

BOOKNEWS from

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

Volume 31, Number 2

January Booknews 2019

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NEW YEAR, MORE NEW BOOKS

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

Some Events will be webcast on Facebook Live

Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#)

MONDAY JANUARY 21 7:00 PM

James Rollins Book Launch

James Rollins signs [Crucible](#) (Harper \$28.99)

Sigma Force #13

Order a signed copy and receive an exclusive collectible—a must-have for James Rollins's fans!

TUESDAY JANUARY 22 7:00 PM

Taylor Adams signs [No Exit](#) (Morrow \$26.99)

Thriller set in a Colorado blizzard

Tami Hoag signs [The Boy](#) (Dutton \$28)

Police investigate dual murders in Bayou Breaux, Louisiana

THURSDAY JANUARY 24 7:00 PM

John Lescroart signs [The Rule of Law](#) (Atria \$27)

San Francisco's Dismas Hardy #18

FRIDAY JANUARY 25 7:00 PM

James Sallis and the Band

SATURDAY JANUARY 26 12:00 PM

What Do I Read Next?

Has your book group run out of great titles to discuss? Or are you just looking for something great to read yourself? Join us at the Poisoned Pen Bookstore for a preview of new and forthcoming titles that will make your book discussion group the talk of the town as well as have you booked up with great reading choices all year

SATURDAY JANUARY 26 2:00 PM

Stephanie Barron signs [That Churchill Woman](#) (Ballantine \$28)

A novel of Jennie Churchill, American heiress mother of Winston (Barron is Francine Mathews when writing historical fiction)

SUNDAY JANUARY 27 2:00 PM

Sarah Tarkoff signs [Fearless](#) (Harper \$16.99)

Eye of the Beholder #2 Adventure/SciFi

MONDAY JANUARY 28 7:00 PM

Professor Gary L. Stuart signs [Call Him Mac](#) (Sentinel Peak \$35 or \$19.95)

A biography of Ernest W. McFarland—Arizona lawyer, judge, senator, governor, Supreme Court justice, and businessman

TUESDAY JANUARY 29 7:00 PM

Join travel specialist and tour leader Sheila Campbell of **Travel to France** for an evening of conversation and information. Her tours have included author ML Longworth, Mark Pryor, and Martin Walker

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 30 7:00 PM

Gregg Hurwitz signs [Out of the Dark](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Orphan X #4

Joseph Finder signs [Judgment](#) (Dutton \$28)

Boston Judge Julianna battles blackmail

THURSDAY JANUARY 31 7:00 PM

Ian Rankin in conversation with Linwood Barclay

Ian Rankin signs [In a House of Lies](#) (LittleBrown \$27)

John Rebus

Toronto's Linwood Barclay signs [A Noise Downstairs](#) (Morrow \$26.99)

A thriller...and good for typewriter geeks

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 3 1:00 PM

Our Super Sunday! "Finding the Hook"

Our Writer in Residence Linwood Barclay teaches a **workshop** on finding the right hook in that first chapter, a way to keep the reader engaged, how every book for me starts not with character, or place, but a "what if?"

Fee: \$25. Limited to 25. Preregistration is advised

JANUARY DISCUSSION CLUBS

SciFi Friday: January 14 7:00 PM: Madeline Miller, [The Song of Achilles](#) (\$16.99)

Croak & Dagger: Saturday January 15 10:30 AM: Claire Macintosh, [I Let You Go](#) (\$9.99)

Hardboiled Crime: Wednesday January 23 7:00 PM: Alan Parks, [Bloody January](#) (\$17)

EVENT BOOKS

Adams, Taylor. [No Exit](#) (Morrow \$26.99 Jan. 22). Here is an edgy thriller about four strangers, a blizzard, a kidnapped child, and a determined young woman desperate to unmask and outwit a vicious psychopath. On her way to Utah to see her dying mother, college student Darby Thorne gets caught in a fierce blizzard in the mountains of Colorado. And realizes, "There's a child locked inside this van." Fear shoots through Darby's body, as she peers through the back window of a vehicle parked at a snowed-in rest stop located in the middle of nowhere. There are four others there to sit out the blizzard: two young men and a middle-aged couple. But which is responsible for the young girl locked inside the van? This is a perfect January read as the weather is key to propelling the plot.

"Darby is an unexpected hero: a sheltered but cunning college sophomore with a history of stealing her mother's car and lying with a straight face, skills that come in handy when trying to outwit a crafty kidnapper. She's also immensely likable; her comebacks when facing off against the enemy are hilariously withering. Humor is everywhere in this novel despite its dark premise. The trapped nine-year-old possesses an equally sharp wit, and the strangers in the rest stop all have their own clever moments. Suspense is still the dominating mode, though, and from beginning to end, it never lets up."—Amy Brady

Barclay, Linwood. [A Noise Downstairs](#) (Morrow \$26.99 Jan. 31). A thriller... and good for typewriter geeks, a big hit last summer by **Toronto's Barclay who is our Winter Writer in Residence at The Pen**. Two murders, one witness, a brutal assault, and a possessed vintage typewriter. Barclay expertly weaves these details into a tantalizing psychological thriller. College professor Paul Davis is trying to help a friend when he stumbles onto the scene of a double murder. Eight months later, still recovering from the injuries inflicted on that fearful night, he wonders if he's gone insane. After all, he doesn't even remember conversations with his wife, Charlotte, who's been much more loving since the accident. When Paul decides to confront his fears by researching the man who brutally attacked him, Charlotte buys him a vintage typewriter to write about his feelings. "As days pass, Paul's anxiety goes into overdrive. He now hears noises in the night and is convinced the murdered women are trying to contact him. Charlotte is as certain that he's either delusional or blacking out, while Anna doesn't know what to believe. At what point does a person know for sure they've lost their mind? Prepared to be blindsided by an ending you didn't see coming. Barclay's nerve-racking tale will have readers scared to close their eyes at night."

Barron, Stephanie. [That Churchill Woman](#) (Ballantine \$28 Jan 26 –3 days before publication date). Jennie Jerome, daughter of NY financial baron Leonard, married Lord Randolph Churchill at age 19 after a tumultuous courtship and over obstacles like the groom's ducal family (Marlborough). This made her the mother of Winston Churchill and wife of a politician who never quite hit the peak and who died of a terrible disease (almost certainly syphilis). Lord R had kept secrets like being gay when it was a crime; Jennie had affairs. But the crux of this brilliantly realized novel is both how she fought to choose how to lead her life and how did her persona and choices shape her son. American

heiresses seldom had it easy marrying into British and other aristocracy (vide Consuelo Vanderbilt who married another Churchill). Jennie never let it break her. **Note: This title has gone into a second printing before it releases so be sure to order your copy now to secure a first.**

Finder, Joseph. [Judgment](#) (Dutton \$28 Jan. 30). Massachusetts Superior Court Judge Juliana Brody, a married mother of two, has one glass too many at a legal conference in Chicago and succumbs to a night with a hunk who zeros in on her. He is, he says, one Matias Sanchez, a businessman from Argentina. Juliana returns to Boston with a happy memory that a week later turns into a nightmare when Matias sits himself at the defense table in a high profile #MeToo case. He is, in fact, a lawyer from Chicago. And he has a video of their encounter he'll use to blacken her name and ruin her career unless she rules for the defendant. Wheelz, a new, fast-growing competitor to Uber and Lyft. The plaintiff is a young female attorney who, fired after spurning the CEO's advances, is determined to expose Wheelz's oppressive frat-house antics. The case has drawn national attention. And not just from protestors of sexual abuse and discrimination, but from investors like, say, some Russians... So will Juliana cave or will she fight? And if the latter, how? This is a one-session-read nail-biter.

Hoag, Tami. [The Boy](#) (Dutton \$28 out Dec. 31, Signed here Jan. 22). Although it's a stand-alone, this new novel stars detectives Nick Fourcade and Annie Broussard of Hoag's *A Thin Dark Line* (1997), which alas is not now in print. The pair is investigating a break-in that has left Genevieve Gauthier's seven-year-old son dead. The boy, dressed in Spider-Man pajamas, is lying in a pool of blood in his bedroom, stabbed some 10 times in the chest and face. His 27-year-old mother, Genevieve, escaped from the assailant and is in the hospital being questioned by Nick's wife and fellow detective, Annie Broussard. Why is Genevieve inexplicably unharmed? Why would the murderer leave any witnesses? Why does the boy's 13-year-old babysitter vanish the next day? The story is character driven but IMHO the standout is the Parish of Partout and the town of Bayou Breux in all its steamy, atmospheric Louisiana vibe, which you James Lee Burke fans will soak up.

No wonder this is already a bestseller: "Hoag puts on quite the juggling act here, dazzling us with multiple theories about the boy's murder, numerous potential suspects, and plot twists that keep us just slightly off-balance. A welcome return for a compelling investigative duo."—*Booklist*. "...Authentic, dark, and intense, this is a portrait of flawed characters on both sides of the law that will surprise you and make you laugh as you double-lock your doors."—Tess Gerritsen

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Out of the Dark](#) (St Martins \$27.99 Jan. 30). This may be the 4th for Evan Smoak, aka Orphan X, but it can as easily be read as a standalone rocket of a thriller. The propulsive narrative has two tracks: Orphan X seeks to defend himself against being taken out by Agent A, an equally well trained assassin who bears X a personal grudge (but what is it?), while at the same time X is relentlessly targeting the President who is protected by both *force majeure* and tech wizardry. The techno aspects are dazzling; can the Secret Service have all this at its disposal? But the real heart of the book is Evan's heart, his

wounded heart, and it's the emotional wallop that stays with you when the action is over. I loved the series start in 2016 with [Orphan X](#) and here, at Book #4, I reconnected with it at gut level which is why it is our **January Thriller Book of the Month**. I stayed glued to the pages all one evening. Do not miss it!

Lescroart, John. [Rule of Law](#) (Atria \$27 Jan. 24). Defense attorney Dismas Hardy's long streak of getting along with everyone on both sides of the courtroom ends when his friend Wes Farrell loses his campaign for re-election as district attorney of San Francisco to a rising star who wastes no time changing the rules. So we know we're going to have trouble with Ron Jameson. Then real trouble begins quietly enough when Hardy's devoted if long-suffering secretary goes AWOL. Driven to (an illegal) search of her apartment looking for clues, Hardy and his longtime and former cop buddy Abe Glitsky discover that Phyllis had a dangerous hidden life. When she resurfaces she's arrested as an accomplice to the murder of a vicious coyote. Seriously? Phyllis? Can Hardy and his newly reformed law firm prevail against not the cops, not the criminals, nor even ICE agents, but against Ron the new DA, a man with a secret or two to hide? You can read this as a standalone but you series' fans will enjoy hanging with some of the players in this legal drama.

Rankin, Ian. [In a House of Lies](#) (LittleBrown \$27 Jan. 31). *LJ* reviews: "For more than a decade, the family of PI Stuart Bloom has decried the inept and ineffectual investigation of his disappearance by the local police. Now his body has been discovered in the trunk of his rusted-out car with clues that lead too close to the detectives assigned to the case. DI Siobhan Clarke, still reeling from a tussle with an Internal Affairs investigation, is assigned the case and quickly discovers that one of the original detectives is her mentor, retired DI John Rebus. Clarke tiptoes around her supervisors and connects with Rebus, giving him access to the cold case but also enlisting his assistance with a number of threats she's received. Lies abound, each character seems to have something to hide, and someone is leaking information. The 22nd Rebus title finds the usual suspects and old friends: Rebus, Clarke, Fox, Cafferty, et al. Newcomers to the series may be drawn in by the plot twists, pithy dialog, and dark underside of Edinburgh, but readers of the previous entries will enjoy a deeper appreciation of the intricacies of the relationships and events." Like Bosch, the aging Rebus adapts to new policing roles, but never loses his fundamental cop's drive and sapient eye.

Rollins, James. [Crucible](#) (Harper \$28.99 Jan 21—this is the day before publication date and our copies come with a custom collectible created just for you). Never let it be said that the fearless Rollins doesn't dare to tackle big subjects. *Crucible* is really a "cautionary tale about artificial intelligence," but Rollins starts this new Sigma Force thriller off during the waning days of the horrific Spanish Inquisition and sets his sights on witches. But there's more. Out for a drink with his best friend and colleague Monk Kokkalis, Commander Gray Pierce arrives home on Christmas Eve to find his house ransacked, his pregnant lover missing, and Monk's two young daughters vanished into the night. The only witness to this attack is Monk's wife, Kat, who is found beaten, bleeding, and comatose on the kitchen floor. Halfway around the world, the U.S ambassador to Portugal is ambushed at a prestigious scientific symposium of women scientists. She and her colleagues are murdered, their bodies

burned beyond recognition. The culprits behind this brutal attack are tied to an ancient sect, one that is determined to return the world to a time of darkness and ignorance, to when witches were burned at the stake. Rollins writes "To stop this cabal and learn the truth about the attack upon their families, Gray and Monk must follow arcane clues tracing back to the time of the Spanish Inquisition—and to the dark mysteries surrounding a medieval text known as the *Malleus Maleficarum*. The Hammer of the Witches. I thought, 'Why not build a story around that: a pairing of the persecution of women in the past with that of today's women who work in scientific fields?' ... *Crucible* deals with a subject matter that personally terrifies me and serves as a cautionary tale about a real-world threat looming just around the corner. ... So brace yourselves—this is Sigma's most daunting and personal adventure to date."

Points to you who can put a name to the patron saint of witches.

Stuart, Gary L. [Call Him Mac](#) (Sentinel \$35 Jan. 28). The political life of Ernest W. McFarland—Arizona lawyer, judge, senator, governor, Supreme Court justice, and businessman—is well documented. Less well known is his life as a family man, country lawyer, rural judge, and visionary. Professor Stuart's work will correct that.

Tarkoff, Sarah. [Fearless](#) (Harper \$16.99 Jan. 27). A decade ago, Grace Luther's life was changed by the Revelations: the moment when Great Spirit "saved" humanity and transformed the world into a place where pious behavior is rewarded with beauty, and wrongdoing results in ugliness and even death. Now, at eighteen, Grace knows that everything she believed about the Revelations is a lie—a myth constructed by the government of the Prophets to force its citizens into model behavior...and one that led to her mother's death. She is determined to expose the deception and bring down the Prophets, even if it means aligning herself with the resistance, a group she doesn't entirely trust. After insinuating herself into Prophet Joshua's inner circle, the double agent gets ever closer to fulfilling her mission to destroy his mind-influencing nanotechnology. But a shocking discovery has her questioning her path, and sends her hunting for answers about her past. Second in the Eye of the Beholder Series after [Sinless](#).

SIGNED BOOKS FOR JANUARY

This is a review of books listed in the Near Year's Booknews plus Signed titles have been added. More will be added as January moves along so please check the Enews or [sign up for it](#) if you don't subscribe. Thank you.

Benedict, Marie. [The Only Woman in the Room](#) (Sourcebooks \$25.99). Hedy Lamarr, movie star. And we now know, so much more. "In her rousing historical novel, Benedict (*Carnegie's Maid*) imagines lesser known aspects of Hedy Lamarr's life—before she took the film world by storm in the '40s, and her later efforts as a hobbyist inventor during her acting years. In 1933, 19-year-old Hedwig "Hedy" Keisler, of Jewish heritage, is performing in a stage production in Vienna when she catches the eye of military munitions manufacturer Friedrich Mandl. His wealth and influence in the face of threats to Austria's precarious independence lead Hedy's parents to encourage a union. Mandl is a controlling, abusive husband, but the keenly intelligent Hedy—whose intellectual curiosity was always encouraged by her father—absorbs every word of her husband's meetings with

high-level political and military operatives, hiding her growing horror at her husband's willingness to offer concessions to fascist influences. In 1937, Hedy escapes his hold and heads to Los Angeles, where she takes the screen name of Lamarr and strikes a lucrative contract with MGM. As her career blossoms and war wages in Europe, Hedy, learning of Hitler's treatment of Jews, sets out to create something that could change the stakes in the Allied effort."

This is a fascinating novel. Benedict will be able to sign it for us on March 1 and so it becomes our **March Modern Firsts Book of the Month**. Non-club members should reserve a copy now as the novel has sprinted onto the bestseller list and will reprint.

✉Bradley, Alan. [The Golden Tresses of the Dead](#) (Orion \$48). In Flavia de Luce's 10th outing, set in 1950s England, the ghoulish central question is: "How had an embalmed finger found its way from the hand of a dead woman in a Surrey cemetery into the heart of sister Ophelia's wedding cake at Buckshaw?" Though only in her early teens, chemistry prodigy Flavia has formed a private detective agency with Arthur Dogger, her late father's valet, at the family estate of Buckshaw which Flavia now owns. The digit turns out to have come from the corpse of a guitar impresario and presents Flavia and Dogger with their first case. The sleuths also get their first client when Anastasia Prill asks for their help in recovering some sensitive stolen letters relating to her father's homeopathic practice, an inquiry that turns into a homicide investigation. "Bradley, who has few peers at combining fair-play clueing with humor and has fun mocking genre conventions, shows no sign of running out of ideas," says the *PW* Starred Review. Since he lives on the Isle of Man we have to import signed copies from London.

Burke, James Lee. [New Iberia Blues](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). Patrick writes, "Dave Robicheaux may be getting on in years but he's certainly not ready to ride into the sunset, as Burke proves in his masterful new novel. As a longtime reader of Burke, I'm always in awe of the lush, poetic language, the visionary attention to time and the presence of the ghosts of the past among the living. This time out, Robicheaux discovers the crucified body of a woman floating in the surf close to a famous movie director's beachfront property. As more bodies are found, each staged in what appears to be a ritualistic, symbolic manner, Robicheaux and his longtime Sancho Panza, Clete Purcell, find themselves on the hunt once again. Dave's daughter Alafair, now a successful novelist in her own right, plays a prominent role this time out. Reading Burke is like spending time with an old friend, and his moral compass is reassuring in these troubled times." Yes, it's Dave Robicheaux, in his 22nd investigation running through dark corners of Hollywood, the mafia, and the backwoods of Louisiana. We have a couple of dozen Signed firsts left.

Chakraborty, SA. [Kingdom of Copper](#) (Harper \$26.99). Nahri's life changed forever the moment she accidentally summoned Dara, a formidable, mysterious djinn, during one of her schemes. Whisked from her home in Cairo, she was thrust into the dazzling royal court of Daevabad—and quickly discovered she would need all her grifter instincts to survive there. Now, with Daevabad entrenched in the dark aftermath of a devastating battle, Nahri must forge a new path for herself. But even as she embraces her heritage and the power it holds, she knows she's been trapped in a gilded cage, watched by a king who rules from

the throne that once belonged to her family—and one misstep will doom her tribe. Book 2 in the Daevabad Trilogy after [The City of Brass](#) (\$16.99), a 2018 SciFi Book of the Month Club Pick, so club members will surely want this sequel.

Dean, Will. [Red Snow](#) (OneWorld \$36). One suicide—the licorice factory owner climbs up the tallest chimney and jumps. One cold-blooded murder. Are they connected? And who's really pulling the strings in the small Swedish town of Gavrik? Black Grimberg licorice coins cover the murdered man's eyes. The hashtag #Ferryman starts to trend as local people stock up on ammunition. Tuva Moodyson, deaf reporter at the local paper, has a fortnight to investigate the deaths before she starts her new job in the south. A blizzard moves in. Residents, already terrified, feel increasingly cut-off. Tuva must go deep inside the Grimberg factory to stop the killer before she leaves town for good. But who's to say the Ferryman will let her go? Nordic Noir for our **January Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**. Order early as we have a limited number of copies.

Dorsey, Tim. [No Sunscreen for the Dead](#) (Harper \$28). In a cryptic prologue. Dorsey ties the two plot lines together logically, offering another successful blend of the funny and the fiendish. Then it begins. Serge and Coleman are back on the road, ready to hit the next stop on their list of obscure and wacky points of interest in the Sunshine State. This time, Serge's interest is drawn to one of the largest retirement villages in the world—also known as the site of an infamous sex scandal between a retiree and her younger beau that rocked the community. What starts out as an innocent quest to observe elders in their natural habitats, sample the local cuisine, and scope out a condo to live out the rest of their golden years, soon becomes a Robin Hood-like crusade to recover the funds of swindled residents.

Fabbri, Robert. [Emperor of Rome](#) (Atlantic UK \$39). Rome, AD 68. Vespasian is tasked with the impossible. Should he quell the revolt in Judaea, as Nero the emperor has instructed, or must he resort to the unthinkable and sabotage his own campaign? If his conquest succeeds, he risks becoming the sole object of the mad emperor's jealousy. If he fails, then his punishment will be severe. The fate of his men and his beloved son, Titus, all hang in the balance. But unknown to Vespasian, Nero has committed suicide, catapulting Rome into political turmoil. Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, is caught between the warring factions of Aulus Vitellius, a cruel opportunist, and the noble Marcus Salvius Otho, who finds himself severely outnumbered. Seeing no aid on the horizon, Sabinus must rely on wit, and wit alone, to ensure the safety of his family. With a contested throne and an army at his disposal, now may finally be Vespasian's time? I ordered this mostly for fans of Lindsey Davis' Falco series and also because Fabbri should be better known as a writer of Roman fiction.

Grant, Andrew. [Invisible](#) (Ballantine \$27 in stock now but Signed here Feb. 5). Here is the coveted *PW* Star for this new start by Grant: "After successfully carrying out a highly tricky mission in Istanbul that serves to sabotage Iran's nuclear ambitions, U.S. Army intelligence operative Paul McGrath, the hero of this superior thriller from Grant, receives a letter from his estranged father two years after it was written, thanks to the inefficient military mail system. McGrath's choice of career alienated his father, a pacifist, but the senior McGrath offers hope for the two of them to reconcile in the letter. When McGrath finally reaches

the house in Westchester he grew up in, he's stunned to learn that his father has died, apparently from a heart attack, following a heated argument with his shady business partner, Alex Pardew. The circumstances immediately trigger guilt in McGrath over his refusal to be that partner. Things get worse when the NYPD suspect McGrath of being behind his father's death, leading McGrath to turn investigator. Grant capably combines a riveting plot and depth of character. His best outing to date, this standalone marks Grant as a rising genre star." It's a cool concept, a kind of cloak of invisibility dropping over McGrath as he becomes a janitor at the court house, a crusader with a mop and bucket.

Johnston, Tim. [The Current](#) (Algonquin \$27.95 out now, Signed March 1). Karen reviews: Johnston's previous novel, [Descent](#) (\$15.99), was a *New York Times* bestseller and *The Current* is sure to follow according to the starred reviews in *Publisher's Weekly* and *Kirkus Reviews*. Caroline Price offers to drive her friend, Audrey Sutter, home to see her father, Tom, who is dying of cancer. Outside a small Minnesota town, the car plunges into an icy river. Audrey survives, Caroline does not. The incident awakens memories of ten years ago when a similar accident happened, killing 19-year-old Holly Burke. Tom Sutter was sheriff at the time and Holly's father was never convinced that Sutter had done a thorough investigation on what really happened. Some viewed it as an accident, others a deliberate push by another car. It is easy to speculate on motives, as there are many. Holly's father, Gordon, and Tom Sutter have cautious conversations concerning the death of one daughter and a similar accident, with a daughter surviving.... The word "nuanced" comes up often when describing Johnston's writing. Rather than skim across the symptoms of an event, he digs into the underlying causes that promoted it. An engrossing read.

Jones, Stephen Mack. [Lives Laid Away](#) (Soho \$28 in stock now). And Jones will visit The Pen on February 10 and will chat with Joe Ide. And here is the *NY Times* review: "A clever, punchy tale set in one of today's more romantic locales: Detroit. A city climbing back from ruin is a great backdrop for redemptive stories like this one, about a native who is renovating houses on his childhood street to try and rebuild the neighborhood he grew up in. Stephen Mack Jones is also a playwright and a poet, which means he knows how to make every word count. This timely story of ICE raids with a sinister motive has heart and muscle aplenty." [August Snow](#) was the 2018 Hammett Prize and Nero Wolfe Award winner.

Meltzer, Brad. [The First Conspiracy](#) (Flatiron \$32). Our **January Modern Firsts Book of the Month**. Not only is it timely, but Meltzer writes history with the same style and propulsion (and fine plotting) that he writes fiction—thus, a terrific choice. In 1776, an elite group of soldiers were handpicked to serve as George Washington's bodyguards. Washington trusted them; relied on them. But unbeknownst to Washington, some of them were part of a treasonous plan. In the months leading up to the Revolutionary War, these traitorous soldiers, along with the Governor of New York William Tryon and Mayor David Mathews, launched a deadly plot against the most important member of the military: George Washington himself. This is the story of the secret plot and how it was revealed. It is a story of leaders, liars, counterfeiters, and jailhouse confessors. It also shows just how hard the battle was for George Washington—and how close America was to losing the Revolutionary War. Taking

place during the most critical period of our nation's birth, *The First Conspiracy* tells a remarkable and previously untold piece of American history that not only reveals George Washington's character, but also illuminates the origins of America's counterintelligence movement that led to the modern day CIA.

Montgomery, Jess. [The Widows](#) (St Martins \$28). "Montgomery's debut features two tough-as-nails, strong-willed women whose empathy leaves a lasting impression. A simultaneous examination of women's rights, coal mining, prohibition, and Appalachian life, this is a fantastic choice for historical fiction fans."—*Library Journal* (starred). "*The Widows* is the story of a community in crisis: the Pinkertons are waging war against miners and the law, and no one is safe from their recklessness. But two brave women take a stand, committing themselves to saving their community and families. Jess Montgomery's gorgeous writing can be just as dark and terrifying as a subterranean cave when the candle is snuffed out, but her prose can just as easily lead you to the surface for a gasp of air and a glimpse of blinding, beautiful sunlight. This is a powerful novel: a tale of loss, greed, and violence, and the story of two powerful women who refuse to stand down."—Wiley Cash, echoed by Julia Keller. And certainly a good choice for fans of Sharyn McCrumb's *Ballad Mysteries*. I add that novel was inspired by the true story of Ohio's first female sheriff, Lily Ross, who became acting sheriff when her husband Daniel was killed over in 1917 France. Was it an accident or a war casualty? Or...? Find out by ordering our **January First Mystery Book of the Month**.

Pronzini, Bill. [The Flimflam Affair](#) (Forge \$27). Carpenter and Quincannon, Professional Detective Services, is a fixture in San Francisco at the dawn of the 20th century. While the future is unclear, Sabina and John know one thing for certain; they will protect their clients from flimflammers, thieves, and murderers, and do whatever it takes to run these dregs of society into the arms of the law. Sometimes, that requires a subtle touch. Professor A. Vargas, self-styled medium extraordinaire, and his partner Annabelle, use guile and trickery to swindle bereaved men and women eager to contact the spirits of deceased loved ones. John and Sabina must not only unmask these charlatans, but also solve the riddle of an impossible murder in the midst of a séance. Other cases involve brute force and personal danger. Such as the theft of a burglarproof safe mysteriously emptied of gold bullion. And John's pursuit of a ruthless gang of counterfeiters, whose leader appears to be a man from John's past in the Secret Service—a man thought long dead. Adding spice to these exploits is Sabina and John's personal relationship, which is rapidly progressing to an exciting new level. 7th in series.

Rowland, Laura Joh. [The Hangman's Secret](#) (Crooked Lane \$28). "Rowland's engaging team of sleuths and a colorful rogues' gallery of suspects make her third Victorian mystery a genuine page-turner." —*Kirkus Reviews*. Which goes on to report, "London, 1890. Photographer Sarah Bain's success as an amateur sleuth has led to a job as a crime-scene photographer for the Daily World. Together with her handsome sidekick, Lord Hugh Staunton, and street urchin and factotum Mick O'Reilly, Sarah's summoned to a grisly scene. Pub owner and sometime hangman Harry Warbrick appears to have hanged himself. His severed head rests in a noose above a pool of blood. But evidence at the scene convinces Sarah that this was not suicide but murder. Malcolm Cross, Sarah's rival at the World, mocks her account. In announcing an in-house contest to ferret out the truth before the

police, Sir Gerald Mariner, the paper's shrewd owner, pits Sarah against Cross (not to mention law enforcement)...”

Souders, Paul. [Arctic Solitaire](#) (Mountaineer Books \$26.95). How did photographer Souders find himself alone aboard a tiny boat, enduring bad weather and worse cooking, while struggling to find his way across more than a thousand miles of Hudson Bay? It was all for a picture. He dreamed of photographing the Arctic's most iconic animal, the polar bear, in its natural habitat. It was a seemingly simple plan: Haul a 22-foot fishing boat northeast a few thousand miles, launch, and shoot the perfect polar bear photo. Of course it didn't go that way.... A dozen left in stock.

Wilson, F. Paul. [The Void Protocol](#) (Forge \$29). Something sits in a bunker lab buried fifty feet below the grounds of Lakehurst Naval Air Station. The product of the Lange-Tür technology confiscated from the Germans after World War II occupies a chamber of steel-reinforced ballistic glass. Despite experimentation for nearly three-quarters of a century, no one knows what it is, but illegal human research reveals what it can do. Humans with special abilities have been secretly collected—abilities that can only have come from whatever occupies the underground bunker in Lakehurst. And so it sits, sequestered on the edge of the New Jersey Pine Barrens, slowly changing the world. Wilson concludes his medical thriller trilogy featuring Rick Hayden and Laura Fanning as they confront the entities responsible for the supernatural events of *Panacea* and *The God Gene*.

Winters, Ben. [Golden State](#) (Little Brown \$27.99 in stock shortly and Signed Feb. 5). Patrick writes, “Following up a groundbreaking novel like [Underground Airlines](#) (\$15.99) is a tall order for any writer, but Winters pulls it off and then some with this brilliant, unsettling novel, our **January SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**. Laszlo Ratesic works for the Speculative Service in an alternate society known as the Golden State, which stands where California once stood. The alternate utopian society has become a refuge for like-minded individuals escaping from the systemic corruption and lies that have splintered the country. In the Golden State, truth is held as the supreme virtue and knowingly contradicting the truth is a crime. It's Lazlo's job to investigate and stop these crimes and he is one of the few people allowed to harbor untruths to speculate on how the crime occurred. Of course, this seeming paradise comes at quite a cost in the form of constant surveillance and recording. When those in power have the monopoly on 'truth' and can use it for their own ends, does truth have any currency left? Winters doesn't shy away asking the difficult questions about where we are today and where we might be headed.”

Critic Hank Stephenson adds, “Winters is an expert at combining social commentary with gripping mystery plots, and the novel never slows down enough to be accused of didacticism. With rich characters, frequent twists and tense set pieces, Winters always nails the hardboiled basics. And even as Ratesic's unquestioning faith in his society erodes, it remains a provocative and compelling alternative to the uncertainty that can seem to undergird modern life.”

JANUARY BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Jones, Gytha. [She Lies in Wait](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

MacRae, Molly. [Crewel and Unusual](#)

Discovery Club One paperback or hardcover per month

Kim, Un-Su. [The Plotters](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First per month

Jan.: Montgomery, Jess. [The Widows](#)

Hardboiled Crime Club One signed First per month

Jan. Dean, Will. [Red Snow](#)

History/Mystery Club One Signed First per month

Faye, Lyndsay. [The Paragon Hotel](#)

History Paperback One per month

Hamilton, Victoria. [A Gentlewoman's Guide to Murder](#)

Modern First Editions One Signed First per month

Meltzer, Brad. [The First Conspiracy](#)

SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Club One Signed First per month

Winters, Ben. [Golden State](#)

Surprise Me! Club One Signed First Per Month

Hendricks, Greer/Sarah Pekkanen. [An Anonymous Girl](#)

Thriller Club One Signed First per month

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Out of the Dark](#)

MORE CLASSIC CRIME REISSUES

✚Duncan, Francis. [Behold a Fair Woman](#) (Sourcebooks \$14.99). Mordecai Tremaine's hobby of choice—crime detection—has left him in need of a holiday. A break away from that gruesome business of murder will be just the ticket, and the picturesque island of Moulin d'Or seems to be just the destination. Out doing the typical British holidaymaker revel in fresh-air-while-there-is-sun thing, Mordecai meets a band of fellow vacationers and more permanent residents at a luxury if peculiar hotel. Then a body is discovered. Mordecai is a classic amateur sleuth, driven by insatiable curiosity and equipped with observational skills and good logic, which provide his entrée into working with the local police to catch whomever has smuggled murder into the island idyll.... 5th in a [reissued series](#) from an earlier age

Medawar, Tony, ed. [Bodies from the Library](#) (Harper \$16.99). 16 Lost Tales by masters of the Golden Age of Detective Fiction for the first time in book form, including a newly discovered Agatha Christie crime story that has not been seen since 1922.

Millar, Margaret. [The Listening Walls](#) (Soho \$14.95). Amy Kellogg is not having a pleasant vacation in Mexico. She's been arguing nonstop with her friend and traveling companion, Wilma, and she wants nothing more than to go home to California and the Bay Area. But an uncomfortable stay in a Mexican hotel takes a nightmarish turn when Wilma is found dead on the street below their room—an apparent suicide. In this suspenseful masterpiece about corrupted love, Rupert Kellogg's wife, Amy, goes missing after an ill-fated trip to Mexico—and Rupert becomes the focus of a paranoid investigation.

Who is Canadian Millar? “Millar's mysteries are filled with clever twists, yet what makes them special is her surgical

approach to her characters' inner lives. She's got an eagle eye for the juicy stuff lots of mystery writers still ignore—questions of class, status, sexual desire and the difficult position of women. This last was something she knew about firsthand. Millar's work was long overshadowed by that of her husband, detective novelist Ross Macdonald. In fact, her best novels — like 1955's *Beast in View* — have a ferocious edge that make him look rather tame.”

—John Powers, NPR's Fresh Air

MORE LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Callanan, Liam. [Paris by the Book](#) (\$16). Our April 2018 Modern Firsts Book of the Month is in part a love letter to Paris, in part a love letter to books beloved to Callanan, and in part a journey of rediscovery by our heroine, an American whose writer husband has gone missing in the city which prompts her to relocate to find him. The Indie Next Pick expresses our exuberance over this delightful book, citing the “equal parts *Madeline* and *The Red Balloon*, the children's books that shape Leah's view of the City of Light. I'd compare Callanan's engrossing third novel to *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry* and *The Little Paris Bookshop*, but with its confounding but ultimately loveable heroine, there's a bit of *Where'd You Go, Bernadette* in the story as well. This captivating novel is filled with rich characters, a twisty plot, a bit of mystery, and a heaping dollop of *joie de vivre*.”

Gabin, Jane S. [The Paris Photo](#) (Wisdom \$18.99). Dr. Gabin joins us with Mark Pryor on February 23 to celebrate the city, but her book is in stock now. American soldier Ben Gordon forms a relationship with a young mother and her son just after the Liberation of Paris in August 1944. Despite this wartime bond, Ben's eventual return to America separates them. Decades later, Ben's daughter stitches the relationship back together when she discovers a photograph of her late father with an unknown woman and boy. Eager to uncover more of her father's past, she travels to Paris to learn about the people in the photograph. *The Paris Photo* joins the many novels lifting characters out of the pages of a history book and reminding us of how the past echoes in and shapes the present. For fans of Rhys Bowen's standalones, Kristen Hannah, and more.

Jónasson, Ragnar. [Rupture](#) (\$16.99). Young policeman Ari Þór tries to solve a 50-year-old murder when new evidence surfaces. But the case proves difficult in a town where no one wants to know the truth, where secrets are a way of life. He's assisted by Ísrún, a news reporter in Reykjavik who is investigating an increasingly chilling case of her own. Things take a sinister turn when a child goes missing in broad daylight, plus there's a stalker on the loose, and the town is in quarantine, “Easily the best yet [of four total Ari Thor thrillers]... A chiller of a thriller whose style and pace are influenced by Jónasson's admiration for Agatha Christie. It's good enough to share shelf space with the works of Yrsa Sigurdardottir and Arnaldur Indridason, Iceland's crime novel royalty.”—*The Washington Post*. Excellent news: **Jonasson will visit The Pen on April 24 to discuss his work and Icelandic Noir.**

☞Lake, Alex. [The Last Lie](#) (Harper \$12.99). There is little coming from British crime besides Trust No One/Domestic Suspense but this one has a bit of a different spin in that we know early that the perfect life and marriage enjoyed by Claire Daniels is built upon a foundation of lies hammered into place by her husband Alfie. She thinks he dotes on her and her only concern

is getting pregnant.... Another characteristic of this genre is that it is largely filled with family and children issues and presents a portrait of domestic life English style that often contrasts with American counterparts.

Sigurdardottir, Yrsa. [The Legacy](#) (\$17.99). A second Icelandic Noir we recommend for January. You have to take a Nordic sensibility into account when weighing humor, I find. This is the PW Starred Review: “This relentlessly paced series launch from Sigurdardottir is as stark and horrifying as any of the ancient Icelandic sagas. In 1987, three orphaned siblings fall victim to bureaucratic exigency: the sister, because she is more desirable to potential adoptive parents, is separated from her two older brothers. Flash forward to 2015, when an intruder slips into the Reykjavik home of Elisa, a young mother, while her husband is away and brutally murders her. Huldar, a police detective shakily directing his first homicide investigation, joins forces with Freyja, a psychologist specializing in the care of traumatized children. Margrét, Elisa's unhappy eldest child who was cowering under the bed where her mother was killed, gradually reveals clues to the killer's identity. Meanwhile, Karl, a reclusive loner, untangles clues he hears on his ham radio. Sigurdardottir's trademark sly ironies, often directed at official fumbling, can be downright ghoulish. Others are deliciously hilarious...Each character is brilliantly conceived. Few readers will be able to put down this powerful tale of revenge.”

Smith, JP. [The Drowning](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99). Alex Mason has it all: a lavish lifestyle, a beautiful family, a thriving career. He's built his life around the certainty that no one would discover what really happened twenty years ago at an idyllic summer camp. He's wrong. “An overbearing alpha male gets his comeuppance in this smart, creepy thriller...Sharp, clear prose is a plus. This is a remarkably adept performance.”—PW Starred Review

MORE NEW BOOKS FOR JANUARY

You will see in the comments below that I am burned out with the psychological suspense drama. There are some terrific books in it in January and to come, but on the whole it's overloaded and growing boring. In case you think I'm just being cranky [read this article](#). I do think this glut of novels fueled by betrayals and powered by revelations is inspiring a return to classic mysteries where detection is the driver of the plot.

☞Barton, Fiona. [The Suspect](#) (Berkley \$26). A “gap” year for the British is somewhat like the “Rumspringa” the Amish accord their teenagers—a year off to explore the world and themselves. Barton's third shines a harsh mirror on what happens when the kids are impulsive, use poor judgment, fail to prepare for potential hazards, and want to hide all this from their parents. For example, heading off ill-prepared to Thailand where a son has basically dropped from sight and two girls make poor decisions and end up dead. That mirror also shines on parents and particularly upon a mother, journalist Kate Waters, who puts defending her child above...everything. Barton, herself a reporter, once again draws upon the profession in modeling character and plot.

Bowman, David. [Big Bang](#) (LittleBrown \$32 with an Introduction by Jonathan Lethem.) The question, where were you when JFK was assassinated? is propelling. “It's the 1950s, brought back to life, treating well- and little-known adventures

of virtually all the main players. Among them: spook/B-novelist Howard Hunt (always plotting), William S. Burroughs (shoots wife in head), Marilyn Monroe (sympathetic, conflicted), JFK (trystmaster, including a one-nighter with Monroe in Bing Crosby's mansion), Jackson Pollock (howls some lyrics from a Stones song written a decade later while painting a red door black), Richard M. Nixon (thinking himself president-elect, takes off on a lark to Tijuana postelection day), Montgomery Clift (face-shattering accident), Dr. Spock (institutionalizes wife), and Buster Hendrix (later Jimi, in the army). Plus many, many more. Refreshingly, but unusually since the 1700s, the author comes out of the text at times to comment. There's a small Pt. 2 that takes in the early Sixties, ending in a significant treatment of the Kennedy assassination in the penultimate chapter, not surprisingly coming to a conclusion quite different from the Warren Commission's. Bowman's posthumous novel is a masterpiece, certainly long but never tedious because of the rapid focus changes. For full effect, however, readers will need better than a passing knowledge of the political and social climate of the Fifties."—*LJ Starred Review*

Brabazon, James. [The Break Line](#) (Berkley \$27). British documentarian Brabazon makes his fiction debut with an adrenaline-charged thriller. Soon after Max McLean, who has been an off-the-books assassin for the British government for more than two decades, decides not to kill his target in Caracas, Venezuela, he receives another assignment. He must travel to Karabunda, a jungle outpost in northern Sierra Leone, and kill the white leader of an insurgent force without backup or access to the usual intel. Max poses as a doctor to scout the remote area, only to discover that the military has closed off the entire region, claiming a cholera outbreak. He learns, though, that the dead have been savaged, some dismembered or eviscerated, with human bite marks left on the bodies. Later, in Freetown, he recovers a message left for him by a comrade-in-arms with a phrase in Irish that translates as "kill them all." And so.... Brabazon produces "inventive violence, a mix of combat styles, and slowly revealed truths" that have earned him very strong reviews but I could not find a heart here as I did with Jack Carr's [The Terminal List](#) (\$9.99), last year's military fiction hot debut, or the 13th Brad Taylor, [Daughter of War](#) (Dutton \$27 Signed), which provides a huge emotional wallop along with its special ops expertise.

✚Bradley, Alan. [Golden Tresses of the Dead](#) (Random \$26). Here is the 10th Flavia de Luce detection in a much decorated and charming series that is no cozy—vide the chopped off finger inserted into Flavia's sister's wedding cake. This autumn in Bishop's Lacey is a time of new beginnings for Flavia whose father has died leaving her the family estate Buckshaw and whose sister Ophelia is married and away. Flavia, "the world's greatest adolescent British chemist/busybody/sleuth" (*The Seattle Times*), has set up a detective agency with the stalwart estate gardener Dogger and the finger provides them with their first case. But Flavia is plagued by her moon-faced cousin Undine, a pest of a child.... See Signed Books for more: [Golden Tresses of the Dead](#) (Orion \$48).

Brady, AF. [Once a Liar](#) (Park/Harper \$15.99). Brady's sophomore novel has an unusual narrator—not unreliable in the usual way. "A smart, nuanced and spine-chilling portrayal of a sociopath walking among us... Brady's depth of knowledge

and skillful hand make us root for him in spite of everything he may—or may not—have done," says author Wendy Walker of Peter Caine, Manhattan defense attorney. Caine's success despite the childhood that warped him has come at a price. And now a long running feud with scheming New York County DA Harrison Doyle, who once humiliated him during a trial, has come to a head. When Doyle's stepdaughter and Caine's mistress, Charlotte Doyle, is stabbed to death, the evidence points to Caine's guilt. Can he prove his innocence and keep his house of cards intact? Here's a wicked read for a cold January night.

Carroll, James. [The Cloister](#) (\$16.95). In 1142 in the Duchy of Bourgogne, the aging Abbess Héloïse finds the dead body of her former lover, Peter Abelard. This story line is woven together with the 1950 story of Father Michael Kavanagh, a New York priest, and Rachel Vedette, a museum docent. They meet when he takes shelter from a rainstorm in the Cloisters at the top of Manhattan, where Rachel works. Over multiple meetings, the two build a rapport; back in the 12th century, Peter and Héloïse's love story unfolds. Rachel and Michael are both haunted by people from their pasts—her now-dead father, whose life's work was an unfinished book on Abelard, and his lost friend from seminary. As Michael discovers his friend's secrets and Rachel deals with her complicated feelings about her father, Héloïse and Peter's troubles escalate. This is an engrossing novel for history and romance lovers and I also include it in a nod to Sharan Newman and her medieval mysteries rooted in the work of Héloïse.

Chaney, Joann. [As Long As We Both Shall Live](#): (Flatiron \$27.99). Marriage is murder. When 40-something housewife Marie Evans falls to her death from a cliff above the Three Forks River in Estes Park, was it a hiking accident as her husband Matt reports? Is it a coincidence that his first wife Janice was killed by an intruder who attacked the couple while they slept? "Chaney grabs readers with her opening line: 'If you try to kill your wife without a plan, you will fail.'... Marriage laid bare, with a riveting account of evasion and pursuit—and a zinger of a coda." —*Booklist Starred Review*

✚Corry, Jane. [The Dead Ex](#) (Viking \$26). Middle-aged Vicki Goudman lives a quiet life working as an aromatherapist, healing her clients out of her home studio in Penzance, Cornwall, with her special blends of essential oils. She's just finishing a session when the police arrive on her doorstep—her ex-husband David, a wealthy London property developer, went missing two weeks ago. Vicki insists she last saw him years ago when they divorced, but the police clearly don't believe her. And her memory's hardly reliable. David's new wife, Tanya, is the one who reported him missing. Meanwhile, there's a whole 'nother plot moving along and in time the two streams coincide with devastating impact. It's another entry in domestic suspense that comes with fascinating and very clever uses of aromatic oils which is fun to explore.

Fernandez, Marc. [Mala Vida](#) (Arcade \$24.99). Present-day Spain, a time of economic crisis and resurgent populist nationalism. The radical right has just won the election after twelve years of Socialist rule. In the midst of this political upheaval, a series of murders is committed, taking place from Madrid to Barcelona to Valencia. The victims include a politician, a real-estate lawyer, doctor, a banker, and a nun. There is no obvious connection between them. As the country prepares for a return to a certain moral order, radio crime reporter Diego Martin is trying to keep

his head above water in anticipation of the expected media purge. When he decides to look into the first murder, he doesn't have the faintest clue that his investigation will lead far beyond his local beat and put his life at risk. For what he uncovers exposes the roots of a national scandal: the theft of babies from the victims of the Franco regime, crimes—never prosecuted—that were orchestrated by now well-connected citizens who will do anything to avoid exposure. “Almodóvar meets Orwell in this acclaimed, fast-paced contemporary noir novel exposing the most shameful secrets of the Franco era—a finalist for the *Grand Prix des Lectrices d' Elle* and winner of the *Prix Plaidoiries* for a crime novel at the *Festival Clameur(s) of Dijon*.”

✎Frances, Michel. [The Temp](#) (Kensington \$26). A psychological thriller. “Emma has long dreamed of being a screenwriter, so when a temp job to cover for Carrie Kennedy, one of London's most sought-after producers, who's on maternity leave, comes up, Emma makes a few résumé tweaks and lands the position. With Carrie out of the office, Emma charms the staff, offering her ideas and notes as everyone works through the newest production, written by Carrie's husband, Adrian. Amid the diaper changing, Carrie is kept in the loop by Adrian and quickly learns that she needs to get back to the office before Emma takes over. Frances (*The Girlfriend*) returns with a mesmerizing novel that is part thriller, part domestic suspense. With chapters denoted by days and dates and of varying length, the story moves at a rapid pace. The push and pull of characters who work to succeed from different angles create a story abounding with mysteries, revelations, and lies, making this novel one of a kind.”—*LJ*

Gentry, Amy. [Last Woman Standing](#) (Houghton \$25). Gentry has borrowed from Patricia Highsmith to create a novel about two women—one the aspiring standup comedian Dana Diaz desperately trying to gain traction in Austin, Texas, towards fame, the other the former tech exec Amanda Dorn who's riding rage and a plan for payback. They meet when Amanda applauds Dana after a bad session in an Austin comedy club and it goes from there as Amanda raises the stakes. The dynamic is OK but I was unable to enter into Dana's voice or find the humor in the joke and patter of her performances. However I may well be too much of a dinosaur to appreciate the standup comedy scene of today.

Gillham, David. [Annelies](#) (Viking \$26). The premise—what if Anne Frank had survived the holocaust and ended up in America with her father?—intrigues but I can't recommend this as a novel or Gillham's portrait of a rage-filled Anne.

Graves, Sarah. [Death by Chocolate Malted Milk](#) (Kensington \$26). The island fishing village of Eastport, Maine, has plenty of salty local character. It also has a sweet side, thanks to Jacobia “Jake” Tiptree, her best friend Ellie, and their waterfront bake shop, The Chocolate Moose. But when island life is disrupted by the occasional killer, Jake and Ellie go sleuthing. Their second investigation after [Death by Chocolate Cherry Cheesecake](#) (\$15.95) begins when Eastport's favorite lovebirds, kindergarten teacher Sharon Sweetwater and Coast Guard Captain Andy Devine, get married. The gala reception is the fête of the season—until Sharon's bitter ex-boyfriend Toby is poisoned with an arsenic-laced milkshake, Andy is jailed as the prime suspect and the wedding is cancelled....

Greeley, Andrew. [The Search for Maggie Ward](#) (Forge \$16.99). Young Navy flier Jerry Keenan is supposed to be on his way

home to Chicago, law school, and a postwar life that is socially acceptable to a well-off Irish Catholic family. Instead he is in Arizona delaying that homecoming while he wrestles with his memories of combat and the men he saw die. That may be one reason an encounter with a girl at a Tucson lunch counter seems so appealing. Another reason is that she is mysterious, hauntingly beautiful, and very sexy—the perfect antidote for a troubled heart. But just when Jerry realizes how much he needs Maggie Ward, she dramatically vanishes—or, is she taken, from him?

Greene, Thomas. [The Perfect Liar](#) (St Martins \$26.99). In this well done spin on domestic suspense, where the driving question is always, who is safe(est)?, we also get a campus mystery. “Widowed Susannah and her teenage son Freddy are living a seemingly perfect life. Her marriage to Max, an acclaimed artist, speaker, and professor, has taken them from New York City to a quiet university town in Vermont. However, both Max and Susannah harbor their own secrets, which could ruin their marriage and the life they've built together. The first warning comes in the form of a note Susannah finds taped on their door, stating, “I know who you are.” As Max and Susannah try to decipher the meaning, more messages follow, and mysterious accidents occur around them, raising suspicions even higher, Told in alternating perspectives between Max and Susannah, it considers mental illness and fear, and a sense of panic sets the pace, as Susannah suspects Max of lying to her, while he remains dismissive. For fans of twisty stories and domestic suspense, this novel creates a slow burn with not one but two shocking climaxes.”—*LJ*. I recommend this; it follows on Greene's success with [The Headmaster's Wife](#) (\$15).

✎Johnson, Daisy. [Everything Under](#) (Grand Central \$16). An eerie, watery reimagining of the Oedipus myth set on the canals of Oxford, from the author of *Fen*. The dictionary doesn't contain every word. Gretel, a lexicographer by trade, knows this better than most. She grew up on a houseboat with her mother, wandering the canals of Oxford and speaking a private language of their own invention. Her mother disappeared when Gretel was a teen, abandoning her to foster care, and Gretel has tried to move on, spending her days updating dictionary entries. One phone call from her mother is all it takes for the past to come rushing back. To find her, Gretel will have to recover buried memories of her final, fateful winter on the canals. A runaway boy had found community and shelter with them, and all three were haunted by their past and stalked by an ominous creature lurking in the canal: the bonak. Everything and nothing at once, the bonak was Gretel's name for the thing she feared most. And now that she's searching for her mother, she'll have to face it.

Johnson, Jeff. [Lucky Supreme](#) (Arcade \$14.99). The night world of Old Town, Portland, Oregon, has gone mad in the grip of gentrification, and at the center of it all is Lucky Supreme, a seedy tattoo parlor, whose proprietor is a street-bred artist with a unique approach to problem solving. Darby Holland has enough on his radar, but when some flash (tattoo artwork) stolen from him resurfaces in California he can't help himself. His efforts to reclaim it set him on a dangerous path, dragging along his delightfully eccentric colleagues, including the brains behind his brawn, Delia, a twiggly vinyl-clad punk genius secretly from the other side of the tracks. No one knows why the art signed “Roland Norton, Panama, 1955” is worth anything or how it came to hang on the walls of Lucky Supreme....

✂ Jones, Gytha. [She Lies in Wait](#) (Random \$27). When a teenage girl goes missing after a wild camping trip in Lodge's debut thriller, those involved must live with uncertainty for 30 years, until her body is found. And here is the **January British Crime Club Book of the Month**, chosen because it is atmospheric, starts a series, has an intricate and twisty plot, is presented in classic closed circle of suspects form—only one of six teens could be the killer—and is not a Domestic Suspense novel but a detection conducted by a Southampton DCI. He gets the case when bones are uncovered in Brinken Wood in the New Forest. They are not fresh. Jonah Sheens, who tirelessly worked the haunting case of the missing 14-year-old Aurora Jackson, is certain Aurora has now been found. The secluded location suggests that the prime suspects remain the same tight circle of family and friends who were in the woods that night, six people who have never quite moved on and whose friendship has eroded. Lodge smoothly intercuts the present-day police probe (including whip-sharp recent transfer DC Juliette Hanson and other team members) with flashbacks to the last day of Aurora's life as seen through her eyes. And we learn the enigmatic Sheens has his own secrets. "Sheens and his team are compassionate, clever, and likable, each with a story that will, we assume, be developed in later books. Despite the small list of suspects, the mystery intrigues and twists, offering enough red herrings and moments of police procedural to please fans..."—*Kirkus* Starred Review.

Kenney, John. [Talk to Me](#) (Putnam \$26). A 2019 cautionary tale. "A superbly crafted story of a swaggering news anchor who disgraces himself, facing shame and regret in an era when being human in public is a blood sport. *Talk to Me* is moving, full of punch and sorrow – and told at the velocity of a man plummeting to earth."—Tom Rachman

Kim, Un-Su. [The Plotters](#) (Knopf \$25.95). Reseng was raised by cantankerous Old Raccoon in the Library of Dogs. To anyone asking, it's just an ordinary library. To anyone in the know, it's a hub for Seoul's organized crime, and a place where contract killings are plotted and planned. So it's no surprise that Reseng has grown up to become one of the best hitmen in Seoul. He takes orders from the plotters, carries out his grim duties, and comforts himself afterwards with copious quantities of beer and his two cats, Desk and Lampshade. But after he takes pity on a target and lets her die how she chooses, he finds his every move is being watched. Is he finally about to fall victim to his own game? And why does that new female librarian at the library act so strangely?

This debut, our **January Discovery Book of the Month**, numbers among emerging Korean noirs. Author, DB John (*Star of the North*) finds it, "Exciting, humorous, intellectual and cinematic. 'Kill Bill meets Murakami.' Twisted and surreal, *The Plotters* is one of those rare books that will haunt you long after you've finished it. The writing is smooth, unhurried and often profound, even as it draws you deeper into the gruesome underworld of skilled contract killers. Chillingly, the violence is almost exquisite, a bloody art form."

Lee, Young Ha. [Dragon Pearl](#) (Disney-Hyperion/Riordan \$16.99). In this highly original novel, 13-year-old Min must venture to the stars of the Thousand Worlds in order to find her older brother, Jun, who is suspected of deserting the Space Forces to search for the legendary Dragon Pearl. Min's quick wits and technical prowess come in handy, but it's her abilities

as one of the fox people to shape-shift and charm others that prove vital after she leaves her home planet of Jinju aboard the freighter Red Azalea. When her brother's former ship rescues the vessel from mercenaries, she poses as slain cadet Bae Jang, promising his ghost that she will avenge his death in exchange for impersonating him on the ship. Disguised as the dead cadet, Min is able to continue both quests, enlisting the aid of two of Bae's friends—female dragon Haneul and nonbinary goblin Sujin—all the while avoiding the scrutiny of Captain Hwan as the ship heads to the Ghost Sector, the probable location of the Dragon Pearl. Lee offers a perfect balance of space opera and Korean mythology with enough complexity to appeal to teens. Ages 8–12.

Loftis, Larry. [Code Name Lise](#) (Gallery \$27). "Reading like a thrilling spy novel and the most exciting sort of non-fiction—well researched, well written, and fast paced enough to keep the pages turning—this will interest fans of the history of espionage, World War II history, military history, women's history, and biography."—*LJ* Starred Review

Medearis, Will. [Restoration Heights](#) (Hanover Square \$26.99). Reddick, a young, white artist, lives in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a historically black Brooklyn neighborhood besieged by gentrification. He makes rent as an art handler in Manhattan and spends his free time playing basketball at the local Y. He is also the last person to see Hannah before she disappears. When Hannah's fiancé, scion to a wealthy Upper East Side family, refuses to call the police, Reddick sets out to discover what happened to her. The search pulls him through a dramatic cross section of New York, taking him to the heart of a many-layered mystery that, in its unraveling, shakes Reddick's convictions and lays bare the complex power dynamics of the city. Unread as yet by me.

Molloy, Aimee. [The Perfect Mother](#) (Morrow \$16.99). A night out. A few hours of fun. That's all it was meant to be. They call themselves the May Mothers—a group of new moms whose babies were born in the same month. Twice a week, they get together in Brooklyn's Prospect Park for some much-needed adult time. When the women go out for drinks at the hip neighborhood bar, they are looking for a fun break from their daily routine. But on this hot Fourth of July night, something goes terrifyingly wrong: one of the babies is taken from his crib. Winnie, a single mom, was reluctant to leave six-week-old Midas with a babysitter, but her fellow May Mothers insisted everything would be fine. Now he is missing. What follows is a race to find Midas, during which secrets are exposed, marriages are tested, and friendships are destroyed. All in 13 days... Also unread by me.

✂ Perks, Heidi. [Her One Mistake](#) (Gallery \$26). And another British psychological suspense where betrayals abound, revelation is key, and the questions are who will survive and who will be safe? This one has a good if implausible twist in the end. Two women become friends in the village of Chiddenford. Their relationship is forged through discussions about their children and Charlotte's recent separation from her husband, Tom. One day, Charlotte jumps at the chance to take Harriet's four-year-old daughter, Alice, to the local fair, since her friend has often helped with Charlotte's youngest child. But within minutes of arriving, Alice disappears while playing on a slide with Charlotte's

two older children. Harriet is devastated, as is her controlling husband, Brian, and Charlotte becomes an object of local infamy and scorn. Both women's secrets begin to spill during the intense police investigation.

Postorino, Rose. [At the Wolf's Table](#) (Flatiron \$26.99). Germany, 1943: Twenty-six-year-old Rosa Sauer's parents are gone, and her husband Gregor is far away, fighting on the front lines of World War II. Impoverished and alone, she makes the fateful decision to leave war-torn Berlin to live with her in-laws in the countryside, thinking she'll find refuge there. But one morning, the SS come to tell her she has been conscripted to be one of Hitler's tasters: three times a day, she and nine other women go to his secret headquarters, the Wolf's Lair, to eat his meals before he does. Forced to eat what might kill them, the tasters begin to divide into The Fanatics, those loyal to Hitler, and the women like Rosa who insist they aren't Nazis, even as they risk their lives every day for Hitler's. As secrets and resentments grow, this unlikely sisterhood faces.... The facets of WWII truly provide an infinite variety for inspiring fiction.

Rich, Nathaniel. [King Zeno](#) (Picador \$19). New Orleans, 1918. The birth of jazz, the Spanish flu, a murderer on the loose. The lives of a traumatized cop, a conflicted Mafia matriarch, and a brilliant trumpeter converge—and the Crescent City is thrown into chaos by a series of murders committed by an ax-wielding maniac with a peculiar taste in music. Wow, I edited and PP Press published a story like this by David Fulmer, *Chasing the Devil's Tail*, which won the 2002 Shamus Award for Best First PI Novel although it was set in 1907.

Roberts, Nora. [Of Blood and Bone](#) (St Martins \$28.99). I find that the Eve Dallas investigations in 21st Century New York go down as smoothly as a milk shake—but with real bite. But here Roberts has ventured into a new world, again the future, with the second in her Chronicles of the One series. "It's been years since the Doom: a mystical plague that not only killed much of society but released magic throughout the world. Technology and societies have failed, people are rebuilding... Fallon Swift, a child ordained to be The One who would vanquish the darkness, knows her future begins on her 13th birthday. She will discover the reach of her powers and meet fairies, shifters, and other extraordinary creatures, as well as learn to fight and heal. Bringing back characters from the first book and adding others from the new generation, Roberts continues her series set in an extraordinary postapocalyptic future where magic and humans learn to coexist, and darkness and light continue the struggle."—*LJ*. Start with [Year One](#) (\$17.99).

Schaffhausen, Joanna. [No Mercy](#) (St Martins \$26.99). *PW* writes, "Schaffhausen's harrowing sequel to 2017's [The Vanishing Season](#) (\$16.99) finds 29-year-old Ellery Hathaway, a Woodbury, Mass., police officer, on involuntary leave after shooting a murderer with ties to the serial killer who abducted and assaulted her when she was 14. A court-appointed psychiatrist prescribes group therapy, where Ellery fixates on the problems of fellow attendees Myra Gallagher and Wendy Mendoza. Eight months earlier, an unknown assailant raped Wendy during a home invasion, and in the 1980s, Myra lost her little boy in a fire allegedly set by an arsonist who's now eligible for parole. Local law enforcement refuses to loop in Ellery, so she launches her own investigations with the help of FBI profiler Reed Markham. Reed and Ellery

grow closer as Ellery's increasingly reckless behavior endangers their lives and careers." It is best to read *The Vanishing Season* first as there are references to it in *No Mercy*.

Sims, Laura. [Looker](#) (Scribner \$25). "It's easy to imagine that stars live gauzily perfect lives. But what happens when the illusion turns deadly? In Sims's creepy debut, a woman fixates on the actress living across the street, admiration tilting into pathology as events in her own life—infertility, her husband's desertion—unmask her fragility. The ultimate unreliable narrator, she reveals her instability slowly."—*People Magazine*. The unnamed narrator can't help noticing with wry irony that, though she and the actress live just a few doors apart, a chasm of professional success and personal fulfillment lies between them. The actress, a celebrity with her face on the side of every bus, shares a gleaming brownstone with her handsome husband and their three adorable children, while the narrator, working in a dead-end job, lives in a run-down, three-story walk-up with her ex-husband's cat. When an interaction with the actress at the annual block party takes a disastrous turn, what began as an innocent preoccupation spirals quickly and lethally...not quite where you expect it to go. I tried to enter into this concept, but I found the narrator so tiresome and self-pitying I lost interest.

Vijay, Madhuri. [The Far Field](#) (Grove \$27). In the wake of her mother's death, Shalini, a privileged and restless young woman from Bangalore, sets out for a remote Himalayan village in the troubled northern region of Kashmir. Certain that the loss of her mother is somehow connected to the decade-old disappearance of Bashir Ahmed, a charming Kashmiri salesman who frequented her childhood home, she is determined to confront him. But upon her arrival, Shalini is brought face to face with Kashmir's politics, as well as the tangled history of the local family that takes her in. And when life in the village turns volatile and old hatreds threaten to erupt into violence, Shalini finds herself forced to make a series of choices that could hold dangerous repercussions for the very people she has come to love. Look for this to be a high-profile literary fiction hit—and for very good reasons.

⌘Watkins, Roz. [The Devil's Dice](#) (Harper \$12.99). A lawyer is found dead in a Peak District cave, his face ribboned with scratches. Amidst rumors of a local curse, DI Meg Dalton is convinced this is cold-blooded murder. There's just one catch—chiseled into the cave wall above the body is an image of the grim reaper and the dead man's initials, and it's been there for over a century. As Meg battles to solve the increasingly disturbing case, it's clear someone knows her own secrets and is playing a deadly game with her. I debated this as the British Crime Club Book of the Month—it was shortlisted for the CWA Debut Dagger Award and was *The Times* Crime Book of the Month last April—but despite the wonderful, moody landscape of The Peaks District, it felt clever rather than authentic to me. I'll be interested to read Watkins' sophomore novel and I recommend this debut to fans of Stephen Booth.

White, Christian. [The Nowhere Child](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Kimberly Leamy is mostly content with her life as a single professional, teaching photography at a Melbourne community college and spending time with her married sister and family. An American approaches her during a break with the theory that she may really be Sammy Went, kidnapped from her Kentucky

home at the age of two. Kim is initially incredulous and reluctant to listen to him—she’s had a loving and warm family life in Australia with her parents, Carol and Dean. But Finn—who soon admits he’s Sammy’s elder brother, Stuart—has reams of convincing documentation gleaned from decades of searching, including DNA proof gleaned from their first meeting. So Kim journeys to Kentucky while, in alternating chapters, the story of her youth unfolds. I liked the set up but there are stock characters and situations developed that make the plot cumbersome and the outcome more or less predictable. Still, a debut filled with atmosphere by a writer to watch.

OUR JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Box, CJ. [The Disappeared](#) (\$9.99). Joe Pickett #18. Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett tackles two parallel cases involving the disappearance of a prominent British executive and a group of falconers who are being harassed by the feds, a double assignment that catches the attentions of a dangerous adversary. *PW* concluded their rave review with “In the end, Sheridan and Nate must deal out rough justice to the malefactors, while the book’s key environmental issue enhances the satisfying conclusion. Also welcome are Box’s underrated touches of wry humor, generally overlooked as one of his strengths. Series fans and newcomers alike will be rewarded.”

Delaney, JP. [The Girl Before](#) (\$9.99). Seizing a unique opportunity to rent a one-of-a-kind house, a damaged young woman falls in love with the enigmatic architect who designed the residence, unaware that she is following in the footsteps of a doomed former tenant. *LJ* had this to say “This haunting Big Brother–esque novel will consume psychological thriller enthusiasts and keep them thinking long after the final page. Fans of Paula Hawkins’s *The Girl on the Train* should add it to their winter reading lists.”

Fox, Candice. [Crimson Lake](#) (\$9.99). Wrongly accused of the abduction of a thirteen-year-old girl, Sydney detective Ted Conkaffey is forced to hide in the crocodile-infested wetlands of Crimson Lake, where he agrees to help convicted killer Amanda Pharrell in a case involving dangerous secrets. *LJ* concluded with “Those who enjoy a gritty, graphic mystery will most enjoy this offering by a Ned Kelly Award–winning author (*Hades*) and James Patterson coauthor (*Never, Never*).”

Hillerman, Anne. [Cave of Bones](#) (\$9.99). Bernadette Manuelito #4. Preparing to speak at an outdoor character-building program for at-risk teens, Tribal Police Officer Bernadette Manuelito discovers the camp in a panic over a missing instructor and a traumatized girl’s discovery of a human skeleton in the wilds of the mythology-steeped lava wilderness bordering the Ramah Navajo Reservation. *Bookpage*, among others, has loved Anne’s take on her late father’s series saying “*Cave of Bones* has a terrific storyline that’s suspenseful and atmospheric, with strands of Navajo folklore woven into every page.”

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Night Moves](#) (\$9.99). Alex Delaware #33. While LAPD homicide detective Milo Sturgis investigates the murder of a John Doe in an upscale LA home, he calls on psychologist Alex Delaware to untangle the web of corrupted love, greed, and broken trust that is exposed. *PW* said “Newcomers will find this an easy entry point into this long-running series.”

O’Connor, Carle. [Murder in an Irish Churchyard](#) (\$7.99). Now officially Kilbane’s newest garda, Siobhán O’Sullivan must try to solve the mysterious death of an American tourist in a graveyard, and faces an awkward reunion with Macdara Flannery when he is dispatched from Dublin to assist with the investigation. *Kirkus* said “The third in O’Connor’s series (*Murder at an Irish Wedding*, 2017, etc.) freely dispenses quirky Irish charm as you scramble to find the truth.”

Reich, Christopher. [The Take](#) (\$9.99). Preferring work that allows him to stay under the radar, freelance industrial spy Simon Riske reluctantly takes a high-profile job from the CIA involving a gangster’s theft of millions from a visiting Saudi prince and a stolen letter containing highly sensitive information. *LJ* weighed in with “Reich’s stylish and action-packed thriller introduces an appealing new protagonist, a troubled youth with a criminal record who becomes a brilliant businessman and spy. Recommend to fans of Daniel Silva.”

Scottoline, Lisa. [Every Fifteen Minutes](#) (\$8.99). A single father and head of a successful Philadelphia psychiatric care unit sees his life begin to crumble when a teen patient is implicated in a murder and the doctor himself is wrongly accused of sexual harassment. *Kirkus* had this to say “A proficient, mounting-stakes actioner that proves Scottoline is just as comfortable with a shrink determined to go to the wall for a troubled teen as she ever was with Bennie Rosato’s all-female law practice.”

NEW IN JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACKS

Finder, Joseph. [Killer Instinct](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Lacking the competitive instincts considered necessary to get ahead in his sales job, Jason Steadman meets a recently-hired Iraq War veteran who recruits him for the company softball team and offers him a job in corporate security.

Gleason, Robert. [The Evil That Men Do](#) (\$9.99). A Russian leader, an American president, and a Saudi ambassador are determined to use nuclear weapons to stop the UN from participating in a global redistribution of wealth and only a journalist, an ex-CIA agent, and a cyber-security billionaire can stop them and save democracies around the world.

Kelly, Diane. [Dead as a Door Knocker](#) (St Martins \$7.99). House Flipper #1. When a dead body is found on the property of the house she wants to buy, real estate agent Whitney Whitaker launches her own investigation to solve this mystery before she loses her investment—and her life.

Rosenfelt, David. [Fade to Black](#) (\$7.99). Attending an amnesia support group after being wounded in the line of duty, New Jersey state police officer Doug Brock is approached by a fellow member who has discovered a scrapbook of cold-case murder victims with possible ties to Doug’s past.

Ryan, Sofie. [No Escape Claws](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Second Chance Cat #6. When Mallory Pearson asks the eccentric team of senior-citizen detectives that work out of her shop to prove her father’s innocence in her stepmother’s death, Sarah and her rescue cat, Elvis, lend a paw to help solve the mystery.

Unger, Lisa. [The Red Hunter](#) (\$9.99). Tackling a house restoration project and blog in the hopes of escaping a traumatic event that ended her marriage, Claudia uncovers an ugly history in the crumbling house, where another woman, Zoey, survived a home invasion and pursued the martial arts to find security and healing.