

BOOKNEWS from

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MORE BOOKNEWS FOR JANUARY 2016

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

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

WRITERS WORKSHOP SATURDAY FEBRUARY 6

10:30-AM-12:30 PM with Michael Koryta, the 2016 Diana Gabaldon/Poisoned Pen Writer in Residence

Fee: \$50 Registration required. Limited to 25

Narrative Writing and the Use of Suspense (Fiction and Nonfiction)

The workshop is open to both fiction and nonfiction writers who are interested in improving their storytelling and broadening their range of techniques. Michael's focus will be on teaching how core issues such as character, plot, tension, and emotion are imperative regardless of the literary form, and demonstrating that fiction writers can benefit from seeing how journalistic techniques can add depth and realism to their own work, while nonfiction writers can benefit from learning how to build scenes, create and sustain suspense, and use dialogue.

TUESDAY JANUARY 19 7:00 PM

Darynda Jones signs [The Dirt on Ninth Grave](#) (St Martins \$26.99) Charley Davidson #9

Chelsea Quinn Yarbro signs [Haunting Investigation](#) (Smoke & Shadow Books \$27.99) Chesterton Holt #1

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 7:00 PM

Nicholas Petrie signs [The Drifter](#) (Putnam \$26.95) First Mystery Pick akin to Travis McGee

Peter Rennebohm signs [Shepherd Lake](#) (PR \$14.95)

THURSDAY JANUARY 21 7:00 PM

Linda Hirshman signs [Sisters in Law](#) (Harper \$28.99) Dual Bio of O'Connor & Ginsberg

TUESDAY JANUARY 26 7:00 PM Book Launch

Kevin Hearne signs [Staked](#) (Ballantine \$27) Iron Druid #8

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 27 2:00 PM

Fiona Barton previews [The Widow](#) (Penguin \$25.95) Debut British

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 27 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime Club discusses Henning Mankell, [The Faceless Killers](#) (\$15)

Kurt Wallander

THURSDAY JANUARY 28 7:00 PM

Reed Farrel Coleman signs [Where it Hurts](#) (Putnam \$26.95) Series debut

AJ Sidransky signs [Forgiving Mariela Camacho](#) (Berwick \$16.95)

SATURDAY JANUARY 30 2:00 PM

Hosted by Michael Koryta (and Barbara)

Ian Rankin signs [Even Dogs in the Wild](#) (LittleBrown \$26) Rebus & Fo

SUNDAY JANUARY 31 2:00 PM

Hosted by Michael Koryta

Alafair Burke signs [The Ex](#) (Harper \$26.99) DA Olivia Randall debut

Andrew Grant signs [False Positive](#) (Ballantine \$27) Series start, Cooper Deveau

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 2 7:00 PM

Stephanie Barron signs [Jane and the Waterloo Map](#) (Soho \$25.95) Jane Austen

We may add Tea & Scones for 2:00 PM also

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 3 7:00 PM

Hosted by Michael Koryta and Patrick

Joe R. Lansdale signs [Honky Tonk Samurai](#) (LittleBrown \$26) Hap & Leonard

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 4 7:00 PM

Hosted by Michael Koryta and Barbara

Gregg Hurwitz signs [Orphan X](#) (St Martins \$25.99) Feb. Surprise Me! Pick

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 6

Writer's Workshop with Michael Koryta 10:30-12:30

Fee: \$50. Registration Required Limited to 25

Narrative Writing and the Use of Suspense (Fiction and Nonfiction) 2:00 PM

Robert Knott signs [Robert B. Parker's Blackjack](#) (Putnam \$26.95) Cole & Hitch

Michael Sears signs [Saving Jason](#) (Putnam \$26.95) Jason Stafford

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7 2:00 PM

Jana Bommersbach signs [Funeral Hotdish](#) (Poisoned Pen \$25.95)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9 7:00 PM Book Launch

Alex Berenson signs [The Wolves](#) (Putnam \$27.95) John Wells #10

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9 7:00 PM

Scottsdale Library 3938 N Drinkwater Boulevard Lower Level

Meg Cabot signs [Remembrance](#) (Harper \$15.95) Mediator Novel #7

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 10 7:00 PM

Lisa Gardner signs [Find Her](#) (Dutton \$26.95) DD Warren

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 7:00 PM

Jim West signs [The Phoenix Sound: A History of Twang & Rockabilly Music in Arizona](#) (Arcadia Publishing \$21.99), hosted by Patrick

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 12 2:00 PM

Scottsdale Museum of the West

Dawn Tripp signs [Georgia, A Novel of Georgia O'Keeffe](#) (Random \$28), hosted by Matt Bell

⌘ = British *PW*=Publishers Weekly *LJ*=Library Journal

MORE SIGNED BOOKS

Anders, Charlie Jane. [All the Birds in the Sky](#) (Forge \$25.99). As editor-in-chief of io9.com, Anders is one of the most influential voices in the realms of science fiction and fantasy, and her 2012 Hugo-winning story “Six Months, Three Days” further established her bona fides. In her fiction debut she writes a wonderful coming of age story about making sense of love, sex and adulthood on the brink of the apocalypse. It will have widespread appeal to everyone from fans of David Mitchell to Neil Gaiman and Ursula le Guin. Patricia is a witch who can talk to birds, Laurence the childhood inventor of the two-second time machine. As teenagers they gravitate towards one another, sharing in the horrors of growing up weird. Now as adults they reconnect as each takes sides in a cataclysmic war between science and magic. As they attempt to save our future, Laurence and Patricia’s shared past pulls them back together. And though they come from different worlds, when they collide, the witch and the scientist will discover that maybe they understand each other better than anyone. *All the Birds in the Sky* is a warm and funny novel that entwines strands of science and fantasy and is our **February SciFi/Fantasy Club Pick**.

⌘Barron, Stephanie. [Jane and the Waterloo Map](#) (Soho \$25.95). I have raved. Now this, a Starred Review: “A well-crafted narrative with multiple subplots drives Barron’s splendid 13th Jane Austen mystery following 2014’s [Jane and the Twelve Days of Christmas](#) (\$25 or \$16.95, both Signed). In November 1815, Jane comes to London to attend to her favorite brother, Henry, who has fallen ill and is on the verge of bankruptcy. While she awaits the proofs of Emma, she receives an invitation to Carlton House, the Prince Regent’s London mansion, where she finds Col. Ewan McFarland, a hero of Waterloo, horribly sick on the floor of the library. Just before he expires, the colonel utters, ‘Waterloo map.’ From evidence at the scene, Jane determines that he was poisoned. Jane joins forces with Raphael West, a painter who’s also a government spy, in pursuit of a ruthless killer and the meaning of the colonel’s cryptic last words. Series fans will be happy to see more of Jane’s extended family and friends, and Austenites will enjoy the imaginative power with which Barron

spins another riveting mystery around a writer generally assumed to have led a quiet and uneventful life.” For you who miss *The DaVinci Clones* there is a nifty code buried in a document and some disgraceful conduct in play.

⌘Barton, Fiona. [The Widow](#) (Bantam UK \$39). This is the true first edition and the First Mystery Club Pick—no way with all that is being thrown into support of publication that this debut will not become a bestseller. I’ve given you my take. Here is a new Starred Review: “What would you do if your spouse suddenly became the prime suspect in the kidnapping of a two-year-old girl? That’s the stomach-churning prospect that confronts London hairdresser Jean Taylor in this exceptional debut from British journalist Barton, who circles her story as if it were a lurking panther, unseen but viscerally sensed. The main action occurs in 2010, with flashbacks to little Bella Elliott’s headline-dominating disappearance from her home in Southampton in 2006. Multiple narrators maximize suspense, with perspectives switching among tough-to-read Jean, whose husband, Glen, has just been fatally hit by a bus at the book’s start; haunted DI Bob Sparkes, the lead investigator, whose career the case jeopardizes; and tabloid reporter Kate Waters, most resourceful of the frenzied journalistic pack chasing the story. Though Barton stumbles slightly down the homestretch, tipping what should be her biggest bombshell, she tells her tale with a realism and restraint that add to its shattering impact.” Personally, I think you should anticipate the big final reveal, but I realize that many reviewers (and publishers) haven’t been reading crime fiction for 65 years like me....

Berenson, Alex. [The Wolves](#) (Putnam \$27.95). Edgar-winner Berenson’s exhilarating 10th spy thriller featuring ex-CIA agent John Wells wraps up a trilogy within the series that started with 2014’s [The Counterfeit Agent](#) (\$9.99) and continued with [Twelve Days](#) (\$9.99). With the tacit approval of the U.S. president, Wells sets out to kill American billionaire Aaron Duberman, who almost tricked the U.S. into invading Iran in 2015’s *Twelve Days*. Duberman, a casino magnate with vast holdings in Macao, is now hiding out in his mansion high atop Hong Kong’s Victoria Peak. Wells, deeply undercover and using the latest in surveillance technology as well as gut-level tradecraft, spends weeks trying to find a crack in Duberman’s security armor. It finally comes when the Chinese and the Russians both become intrigued by the prospect of exploiting Duberman’s vulnerability. Typically unflappable in tight situations, Wells uncharacteristically freezes up at one point. Yet when the call of duty summons, Wells rises to the occasion; his emotions may be mixed, but he still puts on a great show for readers. The exciting scenes in Hong Kong where Duberman has a fortress home high atop Victoria Peak add to...well, the excitement. “Lots of thriller writers know how to work a ticking clock, and lots more come to the genre with some experience in international politics, but few put the two together as effectively as Berenson does in this compelling, globe-trotting time bomb of a novel. Action fans will get all they came for, but those looking for genuine insight into the subtleties of the geopolitical chess game will be equally satisfied.” —*Booklist* Starred Review for our **February Thriller Club Pick**.

Bjørk, Samuel. [I’m Travelling Alone](#) (Doubleday UK \$43). With his first book about investigators Mia Krüger and Holger Munch,

Bjørk has already qualified himself into the mystery writers' elite division. Watch out, Jo Nesbøl!" — *Bergens Tidende* (Norway). Already a well-known novelist, playwright, and singer/songwriter in his native Norway (under the name Frode Sander Øien), Bjørk leaps into the Scandinavian crime fiction game with this story of a special homicide unit in Oslo investigating the hanging of a little girl, who has an airline tag reading "I'm traveling alone" pinned to her clothes. Oslo detectives Holger Munch, a math nerd who dotes on his six-year-old granddaughter, and Mia Krüger, a brilliant profiler who has burned out on her disheartening job and is on the verge of self-destruction, are on it. But it quickly escalates... and may turn personal.

Bommersbach, Jana. [Funeral Hotdish](#) (Poisoned Pen \$25.95). "As she did in [Cattle Kate](#) (\$14.95 or \$14.95 both Signed), veteran crime reporter Bommersbach draws on actual events for this ripped-from-the-headlines novel, which finds an odd but mostly effective way to show both ends of America's illegal drug trade. In Phoenix, Ariz., in 1999, reporter Joya Bonner becomes aware that Mafia turncoat Sammy "the Bull" Gravano is bamboozling the FBI by using his refuge in the Federal Witness Protection Program to run a narcotics ring that's distributing pills all the way to Joya's peaceful hometown of Northville, N. Dakota, where the death of 17-year-old Amber Schlener from a bad dose of Ecstasy sparks misguided vigilante violence. In Phoenix, Joya covers the police investigation that nails Sammy and his son. Back home in Northville, she keeps a lazy sheriff from arresting the wrong people—but it's almost certain that the town's smug innocence has been lost. Sharp writing and incisive characterization bring both stories to life."—*PW*

Burke, Alafair. [The Ex](#) (Harper \$26.99). A gripping standalone suspense from Burke in the Trust No One vein (see Barton). With Burke's move to NYC from Oregon some years ago, her landscape shifted to the city. So we get DA Olivia Randall who receives a desperate phone call from the school-age daughter of her ex-fiancé, Jack Harris, whose wife, Molly, was killed in a mass shooting three years earlier at Manhattan's Penn Station. Jack has now been implicated in a triple murder—one of the victims was the father of the shooter who killed Molly. Jack went to the Hudson River Pier to meet a woman, but his story is so flimsy who would believe it? Olivia? While she's brash, she's conflicted about Jack who may no longer be the guy whose heart she busted years ago... *Kirkus* says, "Her latest features smooth, engaging writing; a sharp, funny edge; and characters worth investing in. Burke has created some memorable female protagonists over the years, but Olivia might be the cream of the crop. If readers are lucky enough, snarky Olivia will snag another convoluted case and make additional appearances up the road."

✦Cannon, Joanna. [The Trouble with Goats and Sheep](#) (Collins \$34). England, 1976. Mrs. Creasy is missing and The Avenue is alive with whispers. As the summer shimmers endlessly on, ten-year-olds Grace and Tilly decide to take matters into their own hands. And as the cul-de-sac starts giving up its secrets, the amateur detectives will find much more than they imagined. Instead of finding their missing neighbor, they must try to make sense of what they've seen and heard, and a complicated history of deception begins to emerge. Everyone on the Avenue has something to hide, a reason for not fitting in. It's only in the suffocating heat of the summer, that the ability to guard these differences becomes impossible to conceal. A clever debut, and very British.

Coleman, Reed Farrel. [Where it Hurts](#) (Putnam \$26.95). Coleman adds another Starred Review to his long roster of them and awards. "Edgar-finalist Coleman offers a searing look at the dark underside of Long Island in this stellar series kickoff. Ex-cop Gus Murphy, whose 20-year-old son, John Jr., dropped dead playing basketball, works as a night shift van driver and house detective for a hotel whose lobby was "a pretty grand sight if you didn't look too closely, and if your taste ran to despair." His reputation as an honest cop leads thug Tommy Delcamino to ask Gus to help him find the person responsible for the brutal torture and murder of Tommy's son, TJ, after the Suffolk County PD fail to give the case much attention. Gus refuses, out of anger that Tommy is trying to take advantage of Gus's loss of John Jr., but he changes his mind after another murder. Coleman's moving portrayal of a man in deep, deep pain, a tightly constructed plot, and a gift for making Long Island seem like James Ellroy's LA add up to a winner." Starts a series.

Cooper, Paul M. [River of Ink](#) (Bloomsbury UK \$35). The stylus is mightier than the sword. Plus just ask Scheherazade: it's a dangerous business being bard to a king. Asanka the poet has had it easy: in good with the ruler, he's parlayed a facility with language—Sanskrit in particular—into a career celebrating the splendors of Sri Lanka. He has some money tucked aside, along with a compliant and pliant mistress, and he gets to write pretty much what he wants to. All that comes crashing down in the first few pages of British writer Cooper's debut novel when the old king has an exceedingly bad day at the hands of a usurper. Magha, the new king, has his good points, but there's a bit of Joe Stalin to him, occasioning the need to put out some good press and burn the books that don't quite deliver the message he's after. But, not knowing a word of Sanskrit himself, how can Magha be sure Asanka is saying the things he wants to convey to his much-put-upon subjects? There's the rub, and there's the seed of some palace intrigues, and the old vexing question arises from it of how a minor, apparently amoral bureaucrat is to survive with something of his honor intact when doing the service of the master that we met in Jason Goodwin's Edgar winner [The Janisary Tree](#) (\$16), for example. "Cooper does a nice job of imaging medieval Sri Lanka and, by way of his narrator, imparts some welcome notes on Sanskrit poetics along the way."—*Kirkus Reviews* on our **January History/Mystery Club Pick**.

✦DePoy, Philip. [A Prisoner in Malta](#) (St Martins \$28). Our **February History/Mystery Club Pick** fastens on the fascination that playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe continues to exert. Was he a spy for Walsingham? Was he murdered? Was he Shakespeare? In 1583, the 19-year-old Kit, on scholarship, is brawling his way through Cambridge, regarded as a social upstart, a womanizer—and a genius. Into the picture comes Elizabeth's spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham who tasks Marlowe with investigating a burgeoning plot against the Queen. His path takes him to a heavily guarded dungeon in Malta where he unwinds Edgar-winner DePoy's take on one of history's greatest mysteries. I've always liked DePoy's work and while he's not a scholar of the period, he brings his skill set to bear on this series start. There are several fabulous historical mysteries for February by such as Stephanie Barron, Priscilla Royal, and Charles Todd, but as I've picked them before I'm going for variety for you.

Dorsey, Tim. [Coconut Cowboy](#) (Harper \$27). Channeling his *Easy Rider*, serial killer Serge A. Storms saddles up for a lethal

road trip as he revs off across the Florida Panhandle to find the lost American Dream of the iconic 1960s. Movie buff Storms has a plan to finish the journey begun by such of his free-wheeling heroes as Captain America and Billy, so tragically cut short by shotgun-wielding rednecks. Coleman is riding shotgun as they hit the peninsula's rural burbs but we know, from the opening real estate scam, that small-town America is no longer that of Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper. Madness, mayhem, ingenious homicides, and power pharmaceuticals are in play in this rollicking look at the rusticity of the Sunshine State.

Frank, Scott. [Shaker](#) (Knopf \$28). A debut, very dark, now with Patrick to read. The *PW* take: "Screenwriter Frank's well-plotted first novel will remind readers of Tom Wolfe's novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. Hit man Roy Cooper flies from New York to Los Angeles to kill someone five days after L.A. suffers a major earthquake. The hit goes smoothly, but as Roy is searching for his rental car in North Hollywood, he sees three street kids, "none older than fourteen, fifteen tops," taunting an old man in an alley. Roy intervenes, but he can't prevent a kid armed with a .25 from shooting the man dead. The murder is caught on video, and the identity of the victim—a mayoral candidate viewed as a legitimate force for reform—gives Roy, who was wounded in the encounter, a higher profile than he'd like. Frank integrates Roy's story, complete with flashbacks, with that of Science, one of the young thugs, and of Kelly Maguire, an LAPD officer with a reputation for racism, along the way revealing their inner lives in impressive psychological detail."

Gallagher, Mike. [Youngblood](#) (Atria \$26). "Gallagher's riveting combination of gritty military jargon, sharply drawn characters, and suspenseful story line adds up to one of the best modern war novels since Tim O'Brien's Vietnam classic, *The Things They Carried* (1990). Highly recommended." — *Booklist* Starred Review. "Thrilling, tragic, and darkly funny, Matt Gallagher's *Youngblood* is a brilliant portrait of command in the modern, morally bruising battlefield." — Phil Klay

Gardner, Lisa. [Find Her](#) (Dutton \$26.95). Our copies come with a paper replica of DD's Boston PD badge. Florence "Flora" Dane, the victim and survivor at the center of bestseller Gardner's compelling eighth novel featuring Boston Sgt. Det. D.D. Warren, has a flat affect and a burning compulsion to meet sexual predators five years after the FBI rescued her from a man who abducted her while she was a UMass student, imprisoning her in a coffin for 472 days. He also raped her repeatedly. One night in a bar, Flora has an encounter with a pick-up she refers to as "Mr. Haven't I Seen You Around Here Before" that leads to a fatal confrontation and to her meeting D.D., who wonders whether Flora can assist in the case of Stacey Summers, a Boston College student who has been missing for three months. "As D.D.'s investigation progresses, the reader is treated to fascinating insights into the psychology of sadistic sexual predators, trauma bonding, and the effects violent crimes have on victims and loved ones."

Geni, Abby. [The Lightkeepers](#) (Counterpoint \$27). I have not yet read a book quite like this one. The Farallon Islands, aka the "Islands of the Dead," lie off the coast of California but are so rocky, remote, and weather-blasted they might almost be on the moon. Nonetheless a half dozen biologists rough it there, hooked by the islands' birds, sharks, seals, and passing whales, if not by the bird lice and the free-ranging mice (no natural predators). Even the ancient rock is rotting. Still despite the hellish

landscape, its protected coves shelter the fauna if not the humans who make do crammed together in a very rough cabin for weeks, months on end. The ferry comes occasionally, a six hour trip, bringing supplies and carrying back messages. Forget the internet. However a helicopter can be summoned, along with officials, by sat phone. When photographer Miranda, whom the biologists call Melissa or "mouse girl," arrives on permit to photo-document the Farallons, she's challenged from the beginning. Traumatized since 14 when her mother died in an accident, Miranda writes endless letters to her Mom, knowing they go to the USPS Dead Letters, as a form of therapy. It's bad enough coping with the wild life and landscape and the peculiarities of the cooped-up scientists, but then one assaults her. I would not call this a locked-room mystery, or crime fiction; the compelling and suspenseful narrative gains traction from the reliability, or not, of the narrator and the violence that builds in this strange community, changing the dynamic from peculiar to hostile. This debut is our **January Modern Firsts Club Pick** after an odyssey to acquire Signed Firsts I was sure I could not bring off. Thus when we're out, we're out!

✂Glasfurd, Guinevere. [The Words in My Hand](#) (Hodder \$40). A *London Times* Pick is announced for the reimagined true story of Helena Jans, a Dutch maid in 17th-century Amsterdam, who works for Mr. Sergeant the English bookseller. When a mysterious and reclusive lodger arrives – the Monsieur – Mr. Sergeant insists everything must be just so. It transpires that the Monsieur is René Descartes. This is Helena's story: the woman in front of Descartes, a young woman who yearns for knowledge, who wants to write so badly she makes ink from beetroot and writes in secret on her skin – only to be held back by her position in society. Weaving together the story of Descartes' quest for reason with Helena's struggle for literacy, their worlds overlap as their feelings deepen; yet remain sharply divided. For all Descartes' learning, it is Helena he seeks out as she reveals the surprise in the everyday world that surrounds him. When reputation is everything and with so much to lose, some truths must remain hidden. Helena and Descartes face a terrible tragedy and ultimately have to decide if their love is possible at all.

Grant, Andrew. [False Positive](#) (Ballantine \$27). Born in Birmingham, England, Grant sets his latest thriller in Birmingham, Alabama, a mini-urban sprawl as full of psychopaths, police politics, drugs and prostitutes as any big metropolis. Cooper Devereaux, a loner cop with a history of violence, shadowy criminal ties and disciplinary suspensions, catches a fresh missing-child case with the clock running. He is teamed with former undercover vice detective Jan Loflin, who has her own sketchy past, full of nervous energy, "as if there was too much for her small body to contain, leaving her muscles to burn off the excess like the flares at an oil refinery." Together they interview the parents of missing seven-year-old Ethan Crane, their neighbors and the boy's teachers and friends. Leads are scarce, the press and police brass clamor for progress, and soon the FBI joins the hunt. Both outsiders and cautious with each other, Devereaux and Loflin doggedly chase down a discarded toy here and an eyewitness sighting there while doing their own sleuthing on the side. While the action zips along in short chapters, which open with the ominously increasing hours since Ethan's disappearance, Grant slowly connects Devereaux's foster care past, Loflin's dark family history and an FBI database

revealing a long pattern of similar kidnappings. At first, False Positive is the very manifestation of a whodunit, but it soon becomes an inquiry into whether the destiny of children is genetically cast from violent parents. Grant knows well how to make this work and then leaves us with a delicious surprise twist on the last page.”—Bruce Jacobs

Hearne, Kevin. [Staked](#) (Ballantine \$27) Iron Druid #8. Tattooed Irishman Atticus O’Sullivan looks like a dreamy young rock star but is really a 2,000-year-old Druid with kick-ass magic powers. Here, he’s fighting vampires that include a former best friend. Ornerly archdruid Owen Kennedy is having a wee bit of troll trouble: Turns out when you stiff a troll, it’s not water under the bridge. Meanwhile, Granuaile is desperate to free herself of the Norse god Loki’s mark and elude his powers of divination—a quest that will bring her face-to-face with several Slavic nightmares. As Atticus globetrots to stop his nemesis Theophilus, the journey leads to Rome. 8th in a bestselling series that moved into hardcover at Book #7, *Shattered*. “Funny, razor-sharp . . . plenty of action, humor, and mythology.”—*Booklist* Starred Review on *Shattered*. January 26 is publication day when he signs here.

Hirshman, Linda. [Sisters in Law](#) (Harper \$28.99). “Fast-paced and sure-footed...persuasive...Hirshman’s ability to write clearly about the law without oversimplifying enables her to explain how O’Connor played defense and Ginsburg offense.”—Huffington Post

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Orphan X](#) (St Martins \$25.99). It’s not often that a stellar new concept appears married to the talents of an established star like Gregg Hurwitz. The Orphan Program and its recruit from East Baltimore playgrounds Evan Smoak, designated Orphan X, form the story’s core. Evan learns many skills including an “ability to creep unnoticed through the virtual universe.” But adult Evan needs and builds a Fortress of Solitude, breached unexpectedly—but not by someone intent on eradicating him. Why? Orphan X is a hero for our age with a limitless future—if he survives. I love this book, a great concept and stylishly written. Our **February Surprise Me! Club Pick**.

Jones, Darynda. [The Dirt on Ninth Grave](#) (St Martins \$26.99). In her 9th outing, Charley Davidson is living in a small NY village as Jane Doe, a girl with no memory of who she is or where she came from. So when she is working at a diner and slowly begins to realize she can see dead people, she’s more than a little taken aback. Stranger still are the people entering her life. They seem to know things about her. Things they hide with lies and half-truths. Soon, she senses something far darker. A force that wants to cause her harm, she is sure of it. Her saving grace comes in the form of a new friend she feels she can confide in and the fry cook, a devastatingly handsome man. But no one can outrun his past, and the more lies that swirl around her—even from her new and trusted friends—the more disoriented she become. Thankfully, she has a Rottweiler.... Our **January SciFi/Fantasy Pick**.

✦Kernick, Simon. [Witness](#) (Century \$32). When Jane Kinnear sees her lover being murdered, she suddenly finds herself in danger. Taken to an anonymous police safe-house, it soon becomes clear that her lover was an MI5 informant with important information about an imminent terrorist attack. DI Ray Mason of Counter Terrorism Command is a man with a controversial past, but his effectiveness at getting results means that he’s now been given the task of preventing the attack from taking place. But

can he be trusted, and does he know more about the attack than he’s letting on? In the safe-house, Jane is trying to piece together a description of her lover’s killer. But what she doesn’t know is that the killer has already found out who she is, and where she is hiding....

Knott, Robert. [Robert B. Parker’s Blackjack](#) (Putnam \$26.95). Cole and Hitch continue to prosper in Appaloosa where the Territorial Marshals do also, but face a new slew of troubles. The biggest is Boston Bill Black, the owner of the new casino. Boston Bill, so flashy, is a prankster and womanizer as well as a known quick-draw. When he becomes wanted for a string of murders, he vanishes, challenging our Marshals to corral him—more than once. And then.... This series has always been great fun.

Lansdale, Joe R. [Honky Tonk Samurai](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Hap and Leonard are not your typical private eyes. But what they lack in experience they make up with perseverance. Hap, a former 60s activist and self-proclaimed white trash rebel, and Leonard, a tough black, gay Vietnam vet, have finally decided to make their detective work official. Their first client: a mean old woman looking for her missing granddaughter. The girl used to work for a car dealership in town...but it seems like cars weren’t the only things on offer. The mystery thickens to include blackmail, revenge, and an inbred family of hillbilly assassins who eliminate any threats to the operation. Only Hap and Leonard could turn a simple missing person case into a life-threatening showdown, and only Joe Lansdale could tell this story. Filled with hilarious dialogue, relentless pacing, and unorthodox characters, *Honky Tonk Samurai* is a rambunctious thrill ride by one hell of a writer. Reissued in paperback: [Big Blow](#) (\$11.95); [Fine Dark Line](#) (\$16.95); [Freezer Burn](#) (\$14.95).

✦MacBride, Stuart. [In the Cold Dark Ground](#) (Collins \$35). Sergeant Logan McRae’s missing-persons investigation has just turned up a body in the woods – naked, hands tied behind its back, and a bin bag duct-taped over its head. The Major Investigation Team charges up from Aberdeen, under the beady eye of Logan’s ex-boss Detective Chief Inspector Steel. And, as usual, she wants him to do her job for her. But it’s not going to be easy: a new Superintendent is on her way up from the Serious Organized Crime Task Force, hell-bent on making Logan’s life miserable; Professional Standards are gunning for Steel; and Wee Hamish Mowat, head of Aberdeen’s criminal underbelly, is dying – leaving rival gangs from all over the UK eying his territory. There’s a war brewing and Logan’s trapped right in the middle... 10th in series.

✦Mark, David. [Dead Pretty](#) (Hodder \$32). Hannah Kelly has been missing for nine months. Ava Delaney has been dead for five days. One girl to find. One girl to avenge. And DS Aector McAvoy won’t let either of them go until justice can be done... 5th in this fine hardboiled British crime series.

McDermid, Val. [Forensics](#) (Grove \$25). ‘The story of forensic science,’ Val writes in her preface, ‘of that road from crime scene to courtroom, is the stuff of thousands of crime novels. The application of science to the solving of crime is the reason I am gainfully employed.’ There is nothing like personal interest to juice up a narrative and this book is fully juiced. McDermid marches us through the history of crime solving, beginning with a handbook for coroners written in China in 1247, which ‘contained the first recorded example of forensic entomology—the use of insect

biology in the solution of a crime.' Yes, 750 years ago, a Chinese coroner conducting an investigation into a murder deduced the murderer by watching to see which sickle the flies landed on. It had been washed, but the flies knew, and the murderer confessed on the spot. Forensics are not new science as this wonderful book of interviews with various professionals makes clear. Val's new Tony Hill, [Splinter the Silence](#) (Grove \$26), is inspired by the horrors of internet trolls who threaten and insult their targets.

Muller, Marcia/Bill Pronzini. [The Plague of Thieves](#) (Forge \$27). In the five years since they opened Carpenter and Quincannon, Professional Detective Services, they have solved dozens, but one has eluded even them: Sherlock Holmes or, rather, the odd egoist claiming his identity, who keeps showing up with a frustrating if useful knack at solving their difficult cases. Now one Roland W. Fairchild arrives from Chicago to hire Sabina to locate his cousin Charles, aka Holmes, who is now heir to his father's considerable fortune—unless Charles is ruled insane. Accompanying Roland is his young wife. John, meanwhile, has been hired by the owner of the Golden State brewery to investigate the “accidental” death of the head brew master, who drowned in a vat of his own beer. John calls it homicide. But while John is certain he can catch his quarry, Sabina is less certain she wants to catch hers. This series is Jack London in its setting, exploring 1890s San Francisco, if it lacks the crisp plotting of Muller's Sharon McCone mysteries.

Nadel, Barbara. [On the Bone](#) (Headline \$43). On a buzzing Istanbul street, in the fashionable district of Beyoglu, a young man drops dead. Ümit Kavas' death was natural but the contents of his stomach betray a shocking truth: his last meal was human flesh. Under desperate pressure from their superiors, Inspector Cetin Ikmen and his colleague Mehmet Süleyman begin the most obscure investigation of their careers. How did Ümit Kavas—apparently a good, liberal man – come to partake in the greatest taboo of all?

Petrie, Nicholas. [The Drifter](#) (Putnam \$26.95). Dana Stabenow reviews: “A vet with PTSD comes to the aid of the family of a friend and fellow vet who has committed suicide, but of course that's only where the story starts, evolving later into a potentially catastrophic domestic terrorism event. (Trying not to give too much away but you'll know all this yourself by the first chapter.) The voice of Peter the vet is solid as a rock and there is a terrific dog, and most of the supporting cast is also good.... I can see Peter evolving in future books into the second coming of Travis McGee, a mercenary not for hire with mad skills and serious heart, ready to do the necessary for all those other hurting vets and their families.”

Rankin, Ian. [Even Dogs in the Wild](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Enjoy John Rebus, now a civilian, and Siobhan and Malcolm Fox, formerly of The Complaints, i.e. the Edinburgh squad's Internal Affairs division, and thus viewed mostly as a rat by his colleagues... even Big Ger, terror of Edinburgh, now also “retired” but maybe a target of a new breed of mobsters.

Rosenfelt, David. [Blackout](#) (St Martins \$28). I love the Andy Carpenter series by Rosenfelt, but his standalone thrillers mostly have outstanding, twisty plots. Here we get a crackerjack story replete with wry observations and witty, and totally convincing, dialogue. While hot on the trail of crime boss Nicholas Bennett, New Jersey state police officer Doug Brock somehow ended up

shot and on the wrong side of a balcony—several feet below it, with serious head trauma. When he comes out of his coma, Doug recalls nothing from the last 10 years: not even his ex-fiancée, fellow cop Jessie Allen, or why, just before his shooting, he called his partner, Nate Alvarez, to say, “This time I got him.” As Doug retraces his steps before the call (aided by a photo on his phone and its amazing GPS technology, which is new to him), it becomes clear that he was dangerously close to uncovering not just criminal activity but an imminent terrorist plot. Time is running out, but Doug can't rely on any “ta da!” recollections. The pressure to halt a catastrophic event while he struggles to recreate his former life makes this an irresistible read by the 2015 Shamus Award winner.

Sears, Michael. [Saving Jason](#) (Putnam \$26.95). Sears is a terrific plotter and makes the money games understandable to a tyro like me, but the real reason to read his wonderful books is to admire the way Wall Street trader Jason Stafford parents his Asperger's son. His exciting fourth novel featuring the disgraced Stafford finds him, now a financial fraud investigator, sneaking onto a Long Island farm that might be the nexus of some shady stock trades. In the book's best sequence, he narrowly outruns the farm's security staff and a herd of cranky bison. But after a colleague is killed, Stafford is swept up into a federal investigation and is forced to go into the witness protection program—along with his autistic seven-year old son, also named Jason but known as “the Kid,” and a pair of bodyguards—in New Mexico, where they're hunted by mobsters. “Stafford is a flawed protagonist who is resourceful and touchingly vulnerable,” and a decent man navigating a challenging parental role with love and patience.

✎Seddon, Holly. [Try Not to Breathe](#) (Corvus \$32). I only ordered a handful of the Signed UK edition of this debut, yet another offering from England tailored to the Trust No One hot streak started by *Gone Girl* and ramped up by *The Girl on the Train*. And this month, Barton's *The Widow*. What lifts Seddon's work above the ordinary is not what happened to Amy Stevenson, a teen assaulted 15 years ago on her way home from school who has lain in a Tunbridge Wells hospital in a coma ever since, nor who the guilty party eventually proves to be. It lies in both disgraced journalist Alex Dale's struggle with compulsive alcoholism while she summons up reserves to chase Amy's story, and in the really fascinating science designed to reach someone locked in, conscious but paralyzed, if enough brain remains to be reached. It all climaxes in a moving court scene. This may be our British Crime Club Pick for February in the unsigned US edition of [Try Not to Breathe](#) (Random \$26).

Sidransky, AJ. [Forgiving Mariela Camacho](#) (Berwick Court \$16.95). The tumult of immigration and the culture of The Dominican Republic in the mix that makes up Washington Heights illuminate a case worked by the NYPD's Gonzalez and Kurchenko. They determine that a woman in an apparent suicide is instead a victim of a multiple murderer. The trail crosses continents and years, times, locations, and the lives of many characters, expanding the cast from Sidransky's debut, [Forgiving Maximo Rothmann](#) (\$16.95).

✎Sykes, SD. [The Butcher Bird Signed](#) (Hodder \$42). A second entry in an atmospheric and craftily plotted 14th Century Kent series. Young Oswald de Lacy (is he really Oswald, the heir thanks to the deaths of those who stood before him, or is he

a cuckoo in the de Lacy nest?) is working on becoming Lord of Somershill Manor and holding his own with his scheming, and now very pregnant, sister Clemence, the widow of the nearby estate holder. If her son is a boy, more complications will ensue. Meanwhile superstition runs rampant when a baby is found impaled on a thorn bush and other children disappear. The villagers blame the return of the Butcher Bird rather than a human agency. Oswald disagrees. The story embraces a trip to London and to the bedroom of a bewitching lady....

Tripp, Dawn. [Georgia, A Novel of Georgia O'Keeffe](#) (Random \$28). Impossible to miss aspects of the life of Georgia O'Keeffe if you spend time in Santa Fe and Abiquiu as I do. Tripp snares you with her look at American icon O'Keeffe in the context of her love affair with Alfred Stieglitz, first met when she travels to New York to meet the famed photographer and art dealer who has discovered her work and mounted an exhibit. Despite their differences in age and sophistication, and his marriage, their connection is electric and she becomes both muse and mistress. His photographs of her clothed and nude create a sensation. At the same time, she struggles to be her own artist and woman, creating a yin and yang between love and breaking free of it. Sensual and sensitive as well as deeply researched, this is also the story of the NY art world between the wars, of the attachment to landscape and the trials of aging, as well as the compulsion of an artist to sacrifice everything to his unique creativity.

✽Tyler, LC. [Masterpiece of Corruption](#) (Constable \$43). It is December 1657. John Grey, at his cramped desk in Lincoln's Inn, is attempting to resume his legal career. A mysterious message from a 'Mr. SK' tempts him out into the snowy streets of London and to what he believes will be a harmless diversion from his studies. Mr. SK's letter proves to have been intended for somebody else entirely and Grey finds himself unwittingly in the middle of a plot to assassinate the Lord Protector – a plot about which he now knows more than it is safe to know. Can he both prevent the murder and (of greater immediate relevance) save his own skin? Both the Sealed Knot and Cromwell's Secretary of State John Thurloe believe he is on their side, but he is unsure that either is on his. As somebody is kind enough to point out to him: 'You are a brave man, Grey. The life of a double agent can be exciting but very short.' Grey just has to hope that prediction is wrong.

Yarbro, Chelsea. [Haunting Investigation](#) (Smoke & Shadow \$27.99). John Charles reviews: "Spring, 1924. The world has clawed its way back from the ravages of WWI and the Spanish Flu pandemic. The 20's are beginning to roar. Poppy Thornton lives with her Aunt Jo and her excitable cat Maestro in upper-crust Philadelphia. Poppy is determined to make a name for herself as a serious crime reporter, but is stuck reporting on garden parties and ladies' fashion. Then one day her editor assigns her to collect background information on the suicide of a prominent businessman. She soon discovers it was actually a murder... but her surprising source for this information is the ghost of a man killed alongside her father during the Great War."

Zandri, Vincent. [Orchard Grove](#) (Polis \$25). In this chilling tale of obsessive love from Thriller Award-winner Zandri, Hollywood scriptwriter Ethan Forrester, who lives with his wife in Orchard Grove, N.Y., is attracted to Lana Cattivo, the sultry blond who moves next door with her husband, an Albany

detective. Unbeknownst to her neighbors and her husband, Lana lived as a child on the same land, then an apple orchard. Buried under a tree lies the body of her sexually abusive stepfather, whom Lana killed with a meat cleaver when she was 13. Lana later evolved into a seductive, manipulative serial killer. Now, as Ethan's once-loving marriage deteriorates, he sits all day, unable to write, spying on Lana, who lies sunbathing barely clothed on her deck. Ethan's involvement with Lana propels him into a series of bad choices, which leave him fleeing for his life.

BRITISH LIBRARY CRIME CLASSICS

Edwards, Martin, ed. [Murder at the Manor: Country House Murders](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). The English country house is an iconic setting for some of the greatest British crime fiction. This new collection gathers together stories written over a span of about 65 years, during which British society, and life in country houses, was transformed out of all recognition. It includes fascinating and unfamiliar twists on the classic 'closed circle' plot, in which the assorted guests at a country house party become suspects when a crime is committed. Many distinguished writers are represented in this collection, including such great names of the genre as Anthony Berkeley, Nicholas Blake, and G.K. Chesterton. Martin Edwards has also unearthed hidden gems and forgotten masterpieces: among them are a fine send-up of the country house murder; a suspenseful tale by the unaccountably neglected Ethel Lina White; and a story by the little-known Scottish writer J.J. Bell. PW gives the anthology an enthusiastic review: "The 16 entries in this British Library crime classics anthology, most dating to the golden age of detective fiction, between the two world wars, will appeal to all lovers of English country house mysteries. Edwards opens with an unsettling Sherlock Holmes story, Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Copper Beeches," about a governess whose employers require her to perform some rather odd duties, such as cutting off her long hair. Other notable authors of the last century include E.W. Hornung, whose famed "amateur cracksman" Raffles appears in "Gentlemen and Players," and Anthony Berkeley, who shows his ingenuity in "The Mystery of Horne's Copse." Margery Allingham surprises us with "Same to Us," a short take on the country house party, and Michael Gilbert unravels a past mystery to solve a modern puzzle in "Weekend at Wapentake." Those looking for comfort on a dark and stormy night will be rewarded."

Wynne, Anthony. [Murder of a Lady](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). Rhys Bowen's Her Royal Spyness Lady Georgie would recognize Duchlan Castle, a gloomy, forbidding place in the Scottish Highlands. Late one night the body of Mary Gregor, sister of the laird of Duchlan, is found in the castle. She has been stabbed to death in her bedroom – but the room is locked from within and the windows are barred. The only tiny clue to the culprit is a silver fish's scale, left on the floor next to Mary's body. Inspector Dundas is dispatched to Duchlan to investigate the case. The Gregor family and their servants are quick – perhaps too quick – to explain that Mary was a kind and charitable woman. Dundas uncovers a more complex truth, and the cruel character of the dead woman continues to pervade the house after her death. Soon further deaths, equally impossible, occur, and the atmosphere grows ever darker. Superstitious locals believe that fish creatures from the nearby waters are responsible; but luckily for Inspector Dundas, the gifted amateur sleuth Eustace Hailey is on the scene, and unravels a more logical solution to this most fiendish of plots.

Anthony Wynne wrote some of the best locked-room mysteries from the golden age of British crime fiction. This cunningly plotted novel – one of Wynne’s finest – has never been reprinted since 1931, and is long overdue for rediscovery.

MORE NEW BOOKS

Note, I have in many cases quoted reviews to save myself typing or looking things up (No, I never seem to write a review as soon as I’m done reading, and so facts, names, etc go out of my head) and thus speed up getting the rest of the January Booknews out to you...I have paid particular attention to debuts.

Arsenault, Emily. [The Evening Spider](#) (Harper \$15.99). Here’s another look at our January **History Paperback Pick**, finding it doesn’t quite fall into the pure mystery genre that Arsenault usually writes in (*The Broken Teaglass*, *In Search of the Rose Notes*, etc.) as it contains ghostly and supernatural elements, and yet the book is not that spooky. It’s more a play on psychological fears than a book about terrifying hauntings. However, with its basis in a real crime, including excerpts from news stories from that time, readers can take delight in Arsenault’s highly inventive imagination as she deftly interweaves the stories of two young mothers living decades apart and searching for answers. IMHO a really brilliant example of a novel with this structure, and with truly terrific US and Canadian history, is Vicki Delany’s [More Than Sorrow](#) (\$14.95). She will join us Feb. 24 at The Pen for International Crime Night and can sign copies (along with her new Constable Molly Smith mystery) [Unreasonable Doubt](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95) then.

Bass, Rick. [For a Little While](#) (LittleBrown \$28). “Long associated with both the Deep South and the mountainous West, Bass writes movingly of the land, weather, and place as well—even when the place isn’t always attractive, such as the dark edges of little Western towns, ‘strange seams of disintegrating roughness on the perimeters.’ All of these elements come to the fore in the hundred-odd pages of new stories that close the book, all wind-swept plains and grim forests, mountain lions, badly loved girls, and wondrous resolutions . . . Essential reading for students of the modern American short story and some of the best work of a writer who is at the top of his game.”—*Kirkus* (Starred Review)

Bennett, Vanora. [Midnight in St Petersburg](#) (St Martins \$25.99). We begin in 1911 when Inna Feldman has fled the southern Russia pogroms for refuge in its capital. Against reason she hopes to become apprenticed into the workshop of the flamboyant, violin-making Leman family. She makes it, but around her society begins to fracture, revolution brews lurking in her wild, destructive cousin Yasha whom she loves, and Rasputin is beginning to make a reputation in the city and court circles. She’s drawn to him. And then there’s an Englishman called Horace who works at Fabergé making stunning creations. As crisis builds, a commission to repair a priceless Stradivarius offers Inna a means of escape—but with whom? This is a romantic rather than a political historical thriller, filled with color, passion, and swept along by the current of real events.

Bill, Frank. [The Savage](#) (Farrar \$14). Van Dorn is eighteen and running solo, dodging the bloodthirsty hordes and militias that have emerged since the country went haywire. His dead father’s voice rings in his head as Van Dorn sets his sights not just on survival but also on an old-fashioned system of justice. Mean-

while, a leader has risen among the gangs--and around him swirls the cast of brawlers from Donnybrook, with their own brutal sense of right and wrong, of loyalty and justice through strength. This is not the distant post-apocalyptic future—this is tomorrow. Bill’s work “is vivid in its violence, grim in its grimness. It reams the English language with a broken beer bottle and lets the blood drops tell the story.” —Daniel Woodrell

Bivald, Katarina. [Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99). Here is a different spin on my review earlier in January: “Bivald’s debut novel, which was originally published in her native Sweden, follows Sara, a bibliophile who has spent her entire life working in a bookshop in Sweden. When Sara arrives in the small town of Broken Wheel, Iowa, to visit fellow book-lover and pen pal Amy, she is greeted by Amy’s funeral procession. “Thousands of miles from home, with a return ticket dated two months hence, Sara is at a loss for what to do. So, naturally, with Amy’s collection of books, she opens a bookstore. . . Filled with familiar literary references, charming and quirky townsfolk, and plenty of scheming, plotting, and shenanigans that could only occur in a place like Broken Wheel, Bivald’s feel-good novel explores that ever-present question: books or people? Read the book and enjoy reaching your own conclusions.”

Black, Benjamin. [Even the Dead](#) (Holt \$27). John Banville is back in mystery mode with an atmospheric, typically sardonic case for Quirke, the morose 1950s Dublin pathologist who here is on sick leave as he confronts a midlife crisis. Drying out in the care of his adoptive brother Mal and uncomfortable with Mal’s depressed American wife (OK, they have a history), Quirke gets two tickets out. One is when the working pathologist asks for confirmation that the charred body of a man pulled from a car is not in fact a suicide but a murder victim, having been killed by a blow to his head. The other comes from Quirke’s daughter Phoebe who wants him to check in to the disappearance of a classmate. The young woman is, it turns out, pregnant by the man dead in the car. Surely she isn’t just a runaway. . . . This is not Black’s best plot but it develops the series characters well as well as leading fans on the next step of Quirke’s emotional journey. And, as ever, it’s elegantly written. I find the Quirkes irresistible.

⌘Brown, Carrie. [The Stargazer’s Sister](#) (Pantheon \$24.95). Plucked from sheer misery in 18th Century Germany and brought to England by her brother, the real-life luminous astronomer and composer William Herschel, Caroline tends to his Slough household devotedly and helps get his newly designed telescope built—then is utterly upended by his decision to marry. But it propels her into discoveries of her own when she’s preemptorily moved out of the house (and her excessive devotion to her brother). “A fictional romance is added to this real-life story of an unusual woman, but it proves less compelling than the events documented by the Herschels themselves. By the end, it is the descriptions of constructing a 40-foot telescope and using it to sweep for undiscovered heavenly bodies that most vividly capture the Age of Wonder.”

Brown, Taylor. [Fallen Land](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Brown’s debut novel is set in the final year of the Civil War, as a young couple on horseback flees a dangerous band of marauders who seek a bounty reward. Callum, a seasoned horse thief at 15, came to America from his native Ireland as an orphan. Ava, her father and

brother lost to the war, hides in her crumbling home until Callum determines to rescue her from the bands of hungry soldiers pillaging the land, leaving destruction in their wake. Ava and Callum have only each other in the world and their remarkable horse, Reiver. Pursued relentlessly by a murderous slave hunter, tracking dogs, and ruthless ex-partisan rangers, the couple race through a beautiful but ruined land, surviving on food they glean from abandoned farms and the occasional kindness of strangers until they intersect with the scorching destruction of Sherman's March through Georgia....

Buchholz, Jason. [A Paper Son](#) (Adams \$24.99). Unread by me. Here's *PW*: "Buchholz's gripping debut is a clever supernatural thriller that plays with readers' narrative expectations. During a massive storm in present-day San Francisco, third-grade teacher Peregrine Long witnesses a vision in his teacup of a Chinese-American family on a ship entering a harbor in China. Unable to explain the experience, he decides to write a short story about the family: in 1925, Bing and Li-Yu leave their home in California with their two children, Rose and Henry, and sail across the Pacific to reunite with their family in a rural Chinese village. Peregrine's story is published in a small journal, and the very next day, Eva Wong, an elderly Chinese-American woman, arrives at his apartment; his tale exactly retells her family history. Though neither of them understands what's happening, Eva implores Peregrine to continue writing so she can find out what happened to her uncle, Henry. Peregrine seeks advice from his sister and a fellow teacher while he attempts to understand the mysterious story. As the storm rages on for weeks, Peregrine continues to have visions and compulsively writes what he sees. Water is a recurring theme that ties together the many threads—from the nonstop rain in San Francisco, to pools, rivers, and oceans, to the flooded rice paddies in 1920s rural China. Rich, interesting characters fill this fast-paced, magical realist novel about family connections."

Buckley, Carla. [The Good Goodbye](#) (\$27). We're spoiled for choice for Surprise Me! Club Picks this winter. Buckley writes a compelling candidate, a standout in the field of Trust No One with not one but two twists in the end. This genre has so overwhelmed publishing that I find myself looking for other kinds of stories so as not to bore you, but I read every word of this one...and you will, too. At the heart are two teenagers, Arden and her BFF and cousin, Rory. Their fathers are brothers, their mothers close if absorbed with their own lives. Natalie, Arden's mom, is desperate to keep her name restaurant open despite her partner's investment gamble that has beggared it. The partner is Rory's dad. Plus Natalie has a pair of boisterous twin boys, age six, to raise. When both girls are terribly injured in a dorm fire, both families are rocked. More so when the police show up, calling it arson. So who set the fire? Why? And who are Arden and Rory, really? Told in multiple voices, this page-turner propels you along to the final solution.

Butterworth, William E III. [The Hunting Trip](#) (Putnam \$28.95). Butterworth is best known to you as WEB Griffin, bestselling author of over 50 thrillers in various series set amidst the military, police, war, spies and counterspies. Here he's going with Philip W. Williams III who at only 16 is expelled from boarding school over a prank. On the train home Williams wonders, now what? What turns out to embrace becoming a world-class marksman, a special agent of US Counterintelligence in post-war Germany,

a courier for the CIA, husband of an Austrian ballet dancer, a bestselling novelist, and finally, to meet the love of his life on a hunting trip to Scotland. One could hardly find a narrative more in contrast to that so elegantly constructed by the UK's Sebastian Faulk's sweep across the 20th Century, rooted back in WWI, below.

Chilton, Andrew. [The Goblin's Puzzle](#) (Random \$16.99). Being the Adventures of a Boy with No Name and Two Girls Called Alice. "Debut author Chilton combines the unpredictability of a Monty Python skit with traces of the Brothers Grimm as he zig-zags among the stories of an unnamed young slave, who escapes his master and soon becomes tied to a mischievous goblin; Plain Alice, the daughter of a sage desperate to follow in her father's footsteps; and Princess Alice, slated to rule West Stanhope if she can elude both a dragon and marriage to the treacherous Duke Geoffrey. The characters, hailing from the Middle Eastern-inspired High Albemarle and the medieval Middlebury, learn that only logic and bravery will thwart dangerous foes, such as a princess-eating ogre, as they make their way from the dragon's lair to Princess Alice's home. Threaded between daring adventures and rhetorical arguments is the unnamed boy's dilemma over his fate. Is he "truly and justly a slave?" Or does he have the power, as the goblin Menofar suggests, to make his own fate? Filled with quick-witted asides and engaging characters, Chilton's novel is sure to please readers looking for a fresh spin on cherished fairy tale conventions. Ages 8–12."—*PW* Starred Review

✚Cornwell, Bernard. [Warriors of the Storm](#) (Harper \$27.99). A fragile peace reigns in Wessex, Mercia and East Anglia. King Alfred's son Edward and formidable daughter, Aethelflaed, rule the kingdoms. But all around the restless Northmen, eyeing the rich lands and wealthy churches, are mounting raids. Uhtred of Bebbanburg, the kingdoms' greatest warrior, controls northern Mercia from the strongly fortified city of Chester. But forces are gathering against him. Northmen allied to the Irish, led by the fierce warrior Ragnall Ivarson, are soon joined by the Northumbrians, and their strength could prove overwhelming. Despite the gathering threat, both Edward and Aethelflaed are reluctant to move out of the safety of their fortifications. But with Uhtred's own daughter married to Ivarson's brother, who can be trusted? In the struggle between family and loyalty, between personal ambition and political commitment, there will be no easy path in this 9th installment in the Saxon Chronicles.

Costantini, Rob. [Root of All Evil](#) (Quercus \$26.99). Rome, 1982. In the wake of a ruinous blunder, a ground-down Commissario Balistreri escapes his regrets through sex, alcohol and gambling. His sole responsibilities are now a stilted investigation into the death of a South American student, and a tiresome obligation - as a gratitude to the man who saved his career - to a rising television starlet needing protection from the pitfalls of fame. As the risks to this girl, Claudia Teodori, begin to rise along with her reputation, the sorrows of Balistreri's past in 1960s Tripoli also start to push back into his present. Both of their fates are inextricably linked in this second thriller in the Balestreri series after [The Deliverance of Evil](#) (\$14.99).

Eastland, Sam. [Red Icon](#) (Opus \$28.95). While you are waiting for March's new Bernie Gunther by Philip Kerr, you can dive into this. Weaving the fates of the Volga Germans brought to Russia by Catherine the Great and the Skoptsy, a reviled offshoot

of Russian Orthodoxy, Eastland's sixth Pekkala outing (after *The Beast in the Red Forest*) surges between the two great wars of the 20th century. To protect his people, Tsar Nicholas II invoked a powerful icon, but when it was stolen, doom engulfed the empire. During World War II, two Soviet soldiers find the artifact in a German church. Stalin seeks to harness the icon's power to defeat the Nazi war machine. He orders Pekkala to vet the object's authenticity. Unbeknownst even to the notorious Emerald Eye is the butcher who abandoned his German heritage to become a Skoptsy adherent. He is the mastermind who plots the modern Armageddon. Eastland (the pen name of writer Paul Watkins) loads the story with abundant emotive details that give this historical re-creation a thrilling momentum. Rasputin, the Tsarina, and Hitler are among the real and fictional characters brought to life by the author with his polished literary skill. Fans of Pekkala will race through this suspenseful story and hasten to recommend it to other lovers of stories about Russia's deep, dark, and deadly past.

Faulks, Sebastian. [Where My Heart Used to Beat](#) (Holt \$27). London psychiatrist and author Robert Hendricks is at the center of this well wrought novel, the 13th fiction by Faulks. It's 1980. Hendricks, a man of tightly bottled memories, receives a letter for a Dr. Alexander Pereira, a ninety-something neurologist and WWI vet who invites him to his home on an isolated island off France's south coast. An admirer, he says, of Hendricks' work, he knew Hendrick's father who died in the war and has some photographs to share. At first reluctant, Hendricks agrees to go when yet another of his personal relationships falls apart. When he meets with Pereira, some of his memories begin to loosen, leading...where? Enjoy the journey.

Gannon, Joe. [The Last Dawn](#) (St Martins \$26.99). This very dark novel begins in 1986 on the Nicaraguan/Honduras border and moves to 1989 El Salvador where Nicaraguan cop Ajax Montoya and his partner Gladys are tasked with finding a young American journalist who's disappeared. Gladys had been kidnapped back in 1986 by a Contra commander and tortured; Montoya arranged her release, but at a price: he's imprisoned and she is exiled to Miami. In 1989, however, they are needed to run a rescue operation for the missing Jimmy Peck. While this is in its way both police procedural and a thriller, it's a true indictment of American policy.

Graves, Sarah. [The Girls She Left Behind](#) (Bantam \$26). Of all this month's crop of Trust No One suspense, this one has the least palatable story even if it did get reviewed in the *NY Times*. Two teenagers, one reluctant, one naively enterprising, attend a late night open-air policy. Their unwise behavior proves catastrophic when a predator pounces on them. The reluctant one comes to and has a brief window of escape which she navigates, leaving the other, plus earlier and desperate victims, behind. Worse, she never tells anyone about them. Some years later the man is caught, the girls released... and what is the one who left them to their fates to do? I am a fan of Graves's Home Repair and Homicide series set in Maine but the premise and characters in this departure revolted me.

Hefti, Matthew. [A Hard and Heavy Thing](#) (Adams \$24.99). Contemplating suicide after nearly a decade at war, Levi sits down to write a note to his best friend Nick, explaining why things have to come to this inevitable end. Years earlier, Levi—a sergeant in the army—made a tragic choice that led his team

into ambush, leaving three soldiers dead and two badly injured. During the attack, Levi risked death to save a badly burned and disfigured Nick. His actions won him the Silver Star for gallantry, but nothing could alleviate the guilt he carried after that fateful day. He may have saved Nick in Iraq, but when Levi returns home and spirals out of control, it is Nick's turn to play the savior, urging Levi to write. Levi begins to type as a way of bidding farewell, but what remains when he is finished is not a suicide note. It's a love song, a novel in which the beginning is the story's end, the story's end is the real beginning of Levi's life....

✠Herron, Mick. [Real Tigers](#) (Soho \$26.95). The disgraced spies at MI5's Slough House must try to save one of their own in CWA Gold Dagger Award-winner Herron's outstanding third thriller featuring uncouth Jackson Lamb and crew. When one of these "slow horses," Catherine Standish, doesn't show up for work, her colleagues don't initially worry until they're contacted by kidnappers who say that they'll only guarantee Standish's return in exchange for information stored on a secret government computer, which happens to be in MI5's headquarters in London's Regent's Park. River Cartwright, the hero of 2010's *Slow Horses*, tries to infiltrate the main office, not an easy task, especially since the agency ripples with internal strife as the new home secretary, Peter Judd, butts heads with the Intelligence Service chief, Dame Ingrid Tearney. Soon the lines between spies, slow horses, and private mercenaries blur dangerously.

Hunt, Samantha. [Mr. Splitfoot](#) (Houghton \$24). An unusual sort of gothic/ghost story set in Maine. The buzz has been large.... Gregory Maguire gave it a rave. Odds are first prints are gone.

Kasper, Agent/Luigi Carletti. [Supernotes](#) (Doubleday \$26.95). "Agent Kasper" is "a former operative for both the Italian intelligence services and the American CIA." Luigi Carletti is a veteran Italian investigative journalist and novelist. Between them they have produced a sparsely constructed thriller based on Kasper's actual story of his operation, betrayal, imprisonment, torture and endurance, told from the harrowing scene of his final prison interview back through his CIA-prompted switch from investigating Mafia money-laundering in Phnom Penh to tracking down the source of "supernotes"—perfectly counterfeited US banknotes. Irrespective of this book's merit as a thriller, if Gannon lays bare US treachery and the workings of the global intelligence community in El Salvador, Kasper really nails it in Cambodia. Is this a great country or what when a major publisher can put out a book like this without reprisals.... Or so one hopes. To read another unusual Cambodian noir, see Osborne, below.

✠Kelly, Michelle. [Downward Facing Death](#) (St Martins \$25.99). I tried to like this series launch about a yoga teacher who, down on her luck, hopes to recover by reopening her late father's butcher shop in Belfrey, Derbyshire. An unexpected arson leads to the discovery of a body on upper floor which leads to many complications. And—I didn't. Not recommended.

Kent, Christobel. [The Crooked House](#) (Farrar \$26). I hate not getting an advance reading copy (ARC) of books like this. I can only quote *PW*: "The former Esme Grace, now living in London under a new legal identity as Alison, is slowly building the semblance of a normal life. Somehow, she has managed to survive the slaughter of her family when she was 14 in the Essex village of Saltleigh—but now a promising romance forces her

back to the village. Though awakening the traumatic memories she has struggled so long to repress is the last thing Alison wants, she fears that if she refuses to accompany her older lover, Paul Bartlett, to the wedding of Morgan Carter, his former flame, in Saltleigh, the relationship is doomed. Little does Alison realize that much graver dangers await, such as her discovery of evidence that casts a startling new light on her long-ago trauma. This psychological thriller falters down the homestretch under the weight of too many unbelievable plot twists, but until then this is a suspenseful ride with a gutsy heroine.”

✦Lambert, Charles. [The Children’s Home](#) (Scribner \$24). In a sprawling estate, willfully secluded, lives Morgan Fletcher, the disfigured heir to a fortune of mysterious origins. Morgan spends his days in quiet study, avoiding his reflection in mirrors and the lake at the end of his garden. One day, two children, Moira and David, appear. Morgan takes them in, giving them free reign of the mansion he shares with his housekeeper Engel. Then more children begin to show up. Dr. Crane, the town physician and Morgan’s lone tether to the outside world, is as taken with the children as Morgan, and begins to spend more time in Morgan’s library. But the children “This genre-bending debut is by turns dread-inducing and heartwarming, a masterful exploration of whether innocence can truly sprout from ignorance....a magical, mesmerizing tale about the courage it takes to confront the unknown.”—*Booklist* Starred Review, reflecting another one in *Kirkus*. Unread by me who can see this is one you have to elect to experience according to your own taste....

Levy, Lawrence. [Brooklyn on Fire](#) (Crown \$14). TV/film pro Levy is no prose stylist and he can drop in chunks of info that halt the flow, but his second novel for daring Mary Handley, a real woman who shouldered her way into professional detection, is so full of the history of 1890 New York, the machinations behind its annexation of Brooklyn (then the fourth largest US city), the scandals of the Huntington family (Colis, his second wife Arabella, and his nephew Henry) and personalities of the Vanderbilts (Mary is engaged to George, who built the Biltmore estate near Asheville), the Rockefellers and the Carnegies that I ended up Googling a whole lot of them. And... there are murders to solve. Read this if you are a history buff.

Marinovich, Matt. [The Winter Girl](#) (Doubleday \$23.95). Yet another Trust No One. It’s not only women who write them. “A marital thriller scarier than *Gone Girl*... Even though *The Winter Girl* is dark and dismal — Marinovich may have given birth to Hamptons noir — the novel is, essentially, the anatomy of a marriage and what happens when deadly secrets, like poisonous snakes, threaten those who seek to get close to them. Marinovich writes with startling authenticity about how it feels to be in a miserable relationship....If you had a love/hate relationship with Nick and Amy Dunne, the crazy couple at the center of Gillian Flynn’s *Gone Girl*, you’ll feel equally at home with Scott and Elise — just be forewarned that this devilishly good story is scads more scary. To quote Scott, “The worst decisions never let you go. They come circling back, even on the best days, to find you.” —*Washington Post*. I read this and I quote the *Post* because I can’t think of good things to say. If you review the roster of this genre out this month, let alone read them serially as I have, your world view becomes soured.

✦Morgan, Ann. [Beside Myself](#) (Bloomsbury \$26). Yet another entry in Flynn/SJ Watson mode. How much of our identity is based on our name? Twin girls—Helen is smart and popular, Ellie is awkward and slow—decide to play a game and switch identities to see if they can trick people, but at the end of the day—Ellie refuses to switch back. This creepy tale of stolen identity will keep readers engaged as alternating chapters depict the sisters’ youthful experiences to adulthood. One twin has a wonderful life of fame while the other battles mental illness. Helen’s struggles as she tries to make people realize her true identity are heartbreaking, and her family’s dysfunctional history is the shadowy underlying theme that permeates the novel.

Murthy, Vasudev. [Sherlock Holmes, The Missing Years: Timbaktu](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95 or \$15.95). “Murthy clearly knows his approach may not best please many Holmes aficionados. At one point, he injects a tad of humor by giving readers three means to register their displeasure with the book. At another point, he praises readers who are willing to take the time to read about exotic customs without enjoying the usual trappings of a Holmes mystery.... The bottom line is, no Holmes purist should come to this adventure with any expectations that they’ll be in familiar territory. Yes, the hand and presence of Professor Moriarty is here. Holmes dons disguises, enjoys his pipe and violin, draws on his language Abilities, and lets it be known he’d like some of his seven percent solution. In between these tropes, we can be forgiven for thinking we’re along for a ride with T.E. Lawrence.”—*Bookpleasures*

Nesser, Hakan. [Hour of the Wolf](#) (Knopf \$25.95). Inspector Van Veeteren of Sweden’s Maardam PD is now retired. But when a (drunk) driver leads the body of a boy by the side of a roadway with escalating consequences, Van Veeteren is so much on the mind of the new inspector, Reinhart, and his team that eventually he re-enters the active force, spurred further by the murder of someone close to him. This story of accident, blackmail, and murder hauntingly illustrates the way one terrible decision can escalate into multifold disaster.

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Man Without a Shadow](#) (Harper \$27.99). Oates explores the lives of an amnesiac and the neuroscientist who studies and adores him. Elihu “Eli” Hoopes, who will be forever known in the annals of science as E.H., loses his short-term memory as a consequence of encephalitis at age 37. The scion of a prominent Philadelphia family, this would-be leftist-turned-stockbroker contracted the fever at the Hoopes’ lodge on Lake George. Referred in 1965 to psychologists at the University Neurological Institute, he becomes, in effect, a career guinea pig, subjected daily to various tests by the illustrious Dr. Milton Ferris and his staff, which includes 24-year-old graduate student Margot Sharpe. However avidly he takes notes and makes sketches, Eli can’t retain memories of anyone he meets. Many of his charcoal drawings depict the figure of a drowned girl, around 11 years old, beneath the surface of a stream near Lake George. Eli’s italicized thoughts about this girl introduce a murder mystery: his cousin Gretchen disappeared one summer, and the Hoopeses hushed it up. Is Eli the killer? As Margot ages and advances in academia, her private life becomes increasingly fraught—she has an affair with Ferris, a married womanizer, and allows him to pillage her ideas but refuses to expose him.... “Oates excels at creating spooky, off-kilter atmospherics... The maze of memory is an ideal setting for Oates...”—*Kirkus Reviews*

O'Dell, Tawni. [Angels Burning](#) (Galaxy \$16). Reminiscent of many a scene from FX's television drama *Justified*, the suspense in *Angels Burning* revolves around the truculent Truly clan. Chief of police Dove Carnahan is appalled by the brutal murder of a teenage girl, whose charred body is found stuffed into a burning sinkhole in an abandoned mining town. The girl is soon identified as a member of the Truly family--notorious for their heavy drinking, frequent jail time and many out-of-wedlock babies. As Dove works with the state police to coordinate the investigation (which is way too high-level for her small-town team), she keeps having flashbacks to the murder of her own mother 35 years earlier. Delving into the dark secrets of the Trulys means that Dove risks exposing the secrets of her family, too. "Tawni O'Dell has created an enigmatic and engaging story, filled with the realistic, quotidian sadness often found in blue-collar towns on an economic downswing. Dove Carnahan is a supremely likable character: a slightly mouthy, rather clothes-obsessed, intelligent and intuitive middle-aged woman."—Jessica Howard

Osborne, Lawrence. [Hunters in the Dark](#) (Hogarth \$25). After a lucrative turn at a Cambodian casino, 28-year-old Englishman Robert Grieve walks away with two grand—a fortune in the Southeast Asian nation—and into a web of danger and deceit circling back to Bangkok. I'd write more but actually Lee Child has written a hugely entertaining review, one of his best pieces of writing ever, in the *NY Times Book Review* which is way better (and more fun) to read than what I might say. [Click here](#) and enjoy.

Palombo, Alyssa. [The Violinist of Venice](#) (St Martins \$15.99). Palombo's training as a classical musician is evident in this her first novel, a historical romance set in the 18th century. Adriana, the musically talented daughter of a strict merchant father, has been forbidden to pursue her creative endeavors. Determined, however, to pursue her dreams despite her father's temper, Adriana secretly receives tutoring in playing the violin from a young priest and musician, Antonio Vivaldi, a situation that quickly escalates into a romantic, heated love affair. What unfolds amid the canals, grand homes and days of Carnival in Venice is a complex plot of lust and love, of duty and dedication, and of the misfortunes that befall those who test Fate. "Palombo skillfully blends historical facts with innovative and colorful fiction, creating a delightful, fast-paced romance that is sure to please music lovers and romance readers alike." —Lee E. Cart

Patterson, James/Marshall Karp. [NYPD Red 4](#) (Little Brown \$28). Det. Zach Jordan and partner Kylie MacDonald, the woman he loved and lost at the police academy, are members of the elite task force NYPD Red, which handles cases involving the rich, famous, and connected. Their new case involves robbery and murder at a fancy movie premiere—and they're not on the screen. Moved to January 25 from March.

Potzsch, Oliver. [The Werewolf of Bamberg](#) (Houghton \$18). This dark, compelling series set in 17th Century Bavaria where the author's ancestors took root, gets a 5th entry. Jakob Kuisl, the executioner of Schongau, has traveled to Bamberg with his family including his daughter Magdalena to attend the wedding of his estranged brother, Bartholomäus, that town's hangman. They find Bamberg in the grip of fear after several prominent citizens have disappeared, and a wolf-like beast has been sighted within and without the town's walls. The descriptions of the creature lead to

suspicions that a werewolf is responsible for the disappearances and for the human remains that are subsequently discovered. Mounting hysteria leads to the establishment of an inquisitorial commission that's reminiscent of an earlier body charged with eradicating a supposed coven of witches in the area. "Pötzsch effectively conjures up an atmosphere of claustrophobia and paranoia The tension, as the Kuisl family finds itself in the midst of the hunt, is palpable, leading to a cleverly clued solution."—*PW* Starred Review. This is no cozy series!

Sakey, Marcus. [Written in Fire](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). "The searing conclusion to Sakey's Brilliance trilogy (after *Brilliance* and *A Better World*) updates the plight of the supernaturally gifted people known as abnorms, who constitute 1% of the U.S. population and first appeared in 1986. Thirty years later, federal agent Nick Cooper, who's an abnorm, realizes that the policy of fighting "monsters" (renegade abnorms) has turned government officials such as Secretary of Defense Owen Leahy into monsters themselves. With tragic results, Leahy has provoked conflict between the government and Tesla, the abnorms' Wyoming enclave, while Cooper, battling desperately for his children's future and torn between lingering affection for his ex-wife and his new abnorm partner, pursues evil abnorm genius John Smith, who's bent on annihilating normal humans. Though the rapid-fire cinematic cuts may disorient readers unfamiliar with the earlier books, this installment raises important questions about such matters as patriotism, self-sacrifice, conflicting loyalties, and parental devotion."—*PW* Starred Review. Sakey's debut *The Blade Itself*, a crime novel, was a 2007 First Mystery Club Pick.

✂Seymour, Gerald. [Vagabond](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Seymour's first thriller, *Harry's Game*, played into the IRA wars with Britain. And here he is back in Northern Ireland where two Russian agents, who are working from the Czech Republic, sell weapons to patient, simmering IRA terrorist Malachy Riordan through middleman Ralph Exton, a small-time smuggler who desperately needs money. Exton is afraid of his Russian clients and of the MI5 agents who have made him a reluctant double agent. They find an empty property near the Major's: the Villa Paraiso. It's a perfect base for them, and for Winnie's darker, less official, plans. But it turns out the villa isn't deserted. The owners have invited a young British couple to house sit while they are away. Jonno and Posie think they are embarking on a romantic, carefree break in the sun. But when the Secret Service team shows, everything changes, the more so when a legendary double agent is brought out of retirement to handle Exton, Danny Curnow (code name Vagabond).

Shames, Terry. [The Necessary Murder of Nonie Blake](#) (\$15.95). Aging Samuel Craddock is the unpaid Sheriff of small Texas town Jarrett Creek which is pretty well busted financially. However the Blake clan is not. Still, they have some sad history: daughter Nonie has been in a mental institution for some 20 years after she tried to hang her 8-year-old sister when she herself was a teen. Now she's back, but just for a week; her body is pulled out of a pond on the Blake property. Nonie didn't drown, she was murdered. Clues are scarce. And when Craddock checks Nonie's background at her hospital, he learns she was released ten years ago. So, where has she been? That's just the first thread he pulls in a sequence that, while it doesn't play out all that logically, is filled with surprise. Shames is, she says, "fascinated by the convoluted loyalties and betrayals" of small town.

✂Shaw, William. [Song for the Brokenhearted](#) (Mulholland \$26). Set in 1969, British author Shaw's superb conclusion to his crime trilogy (following 2015's *The Kings of London*) finds the recently wounded Det. Sgt. Cathal "Paddy" Breen convalescing at the family farm of his former police partner, Helen Tozer, in Devon. Breen, eager to get back to police work, agrees, unofficially, to look into the murder of Helen's 16-year-old sister, Alexandra, which occurred almost five years earlier, when it's discovered that Alexandra had an affair with a wealthy—and married—peer of the realm. Helen and Breen uncover a plot that leads to Africa during the Kenya Emergency, a real event that involved the torture and murder of those suspected of being part of the Mau Mau uprising. Shaw picks up multiple plot threads, expertly weaving them into a complex story that explores the darkest parts of the human psyche and the erosion of one man's humanity, while balancing the delicate and awkwardly sweet relationship between the traditional Breen and decidedly untraditional Helen, as well as her relationship with her still grieving parents.

✂Solomons, Natasha. [The Song of Hartgrove Hall](#) (Penguin \$16). Autumn, 1946, finds war-weary brothers reunited in their beloved Hartgrove Hall, a country house much the worse for wear after years of billeting British and American troops. Fifty years later, Solomons depicts a funeral. "In an effective to-and-fro, she teases out the story of the narrator, renowned composer Harry Fox-Talbot (or "Fox"), his brother Jack and the famous songstress Edie Rose—who arrives at Hartgrove in 1946 as Jack's paramour, and who is being buried in 2000 as Harry's wife. Fox's grief abates when his four-year-old grandson reveals his astounding, precocious gift as a pianist. Descriptions of the verdant British countryside, the grandeur of the manse, and Fox and Edie's devotion combine" in a novel that evokes *Downton Abbey* (but with a better storyline). Read John Charles' take in our January Midmonth *Booknotes*.

Stone, Eric James. [Unforgettable](#) (Baen \$15). This exciting debut, a spy drama thriller with a gloss of science fiction, involves entanglement theory. Somehow, because of a loophole in his quantum state, Nat Morgan is completely forgettable. No one remembers him after one minute. Even cameras and computers are unable to capture his presence or record his doings. This would seem to make Nat a perfect thief, but he's taken a job at the CIA. His handler has a special file with notes and authentication protocols so the agency can use Nat for jobs in which anyone else would be discovered. On a dangerous mission to obtain a powerful computer chip, Nat encounters the ex-Russian spy Yelena Semyonova, who has the same objective. She's working for the mafia, who has kidnapped her sisters to keep Yelena in line, but the two spies form a temporary alliance. During their escape, Nat and Yelena become entangled on a quantum level, making Yelena the only person in the world who can remember Nat. The pair ends up rescuing a brilliant Iranian physicist and helping him defect to the U.S.

Wellington, David. [The Cyclops Initiative](#) (Harper \$25.99). You can think of Wellington as a zombie novelist, but I like his thrillers *Chimera* and *The Hydra Protocol* a lot. And now one-arm, Special Forces soldier/spy Jim Chapel goes over to the wrong side of the law when he is ordered to arrest the person he most trusts, the hacker Angel, on a charge of terrorism. Chapel knows this has to be a frame-up so, what else, he goes rogue out in front of a Marine sniper, a drone gone feral, and really, the entire intelligence community....

Wisniewski, Mark. [Watch Me Go](#) (\$16). The February, 2015, *Hardboiled Crime Club Pick* now in paperback. Douglas "Deesh" Sharp has managed to stay out of trouble living in the Bronx, paying his rent by hauling junk for cash. But on the morning Deesh and two pals head upstate to dispose of a sealed oil drum whose contents smell and weigh enough to contain a human corpse, he becomes mixed up in a serious crime. When his plans for escape spiral terribly out of control, Deesh quickly finds himself a victim of betrayal—and the prime suspect in the murders of three white men. When Jan, a young jockey from the gritty underworld of the Finger Lakes racetrack breaks her silence about gambling and organized crime, Deesh learns how the story of her past might, against all odds, free him from a life behind bars.

Woods, Stuart. [Scandalous Behavior](#) (Putnam \$28). **Can be Signed April 7** when he appears here with [Family Jewels](#) (\$28). Stone Barrington arrives in England where Dame Felicity Devonshire, the director of MI6, gives him a tour of Windward Hall, the Hampshire estate Felicity tells Stone he should buy from its terminally ill owner, Sir Charles Bourne. The same day that Stone pays £10 million for Windward Hall, he purchases a new wardrobe, a Bentley, and a Porsche in London. The murder of a Hampshire neighbor, Sir Richard Curtis, provides a minor distraction. Meanwhile, Hell's Bells, the latest movie from Stone's filmmaker son, Peter, has made an enemy of Don Beverly Calhoun, the leader of an L.A.-based cult called the Chosen Few. Calhoun also takes a dislike to Stone, who discovers that Calhoun is attempting to purchase Curtis's newly available estate. A series of escalating events ensues.

MORE NEW PAPERBACKS...

Baxter, Greg. [Munich Airport](#) (\$16)
Begley, Louis. [Killer Come Hither](#) (\$16)
Bertsch, David. [River of No Return](#) (\$16)
Buchholz, Jason. [Paper Son](#) (Ace \$16.99)
Collins, Max Allan. [Quarry's Deal](#) (\$9.95)
Cornwell, Patricia. [Flesh and Blood](#) (\$15.99)
De Mariaffini, Elena. [Devil You Know](#) (\$14.99)
Eastburn, Joseph. [Kiss Them Goodbye](#) (\$14.99)
Evans, Elizabeth. [As Good As Dead](#) (Bloomsbury \$16)
Hefti, Matthew. [A Hard and Heavy Thing](#) (\$16.99)
Hogan, Phil. [A Pleasure and a Calling](#) (\$16)
Ishiguro, Kazuo. [Buried Giant](#) (\$16)
Jacobsen, Steffen. [When the Dead Awaken](#) (\$14.99)
Mack, Janey. [Choked Up](#) (Kensington \$15)
Mcbeth, Colette. [Life I Left Behind](#) (\$15.99)
Miller, Emma. [Plain Dead](#) (Kensington \$15)
Nakamura, Fuminori. [Last Winter We Parted](#) (\$14.95)
Neuhaus, Nele. [The Ice Queen](#) (\$15.99)
O'Nan, Stewart. [West of Sunset](#) (\$16)
O'Connor, T.J. [Dying to Tell](#) (LittleBrown \$14.99)
Pandian, Gigi. [Masquerading Magician](#) (LittleBrown \$14.99)
Patterson, James. [Truth Or Die](#) (\$15.99)
Plate, Peter. [Dirty in Cashmere](#) (Seventh Street \$14.95)
Rennebohm, Peter. [Shepherd Lake](#) (Penguin \$14.95)
Rhoades, J.D. [Devils and Dust](#) (\$15)
Rickman, Phil. [House of Susan Lulham](#) (\$19.95)
Simenon, George. [Cecile is Dead](#) (\$11)
Sweazy, Larry D. [A Thousand Falling Crows](#) (Seventh Street \$16)
Vaillant, John. [Jaguar's Children](#) (\$14.95)
Weber, Tracy. [Karmas' a Killer](#) (Midnight Ink \$14.99)
Williams, Timothy. [The Honest Folk of Guadeloupe](#) (Soho \$16)