

BOOKNEWS from

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Happy Valentine's Day...here are some treats to flesh out February

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

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

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 includes Victoria Abbott, Cathy Ace, 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

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)
Policewoman Tia Suarez #2

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

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). Rae Carson also appears.

SUNDAY MARCH 6 2:00 PM

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

Abbey, Edward. [The Brave Cowboy, An Old Tale](#) (Harper \$14.99). A reissue of the book that inspired the film *Lone Star*. Jack Burns, a loner at odds with modern civilization. He rides a feisty chestnut mare across the New West—a once beautiful land now smothered beneath airstrips and superhighways. An “anarchist cowboy,” he lives by a personal code of ethics that sets him on a collision course with the keepers of law and order. After a prison breakout plan goes awry, he finds himself and his horse, Whisky, pursued across the desert towards the mountains that lead to Mexico, and to freedom. With local law enforcement, the feds, and the military on their tails, the cowboy and his horse race towards their destiny.

Alcott, Kate. [A Touch of Stardust](#) (\$15). I enjoyed this in hardcover last year; it’s a look at Hollywood without the dark trappings of crime fiction. Julie Crawford left Fort Wayne, Indiana with dreams of being a Hollywood screenwriter. Unfortunately, her new life is off to a rocky start. Fired by the notoriously demanding director of *Gone With the Wind*, she’s lucky to be rescued by Carole Lombard, whose scandalous affair with the still-married Clark Gable is just heating up. As Carole’s assistant, Julie suddenly has a front-row seat to two of the world’s greatest love affairs. And while Rhett and Scarlett—and Lombard and Gable—make movie history, Julie is caught up in a whirlwind of outsized personalities and overheated behind-the-scenes drama ... not to mention a budding romance of her own. Actually even crime fiction may not be dark enough for many aspects of Tinsel Town as at least one recent memoir makes clear.

Binder, Mike. [Keep Calm Signed](#) (Holt \$29). Something different, a kind of British-American hybrid of a political thriller that begins with an explosion that severely wounds the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. It happens in an intimate space. And we learn that former Michigan cop Adam Tatum who made a misstep that has nearly ruined his family has unexpectedly been offered a golden opportunity engineered by his rich British father-in-law: to travel to a high-stakes conference at 10 Downing. His father-in-law, who doesn’t travel, has made it a condition that Adam brings his wife and kids along. The bomb detonated just after Adam’s visit, which suggests to him (and the reader) that Adam has been set up. But why? And by whom? Georgia Turnbull, Chancellor of the Exchequer and by British precedent, the acting PM, and works with detective Davina Steel on the manhunt for Adam that ensues. It’s a long and winding road to how this scenario of betrayals plays out at the highest levels of government and business, and has some real surprises. It’s a debut, and **First Mystery Club Pick**, by Binder, a screenwriter. *Keep Calm* moves into movie production this fall.

Bjork, Samuel. [I’m Travelling Alone](#) (Viking \$26.95). We were unable to supply Signed copies of the UK edition after all... and I’m glad because I found this first novel into English by Bjork to read as if he’d thrown everything but the proverbial kitchen sink into the plot. Karen likes this genre—she’s from Duluth—so I’ve asked her to read it for her take.

Bordewich, Fergus. [The First Congress](#) (SimonSchuster \$30). The little known story of perhaps the most productive Congress in US history, the First Federal Congress of 1789–1791, where James Madison, George Washington, and other extraordinary men invented the government.

Boyce, Trudy Nan. [Out of the Blues Signed](#) (Putnam \$26.95 Feb. 29). This is a slightly uneven debut but it crackles with real cop stuff—Boyce is a veteran—as well as a penetrating look at Atlanta. Hence, a **First Mystery Club Pick**. It “takes the reader for an exciting ride through old Atlanta with brand new homicide detective, Sarah Alt, aka “Salt” as our guide. 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. “A fresh, gritty debut. Boyce unveils one of the best new series characters in ages, an Atlanta detective with a haunting past but complete dedication to working the streets. A book that combines fast-paced suspense with moving insights.”—Lisa Gardner. “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*. “Salt’s character combines quick intelligence and a refreshing, confident humanity that wins allies from all walks of life, and Boyce’s fluid southern voice is an alluring contrast to the stark realities she skillfully evokes.”—*Booklist*

Brodsky, Jordanna Max. [The Immortals](#) (Orbit \$25). This is really fun, Rick Riordan-style tales of the Greek gods of Mount Olympus—for grownups. It takes place in NYC where some of the Olympians settled after the Diaspora (begun when man stopped believing in the ancient deities) and begins with a dire situation facing Selene (aka Artemis, later Diana, the huntress). Brodsky provides a helpful family tree. I think Deborah Harkness sums up my reaction: “*The Immortals* is a lively re-imagining of classical mythology with an engaging premise, a page-turning plot, and an eye for the arresting and uncanny in contemporary urban life.” As someone who had memorized Bullfinch’s *Age of Fables* in the fifth grade, I have walked with Olympians all my life in my head and am constantly surprised by how few people today know the old gods and mythology. Here’s a dandy way to meet them.

Buckley, Carla. [The Good Goodbye](#) (Bantam \$27). I’m a fan of Buckley’s voice and style, and her previous books. I have to say in this story she aces the Trust No One scenario as two families spiral down when the teenaged daughter of each is brought into hospital after a terrible dorm room fire. The title is particularly apt in this tale of betrayals small and large as adults and children battle for identities and dreams.

Burke, Zoe. [No Gun Intended Signed](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). Burke is attending Left Coast Crime so we’ll have some Signed copies of her second madcap adventure for film buff Annabelle Starkey who is in Portland visiting her parents who have relocated from their home and careers in Los Angeles after the events of [Jump the Gun](#) (\$14.95 or \$24.95 if you order ASAP), a freshly funny, pacy cozy debut. Although Annabelle and parents have rebooted their lives, they have not escaped criminals and cons. It begins when someone switches Annabelle’s backpack at the airport for one with a gun....

Camilleri, Andrea. [Montalbano’s First Case and Other Stories](#) (Penguin \$18). The first case is actually a novella and is a terrific introduction to Salvo Montalbano who is a cop in a mountainous

community, which he dislikes, as it opens. What he wants is to be by the sea. So word that he is being posted to Vigata on the Sicilian coast fills him with joy. He explores Vigata, finds his home restaurant, lucks into his seaside apartment, meets his colleagues at the department who form as much a part of this great series as does Montalbano, etc. And this is before he meets Livia. Actually I like his lover in this story much better so I'll read on to see what happens to her. And, inevitably, Montalbano meets the two local Mafia clans who form part of the fabric of local life. Highly recommended to series fans or as an introduction.

Chapman, Drew. [King of Fear](#) (SimonSchuster \$15.99). Garrett Reilly sees what others do not: numbers, patterns, a nation on the brink of collapse. His unique talents has saved countries from falling into a world war, but made his a marked man: marked by terrorist groups; marked by the US Government. Now Garrett recognizes a string of events that could lead to economic Armageddon in the US: banks closing, grocery shelves lying empty, the nation's currency rendered worthless. Total chaos could engulf society within a matter of days. Garrett and the Ascendant team reunite to face enemies on all sides: a wounded Russia bent on keeping its crumbling empire in place, a cyber genius fixated on Garrett, a femme fatale willing to do anything to establish a new world order. In the midst of this, Garrett must also confront his own demons: his class rage, growing paranoia, and a dependency that he cannot seem to shake. After all, it only takes one card to make the whole house fall... A hero with complete disregard for rules and boundaries, Drew Chapman's rogue genius gives readers "a wild ride through the headlines of our times."—*Kirkus* on [The Ascendant](#) (\$7.99), one of our bestselling 2014 First Mystery Club Picks. If you missed it, start there and move into *King of Fear*. Fun for fans of Hurwitz, Sears, and Roger Hobbs' Ghostman.

✚Chase, Eve. [Black Rabbit Hall](#) (Putnam \$27). An excellent English Gothic, modern but with backstory, for readers of Kate Morton's *The Lake House*, or DuMaurier's *Rebecca*. John Charles reviews this in the February BookNotes but I add my voice to his. I am a sucker every time for a story grounded in a great house!

Chee, Alexander. [Queen of the Night](#) (Houghton \$28). This is a big novel in actual size, and in story, with a leisurely pace and sensibility to match its Victorian period and the world of the diva! I enjoyed the opening in Paris where she so hates her dress by Worth that it affects how she hears the disturbing news that sets the plot off. *LJ* gives it a Starred Review: "Curtain up on Lilliet Berne, 'the famous Falcon soprano who never spoke in order to protect her voice.' Chee regales us here with tales of his fictional soprano (inspired by Jenny Lind), who spends most of her life in Europe in the latter half of the 19th century, often playing opposite the tenor (not named) who seems to control her fate. In a richly imagined work nonetheless grounded in fact, we follow Lilliet from one performance to another as she attempts to outrun a curse that she believes has been cast upon her. Several historical figures make cameo appearances, including Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi, Russian writer Ivan Turgenev, and French mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, and the plot twists feature waiting attendance on French Empress Eugénie and escaping from Paris in a balloon during the Commune. In fact, there are as many unexpected turns in Lilliet's life as one would find in the most dramatic opera. Chee also offers informed commentary on numerous productions (the book's title refers to a character in

Mozart's *Magic Flute*) and on the fashions of the era. A completely engrossing work that should appeal to the widest range of readers, especially those with a taste for historical fiction."

Cooper, Paul M. [River of Ink Signed](#) (Bloomsbury \$35). Our January History/Mystery Club Pick is finally here (6 left) from London and earns various rave reviews. I like this one: "The stylus is mightier than the sword in Paul M.M. Cooper's adventurous first novel set in 13th-century Sri Lanka. Asanka started life as a lowly village boy but rose to the lap of luxury when King Parakrama chose him as the royal poet. Then comes Magha, prince of Kalinga, with his conquering army. Asanka's beloved king is brutally murdered before his eyes, the regal queen imprisoned, all loyal members of the nobility slaughtered. But rather than kill Asanka, the cruel Magha commissions him to translate a holy Sanskrit poem into the language of the Sri Lankan peasants. Out of fear and a desire to protect Sarasi, the palace servant girl with whom he is having an affair, Asanka agrees, but the mixture of horror and disgust he feels for the tyrant king leaks into his translation; the villain in Asanka's version of the poem bears a strong resemblance to Magha. When his words become a covert rallying cry in the local villages, Asanka finds himself torn between accepting the role of revolutionary symbol and saving his own life. The elegance of Eastern palaces, the lush flora of Sri Lanka, even the hot stink of war elephants become vivid in Cooper's hands. Sprinkled occasionally throughout the narrative, short chapters in the voices of characters from the Shishupala Vadha and Mahabharata help familiarize readers with Krishna, Shishupal and other heroes and villains of Asanka's culture. Both an homage to classical Indian literature and a demonstration of the strength of allegory, Cooper's suspenseful South Asian adventure shows the best and worst of the human heart." The unsigned US edition: [River of Ink](#) (\$26).

Connolly, John. [Empire](#) (Atria \$16). With the fate of the world at stake, Syl and Paul of the Resistance formed after the Illyri conquered and occupied Earth, battle the sinister forces of the Nairene Sisterhood in this second Chronicles of the Invaders novel by Connolly and Jennifer Ridyrd.

Dick, Philip K. [The Philip K Dick Reader](#) (Kensington \$16). Stories.

Dubois, Brendan. [Night Road](#) (Midnight Ink \$15.99). After a dishonorable discharge from a top-notch covert Coast Guard position, Zach Morrow is left with almost nothing. When a Homeland Security agent asks him for his help in exchange for an honorable discharge and his full pension, Zach agrees. All he has to do is go back to his hometown and get information on an old classmate. That old classmate is Duncan Crowley, a highly successful smuggler of booze, cigarettes, and pot who's branching out for a bigger score—a shipping container that Homeland Security thinks is a weapon of mass destruction. "Surprises keep coming until the last page, where we're let in on a vast, circular plot reminiscent of Grisham—and worthy of him."—*Booklist*

Enrique, Alvaro. [Sudden Death](#) (Riverhead \$27.95). Looking for something different to spark up your winter? Enrique uses a 16th-century game of *pallacorda*—a forerunner to tennis—between two hideously hung-over players to explore the beauties and atrocities of Renaissance Europe. In his fanciful mixing of historical fact and fiction, as well as his linguistic blend of earthiness and erudition, Enrique can be compared to Roberto Bolaño.

The novel recounts a match between the Spanish poet Quevedo and the notorious painter Caravaggio. Two talismanic objects thread their way through the narrative: a tennis ball wound with hair taken from the decapitated head of Anne Boleyn, and an iridescent scapular made from the hair of the Aztec emperor Cuachtémoc, executed by Hernán Cortés. Not only is this novel wildly unpredictable and challenging, it includes some words in Purépecha, a language used by a small group of people in Mexico that is unrelated to any other language.

Fay, Kim. [The Map of Lost Memories](#) (\$15). This wonderful book so won my heart it was a favorite Modern Firsts Club Pick of 2012... in part because I'd just been to Angkor Wat in Cambodia and so fell right into the story about a 1925 quest by a young archaeologist fighting to break into the man's world that is the international treasure-hunting scene. Irene sets off from Seattle to Shanghai, and then beyond, in search of a temple believed to house the lost history of the Khmer civilization.... Fay will be at our February 24 International Crime Night.

Gable, Michelle. [I'll See You in Paris Signed](#) (St Martins \$25.99 March 2). In stock now, Signed March 2. Her second novel after [The Paris Apartment](#) (\$15.99) will send you rushing to Google Gladys Deacon, Duchess of Marlborough, and her actual life story which is just as bizarre as it appears in this book. Look for her portrait by Goldoni and try to imagine why she'd risk plastic surgery back then. Gable's plot, part romance, part history, part mystery, draws on real people and events along with those she makes up. Despite the title, much of it takes place in England.

Goodman, Alison. [Dark Days Club](#) (Penguin \$18.99). This one hooked me, a dedicated Georgette Heyer reader. John Charles joins me in recommending a genre-blurred tale set in Regency London, April, 1812. Young Lady Helen Wrexhall is practicing her curtsy and deportment for her presentation to the Queen now that audiences have resumed. A bow to Society via Royalty launches a young woman if she doesn't disgrace herself with an ugly fall—or a scandal. But Lady Helen can't dismiss the disappearance of one of the maids, though forbidden to pursue it. And she becomes drawn to the city's shadows where she finds the Earl of Carlston who is also concerned with the disappearance and might be able to stop the cabal of demons that has infiltrated every level of society... if Lady Helen's curiosity doesn't get her in his way.... Regency romance meets dark fantasy in this enchanting start to a new series by Goodman (author of the best-selling YA duo logy *Eon* and *Eona*).

Handler, David. [The Lavender Lane Lothario](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Every year, the Gant family performs an annual ritual desecrating the tomb of Aurora Bing. The Gants have held a grudge against the legendary silent film star for almost eighty years, but for Sherm Gant and his son, things have become personal. Aurora's only grandchild, Hubie Swope, has shut down Sherm's notoriously rowdy beachfront bar, and refuses to allow The Pit to reopen until Shem undertakes expensive upgrades. This means war. And when The Pit catches fire and Hubie Swope's charred remains are found in the rubble, it also means murder. Who killed Hubie Swope? Crime-fighting duo Mitch Berger and Des Mitry have no idea. 11th in a kind of cozy series, not too much so, set around Dorset, Connecticut.

Henshaw, Mark. [The Fall of Moscow Station](#) (Touchstone \$26). When a body with Russian military tattoos is found floating in a

lake outside Berlin, the CIA immediately takes notice. The body is identified as the director of Russia's Foundation for Advanced Nuclear Research, who is also a CIA asset. And the murder coincides with the defection of one of the CIA's upper-level officers. Alden Maines is jaded after years in the CIA cleaning up the messes of incompetent political appointees in dangerous foreign posts. When he is passed over for promotion, Maines crosses the Rubicon and decides to cash in as a double agent for Russia. But while Maines dreams of off-shore bank accounts and a new secret life, Arkady Lavrov of Russia's intelligence service (GRU) has other plans. He immediately announces Maines's defection to the world and then pumps him for every last ounce of intel, including the names of every agent in the CIA's Moscow Station and their assets working in the Kremlin. But why would Lavrov burn an asset whose intel and access could pay dividends for years to come? What is Lavrov up to? Traveling from Langley to Berlin and finally Moscow—working black without backup—analyst Jonathan Burke and agent Kyra Stryker are up against their most formidable enemy yet, and their lives and the fate of America's most important assets in the New Cold War hang in the balance.

Holt, Anne. [The Lion's Mouth](#) (Scribner \$25). The British have no monopoly on keeping a lid on potential embarrassment to politicians, to the Establishment. Think of this as part of the Scandinavian Crime Wave but more a political thriller than one with cults and suppressed sex/rage. The Norwegian Prime Minister is found dead. She has been shot in the head. But was her assassination politically motivated, or down to someone's desire for personal revenge? Hanne Wilhelmsen, Chief Inspector of the Norwegian Police, is on leave in California but when the death shakes the country to its core. Her guy Billy T at the PD clues her in quickly and Hanne abandons her leave in California to get off the sidelines of this major investigation. The hunt for the Prime Minister's killer is complicated, intense, and grueling. When secrets begin to unravel from the Prime Minister's past, Hanne and Billy T. race to pierce the puzzle before a private tragedy becomes a public outcry, in what will become the most sensitive case of their career. Well done, something different from Edgar-nominated author and former Norway Minister for Justice Holt.

Hoover, Colleen. [November 9](#) (Atria \$16). This is a kind of love story between a writer called Ben who hopes to produce a novel, and Fallon, who meets him on the day of her scheduled cross-country move and falls into the role of muse. They spend her last day in LA together where her colorful life becomes the source of inspiration Ben's been seeking. Over time and the course of separate lives they continue to meet on the same date every year (OK, this was a movie plot in *Same Time, Next Year*). But gradually Fallon, whose life has taken a tough turn, begins to wonder if Ben is fabricating a perfect reality for the sake of an ultimate plot twist. Can this be a love story if it ends in heartbreak? Not ducking human nature, this is at core a sweet story.

Joinson, Suzanne. [The Photographer's Wife](#) (Bloomsbury \$26). In 1920s Jerusalem, civic advisor and architect Charles Ashton has an ambitious project to redesign the Holy City by importing English parks to the desert and knocking down Ottoman minarets. He employs William Harrington, a British pilot, to take aerial photographs of the city and surrounding desert. At this time, Palestine, under British administration, is a surprisingly peaceful mix of characters; British colonials, exiled Armenians, and Greek,

Arab, and Jewish officials rub elbows, but tensions are growing and there are simmers of trouble ahead. Eleanora, the young English wife of a famous Jerusalem photographer, meets and falls for William Harrington, threatening her marriage, particularly when William discovers that Eleanora's husband is part of an underground nationalist group intent on removing the British. Years later, in 1937, Ashton's daughter Prue is an artist living a reclusive life in Shoreham, Sussex with her son, having escaped the pressures of the London art world in the aftermath of the Surrealist exhibitions and a damaging marriage. Harrington arrives and what he reveals unravels her world, and she must follow the threads that lead her back to secrets long-ago buried in Jerusalem.

Kalla, Daniel. [Nightfall Over Shanghai](#) (Forge \$27.99). We're in the Pacific theater of WWII, 1944, in one of the few cities, indeed places, that took in Jews fleeing the Nazis. Dr. Franz Adler and his daughter Hannah have gradually adjusted to their new and unusual life in the Shanghai Ghetto. Franz is compelled to work as a surgeon for the despised Japanese military while his Eurasian wife Sunny joins spy ring funneling information to the Allies about the port. This draws Hannah into a perilous op while she's also flirting with the Zionists. Then a major Japanese offensive forces Franz inland to work as a field doctor and into the orbit of a fragile Canadian nurse. Soon it's 1945 with American B-52s circling the city and the prospect of post-war lives perhaps a reality... if they survive. What will those new lives be?

Khan, Ausma Zehanat. [The Language of Secrets](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Kahn's second novel after [The Unquiet Dead](#) (\$15.99) again features Detective Esa Khattak, head of Toronto's Community Policing Section, and his partner Rachel Getty. The story begins with the killing at a training camp of one Moshin, apparently a jihadist but actually an undercover op. For months INSET, Canada's federal intelligence agency, had been investigating a local Muslim terrorist cell. Khattak head the murder inquiry and Rachel goes undercover into the ultra-conservative mosque. Is there a terrorist cell operating within it? And the larger question: is Moshin's death a consequence of ideology and politics, or something more personal? All the jockeying among agencies including the RCMP as well as local and federal law is familiar even if the Canadian context is less well known to American readers. The actual "Toronto 18" in part inspired Khan to write this story.

"Khan has brought every ounce of her intellect and professional experience in working with Muslim refugees to this affecting debut. Her use of certain mystery conventions echoes the masters... Yet for all of the echoes of the greats, Khan is a refreshing original, and *The Unquiet Dead* blazes what one hopes will be a new path guided by the author's keen understanding of the intersection of faith and core Muslim values, complex human nature and evil done by seemingly ordinary people. It is these qualities that make this a debut to remember and one that even those who eschew the genre will devour in one breathtaking sitting." —*LA Times*

✠Knight, Renee. [Disclaimer](#) (\$15.99). a 2015 First Mystery Club Pick now in paperback. What if you realized the terrifying book you were reading was all about you? When a mysterious novel appears at Catherine Ravenscroft's bedside, she is curious. She has no idea who might have sent her *The Perfect Stranger*—or how it ended up on her nightstand. At first, she is intrigued by

the suspenseful story that unfolds. And then she realizes—this isn't fiction. And Catherine's past, the dark secret that holds her hostage, starts her world falling apart....

✠Lambdin, Dewey. [A Hard Cruel Shore](#) (St Martins \$26.99). "Check the log, shipmate: Dewey Lambdin has left Alexander Kent and C.S. Forester hull-down in an ocean of words and is closing on Patrick O'Brian as the most prolific historical novelist to celebrate a Royal Navy mariner during the age of sail." —*The Washington Times*. The year 1809 starts out badly for Captain Alan Lewrie, Royal Navy, and his ship, *HMS Sapphire*. They've extracted the sick, cold survivors of Sir John Moore's army from disaster at Corunna, got hit by lightning while escorting the army to England, and suffered a shattered mainmast which may end Lewrie's active commission if a replacement can't be found or fashioned soon. Admiralty needs troopships, not slow, old Fourth Rate two-deckers, so Lewrie must beg, borrow, steal, and gild the facts most glibly if he wishes to keep her and her skilled crew together. Just when he imagines he's succeeded, new orders come appointing him a Commodore over a wee squadron assigned to prey upon French seaborne supply convoys off the treacherous north coast of Spain, better known as the *Costa da Morte*, the Coast of Death, where the sea may be the most dangerous foe. Lambdin's latest paperback: [Kings and Emperors](#) (\$17.99)

✠Lewis, Ted. [GBH](#) (Soho \$14.95). One of Soho Press' principals delights in classic British crime and is bringing some back into print. It runs to the hardboiled side in contrast to the British Library Crime Classics which are more Christie/Allingham/Sayers. George Fowler heads a lucrative criminal syndicate in 1970s London that specializes in illegal pornography. Fowler is king, with a beautiful woman at his side and a swanky penthouse office, but his world is in jeopardy. Someone is undermining his empire from within, and Fowler becomes increasingly ruthless in his pursuit of the unknown traitor, trusting an ever smaller set of advisers. Juxtaposed with the terror and violence of Fowler's last days in London is the flash-forward narrative of his hideout bunker in a tiny English beach town, where he skulks during the off-season, trying to salvage his fallen empire. Just as it seems possible for Fowler to rise again, another trigger may cause his total, irreparable unraveling.

✠Locke, Thomas (Davis Bunn). [Merchant of Alyss](#) (Revell \$14.95). Another winning fantasy this month follows the path of Hyam who, now making his home in Falmouth Port with wife Jolene and working to recover from earlier battles, receives a mysterious shipment of ancient Mylantian scrolls and begins a journey to uncover their meaning. Mythic beasts, unimaginable powers... a quest for deliverance... ah, channeling *Lord of the Rings*.

Lupton, Rosamund. [The Quality of Silence](#) (Crown \$26). For some British authors, Alaska is an irresistible allure, a dangerous landscape, wild, remote, unpopulated where you can set a story that will never fit into Britain. Lupton, a terrific author, tries her hand at such suspense. I think she nails young Ruby, a remarkable deaf child who's the principal point of view narrator, but the perp is more or less a cliché. *PW* likes it more than I, awarding it this review: "Astrophysicist Yasmin Alfredson makes a desperate gamble to save her marriage and flies with her deaf 10-year-old daughter, Ruby, from their home in London to Alaska, where her husband, Matt, a wildlife filmmaker, has been shooting in a

remote area north of the Arctic Circle. At the airport in Fairbanks, police tell a stunned Yasmin that Matt is dead, one of two dozen victims of a freakish fire that wiped out the Inuit hamlet where he was based. But in the absence of identifiable remains, she isn't buying it, and even in the face of a looming winter storm, she resolves to get herself and Ruby, whom she has managed to keep somewhat shielded from the news (despite what the girl can glean from lip reading), the almost 500 miles on a two-lane ice road to hunt for her husband. Lupton limns a starkly beautiful story at once as expansive as the aurora borealis and as intimate as a mother and daughter finally learning to truly hear each another."

Margolin, Phillip. [Violent Crimes](#) (Harper \$26.99). Portland's attorney Amanda Jaffe, a veteran defender, is hired to defend Brandon Masterson, son of a senior partner at a huge Oregon firm representing oil and coal companies who is found beaten to death in his mansion. One of Dale Masterston's colleagues had earlier been killed, putting the Masterston firm's business practices under scrutiny. Brandon was seen fleeing the family mansion and, eco warrior that he is, has confessed to killing his father on behalf of the people being ruined by Dale's practices. The question for Amanda: if Brandon is actually innocent but embracing martyrdom, who is the killer of one or both attorneys?

McKenzie, Elizabeth. [The Portable Veblen](#) (Penguin \$26). An Indie Next Pick getting a lot of buzz begins when Veblen Amundsen-Hovda and Paul Vreelend fall in love and start down a rocky path to the aisle. Paul, an ambitious Stanford doctor, is perfecting a device that will minimize battlefield brain trauma. Named for Thorsten Veblen, the "conspicuous consumption" economist and author of *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Veblen is an "experienced cheerer-upper, and freelance self," a temp and amateur translator of Norwegian—and she's thrilled with Paul's altruistic goals. Will Paul's "peacenik" hippie parents, or Veblen's narcissistic hypochondriac mother, or the heiress of Hutmacher Pharmaceuticals, with her eye on Paul's invention (and Paul), sour the romance? We could ask the squirrel. As Paul and Veblen navigate the obligatory meeting of the families and planning their wedding, Paul starts trials at a VA hospital for his invention. McKenzie satirically juxtaposes the grim reality of wounded veterans with the military bureaucracy, and big pharma wheedling its share. When Hutmacher rushes the product into production, Paul blows the whistle—with disastrous results.

Montes, Raphael. [Perfect Days](#) (Penguin \$26). Here's an unusual novel of suspense in the Patricia Highsmith/*Talented Mr. Ripley* vein. The setting is Brazil. The focus is a twisted young medical student called Teo Avelar, a loner living with his paraplegic mother and her dog in Rio. Teo feels no emotion other than in the presence of his special med school cadaver Gertrude, an old woman at death who is giving up her secrets. Then Teo meets aspiring screenwriter Clarice who's exciting, exotic, spontaneous, a real talker. Her screenplay is called "Perfect Days" about three friends who take a road trip in search of romance. Teo becomes obsessed with Clarice, stalks her on campus and at home, and finally kidnaps her in order to embark on that very odyssey she's writing. He's certain that in time, despite the stress of captivity, she will come to love him. No one must be allowed to stop the life together he envisions. And then... Montes' English language debut drips with irony and delivers a real punch. No peeking!

Nesbø, Jo. [Midnight Sun Signed](#) (Knopf \$25). Jon is a "fixer," or hit man, who has done jobs for an Oslo crime boss known as the Fisherman, has fled the city for Kåsund, a tiny village in the far north populated by Sami (Lapps) and dominated by a very strict religious ethos. Taking refuge in a church, he tells the townspeople he meets that his name is Ulf. "A stranger in a strange land, Ulf slowly reveals what led him to leave Oslo: a failed hit and a theft that has Johnny Moe, the Fisherman's henchman, after him. Ulf is a bad boy with a heart of gold; he got into trouble because he was trying to help someone close to him. His self-mocking deprecations are endearing: "Not that I'm an irresponsible or careless person; I've just got really bad judgment." Immaculately plotted and perfectly paced, the book is also darkly funny and deadly serious. Scandinavian gloom notwithstanding."—*PW*

✠Nickson, Chris. [Skin Like Silver](#) (Severn \$28.95). Leeds, England. October, 1891. An unclaimed parcel at the Central Post Office is discovered to contain the decomposing body of a baby boy. It's a gruesome case for DI Tom Harper. Then a fire during the night destroys half the railway station. The next day a woman's body is found in the rubble. But Catherine Carr didn't die in the blaze: she'd been stabbed to death – and Harper has to find her killer. The estranged wife of a wealthy industrialist, Catherine had been involved with the Leeds Suffragist Society, demanding votes for women, the same organization for which Harper's wife Annabelle has just become a speaker. Were Catherine's politics the cause of her death? Or is the husband she abandoned behind it? What happens when her brother escapes from the asylum? DI Tom Harper's 3rd Victorian investigation. Ordered Upon Request.

Ould, Chris. [Blood Strand](#) (Forge \$14.95). I checked, this is the first of at least three books set on the Faroe Islands, situated between Scotland and Iceland and actually becoming not just a tourist destination but a foodie scene. However, British cop Jan Reyna, who left the islands as a child, finds them foreign. He's back because his estranged father, the one his mother left taking Jan with her, has been found unconscious at a remote scene, with a shotgun by his side and someone else's blood. Signar Ravnsfjall isn't dead—he's had a stroke and remains in a coma. What happened? Although Jan has come to learn, if he can, the story of his parents, he inevitably falls in with local Detective Hjalti Hentze who's working the case. It grows more complex. And although the particular case is solved, Ould leaves plenty of loose ends to tie up in succeeding books scheduled for 2017 and 2018. The landscape is fascinating, and sure to appeal to readers of Ann Cleeves and Arnaldur Indridason as well as Henning Mankell.

✠Pears, Iain. [Arcadia](#) (Knopf \$27.95). Pears still uses his keen knowledge of history and art to bring us a hugely imaginative book. In 1960s Oxford, Professor Henry Lytten is attempting to write a fantasy novel that forgoes the magic of his predecessors, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. He finds an unlikely confidante in his quick-witted, inquisitive young neighbor Rosie. One day, while chasing Lytten's cat, Rosie encounters a doorway in his cellar. She steps through and finds herself in an idyllic, pastoral land where Storytellers are revered above all others. There she meets a young man who is about to embark on a quest of his own—and may be the one chance Rosie has of returning home. These breathtaking adventures ultimately intertwine with the story of an eccentric psychomathematician whose breakthrough discovery will affect all of these different lives and world.

✂Pinborough, Sarah. [Murder](#) (\$14.99). Haunted by the nerve-shattering events he endured during the Jack the Ripper and Thames Torso Killer investigations, troubled Victorian forensics expert Dr. Thomas Bond is trying to reestablish the normal routines of daily life. Aiding in his recovery is the growing possibility that his long-held affections for the recently widowed Juliana Harrington might finally be reciprocated. He begins to allow himself to dream of one day forming a family with her and her young boy. Soon, however, a new suitor arrives in London, challenging the doctor's claims on Juliana's happiness. Worse, it seems the evil creature that Dr. Bond had wrestled with during the Ripper and Torso Killer investigations is back and stronger than ever. As the corpses of murdered children begin to turn up in the Thames, the police surgeon finds himself once again in a life-and-death struggle with an uncanny,

Pyper, Andrew. [The Damned](#) (\$15.99). Most people who have a near-death experience come back alone...but not Danny Orchard. After he survived a fire that claimed the life of his evil twin sister, Ashleigh, Danny wrote a bestselling memoir about going to heaven and back. But despite the resulting fame and fortune, he's never been able to enjoy his second chance at life: Ash won't let him. She's haunted Danny for twenty years and now, just when he's met the love of his life and has a chance at real happiness, she wants more than ever to punish him for being alive—so she sets her sights on Danny's new wife and stepson. To save them from her wrath, he'll have to connect with Ash and hope to keep her in hell forever. Canadian Pyper is a killed writer with a vivid imagination. He has a film deal for this one.

Ramsay, Frederick. [The Vulture Signed](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95 Feb. 20). Dana Stabenow reviews: "In this tenth in Ramsay's Ike Schwartz series, Ike is nearly blown up by a car bomb and decides it's safer to stay dead while he figures out whodunnit. His outraged friends in the Picketsville, Virginia constabulary rush to find the killer, along with the FBI, the CIA and (my favorite) the Navy Seals, while the Big Bad is intent on killing everyone who might lead back to him and in making sure Ike is dead, too. This was a quick, fun read, even if a lot of the action does happen offstage, and I really like Ike and Ruth's relationship. Plus there are all those little one-off scenes that have nothing to do with the plot but everything to do with the tongue-in-cheek tone Ramsay is so good at, like when Ike and Ruth rent a car in Idaho and the car rental folks, who have nothing whatever to do with the main plot, carry on with their own lives for a page."

Redling, SG. [Baggage](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95) introduces readers to the secretive and violent world Anna Ray has tried so hard to leave—but is never far behind. Tormented by the events of February 17—when her parents were killed and her husband committed suicide twenty-years-later—Anna flees across the country to be with her only remaining family. Determined to get a fresh start, Anna tries to put the past behind her but is unable to when the infamous day approaches, and she's framed for murder. What follows is a complex narrative, as Anna tries to uncover the real culprit and attempts to recover from the tragedy of her childhood.

Rhoades, JD. [Ice Chest](#) (Polis \$24). "Every one of these characters could star in his or her own thriller...together they comprise an ensemble that delivers nonstop entertainment. Does Rhoades do comic caper novels better than he does high-octane thrillers?

Too close to call." —*Booklist* Starred Review. Clarissa Cartwright, the planet's most famous beauty, is about to take the stage wearing a fortune in jewels, and not much else. In the wings, a motley crew of bumbling crooks is scheming to make off with the biggest heist of their careers: five and a half million dollars in precious stones, used to create the world's most expensive piece of lingerie. But mix the glitz and glamour of the highest of high fashion with a team of crooks that would have trouble stealing a sandwich from a deli, and all bets are off. When the robbers find themselves pursued by both the intimidating ex-cop tasked with protecting the world's most valuable piece of lingerie and Clarissa's insanely jealous and mobbed-up ex-boyfriend, things get ugly. Especially when Clarissa decides she's had enough of being an object and decides to turn the tables on both the crooks and the fashion world...

Ross, Loretta. [Death & the Brewmaster's Widow](#) (Midnight Ink \$14.99). When firefighter Randy Bogart perishes in the fire at an abandoned brewery known as the Brewmaster's Widow, Death Bogart and his girlfriend Wren Morgan travel to St. Louis, Missouri, where they discover that Randy had left his badge behind at the firehouse before going to the brewery. But the coroner finds another badge on Randy's body, leaving Death and Wren with more questions than answers. Desperate to know what really happened, Death and Wren dig into leads that connect the arson and Randy's death to the mysterious Cherokee Caves once used by nineteenth-century beer barons. 2nd in series.

Ruff, Matt. [Lovecraft Country](#) (Harper \$26.99). Part historical fiction, part fantasy homage, critically acclaimed cult novelist Matt Ruff's new novel tracks a 1950s black family whose trip to New England reveals a secret order and leads them into unexpected adventures that meld their real world terrors of life in Jim Crow America, with objects of the supernatural fiction of H.P. Lovecraft. "A chimerical blend of magic, power, hope, and freedom that stretches across time, touching diverse members of two black families, *Lovecraft Country* is a devastating kaleidoscopic portrait of racism—and of how hard it was to be a Black fan of mid-20th-century science fiction.

Sendker, Jan-Phillip. [Whispering Shadows](#) (\$16). The Berlin author's debut is billed as Book #1 in the Rising Dragon Series. I recall I thought the hardcover was original and compelling in both story and prose, not to mention its cynical take on corruption. Once an ambitious American expat and a dedicated family man, Paul Leibovitz is living as a recluse on an outlying island of Hong Kong. When he makes a fleeting connection with Elizabeth, a distressed American woman on the verge of collapse, his life is thrown into turmoil. Less than twenty-four hours later, Elizabeth's son is found dead in Shenzhen, and Paul, invigorated by a newfound purpose, sets out to investigate the murder on his own. As Paul, Elizabeth, and a detective friend descend deeper into a politically corrupt China and the Shenzhen underworld—against the wishes of a woman with whom Paul has a growing flirtation—they discover dark secrets and vestiges of the Cultural Revolution that people will go to any lengths to keep hidden. Part love story, part crime thriller. I'm already looking out for Book #2.

Shaw, Johnny. [Floodgate Signed](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). Unless you read Shaw, an Anthony Award winner for Best Paperback, it's hard to grasp the raw power of his voice and his plotting. Part of his punch is that everyone in his books is at

risk. 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. And if Andy doesn't solve this case, the Floodgate will fall and his city burn.

Sherry, Maureen. [Opening Belle](#) (SimonSchuster \$25). "*Working Girl or Devil in Prada* meets *Wolf of Wall Street* in this in-depth, sharp yet compassionate behind-the-pinstripe peek inside a temple of elite finance. In 2008, Isabelle—a self-made, thirty-something Wall Street star—appears to have it all: an Upper West Side apartment, three healthy children, a handsome husband, and a high-powered job. But her reality is something else. Her trading desk work environment resembles a 1980s frat party, her husband feels employment is beneath him, and the bulk of childcare and home care still falls in Belle's already full lap. Enter Henry, the former college fiancé she never quite got over; now a hedge fund mogul. He becomes her largest client, and Belle gets to see the life she might have had with him. While Henry campaigns to win Belle back, the sexually harassed women in her office take action to improve their working conditions, and recruit a wary Belle into a secret "glass ceiling club" whose goal is to mellow the cowboy banking culture and get equal pay for their work. All along, Belle can sense the financial markets heading toward their soon-to-be historic crash and that something has to give—and when it does, everything is going to change: her marriage, her career, her world, and her need to keep her colleagues' hands to themselves. From Maureen Sherry, a prize winning writer, a former Managing Director on Wall Street (who never signed a nondisclosure agreement when she left), *Opening Belle* takes readers into the adrenaline-fueled chaos of a Wall Street trading desk, the lavish parties, the lunch-time rendezvous, and ultimately into the heart of a woman who finds it easier to cook up millions at work than dinner at home.

Simonon, George. [Blue Room](#) (\$12); [Cellars of the Majestic](#) (\$11); [Judge's House](#) (\$11). Three more reissues in the Penguin Mairgret republication project.

Straub, Peter. [Interior Darkness](#) (Doubleday \$28.95). This outstanding collection of 16 reprints highlights what makes Straub such a master of genre-bending horror and suspense, and it's an effective introduction for readers new to his considerable body of work. Each story has merit, though a few of the quickies don't punch as hard as the longer works. In the deeply unsettling and uncomfortable "Blue Rose," a young Harry Beevers (who appears as an adult in 1998's *Koko*) reacts to his troubled home life by doing very bad things to his younger brother. New in paperback: [Ghost Story](#) (\$15)

Tallis, F R. [The Passenger](#) (Pantheon \$25.95). It's 1941. A German U330 patrols the roiling waters of the North Atlantic commanded by maverick SS officer Siegfried Lorenz, a man who does not believe in the war he's bound to fight in. U-3330

receives a triple-encoded message: collect two prisoners from a vessel off Iceland and transport them to base at Brest. One is British submarine captain Sutherland, the other a Norwegian academic, Grimstad. This special mission has been ordered by an unidentified someone high up the command chain. Grimstad may be key to a horrifying secret weapon. Then Sutherland goes rogue and shocking incidents rattle U-330 and its crew, suggesting some force is stalking them, wrestling with Lorenz for control. So... scare your socks off horror. New in paperback: [Voices](#) (\$15.95)

✠Todd, Charles. [No Shred of Evidence Signed](#) (Harper \$25.99 Feb. 23). I'm giving a Star to this excellent case for Inspector Ian Rutledge of the Yard. For one, it returns him, and us, to Cornwall, that beautiful Duchy where tragedy stalked his second case. For another, while not a series prequel, it's very personal, illuminating his relationship with his fiancée Jean, whom he released from the engagement when she didn't want to cope with his wartime trauma, and Jean's family. This is the most we know about Rutledge the man so far. And third, it's a baffling puzzle and predicament for the four women accused of murder, and their families. Very county and country house... or so we think. And as an extra treat, Todd presents [Tales: Short Stories Featuring Ian Rutledge and Bess Crawford](#) (\$11.99).

Tripp, Dawn. [Georgia, A Novel of Georgia O'Keeffe Signed](#) (Random \$28). And here is another strong recommendation for a fascinating book, akin to Nancy Horan's bestseller *Loving Frank*. "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."

White, Dave. [Empty Hell](#) (Polis \$14.95). A year after the devastating events of *Not Even Past*, Jackson Donne has gone into hiding in the forest of Vermont. Under the guise of Joe Tennant, Donne has created a totally new life for himself—until one of the few friends he's made goes missing. Meanwhile, back in New Jersey, someone is killing ex-cops—the ones who Donne used to work with. Terrified Donne is committing the murders, a former colleague hires private investigator Matt Herrick to track down New Jersey's most famous fugitive. The closer Herrick gets to tracking Donne down, the more dangerous the case becomes. And once Donne and Herrick cross paths, the two cases tie together, and Donne realizes he must go back to the life he left behind. Because the past has come calling, and if Donne does face up to it, he and Herrick could lose everything, including their lives.

Zander, Joakim. [The Swimmer](#) (\$15.99). Klara Walldéen was raised by her grandparents on a remote archipelago in the Baltic Sea, learning to fish and hunt and sail a boat through a storm.

Now, as an EU Parliament aide in Brussels, she is learning how to navigate the treacherous currents of international politics: the lines between friend and enemy, truth and lies. But Klara has accidentally seen something she shouldn't have: a laptop containing information so sensitive that someone will kill to keep hidden. Suddenly, she is thrown into a terrifying chase across Europe, with no idea who is hunting her or why. Meanwhile, in Virginia, an old spy hides from his past. Once, he was a deep cover CIA agent, an operative so dedicated that he abandoned his infant daughter to keep his cover. Now, he is the only man who can save Klara. And only she can allay his past. A debut now in paperback.