

BOOKNEWS from

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Happy Valentine's Day!

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

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

Listen to some of our programs on our new [podcast channel](#)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 6

Meg Gardiner signs [Into the Black Nowhere](#) (Dutton \$26)
UNSUB #2

Lisa Gardner signs [Look for Me](#) (Dutton \$27)
DD Warren/Flora Dane

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8 7:00 PM

Alex Berenson signs [The Deceivers](#) (Putnam \$28)
John Wells #12

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 10 10:30 AM

Coffee and Crime discusses Margery Allingham's [The Tiger in the Smoke](#) (\$12.99)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 10 2:00 PM

Ian Hamilton signs [The Imam of Tawi-Tawi](#) (Anansi \$15.95)
Ava Lee #10

Leslie S. Klinger signs [In the Shadow of Agatha Christie](#)
(Pegasus \$25.95)

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 11 2:00 PM

Matt Haig signs [How to Stop Time](#) (Penguin \$26)
Modern Firsts Club Pick

MONDAY FEBRUARY 12 6:30-8:30 PM

Our 2018 Writer in Residence Ian Hamilton conducts a
Writers Workshop
Fee: \$20 Registration Required Limited to 25

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 13 7:00 PM

Tom Sweterlitsch signs [Gone World](#) (Putnam \$27) SciFi Club Pick

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 15 2:00 PM Mystery Tea

Rosemary Simpson signs [Lies That Comfort and Betray](#)
(Kensington \$25) Gilded Age Mystery #2

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 16 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Jay Kristoff's [Nevernight](#) (\$16.99)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17 10:30 AM

Croak and Dagger discusses Mick Herron's [Dead Lions](#)
(\$15.95)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17 5:00-7:00 PM

Customer Appreciation Party with
Margaret Coel, Craig Johnson, William Kent Krueger
Cash Bar, Refreshments, Mix and Mingle, no book program

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 20 7:00 PM Launch Party

Steven Saylor signs [The Throne of Caesar](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Gordianus and the Ides of March. Our copies come with a
collectible designed by Saylor!

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 21 7:00 PM Thriller!

Mark Greaney signs [Agent in Place](#) (Berkley \$27)
The Gray Man

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 22 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses Joe Ide's [IQ](#) (\$16)

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 23 7:00 PM

James Sallis and the Three Legged Dog Band play

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24 2:00 PM

Poisoned Pen Press Hosts:

Donis Casey signs [Forty Dead Men](#) (\$26.95 or \$15.95)

Little House on the Prairie... with murders

Dennis Palumbo signs [Head Wounds](#) (\$26.95 or \$15.95)

Serial Killer Thriller

Priscilla Royal signs [Wild Justice](#) (\$15.95) History Paperback Pick

And we will be remembering Fred Ramsay, much missed

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 25 2:00 PM

Rhys Bowen signs [The Tuscan Child](#) (Lake Union \$24.95 or
\$14.95)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27 7:00 PM Launch Party

Joanne Fluke signs [Raspberry Danish Murder](#) (Kensington \$26)
Hannah Swensen

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 28 7:00 PM

Walter Mosley signs [Down the River Unto the Sea](#) (Little Brown
\$27)

EVENT BOOKS TO FEBRUARY 20

Berenson, Alex. [The Deceivers](#) (Putnam \$28). Edgar winner Berenson—[The Faithful Spy](#) (\$9.99)—honed his skills at the *New York Times* and translates his journalism expertise into cutting edge thrillers. Here he really taps into the news, pitting John Wells, still see-sawing about working for the CIA (mostly on his own terms) or putting his personal life first, into Russian meddling. Here's the thing: they don't just want to influence American elections—they want it all! It was supposed to be a terrorist sting. The guns were supposed to be disabled. The target was the American Airlines Center, the home of the Dallas Mavericks. The FBI had told Ahmed Shakir that his drug bust would go away if he helped them, and they'd supply all the weaponry, carefully removing the firing pins before the main event. It never occurred to Ahmed to doubt them, until it was too late. When John Wells is called to Washington, he's sure it's to investigate the carnage in Dallas, but it isn't. The former CIA director, now president, Vinnie Duto has plenty of people working in Texas. He wants Wells to go to Colombia. An old asset there has information to share—and it will lead Wells to the deadliest mission of his life. There's a devious beauty, a highly skilled sniper, a golden-boy Senator, and other players, offering all manner of agendas and betrayals in skillfully composed plot for Berenson's 12th novel. You can [order all 12 here](#)

Gardiner, Meg. [Into the Black Nowhere](#) (Dutton \$26). February may be about hearts and flowers, but as with January, it's also chock full of serial killers. We first met Caitlin Hendrix in last year's Thriller Club Pick [Unsub](#) (\$9.99), a story inspired by the never-caught Zodiac Killer, familiar to Gardiner from her childhood. Caitlin survives (barely) and wins a place in the FBI. Newly assigned to its elite Behavioral Analysis Unit, and separated from her lover Sean Rawlins, an ATF Agent assigned to the Bay Area, Caitlin is eager to prove herself. She gets her wish when young Shana vanished from Solace, Texas. Shana is not the first to go missing—in fact, she's the 5th. An UNSUB may be in play, a killer working near I-35 and its access roads, his hunting ground. That's the set up. Where it goes is.... And in the end, Gardiner sets up a horrifying new investigation so she's not backing off the pace of this explosive series already headed for CBS-TV. And she's signed a contract for more in the series. What I like the most is the character development of Caitlin and Sean, neither mere puppets serving the wrenching plots.

Gardner, Lisa. [Look for Me](#) (Dutton \$27). Boston cop DD Warren is preparing to hunt a puppy for their five-year-old son with her husband, when her phone buzzes. "Red ball," she says. Meaning all Boston homicide detectives are summoned. And with reason: the crime scene, an ordinary, small, two-story home contains the bodies of a man, a woman, and a young sister and brother, the former wrapped protectively around the latter. It's a slaughter by gun. Missing is the 16-year-old, the eldest child of the dead woman. Her three kids have different fathers; the dead man is her boyfriend, a nice guy, the one she moved back into the area with when she finally got sober after losing her kids to foster care. So is Roxanna a hostage? A runaway (with the family's two blind dogs?). Maybe the perp? To work this case DD reluctantly joins forces with Flora Dane, a survivor of horrendous captivity and now dedicated to saving others. Can they make sense of

the clues left behind by Roxanna who may be silently pleading, "Look at me." Gardner is deft at combining gripping investigations with the personal lives of her protagonists, achieving an admirable balance. Order this bestseller's [earlier books](#)

Greaney, Mark. [Agent in Place](#) (Berkley \$27). It's wonderful to see Greaney gain traction with his own work and thus other authors get a chance to boost their careers writing Clancy. In this latest Gray Man thriller, fresh off his first mission back with the CIA, Court Gentry secures what seems like a cut-and-dried contract job: A group of expats in Paris hires him to kidnap the mistress of Syrian dictator Ahmed Azzam to get intel that could destabilize Azzam's regime. Court delivers Bianca Medina to the rebels, but his job doesn't end there. She soon reveals that she has given birth to a son, the only heir to Azzam's rule—and a potent threat to the Syrian president's powerful wife. Catch up on Gentry [by ordering all the Gray Man](#) grippers.

Haig, Matt. [How to Stop Time](#) (Penguin \$26). The Indie Next Pick for our February Modern Firsts Club Pick: "Both incredibly poignant and unceasingly charming, *How to Stop Time* is the story of a man who has an abundance of time and a scarcity of love. Tom Hazard ages very slowly, so slowly that nothing feels new to him as memories from the past crowd every moment of his present. He has also discovered that time without the people we love loses all meaning. Haig takes us from Shakespeare's London to the Roaring Twenties in Paris, from conquering the new world with Captain Cook to present-day Los Angeles. Scenes both familiar and exotic thrum with life, but the real magic is in how he makes us believe in this 439-year-old man who is only now learning how to live."

The *PW* Starred Review adds: "Tom Hazard doesn't age. Or, he does, but very, very slowly. He was born in France in 1581, but like other "albatrosses" (those who carry the burden of living forever), a century to him passes like a decade or less. In this enthralling quest through time, Haig follows his protagonist through the Renaissance up to "now," when Tom works as a history teacher in London. As Tom goes on various recruiting missions for the Albatross Society, the setting of the story moves from Shakespeare's Globe to F. Scott Fitzgerald's Paris to Bisbee, Arizona, and other far reaches of the earth. The main rule of the Albatross Society is that, in order to stay protected from a group of scientists who want to study and confirm the existence of the albatrosses, an albatross cannot fall in love. And yet, all the while, Tom nurses a broken heart and searches for his long lost daughter, Marion, who is also an albatross. His persistence through the centuries shows us that the quality of time matters more than the quantity lived." Library Reads adds, "Even though there is something extraordinary about Tom Hazard and his aging process, the problems and insights he experiences as he goes through life are universal. Love, memory, and time play tricks on us all as this novel illustrates so exquisitely. This is an engaging, sweeping love story with all the elements of a great historical/time travel novel. For fans of *The Time Traveler's Wife* and *Life After Life*."

Hamilton, Ian. [The Imam of Tawi-Tawi](#) (Anansi \$15.95). While *The Water Rat of Wanchai* won Canada's Arthur Ellis Award for best first novel, this latest Ava Lee novel is one of our 2018

Writer in Residence's best. I am crazy about Ava Lee, a Chinese beauty based in Toronto and Hong Kong. Her work as an asset recovery ace and more recently as a venture capitalist—she's a skilled forensic accountant—takes her all over the world to destinations I would never visit like Surinam, and to places I know like Shanghai, Milan, the Faroe Islands. Here it's the southern Philippines. The action begins when Ava receives a call from Manila businessman Chang Wang, an old friend of her late mentor, Uncle, with an urgent request: a local senator needs her forensic fact-gathering talents to quietly investigate a suspected jihadist training school on the island of Tawi-Tawi. Ava does what she does best: she follows the money used to finance the school, and much of the page-turning action involves Ava scouring through files and following leads at a keyboard. She teams up with CIA agent Alasdair Dulles, and once they realize the frightening scale of the terror plot they race to Tawi-Tawi to try to avert a catastrophe. "This time out Hamilton leaves aside Ava's new life as a legitimate businesswoman and throws her into the dark and murky world of global politics and not-so-trustworthy intelligence agencies. Tightly plotted and quick-moving, this is a spare yet terrifically suspenseful novel." Here is a series from a Canadian publisher I highly recommend for binge reading—and doing so in order. **See Some New Books below for links to the entire Ava Lee series and order them all.**

Klinger, Leslie. [In the Shadow of Agatha Christie](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). 13 Victorian women crime writers and their stories. I am working my way through the stories, such a treat to not only enjoy classics but the evolution of crime fiction. The *PW* Starred Review: "Klinger's stellar fourth 'In the Shadow Of' reprint anthology after 2015's [In the Shadow of Edgar Allan Poe](#) (\$15.99) educates readers about genre history and introduces them to talent that's mainly obscure today. Much more than quaint curiosities, the 16 entries from women crime writers who preceded Christie are enjoyable in their own right. Sherlockians, in particular, will appreciate Baroness Orczy's "The Regent's Park Murder," which appeared in 1901, two years before Conan Doyle's "The Empty House," and likewise features the baffling murder of a man who has won at cards. Other highlights include Ellen Wood's "Mrs. Todhettley's Earrings," about a theft case with an amusing O. Henry twist, and C.L. Pirakis's particularly well-done puzzle, "The Ghost of Fountain Lane," which features a female rival to Holmes, Loveday Brooke, and links manifestations of the spirit of Napoleon Bonaparte with a stolen check. Klinger burnishes his credentials as a diligent researcher by retrieving even uncredited work (Australian author Mary Fortune's "Traces of Crime"). This is a must-have volume for classic crime fans.

Klinger's [The New Annotated Frankenstein](#) (Norton \$35) is a knockout, reviving Mary Shelley's Gothic classic by reproducing her original text with over 200 color and black & white illustrations and Klinger's 1000+ annotations. It's a teaching gem as well as a treasure to own. You may recall that Klinger won major awards for his Annotated Sherlock Holmes work and edits a series of collected stories in the Holmes tradition with Laurie R. King whose new Mary Russell [Island of the Mad](#) (Bantam \$28) set in Venice will be Signed here June 9.

Saylor, Steven. [The Throne of Caesar](#) (St Martins \$27.99). A **Publication Day Party. Our copies come with a collectible designed by Saylor.** The final Gordianus the Finder moving chronologically forward to a conclusion reveals what happened at the

Ides of March, 44 BC. A launch party with his editor. Gordianus is "A kind of Roman Sherlock Holmes." Julius Caesar, appointed dictator for life by the Roman Senate, has pardoned his remaining enemies and rewarded his friends. Now Caesar is preparing to leave Rome with his legions to wage a war of conquest against the Parthian Empire. But he has a few more things to do before he goes. Gordianus the Finder, after decades of investigating crimes and murders involving the powerful, has been raised to Equestrian rank and has firmly and finally decided to retire. But on the morning of March 10th, he's first summoned to meet with Cicero and then with Caesar himself. Both have the same request of Gordianus—keep your ear to the ground, ask around, and find out if there are any conspiracies against Caesar's life. And Caesar has one other matter of vital importance to discuss... The *NY Times* finds that, "Saylor puts such great detail and tumultuous life into his scenes that the sensation of rubbing elbows with the ancients is quite uncanny."

Simpson, Rosemary. [Lies That Comfort and Betray](#) (Kensington \$25). For the lucky few in the upper tiers of New York society, living the good life 23 years after the end of the Civil War, it's truly the Gilded Age. But Prudence MacKenzie sees a side of the city that most well-bred young women don't. She's recovering from the deaths of her father, with whom she read law, and her fiancé as well as from an addiction to the laudanum forced on her by a scheming stepmother. Though physically fragile, she won't let ex-Pinkerton detective Geoffrey Hunter, the other half of Hunter and MacKenzie, Investigative Law, play the Southern gentleman and shield her from the sight of her servant Nora Kenny lying dead in the morgue with a slit throat and carefully removed entrails. Once a childhood playmate of Prudence's, Nora was found, tightly wrapped in burlap, just outside the MacKenzie town house on Fifth Avenue. Despite the efforts of the corrupt police chief to arrest Nora's fiancé and make him disappear inside the Tombs, Prudence and Geoffrey won't let the case rest... Think of Prudence as an American analog of Anne Perry's Charlotte Pitt. She debuted in the excellent [What the Dead Leave Behind](#) (\$15.95 or \$25), recommended by John Charles and me.

Sweterlitsch, Tom. [The Gone World](#) (Putnam \$27). This terrific novel is well described by *Kirkus* in its Starred Review as, "A mind-blowing fusion of science fiction, thriller, existential horror, and apocalyptic fiction... The power of this novel is two-fold: Sweterlitsch's intricately plotted storyline will keep readers on the edges of their seats until the very last pages, and his extended use of bleak imagery coupled with his lyrical writing style make for an intense and unforgettable read... This darkly poetic and profoundly disturbing glimpse into the potential last days of humankind will surely haunt readers' dreams long after the book is finished." And then there's this for our **February SciFi Club Pick**: "A fascinating blend that doesn't skim on the criminal investigation or the sci fi... Describing much more than [the] simple setup would rob the reader of the trippy experience of navigating the time-travel intricacies of this nail-biting speculative thriller." —*Library Journal* Starred Review. I loved this, all the crime elements taken in a new direction, and beautifully written! And you will too!

SIGNED BOOKS

Blaedel, Sara. [The Undertaker's Daughter](#) (Grand Central \$26). Already widowed by the age of forty, Ilka Nichols Jensen, a

school portrait photographer, leads a modest, regimented, and uneventful life in Copenhagen. Until unexpected news rocks her quiet existence: Her father—who walked out suddenly and inexplicably on the family more than three decades ago—has died. And he’s left her something in his will: his funeral home. In Racine, Wisconsin. Clinging to this last shred of communication from the father she hasn’t heard from since childhood, Ilka makes an uncharacteristically rash decision and jumps on a plane to Wisconsin. Desperate for a connection to the parent she never really knew, she plans to visit the funeral home and go through her father’s things—hoping for some insight into his new life in America—before preparing the business for a quick sale. But then she stumbles on an unsolved murder, and a killer who seems to still be very much alive... The Danish bestseller has recently moved to the US so we can get signed books now.

Bowen, Rhys. [The Tuscan Child](#) (Lake Union \$24.95 or \$14.95 Feb. 25). In 1944, British bomber pilot Hugo Langley parachuted from his stricken plane into the verdant fields of German-occupied Tuscany. Badly wounded, he found refuge in a ruined monastery and in the arms of Sofia Bartoli. But the love that kindled between them was shaken by an irreversible betrayal. Nearly thirty years later, Hugo’s estranged daughter, Joanna, has returned home to the English countryside to arrange her father’s funeral. Among his personal effects is an unopened letter addressed to Sofia. In it is a startling revelation. Still dealing with the emotional wounds of her own personal trauma, Joanna travels to Tuscany and soon discovers that some would prefer the past be left undisturbed. But she has come too far to let her father’s secrets go....

✎Bradley, Alan. [The Grave’s a Fine and Private Place](#) (Orion \$41). Set in England in 1952, Agatha-winner Bradley’s outstanding ninth Flavia de Luce novel finds 12-year-old Flavia contemplating suicide in the wake of a family tragedy. To relieve the increased tension between Flavia and her two older sisters, Dogger, the de Luce family’s long-serving and devoted servant, proposes an extended boat trip on the river. All is uneventful until the skiff nears the site where a notorious poisoner, Canon Whitbread, discarded the chalice he used in his crimes. Flavia’s hand, trailing behind the boat, comes into contact with the corpse of the canon’s son, Orlando. Unperturbed, Flavia uses her handkerchief to swab liquid from the dead man’s lips, and she and Dogger jury-rig a forensic lab to examine the sample. Though disappointed when the evidence shows Orlando was drowned instead of poisoned, Flavia persists with her amateur detecting, even as she runs afoul of the local constable. As usual, Bradley makes his improbable series conceit work and relieves the plot’s inherent darkness with clever humor.

Casey, Donis. [Forty Dead Men](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95 Feb. 24). *Little House on the Prairie* with murders.... “In Casey’s excellent 10th Alafair Tucker mystery, 22-year-old George W. “Gee Dub” Tucker, a WWI vet scarred by his war experiences, returns to the family farm in Boynton, Oklahoma, run by his parents, Alafair and Shaw, with the aid of their large brood of children. One day, Gee Dub meets Holly Johnson, a wary traveler who’s making her way from Maine to the nearby town of Okmulgee, where she thinks her husband Dan’s family lives. Dan, who served in France, disappeared after the war ended, and she wants to discover what happened to him. Gee Dub tries to help Holly find Dan, but becomes the prime suspect when Dan turns up shot

to death, and Alafair determines to clear him—or, if he’s guilty, destroy the evidence. Casey expertly nails the extended Tucker family—some 20 people—and combines these convincing characters, a superb sense of time and place, and a solid plot in this marvelously atmospheric historical.”—*PW* Starred Review, one of many Poisoned Pen Press has earned since January 2018.

Cleveland, Karen. [Need to Know](#) (Random \$27). Our **February First Mystery Club Pick**. Vivian Miller is a dedicated CIA counterintelligence analyst assigned to uncover the leaders of Russian sleeper cells in the United States. On track for a much-needed promotion, she’s developed a system for identifying Russian agents, seemingly normal people living in plain sight. After accessing the computer of a potential Russian operative, Vivian stumbles on a secret dossier of deep-cover agents within America’s borders. A few clicks later, everything that matters to her—her job, her husband, even her four children—are threatened. Vivian has vowed to defend her country against all enemies, foreign and domestic. But now she’s facing an impossible choice. And worse, her husband Tom confirms her discovery. Where can they go from there? The Indie Next Pick: “Vivian Miller is good at her job, and dedicated. But what she discovers will blow apart everything she thought she knew about her life. What do you do when the choice is country or family? How do you protect your children — and Vivian cares deeply about her children — while walking a tightrope between two superpowers? Cleveland keeps the tension going right to the very last page.” Bruce Jacobs adds, “Cleveland’s debut is a nonstop thriller tapping into a hot mix of contemporary digital counterintelligence, old-school spying and ageless family drama. As Cleveland accelerates the action from covert digital snooping to overt violence, Vivian becomes a mama bear protecting her cubs. *Need to Know* is for those who clamber into the front car of a roller coaster waving their arms and lusting for the next gut-sucking, high-speed drop.”

Dorsey, Tim. [The Pope of Palm Beach](#) (Harper \$28). “The sun was going down behind the Big Burger when the alligator came flying in the drive-through window.” Starting in the Florida Key, Serge A. Storms and buddy Coleman are heading to their hometown, Riviera Beach, to track down legends from their youth: genius surfer/mentor Darby and a crazy hermit rumored to have lived far up the misty Loxahatchee River. But digging up the past can get the wrong people riled—with bloody consequences.

Ellis, Karen. [Map of the Dark](#) (LittleBrown \$28). There are some improbabilities in this series debut but *LJ* well sums up the reason I like it: “Tight prose, strong characters, and deft storytelling... A riveting tale that begs to be read in one sitting. Readers who enjoy police procedurals and Karin Slaughter’s thrillers will delight in discovering a new voice.” I’m less about flawless plotting than I am about a gripping new voice. But I do like a good procedural as opposed to the tsunami of domestic suspense dominating current publishing. This debut for FBI Special Agent Elsa Myers “works well as a solid police procedural and also an in-depth character study . . . Elsa maps out the darkness of a predator that preys on teenagers while navigating her own dark place.”—Oline Cogdill. Plus Elsa is coping with a father dying in a hospital north of Manhattan, sensitively handled.

✎Griffiths, Elly. [Dark Angel](#) (Quercus \$39). Dr Ruth Galloway is flattered when she receives a letter from Italian archaeologist Dr Angelo Morelli, asking for her help. He’s discovered a group of

bones in a tiny hilltop village near Rome but doesn't know what to make of them. It's years since Ruth has had a holiday, and even a working holiday to Italy is very welcome! So Ruth travels to Castello degli Angeli, accompanied by her daughter Kate and friend Shona. In the town she finds a baffling Roman mystery and a dark secret involving the war years and the Resistance. To her amazement she also soon finds Harry Nelson, with Cathbad in tow. But there is no time to overcome their mutual shock—the ancient bones spark a modern murder, and Ruth must discover what secrets there are in Castello degli Angeli that someone would kill to protect. 10th in one of my favorite British mystery series. Love the archaeology and the Fens... the Ruth/Harry thing however is stretching on and on....

Hannah, Kristin. [The Great Alone](#) (St Martins \$28.99). **Publishes now, Signed here March 12. Please reserve your copy now to avoid disappointment.** A February Library Reads Pick: “Leni and her troubled family embark on a new way of life in Alaska’s wilderness in 1974—h ping this is finally the solution for her troubled, POW father, a Viet Nam veteran. In Alaska, Leni and her family are tested and when change comes to their small community her father’s anger threatens to explode and divide the town. This is a beautifully written novel, descriptive and engaging.” It will thrill her fans with its combination of Greek tragedy...coming-of-age story, and domestic potboiler.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Harper, Jane. [Force of Nature](#) (Flatiron \$25.99); UK edition: [Force of Nature](#) (LittleBrown \$32). Annoyingly, Australian Harper, whose debut [The Dry](#) (\$15.95) was an international hit and won the UK’s Gold Dagger for Best Novel, visited us in October, too early to sign her second book. So what we have are tip-ins. Still... “When Detective Aaron Falk learns that an informant went missing during a corporate team building exercise in the bush, he realizes that she tried to call him in the middle of the night. Harper once again creates a compelling, fast-paced, and atmospheric mystery set in a remote wilderness area of Australia. Perfect for fans of Nevada Barr and Paul Doiron. Highly recommended.” If you read *The Dry*—and if you haven’t waste no time!—you will see a few of the same characters and themes developed a bit further, but *Force of Nature* is a book you can pick up and enjoy as a standalone as well.

⌘Herron, Mick. [London Rules](#) (Joseph \$34). When Regent’s Park’s First Desk, Claude Whelan, is tasked with protecting a beleaguered prime minister, he’s facing attack from all directions himself: from the showboating MP who orchestrated the Brexit vote, and now has his sights set on Number Ten; from the showboat’s wife, a tabloid columnist, who’s crucifying Whelan in print; and especially from his own deputy, Lady Di Taverner, who’s alert for Claude’s every stumble. Meanwhile, the country’s being rocked by an apparently random string of terror attacks, and someone’s trying to kill Roddy Ho. Over at Slough House, the crew is struggling with personal problems: repressed grief, various addictions, retail paralysis, and the nagging suspicion that their newest colleague is a psychopath. But collectively, they’re about to rediscover their greatest strength—that of making a bad situation much, much worse. It’s a good job Jackson Lamb knows the rules. Because those things aren’t going to break themselves

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Night Moves](#) (Ballantine \$30). Starred Reviews flourish in this Collectors Corner. Here’s another one: “In

bestseller Kellerman’s exceptionally well-plotted 33rd mystery featuring L.A. psychologist Alex Delaware, Alex’s close friend on the LAPD, Lt. Milo Sturgis, asks for his help in investigating a gruesome murder. When Chet Corvin, a senior vice president in a reinsurance firm; his wife, Felice; and their two children returned home from a restaurant one night, they found a dead man in their den with his face blasted off and his hands severed. The Corvins all insist that they have no idea who he is, let alone why the killer would have left him in their house. The only potential lead is Chet’s alerting Alex and Milo that one of their neighbors, Trevor Bitt, is weird. The pair soon learns that Bitt is a legendary artist, best known for comic book illustrations of disturbing subjects, and their suspicions are heightened by Bitt’s refusal to speak with them. Another murder only makes the case murkier. The leads’ bantering friendship lightens an otherwise grim story. Newcomers will find this an easy entry point into this long-running series.”

Lippman, Laura. [Sunburn](#) (Harper \$28). Patrick is so high on this groundbreaking novel by the veteran Lippman he’s made this the **February Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**. The *WSJ* runs a terrific review, saying in part: A mysterious redhead leaves her husband and child, adopts a new identity and moves to a small town in Delaware. She is soon ensnared in an affair with a secretive stranger she meets in a local tavern. Her true nature—damsel in distress or criminal with a shady past—is uncertain.” In picking this for a winter Must Read, the *Oprah Magazine* books editor adds, “I feel like it creates a whole new category—femme noir. Laura’s done something very revolutionary. She’s taken this traditional noir structure of a man sweeping in to save a woman who then turns around and eats his heart out....”

Matthews, Jason. [The Kremlin’s Candidate](#) (Scribner \$26.99). Matthew’s Edgar-winning debut with [Red Sparrow](#) (\$17) will soon be a movie. And we now have the 3rd in the Red Sparrow Trilogy—our **February Thriller Club Pick**. “The next CIA director could well be U.S. admiral Audrey Rowland, a mole working for the Russians, in Matthews’s stellar conclusion to his Red Sparrow trilogy. If selected, Rowland would learn the identity of Diva, the code name for General Dominika Egorova, a spy for the Americans who has caught Vladimir Putin’s eye and is on track to head the SVR, Russia’s foreign intelligence service. The action shifts among such exotic locales as Istanbul, Khartoum, Hong Kong, and Putin’s compound on the Black Sea, where CIA agent Nate Nash goes undercover on a daring mission to prevent Dominika’s exposure. Dominika and Nate’s romance, which has been smoldering since they parted ways at the end of 2015’s [Palace of Treason](#) creates complications. Meanwhile, back in the States, the CIA operation planners must contend with hostile politicians seeking to end the dirty, underhanded methods the agency uses against the country’s enemies. Matthews, a 33-year CIA veteran, provides a chilling portrait of the cold-blooded Putin, while saying almost nothing about the fictional current and previous U.S. presidents, in a suspenseful thriller that races to a heart-pounding and unexpected resolution. The March release of the film version of the first in the series, *Red Sparrow*, starring Jennifer Lawrence, is bound to give a boost.

Mosley, Walter. [Down the River Unto the Sea](#) (LittleBrown \$27). Former NYPD detective Joe King Oliver, now the owner-operator of King Detective Service, investigates two cases of gross injustice in this excellent standalone from MWA Grand Master

Mosley. Thirteen years earlier, Oliver was convicted on bogus assault charges, which ended his police career and his marriage. He spent nine months in jail before the charges were dropped and he was released without explanation. Oliver now learns that a crooked cop was behind the frame. Meanwhile, he is approached by Willa Portman, an intern for the lawyer representing Leonard Compton, a militant journalist who's on death row for the murder of two policemen three years earlier. Portman says the killings were self-defense. Oliver, who faces a corrupt world with unflinching honesty and ruthlessness, enlists the aid of Melquarth Frost, a hardened career criminal, to even the odds in both cases. The novel's dedication—to Malcolm, Medgar, and Martin—underlines the difference that one man can make in the fight for justice.—*PW* Starred Review

Palumbo, Dennis. [Head Wounds](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). An unusual Serial Killer thriller makes our **February Surprise Me! Pick**. Here is “Brilliant rationality trying to protect innocent victims from ferocious madness. It's hard to imagine a more gripping contest. Dennis Palumbo's *Head Wounds* is a spectacular ride.”—Thomas Perry. This 5th Daniel Rinaldi, Pittsburg clinic psychologist begins: Rinaldi, who consults for the Pittsburgh PD, is at home reviewing the file of the unsolved murder of his wife, Barbara, when someone takes a shot at him through his living-room window. Soon afterward, the police apprehend the shooter, Eddie Burke, the drunk, disaffected boyfriend of Daniel's attractive, well-to-do neighbor, Joy Steadman. Daniel does his best to comfort Joy, but when he returns to her house to check on her hours later, he finds her strangled body. Which makes him a suspect. But not for long.... “The author gets maximum suspense out of the buildup to each killing, taking us along on a child kidnapping and grave robbing, until we get to an ending that has something to do with a Warren Zevon song. Yes, it makes a kind of sense, but it's the compelling craziness of the story that keeps us reading,” says *Booklist*. Which is the point: the SK is truly crazy.

Parks, Alan. [Bloody January](#) (Canongate \$34). For fans of Denise Mina and solid tartan noir, set in 1970s Glasgow. When an 18-year-old boy shoots a young woman dead in the middle of a busy Glasgow street and then commits suicide, McCoy knows it can't be a random act of violence. With a newbie partner in tow, McCoy uses his underworld network to build a picture of a secret society run by Glasgow's wealthiest family, the Dunlops. The Dunlops think they are untouchable... McCoy disagrees. “An old-school cop novel written with wit and economy... Think McIlvanney or *Get Carter*.”—Ian Rankin. There will be a US paperback edition in March.

Patterson, James/Candice Fox. [Fifty Fifty](#) (Little Brown \$28). *Harriet Blue #2. Written with Australian author Candice Fox. Thus a rare double signature is available from March 10.* What are the chances that convicted killer Sam Blue is innocent of the serial murders of three young women? Detective Harriet Blue is certain that her brother is incapable of having committed these horrific crimes. Determined to clear his name, no matter the cost to her career, Harry attends Sam's hearing. The outburst she unleashes earns her a reassignment—to the Outback. I add that you may notice the rise in the number of Australian authors, some of them visiting The Pen. I think of the tide of Scandinavian authors as a possible parallel. Think Jane Harper, Gary Disher, Kate Morton, etc.

✎Royal, Priscilla. [Wild Justice](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95 Feb. 24). “Set in England in 1282, Royal's superlative 14th medieval mystery (after 2017's *The Proud Sinner*) finds Prioress Eleanor traveling to Mynchen Buckland Priory, bearing a gift of money and a sealed letter from her brother, Baron Hugh of Wynethorpe, to a woman she has never met, Prioress Amicia. On arrival, Eleanor and her companions, Brother Thomas and Sister Anne, discover Prioress Amicia imprisoned, having been found guilty of murdering a gossiping widow from the village. When Eleanor talks to Amicia in her cell, she believes Amicia's claim of innocence. Determined to discover the real killer, the trio must investigate a house of nuns and monks who are variously fearful, furtive, and enraged. Royal meticulously depicts life at Mynchen Buckland, which was a part of the Hospitaller order, its pious mission intertwined with the military efforts of the Crusader knights. She also pays close attention to all three of the visitors-turned-sleuths. Instead of functioning as main-character sidekicks or listening posts, Brother Thomas and Sister Anne use their respective gifts to astutely unravel crucial strands to the mystery, helping to bring the story to a satisfying conclusion. Royal shows once again why she stands in the front rank of medieval mystery authors.”—*PW* Starred Review

✎Todd, Charles. [The Gate Keeper](#) (Harper \$26.99). **Out in February, Signed here March 12. Our copies come with a specially designed collectible: a wedding invitation such as challenges Rutledge's equilibrium.** A chance encounter on a country road late one night in December 1920 kicks off the exceptionally clever plot of bestseller Todd's 20th mystery featuring Insp. Ian Rutledge (after 2017's *Racing the Devil*). Rutledge, an emotionally scarred WWI veteran, is driving in Suffolk, with no particular destination in mind, when his headlamps catch a car stopped in front of him. Next to the car, a woman with blood-stained hands is bending over a man lying in the road. Rutledge stops to investigate. The man, Stephen Wentworth, is dead. The woman explains that Stephen was driving her home after a dinner party when a man stepped out in front of them. After Stephen got out of their vehicle and exchanged a few words with him, the man shot Stephen. Over local opposition, Rutledge successfully lobbies to take charge of the inquiry, and then struggles to learn why anyone would want to murder Stephen, a popular local bookseller, resisting the theory that the violence was random. As always, Todd (the mother-and-son writing team of Caroline and Charles Todd) deepen their crafty whodunit with a moving exploration of their astute sleuth's inner torments. For another excellent take read the [NY Times Book Review](#).

✎Vaughan, Sarah. [Anatomy of a Scandal](#) (SimonSchuster \$34). “Vaughan weaves together a juicy courtroom drama set among the British elite and told from the perspectives of three characters... Exceptional.”—*Entertainment Weekly*. Anyone interested in navigating marriage among the upper classes or how power works in parliamentary politics should read this. I felt it was too much a #MeToo plot for the British Crime Club. Here's a Starred Review: “Cases don't come much higher-profile than the potential career-maker assigned to driven British barrister Kate Woodcroft, QC: prosecuting golden boy junior Home Office minister James Whitehouse, the prime minister's best friend since their boyhood at Eton, for raping the young parliamentary researcher with whom he recently ended a brief affair—in a lift at the House of Commons, no less. But the focus isn't simply the he said—she

said courtroom fencing match, but deeper truths about the nature of privilege and power. Skillfully interweaving the story of the unfolding scandal with James's and his wife Sophie's student days at Oxford, Vaughan gradually reveals just how shockingly high the stakes are."

✠Wynn, Patricia. [Whisper of Death](#) (Pemberley \$26.95). Our **February History/Mystery Club Pick**. "Conspiracies abound in Wynn's delectable sixth... Move aside, Tudor and Regency eras, for this dive into early Georgian England reveals a period perfect for a whodunit."—*PW*. London, 1716—While touring the gallery in the dome of London's St. Paul's Cathedral, Hester Kean overhears a mysterious threat. Later, learning that whispers can travel across the vast space—and believing the threat to be real—she takes note of the gentlemen visiting the gallery that day. The most likely suspect is Lord Wragby, who spouts Jacobite sympathies and, ignoring his young wife, mercilessly pursues Hester's cousin Mary. Then Lord Wragby is murdered, and his father, the powerful Marquess of Ireton, blames Mary's lover, James Henry. Hester must work with the outlawed Viscount St. Mars to save her friend from a father bent on vengeance. But St. Mars (aka Blue Satan) flew to France after Hester failed to meet him for their elopement. She fears he may never forgive her. Wynn writes, "The inspiration for the key figure in the mystery was Philip Wharton, who, in his Jekyll-and-Hyde existence, was created the first (and only) Duke of Wharton at the age of 19 by King George, spied and later fought for James Stuart, founded the Hell-Fire Club, a social group for blasphemers, became the Grand Master of the Freemasons in London, converted to Catholicism, ran through an immense fortune, was convicted of treason for firing on Gibraltar, and died penniless at the age of 32. This summary of his life barely scratches the surface of a sometimes brilliant, always erratic, ping-ponging journey..."

BRITISH LIBRARY CRIME CLASSICS

Edwards, Martin, ed. [Foreign Bodies](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). The *PW* Starred Review: Edwards has done mystery readers a great service by providing the first-ever anthology of golden age short stories in translation, with 15 superior offerings from authors from France, Japan, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Holland, Mexico, Russia, and elsewhere; even Anton Chekhov makes a contribution ("The Swedish Match"). Many tales make creative use of the conventions of Ronald Knox's ten commandments for detective fiction. For example, Pierre Véry, a French author unaccountably ignored by American and British publishers, centers "The Mystery of the Green Room," a clever and amusing homage to a locked-room classic, on an open-room puzzle. Another highlight is Koga Saburo's "The Spider," in which a zoology lab assistant looks into unsettling deaths connected with an odd laboratory shaped like a cylinder that rests on top of a towering pillar. Also notable is Jean-Toussaint Samat's "Murder à la Carte," which features poisoning by "nonpoisonous" substances."

Farjeon, J. Jefferson. [Seven Dead](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). This British Library Crime Classic from 1939 likewise earns a Starred Review: "Originally published in 1939, this reissue in the British Library Crime Classics series from Farjeon (1883–1955) is a standout, with a particularly horrifying opening. Ted Lyte, a small-time thief who usually contents himself with picking pockets, enters an apparently unoccupied house near the British coast only to encounter a grotesque tableau behind a locked door.

The room he enters, whose shutters are not only bolted but nailed shut, contains seven emaciated corpses, six of them male; a mantelpiece is adorned by a silver vase supporting an old cricket ball. Lyte flees the scene in terror, only to run into the police. When Inspector Kendall arrives, along with freelance reporter Thomas Hazeldean, who saw Lyte run from the house, Kendall discovers further unsettling oddities, including a crumpled note under one of the dead men bearing the message: "with apologies from the suicide club." Kendall and Hazeldean complement each other nicely as they work toward a satisfyingly logical solution to this ingenious locked-room mystery." Farjeon's [Mystery in White](#) (\$12.95) has remained a bestseller since it republished in the BLCC series.

FEBRUARY BOOK BUYERS CLUB PICKS

British Crime: [The French Girl](#)

Cozy Crime: Graves, Sarah. [Death by Chocolate Cherry Cheese-cake](#)

Discovery: Hamilton, Ian. [The Imam of Tawi-Tawi](#)

First Mystery: Cleveland, Karen. [Need to Know](#)

Hardboiled Crime: Lippman, Laura. [Sunburn](#)

History: Wynn, Patricia. [Whisper of Death](#)

History Paperback: Royal, Priscilla. [Wild Justice](#)

Modern First Editions: Haig, Matt. [How to Stop Time](#)

SciFi/Fantasy: Sweterlitsch, Tom. [The Gone World](#)

Surprise Me! Palumbo, Dennis. [Head Wounds](#)

Thriller: Matthews, Jason. [The Kremlin's Candidate](#)

OUR VALENTINE'S ISSUE LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Casey, Donis. [Forty Dead Men](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95—see Event Books for the Signed hardcover edition). George Washington Tucker, known as Gee Dub to his family, returns from the WWI killing fields with what we know today is PTSD. A young woman met by chance on a lonely road near the family farm in Boynton, Oklahoma, is in search of her missing husband and unwittingly gives Gee Dub a handle on a post-war life. "Casey expertly nails the extended Tucker family—some 20 people—and combines these convincing characters, a superb sense of time and place, and a solid plot in this marvelously atmospheric historical."—*PW* Starred Review

De Hahn, Tracy. [Swiss Vendetta](#) (\$16). A debut taking Swiss-American police detective Agnes Lüthi of the Lausanne PD to the shores of Lac Lemman where a blizzard rages over a homicide scene inside a grand chateau owned by a rich aristocratic family. A wonderfully realized setting and cast and well engineered plot. See the sequel below in Some New Books.

✠Delaney, JP. [The Girl Before](#) (\$16). Reeling from a traumatic break-in, Emma wants a new place to live. But none of the apartments she sees are affordable or feel safe. Until One Folgate Street. The house is an architectural masterpiece: a minimalist design of pale stone, plate glass, and soaring ceilings. But there are rules. The enigmatic architect who designed the house retains full control: no books, no throw pillows, no photos or clutter or personal effects of any kind. The space is intended to transform its occupant—and it does. Then comes Jane, who needs a fresh start... "Delaney has created a genuinely eerie, fascinating setting in One Folgate Street... The novel's structure, volleying back and forth as first Emma and then Jane begin to question their improbable luck, is beautifully handled. The pages fly."—*USA Today*

Heller, Peter. [Celine](#) (\$16) is a delight on every level, filled with rich characters who surprise and an investigation that only a creative mind like Heller could imagine. I loved it! The Indie Next Pick: “There should be an excused absence from life when a new Peter Heller novel is released to the world. There is a pace and a quality to his writing that will make you want to drink it down in one gulp. Heller’s strong narrative voice and complex plotting have always stood out to me and Celine is another example of this. Loosely based on Heller’s mother, Celine is a hard-nosed — if a bit worn down — private investigator living in post-9/11 Brooklyn. She has a stellar reputation, but when she is sent on a case to locate a young woman’s missing father, it’s clear that her age (and lifestyle) has caught up with her. You will fall in love with Celine and connect with everyone who populates this book. I would give just about anything to follow her on more adventures.” Me, too. This gem delivers surprise as well as spectacular craft

Holt, Anne. [Dead Joker](#) (\$17). Hanne Wilhelmsen #5 begins when Chief Public Prosecutor Sigurd Halvorsrud’s wife is found brutally decapitated in front of the fireplace in the family living room. Her husband, who claims he witnessed the grisly murder and is himself covered in blood, immediately falls under suspicion, though he insists his wife’s killer was Ståle Salvesen, a businessman he’d prosecuted years before for insider dealing. DI Wilhelmsen is called in to lead the investigation with her old colleague, Billy T. Despite the circumstantial evidence, Hanne is unconvinced of Sigurd Halvorsrud’s guilt—that is, until a witness says he saw Ståle Salvesen commit suicide by jumping off a bridge days before the murder took place. Then a journalist at one of Oslo’s largest newspapers is found beheaded. What links these two horrific crimes? The demands of the investigation soon clash with a terrible crisis in Hanne’s personal life, upping the tension in the latest entry in an Edgar-nominated series set in Norway.

Kent, Kathleen. [The Dime](#) (\$15.99). 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. 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.”

Nesbø, Jo. [The Thirst](#) (\$16). In [Police](#) (\$15.95)—the last novel featuring Jo Nesbø’s hard-bitten, maverick Oslo detective—a killer wreaking revenge on the police had Harry Hole fighting for the safety of the people closest to him. Now, in the Norwegian author’s 11th Harry Hole, the story continues as Harry is inextricably

drawn back into the Oslo police force. A serial murderer has begun targeting Tinder daters—a murderer whose MO reignites Harry’s hunt for a nemesis of his past. A Starred Review: “Bestseller Nesbø’s exceptional 11th Harry Hole novel finds the alcoholic, demon-ridden, occasionally suicidal Oslo police detective in better shape than usual. Harry is “currently a sober lecturer at Police College.” In the past, he often woke up full of angst; now he’s consistently waking up feeling happy. Of course, this relatively blissful state can’t last. Harry soon joins the hunt for a serial killer, whose MO—cutting the throats of his victims in vampire fashion—is similar to that of the one killer who escaped him and still invades his dreams. Meanwhile, Rakel slips into a mysterious coma. Nesbø depicts a heartbreakingly conflicted Harry, who both wants to forget the horrors he’s trying to prevent and knows he has to remember them in all their grim detail.”

Rankin, Ian. [Rather Be the Devil](#) (\$15.99) finds Rebus, as incapable of settling into his retirement as he is of playing by the rules, investigating a cold case from the 1970s involving a gorgeous and wealthy female socialite who was found dead in a bedroom at one of Edinburgh’s most luxurious hotels. No one was ever found guilty, but the scandalous circumstances of the murder have kept the town talking for over forty years. Now, Rebus has his own reasons to investigate, but his inquiries—along with those of Malcolm Fox and Siobhan Clarke—quickly make him some very dangerous and powerful enemies who will stop at nothing to ensure that the case remains unsolved and the gossip falls on deaf ears.

Silva, Daniel. [House of Spies](#) (\$16.99). Gabriel Allon #17 truly mirrors current events, namely terrorist acts in London. Terrorists leave a trail of carnage across the West End. Is this the work of the shadowy ISIS mastermind known as Saladin? It had his hallmarks of planning and secrecy—but there’s one loose thread. Christopher Keller, in a new ID, arrives at the south coast spy training fortress. And Allon, back in the field from his desk at King Saul Boulevard, Jerusalem, and his team follow it to the South of France. There they meet a British former fashion model and a Frenchman of enormous wealth (drugs?). Is Jean-Luc Martel turning a blind eye to doing business with Saladin whose objective is the destruction of the West? Can Gabriel turn the couple into assets, an unlikely pair of heroes? I’m reminded of Le Carré’s *The Night Manager* although the story is very different.

Slaughter, Karin. [Kept Woman](#) (\$16.99). Charlotte and Samantha Quinn’s happy small-town family life was torn apart by a terrifying attack on their family home. It left their mother dead. It left their father Rusty – Pikeville’s notorious defense attorney – devastated. And it left the Quinn family fractured beyond repair, consumed by secrets from that terrible night. Twenty-eight years later, Charlie has followed in her father’s footsteps and become a lawyer herself – the archetypal good daughter. But when violence comes to Pikeville again – and a shocking tragedy leaves the whole town traumatized – Charlie is plunged into a nightmare. Not only is she the first witness on the scene, but it’s a case which can’t help triggering the terrible memories she’s spent so long trying to suppress.” This is a brutal, take-no-prisoner’s look at violence done to women and deep wounds that demand to be excised.

Whitehead, Colson. [Underground Railroad](#) (\$16.95). The Indie Next Pick: “Whitehead’s new novel is much more than the story

of a runaway slave, Cora, who fights her way to the North; it is also a phantasmagorical look at race in America. In this instance the railroad is literal—a train roaring through tunnels constructed like a subway, leading Cora to several unlikely destinations. Each of Cora’s stops on the railroad is a different version of America, displaying the varied ways in which Americans view race and manifest destiny. Colson digs deep into the troubled heart of America, exposing prejudice, tolerance, hatred, violence, and love as readers stop at each distinct station. Cora is a hero for the ages, and Whitehead is a writer who can guide us, like a station master, into the light.”

Wilson, Carter. [Mister Tender’s Girl Signed](#) (\$15.99). John Charles reviews our **February Discovery Club Pick**: There is one very good reason why Alice Hill hasn’t picked up a knife in ten years. Over a decade ago when Alice was just fourteen and living with her family in London, two of her classmates who became obsessed with Mister Tender, a cartoon character created by Alice’s father, tried to kill Alice by stabbing her with a knife. Fortunately, Alice survived the attack, but her life was never the same. Now as Alice Gray, the owner of a coffee shop in Manchester, New Hampshire, Alice’s one goal is to simply try and get through the day without succumbing to a panic attack when she arrives at work and finds a mysterious package awaiting her. The package not only contains a seemingly impossible piece of Alice’s past, but what is even scarier is the threat to Alice’s future it represents. There is a spare and sinuous eloquence to Wilson’s writing that perfectly matches his cleverly conceived and brilliantly executed plot, and Alice is an unforgettable, truly fascinating protagonist. *Mister Tender’s Girl* is a chillingly suspenseful, darkly intense page-turner with just the right dash of dry wit and a satisfying dollop of the macabre. Just in case, you think I am the only one bowled over by Wilson’s superbly crafted novel, here are some snippets from other rave reviews. *Library Journal* said “The characters are well drawn, the plot hums, the creepiness level is high, and you won’t see the ending coming.” *Kirkus* loved the book too ending with “A blazing fast pace and spine-tingling set pieces make the book hum, but it’s the character of damaged yet indomitable Alice that drives this razor-sharp thriller. Wilson turns the creep factor up to 11, balancing his prose on a knife’s edge. A highly satisfying high-tension thriller.”

BOOKS FOR VALENTINE’S DAY

What better way to celebrate than a quiet read with champagne and chocolate, or coffee and chocolate, or tea and chocolate?

John Charles pulls together some recommendations, and I add a few.

Fiction:

Beaton, M.C. [Death of a Valentine](#) (\$8). Announcing his engagement to associate Josie McSween, police sergeant and once-confirmed bachelor Hamish Macbeth struggles with prenuptial jitters while investigating the murder of a woman whose increasingly complicated case introduced him to his fiancée.

Crawford, Isis. [A Catered Valentine’s Day](#) (\$6.99). Caterers and sisters Bernie and Libby, while attending the funeral of a client’s mother, are plunged into a bizarre mystery when the corpse of Ted Gorman, the owner of Just Chocolate, who supposedly died in a fiery car crash weeks earlier, is found in someone else’s grave.

Edwards. Ruth Dudley. [The St. Valentine’s Day Murders](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$14.95). Life in a dismal bureaucratic cul-de-sac is not what the irreverent, high-flying Robert Amiss expects when the British civil service lends him for a year to the British Conservation Corporation. Morale in this all-male environment is not improved by the arrival of Melissa, a radical feminist lesbian separatist. It is only Amiss’ sense of humor and the joys of visiting his new love Rachel that keep him sane.

Hart, Carolyn. [Deadly Valentine](#) (\$7.99). Mystery bookstore owner Annie Laurence didn’t really want to go to her neighbor’s Valentine Day masked ball — particularly not after the voluptuous brunette made a pass at Annie’s husband, Max. So when her dizzy mother-in-law, Laurel, made a surprise visit to Broward’s Rock Island, Annie thought it would be a perfect excuse to skip the party. She should have known better: True to form, Laurel accepted the invitation for all three of them. But the biggest surprise of all came at the party’s end, when Annie found the amorous hostess in the gazebo—murdered.

Henry, Veronica. [How to Find Love in a Bookshop](#) (Penguin \$25). Struggling to hold onto her family’s bookshop in the wake of her beloved father’s death and circling property developers, Emilia finds support from family-like customers who navigate their own difficulties with secrets, loss and unrequited romance.

Holt, Victoria. [The Shivering Sands](#) (\$16.99). Caroline Verlaine, the young widow of a world-famous pianist, arrives at the legendary Stacy estate to investigate the sudden disappearance of her sister, Roma. As Caroline falls under the strange spell of Napier Stacy and his family’s macabre past, she can’t deny the evidence she starts to find... The Stacys’ deadly secret lies amid the nearby quicksand ruins—a secret that cost Roma her life. A secret that now threatens Caroline. Over the course of her long literary career, Eleanor Alice Burford Hibbert, better known to readers as Victoria Holt, Philippa Carr, and Jean Plaidy, sold more than 100 million copies of her novels. Sourcebooks has been reprinting some of this romance legend’s books so that a new generation of readers can experience the joy of reading this gothic good treats.

Kilpack, Josi S. [The Vicar’s Daughter](#) (Shadow Mountain \$15.99). Waiting for her turn to enter society after her five older sisters, Cassie Wilton begins to write letters to a clerk in East London in the name of her incredibly shy sister, Lenora, but instead finds she herself is falling in love with him. If you miss those marvelous old Regency romances written by Marion Chesney, Carola Dunn, and Georgette Heyer, Kilpack delivers a refreshingly sweet and equally engaging love story.

From me:

Gabaldon, Diana. [Outlander](#). We carry it in various editions. As our all-time bestselling book it is so obvious a choice to us we forget to recommend it to new readers. So I am. It has 7 sequels and one in the works.

Harris, Joanne. [Chocolat](#) (\$16). In tiny Lansquenet, where nothing much has changed in a hundred years, beautiful newcomer Vianne Rocher and her exquisite chocolate shop arrive and instantly begin to play havoc with Lenten vows. Each box of luscious bonbons comes with a free gift: Vianne’s uncanny perception of its buyer’s private discontents and a clever, caring cure for them. Is she a witch? Soon the parish no longer cares, as it abandons itself to temptation, happiness, and a dramatic face-

off between Easter solemnity and the pagan gaiety of a chocolate festival. Read the book: the movie altered the leader of the town's pushback to the mayor as more politically expedient....

Heyer, Georgette. [Arabella](#) (\$17.99). While my favorite Regency Romance by Heyer remains [A Civil Contract](#) (\$13.99), the courtship of young Arabella by the polished Mr. Beaumaris is made the more charming by the presence of Ulysses, the dog with the fly-away ear our heroine rescues and pleads with Mr. B. to adopt. He responds by taking Ulysses about town in his high-perch phaeton, thus making the cur fashionable—and a fashion accessory (a modern touch, really). My Mother's all-time favorite is [Cotillion](#) (\$17.99) featuring two young and naïve relatives who pretend to be a couple and become one. Freddy's father, a prescient parent, humanely lets Kitty and Freddy sort themselves out while Cousin Jack ends with the joke on him.

Kearsley, Susanna. [The Winter Sea](#) (\$16.99). In the spring of 1708, invading Jacobites plot to land the exiled James Stewart on the Scottish coast to reclaim his crown. When young Sophia Paterson travels to Slains Castle by the sea, she finds herself in the midst of the dangerous intrigue. Now, American writer Carrie McClelland hopes to base her next bestselling novel on that story of her ancestors in the dim, dark past. Settling herself in the shadow of Slains Castle, she starts to write about the Jacobite Rebellion—only to discover that the vivid scenes and the romantic hero she's imagining actually exists... This has Diana Gabaldon fans' names all over it—and DG calls it “Fascinating and immersive... I love a novel that deals with the many ways in which people keep their secrets.”

My favorite Kearsley is however [The Shadowy Horses](#) (\$17.99), where time slips between modern York and the Scottish borders where archaeologist Verity Grey is drawn to dark legends and her boss to the unanswered fate of the lost ninth Roman legion.

Morton, Kate. [The Secret Keeper](#) (\$16). But really, any of the Morton novels which will recall the work of Mary Stewart to you. This one is rooted in war-time London and lives that are forever entwined after a chance encounter.

Romantic Nonfiction recommended by John:

Bard, Elizabeth. [Lunch in Paris](#) (Little Brown \$16). *Lunch in Paris* is a memoir about a young American woman caught up in two passionate love affairs—one with her new beau, Gwendal, the other with French cuisine. Packing her bags for a new life in the world's most romantic city, Elizabeth is plunged into a world of bustling open-air markets, hipster bistros, and size 2 *femmes fatales*. She learns to gut her first fish (with a little help from Jane Austen), soothe pangs of homesickness (with the rise of a chocolate soufflé) and develops a crush on her local butcher (who bears a striking resemblance to Matt Dillon). Elizabeth finds that the deeper she immerses herself in the world of French cuisine, the more Paris itself begins to translate. French culture, she discovers, is not unlike a well-ripened cheese—there may be a crusty exterior, until you cut through to the melting, piquant heart.

Callan, Jamie Cat. [Parisian Charm School](#) (Tarcher Perigree \$19). “We all know that French women don't get fat. But their famous *je ne sais quoi* comes from more than just body type—something anyone can master: the old-fashioned art cultivating our inner beauty, confidence, and unique personal style, at any age. From savoring the everyday beauty around you to engaging in captivat-

ing conversations, playing dress-up, hosting impromptu dinner parties under the stars, and of course mastering the art of French flirting, the lively and inspiring lessons in this “syllabus” will help you rediscover your beautiful, fierce, romantic, engaging best self—to attract the best of everything into your life”

Carlson, Erin. [I'll Have What She's Having](#) (Hachette \$27). In *I'll Have What She's Having* entertainment journalist Erin Carlson tells the story of the real Nora Ephron and how she reinvented the romcom through her trio of instant classics. With a cast of famous faces including Rob Reiner, Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan, and Billy Crystal, Carlson takes readers on a rollicking, revelatory trip to Ephron's New York City, where reality took a backseat to romance and Ephron—who always knew what she wanted and how she wanted it—ruled the set with an attention to detail that made her actors feel safe but sometimes exasperated crew members.

De La Hoz, Cindy. [Bogie & Bacall](#) (Running Press \$15). Ever since nineteen-year-old Lauren Bacall seductively taught Humphrey Bogart how to whistle in the most famous scene from 1941's *To Have and Have Not*, fans have been fascinated by the palpable heat between these two movie legends. Their onscreen passion blossomed into a full-blown off-screen love affair, and culminated in a blissful marriage that lasted twelve years, until Bogart's untimely death in 1957. *Bogie & Bacall* celebrates their love, with rare photos of the couple, along with tips and anecdotes that will inspire you to ignite your own legendary romance.

Douglas, Kirk. [Kirk and Anne](#) (Running Press \$25). Compiled from Anne's private archive of letters and photographs, this is an intimate glimpse into the Douglas's' courtship and marriage set against the backdrop of Kirk's screen triumphs, including *The Vikings*, *Lust For Life*, *Paths of Glory*, and *Spartacus*. The letters themselves, as well as Kirk and Anne's vivid descriptions of their experiences, reveal remarkable insight and anecdotes about the legendary figures they knew so well, including Lauren Bacall, Frank Sinatra, Burt Lancaster, Elizabeth Taylor, John Wayne, the Kennedys, and the Reagans. Filled with photos from film sets, private moments, and public events, *Kirk and Anne* details the adventurous, oftentimes comic, and poignant reality behind the glamour of a Hollywood life—as only a couple of sixty-two years (and counting) could tell it.

Epstein, Edward Z. [Audrey and Bill](#) (Running Press \$25). In 1954, Hepburn and Holden were America's sweethearts. Both won Oscars that year and together they filmed *Sabrina*, a now-iconic film that continues to inspire the worlds of film and fashion. *Audrey & Bill* tells the stories of both stars, from before they met to their electrifying first encounter when they began making *Sabrina*. The love affair that sparked on-set was relatively short-lived, but was a turning point in the lives of both stars. *Audrey & Bill* follows both Hepburn and Holden as their lives crisscrossed through to the end, providing an inside look at the Hollywood of the 1950s, '60s, and beyond. Through in-depth research and interviews with former friends, co-stars, and studio workers, *Audrey & Bill* author Edward Z. Epstein sheds new light on the stars and the fascinating times in which they lived.

SOME NEWBOOKS FOR EARLY FEBRUARY

Arden, Katherine. [The Girl in the Tower](#) (Del Rey \$27). Following their debut in [The Bear and the Nightingale](#) (\$16), Vasilisa Petrovna and her faithful steed Solovey travel to Moscow, where

political intrigue and high magic threaten to ensnare them. Faced with equally unappealing prospects of marriage or conviction of witchcraft, she abandoned her 14th-century Russian village. She travels the wilds disguised as a boy and is reluctantly aided by the ancient frost demon Morozko. But when she rescues children from bandits, her path intersects with that of her brother Sasha. Now a warrior monk called Aleksandr the Lightbringer, Sasha serves their cousin Dmitrii, the Grand Prince of Moscow. The prince takes a liking to Vasya, who adopts the guise of Aleksandr's younger brother Vasilii... It's somewhat Shakespearean thus.

Auster, Paul. [4 3 2 1](#) (\$18). Nearly two weeks early, on March 3, 1947, in the maternity ward of Beth Israel Hospital in Newark, New Jersey, 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. "Original and dauntingly complex... it's impossible not to be impressed—and even a little awed—by what Auster has accomplished. *4 3 2 1* is a work of outsize ambition and remarkable craft, a monumental assemblage of competing and complementary fictions, a novel that contains multitudes."—Tom Perotta, *NY Times Book Review*

✚Bauer, Belinda. [The Beautiful Dead](#) (\$16). TV crime reporter Eve Singer's career is flagging, but that starts to change when she covers a spate of bizarre murders—each one committed in public and advertised like an art exhibition. When the killer contacts Eve about her coverage of his crimes, she is suddenly on the inside of the biggest murder investigation of the decade. But as the killer becomes increasingly obsessed with her, Eve realizes there's a thin line between inside information and becoming an accomplice to murder—possibly her own. Gold Dagger winner Bauer has had more impact in the UK where she has been compared to the late Ruth Rendell.

✚Billingham, Mark. [Rush of Blood](#) (\$16). Taking a break from Tom Thorne, Billingham crafts a sizzler that "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*

✚Brett, Simon. [Mrs. Pargeter's Public Relations](#) (\$17.95). It is her characteristic generosity rather than her love of animals that finds Mrs. Pargeter supporting her friend, Jasmine Angold, at a charity reception for PhiloPussies, whose worthy aim is to rehabilitate stray cats from the Greek island of Atmos into caring English homes. But the evening is to have unexpected consequences. At the event, Mrs. P is taken aback to meet a woman who claims to be the sister of her late husband, the much-missed Mr. Pargeter. This surprising encounter leads to unwelcome digging into past secrets, the discovery of a body in Epping Forest, an eventful trip to Greece—and unexpected danger for Mrs. Pargeter.

✚Brody, Frances. [Death in the Stars](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Yorkshire, 1927. Eclipse fever grips the nation, and when beloved theatre star Selina Fellini approaches trusted sleuth Kate Shackleton to accompany her to a viewing party on the grounds of Giggleswick School Chapel, Kate suspects an ulterior motive. During the eclipse, Selina's friend and co-star Billy Moffatt disappears

and is later found dead in the chapel grounds. Kate can't help but dig deeper and soon learns that two other members of the theatre troupe died in similarly mysterious circumstances in the past year. With the help of Jim Sykes and Mrs. Sugden, Kate sets about investigating the deaths—and whether there is a murderer in the company. When Selina's elusive husband Jarrod—who was injured in the war and is subject to violent mood swings—comes back on the scene, Kate begins to imagine something far deadlier at play... 9th in a traditional cozy series.

Brown, Sandra. [Seeing Red](#) (\$14.99). Kerra Bailey is a TV journalist hot on the trail of a story guaranteed to skyrocket her career to new heights. Twenty-five years ago, Major Franklin Trapper became a national icon when he was photographed leading a handful of survivors to safety after the bombing of a Dallas hotel. For years, he gave frequent speeches and interviews but then suddenly dropped out of the public eye, shunning all media. Now Kerra is willing to use any means necessary to get an exclusive with the Major—even if she has to secure an introduction from his estranged son, former ATF agent John Trapper.

Cameron, Marc. [National Security](#) (\$15.95). The latest author to join the Tom Clancy brand gets this review for his first thriller published in small paperback in 2011 and now brought out in a large paperback: Cameron's testosterone-fueled debut thriller features characters straight out of central casting, most notably Capt. Jericho Quinn, an agent of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and Sheikh Hussein al Farooq, a terrorist mastermind the equal of bin Laden. A massive mall bombing in Colorado is a mere prelude to a planned biological attack that could decimate the U.S. Quinn and Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jacques Thibodaux, who team for a daring rescue of American captives in Iraq, are later recruited by Winfield Palmer, the national intelligence director, to serve as his "hammer." With sexy Dr. Megan Mahoney of the Centers for Disease Control providing brains and beauty, the trio has to locate and stop three messengers of death carrying vials of a deadly airborne hemorrhagic virus. Quinn, with his part Apache ancestry, fluency in Arabic and Mandarin Chinese, and military skills, makes a formidable warrior readers will want to see more of." I liked Cameron's [Tom Clancy: Power and Empire](#) (Putnam \$29.95 Signed).

Cantú, Francisco. [The Line Becomes a River](#) (Penguin \$26). My eye was caught by this editor's nominee for a best book of 2017—which publishes February 6. When you're in the book world you are constantly reading ahead which can be a drawback: "Though I'm hesitant to recommend a book published in 2018 when so many great ones came out in 2017, for the sake of being honest, I have to say that the best book I read in 2017 is *The Line Becomes a River*, a memoir by an ex-border patrol agent describing his experiences patrolling the Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas borders. It's a book with some of the same appeal of J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* in that it brings a strong personal narrative to one of the major social issues in America today. What I liked about Cantú's book is how humble and plain-stated it is. It continues to cross my mind even months after reading it."

Here is the *PW* Starred Review: "An ex-Border Patrol agent finds himself on both sides of the battle over illegal immigration in this fraught memoir of his time patrolling the Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas borders from 2008 to 2012, an experience that roiled his emotions and shook his sense of his

own part-Mexican identity. He discovers at the border a zone of heartbreaking absurdity: agents arrest a parade of undocumented migrants who want nothing but a job; to do so, they employ tactics such as emptying water bottles and urinating on food caches hidden along commonly used routes to deny border crossers sustenance, then rescue them when they are dying of thirst in the desert. After Cantú quits because of teeth-grinding stress and guilt, he's forced to further reexamine the border when an undocumented friend, José, goes to see his dying mother in Oaxaca and is arrested trying to return. Through José's story, Cantú comes to see the border crossers' fierce resolve in the face of border police and brutal smuggling gangs as a defense of family and civilized values. Cantú's rich prose ('For one brief moment, I forgot in which country I stood. All around me the landscape trembled and breathed as one.') and deep empathy make this an indispensable look at one of America's most divisive issues."

Chancellor, Bryn. [Sycamore](#) (Harper \$15.99). "Eighteen years after high school junior Jess Winters vanished from Sycamore, Arizona, human bones are found near where Jess was last seen alive. Everyone in the small community, from family to friends to teachers, was profoundly affected by the unsolved mystery. Told from multiple points of view, this deeply moving story explores the events that led to Jess' disappearance and slowly reveals the mistakes, secrets, and regrets, but also the humanity and the good, that reside in each of the characters. Heart-wrenching and compassionate in the manner of Kent Haruf's stories, this is a flawless first novel."

☞Cleeves, Ann. [Hidden Depths](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Bringing out the third Vera Stanhope in a US hardcover wins various enthusiastic reviews: "Cleeves sets a good scene, this time in Northumberland during a heat wave, and she brings a large cast to life, shifting points of view between bereaved relatives, victims, and suspects in a straightforward, satisfyingly traditional detective novel." —Jessica Mann, *The Literary Review*

De Hahn, Tracee. [A Well-Timed Murder](#) (St Martins \$25.99). I was smitten with De Hahn's debut in 2017's [Swiss Vendetta](#) (\$16), which took Swiss-American police detective Agnes Lüthi of the Lausanne PD to the shores of Lac Lemman where a blizzard rages over a homicide scene inside a grand chateau owned by a rich aristocratic family. Agnes survived and now receives a call from aristocrat and growing love interest, Julien Vallotton. Legendary watchmaker Guy Chavanon, a friend of Julien's, has died from anaphylaxis-induced heart failure while attending a reception at the Moutier Institut de Jeunes Gens—the boarding school where Chavanon's son is a student. Chavanon's grown daughter believes her father's death wasn't an accident. He had invented something that would revolutionize the watch industry, and she thinks he was murdered because of it. When she unearths a series of threats against student Koulsy Haroun, the son of a suspected war criminal who has a peanut allergy, she wonders if Koulsy was the killer's intended target—not Chavanon. The plot fails to get rolling as it did with *Swiss Vendetta*, but you can "enjoy the dynamic setting and fascinating glimpse into the Swiss watchmaking world." Which as De Hahn points out, truly has had to reinvent itself and its brand.

Downing, David. [Jack of Spies](#) (\$9.99). A brilliant novel of pre-WWI intelligence gathering that starts off in the Far East. It's 1913. Jack McColl, a Scottish car salesman with an uncanny ear

for languages, has always hoped to make a job for himself as a spy. As his sales calls take him from city to great city—Hong Kong to Shanghai to San Francisco to New York—he moonlights collecting intelligence for His Majesty's Secret Service, but British espionage is in its infancy and Jack has nothing but a shoestring budget and the very tenuous protection of a boss in far-away London. He knows, though, that a geopolitical catastrophe is brewing, and now is both the moment to prove himself and the moment his country needs him most. Starts a five-part series by the author of the brilliant Berlin railway station spy stories of WWII—*Zoo Station*, etc.

Duffy, Brendan. [The Storm King](#) (Ballantine \$27). Duffy follows his debut, [House of Echoes](#) (\$16) with a stunning literary thriller, which combines accomplished wordsmithing with startling twists. Nate McHale is a husband, father, and pediatric surgeon in New York City, but he was once the Storm King of Greystone Lake in upstate New York, the leader of a band of vengeful vandals. Under cover of bad weather, Nate and his high school friends balanced "the equations of pain" by committing acts of retribution for attacks and sleights against them. Nate's high school girlfriend, Lucy Bennett, disappeared just after graduation. Now Lucy's body has recently been found, and Nate is returning to Greystone Lake for the first time in 14 years for her funeral. He must tame the "menagerie of suffering in the cages of [his] soul" in order to fight his way through the layers of secrets, past and present, as a hurricane rages and a new wave of vandalism even more vicious than his own strikes the town. Duffy weaves Lucy's murder and town folklore into a tapestry of storm, pain, fire, and, eventually, redemption.

Graves, Sarah. [Death by Chocolate Cherry Cheesecake](#) (Kensington \$25). Jacobia "Jake" Tiptree, the star of Graves's Home Repair Is Homicide series is back in this charming series reboot, our **February Cozy Crimes Club Pick**. Jake and her friend Ellie White have opened a chocolate-themed bake shop, Chocolate Moose, in Eastport, Maine. Business is off to a promising start when the Eastport Coast Guard Station orders a dozen chocolate cherry cheesecakes for a fundraiser. But three days before the cheesecakes are due to be delivered, Jake finds the body of health inspector Matt Muldoon in the kitchen, his head plunged into a pot of chocolate. Matt was on a crusade to shut down Chocolate Moose, and the pastry needle that killed him is covered with Ellie's fingerprints. Since she has no alibi and her dislike for the man is well known, the friends must uncover the real killer before Ellie is arrested. Red herrings abound, and while some plot developments strain credulity, the characters are appealing, and down east Maine is a delightful place to visit. Graves fans will enjoy catching up with old friends.

Greenwood, Kerry. [Murder on a Midsummer Night](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95). Personally I prefer the Art Deco covers original to the Miss Fisher Mysteries, but the TV Tie-ins with Essie Davis are fun. The Hon. Phryne Fisher, languid and slightly bored at the start of 1929, has been engaged to find out if the antique-shop-owning son of a Pre-Raphaelite model has died by homicide or suicide. He had some strange friends: a Balkan adventuress, a dilettante with a penchant for antiquities, a Classics professor, a medium, and a mysterious supplier who arrives after dark on a motorbike. Simultaneously, she is asked to discover the fate of the lost illegitimate child of a rich old lady, to the evident dislike of the remaining relatives. With the help of her sister Beth, the

cab drivers Bert and Cec, and even her two adoptive daughters, Phryne follows eerie leads that bring her face-to-face with the conquest of Jerusalem by General Allenby and the Australian Light Horse, kif smokers, spirit guides, pirate treasure maps, and ghosts. 17th in this charming Australian mystery series. And stream the series—not just mystery, but “costume porn.”

Grippando, James. [A Death in Live Oak](#) (Harper \$27.99). When the body of Jamal Cousin, president of the preeminent black fraternity at Florida’s flagship university, is discovered hog-tied in the stygian swamps of the Suwannee River Valley, the death sets off a firestorm that threatens to rage out of control as a fellow student, Mark Towson, the president of a prominent white fraternity, is accused of the crime. Contending with rising political tensions, racial unrest, and a sensational media, Towson’s defense attorney, Jack Swytek, fears the worst. The evidence against his client—which includes a threatening text message referencing “strange fruit” on the river—seems overwhelming. Then Jack gets a break that could turn the case. Jamal’s gruesome murder bears disturbing similarities to another lynching that occurred back in the Jim Crow days of 1944. Are the chilling parallels purely coincidental? With a community in chaos and a young man’s life in jeopardy, Jack will use every resource to find out. As he navigates each twist and turn of the search, Jack becomes increasingly convinced that his client may himself be the victim of a criminal plan more sinister than the case presented by the state attorney. Risking his own reputation, this principled man who has devoted his life to the law plunges headfirst into the darkest recesses of the South’s past—and its murky present.

New in large paperback: [Gone Again](#) (\$15.99). From March, 2016: Shortly after teenager Sashi Burgette disappeared on her way to school, ex-con Dylan Kyle was pulled over for drunk driving, and police found some of Sashi’s clothing in his car. Dylan is close to his execution date when Sashi’s mother tells defense attorney Jack Swytek that she’s just received a call from her daughter....

Hamilton, Ian. [The Water Rat of Wanchai](#) (\$16) #1Ava Lee Series
Hamilton, Ian. [The Disciple of Las Vegas](#) (\$15) #2
Hamilton, Ian. [Wild Beasts of Wuhan](#) (\$15) #3
Hamilton, Ian. [The Red Pole of Macau](#) (\$15) #4
Hamilton, Ian. [The Scottish Banker of Surabaya](#) (\$15.95) #5
Hamilton, Ian. [Two Sisters of Borneo](#) (\$15.95) #6
Hamilton, Ian. [The King of Shanghai](#) (\$15.95) #7
Hamilton, Ian. [The Princeling of Nanjing](#) (\$15.95) #8
Hamilton, Ian. [The Couturier of Milan](#) (\$15.95) #9

✎Harrod-Eagles, Cynthia. [Shadow Play](#) (Severn \$28.99). DCI Bill Slider of Shepherd’s Bush nick arrives at a crime scene—the muddy yard of an auto repair shop near a London railway line—where lies the body of a well-dressed, well-groomed middle-aged man, killed by a blow to the head. The shop’s surly owner says he’s never seen the man before. The only clue to the victim’s identity is a lottery ticket tucked in his jacket pocket. Soon Slider is drawn into an investigation that touches the lives of a masseuse with a heart of gold, rapacious property developers, small-time politicians, hotshot lawyers, and handsome rent boys, among other colorful and distinctive characters. Slider and the likable members of his police team enjoy an easy camaraderie, and their exchanges are sprinkled with dry wit, as are those between Slider and his musician wife, Joanna, who acts as his sounding board. Harrod-Eagles shows once again why this series ranks

high among contemporary British police procedurals. I love the dialogue and am always pleased with the way Bill nudges a case along to an often surprising conclusion.

Johnson, Denis. [The Largesse of the Sea Maiden](#) (Random \$27). Twenty-five years after *Jesus’ Son* comes a haunting new collection of short stories on mortality and transcendence, from National Book Award winner and two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist Denis Johnson. They are, literally, Johnson’s last word(s)....

Klinger, Leslie S. [In the Shadow of Edgar Allan Poe](#) (\$15.95). To go with Klinger’s Agatha Christie album (see Event Books), an earlier assemblage. Poe did not invent the tale of terror, says Klinger. There were American, English, and Continental writers who preceded Poe and influenced his work. Similarly, there were many who were in turn influenced by Poe’s genius and produced their own popular tales of supernatural literature. This collection features masterful tales of terror by authors who, by and large, are little-remembered for their writing in this genre—even Bram Stoker, no short fiction ace.

Kunzru, Hari. [White Tears](#) (\$16). Ghost story, murder mystery, love letter to American music—*White Tears* is all of this and more. Seth is a shy, awkward twentysomething. Carter is more glamorous, the heir to a great American fortune. But they share an obsession with music—especially the blues. One day, Seth discovers that he’s accidentally recorded an unknown blues singer in a park. Carter puts the file online, claiming it’s a 1920s recording by a made-up musician named Charlie Shaw. But when a music collector tells them that their recording is genuine—that there really was a singer named Charlie Shaw—the two white boys, along with Carter’s sister, find themselves in over their heads, delving deeper and deeper into America’s dark, vengeful heart. *White Tears* will appeal to fans of the late Bill Moody’s Evan Horne mysteries of which we recommend [Looking for Chet Baker](#) (\$14.95) highly. And [Shades of Blue](#) (\$14.95) which I had the privilege of editing for PPP.

Millar, Margaret. [Beast in View](#) (Soho \$14.95). Winner of the 1956 Mystery Writers of America Edgar Award for Best Novel, this gem by Canadian Millar, wife of Ross Macdonald, is republished by Soho. Thirty-year-old Helen Clarvoe is scared and all alone. The heiress of a small fortune, she is resented by her mother and, to a lesser degree, her brother. The only person who seemingly cares for her is the family’s attorney, Paul Blackshear. A shut-in, Helen maintains her residence in an upscale hotel downtown.

✎Nickson, Chris. [Free From All Danger](#) (Severn \$28.99). October, 1736. Lured out of retirement to serve as Constable once again, Richard Nottingham finds Leeds very different from the place he remembers. Many newcomers have been attracted by the town’s growing wealth, but although the faces have changed, the crimes remain the same, as Nottingham discovers when a body is found floating in the River Aire, its throat cut. What has changed is the fear that pervades the town. With more bodies emerging and witnesses too frightened to talk, Nottingham realizes he’s dealing with a new kind of criminal, someone with no respect for anything or anyone. Someone who believes he’s beyond the law; someone willing brutally to destroy anyone who opposes him. Ordered Upon Request.

Page, Katherine Hall. [The Body in the Casket](#) (Harper \$25.99). A review in the *NY Times* for a favorite and delicious December book: “Page, who has written almost two dozen culinary myster-

ies, has come up with another smart twist on her cozy formula featuring Faith Fairchild, a minister's wife and keen-eyed amateur detective from suburban Massachusetts. Faith's catering firm, Have Faith in Your Kitchen, has been hired for a weekend party by Max Dane, a once-famous Broadway producer celebrating his 70th birthday. But what he really wants to hire is Faith's sleuthing talent, because he strongly suspects that one of his guests wants to kill him. The mechanics of the murder mystery are well set up and executed, but what you're hungry for is what's on the menu. This time, Faith is starting off with 'Fallen Angel' cocktails, then moving along to deviled eggs and an apple-potato dish called 'Himmel und Erde.' The main course, lobster *pasta fra diavolo*, is followed by an angel food cake, from a recipe that calls for 'nine large eggs' and a mountain of sugar. Sounds divine." 24th in an always satisfying series.

Perry, Thomas. [The Bomb Maker](#) (Grove \$26 Signed). This review for Mr. Perry's January book in the *Times* is also worth notice: "The intense thrills are almost unbearable. After sweating through a scene in which a member of the Los Angeles Police Department Bomb Squad narrowly escapes a lethal explosion, we're knocked back by the loss of 14 team technicians — half the squad — who are blown to smithereens. 'Bombs were acts of murder,' Perry writes, but 'they were also jokes on you, riddles the bomber hoped were too tough for you.' Dick Stahl, who steps in to head the depleted squad, doesn't get the joke, but he goes *mano a mano* with the abominable riddler, whose clear intention is to destroy those who respond to his devilishly clever booby traps. There seems to be no pattern to the placement of these 'well-designed, insidious and psychologically astute' devices, which turn up at a gas station, a school cafeteria and a hospital ward. Before they go off, the tension is killing. And when they do, the damage is spectacular."

✚Rhys, Rachel. [Dangerous Crossing](#) (Atria \$26). "Sandwiched between two policemen, the woman descends the gangplank of the ship." It's September 4, 1939—war has just been declared—and the boat is the *Orontes*. The British ship has docked in Sydney after five weeks at sea, which produced two corpses. From here, *Dangerous Crossing* rewinds to the day when Lily Shepherd, a young working-class Englishwoman from whose point of view the novel is told, boards the ship in Essex. Lily's intent, like that of other young British women on board, is to work as a maid in Australia, although she dares to dream of more than a life in service. On the boat, the glittery Eliza and Max Campbell seek out her company. Why, Lily wonders, is this first-class couple fraternizing with her and the others in tourist class, including Edward Fletcher, whose hot-and-cold attitude toward her is puzzling? Also perplexing: when her new friend Maria Katz, an Austrian Jew, says that she's been assaulted on board, the ship's personnel don't believe her. "*Dangerous Crossing* has the trappings of an Agatha Christie mystery—somewhat heightened characterizations, preoccupation with social class, scrupulous attention to wardrobe—but Rachel Rhys (the pen name of the English suspense novelist Tammy Cohen) is especially beholden to *Death on the Nile*, with which this book shares its era, shipboard setting and breathtaking scenery."

Smith, Michael Farris. [Desperation Road](#) (\$15.99). For fans of Daniel Woodrell, Tom Franklin, Ron Rash, David Joy, this January 2017 Hardboiled Crime Club Pick is now in paperback. "Two hard-luck cases collide in this smooth-flowing novel of the Deep

South, where a Mississippi town harbors a long-brewing hunger for vengeance and a slim chance of redemption. Maben and Russell are heading to McComb from different directions, geographically and otherwise. She has been on the road for too many years after a terrible car accident and has tried almost everything to make a life somewhere for herself and her young daughter. He has been serving 11 years in prison for a drunken driving incident that killed a young man. But fate takes Maben on yet another nasty detour via a deputy sheriff who rapes her and then calls up two friends to join the party. Maben grabs his gun and ends that soiree before it gets going. Russell steps off a bus and into the fists and boots of the dead young man's two brothers. Russell's stolid father and a Mexican woman he has taken in offer stability when it's most needed. Another deputy sheriff, who played high school football with Russell, faces the awkward task of finding out why his old friend turned up at the scene of Maben's highly motivated gunplay shortly after investigators arrived... The book's brooding atmosphere lights up often with strong scenes of high tension. Smith writes shapely prose and sharp dialogue and everywhere displays an acute sense of the moments and pain that can define lives in a small town."—*Kirkus* Starred Review

Tallis, Frank. [Mephisto Waltz](#) (Pegasus, \$25.95), is an exact replica of early-20th-century Vienna, "where celestial coffeehouses lined the principal approaches to the Pearly Gates." The *NY Times* goes on to say, "That would make angels of the psychoanalyst Dr. Max Liebermann and his friend, Detective Inspector Oskar Rheinhardt, the brainy sleuths in Tallis' erudite series of historical mysteries. He seizes on the singular appeal of this period, from the luscious *apfelschmarrn* and *topfenstrudel* served in the fashionable cafés to the lively intellectual discourse of their learned patrons. ('The Viennese were so highly strung, so nervous, even symphonies got them agitated.'). A disfigured corpse discovered in the workshop of a derelict piano manufacturer leads to revelations about the city's dark side, an underworld of anarchists plotting to assassinate Emperor Franz Josef. A woman who has built a bombmaking factory in her basement makes a memorable appearance, as does Dr. Sigmund Freud, who advances the argument that 'a political party is just another form of crowd' and politicians are dangerous because they're 'buoyed up by the people who stand behind them, carried forward on waves of feeling.'

SOME SMALL PAPERBACKS FOR EARLY FEBRUARY

Brown, Dale. [Act of Revenge](#) (\$9.99). When Boston is hit by a coordinated string of terrorist attacks, robotics innovator Louis Massina leads a team of tech geniuses to deploy every bot, drone and cyberweapon at their disposal to save the city and bring the plot's mastermind to justice.

Childs, Laura. [Pekoe Most Poison](#) (\$7.99) Tea Shop #18. Invited by one of Charleston's most prominent hostesses to a philanthropic "Rat Tea" where guests are served by attendants in rodent costumes, Indigo Tea Shop owner Theodosia Browning lands in the middle of a dangerous game of cat and mouse when the hostess' husband is poisoned.

Gregory, Lena. [Clairvoyant and Present Danger](#) (Berkley \$7.99). When communications with a ghost land her in the middle of a murder investigation, psychic Cass Donovan, thinking her gift might actually be a curse, must use her visions to catch a killer who has set his sights on her.

Jackson, Lisa. [Almost Dead](#) (Kensington \$7.99). When a mysterious killer bent on revenge begins targeting members of her family, Cissy Cahill must unravel a deadly mystery linked to her family's secret past before she becomes the next victim.

Macmillan, Gilly. [What She Knew](#) (\$9.99). A recently divorced mom finds herself in the eye of an increasingly suspicious public after her 8-year-old son suddenly vanishes at a Bristol park on a Sunday afternoon. Rachel must follow the clues to find him herself.

Randall, Shari. [Curses, Boiled Again](#) (Tor \$7.99). Allie Larkin was living her dream as a ballet dancer when a bad fall put her out of business. Now she's back home in Mystic Bay to heal a broken ankle while also helping her dear Aunt Gully get her Lazy Mermaid Lobster Shack off the ground. Nothing would help Gully more than winning the local food festival's Best Lobster Roll contest. The competition is sure to be killer—especially after one of the contest judges dies after eating a roll from one of Gully's biggest rivals. Soon, all eyes fall on Gully as the prime suspect.

Rose, Karen. [Edge of Darkness](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Meredith Fallon has loved Adam Kimble for a year, and seeing how hard he's worked to deal with his PTSD makes her feelings only stronger, but she respects his needs. Her work keeps her busy anyway: she counsels sexually abused women like Mallory Martin to help them reintegrate into the world. But someone doesn't want Meredith helping women like Mallory, and Meredith finds herself in the crosshairs of a very determined killer.

Ryan, Sofie. [The Fast and the Furrriest](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Second Chance Cat #5. When Mac, her right-hand man, is accused of murdering a woman from his past who had just arrived in town, thrift store owner Sarah Grayson—along with her rescue cat, Elvis—must sniff out the clues to prove Mac's innocence.

Schutt, Bill. [The Himalayan Codex](#) (Harper \$9.99). Zoologist and adventurer Captain R. J. MacCready journeys to post-World War II Tibet to search for a legendary creature that may hold the secret to humankind's evolutionary future.

Westlake, Donald. [Help I Am Being Held Prisoner](#) (Hard Case Crime \$9.95). It isn't easy going to jail for a practical joke. Of course, this particular joke left 20 cars wrecked on the highway and two politicians' careers in tatters—so jail is where Harold Kunt landed. Now he's just trying to keep a low profile in the Big House. He wants no part of his fellow inmates' plan to use an escape tunnel to rob two banks. But it's too late; he's in it up to his neck. And that neck may just wind up in a noose.