The casual reader

A young girl died from a drug overdose and another young man died by hanging. Both were ruled suicides and both were suspicious. After the coroner suddenly died, Jenny Cooper is appointed as a replacement. This book is set in England and the role of the coroner is very important. The coroner is tasked with finding the truth and Jenny is dedicated. The investigation of these murders takes a turn for the dramatic and Jenny must decide to follow the evidence and speak for the dead or allow the ruling of suicide to stand. If you enjoy a procedural drama, you will love these books. —Judy Howell

The Coroner by M. R. Hall. (422 Pages) Available in Hardcover, Paperback, Kindle, iBook.

Miranda and Caliban

It’s no secret how much I love Shakespeare, but Shakespearean retellings are often a mixed bag. I was very interested in this one. First, it’s written by Jacqueline Carey, and I have read her fantasy novels for years. She’s an excellent writer. Second, it’s a retelling of The Tempest, which I used to teach in class. The focus here, as you can guess from the title, is on the relationship between Miranda and Caliban. The glimpse we have of it in the play seems very much informed by the racial stereotypes of the day, so I was happy to see Carey give their backstory nuance and depth. The prose is graceful without losing focus and leaves a beautiful melancholy behind. This is one of the good retellings that sends you back to the original while having a greater appreciation for the complexities of Shakespeare’s characters. —Michelle Fields

Miranda and Caliban by Jacqueline Carey. (336 pages) Available in Hardcover, Kindle, iBook, Nook

Whispers

The Holland sisters escaped their home 16 years before. Each of the three was traumatized in her own way and grieving. Suddenly, their father expects them to return and face the music. Claire, the middle sister, moves home with her own two children and rekindles a romance that she thought long dead. Follow Claire and her sisters as the story unfolds. Two accidents and one disappearance are finally connected. Are these really accidents or murder? Who will end up paying the price for silence. —JH

Whispers by Lisa Jackson (416 Pages) Available in Hardcover, Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.
**THE MERMAIDS SINGING**

While I usually prefer to read cozy mysteries, as they are less prone to giving me bad dreams, sometimes I do like reading a good thriller. This is the first in a long running series about Tony Hill and Carol Jordan by Scottish author, McDermid. One of the most interesting things about this book, for me, was the setting. This is the early 90s, and profiling was still seen as a bit dodgy by a large portion of the British police. Tony Hill is such a profiler, and Carol Jordan is the cop assigned to work with him as he develops a profile of a serial killer. Fair warning: each chapter starts with an excerpt from the killer’s diary… it is quite gruesome. I admit to skimming it for important information and then skipping back to the cops when it got too graphic. So if you don’t like the disgusting parts you can still read the book and enjoy it. —MF


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**THE CUCKOO’S CALLING**

Cormoran Strike lost his leg in Afghanistan and left the service. He is now a private investigator with a small office in downtown London. Robin Ellacott is a temporary secretary. She has been sent by her agency for duty at Strike’s PI office. Upon arrival she is almost bowled down, first by a lovely woman exiting the building and then by Cormoran himself. Strike is a realistic character who is investigating the suicide of a famous model. Join Strike as he investigates the possible suicide and discovers complications that put his very life at risk. If you like a traditional detective novel, you’ll love this series. —JH


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**THE WOMAN ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS**

This historical novel gives a peak into the life of my favorite mystery writer, Agatha Christie. I was a little trepidatious about reading fiction about Christie instead of by her, but I enjoyed this glimpse into a turning point in her life. After divorcing her husband, Archie Christie, Agatha is at a crossroads in her life. She goes on vacation, on a last minute whim choosing to travel by Orient Express to the Middle East. Romance and a love for archaeology blossoms. What makes the book even better is the introduction of another formidable woman from history, Katharine Woolley, an archaeologist in her own right and a woman with her own fascinating secrets to hide. —MF