

BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.

Volume 26, Number 1

January Booknews 2014

sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919

<http://www.poisonedpen.com>

<http://poisonedfiction.blogspot.com/>

<http://twitter.com/poisonedpen>

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd.

Scottsdale, AZ 85251

480-947-2974



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL...

This is our 25th year, one to celebrate all year long

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

Some Events will be webcast at <http://new.livestream.com/poisonedpen>.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and check our blog at <http://poisonedpen.com/blog/>

THURSDAY JANUARY 9 7:00 PM

Lisa Gardner signs [Fear Nothing](#) (Dutton \$27.95) Boston cop DD Warren

FRIDAY JANUARY 10 7:00 PM

Drew Chapman signs [The Ascendant](#) (SimonSchuster \$25) First Mystery Pick

SATURDAY JANUARY 11 10:30 AM

Coffee and Crime reads Attica Locke's [Black Water Rising](#) (\$14.99)

TUESDAY JANUARY 14 7:00 PM

James Thane signs [Until Death](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$14.95) Phoenix cops

SATURDAY JANUARY 18 2:00 PM

Julie Kramer signs [Delivering Death](#) (Atria \$24.99) Riley Sparks
Brad Taylor signs [The Polaris Protocol](#) (Dutton \$26.95) Pike Logan

TUESDAY JANUARY 21 7:00 PM

Robert Knott signs [Robert B Parkers Bull River](#) (Putnam \$26.95) Virgil & Hitch

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 22 7:00 PM

Ian Rankin signs [Saints of the Shadow Bible](#) (LittleBrown \$26) Edinburgh's Rebus

THURSDAY JANUARY 23 7:00 PM

Arthur Kerns signs [The Riviera Contract](#) (Diversion \$19.99) Debut spy story
MA Lawson signs [Rosarito Beach](#) (Blue Rider \$26.95) Agent Kay Hamilton

SATURDAY JANUARY 25 4:00 PM

James Rollins signs various titles in an informal chat event. He can personalize his latest, written with and also signed by Rebecca Cantrell: [Innocent Blood](#) (\$28)

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29 7:00 PM

Charles Todd signs [Hunting Shadows](#) (Morrow \$25.99) Inspector Ian Rutledge

Todd also appears with Rhys Bowen at NOON at the Phoenix Public Library, 1221 N. Central Avenue Phoenix 85004. The Pen will sell books there too.

THURSDAY JANUARY 30 7:00 PM

Michael Robertson signs [Moriarty Returns a Letter](#) (St Martins \$24.99) Baker Street Mystery

FRIDAY JANUARY 31 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime Club reads Matthew Jones, [A Single Shot](#) (\$14.99)

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 5 7:00 PM

Scottsdale Public Library, 3839 N. Drinkwater, Scottsdale 85251
Daniel Stashower signs [Hour of Peril](#) (\$16.99) The Plot to Murder Lincoln before the Civil War

EVENT BOOKS

Chapman, Drew. [The Ascendant](#) (SimonSchuster \$25). A top Indie Next Pick for January: “A ruthless entity has declared war on America, not through military attacks or terrorist activities but by targeting our economy. Two hundred billion dollars in U.S. Treasury bonds are sold off, precious natural resources are destroyed, our power grid is sabotaged, and the real estate market is gutted when property is sold for cutthroat prices. Only one man, Garret Reilly, a trading prodigy who has an uncanny ability to recognize patterns, has a sense of what is being perpetrated and who is behind it. Chapman has created a brilliant, gripping thriller that is all the more frightening in its distinct possibility!” I’ve become addicted to *Person of Interest* and find Reilly an interesting hybrid of this show and of the lead character of *House*, although Reilly is not a doctor. This is also a **First Mystery Club Pick**.

Gardner, Lisa. [Fear Nothing](#) (Dutton \$27.95). Interestingly, winter 2014 is a season of novels where rare, dangerous diseases play a role. Congenital Insensitivity to Pain proves, as Gardner shows in this new case for Boston cop DD Warren, to be a real curse, isolating those with it from their fellows and leaving them open to all kinds of injuries that can maim or kill. Few sufferers live past their thirties. Dr. Adeline Glen has beaten these odds... so far. The daughter of infamous serial killer Harry Day who buried young women he killed beneath the floor of the family home, she’s the sister of Shana Day, herself a notorious killer who first struck at age fourteen. Imprisoned for 30 years, Shana has murdered more people inside than she did as a free woman. Adeline visits her monthly in what is an ordeal for both, but some kind of sibling connection. And now a new killer, the Rose Killer, is targeting lonely women in Boston. DD is still crippled by the injury, especially to her shoulder, she received in her last case, [Touch & Go](#) (\$9.99), so she’s not officially back on the job, but she can’t stay away from the hunt. Adeline says that the Rose Killer knows things about Harry Day, who’s been dead now some 40 years, he shouldn’t, couldn’t. And Shana claims she can help catch him. When the Rose Killer targets DD, these three women... well, it’s some ride to the finish of bestseller Gardner’s new shocker. PP Staffer David Hunenberg adds, “Gardner’s novel is vivid and detailed, making it all that much more frightening. If this is any indication of Crime Fiction 2014, we are in for a great year!” For Gardner’s earlier work, [click here](#).

Kerns, Arthur. [The Riviera Contract](#) (Diversions \$19.99). A debut. Retired FBI agent Hayden Stone needs a change of pace. Working now for the CIA, on his last assignment to Afghanistan a colleague was killed, and Stone blames himself for the death. A friend in the upper ranks of the CIA offers him an assignment to the South of France, hoping this is what Stone needs to keep an even keel: French life on the Côte d’Azur. His attempts to relax are thwarted, however, as two separate terrorists attempt to murder him. Meantime, Stone meets an old love, a contessa, who he had seduced and abandoned years before. Stone’s investigation into his assignment and the attempts on his life lead to a brutal Middle Eastern terrorist in Provence to deliver a strain of the Ebola virus to major U.S. Cities. At the same time, the CIA and French intelligence have targeted a seriously ill

al Qaeda functionary who is seeking medical attention in Nice. Complicating matters still, a Saudi prince and his son-in-law on a yacht off Villefranche are assisting this al Qaeda figure. They lease the contessa’s palace so that, without her knowledge, doctors can administer to the functionary. Stone romances the contessa who loves him, but doesn’t trust him and with cause, for he also has become fond of a young French researcher, who secretly works for French Intelligence. Stone certainly has his hands full. “...Deftly plotted and compellingly readable, Kerns takes his readers into the shadowy world of international terrorism.”—Sheldon Siegel

Knott, Robert. [Robert B Parker’s Bull River](#) (Putnam \$26.95). Prolific Parker, who died in 2010, loved the private eye genre, but he explored others as well. In fact, a Spenser or two was a Western in disguise. Parker created itinerant lawmen (OK, drifters, but maybe with more purpose) Virgil Cole and Everett Hitch in [Appaloosa](#) (\$7.99), the first of his actual Westerns (it became a movie). And Knott, the scriptwriter for the film, has carried on the series with [Ironhorse](#) (\$9.99) and now this. After hunting down murderer and bandito Captain Alejandro Vasquez, Territorial Marshal Virgil Cole and Deputy Everett Hitch return him to Citadel to stand trial. As soon as they remand Vasquez into custody, a major bank robbery occurs and the lawmen are tasked with a new job: investigate the robbery of Comstock Bank, recover the loot, and bring the criminals to justice. And before long Vasquez becomes the key to their investigation. Which leads our drifters to Mexico—maybe that one step too far for them?

Kramer, Julie. [Delivering Death](#) (Atria \$24.99). TV reporter Riley Spartz is a star investigative journalist for Channel 3—and no stranger to the seedier side of her hometown. But when she receives a package of human teeth in the mail at work, she’s quickly embroiled in a homicide investigation that spirals into one of the odder cases the Minneapolis police force has ever seen. Though the cops try to keep certain grisly details quiet, this murder has a strange twist—it seems that the killer wants the crime publicized. Is it a revenge killing, or something more? Riley’s investigation takes her inside a lucrative identity theft ring that links low-life crooks to white-collar opportunists. While Riley pushes to keep the homicide in the news, her boss is convinced that coverage of the Mall of America’s unique version of a royal wedding is key to the station’s winning ratings. As the stakes continue to rise for her job and her life, Riley must outwit the killer in a trap that could leave yet another person dead. I like Riley tremendously as a sleuth and a person. She’s soldiering through professional and personal tribulations once again which adds texture to a nifty plot with some real twists. Kramer’s own background as a TV journalist adds depth and believability to this series. David Hunenberg adds, “Humor takes this novel from standing out to being outstanding (Spam, the kind you eat, was a major ingredient for the U.S. winning WWII)!?! Riley is so likable that you can’t help rooting for her as she chases her story from start to finish. Kramer’s journalistic style makes this novel shine.” See Our January Mass Market Paperback Picks for Riley’s last case and to view all, [click here](#).

Lawson, MA. [Rosarito Beach](#) (Blue Rider/Putnam \$26.95). Another Event Book gets a January Indie Next Pick: “Once

readers delve into this first book of a new series by the author of the popular Joe DeMarco novels, they will immediately be drawn into the world of Kay Hamilton, rugged DEA agent and obstinate, independent loner. Up against a tough drug lord in Mexico, Hamilton is able to hold her own until her own daughter is taken hostage. Then it demands all of Hamilton's ingenuity and guts to find her daughter and set her free. Just how far will a mother go to save her child? I want the next Kay Hamilton soon, Mr. Lawson!" I add that this is a new direction for author Mike Lawson whose Joe DeMarco thrillers I have long admired. Kay is a kick-ass series lead picking her way in a dangerous, blurry world, which you may not think San Diego to be until you read this, and you will find it very satisfying how this plays out. It begins when Kay, having left Miami after a notorious case, goes her length to bust Tito Olivera, brother of drug czar Caesar. If Caesar goes down it will be a blow to the major Mexican drug cartels. But a mysterious stranger shows up and blows Kay's plans all to hell. For the considerable earlier work by Lawson, [click here](#).

Rankin, Ian. [Saints of the Shadow Bible](#) (LittleBrown \$26). OK, we're all crazy about Edinburgh's Inspector Rebus and hated it when he aged out and retired. Happily Scotland really changed retirement age so Rankin brought Rebus back to work. But meanwhile he created Malcolm Fox, a cop working in Complaints (Internal Affairs), who's terrific. It's inevitable that when Rebus and his attitude rejoin the force, suffering a demotion, he'd run afoul of Fox, no? Rebus is investigating a car accident when news arrives that a case from 30 years ago is being reopened. Rebus' team from those days is suspected of helping a murderer escape justice to further their own ends. Malcolm Fox, in what will be his last case as an internal affairs cop, is tasked with finding out the truth. And so the scene is set for the two to butt heads. This is also an interesting tale lining up with debates about the upcoming vote in Scotland for independence. We are delighted that Rankin will be joining us from Edinburgh on January 22 as part of our 25th anniversary year-long festival of authors. For a look at all Diamond and Gold Dagger and Edgar winner Rankin's work, [click here](#).

Robertson, Michael. [Moriarty Returns a Letter](#) (St Martins \$24.99). The set-up for this Baker Street series is fun. Reggie and Nigel Heath are two brothers with a law office at London's 221B Baker Street. Their lease negotiation includes a provision that they will answer all letters addressed to Sherlock Holmes that arrive. As many of them contain problems, three-pipe or more, the brothers have developed some detecting expertise and enjoyed some odd adventures. And now when an exhibition of vintage Sherlock Holmes letters opens at the Marylebone Hotel, problems are compounded. As Reggie and his beloved Laura embark on a pre-wedding trip, someone from Reggie and Nigel's past—someone whom they thought was long gone—reappears. But first, you as readers, learn some interesting Holmesian history.... Isn't it fun, and amazing, that a character created at the end of the Victorian era lives on and flourishes in the 20th Century in films, TV, and various books? For Reggie and Nigel's earlier cases, [click here](#).

Stashower, Daniel. [Hour of Peril](#) (\$16.99). Stashower visits our local library in conjunction with its Lincoln exhibit to promote the paperback edition of his 2013 Nonfiction bestseller. *Booklist* gave it a Starred Review: "Some of President Lincoln's associates

and some historians have questioned if the supposed conspiracy to assassinate him upon his arrival in Baltimore was serious. Stashower has no doubt that the plot was real, and he has written a convincing and well-researched chronicle of it and the successful effort to thwart it. His story has the necessary elements of a successful historical thriller, including a determined assassin; a wily, intrepid detective; a serpentine plot; and, in Lincoln, an important and sympathetic potential victim. Stashower seems determined to lay out the painstaking details of the plot; although it provides credibility, it sometimes acts as a drag on the narrative. Still, the stakes are high, so the story has a built-in urgency and excitement. The detective, the soon-to-be-famous Allan Pinkerton, is a relentless and clever sleuth, and the chief conspirator, a Baltimore barber named Ferrandini, is a formidable adversary. Despite some slow moments, the book generally succeeds as both a historical inquiry and a detective story."

Taylor, Brad. [The Polaris Protocol](#) (Dutton \$26.95). I've said before that Taylor is the natural heir to Vince Flynn (although he's more center than to the right and more focused on military hardware). When it comes to tactics and hardware he is spot-on."—Vince Flynn on *All Necessary Force*. And this 5th thriller for Pike Logan and his Taskforce team confirms that. Pike and Jennifer Cahill (secret lovers if not so secret to their teammates) are in Turkmenistan operating, as the top-secret Taskforce does, outside the law, when Jennifer's phone rings at a crucial moment. When she gets to it she hears the voice of her brother Jack, an investigative reporter on a crazy mission penetrating Mexican drug cartels. He's caught between two of them and his call comes as he's being kidnapped. Turns out that illegal drug trafficking is not all of what's going on, which you readers will already know from hints in opening scenes. What Taylor imagines is happening is truly scary—and could become nonfiction. Leave it to thrillers written by pros such as Delta Force veteran Taylor to see that bit ahead into the future. "Bestseller Taylor's fifth Pike Logan thriller takes all the energy of the previous installments and multiplies it by a force factor of 10... A great premise, nonstop action, and one of the baddest villains in the genre... make this a winner." —*Publishers Weekly* Starred Review. Doe Pike's earlier thrillers, [click here](#).

Thane, James. [Until Death](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$14.95). Thane's second novel for Phoenix policeman Sean Richardson turns on the loss of the classic "little black book," one kept by high-price (and classy) escort Gina Gallagher. After three of her 20-man client list are murdered, Gina's brave enough to come to the cops with this information. There is nothing in her book to connect her to it, which makes its use as a hit list more puzzling. This soft-boiled procedural makes fine use of metro Phoenix and Scottsdale as the landscape for the investigation. Richardson is far from a stereotypical cop and his partner Maggie McClinton is a winner. It's hard for both of them to work a case where the collateral damage on many levels is the true tragedy.

Todd, Charles. [Hunting Shadows](#) (Morrow \$25.99). On a blistering August, 1920, day, guests are assembling at Ely's astonishing medieval cathedral for a wedding. As the groom and his party arrive, a shot rings out and one of the men with him drops. As friends hustle the groom to safety, guests mill and no one can spot the shooter. The local police spend two fruitless weeks digging for clues before they give up and call in Scotland Yard. DI Ian Rutledge gets the case which is complicated by

news of another out-of-the blue, evidence-free shooting in a Fens village near Ely. Rutledge arrives in the marsh country one completely foggy night and for most of his investigation he remains mired in one. An eye witness to the second shooting describes a “monster” and is so mocked she recants her story. No one can find a connection between the dead Army officer at the wedding and the inoffensive widowed solicitor from the village who is standing for Parliament. You won’t have a clue either—but in time information filters in to clear things up. “Tricky plotting and rich atmospherics distinguish bestseller Todd’s 16th novel featuring Scotland Yard’s Insp. Ian Rutledge....Todd has rarely been better.”—*Publishers Weekly* Starred Review “Another winner...Strong atmosphere and a complicated mystery...”—*Romantic Times* 4.5 Stars. I really love Cambridgeshire and the Fen Country (old windmills, marshes, isolated villages) Todd paints. Readers of Jim Kelly and Michelle Spring will appreciate this landscape. For earlier work by Todd, [click here](#). Rutledge’s last case is reviewed in Our January Trade Paperback Picks.

FIRST NOVELS

Axelrod, Steven. [Nantucket Sawbuck Signed](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26). “Axelrod has a gift for characterization and a strong lead in Kennis.... his mystery debut gives the island as much personality as its varied inhabitants.”—*Kirkus*. When Nantucket homeowner Preston Lomax is killed in his McMansion, everyone on the island could be a suspect. Lomax lived large, owed money, and the word was spreading he was planning to stiff them all and disappear. Chief of Police Henry Kennis, a newcomer from California, finds himself investigating with help from the State Police. Together they solve the case—or so it appears. But Kennis can’t shake the feeling that they’ve missed something. Kennis soon discovers scandals and intrigues behind the scenes in one of America’s most exclusive resort locations. This glamorous setting hosts an eclectic cast of local characters—oddball journalists, surfing carpenters, drug dealers, wealthy homeowners, and their slacker children. Kennis uncovers a truth that lies somewhere between the bad blood and the good neighbors and realizes that the real answer hits painfully close to home. “*Nantucket Sawbuck* is a rare delight—a well-written small-town mystery that feels like life, complete with suspects who are the sort of people who commit murders and a police chief who’s capable of catching them at it. Read this book.”—Thomas Perry. Also in trade paper: [Nantucket Sawbuck](#) (\$14.95). **A First Mystery Club Pick.**

⌘Dugdall, Ruth. [Sacrificial Man](#) (Skyhorse/Arcade \$22.95). As a veteran reader of crime fiction my shock or Ugh meter is set very low, but I have to say this winner of a CWA Debut Dagger scored way too high. Spoiler here: it’s basically about a dying man (with Jakob-Creutzfeld disease we eventually learn) whose fantasy is to have someone kill and eat him, and about the woman who connects via some internet channel and agrees to it. And then how they double cross each other to an ironic ending which Probation Officer Cate Austin rather enjoys. I am happy to think the man and woman both died or will as they deserve. So, skip it. Or be mad at me for spoiling your read.

Elo, Elisabeth. [North of Boston Signed](#) (Viking \$28.95). Dennis Lehane meets *Smilla’s Sense of Snow* in a debut about an edgy young woman with the rare ability to withstand extreme conditions. It makes a plot about a gutsy young woman who

somehow survives four hours in 40-some degree Atlantic Ocean, after a freighter strikes the lobster boat where she is crewing, roll. Piro Kasparov is a Boston girl of Russian ancestry trying to figure out her life. Her BFF is a drunk called Thomasina, Piro’s prep school buddy and mother of Ned. Thomasina has been widowed when her husband Neil, captain of the lobster boat, drowned. Neil saved Piro’s life by staying aboard to radio a distress call. Piro agrees to look after Ned as Thomasina falls further apart, and gradually picks up hints that not all was as it seems. Did the freighter ram the boat deliberately? It’s a suspicion seconded by her deeply cynical, autocratic Russian father. Then the navy reaches out to her to participate in research on human survival in dangerously cold temperatures. With the help of a curious journalist named Russell Parnell, Piro begins unraveling a lethal plot involving the glacial whaling grounds off Baffin Island. In a narrow inlet in the arctic tundra, Piro confronts her ultimate challenge: to trust herself. I thought Canadian Arctic sleuth Ellie Kugak’s debut in MJ McGrath’s [White Heat](#) (\$15) was terrific, so this is for her fans too. **A First Mystery Club Pick.**

Miller, Mary. [Last Days of California](#) (Liveright \$24.95). Jess, is fourteen years old and waiting for the world to end. Her evangelical father has packed up the family and left their Montgomery home to drive west to California, hoping to save as many souls as possible before the Second Coming. With her long-suffering mother and rebellious (and secretly pregnant) sister, Jess hands out tracts to nonbelievers at every rest stop, waffle house, and gas station along the way. As Jess’s belief frays, her teenage myopia evolves into awareness about her fracturing family. Using deadpan humor and savage charm belying deep empathy for her characters, Miller’s debut captures the angst, sexual rivalry, and escalating self-doubt of teenage life in America. “Beyond the well-crafted coming-of-age narrative, Miller gets every little detail about the South—from the way the sky greens before a storm to gas stations where Hank Williams Jr.’s ‘Family Tradition’ blares—just right. But it’s Jess’s earnest, searching voice, as she contemplates her parents, the trip, and their values, that lingers after Miller’s story has finished. In Jess, Miller has created a narrator worthy of comparison with those of contemporaries such as Karen Thompson Walker and of greats such as Carson McCullers.”—*PW* Starred Review

Snyder, Rachel Louise. [What We’ve Lost Is Nothing](#) (Scribner \$25). Home to Frank Lloyd Wright and Ernest Hemingway, the city of Oak Park, Illinois, is a historic enclave that prides itself on its dedication to diversity. Nestled in the shadow of the City of Big Shoulders to its east, the border between city and suburb often gets a little murky, so when an entire street of homes is robbed during a single afternoon, suppressed racial tensions bubble to the surface as the suspects remain at large. Every one of the eight families affected will have their beliefs, their commitment to their community, and even their most precious relationships challenged during the course of the initial 24 hours following the burglaries, but none more so than the McPhersons, whose 15-year-old daughter was home during the invasion. “Veteran journalist Snyder crafts a muscular and fearless debut novel that boldly tackles the heady themes of prejudice, self-preservation, poverty, and privilege. Deftly underscored by a steady drumbeat of denial and discontent, Snyder’s drama provocatively reveals the escalating tensions of a community

about to implode. Snyder also limns a gut-grabbing portrait of heedless teens and bad choices which warp lives of the kids and the adults surrounding them.

Staveley, Brian. [The Emperor's Blades](#) (Tor \$27.99). Here is volume One in the Chronicle of the Unhewn Throne, the launch of a fantasy series. It begins with the Emperor of Annur is slain by enemies and unknown. He leaves a daughter and two sons who launch into intrigue, revenge, assassinations, encounter death priests and black-ops bird riders and giant poisonous lizards. Characters, special language, and a new brand of fantasy Zen, it's all here.

Sternbergh, Adam. [Shovel Ready Signed](#) (Crown \$25). Spademan used to be a garbage man. That was before the dirty bomb hit Times Square, before his wife was killed, and before the city became a blown-out shell of its former self. Now he's a hitman. In a near-future New York City split between those who are wealthy enough to "tap in" to a sophisticated virtual reality, and those who are left to fend for themselves in the ravaged streets, Spademan chose the streets. His new job is not that different from his old one: waste disposal is waste disposal. He doesn't ask questions, he works quickly, and he's handy with a box cutter. But when his latest client hires him to kill the daughter of a powerful evangelist, his unadorned life is upended: his mark has a shocking secret and his client has a sordid agenda far beyond a simple kill. Spademan must navigate between these two worlds—the wasteland reality and the slick fantasy—to finish his job, clear his conscience, and make sure he's not the one who winds up in the ground. The bookseller making this a January Indie Next Pick writes, "I have always been a fan of dystopian novels, but when I picked up Sternbergh's novel I was unprepared for the post-dirty bomb New York that awaited me. This book is a sucker punch, plain and simple. Gritty, taut, and compelling, *Shovel Ready* paints a grim and savage portrait of a future where the rich have quite literally checked out and the rest of New York is treading water in the ashes of a once-great city. A fantastic read!" This is our **January Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**.

✠Tobin, Sophia. [The Silversmith's Wife Signed](#) (SimonSchuster \$32). The year is 1792 and it's winter in Berkeley Square. As the city sleeps, the night-watchman keeps a cautious eye over the streets, and another eye in the back doors of the great and the good. Then one fateful night he comes across the body of Pierre Renard, the eponymous silversmith, lying dead, his throat cut and his valuables missing. It could be common theft, committed by one of the many villains who stalk the square, but as news of the murder spreads, it soon becomes clear that Renard had more than a few enemies, all with their own secrets to hide. At the centre of this web is Mary, the silversmith's wife. Ostensibly theirs was an excellent pairing, but behind closed doors their relationship was a dark and at times sadistic one and when we meet her, Mary is withdrawn and weak, haunted by her past and near-mad with guilt. Will she attain the redemption she seeks and what, exactly, does she need redemption for...? Rich, intricate and beautifully told, this is a story of murder, love and buried secrets. And one has to love this debut author's job description: she is currently Library Secretary for the Worshipful Company of Goldsmith's and lives in London. This is our **January History/Mystery Pick**.

Urguhart, Rachel. [The Visionist](#) (LittleBrown \$26). 15-year-old Polly Kimball sets fire to the family farm, killing her abusive

father. She and her young brother find shelter in a Massachusetts Shaker community called The City of Hope. It is the Era of Manifestations, when young girls in Shaker enclaves all across the Northeast are experiencing extraordinary mystical visions, earning them the honorific of "Visionist" and bringing renown to their settlements. The City of Hope has not yet been blessed with a Visionist, but that changes when Polly arrives and is unexpectedly exalted. As she struggles to keep her dark secrets concealed in the face of increasing scrutiny, Polly finds herself in a life-changing friendship with a young Shaker sister named Charity, a girl who will stake everything—including her faith—on Polly.

BRITISH BOOKS

Beaufort, Simon. [The Murder House](#) (Severn \$28.95). "In this darkly comic psychological thriller from Beaufort (the joint pen name of Susanna Gregory and Beau Riffenburgh), what should have been a minor procedural indiscretion—the illicit possession of a criminal case file—leaves police constable Helen Anderson vulnerable to ambitious and crooked defense barrister James Paxton, who was at school with her in Bristol years earlier. Smugly overconfident Paxton forces Helen to commit ever-greater crimes until he overplays his hand. Determined to remain a cop despite one serious faux pas, Helen demonstrates a laudable talent for improvisation and evasion as she comes to realize she can't avoid her new career path. Each step into depravity and self-indulgence seems justifiable to Helen, each heinous act an easier choice than the one before. Beaufort (*A Dead Man's Secret* and seven other Sir Geoffrey Mappestone mysteries) artfully presents a monster in a flattering light while never underplaying the gravity of her crimes."—*PW*. Ordered upon Request.

Benison, CC. [Ten Lords A-Leaping](#) (Random \$25). Although Father Tom Christmas serves his little church in enchanting Thornford Regis with a glad and faithful heart, he never expects to find himself skydiving to raise money for it. Nor, safely back on the ground, to see two of the other divers leap from the plane, then tangle in a midair punch-up and begin falling to the earth. To say that there is tension between the men in question—Oliver, the 7th Marquess of Morborne, and his brother-in-law Hector, the 10th Earl of Fairhaven—would be an understatement. But the trouble among this ancient landed family really began a generation ago, when a marquess divorced his first spouse to marry his brother's wife, fathering in his two marriages a viper's nest of arrogant young aristocrats. Now they have all turned up for the show to witness this shocking event in the sky. Thankfully the men land safely, but death will not be slighted. Much to Father Tom's dismay, he later discovers Lord Morborne lying deceased on castle grounds. Rumors of bigamy, art forgeries, and upstairs/downstairs intrigue fly. So do whispers of unvicariously behavior between Tom and Oliver's beautiful half-sister, Lady Lucinda. In fact, the vicar may be headed for a very hard landing of his own. This is the 3rd case for Tom Christmas. [Click here](#) for the first two.

Bradley, Alan. [The Dead in Their Vaulted Arches](#) (Random \$24). Over the course of the Flavia de Luce mysteries, none has tugged at our curiosity and hearts more than that surrounding her mother, Harriet, who disappeared when Flavia was just a baby. Flavia's father has always been closed up, remote. Her

two older sisters treat her oddly, and aged Aunt Felicity has been enigmatic at best. But now, Harriet is coming home. In a coffin. And at the Buckshaw train halt where a crowd has assembled in respect, including Winston Churchill, an unknown man falls to his death on the tracks? Or was he pushed? That's one of the questions to which Flavia, whose world is changing and who is nearing age 12, eventually gets an answer.... For the newest Flavia in paperback, [Speaking from Among the Bones](#) (\$15), see our January Trade Paperback Picks. And an email from author Bradley tells me that the TV series for Flavia is looking good for 2015. Plus this is volume six of a contracted ten volume series.

Cleeves, Ann. [Harbour Street Signed](#) (Macmillan \$39). As the snow falls thickly on Newcastle, the shouts and laughter of Christmas revelers break the muffled silence. Detective Joe Ashworth and his daughter Jessie are swept along in the jostling crowd onto the Metro. But when the train is stopped due to the bad weather, and the other passengers fade into the swirling snow, Jessie notices that an old lady hasn't left the train: Margaret Krukowski has been fatally stabbed as she sat on the crowded train. Why would anyone want to harm this reserved, elegant lady? Arriving at the scene, DI Vera Stanhope is relieved to have an excuse to escape the holiday festivities. As she stands on the silent, snow-covered station platform, Vera feels a familiar buzz of anticipation, sensing that this will be a complex and unusual case. Soon Vera and Joe are on their way to the south Northumberland town of Mardle, where Margaret lived, to begin their inquiry. Then, just days later, a second woman is murdered. Vera knows that to find the key to this new killing she needs to understand what had been troubling Margaret so much before she died – before another life is lost. Retracing Margaret's final steps, Vera finds herself searching deep into the hidden past of this seemingly innocent neighborhood, led by clues that keep revolving around one street . . . Why are the residents of Harbour Street so reluctant to speak? 6th for Detective Inspector Vera Stanhope

Crombie, Deborah. [Now May You Weep](#) ;[The Sound of Broken Glass](#) (\$13.99 each). Reissues of two cases for Kincaid and James. Crombie signs the new one, March 25, here.

Dolan, Eva. [Long Way Home Signed](#) (Harvill \$35). A man is burnt alive in a suburban garden shed. DI Zigic and DS Ferreira are called in from the Peterborough Hate Crimes Unit to investigate the murder. Their victim is quickly identified as a migrant worker and a man several people might have had good reason to see dead. A convicted arsonist and member of a far-right movement has just been released from prison, while witnesses claim to have seen the dead man fighting with one of the town's most prominent slum landlords. Zigic and Ferreira know all too well the problems that come with dealing with a community that has more reason than most not to trust the police, but when another migrant worker is attacked, tensions rapidly begin to rise as they search for their killer. Starts a new series, very dark in the manner of say Stuart MacBride while underlining how much of England is no longer "English," in the way that many Americans expect in crime fiction.

Doughty, Louise. [Apple Tree Yard](#) (Farrar \$26). Not a detection but a novel of psychological suspense as a trial unfolds at the Old Bailey where Yvonne Carmichael, renowned geneticist and public authority, is in the dock. As she gives her testimony we follow her back through memories and walk with her in the

present. How did a chance encounter in the Houses of Parliament lead to the act of violence that has her charged with murder? How did her comfortable, careful life become hostage to her passion for a man who guided her into a deserted, ancient chapel under Parliament where they had astonishing sex? And did her desire paint him as someone he isn't—some kind of secret agent?—or, is he? Did he? Hilary Mantel calls this a "compelling and bravely written book" and I agree. **It isn't a comfortable read like many of my British Crime Club choices (and we have some cozy, funny ones coming in 2014), but it stays with you.** Plus readers of British crime should become more acquainted with the Old Bailey and the justice system.

Griffiths, Elly. [The Outcast Dead Signed](#) (Quercus \$39). Early notice of the February publication of a new Ruth Galloway mystery.

Hannah, Sophie. [The Orphan Choir](#) (Picador \$25). Louise has no reason left to stay in the city. She can't see her son, Joseph, who is away at boarding school, where he performs in a prestigious boys' choir. Her troublesome neighbor has begun blasting choral music at all hours of the night—and to make matters worse, she's the only one who can hear it. Hoping to find some peace, Louise convinces her husband, Stuart, to buy them a country house in an idyllic, sun-dappled gated community called Swallowfield. But it seems that the haunting melodies of the choir have followed her there. Could it be that her city neighbor has trailed her to Swallowfield, just to play an elaborate, malicious prank? Is there really a ghostly chorus playing outside her door? And why won't they stop? Growing desperate, she begins to worry about her mental health. Against the pleas and growing disquiet of her husband, Louise starts to suspect that this sinister choir is not only real but a warning. But of what? And how can it be, when no one else can hear it? "This stand-alone novel, a break from Hannah's series of psychological police procedurals featuring Charlie Zailer and Simon Waterhouse, is a riveting story in which suspense snowballs to a climax that is all the more dire for its everyday contemporary English setting. Absolutely haunting, in every sense of the word."—*Booklist*

Heley, Veronica. [False Diamond](#) (Severn \$28.95). The fake diamond in Dilys Holland's engagement ring implies that all is not well with her marriage. And Bea Abbot has already clashed with Dilys' husband, the bullying Benton, when she refuses to help him rescue his ailing company. But matters are about to turn a great deal worse when Dilys tries to commit suicide. Or does she? The latest Abbott Agency detection. Ordered Upon Request.

Kernick, Simon. [Stay Alive Signed](#) (Century \$32). You're on a trip with your family, miles from anywhere. A shot rings out—and your whole life changes in an instant. A woman is racing towards you, chased by three gunmen. Although you don't know it, she harbors a deadly secret. She's in terrible danger. And now you are too. You're running, terrified, desperate to find safety. You know that the men hunting you have killed before. And if they catch you, you'll be next .

MacBride, Stuart. [Song for the Dying Signed](#) (Collins \$39).). He's back. Eight years ago, "The Inside Man" murdered four women and left three more in critical condition – all of them with their stomachs slit open and a plastic doll stitched inside. And then the killer just . . . disappeared. Ash Henderson was a Detective Inspector on the initial investigation, but a lot can change in eight years. His family has been destroyed, his career

is in tatters, and one of Oldcastle's most vicious criminals is making sure he spends the rest of his life in prison. Now a nurse has turned up dead on a patch of waste ground, a plastic doll buried beneath her skin, and it looks as if Ash might finally get a shot at redemption. At earning his freedom. At revenge.

Rickman, Phil. [The Magus of Hay](#) (Grove \$24.95). A man's body is found below a waterfall. It looks like suicide or an accidental drowning—until DI Frannie Bliss enters the dead man's home. What he finds there sends him to Merrily Watkins, the Diocese of Hereford's official advisor on the paranormal. It's been nearly 40 years since Hay was declared an independent state by its self-styled king—a development seen at the time as a joke, a publicity scam. But behind this pastiche a dark design was taking shape, creating a hidden history of murder and ritual-magic, the relics of which are only now becoming horribly visible. It's a situation that will take Merrily Watkins—alone for the first time in years—to the edge of madness. “Few writers blend the ancient and supernatural with the modern and criminal better than Rickman. Merrily Watkins is both strikingly original and consistently intriguing... A fascinating portrayal of ancient grudges and shifting allegiances make this an absorbing and thought-provoking thriller.” —*Guardian*. [Signed UK copies](#) (\$52).

Sayers, Dorothy L. [Clouds of Witness](#); [Unnatural Death](#); [The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club](#); [Whose Body?](#) (Harper \$14.99 each). Four reissues of Lord Peter Wimsey cases. The first must be read in order to understand the Jill Paton Walsh novels of Lord Peter and Lady Harriet.

Smith, Helen. [Beyond Belief](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$14.95). So here is the opposite to the Doughty novel above, an “almost” choice for the British Crime Club. It's in a Wodehouse tradition with its mayhem, murder, “horrorscopes” and preternatural dachshunds. 26-year-old Emily Castles is tapped to attend a Belief and Beyond conference in Torquay (birthplace of Agatha Christie) as a “future crimes investigator.” A columnist knows as Perspicacious Peg for the horrorscopes predicts a murder will occur on site, so it's Emily's task to head it off. The probably target is a celebrated and outspoken magician who is planning a daring walk-on-water stunt and offering a £50,000 award to any attendee who can prove the paranormal exists. Once three dead bodies turn up, young Emily puts old-fashioned deductive detecting to work....

Staincliffe, Cath. [Dead to Me](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Detective Constable Janet Scott has put in the time and seen it all, but has no desire for the boss's job—she loves her own too much. Rachel Bailey couldn't be more different—she's energetic, impulsive, and ambitious, and has just been transferred to the Manchester murder squad. Their commander thinks Rachel's intuition could make her a great cop, but has reservations about her shoot-first-think-later approach, so she partners her with Janet. At first, the match seems to have been made somewhere considerably lower than heaven, but when a teenage girl is found brutally murdered, stabbed to death in her squalid flat on a North Manchester housing estate, both detectives realize they must work together to stop a vicious killer. The case quickly becomes more complicated than it seems, fraught with dangers neither woman could see coming. Eager to make her mark, Rachel's reckless pursuit of the truth could threaten her future on the squad. And an unexpected turn in the investigation forces Janet to

face personal demons. A UK TV crime series features these two women; not sure if this is the novelization of the series, or vice versa. It's gritty, more like *Prime Suspect*.

Williams, Charlotte. [The House on the Cliff](#) (\$14.99). First novel set on the lovely, rocky coast of Wales. See our January Trade Paperback Picks. We have the Signed UK edition at a special price: [The House on the Cliff Signed](#) (\$25).

INTERNATIONAL CRIME

We have Book Buyers Clubs for Autographed Editions, and 3 for good Unsigned reads. Our Fresh Fiction Club is perfect for books in translation or by authors writing in English who live outside the US. One book per month, charged to you. Please email sales@poisonedpen.com to join this wonderful treat for you. The other two clubs for Unsigned treats are British Crime Club, like Fresh Fiction either paperbacks or hardcovers, and the History/Mystery Paperback Club. Imagine a delightful surprise just appearing at your door each month....

For Kids, get them started thinking (and reading) globally early:

Broom, Jenny. [Walk This World](#) (Candlewick \$17.99). Each page in this vibrant tour around the world opens to a new destination, allowing young readers to travel into global cultures. Spy in windows and step through doors by interacting with the flaps on each colorful spread. Perfect for helping young explorers distinguish between and appreciate diverse world cultures. Ages 5-8/

Adler-Olsen, Jussi. [Purity of Vengeance: A Department Q Thriller](#) (Dutton \$26.95). A January Indie Next Pick: “Since his involvement in an incident in which a detective was killed and another paralyzed, Detective Carl Morck of Copenhagen's Department Q has been assigned to a basement office to work on cold cases. Among a backlog of cases, his assistants discover a series of mysterious disappearances that occurred almost 15 years earlier, all within the same few days. The coincidence intrigues Morck, and two characters, still living, seem to be the common denominator: Nete Hermansen, victimized in her youth, and Curt Wad, a right-wing master of the Purity Party. Adler-Olsen delivers a fast-paced narrative that will keep readers turning the pages until the satisfying conclusion.” Hmm, I'm not so sure about “satisfying” as this work is so relentlessly dark and some of the characters so cold.... Fanatics don't much interest me, along with psychopaths.

Bateman, Colin. [Cycle of Violence](#); [Of Wee Sweetie Mice and Men](#) (\$14.95 each). Reissues of two of Bateman's comedic yet crackerjack crime novels bringing first Belfast, and in book two, New York, roaring to life.

Coelho, Paulo. [Manuscript Found in Accra](#) (\$14). 1099. Jerusalem awaits the invasion of the crusaders who have surrounded the city's gates. There, inside the ancient city's walls, women and men of every age and faith have gathered to hear the wisdom of a mysterious man known only as the Copt. As the wise man speaks of loyalty, fear, bravery and solitude, of love, sex, beauty and elegance, his words offer insights into values. This book has mostly been panned but it offers material upon which to reflect as the new year opens.

Cotterill, Colin. [The Woman Who Wouldn't Die](#) (\$15.95). The 9th in the gently loony, fabulous Dr. Siri series follows up events in 2011's [Slash and Burn](#) (\$15). In a small Lao village, a very strange thing has happened. A woman was shot and killed in her

bed during a burglary; she was given a funeral and everyone in the village saw her body burned. Then, three days later, she was back in her house as if she'd never been dead at all. But now she's clairvoyant, and can speak to the dead. That's why the long-dead brother of a Lao general has enlisted her to help his brother uncover his remains, which have been lost at the bottom of a river for many years. Lao national coroner Dr. Siri Paiboun and his wife, Madame Daeng, are sent along to supervise the excavation. It could be a kind of relaxing vacation for them, maybe, except Siri is obsessed with the pretty undead medium's special abilities, and Madame Daeng might be a little jealous. She doesn't trust the woman for some reason—is her hunch right? What is the group really digging for at the bottom of this remote river on the Thai border? What war secrets are being covered up? For earlier Dr. Siris, [click here](#). The first, [The Coroner's Lunch](#) (\$14), was a First Mystery Club Pick which remains a top favorite with me and a Pen bestseller.

De La Motte, Anders. [Buzz: A Thriller](#) (Atria \$15). It's been four months since HP Pettersson was dragged into a ruthless Alternate Reality Game that nearly cost him his life. Although he now has everything he ever wished for—freedom, money, and no responsibilities—he isn't satisfied. He's plagued by insomnia and paranoia, and misses the adrenaline rush of the Game. He misses the attention. At times, he even hopes the Game Master will find him. And when HP catches the eye of a rich and powerful CEO for all the wrong reasons, he may get his wish. But he quickly learns that sometimes, you have to be careful what you wish for... Second in a hot Swedish trilogy after [Game](#) (\$16). Much touted to Stieg Larsson readers.

De Waal, Elisabeth. [The Exiles Return](#) (Picador \$26). “Until Edmund de Waal, Elisabeth de Waal's grandson, inherited ‘the yellowing typescript’ of this historical novel, written in the 1950s, it languished and was untitled and unpublished in her lifetime. The setting is postwar Vienna, a city “of recognition and non-recognition, of the comfortably familiar and the frighteningly strange.” After immigrating to the U.S. to escape Nazi persecution, Jewish scientist Kuno Adler returns to Vienna, where he finds love while fleeing the confines of his marriage. Adler comes face-to-face with Austria's recent past when he discovers that his supervisor is “one self-confessed, unrepentant Nazi.” Marie-Therese is an aloof, pedigreed American teenager staying with family in Austria; her marriage plot weaves through the book and supplies the melodrama of its denouement. Will Resi marry down to Lucas Anreither, who is loving and stable, but the grandson of the family's gamekeeper? Or will she marry Lorenzo Grein, a titled aristocrat? Why does the wealthy Theophil Kanakis host salons and surround himself with Vienna's glittering youth? While the novel's prose is by turns lyrical and melancholy, and there's much to be admired in this elegy to loss and return, the novel's dramatic impact is ultimately thwarted by an operatic ending that betrays its age.”—*PW*. But *Library Journal* writes, “De Waal's grandson Edmund de Waal (*The Hare with Amber Eyes*) has succeeded in publishing his grandmother's posthumously discovered manuscript 75 years after the 1938 Anschluss that dislocated his family. This elegant novel should appeal to readers who admire the European stylishness of war-era books such as Irène Némirovsky's *Suite Française* and Tatiana de Rosnay's *Sarah's Key*.”

Doyle, Roddy. [The Guts](#) (Viking \$27.95). In the 1980s Jimmy Rabbitte formed the Commitments, a ragtag, blue-collar collective of Irish youths determined to bring the soul music stylings of James Brown and Percy Sledge to Dublin. Time proves a great equalizer for Jimmy as he's now approaching fifty with a loving wife, four kids, and a recent cancer diagnosis that leaves him feeling shattered and frightened. Jimmy still loves his music, and he still loves to hustle—his new thing is finding old bands and then finding the people who loved them enough to pay for their resurrected albums. As he battles his illness on his path through Dublin, Jimmy manages to reconnect with his own past, most notably Commitments guitarist Liam “Outspan” Foster and the still beautiful backup vocalist Imelda Quirk. Jimmy also learns the trumpet, reunites with his long-lost brother, and rediscovers the joys of fatherhood in this follow up to Doyle's debut in [The Commitments](#) (\$15.99).

Gage, Leighton. [The Ways of Evil Men](#) (Soho \$26.95). Sadly this is the final novel bringing modern Brazil and courageous cop Chief Inspector Mario Silva to life, for Gage died of pancreatic cancer. How ironic that it's his best book, a real zinger in story and action and one exposing a practice so cold-blooded it makes your heart stop: the deliberate extermination of a small Amazon tribe to gain control of their (small plot of) land. And for a motive it's hard to believe! The Awana tribe, who live in the remote Amazon jungle in the Brazilian state of Pará, have dwindled to only 41 members—and now 39 of them have dropped dead of what looks like poison. The neighboring white townfolk don't seem to be mourning the genocide much—in fact, the only person who seems to care at all is Jade Calmon, the official tribal relations agent assigned to the area. She wants justice for the two survivors, a father and his 8-year-old son. But racism is deeply entrenched and no one is going to help her get to the truth. Unfortunately, this is far from the first time the Brazilian federal police have had a tribal genocide to investigate. Chief Inspector Mario Silva and his team are sent in from Brasilia to try to solve the increasingly complex case just as a local white man is discovered murdered. Someone has done their best to frame the surviving Awana man, and the town is about to erupt. “The late Gage (1942–2013) weaves an engaging plot and psychologically complex characters together with a sharp-edged social commentary on the Brazilian class system; his voice will be greatly missed in the crime fiction community.”—*PW* Starred Review on this final gift from Gage to us all.

Jansson, Anna. [Killer's Island](#) (Stockholm Text \$14.95). I came to like Maria Wern whose beat is the gorgeous island of Gotland, Sweden (think Martha's Vineyard) through the MHz-TV-broadcast series. They are terrific television with a special landscape. This is the second Wern to be translated into English following [Strange Bird](#) (\$14.95).

Jungersen, Christian. [You Disappear](#) (Knopf \$27.95). Mia is an elementary schoolteacher in Denmark, while her husband, Frederik, is the talented, highly respected headmaster of a local private school. During a vacation in Spain, Frederik has an accident and his visit to the hospital reveals a brain tumor that is gradually altering his personality, confirming Mia's suspicions that her husband is no longer the man he used to be. Now she must protect herself and their teenage son, Niklas, from the strange, blunted being who lives in her husband's body—and

with whom she must share her home, her son, and her bed. When it emerges that one year ago Frederik had defrauded his school of millions of crowns, the consequences of his condition envelope the entire community. Mia faces more tough questions. Had his illness already changed him back then when he still seemed so happy? What are the legal ramifications? In her support group for spouses of people with brain injuries, Mia meets a defense attorney named Bernhard. Together they help prepare for Frederik's court case by immersing themselves in the latest brain research and in classic philosophical questions of free will, while simultaneously navigating the uncertain waters of their growing mutual infatuation. The publisher says, "Danish bestseller Jungersen's clear, spare prose and ceaseless plot twists will keep readers hooked until the last page."

Larsson, Stieg. [The Expo Files: Articles by the Crusading Journalist](#) (MacLehose \$22.95). Now almost exclusively known as the author of the bestselling Millennium Trilogy, Sweden's Stieg Larsson was first a professional journalist and an untiring crusader for democracy and equality. Collected in English for the first time, the articles in this volume explore the human rights issues that formed the ideological foundation of his explosive trio of novels.

Magson, Adrian. [The Watchman Signed](#) (Severn \$43). He's a professional shadow. A watcher who provides protection in potentially hostile situations. He works in the background, stays off the record. Often the people he's guarding have no idea he's there. Some people know him as Portman. When two British intelligence agents are dispatched to negotiate the release of a group of western hostages in Somalia, veteran MI6 operator Tom Vane realizes that something about this operation doesn't stack up. Unwilling to see two promising officers sacrificed in what he believes to be a suicide mission, he covertly hires deep cover specialist Marc Portman to protect them. Heading for the wild, lawless land on the Kenyan/Somali border, Portman soon realizes that the British Intelligence Services have been double-crossed. Can he survive long enough to keep his charges alive and prevent a catastrophe?

Nadel, Barbara. [Body Count Signed](#) (Headline \$41). Any bloody death will lead Inspectors Cetin Ikmen and Mehmet Suleyman out onto the dark streets of Istanbul. On 21 January, a half-decapitated corpse in the poor multicultural district of Tarlabasi poses a particularly frustrating and gruesome mystery. But as the months pass and the violence increases, it turns into a hunt for that rare phenomenon in the golden city on the Bosphorus: a serial killer. Desperate to uncover the killer's twisted logic as the body count rises, Ikmen and Suleyman find only more questions. How are the victims connected? What is the significance of the number 21? And how many Istanbulers must die before they find the answers? This is a terrific series bringing modern Turkey to you as well as often delving into its complex, multicultural past.

Neuhaus, Nele. [Bad Wolf: A Novel](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Karen Shaver reviews this second novel translated into English from the German bestseller. "Pia Kirchoff and Oliver von Bodenstein, who appeared in the author's previous novel, [Snow White Must Die](#) (\$14.99), encounter two separate crimes, seemingly unrelated. There are several weeks between the crimes and it takes time to peel away the pieces before finding a commonality between the two. The intense investigation results in uncovering a well-kept secret among the international elite, revealing their participation in a child abuse program. Although this is a topic few people

care to talk about, the author has presented the issue without the sensational, graphic descriptions often found in print. The plot is complex and, oftentimes, unpredictable, but the pace never slows, making it hard to put down." Actually this novel is book two in a five book series with these German cops. The focus here is on Frankfurt, a city with big ties to the book world with its annual fair going for some 500 years. I can recommend Neuhaus to those who like Scandinavian crime; there's a similar sensibility.

Padura, Leonardo. [The Man Who Loved Dogs](#) (Farrar \$35). Iván Cárdenas Maturell in his youth was the great hope of modern Cuban literature—until he dared to write a story that was deemed counterrevolutionary. When we meet him years later in Havana, Iván is a loser: a humbled and defeated man with a quiet, unremarkable life who earns his modest living as a proofreader at a veterinary magazine. One afternoon, he meets a mysterious foreigner in the company of two Russian wolfhounds. This is "the man who loved dogs," and as the pair grows closer, Iván begins to understand that his new friend is hiding a terrible secret. Moving seamlessly between Iván's life in Cuba, Ramón's early years in Spain and France, and Trotsky's long years of exile, this his is a story about political ideals tested and characters broken, a multilayered epic that effortlessly weaves together three different plot threads—Trotsky in exile, Ramón in pursuit, Iván in frustrated stasis—to bring emotional truth to historical fact.

Pancol, Katherine. [The Yellow Eyes of Crocodiles](#) (Penguin \$16). A January Indie Next Pick: "Treat yourself to this delightful French tale — with a bit of bawdiness — of family, friendship, and quirky misdirection. Readers are transported from high society Paris to medieval academia to a Kenyan crocodile farm. It is easy to see why Pancol is a bestselling author whose books have been translated into 30 languages!" When her chronically unemployed husband runs off to start a crocodile farm in Kenya with his mistress, Joséphine Cortès is left in an unhappy state of affairs. The mother of two—confident, beautiful teenage Hortense and shy, babyish Zoé—is forced to maintain a stable family life while making ends meet on her meager salary as a medieval history scholar. Meanwhile, Joséphine's charismatic sister Iris seems to have it all—a wealthy husband, gorgeous looks, and a très chic Paris address—but she dreams of bringing meaning back into her life. When Iris charms a famous publisher into offering her a lucrative deal for a twelfth-century romance, she offers her sister a deal of her own: Joséphine will write the novel and pocket all the proceeds, but the book will be published under Iris's name. All is well—that is, until the book becomes the literary sensation of the season.

Tursten, Helene. [The Fire Dance](#) (Soho \$26.95). Göteborg's Detective Inspector Irene Huss hasn't seen Sophie Malmborg for over fifteen years, but she's still haunted by the strange young ballerina's role in the fire that killed her stepfather. Why had she refused to speak to Irene and the other case workers back then? Could an eleven-year-old—even one as disturbed and aloof as Sophie—truly capable of setting her own house on fire? These questions resurface now when Sophie makes a dramatic entrance at a club, then disappears. It's right before a ballet she has choreographed is to be performed, so surely she didn't do a voluntary runners. But where is she? Her stepbrother tries to help. Her mother, again on the hunt to marry up, sends divergent messages. Then the charred remains of a dancer are found in an abandoned warehouse, victim of another fire. Is this Sophie? Did

she die at the scene? Irene's case is all questions with elusive answers and makes compelling reading.

THE COZY CORNER

Here's a reminder to check our section on Mass Market Paperbacks, both Picks and the New List, for cozies. Inclusion of the publisher's name means the book is a paperback original. No publisher name means the book was first a hardcover.

Binchy, Maeve. [A Week in Winter](#) (\$14.95). Stoneybridge is a small town on the west coast of Ireland where all the families know one another. When Chicky Starr decides to take an old, decaying mansion set high on the cliffs overlooking the windswept Atlantic Ocean and turn it into a restful place for a holiday by the sea, everyone thinks she is crazy. Helped by Rigger (a bad boy turned good who is handy around the house) and Orla, her niece (a whiz at business), Chicky is finally ready to welcome the first guests to Stone House's big warm kitchen, log fires, and understated elegant bedrooms. Enjoy sharing a week with the unlikely group of guests who assemble...

Canadeo, Anne. [A Dark and Stormy Knit](#) (Gallery \$15). The Black Sheep Knitters are at first amused by the Knit Kats, a local graffiti group who apply their stitching skills to such public protests as covering the new parking meters along Main Street with knitted hoods bearing silly cat faces. But quiet Plum Harbor is roiled by such playful acts of civil disobedience and the group makes the local news, then post photos of disguised members with cute pseudonyms on their website. The Knit Kats mean no harm. And everyone agrees until a body turns up covered in stitches that bear the Knit Kats distinctive paw print of mischief. When a member of the Black Sheep circle is implicated, the group resolves to "help" the police and clear her name.... For earlier Black Sheep yarns, [click here](#).

Childs, Laura. [Eggs in a Casket](#) (Berkley \$25.95). While Petra handles the breakfast rush at the Cackleberry Club, the café's other two owners, Suzanne and Toni, head to Memorial Cemetery to help prepare for its 150th anniversary celebration. But as they search the winding paths for the historical society tent, they discover something else out of place: the body of ex-prison warden Lester Drummond lying face down in someone else's freshly dug grave. In the small town of Kindred, everyone knows everyone, and Lester was no exception. Suzanne knew him as the creepy guy who made unwanted advances on her friend Missy Langston. But now it appears the man was hiding a few secrets... and at least one of them was worth killing for. As the case cracks open, there are plenty of suspects to consider...

Clark, Mary Jane. [That Old Black Magic](#) (Morrow \$25.99). Aspiring actress and wedding-cake decorator Piper Donovan has barely arrived in New Orleans to perfect her pastry skills at the renowned French Quarter bakery Boulangerie Bertrand when a ghastly murder rocks the magical city. Intrigued by the case, Piper can't help but look for the "Hoodoo Killer" among the faces around her. Could it be the handsome guide eager to give her special private tours? Or the inscrutable jazz musician who plays on historic Royal Street? What about the ratings-starved radio talk-show host? Or even the amiable owner of the local Gris-Gris Bar? Though Piper has a full plate decorating cakes for upcoming wedding celebrations, she's also landed an exciting but unnerving role in a movie being shot in the Big Easy. When the

murderer strikes again, leaving macabre clues, she thinks she can unmask the killer. To do it, Piper will have to conjure up some old black magic of her own....

Hall, Parnell. [NYPD Puzzle: A Puzzle Lady Mystery](#) (St Martins \$24.99). When young attorney Becky Baldwin hires Cora Felton to accompany her to New York City to meet a new client in his penthouse apartment, the Puzzle Lady jumps at the chance. Cora is just coming off a bad breakup, and finding out that Chief Harper testified at a parole hearing for a killer she helped put away, has her feeling old. But when she and Becky arrive at the apartment, they find the man is dead. There's a puzzle on his chest, and a prowler is searching the bedroom. Cora pulls her gun and gets off a shot as the intruder ducks out the window. The NYPD now thinks Cora is the murderer. Getting her off should be a breeze for Becky, but when the fatal bullet is too badly damaged to identify, Cora is lucky to get out on bail. Meanwhile, a diabolical killer is leaving puzzle clues. If only they were just Sudoku puzzles—Cora can't solve the crosswords without the help of her niece, Sherry, who's back in Bakerhaven taking care of her toddler. In order to clear her name, Cora must match wits with a gruff NYPD homicide sergeant who is quite attractive, except for the fact that he suspects her of murder. Includes new crossword puzzles by Will Shortz.

O'Connor, T.J. [Dying to Know](#) (Midnight Ink \$14.99). Midnight Ink is starting out the new year introducing this new cozy series and the one below by Weber. This one is the first in the Gumshoe Ghost series. Angel Tucker hears a bump in the night. Her policeman husband Oliver, known as Tuck, is in no mood to check this out but her goes outside to appease his wife and bam, is shot dead with his own spare service weapon. Returning to the scene as a ghost, he has no clue who shot him—or why. Or why his old partner hid a case file in Tuck's office. Slowly harnessing his new abilities, Tuck connects with Angel and they go after the killer, not knowing who to trust or who the next target might be....

Simon, Clea. [Grey Howl](#) (Severn \$27.95). A prestigious literature event is convening in Cambridge and Dulcie Schwartz is the university liaison. But a strange apparition is haunting the conference—and even Mr. Gray, ghost of Dulcie's late, great cat, seems to be overwhelmed, leaving Dulcie to manage an increasingly backstabbing crew of professional rivals, one of whom may be a killer. Ordered Upon Request.

☞Smith, Helen. [Beyond Belief](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$14.95). So here is an "almost" choice for the British Crime Club. It's in a Wodehouse tradition with its mayhem, murder, "horrorscopes" and preternatural dachshunds. See British Books for more.

Weber, Tracy. [Murder Strikes a Pose](#) (Midnight Ink \$14.99). The first in the Downward Dog Series for yoga instructor Kate Davidson. When George, a homeless alcoholic, and Bella, his horse-sized German Shepherd, disturb the peace outside her studio, she tries to get rid of them. Bella terrifies her students. But the trio forms an unlikely friendship. Then George is found dead. While the cops dismiss this as a drug-related murder, Kate assumes the Warrior Pose and digs into his past while searching for someone to adopt Bella. She succeeds at one....

A CLASSIC AUTHOR

Andrews, V.C. [The Unwelcome Child](#) (Pocket \$7.99). Follow along with Ellie Edwards, who grew up believing that because of her mother's sinful ways she was born without a soul; that's why she was abandoned and left in the care of Grandmother Myra and Grandfather Prescott, who try to ensure her evil will not infect them—by raising her in a virtual prison. Because her days are occupied with homeschooling, strict religious studies, and vigorous housekeeping in their upstate New York home, Elle knows practically nothing of the outside world, even as she emerges as a young woman with impressive artistic talent. But when she makes a secret, forbidden connection to vacationers at the nearby lake—a handsome boy and his precocious twin sister—Elle's world will shatter. Will discovering the truths about her past send her future plummeting to hell? Ties in to the new TV series. V.C. Andrews has been a bestselling phenomenon since the publication of her spellbinding classic *Flowers in the Attic*. That blockbuster novel began the renowned Dollanganger family saga.

OUR JANUARY TRADE PAPERBACK PICKS

Atkinson, Kate. [Life After Life](#) (\$18). Appearing on many Best Books of 2013 Lists. Here is part of the *NY Times* review: "One of the things I like most about British mystery novels (including Kate Atkinson's) is the combination of good writing and a certain theatrical bravado. Their authors enjoy showing us how expertly they can construct a puzzle, then solve it: the literary equivalent of pulling a rabbit out of a hat. *Life After Life* inspires a similar sort of admiration, as Atkinson sharpens our awareness of the apparently limitless choices and decisions that a novelist must make on every page, and of what is gained and lost when the consequences of these choices are, like life, singular and final." Critic Sarah Lyall writes, "An audacious, ambitious book that challenges notions of time, fate and free will, not to mention narrative plausibility...[Atkinson's] writing is funny and quirky and sharp and sad—calamity laced with humor—and full of quietly heroic characters who offer knowing Lorrie Moore-esque parenthetical asides...Atkinson's true genius is structure...Each version is entirely and equally credible." This is literary fiction, not crime fiction.

Beukes, Lauren. [The Shining Girls](#) (\$16). A 2013 First Mystery Pick that shows Atkinson is not alone in flexing time and structure. Harper Curtis is a killer who stepped out of the past. Kirby Mazrachi is the girl who was never meant to have a future. Kirby is the last shining girl, one of the bright young women, burning with potential, whose lives Harper is destined to snuff out after he stumbles on a House in Depression-era Chicago that opens on to other times. At the urging of the House, Harper inserts himself into the lives of the shining girls, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. He's the ultimate hunter, vanishing into another time after each murder, untraceable—until one of his victims survives. Determined to bring her would-be killer to justice, Kirby joins the *Chicago Sun-Times* to work with the ex-homicide reporter, Dan Velasquez, who covered her case. Soon Kirby finds herself closing in on the impossible truth.

✚Bradley, Alan. [Speaking from Among the Bones](#) (\$15). An original, witty, and nostalgic series by Bradley takes readers back to 1950s Britain and the village where the eccentric de Luce family dwells in its decaying estate (the family is broke). Upon

the five-hundredth anniversary of St. Tancred's death, the English hamlet of Bishop's Lacey is busily preparing to open its patron saint's tomb. Nobody is more excited to peek inside the crypt than Flavia, yet what she finds will halt the proceedings dead in their tracks: the body of Mr. Collicutt, the church organist, his face grotesquely and inexplicably masked. Who held a vendetta against Mr. Collicutt, and why would they hide him in such a sacred resting place? The irrepressible Flavia decides to find out. There's some great stuff here with the church organ and its pipes as well as St. Tancred's tomb. Think Nancy Drew with a British twist. This series has won tons of awards including the Crime Writers' Association Debut Dagger Award, Barry Award, Agatha Award, Macavity Award, Dilys Winn Award, and Arthur Ellis Award. See British Books for Flavia's new case in hardcover. [Click here](#) for all of Flavia's adventures.

Cantrell, Rebecca. [A City of Broken Glass](#) (\$14.99). Exiled journalist Hannah Vogel is in Poland with her son Anton to cover the 1938 St. Martin festival when she hears that 12,000 Polish Jews have been deported from Germany. Hannah drops everything to get the story on the refugees, and walks directly into danger. Kidnapped by the SS, and driven across the German border, Hannah is rescued by Anton and her lover, Lars Lang, who she had presumed dead two years before. Hannah doesn't know if she can trust Lars again, with her heart or with her life, but she has little choice. Injured in the escape attempt and wanted by the Gestapo, Hannah and Anton are trapped with Lars in Berlin. While Hannah works on an exit strategy, she helps to search for Ruth, the missing toddler of her Jewish friend Paul, who was disappeared during the deportation. Trapped in Nazi Germany with her son just days before Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, Hannah knows the dangers of staying any longer than needed. But she can't turn her back on this one little girl—plus there's her own complicated love life in the mix. 4th in an excellent series examining lives of ordinary (and extraordinary) people caught up in the Nazi regime. David Downing, Philip Kerr, Joe Kanon, and often Alan Furst are analogues. [Click here](#) for Hannah's books.

Kallentoft, Mons. [Summer Death](#) (\$16). Whether or not you're intrigued by the avalanche of Scandinavian crime fiction, here's an intriguing example. The tiny town that Detective Malin Fors calls home is plagued by a sweltering heat wave and resulting raging forest fires. It is the hottest summer anyone can recall, and it's about to become the most violent and grim, too. A teenage girl is found naked and bleeding in a city park, without any recollection of what has happened to her. Next, another grisly discovery is made on a lakeside beach, and the whole town is on edge. A serial killer walks among them, and while the families of Linköping withdraw to protect their young, Malin must uncover the secrets behind these crimes, potentially putting herself and her own family at risk in the process. For other books by Kallentoft, [click here](#).

Meyer, Philipp. [The Son](#) (\$16.99). Patrick picked this terrific novel as a 2013 Modern Firsts Club selection. It's best on various Best of 2013 lists. The *Washington Post* review tells you why: "What a pleasure it is...to see Meyer confirm all that initial enthusiasm [for *American Rust*] with a second book that's even more ambitious, even more deeply rooted in our troublesome economic and cultural history. With its vast scope—stretching from pre-Civil War cowboys to post-9/11 immigrants—*The Son*

makes a viable claim to be a Great American Novel of the sort John Dos Passos and Frank Norris once produced. Here is the tale of the United States written in blood across the Texas plains, a 200-year cycle of theft and murder that shreds any golden myths of civilized development.”

Mosley, Walter. [Little Green](#) (\$15). Mosley’s iconic Easy Rawlins returns from the brink of death to investigate the dark side of that haven for Los Angeles hippies, the Sunset Strip. He’s quickly back in top form, cruising the gloriously psychedelic mean streets of L.A. with his murderous sidekick, Mouse. They’ve been hired to look for a young black man, Evander “Little Green” Noon, who disappeared during an acid trip. Fueled by an elixir called Gator’s Blood, Easy experiences a physical, spiritual, and emotional resurrection, but peace and love soon give way to murder and mayhem.

Pryor, Mark. [The Blood Promise](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95). An excellent 3rd investigation for Hugo Marston, Regional Security Officer at the American Embassy in Paris. His new challenge is to find out what lies hidden inside an old sailor’s chest before a 20-year-old promise is broken and claims more lives. We see that in 1795 Paris, an old man signed a letter in blood and locked it up in a secret compartment inside a chest. A messenger arrives to transport the chest, but the plague strikes and an untimely death changes history. So when Marston is more or less babysitting a US Senator (and potential Presidential candidate) who is in Paris negotiating a dispute between the US and France, the talks held at a chateau in the country collapse when the senator announces someone has broken into his room. And it appears someone has discovered that long hidden secret. . . . The secret itself is not that hard to work out, but where Pryor goes with it is gripping and fun. Start with [The Bookseller](#) and [The Crypt Thief](#) (\$15.95 each).

✦Shepherd, Lloyd. [The Poisoned Island](#) (\$16). “Memorable prose, tight plotting, and complex characters distinguish Shepherd’s follow-up to 2012’s [The English Monster](#) (\$16). In June 1812, the *Solander*, a ‘nondescript ship containing wonders,’ arrives in London, bearing the fruits of a major botanical expedition to Tahiti. The discoveries prove to have more than scientific implications when members of the crew start turning up dead with smiles on their faces, even after being strangled or having their throats slit. The task of solving the crimes falls to Charles Horton, of the Thames River Police, whose methods have already been successful in a number of cases—notably the Ratcliffe Highway murders six months earlier. The involvement of the Royal Society president, naturalist Sir Joseph Banks, who sent the *Solander* on its mission to the far side of the world, makes the investigation a politically sensitive one. Shepherd’s use of the present tense lends an intimate immediacy to the action.”—*PW*. London’s *Guardian* adds, “A spirited evocation of an era when roving botanists could also be blithe sexual predators, and ‘savages’ could be both admired and exploited... Georgian London is vividly brought to life...A gutsy, involving yarn.” Anne Perry’s William Monk joins the River Police over a century later; and both PD James and David Morrell in addition to Shepherd’s first for Horton, have written about the infamous Ratcliffe Highway murders. This is great stuff.

✦Williams, Charlotte. [The House on the Cliff](#) (\$14.99). Jessica Mayhew is a sharp, successful therapist with a thriving practice and loving family. But the arrival of a new client, actor Gwydion

Morgan, coincides with a turbulent moment in her life: her husband has just confessed to a one-night stand with a younger woman. The son of a famous stage director, Gwydion is good-looking and talented but mentally fragile, tormented by an intriguing phobia. When Jessica receives a frantic call warning that he is suicidal, she decides to make a house call. The Morgans live in a grand cliff-top mansion overlooking the rocky Welsh coast. It seems to be a remote paradise, but there’s something sinister about it too: Jessica learns that the family’s former au pair drowned in the bay under mysterious circumstances. In her quest to help Gwydion, to whom she’s grown increasingly attached, Jessica becomes ensnared in the Morgan family mystery, which soon becomes an explosive public scandal—one that puts her directly in harm’s way. Meanwhile, Jessica is doing her best to keep her marriage and family together, but her growing attraction to Gwydion is impossible to ignore.

BECAUSE WE LIKE THESE...

Andrews, Bryce. [Badluck Way: A Year on the Ragged Edge of the West](#) (Atria \$25). A January Indie Next Pick that resonates here in Arizona. “Andrews spent a year on an 18,000-acre ranch in Montana that was touted as being committed to the well being of the land, livestock, and wildlife. All goes well in his rugged new life until wolves begin their relentless plundering of the summer herds. In a heartbreaking meditation on life, ethics, animal rights, and conservation, Andrews struggles to keep his herding responsibilities and his fascination for the wolves in balance. Passages in which he channels the wolves are truly haunting, suggestive of a kinship that presages his anguish as he is required to brutally eliminate one of them. This is an elegant, lyrical account of a sensitive, conservation-minded cowboy in the American West of the 21st century.”

Banks, Russell. [A Permanent Member of the Family](#) (Ecco \$25.99). Karen Shaver reviews: “There are few superlatives left to describe the writing of Russell Banks, and this 12-story collection is no exception. *The New York Times* has called him “the most compassionate fiction writer working today.” The stories here present the complex issue of family and how we “try—and sometimes fail—to connect with one another”. Told with empathy, humor and some sadness, the elegant writing tells stories that are sure to resonate with the reader. An intelligent and satisfying read.”

Forsyth, Mark. [Horlogicon](#) (\$16). I can’t wait to dive into this. Do you wake up feeling rough? Then you’re *philogrobolized*. Find yourself pretending to work? That’s *fudgelling*. And this could lead to *rizzling*, if you feel sleepy after lunch. Though you are sure to become a sparkling *deipnosopbist* by dinner. Just don’t get too *vinomadefied*; a drunk dinner companion is never appreciated. The *Horlogicon* (or book of hours) contains the most extraordinary words in the English language, arranged according to what hour of the day you might need them...

Hiraide, Takashi. [The Guest Cat](#) (New Directions \$14.95). A bestseller in France and winner of Japan’s Kiyama Shohei Literary Award, this deeply felt work by poet Takashi Hiraide is ostensibly about a visiting cat, but even more, it’s a subtly moving and exceptionally beautiful novel about the transient nature of life and idiosyncratic ways of living. A couple in their thirties live in a small rented cottage in a quiet part of Tokyo; they work at home, freelance copy-editing; they no longer have

very much to say to one another. But one day a cat invites itself into their small kitchen. It leaves, but the next day comes again, and then again and again. Soon they are buying treats for the cat and enjoying talks about the animal and all its little ways. Life suddenly seems to have more promise for the husband and wife — the days have more light and color. The novel brims with new small joys and many moments of staggering poetic beauty, but then something happens. . . . As Kenzaburo Oe has remarked, Takashi Hiraide's work "really shines." His poetry, which is remarkably cross-hatched with beauty, has been acclaimed here for "its seemingly endless string of shape-shifting objects and experiences, whose splintering effect is enacted via a unique combination of speed and minutiae."

Horwitz, Debra et al. [Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent or Change Unwanted Ones](#) (Harcourt \$27). A January Indie Next Pick which I can relate to as the owner of a very independent wire-haired fox terrier. "Recent discoveries in the science of dog behavior merge with practical training approaches in this simple, direct guide for owners and caretakers at all levels of experience. In easy-to-read chapters, a variety of experts explain why our canine companions do what they do, so we can use this knowledge to create relationships with our pets that are more authentic and less problematic, and that can, ultimately, save the lives of many dogs."

Kizzia, Tom. [Pilgrim's Wilderness: A True Story of Faith and Madness on the Alaska Frontier](#) (Crown \$25). Karen Shaver reviews: "Led by Patriarch Papa Pilgrim, this family, including his wife and fifteen children, arrive in the Alaska wilderness to "... live our old-time way and be left in peace." They charm the few inhabitants of McCarthy with their well-behaved children, who are also known as the Pilgrim Family Minstrels, playing hillbilly music for the audience. The children are home-schooled, but kept illiterate to ensure their dependence on Papa. Amusements such as television or radio are not present in their home. They go about their chores in pairs to keep an eye on one another and keep each other honest. Papa incurs the wrath of the government when he violates the regulations of the National Park Service and creates a road on government land. While this is seen by some as environmentalists vs. the government, it is the beginning of Papa's well-constructed world coming apart. As his children get older and find comfort in a compassionate family, the once well-kept secret life-style of the Pilgrim's leaks into to the community. Popular author, Dana Stabenow, was in the store recently and remarked that the Alaska wilderness—or any wilderness, for that matter- is a magnet for those folks who want to practice their self created lifestyle, positioned to avoid the scrutiny of more traditional societies. She, and others, gives strong praise to the reporting of Kizzia for this readable story."

NEW BOOKS

Allende, Isabel. [Ripper Signed](#) (Harper \$28.99). Long divorced from Amanda's father, Indiana Jackson is reluctant to settle down with either of the men who want her—Alan, the wealthy scion of one of San Francisco's elite families, and Ryan, an enigmatic, scarred former Navy SEAL. While her mom looks for the good in people, Amanda is fascinated by the dark side of human nature—as is her father, the SF PD's deputy chief of homicide. Brilliant and introverted, the MIT-bound high school senior

Amanda is a natural-born sleuth addicted to crime novels and to Ripper, the online mystery game she plays with her beloved grandfather and friends around the world. When a string of strange murders occurs across the city, Amanda plunges into her own investigation, probing hints and deductions that elude the police department. But the case becomes all too personal when Indiana suddenly vanishes. Could her mother's disappearance have something to do with the series of deaths?

Andrews, Julie. [Very Fairy Princess Sparkles in the Snow](#) (LittleBrown \$18). *School Library Journal* writes, "Spunky Geraldine is certain that she will be chosen to sing solo at the Winter Wonderland Festival. To make Mr. Higginbottom's decision easier, she steps forward just a little during chorus rehearsal and sings in her best (loudest) voice. She also sings outside her music teacher's door during lunch and underneath his window at recess. Geraldine is crushed when he announces that a professional will be the guest soloist. However, "Fairy princesses know how to take a frown and turn it upside down," and on the morning of the concert, Geraldine is excited and ready to perform. Because of a snowstorm, though, the guest soloist can't get to the event on time. Luckily, "Fairy princesses are ALWAYS happy to lend a hand in a crisis," and the child volunteers to substitute for her. Even with a shoe mishap, the concert is fabulous and is followed by a family sleigh ride. The lively, ink and colored-pencil illustrations capture Geraldine's spirit well. One can never have too many princess books, and this one is better than most." Something fun for preschoolers.

Andrews, Mary Kay. [Heart Trouble](#) (\$14.99). The reissue of another of the mysteries written as Kathy Trochek by an author today best known for romantic comedy. PI Callahan Garrity raises eyebrows when she accepts an assignment from the most hated woman in Atlanta—a wealthy white socialite who killed a young black girl in a drunken hit-and-run and was punished with no more than a slap on the wrist. Even Callahan's "Mice" are grumbling. But when a roadside murder turns up the heat on the racial tensions that have been simmering dangerously since Whitney Albright Dobbs received her laughably light sentence, Callahan realizes she'll have to pull out all the stops to trap a mean, mad killer... I always enjoyed this series.

Atkinson, Kate. [Life After Life](#) (\$18). On many Best of 2013 lists. See January Trade Paperback Picks.

Baker, Tiffany. [Mercy Snow](#) (Grand Central Publishing \$25). June McAllister is the wife of the local mill owner and undisputed first lady in town. But the Snow family, a group of itinerant ne'er-do-wells who live on a decrepit and cursed property, have brought her—and the town—nothing but grief. June will do anything to cover up a dark secret she discovers after the crash, one that threatens to upend her picture-perfect life, even if it means driving the Snow family out of town. But she has never gone up against a force as fierce as the young Mercy Snow. Mercy is determined to protect her rebellious brother, whom the town blames for the accident, despite his innocence. And she has a secret of her own. When an old skeleton is discovered not far from the crash, it beckons Mercy to solve a mystery buried deep within the town's past. The January Indie Next Pick reads, "Titan Falls, a small, sleepy town in New Hampshire where life fluctuates with the ups and downs of the local paper mill, gets roughly awakened when a school bus crashes into a ravine. The

event brings two families into conflict: the Snow family, always known as good-for-nothing, has to fight for their survival in town when their son is accused of causing the accident; the McAllisters, owners of the mill and the leading family in town, court trouble as old secrets connected to the Snows threaten to be uncovered. This is a captivating story and a thrilling good mystery!”

Bledsoe, Alex. [He Drank, and Saw the Spider](#) (Tor \$24.99). Bledsoe’s style is so engaging and his narrator’s voice, that of sword jockey Eddie LaCrosse, so alive that this 5th entry in a blend of fantasy and noir (with a medieval twist) makes delightful reading. I was hooked from the first sentence—and by the baby. While there’s violence, it’s all off stage so in its way this is almost a cozy. The story of the baby Eddie has for a day before handing her off to an interesting family of sheep farmers, of two feuding kings, a powerful sorceress, a smitten prince, a troubled monster, and long-buried secrets, unspools. There’s a lot of love in it, too. What did he drink? Poison! For the earlier Eddie’s [click here](#). *Dark Jenny* had Starred Reviews all around.

Cash, Wiley. [This Dark Road to Mercy Signed](#) (Morrow \$28). When their mother dies unexpectedly, twelve-year-old Easter Quillby and her six-year-old sister, Ruby, are shuffled into the foster care system in Gastonia, North Carolina, a little town not far from the Appalachian Mountains. But just as they settle into their new life, their errant father, Wade, an ex–minor league baseball player whom they haven’t seen in years, suddenly reappears and steals them away in the middle of the night. Brady Weller, the girls’ court-appointed guardian, begins looking for Wade, and quickly turns up unsettling information linking him to a multimillion-dollar robbery. But Brady isn’t the only one hunting him. Also on the trail is Robert Pruitt, a mercurial man nursing a years-old vendetta, a man determined to find Wade and claim what he believes he is owed. The combination of Cash’s evocative and intimate Southern voice and those of the alternating narrators, Easter, Brady, and Pruitt, brings this soulful story vividly to life...Cash debuted in 2013 with Modern Firsts Club Pick [A Land More Kind Than Home](#) (\$14.99).

Dolan, Harry. [The Last Dead Girl Signed](#) (Putnam \$28). Joy, a prequel to First Mystery Pick and big 2009 hit [Bad Things Happen](#) (\$15) where we followed a twisty case worked by the man calling himself David Loogan. Learn now why I say “calling himself...” And why David was living an anonymous life in Ann Arbor, Michigan where he’s editing a mystery magazine and gets dragged into an unwise affair with the wife of the publisher. Her husband soon turns up dead. So, how did David get to this? Not easily. It begins one dark and stormy April night on a lonely road when a chance encounter draws David into a romance with Jana, a law student. She’s an enigma and won’t explain. He lets it go—and then it’s too late. When she is brutally murdered, he sets out to learn why and discovers her death may be related to one that happened earlier. One that had obsessed Jana during her last weeks. As he retraces her steps, he finally realizes someone is tracing his.... Dolan’s second for David is [Very Bad Men](#) (\$15).

Dorsey, Tim. [Tiger Shrimp Tango](#) (Morrow \$25.99). Call it just another day in Serge Storms’ sun-splashed paradise! Thanks to the growth of the Internet, America finds itself plagued by a noxious epidemic of ruthless scam artists. Where do they all come from? If you guessed 110 percent of them are spawned

in Florida, you win the cigar...When a new digital scheme goes horribly awry— causing innocents to die and a young woman to go missing—only one person can set things right: obsessive Florida trivia buff and reluctant serial killer Serge Storms. Aided by his perpetually addled sidekick, Coleman, and latter-day noir private eye Mahoney, Serge launches a crusade to rid his beloved state of predators and save the girl....

Edsel, Robert M. [Saving Italy](#) (\$16.95). “Alongside the Allies’ push north against the Nazis, there was another war fought in WWII Italy, a battle to preserve the country’s rich cultural contribution to Western civilization. With Leonardo da Vinci’s iconic *The Last Supper* nearly demolished by a bomb, protecting the nation’s art became an urgent task, requiring hundreds of paintings and sculpture to be hidden throughout the country (Michelangelo’s David was entombed in brick). The group assigned to save the art in Italy was made up of 40 American and British “Monuments Men.” Edsel (who has trod this ground before, in *The Monuments Men*, 2009) clearly presents the war in Italy as a battle not just to occupy the land but also to preserve the country’s culture. In urgent and precise prose, he puts the reader in the cockpit, the foxhole, and the cramped offices of those charged with saving the artwork. Most of the pilfering and destruction of art treasures was done by the Nazis, of course, but Edsel points out that the Allies were not blameless, either. This is a must-read for WWII buffs and anyone interested in the fight for art history.”—*Booklist*

Ellis, Warren. [Gun Machine](#) (\$16). This morning Detective John Tallow was bored with his job. Then there was this naked guy with a shotgun, and his partner getting killed, and now Tallow has a real problem: an apartment full of guns. Old guns. Modified guns. Arranged in rows and spirals on the floor and walls. Hundreds of them. Each weapon is tied to a single unsolved murder. Which means Tallow has uncovered two decades’ worth of homicides that no one knew to connect and a killer unlike anything that came before. Tallow’s bosses don’t want him to solve the case. The murderer just wants him to die. But there’s a pattern hiding behind the deaths, and if Tallow can figure it out he might even make it out alive.... Great fun, this one. And damned clever.

Golden, Christopher. [Snowblind](#) (St Martins \$25.99). The small New England town of Coventry had weathered a thousand blizzards . . . but never one like this. Icy figures danced in the wind and gazed through children’s windows with soul-chilling eyes. People wandered into the whiteout and were never seen again. Families were torn apart, and the town would never be the same. Now, as a new storm approaches twelve years later, the folks of Coventry are haunted by the memories of that dreadful blizzard and those who were lost in the snow. Photographer Jake Schapiro mourns his little brother, Isaac, even as—tonight—another little boy is missing. Mechanic and part-time thief Doug Manning’s life has been forever scarred by the mysterious death of his wife, Cherie, and now he’s starting over with another woman and more ambitious crimes. Police detective Joe Keenan has never been the same since that night, when he failed to save the life of a young boy . . . and the boy’s father vanished in the storm only feet away. And all the way on the other side of the country, Miri Ristani receives a phone call... from a man who died twelve years ago. As old ghosts trickle back, this new

storm will prove to be even more terrifying than the last. This is Golden's first horror novel in more than a decade. Think early Stephen King.

Releasing February 4, Golden edits [Dark Duets](#) (Harper \$25.99), horror, thriller, and dark fantasy tales—an ambitious and unique anthology featuring biting and atmospheric original stories from seventeen pairs of acclaimed writers, all collaborating together for the first time, including New York Times bestselling authors Charlaine Harris, Joe R. and Kasey Lansdale, Rachel Caine, Holly Black, Cassandra Clare, Stuart MacBride, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Jonathan Maberry, Tom Piccirilli, and David Liss.

Greenway, Alice. [The Bird Skinner](#) (Atlantic \$24). “Following the amputation of one of his legs, ornithologist Jim Carroway withdraws from the world and settles on an island off the coast of Maine. His alcohol- and cigarette-filled solitude is interrupted when the daughter of a friend he hadn't seen in 30 years arrives unannounced from the Solomon Islands. Jim's memories of being stationed there during WWII as a coast watcher, as well as memories of his past life as a scientist, husband, and father, come back to haunt him over the summer the two spend together. Rich in fascinating cultural and scientific details, *The Bird Skinner* is a compassionate but objective exploration of the psychology of a broken man.”

Griffin, WEB. [Hazardous Duty](#) (Putnam \$27.95). A Presidential Agent novel. The President is fed up. Mexican cartels. Somali pirates. Wouldn't it be a good idea to call Colonel Charley Castillo and his merry men back into action to clean up? Sure, but the President hates Castillo's guts, had him forcibly retired from service. And Castillo's men are now scattered far and wide. Plus the President is rumored to be unstable—nutcase is the term whispered about. So how will this plan work out? No one knows, but one thing's for sure—it was hazardous duty for the Castillo crew. Authors Griffin acknowledge that this reads like M*A*S*H because it is in fact a version of M*A*S*H goes to the White House. Enjoy.

Griffith, Nicholas. [Ping Pong Diplomacy](#) (Scribner \$26). I'm a big fan of Griffith's fiction and this nonfiction account of the origins of ping-pong (invented by Ivor Montagu, son of a rich English baron and spy for the Soviet Union), its ties to Communism, the way China helped cover up the Great Famine story by holding the World Table Tennis Championships during it—36 million Chinese died; how Championship players were instruments, also tortured and murdered as part of the Cultural Revolution. But finally, in the spring of 1971, seeking a global political realignment, the survivors were ordered to reach out to their American counterparts. You couldn't make this stuff up—and Griffith doesn't have to in order to write this absorbing book.

Grimes, Martha. [The Way of All Fish](#) (Scribner \$26.99). I've always thought Grimes' wicked send-up of publishing in *Foul Matter*—a printer's term—is one of her best. Here is the sequel. Candy and Karl, hitmen with a difference—they have scruples—once again venture into the murky Manhattan publishing scene. This time they come to the aid of a writer who is being sued by her unscrupulous literary agent, L. Bass Hess, a man determined to get a 15% commission for a book he didn't sell. Hess is relentless and litigious. The contract killers join forces with publishing mogul Bobby Mackenzie and megabestselling writer

Paul Giverney to rid the mean streets of Hess, not by shooting him, but by driving him crazy. They are helped by other returning characters and a crew of new colorful personalities, including an out-of-work Vegas magician, an alligator wrangler, a glamorous Malaysian con lady, and Hess' aunt in Everglades City, who has undergone a wildly successful sex change. Even more fey than usual, Grimes clearly enjoyed herself hugely with this one.

Harris, Charlaine/Christopher Golden. [Cemetery Girl, Book One: The Pretenders](#) (InkLit \$24.95). She calls herself Calexa Rose Dunhill—names taken from the grim surroundings where she awoke, bruised and bloody, with no memory of who she is, how she got there, or who left her for dead. She has made the cemetery her home, living in a crypt and avoiding human contact. But Calexa can't hide from the dead—and because she can see spirits, they can't hide from her. Then one night, Calexa spies a group of teenagers vandalizing a grave—and watches in horror as they commit murder. As the victim's spirit rises from her body, it flows into Calexa, overwhelming her mind with visions and memories not her own. Now Calexa must make a decision: continue to hide to protect herself—or come forward to bring justice to the sad spirit who has reached out to her for help...

Hiaasen, Carl. [Dance of the Reptiles](#) (Vintage \$15.95). A paperback original compiling “Rampaging Tourists, Marauding Pythons, Larcenous Legislators, Crazed Celebrities, and Tar-Balled Beaches: Selected Columns.”

Higgins, Jack. [The Death Trade](#) (Putnam \$26.95). An eminent Iranian scientist has made a startling breakthrough in nuclear weapons research, but he can't stand the thought of his regime owning the bomb. He would run if he could, but if he does, his family dies. He is desperate; he doesn't know what to do. It is up to Sean Dillon and the rest of the small band known as the Prime Minister's private army to think of a plan. Most particularly, it is up to their newest member, an intelligence captain and Afghan war hero named Sara Gideon, who thinks there just might be a way to pull it off. But plans have a way of encountering the unexpected. And as the operation spins out, from Paris and Syria to Iran and the Saudi Arabian desert, there is very much that is unexpected indeed, but Sean Dillon and Sara Gideon are up for it.

Horan, Nancy. [Under the Wide and Starry Sky](#) (Ballantine \$26). Horan's [Loving Frank](#) (\$23.95) brought the affair between Frank Lloyd Wright and the married woman (who was in time murdered by a worker on their property in Wisconsin) to life. Horan now turns to a married woman, Fanny van de Grift Osbourne, who left her philandering husband in San Francisco and sailed, with her three children and the nanny, to Belgium to study art. After a tragedy, Franny and brood relocate to an artist colony in Franc where she meets the lively Scot Robert Louis Stevenson. Ten years her junior, the author falls in love with Franny, a woman ahead of her time. She isn't smitten with the young lawyer at first but in time, she is, and so begins their fierce affair and marriage that ends in Samoa where Stevenson dies. Fanny spent her remaining years in Santa Barbara but her ashes were returned to the island to lie with those of Stevenson. A well-written and evocative story that brings both lovers to life.

Jaffe, Eric. [A Curious Madness](#) (Scribner \$30). In the wake of World War II, the Allied forces charged twenty-eight Japanese men with crimes against humanity. Correspondents at the Tokyo trial thought the evidence fell most heavily on ten of the accused.

In December 1948, five of these defendants were hanged while four received sentences of life in prison. The tenth was a brilliant philosopher-patriot named Okawa Shumei. His story proved strangest of all. Among all the political and military leaders on trial, Okawa was the lone civilian. In the years leading up to World War II, he had outlined a divine mission for Japan to lead Asia against the West, prophesized a great clash with the United States, planned coups d'état with military rebels, and financed the assassination of Japan's prime minister. Beyond "all vestiges of doubt," concluded a classified American intelligence report, "Okawa moved in the best circles of nationalist intrigue." Okawa's guilt as a conspirator appeared straightforward. But on the first day of the Tokyo trial, he made headlines around the world by slapping star defendant and wartime prime minister Tojo Hideki on the head. Had Okawa lost his sanity? Or was he faking madness to avoid a grim punishment? A U.S. Army psychiatrist stationed in occupied Japan, Major Daniel Jaffe—the author's grandfather—was assigned to determine Okawa's ability to stand trial, and thus his fate. Jaffe was no stranger to madness. He had seen it his whole life: in his mother, as a boy in Brooklyn; in soldiers, on the battlefields of Europe. Now his seasoned eye faced the ultimate test. If Jaffe deemed Okawa sane, the war crimes suspect might be hanged. But if Jaffe found Okawa insane, the philosopher patriot might escape justice for his role in promoting Japan's wartime aggression. Nonfiction, but with the propulsion of a thriller, no?

Johnson, Deborah. [The Secret of Magic](#) (Viking \$28). Opening the mail for her mentor and employer, Thurgood Marshall, at the NAACP office in New York, Regina Robichard is captivated by a letter from famous southern author M. P. Calhoun, asking for an investigation of the murder of a young black man, Joe Howard Wilson. Robichard is a fan of Calhoun, having read her book about a magical forest and an unsolved murder. As a stand-in for Marshall, Robichard travels to Revere, Mississippi, to find out the truth behind the murder of Wilson, who was among scores of black men returning from the war, unwilling to put up with the humiliations of racism. What she discovers are parallels between life in Revere and Calhoun's book. "How much of the book is real, and how does it connect to the murder? Inspired by her grandfather, who fought in WWII and was a huge admirer of Thurgood Marshall, and her own admiration of Marshall colleague Constance Baker Motley, Johnson offers a completely engaging southern gothic with unforgettable characters in this fictionalized account of a pivotal NAACP case from the 1940s."—*Booklist*

Katzenbach, John. [Red 1-2-3 Signed](#) (Mysterious \$27). January is not just a month of rare genetic disorders shaping lives and novels, it's a month for dynamite women. In this case, three of them, all red heads. Three women, very ordinary, with nothing in common other than their hair. And the fact that some wacko called "The Big Bad Wolf" has targeted them, is stalking them, intent upon killing all three. He's just waiting for the perfect chance to complete his master plan after upending their lives and instilling them with daily terror. But he didn't count on one thing: the three Reds discover each other and, with law enforcement indifferent to their inchoate plight, use clues he's left to turn the tables. Can they beat the Wolf at his terrible game? Points to veteran author Katzenbach for reminding us that the Brothers Grimm did not write jolly fairy tales for kids. This is our

January Thriller Club Pick.

Kidd, Sue Monk. [The Invention of Wings Signed](#) (Viking \$27.95). The January Indie Next No. 1 Pick: "Kidd gives us an outstanding view into the lives of two women whose reaction to slavery is the same — it must not continue. Loosely based on real-life abolitionist and women's rights activist Sarah Grimke, *The Invention of Wings* reveals how an intelligent woman of privilege was just as much a prisoner of her times as the slave girl, Hetty, who was given to Sarah as a birthday gift when she was 11 years old. Kidd juxtaposes the lives of these two women to show how each became an activist and how they eventually helped each other escape the claws of the South that wanted to destroy them. This is a splendid tale that will reaffirm the injustices of slavery and will open some eyes to how women were treated in the 1800s. As always, Kidd offers rich, well-developed characters that readers think about long after the book is closed." Out in January but Signed in February for that month's **Modern Firsts Club Pick**.

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [River Road](#) (Putnam \$26.95). "Best-selling Krentz returns to her classic romantic-suspense roots with a spine-tingling tale of a small town harboring deadly secrets. With its irresistible mix of scintillating humor, stunning suspense, and sexy romance, *River Road* is a complete page-turner."—*Booklist*. It's been thirteen years since Lucy Sheridan was in Summer River. The last time she visited her aunt Sara there, as a teenager, she'd been sent home suddenly after being dragged out of a wild party—by the guy she had a crush on, just to make it more embarrassing. Obviously Mason Fletcher—only a few years older but somehow a lot more of a grown-up—was the overprotective type who thought he had to come to her rescue. Now, returning after her aunt's fatal car accident, Lucy is learning there was more to the story than she realized at the time. Mason had saved her from a very nasty crime that night—and soon afterward, Tristan, the cold-blooded rich kid who'd targeted her, disappeared mysteriously, his body never found. But a lot has changed in thirteen years....

Lackey, Mercedes et al. [Revolution: Book Three of the Secret World Chronicles](#) (Baen \$25). Based upon characters first created in the popular MMORPG, *City of Heroes*, here are new adventures for modern humans with super-powers.

Lansdale, Joe R. [The Ape Man's Brother](#) (Subterranean \$20). Orphaned by a plane crash, raised in the wilds of a lost world hidden somewhere beneath a constant mist, The Big Guy and his ape-man brother from another mother are living a life of danger amongst rampaging dinosaurs, giant birds, warring ape tribes, and all manner of deadly beasts. It's a wonderful existence for someone like The Big Guy and his furry brother, except for the flea problem. Then an expedition of explorers from the outside turns his world inside out. Or rather a very blonde beauty called The Woman does. It leads to his and his ape brother being convinced to fly to New York by zeppelin, where they become the toast of the town. They even make Hollywood movies. It seems perfect. At least until The Big Guy does something that comes quite naturally to him in the wild, but leads to public humiliation in this new found world. To make matters worse, his ape brother has grown to not only love the pampered life, meals he doesn't have to chase down, good cigars, fine wines and statuesque women, he's come to like the Wrong Woman. But—changes are afoot.

Lee, Chang-Rae. [On Such a Full Sea Signed](#) (Riverhead \$27.95). Everyone gives this a rave or a Star. “A harrowing and fully imagined vision of dystopian America from Lee... The potency and strangeness of [his] characters never diminish the sense that Lee has written an allegory of our current predicaments, and the narration, written in the collective voice of B-Mor, gives the novel the tone of a timeless and cautionary fable. Welcome and surprising proof that there’s plenty of life in end-of-the-world storytelling.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review. In a future, long-declining America, society is strictly stratified by class. Long-abandoned urban neighborhoods have been repurposed as high-walled, self-contained labor colonies. And the members of the labor class—descendants of those brought over en masse many years earlier from environmentally ruined provincial China—find purpose and identity in their work to provide pristine produce and fish to the small, elite, satellite charter villages that ring the labor settlement. In this world lives Fan, a female fish-tank diver, who leaves her home in the B-Mor settlement (once known as Baltimore), when the man she loves mysteriously disappears. Fan’s journey to find him takes her out of the safety of B-Mor, through the anarchic Open Counties, where crime is rampant with scant governmental oversight, and to a faraway charter village, in a quest that will soon become legend to those she left behind.

Macdonald, John D. [Cinnamon Skin](#); [The Dreadful Lemon Sky](#) (\$16 each). Two more reissues of Travis McGee cases. Rollicking stuff, inspiring authors like Randy Wayne White.

McCafferty, Keith. [Dead Man’s Fancy Signed](#) (Viking \$26.95). Signing date to be determined. But this third case for Montana private eye/fishing guide Sean Stranahan and Sheriff Martha Ettinger is yours from early in January. There are so many authors you could associate with McCafferty; Box, Craig Johnson, Paul Doiron, Nevada Barr, the late William Tappley. Though McCafferty’s voice and spin are his own. Reviewers have given this a Star. So do I but then I picked Sean’s first case for our First Mystery Club and lavished praise on the second (and no, the Gray Ghost fly he tied for me came later: I was not bribed). What we get here in book three are wolves, a missing woman from the Culpepper Dude Ranch out in the Madison Valley, and a ranch wrangler impaled on the horn of a giant bull elk—he bled to death. Accident? Chased there by wolves? Sheriff Martha has a murder and a missing person case to work with the reluctant help of Stranahan. And part of it is the missing Fly Fishing Venus and part of it the Svengali master of an animal rights group. Questions of human vs. wild life produce high emotion. How high? For all three Stranahans, [click here](#).

Medsger, Betty. [The Burglary](#) (Knopf \$29.95). Who broke into an FBI office in 1971 and exposed the Bureau’s secret program to stifle dissent? The never-before-told full story of the history-changing break-in of the FBI offices in Media, Pennsylvania, by a group of unlikely activists—quiet, ordinary, hardworking Americans—that made clear the shocking truth and confirmed what some had long suspected, that J. Edgar Hoover had created and was operating his own shadow Bureau of Investigation.

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Carthage](#) (Ecco \$26.99). Zeno Mayfield’s daughter has disappeared into the night, gone missing in the wilds of the Adirondacks. But when the community of Carthage joins a father’s frantic search for the girl, they discover the unlikeliest of suspects—a decorated Iraq War veteran with close

ties to the Mayfield family. As grisly evidence mounts against the troubled war hero, the family must wrestle with the possibility of having lost a daughter forever. “After her lavishly imagined, supernatural historical novel, *The Accursed* (2013), Oates turns in the latest of her intensely magnified studies of a family in crisis and the agony of a misfit girl.”

Pastan, Rachel. [Alene](#) (Riverhead \$27.95). I’ve always loved DuMaurier’s *Rebecca*. Pastan’s 3rd novel is something of an homage, in that it involves a naïve young woman, an older man of the world (this one gay, rich, and an art collector who needs an amanuensis, the young woman), and a missing, seductive, controversial beauty (the rich collector’s former amanuensis). The Manderley is called Nauk, a cutting-edge modern art museum on an isolated Cape Cod bay. The story begins in Venice at the Biennale where the young curator who hates her job in the Midwest and her boss, Louise, meets Bernard Augustin. With Louise felled by migraine, the curator head out into the city, meets Bernard, and he offers her a job at the Nauk. His air of sadness and mystery relates, we learn, to the missing Alene. And so the story unfolds. The writing is elegant and offers some sharp insights into art, especially the modern art market. A very enjoyable read.

Payton, Brian. [The Wind is Not a River Signed](#) (Ecco \$28). The January Indie Next Pick: “A grand tale of devotion and adventure set in a forgotten theater of World War II, Payton’s new novel is convincingly told. Along with journalist John Easley, the stranded protagonist, readers feel the Arctic wind screaming across Japanese occupied Atta in the remote Aleutian Islands and are swept along by the parallel narrative of Helen, John’s wife, as she sets off from her native Seattle in a bold, imaginative effort to locate her missing husband. Compelling!” Journalist John Easley’s fight to survive begins in April 1943, when the military plane he’s riding goes down in the Japanese-occupied Aleutians. Both the weather and the enemy are cruel. Already mourning his brother who died earlier in the war, Easley is determined to expose this Japanese outpost as his wife Helen, getting news of his disappearance, starts her own fight against accepting his loss. This novel recalls *Cold Mountain* and is one that stays with you. “This moving and powerfully written novel explores themes of war, life and death, morality, and love in a unique World War II battleground that very few people outside Alaska know about or remember... Payton... has written a suspenseful, beautifully researched title that readers will want to devour in one sitting.”—*Library Journal* Starred Review. It’s a **Modern Firsts Club Pick**.

Percy, Benjamin. [Red Moon](#) (\$16). I like what Percy has to say about his hit literary horror novel. “Werewolves have a rich mythology, and I wanted to honor that tradition while making it new, making it my own. I think this is why Justin Cronin uses the term virals (instead of vampires) in *The Passage* and why Robert Kirkman calls them walkers (instead of zombies) in *The Walking Dead*. So lycan—short for lycanthropy, the psychological condition that makes you believe you can transform into a wolf—is one small sleight of hand that hints at the larger sorcery of the novel. My lycans are not full-moon howlers. They are infected with lobos, an animal-borne pathogen. Prions (the basis of Mad Cow and Chronic Wasting disease) are misfolded proteins that target the brain—and target in this novel rage and sexual impulse. I interviewed researchers at the USDA and Iowa State University to figure out the slippery science of this condition and create a believable horror.” And so he did. Don’t miss it.

Riggs, Ransom. [Hollow City](#) (Quirk \$17.99). The sequel to bestseller [Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children](#) (\$10.99), an original mix of YA fantasy and vintage photography that enthralled readers and critics alike. *Publishers Weekly* called it “an enjoyable, eccentric read, distinguished by well-developed characters, a believable Welsh setting, and some very creepy monsters.” This second novel begins in 1940, immediately after the first book ended. Having escaped Miss Peregrine’s island by the skin of their teeth, Jacob and his new friends must journey to London, the peculiar capital of the world. Along the way, they encounter new allies, a menagerie of peculiar animals, and other unexpected surprises. Complete with dozens of newly discovered (and thoroughly mesmerizing) vintage photographs.

Rizzo, John. [Company Man](#) (Scribner \$28). In 1975, fresh out of law school and working a numbing job at the Treasury Department, John Rizzo took “a total shot in the dark” and sent his résumé to the Central Intelligence Agency. He had no notion that more than thirty years later, after serving under eleven CIA directors and seven presidents, he would become a notorious public figure—a symbol and a victim of the toxic winds swirling in post-9/11 Washington. From serving as the point person answering for the Iran-contra scandal to approving the rules that govern waterboarding and other “enhanced interrogation techniques,” John Rizzo witnessed and participated in virtually all of the significant operations of the CIA’s modern history. Rizzo charts the CIA’s evolution from shadowy entity to an organization exposed to new laws, rules, and a seemingly never-ending string of public controversies.

Russell, Karen. [Vampires in the Lemon Grove](#) (\$14.95). An imaginative collection of stories from new literary star Russell. A dejected teenager discovers that the universe is communicating with him through talismanic objects left behind in a seagull’s nest. A community of girls held captive in a silk factory slowly transmute into human silkworms, spinning delicate threads from their own bellies, and escape by seizing the means of production for their own revolutionary ends. A massage therapist discovers she has the power to heal by manipulating the tattoos on a war veteran’s lower torso. When a group of boys stumble upon a mutilated scarecrow bearing an uncanny resemblance to the missing classmate they used to torment, an ordinary tale of high school bullying becomes a sinister fantasy of guilt and atonement. In a family’s disastrous quest for land in the American West, the monster is the human hunger for acquisition, and the victim is all we hold dear. And in the collection’s marvelous title story—an unforgettable parable of addiction and appetite, mortal terror and mortal love—two vampires in a sun-drenched lemon grove try helplessly to slake their thirst for blood.

Shames, Terry. [The Last Death of Jack Harbin](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95). Just before the outbreak of the Gulf War, two eighteen-year-old football stars and best friends from Jarrett Creek, Texas, signed up for the army. But Woody Patterson was rejected and stayed home to marry the girl they both loved, while Jack Harbin came back from the war badly damaged. The men haven’t spoken since. Just as they are about to reconcile, Jack is brutally murdered. With the chief of police out of commission, it’s up to trusted ex-chief Samuel Craddock to investigate. Against the backdrop of small-town loyalties and betrayals, Craddock discovers dark secrets of the past and present to solve the mystery of Jack’s death.

Smith, April. [A Star for Mrs. Blake](#) (Knopf \$25.95). The Indie Next Pick finds this standalone by Smith to “highlight a little-known slice of American history. The Gold Star Mothers, whose sons died in WWI and were buried in France, were escorted to their graves years later by the U.S. Army. Mrs. Blake, a spunky and practical woman from Maine, is one of a group of mothers making the journey. These women, unlikely candidates for friendships due to differences in class and life experiences, are brought together by the great equalizer of grief. This band of women is quirky and full of fire and vinegar, and readers are right beside them every step of the way as they prove that a mother’s love is indomitable.”

Stewart, Christopher S. [Jungleland: A Mysterious Lost City, a WWII Spy, and a True Story of Deadly Adventure](#) (\$15.99). On April 6, 1940, explorer and future World War II spy Theodore Morde (who would one day attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler), anxious about the perilous journey that lay ahead of him, struggled to fall asleep at the Paris Hotel in La Ceiba, Honduras. Nearly seventy years later, in the same hotel, acclaimed journalist Christopher S. Stewart wonders what he’s gotten himself into. Stewart and Morde seek the same answer on their quests: the solution to the riddle of the whereabouts of Ciudad Blanca, buried somewhere deep in the rain forest on the Mosquito Coast. Imagining an immense and immaculate El Dorado-like city made entirely of gold, explorers as far back as the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés have tried to find the fabled White City. Others have gone looking for tall white cliffs and gigantic stone temples—no one found a trace. Legends, like the jungle, are dense and captivating. Many have sought their fortune or fame down the Río Patuca—from Christopher Columbus to present-day college professors—and many have died or disappeared. What begins as a passing interest slowly turns into an obsession as Stewart pieces together the whirlwind life and mysterious death of Morde, a man who had sailed around the world five times before he was thirty and claimed to have discovered what he called the Lost City of the Monkey God. Armed with Morde’s personal notebooks and the enigmatic coordinates etched on his well-worn walking stick, Stewart sets out to test the jungle himself—and to test himself in the jungle.

Tapply, William G. [Every Day Was Special: A Fly Fisher’s Lifelong Passion](#) (Skyhorse \$14.95). This one makes me weep. How I miss Tapply and his wonderful books. Just before he died of leukemia in July 2009, Tapply completed this collection of 30 fishing essays, his tenth such collection. “The foreword by angling publisher Nick Lyons offers a personal, sporting, and literary biography of Tapply, who will be missed both for his outdoors nonfiction and for his crime fiction. This volume addresses such larger, discursive topics as why people fish as well as recounting adventure fishing for trout, bass, bluegill, striped bass, tarpon, bonefish, and snook. Throughout, Tapply’s ruminations feature his signature self-deprecating humor as well as thoughts on how friends and family make fishing a more rewarding experience. Tapply refers often to classic fishing authors such as Ray Bergman, Harold Blaisdell, and Ed Zern. Sadly, Tapply’s untimely demise means his excellent fishing writing has become ‘classic’ before its time. —John Rowen

Unger, Lisa. [In the Blood Signed](#) (Touchstone \$28). “Unger’s taut prose, flawed characters, and very unreliable narrator will keep readers riveted from the first page to the last. Lana Granger

has deep, dark secrets that she would like to keep hidden, but it seems that somebody wants to expose her. Thrills, chills, and too many suspects to count, this book has it all!” That’s a very short summation of a complex book that turns on a real surprise, which is why this book is perfect for our **January Surprise Me! Club Pick**. Authors like Lisa Gardner, with a few surprises of her own this month, and Lee Child, Tess Gerritsen, Harlan Coben, and Karin Slaughter agree. When you meet Lana Granger, about to graduate from college with her trust fund about tapped out, she accepts her mentor professor’s advice to take a job. It’s babysitting a troubled boy called Luke with a history of being expelled from schools far and wide. He’s a manipulative kid, used to controlling people, but he’s met his match in Lana. Or has he? Lots of hidden and half truths seep out as this twister progresses.

Vachss, Andrew. [Urban Renewal: A Cross Novel](#) (Vintage \$14.95). The man known only as Cross and his multi-skilled team of urban mercenaries are back, this time invading one of Chicago’s least desirable neighborhoods in a land-grab that has the entire underworld puzzled. Chicago has no shortage of deadly gangs. They all know the Cross Crew occupies a cinderblock bunker called Red 71. The Crew is notorious for its deadly efficiency and its disinterest in anything but money. So why has it turned from seller to buyer, grabbing up houses on a block where only a few holdouts against urban decay remain? Both the cops and the underworld are watching closely...but are they the only ones? “The enigmatic Cross and his crew of misfits, who occupy a fortified position in a ruined Chicago, kill for money, or to make a point, though they do neither indiscriminately, as shown in Vachss’ hard-hitting sequel to 2012’s *Blackjack*. ... This raucous ride also provides background on how Cross, Rhino, and Ace came together in a vile juvenile institution.”—*PW*. Knopf moved Vachss into paperback original sometime ago.

Wagner, Bruce. [The Empty Chair](#) (Blue Rider/Putnam \$27.95). In *First Guru*, a fictional Wagner narrates the tale of a Buddhist living in Big Sur, who achieves enlightenment in the horrific aftermath of his child’s suicide. In *Second Guru*, Queenie, an aging wild child, returns to India to complete the spiritual journey of her youth.

Williams, Charles. [Nothing in Her Way/River Girl](#) (Stark House \$19.95). A noir double-header reissue. “Charles Williams remains the best kept secret in noir fiction.” —Max Allan Collins

Wolf, Dick. [The Execution](#) (Morrow \$27.99). Ten days after the Mexican presidential election, twenty-three bodies are discovered beheaded on the United States border, each marked with a carving of a Hummingbird. Detective Cecilia Garza of the Mexican intelligence agency recognizes it: it is the signature of an assassin called Chuparosa. Garza has been pursuing the killer for years, yet knows little about him, except that he’s heading to New York—with the rest of the world. It’s United Nations Week in Manhattan and Jeremy Fisk can’t let grief over a devastating loss keep him from safeguarding his city. Complicating matters is the startling news of a mass murder in nearby Rockaway—and the arrival of a disturbingly beautiful and assertive Mexican cop. To have a chance at finding Chuparosa, these uneasy allies must learn to work together and fast.

Woods, Stuart. [Standup Guy Signed](#) (Putnam \$28). That Stone Barrington is so smooth, even when he’s practicing his version of criminal law. Meaning he gives out some advice to his new

client, an elderly, eccentric gentleman named Fratelli with a big dilemma arising from the proceeds of a \$7 million robbery years ago at JFK. How shall John Fratelli who has served his full prison term, enjoy retirement with his share of the long-hidden swag? The trick here is for Stone not to learn too much. He’s also involved in a campaign committee behind Kate Lee’s decision to run for President as her husband Will’s second term is nearing its end. Thus we see that Stone, now really rich, may become a player in the DC scene, not just in NYC. Stone in this book does a balancing act between the high life and low lifes, high authority and scum bags. And much of it for Fratelli who despite his history is a stand-up guy. It’s all a lot of fun. And most of the time they’re meeting at Patroon’s in the absence of Elaine’s iconic Manhattan restaurant. But in real life word comes that Elaine’s is being reopened under new management (she died) so that may skew future Stones....

OUR JANUARY MASS MARKET PICKS

Inclusion of the publisher’s name means the book is a paperback original. No publisher name means the book was first a hardcover.

Berry Steve. [The King’s Deception](#) (\$9.99). Berry loves to weave thrillers for his bookseller sleuth Cotton Malone from history, often taking an unusual view. Here Cotton’s in England where the history in question revolves around Elizabeth I and questions of identity. Unlikely, but fun to explore.

Crais, Robert. [Suspect](#) (\$9.99). “The most multifaceted and appealing new protagonist in crime fiction this year just may turn out to be a dog—and a hard-boiled dog, to boot. Maggie is a German shepherd trying out for the LAPD’s K-9 unit, but it looks like she isn’t going to make it. A former military dog, Maggie survived three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan but was severely wounded (her handler was killed) and now suffers from the canine version of PTSD. LAPD cop Scott James, shot during an altercation in which his partner was killed, also suffers from PTSD and has been assigned to the K-9 unit, but it doesn’t look he’s going to make it, either. Scott and Maggie immediately bond, but the hard-nosed sergeant who heads the unit doubts whether either one can measure up. Man and dog think otherwise, however, and as Scott continues—off the books—to investigate the shooting that cost his partner her life, he finds that Maggie has his back, just as his partner did.”—*Booklist* Starred Review

Fowler, Earlene. [The Road to Cardinal Valley](#) (\$7.99). Hoping to remove her troubled, alcoholic brother, Nash, from the temptations of Nashville, widowed Ruby returns with him to friendly, small-town Cardinal, California, hoping for a new start. She soon settles in, with the help of her former husband Cole’s relatives, especially Cole’s aunt and his brother, Lucas, who has developed romantic feelings for Ruby. Nash doesn’t feel comfortable in Cardinal, however, and begins drinking again. Ruby has been bitter since she and Nash were abandoned as children by their mother, Etta, but when Nash gets into deep trouble, Ruby reunites with Etta to help him. Ultimately, Ruby finds acceptance, love, and forgiveness as well as the importance of friends and family. Start with [The Saddlemaker’s Wife](#) (\$7.99), neither being part of the Benni Harper mysteries by Fowler.

Hyzy, Julie. [Home of the Braised](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Tensions are running high as the White House staff adjusts to a new chief usher and prepares for a high-stakes state dinner, where

everything must be perfect. But as the date for the event approaches, things go disastrously wrong when the secretary of defense is found dead in his home, seemingly killed during a break-in. At the same time, White House Chef Olivia's fiancé, Gav, is looking into the mysterious murder of an old friend. Is there a connection? Despite an increase in security following the secretary's death, Ollie learns the president is in imminent danger at the dinner. Includes recipes for a complete Presidential menu.

Johnston, Linda O. [Teacup Turbulence](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Thanks to a savvy ad campaign featuring teacup pups sporting HotPets Bling—a new line of faux jewelry dog collars—small dog adoptions have skyrocketed across the city. So when Lauren discovers a shelter in the Midwest with more toy dogs than it can handle, she arranges a private plane to swoop in and fly the pups back to LA. But Lauren didn't count on rescue worker Teresa Kantrim coming along for the ride. Teresa has cared for the dogs since they were found and doesn't trust anyone from La-La Land to take over the job. Her biting comments clearly haven't earned Teresa any new friends, but when she turns up murdered, it's time for Lauren to dig into Teresa's past

Kramer, Julie. [Shunning Sarah](#) (\$7.99). Kramer, a former journalist and TV news producer, has outdone herself. Her fourth Riley Spartz thriller (after *Silencing Sam*) has the perfect mix of suspense, excitement, romance, and surprises to keep the discriminating crime fiction reader captivated."—*Library Journal* (starred review). See Event Books for Riley's 5th appearance.

Martin, Carol Ann. [Tapestry of Lies](#) (NAL \$7.99). In this Weaving Mystery, Della Wright can't believe her luck when celebrity designer Bunny Boyd walks into her weaving studio in small-town Briar's Hollow, North Carolina, with a large custom fabric order. Bunny needs materials for her latest design project: Bernard Whitby's mansion. Bernard is Briar Hollow's resident millionaire, and Della soon discovers that Bunny has designs on the man as well as his house. And he's happy to have a celebrity at his side when he announces his candidacy for governor. But the buzz surrounding Bernard's announcement is quickly overshadowed by the murder of a local coffee shop owner. When her good friend Jenny becomes one of the suspects, Della decides to unravel the mystery. But she'll have to work fast—before she gets tangled in a killer's clutches

Mitzner, Adam. [A Case of Redemption](#) (\$7.99). Dan Sorensen was once a high-powered New York City defense attorney . . . but that was before a horrifying accident killed the two people in his life who meant the most, plunging him into a downward spiral. As he approaches rock bottom, Dan is unexpectedly offered the opportunity of a lifetime: defend an up-and-coming rapper in a murder trial on the front page of every newspaper. Although his client swears he's innocent of the brutal slaying of his pop star girlfriend, proving it will not be easy, especially because he's suspected of bragging about the crime in one of the hottest songs in the country. Unsure that he's ready to handle such a high-stakes case, Dan realizes that this chance to save a man he believes has been falsely accused of murder just may be his last and only hope to put his own life back on track. I loved this book which offers so much more than this bare-bones description. It's truly original.

Rowland, M L. [Zero-Degree Murder](#) (Berkley \$7.99). As a volunteer for Timber Creek Search and Rescue, missing out on holiday festivities is nothing new to Gracie. After all, disasters don't stop happening because of a cooked turkey. So when Gracie is called out on Thanksgiving for four hikers missing in the wilderness of Southern California, she packs up her gear and heads out to find them. The mission quickly goes from routine to deadly. An early season blizzard sets in. The one missing person the team does find, famous actor Rob Christian, remembers being attacked by someone else on the trail, someone trying to kill him. And Gracie's partner leaves to get back up, taking the radio—their only link to the outside world—with him. Alone in the mountains, Gracie will have to use all her expertise to keep Rob alive. But with an unknown killer lurking somewhere in the dark, even that might not be enough. . .

Taylor, Brad. [Enemy of Mine](#) (\$9.99). "Pike Logan returns in another stellar effort from Taylor, a retired Delta Force commander. What starts off as a simple mission to track down an assassin called the Ghost ends up becoming something very different. Working with the first woman allowed in Special Forces, Logan and partner Jennifer find their cover blown almost immediately. Torture and an unorthodox rescue follow. But the biggest enemy of all has yet to reveal himself, a criminal mastermind with ties to Logan's past. How Logan handles the truth could jeopardize both the mission and his team. Readers of novels set in the world of Special Forces have many choices, but Taylor is one of the best. His obvious insider knowledge, combined with a well-constructed narrative, make all his work—and this novel, in particular—a delight for fans of the subgenre. The added female viewpoint here provides a fascinating perspective on a primarily male-dominated world."—*Booklist*. Taylor signs his new thriller January 18 here. See Event Books.

And for speculative fiction fans:

Hamilton, Peter F. [Great North Road](#) (\$7.99). "Hamilton, the increasingly popular British science-fiction writer, tends to write long, but he also writes well. Someone else might have told this story in half the space, but it probably wouldn't have been nearly as good. The story is simple enough: in the year 2143, a man is murdered, and Sidney Hurst, the detective assigned to the case, must wade through the evidence to find the culprit. Well, wade isn't exactly the word, because the evidence is pretty sparse. Physical traces of the murderer are virtually nonexistent, the scene of the crime is unknown (the body was dumped), and even the victim's identity is a mystery. Hurst knows the dead man is a North, a member of an extended family of clones, but nobody seems to be able to figure out which of the many hundreds of Norths he might be. Oh, and there's also the tantalizing possibility that the unknown killer might be the same creature that slaughtered another North and 13 other people two decades ago. And that's just the setup of this epic-size SF mystery (which morphs, the deeper you go into the story, into something else entirely). The author's rapidly growing legion of fans will flock to this new title, and readers unfamiliar with Hamilton's brand of SF should be steered in its direction. It's a perfect introduction to his gifts for character design, dialogue, and sheer, big-idea-driven storytelling."—*Booklist* Starred Review. In its own Starred Review, *PW* adds, "Hamilton's stand-alone near-future mystery is a mesmerizing page-turner whose pace never lags despite

the book's substantial length...the intense whodunit plot and the sustained ambiguity about Tramel's innocence or guilt are enhanced by plausible extrapolations of 22nd-century human cultures."

NEW IN MASS MARKET PAPERBACK

- Adams, Ellery. [Pecan Pies and Homicides](#) (Berkley \$7.99)
Charmed Pie Shoppe
- Burcell, Robin. [The Kill Order](#) (Harper (\$7.99). Sidney Fitzpatrick
Charbonneau, Joelle. [Chorus Lineup](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Glee Club
Mystery
- Collins, Max Allan. [Wrong Quarry](#) (Titan \$9.95)
- Cook, JJ. [Playing with Fire](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Romantic Suspense/
Firefighters
- Fifield, Christy. [Murder Sends a Postcard](#) (Berkley \$7.99)
Haunted Souvenir Shop
- Griffin, W E B. [Empire and Honor](#) (\$9.99) Honor Bound 1945
- Hollis, Lee. [Death of a Chocoholic](#) (Kensington \$7.99) Hayley
Powell
- Jackson, Lisa. [Night Before](#) (\$7.99)
- Kellerman, Jonathan. [Guilt](#) (\$9.99) Alex Delaware
- Knox, Annie. [Paws for Murder](#) (NAL \$7.99) Pet Boutique Mystery
- Marks, Mary. [Forget Me Knot](#) (Kensington \$7.99) Quilting Mystery

SciFi/Fantasy/Paranormal

- Bennett, Jenn. [Bitter Spirits](#) (Berkley \$7.99)
- Brooks, Terry. [Witch Wraith](#) (\$7.99)
- Hunter, Faith. [Black Arts](#) (NAL \$7.99)
- Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Dream Eyes](#) (Berkley \$7.99)
- Laurie, Victoria. [The Ghoul Next Door](#) (NAL \$7.99)
- Robson, Cecy. [Cursed By Destiny](#) (NAL \$7.99)
- Shearin, Lisa. [The Grendel Affair](#) (Ace \$7.99)

Reissues

- Connelly, Michael. [The Black Echo](#) (\$10) 1st Bosch/Edgar winner
- Connelly, Michael. [The Black Ice](#) (\$10) 2nd Bosch
- Connelly, Michael. [The Concrete Blonde](#) (\$10) 3rd Bosch
- Connelly, Michael. [The Last Coyote](#) (\$10) 4th Bosch
- Connelly, Michael. [Trunk Music](#) (\$10) 5th Bosch
- Gerritsen, Tess. [Body Double](#) (\$9.99)
- L'Amour, Louis. [Hills of Homicide](#) (\$5.99) Western
- Levine, Laura. [Shoes to Die for](#) (\$7.99) 3rd Jaine Austen

HISTORY/MYSTERY

- ✦Chase, Ella March. [The Queen's Dwarf](#) (St Martins \$26.99).
"Entertaining but flawed, Chase's latest follows Jeffrey Hudson, a dwarf from a poor family who finds himself spying on the French-born queen of England after his father sells him to the scheming Duke of Buckingham. For much of the story, Jeffrey is torn between the need to protect his younger brother, Samuel, and his feelings of loyalty and affection for the queen, Henrietta Maria, a kind woman who wants to do right by everyone, but whose Catholic faith, barren womb, and foreign birth have aroused suspicion among her subjects. The handsome, commanding Buckingham—who has had the king, Charles Stuart, under his spell since Charles was a sickly boy—has Jeffrey relay potentially damaging information on the queen to the king in order to maintain his influence on Charles. Much of England begins to hate Buckingham, as his hubris leads to many deaths, but Charles continually forgives him. The story, while engrossing, has a glaring plot flaw midway through that creates

an impossible quandary for Jeffrey, and undermines the idea that the dwarf is smarter than most people think. That aside, the novel is a fascinating glimpse into 17th-century court life, rife with ladies in waiting who could be confidants or backstabbers; lush, wasteful banquets; and people like Jeffrey who are treated kindly but were essentially pets for royalty."—*PW*

Chiaverini, Jennifer. [Mrs. Lincoln's Rival](#) (Dutton \$26.95).
Chiaverini continues to imagine and portray the life of Mary Todd Lincoln through her private affairs and unlikely confidantes. This time the other woman is a rival. Kate Chase Sprague, the daughter of Salmon P Chase, Lincoln's election rival and now his Secretary of the Treasury, runs up against Mrs. Lincoln in the opening scene, March 28, 1861, at a White House dinner. Kate, Chase's second wife's second daughter, is to play hostess for her father. And in Washington, social and political power is wielded by the most successful hostess. I read this with much more interest in the Chases, father and daughter, whose story is less well known than that of the Lincoln's. It's sad but enlightening.

✦Clare, Alys. [The Winter King Signed](#) (Severn \$43). All Saint's Eve, 1211. An overweight but wealthy nobleman, desperate for an heir, dies at the celebration feast he's thrown in his own hall. A natural death...or at the hands of his reluctant new wife? Sabin de Gifford, an apothecary and healer of note, is called to examine the body, and concludes that he died of a spasm to the heart. But she is troubled, all the same, and beset by suspicions. Did the man really die of a heart attack? Or was something more sinister to blame? There is only one person Sabin can turn to for help: fellow healer Meggie, daughter of Sir Josse d'Acquin. But what she requires of her is dangerous indeed.... In the Hawkenlye series.

✦Cornwell, Bernard. [The Pagan Lord Signed](#) (Harper \$30). At the onset of the tenth century, England is in turmoil. Alfred the Great is dead and Edward his son reigns as king. Wessex survives but peace cannot hold: the Danes in the north, led by Viking Cnut Longsword, stand ready to invade and will never rest until the emerald crown is theirs. Uhtred, once Alfred's great warrior but now out of favor with the new king, must lead a band of outcasts north to recapture his old family home, that great Northumbrian fortress, Bebbanburg. Loyalties will be divided and men will fall, as every Saxon kingdom is drawn into the bloodiest battle yet with the Danes.

✦Dickinson, David. [Death of an Elgin Marble](#) (Constable \$41). The British Museum in Bloomsbury is home to one of the Caryatids, a statue of a maiden that acted as one of the six columns in a temple which stood on the Acropolis in ancient Athens. Lord Elgin had brought her to London in the nineteenth century, and even though now she was over 2,300 years old, she was still rather beautiful—and desirable. Which is why Lord Francis Powerscourt finds himself summoned by the British Museum to attend a most urgent matter. The Caryatid has been stolen and an inferior copy left in her place. Powerscourt agrees to handle the case discreetly—but then comes the first death: an employee of the British Museum is pushed under a rush hour train before he and the police can question him. What had he known about the statue's disappearance? And who would want such a priceless object? Powerscourt and his friend Johnny Fitzgerald undertake a mission that takes them deep into the heart of London's Greek community and the upper echelons of English society to uncover the bizarre truth of the vanishing lady....

✂Gardner, Ashley. [A Disappearance in Drury Lane](#) (JA \$16). Late December, 1818 As Captain Gabriel Lacey prepares for his upcoming wedding, his former neighbor, Marianne Simmons, comes to him about an actress friend who's gone missing. Lacey agrees to help look for the actress, little realizing that the search will pit him against men who think nothing of abduction, assault, or sending incendiary devices to the innocent. At the same time, Lacey's personal life is changing, and his time for investigation is frequently and frustratingly interrupted. He is also commanded by a new Bow Street Runner to assist in bringing down James Denis, a criminal with whom Lacey now has complicated ties. Lacey must help or else risk hanging alongside Denis. The search for the actress takes Lacey from elegant assembly rooms to the backstage of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, where he finds darkness in all corners. Lacey's life and honor are constantly challenged as he tries to settle into his new life, until he realizes he can follow no code but his own. Book 8 in the Captain Lacey Regency Mysteries. Ordered Upon Request.

✂Gregory, Susanna. [Murder on High Holborn Signed](#) (LittleBrown \$46). In 1665 England is facing war with the Dutch and the capital is awash with rumors of conspiracy and sedition. These are more frenetic than normal because of the recent sinking in the Thames of one of the largest ships in the navy—a disastrous tragedy that could very well have been caused by sabotage. As an experienced investigator, Thomas Chaloner knows that there are very few grains of truth in the shifting sands of the rumor-mill, but the loss of such an important warship and the murder of Paul Ferine, a Groom of the Robes, in a brothel favored by the elite of the Palace of White Hall makes him scent a whiff of genuine treason. As well as investigating the murder, Chaloner is charged with tracking down the leaders of a fanatical sect known as the Fifth Monarchists. He suspects his masters are not particularly concerned by their amateur antics, and that the order for him to infiltrate the group is intended to distract him from uncovering some unsavory facts about Ferine and his courtly associates. Then, as he comes to know more about the Fifth Monarchists and their meetings on High Holborn, he discovers a puzzling number of connections—to both Ferine's murder and those involved with the defense of the realm. Connections that he must disentangle before it is too late to save the country.... Read with Samuel Thomas, below.

Lyndon, Robert. [Imperial Fire Signed](#) (LittleBrown UK \$40). In the world after 1066, vast empires clamor for dominance. From the Normans in the north to the Byzantines in the south, battles rage across Europe and around its fringes. But in the east, an empire still mightier stirs, wielding a weapon to rule the world: gunpowder. Seeking the destructive might of this 'fire drug', the mercenary Vallon—a man made as of grit and earth as much of flesh and blood—is sent by the defeated Byzantine emperor on a secret and near-impossible quest to the far off land of Song Dynasty China. Alongside a squadron of highly trained soldiers, Vallon is accompanied by the learned physician Hero, hermit-like tracker Wayland and a young, ego-driven upstart named Lucas. All have their own reasons for going, all have secrets. It's a quest that will lead them across treacherous seas and arid deserts and into the uncharted land of mountains and plains beyond the Silk Road. Many will die... but the rewards are unbelievable.

Margolin, Phillip. [Worthy Brown's Daughter](#) (Harper \$26.99). Surprised to find an historical novel by legal thriller bestseller Margolin here? He explains this is a 30-year project come to fruition, resulting in what he thinks of as his best book. The drama is set in his home state of Oregon, back in the 19th Century. One of a handful of lawyers in the new state of Oregon, recently widowed Matthew Penny agrees to help Worthy Brown, a newly freed slave, rescue his fifteen year old daughter, Roxanne, from their former master, a powerful Portland lawyer. Worthy's lawsuit sets in motion events that lead to Worthy's arrest for murder and create an agonizing moral dilemma that could send either Worthy or Matthew to the hangman. At the same time, hanging judge Jed Tyler, a powerful politician with a barren personal life, becomes infatuated with a beautiful gold-digger who is scheming to murder Benjamin Gillette, Oregon's wealthiest businessman. When Gillette appears to die from natural causes, Sharon Hill produces a forged contract of marriage and Tyler must decide if he will sacrifice his reputation to defend that of the woman who inspired his irrational obsession. At Worthy's trial, Matthew saves Worthy by producing a stunning courtroom surprise and his attempt to stop the deadly fortune hunter ends in a violent climax. "Margolin shines in recreating pioneer life... there's legal wrangling, murder and romance, set against the backdrop of race and frontier life. . . . his scene-setting, knowledge of the frontier and relating of the hard task of the law make for an appealing read."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Martin, Andrew. [Night Train to Jamalpur](#) (Faber \$35). North East India, 1923. On the broiling Night Mail from Calcutta to Jamalpur, a man is shot dead in a first class compartment. Detective Inspector Jim Stringer was sleeping in the next compartment along. Was he the intended target? Jim should have known that his secondment to the East Indian Railway, with a roving brief to inspect security arrangements, would not be the working holiday he had hoped for. The country seethes with political and racial tension. Aside from the Jamalpur shooting, someone is placing venomous snakes—including giant king cobras—in the first class compartments of the railway. Jim also has worries on the home front: his daughter has formed a connection with a Maharajah's son, who may in turn have a connection to Jim's incredibly rude colleague, the bristling Major Fisher. Jim must do everything he can to keep his family safe from harm, as he unravels the intrigues that surround him....

✂McGee, James. [Hawkwood](#) (\$15.95). The year is 1811, and Bow Street Runner Matthew Hawkwood is ordered by Chief Magistrate James Read to investigate the double murder of a coachman and a naval courier on the Kent Road. Hawkwood is initially puzzled as to why Read is so concerned by this relatively mundane case, but as his investigation unfolds, another body is discovered and a higher agenda begins to emerge—an attempt by the Emperor Napoleon to bring about a crushing military and psychological blow to Britain, the means of which would bring terror to the seas for years to come... Next: [Resurrectionist](#) (\$14.95). A new term at London's anatomy schools stokes demand for fresh corpses, and the city's 'resurrection men' vie for control of the market. Their rivalry takes an ugly turn when a grave robber is brutally murdered and his body displayed as a warning to other gangs. To hunt down those responsible, Hawkwood must venture into London's murkiest corners, where even more gruesome discoveries await him. Nowhere, however,

is as grim as Bedlam, notorious asylum for the insane and scene of another bizarre killing. Sent to investigate, Hawkwood finds himself pitted against his most formidable adversary yet, an obsessive genius hell-bent on advancing the cause of science at all costs.

Myers, Beverle Graves. [Whispers of Vivaldi](#) (\$14.95). Venice, 1745—an age of reckless pleasures, playful artifice, and baroque excess. An accident has reduced Tito Amato’s glorious singing voice to a husky croak. A tragedy—but also opportunity. Tito can reinvent himself as a director of his beloved Teatro San Marco, staging operas to claim Venice’s fickle heart as he had as a singer. With the theater losing subscribers to a rival company headed by an unscrupulous impresario, San Marco’s Maestro Torani charges Tito with locating the perfect opera to fill the seats in time for the opening of Carnival. Surprisingly, a second-rate composer provides the very thing—an opera so replete with gorgeous melodies it might well have been written by Antonio Vivaldi, Venice’s greatest composer, dead these past four years. “Perhaps the Red Priest did write the opera,” whispers the gossip snaking through coffeehouses and cafés. Even more disconcerting are the rumors swirling around Angeletto, a male soprano Tito imports from Naples to sing the lead. Is this exquisite being truly a castrato, or a female soprano engaging in a daring but lucrative masquerade? More terrible: Maestro Torani undergoes a series of increasingly vicious attacks ending in his murder. And Tito is accused of killing the distinguished maestro so he can become the principal director of San Marco. His own life as well as the future of Teatro San Marco now depends on his skills as a sleuth.... Sixth in a series akin to dropping Donna Leon’s novels back 250 years. Our **January History Paperback Pick**. Also in hardcover: [Whispers of Vivaldi Signed](#) (\$27).

✚Ryan, Robert. [The Dead Can’t Wait Signed](#) (SimonSchuster UK \$). Dr John Watson is fresh from his time in the trenches of Flanders Fields and back home for some much needed R&R. But deep in England’s green and pleasant land something evil lurks. For enemy spies have infiltrated the home front, in search of vital information to take back to Germany. And when seven dead men are discovered, their bodies laid side by side, there is only one man who can solve this curious crime: Dr John Watson. The sequel to [Dead Man’s Land](#) (\$16) which takes place mostly in Flanders Field. One HC: [Dead Man’s Land](#) (\$35).

✚Shepherd, Lloyd. [The Poisoned Island](#) (Touchstone \$16). Read of the early 1800s and the London River Police in an age of botanist explorers and dark murders. See January Trade Paperback Picks.

Sidebottom, Harry. [The Amber Road Warrior of Rome: Book V](#) (Overlook \$26.95). In AD 264, the Roman Empire has been torn in two. The western provinces—Gaul, Spain and Britain—have been seized by Postumus, the pretender to the throne. To the east, on the plains of northern Italy, the armies of the emperor Gallienus muster and he is keen to take his rightful place of power. A war between two emperors is coming and everyone must choose a side. On a mission shrouded in secrecy and suspicion, Ballista is sent by Gallienus back to his original home of Hyperborea, the place of the people of his birth to raise an army against Postumus. This means that Ballista must journey along The Amber Road to the far north. Along the way Ballista meets a fearsome, masked warlord who attacks, bringing fire

and sword against Ballista and his men. And in his home of Hyperborea not all welcome Ballista’s return. In the battle between Postumus and Gallienus only one can survive and be emperor.

✚Skidmore, Chris. [The Rise of the Tudors](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). British historian Skidmore retells the story of how the Tudor dynasty ascended from obscurity to the throne in late medieval England. It’s an incredible tale, made all the more remarkable by the fact that Henry VII became king of England in 1485 as much by accident as by design. The narrative begins 60 years earlier, with the affair between Henry V’s young widow, Catherine of Valois, and her servant, Owen Tudor, that produced Edmund Tudor, later the father of Henry VII. But if you read Anya Seton you know from her fiction it all really starts with John of Gaunt, son of Edward III, and his affair and later marriage to Katherine Swynford.

✚Thomas, Samuel. [The Harlot’s Tale Signed](#) (St Martins \$27). This excellent follow-up to last year’s History/Mystery Pick [The Midwife’s Tale](#) (\$14.99) moves us into a broiling August, 1645, when York, a year after it fell into Puritan hands, is suffering severely in the drought. And many citizens believe sin is responsible. Lady Bridget Hodgson, a widow and midwife, and her assistant Martha Hawkins, manage a difficult delivery. But Lady Bridget’s duties are more than bringing babies into the world and saving mothers; she’s also on demand to examine the bodies of women and children for the coroner whether murdered or accused of witchcraft. So summoned, she discovers that the prostitute Jennet who has been stabbed in the belly has a paper inscribed with a Biblical verse in her fist. Her client is dead too. Bridget has seen the new Puritan preacher Hezekiah Ward at work in the city—could this be his work also? Or one of Ward’s fanatic followers? As her brother-in-law the wealthy merchant Edward welcomes home his elder (and favored) son Joseph—and Joseph’s cruel fellow-soldier—home from the fighting, Bridget, Martha, and Edward’s younger son Will strive for balance and bringing an escalating killer to justice. The path of the investigation is not so much the point of this novel as the evocation of how York is governed and of the dangers of fanatics and excess.

✚Tobin, Sophia. [The Silversmith’s Wife Signed](#) (SimonSchuster \$32). A debut set in late Georgian London. A silversmith is murdered. See First Novels for a review of our **January History/Mystery Pick**.