

# BOOKNEWS from

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## Happy New Year! Here is a short Booknews to kick it off in style with terrific authors and books

### AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

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

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 7 Program with Photos 7:00 PM

**Douglas Preston** signs [The Lost City of the Monkey God](#) (Grand Central \$28)

Our copies come with a Signed photo of Doug on expedition

**Location:** Hilton Resort 6333 N Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale AZ

**Time:** Kiva Room Patio Cash Bar Opens 5:30 PM Program 7:00 PM

Free to attend. Free valet parking.

#### TUESDAY JANUARY 10 A Duo of Thrills

**Thomas Perry** signs [The Old Man](#) (Grove/Mysterious \$26)

**Erich Wurster** signs [The Coaster](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95)

#### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 11 A Trio of Thrills

**Nicholas Petrie** signs [Burning Bright](#) (Putnam \$26) Peter Ash #2

**Brad Taylor** signs [Ring of Fire](#) (Dutton \$27) Pike Logan #11

**Ingrid Thoft** signs [Duplicity](#) (Putnam \$25) PI Fina Ludlow #4

#### THURSDAY JANUARY 12

**Tasha Alexander** signs [A Terrible Beauty](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

Lady Emily #11

**Andrew Grant** signs [False Friend](#) (Ballantine \$27) Cooper Devereaux #2

**Deanna Raybourn** signs [A Perilous Undertaking](#) (Berkley \$26)

Veronica Speedwell #2

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 14 10:30 AM

**Coffee and Crime** discusses Dorothy Gilman's [The Unexpected Mrs. Pollifax](#) (\$7.99)

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 14 2:00 PM

**K.T. Roberts** signs [Blind Retribution](#) (Montlake \$12.95)

#### TUESDAY JANUARY 17 7:00 PM

**Mette Ivie Harrison** signs [For Time and All Eternities](#) (Soho \$26.95) The Bishop's Wife #3

#### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 18 7:00 PM

**Gregg Hurwitz** signs [The Nowhere Man](#) (St Martins \$25.99) Orphan X #2

#### FRIDAY JANUARY 20 7:00 PM

**SciFi/Fantasy Club** discusses NK Jimison's [Fifth Season](#) (Orbit \$15.95)

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 21 10:30 AM

**Croak & Dagger** discusses Julia Keller, [A Killing in the Hills](#) (\$15.99)

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 21 2:00 PM

**Beatriz Williams** signs [The Wicked City](#) (Harper \$26.99) Contemporary and Jazz Age suspense

#### TUESDAY JANUARY 24 2:00 PM

**British Tea with Claire Mackintosh**

Attendees will receive a free Advance Reading Copy of her second novel *I See You* which publishes February 21

She will sign the paperback edition of bestseller [I Let You Go](#) (\$16)

## EVENT BOOKS

Alexander, Tasha. [A Terrible Beauty](#) (St Martins \$26.99) Lady Emily #11. It was always a possibility that Lady Emily's husband, lost in Africa, would reappear. Which would make her marriage to Colin bigamous and not spare their children. When Lady Emily and Colin arrive with friends on the beautiful Greek island of Santorini for a holiday, who is the man taking refuge in her beautiful house? This is a lively chapter in an excellent Victorian series powered by a widow's grief and regrets in the early chapters, then by courtship and joy, and always by tricky crimes that arise in a variety of locales. [Order them all here](#) for a winter escape reading binge.

Grant, Andrew. [False Friend](#) (Ballantine \$27). Andrew, married to Tasha, joins us with the second investigation for Birmingham, Alabama's Cooper Devereaux. He's a cop with the same non-team-player streak as Harry Bosch and charges into the investigation of an arsonist who is targeting schools. But it's much more complicated a set of crimes than that, calling in the FBI, city officials, even the local underworld. Lots of adrenaline flows here, and good writing. I find it fascinating that Grant, like his brother Lee Child, is a Brit writing American crime fiction...convincingly. He's signed all his books at The Pen and we're pleased to see him on track with the Devereaux series. Start with [False Positive](#) (\$9.99 or \$27 Signed).

Harrison, Mette Ivie. [For Time and All Eternities](#) (Soho \$26.95). Harrison's 3<sup>rd</sup> investigation for the Mormon bishop's wife is wrenching, and wrestles with conflicting views about polygamy and the roots of Mormonism. It is not a comfortable read, but it is thought-provoking. In Harrison's thought-provoking third Linda Wallheim, a conflicted Mormon wife and mother in Draper, Utah, has doubts about church doctrine that put a strain on her marriage. When her agnostic son, Kenneth, becomes engaged to Naomi Carter, whose physician father, Stephen, is the patriarch of a polygamist sect, Naomi asks Linda to visit her family's compound and help determine whether her nine-year-old sister, Talitha, is being abused. At the compound, in a part of the state 'off the map,' Linda discovers that not all of Stephen's five wives are happy with their situation. When a murder occurs and the wives refuse to call the police for fear of losing their children, Linda once again turns sleuth. Never mind the contrived solution or that no one affected by the murder seems that distressed. The plight of a woman who's struggling with a crisis of faith makes this Harrison's most powerful and personal novel yet." Read them in order: [The Bishop's Wife](#) (\$15.95), a bestseller; [His Right Hand](#) (\$15.95; \$26.95 Signed).

Hurwitz, Gregg. [The Nowhere Man](#) (St Martins \$25.99). This is the sequel to awesome series start [Orphan X](#) (\$9.99), one of my favorite thrillers of 2016. Don't miss Evan's second which gains this Starred Review: "Evan Smoak (aka the Nowhere Man), who used to be an assassin for the Orphan Program, a covert U.S. government agency, now lives in a fortified penthouse overlooking Los Angeles, in bestseller Hurwitz's stellar sequel to 2016's *Orphan X*. Evan masquerades as an importer of industrial cleaning supplies, but he's actually atoning for his murderous past by saving persons in need of help. He only asks that each

rescued person refer him to someone else who needs his services. Despite meticulous efforts to maintain his cover, Evan faces many enemies who wish him grievous harm. One of them is Charles Van Sciver, the most brutal of the Orphans, who's now running the program and is on a mission to hunt down former members of the organization. Evan's efforts to elude Van Sciver and company will keep readers on the edge of their seats, but it's Hurwitz's engaging, sympathetic characters who place this thriller above the pack."

Perry, Thomas. [The Old Man](#) (Grove/Mysterious \$26). I've never met a Perry I didn't like, all the way from Edgar winner [The Butcher's Boy](#) (\$17) to 2016's fab caper [Forty Thieves](#) (\$16: \$26 Signed). And he's outdone himself again with a lead similar to Petrie's Peter Ash in some ways, and laced with Jane Whitefield, for Dan Chase is a man on the run (with two black Labs called Dave and Carol who steal the book). The why of it and from whom are gradually revealed. Love the scenes in Chicago. The Indie Next Pick: "Dan Chase is a wealthy old man living a quiet life after the death of his wife and his daughter's move to another part of the country. But wait — he is being followed, and then his house is broken into and he has to kill the intruder. Next, the old man turns to his 'go' bag as it seems he has many identities, stashes of currency, and a plan to disappear. There are secrets to be discovered all throughout this tale and Perry keeps readers wondering what will come next. This is definitely one of Perry's best!"

Petrie, Nicholas. [Burning Bright](#) (Putnam \$26). As I emailed Nick: "It's not often a second novel is as good as or better than the first but you pulled it off. I've never climbed a sequoia but as a Stanford undergrad I spent plenty of time in California redwood forests and think you captured their magic along with a brilliant depiction of what it would be like to climb one. Inevitably Peter is going to have to change his direction but in this our **January Thriller Club Pick** you once again nail him—action like Jack Reacher, but with heart." Speaking of which, he meets his match here. The Indie Next Pick: "*Burning Bright* solidifies Petrie's place among the best thriller writers working today. His hero, Peter Ash, wanders from town to town, living outdoors because his PTSD will not allow him to remain inside walls for very long. When he discovers a woman on the run from shadowy killers, Ash knows he must help her in spite of his near-crippling claustrophobia. Petrie gives us characters we love, warts and all, and there is a true sense of forward propulsion to his action-packed tale. Peter Ash is a hero for today." Absolutely start with 2016 First Mystery Club Pick [The Drifter](#) (\$16)—see, there's that likeness to Reacher again.

Preston, Douglas. [The Lost City of the Monkey God](#) (Grand Central \$28). This fabulous book was the joy of my heart at the holidays. It has everything one could want: high adventure, a city hidden by centuries of virgin Honduran jungle, cool new technology, deadly and horrible ancient dangers like leishmaniasis and deadly fer-de-lance vipers, intrepid archaeologists intent on demonstrating that myth can be rooted in fact, photographers, and reporter Preston on assignment early on from the *New Yorker* and then *National Geographic*—and, above all, a polished, alluring narrative voice. I've bought copies for New Year's gifts for

family and friends. This, our **January Modern First Editions Club Pick** (it reads like a thriller!), was snatched from my hands by Dana Stabenow who writes a [stunning, insightful review](#) of the book which I strongly recommend you read. Our copies come with an exclusive signed photo of Doug on expedition (and suited up for it). **Note: if you order two-plus copies, or one or more copies plus one or more copies of [The Obsidian Chamber](#), you get free shipping to January 14 to the continental US (Alaska, Hawaii, and international shipments get a \$5 credit).**

Roberts, K T. [Blind Retribution](#) (Montlake \$12.95). Women's fiction often starts with a life-changing event, tragic like a death, or terrible like a job loss or a fiancé who breaks up and then tactlessly blogs it. Both events occur here: Kate's new husband Jonathan dies in an accident and it occurs at a party celebrating Kate's half-sister Ainsley's fiancé's successful fight against cancer. So Kate is a widow and Ainsley is almost as quickly dumped as Eric decides on a new start in Alaska. So there they are in Cambry-on-Hudson, two women, lives shattered, sharing a murky blended family history and for Kate, Nathan's second wife, the grief of his family as well. The story arc is how they move on from there and it's engaging, told with warmth, not skirting the awful in favor of funny but managing both. And Roberts introduces one variation in genre that is surprising and special. She's not Jodi Picoult but there's just a bit of Jodi here.

Raybourn, Deanna. [A Perilous Undertaking](#) (Berkley \$26). Raybourn's effervescent sequel to 2015's [A Curious Beginning](#) (\$15) combines witty suspense with a playful look at the secrets proper Victorians hid. When Veronica, an adventurous lepidopterist, meets a woman calling herself Lady Sundridge, she easily deduces her exalted true identity. Lady Sundridge wants Veronica to reinvestigate the murder of an artist known as Artemisia. Though she wants her late friend's death avenged, the woman insists that Artemisia's lover, Miles Ramsforth, soon to be hanged for the crime, is not guilty. Veronica and her associate, aristocratic natural historian Revelstoke "Stoker" Templeton-Vane, wend their way through opium dens, artists' studios, the headquarters of Scotland Yard, and the Elysian Grotto, an underground cave lavishly fitted out for sexual pleasure on the Ramsforth estate. The sleuths' lives are threatened as their investigation uncovers peccadillos at the highest levels of society. Revelations about Stoker's painful past add nuance to the pair's spirited and sexually charged banter in this playful historical. I don't often repeat a Pick by the same author but this is one of those miraculous sequels that is better than the first book so it's our **January History Pick**. Don't miss it! Raybourn is back in the form that made her bestselling Lady Julia Grey Victorian mystery series so fabulous: a combination of stylish writing, wit, period mastery, plot, and playfully discreet sex.

Taylor, Brad. [Ring of Fire](#) (Dutton \$27). Shortly before 9/11, the about-to-go-under CEO of a small Florida-based aircraft maintenance firm filled an emergency order for a Saudi prince and made a buddy of the son of a Saudi financier. One thing led to another good thing and eventually Dexter scraped together a bribe Tariq would forward that would allow Dexter to become a player in the defense industry. It works, Dexter rises in power, but then come the Panama Papers with their exposure of illicit offshore financing and Dexter knows they could prove his undoing. So he sets in motion a plan to stop the anticipated next leak. This same data

theft has left the Taskforce vulnerable and potentially compromised. So as they are back in the good graces of the president, Pike Logan and Jennifer Cahill are tasked with damage control. But unbeknownst to either Dexter or the Taskforce, the Saudi has been using the shell company to fund terrorists all over the world, and he has a spectacular attack planned, coinciding with the fifteenth anniversary of 9/11. Up to the minute, pertinent, and gripping, this is the 11<sup>th</sup> in former Delta Force officer Taylor's thrillers. [You can order #1-10.](#)

Thoft, Ingrid. [Duplicity](#) (Putnam \$25). Fina Ludlow prefers the role of investigator at Ludlow & Associates to that of lawyer like her father and brothers. Her family is bruising in its members' personal lives. And there was always going to be a day of reckoning when Rand, the oldest brother lawyer exiled to Florida for crimes committed in an earlier book, returns to Boston if not to their bosom. Fina is outraged. She's also hooked into an investigation requested by a long-ago lover of her father, Carl, head of the powerhouse family personal injury firm, who is worried that her heiress daughter is giving away wealth to the Covenant Rising Church. Fina's assignment is to vet the church and its luxe-living pastor and wife.... The church investigation produces little surprise but that of one of its members does. I much admire Fina's spirit and enjoy her narrative voice. [Order Fina's three earlier investigations.](#) *Brutality* won last year's Shamus Award for Best PI Novel.

Williams, Beatriz. [The Wicked City](#) (Harper \$26.99). John Charles reviews: In 1920s New York City Geneva "Gin" Kelly spends her days earning a living working in the typing pool at Sterling Bates and her nights knocking back drinks with her new swain Billy Marshall at Christopher's Club, a speakeasy in the basement of her Greenwich Village Apartment building. Everything is swell until Revenue Agent Oliver Anson shows up one night with a business proposition for Gin. Oliver wants Gin to help him bust up Duke Kelly's - Gin's Stepfather - Appalachian bootlegging operation. While there is no love lost between Gin and Duke, Gin is reluctant to become involved in Oliver's plan until something forces her into accepting Oliver's challenge. Eight decades later, forensic accountant Ella Hawthorne moves into Gin's old apartment at 11 Christopher Street after she discovers her husband keeping company with a working girl. Not only does Ella find herself hearing strains of jazz late at night in her apartment building, her new business assignment sends her to Sterling Bates, where she finds herself becoming even more entangled in Gin's life. In her latest impeccably crafted, elegantly written novel, Williams mixes up a potent literary cocktail composed of a cast of compelling characters, an engaging plot spiked with plenty of danger, and an expertly constructed historical setting richly embellished with fascinating period details. Williams then serves up this addictively readable libation, which packs a potent punch, with a generous splash of sexy romance and a few nice twists of sharp humor. While *The Wicked City* is the first in a new series for Williams, long-time fans of the author's Schuyler family will be please to see how she works in a connection to those books as well. Exhilarating, escapist fun for anyone who enjoys historical fiction/women's fiction. [Order other Williams novels.](#)

Wurster, Erich. [The Coaster](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). A 2016 First Mystery Club Pick that has been awaiting the arrival of Kansas

attorney Wurster whom I scheduled to sign with Thomas Perry as Tom lent his skills to editing the book. So you will gather it's a caper, an unusual one with a unique voice in narrator Bob Patterson. Bob, law-school trained but more or less the house-husband of a wife who works for her mega-rich father, considers himself an Everyman. Until his father-in-law has a surprise heart attack and the Pattersons' world gradually becomes up-ended. "Sharks appear, and Patterson battles them, but this is not a heartwarming story of one man's redemption through steady employment. As he learns what this corner of corporate America is really up to, Patterson reveals a treacherous streak of his own. The style is witty and knowing, as when Patterson wishes he had a cold-blooded but loyal killer chum to rescue him, just like those pop-novel detectives. The violent finale boils with surprises, all the while staying mordantly funny. A rumbustious read."—*Booklist*. Also in paperback: [The Coaster](#) (\$15.95).

### BOOKS TO BEGIN A NEW YEAR

Brierley, Saroo. [Lion \(Movie Tie-In\)](#) (Penguin \$16). At only five years old, Saroo fell asleep on a train in India. Unable to read or write or recall the name of his hometown or even his own last name, he survived alone for weeks on the rough streets of Calcutta before ultimately being transferred to an agency and adopted by a couple in Australia. Despite his gratitude, Brierley always wondered about his origins. Eventually, with the advent of Google Earth, he had the opportunity to look for the needle in a haystack he once called home, and pore over satellite images for landmarks he might recognize or mathematical equations that might further narrow down the labyrinthine map of India. One day, after years of searching, he miraculously found what he was looking for and set off to find his family. This inspirational true story, originally titled *A Long Way Home* and now a movie starring Dev Patel, reminds us that the impossible can sometimes be achieved.

Friedman, Thomas. [Thank You for Being Late](#) (Penguin \$28). In an anxious and fractured world Friedman's thoughts about where we are and how we got here make a powerful impact. The best thing is to read [this penetrating essay](#) on the book in the *NY Times Book Review*. The technological supernova is making a joke of both patent law and education. Governments, companies and individuals are all struggling to keep up.... respire from these accelerations? There is none, there is not going to be, and Trumpian attempts to stop it all will do more damage than good. If Darwin was right, adapt or die, Friedman comes down on humans' adaptability as the positive. Rob and I have each ordered a copy to read on our own, then discuss (the book, not the review). Friedman's message is, it's going to be OK. Fingers crossed!

Ravikant, Kamal. [Rebirth: A Fable of Love, Forgiveness, and Following Your Heart](#) (Grove \$26). Almost broke, unsure about his direction in life, and running from memories, he is led by fate to the Camino de Santiago, an ancient 550-mile pilgrimage route across northern Spain. His month-long pilgrimage forces Amit to face life's big questions, and causes him to grow and embrace a new sense of purpose and being. Based on the author's experience of walking the legendary Camino de Santiago, and told in the tradition of Paulo Coelho and Mitch Albom, *Rebirth* is a beautiful fable about forgiveness, synchronicity, and the unexpected adventures that reveal who we are.

Schwalbe, Will. [Books for Living](#) (Knopf \$25.95). See Signed Books below. Schwalbe, author of *The End of Your Life Book Club*, focuses on a personal collection of books. Readers will remember favorite books, find new books to try, and lessons to think about. Schwalbe's book is warm, charming, and very personal. It's a book for all avid readers."

### SIGNED BOOKS SO FAR FOR JANUARY

✚Airth, Rennie. [Death of Kings](#) (Macmillan \$43). Due in early February but this is lots of advance notice as our supply is limited. Airth's first, [River of Darkness](#) (\$16), stays with me still as one of the best British mysteries I've read. It is set in a small, rural village with all the charms thereof and follows the inquiry led by Inspector John Madden who, soon after WWI ends, is sent down to inquire into a gruesome killing. The local police dismiss the slaughter as a botched robbery, but Madden detects signs of a madman at work. We follow Madden in three more amazing cases to 1947, watching him and his world change yet again. And now in his 5<sup>th</sup> investigation there is a cold crime, the murder of a lovely actress in 1938 on a grand Kent estate, which gets a second look when, in 1949, a jade necklace reappears. The retired Madden is tasked with reviewing whether the man hanged for the actress' murder was, in fact, guilty. I have to say that the resolution of the puzzle is the least satisfying of Airth's mysteries, but the portrait of Kent, of London, and the post-war period which in England went on far longer than in the US, is beautifully done and moving. And I like a book where, however horrible the crime, there is empathy for its perpetrator. [Order all the Maddens](#) and binge on an England no longer recognizable.

Chirovici, EO. [The Book of Mirrors](#) (Century \$45). Our **January First Mystery Club Pick** embraces faulty memories, outright lies, and secrets that make it hard to know whom to believe. The story is told in three parts. The first is a memoir or one Richard Flynn referencing his time at Princeton in the 1980s and the murder of famous Professor Joseph Wieder a night before Christmas, 1987. The case is still cold. So 25 years later, is Flynn now using this book, which has been submitted to literary agent Peter Katz, to reveal Wieder's killer? The story is then moved forward by two other men, the last a retired cop who worked the Wieder murder. This book has tremendous hype behind it, sales in 36 countries including later this year in the US. Reviews have been excellent – "A smart, sophisticated murder puzzle sure to please the more literary-minded aficionados of the form."—*Kirkus Reviews*.

Church, James. [The Gentleman from Japan](#) (St Martins \$27). This wonderful book got lost in the holiday rush so here is a new review for it: "Inspector O, formerly a police investigator in North Korea, is living with his nephew, Major Bing, in Yanji, China. Bing is chief of the Chinese Ministry of State Security operations on the border with North Korea, so he is called in when seven residents die on the same evening in four restaurants in the Yanji area. The mayor is calling it terrorism, but Bing isn't so sure. He thinks it might be a message from one gangster to another. Inspector O has heard mafia rumors too, but then he is suddenly approached to undertake a secret task in Portugal, posing as a businessman from Japan. Obedient to the call of an old friend, O heads for Europe and is swept into a confusing mission that spreads from Portugal to Spain. "A rather elliptical entry in an interesting series, *The Gentleman from Japan* showcases

James Church's intelligence background. O's poetic, introspective approach to high-level intrigue is sure to appeal to fans of Arnaldur Indridason or Donna Leon. Enigmatic but irresistible, *The Gentleman from Japan* is a fascinating international escapade for the impeccable Inspector O." –Jessica Howard

Gardner, Lisa. [Right Behind You](#) (Dutton \$27). Signed at the end of January—the author had to cancel her event here but promises to return in 2018. Meanwhile it's wise to order now. Returning to her former FBI profilers Pierce Quincy and Rainie Conner who are, surprisingly, parenting, plus teaching social skills to a foster child, Gardner elects to look at spree killing, its mechanics and psychology. When two people are gunned down in a convenience store by a teen with cold eyes and a hot gun, that's what it looks like, the start of a spree. And looking into the camera is the older brother of Quincy and Rainie's foster child Sharlah, the same older brother who beat their father to death with a bat to save both their lives. This is Gardner, so make no assumptions....

Goodkind, Terry. [Death's Mistress](#) (Tor \$29.99). Our **January SciFi/Fantasy Club Pick** launches The Nicci Chronicles, an entirely new series with a cast of characters centered on one of his best-loved characters in the now-concluded *Sword of Truth*. Onetime lieutenant of the evil Emperor Jagang, known as "Death's Mistress" and the "Slave Queen," the deadly Nicci captured Richard Rahl in order to convince him that the Imperial Order stood for the greater good. But it was Richard who converted Nicci instead, and for years thereafter she served Richard and Kahlan as one of their closest friends—and one of their most lethal defenders. Now, with the reign of Richard and Kahlan finally stabilized, Nicci has set out on her own for new adventures. Her first job being to keep the unworldly prophet Nathan out of trouble...

✎Gregory, Susanna. [The Executioner of St Paul's](#) (LittleBrown \$52). As the 12<sup>th</sup> Thomas Challoner adventure opens, the plague is raging through 1665 London, emptying the city. The only people left are those too poor to flee, or those who selflessly struggle to control the contagion and safeguard the capital's future. Amongst them, though, are those prepared to risk their health for money – those who sell dubious 'cures' and hawk food at wildly inflated prices. Also amongst them are those who hold in their hands the future of the city's most iconic building – St Paul's Cathedral. The handsome edifice is crumbling from decades of neglect and indecision, giving the current custodians a stark choice – repair or demolish. Both sides have fanatical adherents who have been fighting each other since the Civil Wars. Large sums of money have disappeared, major players have mysteriously vanished, and then an unidentified skeleton is discovered in another man's grave. A reluctant Challoner returns to London to investigate, only to discover that someone is determined to thwart him by any means—by bullet, poison, or bludgeon.

✎Kernick, Simon. [Bone Field](#) (Random UK \$27.99). When the bones of a 21-year old woman who went missing without trace in Thailand in 1990, are discovered in the grounds of an old Catholic school in Buckinghamshire, an enduring mystery takes on a whole new twist. Her boyfriend at the time, and the man who reported her missing, Henry Forbes, now a middle-aged university lecturer, comes forward with his lawyer and tells DI Ray Mason of the Met's Homicide Command that he knows what happened to Kitty, and who killed her. So begins a complicated hunt...

✎Mark, David. [Dark Mercy](#) (Mulholland UK \$35). Three Irishmen went to America. One's dead. One's as good as. One is missing... The missing man is Valentine Teague. Petty criminal, bare-knuckle fighter – and DS Aector McAvoy's brother in law. Back home, Val's being held responsible for the blood spilt in the snowy woods of upstate New York. If McAvoy doesn't find out the truth, all hell will break loose, putting his own family in the crossfire. Investigating proves harder than he could have imagined. New York City is a different world, and the crime has been forty years in the making. 6<sup>th</sup> in an excellent British hardboiled policing series that should be far better known (and read) by you!

Mejia, Mindy. [Everything You Want Me to Be](#) (Atria/Bestler \$26.99). Signed here January 28. Here's a preview in the Indie Next Pick: "To some extent we are all chameleons. We fit ourselves to the situations we find ourselves in, act differently around our boss than with our family, and tell little white lies out of kindness. But what if that's all you did? Hattie Hoffman is just a teenager, but she has already mastered the art of observing the people around her, assessing their desires and expectations and molding herself accordingly. *Everything You Want Me to Be* is a chilling mystery that explores the mutability of identity through the eyes of three very different people. If you're looking for the next captivating thriller that everyone will be comparing to *Gone Girl* or *The Girl on the Train*, this is it!"

Muller, Marcia/Bill Pronzini. [The Dangerous Ladies Affair](#) (Forge \$27). For the firm of Carpenter and Quincannon, Professional Detective Services, stopping extortionists is not only grand, but excitingly lucrative. When a pleasant afternoon's bicycling through Golden Gate Park with a friend ends with the revelation of threatening letters, followed by a gunshot in a mansion garden, Sabina Carpenter knows this is a case that demands her immediate and undivided attention. The questions her partner John Quincannon has to unravel are not difficult: Wrixton, a wealthy banker, has met his extortionist's first demand, but the order to pay another \$5,000 is too much to face. The banker's real problem is something he doesn't want to reveal. That was fine with the detective, and when he was informed that some private letters were involved and Wrixton absolutely needed them back, there was nothing more Quincannon needed in the way of background. As with so many of San Francisco's elite, the bedroom doors never seemed to stay shut. That was the easy part; far more difficult was the matter of the dead courier, murdered most foully in a locked room within a locked room, creating a trail that will take John Quincannon through most of San Francisco's less savory places.... #5 in this Victorian era series. [Order the first four.](#)

Nadel, Barbara. [The House of Four](#) (Headline \$45). Everyone in the Istanbul neighborhood of Moda knows the Devil's House. A crumbling Ottoman mansion, and once the home of a princess, it is a place associated with ill fortune. The princess's four children, now in old age, still live in separate apartments on different floors and are rumored never to speak to each other. Then one of them is found dead, stabbed through the heart, and it is discovered that the other three siblings have met an identical fate. There is no sign of forced entry or burglary, and all evidence must be gained from letters and diaries, but as Inspector Ikmen digs into their past it becomes clear they have been harboring a secret... Meanwhile a young couple is arrested for a series of seemingly random killings on the streets of Istanbul. They claim to have been squatting in the Devil's House. But this fiendish mystery is far from over.

✚Rowland, Laura Joh. [The Ripper's Shadow](#) (Crooked Lane \$28). “Laura Joh Rowland reinvents the story of Jack the Ripper in a wholly unexpected way. Gritty, imaginative, and full of nail-biting suspense...”—Tasha Alexander. “There are so many fine things about this novel that it’s difficult to enumerate them all. The characters are beautifully drawn; the dialogue sparkles; the setting is vividly rendered... This is sure to delight followers of Ripper-themed fiction and all who cherish Victorian-era mysteries.”—*Booklist* starred review. That’s all I know until the book arrives....

✚Sansom, Ian. [Essex Poison](#) (Harper \$32). October 1937. Swanton Morley, the People’s Professor, sets off to Essex to continue his history of England, *The County Guides*. Morley’s daughter Miriam continues to cause chaos and his assistant Stephen Sefton continues to slide deeper into depression and despair. Morley is an honorary guest at the Colchester Oyster Festival. But when the mayor dies suddenly at the civic reception suspicion falls on his fellow councilors. Is it a case of food poisoning? Or? Join Morley, Miriam and Sefton on another journey into the dark heart of England.

Schwalbe, Will. [Books for Living](#) (Knopf \$25.95). The Indie Next Pick: “Anyone can recommend a book, but it’s rare that someone can fully articulate its lifelong impact. Schwalbe has the rarest of voices — both intimate and universal — and with deep care and reflection he offers readers the most personal and heartfelt parts of himself in his latest collection. This is not a list of Schwalbe’s favorite books, but is instead an explanation of how certain books and authors taught him timeless lessons about our deepest longings. Schwalbe’s voice leaps off the page and fills the room as only the liveliest conversations can. I can’t stop thinking about this book and want to read every title mentioned, if only to keep the conversation going. <Every book changes your life. So I like to ask: How is this book changing mine?> Schwalbe, author of *The End of Your Life Book Club*, focuses on a personal collection of books. Readers will remember favorite books, find new books to try, and lessons to think about. Schwalbe’s book is warm, charming, and very personal. It’s a book for all avid readers.”

## BRITISH CRIME CLASSICS

Crofts, Freeman Willis. [Mystery in the Channel](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). “At the start of Crofts’ solid seventh procedural featuring Scotland Yard’s Inspector French, first published in 1931 (after *Sir John Magill’s Last Journey*), a steamship encounters a yacht adrift in the English Channel. Aboard the smaller boat are the corpses of two men, who were partners in Moxon’s General Securities, an investment firm. The Sussex County Constabulary calls on French to investigate. The grim find comes after the firm declared a deficit of about £8 million, causing a panic on the British Stock Exchange. A third partner and the accountant have gone missing as well. French methodically evaluates means, motive, opportunity, and the proffered alibis, after concluding that the killer was no stranger to his victims... “it’s one of Crofts’ better efforts, redeemed by touches of humor (e.g., French’s greatest friendship on the force ‘survived perhaps the greatest test which could have been imposed on it, a walking tour in the Scottish highlands lasting for ten days’).” Note: I incorrectly listed Bude’s [The Cheltenham Square Murder](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95) for January when in fact it will be out in late February.

Edwards, Martin, ed. [Crimson Snow: Winter Mysteries](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). This British Library Crime Classic collection got a boxed and Starred Review in *PW*. Now Michael Dirda chimes in with a rave in *The Washington Post*: “Who can resist a story that begins: ‘I shall never forget the terrible Christmas I spent at Ringshaw Grange in the year ’93.’ Note that’s 1893, which is the proper time for a vintage whodunit such as Fergus Hume’s ‘The Ghost’s Touch.’ In this imaginative anthology, Edwards — president of Britain’s Detection Club — has gathered together overlooked criminous gems by such old pros as Edgar Wallace, Margery Allingham, Julian Symons and Michael Gilbert, to name only the most famous. Fans of the world’s first consulting detective won’t want to miss ‘Christmas Eve,’ a short play by S.C. Roberts in which the winsome Violet de Vinne consults Holmes — and a smitten Watson — about the theft of Lady Barton’s pearls.”

Smith, Andrew, ed. [Lost in a Pyramid](#) (British Library Publishing \$14.95). A mummy disappears from its sarcophagus in the dead of night; a crazed Egyptologist entombs a beautiful young woman; a student at Oxford reveals the terrible secrets of an ancient papyrus. These are among the 12 tales from the golden age of the mummy story collected here—stories that still cast a spell with their different versions of the mummy’s curse, some chilling, others darkly romantic and even comic. This enthralling collection is introduced by Andrew Smith, a leading expert on ghost stories and Victorian gothic. Scare yourself with Smith’s book instead of reading the daily news.

## IF YOU LOVE BRITISH MYSTERY

*I highly recommend these books in addition to the Crime Classics for winter joy in reading:*

Airth, Rennie. [The Death of Kings](#) (Viking \$27). See Signed Books above for my review. 5<sup>th</sup> for policeman John Madden working cases from 1920-1949.

Barron, Stephanie. [Jane and the Waterloo Map](#) (\$16.95). Jane Austen chances upon a body in the Carlton House library.... See our January Paperback Picks below.

Boyd, Damian. [Death Sentence](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Who knew that my two favorite British mysteries of December would be published by amazon? This is the 6<sup>th</sup> in the DI Nick Dixon series (love the name, so retro) and is a real corker using the Somerset landscape and some recent history to showcase a fiendish plot where Dixon and his team march steadily towards the end game but they, and you, don’t see it coming. Boyd makes you feel you’re watching the whole in real time. I went back and read the earlier Dixons. The first, *As the Crow Flies*, is the weakest plot but again uses landscape well and incorporates nifty climbing info. *Head in the Sand* (the perfect title) is much stronger, opening with the discovery of a severed head in the sand trap by the 12<sup>th</sup> green at the Burnham-on-Sea golf club. As with *Death Sentence*, you follow along a complex path back to the instigating incident and then forward. *Kickback* is a bit thin but fun for Dick Frances fans as its setting is the racing industry (a murder in a stable) and is a real primer on on-line betting. I haven’t gotten to the 4<sup>th</sup>, but the 5<sup>th</sup>, *Dead Level*, takes place just after the 4<sup>th</sup> and features another devilish plot with a motive that is a true surprise (and a must read but I can’t tell you why without spoiling it). In all of them you find echoes of Bosch: a police force that is hierarchical and full of politics. [Try them all](#). And you can read Dana

Stabenow's [rave review for \*Death Sentence\*](#) before you do: she says it hooked her in the same way as Ed McBain's 87<sup>th</sup> Precinct entry *Ice* did.

The other amazon published hit with me is TE Kinsey's [A Quiet Life in the Country](#) (\$15.95), a sly Edwardian mystery series start. Perfect escape reading with a wealth of hints about earlier adventures for the Lady and her maid which promises well for future stories.

Edwards, Martin, ed. [Motives for Murder](#) (Crippen & Landru \$19). "Honoring one of our best detective story writers on his 80th birthday [this anthology] is worth acquiring just for its extras: a foreword by Len Deighton, Lovesey's own reminiscences of the Detection Club in the 1970s and the anecdotal introductory notes to the 20 new stories, which include Andrew Taylor's delightful 'The False Inspector Lovesey,' a bit of literary homage that neatly mixes double-cross, swindle and an orphaned housemaid's dreams."—Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post*. I love this wonderful and affectionate tribute to Lovesey, one of my favorites, by fellow members of Britain's Detection Club (membership by invitation only) including Aird, Cleeves, David Roberts, John Malcolm, Janet Laurence, Kate Charles, Kate Ellis, Michael Ridpath, Simon Brett (the past president), Michael Jecks, Susan Moody... it's like a visit with many old friends. Use your British Crime Club membership Gift Card to acquire this gem and hours of happy reading time.

Lloyd, Catherine. [Death Comes to the Fair](#) (Kensington \$25). The voices in the 4<sup>th</sup> entry in the Kurland St Mary Mysteries, opening in October, 1817, struck a real chord with me this time (I read only one of the previous entries, but now I'm going to read them all). I like the Regency period, I like the formality between the courting couple contrasted with the unconventional situations, and I like the closeness of village life as well as forays to London and such. The story opens with the discovery of Ezekiel Thurrock, the long-time church verger, crushed by a stone gargoyle. It appears to have fallen by chance from the bell tower.... [Order the whole series](#).

Thomas, Sherry. [A Study in Scarlet Women](#) (\$15). John Charles introduced me to this author when she signed the start of her Lady Sherlock Series. An excellent book. I bought her Regency romances for fun afterward and enjoyed them for their varied landscapes (as far as China), the heat between the sexes, the predicaments complicating the courtships, and the sparkling prose. One is more or less a clone of Heyer's [A Civil Contract](#) (\$13.99), the supreme example of the Regency novel, but hey.... If you want a bit of a read on the wild side [try Thomas' work](#).

#### OUR JANUARY TRADE PAPERBACK PICKS

✦Barron, Stephanie. [Jane and the Waterloo Map](#) (\$16.95). Jane Austen finds a body in the library, joy. The library is at Carlton House, home to the Prince Regent, and it brings her into the orbit of the prince and court, of soldiers who fought in the 1815 battle, and a treasure hunt, all of which enliven her time in London nursing her widowed banker brother Henry. The British economy is in post-war shreds and Henry, about to declare bankruptcy, will drag other Austens down with him. This is a terrific chapter in the Being a Jane Austen Mystery series as well as a fine work of history. Fingers crossed it is the penultimate and not the final investigation by Jane.

Beverly, Bill. [Dodgers](#) (\$15). A dark debut that forms an unforgettable coming-of-age journey that recalls the very best of Richard Price, Denis Johnson, and J.D. Salinger. It is the story of a young LA gang member named East, who is sent by his uncle along with some other teenage boys—including East's hothead younger brother—to kill a key witness hiding out in Wisconsin. The journey takes East out of a city he's never left and into an America that is entirely alien to him, ultimately forcing him to grapple with his place in the world and decide what kind of man he wants to become. A 2016 Hardboiled Crime Club Pick, it scooped up a bushel of awards including a rare double win with Britain's The Crime Writers' Association John Creasey Memorial Dagger and Gold Dagger for Fiction; plus *Booklist* 2016 Editors' Choice; and nominations for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize and the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence.

Coleman, Reed F. [Where it Hurts](#) (\$16). A 2016 staff favorite begins a new series set in Suffolk County to raves like these: "Coleman's poetic pulp fiction in *Where It Hurts* translates seamlessly to the here and now... It's proof that the hard-boiled detective genre is timeless. His version of Sam Spade merely carries a cell phone and has a therapist."—*The Dallas Morning News*. "Gus, who is absolutely one of genre veteran Coleman's best-drawn characters, brings the hard-boiled investigator's requisite battle scars to the table without the self-destructive bent we've been trained to expect. Instead, he meets his tragedy and its consequences with a considered straightforwardness, and his desire for justice reawakens in time with the investigation's quickening tempo, hopefully signaling the start of a series."—*Booklist* Starred Review. Coleman signs the sequel, [What You Break](#) (Putnam \$27), here on February 8.

Donellan, JM. [Killing Adonis](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95). "Nurse Freya makes friends with Maria, the housekeeper, and slowly develops a romantic relationship with the reclusive Jack, who joins her in trying to uncover some of the secrets hidden behind the locked doors, many of which turn out to be horrifying and deadly. This first mystery from Donellan will remind many readers of Tom Robbins' work: cleverly crafted and overflowing with idiosyncratic characters and mordant humor. A most unusual mystery, indeed."—*Kirkus Reviews*. This first mystery from Australian Donellan is a racy, well-paced, action-packed, and funny tale of twisted love, gruesome death, steadfast friendship, awesome greed, and familial madness—not to mention penguins in sweaters. Donellan has a gift for witty turns of phrase and dialogue that jumps off the page and makes you smile. For the hardcover edition, see *Some New Books for January* below.

✦Herron, Mick. [Real Tigers](#) (\$15.95). 3<sup>rd</sup> in his Slough House spy thrillers, nominated for Gold and Steel Daggers. "Herron's Slough House novels are the finest new crime series this millennium..." Here is what two other Brits have to say: "Herron, like all good novelists, manufactures his own form of reality and persuades his readers to subscribe to it. The satire is streaked with violence, which itself has elements of visual comedy. The dialogue is sharp and the prose is dark and sardonic. Underlying everything is a sense of outrage about the corruption within the Establishment. This is not the sort of novel where you're likely to find positive portraits of Old Etonians. But if you read one spy novel this year, read *Real Tigers*. Better still, read the whole series – Andrew Taylor, *The Spectator*. "Satire, verbal sparring

and gunfights are deftly combined in an excellently written novel permeated by Herron's sly, dry and very English sense of humor – rather as if Philip Larkin or Alan Bennett had had a go at spy fiction – John Dugdale, *Sunday Times*. And the late Roger Hobbs adds: “I absolutely loved *Real Tigers*. It's a decidedly British spy novel written with distinctly American noir panache. Herron has a natural talent for creating and portraying characters that are instantly understandable, relatable, and more than occasionally despicable. A real treat.” [Order them all](#) and binge read for a winter treat.

Jones, Allen Moore. [A Bloom of Bones](#) (Ig \$16.95). This paperback original is a stunner! This riveting novel opens on a boy, Eli Singer, and an older man dropping a body into a hole. Years later the boy is now a successful poet but his life and career is about to be upended. In New York to meet with his publisher and falls in love with a literary agent. But then the earth on his Montana ranch opens and gives up that long buried corpse and Eli becomes the prime suspect in a murder case. Author Jones writes beautifully in creating the character of Eli Singer's past life, of the events that brings his family to that ranch, and what led to that moonlight burial. In alternating chapters we get to know Chloe, the agent, and her growing relationship with the poet. A thoroughly satisfying and quietly emotional read.

Jones, J Sydney. [The Edit](#) (Mysterious \$15.99). Another excellent paperback original. On the coast of Central America, an aging man sits down to pen his memoirs. He begins with his childhood in Vienna, just after World War I, when his family lived in respectable poverty and his greatest pleasure was being rocked to sleep in the lap of his beloved babysitter. It would be a sweet tale if the author could withhold what comes later... but he intends to tell every horrifying detail of the truth. He's a war criminal, a veteran of the elite Nazi brigade known as the SS, and he'll write proudly of every atrocity he can recall. Distracting him from his work is inquisitive American journalist Kate O'Brien, who has come in search of a story. When Kate accidentally stumbles upon the old man's pages, he has no choice but to act, kidnapping her and locking her in his basement. “His latest crime threatening to expose him, the proud Nazi will come face to face with the horrors of his past and the blackness of his soul. Impeccably researched and chillingly believable.”—fellow bookseller Ian Kern.

✎Naughtie, James. [The Madness of July](#) (\$17.95). Set in the late 1970s during six sweltering days in July. Will Flemyng was trained as a spy for a life behind enemy lines, but now he is in politics—and rising to the top. But when a bizarre death starts to unravel some of the most sensitive secrets of his government, Will is drawn back into the shadows of the Cold War and begins to dance with danger once more. Buffeted by political forces and the powerful women around him, and caught in interlocking mysteries he must disentangle—including a potentially lethal family secret. “In his fiction debut, British journalist Naughtie offers a double-twisting spy drama worthy of his countryman LeCarré... Naughtie lays down an extraordinarily complex narrative... every page seems to chronicle encounters where one character or another schemes to uncover or hide evidence, all the deviousness pronounced in the right accent.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. Out this month, a new Naughtie: [Paris Spring](#) (Overlook \$26.95).

Perry, Thomas. [Forty Thieves](#) (\$16). “This stand-alone caper smoothly mixes high-octane thrills with comic capering, as two married couples—one a PI team, the other a hit couple for hire—spar with one another... until they both find themselves in the crosshairs of a lethal gang of Russian jewel thieves. Along the way to a knockout finale... Perry offers a master class in narrative sleight of hand. Like the work of the late, great Ross Thomas—the crime writer Perry most resembles—Perry's books, whether series or stand-alone, absolutely resist easy categorization, thoroughly melding character and plot, light and dark, and totally immersing the reader in the irresistible narrative.”—*Booklist* Starred Review. “Nick and Nora Charles they're not. But while Sid and Veronica Abel may be lacking in urbanity, these private investigators are no less brainy and far better marksmen. Appearing for the first time in Thomas Perry's new thriller, *Forty Thieves*, these former Los Angeles police detectives have been married for over 30 years and have children and grandchildren. That confers on them the wisdom of the ancients, along with the cloak of invisibility in a youth-obsessed society, which suits them just fine.... The tips you learn in a Perry novel are priceless.”—Marilyn Stasio, *New York Times Book Review*. For Perry's 2017 gem, see [Signed Books](#), and come greet him January 10 at The Pen.

Shames, Terry. [An Unsettling Crime for Samuel Craddock](#) (Seventh Street Press \$15.95). Karen reviews: This prequel to Shames successful series has Samuel Craddock at the beginning of his career as the Chief of Police in a small Texas town. The quiet bucolic area is jolted by the discovery of five young black people who have been brutally murdered and burned. Jurisdiction issues have the case in the hands of John Sutherland, a member of the Texas Highway Patrol, who has no patience with the black community. Sutherland's immediate conclusion is that the crime was perpetrated by another black and sets out to prove a case against his chosen suspect. Sam sees too many elements that do not work in concert with Sutherland's conclusions and pursues his own investigation to set things right. The story is built around racial issues of the past that continue to exist in today's culture. Shames combines good story telling with suspense, characters, both admirable and despicable, and a satisfying conclusion. Enjoy the series! [Order it here](#).

Silvis, Randall. [Two Days Gone](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99). Karen reviews: Tom Huston seems to have it all. He is a successful writer, college professor, with a wife and three children. Ryan DeMarco, a Police Sergeant, came to know Tom when consulting with him on some of Tom's writings. The ideal world that everyone assumed was Tom's is blown apart when his wife and three children are found brutally murdered. Tom has disappeared and is assumed to be the prime suspect. The mystery is why would someone who seemed to have it all, destroy everything? Both Ryan and Tom were solitary souls and, Ryan thought, they had some common ground. In elegant prose, Silvis shows Ryan's struggle to understand how the man he thought he knew could be capable of such viciousness toward the people he supposedly loved. Tom's journey, expressed by a narrative in his head, seems to be guided toward an unknown destination, created by characters of his own imagination, as well as those of other writers. Tom has a haunting past that was unknown to others and lends a sense of darkness throughout the story. The characters in this book are flawed and there are sections that are difficult to read. The resolution is elusive until the



end. One critic stated, “Wanna be authors absolutely should read this novel . . . it’s also a book for fans of Edgar Allan Poe and also of the novel, *Lolita*.” Once started, Silvis’s book is hard to put down and is not easily forgotten. The Indie Next Pick adds: “This is the perfect dead-of-winter read!”

### SOME NEW BOOKS FOR JANUARY

I read a lot of January books during late December and found a few gems, highlighted here, and many disappointments. Some are trying too hard to be original and end up failing. Some are aimed at catching the *Gone Girl* bandwagon which grows tiresome. So while there are many books publishing, let’s focus on a few. I did include most of the Indie Next Picks so you can see the views of other booksellers, not necessarily held by me or our staff.

✚Adams, Jane A. [The Murder Book](#) (Severn \$28.99). “Set in England in 1928, this accomplished series launch from Adams introduces Chief Inspector Henry Johnstone of Scotland Yard. George Fields, poor but proud, often spends weeks away from his wife and their seven-year-old daughter, who live in rural Lincolnshire, in order to make a meager living on fishing boats. After one such absence, he returns home to find that workmen have unearthed the bodies of his wife and child from a hole in the yard of the cottage the family was renting. Johnstone and his sergeant, Mickey Hitchens, investigate, but clues are few and far between. When a local landowner’s son is killed in an apparent riding accident, his death appears to be unrelated, but the Scotland Yarders eventually discover links with the earlier death. The great strength of this well-crafted whodunit lies in the author’s depiction of how her characters struggle to live as best they can in an economically depressed and changing world. Adams delivers more than one surprise en route to the satisfying ending.”—*PW* Starred Review. Ordered upon Request.

Arden, Katherine. [The Bear and the Nightingale](#) (Del Rey \$27). The Indie Next Pick finds this to be, “an enchanting mix of fairy tale, fantasy, and historical fiction set in medieval Russia. Nestled between the northern wilderness and civilization is a village where old and new traditions live side by side. Vasya, the last daughter of Pyotr and Marina, is born on the howling winds of autumn. Different from the others in her village, she is destined to be like her grandmother and is gifted with powers by birthright. As time goes by, Vasya is tested. Caught in the conflict between the old spirits and the new religion, Vasya must do everything in her power to save her family and village. Arden’s novel is the rich, mesmerizing fairy tale you’ve been waiting for!”

Banner, AJ. [The Twilight Wife](#) (Touchstone \$15). This domestic suspense thriller has two good things going for it. First, it’s American, not British—the Brits have flooded the market with these, everyone trying to catch the coattails of Paula Hawkins. And second, the landscape of the marine Northwest, the San Juan Islands, is vividly rendered, as is the work of marine biologist Kyra Winthrop. The 34-year-old remembers nothing about the diving accident that left her with a complex form of memory loss. Glimpsing only brief flashes of the last few years of her life, her world has narrowed to a few close friendships on the island where she lives with her devoted husband, Jacob. They are working on her recovery, needing patience. But Kyra begins to have visions—or are they memories?—of a rocky marriage, broken promises, and cryptic relationships with the island residents, whom she believes to be her friends. In short, Trust No One.

✚Bauer, Belinda. [The Beautiful Dead](#) (Grove \$25). A winner of the Crime Writers’ Association’s Gold Dagger Award, British author Bauer returns with a spintingler featuring TV crime reporter Eve Singer, covering a serial killer who treats each murder as an art exhibition. Alas, it seems he wants to put Eve on display. Plenty of gore here. *Kirkus* remarks, ‘Bauer’s way with character and repartee helps to keep our interest in what would otherwise be pretty standard fare.’”

Bohjalian, Chris. [The Sleepwalker](#) (Doubleday \$26.95). The Indie Next Pick: “Once again, master storyteller Bohjalian has crafted a thoughtful, suspenseful novel that grabs hold and doesn’t let go until the end. Exploring the world of sleepwalking and parasomnia, he recounts the story of the night Liana’s mother disappeared. At turns a harrowing mystery and a heartbreaking tale of a family coping with their mother’s affliction, *The Sleepwalker* is filled with beautiful prose that culminates in a twist readers never see coming.”

✚Buckley, Fiona. [The Heretic’s Creed](#) (Severn \$28.99). I have enjoyed this long-running series which has grown and expanded the role of Ursula Blanchard, now acknowledged as the half-sister of Elizabeth I, and agree with this review, adding that the depiction of the remote Yorkshire countryside in winter is vivid: “Buckley’s outstanding 14th Tudor mystery takes Ursula Blanchard, the intelligent, resourceful gentlewoman with a secret family connection to Elizabeth I, to an unofficial convent in a remote corner of the Yorkshire moors. An ostensible diplomatic visit to the court of the child king of Scotland, James VI, plays cover for Blanchard’s investigation of Stonemoor House, where two men have gone on the queen’s business before—and never returned. Buckley manages not only to imbue the would-be convent, reached in the midst of a snowstorm no less, with mystery and menace but also to dramatize how difficult it was for a woman to live an independent life in the 1570s, whether she be Protestant widow or aristocratic Catholic spinster. It was a time when religious calling was hopelessly tangled with political loyalty, and people could easily mistake an herbal cure for a witch’s potion. Still, there are no caricatured villains in this layered entry. Buckley draws even the most minor characters with subtlety and skill, making the dramatic conclusion that much more satisfying.”—*PW* Starred Review

Coyle, Cleo. [Dead Cold Brew](#) (Berkley \$27). A murder aboard the *Andrea Doria*, after the doomed luxury liner’s collision with another ship off the coast of Nantucket in 1956, propels Coyle’s satisfying 16th Coffeehouse mystery. Flash forward 60 years. Clare Cosi, the manager of the Village Blend, a Greenwich Village coffeehouse, which she runs with her ex-husband, Matteo Allegro, is the only witness to get a look at a sniper who has been picking off New York City cops. Unfortunately, to Clare the shooter looked exactly like the cartoon superhero Panther Man—complete with cape and pointy ears. Will her policeman boyfriend, Mike Quinn, think she’s lost her mind? The plot’s blend includes a fabulous diamond, blackmail, embezzlement, surprise inheritances, murder, and a decades-old family scandal. Along with this spicy mix, the reader gets a generous helping of coffee lore and over a dozen lusciously rich recipes. [Order earlier investigations.](#)

Donellan, JM. [Killing Adonis](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). If you relish something different pick up this outstanding serial killer debut

from an Australian author. Here's one of its rave reviews: "Freya makes friends with Maria, the housekeeper, and slowly develops a romantic relationship with the reclusive Jack, who joins her in trying to uncover some of the secrets hidden behind the locked doors, many of which turn out to be horrifying and deadly. This first mystery from Donellan (*A Beginner's Guide to Dying in India*, 2009) will remind many readers of Tom Robbins' work: cleverly crafted and overflowing with idiosyncratic characters and mordant humor. A most unusual mystery, indeed."—*Kirkus Reviews*. This delicious romp, which includes a bit of social consciousness. In a Brisbane bar, with a Moscow Mule in hand, nurse Freya Miller, who has always dreamed of becoming the Florence Nightingale of East Timor, is reconsidering her future. A friend shows her an ad for a private nurse that reads: "Light duties. Large pay. No questions asked or answered." In an alcoholic haze, Freya sends off her résumé and is shocked into sobriety when she's invited to come for an interview at the home of one of the world's most powerful families. So begins this racy, well-paced, action-packed, and funny tale of twisted love, gruesome death, steadfast friendship, awesome greed, and familial madness—not to mention penguins in sweaters. Donellan has a gift for witty turns of phrase and dialogue that jumps off the page and makes you smile.

Cutter, Nick. Horror novelist [Nick Cutter](#) (*The Troop*) continues his streak of genre mash-ups with *Little Heaven*, a nasty epic that grafts Lovecraftian imagery onto a Neo-Western foundation, throwing in a cult subplot for good measure. The novel bounces back and forth in time between the 1960s (when three guns-for-hire named Micah, Minerva and Ebenezer get roped into a scheme to rescue a young boy from Little Heaven, a Jonestown-like cult in the backwoods of New Mexico) and the 1980s (when Micah rounds them back up to help save his daughter). The plot borrows liberally from western story beats and even clichés, but Cutter cleverly re-contextualizes them under the doomy umbrella of horror. "Cutter might not be as pithy as Elmore Leonard, but his hardboiled prose is perfect for the flowery unknowability that characterizes Lovecraftian horror: "When humans experience something that challenges their fundamental belief of the world—its reasonableness, its fixed parameters—well, their minds crimp just a bit. A mind folds, and in that fresh pleat lives a darkness that cannot be explained or accounted for." Which is not to say that Cutter is shy with gross-out scares: "It opened its mouth. Its face split in half, pulling its head apart; the top of its skull levered back like a Pez dispenser." The novel even includes grotesque illustrations perversely reminiscent of the charming sketches commonly found in 19th-century classics. Cutter knows horror, and he nails the basics well enough to support ambitious plotting and refreshing genre experimentation."—Shelf Awareness

Dumas, Alexandre. [The Red Sphinx](#) (Norton \$25.95). Despite the subtitle, fans of Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan won't find the legendary swashbucklers here. However, Dumas' trademark gifts at crafting engaging historical romances are amply in evidence in this lengthy yet fast-paced volume that places at center stage the Machiavellian lead, Cardinal Richelieu. Ellsworth's translation captures a complete narrative of the cardinal's machinations directly after the events of *The Three Musketeers* by merging for the first time the original serial novel of The Red Sphinx with a separate story, The Dove, which had been written 15 years earlier. In 1628, Richelieu struggles to retain power in

the face of a formidable array of foes, including Queen Anne and the queen mother, by seeking out the truth behind the assassination of Henri IV, the ostensible father of the current monarch. Dumas's penchant for addressing his readers ("We hope our readers will forgive us, but we believe it is time to present King Louis XIII to them, and to devote a chapter to his strange personality") remains endearing, and his wit helps sustain interest despite many fewer action sequences than in the author's better-known works. A very entertaining epic."—*PW* Starred Review

Ferencik, Erica. [The River at Night](#) (Gallery/Scout Press \$26). The Indie Next Pick: "What would you do to save the lives of your friends? In this debut novel, Winifred and her three friends are about to find out. Instead of a trip to a comfortable, fancy resort in some exotic destination, they embark on an excursion to the Allagash wilderness in upstate Maine. What happens next is everyone's nightmare, yet it leads to the kind of wisdom few people ever achieve. This is a tense, disturbing, yet satisfying story of the strength of friendship in the face of a severe challenge." I didn't warm to this gothic tale, or to the women. Nevada Barr writes this kind of book much better. It's one of several new novels sheltering under the Cheryl Strayed umbrella and, as with all the *Girl on the Train* clones, a buffet of them quickly bores.

Flint, Emma. [Little Deaths](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Karen and I didn't warm to this literary suspense inspired by a true story. Here's the Indie Next Pick: "In 1965, Ruth Malone, recently separated from her husband, wakes to find her children gone. Both are found dead and Ruth finds herself the prime suspect, tried and convicted by the court of public opinion because she is a single parent and rumors abound about her drinking and dating habits. Flint has created a compelling whodunit based on true events, and I was riveted from page one."

Fridlund, Emily. [A History of Wolves](#) (Atlantic, \$25). I really did not get this book, the No. 1 Indie Next Pick for January. As I have said, I'm for story, not for reading group fodder. "A lonely teenager in rural northern Minnesota, Linda is desperate for connection and obsessed with both her enigmatic new neighbors and a classmate entangled in a scandalous relationship with a teacher. Narrating these seemingly disparate story threads is the adult Linda, who may have been villain, victim, or bystander in at least one tragedy. With lyrical prose and precise pacing, debut author Fridlund builds tension and weaves a complex, multilayered morality tale rich in metaphor and symbolism. This haunting, meticulously crafted novel will inspire lengthy rumination on topics ranging from the meaning of the title to the power of belief. Perfect for reading groups!" Interestingly one of my esteemed colleagues made this a First Mystery Pick but I don't think of it that way (if at all).

Griffin, WEB. [Curtain of Death](#) (Putnam \$29). Unread by me so I quote *PW* which makes a strong point about post-war US policy: "Bestseller Griffin and son Butterworth's odd decision to name a major character Claudette Colbert makes suspending disbelief even more of a challenge in their third *Clandestine Operations* novel. Their Claudette Colbert is a WAC technical sergeant stationed in Munich in 1946. When four men, believed to be Polish DPs, attempt to abduct her and a fellow WAC tech sergeant in a stolen ambulance, Claudette pulls a revolver out of her bra and shoots three of her assailants dead and mortally wounds the fourth. That improbable scene paves the way for a formulaic spy

story that explores the repercussions of the attempted kidnapping as well as the implications of America's denazification of German scientists after WWII. Authors such as James Michener and Joseph Kanon have explored with more depth the moral ambiguity of the U.S. government's decision to turn a blind eye to war crimes in order to counter the Soviet threat." New book from Kanon in June!

Harper, Jane. [The Dry](#) (Flat Iron \$25.99). The Indie Next Pick for our **January Fresh Fiction Pick**: "This story of a small town and the secrets it has been protecting for decades is fast-paced and never predictable. In a remote section of rural Australia during an extended drought, devastating weather conditions collide with an unexpected turn of events that ultimately results in the murder of a young family. Bearing the scars of the town's past, Aaron Falk returns home for the funeral and is forced to make a choice between saving himself and facing a secret he has been hiding from for 20 years. This is an amazing debut that I could not put down!" Library Reads Pick: <Luke lied. You lied. Be at the funeral.> These eight words will change everything for Agent Aaron Falk, summoned by the father of his former best friend. It appears Luke went on a rampage, murdering his wife, son, and then himself. At Luke's father's request, Aaron agrees to look into the murders/suicide and learns that the small town has long held grudges and secrets that may be best kept hidden in this atmospheric, chilling complex tale of anger and revenge."

Greaney, Mark. [Back Blast](#) (\$16). Also out in a mass market paperback – see that section by John Charles below. Greaney's Gray Man series is terrific: he returns to The Pen February 15 to sign the 6<sup>th</sup> one: [Gunmetal Gray](#) (NAL \$27). [Order the first 4](#) to get up to speed.

✂Harrod-Eagles, Cynthia. [Old Bones](#) (Severn \$29.99). This is one of my favorite policing series, a long running saga filled with tricky plots, amusing dialogue, wrenching personal relations (now settled happily down), and portraits of London. Alas most of the books are out of print. This 19<sup>th</sup> Bill Slider, our **January British Crime Club Pick**, earns a cluster of strong reviews from fans like me. The *PW* Starred Review: "Harrod-Eagles' outstanding 19th outing for Detective Inspector Bill Slider and his team of London coppers opens with Slider under suspicion of having leaked information to the press about a case involving his superiors in the department. He's therefore assigned a cold case to keep him, as his boss says, "out of everyone's hair. You can't upset anybody looking into old bones." The bones in question were found in the back garden of a London house and belong to a teenage girl; the medical examiner estimates she has been buried there for around 25 years. What was intended as mere busywork becomes, in the hands of diligent and determined Slider (who balances his idealism with an intimate understanding of the unfairness of life), much more complex and controversial. This admirable entry features a well-integrated cast of both sexes and is refreshingly free of innuendo about female police officers. Harrod-Eagles graces her narrative with a quiet wit that makes the book a pleasure to read." *Kirkus* admires its "steadily increasing momentum until the placidly ugly payoff: one of the author's best." The Club is guaranteed copies but supply is otherwise very limited from his publisher so order without delay. My late Mother and I devoured all the LA cops books by Dell Shannon and think these analogous. Many of you are readers of Harrod-

Eagles' historicals The Morland Dynasty. All else aside, I picked this book for the BCC because it is not another mirror of *The Girl on the Train*. Why not begin the new year with a mystery in the classic form?

Higgins, Jack. [The Midnight Bell](#) (Putnam \$28). Old pro Higgins, like Stuart Woods, has a formula down pat for his heroes like Sean Dillon, a stalwart of the "Prime Minister's private army" or off-the-books counterintelligence ops. Who here is fresh from defeating an al-Qaeda op and about to encounter havoc rippling out from a decision by a special projects guy at the CIA who, failing to get permission for a daring anti-terrorism plan, puts it into motion anyway. The target is a new Master for the Islamic group who has uncanny knowledge of what's in play. It's a form of comfort reading to know that Dillon, like Stone Barrington, will never take a fatal bullet and always outmaneuver his opponent. Plus the writing is so smooth the pages nearly turn themselves. Good escape reading.

Ho-Kei, Chan. [Borrowed](#) (Grove \$16). Fellow bookseller Ian Kern writes this rave review: "In the tradition of Sherlock Holmes and Nero Wolfe comes a new hero for mystery fans—Kwan Chun-dok of the Hong Kong Police Department. Let me be clear, I'm not making this comparison lightly. Nor am I being hyperbolic when I say that *The Borrowed* is hands down the best mystery I've read this year, maybe even in recent memory. In a series of ingenious, diabolical, and utterly enjoyable stories we are introduced to the exploits of this most singular detective. Told in reverse chronological order, Chan's stories highlight the detective's career while interweaving the social and political changes in Hong Kong over the last fifty years. Contending with criminal masterminds and gangsters, Kwan's unique skills unravel even the most dastardly of crimes. While these stories may be a little more violent than their Golden Age predecessors, Chan has nevertheless caught the spirit and intent of this era, delivering some truly fascinating cases that will challenge even the most diehard amateur detective. Already an award-winning author in Hong Kong, we can only hope more of his work gets translated into English"

Howard, Kate. [The Ornatix](#) (Overlook \$27.95). Born with a birthmark the shape of a bird across her face, Flavia's life has been one of hiding and shame--first tucked away in her family home, then hidden behind a veil and, finally, sent to board as a servant in the convent of Santa Giuliana. There, she meets Ghostanza, a Venetian courtesan exiled by her family to live with the nuns. Obsessed with her appearance, Ghostanza spends her days scheming ways to collect the materials needed for her secret beauty treatments, including her closely guarded recipe for the perfect *cerussa*, a blended white lead used as a skin lightener... "The antique recipes for beauty treatments slipped between the chapters of *The Ornatix* are a testament to Kate Howard's skill in drawing on the truths of history to reflect on beauty and womanhood (and where the two intersect) in 16th-century Umbria and up through today. Howard's language is as layered as the paints Ghostanza spreads across her face each day, which can make the plotting feel slow and slippery at times. As a whole, however, and especially as it slinks forward to a surprising conclusion, Howard's debut proves to be a complicated, intricate story of beauty, obsession, revenge and what it means to be seen—and therefore to be known." —Kerry McHugh

Judd, Alan. [The Kaiser's Last Kiss](#) (\$16). First published in 2004 and now republished as it is slated to become a movie starring Christopher Plummer. It is 1940 and the exiled monarch Kaiser Wilhelm is living in his Dutch chateau, Huis Doorn. The old German king spends his days chopping logs and musing on what might have been. When the Nazis invade Holland, the Kaiser's staff is replaced by SS guards, led by young and recently commissioned SS officer Martin Krebbs, and an unlikely relationship develops between the king and his keeper. While they agree on the rightfulness of German expansion and on holding the nation's Jewish population accountable for all ills, they disagree on the solutions. But when Krebbs becomes attracted to Akki, a Jewish maid in the house, he begins to question his belief in Nazism. I recall the chief interest of the story was the portrait of the aging Kaiser who went into exile after WWI.

Kubica, Mary. [Don't You Cry](#) (\$15.99). Kubica stepped into the psychological suspense field so dominating publishing with [The Good Girl](#) (\$14.95). Here she alternates narrators in a Chicago woman whose "exemplary" roommate Esther has gone missing, and Alex, a youth who turned down a full college scholarship to stay in his small town an hour outside the city on Lake Michigan in order to care for his alcoholic father. Inevitably, Quinn begins to discover that Esther was not the paragon she seemed, and the two narrations begin to ping off each other.

Lee, JM. [The Boy Who Escaped Paradise](#) (Norton \$24.95 with possible Signed bookplates). In [The Investigation](#) (\$25), Lee's first novel translated into English and a 2014 Modern Firsts Club Pick, Korean author Lee celebrated the arts. His follow-up pays homage to the beauty of numbers with the extraordinary story of a math savant told through his own words. From a prison hospital—where he's being held by U.S. officials on suspicion of murder and 11 international crimes—21-year-old Ahn Gil-mo relates his journey across the globe to a nurse who shares his love of numbers. The son of an esteemed physician in North Korea, Gil-mo attends an excellent school catering to his mathematical gift. Lee offers the first glimpses of North Korea's hostile human rights environment when Gil-mo's father's medical license is revoked. The family continues to survive amid famine until officials arrive at their front door and drag Gil-mo's parents away. His father returns long enough to collect him, and the two are banished to a prison camp because, as the boy learns, his father was discovered practicing Christianity. He never sees his mother again, and his father soon dies, leaving the son at the mercy of those who want to take advantage of his innocence and valuable skills. Gil-mo's affinity for numbers lands him an easier job with Mr. Kang, working with foreign currency. It is here that Gil-mo makes the promise he spends his life fulfilling, no matter the cost: looking after Kang's daughter, Yeong-ae. With regular allusions to Homer, Lee takes his modern-day Odysseus on a journey of epic proportions after he escapes the camp in order to keep his promise to Kang. A spectrum of players makes *The Boy Who Escaped Paradise* riveting. The novel is a reminder of the power of numbers, but one doesn't need to be a math fan to appreciate the brilliance of this work. The language is mesmerizing, illustrating the logic of Gil-mo's mind as clearly for the audience as it functions for the boy."

✦Leo, Forrest. [The Gentleman](#) (Penguin \$26). Here's a late discovery from a Favorite of 2016 List: "In this riotous send-up

of Victorian literature and Victorian manners, Lionel Savage is a middling poet who runs out of money. To avoid penury, he enters into a loveless marriage with the wealthy Vivien Lancaster. But six months into the marriage, Lionel finds that the marriage has sapped his vital poetic spark. Then, at a masked party held by his wife, he meets the Gentleman, a stranger who ultimately reveals himself to be the 'Dev'l.' The next day, Vivien is missing and Lionel realizes that he must have accidentally sold her to the Gentleman. To rescue her, Lionel recruits an intrepid band consisting of Simmons, his back-talking manservant; Ashley Lancaster, his brother-in-law, an explorer newly returned to London; Will Kensington, an inventor of flying machines; and his 16-year-old sister, Lizzie Savage, recently expelled from boarding school for having sex with the dean's son. Pinpointing a volcano in Iceland as the entrance to hell, Lionel and company find it difficult to get out of London when they are mistaken for government spies, then anarchists, and are forced to flee from the police. Lionel is also challenged to no fewer than three duels on the way to a surprising ending. In his debut, Leo does an inspired job of parodying the conventions of Victorian fiction. Hilarious dialogue, a Pythonesque sense of the absurd, and comical complications worthy of Thorne Smith at his 'dev'lish' best round out the tale."—Peter Cannon, *PW*. I point out that Peter is the mystery editor but also an expert enthusiast for HP Lovecraft, so take that into account while reading his review.

✦McDermid, Val. [Out of Bounds](#) (Atlantic Monthly \$25). An enthusiastic Indie Net Pick for a veteran, award-winning author: "McDermid is a thriller writer at the top of her game and *Out of Bounds* has everything readers want in a character-driven suspense novel: fully human characters, tight plotting, unexpected twists, and a story that grabs and won't let go. Karen Pirie is still reeling from the death of her partner and is coping by throwing herself into her work as detective chief inspector of Scotland's Historic Cases Unit. As the unit works to unravel a 20-year-old case through a DNA match from the driver in a recent car accident, Pirie skates on thin ice with her superiors by digging into the background of a mentally disturbed man who appears to have committed suicide. Highly recommended!"

McCallin, Luke. [The Divided City](#) (Berkley \$16). The author of *The Man from Berlin* and *The Pale House* completes a dark, compelling thriller trilogy set in post-World War II Germany featuring ex-intelligence officer Captain Gregor Reinhardt. The British author has worked around the world and is well able to immerse himself in the fractured city and period when wartime alliances and roles are giving way to harsh new realities. Reinhardt has been hired back into Berlin's civilian police force where his colleagues regard him with suspicion and disdain. The murder of a man in a tenement sparks fears a serial killer is on the loose, but what if instead a plot involving Allies, Soviets, and Germans not yet done with fighting is afoot? This trilogy is an excellent reminder that governing and managing bureaucracy are Herculean tasks. Our **January History Paperback Pick** will appeal to readers of Philip Kerr's Bernie Guenther series, David Downing's wonderful Berlin stations spy stories, and some Joseph Kanon. But start with the [two earlier books](#).

McVeigh, Jennifer. [Leopard at the Door](#) (Putnam \$26) is, per the Indie Next Pick, "a beautifully layered coming-of-age novel set in a Kenya still under the yoke of colonial British rule. Rachel, whose beloved mother died when she was 12, returns to the coun-

try she loves after six years in England. She struggles against the expectations of her father and his new partner, Susan, whom Rachel has a difficult time accepting. Fine writing weaves Rachel's story with the essence of Kenya, the treatment of its people, and the uprising of the Mau Mau who seek independence. This is a thrillingly taut novel — with a clever title, too!”

Miller, Derek B. [Girl in Green](#) (Houghton \$26) with Signed Bookplate. The author, who lives in Sweden, debuted with a staff favorite: [Norwegian by Night](#) (\$14.95). We can't get signed books but we are getting Signed bookplates for *Girl in Green* and, while they last, for *Norwegian by Night* where he introduced readers to an elderly Korean War veteran finding his place in the modern world. “In his sophomore novel, international affairs specialist Miller takes a giant step out of Norway to follow two unlikely heroes on an errand of mercy in one of the most dangerous places on Earth--modern-day Iraq, where the label “postwar” clashes with the reality of life for its citizens. As daring in execution as imagination, this adventure tale crackles with heart, charm and dark honesty. In Arwood and Benton, readers will see the kind of big personalities that carry movie franchises. Whether our heroes are wondering where they went wrong (usually Benton), or introducing a new half-baked plan sure to save the day unless it gets them killed (usually Arwood), just going along for the ride would be entertaining enough, but Miller also provides ample food for thought and an ending that roars. A word of advice: buy *The Girl in Green* rather than borrow it. With the proliferation of sharp one liners, occasional droplets of poetry like ‘the buzuq sings a song for which there will never be any words’ and insightful distillations of the intricacies and contradictions of an American conflict that slides from phase to phase without ever ending, the urge to highlight and dog-ear will overcome even the most book-proud reader.”—Shelf Awareness. The Starred *PW* review ends, “Miller caps his stellar, electrifying story with a knockout ending.”

Moore, Jonathan. [The Dark Room](#) (Houghton \$24). The sequel to Moore's celebrated [The Poison Artist](#) \$14.95) has a staggering and terrible premise. Gavin Cain, San Francisco PD Homicide investigator is terrific, with a strong voice, a sharp sense of justice, and a personality akin to Harry Bosch. The SF peninsula is vividly rendered. I thought for sure I had our Surprise Me Club Pick here and then Moore rings in players as he approaches the end game that I don't find credible and it spoiled the whole. Rats!! I'm going to go back and read *The Poison Artist* and see if the problem is that Moore, promising a knockout book for 2018, just dreamt this one up too fast to do an ending worthy of the beginning. On all other counts *The Dark Room* is a winner (with a lot of Chandler tropes).

Peelle, Lydia. [The Midnight Cool](#) (Harper \$26.99). The Indie Next Pick: “The journey of middle-aged swindler Billy and his young, idealistic partner Charles is a journey into the history and heart of the oft-maligned American dream. As the nation considers whether it will join World War I, Billy and Charles must weigh the merits of freedom against patriotic obligation, their life on the road against the temptation of putting down roots, and their diverging desires against the love and loyalty they bear for each other. As Billy says, ‘I reckon that's the beauty and the shame of it, all at once.’ Peelle's exploration of this beauty and shame is exquisitely wrought, richly populated, and ultimately devastating. I finished the novel in tears.”

Rivers, Susan. [The Second Mrs. Hockaday](#) (Algonquin 25.95). A Library Reads Pick: “Placidia is seventeen when she marries Major Hockaday, an older man and recent widower with a child. After he is recalled to service in the Civil War, she must manage his farm and take care of his son and all with little help. When he returns, it is to find that she has given birth, and said to have murdered the child. Told in journal entries, letters, and court documents, we learn about her life and the answers to this puzzling and horrifically charged event. A dark book that highlights the amazing strength so many of these women had to develop.” The Indie Next Pick: “When Major Gryffth Hockaday returns home after years fighting in the Civil War, he discovers that his wife had given birth to a child who later died, both events occurring under mysterious circumstances. Knowing he cannot be the father of the child, he has murder charges brought against his wife. The trial and the story of what happened unfold through letters and diary entries written by Placidia Hockaday and other family members, culminating in a shocking truth. Inspired by actual events, the characters and story that Rivers has created are truly memorable and *The Second Mrs. Hockaday* is a unique and fascinating read.”

Schweblin, Samanta. [Fever Dream](#) (Riverhead \$25). The Indie Next Pick: “Haunting, foreboding, eerie, and ominous, *Fever Dream* is the first of the Argentine author's books to appear in English. Despite its brevity, it throbs with a quickened pulse, as heightening tension is its most effective quality. An intriguing yet purposefully vague plot adds to the story's mystique, one of peril, poison, and the unexplained terror of worms. Metaphorical in scope, Schweblin's impressively constructed tale leaves much to the imagination but is all the richer for doing so. Unsettling and compelling, this is a delirious, potent novel not to be overlooked.” I have to say I made no headway with this but I do put most Indie Next Picks before you as representing the taste of Independent Booksellers.

✚Spencer, Sally. [The Shivering Turn](#) (Severn \$28.99). Introducing Oxford-based private investigator Jennie Redhead in the first of a brand-new mystery series. 17-year-old Linda Corbet is missing and Jennie Redhead is hired to investigate. The only clue she has is a fragment of a 17th century poem she finds in Linda's room. But from that one clue Jennie's investigations will lead her to a hidden world of privilege, violence and excess which lies behind Oxford's dreaming spires I have always found Spencer's voice to be flat but the elements here are appealing. Ordered Upon Request.

Swanson, Peter. [Her Every Fear](#) (Harper \$26.99). “Kate Priddy is moving to Boston to swap apartments with her cousin. Haunted by an abusive ex, she wants to leave behind her previous life. But when her neighbor, Audrey Marshall, is murdered, Kate is drawn into a web of fear even darker than her past. Varying points of view add new perspectives to the narrative as the book goes on; the mystery of what really happened to Audrey is just a part of the intrigue as we delve into the minds of imperfect, broken people.” The Indie Next Pick: “Swanson builds tension like a chess grandmaster slowly revealing his game. Kate Priddy tries to escape her dark past with a move to Boston, only to discover that she is not the only one trying to hide t secrets, and that many are darker than her own. Moving seamlessly among each character's point of view, Swanson's heart-stopping thriller draws readers into this terrifying and twisted tale of revenge and holds

them until the surprising end.” I liked his debut in [The Girl with a Clock for a Heart](#) (\$14.99; 2 Signed \$35) so much it was a 2014 First Mystery Club Pick, but I failed to believe in this one or its bow to *Rear Window*.

Woods, Stuart. [Below the Belt](#) (Putnam \$28). What would January be without an escape with Stone Barrington? Hitting a benchmark, 40 cases, the debonair New York lawyer agrees to do a favor for his friend former U.S. president Will Lee, who’s visiting Santa Fe, NM where Stone has just bought a house (of course, he collects houses). All Stone has to do is drive into the nearby mountains and retrieve a sort of high security suitcase from another ex-president, Joe Adams, and deliver it to Will at the Santa Fe opera after that night’s performance. When a rock slide on the mountain road prevents Stone from making his rendezvous, he ends up spending a lot of time looking after the strong case, which contains a retired CIA agent’s memoir ripe with explosive secrets. One person whose reputation could suffer from the memoir’s revelations is charismatic Nelson Knott, who’s considering a run for president as a third-party candidate—and whose wealthy supporters are prepared to go to any lengths on his behalf. Woods comes up with one of his nifty twists in the end game, plus you get to tour Santa Fe which is always a treat. Because he was ill this fall we didn’t pester him with shipping this book but he returns in April, probably 17 or 18. You can [order Stone’s full roster of thrillers](#).

#### JANUARY MASS MARKET PAPERBAC PICKS

Berry, Steve. [The 14th Colony](#) (\$9.99) Cotton Malone #11. Shot down over Siberia during what was supposed to be a straightforward mission, ex-Justice Department agent Cotton Malone barely escapes the clutches of a zealous anti-U.S. former KGB officer and learns that a sleeper is plotting a deadly attack during the American presidential inauguration. *PW* concluded its review with “The story line expands to include missing nukes, a society formed by U.S. army officers after the Revolutionary War, and a dying man’s cryptic reference to the “zero amendment.” Richer characterizations and more thoughtful suspense elevate this above similar 24-like stories.”

Dorsey, Tim. [Coconut Cowboy](#) (\$9.99) Serge Storms #19. Embarking on a plan to finish the motorcycle journey of his Easy Rider heroes in the Florida panhandle, Serge Storms and his sidekick Coleman encounter corrupt politicians, homicides, and mind-altering drugs. *Kirkus* had this to say “Dorsey’s 19th keeps the body count low but the energy high as he proves again that enough is enough, but too much is plenty.”

Greaney, Mark. [Back Blast](#) (\$9.99) Court Gentry #5. Returning to Washington to uncover the truth about why the CIA betrayed him, former elite agent-turned-Gray Man Court Gentry discovers that the case is still very much under discussion and that he has stumbled onto a secret that powerful enemies will kill to keep. *PW* loved the latest Court Gentry book saying “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.”

Grippando, James. [Gone Again](#) (\$9.99) Learning that a man on death row who is days away from being executed may be innocent, Jack Swyteck races against time to discover the truth about the victim, the accused, and the victim’s parents. Read everything

by John Grisham and in need of a new author? Try Grippando. His thrillers have the same addictively readable quality.

Heiter, Elizabeth. [Stalked](#) (Mira \$7.99) Profiler #4. When Haley, a popular 17-year-old cheerleader goes missing, leaving behind a cryptic note, FBI profiler Evelyn Baine is called in to investigate and discovers that everyone close to Haley has something to hide, including the teenager herself, and that discovering the truth could get both her and Haley killed. If you enjoy television shows like *Criminal Minds* or like Ridley Pearson’s Daphne Matthews series and haven’t yet discovered Heiter’s equally thrilling books, you are in for a treat.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Assault and Beret Signed](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Hat Shop #5. Searching for the man she impulsively eloped with years ago to have their marriage annulled, London milliner Vivian Tremont arrives in Paris where she and her best friend get involved in the search for a masterpiece stolen by a master of deception.

Page, Katherine. [The Body in the Wardrobe](#) (\$7.99) Faith Fairchild #23. Minster’s wife, caterer, and part-time sleuth Faith Fairchild pairs up with Sophie Maxwell, last seen in *Body in the Birches* and now a newlywed living in historic Savannah, Georgia, where Sophie crosses paths with murder. *Kirkus* says “A paean to the beauties of Savannah with more romantic suspense than true mystery, but it’s still a charming tale filled with lively characters and mouthwatering descriptions of local food.”

Rollins, James. [War Hawk](#) (\$9.99) Tucker Wayne #3. While helping a former army colleague, who’s on the run from assassins, Tucker Wayne and his military dog, Kane, must stop a psycho trying to commandeer all the resources of modern warfare. *PW* ended their review with “Kane, a Belgian Malinois, is the stand-out character, more than just a plot device and never anthropomorphized. His point-of-view chapters reveal his loyalty, fear, intelligence, and even a desire for revenge. Kane’s a good boy!”

#### NEW IN MASS MARKET PAPERBACKS

Abbott, Kristi. [Pop Goes the Murder](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Popcorn Shop #2. When her ex-husband offers to feature her breakfast bars and popcorn fudge on his popular cooking show, Rebecca Anderson becomes embroiled in a murder investigation after she discovers his assistant is found electrocuted in a hotel bathroom.

Alexander, Ellie. [Fudge and Jury](#) (St Martins \$7.99) Bakeshop #5. When her competitor, famed chocolatier Evan Rowe of Confections Couture, meets his demise after sampling a slice of her four-layer decadent chocolate cake, Jules falls under scrutiny and must sift through the ingredients to whip up the truth—and the real killer.

Kappes, Tonya. [Ghostly Reunion](#) (Harper \$7.99) Ghostly Southern #5. Emma Lee, the proprietor of the Eternal Slumber Funeral Home, is saddled with the ghost of her high school nemesis Jade Lee Peel who wants her to solve her murder so she can cross over, but not before coming between Emma and her hunky boyfriend, Sheriff Jack Henry Ross.

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Breakdown](#) (\$9.99) Alex Delaware #31. When an actress turns up dead after a public breakdown weeks earlier, Alex Delaware assists lieutenant Milo Sturgis with the case and wonders if there is a connection to the victim’s missing daughter and a second celebrity killing.

Martinez, Juan. [Conviction: The Untold Story o](#) (Harper \$9.99) Juan Martinez, the fiery prosecutor who convicted notorious murderess Jodi Arias for the disturbing killing of Travis Alexander, speaks for the first time about the shocking investigation and sensational trial that captivated the nation.

Orgain, Diana. [Third Time's a Crime](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Love or Money #3. Contestants on an all-new show set in a haunted castle in Golden, California, ex-detective Georgia Thornton and nine other people must solve the disappearance of a teenage girl at the castle in 1960—and find themselves close to the truth when someone gets murdered.

Patterson, James. [Merry Christmas Alex Cross](#) (Grand Central \$7.99) Alex Cross #19. On Christmas Eve, Detective Alex Cross is called away from his family to resolve a horrific hostage situation that is spiraling out of control in this reprint of a 2012 title by Patterson.

Ryan, Sofie. [Telling Tails](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Second Chance Cat #4. When her friend and employee, Rose, witnesses a murder, but no one believes her, Sarah Grayson and her senior sleuths known as Charlotte's Angels are determined to find the truth before the killer strikes again.