MURDER ON BLACK SWAN LANE

This novel marks the beginning of a new mystery series set in Regency-era London. The main characters are a science loving aristocrat, the Earl of Wrexford and a talented artist, A. J. Quill. Quill hides the fact that she is, in fact, a woman concealing her name behind a pseudonym. Wrexford finds himself a prime suspect in the murder of a minister who he has been in conflict with for some time. Quill is a widow who uses a Baker Street irregulars-style network of informants to skewer the celebrities of London in her satirical cartoons. The two of them eventually team up in this fun, atmospheric mystery. — Michelle Fields


THE GOVERNESS OF HIGHLAND HALL

The Governess of Highland Hall is a Christian fiction romance book; therefore, if you are looking for a bodice ripper, do not pick this book. However, if you are looking for characters that have flaws and are trying hard to become better Christians, this would be the book for you. Our main female character Julia comes to Highland Hall to be a governess. She recognizes that she is developing deep feelings for William. These feelings are considered to be inappropriate because of the difference in their social class. Overall, there are some unexpected twists and turns but for the most part plays out as a romance should. Woven throughout this book is the focus on living a better Christian life. Well worth the read. — Judy Howell

The Governess of Highland Hall by Carrie Turansky. [496 Pages] Available in Hardcover, Nook, Kindle, iBook.

PARADE’S END

I realize that very few people are probably going to take me up on this recommendation, but I could not ignore my most powerful read of 2017. Parade’s End is actually a tetralogy of novels published under one cover. They were written in the 1920s by a novelist who was reflecting on World War I. Both the war and the changes it heralded in society are brought into focus here. Ford uses stream of consciousness and a non-linear structure in a way that does not feel like a gimmick. Instead, the narrative nicely parallels the chaos going on Christopher Tietjans’s (the main character) head. The role of women, the class structure, and the nature of war itself are all examined in this book. I won’t lie. It’s not an easy read, but by the end I felt that I knew these characters in ways that I rarely know anyone. It’s a tour de force. — MF

What We Are Currently Reading

Judy:
- *Circling the Sun* by Paula McClain
- *Alone in the Dark* by Karen Rose

Michelle:
- *Arcadia* by Iain Pears
- *Martin Chuzzlewit* by Charles Dickens
- *Death in St. Petersburg* by Tasha Alexander
- *The Girl in the Tower* by Katherine Arden
- *Enchantress of Numbers* by Jennifer Chiaverini

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 January 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!

I’m In No Mood for Love

In the previous Writer Friends book, we met one of our main characters, Clare. Clare is a romance writer planning to get married and oblivious to the fact that her chosen mate is probably not for her. After Clare caught her would be husband with the Maytag repair man literally in the closet, she drinks a bit much and wakes up terribly confused. How did she get in this hotel room? Who's in the shower? If you are in the mood for a breezy, summer read, this book would be perfect for you. An interesting plot with likable characters. — JH

I'm In No Mood for Love by Rachel Gibson (336 Pages) Available in Hardcover, Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.

The Lies of Locke Lamora

While reading *Parade’s End* for about six weeks, I needed some lighter reading to go alongside it. This book entirely fits the bill. It is action packed, funny and yet filled with interesting characters. It is a fantasy novel that focuses on the criminal elements of the fictional world it creates — particularly con-men and thieves. Locke Lamora is the con-men of con-men. In a series of hilarious flashbacks, we learn of his childhood and apprenticeship where he takes precocity to the limit. The world Lynch creates is gritty, yet not grim. I am looking forward to reading more about Locke and his friend, Jean. — MF


The Jury

This series is always a fun read. Fun in that everyone knows a situation that requires justice. The ladies in this series are a group of vigilantes that always deliver justice. Not just justice, but justice that is based on the crime. Of course, this requires a suspension of disbelief when reading. It is highly unlikely that a group would get by with the types of crimes they commit. However, the characters are well developed. You can read the books of this series out of order and still keep up. — JH

The Jury by Fern Michaels. (320 Pages) Available in Hardback, Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.