THE CASUAL READER

June 2017

PHANTOM EVIL

New Orleans is a wonderful, old city full of ghosts and history. The governor of the state’s wife has died in mysterious circumstances and he thinks she’s been murdered by a ghost. The FBI is just forming a secret unit who is made up of paranormal investigators. Jackson and his Krewe of hunters converge on New Orleans and work to solve a crime that is unsolvable. Is it a ghost murderer? Is it a real human murderer? If you like a fast paced mystery with a hint of the paranormal, you’ll love this book. —Judy Howell

Phantom Evil by Heather Graham. (368 Pages) Available in Hardback, Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.

EVERYONE BRAVE IS FORGIVEN

This extraordinary WWII novel, inspired by the author’s own family, took a few chapters to draw me in, but once it did I was completely gripped by the story. The main characters include Mary, a young woman who attempts to run a school of outcasts — the children not evacuated to the countryside because they don’t fit in because of race or disability. This was an intriguing aspect that I had not seen tackled before. Mary gets engaged to Tom, whose best friend, Alistair is one of the other main characters. We see Alistair in the early days in France, being evacuated at Dunkirk and then later on the island of Malta. The remaining main character is Hilda, Mary’s best friend. Both women start the book as naïve, rather shallow people, but their experiences during the Blitz soon change that. I found this to be a very moving novel. —Michelle Fields

Everyone Brave is Forgiven by Chris Cleave. (422 pages) Available in Hardcover, Kindle, iBook.

IN THE BLOOD

Lana Granger is a liar and is very manipulative. Lana withholds emotional commitment from her friends. Lana has probably met her match when she begins working with Luke. He has a genius level intelligence and knows many secrets. When Lana’s close friend Beck disappears, Luke seems to know something about it. In the Blood is a psychological thriller in all aspects. By the end of the book, no one is sure of the answer to one important question . . . who do you trust? If you like a fast paced book that has so many twists and turns that you get dizzy, you’ll love this book. —JH

In the Blood by Lisa Unger. (440 Pages) Available in Hardcover, Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.
**What We Are Currently Reading**

*Judy:*
- Picture Perfect by Jodi Picoult
- Magic Bitter, Magic Sweet by Charlie Holmberg
- The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich by William L. Shirer
- Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom

*Mitchell:*
- War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy
- The Gans Above by Robyn Bennis
- A Perilous Undertaking by Deanna Raybourn
- The Elizabeth Papers by Jenetta James
- Into the Water by Paula Hawkins

Would you like to make a book recommendation? We are looking for guest reviewers. If you are interested, please contact either Michelle Fields or Judy Howell by June 29. Recommendations only have to be around 100 words, so please join the fun. We enjoy hearing about new books just as much as we like telling other people about ones we’ve enjoyed!

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**A CLOSED AND COMMON ORBIT**

This novel picks up where *A Long Way to a Small Angry Planet* ends, but you don’t have to have read the earlier book to read this one. I would recommend it, but it’s not necessary. This book is about an AI suddenly gaining a “body” and striving to adapt to it. I found it to be charming and poignant. The chapters alternate between the AI and the backstory of one of her friends. Both perspectives are very interesting, but I think I might have enjoyed her friend’s history even more. Pepper lived on a world where children were enslaved. By accident she sees outside the building she has always worked and lived in, and she is startled to discover that there was a world out there. Chambers does a good job at creating interesting alien cultures and I found this to be a wonderful summer read. — MF


**THE STORYTELLER**

Sage was injured in an accident. She thinks her scars make her different and not attractive. Sage decides to become a baker. She is from a Jewish family but is not practicing and even questions the existence of God. In a grief group Sage meets a wonderful older man, Josef Weber. He is a pillar of the community who just lost his wife of 50 years. Sage begins to feel close to Josef. Then he asks her for a favor. Josef wishes for Sage to kill him. He has tried over two times to kill himself and he doesn’t succeed. He tries to convince Sage that it’s the right thing to do. Josef believes he deserves to die. He was a member of the Nazi SS Guard. Why did he choose Sage? Was it because her family is Jewish? The Storyteller is an emotional read. You meet many characters who have life experiences that are very radically different than my own. If you like a book that challenges you to look at an issue from a different perspective, you’ll love this book. — JH


**WINGS OF FIRE**

*Wings of Fire* is the second in the Inspector Ian Rutledge series, but it is not necessary to read the first in the series. Everything is well explained in the beginning of this novel. The one things I will tell you from the first book is that Rutledge has recently returned from the Great War. He is suffering from shellshock and has recurring hallucinations of Hamish, a young Scotsman that Rutledge had been forced to have executed for desertion. Hamish comments, rather like a Greek chorus, on Rutledge’s thoughts and actions. In this novel, Scotland Yard is asked to look into a series of strange deaths that have occurred in a prominent family. Rutledge is devastated to discover that one of the deaths, possibly a murder-suicide, was of a woman who was secretly his favorite poet. Much of his investigation involves his digging into the past history of the family, and I have a weakness for that kind of story. I enjoyed this very much and look forward to spending more time with Rutledge (and Hamish)!. — MF

*Wings of Fire* by Charles Todd. [323 Pages] Available in Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook