

Series: One Thing After Another
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A few weeks ago I reintroduced readers to Candice Fox's Crimson Lake series. I don't think you can adequately imagine my jubilation when I realized the third book in her series was already out. "Gone by Midnight" begins when an 8-year-old boy goes missing. In a parallel story, Ted wakes suddenly from a sound sleep to anxiously realize he miscounted his geese. One was missing when he went to sleep. And so it begins. Threads from "Redemption Point" set up some plot points in this third book, so I encourage you to start at the beginning to get the full benefit of this series. More about "Gone by Midnight": Four young boys are left upstairs in the hotel where their parents are vacationing while their folks have dinner and drinks downstairs. When the adults check on the boys, one is missing. The mother of the missing boy calls for Amanda and Ted (of the missing goose) to help the police find her son. And other than it's a mystery, what can I tell you? Cats! Bikers! Crocodiles! I really can't say another thing. OK, lean in, I'll whisper: I love this series. And I love this author. Unexpected things happen in the land down under; the differences between these books and other mysteries are what make them so enjoyable.

"A Beautiful Corpse," the second book in Christi Daugherty's Harper McClain series, just came out. Harper is the night reporter in Savannah, covering crimes that happen after dark. While having drinks and shooting pool with her friend Bonnie, Harper's phone goes off. It's Miles, her good friend and photographer; they've got a murder to cover. Bonnie decides to drive because Harper's over the limit. As shocking as murder always is, this one strikes the pair hard; they both know the woman. Unless you have never seen a crime show, you know that when there is a murder, they always look at the husband or boyfriend. But what I was shocked to find out, Daugherty points out in a matter-of-fact way: "Not more than one in ten murdered women are killed by someone they don't know." But this victim's ex has an alibi. So even though the police are investigating, that doesn't stop Harper from investigating, too. This book revolves around the murder, but it also revisits the break-in Harper had in the previous book, which has repercussions and pushes her personal life forward so that I really was ready for the third book once I put this one down.

Maureen Johnson's "Truly Devious" is one of the best books I've read this year. Juxtaposing the 1930s and present day, it begins in the '30s when an eccentric tycoon, Albert Ellingham, founded a private school in the forests of Vermont where the brightest thinkers, artists, inventors and writers could study anything and everything. It would be a place with tunnels, secret passages, hidden nooks and twisty pathways where everyone would be continually exploring and learning. Tragedy strikes when Albert's wife and child are kidnapped, and he receives a threatening ransom note cut out from magazines signed by Truly Devious. Cut to present day. Stevie Bell is entering her first year at the Ellingham Academy. Stevie's specialty is true crime investigation, and she intends on solving the Truly Devious case. But school has other plans for Stevie as she tries to acclimate herself to new friends and places because Truly Devious isn't finished, and death comes again to Ellingham Academy. I cannot speak

highly enough of the wonderfully developed time periods, the fully realized characters, the interesting locale, and the ongoing, fascinating mysteries. So why am I adding this title to an article about series books? Well, once you finish "Truly Devious" you'll want to plunge right into "The Vanishing Stair," which picks right up where the first one ends. And if you think I am breathlessly waiting for the third book in this trilogy, you'd be right. I cannot wait to get back to Stevie and her friends to finally find out the whole story of what really happened and is happening at the Ellington Academy.

A series is a number of things coming one after another. Sometimes, even if I have enjoyed a book, there is just not enough reason to continue. But frankly, for these authors, I am willing to follow each and every one of them, and, (sigh) wait as long as it takes for their next book. I invite you to visit the library and find your own next favorite author. Come in and check something out.