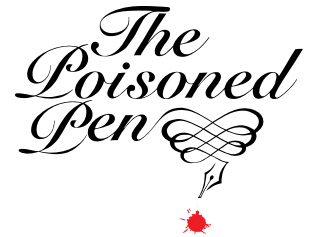


BOOKNEWS from

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Happy Valentine's Day, and President's Day!

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

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

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 2 7:00 PM

Michael Gamble signs [Murder by Tango](#) (Dominus \$26.95)
April Smith signs [Home Sweet Home](#) (Knopf \$26.95)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 4 2:00 PM

Betty Webb signs [Desert Vengeance](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95) Lena Jones #9

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 7 7:00 PM Western Crime

Alexandra Burt signs [The Good Daughter](#) (Berkley \$16)
Robert Knott signs [Robert B Parker's Revelation](#) (Putnam \$27)

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 8 2:00 PM

Kristan Higgins signs [On Second Thought](#) (Harlequin \$15.99)
Two Attendees who purchase Higgins' book will win a lovely basket of treats

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 8 7:00 PM Trust No One!

Sarah Pinborough signs [Behind Her Eyes](#) (Flatiron \$25.99)

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 9 7:00 PM

John Lescroart signs [Fatal](#) (Atria \$26.99) Suspense!
Kelly Parsons signs [Under the Knife](#) (St Martins \$26.99) Medical thriller

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11 10:30 AM

Coffee and Crime discusses ML Longworth, [Death at the Chateau Bremont](#) (\$15), first in a delightful Provence series

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11 12:00 PM

Priscilla Royal signs [The Proud Sinner](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95; \$15.95) Medieval Mystery #13

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 11 2:00 PM

Reed Farrel Coleman signs [What You Break](#) (Putnam \$27) Gus Murphy #2

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 15 7:00 PM

Mark Greaney signs [Gunmetal Gray](#) (Berkley \$26) The Gray Man #5

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 16 7:00 PM

Stephen Coonts hosts a duel of thrillers
Charles Cummings signs [The Divided Spy](#) (St Martins \$26.99)
KJ Howe signs [The Freedom Broker](#) (Quercus \$26.99) First Mystery Pick

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 17 7:00 PM

Mark Pryor hosts
Ian Rankin signs [Rather Be the Devil](#) (LittleBrown \$27)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 18 10:30 AM

Croak and Dagger discusses Elsa Hart's debut, [Jade Dragon Mountain](#) (\$15.99)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 18 2:00 PM British Tea

Deborah Crombie signs [Garden of Lamentations](#) (Harper \$26.99) Kincaid & Jones
Charles Todd signs [Racing the Devil](#) (Harper \$26.99) Inspector Rutledge

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21 7:00 PM Two super second novels

Trudy Nan Boyce signs [Old Bones](#) (Putnam \$27)
Heather Young signs [Shimmering Road](#) (Putnam \$26)

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22 7:00 PM Western Crime

Eric Heisner signs [T.H. Elkman](#) (Skyhorse \$22.99)

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 23 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime Club discusses John Ball's classic [In the Heat of the Night](#) (\$15)

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 24 7:00 PM in our Annex

SciFi/Fantasy Discussion Club discusses Cixin Liu's [Three Body Problem](#) (\$15.95)

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 24 7:00 PM

James Sallis and the Three-Legged Dog Band play

MONDAY FEBRUARY 27 7:00 PM Exceptional noir

Kathleen Kent signs [The Dime](#) (Mulholland \$26)
Joe R. Lansdale signs [Rusty Puppy](#) (Mulholland \$26)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 28 7:00 PM Book Launch

Joanne Fluke signs [Banana Cream Pie Murder](#) (Kensington \$26)

WEDNESDAY MARCH 1 7:00 PM

Rhys Bowen signs [In Farleigh Field](#) (Lake Union \$24.95 or \$14.95) March History Club Pick

THURSDAY MARCH 2 7:00 PM

Tim Dorsey signs [Clownfish Blues](#) (Harper \$26.99) Serge A. Storms

EVENT BOOKS

Bowen, Rhys. [In Farleigh Field](#) (Lake Union \$24.95 or \$14.95). World War II comes to Farleigh Place, the ancestral home of Lord Westerham and his five daughters, when a soldier with a failed parachute falls to his death on the estate. After his uniform and possessions raise suspicions, MI5 operative and family friend Ben Cresswell is covertly tasked with determining if the man is a German spy. The assignment also offers Ben the chance to be near Lord Westerham's middle daughter, Pamela, whom he furtively loves. But Pamela has her own secret: she has taken a job at Bletchley Park, the British code-breaking facility. As Ben follows a trail of spies and traitors, which may include another member of Pamela's family, he discovers that some within the realm have an appalling, history-altering agenda. Our **March History/Mystery Club Pick**.

Boyce, Trudy Nan. [Old Bones](#) (Putnam \$27). This sophomore police thriller by actual Atlanta cop Boyce after [Out of the Blues](#) (\$27 Signed 1st) is really kick ass! Definitely for readers of Karin Slaughter for the obvious reasons, but also for Marcia Muller/McCone and Paretsky/Warshawski fans for the backstory of Detective Sarah Alt's home/family and the issues addressed in the story. Salt is dealing with various issues including her romance with fellow officer Wills and whether and where they might combine households since she is firmly attached to her rural family home with its fenced land and herd of sheep. On the professional front she's investigating the case of a decomposed body, a girl she took custody of two years back, when she's suddenly hauled into riot detail after students at Spellman College (historically a black women's institution) are gunned down by a drive-by shooter.... Boyce handles the threads of this excellent novel with the finesse of a more seasoned pro.

Burt, Alexandra. [The Good Daughter](#) (Berkley \$16). 33-year-old Dahlia Waller finds an unidentified woman lying comatose in the woods near the home she shares with her mentally unstable mother in Aurora, Tex. The experience inspires Dahlia to dig into the mysteries of her own past, including the absence of her father, the nomadic nature of her childhood, and her mother's aversion to paper work. The rural Texas landscape is well wrought, but the story is not for me. However here's a different take from *Kirkus*: "Burt knows how to propel a strongly character-driven novel forward, using intrigue, mystery, plot twists, and rich—sometimes grisly—sensory imagery. Her insightful ability to make the turmoil within Memphis and Dahlia visible and believable makes for strong female characters who are nevertheless flawed and somewhat unreliable narrators. The look into their inner chaos is both fascinating and unsettling and speaks to the strength of the human will to survive even under the most adverse conditions." We have stocked her earlier novel [Remember Mia](#) (\$16) for her to sign.

Coleman, Reed Farrel. [What You Break](#) (Putnam \$27). Coleman is always a tricky plotter. In this sequel to his new series start [Where It Hurts](#) (\$16), he does a masterful job portraying Long Island and Brooklyn in a story reaching deep into the past. Here's one of the Starred Reviews: Shamus Award-winner Coleman delves deep into the wounded psyche of his ex-cop lead. Gus Murphy is still struggling with the sudden death of his 20-year-

old son, John Jr., and kills time working as a courtesy-van driver shuttling between a ratty Suffolk County hotel and Long Island's MacArthur Airport. Meanwhile, the hidden past of his friend Slava Podalak, the hotel's night bellman, has resurfaced with a vengeance, and Gus becomes a witness to murder. In addition, Gus's confidant, Bill Kilkenny, a former priest, asks him to help the wealthy Micah Spears find out not who butchered his granddaughter but why. Spears makes Gus an offer impossible to resist—funding a youth sports foundation in John Jr.'s name. Coleman doesn't pull any punches or settle for pat character arcs in presenting a realistically flawed Gus, who realizes that his morality "was not so much a search for the truth as a set of rationalizations that let sleep at night."

Crombie, Deborah. [Garden of Lamentations](#) (Harper \$26.99). It's hard to imagine this is the 17th investigation for Kincaid and James. We've followed them from the beginning as two detective with Scotland Yard working as partners through romance to marriage. At first they moved about but more recently they've been London based. You don't have to read the whole series before this one but you definitely need to get in the picture by starting with #16, 2014's [To Dwell in Darkness](#) (\$15.99), to understand why Duncan Kincaid has been demoted and reassigned to a new super (if he indeed understands it). We follow two lines thus: Kincaid's meeting with his old boss who has amazingly reappeared on duty, and Gemma's troubling investigation into the murder of a neighbor's nanny found placed early one morning in one of those private gardens assigned to London residents whose homes border it. In fact the city's parks and gardens are on display in this multifaceted narrative along with the darker aspects of cover-ups and corruptions, and the abuse of power in both lines of inquiry. There's a nifty undercover op in play and a resolution of all the plot points. Crombie is a master of the telling detail that textures her intelligent plots and portraits of people and place. The Indie Next Pick adds: "As always in Crombie's novels, the look we get at the domestic lives of Duncan, Gemma and their children is as interesting as the mystery. Another fine entry in this excellent series." [Order all 17](#).

Cumming, Charles. [The Divided Spy](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Oscar-winner Colin Firth is certainly a fan; he recently announced an adaptation of Cumming's Thomas Kell series to the small screen, with a six-episode series scheduled to air in 2017. Former MI6 officer Thomas Kell seeks revenge against the Russian government, but his efforts end up threatening the national security of his beloved Britain. As the mission reaches boiling point, the threat of a catastrophic terrorist attack looms over Britain, and Kell is faced with an impossible choice—loyalty to MI6 or to his own conscience? Cumming is a super author in the Le Carré vein. I would have made this book our February Thriller Club Pick but many of our customers had already bought the UK edition. I recommend his books, and those by James Naughtie reviewed in Signed Books, to you who relish good spy stories. [Order Cumming's earlier books](#).

Dorsey, Tim. [Clownfish Blues](#) (Harper \$26.99). Dorsey signs here March 2 but it publishes end of January; to secure a Signed first, please order now. As he's shooting an homage to the classic *Route 66* TV series (filmed partly in Florida), lovable Sunshine

State maniac Serge A. Storms contends with money-laundering drug cartels, bent bodega owners, and weaselly venture capitalists all trying to game the state lottery system. There's plenty of sharp cultural commentary ("The sidewalks were thick with street crazies talking to themselves, and executives with Bluetooths talking to themselves"). Dorsey hasn't been to The Pen in years so please turn out to give him a warm welcome. You can [order his earlier books](#).

Fluke, Joanne. [Banana Cream Pie Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). Fluke launches her latest Hannah Swensen here at the Pen on February 28. A romantic seven-day cruise is the perfect start to bakery owner Hannah Swensen's marriage. Then back in Lake Eden, reality crashes in when the downstairs neighbor in her mother's condo is murdered.... As ever, tested recipes are included. [Order more Hannahs](#).

Gamble, Michael. [Murder by Tango](#) (Dominus \$26.95). I've watched thrilling performances of tango in Argentina, on the streets, in theaters—it's dance and drama fused, pulsing with passion and rhythm yet performed with elegant style. Gamble has seized upon the tango community as the landscape of a revenge thriller. Star performer Miguel Zamotto has forsakes Buenos Aires for Manhattan so he can track down the killer of his sister. Entering the country illegally, he uses an alias to audition for one of the coveted spots in Spanish aristocrat Don Luis de Granada's dance company—the very company where Miguel's sister was the star *tanguera*, and was murdered. Aggie Jacobs is the other new hire but Miguel must stay focused on his resolve for revenge. As Don Luis favors Miguel he relates the history of a family which has been cursed for over 600 years, a curse associated with the forgery of the Hebrew bible known as the Aleppo Codex. Is Don Luis manipulating Aggie, and perhaps Miguel, in a scheme of his own? This offbeat mystery gets a quality HC production from Dominus.

Greaney, Mark. [Gunmetal Gray](#) (Berkley \$27). So Court Gentry, hunted by the CIA, does a switcheroo and is now back on the agency's inside where he's as formidable an assassin as ever in his 6th thriller. The force is with him as this Starred Review clearly shows: Bestseller Greaney's outstanding sixth Gray Man novel finds Court Gentry, now a contract employee of the CIA, joining an effort to locate one of the world's greatest computer hackers, 26-year-old Fan Jiang, a sergeant in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, who's on the run after escaping from mainland China. Teams of agents from Russia and China are also involved in the hunt for Fan. Court pretends to join the Chinese, because they have captured and are threatening to kill an old spy buddy, Sir Donald Fitzroy, a British agent who once saved Court's life. The Russians are led by Zoya Feodorovich Zakharova, an SVR operative, who's working with an elite SVR paramilitary unit known as Zaslou. Court eventually captures Zoya, who quickly becomes a love interest. The tension mounts as Court, with the help of the talented Zoya, chases Fan all over Eastern Asia. I add that it's a treat to be battling the Chinese instead of ISIS (in a book). [Order the first 4 Gray Man thrillers](#).

Heisner, Eric. [T.H. Elkman](#) (Skyhorse \$22.99). Honest work on the 1800s frontier was sometimes hard to acquire. Traveling independently on the expansive road through the west, cowboy and westerner Tomas H. Elkman is a man of the times. To ease the loneliness of the trail while searching for gainful employ-

ment, Elkman warily teams up with a fight-prone, good-timing gambler by the name of Jefferson McGredy. This strange pairing of men is hired to deliver an assemblage of horses to a ranch in the untamed northern territory. The rancher sends his young son, Kent Martin, to accompany the horsemen on their travels through mountains and rivers, across primitive landscapes, and into remnants of mining boomtowns. The journey becomes a constant challenge to their moral fiber as they face the overwhelming hardships of hostile weather, rustlers, and natives....

Higgins, Kristan. [On Second Thought](#) (Harlequin \$15.99). 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. There's just a bit of Jodi here, as well as of Liane Moriarty. [Order other novels by Higgins](#).

Howe, KJ. [The Freedom Broker](#) (Quercus \$26.99). This debut thriller, our **February First Mystery Club Pick**, has a terrific hook, strong action, and memorable characters. If it's all a bit predictable I can go with it—the test for me is the series potential and whether the book sticks in my mind, which this one does. And the theater is the world of international kidnapping. Kidnap and rescue expert Thea Paris has suffered from survivor's guilt ever since her brother, Nikos, was kidnapped 20 years earlier at age 12—despite Niko's safe return. In the present day, the stakes get personal again when Thea's wealthy father, Christos, is kidnapped on his 60th birthday from his yacht, which was moored at the Greek island of Santorini. A powerful oil baron about to make the deal of a lifetime, Christos has certainly made his share of enemies. Thea expects a ransom demand, but instead a series of foreboding messages in Latin come to her father's phone. With no way to know whether her father is still alive, or who's behind the kidnapping, Thea must fight the clock, her own secrets, and those of her closest family members for some kind of resolution, no matter how damaging. "A fast-moving thriller featuring kidnapped oil tycoon Christos Paris and his kidnap-negotiator daughter, Thea. She's tough. She's smart. She's diabetic . . . A spectacular start for what promises to be a great Thea Paris series."—*Kirkus (Starred Review)*

Kent, Kathleen. [The Dime](#) (Mulholland \$26). Detective Betty Rhyzyk, a tough-as-nails Brooklyn cop transplanted to Dallas and the narrator of historical novelist Kent's outstanding first crime novel, works undercover in narcotics. At almost six feet tall with flaming red hair and a steady girlfriend, she's not the norm in Texas. Joe R. Lansdale is so smitten with this book he's touring with Kent; Patrick and I fought over which club wins **The Dime** and he won so it's the **February Hardboiled Crime Club Pick, but you First Mystery Club people should grab it too!** Here's Patrick's review: "Betty Rhyzyk, the protagonist of

this outstanding crime debut, comes from a long line of Brooklyn cops, but she's in for quite an adjustment when she takes a job with the Dallas PD. Her first case working as lead detective on a narcotics case goes south fast when a cartel leader from below the border loses a bag of drug money and begins littering the streets with bodies. To compound matters, she butts up against a well-entrenched good ol' boy law enforcement community that doesn't exactly appreciate a supremely competent, six-foot female with fiery red hair putting them all to shame. Kent does a brilliant job of portraying modern day Dallas, from the unholy trinity of money, guns and church, to the beauty of the landscape. This is a violent book, as all realistic depictions of the drug cartels must be, and in the author's talented hands the violence never feels gratuitous. The start of a great new series."

Knott, Robert. [Robert B Parker's Revelation](#) (Putnam \$27). This new chapter in the Hitch/Cole series has everything you want in a rousing Western/mystery: a prison sequence worthy of Elmore Leonard; a really bad guy (and a surprise really really bad guy); a gentrifying Western town the US Marshal is sworn to protect; not one but two women to romance and rescue; a group of convicts on the loose and a hunt for missing riches; and a five-star finale. Honestly this one cries out for a movie (if the cast for *Appaloosa* can be reassembled) and is IMHO Knott's finest book yet. [Order his earlier Hitch & Cole novels.](#)

Lansdale, Joe R. [Rusty Puppy](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Hap Collins has just recovered from a near-fatal stabbing in last year's [Honky Tonk Samurai](#) (\$15.99), but he's already back on the job with best friend and fellow investigator Leonard Pine in this dark, moving tale involving racism, rogue cops and murder. A young man named Jamar Elton was murdered and a witness claims to have seen three police officers beat him to death near a project house in the neighboring East Texas community of Camp Rapture. Hap and Leonard decide to help the slain man's mother by looking into things, but the only witness, a recidivist criminal named Timpson Weed, quickly ends up dead too. As always, Lansdale spins a wild, rollicking yarn, but behind all of the mayhem is a heart-felt tale about friendship, brotherhood, loyalty and family. Hap and Leonard are complicated, violent men but they display a basic humanity and decency that carries this remarkable series along. Patrick is a long-time Lansdale enthusiast. He says, "I drop everything to read a new Lansdale. He's never afraid to tackle subjects like racism and intolerance head on, but he takes readers on such a wild and raucous ride that we don't realize how much he's challenging us to look at our assumptions and beliefs. Joe's one of the true originals out there, and it's great to see his work reaching a bigger audience at last." [Order earlier Hap & Leonard novels.](#) We regret we cannot supply *Coco Butternut*, look for it on-line.

Here's an upcoming one: [Blood and Lemonade](#) (Tachyon \$15.95). Fans of Lansdale's Hap and Leonard novels will welcome this wonderful compilation of vignettes and episodes from Hap Collins's early life in East Texas, most of which deal with issues of racism and injustice. "Tire Fire" relates the full story of teenager Hap's memorable first meeting with Leonard Pine at a nighttime "money fight" in the country. This loose collection of tales showcases some of Lansdale's most personal and reflective writing to date. The publication date appears to be March 24 so we can't guarantee that Lansdale can sign our copies.

Lescroart, John. [Fatal](#) (Atria \$26.99). Bestseller Lescroart successfully blends a police procedural with a whodunit in this absorbing standalone. A few days after meeting at a dinner party in San Francisco, Kate Jameson, who's married, phones lawyer Peter Ash about a private legal matter and suggests they rendezvous at a downtown hotel, where she has a room. After they end up having sex, Kate doesn't want a repeat, but Peter becomes obsessed with her. Soon afterward, Kate and her best friend, Beth Tully, a San Francisco homicide inspector, survive a terrorist attack. Six months later, Beth and her partner, Ike McCaffrey, are called to a beach where Peter's body has washed up. The corpse, which was in the water for over a day, has a bullet hole in the chest, but the bullet is missing. With so little to work with and alibis abounding, Beth and Ike make slow progress. The challenges for the protagonists lend verisimilitude to the story and give it a satisfying rhythm. Lescroart keeps readers guessing until the very end. I'm a fan of all Lescroart's stylish and craftily plotted mysteries—[order them all.](#)

Parsons, Kelly. [Under the Knife](#) (St Martins \$26.99) follows Morgan Finney, a biotechnology tycoon with a brilliant mind a no social skills, as he vows to kill the doctor he blames for his wife's horrific demise following an emergency appendectomy. As Finney attempts to systematically destroy her life, Dr. Rita Wu reaches out to ex-lover Dr. Spencer Cameron as first, they suss out what Finney is doing, and then race to stop him. This thriller is a real immersion into the realm of surgery and fascinating. The author, a Stanford alum, is a board-certified urologist and faculty member of UC San Diego. I always like to cite credentials for a thriller drawing on professional expertise.

Parsons' first medical thriller, [Doing Harm](#) (\$9.99), a First Mystery Club Pick, got these raves: "Best damn medical thriller I've read in 25 years. Terrifying OR scenes, characters with real texture."—Stephen King. "*Doing Harm* is a terrific medical thriller—compelling, gripping, and terrifying. You'll shiver with delight."—Harlan Coben. "This spectacular debut is a real nail-biter with startling revelations that build suspense throughout. Steve's back is constantly against the wall, and it's exciting to watch him battle the criminal mind. The tension on his home front is a good counterpoint to all the stress at the hospital. Most of the medical jargon is explained to make it easy for everyone."—*Romantic Times Book Reviews*

Pinborough, Sarah. [Behind Her Eyes](#) (Flatiron \$25.99 Feb. 8). "The most unsettling thriller of the year... Read it now before someone spoils the ending for you."—John Connolly. The Indie Next Pick: "Louise meets a charming man in a bar and is smitten. The attraction is mutual, but David confesses he is married. They go their separate ways ... until the next morning when Louise goes to work and realizes that the new psychiatrist who has been hired by the practice is David. Adele, David's wife, is struggling to keep their marriage alive, but David has tired of her lies. A friendship begins between Adele and Louise. David and Louise are still attracted to each other and the triangle is complete. This is not your average thriller. It is absolutely riveting!" A love-triangle that can only end... how? You'd be surprised. "A dark, electrifying page-turner with a corker of an ending."—Harlan Coben. "Fully realised characters, peerless writing, a tank of a plot that sustains the suspense right to the end, and a whammy of a finale. It takes a lot to catch me out, but this one did. It'll get you too..."—Joanne Harris.

Rankin, Ian. [Rather Be the Devil](#) (LittleBrown \$27). As he settles into an uneasy retirement, Rebus has given up his favorite vices. There's just one habit he can't shake: he can't let go of an unsolved case. It's the only pastime he has left and up until now, it's the only one that wasn't threatening to kill him. But when Rebus starts reexamining the facts behind the unsolved murder of Maria Turquand, the wife of a wealthy banker with a penchant for sleeping around, at Edinburgh's classy Caledonian hotel—the past comes roaring back to life with a vengeance. And as soon as Rebus starts asking questions about the long forgotten crime, a fresh body materializes. His inquiries reunite him with his old pals-Siobhan Clarke and Malcolm Fox-and, inevitably, Big Ger Cafferty. “Rankin thoughtfully explores the strange co-dependent relationship between the cop and his longstanding rival, aging gangster.” .2017 marks Rankin's 30th year publishing his award-winning books. He celebrates the anniversary as a new Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

NOTE: Mark Pryor will sign his delightful, thoughtfully plotted Hugo Marston mysteries February 17 as he hosts Rankin. [Order them here.](#)

Royal, Priscilla. [The Proud Sinner](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95; \$15.95) “Royal's 13th medieval murder takes a page from *The Mousetrap*, forcing the detective to think outside the box imprisoning her and her suspects.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. Prioress Eleanor of Tyndal Priory must play reluctant host to seven scheming abbots and their servants who arrive at her door. Ilbert, who'd fallen ill, then dies. After a blizzard delays their travel to meet with a papal envoy, the six, ensconced in the new guest quarters and served the best food the priory can provide, carp and wine as they wait for the roads to reopen. Despite their protestations of holiness, each selfishly hopes to advance his own position in the church hierarchy. Sister Anne redoubles her efforts to discover the cause of Ilbert's death when Odo becomes ill and Abbott Gifre dies after eating mushroom tart. Are the priory's kitchens, or Sister Anne, to blame? (Royal has a wonderful time with food prep and service). Both Crouner Ralf and Eleanor's right hand, Brother Thomas, work clear the priory while searching out a killer before they all die, one by one. Also in paperback: [Proud Sinner](#) (\$15.95). [Order the first 12](#) medieval mysteries by Royal.

Smith, April. [Home Sweet Home](#) (Knopf \$26.95 Feb. 1). Old pro Smith, who's enjoyed success in screenwriting and crime fiction (FBI Special Agent Ana Grey), has found a passion in fiction based on actual 20th Century events. This powerful book, laced with irony, follows a family that relocates from post-war Manhattan in 1950 to a more honest life west and ends up on a cattle ranch in South Dakota. The shocking opener—the brutal murder of the Kuseks' son Lance and injuries to his family on Christmas Eve, 1985—brings his sister Jo to the Rapid City hospital where she ponders who could have committed the deed and whether the family's history might have engendered it. Could it somehow be connected to her family's ranch? Her father's political career? Her mother's brief time as a member of the Communist party? Her parents' trial to clear their reputations? Could it be someone she knows? Smith's novel weaves smoothly between Jo in the hospital nervously waiting for answers and her family's epic backstory. It is a moving tale of the Kuseks' trials and triumphs as Calvin Kusek becomes a rancher, politician, and lawyer, but it underscores the darkness of the McCarthy era and the persecution the Kusek family endures for its liberal beliefs. The film

Trumbo showed you Hollywood in this era; Smith moves our **February Modern Firsts Editions Club Pick** to the Midwest.

Todd, Charles. [Racing the Devil](#) (Harper \$26.99). On the eve of the dreadful Battle of the Somme, five British officers accidentally gather for drinks, share a love for motorcars, and vow that if they survive the war, they will meet in Paris and race their vehicles to Nice. In 1919 they do. En route one man is nearly run off the road...deliberately so. A year later, a rector of a Sussex church borrows the car of one of the five bettors, without permission, crashes on a dark, rainy road, and is killed. The local constable, suspicious that another vehicle was involved, calls in the Yard, which sends Inspector Ian Rutledge to work his 19th investigation. I know I've picked Todd books before for our History/Mystery Club. I do it again for February because I am blown away by the motive Inspector Rutledge has to winkle out, and the totally ruthless nature of the serial murderer. Points to Todd for originality in our **February History/Mystery Club Pick**. If there were more mystery in Robert Knott's terrific Hitch and Cole noted above it would have been a close race and I urge you history fans to grab it too. And the Tobin in Signed Books. January's new novels by Casey and Ramsay score high points in originality too, so this is a banner winter for you fans of historicals.

Webb, Betty. [Desert Vengeance](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). “Webb, no stranger to hot-button issues, takes on child molestation in a page-turner that presents both her flawed heroine and the reader with plenty of challenges to their moral codes.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. Lena Jones is there the day her foster father, ironically called “Papa” Brian, is released from prison. Lena spent years in the foster-care system, and the worst were the years she spent in the care of the Wycoffs. ‘Papa Brian’ raped her repeatedly, and Norma enabled him by denying it. Wycoff was finally arrested when Lena stabbed him and a long list of children testified to his abuse. It's been 30 years but her wounds are still fresh and she is determined to shame both Wycoffs. When Norma is soon murdered, Lena is an obvious suspect. Yet there are so many others with reasons to hate the Wycoffs that the police, who have no love for child molesters, give her a pass on the murder. Jimmy Sisiwan, Lena's partner at Desert Investigations, does his best to get her to drop the case. But a GPS tracker she's planted on Wycoff's car allows her to follow him to Black Canyon City, where his sister, Grace, another enabler, may set off a destructive new chain. But then.... I really should drive up there and bring back pie from the amazing Rock Springs Café. But we'll have chocolates! [Order the Lena Jones series.](#)

Young, Hester. [The Shimmering Road](#) (Putnam \$26). Young has shifted her landscape from Louisiana in First Mystery Club Pick [The Gates of Evangeline](#) (\$16) to Tucson and a surprisingly hard punch for the situation in which Charlie Cates finds herself. The recently bereaved but now pregnant journalist Charlie has a family legacy of experiencing vivid dreams or visions that propel her (and the plot) into action. And so it is when she and her boyfriend Noah leave his home for Tucson to attempt to adopt her six-year-old niece after the double homicide of Micaela's mom, Charlie's half sister, and Charlie's mom Donna. I keep finding myself saying that “this is a second novel better than the author's first” and here's another instance. “Whip-smart, adrenaline-fueled... Young deftly uses Charlie's supernatural gift to create tension and dread without relying too heavily on it to advance the plot. And a story line involving Donna's employer—a nonprofit that helps women

living in Mexican border towns—both champions charity and gives poverty a human face.” —*PW*, saying it well. The Southwest backdrop shines too.

SIGNED BOOKS

Auster, Paul. [4 3 2 1](#) (Holt \$32.50). Nearly two weeks early, on March 3, 1947, Archibald Isaac Ferguson, the one and only child of Rose and Stanley Ferguson, is born. From that single beginning, Ferguson’s life will take four simultaneous and independent fictional paths. Four identical Fergusons made of the same DNA, four boys who are the same boy, go on to lead four parallel and entirely different lives. Family fortunes diverge. Athletic skills and sex lives and friendships and intellectual passions contrast. Meanwhile, readers will take in each Ferguson’s pleasures and ache from each Ferguson’s pains.

Barry, Brunonia. [The Fifth Petal](#) (Crown \$27.99). Barry will not be signing here until March 15, but to get a signed first since it publishes in January, order yours now. The Indie Next Pick: “Barry takes her readers back to Salem with a mesmerizing tale filled with familiar characters from her previous works and new ones as well. Towner Whitney and John Rafferty come to the aid of Callie Cahill as they attempt to piece together the circumstances surrounding the brutal murder of her mother while trying to keep herself from becoming a victim as well. This is a beautifully written story, full of twists and turns. Fans of *The Lace Reader* will love *The Fifth Petal*, though the book stands on its own and can be recommended to all readers.”

Berenson, Alex. [The Prisoner](#) (Putnam \$28). Berenson won the Edgar for Best First Novel for his spy hero John Wells who here treats us to his 11th action thriller tapping into the geopolitical turmoil of our times. ISIS is old news by now, but Berenson takes Wells back full circle to the series’ early years when Wells disguised himself as an al Qaeda Jihadist to infiltrate the dangerous world of fanatics, using his spy craft to oil the machinery of his op aimed at unmasking a CIA mole. I like the way Berenson lures him back into the game from deep retirement and how it circles his life in a satisfying way. Recommended. If you’ve missed out on reading Wells, [order up](#) and binge on his thrillers including the paperback of his terrific 2016 Wells, [The Wolves](#) (\$9.99).

Brodsky, Jordanna Max. [Winter of the Gods](#) (Orbit \$26). **Our February SciFi/Fantasy Pick** is the sequel to the charming debut [The Immortals](#) (\$15.99). Think of it as Rick Reardon’s Olympus novels—for grownups—since it brings the gods back—to contemporary New York where they create the kind of mischief and havoc they were famed for back in ancient Greece. The lead character is Diana, goddess of the moon, but all the Olympians take part. It’s better to read *The Immortals* first (alas last year I could not get the book Signed). This is adult fantasy but fun for teens (especially if they’ve read Reardon). When I was in the 5th grade I’d already memorized Bullfinch’s *Age of Fable* so I take an elastic look at what Young Adults can master and IMHO everyone should know who the Olympians are and what they each represent.

Chirovici, EO. [The Book of Mirrors](#) (Century \$45). **Our January First Mystery Club Pick, arriving late**, 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*.

☒Clement, Rory. [Corpus](#) (Zaffire \$32). In Berlin, a young Englishwoman evades the Gestapo to deliver vital papers to a Jewish scientist. Within weeks, she is found dead in her Cambridge bedroom, a silver syringe clutched in her fingers. In a London club, three senior members of the British establishment light the touch paper on a conspiracy that will threaten the very heart of government. Even the ancient colleges of Cambridge are not immune to political division. Dons and students must choose a side: right or left, where do you stand? When a renowned member of the county set and his wife are found horribly murdered, a maverick history professor finds himself dragged into a world of espionage which, until now, he has only read about in books. But the deeper Thomas Wilde delves, the more he wonders whether the murders are linked to the death of the girl with the silver syringe—and, just as worryingly, to the scandal surrounding King Edward VIII and his mistress Wallis Simpson... Set against the drumbeat of war and moving from Berlin to Cambridge, from Whitehall to the Kent countryside, and from the Fens to the Aragon Front in Spain.

De Hahn, Tracee. [Swiss Vendetta](#) (St Martins \$27). Widowed Inspector Agnes Lüthi, a Swiss-American police officer, has just transferred to the Violent Crimes unit from Financial Crimes to try to shed all reminders of her old life. She’s barely got her feet under her when a horrendous blizzard strikes Lausanne and she’s sent forth to investigate her first homicide. The first hurdle is, can she get to the crime scene which is the lawn of the grand Chateau Valloton situated right on Lac Léman. Someone has stabbed the young appraiser from a London auction house who is on site at the medieval fortress housing vast works of art and historical treasures (Switzerland mostly escaped Nazi plundering). Who killed the woman? The tight-lipped Swiss family, its loyal servants, an aging WWII survivor or the American history student working in the chateau’s library? It’s a real Agatha Christie set up but with a nice Gothic touch as the storm rages around the chateau and suspects abound within. And the characters are textured and complex. If I weren’t limited to one book a month for the First Mystery Club this too would be a February FMC Pick.

☒Delaney, JP. [The Girl Before](#) (Quercus \$32). Jane stumbles on the rental opportunity of a lifetime: the chance to live in a beautiful ultra-minimalist house designed by an enigmatic architect, on condition she abides by a long list of exacting rules. After moving in, she discovers that a previous tenant, Emma, met a mysterious death there—and starts to wonder if her own story will be a re-run of the girl before. Told in alternating voices, Emma’s and Jane’s, their tenancies at One Folgate Street progress. The integration of high-end technologies contributes to the eerie atmosphere—the house constantly watches and monitors its inhabitants. The two women are dramatically different personalities, but their experiences in the home—including an affair with Monkford that works to weave a darkly erotic element into their stories—begin to mirror each other’s. This is a variation on the

domestic suspense drama in the vein of Ruth Rendell. Minimalists may find some new decorating ideas. I started off full of enthusiasm for what felt “deliciously sinister” but in the end I agree with the [NY Times’ conclusion](#).

Estleman, Loren. [The Lioness Is the Hunter](#) (Forge \$28). Amos Walker and Detroit, two embattled entities and still going in this long-running PI series. Detroit entrepreneur Carl Fannon hires Walker to trace Emil Haas, his partner, whose sudden disappearance has jeopardized their firm’s plans to purchase the historic Sentinel Building. Almost immediately, the missing man shows up and asks the detective to meet him in the empty Sentinel to discuss a top-secret concern. Walker complies, only to find not Haas, but Fannon’s suffocated corpse locked in a basement vault. When Gwendolyn Haas, the partner’s adult daughter, enters the picture, the client number rises to three, including one missing and one murdered. But the worst is yet to come.... Estleman’s affection for Detroit shines through, a pleasure to read.

Garber, Stephanie. [Caravel](#) (Hodder \$32). An exciting fantasy debut for Young and Mature adults. The hardback will have FOUR secret hidden-on-the-board covers featuring stunning foiled illustrations. The one you receive will be randomly chosen. Welcome to Caravel, where nothing is quite what it seems. Scarlett has never left the tiny isle of Trisda, pining from afar for the wonder of Caravel, a once-a-year week-long performance where the audience participates in the show. Caravel is Magic. Mystery. Adventure. And for Scarlett and her beloved sister Tella it represents freedom and an escape from their ruthless, abusive father. When the sisters’ long-awaited invitations to Caravel finally arrive, it seems their dreams have come true. But no sooner have they arrived than Tella vanishes, kidnapped by the show’s mastermind organizer, Legend. If you liked *The Night Circus*, this is for you. For the unsigned US edition, see Some New Books for February.

✎Griffiths, Elly. [The Chalk Pit](#) (Quercus \$39). Boiled human bones have been found in Norwich’s web of underground tunnels. When Dr Ruth Galloway discovers they were recently buried, DCI Nelson has a murder enquiry on his hands. The boiling might have been just a medieval curiosity—now it suggests a much more sinister purpose. Meanwhile, DS Judy Johnson is investigating the disappearance of a local rough sleeper. The only trace of her is the rumor that she’s gone ‘underground’. This might be a figure of speech, but with the discovery of the bones and the rumors both Ruth and the police have heard that the network of old chalk-mining tunnels under Norwich is home to a vast community of rough sleepers, the clues point in only one direction. Local academic Martin Kellerman knows all about the tunnels and their history—but can his assertions of cannibalism and ritual killing possibly be true? As the weather gets hotter, tensions rise. A local woman goes missing and the police are under attack. Ruth and Nelson must unravel the dark secrets of The Underground and discover just what gruesome secrets lurk at its heart ... [Order this amazing British series](#) and get up to speed. It’s one of my favorites.

✎Harris, Joanne. [Different Class](#) (\$26). I like what the *NY Times* has to say about another visit to St Oswald’s school with Harris. “Joanne Harris delivers mischief and murder to an English prep school in a delightfully malicious view of privileged students with overly active imaginations. The novel’s alarming events are mostly related by Roy Straitley, a crotchety Latin master with a

droll sense of humor and a partiality for students who are “rebels and clowns.” In deference to the new reformist headmaster at St. Oswald’s Grammar School for Boys, Straitley will deign to invite visiting parents into his office, “much as folklore dictates we should invite a vampire before he can feed.” He draws the line, though, at trivializing the classics department or (God forbid!) consolidating with Mulberry House, a school for girls. But, as we learn from the diary of someone with a disturbing taste for torturing animals, more dangerous forces lie elsewhere. Years earlier, Harry Clarke, a charismatic English teacher, had been unfairly accused of pederasty and charged with murder. But, thanks to Straitley, we now know where to look for the true spawn of Satan.”

✎Herron, Mick. [Spook Street](#) (Murray \$35). Radioactive secrets and unfinished business go with the territory on Spook Street: David Cartwright’s always known there would be an accounting. And he’s not as defenseless as they might think. Jackson Lamb worked with Cartwright back in the day. He knows better than most that this is no vulnerable old man. ‘Nasty old spook with blood on his hands’ would be a more accurate description. ‘The old bastard’ has raised his grandson with a head full of guts and glory. But far from joining the myths and legends of Spook Street, River Cartwright is consigned to Lamb’s team of pen-pushing no-hopers at Slough House. So it’s Lamb they call to identify the body when Cartwright’s panic button raises the alarm at Service HQ. And Lamb who will do whatever he thinks necessary, to protect an agent in peril. Slough House is an excellent and strongly reviewed spy series that gets less splash than warranted. [Order them all](#).

Jonasson, Ragnar. [Rupture](#) (Orenda \$35). Note: this is the only hardcover UK edition of a UK paperback publishing at the same time. In 1955, two young couples move to the uninhabited, isolated fjord of Hedinsfjörður. Their stay ends abruptly when one of the women meets her death in mysterious circumstances. The case is never solved. Fifty years later an old photograph comes to light, and it becomes clear that the couples may not have been alone on the fjord after all... In nearby Siglufjörður, young policeman Ari Thór tries to piece together what really happened that fateful night, in a town where no one wants to know, where secrets are a way of life. He’s assisted by Ísrún, a news reporter in Reykjavik who is investigating an increasingly chilling case of her own. Things take a sinister turn when a child goes missing in broad daylight. With a stalker on the loose, and the town of Siglufjörður in quarantine, the past might just come back to haunt them.

The Icelandic author’s first book [Snowblind](#) (St Martins \$25.99) now publishes in the US. We have Signed copies so you can start at the beginning of this Nordic Noir series.

Kellerman, Faye. [Bone Box](#) (Harper \$29). I’ve just started this new case for Rina Lazarus and husband Peter Decker who’s now a cop in upstate NY, usually more restful than working homicide for the LAPD. Rina’s out for a hike in the woods, enjoying hints of autumn and photographing an ancient oak when she steps back—and onto the bones of someone’s hand. It’s likely the victim, who interestingly despite the long dark hair might be male, was a student in one of the five sister colleges forming the Five Colleges of Upstate consortium in the community. Then more human remains are found and the Dexters end up doing some spade work in NYC....

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Heartbreak Hotel](#) (Ballantine \$30). At nearly 100 years old, Thalia Mars is a far cry from the patients that child psychologist Alex Delaware normally treats. But the charming, witty woman convinces Alex to meet with her in a suite at the Aventura, a luxury hotel with a checkered history. What Thalia wants from Alex are answers to unsettling questions—about guilt, patterns of criminal behavior, victim selection. When Alex asks the reason for her morbid fascination, Thalia promises to tell all during their next session. But when he shows up the following morning, he is met with silence: Thalia is dead in her room. . . . Publishes February 14—an apt title, no, for this 32nd Delaware?

✂ Lovett, Charlie. [The Lost Book of the Grail](#) (Viking \$27). Publishes Feb. 28 so it won't arrive until March when it will be our **British Crime Club Pick**. I can't rave enough about this delightful bibliomystery set in Trollope's Barsestshire (copyright ran out long ago): a lost manuscript (in Saxon originally) and a treasure hunt; a trawl through the history of the cathedral and its patron, St. Ewolda; a Guardian; codecracking; an unlikely romance between a middle-aged book lover and an American on assignment to digitize the cathedral library which may need to be sold to raise funds to preserve the building—and more. Here's some of a Starred Review: "Diffident Arthur Prescott. . . has chosen to teach at the University of Barchester, a backwater institution" because he summered with his beloved grandfather in the city. . . . A junior lecturer who's fond of P.G. Wodehouse, Arthur finds his values at odds with those of many of his colleagues, who prefer teaching seminars on J.K. Rowling rather than Shakespeare. His life is upended by the arrival of an attractive American, Bethany Davis, who has the job of digitizing the local cathedral's ancient manuscripts, and whom he fears threatens his own private quest for the location of the Holy Grail. Bethany gradually brings Arthur out of his emotional shell, and the two become research partners. . . ." The humor blends well with the clever academic sleuthing. This is a standalone but you can [order Lovett's earlier novels](#), all for bibliophiles.

✂ Mackintosh, Claire. [I See You](#) (Berkley \$26). Every morning and evening, Zoe Walker takes the same route to the train station, waits at a certain place on the platform, finds her favorite spot in the car. Like other commuters, her routine is predictable. On her way home one night she glances through the paper and is shocked to see a grainy photo of her own face in an advertisement for a website called FindTheOne.com. Other women begin appearing in the same ad, a different one every day. That's the premise. Where it goes is less surprising than who the placers of the ad turn out to be. . . and why. I like Mackintosh's summation of Zoe too; unusual in his genre. The Indie Next Pick for our **February British Crime Club Pick**: "Zoe Walker sees her picture in a personal ad for a dating website. At first she thinks there must be a mistake. She soon learns that other women whose pictures have appeared in these ads have been subjected to violent crimes. Zoe contacts the police. PC Kelly Smith, a disgraced former detective, works to find the mastermind behind the website and redeem herself. As each day passes Zoe becomes more and more paranoid and suspicious of everyone she meets. Told from three different viewpoints, the tension builds. . ." We still have some Signed paperbacks of Mackintosh's bestselling debut, [I Let You Go](#) (\$16).

Mastai, Elan. [All Our Wrong Todays](#) (Penguin \$26). "Mastai's debut is a clever and funny time travel romp which turns into an action-packed science fiction thriller. It publishes in February as the #1 Indie Next Pick but it's our **March Modern Firsts Club Pick** The Canadian author excels himself with a witty and freewheeling time-traveling romance that packs an emotional wallop. Tom Barren is a time traveler from an alternate reality: a technologically perfect utopian 2016 where all disease has been eradicated, gender equality is a given, and technology takes care of humanity's every need. But when Tom steals his scientist father's time machine and travels back to 1965, he accidentally interferes with history and ushers in the comparatively dystopian 2016 we know today. In our 2016, Tom meets the love of his life and discovers a vastly improved version of the family he would have had. Given a chance to return to 1965, Tom is faced with an impossible, heartbreaking choice: go back and restore the utopian world he knows (and all the people in it), or remain in our relatively analog world with the woman he loves? [Watch the video trailer](#) for this #1 February Indie Next Pick. "A thrilling tale of time travel and alternate timelines with a refreshingly optimistic view of humanity's future."—Andy Weir, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Martian*, one of our bestselling Modern Firsts Club Picks that will be our March Modern Firsts Club Pick.

Mastai adds, "Since I was a kid I've been really interested in this idea of what happened to the future we were supposed to have. When I was growing up, my grandfather had an extensive collection of sci-fi novels and anthologies from the '50s and '60s and I was really fascinated by the covers, which had paintings of these wild scenes of aliens and foreign worlds and robots and flying cars and all these sorts of adventures and technologies that the post-war generation was just certain were going to happen. But even as a 10-year-old kid in the '80s, I knew that there was a disconnect between the future that, decades earlier, people imagined we were going to have versus what we were actually having. Even as a kid that was really clear to me, that it didn't happen the way they thought it was going to happen. I did not get a jetpack for my ninth birthday."

Miller, Derek. [The Girl in Green](#) (Houghton \$26). The author lives in Norway so the best we can do is Signed bookplates. His first, [Norwegian by Night](#) (\$14.95; if we get enough bookplates we'll include one with each paperback too) is a staff favorite, hand sold. Here is the Starred Review for his new one: "Private Arwood Hobbes and Brit reporter Thomas Benton witness the slaughter of Shiite civilians by the Iraqi army and cannot prevent the cold-blooded murder of a young girl in a green dress. The experience haunts both men for years, but 22 years later, in 2013, shocking news footage of an insurgent attack in Iraq reunites the two men in a desperate and risky gambit to save a girl in a green dress shown in the video. Middle-aged Hobbes is energized to right an old wrong, and old, slow Benton is reluctant to get involved. Amid the dangerous Syrian, Iraqi, and Kurdish refugee crisis in northern Iraq, Hobbes and Benton team up with a U.N. refugee officer, but the men are captured by ISIL terrorists, beginning a deadly cat and mouse game of torture, intimidation, and negotiation. Benton doesn't understand Hobbes's obsession with the girl in the video or the unique skills he's gained since 1991. Miller caps his stellar, electrifying story with a knockout ending."

✂Naughtie, James. [Paris Spring](#) (Zeus \$35). Fans of John le Carré and Len Deighton will welcome Naughtie's superior spy thriller, a prequel to 2014's [The Madness of July](#) (\$17.95). The characters' struggles between personal and public responsibilities play out against a background rarely used in espionage fiction—the growing unrest in Paris in April 1968. The city is “on the brink of an eruption,” as an author's note explains, after Charles de Gaulle's government proves to be unprepared for France's “cauldron of youthful anti-establishment unrest.” British operative Will Flemyng, who appeared in the previous book as a government minister, is approached by a German man calling himself Kristof, who quickly gets Will's attention by promising to reveal something very interesting about Will's younger brother, Abel. Kristof's suggestion that Abel is working against the West puts Will in a tough place, as he tries to do his duty to both his country and his kin. Will's juggling act becomes trickier after the body of an American reporter, Grace Quincey, turns up in the Père Lachaise cemetery. Naughtie draws on his experience as a political correspondent for the Washington Post and Britain's the Guardian to make the story's dramatic developments plausible. Read his book with the Slough House series by Mick Herron and the Will Flemyngs by Charles Cumming reviewed above. And watch the last episodes of *Foyle's War*.

Pronzini, Bill. [The Violated](#) (Forge \$27). In theory this publishes March 3 but copies are in early so I list it for February. It's a standalone for the Grand Master. Santa Rita, California, the mutilated body of Martin Torrey is found in Echo Park by two passersby. A registered sex offender, Torrey has been a suspect in a string of recent rapes, and instant suspicion for his murder falls on the relatives and friends of the women attacked. Police chief Griffin Kells and detective Robert Ortiz are under increasing pressure from the public and from a mayor demanding results in a case that has no easy solution. Pronzini cleverly unfolds the case through alternating perspectives: Martin Torrey's wife, caught between her grief and the fear her husband was guilty; the outraged husbands of the women violated; the enterprising editor of the local paper; the mayor concerned most with his own ratings; the detectives, often spinning in circles—until a surprising break leads to a completely unexpected conclusion.

Reardon, Scott. [The Prometheus Man](#) (LittleBrown \$27). In Paris, Project Prometheus had been trying to engineer human killing machines. “At the core of Reardon's complex plot is a classic doppelgänger: the protagonist, Tom Blake, hired on to work with the CIA, is not who he says he is. He's really Tom Reese. Reese stole Blake's identity as a CIA agent as a way to gain information that will lead him to whoever killed his brother. Reese is canny enough to know that it won't be long before the CIA discovers he's an imposter—they're already pressing for a lie detector test. With a day or less before the agency discovers his cover ID, Reese is in a classic race against time...”—*Kirkus Reviews*. This debut publishes January 24 and wends its way to us to become our **February Thriller Club Pick**. The writing is propulsive and the concept original (well, not entirely, Mary Shelley did a version of it 199 years ago). “A phenomenal debut, full of non-stop action and thrills. With this bioengineered twist on Jason Bourne, Reardon offers a dark vision of covert work that may be closer to the present than we think.”—Matthew Quirk. “Not only a stellar debut, it's a rare find in the reading landscape: a fast-paced techno-thriller with well-realized characters and a beating

heart. A lot of people are running around claiming to be the next Michael Crichton. Scott Reardon actually has the writing chops to pull it off.”—Brad Parks. Bottom line: the chase is key here more than textured characters.

Saunders, George. [Lincoln in the Bardo](#) (Random \$28) is the first novel in Saunders's long career. The book begins in February of 1862, less than a year into the Civil War, as Abraham Lincoln's 11-year-old son Willie dies of a sudden illness. While President Lincoln visits the boy's tomb several times to cradle his body and grieve, Willie finds himself stuck in the bardo, the Tibetan name for a transitional, purgatory-like state that exists between lives. There Willie meets a host of other lost souls, and soon a struggle begins that threatens to claim his soul. The “bardo” is, in Tibetan Buddhism, the transitional state between death and rebirth. In Saunders's novel, it has a tangible location: Oak Hill Cemetery in Washington, D.C.'s Georgetown neighborhood, February 1862, shortly after the death of Abraham Lincoln's son Willie, age 11, from typhoid fever. Over the course of an extended evening, the novel recounts the anguished visits of the grief-stricken president to the mausoleum containing his son's body. These rendezvous occur in anything but solitude. Instead, they're intently observed by an audience of spirits, whose alternating chorus of voices supplies most of the novel's distinctive, drama-style narrative as they recognize, in the words of one of them, the “vivifying effect this visitation had on our community.”

Smith, Michael Farris. [Desperation Road](#) (LittleBrown \$27). Patrick makes the **January Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**, a knockout I endorse: “Eleven years ago, Russell Gaines made a serious mistake and a man ended up dead. After serving his time in Parchman penitentiary, Gaines has returned home to his small Mississippi town to face his fractured past. The woman he loved is now married with children, his mother has died, and the two brothers of the man Gaines accidentally killed are out to get him. On the same day Gaines is released from prison, a young woman named Maben walks into town with her young daughter. Scarred by addiction and a string of abusive relationships, she seems unable to reverse her path of self destruction. When a crooked cop picks Maben up and forces her into his car, things go from bad to worse quickly. Of course, Russell and Maben's paths are fated to cross. I loved Michael Farris Smith's *Rivers* and this novel is even better. One of the best books I've read in a long time.” Patrick also recommends Smith's [Rivers](#) (\$15.99).

✂Theobald, John. [What the Raven Brings](#) (Headline \$36). #2 in the Ravenmaster Trilogy after [These Dark Wings](#) (\$32 Signed). Now it's 1942. After her mother was killed in an air raid, Anna Cooper was sent to live with her uncle, the Ravenmaster at the Tower of London. Now, he too is dead. His dying wish was for Anna to be the next Ravenmaster, keeper of the birds who, according to legend, guard the fate of the kingdom. But the Tower authorities won't stand for a female Ravenmaster, let alone one who is not yet sixteen years old. Denied her destiny, Anna is desperate to escape the Tower and join the war effort. She bluffs her way into the glamorous—and dangerous—world of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. But no matter how high she flies, Anna can't escape her past... nor the secret that it conceals. A secret that could change the course of the war. Billed as fiction for teens but I find them fully intriguing.

✂Tobin, Sophia. [The Last Servant](#) (SimonSchuster UK \$32—May be retitled *The Vanishing*). Pure Bronte this one, a cross between *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. I like it so well I'd make it a History/Mystery Club Pick but, given the price, instead I'm going with the terrific February Charles Todd with its surprising motives and twists. But if you love this genre, be sure to order the Tobin. Here's the score. On top of the Yorkshire Moors, in an isolated spot carved out of the barren landscape, lies White Windows, a house of shadows and secrets. Here lives Marcus Twentyman, a hard-drinking but sensitive man, and his sister, the brisk widow, Hester. When Annaleigh, a foundling who has fled her home in London, finds herself at the remote house, in service to the Twentymans, she discovers all is not as it seems behind closed doors. Isolated and lonely, Annaleigh is increasingly drawn to her master. And as their relationship intensifies, she soon realizes that her movements are being controlled and her life is no longer her own. Note: we have a special price for our remaining 3 copies of Tobin's fine second novel: [The Widow's Confession](#) (\$20 Signed). She's an interesting writer and scholar of historical fiction you should know.

BRITISH LIBRARY CRIME CLASSICS

Bude, John. [The Cheltenham Square Murder](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95 due in late February). In the seeming tranquility of Regency Square in Cheltenham live the diverse inhabitants of its ten houses. One summer's evening, the square's rivalries and allegiances are disrupted by a sudden and unusual death—an arrow to the head, shot through an open window at no. 6. *The Cheltenham Square Murder* is a classic example of how John Bude builds a drama within a very specific location. Here the Regency splendor of Cheltenham provides the perfect setting for a story in which appearances are certainly deceiving. Bude's earlier BLCCs are: *The Cornish Coast Murders*; *Death on the Riviera*; *The Lake District Murder*; *The Sussex Down Murder* (\$12.95 each). [Order them all.](#)

Crofts, Freeman Willis. [The 12:30 from Croydon](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$12.95). "The degree of suspense Crofts achieves by showing the growing obsession and planning is worthy of Hitchcock. Another first-rate reissue from the British Library Crime Classics series." *Booklist* Starred Review. We begin with a body. Andrew Crowther, a wealthy retired manufacturer, is found dead in his seat on the 12.30 flight from Croydon to Paris. Rather less orthodox is the ensuing flashback in which we live with the killer at every stage, from the first thoughts of murder to the strains and stresses of living with its execution. Seen from the criminal's perspective, a mild-mannered Inspector by the name of French is simply another character who needs to be dealt with. "An old-fashioned but steadily absorbing account of a decent man's descent into corruption and murder. One of Crofts' best."—*Kirkus Reviews*

And now in stock by Crofts: [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')." "

And other British classics

Allingham, Margery. [The White Cottage Mystery](#) (Bloomsbury \$16). Eric Crowther collected secrets and used them as weapons. Delighting in nothing more than torturing those around him with what he knew, there is no shortage of suspects when he is found dead in the White Cottage. Chief Inspector Challenor and his son Jerry will have to look deep into everyone's past—including the victim's—before they can be sure who has pulled the trigger. The fact that Jerry is in love with one of the suspects, however, might complicate things. *The White Cottage Mystery* was Margery Allingham's first detective story, originally written as a serial for the *Daily Express* in 1927 and published as a book a year later. This new Bloomsbury edition is the only US edition currently in print. The success of the BLCC publishing program is propelling more treasures back into print.

Conway, Hugh. [Dark Days and Much Darker Days](#) (Harper \$15.99). A shilling shocker! In the eyes of the law, murder is murder. When Dr North discovers that his beloved Philippa—surely the most beautiful murderess who ever crossed the pages of fiction—has killed her abusive husband, he must decide whether to turn her in or take the law into his own hands. There are dark days ahead as he wrestles with his conscience: can a crime ever be justified? And is Philippa the villain or the victim? Combining the thrills of the Penny Dreadful with the melodrama of the Sensation Novel, Hugh Conway wrote some of the most successful Christmas crime stories ever published. "Dark Days" followed his enthralling "Called Back" as a Christmas Annual, published just before his untimely death ended a writing career of only four years, robbing the world of one of the most popular detective writers since Wilkie Collins. This Detective Story Club Classic is introduced by David Brawn, and includes *Much Darker Days* by Scottish writer, critic and satirist Andrew Lang, a hilarious retelling of the story which sold almost as well as the original.

Du Maurier, Daphne. [Rebecca](#) (Knopf \$26). Knopf adds DuMaurier's classic Gothic set at Manderley, a country house on the windswept Cornish coast where widower Maxim de Winter has brought his naive second wife, to Everyman's Library Contemporary Classics. The glamorous Rebecca haunts the house and everyone in the story. It's a great film!

AMERICAN CRIME CLASSICS FROM STARK HOUSE

Allyn, Doug. [The Jukebox Kings](#) (\$17.95). "This superior crime novel set in 1960s Detroit, from Allyn stars Irish Mick Shannon, a former prize fighter and ex-felon. Mick stumbles into a new career when elderly mobster Moishe Abrams uses him to collect the "vig" (the interest paid to a moneylender) owed him in the neighborhood known as 8 Mile, "the border between the dark heart of Detroit and the whiter suburbs." On one such errand, Mick makes a deal with blues singer Martika Daniels that allows her to run the record studio Black Kat Recordings and later involves him in

the scramble to get Black Kat music played on the jukeboxes that Abrams controls in Detroit's Darktown. Mick must contend with members of the black community who distrust whites, as well as with Abrams's notorious boss, John Luca. Allyn is solid on the infighting for mob control and on the racial discord that led to the riots of 1967, but he's superb on every detail about the black music scene, from the clubs and makeshift recording studios to the stars, both recognized and unrecognized."—*PW* Starred Review

Chase, James Hadley. [Just the Way It Is/Blonde's Requiem](#) (\$19.95). Two 1940s noir classics.

Flagg, John. [Death and the Naked Lady / The Lady and the Cheetah/Faces Turned Against Him](#) (\$19.95). Two standalone espionage classics from the early 1950s—originally published by Gold Medal Books—plus a rare short story.

Fleischman, AS. [Shanghai Flame / Counterspy Express](#) (\$19.95). Two novels of exotic adventure and intrigue from the 1950s.

McKimmey, James. [Cornered! / The Long Ride](#) (\$19.95). Two character driven crime novels from the early 1960s. "He wrote several outright masterpieces ... that were on the level of, or even better than, the works of better-known crime writers of his era."—Jason Starr, *LA Review of Books*. New introduction by Bill Crider.

Wallace, Edgar. [Angel of Terror / Kate Plus 10](#) (\$19.95). The first is a story of an amoral but beautiful woman and her victims, the second features Kate, headstrong criminal mastermind whose each swindle is bigger than the last. I love his biography: Richard Horatio Edgar Wallace was born into London poverty as an illegitimate child on April 1, 1875. Joining the army at 21 as a war correspondent, he returned to London burdened with debts. He started to write thrillers in order to raise some income, and soon found success with books like *The Four Just Men*. Utilizing his experiences in the Congo, he also wrote a series of colorful stories featuring Commissioner Sanders. By 1921, he had become an internationally known author, eventually publishing over 170 novels, 957 short stories and 18 stage plays, with more than 160 films having been made from his work. Wallace moved to Hollywood in the early 1930s where he worked as a scriptwriter for RKO studios. While working on the rough draft of *King Kong*, he died suddenly on February 10, 1932, from undiagnosed diabetes.

Whittington, Harry. [Trouble Rides Tall / Cross the Red Creek/ Desert Stake-out](#) (\$21.95). Three hard-bitten noir westerns. "Tough, lean, and gritty... *Desert Stake-Out* stands out amidst Whittington's already outstanding body of work

SPECIAL INTEREST BOOKS

Brits, Louisa Thomsen. [The Book of Hygge](#) (Plume \$22). *Hygge* (hoo-gah) is a Danish word but a universal feeling of being warm, safe, comforted, and sheltered—an experience of belonging to the moment and to each other. When life gets hectic, work grows stressful, and the days fly by, unplug and tune in. *Hygge* anchors us, reminding us to slow down, to connect with place and with one another, to dwell and savor rather than rush and spend. When you curl up by the fire with a blanket, or have a simple meal with friends, that is *hygge*. And for sure, immersing yourself in a wonderful book, beverage (hot or cold) in hand, has to be the very best *hygge*....

Lyons-Weiler, James. [The Environmental and Genetic Causes of Autism](#) (Skyhorse \$29.99) goes deep into past and current research to reveal how genetic predispositions and environmental factors can combine to produce autism and autism spectrum disorders. Lyons-Weiler provides a major overview of all aspects of the condition of autism, reviews changes in diagnoses and treatments, and explains how genetic information can be used to tailor effective treatments, and sometimes reversals, of the symptoms. He also presents practical forward-looking suggestions on how to design future studies to facilitate the discovery of biomarkers for autism risk and how to classify the full range of autism spectrum disorders. Why am I recommending this book? In part because the whole myth that vaccines cause autism drives me nuts; not vaccinating children (and adults where appropriate) is truly dangerous to individuals, families, and communities. If Rob had known about a shingles vaccine he wouldn't have had an attack. Learning from his experience, I rushed to get the vaccine. Here's a statement from the author that applies on all levels: "My goal in this book was to summarize as much of the basic, translational and clinical research on autism as a collection of traits. The result is, I hope, going to help raise the bar and improve the tone of discourse on the causes of autism. When only part of the science is selected to support a pre-conceived notion during the formation of public policy, everyone suffers from the impoverishment of knowledge. This poverty of comprehension has profound impact on a growing number of Americans and people around the world. In keeping with my personal view, it is during the time of deepest despair that we are mathematically entitled to the largest possible amount of hope."

Stewart, Rory. [The Marches](#) (Houghton \$27) is receiving extra attention in light of Brexit and revived discussion of Scottish independence. Plus it illuminates historical fiction. "For much of the walk along Hadrian's Wall, Stewart is accompanied by his 89-year-old father, an ex-service man who injects a bluff candor into the proceedings and is one of the book's many strengths. With great affection and frankness, Stewart charts their relationship; the book could almost have been subtitled 'A Walk Around My Father.'... Stewart shows self-deprecating humor throughout, and his prose is always cool and lucid... Stewart brings a humane empathy to his encounters with people and landscape. A walk, he believes, is a kind of miracle that can help him learn, like nothing else, about a nation or himself. He is precisely the sort of companion one would want to travel such a route with: informed, engaged and with a great deal of compassion."

Talese, Gay. [High Notes: Selected Writings](#) (Bloomsbury \$20). The pieces collected here are classics of the journalistic style Talese pioneered in his nonfiction. David Halberstam called Talese "the most important nonfiction writer of his generation."

BEST MYSTERY OF 2016?

For a British take, [read this essay](#) in *The Guardian*

FEBRUARY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

✚Brody, Frances. [Murder on a Summer's Day](#) (\$15.99). Brody's series is set in post-WWI Yorkshire where Kate Shackleton, presumptive widow of an army doctor, has forged a life as an investigator. A relative from the India Office charges her with finding Maharajah Narayan Halkwaer of Gattiawan, last seen hunting on the Bolton Abbey estate of the Duke of Devonshire. An exhaustive search turns up the Maharajah—shot through the heart. His

body has obviously not been in the woods overnight. And what has happened to the hugely valuable diamond that was in the Maharajah's possession? He was staying in an estate cottage, not in the Abbey, as his stunning, much younger English fiancée, from the area, can't be received. And indeed the Maharajah's wife and son soon arrive along with his father and a retinue from Gattiawan. Don't read this for the plot but for the Downtown-like setting and the intriguing period detail tied to that of British India... in Britain. See New Books for a new Kate.

Burke, Alafair. [The Ex](#) (\$15.99) is up for a 2017 Edgar Award for Best Novel. The set-up tells you why. Widower Jack Harris has resisted the dating scene ever since the shooting of his wife Molly by a fifteen-year-old boy three years ago. An early morning run along the Hudson River changes that when he spots a woman in last night's party dress, barefoot, enjoying a champagne picnic alone, reading his favorite novel. Everything about her reminds him of what he used to have with Molly. Eager to help Jack find love again, his best friend posts a message on a popular website after he mentions the encounter. Days later, that same beautiful stranger responds and invites Jack to meet her in person at the waterfront. That's when Jack's world falls apart. Olivia Randall is one of New York City's best criminal defense lawyers. When she hears that her former fiancé, Jack Harris, has been arrested for a triple homicide—and that one of the victims was connected to his wife's murder—there is no doubt in her mind as to his innocence. The only question is who would go to such great lengths to frame him—and why?

Bussi, Michel. [Black Water Lilies](#) (\$15). "The plot is set in Giverny, where Monet planted and painted water lilies. It's where the characters live, the murders are committed, the clues are scattered, and the police investigate ... [an] intelligent and absorbing book."—*The Times*. This is the story of thirteen days in a French village that begin with one murder and end with another. Jérôme Morval, a man whose passion for art was matched only by his passion for women, has been found dead in the stream that runs through the gardens. In his pocket is a postcard of Monet's *Water Lilies* with the words: *Eleven years old. Happy Birthday*. Entangled in the mystery are three women: a young painting prodigy, the seductive village schoolteacher, and an old widow who watches over the village from a mill by the stream. All three of them share a secret. But what do they know about the discovery of Jérôme Morval's corpse? And what is the connection to the mysterious, rumored painting of *Black Water Lilies*? Bussi made a name for himself with [After the Crash](#) (\$15).

Freeman, Brian. [Goodbye to the Dead](#) (\$16.99). Detective Jonathan Stride's first wife, Cindy, died of cancer eight years ago, but her ghost hangs over Stride's relationship with current lover, and fellow detective, Serena Dial. When Serena witnesses a brutal murder outside a Duluth bar, she stumbles onto a case with roots that go all the way back to the last year of Cindy Stride's life. At the time, Cindy and Stride were on opposite sides of a domestic murder investigation. Gorgeous, brilliant Janine Snow—a surgeon transplanted to Duluth from Texas—was the prime suspect in the shooting death of her husband. Cindy believed her friend Janine was innocent, but Stride thought all the evidence pointed to the surgeon—even though the gun was never found. Despite Cindy's attempts to help Janine, the case led to a high-profile murder trial in which Janine was convicted and sent to prison. During the current investigation, Serena finds a gun used in the

murder of a woman connected to an organized crime syndicate—a gun that turns out to be the same weapon used to kill Janine Snow's husband.... "Deftly plotted seventh Jonathan Stride novel... Stride's heartfelt memories of [his deceased wife] and his reluctance to fully commit to [his girlfriend], coupled with an in-depth look at the book's supporting characters, make this police procedural a standout."—*PW* Starred Review.

Freeman also publishes an unusual mystery, [The Night Bird](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.99), a tale of betrayals and memories too vivid, lost, erased, in San Francisco where the dramatic opener ends with a young woman inexplicably going berserk and falling from the Bay Bridge. Some weeks earlier another young woman had also erupted at a wedding reception where she barely knew anyone and blew her brains out. Homicide detective Frost Easton of the SFPD doesn't like or believe in coincidences. He finds a connection that leads him to psychiatrist Francesca Stein who uses controversial therapy to help people escape their memories. We're into Jonathan Kellerman territory here... This is the first Frost Easton but, I hope, not the last.

✚Hamer, Kate. [The Girl in the Red Coat](#) (\$16.99). "Girl" in the title is a signal for Trust No One. Library Reads reports: There is not much more terrifying than losing your child. There's the terror, the guilt, and then the relentless and unending chasm left behind by your child. I am grateful to not know that pain, and yet what Beth, the main character of this book, went through, resonated with me." And of course in this genre, you have to ask whether the initial facts given to the reader mirror what actually happened.

Harvey, Michael. [Brighton](#) (\$15.99). This gritty standalone from Harvey reminds me of *Mystic River*. It focuses on two childhood friends who have gone in dramatically different directions as adults. Kevin Pearce starts life as an intelligent young man born into poverty and a brutal home life in 1970s Brighton, a hard-bitten section of Boston. Kevin's best friend, Bobby Scales, is a violent urban Huck Finn who's also capable and loyal. After Kevin's grandmother is murdered in a grisly home invasion, Kevin and Bobby ambush and slay the killer. Twenty-seven years later, Kevin, now a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, discovers that the gun Bobby used to shoot his grandmother's killer is the same gun used in the recent murder of an undercover policewoman. Kevin searches for the connection, which reunites him with Bobby, now a tough Brighton bookie. Harvey crisply evokes the dark side of the Boston urban underclass inhabiting a fractured neighborhood in a constant state of casual violence and brutality. An intense, twist-filled climax caps the story.

Holt, Anne. [The Lion's Mouth](#) (\$16). "The wonder and pleasure of *The Lion's Mouth* is in how Ms. Holt—Norway's former minister of justice—weaves the strands of a political thriller, a police-procedural, a locked-room mystery and a domestic novel into a satisfying plot."—*Wall Street Journal*. When Norway's new prime minister is found dead in her office, the country is shaken. While some link her death to an act of terrorism or the manifesto of a lone madman, others suspect a killer much closer to home. Meanwhile, the local press leaks new details about a decades-old mass infant mortality scandal with a possible connection to the prime minister's demise. As the police investigate the murder, Billy T. confers with his partner, CI Hanne Wilhelmsen, who is on leave and vacationing in the United States. Intrigued by the

case, she returns to Norway to help investigate and solve the high-profile mystery. As each potential lead unravels, Hanne is forced to employ her fine-honed investigative skills to restore the truth.

Lancet, Barry. [Pacific Burn](#) (\$16). This is the third for Jim Brodie, San Francisco dealer in Japanese antiques and PI by virtue of an inherited firm in Tokyo. Brodie has just been brought on as the liaison for the mayor's new Pacific Rim Friendship Program. Brodie in turn recruits his friend, the renowned Japanese artist Ken Nobuki, and after a promising meeting with city officials and a picture-perfect photo op, Brodie and Nobuki leave City Hall for a waiting limo. But as soon as they exit the building, a sniper attacks them from the roof of the Asian Art Museum. Quick thinking allows Brodie to escape, but Nobuki ends up hospitalized and in a coma. Brodie soon realizes that, with the suspicious and untimely death of Nobuki's oldest son a week earlier in Napa Valley, someone may be targeting his friend's family—and killing them off one by one. I am a true fan of this series which began with FMC Pick [Japantown](#) and continues with [Tokyo Kill](#) (\$15.99 each).

Lansdale, Joe R. [Honky Tonk Samurai](#) (\$15.99). The PW Starred Review: "At the start of Edgar-winner Lansdale's terrific 11th entry in his Hap and Leonard series, Hap Collins and Leonard Pine, who are doing some freelance detective work, are on a stakeout in their car watching a house in an East Texas town when they notice a man abusing a dog. Leonard jumps out of the car, knocks the man to the ground, and takes the dog. An octogenarian neighbor, Lilly Buckner, who captures the incident on camera, tells them that she'll go to the cops unless they help her find her missing granddaughter. What begins as a simple missing persons case soon turns into a full-scale assault against a group of elite hired assassins. But Hap and Leonard assemble their own team, including series regular Jim Bob Luke, a mercenary known only as Booger, and the beautiful but deadly Vanilla Ride. This shambolic, action-packed novel will ensnare new readers and satisfy devoted fans alike. See Event Books for his new Hap & Leonard.

Lutz, Lisa. [The Passenger](#) (\$15.99). 48 hours after leaving her husband's body at the base of the stairs, Tanya Dubois cashes in her credit cards, dyes her hair brown, demands a new name from a shadowy voice over the phone, and flees town. It's not the first time. And it won't be as "Tanya" continues a journey of reinvention, hopscotching from city to city, gaining an enigmatic ally in a hard woman called Blue, and all the time on track to return to where the dark secret that set her on the run began.... Fast paced and full of unexpected obstacles, this is a roller-coaster ride of a read you don't want to miss."

Nesbø, Jo. [Midnight Sun](#) (\$15). I quote *LJ*: "Nesbø departs from his celebrated Harry Hole series, but no matter; this brief, intensely fable-like account of a golden-hearted hit man is a sequel to [Blood on Snow](#), being readied for the big screen by Leonardo DiCaprio and Warner Bros. Here, our antihero arrives in a small Norwegian town above the Arctic Circle, on the run from a particularly vicious Oslo drug lord for whom he once acted as fixer." Norwegian Nesbø is slated to visit us for the first time on May 21 to sign [The Thirst](#) (Knopf \$26.95) with Harry Hole.

Ould, Chris. [Killing Bay: Faroes Novel 2](#) (Titan \$14.95). If you've been mourning Henning Mankell and find some Nordic

Noir, well...too noir, this second book in Ould's series set in the remote Faroe Islands (they are Danish, southeast of Iceland, and becoming known for Locavore cuisine as compared to when they used to eat puffins, and for birding, fishing, some oil). Faroese is related to old Norse and Icelandic. The islands are mostly mountainous with fjords, and ferries play a major role. This series makes a perfect segue from Ann Cleeves' Shetland Islands series. British cop Jan Reyna, illegitimate son of a rich islander and his first wife but raised in England by his aunt, returned in [The Blood Strand](#) (\$14.95) to a complicated family situation. He's still there when a Greenpeace like group assembles to protest the annual *grind*, the traditional whale hunt. It gets violent at the killing shore. Reyna meets one of the protestors and likes her. She's soon found dead in what appears to be a staged crime scene. Narrated by Jan and by Faroese cop Hjalti Hentze, the investigation into Erla's murder gets tangled with Jan's quest to understand his mother and her suicide. Great local color and characters make this a natural for our February **Fresh Fiction Pick**. I'd read the two books in order.

Quirk, Matthew. [Cold Barrel Zero](#) (\$15.99). Quirk's [The 500](#) (\$15.99), a 2012 FMC Pick, was a real rocket ride. Here Quirk is now with former combat medic Tom Byrne whose vacation in SoCal is interrupted when the FBI hauls him in for questioning and multiple felony charges. "Thriller Award-winner Quirk ([The 500](#)) goes flat-out explosive in this superior military adventure novel. Ex-Marine John Hayes has assembled a team of special ops agents who have been put on a U.S. government kill list by mistake. In an effort to obtain evidence that will exonerate them, they pull off a spectacular armored car hijacking, seizing a mysterious 1,300-pound crate shipped from the Emirates to Los Angeles. Meanwhile, Thomas Byrne, a former combat medic who served with Hayes, is vacationing in Southern California when he's arrested on trumped-up charges and brought to meet Colonel Riggs, who's in charge of the military task force to capture Hayes. Byrne has no idea whether to trust Riggs or his old buddy Hayes, with whom he later connects. The explanation for all the mayhem rests in a war crime that Hayes supposedly committed, but as usual with this author, facts are slippery and doubts abound. There's plenty of cool cutting-edge technology, but in the end it comes down to action, and the riveting battle scenes are among the best in the business. We are working on Signed copies of his March thriller, [Dead Man Switch](#) (Mulholland \$26), again with John Hayes.

✽Steiner, Susie. [Missing, Presumed](#) (\$16). A 2016 British Crime Club Pick in hardcover starts with the sudden disappearance of a woman. Edith Hind, a 24-year-old Cambridge graduate student, goes missing, leaving behind only a smear of blood and signs of a struggle at the flat she shares with her boyfriend. The pressure is on DS Manon Bradshaw, who excels at her job but not at her personal life—she has suffered a string of dreary Internet dates—and the rest of the Cambridgeshire Major Incident Team; Edith's father is Sir Ian Hind, physician to the royal family. Steiner slips smoothly among narrators, shifting from Manon's ever-widening investigation to characters who are directly affected by Edith's disappearance. As leads dry up and the days Edith is missing increase, every scrap of case information is fodder for the press, who pounce on the more salacious aspects of Edith's personal life, even as Manon and the team discover that the answers might be linked to something much more serious. The actual perp won't

surprise you sophisticated readers of British suspense, but all will enjoy a vein of dark humor pulses beneath this thoughtful, richly plotted police procedural with an appealing, complicated heroine at its center.

✦Winspear, Jacqueline. [Journey to Munich](#) (\$15.99). The arc of Maisie Dobbs' story is moving close to WWII. She's clearly going to be asked to help her country with her skills. Karen reviews: "Maisie Dobbs, now in England, is contacted by the British Secret Service with a request for her services. Maisie is reluctant or, rather, resistant to accepting. It involves impersonating the daughter of a British subject being held in Dachau. She will have to travel to Nazi Germany who has promised to release the man, but only to a relative. Because of issues in the family, sending a relative is not possible. After some pause, Maisie decides to take on the project and, once in Germany, finds the task more than challenging than previously thought, as she discovers that the British government is not the only interested party in this case. In spite of dangers that crop up, Maisie remains thoughtful and plots her strategies to minimize failure, keeping readers on the edge." Winspear signs a new Maisie Dobbs here March 13: In [This Grave Hour](#) (Harper \$27.99). It's September, 1939....

BOOKS ABOUT BOOKS

Dunning, John. [Booked to Die](#) (\$16). Our bestselling ever small paperback reappears in this larger format. It's one of my favorites, not only because it has a genuine MacGuffin in the plot, and it's driven by a love of books, a hunt for books, and their figurative and literal value, but it embraces various genres all in one story: the cop, the amateur sleuth, the private eye—murder, a procedural, suspense, It was a true tragedy for readers as well as John and his family when he developed a brain tumor that put an end to his Cliff Janeway series set in Denver where John was a devil on the rare books scene. It makes an interesting companion to Charlie Lovett's *Lost Book of the Grail*, which I've given a rave in Signed Books,

Rydell, Anders. [The Book Thieves](#) (Viking \$28). For readers of *The Monuments Men* and *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, the story of the Nazis' systematic pillaging of Europe's libraries and the small team of heroic librarians now working to return the stolen books to their rightful owners. While the Nazi party was being condemned by much of the world for burning books, they were already hard at work perpetrating an even greater literary crime. Through extensive new research that included records saved by the Monuments Men themselves, Anders Rydell writes the story as he joins the effort to return the stolen books. One volume was passed to him by the small team of heroic librarians who have begun the monumental task of combing through Berlin's public libraries to identify the looted books and reunite them with the families of their original owners. For those who lost relatives in the Holocaust, these books are often the only remaining possession of their relatives they have ever held. And as Rydell travels to return the volume he was given, he shows just how much a single book can mean to those who own it.

SOME NEW BOOKS FOR FEBRUARY

Armstrong, Kell. [A Darkness Absolute](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Now here's a serial killer book that really hooked me, in part because Armstrong created such a fascinating secret town in Canada's Yukon in [City of the Lost](#) (\$15.99 pub March 14). It started as

a refuge but has become a kind of dark Brigadoon, a town well off the grid. The rules are absolute: no Internet, cell phones, mail, ingress or egress. It's an extreme form of WitPro for people running from past lives (misdeeds, too) but it's governed now by investors. Casey Duncan moved to this "safe haven" where, as a former homicide cop, she's a sheriff's deputy. Out in a raging blizzard searching for a missing resident she and her follow deputy Will are stranded, take refuge in a cave, and are horrified to discover Nicole, another resident thought to be dead. No, Nicole's down a hole where she's been held as a sex slave for over a year. They rescue her. They find the bodies of two other women. Has an outsider struck Rockton, or is it one of the town's own? The writing is propulsive and Casey's voice dynamite plus other characters zing. I read this straight through in a single sitting.

Backman, Fredrik. [Britt Marie Was Here](#) (\$16). The latest in a trio of thematically similar books by the bestselling Swedish author of *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry* (2015), etc. Like Backman's debut, *A Man Called Ove* (2014), this latest novel features an older, very particular protagonist forced to navigate a challenging set of circumstances. Readers will remember the titular Britt-Marie as the "nag-bag" from *My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry*. In that book, and to a greater extent in this one, Britt-Marie's compulsive fastidiousness is explained by her tragic past and history of being neglected and diminished by those around her. Having left her husband after recognizing his faithlessness, she finds herself in Borg, a tiny, economically depressed "community built along a road." Borg is almost Dickensian in its circumstance. It only needs the arrival of Britt-Marie to begin a transformation. [Order Backman here.](#)

✦Beaton, MC. [Death of a Ghost](#) (Grand Central \$26). Hamish Macbeth has always been fun as he polices and romances an assortment of women around his Lochdubh beat in Scotland. This one involves a haunted castle near Drim. It's a ruined castle... with maybe a ghost? No, what he finds in the cellar is a body that then disappears when he and Clumsy Carson step away to eat bacon baps... Skip this one, it's a weak effort and downright silly.

✦Billingham, Mark. [Rush of Blood](#) (Grove/Atlantic \$25). Three British couples meet around the pool during a visit to Florida, and bond. But tragedy strikes: nearby: the teen daughter of an American holidayer is missing, then found dead. "*Rush of Blood* appears to warn against making friends on holiday and the further, equally grave, danger of failing to leave them behind when you board the plane home.... The suspense is expertly built and the resolution of the mystery is unexpected and deeply chilling, the perfect ending to an extremely gripping book."—*Daily Express*

Blaedel, Sara. [The Lost Woman](#) (Grand Central \$26). A housewife is the target of a shocking, methodical killing. Shot with a hunting rifle through her kitchen window, the woman is dead before she hits the ground. Though murdered in England, it turns out that the woman, Sofie Parker, is actually a Danish citizen who's been on the Missing Persons list for almost two decades, so Louise Rick of the Danish police's Special Searches Agency is called to action. In an unexpected twist, the police discover that Sofie had been reported missing eighteen years ago by none other than Eik, Louise Rick's police colleague and lover. Impulsive as ever, Eik rushes to England, and ends up in jail on suspicion of Sofie's murder. Completely blindsided by Eik's connection to

the case, Louise is thoroughly unsettled, yet she must set aside her own emotional turmoil if she hopes to find the killer. [Order Louise's earlier cases.](#)

✚Brody, Frances. [A Death in the Dales](#) (St Martins \$25.99).

Brody is no romantic as her portrait of Yorkshire village life in the years following WWI shows. Widowed Kate Shackleton, a fledgling investigator of the Maisie Dobbs ilk, has come to Langcliffe with a doctor who's been romancing her. He offered Kate the house of his recently deceased aunt where Kate and her niece Harriet, who is recovering from diphtheria. Aunt Freda had a view from her bedroom and believed she saw a murder, and that the wrong person had been arrested and convicted. Kate gradually realizes that Freda has left her a crime to solve and that things are not as they seem in the village. Life is pretty much a grind in this rural area and Brody shows it to you as Kate's investigation progresses. For the new Kate paperback, see Our February Large Paperback Picks.

Carnoy, David. [Lucidity](#) (Overlook \$26.95). "At the start of Carnoy's spellbinding third thriller, Max Fremmer, a book doctor who lives on Manhattan's Upper West Side, learns from an NYPD cop that his client Candace Epstein, who recently told him that "she knew something bad about someone," has been pushed in front of a car on Central Park West with fatal results. In his search for the truth behind Candace's death, the wily Max gets involved with the Lucid Dreaming Center, an institute that helps people control their dreams. Flash back four months to California, where retired detective Hank Madden of the Menlo Park PD decides to look into the decades-old cold case of Stacy Walker, who disappeared—as did her husband, Ross, who was suspected of her murder. Hank gets busy digging up a backyard where Stacy might be buried. Max and Hank connect with amusing results as their two cases converge. Carnoy's sharp sense of humor and clever plotting—a character suffers a pair of setbacks involving a check he didn't write and a text he didn't send—make this novel a standout."—*PW* Starred Review

✚Cleeves, Ann. [The Crow Trap](#) (St Martins \$16). Can be Signed April 24 with Cleeves' new Shetland Island mystery [Cold Earth](#) (St Martins \$25.99). This is the first US publication of the first in the Vera Stanhope series. Three very different women come together at isolated Baikie's Cottage on the North Pennines, to complete an environmental survey. Three women who each know the meaning of betrayal. Rachael, the team leader, is still reeling after a double betrayal by her lover and boss, Peter Kemp. Anne, a botanist, sees the survey as a chance to indulge in a little deception of her own. And then there is Grace, a strange, uncommunicative young woman, hiding plenty of her own secrets. Rachael is the first to arrive at the cottage, where she discovers the body of her friend, Bella Furness. Bella, it appears, has committed suicide—a verdict Rachael refuses to accept. When another death occurs, a fourth woman enters the picture—the unconventional Detective Inspector Vera Stanhope... who has her own series on TV.

Colfer, Chris. [Stranger Than Fan Fiction](#) (Little Brown \$18.99). Cash Carter is the young, world famous lead actor of the hit television show *Wiz Kids*. When four fans jokingly invite him on a cross-country road trip, they are shocked that he actually takes them up on it. Chased by paparazzi and hounded by reporters, this unlikely crew takes off on a journey of a lifetime—but along

the way they discover that the star they love has deep secrets he's been keeping. What they come to learn about the life of the mysterious person they thought they knew will teach them about the power of empathy and the unbreakable bond of true friendship. Ages 15 plus, recommended for its look at depression.

✚DePoy, Phillip. [The English Agent](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Think of the Tudor Age as a kind of cold war between England and Spain fuelled by religion and royal succession. Francis Walsingham was England's spy master and it's forever been rumored that poet and playwright Christopher Marlowe was a secret agent. A rakehell, Marlowe had great cover. And in this book his new play is having a terrible performance at a disreputable bar in Cambridge, after which he and Thomas Kyd are attacked on the streets. He's thus happy to be sent to Holland to head off a purported Spanish plot to assassinate ally William the Silent. Marlowe gains an unexpected and courageous ally in a young woman who becomes the first to die...

✚Doherty, Paul. [Pilgrimage to Murder](#) (Severn \$29.99). 1381. The Great Revolt was crushed; the king's peace enforced. Brother Athelstan prepares for a pilgrimage, but he is summoned to the scene of a triple murder. One victim was John of Gaunt. Was this an act of revenge? Athelstan is also receiving menacing messages from an assassin. Could Athelstan's pilgrimage be leading him into a deadly trap? This 17th Brother Athelstan medieval murder can be Ordered Upon Request but don't delay as Severn books quickly disappear.

Dolan-Leach, Caite. [Dead Letters](#) (Random \$27). When news of Zelda Antipova's death reaches her buttoned-down twin sister, Ava, Ava returns home to her family's central New York vineyard from Paris. She helps her ailing mother and estranged father with funeral arrangements, yet Ava is suspicious of Zelda's supposed demise in a barn fire, and it isn't long before she begins to receive email messages from Zelda, who claims to have faked her own death. Following a series of clues left by Zelda, Ava begins a twisted scavenger hunt, bent on piecing together her sister's troubles, from massive debt to drug addiction. Along with her old high school boyfriend, Wyatt, she immerses herself in Zelda's world, hoping to find her sister at the end of the puzzle. "Dolan-Leach's debut is a smart, dazzling mystery with a twist that not only shines a new light on the novel's title but also leaves the reader hunting for the next clue. Dolan-Leach revels in toying with both Ava and her audience, placing small hints and red herrings throughout her text." In another Starred Review, *LJ* discounts the mystery and focuses on the way the novel "centers on family and particularly on the power of genetics, sisterhood, and loss. A story as compassionate and insightful as it is riveting."

Donnelly, Lara Elena. [Amberlough](#) (Tor \$25.99). Set in a fantastical version of the Roaring Twenties. Le Carré meets *Cabaret* in this debut spy thriller. Welcome to Amberlough City, the illustrious but corrupt cosmopolitan beacon of Gedda. The radical One State Party—nicknamed the Ospies—is gaining popular support to unite Gedda's four municipal governments under an ironclad, socially conservative vision. Opposed are gay double agent Cyril DePaul and his lover Aristide Makricosta, smuggler and emcee at the popular Bumble Bee Cabaret. When Cyril's cover is blown on a mission, however, he must become a turncoat in exchange for his life. Cyril enters a complex game of deception. As they turn to Cordelia Lehane, a cabaret dancer and herself involved

in espionage, the government of Amberlough is upended by a fascist coup. Think of Ellen Kushner's fantasy novel *Swordspoint*, a "fantasy thriller full of queer characters, elegant prose, moral ambiguity and spycraft."

✦Dunn, Carola. [Requiem for a Mezzo](#) (\$15.99). England, 1923: The Honourable Daisy Dalrymple attends a performance of Verdi's Requiem with Detective Chief Inspector Alec Fletcher of Scotland Yard. The tickets were a gift from Muriel Westlea, Daisy's neighbor and the sister of Bettina Westlea, who will be singing the mezzo role. What should be a pleasant afternoon is disrupted when, during the performance, Bettina falls dead on stage—poisoned with cyanide. While it's quickly determined that Bettina's on-stage prop glass of liqueur was laced with the deadly poison, discovering the person responsible will not be an easy task. [Order a selection](#) of the well wrought Daisys and binge.

Elkins, Aaron. [The Trouble with Mirrors](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Alix London, the art restorer and FBI consultant renowned as the Art Whisperer, can spot a counterfeit masterpiece before the paint even dries. What she can't see is why an elite European art dealer would offer her big money for a little mirror that's no more than a homemade gift from her beloved uncle Tiny. Not that Alix would part with it at any price. But when the mirror is abruptly stolen from her home, she realizes that someone sees more in the looking glass than mere sentimental value. When her uncle Tiny disappears mysteriously just after the mirror is stolen, the simple art theft becomes a personal and professional challenge Alix can't ignore!

✦Ellis, Janet. [The Butcher's Hook](#) (Pantheon \$25.95). The trend is to rub off glamour and romance in historical fiction and go for the grotty and gruesome. This novel set in the summer of 1763, London, does just that. At nineteen, Anne Jacob is awakened to the possibility of joy when she meets Fub, the butcher's apprentice, and begins to imagine a life of passion with him. The only daughter of well-to-do parents, Anne lives a sheltered life, but her home is a miserable place: her father is uncaring, her mother is ailing, and the baby brother who taught her to love is dead. Her parents have chosen a more suitable husband for her, but Anne is a tough nut with an idiosyncratic moral compass. In pursuing her own happiness, she shows no fear or hesitation. Even if it means getting a little blood on her hands.

Enrique, Alvaro. [Sudden Death](#) (\$16). Enrique is one of the most audacious, smart, and original books you will read this year. It is a literary triptych—part history lesson, part tennis match, and part hypermodern adventure. Daring and visceral with a cast that includes Thomas Cromwell, Mary Magdalene, Aztec emperors, and more, the limits of the novel in Enrique's hands seem boundless. No other author is taking chances like this with such gratifying results.

✦Flanders, Judith. [A Cast of Vultures](#) (St Martins \$25.99). London book editor Samantha Clair agrees to help an elderly friend, Viv, locate a missing neighbor. They actually break into Dennis' flat, news Sam doesn't share with her live-in partner, DI Jake Field. Days later, Dennis' body is discovered in an abandoned building that caught fire and was home to a group of assorted squatters who are an asset to a gentrifying neighborhood. When the police write off Dennis as dealing drugs and random arson, Sam resolves to help Viv clear him despite Jake's discouragement. Meanwhile a shakeup at Sam's publishing house bodes

ill: management consultants are calling books "product" and editors are pushed into placing publicity above quality. Flanders adroitly avoids chick-lit clichés, opting for nuanced, multidimensional characters, including Sam's high-powered attorney mother, Helena, and her reclusive upstairs neighbor, Mr. Rudiger, in her uniquely elegant and humorous mix. A delight.

Now in paperback: [Bed of Scorpions](#) (\$15.99) is fabulous on many levels. For one, the portrait of contemporary London. For another, the portrait of a middle-class British woman, so reined in, so restrained, so desperately conventional (until, of course, she explodes). It is behavior uniquely British. For a third, the tricky story involving forgery and murder and more. Fourth, the wry, witty, language that skewers nearly everything including our narrator, Samantha Clair, book editor extraordinaire and daughter of one of London's leading lawyers who is, by contrast, terrifyingly organized. And finally, for you bibliophiles, an inside look at publishing. Love the policeman. I do think towards the end that a scene putting Sam in jeopardy feels forced, but the pressure to place the sleuth in peril, to have a chase, is high. Historian Flanders, a foremost historian of the Victorian era, really takes wing with her second contemporary mystery. I liked the first, [A Murder of Magpies](#) (\$24.99), so well it was a British Crime Club Pick

✦Fraser, Anthea. [Retribution](#) (Severn \$28.99). Biographer Rona Parish is keen to finish her series on successful single mothers for local glossy magazine, Chiltern Life—and interviewing the mysterious and intriguing Nicole Summers should finish off the series nicely. But on one of her visits to Nicole's house, Rona makes a shocking discovery. 10th in this traditional British mystery series. Ordered Upon Request.

Gaiman, Neil. [Norse Mythology](#) (Norton \$25.95). Ancient myths, Norse and otherwise, have long inspired some of Neil Gaiman's greatest work. He returns to the wellspring with a novelistic retelling of the foundational Norse myths and the struggles of Odin, Thor and Loki and begins at the mythic creation of the world and concludes with Ragnarok, the apocalyptic war between the gods. The Indie Next Pick: "After reading Gaiman's account of Norse mythology, I doubt that I will ever forget how the gods of Asgard acquired their treasures. Thor's hammer that never misses its mark, Frey's incredible ship that shrinks to the size of a pocketable silk scarf, Odin's powerful spear, all came to be because of Loki's mischief. Above all, I will not forget the ill-gotten and ill-treated children of Loki who bring about Ragnarok, the end of earth and heaven and the death of the gods. Everything feels very real and very now when told by someone who has obviously drunk of the 'mead of the poets.'" "

Garber, Stephanie. [Caravel](#) (Flatiron \$18.99). Here's one of the Starred Reviews: "At the start of Garber's magnificent debut novel, the mysterious Master Legend invites sisters Scarlett and Donatella Dragna to attend Caravel—a magical multiday event that is part spectacle, part treasure hunt. Although their tyrannical father has threatened death if they leave home without his permission, Tella strikes a deal with a roguish sailor named Julian for transport to Legend's private island—a plan that essentially involves kidnapping the conflicted Scarlett, who is weeks away from marrying a man she's never met. Upon arrival, Tella is taken, and it's revealed that she is the subject of this year's hunt. Scarlett and Julian join forces to find her, but in a

game in which secrets are currency and appearances deceive, Scarlett has no way of knowing whether she's a Caraval player or Master Legend's pawn. Intriguing characters, an imaginative setting, and evocative writing combine to create a spellbinding tale of love, loss, sacrifice, and hope. While the search for Tella drives the narrative, Scarlett's quest for self-empowerment is equally captivating. Scarlett and Julian's chemistry intoxicates, and Garber's tantalizing conclusion will leave readers hungry for a sequel." See Signed Books for the UK edition.

Grippando, James. [Most Dangerous Place](#) (Harper \$26.99). According to the FBI, the most dangerous place for a woman between the ages of twenty and thirty is in a relationship with a man. Those statistics become all too personal when Jack Swytek takes on a new client tied to his past. It begins at the airport, where Jack is waiting to meet his old high school buddy, Keith Ingraham, a high-powered banker based in Hong Kong, coming to Miami for his young daughter's surgery. But their long-awaited reunion is abruptly derailed when the police arrest Keith's wife, Isabelle, in the terminal, accusing her of conspiring to kill the man who raped her in college. Jack quickly agrees to represent Isa, but soon discovers that to see justice done, he must separate truth from lies—an undertaking that proves more complicated than the seasoned attorney expects....

Harrison, Cora. [An Unjust Judge](#) (Severn \$28.99). Burren Mystery #14. It was a macabre ending for an unjust judge: his throat slit by a sharp knife; his body stuffed into a lobster pot and left beneath a powerful jet of water shooting up through the cliffs. When Mara investigates, she suspects five men who had received harsh sentences for minor crimes. But who was it who was seen that night by the elderly Fergus? Medieval Ireland for fans of Peter Tremayne. Ordered Upon Request.

Hart, Ellen. [Fever in the Dark](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Lives put on-line can also be put on the line. Fiona and Annie return home from their one year anniversary trip to discover that their poignant proposal video has been posted on YouTube and has garnered hundreds of thousands of hits. The video is on the verge of going viral, and there's enormous media interest in Fiona and Annie, as their fame comes just on the heels of the Supreme Court's decision to legalize gay marriage across the country. As some of the attention starts to turn vicious, Fiona pulls in an old friend, private investigator Jane Lawless, to help separate the harmless threats from the potentially harmful. As the media storm continues to grow, Fiona revels in the attention, but Annie is furious. Fiona has always known that Annie has secrets, but her newfound notoriety threatens to bring Annie's past straight to their door. And then, when a murder occurs and Annie and Fiona are both suspects, it's up to Jane to prove their innocence...although the more she learns, the more she starts to wonder whether they actually are innocent.

Hawken, Sam. [Walk Away](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Action-adventure with a badass called Camaro Espinoza, a woman with a dark past and the skills of a former Army medic. In the sequel to [The Night Charter](#) (\$15.99), Camaro is drawn from her under-the-radar life in Miami to Carmel, California, by her sister's plea for help. The brothers Jacob, Annabel's boyfriend, and his psycho brother Lukas, an ex-Marine combat vet, need taking down.... "Fast, violent, and starring a lead character with a private code, and to hell with those law books....Like a good action hero, Camaro is soli-

tary, vengeful, and fond of beer and motorcycles—a female 'tough guy' who defies stereotypes with engaging bravado. Hawken calls her 'a lean, mean thrilling machine.' He's nailed it."—*Booklist*. Plenty of guns and fists pepper the action.

✠Herron, Mick. [Spook Street](#) (Soho \$26.95). Another superb Slough Street spy novel. See Signed Books for a review.

Hill, Joe. [The Fireman](#) (\$18.99). From the award-winning bestselling author of *NOS4A2* and *Heart-Shaped Box* comes a chilling novel about a worldwide pandemic of spontaneous combustion that threatens to reduce civilization to ashes and a band of improbable heroes who battle to save it, led by one powerful and enigmatic man known as the Fireman. We have a few Signed copies still: [The Fireman](#) (\$28.99)

James, Miranda. [Twelve Angry Librarians](#) (Berkley \$26). Librarian Charlie Harris is known around his hometown of Athena, Mississippi, for walking his cat, a rescued Maine Coon named Diesel. But he may soon be taken for a walk himself—in handcuffs. The Southern Academic Libraries Association is holding this year's annual meeting at Athena College. Since Charlie is the interim library director, he must deliver the welcome speech to all the visiting librarians. And as if that weren't bad enough, the keynote address will be delivered by Charlie's old nemesis from library school. It's been thirty years since Charlie has seen Gavin Fong, and he's still an insufferable know-it-all capable of getting under everyone's skin. In his keynote, Gavin puts forth a most unpopular opinion: that degreed librarians will be obsolete in the academic libraries of the future. So when Gavin drops dead, no one seems too upset. But Charlie, who was seen having a heated argument with Gavin the day before, has jumped to the top of the suspect list. [Order earlier Cat in the Stacks mysteries.](#)

Indridason, Arnaldur. [Into Oblivion](#) (\$16) is the follow-up to the gritty Erlendur series prequel [Reykjavik Nights](#) (\$16). It's 1979. A woman swims in a remote, milky-blue lagoon. Steam rises from the water and as it clears, a body is revealed in the ghostly light. Miles away, a vast aircraft hangar rises behind the perimeter fence of the US military base. A sickening thud is heard as a man's body falls from a high platform. Many years before, a schoolgirl went missing. The world has forgotten her. But Erlendur has not. Erlendur is a newly promoted detective. He is only starting out, but he is already deeply involved in his work.

✠Kent, Christobel. [The Crooked House](#) (\$16). "A chilling psychological thriller featuring a claustrophobic English seaside town, a heroine the sole survivor of a family massacre, and her intriguing relationship with an older, slightly dominating man.... Comparisons to Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* are apt."—*LJ*. "While Kent handles her mystery plot and large ensemble adroitly, what is most memorable is the atmosphere of the novel's estuarine world, where everything seems muddy, shifting and treacherous."—John Dugdale, *The Sunday Times*

Liebman, Ron. [Big Law](#) (Blue Rider \$26). Carney Blake is a junior partner at the behemoth New York firm Dunn & Sullivan which typically defends corporations, many of which have questionable business practices. Yet Carl Smith, the firm's chairman, has asked Carney to take the lead on a plaintiff's class-action lawsuit. Flattered, Carney sets aside his misgivings about the peculiarity of the case and gets to work. He may be a junior partner, but he's smart and determined. So when Smith's behavior toward Carney and the case starts raising red flags and the

defendant serves Carney with a personal lawsuit, he makes it his mission to uncover the truth, if for no other reason than to save his career. “*Big Law* should appeal to fans of John Grisham and Michael Connelly’s legal thrillers. It’s smart and complex, with authentically flawed characters. Liebman develops a convincing plot, pulling his readers into the legal world without bogging down the momentum with a lot of industry jargon.”—Jen Forbus

McVeigh, Jennifer. [Leopard at the Door](#) (Putnam, \$26.). The Indie Next Pick finds this to be “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 country 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!”

✎Morgan, Ann. [Beside Myself](#) (\$16). Helen and Ellie are identical twins, “two peas in a pod.” Helen is the older twin, the smart one, the one favored with special toys, clothes and shoes. Ellie is the more difficult child, whose hair never stays in place, whose clothes are often splattered with food, and who throws fits in school. One day, Helen invents a game where the two switch identities—and life is never the same for either of them. Even though their own mother can’t tell them apart, Helen never stops struggling to prove her true identity, making Ellie smirk and Helen cringe. She descends into a world of mental illness, behavioral issues, and eventually drugs and sex, while Ellie continues to be the golden child, favored by Mother, her friends and teachers. As the years pass, Helen even wonders if the switch really took place.

Nakamura, Fuminori. [The Gun](#) (\$14.95). On a nighttime walk along a Tokyo riverbank, a young man named Nishikawa stumbles on a dead body, beside which lies a gun. From the moment Nishikawa decides to take the gun, the world around him blurs. Knowing he possesses the weapon brings an intoxicating sense of purpose to his dull university life. But soon Nishikawa’s personal entanglements become unexpectedly complicated... “A thriller in the same elevated sense as is Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* or Camus’ *The Stranger* ... Nature versus nurture, free will versus fate: Such are the themes that flicker almost subliminally through this shocking narrative, which also emits echoes of Poe and Mishima.»—Tom Nolan, *The Wall Street Journal*

Nguyen, Viet Thanh. [The Refugees](#) (Grove \$24). Nguyen’s [The Sympathizer](#) (\$16) was one of the most widely and highly praised novels of 2015, the winner not only of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, but also the Center for Fiction Debut Novel Prize, the Edgar Award for Best First Novel, the ALA Carnegie Medal for Fiction, the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature, and the California Book Award for First Fiction. Now here is a collection of stories written over a period of twenty years, exploring questions of immigration, identity, love, and family. Nguyen gives voice to lives led between two worlds, the adopted homeland and the country of birth, through “snapshots” of individuals straddling two disparate spheres.

Patterson, James. [NYPD Red 5](#) (LittleBrown \$28) with Marshall Karp. Also new: [Humans, Bow Down](#) (LittleBrown \$28), scifi, and [Bullseye](#) (\$15.99), Michael Bennett #9.

Pattison, Eliot. [Soul of the Fire](#) (\$15.99). Here’s the latest paperback in one of my all time favorite series—crime, but so much more. “Pattison’s superlative eighth mystery featuring Shan Tao Yun takes the former Beijing government investigator to Zhongje, a Tibetan community that the Chinese regard as a “showcase for the motherland.” To Shan’s astonishment, he’s been tapped to serve on the People’s International Commission for Peace and Order, “dedicated to eliminating the criminal acts of self-aggression that undermine harmonious coexistence in ethnic geographies.” Shan, who has served time in labor camps, is to fill the designated slot reserved for a reformed criminal, but on his first day on the commission, he witnesses a self-immolation. His police training causes him to doubt that the death was a suicide, and his refusal to ignore the facts puts him at odds with his superiors, who don’t want the truth derailing their political agenda. Pattison impressively combines a thrilling plot with a passionate denunciation of the Chinese oppression of the Tibetan people.”—PW Starred Review. I’m working on Signed copies of March’s [Skeleton God](#) (\$27)—no guarantees yet.

Ramqvist, Karolina. [The White City](#) (Grove \$16). Stieg Larsson’s *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* may have sparked a Swedish crime phenomenon, but former editor-in-chief of Sweden’s *Arena* magazine Ramqvist is putting her own stamp on the genre with the sensitive Karin and her mysterious gangster lover, John. A follow up to *The Girlfriend* (not yet published in English), in which the paramours first appear, this is the self-contained story of Karin’s lavish life gone on the rocks after John has disappeared and the Swedish authorities are about to seize their modernist mansion, car, and ill-gotten bank accounts. All Karin has left is their infant daughter, Dream, and a safe full of guns. Karin is down to eating canned food and stale muesli, smoking cigarette butts from ashtrays, selling her designer bags and shoes online, and having quick sex with the pizza delivery guy while she can still afford to order in. And, of course, caring for Dream. Can Karin muster the energy and wits to use John’s small arsenal to shake money out of his fellow mobsters? Winner of Sweden’s prestigious 2015 Enquist Prize, *The White City* is “a haunting novel of a woman adrift yet firmly attached to romantic memories of her lover and the simple needs of her daughter.”

Rekulak, Jason. [The Impossible Fortress](#) (SimonSchuster \$26). Until May 1987, fourteen-year-old Billy Marvin of Wetbridge, New Jersey, is a nerd, but a decidedly happy nerd. Afternoons are spent with his buddies, watching copious amounts of television, gorging on Pop-Tarts, debating who would win in a brawl (Rocky Balboa or Freddy Krueger? Bruce Springsteen or Billy Joel? Magnum P.I. Or T.J. Hooker?), and programming video games on his Commodore 64 late into the night. Then Playboy magazine publishes photos of Wheel of Fortune hostess Vanna White, Billy meets expert programmer Mary Zelinsky, and everything changes. A love letter to the 1980s, to the dawn of the computer age, and to adolescence—a time when anything feels possible—*The Impossible Fortress* will make you laugh, make you cry, and make you remember in exquisite detail what it feels like to love something—or someone—for the very first time.

Robb, J D. [Echoes in Death](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Robb (Nora Roberts) is not only prolific but consistently inventive, entertaining, and clever in her crime series set in a near-future New York City, as shown by this stunning 44th entry. One cold winter night, Lt. Eve Dallas and her husband, Roarke, encounter a naked,

dazed, and bruised young woman wandering a Manhattan street. They take her to a hospital, where they learn that the victim has been raped; a fingerprint analysis identifies her as Daphne Strazza, the wife of prominent surgeon Anthony Strazza. When Eve and Roarke enter the Strazzas' elegant townhome, they find Anthony slain in the bedroom. Eve soon learns of two similar cases, and she and her police team—aided by Roarke, the owner and CEO of Roarke Industries, and psychiatrist Charlotte Mira—begin a laborious process of finding commonalities that identify a pool of suspects and more potential victims while creating a profile of the perpetrator. When the attacker strikes again, Eve redoubles her efforts. Just when Eve appears to have everything sewn up, Robb delivers a final, devastating twist.

✎Robinson, Peter. [A Piece of My Heart](#) (\$15.99). The latest reissue of an Inspector Alan Banks—from 2006, #16 in the series—in large paperback has an ironic title: Peter suffered a mild heart attack. This case links two murders, one from 1969 when a young woman is stabbed at a rock festival, and one current murder, the death of a freelance journalist.

Romano-Lax, And. [Behave](#) (Soho \$15.95). The Starred *PW* review: “Rosalie Rayner—wife of real-life behaviorist pioneer John Watson, assistant in his controversial 1920 Little Albert experiment, and coauthor of his now-discredited parenting guide—is the confessional narrator of Romano-Lax’s scorching new novel. After graduating from Vassar in 1919, Rosalie attends Johns Hopkins, where she works in the psychology lab under Watson, a handsome, gregarious advocate of conditioning over introspection. In their best-known collaboration, they expose a baby to rats, loud noises, and other stimuli, eliciting fearful responses. The baby that Watson chooses for this experiment—a stolid, passive nine-month-old referred to as Albert—seems the perfect subject to prove almost all behavior is conditioned. Rosalie does not question Watson’s ideas or methods as they embark on a scandalous affair. Eventually Watson divorces his first wife, marries Rosalie, and becomes an advertising executive, while Rosalie becomes a stay-at-home mom disconnected from her husband’s ideas... By detailing how the study of human behavior differs from understanding people, and how smart women can miss the obvious and make mistakes, Romano-Lax sheds a harsh yet deeply moving light on feminism and psychology, in theory and in practice.”

✎Ryan, Jennifer. [The Chilbury Ladies’ Choir](#) (Crown \$26). The Indie Next Pick finds this novel to be “a powerful story of both hope and despair. Told through diary entries, this is a wonderful glimpse into life in a small British town during World War II. Ryan is a skilled writer who gives each diary entry a clear voice: Mrs. Paltry is dishonest and scheming, Venetia, the self-centered young woman in love with a mysterious man, Kitty, the love-struck teenager with big dreams, and Mrs. Tilling, the midwife and moral compass of the town. Through their entries, you really see them grow. The power of music brings them strength that they didn’t know that they had.” The immersion in small-town life opens with Mrs. Tilling’s journal entry of Tuesday, 26th March, 1940. Mrs. Tilling is a timid, good-hearted, churchgoing lady, a widow whose only son is about to be sent to France to fight. The occasion of this journal entry is the funeral for young Commander Edmund Winthrop. This funeral is to be the last appearance of the village choir, as, according to the Vicar, “all our male voices have gone to war.” Anxious Mrs. Tilling, devious

Miss Paltry and the ever-evolving sisters Venetia and Kitty represent a wealth of possible reactions to an event bigger than themselves. In their variously sweet, mischievous, aggrieved and hopeful letters and journals, these ladies bring home the impact of world war. And in a village deprived of its men, they show that women can pull together and do anything that needs doing. This debut will appeal to readers who devoured [The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society](#) (\$16).

Santiago, Mikel. [The Last Night at Tremore Beach](#) (Atria \$26). Santiago starts his unusual and fabulous story out making you think that a storm of the century about to hit Ireland’s scenic, isolated Tremore Beach where a renowned composer has taken refuge from a creative crisis and the collapse of his marriage, is going to be ignored with terrible consequences. And in a way, that’s what happens. Peter Harper, stubbornly ignoring the threat, heads out for a convivial evening with the aging couple who are his only neighbors. It’s a kind of death wish scene. Instead of being swept into the ocean, Peter is struck by lightning. He begins to experience headaches and bizarre dreams that blur with reality. You may think this is a Stephen King, but no, Santiago veers in a different direction. I was sucked in by this Spanish author’s debut and by his insights into the creative process for a composer bereft of inspiration but under severe commercial pressure, and recommend that you be, too. I chose Ould’s second Faroe Islands thriller for our February Fresh Fiction Club Pick as it’s a paperback original and I like to mix up prices, but Santiago is an equally fine thriller.

✎Searle, Nicholas. [The Good Liar](#) (\$15.99). Veteran con artist Roy is a born liar—and when he meets wealthy widow Betty online, he knows she’s an easy mark. In no time at all, he’s spinning his web of duplicity and betrayal around her, even moving into her lovely cottage. He’s sure his scheme will be a success. He’s done this before. But who is Roy, really? While this masterful narrative of literary suspense entwines Roy’s and Betty’s futures, it also delves deeply into their pasts. As the clock turns back and the years fall away... Here’s Trust No One from a male author; it’s refreshing to wonder if the male of our species is the spider or the fly.

Shannon, Samantha. [Bone Season](#) and [Mime Order](#) (\$17 each). Order up in preparation for the release of the final book in this heralded fantasy trilogy: [The Song Rising](#) (Bloomsbury \$26), in the Signed Limited Edition. Order now as our supply is limited.

Sigurdardottir, Yrsa. [The Undesired](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Aldis hates her job working in a juvenile detention center in rural Iceland. The boys are difficult, the owners are unpleasant, and there are mysterious noises at night. And then two of the boys go astray...Decades later, single father Odinn is looking into alleged abuse at the center. The more he finds out, though, the more it seems the odd events of the 1970s are linked to the accident that killed his ex-wife. Was her death something more sinister?

Now in paperback: [The Silence of the Sea](#) (\$15.99). Karen reviews: A luxury yacht arrives in Reykjavik with no crew or passengers aboard. Thus begins this latest installment of the Thora Gudmundsdottir series. All seemed in order when the yacht left Lisbon and it is up to authorities to determine what happened on the boat. There is a rumor the boat is cursed and even Thora gets spooked as she begins her investigation of the former owner’s missing wife and a body that has been washed

ashore. This title has been hailed as “possibly her best book yet” and “a dazzling display of brilliant crime writing.” This is a great read that will hook you from the beginning.” Yrsa and Arnaldur Indridason bring Iceland chillingly to life.

Simenon, George. [Maigret at the Coroner's](#) (Penguin \$12). Maigret in Arizona. On his travels through the U.S., Maigret stops in Tucson. His FBI friend Harry Cole leaves him one day to observe a coroner's inquest. The body being examined is that of Bessie Mitchell, a young girl who died under suspicious circumstances—she spent a night drinking and driving with five young Air Force men and was found the next morning on the tracks, run over by a train. Maigret quickly becomes engrossed in the hearing and the men's conflicting stories, leaving questions of who bears the guilt for this death and who can be trusted at all. This chapter of the French cop's long career is the latest to be republished by Penguin. [Order other Inspector Maigrets.](#)

Stella, Charlie. [Tommy Red](#) (Stark House \$15.95). Mob noir. Tommy Dalton's ex-wife is on an honesty kick with their daughter, Alysha. She tells her that her dad kills people. Which, of course, he does. But that's not the kind of information he wants shared with his kids. Particularly now that he's working on a new job. Dominick Farase, ready to testify against the Cirelli family, needs silencing. An ex-cop spots him and lets Gasper Cirelli know where to find him. Not a difficult job for Tommy Red. But the Cirellis get nervous about this one, and decide to remove all evidence of the hit including Tommy. More hits are called, and some of them get sloppy. A couple of FBI agents get involved. Frank Cirelli, Gasper's son and acting head of the family, has to make some tough decisions. Sacrifices must be made. But as far as Tommy is concerned, the Cirellis make their biggest mistake when they fail in their efforts to take him out.... Great pacing from Stella who has a killer feel for a goombah brew.

✦ Tolkien, Simon. [No Man's Land](#) (Doubleday \$27.95). Tolkien writes, “Edwardian society had a quite incredible divide between rich and poor. One percent of the population owned half the nation's wealth and, following the lead of pleasure-loving King Edward VII, they threw off the repressive solemnity of the Victorian era and indulged in a frenzy of conspicuous consumption. The rich regularly spent more on a single dinner than a poor family could earn in a year. To make this mad pursuit of pleasure possible, their servants did back-breaking work for little money and no thanks.... This was a hard, cruel, selfish world, epitomized not by *Downton Abbey* but by the *Titanic* disaster: 61% of the first-class passengers survived, but only 23% of those in third class did. It was a decadent society, rushing like the *Titanic* headlong towards its own destruction.”

Tripp, Dawn. [Georgia](#) (\$17). This terrific 2016 Modern Firsts Club Pick imagines the life of artist Georgia O'Keeffe in a way that a biography could not do. From her early life through her romance and marriage to Stieglitz to her long sojourn in New Mexico, you span a creative career and a century. Highly recommended.

Wegelius, Jakob. [The Murderer's Ape](#) (Delacorte \$17.99). trans. from the Swedish by Peter Graves. Sally Jones is a top-notch engineer, excels at chess, and exceeds expectations at every turn—that she is a gorilla may be the least interesting thing about her. Working aboard cargo ship *Hudson Queen* with her dear friend Chief, Sally is content and safe, but when a job goes awry,

Chief lands in prison for murder and only Sally Jones knows he is innocent. Determined to clear his name, the indomitable gorilla forges unexpected friendships, travels countless miles, and barely survives death on numerous occasions. Meticulous black-and-white character illustrations introduce key players at the novel's start, and spot illustrations adorn the heading of each chapter, offer tempting glimpses of what awaits. Originally published in Sweden and ostensibly typed out by the gorilla on a typewriter, Wegelius' story is a thrilling adventure, but it's Sally Jones's devotion to her friends and poignant observations that set it apart. For ages 12+ but honestly, who can resist this?

White, Karen. [Guests on South Battery](#) (Berkley \$26). 5th in White's Tradd Street series, highly recommended by Beatriz Williams and Lauren Willig (her sometimes writing partners). I'd liken her work to that of the late Barbara Michaels: atmosphere, suspense, ghosts. And steeped in the history and landscape of Charleston. “White captures the true essence of Charleston by intertwining the sights and smells of the historic town with an enchanting story filled with ghostly spirits, love, and forgiveness... a once-in-a-lifetime series.” [Order all five](#) for immersive escape reading: *House on Tradd Street*, *Girl on Legare Street*, *Strangers on Montagu Street*, *Return to Tradd Street*.

✦ Wilson, D K. [The Traitor's Mark](#) (\$15.95). Our **February History Paperback Club Pick** is based on the true story of the unsolved disappearance of Hans Holbein, famed portrait-painter of Henry VIII. Holbein died in the autumn of 1543. A century later a chronicler reported that the artist had succumbed to plague, yet there is no contemporary evidence to support this. Suspicions have been raised over the centuries, but the mystery of what actually happened remains unsolved to this day. Our Story: Young London goldsmith Thomas Treviot is awaiting a design for a very important jewelry commission from Hans Holbein. When the design fails to turn up, Thomas sends a servant to track Holbein down, only to discover that the painter has disappeared. In his hunt for Holbein and the lost design, Thomas is led into a morass of dangerous political intrigue, Spanish spies and courtiers—all deadly dangerous....

Wilson, Sam. [Zodiac](#) (Pantheon \$25.95). South African Wilson's debut boasts a highly original setting: the corrupt African dystopia of San Celeste, in which people are segregated not by race or religion but by their zodiac sign. Capricorns sit at the top of society, while Aries are considered the violent underclass. A child born on an undesirable birthday causes the family's status to plummet. Detective Jerome Burton of the SCPD and astrological profiler Lindiwe Childs reluctantly team to investigate a series of murders of people with different signs. Are the murders the start of a revolution or a serial killer at work? Meanwhile, Daniel Lapton, the scion of a family owning an international chain of hotels, uses his wealth and power to search for the daughter he learned about only after his father's death. While Wilson's ambition may have exceeded his grasp, this is a striking concept and something different for crime fiction fans. The UK edition was a SciFi/Fantasy Club Pick.

Yokoyama, Hideo. [Six Four](#) (Farrar \$28). The crime reader's dream of a long, labyrinthine novel that you never want to finish is magnificently fulfilled by Yokoyama. This Japanese super-seller, translated by Jonathan Lloyd-Davies, is a police-procedural conspiracy thriller involving two disappearances that also rivetingly dramatizes the mindsets and lifestyles of contemporary Japan.

SOME SCIFI/FANTASY NEW FOR FEBRUARY

Aaronovitch, Ben. [The Hanging Tree](#) (DAW \$7.99). Book 6 in the charming Rivers of London urban fantasy series. Suspicious deaths are not usually the concern of Police Constable Peter Grant or the Folly—London’s police department for supernatural cases—even when they happen at an exclusive party in one of the flats of the most expensive apartment blocks in London. But the daughter of Lady Ty, influential goddess of the River Tyburn, was there, and Peter owes Lady Ty a favor...

Beagle, Peter S. [In Calabria](#) (Tachyon \$19.95). From the acclaimed author of [The Last Unicorn](#) (\$16) comes a new, exquisitely-told unicorn fable for the modern age. Claudio Bianchi has lived alone for many years on a hillside in Southern Italy’s scenic Calabria. Set in his ways and suspicious of outsiders, Claudio has always resisted change, preferring farming and writing poetry. But one chilly morning, as though from a dream, an impossible visitor appears at the farm. When Claudio comes to her aid, an act of kindness throws his world into chaos. Suddenly he must stave off inquisitive onlookers, invasive media, and even more sinister influences.

Clarke, Cassandra. [Magic of Blood and Sea](#) (Saga \$29.99 or \$17.99). A pirate princess and a cursed assassin find their fates intertwined....

Clarke, Neil. [Galactic Empires](#) (NAL \$17.99). Neil Clarke, publisher of the award-winning *Clarkesworld* magazine, presents a collection of thought-provoking and galaxy-spanning array of galactic short science fiction.

Gladstone, Max. [Bookburners](#) (Saga \$34.99). Urban fantasy about a secret team of agents that hunts down dangerous books containing deadly magic—previously released serially online by Serial Box, now available in print for the first time! Magic is real, and hungry. It’s trapped in ancient texts and artifacts, and only a few who discover it survive to fight back. Detective Sal Brooks is a survivor. She joins a Vatican-backed black-ops anti-magic squad—Team Three of the Societas Librorum Occultorum—and together they stand between humanity and the magical apocalypse. Some call them the Bookburners. They don’t like the label. Supernatural meets *The DaVinci Code* here.

Kadrey, Richard. [The Wrong Dead Guy](#) (Harper \$24.99). In this fast paced sequel to [The Everything Box](#) (\$16.99)—the second entry in Kadrey’s comedic Another Coop Heist supernatural series—chaos ensues when Coop and the team at DOPS steal a not-quite-dead and very lovesick ancient Egyptian mummy wielding some terrifying magic. New in paperback: [The Perdition Score](#) (\$15.99), Sandman Slim #8.

Ruff, Matt. [Lovecraft Country](#) (Harper \$15.99). Chicago, 1954. When his father Montrose goes missing, 22-year-old Army veteran Atticus Turner embarks on a road trip to New England to find him, accompanied by his Uncle George—publisher of The Safe Negro Travel Guide—and his childhood friend Letitia. On their journey to the manor of Mr. Braithwhite—heir to the estate that owned one of Atticus’s ancestors—they encounter both mundane terrors of white America and malevolent spirits that seem straight out of the weird tales George devours.

Schwab, V E. [A Conjuring of Light](#) (Tor \$25.99). The battle between four magical Londons comes to a head in this stunning finale to the bestselling Shades of Magic trilogy.

Snyder, Maria V. [Dawn Study](#) (Mira \$16.99). The conclusion of the Poison Study Series: #6.

Wendig, Chuck. [Empire’s End](#) (Ballantine \$28.99). Aftermath: Star Wars Trilogy #3

OUR FEBRUARY PAPERBACK PICKS

Berenson, Alex. [The Wolves](#) (\$9.99) John Wells #10. Determined to bring an insidious war instigator to justice, John Wells confronts obstacles in the form of political resistance, CIA agendas and meddling by foreign interests before embarking on a high-risk solo mission. *Kirkus* ended their review with “Fans of the John Wells series won’t be disappointed. They’ll agree with his enemies that if Wells isn’t Superman, he’s super something.”

Furlong, Susan. [War and Peach](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Georgia Peach #3. When one of the mayoral candidates, local farmer Clem Rogers, is murdered, all eyes turn to his rival—small-business owner Margie Price—and it is up to Nola Mae Harper to find the truth before the killer casts another fatal vote. Furlong also writes the Novel Idea mysteries as Lucy Arlington.

James, Miranda. [No Cats Allowed](#) (\$7.99) Cat in the Stacks #7. A new director at the Athena College library sets about making very unpopular changes, including his “no cats allowed” policy, which makes things awkward when he mysteriously dies, leaving librarian Charlie and his feline sidekick, Diesel, to investigate. If you enjoy Jenn McKinlay’s Library Lover’s series and haven’t discovered James’ equally charming cozy series you are in for a treat.

Parsons, Kelly. [Doing Harm](#) (\$9.99) Charged with molding a group of medical trainees into doctors, and in line for a coveted job, Chief Resident Steve Mitchell’s future is bright. But then a patient mysteriously dies, and it quickly becomes clear that a killer is on the loose in his hospital. A killer set on playing a deadly game with Steve. *LJ’s* review included “The descriptions of surgery and other hospital procedures by board-certified urologist Parsons may leave readers wary of going under the scalpel or even entering a hospital. However, as a medical thriller, this skillfully wrought debut gets high marks for building tension to a breathtaking climax.”

Preston, Douglas. [Beyond the Ice Limit](#) (\$7.99) Gideon Crew #4. Five years after a giant meteorite from deep space sank to the ocean floor after a failed recovery effort, the discovery that the meteorite is actually a complex organism that is now growing and could destroy life on Earth leads to a high-stakes assignment for Gideon Crew. *Kirkus* says “Science fiction as action adventure, the sort of book primed for screen treatment if a producer can find a sufficient F/X budget.”

Sandford, John. [Saturn Run](#) (\$9.99) When a mid-21st-century Caltech intern discovers that a spacecraft from a technologically superior alien source is headed toward Saturn, a ragtag crew of competitors races to be the first to claim the ship and its technological advantages. *PW* was just one of the review sources raving about this new venture from Sandford saying “Scenes of wonder and beauty are joined with moments of helpless calamity at a pace that leaves the reader no time to look back and consider what just happened. The authors include plenty of fascinating technology and inside jokes for SF fans, and the conclusion is inevitable and satisfying.”

Shelton, Paige. [The Cracked Spine](#) (\$7.99) Scottish Bookshop #1. Delaney Nichols uproots herself from her quiet Kansas town and takes a job at The Cracked Spine in Edinburgh, only to put on her investigating cap when someone in her new life ends up dead. *PW* ended their review with “This spotlessly clean, fun-filled read takes plenty of twists and turns on the way to the satisfying ending.”

Stevens, Chevy. [That Night](#) (\$7.99) Returning home after serving time for the wrongful conviction of her sister’s murder, Toni struggles to re-acclimate and avoid parole violations while her boyfriend, who was also wrongly convicted, resolves to clear their names. *LJ*’s verdict? “Fans of layered mysteries will love this novel as they try to guess the players in Nicole’s death and try to figure out exactly what happened “that night.” A compelling, exceptional read.” Stevens will be appearing at the Poisoned Pen on March 18th at 2 PM along with three other authors for an entertaining Saturday event.

NEW IN PAPERBACK

Betley, Matthew. [Overwatch](#) (\$9.99) Awakening from a blackout after suffering a sobriety lapse, former Marine Force Reconnaissance officer Logan West is targeted by a professional mercenary with ties to a mysterious organization that is plotting attacks in the Middle East to draw the U.S. into a war with Iran. Fans of Brad Thor and Brad Taylor (or, in other words the entire Brad thriller crowd) will want to give this new thriller by Betley a serious look.

Blackmoore, Stephanie. [Murder Wears White](#) (Kensington \$7.99) Wedding Planner #2. When the poisoning of the bride’s aunt mars her very first ceremony as a wedding planner, Mallory Shepard soon discovers that this is not the first murder in the bridal family. Well, people do say weddings can be murder, right?

Cameron, Lou. [Angels Flight](#) (Stark House \$9.99) The story begins in the Depression Era jazz world. Then moves to 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, then 1940 when FDR sends help to Churchill and England during The Battle of Britain and on to the close of World War Two, and later into the Korean War. However, this is not a war novel at all. Cameron only mentions these then current events through his narrator Ben Parker, to put this decades’ long saga of the music business into historical perspective. Cameron is telling a grand story, an epic of sorts—a noir horror tale set to a hot jazz beat. In other words, this has Patrick Millikin written all over it.

Coulter, Catherine. [Insidious](#) (\$9.99) Savich and Sherlock #20. Investigating the attempted murder of an octogenarian society icon, FBI agents Savich and Sherlock consider a number of family suspects while Special Agent Cam Wittier teams up with detective Daniel Montoya in Los Angeles to capture a serial killer who is targeting young actresses.

Davis, Krista. [Mission Impawsible](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Paws and Claws #4. While preparing the Sugar Maple Inn for a matchmaking festival for pet owners, Holly and her grandmother, Oma, must find the killer who is targeting their guests, while at the same time, Oma is determined to find a man for Holly.

Fluke, Joanne. [Wedding Cake Murder](#) (\$7.99) Hannah Swenson #19. About to marry her college crush, Hannah must solve the murder case of nasty celebrity chef Alain Duquesne found stabbed to death in the Lake Eden Inn’s walk-in cooler.

Harper, Karen. [Drowning Tides](#) (Mira \$7.99) South Shores #2. After forensic psychologist Claire Britten starts working with lawyer Nick Markwood on his South Shores project, the billionaire criminal who staged Nick’s father’s “suicide” kidnaps Claire’s daughter, and Claire and Nick must band together to stop this dangerous man.

Harris, Charlaire. [Night Shift](#) (\$9.99) Midnight Texas #3. When weapons obtained from Midnight’s local pawn shop are used in a series of dramatic suicides at the main crossroads in town, the vampire Lemuel makes astonishing discoveries about why the community has attracted so many paranormal residents, who must work together to stop the violence.

Kelly, Diane. [Death, Taxes, And Sweet Potato Fries](#) (St Martins \$7.99) Death and Taxes #11. When the IRS is tasked with helping border patrol, Special Agent Tara Holloway finds herself investigating her old flame, while she prepares for her upcoming wedding, develops an addiction to sweet potato fries and goes up against someone who is making false tax reports and using the IRS as a pawn in a cunning game of revenge.

Larsen, Ward. [Assassin’s Silence](#) (Tor \$9.99) Surprised by a mysterious assault team that nearly captures him, former Mossad agent David Slaton is sought by a desperate CIA that has connected the disappearance of a derelict airliner to a practiced killer who has left a trail of bodies across Europe.

Ludlum, Robert. [The Ambler Warning](#) (\$9.99) Imprisoned and drugged in a restricted island psychiatric facility for government intelligence employees, former Consular Operations agent Hal Ambler manages a daring escape and sets out to discover why he was placed there, a situation that is complicated when he realizes that his facial features and all records about him have been altered.

Martini, Steve. [Blood Flag](#) (\$9.99) Paul Madriani #14. Defending a client accused of mercy-killing her father, attorney Paul Madriani is drawn into a treacherous conspiracy involving the victim’s former unit from World War II and a feared Nazi relic.

Meltzer, Brad. [The House of Secrets](#) (\$7.99) Hazel Nash #1. After an accident leaves her with no memory, Hazel Nash must put together the pieces of her past and present to find the truth about her father and his connection to a corpse found with a book found in his chest.

Nielsen, Helen. [Woman on the Roof](#) (Stark House \$9.99) In this classic mystery originally published in 1954, Wilma has recently been released from a mental health clinic and no longer trusts the world around her...including the seemingly dead body of neighbor in the apartment below.

Patterson, James. [Murder House](#) (\$9.99) Returning to the luxurious Hamptons of her youth to investigate the murders of a Hollywood power broker and his mistress, detective Jenna Murphy uncovers links between the case and a series of unsolved killings.

Perry, Carol J. [Murder Go Round](#) (Kensington \$7.99) Witch City #3. When a silver samovar at a local repair shop awakens her psychic abilities and conjures visions of murder, Lee Barrett is faced with the murder of a man who was trying to steal her newly purchased wooden carousel horse and, guided by her wise tabby cat, must discover the story behind the horse to catch a killer.

Robb, JD. [Apprentice in Death](#) (\$7.99) Eve Dallas #42. Investigating a Central Park sniper attack that has left three dead, Eve Dallas discovers that the killer was potentially miles away from the victims and may be the protégé of an even more deranged shooter.

Stewart, Fran. [A Wee Homicide in the Hotel](#) (Berkley \$7.99) ScotShop #3. When Big Willie, the returning champion of the Scottish-themed games, is murdered during the Highland Festival, Peggy Winn, the owner of the ScotShop, decides to solve the crime with the help of her 14th-century ghostly companion, Dirk.

Tate, Clover. [Blown Away](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Kite Shop #1. While starting her own kite business on the Oregon coast, Emmy Adler finds the grand opening of her shop marred by the murder of a local chef—and her best friend's ex-boyfriend—and must find the real killer before her shop and her best friend's freedom come crashing down.

Wallace, Auralee. [Snowed in with Murder](#) (St Martins \$7.99) Otter Lake #3. Determined to save her relationship with local sheriff Grady Forrester, Erica Bloom returns home to Otter Lake where she hopes to make th