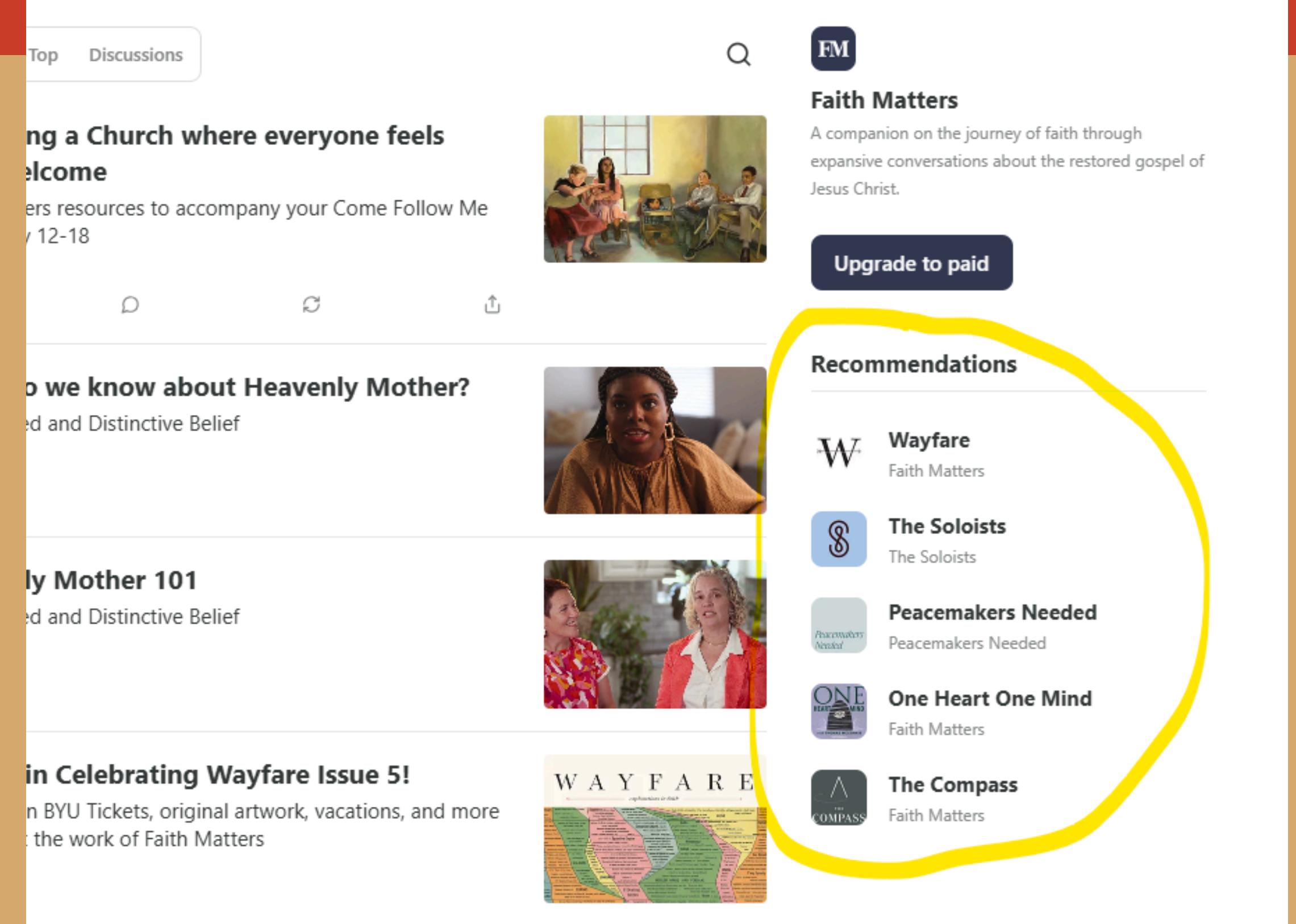
Free

- Subscriber-only posts and features
- Post comments and join the community
- Occasional public posts

Select

Social Discovery Features

- You can recommend other Substacks on your home page



Top Discussions

Q

Faith Matters

A companion on the journey of faith through expansive conversations about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Upgrade to paid

Recommendations

- Wayfare**
Faith Matters
- The Soloists**
The Soloists
- Peacemakers Needed**
Peacemakers Needed
- One Heart One Mind**
Faith Matters
- The Compass**
Faith Matters

ng a Church where everyone feels welcome
ers resources to accompany your Come Follow Me / 12-18

o we know about Heavenly Mother?
ed and Distinctive Belief

Heavenly Mother 101
ed and Distinctive Belief

in Celebrating Wayfare Issue 5!
n BYU Tickets, original artwork, vacations, and more the work of Faith Matters

W

§

Peacemakers Needed

ONE HEART ONE MIND

△

THE COMPASS

WAYFARE

Social Discovery Features

- When someone subscribes to you, they're prompted to subscribe to other Substacks you have recommended.

Get Faith's recommendations

People and publications recommended by Faith Matters

> Follow 1 person 



▼ Subscribe for free to 3 publications   



Peacemakers Needed

A hub to share ideas, practices, and opportunities that support bridge-building efforts happening around us—locally, globally, in our homes, and in our hearts.

 **Wayfare**

By Faith Matters

Explorations in Faith



 **The Soloists**

Nourishing conversations on singleness, dating, relationships, and religion. A new podcast by Faith Matters Foundation.

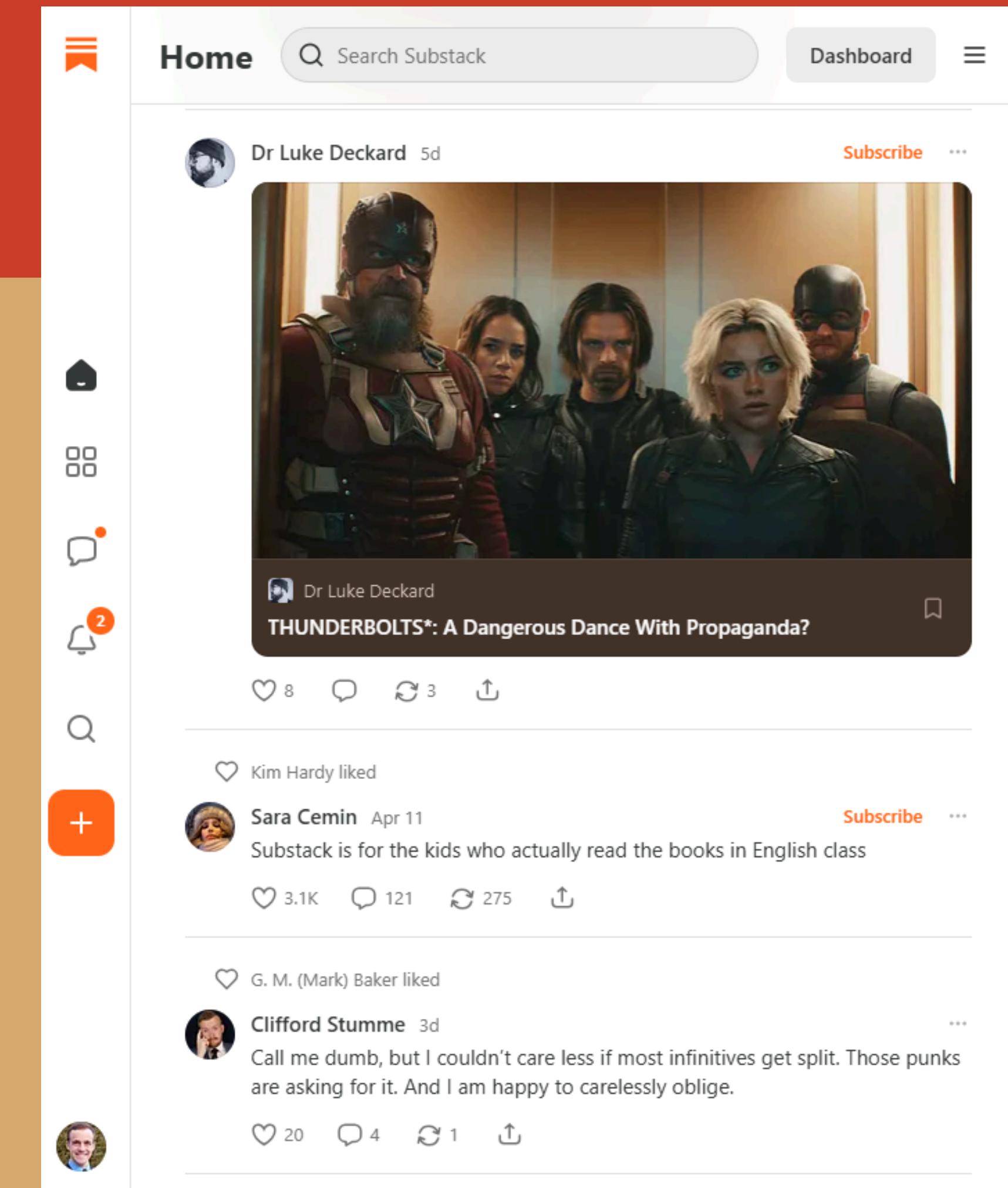


Continue

Skip

Substack Notes

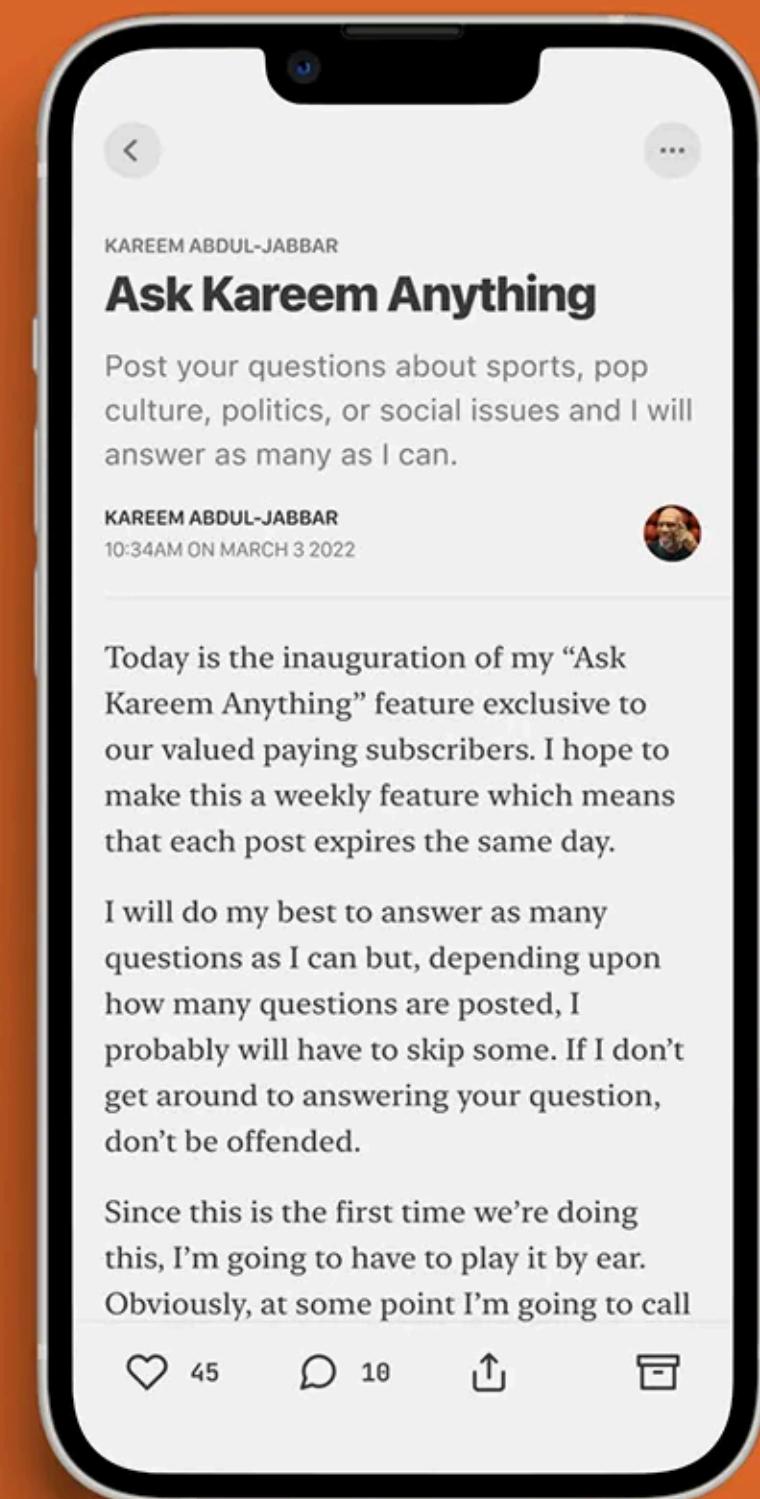
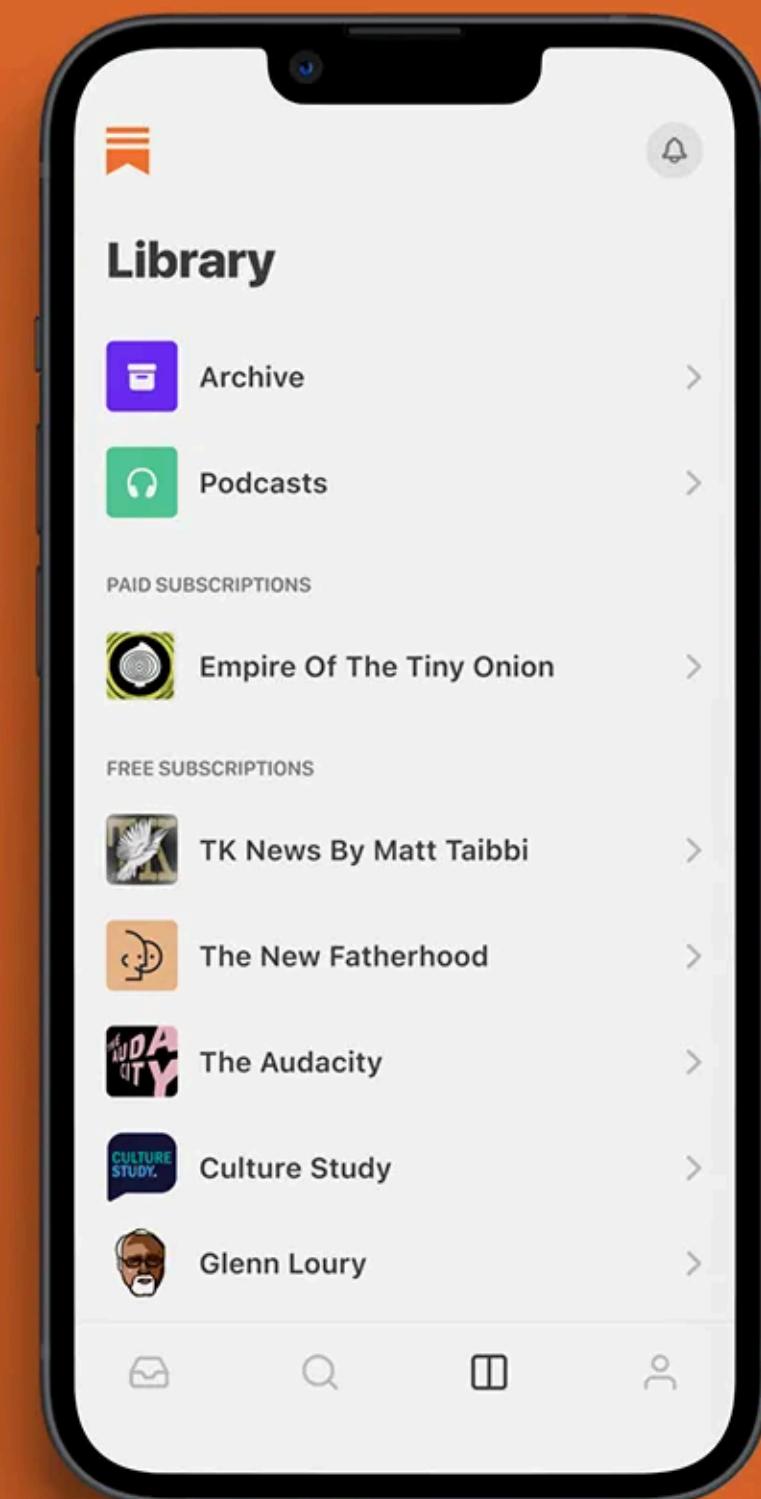
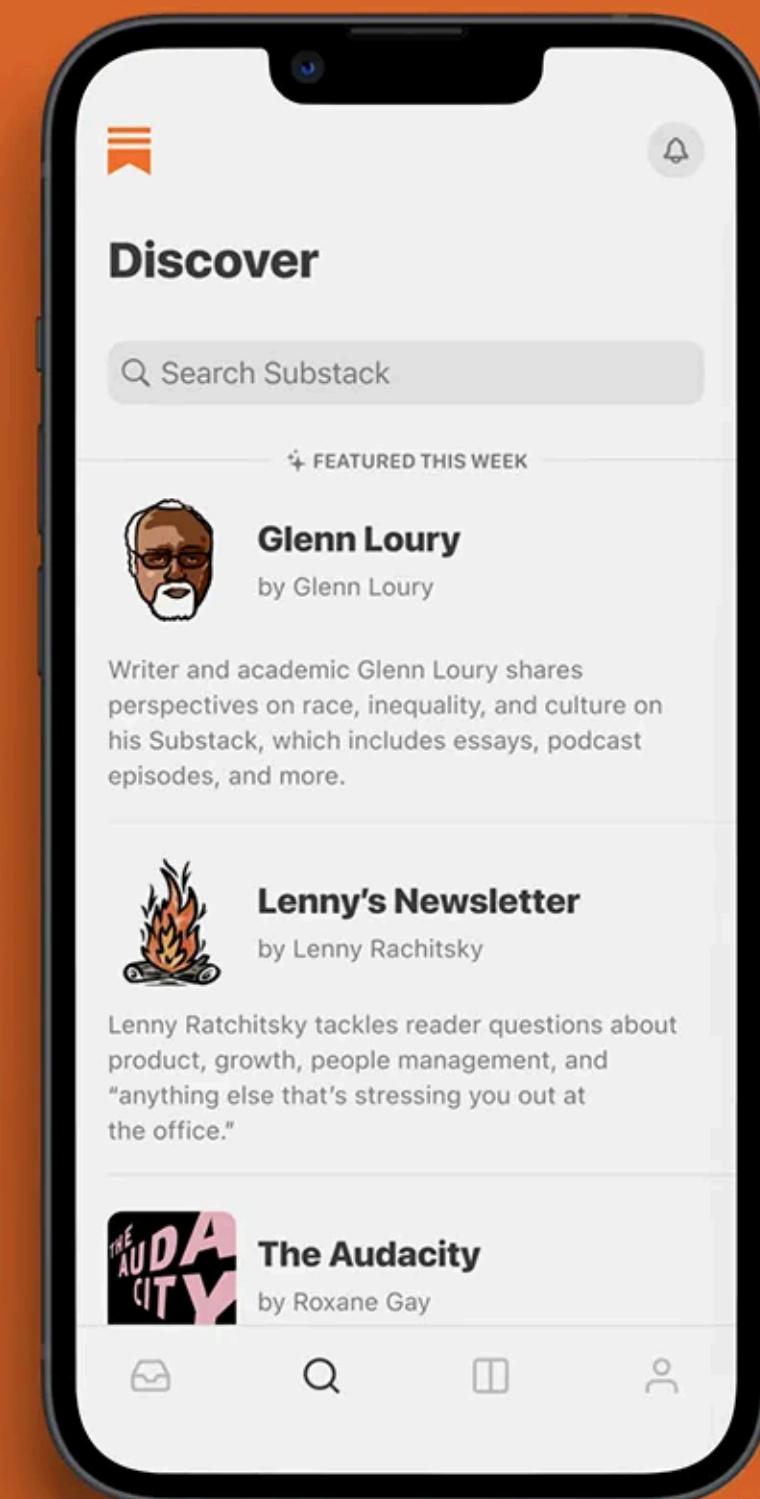
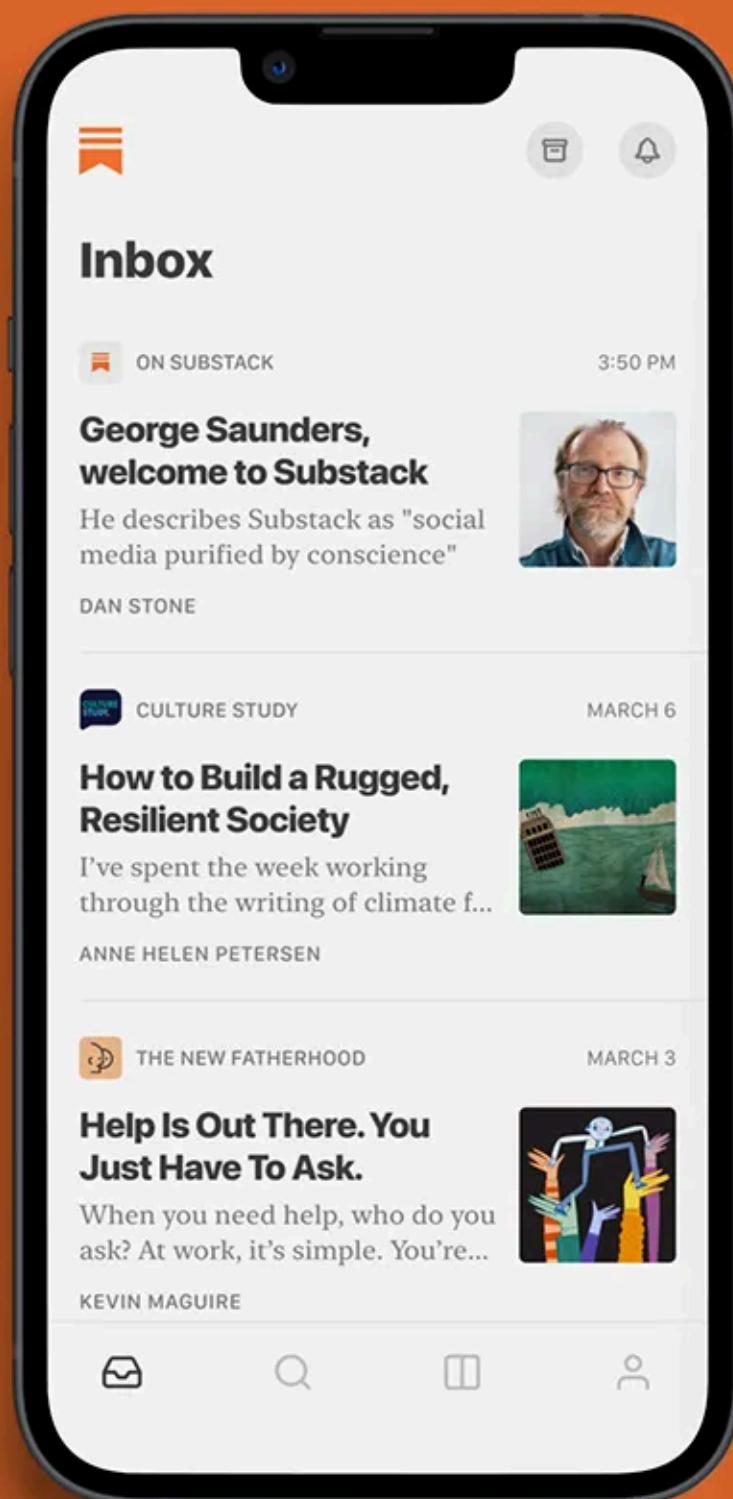
- A Twitter-like feed of short posts (“Notes”)
- You can post text, images, and links (no videos ~~yet~~)
- Great place to connect . . . with other Substack writers
- A bit clunky



The screenshot shows the Substack Notes interface. On the left is a sidebar with icons for Home, Dashboard, and a menu. The main area is the 'Home' feed, which includes a search bar and a 'Subscribe' button. The feed displays three posts:

- Dr Luke Deckard 5d**: A post featuring a group of characters from the movie 'The Thunderbolts'. The post title is "THUNDERBOLTS*: A Dangerous Dance With Propaganda?". It has 8 likes, 3 comments, and a share icon.
- Sara Cemin Apr 11**: A post with the text "Substack is for the kids who actually read the books in English class". It has 3.1K likes, 121 comments, and 275 shares.
- Clifford Stumme 3d**: A post with the text "Call me dumb, but I couldn't care less if most infinitives get split. Those punks are asking for it. And I am happy to carelessly oblige.". It has 20 likes, 4 comments, and 1 share.

Substack App



Recap: What is Substack?

A ready-out-of-the-box combined blog and newsletter platform that has built-in paid subscription capabilities, podcasting hosting capability, and social discoverability features.

Substack's Business Model

- No up-front cost or monthly fees
- They keep 10% of your paid subscription revenue
- THAT'S IT!

Substack's Business Model

- What this means
 - No ads
 - They make money only when you make money
 - Incentivizes reader loyalty, quality content, and high-value, high trust relationships
 - No incentives for clickbait, rant wars, viral flash in the pans, or superficial content

So, Should You Use Substack?

Advantages of Substack:

- No up-front cost or monthly fees
- Ready out of the box
- ONE site to manage hosting, content, email list, payments, and membership
- No hassle of managing plugins/add-ons, extensions, etc.
- No spambots (that I've seen)
- Organic discovery via Substack network
- Very wholesome

Disadvantages

- No API = No integrations
- No email automations beyond a welcome email
 - No drip or welcome sequences
 - No segmentation or tagging
 - No landing pages
- Limited customization (especially of home page)
- No ecommerce capability
- No forms, event registration, or e-learning features
- No ability to add features with 3rd-party add-ons

Substack vs. WordPress

Feature	Substack	WordPress
Domain registration	\$12-\$20/year	\$12-\$20/year
Hosting	Free	\$100-\$200/year
Blog	Included	Included
Email newsletter	Included	Integration with separate software (\$10-\$20/month)
Pop-up sign-up form	Included	Requires extra plug-in or code snippet
Subscribe button	Included	Requires extra plug-in or code snippet
Spam filtering	Included	Requires extra plug-in and configuration, sometimes \$\$
Analytics	Included (you can also add Google Analytics)	Requires extra plug-in

Substack vs. WordPress, cont.

Feature	Substack	WordPress
Payment Processing	Stripe	Stripe, PayPal, or Square
Payment portal	Free	Extra ecommerce plug-in or form
User subscription / management	Included	Extra plug-in, requires configuration
Restrict content to paid users	Included	Extra plug-in or complex configuration
Share of revenue	10%	Typically 8% or monthly subscription fee

So, Should I Be on Substack?

YES, if . . .

- You are starting a blog, email list, or newsletter
 - *OR, you have a blog or email list elsewhere that has a small following and hasn't been growing robustly, and that you don't mind moving else*
- You want a cheap and simple option
- You don't need email automations or segmentation

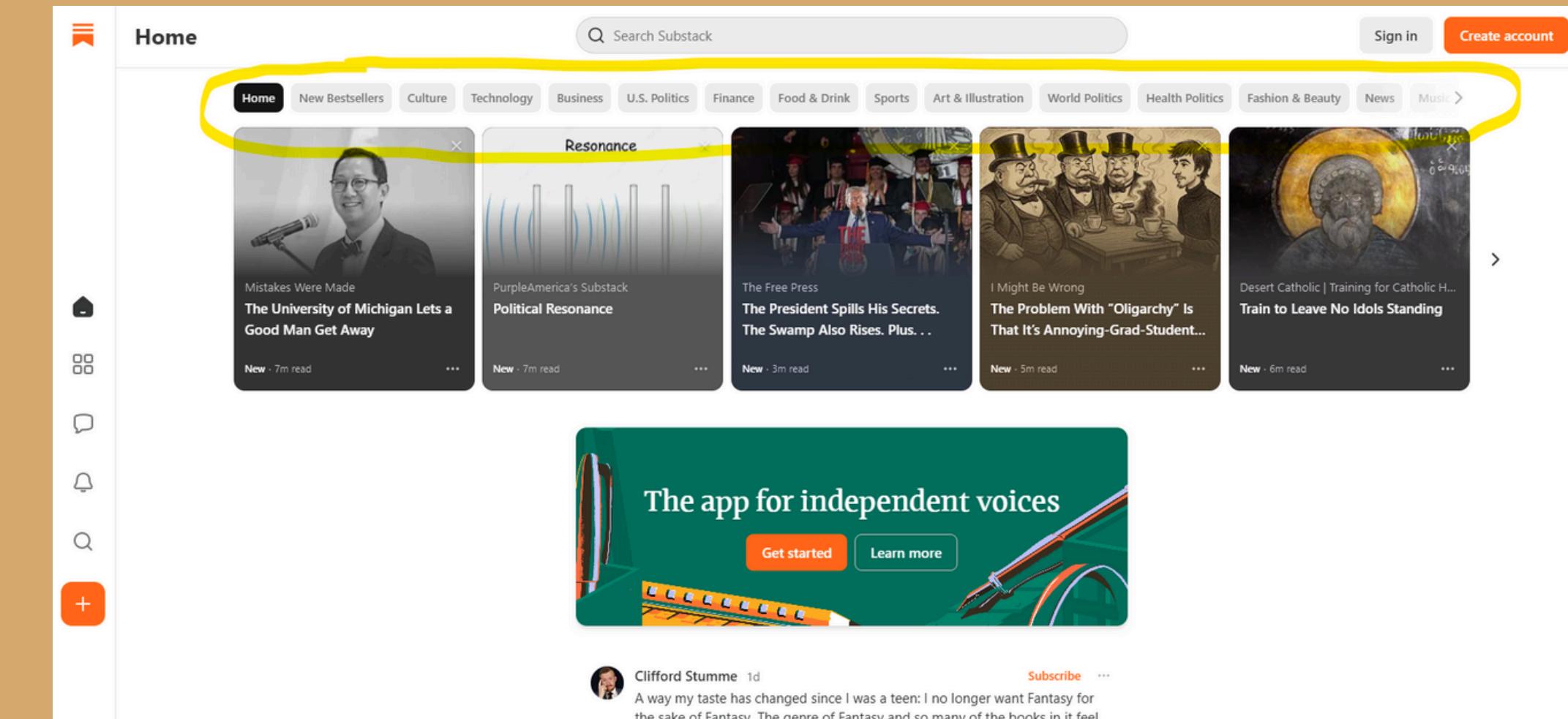
So, Should I Be on Substack?

NO if . . .

- You already have a thriving email list and blog/website elsewhere
- You need email automations or segmentation
- You aren't interested in starting a blog, newsletter, or email list

Getting Started

- Go to Substack.com. Click on the category that interests you.
- Browse 5-10 publications.
- Don't waste time scrolling through Notes
- Create an email specifically for Substack to avoid inbox flooding.
- Create an account.

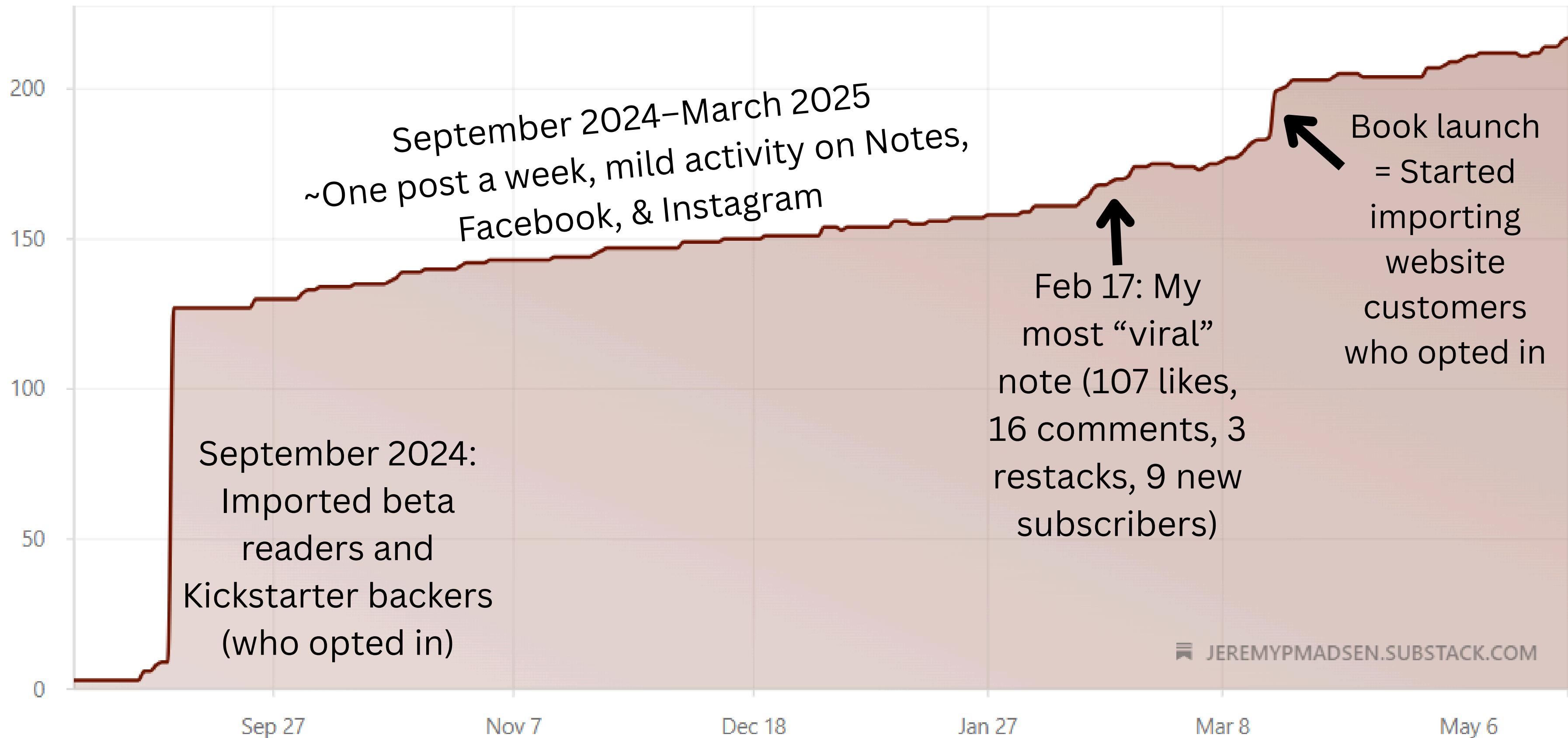


Starting Your Substack

- Focus on a topic/niche.
- Have an interesting, clear publication name.
- Write an intro post and one good-quality content post.
- Lightly customize your welcome email.
- Don't stress about themes or advanced settings for now.
- Email or message 100 friends or family:
 - “I'm starting a blog and newsletter on [X], designed for [Y] people] who want [Z]. If that's you, you can subscribe [here](#). If you know anyone like that, can you share this with them?”

Growing Your Substack

- Write at a consistent, manageable cadence (1-4 posts/month)
- Share a highlight from each post on Notes and your existing social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X)
- Recommend 3-10 Substacks that serve your same audience.
- Don't monetize early. If you do ever monetize, keep at least half your content free, especially your best content.
- Give it at least six months of consistent work before making any judgement.



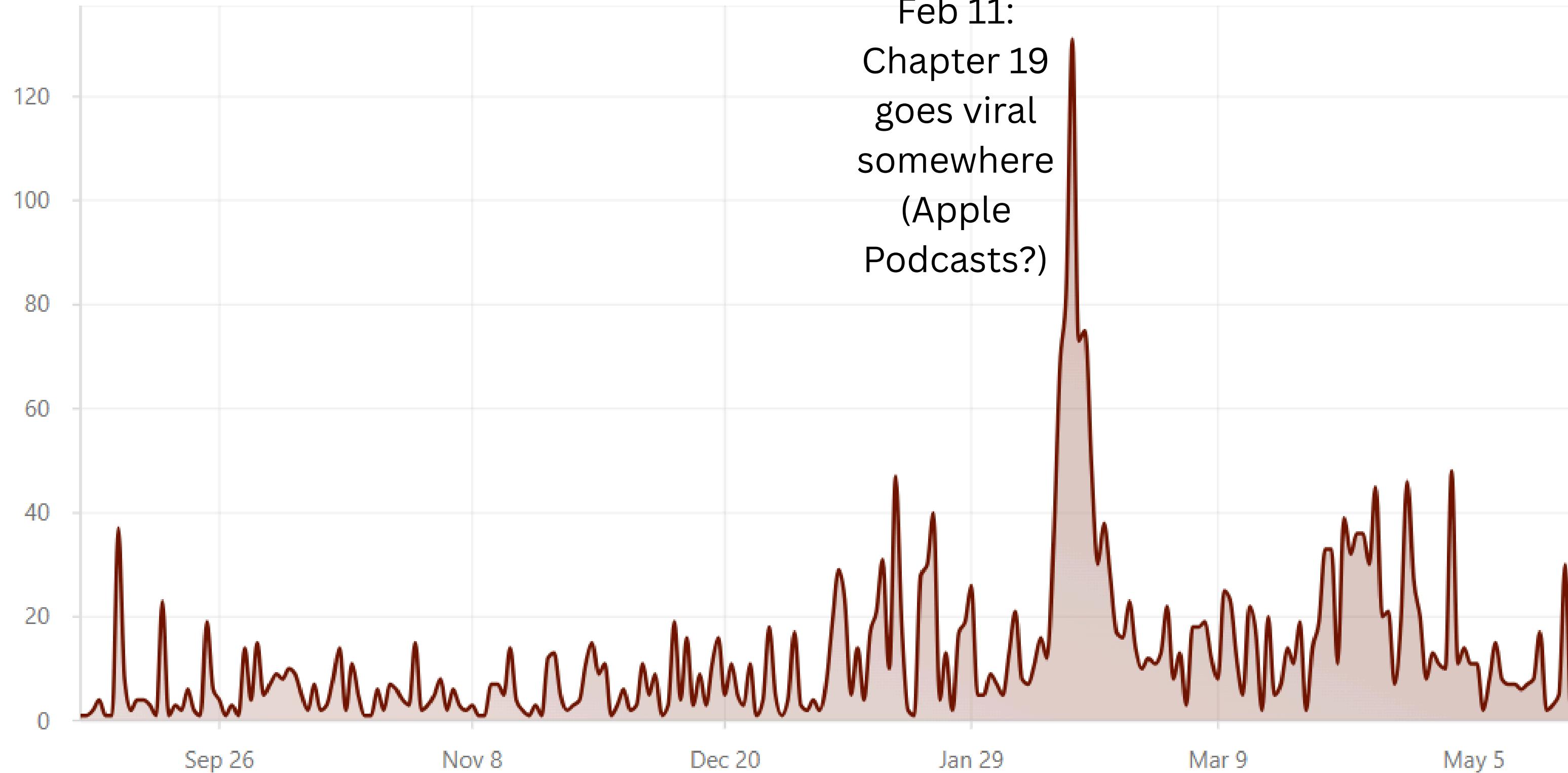
Downloads

Trend from Aug 24, 2024 to May 6, 2025

Daily

All time

Feb 11:
Chapter 19
goes viral
somewhere
(Apple
Podcasts?)



Source	Subscribers	Percent
Substack App	27	13%
Other Substack Network	3	1%
Substack existing accounts	15	7%
Imported accounts	153	71%
New accounts	17	8%

Other uses of Substack

- Travel blog
- Private family newsletter
- Sending chapters to beta readers

No matter what platform you use . . .

- Know who you're writing to and what they want
- Give them value
- Be consistent
- Engage meaningfully
- Don't be spammy
- Give it time
- Seek revelation, follow the Spirit, and seek to serve

Download these slides at jeremypmadsen.com/substack