The Casual Reader

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Michelle Fields and Judy Howell, Editors

THE HONEST SPY

Fritz Kolbe is a widowed civil servant that is living in Africa at the outbreak of World War II. He makes a decision not to take his young daughter back to Germany with him. Fritz thinks the Nazi situation in Germany is too dangerous to take a chance on his daughter's safety. Upon arrival back in Germany, Fritz continues in his everyday civil servant life. Eventually, Fritz makes the decision to become a spy. He doesn’t know how to do that and contacts people outright which leads to difficulty in his life. As a novel, this book looks at Fritz Kolbe’s life and his relationships during the fearful times of World War II in Germany. It brings to life how a small mistake could result in a death. Especially when a person decided to work against the Reich. This book is an eye opening read about what life was like in Germany before and during World War II. — Judy Howell

The Honest Spy by Andreas Kollender. (368 Pages) Available in Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.

ONE OF US IS LYING

This novel was marketed as The Breakfast Club crossed with a thriller. Five students go into detention, but one of them does not make it out alive. The dead boy ran a gossip app that everyone at their high school was addicted to reading, and it seems that he had an unpublished post that hinted that each of the other four students had a dark secret that it seems that at least one was willing to kill to keep quiet. While this was no rival to Agatha Christie, it was fairly enjoyable.—Michelle Fields

One of Us is Lying by Karen M. McManus. (361 pages) Available in Hardcover, Paperback and Kindle

SARAI: A NOVEL

Sarai is beautiful, spoiled and used to being the center of attention. Even so, she has a hard time getting the attention of her half-brother Abram. After getting his attention and her father’s approval for a marriage, Sarai makes Abram promise that he will only have one wife. In return, Sarai promises to give him a son. Reading this age old biblical story as a novel was wonderfully refreshing. Seeing Sarai as a woman and a complete person was very interesting. If you are interested in reading biblical based fiction, this series of books will be a great addition to your reading list. — JH

What We Are Currently Reading

**Judy:**

*Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng

*A Study in Death* by Anna Lee Huber

*Dark Diary* by P. Anastasia

*Bleak House* by Charles Dickens

**Michelle:**

*A Brush with Shadows* by Anna Lee Huber

*A Treacherous Curse* by Deanna Raybourn

*Heartstone* by Elle Katharine White

*The Witches of New York* by Ami McKay

*The Caves of Steel* by Isaac Asimov

*Bleak House* by Charles Dickens

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 April 30. 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!

### SEARCH THE DARK

By Charles Todd (310 Pages) Available in Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.

While this book is third in a series, you do not have to start at the beginning to enjoy it. The most important thing to understand is that the protagonist, Inspector Ian Rutledge of Scotland Yard, has returned from World War I suffering from shell shock. He has managed to hide this fact from his superiors, as well as the fact that he hears the voice of a dead soldier talking to him all the time. In fact, Hamish keeps up a running commentary on everything that occurs. In this novel, Rutledge is sent to look into a strange case. A man getting onto a train in the country sees a woman that he is shocked to recognize as his wife, who he had been told died while he was abroad. He is later arrested for the murder of a woman whose face is unrecognizable. Rutledge is brought in to search for the children who had been with the woman, but he is not convinced that everything is as straightforward as it seems. This is an excellent entry into a very well done historical mystery series. — MF

### BLONDE HAIR, BLUE EYES

By Karin Slaughter. (67 Pages) Available in Kindle, Nook, iBook.

This is the prequel to *Pretty Girls*. Julia is a 19 year old college student. She’s going to be a famous journalist. In doing some research, Julia notices that there are some young women missing in the area. She wants to do an article about the pretty girls who are missing because she knows two of them Mona-no-name and Beatrice Oliver. Julia met Mona at the homeless shelter, and she goes to school with Beatrice. Will Julia unravel the mystery before she becomes the story? If you have read the book *Pretty Girls* already and want to find out more about Julia, this is the place to discover her story. If, like me, you want to read Pretty Girls, it’s good to start here. Read this story first and get to know Julia a little bit. This book is a very quick read. — JH

### BURMESE DAYS

By George Orwell. (287 Pages) Available in Paperback, Kindle, Nook, iBook.

Orwell is most famous for his novels Nineteen Eighty Four and Animal Farm, but his other works also deserve attention. This was his first novel and is heavily inspired by his own experiences in the British colonies. The main character, Flory, is a lonely Englishman working in Burma. He is torn between two cultures, fitting in to neither completely. His best friend is a native doctor, but he also socializes with the other British at a local club that is exclusively whites only. His world is turned upside down by the arrival of a young woman whom he falls in love with as well as the turmoil caused by the political machinations of a local politician who is scheming to become the first Burmese member of the British club. — MF