

# BOOKNEWS from

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

Volume 28, Number 1

January Booknews 2016

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## Another Fabulous February!

**AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...**

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

### THURSDAY FEBRUARY 4 7:00 PM

Hosted by Michael Koryta and Barbara

Gregg Hurwitz signs [Orphan X](#) (St Martins \$25.99) February.

Surprise Me! Pick

### SATURDAY FEBRUARY 6 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 Postponed

### 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 3830 N Marshall Way

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

### SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13 10:30 AM

Coffee and Crime discusses Katherine Hall Page's [The Body in the Belfry](#) (\$7.99), the first investigation by caterer Faith Fairchild

### TUESDAY FEBRUARY 16 6:30 PM

Admission: \$10. Contributions also appreciated to a fund to support the work of Dr. Morales at the Temple of the Moon, Trujillo, Peru

ASU Professor Sharona Fredrick, Assistant Director, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and Barbara present a program on Medieval Peru: Exploring the Mythologies of the Sea People with a focus on their legends and their differences with Incan cosmology (Barbara adds the modern touch—photos included).

### WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17 7:00 PM

Mark Greaney signs [Back Blast](#) (Berkley \$26.95) The Gray Man  
Neal Griffin signs [A Voice from the Field](#) (Forge \$25.99)

### THURSDAY FEBRUARY 18 7:00 PM

David Freed signs [Three Nine Line](#) (Permanent \$29)

Frederick Ramsay signs [The Vulture](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95; \$15.95). Ike Schwartz #10.

### FRIDAY FEBRUARY 19 7:00 PM

James Sallis and the Three Legged Dog Band

### SATURDAY FEBRUARY 20 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discusses AJ Sidransky's [Forgiving Maximo Rothman](#) (\$16.95)

### MONDAY FEBRUARY 22 7:00 PM

Book Launch Party with wedding cake, prizes, and other treats

Joanne Fluke signs [Wedding Cake Murder](#) (Kensington \$26) Hannah Swensen

### TUESDAY FEBRUARY 23 6:30 PM

Historical Mystery Night

Charles Todd signs [No Shred of Evidence](#) (Harper \$25.99)

Also appearing: Rhys Bowen, Mary Anna Evans, Dana Stabenow

### WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 6:30 PM

International Mystery Night with Jewish Noir, too

Vicki Delany signs [Unreasonable Doubt](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95) Molly Smith #8

Leslie Jones signs [Deep Cover](#) (Harper \$11.99) Duty & Honor #3

Barry Lancet signs [Pacific Burn](#) (SimonSchuster \$25) Jim Brodie #3

Lene Kaaberbøl and Agnete Friis sign [The Considerate Killer](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Nina Borg #4

SK Rizzolo signs [On a Desert Shore](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95)

Regency Mystery #4

Priscilla Royal signs [Land of Shadows](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95)

Medieval Mystery #12

Also appearing:

Kim Fay signs [The Map of Lost Memories](#) (\$15)

Laurie R King signs [Mary's Christmas](#) (\$10) and the [Toto Travel Book](#) (\$16) by King and Peters

Jeffrey Siger signs [Devil of Delphi](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95)

A group of Canadian authors will be announced including Victoria Abbott, Brenda Chapman, Ian Hamilton, RJ Horlick, Linda Wilken

For [Jewish Noir](#) (PM Press \$17.95): stories by Michael J. Cooper, Wendy Hornsby, Travis Richardson, Kenneth Wishnia, and Melissa Yuan-Innes

**THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 7:00 PM**

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses Gary Phillips' [Only the Wicked](#) (\$9.99)

**MONDAY FEBRUARY 29**

**Trudy Nan Boyce** signs [Out of the Blues](#) (Putnam \$26.95) Debut  
**Ingrid Thoft** signs [Brutality](#) (Putnam \$26.95) Fina Ludlow #3

**TUESDAY MARCH 1 Launch Party 7:00 PM**

**Rhys Bowen** signs [Time of Fog and Fire](#) (St Martins \$25.99)  
Molly Murphy

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 2 7:00 PM**

**Michelle Gable** signs [I'll See You in Paris](#) (St Martins \$25.99)

**THURSDAY MARCH 3 7:00 PM**

**V.E. Schwab** is interviewed by Sam Sykes and signs [Gathering of Shadow](#) (Tor \$25.99)

**SUNDAY MARCH 6 2:00 PM**

**Jon Talton** signs [A Brief History of Phoenix](#) (Arcadia \$21.99)

**EVENT BOOKS**

Berenson, Alex. [The Wolves](#) (Putnam \$27.95). "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. Edgar-winner/*NY Times* journalist Berenson, like Daniel Silva, draws deeply on his professional as well as his novelist's skill to produce the exhilarating 10th spy thriller featuring ex-CIA agent John Wells. It wraps up a trilogy within the series that started with 2014's [The Counterfeit Agent](#) (\$9.99) in which American billionaire Aaron Duberman, a casino überlord with vast holdings in Macao, stepped into global politics with the intent of fomenting war between Iran and the United States in [Twelve Days](#) (\$9.99). With the tacit approval of the U.S. president, Wells now sets out to kill Duberman, who has taken his family to his secure hideout 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....

Bommersbach, Jana. [Funeral Hotdish](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). POSTPONED, NO DATE. Seeing Sammy the Bull Gravano strut through a Phoenix restaurant shocks investigative reporter Joya Bonner. The notorious Mafia hitman—nineteen murders—and FBI snitch—testimony sent Godfather John Gotti to prison—is hidden in the federal Witness Protection Program, yet he's now a successful drug lord. His products travel national highways with tragic results for Joya's North Dakota hometown, where grief turns to revenge, violence, and murder. By chasing the biggest scoop of her career, Joya risks her job, her love, and her life to see if Sammy can be stopped. "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*. Also in paperback: [Funeral Hotdish](#) (\$15.95). Bommersbach is the author of [The Trunk Murderess: Winnie Ruth Judd](#) (\$16.95) and a debut novel praised by CJ Box, [Cattle Kate](#) (\$24.95; \$14.95).

Bowen, Rhys. [Time of Fog and Fire](#) (St Martins \$25.99). NY's 1906 Police Department doesn't value a cop as honest as Captain Daniel Sullivan. The chance of a special job for John Wilkie, head of the U.S. Secret Service that could lead to a long-term appointment appeals to Sullivan and to his wife Molly Murphy. And it provides Bowen an excellent opportunity to take the Sullivans west, to her own home turf, for sleuthing, scares, and surprises like a cryptic letter from Daniel that draws Molly to join him in California, and the news when she arrives that Daniel has fallen off a cliff and has just been buried! Players like Mr. Paxton with the Metropolitan Opera, a cast supporting the great tenor Enrico Caruso, and real historical events like the San Francisco earthquake, test even someone as resolute and resourceful as Molly. Order earlier Molly mysteries [here](#).

Boyce, Trudy Nan. [Out of the Blues](#) (Putnam \$26.95). In her debut, a **First Mystery Club Pick**, a seasoned Atlanta cop brings her impressive career into play with Sarah Alt. Her first case is the decade-old drug overdose of blues musician Mike Anderson, reopened thanks to a tip from a convicted felon imprisoned for attacking Salt. Her investigation quickly ruffles feathers in the department as she alienates a powerful local pastor, who employs off-duty cops as security guards. "*Out of the Blues* takes the reader for an exciting ride through old Atlanta with brand new homicide detective. Salt is brave and imaginative, salty and sweet, and her creator—former Atlanta homicide detective, Trudy Nan Boyce—uses her impressive descriptive power to make our ride colorful, gothic, and irresistibly Southern."—Joseph Wambaugh. "Less whodunit than odyssey, as Salt—clearly bent... on fixing the world one sociopath at a time—navigates anti-woman prejudice in her unit, anti-cop sentiment in her hometown, and the steaming corruption that reaches from Atlanta's lower depths to its very top."—*Kirkus Reviews*. What I like best is "Boyce's clear passion for Atlanta's people, culture, landscape, and history. Appreciation for the blues, along with magic realist elements related to the hellhound legend, add dimension to the plot."

Cabot, Meg. [Remembrance, A Mediator Novel](#) (Harper \$15.99). Just for fun, a sexy new entry to this fan-favorite series presented 15 years after Cabot's first Mediator hit. Suze Simon—all grown up and engaged to her once-ghostly soulmate—faces a vengeful spirit and an old enemy bent on ending Suze's wedded bliss before it begins. Think Valentine's Day here. We host at the Scottsdale Library (while Alex Berenson is thrilling fans at The Pen).

Delany, Vicki. [Unreasonable Doubt](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). *LJ* calls this Constable Molly Smith "a taut, well-written whodunit." Smith and Sergeant John Winters of the Trafalgar Police face the British Columbia tourist haven's darker side where secrets fester, prejudices smolder, emotion replaces thought, and the police have to face up to the idea of corruption at the worst, incompetence at best, inside the department some 25 years ago that may linger still. Walter Desmond is back in town. He has been officially exonerated by new evidence prejudicial to the Trafalgar Police, and thus his conviction for a young woman's murder

has been overturned. His pitbull attorney, a woman who takes on cases like Walt's, is seeking five million in damages from the provincial government. But Walt has not returned to Trafalgar to pursue money or revenge. He just wants to know the *why* of it. 25 years of his life spent in prison. The family of the murdered girl, Sophia Angelo, is bitterly determined to see Walt returned to prison—or dead. But for Trafalgar's Police, the reality is: if Walter didn't kill Sophia, someone else did. And so Sophia's case is reopened while many in Trafalgar seethe that Walt is to be treated as an ordinary citizen.... Also in paperback: [Unreasonable Doubt](#) (\$15.95). Order the earlier Smiths [here](#).

Fluke, Joanne. [Wedding Cake Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). "Best-seller Fluke's frothy 19th Hannah Swensen Mystery finds the guileless Lake Eden, Minnesota, baker both a bride to be and a contestant in the Food Channel's Dessert Chef Competition. Her meddlesome mother, Delores, has assumed the role of wedding planner, leaving Hannah free to focus on her confections, but when head judge and celebrity chef Alain Duquesne is murdered mid-contest and her sister, Michelle, finds the body, Hannah feels honor-bound to catch his killer. Fluke's cast is lively and winsome enough to carry the tale... and to say more would be a spoiler."—*PW*. [Watch](#) the book trailer.

Freed, David. [The Three-Nine Line](#) (Permanent \$29). The 4<sup>th</sup> Cordell Logan mystery takes the wise-cracking U.S. government agent to Hanoi, where three ex-POWs, once guests of the notorious Hanoi Hilton, are participating in a reconciliation ceremony with their former guards. Freed pulls off the remarkable feat of writing an entertaining first-class suspense yarn while addressing serious political and personal issues in an even-handed, informed manner. Published last July, this novel is in very short supply! I like Freed's books very much; his first, *Flat Spin*, was a 2012 First Mystery Pick. Alas that his schedule brings him to The Pen so late from pub date. No paperbacks thus far.

Gable, Michelle. [I'll See You in Paris](#) (St Martins \$25.99). At once a great love story and literary mystery, Gable's second novel is based on the real life of Gladys Spencer-Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough, a woman whose life was so rich and storied it could fill several books. Nearly a century after Gladys's heyday, a young woman's quest to understand the legendary Duchess takes her from a charming hamlet in the English countryside, to a dilapidated manse kept behind barbed wire, and ultimately, to Paris, where answers will be found at last. In the end, she not only solves the riddle of the Duchess but also uncovers the missing pieces in her own life. When Gable visited us to sign [A Paris Apartment](#) (\$15.99), it sold out in a flash, do don't dilly dally securing your copy of our **March Surprise Me Club Pick**.

Gardner, Lisa. [Find Her](#) (Dutton \$26.95). **Our copies come with a replica of DD Warren's Boston PD badge.** February Library Reads finds this 8<sup>th</sup> thrilling DD Warren investigation to be: "WOW. Intense. Those initial pages are a testament to the strength of Lisa Gardner's writing. I had to know what was going to happen! At times it was so bleak and dark, and yet I still had to know what Flora and Stacy were going to be doing. A very suspenseful, twisty, unpredictable page-turner." Flora Dane 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 crime have on victims and loved ones.

Greaney, Mark. [Back Blast](#) (Berkley \$26.95). "In Greaney's rousing fifth Gray Man novel, ex-CIA operative Court Gentry returns to the U.S. after five years dodging the kill order that has followed him all over the world. He needs to know why Denny Carmichael, the director of the CIA's National Clandestine Service, issued the order; if Gentry has to leave a string of bodies behind him to get at the truth, then so be it. Gentry slowly ferrets out various official reasons for the original shoot-on-sight order, which stemmed from an early operation, *Back Blast*, when he supposedly went rogue and killed the wrong person while executing the op. Gentry is positive he's innocent, but the evidence continues to mount, until even he's no longer sure what happened. Greaney's unraveling of the *Back Blast* mystery is masterly, but it's the Gray Man's ability to outthink and outgun the scores of men who are hunting him throughout the streets of Washington, D.C., that will keep readers glued to the pages."—*PW* Starred Review.

Griffin, Neal. [A Voice from the Field](#) (Forge \$25.99). Detective Tia Suarez, introduced in 2015 Hardboiled Crime Club Pick for Griffin's outstanding first novel, [Benefit of the Doubt](#) (\$9.99), persuades her boss to permit her to go back on the street, even though she has suffered from PTSD ever since being shot. Assigned to an undercover detail in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as part of a regional vice operation, Tia poses as a prostitute. This opening scene is dynamite! Trying out the role for the first time, she's almost abducted by two bad guys. Gunther Kane, is caught, but the other man, keeping a young girl captive in the back of a van, escapes. Tia is outraged that her account is questioned in court, and this slur on her credibility means that Kane is let go with a slap on the wrist, despite having assaulted an officer. Though she has a history of hallucinations, Tia is positive about what she saw and is fired up to rescue the girl. It's not easy to be a cop today and Tina is a decent one, trying to do her duty. Griffin brings 25 years of law enforcement to the table in this very fine series.

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Orphan X](#) (St Martins \$25.99). The February Indie Next Pick: "The U.S. government secretly trained a group of orphaned children to be lethal assassins when they grew up. Evan, one of these children and now a grown man, has left the program and disappeared, resurfacing only to help those in desperate need. It is through this work that one of his enemies has found him, but which enemy—the government, one of his fellow orphans, or a relative of one of the many bad guys he has gotten rid of? Filled with lots of twists and turns and neat techno gadgets, *Orphan X* takes you on a roller coaster ride that will leave you breathless and waiting for the next installment of the Nowhere Man." The story takes off, with enough action to grab the attention of actor Bradley Cooper and Warner Bros.; movie rights have been snapped up for Cooper to produce and possibly star.

✎Jones, Leslie. [Deep Cover](#) (Harper \$11.99). A romantic thriller from a Scottsdale author. On a secret assignment for MI-5, British SAS soldier Trevor Carswell is deep undercover with The Philosophy of Bedlam, a home-grown anarchist group responsible for several museum bombings. He's on the brink of unearthing their motives when Scotland Yard foils their latest attack. Desperate to escape, the Bedlamites take civilian hostages—among them, a woman Trevor never expected to see again.

Kaaberbol, Len/Agnete Friis. [The Considerate Killer](#) (Soho \$27.95). This pair of Danish authors who scored big with *The Boy in the Suitcase* visits us for our International Crime Night Feb. 24, welcoming a range of authors who are then attending Left Coast Crime in Phoenix Feb. 25-28. As a Red Cross nurse, Nina typically finds herself fighting for others' lives, not her own. For the first time, she's the primary target of a hit, and it slowly dawns on her that this case is connected to a surprising and dangerous friendship among three young men from Manila. Order Danish Nina's first 3 investigations [here](#).

Knott, Robert. [Robert B Parker's Blackjack](#) (Putnam \$27). 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. Order earlier Cole & Hitch fun [here](#).

Lancet, Barry. [Pacific Burn](#) (SimonSchuster \$25). This is the third for Jim Brodie, San Francisco dealer in Japanese antiques and PI by virtue of an inherited firm in Tokyo. Brodie has just been brought on as the liaison for the mayor's new Pacific Rim Friendship Program. Brodie in turn recruits his friend, the renowned Japanese artist Ken Nobuki, and after a promising meeting with city officials and a picture-perfect photo op, Brodie and Nobuki leave City Hall for a waiting limo. But as soon as they exit the building, a sniper attacks them from the roof of the Asian Art Museum. Quick thinking allows Brodie to escape, but Nobuki ends up hospitalized and in a coma. Brodie soon realizes that, with the suspicious and untimely death of Nobuki's oldest son a week earlier in Napa Valley, someone may be targeting his friend's family—and killing them off one by one. Suspects are nearly too numerous to name—and could be in the United States or anywhere along the Pacific Rim. The quest for answers takes Brodie from his beloved San Francisco to Washington, DC, in a confrontation with the DHS, the CIA, and the FBI; then on to Tokyo, Kyoto, and beyond, in search of what his Japanese sources tell him is a legendary killer in both senses of the word.... I am a true fan of this series which began with FMC Pick [Japantown](#) and continues with [Tokyo Kill](#) (\$15.99 each).

Ramsay, Frederick. [The Vulture](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). The tenth in Frederick Ramsay's unusual, engaging Ike Schwartz series delivers characteristic shock, surprise, action, banter.... I can't assign a label to the Schwartz series such as police procedural or cozy or thriller or even spy story—Ramsay draws elements from all and fuses them into his fast paced, funny, yet poignant novels. He even has a surprising if light hand with technology. Like... The Vulture. Which springs straight from headline news on some level. We begin with chilling news: a bomb has demolished the

car of Picketsville, Virginia's Sheriff Ike Schwartz, creating a crater in the road and shattering windows up and down the town's Main Street. Is this a cop killing—or domestic terrorism? The report devastates Ike's department; his wife Ruth, president of the local college; his friends and family; and tickles an alert in the office of Charlie Garland, Ike's former colleague at the CIA whose elastic job description includes monitoring Ike's life. Investigations—led by more than one player—fan around and out of Picketsville as far as a small town in Idaho. And leads to a question at the heart of The Vulture, one well worth examining in real life as well as fiction: If some banks and businesses are too big to fail, are some people are too deeply connected, too important, or too wealthy to bring to justice? Order Ike's first 9 cases [here](#).

✎Rizzolo, SK. [On a Desert Shore](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). Hat's off to SK Rizzolo who tackles both race and class divides in her fourth Regency Mystery. I recommend watching the movie *Belle* as a companion: in both, a wealthy, upper-class British father seeks to make an illegitimate, mixed-race child his heiress, challenging societal norms and family bonds. Yet neither young woman, Marina in the book, Belle in the movie, lacks marriage prospects. Money, it would seem, trumps blood. Or does it? Bow Street runner John Chase is hired to protect a young heiress from Jamaica, and Mrs. Penelope Wolfe is engaged to live in the household of Marina's father, a West Indian nabob, as an added layer of protection. Together, they must work to uncover a ruthless and diabolical killer. Marina is not the only illegitimate child here. Chase has a son born of a union with an independent American who refused to wed him. Penelope's younger sib Lewis, too, is the product of a liaison. None of his was uncommon in Regency Society—the trick was to maintain a surface gloss over the unconventional. The upper crust and the rich had much more success than the middle classes where missteps could spell ruin. And impel... murder. Order the first three Regency Mysteries [here](#).

✎Royal, Priscilla. [Land of Shadows](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). Gillian Flynn, *Gone Girl*, and Paula Hawkins, *Girl on the Train*, Harlan Coben, *The Stranger*, Joseph Finder, *The Fixer*, or Canadian Linwood Barclay's many novels—what do bestsellers like these give readers? Cutting edge, contemporary stories where spouses, parents, children, lovers... people close to you... want to kill you, profit from you, or ruin your life. It was no different in England, 1279, when Edward I was not only hammering the Welsh but bearing down on England's Jews. His motive: money. He, like most Plantagenets, was expensive—all those wars including his crusades; the upkeep of a huge family. Greed, patronage, favors, dynastic dynamics all filtered down through society from the top. And so a gathering at his royal manor at Woodstock sets a stage for a drama of domestic suspense filling Royal's 12<sup>th</sup> medieval mystery. Edward and his queen have broken a journey to Gloucestershire at Woodstock Manor where Eleanor goes into labor. As the queen struggles to birth a daughter, one of Edward's loyal men, Baron Adam of Wynethorpe, is felled by apoplexy. This brings elder son Hugh, a veteran of the crusades suffering from what we now know as PTSD, and daughter Prioress Eleanor, attended by her sub-infirmarian Sister Anne and her right-hand man, the monk Thomas, hotfoot to his death bed. Awaiting Hugh's arrival is his son Richard, a rebellious boy with a secret. In the contentious, greedy crowd also assembled at Woodstock is an adulterous wife with more than one lover who plays a danger-

ous game and, indeed, she is found hanged. Suicide? Of course not... Also in paperback: Royal, Priscilla. [Land of Shadows](#) (\$15.95). Order the first 11 Medieval Mysteries [here](#)

✦Schwab, VE. [Gathering of Shadow](#) (Tor \$25.99). “Schwab’s fantastic follow-up to 2015’s *A Darker Shade of Magic* returns to the linked alternate realities of London: Grey London, our own familiar magic-free city in its Regency era; Red London, where people and magic work in concert; White London, where people struggle for control of magic; and the memory of Black London, destroyed by terrible spells. Lila Bard, a cutpurse from Grey London, has found freedom on the high seas with a privateer who’s more than he seems. Kell, a powerful magician with more than a little wanderlust, has given up smuggling between the Londons now that he’s magically bound to his brother, the Red prince Rhy. Red London is about to host the Essen Tisch, or Element Games, pitting the most talented magicians against one another; this would be the perfect place for Lila to show off her burgeoning powers, if she can get in—and she’s eager to see Kell again, in spite of herself. Meanwhile, in White London, a new king rises, and he will do anything, and sacrifice anyone, to make his London great again. Lila, Kell, and Rhy are complex, fully realized creations who challenge conventional ideas of what a hero should be made of, and the supporting characters feel just as real. New touches such as a bustling magical market enliven already-rich world-building. Tensions rise steadily, culminating with the exciting Element Games, and the finale will leave readers breathless. This is how fantasy should be done.”—*PW* Starred Review

Sears, Michael. [Saving Jason](#) (Putnam \$27). 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. Order Stafford’s first three thrillers [here](#).

✦Todd, Charles. [No Shred of Evidence](#) (Harper \$25.99). Inspector Ian Rutledge, exhaustedly closing up his last case, finds himself rushed off to north Cornwall near Padstow where the Chief Constable has requested the Yard to assist on a devilish case. Four young women, out for a row up the small river in the magistrate’s family boat, are signaled for help by a young banker who appears to be going down in his own boat. And drowning. Their account is they tried to pull him from the river before a farmer waded out from shore and finished the job. Why then has the gruff farmer accused the four woman of trying to murder the banker? They are being held at the magistrate’s home rather than the local gaol, a more difficult task when Harry Saunders dies and a kind of hue and cry for murder builds. Rutledge is shocked to discover when he interviews them that one is the sister of his former fiancée Jean whom he released from the engagement dur-

ing the war. It’s 1920, but the past is still painful for all concerned in this drama. It’s baffling and grows the more so as layer upon layer of local secrets are revealed. Good luck working out which ones will turn out to hold the key to the case. This is the 18<sup>th</sup> case in a superior historical mystery series. Order the rest of them [here](#). **Note: New: Tales: Short Stories Featuring Ian Rutledge and Bess Crawford** (\$11.99).

Tripp, Dawn. [Georgia, A Novel of Georgia O’Keeffe](#) (Random \$28). This fascinating book, akin to Nancy Horan’s bestseller *Loving Frank*, gets this Indie Next Pick for our February Modern Firsts Club Pick: “Georgia is as stunningly beautiful as the artwork that inspired it. This is an incredible read from beginning to end, a book that begs to be discussed!” I recommend it not just for the way it opens insights into the life of such a formidable artist as well as that of gallery owner and pioneering photographer Stieglitz and how they turned much of their world upside down, but for illuminating the culture surrounding them, and the vibrant landscape of New Mexico. Another reader writes, “Tripp’s writing is the linguistic equivalent of O’Keeffe’s art: bold, luminous, full of unusual juxtapositions.” As O’Keeffe begins experimenting with scale and form in her flower paintings, Tripp says she “took that simple delicacy of a flower and kicked the shape open.” Instead of a typical still life of flowers in a vase, “life at arm’s length,” O’Keeffe wanted to portray ordinary objects as their immediate, essential selves, “not constrained, but altogether different.” Following the arc of O’Keeffe’s career, Tripp delves into the tension between the public artistic image (largely curated by Stieglitz, at least early on) and the private desires of the woman who simply wanted to create. Drawing on meticulous research into O’Keeffe’s correspondence and career, Tripp goes beyond the public icon to imagine a character “so human, so flawed and imprecise, and beautiful for that.”

**NOTE: I draw your attention to a novel based on another remarkable woman:** Ashley Warlick’s [The Arrangement](#) (Putnam \$25.99). This stellar novel fictionalizes the seminal food writer M.F.K. Fisher—known to her friends as Mary Frances—as she evolved amid the triangle of her professor husband, Al, and their friend Tim Parrish in 1930s Los Angeles. Warlick is not appearing here.

#### MORE SIGNED BOOKS

Anders, Charlie. [All the Birds in the Sky](#) (Tor \$25.99). *All the Birds in the Sky* reads like an instant classic. In tackling big questions about what is really important in life and how we are all connected, the novel soars through magic and science, good and evil, and all the shades in between; through the struggles of children against clueless parents, teachers, and spiteful kids; and through the struggles of adults against a heedless society, all with a love story at its heart. “Deep, dark, funny, and wonderful!” This is our **February SciFi/Fantasy Club Pick**.

✦Archer, Jeffrey. [Cometh the Hour](#) (Macmillan \$45) #6 in the Clifton Chronicles opens with the reading of a suicide note which has devastating consequences for Harry and Emma Clifton, Giles Barrington and Lady Virginia. Giles must decide if he should withdraw from politics and try to rescue Karin, the woman he loves, from behind the Iron Curtain. But is Karin truly in love with him, or is she a spy? Lady Virginia is facing bankruptcy, and can see no way out of her financial problems, until she is introduced to the hapless Cyrus T. Grant III from Baton Rouge,

Louisiana, who's in England to see his horse run at Royal Ascot. Sebastian Clifton is now the Chief Executive of Farthings Bank and a workaholic, whose personal life is thrown into disarray when he falls for Priya, a beautiful Indian girl. But her parents have already chosen the man she is going to marry. Meanwhile....

✎Barton, Fiona. [The Widow](#) (Penguin \$26). "I read *The Widow* with an increasing sense that I was turning the pages through next year's *The Girl on the Train*. It has all the ingredients for a bestseller—a clear proposition and a central premise that will stimulate word of mouth: what goes through the minds of women whose husbands turn out to be monsters?"—*The Bookseller* (UK). "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..."

Brown, Pierce. [Morning Star](#) (Hodder \$39). Book 3 in the Red Rising Trilogy. Darrow is a Helldiver, one of a thousand men and women who live in the vast caves beneath the surface of Mars, generations of people who spend their lives toiling to mine the precious elements that will allow the planet to be terraformed. Just knowing that, one day, people will be able to walk the surface of the planet is enough to justify their sacrifice. The Earth is dying, and Darrow and his people are the only hope humanity has left. Until the day Darrow learns that it is all a lie. That Mars has been habitable – and inhabited – for generations, by a class of people calling themselves the Golds. A class of people who look down at Darrow and his fellows as slave labor, to be exploited and worked to death without a second thought. Until the day Darrow, with the help of a mysterious group of rebels, disguises himself as a Gold and infiltrates their society.

Coonts, Stephen. [Art of War](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Out in February, Signed here March 16. The Chinese dragon is flexing its muscles. As its military begins to prey on neighbors in the South China Sea, attacking fishing vessels and scheming to seize natural resources, the US goes on high alert. But a far more ominous danger lurks closer to home: a Chinese sleeper cell has planted a nuclear weapon in the harbor at Norfolk, Virginia, the biggest naval base on the planet. The target: a secret rendezvous of the Atlantic Fleet aircraft carriers and their battle groups. When the CIA director is assassinated and Jake Grafton is appointed to take his place, he gets wind of the conspiracy, but has no idea when or where the attack will occur. In the meantime, a series of assassinations, including an attempt on the life of the President, shake the country and deliberately mask a far more sinister objective—challenges for Grafton and CIA burglar Tommy Carmellini, last seen together in 2013's [Pirate Alley](#) (\$9.99)

Cussler, Clive. [The Gangster](#) (Putnam \$28.95). On sale March 1. **Our copies of Isaac Bell's 9<sup>th</sup> great adventure, set in New York's Little Italy, come with a nifty insert signed by Scott depicting a scene in the construction of the Catskill Aqueduct chronicled in the book.** (Note: wonderful illustrations by Roland Dahlquist appear in the bound book.) It is 1906, and in New York City, the Italian crime group known as the Black Hand is on a spree: kidnapping, extortion, arson. Detective Isaac Bell of the

Van Dorn Agency is hired to form a special "Black Hand Squad," but the gangsters appear to be everywhere—so much so that Bell begins to wonder if there are imitators, criminals using the name for the terror effect. And then the murders begin, each one of a man more powerful than the last, and as Bell discovers, to his dismay, the ultimate target may be the most powerful man of all.

✎Dolan, Eva. [After You Die](#) (Harvill \$32). Dawn Prentice was already known to the Peterborough Hate Crimes Unit. The previous summer she had logged a number of calls detailing the harassment she and her severely disabled teenage daughter were undergoing. Now she is dead—stabbed to death whilst Holly Prentice has been left to starve upstairs. DS Ferreira, only recently back serving on the force after being severely injured in the line of duty, had met with Dawn that summer. Was she negligent in not taking Dawn's accusations more seriously? Did the murderer even know that Holly was helpless upstairs while her mother bled to death? Whilst Ferreira battles her demons, determined to prove she's up to the frontline, DI Zigic is drawn into conflict with an official seemingly resolved to hide the truth about one of his main suspects. Can either officer unpick the truth about mother and daughter? Val McDermid recommends this series, as do I.

Estleman, Loren. [Shoot](#) (Forge \$27). "Estleman's fun fourth Valentino mystery finds the UCLA film scholar on the trail of a lost western, *Sixgun Sonata*, starring the married actors Red Montana and Dixie Day. Southern California's Red Montana and Dixie Day Museum is closing, and Valentino receives an invitation to a farewell gala at the museum—a perfect opportunity to meet with Montana and plead for the sole surviving copy of the legendary feature film, rumored to be in Montana's possession. Montana actually screens a portion of *Sixgun Sonata* and agrees to let Valentino have it—but only if Valentino will track down and recover the suppressed porno film that Dixie made before she teamed with Montana and started her career as a squeaky-clean cowgirl. And where is Dixie now? At her home, dying of cancer. Film buffs will revel in Estleman's countless references to Hollywood's greats and not-so-greats. Others may feel overwhelmed by his encyclopedic knowledge."—*PW*

Gallagher, Matt. [Youngblood](#) (Atria \$26). Karen reviews a book "which explores the confusion and uneasy efforts that are used to maintain a careful exit from the war in Iraq. Lieutenant Jack Porter narrates the story trying to determine who is a partner, who is an ally, who is an enemy and how best to leave the arena of this war. In the midst of his preparations, Sergeant Daniel Chambers enters the picture. A tobacco-chewing, tattoo covered, veteran, his style is aggressive and has the potential to disrupt a fragile peace between the troops and the citizenry. During his preparations, Jack discovers a buried case concerning an American soldier and the daughter of a sheikh. It becomes apparent that Chambers is a part of the story and Jack sets about resolving the mystery of what happened and where the American soldier can be found. The author is adept in bringing the reader to the place of action. "A slobbering whistle filled the darkness, followed by the sounds of exploding air. I looked up for fireworks but instead saw mortars running down the cheeks of night." His characters are well defined, and the reader is educated on that part of war that does not always include a battlefield or, a definite plan of action, but does include compromises that are politically, but not necessarily personally, correct. Terrific."

Gilman, David. [Gate of the Dead](#) (Zeus \$39). Tuscany, 1358: Thomas Blackstone has built a formidable reputation in exile, fighting as a mercenary amid the ceaseless internecine warring of Italy's City States. Success has bred many enemies, who will seize any opportunity to destroy the man they cannot overcome on the field. When a dying man delivers a message recalling Blackstone to England, it seems almost certain to be a trap. Yet Blackstone cannot decline – the summons is apparently from the Queen. Blackstone will brave the terrors of the High Alps in winter, face the Black Prince in Tournament in Windsor, confront the bloody anarchy of a popular revolt in northern France and submit to trial by combat with a man he knows could kill him. And every step of the way, he will be shadowed by a notorious assassin...

✎Glasfurd, Guinevere. [The Words in My Hand](#) (Hodder \$40) is 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.

✎Hannah, Sophie. [The Narrow Bed](#) (Hodder \$36). A killer that the police are calling 'Billy Dead Mates' is murdering pairs of best friends, one by one. Before they die, each victim is given a small white book. For months, detectives have failed to catch Billy, or work out what the white books mean. And then a woman, scared by what she's seen on the news, comes forward. Stand-up comedian Kim Tribbeck has one of Billy's peculiar little books. A stranger gave it to her at a gig she did a year ago. How—and why?—could she be Billy's next target? (The title is a term for a coffin).

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Breakdown](#) (Ballantine \$28.95). On our shelves now, but not signed until MARCH 14. Psychologist Dr. Alex Delaware meets beautiful and emotionally fragile TV actress Zelda Chase when called upon to evaluate her five-year-old son, Ovid, who seems to be a solid kid despite his erratic parenting. Six years later, Alex is summoned by a woman running a new psych program (she's all jargon, bad manners, and manipulative) when Zelda lands there after a bizarre psychiatric episode; the colleague who first called Alex in on her case has died, never signing Alex off it. Alex cannot believe how quickly Zelda, who lost her gig when her TV show closed, has deteriorated emotionally and physically (few teeth!). The shelter he takes her to upon release is a voluntary one. Zelda skips. Sad turns tragic when she is discovered dead on the grounds of a palatial Bel Air estate. Having experienced more than enough of L.A.'s dark side to recognize the scent of evil, Alex turns to his friend LAPD Lieutenant Milo Sturgis for help in finding out who ended Zelda's broken life. But Alex's real quest is to discover what has happened to Ovid. As he and Milo pursue the twin mysteries, they unveil shattered dreams, the corruption of a family, and a grotesque betrayal. Kellerman weaves into his 31<sup>st</sup> Delaware an engrossing array of psychiatric ethics, therapies, helpful drugs which are compelling in their own right.

✎Kernick, Simon. [The 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....

MacBride, Stuart. [In the Cold Dark Ground](#) (Collins \$40). 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... 10<sup>th</sup> 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... 5<sup>th</sup> in this fine hardboiled British crime series.

Martel, Yann. [The High Mountains of Portugal](#) (Canongate UK \$39). In Lisbon in 1904, a young man named Tomás discovers an old journal. It hints at the location of an extraordinary artifact that, if it exists, would redefine history. Travelling in one of Europe's earliest automobiles, he sets out in search of this treasure. Some thirty-five years later, a Portuguese pathologist finds himself at the centre of a murder mystery. Fifty years on, a Canadian senator takes refuge in northern Portugal, grieving the loss of his beloved wife. But he comes to his ancestral village with an unusual companion: a chimpanzee. Three stories. Three broken hearts. One exploration: what is a life without stories?

✎McCarthy, Rob. [The Hollow Men](#) (Hodder \$36). Introducing Dr Harry Kent. Former Army medic, hospital registrar, police surgeon, drug addict and defender of anyone the world would rather brush aside. His critics say he has a weakness for lost causes. Usually his police work means minor injuries and mental health assessments. But Solomon Idris' case is different. Solomon Idris has taken eight people hostage in a chicken takeaway, and is demanding a lawyer and a BBC reporter. Harry is sent in to treat the clearly ill teenage before the siege goes horribly wrong. When Solomon's life is put in danger again from the safety of a critical care ward, it becomes clear he knows something people will kill to protect. Determined to uncover the secret that drove the boy to such desperate action, Harry soon realizes that someone in the medical world, someone he may even know, is causing harm...

Mieville, China. [This Census Taker](#) (Picador UK \$35) evokes fantasy from the emotional currents of daily life, eradicating differences between self and other and between reality and dream. An anonymous narrator, who's currently a prisoner but spoken of as an "honored guest," relates a tragic childhood in a nameless, war-ravaged society. His isolated life is shattered when his father, a so-called keymaker whose keys open clients' hidden desires, murders his mother. His claims that his father buried his mother in a pit don't prevent the adult authorities from returning him to his father's care. The only glimmer of joy in his life is his chance friendship with two orphans, motherly Samma and tough Drobe. The narrative of guilt and justice is accelerated by the appearance of the Census-Taker, an official who "counts people and things" and whose relentless probing leads the narrator to become the stranger's assistant, searching for his own personality by recording the lives of others. "Miéville's Kafkaesque narrator is a man without identity who delves for meaning in other people's stories, statistics, and untrustworthy memories. Fans of Miéville's work will recognize and relish his sharp, probing storytelling."—*PW* Starred Review

Nesbø, Jo. [Midnight Sun](#) (Knopf \$23.95). I didn't warm to this so I quote *LJ*: "Nesbø departs from his celebrated Harry Hole series, but no matter; this brief, intensely fable-like account of a golden-hearted hit man is a sequel to [Blood on Snow](#), being readied for the big screen by Leonardo DiCaprio and Warner Bros. Here, our antihero arrives in a small Norwegian town above the Arctic Circle, on the run from a particularly vicious Oslo drug lord for whom he once acted as fixer."

Romano-Lax, And. [Behave](#) (Soho \$26.95). Our **March Modern Firsts Club Pick** will probably arrive towards the end of February. It earns a Starred *PW* review: "Rosalie Rayner—wife of real-life behaviorist pioneer John Watson, assistant in his controversial 1920 Little Albert experiment, and coauthor of his now-discredited parenting guide—is the confessional narrator of Romano-Lax's scorching new novel. After graduating from Vassar in 1919, Rosalie attends Johns Hopkins, where she works in the psychology lab under Watson, a handsome, gregarious advocate of conditioning over introspection. In their best-known collaboration, they expose a baby to rats, loud noises, and other stimuli, eliciting fearful responses. The baby that Watson chooses for this experiment—a stolid, passive nine-month-old referred to as Albert—seems the perfect subject to prove almost all behavior is conditioned. Rosalie does not question Watson's ideas or methods as they embark on a scandalous affair. Eventually Watson divorces his first wife, marries Rosalie, and becomes an advertising executive, while Rosalie becomes a stay-at-home mom disconnected from her husband's ideas—in favor of schedules, against demonstrations of affection, as promoted in their book on child rearing. Sticking to historical fact, imagining only what history omits, Romano-Lax depicts Rosalie as a modern woman of the 1920s: bobbed hair, driving a Stutz Bearcat, career-focused until her devotion to a controlling behavior-control expert confines her to a traditional role. Scenes of little Albert whimpering are disturbing; scenes of Rosalie trying to raise her own children according to Watsonian doctrine are maddening. By detailing how the study of human behavior differs from understanding people, and how smart women can miss the obvious and make mistakes, Romano-Lax sheds a harsh yet deeply moving light on feminism and psychology, in theory and in practice."

Seddon, Holly. [Try Not to Breathe](#) (Corvus \$32). We will have a handful of signed UK copies of our February British Crime Club Pick in the unsigned US edition: [Try Not to Breathe](#) (Ballantine \$26). See First Novels.

✠Theobald, John. [These Dark Wings](#) (Zeus \$32). After her mother is killed in the Blitz and her father in the North Sea, 12-year-old Anna Cooper is sent to live with an uncle she has never met – the Ravenmaster at the Tower of London. Amid the Tower's old secrets and hidden ghosts, the ravens begin to disappear and Anna must brave the war-torn city to find them. With Nazi forces massing on the other side of the Channel, the fate of Britain might be at stake, for an ancient legend foretells that Britain will fall if the ravens ever leave the Tower.

✠Tyler, LC. [A 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. The sequel to [A Cruel Necessity](#) of which we have one remaining Signed copy.

#### FOR BIBLIOPHILES AND BOOK COLLECTORS

Barry, Rebecca. [Rare Books Uncovered](#) (Voyager \$25). How we miss John Dunning whose wonderful mysteries with ex-cop and devoted bookman Janeway remain among our favorites. [His Booked to Die](#) (\$8.99) remains our bestselling mass market paperback ever! If you missed it, read it. You never look at your books quite the same way again. Plus, it has a genuine MacGuffin in the plot, something as rare as find a first edition at a garage sale. Few collectors are as passionate or as dogged in the pursuit of their quarry as collectors of rare books. In *Rare Books Uncovered*, expert on rare and antiquarian books Rebecca Rego Barry recounts the stories of remarkable discoveries from the world of book collecting. Read about the family whose discovery in their attic of a copy of Action Comics No. 1—the first appearance of Superman—saved their home from foreclosure. Or the Salt Lake City bookseller who volunteered for a local fundraiser—and came across a 500-year-old copy of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*. In addition to being about loving books, it's about the thrill of a treasure hunt, no? Foreword by bibliophile Nicholas Basbanes.

#### FIRST NOVELS

Anders, Charlie. [All the Birds in the Sky Signed](#) (Tor \$25.99). See Signed Books.

Barton, Fiona. [The Widow Signed](#) (Penguin \$26). The Indie Next Pick: "Readers on the hunt for the newest, hottest thriller can take heart: Barton's debut novel is impeccably paced and quietly terrifying, sure to fill any void left after reading *The Girl on the Train*. Jean Taylor is reeling over the loss of her husband, but



the man she knows and the man the police know are two very different people. Told in alternating voices, *The Widow* will have readers on the edge of their seats.”

Flannery, Tim. [The Mystery of the Venus Island Fetish](#) (St Martins \$24.99). Australian scientist Flannery (An Explorer’s Notebook: Essays on Life, History, and Climate) makes his fiction debut. It’s set in 1952 and opens in a Margaret Meade kind of scene on one of the remote Venus Islands where Sydney museum curator Archibald Meek has immersed himself in the native culture. The arrival of a tramp steamer, two years late, to return him home is more a disruption than salvation, but duty bound, and anxious to see his fiancée Beatrice to whom he has sent a no-fail love token (his preserved foreskin removed during a native circumcision), Meek takes his specimens and boards. Home, he discovers Beatrice is appalled and the ambitious director has on display in his office a monstrous mask surrounded by 32 human skulls—”the most famous Pacific Islands artifact in the world.” And notes that four of the skulls don’t match—and four museum curators have gone missing. Humor is really hard to sustain, and difficult to translate from culture to culture, even when both speak English. I enjoyed the concept and the opening pages more than the total book but clearly Flannery has a wonderful time with his pokes at anthropologists and the culture of pre-war Australia.

Goldberg, Paul. [The Yid](#) (Picador \$26). The death of Josef Stalin on March 5, 1953, four days after he suffered an apparent stroke, was much more prosaic than the account Paul Goldberg has created in this vivid debut, a wildly imaginative account of a plot to assassinate Stalin that combines elements of drama, thriller and farce into an energetic alternate history of the dictator’s demise. In the depths of a Moscow winter in February 1953, all but a few of the Soviet Union’s some two million Jews are unaware that a plan for mass deportations and executions will soon be set into motion. But retired Yiddish theater actor Solomon Levinson, physician Aleksandr Kogan and Yiddish-speaking African American engineer Friederich Lewis, who’s fled the racism of his native Omaha for the Soviet Promised Land, are about to improvise a desperate scheme to thwart Stalin’s plan to launch “a Kristallnacht times ten, or times a hundred!” These unlikely co-conspirators prove to be remarkably adept at the swift, savage, but balletic, violence necessary to work their way methodically (if, on occasion, accidentally) toward Stalin’s dacha. But for all their single-minded determination to assassinate the Soviet leader, whose anti-Semitism is every bit as virulent as his World War II ally-turned-adversary’s, Levinson, Kogan and Lewis can’t help but reflect on their shared disillusionment with life under the Communist regime.

Guskin, Sharon. [The Forgetting Time](#) (Flat Iron Books \$25.99). Karen reviews: Psychologist Dr. Jerry Anderson is literally losing his mind—aphasia is taking away his memory and his ability to communicate—when he is introduced to the severe behavior problems of four-year-old Noah. From the few clues, it seems Noah has lived a previous life. This Indie Next Pick is reviewed for us by Karen: Jerome Anderson is a psychiatrist and has discarded his practice to pursue his obsession with the paranormal community. He has been diagnosed with a type of dementia called aphasia, a disease that will gradually rob him of his language skills. He tells himself he is not done yet and his research becomes more urgent. Janie is a single mother of four-

year-old Noah. She is completely devoted to him, but mystified by some odd behaviors. He refuses to be near water, challenging any daily hygiene, insists he wants to go home, even when in his own bed and has frequent, intense nightmares. Janie, Noah and Dr. Anderson come together and join in on a sometimes hostile journey to prove that “either reincarnation was bunk or it wasn’t.” This is not normally the kind of book I read, but Guskin has a way of inviting the reader into this tale of sympathetic characters, a pace and progression that makes the reader feel he has joined in the hunt for answers.

✂Hamer, Kate. [The Girl in the Red Coat](#) (Melville \$25.95). February Library Reads reports, “There is not much more terrifying than losing your child. There’s the terror, the guilt, and then the relentless and unending chasm left behind by your child. I am grateful to not know that pain, and yet what Beth, the main character of this book, went through, resonated with me. I have had so many things on my to-do list, and yet I found myself delaying laundry and dusting and research so that I could find out how this story would unfold.” I gave this debut real thought for the British Crime Club but I was put off by the title and it’s not really a mystery since the way the story plays out is revealed, not deduced. The tragedy depicted is however viscerally real.

Johnson, Julia Claiborne. [Be Frank with Me](#) (Harper \$25.99). When reclusive novelist Mimi Banning loses her fortune and must quickly write a second novel, her publisher sends a young publicist to oversee the efforts and make sure their huge investment is secure. Alice Whitley arrives and is put to work as a caregiver to Mimi’s eccentric nine-year-old son, Frank. Frank is a diamond in the rough, and as Alice gets to know him and the mysterious characters in his life, she becomes all-consumed with discovering his paternity. From February Library Reads: “Frank is an odd 9-year-old boy who has a higher IQ than Einstein’s and dresses as if he were on a movie set in the early 1920s—and he is someone with whom you are sure to fall in love. Frank’s reclusive mother is an author whose publisher has just sent Alice Whitley to serve as an assistant and ensure the next book is completed. The relationship between Frank and Alice is magical. Readers will devour this book and want more. Just magical.”

Les Becquets, D. [Breaking Wild](#) (Berkley \$26). The Indie Next Pick: “Outdoor and adventure enthusiasts will rejoice in Les Becquets’ debut novel. In the spectacular and unforgiving wilderness of northwestern Colorado, elk-hunter Amy Raye Latour goes missing in a snowstorm at the beginning of winter. A search-and-rescue operation is organized and ranger Pru Hathaway and her rescue dog go to look for the missing woman. With alternating chapters focusing on each woman, Les Becquets spins a thrilling story about two strong and mysterious female characters whose resourcefulness and determination help them tackle incredible adversity. *Breaking Wild* is an extraordinary adventure story whose ending is as tense and suspenseful as anything I have ever read.”

✂Morgan, Ann. [Beside Myself](#) (Bloomsbury \$26). Morgan’s debut psychological thriller is a stunning portrayal of what might happen when one’s identity is stolen. Helen and Ellie are identical twins, “two peas in a pod.” Helen is the older twin, the smart one, the one favored with special toys, clothes and shoes. Ellie is the more difficult child, whose hair never stays in place, whose clothes are often splattered with food, and who throws fits in school. One day, Helen invents a game where the two

switch identities—and life is never the same for either of them. Despite Helen’s protests and actions, suddenly her friends, toys and clothes are Ellie’s and she is stuck being Ellie. When Helen attempts to return to herself, her mother says, “‘Oh Ellie... What have you done to your hair? And wearing Helen’s clothes too. How many times do we have to go through with this? Yours is the left drawer and Helen’s is on the right....’” Even though their own mother can’t tell them apart, Helen never stops struggling to prove her true identity, making Ellie smirk and Helen cringe. She descends into a world of mental illness, behavioral issues, and eventually drugs and sex, while Ellie continues to be the golden child, favored by Mother, her friends and teachers. As the years pass, Helen even wonders if the switch really took place.

Pauw, Marion. [Girl in the Dark](#) (Harper \$25.99). This is the American debut for Dutch author Pauw. I swear I am not letting title prejudice me, but I had a hard time with this variation on the Trust No One genre. Some of it is affect—flat. Some is the plot’s resolution. I do think the challenge lawyer Iris Kaselstein faces managing her workload while fulfilling her responsibilities as a single mother to her three-year-old son, Aaron whose aggressive behavior gets him regularly booted from day care, is believable. The second voice narrating the unfolding drama is that of Ray Boelens, a mentally challenged prison inmate convicted of stabbing a neighbor and her little girl, is more convincing. Ray, vocal in maintaining his innocence, becomes Iris’ client which starts a chain of events that might, or might not, be coincidences.

✚Searle, Nicholas. [The Good Liar](#) (Harper \$27.99). Another British import in the Trust No One vein. Veteran con artist Roy is a born liar—and when he meets wealthy widow Betty online, he knows she’s an easy mark. In no time at all, he’s spinning his web of duplicity and betrayal around her, even moving into her lovely cottage. He’s sure his scheme will be a success. He’s done this before. But who is Roy, really? While this masterful narrative of literary suspense entwines Roy’s and Betty’s futures, it also delves deeply into their pasts. As the clock turns back and the years fall away... I’d like to add a real cliché here but if I do it gives away the plot. British publishing is clearly going all in mining this genre. I like Searle better than many of them and it’s refreshing to wonder if the male of our species is the spider or the fly.

✚Seddon, Holly. [Try Not to Breathe](#) (Ballantine \$26). And here is another from Britain. I went with it as our **February British Crime Club Pick** not so much for the suspense although there’s plenty (note, you should be able to work out who is the betrayer early on), but for the vivid way Seddon depicts the grip that alcohol has on fired/divorced journalist Alex Dale, a woman truly on her last legs. Her routine keeps her anchored, but can she do better? Her chance comes when Alex discovers Amy Stevenson. Amy Stevenson, who was just another girl from a nearby town until the day she was found unconscious after a merciless assault. Amy Stevenson, who after a vicious attack in 1995 has been in a coma for fifteen years inside the neuro-disability ward at Tunbridge Wells Royal Infirmary, forgotten by the world. Amy Stevenson, who, unbeknownst to her doctors, is in the grip of locked-in syndrome. Alex becomes consumed with Amy, her story. And there is one doctor with an experimental technique that might help reveal it (this novel is not a love story but love drives it all). **Note; see Signed books as we have some UK imports of this debut.**

Tanquary, Kathryn. [The Night Parade](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). Wonder and imagination abound in Tanquary’s debut, a fantasy set in a contemporary Japanese mountain village; filled with respect and admiration for cultural tradition, it evokes both Grimm’s fairy tales and Miyazaki’s films. Saki, a city girl from Tokyo, isn’t looking forward to traveling with her family to her grandmother’s remote village for the festival of Obon, which celebrates the spirits of the dead. She quickly finds herself in trouble—and fighting a “death curse”—after playing a dangerous game with a group of local kids in her ancestors’ graveyard. The next three nights find Saki as part of the Night Parade, the spirit tradition running parallel to the Obon festival—and her only chance for redemption, if she can survive her encounters with three spirit guides. Saki’s decided love for technology (she’s glued to her phone) is a perfect foil for an examination of how the present can be influenced by the past, and vice versa, with both coexisting peacefully. Vivid details and realistic situations ensure accessibility, and subtle teaching moments are wrapped in wide-eyed enchantment. Ages 10–14.

## NEW BOOKS

✚Archer, Jeffrey. [Cometh the Hour](#) (St Martins \$27.99). See Signed Books for comments on this 6<sup>th</sup> Clifton Chronicles entry.

✚Arlidge, MJ. [The Doll’s House](#) (Penguin \$15). Another serial killer twisted by childhood sexual trauma visits torture and death upon a series of young women. We begin with what happens to Ruby, segue to a deserted beach where a family has unearthed a girl buried some two-four years, the sand preserving her well, and then alternate between the steps DI Helen Grace takes to hunt the psycho and what is happening to Ruby. Plus a few words from the SK. Sorry, I really don’t like this series, partly it’s disgust and partly it’s boredom—there is absolutely nothing original here.

✚Bauer, Belinda. [The Shut Eye](#) (\$14). Val McDermid gave Gold Dagger winner Bauer a shout out at her January 16 event at The Pen. So here’s another look at her latest US release. Detective Chief Inspector John Marvel is obsessed with the disappearance of 12-year-old Edie Evans, who went missing more than a year earlier while riding her bike, but Marvel’s boss, the superintendent, wants the detective to look for a poodle belonging to the superintendent’s wife. James and Anna Buck’s son, four-year-old Daniel, is also missing, and Anna’s grip on reality has been slipping in the months since he disappeared. She seeks out a so-called psychic named Richard Latham, but soon after, Anna thinks she’s having visions herself. Though chapters in *The Shut Eye* (a term meaning psychic) are from different points of view and at first seem to be telling separate stories, Bauer eventually weaves the threads together while keeping readers guessing all the way. As with her previous U.S. release, [Rubbernecker](#) (\$24), Bauer excels in developing her characters, giving each a distinct and believable voice, whether it’s a grieving mother with obsessive-compulsive disorder, a gruff detective, a black lesbian female police officer (the “Holy Grail of Equal Opportunities”), or a Hmong immigrant.

✚Beaton, M C. [Death of a Nurse](#) (Grand Central \$25). James Harrison has recently moved to a restored hunting lodge in Sutherland with his gorgeous private nurse Gloria Dainty. When Hamish visits Mr. Harrison to welcome him to the neighborhood, the old man treats him very rudely. Gloria apologizes for her employer’s

behavior, and Hamish takes the plunge and invites her out for dinner. On the appointed evening, Hamish waits for Gloria at the restaurant. And waits. Gloria never shows up. Four days later, Gloria's body washes up on the beach near Braikie. Now without a date and without his former policeman Dick Fraser (who left the force to buy a bakery), Hamish must find out who killed the beautiful new resident of Sutherland, and why, before....

Benjamin, Melanie. [The Swans of Fifth Avenue](#) (Random \$28). The February Indie Next Pick: "Are you interested in the lifestyles of the rich and famous? Arrange your hair and makeup, darlings, and get ready to dish about the dirty little secrets in 1950s high society. Truman Capote collected 'swans'—rich and glamorous women who floated through life pampered and indulged. This fictionalized account of the meteoric rise and very public fall of Capote, entwined with his deep friendship with Babe Paley and his ultimate betrayal of her and the rest of the swans, will slake your thirst for gossipy, breezy, scandalous details. Take off your wrap, pour a highball, and enjoy!"

Blaedel, Sara. [Killing Forest](#) (Grand Central \$26). A missing-persons case gets personal for Det. Insp. Louise Rick in Danish bestseller Blaedel's engrossing fifth series mystery to be published in the U.S. (after 2015's *Forgotten Girls*). Sune Frandsen, a 15-year-old boy, has disappeared in the woods near Hvalsø, on the property of Camilla Lind, Louise's journalist friend. Louise's first great love, Klaus, who apparently hanged himself years earlier, belonged to a group of young men, including Sune's father, who practiced rituals inspired by old Norse religious beliefs. When a dead prostitute is found near the sacred oak where these men still meet, Louise becomes certain that Sune witnessed her murder and is in grave danger himself. She also suspects that Klaus's death wasn't a suicide and that the cultists had a hand in that as well. Now she just has to get someone to talk.

Bracken, Alexandra. [Passenger](#) (Hyperion \$17.99). "This series opener doesn't let up its high-octane pace until the final page. In a matter of moments, Etta, a talented teenage violinist in New York City, goes from making her concert soloist debut to finding herself prisoner aboard a ship in the distant past. It turns out she is descended from one of a dwindling number of time-traveling families who manipulate history in an ongoing fight for power and influence. The captain of the ship, Nicholas Carter, was hired to retrieve Etta and bring her to the head of the most powerful family. Together they must travel across the globe and through different time periods in search of the long missing astrolabe. There are plenty of twists and turns and excitement as they travel—though at almost 500 pages, the story has periods where it drags, and complex plot machinations and world-building threaten to overwhelm the narrative. Luckily, the romance crackling between Nicholas and Etta will keep fans intrigued. This strong new series will appeal to readers looking for a time-traveling adventure with plenty of drama and romance. "—*School Library Journal*. Think *Outlander* for grades 9+.

✦ Brackston, Paula. [Silver Witch](#) (\$15.99). A year after her husband's sudden death, ceramic artist Tilda Fordwells finally moves into the secluded Welsh cottage that was to be their new home. She hopes that the tranquil surroundings will help ease her grief, and lessen her disturbing visions of Mat's death. Instead, the lake in the valley below her cottage seems to spark something dormant in her. "Vivid Welsh historical details, haunt-

ing surroundings, and Gothic magical elements both enchant and perplex the reader as Tilda and Dylan strive to unravel the mysteries of the past before the present danger overwhelms them. Readers who savor richly detailed paranormal fiction or have enjoyed Brackston's previous novels will want to give this one a try." —*LJ*

Brennan, Marie. [Voyage of the Basilisk](#) (\$15.99). Brennan visited us in 2015 with Brackston with her third fictional memoir in the voice of controversial naturalist Lady Isabella Trent, which describes a voyage designed to expand Isabella's understanding of seagoing dragons, matches real-world Victorian scientific narratives almost too closely. Potential points of excitement, such as bribing officials, are given the same weight as making hotel arrangements, and Isabella's true feelings for Tom (her expedition partner) and Suhail (an archaeologist) are veiled behind Victorian-era mores. The memoir finally humanizes Isabella after a storm shipwrecks her and Tom on Keonga, a thinly disguised Hawaii.

✦ Brett, Simon. [The Killing in the Café](#) (Severn \$28.95). Polly's Cake Shop has been a feature of the shopping parade for many years, but when its owner announces her retirement, the Fethering residents start to worry about the loss of this popular amenity. Alarmed by rumors that the café might become a Starbucks, a group clubs together to form the Save Polly's Cake Shop Action Committee. The plan is that Polly's should become a community venture, managed and run by volunteers from the village. Roped in to help, Jude finds the committee meetings fraught with petty power struggles, clashing personalities and monstrous egos. Matters take a turn for the worse when she and Carole come across a badly-decomposed body on Fethering beach – and uncover a link to Polly... Ordered Upon Request.

✦ Brody, Frances. [Murder on a Summer's Day](#) (St Martins \$25.99). I've enjoyed this traditional series set in post-WWI Yorkshire where Kate Shackleton, presumptive widow of an army doctor, has forged a life as an investigator. A relative from the India Office charges her with finding Maharajah Narayan Halkwaer of Gattiawan, last seen hunting on the Bolton Abbey estate of the Duke of Devonshire. An exhaustive search turns up the Maharajah—shot through the heart. His body has obviously not been in the woods overnight. And what has happened to the hugely valuable diamond that was in the Maharajah's possession? He was staying in an estate cottage, not in the Abbey, as his stunning, much younger English fiancée, from the area, can't be received. And indeed the Maharajah's wife and son soon arrive along with his father and a retinue from Gattiawan. Don't read this for the plot but for the Downtown-like setting and the intriguing period detail tied to that of British India... in Britain.

Cantor, Rachel. [Good on Paper](#) (Melville \$25.95). Shira Greene is working as an office temp and living with her daughter, Andi, and Ahmad, her best friend, when she gets a life-changing telegram: Romei, the mysterious winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, wants her to translate his latest, a work of poetry and prose based on Dante's *La Vita Nuova* (literally "new life"), the same work that Shira was translating when she abandoned her Ph.D. At first, Shira thinks that someone is playing a joke, but she's happy to have a second chance at her career; she even begins to imagine love with the eccentric part-time rabbi and owner of the neighborhood bookstore that publishes Gilgul, the literary

journal where one of Rachel's stories caught Romei's eye. Cantor's follow-up to 2014's *A Highly Unlikely Scenario* (which PW starred) starts light and shimmers with humorous touches, but as Romei's faxed pages begin arriving, Shira panics, fearing the work is not only untranslatable but designed to break her.

✎Chase, Eve. [Black Rabbit Hall](#) (Putnam \$27). The Indie Next Pick: "Young Amber Alton and her family adore Black Rabbit Hall, and the joy and peace it brings to them all. That is, until a tragic accident changes everything. Three decades later, Lorna decides her wedding must be celebrated at the crumbling hall. As the book moves between these two time periods, secrets slowly unfold. Perfectly twisty with interesting characters and a compelling story that kept me up too late. Readers of Kate Morton's [The Lake House](#) (\$28) will enjoy this. John Charles will write more about this Gothic in the February BookNotes.

Costantini, Robert. [The Root of All Evil](#) (Quercus \$26.99). For decades, Michele Balistreri, the volatile veteran detective now heading Rome's homicide squad, has avoided investigating the only murder that really matters to him: his mother's. But the day of reckoning for what befell Italia Balistreri—on a windswept Libyan cliff top hours before the August 1969 coup that installed Muammar Al Gaddafi as the country's dictator—can no longer be dodged in Costantini's suspenseful, at times savage, thriller, the second in his ambitious, politically steeped Evil trilogy (after 2014's *The Deliverance of Evil*). Investigative journalist Linda Nardi, one of the few individuals Michele cares about, has been digging into a high-stakes fiscal scandal potentially involving several people he has spent a lifetime trying to forget—including his Sicilian industrialist father, Salvatore. Costantini takes his time skillfully planting the twisty, deep-lying roots of his narrative back in Libya, where young "Mike" Balistreri learns about love, brotherhood, and betrayal as well as his own darker side.

Daheim, Mary. [Here Comes the Bribe](#) (Harper \$23.99). Rodney Schmuck and his wife, Millie, Hillside Manor's latest guests, seem normal, well, except for that last name. Innkeeper Judith McMonigle Flynn is touched to hear that the fortysomething couple is in town to visit family. Rodney is especially eager to see his long-lost mother—who he insists is Judith. Shocked to meet an alleged son she's sure she never had, she can't believe Rodney when he swears he has proof from a Norway General Hospital birth certificate listing Judith Anne Grover as his mother. The father's name is Unknown. Judith has never heard of Rodney, let alone given him life. But she's got a bigger problem when one of the B&B guests turns up dead in the backyard. To Judith's surprise, Joe is willing to help investigate. He can't ignore a potential homicide that hits so close to home. But Rodney is seeking compensation for Judith's so-called abandonment of him. Perhaps she'll sign over Hillside Manor?

Enrique, Alvaro. [Sudden Death: A Novel](#) (Riverhead \$27.95). Enrique is one of the most audacious, smart, and original books you will read this year. It is a literary triptych—part history lesson, part tennis match, and part hypermodern adventure. Daring and visceral with a cast that includes Thomas Cromwell, Mary Magdalene, Aztec emperors, and more, the limits of the novel in Enrique's hands seem boundless. No other author is taking chances like this with such gratifying results.

Foster, Alan Dean. [The Force Awakens](#) (Ballantine \$28). Foster adapts a novel from the blockbuster movie.

Goodman, Carol. [River Road](#) (Touchstone \$25). Nan Lewis is driving home from a faculty holiday party after finding out she's been denied tenure. On her way, she hits a deer, but when she gets out of her car to look for it, the deer is nowhere to be found. Eager to get home and out of the oncoming snowstorm, Nan is forced to leave her car at the bottom of her snowy driveway to wait out the longest night of the year—and the lowest point of her life... The next morning, Nan is woken up by a police officer at her door with terrible news—one of her students, Leia Dawson, was killed in a hit-and-run on River Road the night before. And because of the damage to her car, Nan is a suspect. In the days following the accident, Nan finds herself shunned by the same community that rallied around her when her own daughter was killed in an eerily similar accident six years prior. When Nan begins finding disturbing tokens that recall the death of Nan's own daughter, Nan suspects that the two accidents are connected

✎Green, Julius. [Curtain Up](#) (Harper \$30). Green, founder of the Agatha Christie Theatre Company, which has exclusive rights to Christie's original plays in the U.K., is a meticulous historian. He cross-references the "notoriously inaccurate chronology" of Christie's autobiography, and her nearly illegible correspondences and notebooks, with the papers, memoirs and interviews of contemporaries to follow each play from inception to staging. Green believes Christie got more pleasure writing plays than novels, the theater allowed her to expand beyond mysteries into comedies and psychological dramas. When she adapted her Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple mysteries into plays, she distanced them from their source by dropping the detectives from the cast. Theater buffs and Christie fans will delight in this fascinating and well-researched appreciation.

Gudenkauf, Heather. [Missing Pieces](#) (Mira \$26.99). The Indie Next Pick: "Gudenkauf once again weaves her magic, drawing readers into her latest work. *Missing Pieces* is a story of dark family secrets that have multiplied over the years, eroding the trust and love between husbands and wives, siblings, parents, and children. Gudenkauf uses deliberate pacing, skillful character development, and even the old nursery rhyme 'Three Blind Mice' to bring this thriller to a perfect, stunning ending."

Hall, Parnell. [Presumed Puzzled](#) (St Martins \$24.99). The Puzzle Lady gets more than she bargained for when she's hired to track down Paula Martindale's straying husband. She finds him, all right—hacked to pieces on his living room rug, while his blood-drenched wife haunts the crime scene clutching a butcher knife. It's a tough spot for attractive young attorney Becky Baldwin. Paula is presumed innocent until proven guilty, but try to find one juror who's going to think so. It's up to Cora to find the evidence to save the day. She has just two problems: She's a witness for the prosecution, and every bit of evidence she finds in Paula's favor, from crossword puzzles to Sudoku to alibi witnesses, tends to indicate that Cora herself is the killer! 17<sup>th</sup> in series.

Higashino, Keigo. [A Midsummer's Equation](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Rob loved this. I am perishing to read it! Meanwhile here is the *LJ* Starred Review: "Edgar-finalist Higashino's excellent third whodunit featuring Manabu Yukawa takes the brilliant physicist to the dying Japanese resort town of Hari Cove, where Yukawa (aka Detective Galileo) offers his expertise at hearings on an offshore drilling proposal that promises to boost the nation's economy by providing access to rare metals. Locals who fear

the effects of the resulting environmental damage, which also threatens the area's fishing industry, are against the plan. As the corporation behind the mining operation holds meetings to win over opponents, Masatsugu Tsukahara, a fellow guest at the hotel where Yukawa is lodging, is found at the base of a seaside cliff, apparently dead from an accidental fall. An autopsy reveals that Tsukahara actually died from carbon monoxide poisoning, and the mystery deepens when Yukawa learns that the dead man was a former homicide detective. Superb fair cluing and a nicely enigmatic lead will appeal to golden age fans."

Indridason, Arnaldur. [Into Oblivion](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Karen reviews: Inspector Erlendur is called to a case where a body is discovered in an isolated lagoon, but suspicion is the murder occurred elsewhere. Clues lead Erlendur to a US military base where cooperation between the military and the Icelandic police is less than harmonious. Using his best skills, Erlendur sets about choreographing a dance between the two that leads to the discovery of secret shipments not sanctioned by the Icelandic government. Simultaneously, Erlendur is still investigating a cold case involving the disappearance of a young girl. He sees an obituary of one of the last family members and feels compelled to bring closure to the remaining family and friends as well as to himself. Indridason provides a stark sense of place, decent characters and a mesmerizing read. A fellow author defines Indridason titles as "classic mystery fiction".

James, Miranda. [No Cats Allowed](#) (Berkley \$25.95). In the latest mystery in the Cat in the Stacks series, librarian Charlie Harris and his Maine Coon cat Diesel must clear a friend when the evidence is stacked against her... #7 in a cozy set in Mississippi.

Kadrey, Richard. [Killing Pretty: Sandman Slim #7](#) (\$14.99). Someone has tried to kill Death—ripping the heart right out of him—or rather, the body he's inhabiting. And that means Death needs Sandman Slim's help: he believes anyone who can beat Lucifer and the old gods at their own game is the only one who can solve his murder. Stark would rather get a drink. But when people stop dying, Stark knows he has to figure it all out. So he follows a sordid trail deep into L.A.'s subterranean world, from vampire-infested nightclubs to talent agencies specializing in mad ghosts, from Weimar Republic mystical societies to sleazy supernatural fight and sex clubs. Along the way he meets a mysterious girl—distinguished by a pair of graveyard eyes—as badass as Slim....

Lambert, Charles. [The Children's Home](#) (Scribner \$24). The Indie Next Pick: "Tragically disfigured and reclusive, Morgan lives in a secluded country estate with only his housekeeper, Engel, to keep him company—until the children start to arrive. The first, an infant named Moira, is left in a basket on the doorstep; others soon follow—including the oddly precocious David—the eldest at five years old. But what does the children's enigmatic presence portend for Morgan and the world in which he lives? Through lyrical prose, Lambert creates an absorbing and dream-like narrative that recalls both the pastoral gothic of Shirley Jackson and the dystopic vision of John Wyndham."

✎Mattick, Lindsay. [Finding Winnie](#) (Little Brown \$18). A #1 *New York Times* Bestseller and Winner of the 2016 Caldecott Medal. Before Winnie-the-Pooh, there was a real bear named Winnie. And she was a girl! In 1914, Harry Colebourn, a veterinarian on his way to tend horses in World War I, followed his heart and

rescued a baby bear. He named her Winnie, after his hometown of Winnipeg, and he took the bear to war. Harry Colebourn's real-life great-granddaughter tells the true story of a remarkable friendship and an even more remarkable journey—from the fields of Canada to a convoy across the ocean to an army base in England... And finally to the London Zoo, where Winnie made another new friend: a real boy named Christopher Robin. Here is the remarkable true story of the bear who inspired Winnie-the-Pooh.

McKenzie, Elizabeth. [The Portable Veblen](#) (Penguin \$26). The Indie Next Pick: "This story of an engaged couple trying to navigate crazy family dynamics, betrayal, and professional dilemmas on their way to getting married is one of the funniest novels I've ever read. If you simply list the story's elements—a hippy commune, a combat field-medicine controversy, screaming snails, a devious pharmaceutical exec, a long-dead social theorist, the world's greatest hypochondriac, and a main character who believes a squirrel is following her around California trying to tell her something—you would think that there is just no way it could all come together, but it absolutely does, and ingeniously so. A terrific book!"

Molesini, Andrea. [Not All Bastards Are From Vienna](#) (Grove \$26). Karen reviews: Molesini has won high praise from critics and was awarded the Campiello Literary Prize for this intoxicating read. It is 1917 and the Spada family estate has been requisitioned by the enemy who runs motorcycles through the dining room, breaks furniture for firewood and takes command of foodstuffs and the workings of everyday life. Grandma Guglielmo, matriarch of the family, urges tight lips and sour looks as they navigate this new routine. She hides her precious jewels in the enema bags hanging in her bathroom knowing the new residences will not exam them. She leaves less precious stones in places the enemy can find to allay any suspicions she is not forthcoming with all of her valuables. Her view of the enemy is that they "are better at fighting than at thinking" and uses that to the family's advantage. It's difficult to know who is part of the resistance and who is the enemy. Characters are honorable and humorous. Grandpa goes to his "Thinking Den" in times of stress to work on his mythical novel on his typewriter, respectfully referred to as Beelzebub. Teresa, the cook, is noted as unusually ugly – but she can cook with minimal ingredients. Her cross-eyed daughter, Loretta, spends most of her time gazing at the ground. The narrator, Paolo, an orphan, observes the changing landscape as both captive and captor struggle to live in a world that no longer exists. The elegant prose combined with the characters and sense of place makes this a wonderful, lasting read.

Moore, Jonathan. [The Poison Artist](#) (Houghton \$24). This exquisite tale of obsession from Bram Stoker Award–finalist Moore opens with Caleb Maddox, a toxicologist and pain researcher, looking in the mirror of a San Francisco hotel bathroom as he picks tiny shards of glass out of his bleeding forehead. A short time before, his live-in lover, now his ex-girlfriend, threw a tumbler in his face. "It was good glass. Murano crystal, maybe," from a set they had bought at Macy's just before she moved in a year earlier. Caleb later leaves the hotel and goes to a bar called the House of Shields, where he meets a mysterious absinthe-drinking woman, Emmeline, who mesmerizes him with a whisper and a titillating silken touch. Caleb's hard-drinking week-plus pursuit of Emmeline parallels the serial killings that he has been secretly investigating with his oldest and closest friend, medical

examiner Henry Newcomb. Male bodies have been washing up in the bay with evidence of unspeakable torture.

Murphy, Shirley. [Cat Shout for Joy](#) (Harper \$19.99). Awaiting the birth of his first kittens, feline PI Joe Grey, his companion, Dulcie, and their furry sleuthing pals must unmask a killer preying on some of the most vulnerable citizens in the charming California coastal community of Molena Point.

✦ Rickman, Phil. [Friends of the Dusk](#) (Atlantic \$27.95). When autumn storms blast Hereford, centuries-old human bones are found among the roots of a tree blown down on the city's Castle Green. But why have they been stolen? At the nearby Cathedral, another storm is building around a new, modernizing bishop who believes that if the Church is to survive it must phase out irrelevant archaic practices. Not good news for Merrily Watkins, consultant on the paranormal or, as it used to be known, diocesan exorcist. Especially as she's now presented with the job at its most medieval. In the moody countryside on the edge of Wales, a rambling 12th-century house is thought to be haunted. Although its new owners don't believe in ghosts, they do believe in spiritual darkness and the need for exorcism. But their approach to Merrily is oblique and guarded. No-one can be told—least of all, the new bishop. Merrily's discovery of the house's links with the medieval legend of a man who resisted mortality threatens to expose some modern hidden history... The 13<sup>th</sup> Merrily Watkins.

Rhoades, J D. [Ice Chest](#) (Polis \$24). Anytime I see a heist novel with a crew of thieves I think of the much missed Donald E. Westlake. So does Rhoades as he sets some bumbling crooks to steal some \$5.5 million in jewels encrusting the world's most expensive lingerie as worn on stage by Enigma's Model of the Year Clarissa Cartwright who is clad in little else but the bra (known as the Ice Chest). Clarissa has an insanely jealous mobbed-up ex-boyfriend. The crooks face an intimidating former cop tasked with protecting what little she is wearing. And Clarissa, tired of being an object, decides to turn the tables on the crooks, cops, and the world of fashion. Enjoy!

Robb, JD. [Brotherhood in Death](#) (Penguin \$27.95). Dennis Mira just had two unpleasant surprises. First he learned that his cousin Edward was secretly meeting with a real estate agent about their late grandfather's magnificent West Village brownstone, despite the promise they both made to keep it in the family. Then, when he went to the house to confront Edward about it, he got a blunt object to the back of the head. Luckily Dennis is married to Charlotte Mira, the NYPSD's top profiler and a good friend of Lieutenant Eve Dallas, about to work her 42<sup>nd</sup> In Death Series case.

Robinson, Peter. [No Cure for Love](#) (\$14.99). You Robinson fans know that this novel set in America was published in Canada in 1995. We sold lots of them. Now it gets a US edition with a Foreword by Michael Connelly. Sarah Broughton has come a long way. She's the star of a hit TV show. She lives in a beautiful California beach house. And—most importantly—she's escaped her dark past, including her old name. When she begins receiving anonymous letters she assumes they're from a harmless admirer until one of them uses her real name. Then that name is written in the sand outside her home—next to a dead body. Panicked, Sarah turns to Detective Arvo Hughes of the LAPD, who specializes in hunting dangerous stalkers. But nothing in his experience has prepared him for the mastermind he's up against....

Robotham, Michel. [Life or Death](#) (\$16). Aussie Robotham is much admired by me for his British mysteries. But here he turns to Texas and the ultimate underdog hero, an honorable criminal shrouded in mystery. Audie Palmer has spent ten years in a Texas prison after pleading guilty to a robbery in which four people died and seven million dollars went missing. During that time he has suffered repeated beatings, stabbings and threats by inmates and guards, all desperate to answer the same question: where's the money? On the day before Audie is due to be released, he suddenly vanishes. Now everybody is searching for him—the cops, the FBI, gangsters, and worse—but Audie isn't running to save his own life. Instead, he's trying to save someone else's.

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. [Prime Time](#) (\$15.99). Investigative reporter Charlotte McNally knows that in the cutthroat world of television journalism, every story could be your last. There's always someone younger and prettier to take your place, always a story more sensational to drive ratings through the roof. When Brad Foreman's widow demands to know why Charlie never answered his email, Charlie is confused. She never received his message. What did Brad, an accountant at a pharmaceutical company, want to tell her? As she searches through her computer, she finds an innocent-looking email in her junk mail folder that may turn out to be the biggest story of her career. Is the encoded email—and the ones that follow—linked to Brad's "accidental" death? Charlie's investigation leads her to Brad's friend, professor Josh Gelston, who is charming and exceedingly helpful—too much so? This is a trade paperback edition of the 2009 start to the Agatha-Award winning McNally series.

Sanderson, Brandon. [The Bands of Mourning](#) (Tor \$27.99). He is the author of 14 critically-acclaimed novels, With The Alloy of Law and Shadows of Self, Brandon Sanderson surprised readers with a New York Times bestselling spinoff of his Mistborn books, set after the action of the trilogy, in a period corresponding to late 19th-century America. Now Sanderson continues the story. The Bands of Mourning are the mythical metal minds owned by the Lord Ruler, said to grant anyone who wears them the powers that the Lord Ruler had at his command. Hardly anyone thinks they really exist. A kandra researcher has returned to Elendel with images that seem to depict the Bands, as well as writings in a language that no one can read. Waxillium Ladrian is recruited to travel south to the city of New Seran to investigate. Along the way he discovers hints that point to the true goals of his uncle Edwain and the shadowy organization known as The Set.

Shaw, Johnny. [Floodgate](#) (Amazon \$24.95). Andy Destra is a mostly honest cop in the most notoriously corrupt and crime-ridden city in America: Auction City. After discovering explosive information that reveals corruption within the highest levels of the police department, Andy is kicked off the force, framed, and disgraced, left to wage a lonely one-man crusade against conspiracies he can't prove. Andy's investigation plunges him into a blackly comic maelstrom of one-armed gang members, slick pickpockets, criminal syndicates, hired mercenaries, escaped convicts, sewer dwellers, and one sinister ice cream truck. At the same time, he must contend with a mystery closer to home: the true identity of his parents, his most unshakeable obsession. Understanding their past may be the key to Auction City's future as it teeters on the brink of chaos. If Andy can't solve this, his city will burn. I've been a fan of the unusual (OK, perhaps bizarre) noirs by Shaw. He is coming to Left Coast Crime so we'll work on getting Signed copies. More in March.

Sigurdardottir, Yrsa. [The Silence of the Sea](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Karen reviews: A luxury yacht arrives in Reykjavik with no crew or passengers aboard. Thus begins this latest installment of the Thora Gudmundsdottir series. All seemed in order when the yacht left Lisbon and it is up to authorities to determine what happened on the boat. There is a rumor the boat is cursed and even Thora gets spooked as she begins her investigation of the former owner's missing wife and a body that has been washed ashore. This title has been hailed as "possibly her best book yet" and "a dazzling display of brilliant crime writing." This is a great read that will hook you from the beginning.

Steiner, Peter. [The Capitalist](#) (SimonSchuster \$25.99). Cartoonist and crime writer Steiner has taken inspiration and ire from the Bernie Madoff Ponzi scheme for his 5<sup>th</sup> Louis Morgon, the retired CIA op now living in France and aging well. Louis had a little money invested with Wall Street investment whiz St. John Larrimer. When Larrimer skips out ahead of exposure and arrest, his scheme crashing, Morgon is more annoyed than hurt. But his lover Pauline loses a much loved younger brother to suicide at his ruin, and Morgon decides to unearth Larrimer from where he's gone to hole (somewhere in France to avoid extradition) and bring the man to account. Three billion dollars. Watch him go about it. And try not to be enraged at the result.

✎Walters, Minette. [The Cellar](#) (Grove \$24). This slim book marks the return of Walters after some years with the story of a family of African immigrants, the Songolis, and the dark secret they keep hidden in the depths of their seemingly respectable British home.

Warlick, Ashley. [The Arrangement](#) (Putnam \$25.99). "Ostensibly the story of M.F.K. Fisher and the years when she honed her skills as America's first food essayist, *The Arrangement* is actually a story about the fragility of relationships. As Fisher grows in renown, her marriage crumbles and she boldly takes a lover who represents everything antithetical to her husband—his best friend. This is a sensual novel in every sense of the word, and the reader experiences all the excitement of both food and sexuality as Fisher becomes a more independent woman and discovers her writing abilities. What a woman! What a novel!" To go with: Fisher, MFK. [The Theoretical Foot](#) (Counterpoint \$25)

White, Karen/Beatriz Williams/Lauren Willig. [The Forgotten Room](#) (NAL \$26). A female doctor in 1944 treats a wounded soldier in a New York City hospital. A young woman works as domestic staff for a rich family living in a resplendent mansion in 1892. A secretary at a law firm in 1920 searches for the truth about her paternity. What connects these women? The authors answer this question in their collaborative novel. Kate's patient is Captain Ravenel, whose leg she saves from amputation. But he looks at her with more than gratitude; it's as if he knows her from somewhere. Olive gets a job in the Pratt family household. She has an ulterior motive, but her vengeful plans are complicated when she catches one of the sons' attention. Lucy, defying her grandmother by getting an education and a job as a secretary, also has secret reasons for being at the law firm that employs her. Their stories, told in alternating chapters, share an exquisite ruby pendant and the titular room, which somehow connect them all. "White, Williams and Willig have pulled off an impressive feat: combining their voices seamlessly. Even if their respective fans think they know each author's style well, it's difficult to discern who wrote what."

Wignall, Kevin. [A Death in Sweden](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). This excellent novel opens with a puzzling and terrifying scene—a terrible accident in northern Sweden where one passenger on a bus is saved by a stranger—one Jacques Fillon, known to no one in the community although he's been there awhile. Dan Hendricks is a man in need of a lifeline. A former CIA operative, he is now an agent for hire by foreign powers on the hunt for dangerous fugitives. It's a lethal world at the best of times, and Dan knows his number is almost up. His next job could be his last, his biggest. He's hired to find Jacques Fillon. But Fillon's death has exposed a secret—Fillon does not exist. So who is the dead man? Will uncovering his identity lead to Dan's final undoing?

Ying, Song. [Apricot's Revenge](#) (St Martins \$26.99). From the author of 5 novels and 15 works of nonfiction comes his first translated into English, a murder mystery mining the untapped field of social crime novels. "When a corpse washes up on a resort beach in southern China, it is soon identified as real estate mogul Hu Guohao. Apparent cause of death: drowning. The police are baffled because Hu was known to be a strong swimmer. Nie Feng, a reporter for *Western Sunshine* magazine, interviewed Hu the previous week, and, he, too, is perplexed. Nie manages to gain access to the investigation and uncovers the first important clues that will lead to a suspect previously unknown to the police. Secrets going back to the days of Chairman Mao and the turbulent Cultural Revolution will surface. A best seller in China, this first-class procedural offers an intriguing setting and exquisite portrait of a modern country grappling with its past. The smooth translation renders the narrative well. Both fans of Qiu Xiaolong's "Inspector Chen" mysteries and Sinophiles will want to add this social crime novel to their reading lists."—*LJ* Starred Review

#### OUR FEBRUARY TRADE PAPERBACK PICKS

Bowen, Rhys. [The Edge of Dreams](#) (\$15.99). It's 1905. Molly Murphy in theory retired from her work as a private detective when she married NYPD Captain Daniel Sullivan and became the mother of Liam. But she's still Molly and when she and Liam barely survive an accident to an elevated train while Daniel is being pressured to solve a series of murders that appear to be connected only through taunting notes that are addressed to him at Mulberry Street police headquarters, she swings into sleuthing despite her injuries. This is an especially tricky case, 14<sup>th</sup> in an award-winning series. See Event Books for the March 1 sequel.

✎Bradley, Alan. [As Chimney Sweepers Come to Dust](#) (\$15). Flavia de Luce is now 12. Worse, she feels banished by her father and Aunt Felicity who have sent her off to Canada's Miss Bodycote's Female Academy, the boarding school that her mother, Harriet, once attended. The sun has not yet risen on Flavia's first day in captivity when a gift lands at her feet, one perfectly suited to the budding chemist: a charred and mummified body, which tumbles out of a bedroom chimney. Now, while attending classes, making friends (and enemies), and assessing the school's stern headmistress and faculty (one of whom is an acquitted murderess), Flavia is on the hunt for the victim's identity and time of death, as well as suspects, motives, and means. Rumors swirl that Miss Bodycote's is haunted, and that several girls have disappeared without a trace. Bradley has a wonderful time with Flavia in his homeland. Read this award-winning, unusual series from the beginning: order [here](#).

Carter, MJ. [The Strangler Vine](#) (\$16). A 2015 First Mystery Club Pick and 2016 Edgar Allan Poe nominee won praise from me and Starred Reviews. This one is from *Library Journal*: “From the thrilling prolog to the satisfying conclusion, former journalist and nonfiction author Carter’s (*Anthony Blunt: His Lives*) first foray into fiction hooks the reader into a ripping adventure ride, full of danger, conspiracy, and trickery. Young William Avery, a soldier in the service of the British East India Company in 1837 India, receives an unexpected assignment. He is to accompany Jeremiah Blake, a secret political agent with an astonishing talent for languages and Sherlock Holmesian disguises, on a mission to find the scandalous British writer Xavier Mountstuart, who is missing. Each twist and turn of the duo’s journey draws them deeper into the mystery of the sinister Thuggee cult and closer to uncovering the shocking truth at the heart of the puzzle of Mountstuart’s disappearance. The details of life in 1830s India are enthralling, as is the history of the Thugs. Historical fiction fans who love action, adventure, and intrigue supported by incredible research will devour this novel, which was longlisted for the 2014 Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction.” Look for Carter’s 2<sup>nd</sup>, [The Infidel Stain](#), end of March. No word yet on whether we can snag Signed copies since she lives in the UK.

Chapman, Drew. [King of Fear](#) (SimonSchuster \$15.99). We loved [The Ascendant](#) (\$7.99), a 2014 First Mystery Club Pick. This sequel is a paperback original and is gathering up great reviews: An eccentric genius is all that stands between the U.S. and total financial collapse. Garrett Reilly, who has a gift for detecting patterns, has put that talent to work in creating the Ascendant project, “an attempt to assemble a team of out-of-the-mainstream thinkers to help America fight the next generation of wars.” Though the program succeeded in thwarting a Chinese cyber attack, Garrett quit after suffering psychological and physical damage. Now his work as an investment analyst alerts him to another alarming problem—evidence of an “enormous pool of money” accumulated in a private equity exchange. Meanwhile, a hit woman murders the head of the New York Federal Reserve; she accuses Garrett of ordering the killing before taking her own life. The allegation puts him on the run and into the path of an elusive Russian crook who may be his intellectual equal. Chapman makes the battle of wits as suspenseful as a standard action thriller.

Freeman, Brian. [Season of Fear](#) (\$14.99). Freeman once again leaves the cold of Minnesota for to the sun-drenched beaches of Naples, Florida, and the idiosyncratic world of Detective Cab Bolton. Attractive and popular politician Diane Fairmont is running for the Florida governorship, but a chill is cast over the campaign when she receives an anonymous note announcing the return of the assassin who killed her husband ten years earlier. Because of complicated ties between Fairmont and his mother, movie actress Tarla Bolton, Detective Bolton is assigned to the case. As Bolton struggles to penetrate the veil of secrecy surrounding the Fairmont campaign, he begins to realize that the death threat is not the only danger faced by the campaign staff. A desperate race against the clock ensues as Bolton tries to unlock the secrets of a poisonous conspiracy. He joins us March 16 with his 7<sup>th</sup> Jonathan Stride, [Goodbye to the Dead](#) (Quercus \$26.99)... by then it might be thawing in Duluth....

Hart, Rob. [City of Rose](#) (Polis \$14.95). Another paperback original by Hart, the sequel to 2015’s [New Yorked](#) (\$14.95), joins Ash McKenna in Portland where the PI is working a quieter gig as a

bouncer at a vegan stripper bar. One of the club’s dancers pleads with him to find her missing daughter who has been, she says, snatched from day care by the girl’s father. Ash came to Portland to escape his role as a blunt instrument of violent tendencies, so he declines. But soon he is held at gunpoint by a man in a chicken mask, and told to keep away from the girls. Terrible at following directions, Ash navigates an unfamiliar city as he becomes embroiled in a labyrinthine plot involving a ruthless drug cartel and a scandal that could reach one of the most powerful men in Portland. Noir with humor lightening the darkness.

Joy, David. [Where All Light Tends to Go](#) (\$16). A 2015 First Mystery Club and 2016 Edgar Allan Poe Award nominee from an author of huge promise. In Appalachia, a young outlaw, Jacob McNeely, struggles to escape what Faulkner called that “old fierce pull of blood,” a violent meth-dealing father, the dark legacies of an unforgiving place and the terrible miseries it breeds. A beautiful, brutal book.”—*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*. “Joy’s first novel is an uncompromising noir, its downward thrust pulling like quicksand on both the characters and the reader. And, yet, there is poetry here, too, as there is in Daniel Woodrell’s novels, the kind of poetry that draws its power from a doomed character’s grit in the face of disaster.”—*Booklist*. “This isn’t your ordinary coming-of-age novel, but with his bone-cutting insights into these men and the region that bred them, Joy makes it an extraordinarily intimate experience.”—*NY Times*

Kaaberbol, Lene. [Doctor Death](#) (\$16). The Danish co-author of the Nina Borg series (see Event Books) goes it alone to pen an historical thriller featuring an ambitious young female detective challenging the mores 19<sup>th</sup> Century France. Strong-minded and ambitious, Madeleine Karno is eager to shatter the constraints of her provincial French upbringing. She longs to become a pathologist like her father, whom she assists, but this is 1894. Autopsies are considered unseemly and ungodly, even when performed by a man. So it’s no surprise that when young Cecile Montaine is found dead in the snowy streets of Varbourg, her family will not permit a full postmortem autopsy, and Madeleine and her father are left with a single mysterious clue. Soon after, the priest who held vigil by the dead girl’s corpse is brutally murdered. The thread that connects these two events is a tangled one, and as the death toll mounts, Madeleine must seek knowledge in odd places: behind convent walls, in secret diaries, and in the yellow stare of an aging wolf.

Kerr, Philip. [The Lady from Zagreb](#) (\$16). A 2016 Edgar Allan Poe Award nominee. This Starred Review for Kerr’s 10<sup>th</sup> Bernie Gunther, set in Zagreb, Croatia, and Zurich, Switzerland, tells you why: “Bernie, now an officer in the SD, is at an international police conference in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee in the summer of 1942. Heinrich Heckholz, an attorney, wants Bernie to use his access at Wannsee to gather evidence that a charitable foundation is involved in fraud. Soon after, Heckholz is beaten to death with a bust of Hitler in his office. Almost a year later, with the crime still unsolved, Joseph Goebbels asks Bernie to help movie star Dalia Dresner locate her estranged father. Bernie falls quickly—and hard—for Dalia and agrees to travel on her behalf to Yugoslavia, where he witnesses some horrific scenes. Kerr combines a murder mystery that Raymond Chandler could have devised with a searing look at the inhumanity of the Nazis and their allies, presented from a unique perspective.” Another, from LJ, ends with, “Kerr’s magic lies in how he addresses core ethical ques-



tions. What is the right conduct while operating within the filthy underbelly of Nazi Germany? How could Kerr's sardonic, tough-talking, anti-Nazi PI survive in a criminal state with his moral integrity and honor intact? Noir devotees, immerse yourselves in the cynical, amoral angst Kerr skillfully portrays." Kerr joins us March 30 to sign Bernie's next, [The Other Side of Silence](#) (\$26.95), set in 1956 on the French Riviera.

Pandian, Gigi. [The Masquerading Magician](#) (Midnight Ink \$14.99). The Accidental Alchemist mysteries feature centuries-old alchemist Zoe Faust and her impish gargoyle sidekick Dorian, who was accidentally brought to life by a French stage magician who didn't realize the alchemy book he was reading from contained real magic. In Zoe's second outing, she finds that deciphering an ancient alchemy book is more difficult than she bargained for. She'd much rather be gardening and exploring her new home of Portland, Oregon—but time is running out for living gargoyle Dorian Robert-Houdin. If Zoe isn't able to unlock the alchemy book's secrets soon, the French gargoyle will remain awake but trapped in stone forever. When Zoe gives herself a rare night out to attend a classic magic show that reminds her of her youth, she realizes the stage magicians are much more than they seem. A murder at the theater leads back to a string of unsolved robberies and murders in Portland's past, and a mystery that is surprisingly personal. Pandian's work is nominated for an award at Left Coast Crime 2016. [The Accidental Alchemist](#) (\$14.99).

✠Sansom, Ian. [Lamentation](#) (\$17). It's the summer of 1546, and London barrister Matthew Shardlake is deeply troubled. Still haunted by his near-drowning the year before, professionally embroiled in a contentious lawsuit between two siblings, Shardlake feels distress that is heightened by the tension roiling the city around him. As King Henry's health fails, the clash between religious radicals and traditionalists threatens to tear England apart. The king's Protestant and Catholic councilors are engaged in a vicious power struggle to control the throne and the government after Henry's death. Suspicion lurks around every corner and no one is safe; heretics are hunted in the streets and radical Protestants are burned at the stake. Amid all the turmoil, the traditional Catholic forces are mounting an attack against the king's sixth wife—Shardlake's old friend and ally Queen Catherine Parr. When the desperate queen calls Shardlake to her side, enlisting his help to find a stolen manuscript she has written, *Lamentation of a Sinner*, confessing her Protestant sympathies, the attorney-turned-detective is thrust into a high-stakes game of treason and terror. This is an excellent book to read alongside Elizabeth Fremantle's brilliant novel of Parr which I highly recommend: [The Queen's Gambit](#) (\$15.99). "Sansom's evocation of Tudor London is utterly convincing... A fine example of the intelligent imagination playing on history. Most importantly it shows what the reader of history may often tend to forget: that events now safely in the past were once uncertainly and dangerously in the future."—*Wall Street Journal*. Order the earlier Shardlake's [here](#).

Thayer, James. [House of 8 Orchids](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). This splendid thriller is our **February Fresh Fiction Pick**. I love it, so unusual and so stylish. Also thrilling. In 1912, John Wade and his brother, William—children of the American consul—were kidnapped off the street in Chungking, China, and raised in the house of Eunuch Chang, the city's master criminal. 25 years later, John is the eunuch's most valuable ward, a trained assassin and swindler, and William has become a talented forger. On the

brink of World War II, China is in chaos. When William betrays Eunuch Chang and escapes to central China, a place of ferocious warlords and bandits, John begins a desperate search to save his brother, while Eunuch Chang hunts them both. Thayer, a graduate of Washington State University and the University of Chicago Law School, and teaches fiction writing at the University of Washington, wrote a number of thrillers for Simon & Schuster. This is where amazon publishing is doing a good job, returning authors like him to publishing.

✠Winspear, Jacqueline. [A Dangerous Place](#) (\$15.99). It's now spring, 1937, four years since Maisie Dobbs married James and endured such tragedy that she left England. This exile in Darjeeling ends when her stepmother calls her home where her father, Frankie, longs for her. As she sails to England, she realizes she isn't yet ready to face the return, so she insists on disembarking in the British garrison at Gibraltar. The Captain warns her it's a very dangerous place, filled with refugees fleeing the Spanish Civil War for one...and he's right. Winspear joins us March 29, on sale date, with [Journey to Munich](#) (Harper \$26.99).

#### OUR FEBRUARY MASS MARKETS PICKS

Aames, Avery. [For Cheddar or Worse](#) (\$7.99). Cheese Shop #7. When pretentious cheese critic Lara Berry is murdered during the annual Cheese Festival in Providence, Ohio, and her best friend stands accused of the crime, cheese-shop owner Charlotte Bessett must slice through the clues to carve out a clever killer. Agatha Award-winning Aames not only writes the Cheese Shop Mysteries, but as Daryl Wood Gerber, the Cookbook Nook Mysteries.

Berenson, Alex. [Twelve Days](#) (\$9.99). John Wells #9. Uncovering a plot to lure America into invading Iran, John Wells and his CIA contacts race against time to prevent full-scale war in the face of a deadly terrorist attack and a squad of suicide bombers. *Kirkus* said this about the latest John Wells "This well-written and fast-moving novel delivers more than a good plot. It illustrates how in the midst of regional chaos, a great power can jump to calamitous conclusions. This one is well-worth the thriller enthusiast's time, which holds true for all the novels Berenson has written to date."

Caldwell, Ian. [The Fifth Gospel](#) (\$9.99). In this follow-up to the *New York Times* best-seller *The Rule of Four* finds a lost gospel, a contentious relic and a dying pope's final wish sending two Vatican priest brothers on a dangerous intellectual quest to untangle Christianity's greatest historical mystery. *Bookpage* was just one of the many review sources that loved Caldwell's *DaVinci Code*-esque thriller stating "Caldwell constructs the novel's central puzzle masterfully, weaving between past and present, danger and intrigue, codes and obfuscations at a blistering pace that makes the more than 400-page novel breeze by. But the key to *The Fifth Gospel's* effectiveness is Alex's emotional, intense point of view. Caldwell has woven a tale that's as much about brotherhood, faith, the sins of the past and what it means to atone as it is about the faith shattering secrets."

Coben, Harlan. [The Stranger](#) (\$9.99). Parents Adam and Hannah Price confront the shocking secret on which their marriage was built, leaving Adam to wonder whether he ever truly knew his wife at all. *LJ's* review included this snippet "Coben (Missing You) deftly weaves many seemingly disconnected characters into one cohesive tale of suspense, with an expertly realized New Jersey setting."

Cooper, Amanda. [The Grim Steeper](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Teapot Collector #3. During the Fall Fling Townwide Tea Party in the quaint Finger Lakes town of Gracious Grove, Sophie Taylor, along with her Nana and their friends, the Silver Spouts, must clear her boyfriend's name of murder after the dean who accused him of falsifying grades is found dead. If you love the tea lore and facts in Laura Child's books or just appreciate a well-written, small town cozy and haven't yet discovered Cooper's series, you are in for a treat.

Jackson, Lisa. [Fatal Burn](#) (\$7.99). Secrets have been kept from Shannon Flannery. Dark, dangerous, and very fatal secrets. Now, with no one to trust but a man who has every reason to doubt her, Shannon's determined to discover the shocking truth, even if it brings her face to face with a serial killer whose slow burn for vengeance will not be denied. *PW* loved Jackson's latest saying "she injects nearly every other scene with plenty of dread and drama, keeping suspense lovers reading. A tight, twisty plot catapulting toward a fiery conclusion will please fans and should earn Jackson new ones."

Layton, Jeffrey. [The Good Spy](#) (Kensington \$9.99). After escaping a Russian military spy sub near the U.S.-Canadian border and reaching the shore undetected, Yuri Kirov, a seasoned security officer, must convince software engineer Laura Newman that the fate of the world depends on her helping him. The old Cold War heats up again in this new espionage thriller.

McKevett, GA. [Killer Gourmet](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Savannah Reid #20. The opening of Ryan and John's new gourmet restaurant is shattered by the murder of their temperamental chef, prompting Savannah and the Moonlight Magnolia gang to sift through a wide range of suspects to find the killer. *PW* concluded their review by saying "Natural dialogue and characters with real-life problems set this series well above the cozy average once again."

Page, Katherine. [The Body in the Birches](#) (\$7.99). Faith Fairchild #22. While spending the summer vacation at their home on Sanpere Island, Faith investigates a neighbor's dispute involving the death of a housekeeper and the family's fight for control of a wealthy estate. *LJ's* review ended with this "Reading this enjoyable long-running series is like having a conversation with an old friend. Faith and her family continue to grow, and now having teenagers will test her and Tom's patience. Anyone who likes Joan Hess or Donna Andres will appreciate this well-crafted mystery."

Reichs, Kathy. [Speaking in Bones](#) (\$7.99). Temperance Brennan #18. When an online detective offers a possible lead in an unsolved case, Tempe's ensuing investigation reveals the activities of a cult that practices ritual sacrifices tied to a famous unexplained light phenomenon. *PW* said "Brennan's on-again off-again relationship with Ryan brings some welcome romantic interest to this multilayered series."

Sears, Michael. [Long Way Down](#) (\$9.99). Jason Stafford #3. Working as a financial investigator after two years in federal prison, Jason Stafford looks into a biofuel engineer's claims about being set up by dangerous adversaries. *PW's* take included "Sears is at his best explaining financial wrongdoing, and Stafford is a fine and fully rounded protagonist."

White, Randy Wayne. [Cuba Straits](#) (\$9.99). Doc Ford #22. When a friend who was running a lucrative smuggling operation goes missing after selling a valuable cache of letters written by Fidel Castro, Doc Ford discovers that the letters may have contained a powerful secret. *Bookpage* says this about White "If you miss Travis McGee like a long-lost brother, if you value a writer whose easy familiarity with his milieu is evident on every page, look no further."

#### NEW IN PAPERBACK

Allan, Barbara. [Antiques Swap](#) (\$7.99). Trash 'n' Treasures #9. When the jealous wife of a local tycoon is found dead, Brandy Borne, her ever-eccentric mother and their sleuthing shih tzu investigate clues surrounding a super-secret high-society bridge group.

Arlington, Lucy. [Off the Books](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Novel Ideas #5. While hosting a wedding-themed week for Inspiration Valley that spotlights North Carolina's best vendors as well as her most popular bridal books, Lila Wilkins, the owner of the Novel Idea Literary Agency, discovers that murder is on the guest list when a dead man is found face down in frosting.

Baldacci, David. [Memory Man](#) (\$9.99). Amos Decker #1. More than a year after the most tragic event in Amos Decker's life, a man confesses to murdering his family and Amos, called to help with the investigation, struggles with the memories.

Beaton, M C. [Death of a Liar](#) (\$7.99). Hamish Macbeth #31. After a woman who claimed she was attacked was lying, Sergeant Hamish Macbeth disregards the same woman's claim about an intruder, until her body is found and he must sort through her lies to find the killer.

Cleeland, Anne. [Murder in Hindsight](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Doyle and Sinclair #3. Tracking a vigilante killer only to be pulled into a web of danger by a returned Solonik, Kathleen Doyle finds her efforts further complicated by Acton's unexpectedly distant behavior.

Connolly, Sheila. [A Turn for the Bad](#) (Berkley \$7.99). County Cork #4. When a farmer goes missing and a body washes ashore on the Cork coast, Boston expat Maura Donovan, after listening to the suspicions of her employee, decides to investigate on her own and gets in way over her head.

Corleone, Douglas. [Robert Ludlum's The Janson Equation](#) (\$9.99). Hired by a prominent senator to locate his missing son, who fled the city to avoid questions about his murdered girlfriend, Janson and Kincaid are targeted by an assassin when they stumble on a dangerous plot to provoke a war.

Ferris, Monica. [Darned If You Do](#) (\$7.99). Needlecraft #18. After a tree falls on Tom Riordan's house, landing him in the hospital, the police discover a mountain of junk piled high in his home. Locals in Excelsior, Minnesota—including Betsy and her Crewel World Monday Bunch—offer to help with the cleanup while Tom recuperates. But when Tom is found murdered in his hospital bed, the sole heir to his property—his cousin Valentina—becomes the number one suspect.

Hamilton, Donald. [Annihilators](#) (\$7.99). Matt Helm #20. A terrorist organization kidnaps Matt Helm's lover and threatens to kill her unless Helm assassinates the president of Costa Verde.

Haywood, BB. [Town in a Cinnamon Toast](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Candy Holliday #7. To save her friend's wedding, Maine blueberry farmer and occasional sleuth Candy Holliday must put her maid-of-honor duties to the test when the best man is found dead, which exposes a conspiracy that could change the quiet coastal town of Cape Willington forever.

Hollon, Cheryl. [Shards of Murder](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Webb's Glass Shop #2. When Megan Loyola, the \$25,000 winner of the Spinnaker Arts Festival, turns up dead, Savannah Webb, the new proprietor of Webb's Glass Shop, must piece together the clues to find the person who took this killer competition too far.

James, Delia. [A Familiar Tail](#) (NAL \$7.99). Witch's Cat #1. Artist Annabelle Britton, who is unlucky in love, arrives in the quaint seaside town of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where she finds herself unexpectedly saddled with a witch's wand, a furry familiar and a coven of witches who gather together to keep the town safe from evil.

James, Miranda. [Arsenic and Old Books](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Cat in the Stacks #6. When librarian Charlie Harris tries to catalogue a set of Civil War-era diaries that the town's mayor has donated to Athena College, he discovers several other residents of Athena, Mississippi, are literally willing to kill to get their hands on the books.

Mansbach, Adam. [The Devil's Bag Man](#) (Harper \$7.99). In this chilling sequel to *The Dead Run*, Jess Galvan, who has been locked in a Mexican jail for a crime he did not commit, makes a devil's bargain to escape, only to confront the hellish challenges of having his mind and body possessed by the 500-year-old ghost of an Aztec priest.

McEwen, Scott. [The Sniper and the Wolf](#) (Picador \$9.99). Navy SEAL Gil Shannon must seek the aid of an unlikely ally, a Russian special ops officer, in his quest to hunt down a Chechen terrorist.

McLaughlin, Staci. [Murder Most Wholesome](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Blossom Valley #5. When Birch, "the one who got away," is found dead in Zennia Patrakio's garden, Dana Lewis must take over grief-stricken Zennia's cooking duties at the spa while trying to find answers at the commune where Birch had been living—and where the residents are nuttier than granola.

Patterson, James. [Private Vegas](#) (Grand Central \$9.99). Private #9. Following leads on two criminals to Las Vegas, private detective Jack Morgan discovers a lucrative murder ring being controlled by a wealthy man who seduces beautiful women into becoming killers for hire.

Patterson, Will. [Dark Homecoming](#) (Kensington \$9.99). When she marries David, the scion of one of Palm Beach's wealthiest families, Liz Huntington is plagued by the ghost of David's first wife, Dominique, and discovers that behind Huntington House's stately façade lies an unimaginable secret and a love turned to twisted, unnatural obsession. Where is Mrs. Danvers when you really need her?

Robb, J D. [Devoted in Death](#) (\$7.99). Eve Dallas #41. Eve Dallas, aided by Roarke and her team, investigates clues surrounding a murder of unusual brutality before pursuing a woman and her ex-con boyfriend who have developed a taste for extreme violence.

Rollins, James. [Blood Infernal](#) (\$9.99). Order of the Sanguines #3. Archaeologist Erin Granger rejoins forces with Army Sergeant Jordan Stone and Father Rhumn Korza to decipher an immortal prophecy and find the Chalice of Lucifer to prevent an apocalypse.

Ross, Barbara. [Fogged Inn](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Maine Clambake #3. Nothing's colder than a corpse—especially one stashed inside a sub-zero fridge. The victim spent his last night on earth dining at the restaurant bar, so naturally Julia finds herself at the center of the ensuing investigation.

Ryan, Annelise. [Stiff Competition](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Mattie Winston #5. Every fall, hunting season in Sorenson, Wisconsin, leads to some accidental injuries. Deputy coroner Mattie Winston just hopes the hunters don't bring any more business to her office. But somebody seems to have declared open season on land developers.

Ryan, Sofie. [A Whisker of Trouble](#) (NAL \$7.99). Second Chance Cat #3. The owner of a second hand shop in North Harbor, Maine, Sarah Grayson and her rescue cat, Elvis, must sniff out a killer when they stumble upon a dead body while searching for fabulous finds on the estate of collector Edison Hall.

Spillane, Mickey. [Mike Hammer—Kill Me, Darling](#) (Forge \$7.99). An inebriated Mike Hammer (as opposed the rarely seen sober Mike Hammer) investigates the murder of an aging police officer who once worked with Mike Hammer's ex-partner Velda, who is reputed to be involved with a powerful Florida gangster.

Thompson, James. [The Anthrax Protocol](#) (Kensington \$7.99). In an excavation site in Mexico, a team of archeologists uncovers the lost tomb of Montezuma—and a deadly strain of anthrax as ancient as the Biblical plagues. One by one, the team falls violently ill, bleeding from their eyes and ears before succumbing to a slow, painful death. Whatever was buried with the Aztec chief is still active, infectious—and now airborne...

Vallere, Diane. [A Disguise to Die For](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Costume Shop #1. When her customer, wealthy nuisance Blitz Manners, is murdered and party planner Ebony Welles is accused of the crime, costume-shop owner Margo Tamblyn must unmask the real killer to save her friend.

Wenger, Christi. [It's a Wonderful Knife](#) (NAL \$7.99). Comfort Food #5. With a broken leg and busy diner during the holiday season, Trixie Matkowski also finds herself the prime suspect in the murder of Liz Fellows, the director of the local Christmas pageant who was found with Trixie's butcher knife in her back.

Wolf, Dick. [The Ultimatum](#) (\$9.99). When sensitive NYPD intelligence, including his home address, is released to WikiLeaks, Detective Jeremy Fisk is attacked by mysterious assailants linked to a serial sniper who is using cutting edge drone technology to murder innocent civilians.

### SOME HISTORY/MYSTERY

Chee, Alexandra. [The Queen of the Night](#) (Houghton \$28). The Indie Next Pick. "This historical novel about an opera singer is as grand and theatrical as opera itself. It is the story of a legendary soprano who looks back at her past to solve a mystery, but it is also a story of an artist and the road she takes to become one. Chee attempts the seemingly impossible—to describe a soprano voice with words—and he succeeds brilliantly, creating a tale

that is vivid, intricate, and rich. Throw in cameos by figures like Verdi and George Sand, fascinating details about royal fashions, 19th century Paris, theater, and a circus, and the result is a perfect novel.”

✚DePoy, Phillip. [A Prisoner in Malta](#) (St Martins \$26.99). “It’s no mystery why Elizabethan spymaster Sir Francis Walsingham recruits Marlowe from his studies at Cambridge at the tender age of 19. The young man has a rare skill with persuasive words, an equal skill with dagger and rapier, an actor’s knack for role-playing, and apparently no fear of confrontation or death. Since he seems indifferent to whether he lives or dies, the great game is merely a game to him. So he’s a natural to pack off to Malta along with royal physician Rodrigo Lopez, to whom he owes a debt of honor, to rescue an agent Walsingham must speak to personally if the double-pronged Spanish plot against the queen—invasion from without, insurrection by traitors loyal to Mary Queen of Scots within—is to be foiled. Rescuing the prisoner from that Malta dungeon is so easy that there are bound to be further troubles. These involve a code based on the Douay translation of the Bible favored by Catholics, assassins from Spain and Arabia, highly questionable clergymen, many poniards thrust against (and sometimes into) hostile bodies, endless speculation about Walsingham’s true motives... Ebullient persiflage spiced with high-level intrigue, a covey of double and triple agents, and enough action scenes for a summer movie. Eat your heart out, James Bond.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. Our signed copies went to the History/Mystery Club members.

✚Goodman, Allison. [The Dark Days Club](#) (Penguin \$18.99). In a delicious collision of Regency romance and dark fantasy, Goodman (Eona) tells the story of Lady Helen Wrexhall, a wealthy 18-year-old orphan on the eve of coming out at the court of King George III. If things go as planned, she will pass from the house of her choleric uncle to that of a suitably noble husband. Rumor has it that the Duke of Selburn (the catch of the season) is interested; unfortunately, so is the disreputable Earl of Carlston, though he has something other than marriage in mind. Helen is dissatisfied with a vapid life of endless parties, and she’s also aware that she has begun to develop abilities that seem inappropriate for a young noble woman, like extraordinarily acute hearing and lightning-fast reflexes. Then Carlston tells her about the Dark Days Club, its secret battle to preserve English society from a monstrous enemy, and her destined role in that battle. Book One in the Lady Helen Trilogy. Ages 14+

✚Goodman, Ruth. [How to Be a Tudor: A Dawn to Dusk Guide to Tudor Life](#) (Liveright \$29.95). Drawing on her own adventures living in re-created Tudor conditions, historian Goodman serves as our intrepid guide to sixteenth-century living. Proceeding from daybreak to bedtime, this charming, illustrative work celebrates the ordinary lives of those who labored through the era. From sounding the “hue and cry” to alert a village to danger to malting grain for homemade ale, from the gruesome sport of bear-baiting to cuckolding and cross-dressing—the madcap habits and revealing intimacies of life in the time of Shakespeare are vividly rendered for the insatiably curious.

✚Harris, Tessa. [Secrets in the Stones](#) (Kensington \$15). It’s 1784. Newly released from the notorious asylum known as Bedlam, Lady Lydia Farrell finds herself in an equally terrifying position—as a murder suspect—when she stumbles upon the muti-

lated body of Sir Montagu Malthus in his study at Boughton Hall. Meanwhile Dr. Thomas Silkstone has been injured in a duel with a man who may or may not have committed the grisly deed of which Lydia is accused. Despite his injury, Thomas hopes to clear his beloved’s good name by conducting a postmortem on the victim. With a bit of detective work, he learns that Montagu’s throat was slit by no ordinary blade, but a ceremonial Sikh dagger from India—a clue that may be connected to the fabled lost mines of Golconda. From the mysterious disappearance of a cursed diamond buried with Lydia’s dead husband, to the undying legend of a hidden treasure map, Thomas must follow a trail of foreign dignitaries, royal agents—and even more victims—to unveil the sinister and shocking secrets in the stones... 6<sup>th</sup> in a satisfying series I liken to Deanna Raybourn’s Lady Julia Grey mysteries, though Harris’ series is Georgian, not Victorian.

Harrison, Cora. [A Fatal Inheritance](#) (Severn \$27.95). When a woman’s body is discovered, strangled and bound with rope to the stone torso of Fár Breige, the ancient stone god which stands sentinel above the haunted caves and ancient fortifications of the Atlantic cliffs, the locals believe it was the god who killed her.

In life, Clodagh O’Lochlainn had been a disgrace to her clan, tormenting her former priestly lover, jeering at her husband, robbing her relatives: but could she really have been slaughtered by a vengeful god, as the local population believes? Abandoning preparations for the celebration of her fiftieth birthday, Mara, Brehon of the Burren, with the assistance of Fachtnan and her scholars, takes up the task of solving the murder. The 13<sup>th</sup> Burren Mystery, excellent for fans of Peter Tremayne. Ordered Upon Request.

✚Holsinger, Bruce. [The Invention of Fire](#) (\$15.99). “The invention of handguns presages a radical change in warfare in Holsinger’s skillful and engrossing second medieval whodunit. In London in 1386, the bodies of 16 unidentified men, who have been slaughtered in some unknown fashion, are found in a public privy. Poet John Gower, a colleague of Geoffrey Chaucer, is asked to look into the deaths by Ralph Strode, an old friend who was once a criminal court judge. Strode warns him that not everyone is eager for a solution. Nicholas Brembre, “perhaps the most powerful mayor in London’s history,” is reported to have destroyed evidence and threatens anyone who even mentions the massacre. Strode correctly predicts that Gower’s “devotion to the right way” will move him to seek the truth, a challenge made even greater by the investigator’s fears that he’s going blind. Holsinger is equally adept at depicting the machinations of the rich and powerful and the fears and hopes of the working class.”—*PW Starred Review* on Holsinger’s 2nd mystery after 2014’s [A Burnable Book](#) (\$16.99).

Moran, Michele. [Rebel Queen](#) (\$16). Queen Lakshmi—India’s Joan of Arc—against all odds defied the mighty British invasion to defend her beloved kingdom. When the British Empire sets its sights on India in the mid-nineteenth century, it expects a quick and easy conquest. India is fractured and divided into kingdoms, each independent and wary of one another, seemingly no match for the might of the English. But when they arrive in the Kingdom of Jhansi, the British army is met with a surprising challenge. Instead of surrendering, Queen Lakshmi raises two armies—one male and one female—and rides into battle determined to protect her country and her people. Hers was, and remains, an inspiring sacrifice.

Ohanesian, Aline. [Orhan's Inheritance](#) (\$15.95). A 2015 History Pick, highly recommended by Karen, gets a Starred *LJ* review: "The death of 93-year-old Kemal Türkolu, founder of a Turkish kilim dynasty, throws his family into upheaval when his will (contradicting Turkish inheritance laws) assigns the rug business to his grandson Orhan, bypassing Kemal's embittered son, Mustafa. Worse, the family home in Anatolia is left to an elderly Armenian woman living in a Los Angeles retirement community. Who is this Seda Melkonian, whose legacy threatens to evict Mustafa and the irrepressible Auntie Fatma? Orhan travels to L.A. to get Seda to sign her rights back to the family and to uncover the connection to his grandfather. "Nobody does sorrow like the Armenians," Seda's niece Ani tells Orhan, and the story that Seda gradually reveals is one of heartbreaking loss and unending grief. In 1915 she and her family were swept up in the mass deportations and killings of over a million Christian Armenians by a crumbling Ottoman empire. Traveling back and forth in time from 1915 to 1990, Ohanesian's beautifully written debut brings to life a historic tragedy that Turkey still denies ever happened."

Robertson, Imogen. [The Paris Winter](#) (\$15.99). Maud Heighton came to Lafond's famous Academie to paint, and to flee the constraints of her small English town. It took all her courage to escape, but Paris, she quickly realizes, is no place for a light purse. While her fellow students enjoy the dazzling decadence of the Belle Époque, Maud slips into poverty. Quietly starving, and dreading another cold Paris winter, she stumbles upon an opportunity when Christian Morel engages her as a live-in companion to his beautiful young sister, Sylvie. Maud is overjoyed by her good fortune. With a clean room, hot meals, and an umbrella to keep her dry, she is able to hold her head high as she strolls the streets of Montmartre. No longer hostage to poverty and hunger, Maud can at last devote herself to her art. But all is not as it seems. Christian and Sylvie, Maud soon discovers, are not quite the darlings they pretend to be. Sylvie has a secret addiction to opium and Christian has an ominous air of intrigue. As this dark and powerful tale progresses, Maud is drawn further into the Morels' world of elegant deception.

✚ Sansom, Ian. [Lamentation](#) (\$17). It's the summer of 1546, and London barrister Matthew Shardlake is deeply troubled. See Our February Trade Paperback Picks, and also look there for the latest Jacqueline Winspear Maisie Dobbs paperback as well as those for Rhys Bowen and Philip Kerr.

Thayer, James. [House of 8 Orchids](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). This splendid thriller is our February Fresh Fiction Pick. I love it, so unusual and so stylish. Also thrilling. Set in 1912 China. See Our February Trade Paperback Picks.

Weiner, Erich. [The Geography of Genius](#) (SimonSchuster \$26.95). Join the bestselling author of *The Geography of Bliss*, as he journeys from Athens to Silicon Valley—and throughout history—to show how creative genius flourishes in specific places at specific times.