THE CASUAL READER
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SIDNEY CHAMBERS & THE SHADOW OF DEATH

This book is the first of the Grantchester series, which stars a young vicar as an amateur sleuth. Set in Cambridge, England in the 1950s, the series is composed of short stories rather than one long novel. Sidney is a delightful protagonist, thoughtful and compassionate. He is very human and relatable with recognizable human weaknesses while also being a very good person. Some of the stories involve murder, but others involve burglary and kidnapping. I enjoyed spending time with Sidney and his dog, Dickens. —Michelle Fields


TANGLED UP IN YOU

Maddie has sworn off of men. She’s an author and an independent woman. She doesn’t need or want a man. Absolutely, she does not want Mick. She doesn’t want to spend any time with him. The problem is Maddie really does want Mick. Maddie comes back to her hometown to write a book. Not just any book, but a book about her mom. Maddie’s mom was murdered when she was a child. She just found her mom’s journals and can see for the first time how young and idealistic her mother was. It’s heartbreaking. Maddie needs to meet all of the families of the people who were also involved in the tragedy. The problem is every time she tries to tell Mick who she really is, she chickens out. The situation becomes very complicated and spirals out of control. If you like a comedy with serious overtones, you’ll love this book. This book is an illustration of how the best of intentions can go awry. — Judy Howell


MY FAVORITE THING IS MONSTERS

NPR chose this book as the best graphic novel of 2017. It is a stunning debut, a dark coming of age story about a girl, Karen, who relates more easily to movie monsters than to people. Each page of the book is drawn as if it were a page in her diary down to the ruled lines of a notebook page. Karen draws herself as if she were the Wolf Man. The backdrop is Chicago 1968, a very tumultuous time period, indeed. In this first of a projected three volume series, we see the reaction to Martin Luther King Jr.’s assassination and from the description of the next volume, Ferris will be including the Democratic National Convention as well. On the more personal side, Karen has few friends, her mother is seriously ill, her brother seems to have criminal ties, and her neighbor, a survivor of the Holocaust, is murdered. Our library has a copy of this, so be sure to check it out! —MF

If you like a cute and cozy mystery, you will love this book. The entire mystery takes place in a coffee house that has been in the same family over 100 years. It's very upscale. Within the text of the book, you will learn much about brewing coffee. If you are trying to give up coffee, don't read this book. It makes coffee sound so good. Clare Cosi is the heroine. She's the manager of the coffee shop and walks in to discover her assistant manager at the bottom of the stairs. Was it an accident? Was it an intentional? If you like a mystery and want to learn a lot about brewing coffee, this mystery is for you. —JH


This novel is getting a revival of buzz recently thanks to the new Netflix show. Before trying out the show, like me, you may be interested in checking out the source material, which is quite interesting. Takeshi Kovacs is offered a deal that he cannot refuse that requires him to investigate the death of an extremely powerful man. In this universe, people have their personalities saved to a “stack,” a computer chip embedded into their spinal column. When they die, they can be “re-sleeved” into a new body. This brings up all sorts of fascinating ethical questions and dilemmas. This is a very fast paced book that is part SF, part noir. Consider checking this out if you are a fan of Philip K. Dick. —MF


Denise is heartrendingly human and ever so vulnerable in a world that she knows has supernatural beings. Her best friend, Cat, is part vampire and part human. Denise has personal knowledge of loss and how knowing these supernatural creatures can end up changing a life. In the most recent several weeks, Denise has lost a shockingly large number of relatives to sudden heart problems. What could cause this many deaths? Then she gets contacted and marked by a demon. The bad part is if she doesn't find her distant relative, Nathaniel, then she has to sacrifice herself. The only thing that Denise can think to do is contact Spade. She met Spade the previous year and thinks he might be able to help her negotiate the world of the vampire to find Nathaniel and save herself. If you enjoy a gory romp through the world of the undead, then you will enjoy this book. There's lot of action, mystery and romance. —JH