

# BOOKNEWS from

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Wishing you a Happy Valentine's Day...

Note: All the event times are Mountain Standard Time

Watch these virtual events on [Facebook Live](#) or on our [YouTube](#) channel and any time thereafter at a time that suits you. You don't have to belong to Facebook to click in.  
You also can listen to our [Podcasts](#) on [Google Music](#), [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), and other popular podcast sites.

## MONDAY FEBRUARY 1 7:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

**Faye and Jonathan Kellerman in conversation**

Faye discusses [The Lost Boys](#) (Harper \$29.99)

Dexter & Lazarus

Jonathan discusses [Serpentine](#) (Bantam \$28.99)

Alex Delaware

Signed books available for both

## TUESDAY FEBRUARY 2 7:00 PM

**Walter Mosley in conversation with Patrick**

Mosley discusses [Blood Grove](#) (LittleBrown \$27)

Easy Rawlins

Signed books available

## WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 3 6:00 PM

**Joshua Hood** discusses [Robert Ludlum's The Treadstone Exile](#) (Putnam \$28)

Signed books available

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 4 6:00 PM

**Jane Harper** discusses [The Survivors](#) (Flatiron \$27.99)

An Australian author

Signed bookplates

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 4 7:15 PM

**John Hart in conversation with Tami Hoag**

Hart discusses [The Unwilling](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Signed books for Hart available

## FRIDAY FEBRUARY 5 1:00 PM

**Sebastian Fitzek in conversation with Karin Slaughter**

Fitzek discusses [The Package](#) (Zeus \$27.99)

A German author, no signed books

## SATURDAY FEBRUARY 6 2:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

**Dana Stabenow** discusses Stabenow, Dana. [Spoils of the Dead](#) (Zeus \$29.99)

Alaskan State Trooper Liam Campbell returns

Signed books available

## MONDAY FEBRUARY 8 7:00 PM

**Tod Goldberg** in conversation with Patrick

Goldberg discusses [The Low Desert: Gangster Stories](#) (Catapult \$26)

Signed books available

## TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9 1:00 PM

**Abigail Dean in conversation with Caz Frear**

Dean discusses [Girl A](#) (Viking \$27)

A very hot UK debut

UK Signed edition [Girl A](#) (Collins \$36)

## TUESDAY FEBRUARY 9 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

**Michael Koryta in conversation with Lee Child**

Koryta discusses [Never Far Away](#) (LittleBrown \$28)

Signed books for Koryta available

## WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 10 6:30 PM

**Dan Frey in conversation with Dr. Jason Rugolo**

Frey discusses [The Future Is Yours](#) (Del Rey \$27)

Our February SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month

Signed copies for this debut available

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 1:00 PM

**Janet Skeslien Charles in conversation with Mark Pryor**

Charles discusses [The Paris Library](#) (Atria \$28)

The #1 Indie Next Pick for February

Signed bookplates; Signed UK edition [The Paris Library](#) (\$45)

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 11 7:00 PM

**Alex Berenson** discusses [The Power Couple](#) (SimonSchuster \$28)

Our February Crime Book of the Month

Signed books available

## SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13 3:00 PM

**Sarah Pearse in conversation with Jayne Anne Krentz**

Pearse discusses [The Sanatorium](#) (Viking \$27)

[The Sanatorium](#) (Bantam \$36) is our February First Mystery

Book of the Month Signed UK edition

Gothic thriller set in the Swiss Alps. Order early as we will not reorder

## SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13 4:00 PM

**Charles Todd** discusses [A Fatal Lie](#) (Harper \$28.99)

DI Ian Rutledge begins an investigation in Wales

Signed books available

## MONDAY FEBRUARY 15 6:00 PM

**Mark Greaney 20<sup>th</sup> book birthday party**

**Special Guests**

Greaney discusses [Relentless](#) (Berkley \$28)

The 10<sup>th</sup> Gray Man thriller and Greaney's 20<sup>th</sup> book

Signed books available

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 16 7:00 PM**

**JA Jance** discusses [Missing and Endangered](#) (Harper \$28.99)  
Joanna Brady/Bisbee  
Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17 5:00 PM**

**Allison Epstein in conversation with Susanna Calkins Epstein** discusses her debut, [A Tip for the Hangman](#) (Doubleday \$26.95)  
Christopher Marlowe, Elizabethan spy and much more...  
Our February Historical Fiction Book of the Month  
Signed books available

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18 7:00 PM**

SciFi Friday discusses Alix Harrow's [The Ten Thousand Doors of January](#) (\$16.99)

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 19 10:30 AM**

**Croak & Dagger** discuss Louise Penny's [Bury Your Dead](#) (\$17.99)

**SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21 2:00 PM Live Book Launch**

**Joanne Fluke** discusses [Triple Chocolate Cheesecake Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)  
Minnesota baker Hannah Swensen  
Signed books available

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 23 1:00 PM**

**Russ Thomas in discussion with Andrew Child (Grant) Thomas** discusses [Nighthawking](#) (Putnam \$26)  
Sheffield DS Adam Tyler  
Our British Crime Book of the Month  
Signed UK edition available in April

**TUESDAY FEBRUARY 23 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch**

**Steve Berry** discusses [The Kaiser's Web](#) (St Martins \$28.99)  
Signed books with custom insert available

**WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 24 7:00 PM**

**Joe Ide in conversation with Patrick Ide** discusses [Smoke](#) (LittleBrown \$27.99)  
LA's IQ  
Signed books available

**THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 1:00 PM**

**Alexis Landau** discusses [Those Who Are Saved](#) (Putnam \$27)

**THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 6:30 PM**

**Charlaine Harris in conversation with Pat King Harris** discusses [The Russian Cage](#) (Saga \$27.99)  
Signed books available

**THURSDAY FEBRUARY 25 8:00 PM**

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses Arnold Han's [3 Steps to Hell](#) (Stark House \$23.95)  
Contains *So I'm a Heel*, *Flint*, *The Big Out*

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 26 6:00 PM**

**Charles Finch** discusses [An Extravagant Death](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Signed books available

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 27 1:00 PM**

**AAUW Luncheon featuring Kent Krueger** as speaker  
Tickets, details to come

**MONDAY MARCH 1 7:00 PM Virtual Book Launch**

**CJ Box** discusses [Dark Sky](#) (Putnam \$27.99)  
Joe Pickett  
Signed books available. Personalizations possible

**TUESDAY MARCH 2 6:00 PM Victorian Crime**

**Tasha Alexander and Deanna Raybourn in conversation Alexander** discusses [The Dark Heart of Florence](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Lady Emily  
**Raybourn** discusses [An Unexpected Peril](#) (Berkley \$26)  
Veronica Speedwell  
Signed books available for both

**A VALENTINE GIFT BAG**

Looking for that perfect gift for a reader? We've put together a [Valentine gift bag](#) (\$60) for you: books plus a taste of chocolate and a little valentine.

Three of the books are a trilogy by Loretta Chase: because the Chases are hard to get, we are not offering them separately for now. I'm hoping *Bridgerton* will nudge the publisher into reprinting them. The other two books, one a hardcover and one a large paperback, are a surprise.

Chase, Loretta. *Miss Wonderful*; *Mr. Impossible*; *Lord Perfect*. After the much missed Georgette Heyer whom I read right through her last Regency romance, this trilogy by Chase wins my heart. If you've liked Netflix's *Bridgerton* based on romances by Julia Quinn, you will love Chase—less sex, more witty repartee, truer to the period. Various authors join me in raving about them as does our own John Charles. Expect to see a boom in Regencies with the success of *Bridgerton* but remember, not all of them are created equal.



## SIGNED BOOKS

Alexander, Tasha. [The Dark Heart of Florence](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Lady Emily and her intelligence agent husband, Colin Hargreaves, travel to Florence to investigate a break-in at the Palazzo di Vieri, the home of Colin's daughter, along with Emily's friend Cécile du Lac, an elegant Parisian with a passion for champagne and bohemian sensibilities. Meanwhile, the body of an informant associated with Darius Benton-Stone, Colin's fellow agent, has been discovered in the palazzo's courtyard. While Colin and Darius investigate, Emily and Cécile keep themselves busy visiting the sights and doing some digging of their own into the dead man's background. They also discover that the Palazzo di Vieri is believed to contain a secret treasure. Could the man have been searching for it? Flashbacks to late 15th-century Florence from the 1903 city ratchet up the tension and provide answers to the present-day goings-on. Alexander effortlessly slips an enormous amount of Florentine history into a narrative that offers a loving portrait of the city and just the right amount of dashing derring-do

Berenson, Alex. [The Power Couple](#) (SimonSchuster \$28). Rebecca and Brian Unsworth appear to have it all. A nice house in the suburbs of Washington, DC. Two well-behaved, healthy teenage children. Important government jobs—Rebecca working in counterterrorism for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Brian serving as a coder for the National Security Agency. Their lives stand to improve even more as Brian, in his off-hours, has just developed and sold a highly profitable app. However, the Unsworths' marriage isn't as perfect as it seems. After two decades together, they've drifted apart, talking little and having sex even less. Seeking to revive their strained relationship, they decide for their twentieth wedding anniversary to take their two kids, Kira and Tony, on a European getaway. They have a blast...until one night in Barcelona.... Our **February Crime Book of the Month** is both a welcome return to fiction for the Edgar winner and *NY Times* reporter and presents a plot that truly surprised me. Wow! Kudos to you if you figure it out. I don't want to say much for fear of spoilers and I urge you not to read reviews as everything said will be one.

Berry, Steve. [The Kaiser's Web](#) (St Martins \$28.99). A secret dossier from a World War II-era Soviet spy comes to light containing information that, if proven true, would not only rewrite history — it could impact Germany's upcoming national elections and forever alter the political landscape of Europe. Two candidates are vying to become Chancellor. One is a patriot having served for the past sixteen years, the other a usurper, stoking the flames of nationalistic hate. Both harbor secrets, but only one knows the truth about the other. They are on a collision course, all turning on the events of one fateful day — April 30, 1945 — and what happened deep beneath Berlin in the Führerbunker. Did Adolph Hitler and Eva Braun die there? Did Martin Bormann, Hitler's close confidant, manage to escape? And, even more important, where did billions in Nazi wealth disappear to in the waning days of World War II? The answers to these questions will determine who becomes the next Chancellor of Germany. This premise allows Berry to tour you around the globe with Cotton Malone, from Bavaria to the Chilean Lake District which is still a Bavarian enclave, on to South Africa and then into secret vaults in Switzerland.... With the rise of the right in Germany and elsewhere, and the possibility of Merkel's retirement, this is both historical and timely. Our copies come with a custom insert.

Box, CJ. [Dark Sky](#) (Putnam \$27.99). National book launch. CJ is signing this at The Pen so inscription requests are welcome. When the governor of Wyoming gives Joe Pickett the thankless task of taking a tech baron on an elk hunting trip, Joe reluctantly treks into the wilderness with his high-profile charge. But as they venture into the woods, a man-hunter is hot on their heels, driven by a desire for revenge. Finding himself without a weapon, a horse, or a way to communicate, Joe must rely on his wits and his knowledge of the outdoors to protect himself and his companion. Meanwhile, Joe's closest friend, Nate Romanowski, and his own daughter Sheridan learn of the threat to Joe's life and follow him into the woods... "Into the woods" is a Brothers Grimm trope repeated by many fab authors before Box like Tana French and Harlan Coben.

Charles, Janet Skeslien. [The Paris Library](#) (Trice \$45). Inspired by the true story of the librarians who risked their lives during the Nazis' war on words: a story of courage and betrayal inspired by real-life defiance in Occupied Paris, perfect for fans of *All the Light We Cannot See*, *The Book Thief* and *The Guernsey Literary & Potato Peel Pie Society*, or *The Lions of Fifth Avenue* and *Sarah's Key*. Structured in two tracks, 1939 Paris and 1983 Montana, it is a tale for lovers of books and libraries as well as the ever burgeoning WWII fiction genre, and is the No. 1 Indie Next Pick for February (we will have signed bookplates for the US edition): "I can't think of a more perfect novel to recommend to book lovers than *The Paris Library*! Not only does it bring to life the true story of the heroic librarians of the American Library in Nazi-occupied Paris, its interwoven narrative of a bereft teenager in 1980s Montana who finds a kindred spirit in her mysterious, reclusive, and book-loving French neighbor is a feat of extraordinary storytelling. *The Paris Library* is a testament to the everlasting power of literature and literary places to bring people together and be a home for everyone, even during our darkest, most hopeless, and divided times." Charles herself writes: "I wrote this novel as a love letter to libraries, to bookstores, and to book people. In these difficult days, we need the sanctuaries of bookshops and libraries more than ever." Mark Pryor, who has written many a love letter to Paris (including the American Library) in his Hugo Marston series, joins me in conversation with Charles. Don't miss it.

✦ Finch, Charles. [An Extravagant Death](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Set in 1878, Finch's entertaining 14th mystery featuring Charles Lenox (after 2020's *The Last Passenger*) finds Lenox, "probably the preeminent detective in all of England, professional or amateur," dealing with the consequences of his exposure of three Scotland Yard chief inspectors being behind an armed robbery and numerous other crimes. The scandal imperils Benjamin Disraeli's government, and the politician implores Lenox to travel to the U.S. during the trial and allow his testimony to be provided in written form to minimize press sensationalism. Lenox reluctantly agrees, but demands full access to the file on the case of Harold Wallace, who was stabbed to death in his home a few blocks away from Lenox's own London residence. Lenox has doubts that the man charged with the crime, Wallace's butler, is guilty. Upon the investigator's arrival in the States, his skills are called upon by William Stuyvesant Schemerhorn IV of Newport, R.I., after an 18-year-old girl, whom his son had been courting, was found dead on a beach, apparently from a head wound. Finch effectively juggles the various plot threads, but there are two compelling

reasons to dig into this story. One is the detailed, affectionate, yet almost satirical look at Newport and the artificiality of the super rich and their “cottages” and social whirl. The other is the effect this has on a Lenox approaching fifty and examining his life through an outsider, not an insider, lens. It’s a good way to return from the prequel trilogy that ended in 2020.

Fluke, Joanne. [Triple Chocolate Cheesecake Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). Our copies come, some of them anyway, with a recipe card in addition to the recipes in the book. Joanne is signing at The Pen so inscription requests are welcome. Hannah Swensen’s up to her ears with Easter orders rushing in at The Cookie Jar, plus a festive meal to prepare for a dinner party at her mother’s penthouse. But everything comes crashing to a halt when Hannah receives a panicked call from her sister Andrea—Mayor Richard Bascomb has been murdered and she’s the prime suspect. Even with his reputation for being a bully, Mayor Bascomb—or “Ricky Ticky,” as Hannah’s mother likes to call him—had been unusually testy in the days leading up to his death, leaving Hannah to wonder if he knew he was in danger. Meanwhile, folks with a motive for mayoral murder are popping up in Lake Eden. Was it a beleaguered colleague? A political rival? A jealous wife? Or a scorned mistress? As orders pile up at The Cookie Jar—and children line up for Easter egg hunts—Hannah springs into investigation mode....

Frey, Dan. [The Future Is Yours](#) (Del Rey \$27). “Let me tell you about your future: You’re going to love this book. A fascinating premise, brilliantly executed. The Future Is Yours is a thrilling sci-fi adventure you simply can’t put down and a masterful modern take on the epistolary novel.”—Sylvain Neuvel. If you had the chance to look one year into the future, would you? For Ben Boyce and Adhi Chaudry, the answer is unequivocally yes. And they’re betting everything that you’ll say yes, too. Welcome to The Future: a computer that connects to the internet one year from now, so you can see who you’ll be dating, where you’ll be working, even whether or not you’ll be alive in the year to come. By forming a startup to deliver this revolutionary technology to the world, Ben and Adhi have made their wildest, most impossible dream a reality. Once Silicon Valley outsiders, they’re now its hottest commodity. The device can predict everything perfectly—from stock market spikes and sports scores to political scandals and corporate takeovers—allowing them to chase down success and fame while staying one step ahead of the competition. But the future their device foretells is not the bright one they imagined. Ambition. Greed. Jealousy. And, perhaps, an apocalypse. The question is—can they stop it? Told through emails, texts, transcripts, and blog posts, this bleeding-edge tech thriller, our **February SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**, chronicles the costs of innovation and asks how far you’d go to protect the ones you love—even from themselves.

Goldberg, Tod. [The Low Desert](#) (Catapult \$26). Patrick raves about this collection of stories. Here’s another fan: “A dozen witty but pitiless stories revolve around lowlifes hell-bent on the high life, their hapless pursuers and those operating somewhere in between. Comparing a work of literary fiction with a television show used to be an insult, but no longer. To liken these Gangster Stories to *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul*, which share the book’s concerns, terrain and wry ruthlessness, is high praise indeed. Goldberg’s sense of humor and lavish attention to character distinguish *The Low Desert* from more traditional fiction about the folly of criminals, those who are conscientious or naive

enough to try to thwart them, and those operating somewhere in between....Goldberg counterbalances the brutality with glimmers of humanity. Several of his characters have soft spots for dogs. Some lawless types dream of bettering themselves through education and more honorable work. In “The Spare,” Dark Billy Cupertine, a high-ranking member of a crime family, decides to risk it all so that his son “would never make the same mistakes” Billy has. The kid has a better chance of winning at Caribbean stud.” –Nell Beram

Greaney, Mark. [Relentless](#) (Berkley \$28). CIA operative Zach Hightower is trailing his target, a traitorous former NSA computer scientist, in a Caracas marketplace when he’s grabbed by thugs from Venezuela’s intelligence service. On learning of the failed mission, the CIA deputy director for operations rousts Zach’s partner, CIA contract killer Court Gentry (aka the Gray Man), from his hospital bed, where he’s recovering from a chest wound, and sends him to finish the job. Gentry takes on a long list of bad guys, including a group of American mercenaries working for the spy organization of the United Arab Emirates, a rogue international intelligence firm, and a Russian super agent who may be the only assassin in the world who could go one-on-one with Gentry and come out on top. Readers won’t be wrong to suspect that Gentry, despite being at half strength, will prevail. Vivid action scenes spark the narrative.

✦ Griffiths, Elly. [The Night Hawks](#) (Quercus \$45). In her last investigation, archaeologist Ruth Galloway gave up her attempt at a new life in Cambridge, and a new relationship. Now she’s back in North Norfolk where a group of metal detectorists, are searching for buried treasure when they find a body on the beach. At first Nelson thinks that the dead man might be an asylum seeker but he turns out to be a local boy, Jem Taylor, recently released from prison. Ruth is more interested in the treasure, a hoard of Bronze Age weapons. DCI Nelson at first thinks that Taylor’s death is accidental drowning, but a second death suggests murder. Nelson is called to an apparent murder-suicide of a couple at the isolated Black Dog Farm. Local legend talks of the Black Shuck, a spectral hound that appears to people before they die. Nelson ignores this, even when the owner’s suicide note includes the line, ‘He’s buried in the garden.’ Ruth excavates and finds the body of a giant dog. All roads lead back to this farm in the middle of nowhere, but the place spells serious danger for anyone who goes near. Ruth doesn’t scare easily. Not until she finds herself at Black Dog Farm....

Note that Griffiths standalone [The Postscript Murders](#) (Houghton \$25), wonderfully comic and focused mainly on Brighton, is our **March British Crime Book of the Month**. A virtual event with her will be March 5 1:00 PM. Any club member who bought the now sold-out signed UK edition should contact Karen for an alternate selection for March.

Hannah, Kristen. [The Four Winds](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Unsigned but with Signed bookplates. Library Reads writes: “Elsa, abandoned by her husband, leaves Texas with her two children to save her young son from dust pneumonia. Beautifully written historical fiction about a mother’s love and strength holding a family together as they leave the Dust Bowl and head West to fulfill dreams of green lands, only to find themselves unwelcome and with conditions worse than what they left. For readers who enjoy historical fiction with unforgettable characters, and fans of *The Giver of Stars* and *Cilka’s Journey*.”

Harper, Jane. [The Survivors](#) (LittleBrown UK \$45). These are surely UK tip-ins since Harper is an Australian author. We will have Signed bookplates for the US edition: [The Survivors](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). The Indie Next Pick: “Jane Harper returns with another atmospheric psychological suspense novel, this time set on the Tasmanian coast. Harper’s landscapes are tangible, exquisitely drawn, and as important to her stories as any character. The laid back and beautiful — but slightly run-down — beach town of Evelyn Bay is the star. Though there is a new body and an old mystery here, the novel focuses more on the inner conflicts, guilt, and secrets of its characters — a close group of lovers, friends, and family who are all holding back parts of their past. Reading the book was like watching the waves lap at the mouths of dark caves from a Tasmanian beach. An excellent escape!” Harper is the international bestselling author of *The Dry*, *Force of Nature* and *The Lost Man* (my personal favorite). She is an ace at the interplay of landscapes with fraught family relationships. Having been done out of my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday cruise to Tasmania and the Antarctic by COVID, I am excited to visit it with Harper.

Harris, Charlaïne. [The Russian Cage](#) (Saga \$27.99). A young gunslinger in an alternate America, Lizbeth (aka Gunnie) Rose faces down the Holy Russian Empire. She’s accustomed to working dangerous but impersonal protection jobs, but now she puts it all on the line to save the man she loves after she receives a coded letter from her preteen sister, Felicia, telling her that the wizard Eli Savarov, the man Gunnie loves, has been imprisoned by the Holy Russian Empire. Gunnie immediately sets out from Texoma to save him. Upon arriving in the HRE, she finds that Eli’s arrest is largely political, and to save him she’ll have to work together with Felicia, Eli’s friend Felix, and Eli’s family. The plan they land on requires Gunnie to involve herself in the HRE’s politics, which means casting aside her comfortable boots and jeans in order to blend in with royal family.

Hart, John. [The Unwilling](#) (St Martins \$27.99). “We the unwilling, led by the unqualified to kill the unfortunate, die for the ungrateful.” —Unknown Soldier. A dishonorably discharged Marine returns home, throwing his family into chaos. In 1972, at the height of the Vietnam War, Gibson “Gibby” French is about to graduate from his North Carolina high school. Both of Gibby’s older brothers have been to war. Robert was killed in action; Jason returned—but as a shattered man who descended into a life of drugs and violence. After being released from a 27-month prison term, Jason, against the wishes of their parents, seeks to reconnect with Gibby. They spend a day together enjoying some whiskey and the company of two women, Tyra and Sara. But shortly afterward, Tyra is found brutally murdered. Jason is arrested for the crime and sent back to prison. Gibby is determined to prove his brother’s innocence, but he must grapple with powerful forces that are targeting Jason. When Sara disappears, Gibby looks to save her and find the true killer. Multi-Edgar Award-winning Hart offers another propulsive crime novel that features fully realized, multifaceted characters and a strong sense of place,”—*LJ*. I can say that place is the most compelling thing about this rather slow paced story that evolves into a procedural. That and the inescapable sadness that hangs over families caught in the debacle that was our time in Vietnam.

✦ Herron, Mick. [Slough House](#) (Murray \$38). Revenge, betrayal, and gallows humor abound in the seventh installment of Herron’s ripping good series of spy novels. This time out, MI5’s disgraced

spies are being hunted by Russian assassins and there’s no one they can trust to help them. Plus they are being downsized and worse. Herron’s deft plotting and taut writing make his books the best spy thrillers being published today. John Sandford is a serious fan. *Booklist* chimes in: “Combining some of the cleverest dialogue in the genre with unexpected bursts of violence, Herron brings to the spy novel—not known in the post-Bond era for its sense of humor—an Elmore Leonard-like ability to make us laugh and cry almost simultaneously.” And Ann Cleeves expresses my view of this chapter in the *Slough House* saga: “This is a darker, scarier Herron. The gags are still there but the satire’s more biting. The privatization of a secret service op and the manipulation of news are both relevant and horribly credible.” I believe Herron settles deeper into the mantle of the late John Le Carré—and there is a TV series coming.

Here are a few comments from Herron: Question: In your new novel, *Slough House*, your focus is on the privatization of national security. MI5 is on sale to the highest bidders, including multimillionaires and media moguls looking to politicize government information. Is this happening? Is this something you think Britons should be worried about? Answer: If it’s not already happening, it probably will be soon. But that’s my take on the situation having finished the book; at the time of writing, I wasn’t aiming to deliver a warning or make a prediction. When plotting a novel, I simply look at what’s going on in the world and slightly bend it to my own use for British spies...

Hood, Joshua. [Robert Ludlum’s Treadstone Exile](#) (Putnam \$28). Hood’s fast-paced sequel to 2019’s *Robert Ludlum’s The Treadstone Resurrection* (\$9.99) finds Adam Hayes, a former operative for Treadstone, a CIA unit that “turned him into a government-sanctioned assassin,” in Ceuta, Spain, where he’s feeling proud of himself for not having killed anyone in 152 days. He’s left his wife and child behind in America and gone on the run after the U.S. government declared him *persona non grata*. In Ceuta, he becomes involved in a smuggling ring, and the no-kill record is soon broken. Meanwhile, Andre Cabot, the founder and CEO of a cybersecurity firm, is in financial difficulty, and decides to steal his way back into solvency. Hayes lands right in the middle of Cabot’s plans and must be dealt with. Never mind clichéd prose (“get the hell out of Dodge”), a surfeit of backstory, and voices in the heads of Hayes and other characters that yammer at them in italics. Few thriller fans will be able to resist as the author hauls them by their necks down many rough roads while Hayes mows down the opposition. Hood is a master of action.

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Prodigal Son](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Extreme action melded with in-depth character studies punctuate Hurwitz’s absorbing sixth Orphan X thriller featuring Evan Smoak, who was abandoned as a baby, then, as a child, recruited into the secret Orphan Program, where he was trained to be an assassin. Leaving the Orphans, Evan reinvented himself as the Nowhere Man, a crime-fighting vigilante for ordinary people in need. Now retired, Evan wants to lead “an ordinary life, whatever that was.” And here he Evan meets a dose of the ordinary with the arrival of Veronica LeGrande, who claims to be his long-lost mother. The skeptical Evan comes to believe Veronica as she recounts details about the circumstances of his birth. Veronica wants a favor: help Andrew Duran, a down-on-his-luck, minimum-wage guard at an impound lot who witnessed a murder.

Evan is soon embroiled in a conspiracy involving innovative military technology—and targeted by brother and sister killers. *Prodigal Son* spins on sharp, over-the-top action with a sense of believability, including Evan’s high-tech weapons, surveillance toys and his state-of-the-art condo. Evan’s mad martial-arts skills give him the edge in any fight, no matter how many opponents he faces, but he is no superhero, often getting hurt. Our copies will arrive from Hurwitz about February 3.

Ide, Joe. [Smoke](#) (LittleBrown \$27.99). Isaiah “IQ” Quintabe is driving north from his home in Long Beach, where he’s had enough of dealing with violent crime. He stops in Coronado Springs, a town near Lake Tahoe, where he ends up renting a one-bedroom house. His peaceful existence is interrupted by Billy Sorensen, an escapee from a neuro-psych facility who breaks into his house to steal food. Billy claims that a serial killer, known as AMSAK because his 17 victims were dumped near the Sacramento and American rivers, is headed to Coronado Springs—and that he knows AMSAK’s identity. Reluctantly, Isaiah investigates... “Ide has displayed a rare ability to mix dark comedy and gut-churning drama... mixmaster Ide’s compulsion to blend light and dark (Isaiah’s confrontation with the serial killers, while gruesome, takes the form of ‘a slapstick movie shot in a burning insane asylum’) affects the two plots in surprising ways, again producing an emotion-rich form of character-driven tragicomedy, but one in which peril forever loiters in the shallows.” —*Booklist*

Jance, JA. [Missing and Endangered](#) (Harper \$28.99). When Jennifer Brady returns to Northern Arizona University for her sophomore year, she quickly becomes a big sister to her new roommate, Beth Rankin, a brilliant yet sheltered sixteen-year-old freshman. For a homeschooled Beth, college is her first taste of both freedom and unfettered access to the internet, and Jenny is concerned that she is too naive. With Beth at war with her parents, Jenny asks to invite Beth home for Christmas, and Jenny’s mom, Cochise County Sheriff Joanna Brady, says yes. After all, what could go wrong? Within hours, however, Joanna’s department is sucked into a complex officer-involved shooting that places two vulnerable young children in jeopardy. Then when Beth disappears, Joanna finds herself in a case fraught with landmines. With her own daughter’s well-being at stake, the seasoned sheriff knows there’s no room for the slightest mistake as hope ticks away for a fragile young girl who has gone missing, and is surely endangered.

Kellerman, Faye. [The Lost Boys](#) (Harper \$29.99). Former LAPD detective Peter Decker, now with the police in the “sleepy little college town” of Greenbury, N.Y., has two cases to occupy him. First, 35-year-old Bertram Lanz, who’s cognitively disabled, has gone missing from a field trip arranged by his residential facility, and after extensive searches don’t locate him, Decker fears that Lanz did not lose his way but might well have abducted by someone he knew. Why? When no trace of the man is found, the disappearance quickly becomes an official missing persons case and is assigned to Decker and his partner Tyler McAdams. While combing the woods, searchers discover the remains of one of three young men who had vanished ten years back during a camping trip. And for Decker, personal problems are adding pressure as well. After a ten-year absence, the biological mother of Decker’s and Rina’s foster son, Gabriel, has suddenly appeared in New York, children in tow, wreaking emotional havoc on the young man.... Many threads pull a layered story along to several unexpected results.

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Serpentine](#) (Ballantine \$28.99). Here’s a Starred review of a series that for me has, over the last entries, raised its game. “In Edgar winner Kellerman’s top-notch 36th Alex Delaware novel, a cold case preoccupies the L.A. consulting psychologist and his friend and colleague, Lt. Milo Sturgis of the LAPD: the death of Dorothy Swoboda, whose burned body was found in a car below Mulholland Drive 36 years earlier. Dorothy’s 39-year-old daughter, Ellie Barker, who recently sold her lucrative exercise wear business for millions, remains haunted by the loss of her mother, who abandoned her when she was three. Now Ellie wants an explanation for what one report at the time called a murder and another, a one-vehicle accident. Armed with the thinnest of case files, Milo and Alex uncover a disturbing number of murders that seem related to Dorothy, and they realize that the killing spree might not yet be over. Kellerman maintains pace and suspense through the interactions of the characters—witnesses, detectives, relatives of the victims—all of whom are rendered in striking and precise detail. This entry is pure pleasure, intelligently delivered.” And delivered bit by bit, one thing uncovering or suggesting another... inexorably. The pacing is very fine.

Koryta, Michael. [Never Far Away](#) (LittleBrown \$28). I concur with this Starred Review by Edgar-winner and Pen favorite Koryta, our second Writer in Residence (after Charles Finch), who will be joined for his national book launch at The Pen by Lee Child. “At the start of this stellar thriller from bestseller Koryta, Nina Morgan fakes her own death in a remote area of Florida with the assistance of the two hit men who have orders to kill her—but decide not to because they’re unhappy with the man who hired them, among other reasons—in order to protect her husband, Doug Chatfield, and their two small children, Hailey and Nick. Ten years later, Doug dies in a car accident, a tragedy that triggers a contingency plan. Hailey, now 13, calls Nina’s pager, believing it’s the way to contact her aunt Leah Trenton. Nina, posing as Leah, takes custody of Hailey and Nick, now 11, and they start a new life in Maine. Despite Nina’s elaborate precautions, word of Doug’s death reaches Corson Lowery, the founder of what one U.S. senator calls ‘Blackwater on steroids.’ Lowery, Nina’s former employer, was the person who ordered her killed a decade earlier. When he learns that the children have been picked up by a nonexistent aunt, Lowery puts two other hit men on her trail. Well-developed characters enhance the high-octane plot. Fans of nail-biting suspense will be in heaven.”

Mosley, Walter. [Blood Grove](#) (LittleBrown \$27). The uneasy passage of Easy Rawlins through late-20th-century Los Angeles continues at the hinge of the 1960s and ‘70s in one of the knottiest cases of the Black detective’s long and bloody career. Patrick reviews: “The return of Mosley’s groundbreaking protagonist Easy Rawlins is always a cause for celebration. Set in 1969, when so much of the youthful idealism of the mid-60’s had been stomped out by violence and disillusionment, Mosley’s latest novel deals with themes of racism and PTSD that unfortunately seem as relevant today as ever. This time out, Rawlins is approached by a young white Vietnam vet who believes he may have killed a man in an orange field outside LA. The young man, who Rawlins realizes is clearly damaged by the war, claims that he and his girlfriend were attacked but that he was knocked out in the ensuing fight, and, when he woke up, the woman and his dog were gone. Rawlins doesn’t really believe the story, but as a fel-

low combat veteran (WWII) he feels compelled to help the man if he can. Set against the backdrop of LA at one of its most tumultuous moments, this is classic Mosley. I can't wait to discuss the book with Mr. Mosley on Feb 2nd."

*Kirkus* echoes: "Easy, who served in Europe during World War II, takes the case, partly in solidarity with a fellow vet's travails. It doesn't take long for Easy to begin regretting this decision as he finds himself fitfully making his way through a minefield of thieves, crime bosses, prostitutes, goons, and, as always, racist White cops who even after a decade of civil rights laws, race riots, and cultural upheaval can't bring themselves to acknowledge that a smart, self-possessed Black man like Easy Rawlins, who at this point in the series is pushing 50, deserves to drive around LA in a yellow Rolls Royce that belongs to him. It's hard to believe Mosley once gave serious thought to killing off his first detective hero."

Pearse, Sarah. [The Sanatorium](#) (Bantam UK \$36). Our February First Mystery Book of the Month is a kind of locked-room Gothic set very high in the Swiss Alps in a former sanatorium converted to a luxe hotel. It will remind Ruth Ware readers somewhat of *One by One*. It's slated for a major book club pick. Here are some takes on it by fellow authors:

"*The Sanatorium* is an absolutely splendid Gothic thriller — gracious in its nods to the classic locked-room mystery, yet bold enough to burst out of that room through the window. Pearse writes prose fresh and crisp as Swiss Alp powder, and her characters fascinate even as their numbers dwindle." —A. J. Finn, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Woman in the Window*

"Pearse's *The Sanatorium* will keep you checking over your shoulder. This spine-tingling, atmospheric thriller has it all: an eerie Alpine setting, sharp prose, and twists you'll never see coming. A must-read." —Richard Osman, international bestselling author of *The Thursday Murder Club*

"Sarah Pearse's *The Sanatorium* is a knockout. Mesmerizing, lyrical prose contrasts starkly with the dark story events in this debut thriller set at a remote luxury hotel in the Swiss Alps. Tense, claustrophobic, with a horrific connection between past and present that is utterly unpredictable—I loved this book!" —Karen Dionne

Quartey, Kwei. [The Missing American](#) (Soho \$27.95). This 2020 series start for Emma Djan set in Accra, Ghana, is a 2021 Edgar nominee. We sold out of a recent batch of signed firsts but have restocked. Vividly invoking the noisy world of Accra, Ghana, Quartey has created a delightful character in Emma Djan, and a satisfyingly twisty mystery in the January 2021 sequel, [Sleep Well, My Lady](#) (\$27.95). Fans of Andrea Camilleri or Colin Cotterill are sure to enjoy Quartey's talented writing which is, as our video interview on January 25 shows, applauded by Michael Connelly. Check out the [video](#) or the [podcast](#).

Qui, Xiaolong. [Becoming Inspector Chen](#) (Severn \$29). Qiu deepens his Dalgliesh-like series lead in his superior 11th novel featuring Shanghai policeman and poet Chen Cao. Chen's latest investigation embarrassed the Beijing Communist Party leadership, and he's fallen out of favor. Despite suspecting that he'll soon lose his chief inspector position, Chen's curious about a new case involving an anti-party poem posted on the country's most popular social media platform, which reminds him of a

previous inquiry. Flashbacks detail Chen's first case, which centers on an old gourmet's murder and involves "a piece of blood-speckled gauze, and a gray lizard with a strange name he failed to recollect." That intriguing plotline is enhanced by an account of Chen's painful childhood as the son of an academic deemed hostile to Mao's regime and the events that led to Chen's joining the Shanghai PD. While series fans will be delighted at the background Qiu provides, this is an accessible starting point for newcomers interested in a dogged, honest cop who must battle his own government to do his job.

✦ Raybourn, Deanna. [An Unexpected Peril](#) (Berkley \$26). *Kirkus* reviews: "Why is lepidopterist Veronica Speedwell bored with life in London? After all, she and her love, the Hon. Revelstoke Templeton-Vane, better known as Stoker, are living on a lovely estate while they work on a vast collection of objects of natural history and help design an exhibit to honor Alice Baker-Greene, an intrepid mountaineer and feminist, who died in a climbing accident in the tiny country of the Alpenwald. Princess Gisela of the Alpenwald herself comes to open the exhibit. All goes smoothly until Stoker finds Alice's climbing rope among the exhibition items and notices that it wasn't frayed but cut with a knife, turning her fatal accident into murder. Veronica, who'd met and admired Alice, is keen to investigate, but Stoker's not interested in expanding their case files. Their differences are rendered moot when members of the Alpenwald delegation beg Veronica to pose as the wayward Princess Gisela, who often goes off on little trips on her own, in order to avert the scandal that would surely arise if she did not show up for her engagements. The two women look remarkably alike because both are related through Queen Victoria's large family, Veronica as the unacknowledged daughter of Prince Bertie. Now that she has entree to all the Alpenwalders, Veronica, her boredom decisively ended, sets to work sleuthing with the reluctant Stoker. Their discoveries soon put them at odds with a clever killer. This well wrought and entertaining [Veronica Speedwell series](#) is best read in order.

Rice, Luanne. [The Shadow Box](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). I repeat my recommendation for this suspenseful novel by Rice set along Connecticut's wilderness and coast (think Old Lyme and such) for two reasons. One, it's a strong story that tours you through compelling landscapes and homes. I love the way an old structure thwarts a murder at the outset. And two, the publisher went all in and in addition to creating the dust jacket, covered the boards with a colorful and arresting depiction of a shadow box. It's gorgeous. Front and back. A real boon to any collector. I featured a photo of the two covers in our [Instagram account](#).

Saunders, George. [A Swim in a Pond in the Rain](#) (Random \$28). Tip ins. If you've been whiling away the pandemic reading, here's a chance to take a literary deep dive into those Russian masters you've always wanted to try—Chekhov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Gogol—or have tried. "One of the most accurate and beautiful depictions of what it is like to be inside the mind of a writer that I've ever read."—Parul Sehgal, *The New York Times*

Stabenow, Dana. [Spoils of the Dead](#) (Zeus \$29.95). Dana earns another Starred Review, this time for the return of Liam Campbell, not for a Kate Shugak: "After a long hiatus, Alaska state trooper Liam Campbell is back (not counting his joint appearance with Kate Shugak, Stabenow's other series protagonist, in 2012's *Restless in the Grave*) for this fifth entry in his series. The

sergeant is newly reassigned, from small-town Newenham to bigger Blewstown, when he has two murders on his hands, one 20 years old and the other new. Campbell finds the body of archaeologist Erik Berglund, one of the first people he has met in town, a man Campbell discovers has pissed off virtually everyone in town over the perennial conflict between digging for oil and preserving historical sites. Campbell's wife, bush pilot Wyonet Chouinard, provides invaluable assistance, with both the investigation and transportation (which exposes Campbell's fear of flying). Stabenow's vivid portraits of the Alaskan landscape, along with the Campbell-Chouinard relationship (these are two people besotted with each other), lighten the tone in this smooth, character-driven mystery featuring Alaskan history and culture and the welcome return of Sergeant Campbell." She is signing it at The Pen so personalizations welcome. She will also be sending some special stuff out with randomly chosen copies. Don't miss out.

For those who missed the [first four Campbells](#), we have the UK paperbacks (\$15.95 each) which Dana has signed.

Stabenow, Dana. [No Fixed Line](#) (Zeus \$29.95). Kate Shugak #22 in case you missed it. It is New Year's Eve, nearly six weeks into an off-and-on blizzard that has locked Alaska down, effectively cutting it off from the outside world. But now there are reports of a plane down in the Quilak Mountains. With the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board—responsible for investigating aviation incidents) unable to reach the crash site, ex-Trooper Jim Chopin is pulled out of retirement to try to identify the aircraft, collect the corpses, and determine why no flight has been reported missing. But Jim discovers survivors: two children who don't speak a word of English. Meanwhile, PI Kate Shugak receives an unexpected and unwelcome accusation from beyond the grave.

Tarkington, Ed. [The Fortunate Ones](#) (Algonquin \$26.95). After fatherless Charlie Boykin, who lives on the wrong side of 1980s East Nashville with his cocktail waitress mother, wins a scholarship to a private school, he becomes ensconced in the upper crust society of posh neighboring town Belle Meade. Befriended by golden boy and fellow freshman Arch Creigh, also fatherless, Charlie is introduced to a world of privilege and is soon caught up in a love triangle with Arch's girlfriend, Vanessa. Charlie never feels truly at home among his wealthy peers, though his friendship with Arch continues through college and beyond, when he helps Arch with his political career after Arch marries Vanessa. Tarkington frames the story with middle-aged Charlie's present-day narration, in which he learns that Arch, now a U.S. senator, has died by suicide. While there's no shortage of melodrama, the author skillfully unpacks Charlie's uneasy feelings. "Ed Tarkington's wonderful second novel feels like a fresh and remarkably sure-footed take on *The Great Gatsby*, examining the complex costs of attempting to transcend or exchange your given class for a more gilded one. Tarkington's understanding of the human heart and mind is deep, wise and uncommonly empathetic. As a novelist, he is the real deal. I can't wait to see this story reach a wide audience, and to see what he does next." —Paula McLain. Kevin Wilson, author of *Nothing to See Here*, adds, "There's a sharpness to Ed Tarkington's view of the world, an exacting truthfulness of how things work, but he marries it to such an open-hearted and resonant humanity in his writing that it's hard not to place him easily in the company of Pat Conroy and Alice McDermott. In *The Fortunate Ones*, Tarkington examines privilege and friendship with that same incredible perspective, and he

helps us see the difficulties of trying to hold onto yourself even as you want so badly to be transformed. An amazing, thought-provoking novel by one of our most generous writers." With *The Great Gatsby* entering in the public domain this January, here is a splendid narrative with parallels (although wholly original) set in a different time and landscape—and our **February Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month**.

✠ Todd, Charles. [A Fatal Lie](#) (Harper \$28.99). Inspector Ian Rutledge remains out of favor with his jerk of a superior at the Yard, Chief Super Markham, and so in a cold spring of 1921 draws assignment to an odd case at the famed Telford-built aqueduct carrying narrowboats via a narrow indeed channel across a Welsh valley on 126 foot pillars. A body has been found in the River Dee below by a lad out with his fishing pole, a body clearly fallen from the aqueduct's great height. Suicide? Accident? No. Rutledge quickly determines the man had been pushed off the tow path. His total lack of ID suggests murder. But who is he? Some intelligent examination of the corpse leads Rutledge to a small community where the man and his wife, Ruth, ran a failing pub. No one had missed Sam as he was thought to be in nearby Shrewsbury negotiating for supplies. And probably still on the hunt for the couple's three year old daughter, Tildy, who went missing a year ago. Now Rutledge has two lines of investigation to work, with a little backup back at the Yard from Gibson. Weeks elapse as he motors all over northern Wales seeking answers while unearthing betrayals large and small....

✠ Tudor, CJ. [The Burning Girls](#) (Joseph \$36). An unconventional vicar moves to a remote corner of the English countryside, only to discover a community haunted by death and disappearances both past and present—and intent on keeping its dark secrets. If you think this is some kind of village cozy or an Agatha Christie sort of mystery, you have not read Tudor whose thrillers are dark and brutal. So, welcome to Chapel Croft. Five hundred years ago, eight protestant martyrs were burned at the stake here. Thirty years ago, two teenage girls disappeared without a trace. And two months ago, the vicar of the local parish killed himself. Rarely have the secrets of an English village been used to greater effect than in this tautly suspenseful mystery from Thriller Award-winner Tudor. When the Rev. Jack Brooks, a widow with a 14-year-old daughter, Flo, is ordered to fill a sudden vacancy in Chapel Croft, Jack learns that the Sussex village is famous for the burning of its martyrs in the reign of Mary I, two of the victims having been young girls. But it's not so clear what happened to two teenage girls who disappeared from Chapel Croft 30 years earlier, in 1990, never to be heard from again. Once Jack discovers that her predecessor killed himself, the menace stalking the village becomes a palpable threat. Shifting points of view bring into play a secret from Jack's past—that threat is added to the escalating dangers in Chapel Croft....

#### UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Charles, Janet Skeslien. [The Paris Library](#) (Atria \$28). For a review see Signed Books. Here is a comment from Charles whose book is the #1 Indie Next Pick for February: "I wrote this novel as a love letter to libraries, to bookstores, and to book people. In these difficult days, we need the sanctuaries of bookshops and libraries more than ever." Indienext: "I can't think of a more perfect novel to recommend to book lovers than *The Paris Library*! Not only does it bring to life the true story of the heroic librarians of



the American Library in Nazi-occupied Paris, its interwoven narrative of a bereft teenager in 1980s Montana who finds a kindred spirit in her mysterious, reclusive, and book-loving French neighbor is a feat of extraordinary storytelling. *The Paris Library* is a testament to the everlasting power of literature and literary places to bring people together and be a home for everyone, even during our darkest, most hopeless, and divided times.”

✦ Dean, Abigail. [Girl A](#) (Viking \$27). See Signed Books too. Lex Gracie doesn’t want to think about her family. She doesn’t want to think about growing up in her parents’ House of Horrors. And she doesn’t want to think about her identity as Girl A: the girl who escaped, the eldest sister who freed her older brother and four younger siblings. It’s been easy enough to avoid her parents—her father never made it out of the House of Horrors he created, and her mother spent the rest of her life behind bars. But when her mother dies in prison and leaves Lex and her siblings the family home, she can’t run from her past any longer. Together with her sister, Evie, Lex intends to turn the home into a force for good. But first she must come to terms with her siblings—and with the childhood they shared. What begins as a propulsive tale of escape and survival becomes a gripping psychological family story about the shifting alliances and betrayals of sibling relationships. “The height of a pandemic might not be the ideal time to read a novel about six English children held captive at home and abused by their deranged parents. But put your fears aside or you’ll miss out on a stunning debut...”—*Washington Post*. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

Fitzek, Sebastian. [The Package](#) (Zeus \$27.99). A huge seller in his native Germany for his psychological suspense, Fitzek offers you one. Emma’s the one that got away. The only survivor of a killer known in the tabloids as “the hairdresser” – because of the trophies he takes from his victims. Or she thinks she was. The police aren’t convinced. Nor is her husband. She never even saw her tormentor properly, but now she recognizes him in every man. Questioning her sanity, she gives up her job as a doctor in the local hospital and retreats from the world. It is better to stay at home. Quiet. Anonymous. Safe. No one can hurt her here. All she did was take a parcel for a neighbor. She has no idea what she’s let into her home. But you do, gradually. The structure of the narrative is unusual but it pulls together in the end with its betrayals and twists.

Harper, Jane. [The Survivors](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). Signed bookplates. See Signed Books for a review of the UK edition. Jane is a *New York Times* and *Sunday Times* bestseller, and has won numerous top awards including the Australian Book Industry Awards Book of the Year, the Australian Indie Awards Book of the Year, the CWA Gold Dagger Award for Best Crime Novel, and the British Book Awards Crime and Thriller Book of the Year. Her books are published in more than 36 territories worldwide, with [The Dry](#) (\$15.99) in production as a major motion picture starring Eric Bana. Jane worked as a print journalist for thirteen years both in Australia and the UK, and now lives in Melbourne.

Pearse, Sarah. [The Sanatorium](#) (Viking \$27.99). Half-hidden by forest and overshadowed by threatening peaks, Le Sommet has always been a sinister place. Long plagued by troubling rumors, the former abandoned sanatorium has since been renovated into a five-star minimalist hotel. An imposing, isolated getaway spot high up in the Swiss Alps is the last place Elin Warner wants to be. But Elin’s taken time off from her job as a detective, so when

her estranged brother, Isaac, and his fiancée, Laure, invite her to celebrate their engagement at the hotel, Elin really has no reason not to accept. Arriving in the midst of a threatening storm, Elin immediately feels on edge—there’s something about the hotel that makes her nervous. And when they wake the following morning to discover Laure is missing, Elin must trust her instincts if they hope to find her. With the storm closing off all access to the hotel, the longer Laure stays missing, the more the remaining guests start to panic. As yet no one has realized yet that another woman has gone missing.

✦ Thomas, Russ. [Nighthawking](#) (Putnam \$26). **This is the Unsigned US edition and our February British Crime Club Book of the Month.** I normally try not to select two in a row by one author for a club, but this is so good I can’t resist... plus I keep on the hunt for UK books that are NOT domestic suspense. **If you prefer the Signed UK edition out in April and belong to the club please let Karen know so we can select something else for you.**

“The discovery of a young woman’s body buried in the sprawling Botanical Gardens of Sheffield, England, drives Thomas’s outstanding sequel to 2020’s *Firewatching*, which introduced DS Adam Tyler. The victim—a Chinese national studying botany at the local university—was found with ancient Roman coins on her eyes, historically valuable artifacts worth a lot of money. Tyler, struggling to get the wreckage of his personal life in order and still obsessed about finding out the truth of his father’s alleged suicide, offers little help as the brunt of the work falls to Tyler’s newly promoted protégé, Det. Constable Mina Rabbani, who realizes quickly that the case involves much more than a simple buried body. Thomas adeptly develops his diverse cast, but the novel’s real power lies in its intricate structure—the mystery surrounding the body is impressively deep, the various levels of tension are relentless, and every chapter ends with a narrative punch to the face. This police procedural is virtually unputdownable.”—*PW* Starred Review

## OUR FEBRUARY BOOKS OF THE MONTH

**The Crime Book of the Month** One Signed hardcover First per month

Berenson, Alex. [The Power Couple](#)

**British Crime Book of the Month** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Thomas, Russ. [Nighthawking](#)

**Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Cosimano, Elle. [Finlay Donovan is Killing It](#)

**Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month** One Signed hardcover First per month

Tarkington, Ed. [The Fortunate Ones](#)

**First Mystery Book of the Month Club** One Signed hardcover First per month

Pearse, Sarah. [The Sanatorium](#)

**Historical Fiction Book of the Month** One Signed hardcover First per month

Epstein, Allison. [A Tip for the Hangman](#)

**International Crime Book of the Month** One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Raman, RV. [A Will to Kill](#)

**SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month** One hardcover or paperback per month signed when possible

Frey, Dan. [The Future Is Yours](#)

## CLASSICS

Carr, John Dickson. [The Plague Court Murders](#) (Penzler \$15.95). Impossible crime master Carr (1906–1977) has rarely been better than in this mind-boggling mystery, first published in 1934. After James Halliday commits suicide, his elderly aunt becomes convinced that he was driven to it by the spirit of Louis Playge, a 17th-century hangman who died in the London house Halliday inhabited in Plague Court, and agrees to let psychic researcher Roger Darworth try to exorcise Playge's spirit. Darworth arranges to be sealed inside a small building in the rear yard, with the sole door locked from the outside and double-barred from the inside. Despite those precautions and the absence of evidence that anyone approached the building, which was surrounded by pristine mud, he's stabbed to death by a knife used by Playge that was recently stolen from a museum. Sir Henry Merrivale, making his series debut, helps the police investigate. The macabre setup is bolstered by the author's superior gift at creating atmosphere. This entry in the American Mystery Classic series begs rereading to note how artfully Carr misdirects readers even while planting all the vital clues in plain sight.

Hopkins, Pauline. [Of One Blood: Or, The Hidden Self](#) (The Haunted Library \$14.99). When medical student Reuel Briggs reluctantly attends a performance by the beautiful singer Dianthe Lusk, he can't help but fall for her. The very next day, their paths cross again when Dianthe's train crashes. To bring her back from the brink of death, Reuel draws on an eerie power he can't quite name. Soon, the two are engaged, and Reuel sets off on an archeological expedition to Africa to offset his debts before the wedding. But, in Ethiopia, unexpected danger and terror force him to confront the truth about his lineage, his power, and the history that lives in his very blood. First serialized in *Colored American Magazine* in 1902, this narrative exemplifies Pauline Hopkins's incisive writing and interrogates issues of race and history that remain urgent today. This edition is presented by the Horror Writers Association and introduced by award-winning author Nisi Shawl. Includes notes, biographical information about the author, discussion questions for classroom use, and suggested further reading from Leslie S. Klinger et al.

Lorac, ECR. [Checkmate to Murder: A Second World War Mystery](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). Set in WWII London, this excellent fair-play mystery from Lorac (1894–1958) opens on a dramatic note. One evening, artist Bruce Manaton is in his studio painting the portrait of an actor while two other men, a civil servant and a government chemist, are playing chess. Shortly after Manaton's sister pops outside briefly to make sure that blackout precautions have been observed, Special Constable Lewis Verraby, who has arrested Canadian soldier Neil Folliner for murder, intrudes on the quartet. After noticing the front door of the building next to the studio open, Verraby went inside and found Folliner near the corpse of the soldier's great-uncle, Albert, who'd been shot in the head. Folliner insists that Albert was already dead when he arrived. Scotland Yard's Chief Insp. Robert Macdonald, Lorac's series sleuth, looks beyond the obvious—that Folliner is guilty—at the possible motives of the others on the scene, including Verraby. The astute Macdonald's interrogations and deductions lead

to a satisfying resolution. The characters are all well-delineated, and the clues artfully hidden. First published in 1944, this British Library Crime Classic more than deserves that status

Waugh, Hillary. [Last Seen Wearing](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). Originally published in 1952, this entry in the Library of Congress Crime Classics series from MWA Grand Master Waugh (1920–2008) stands as one of the first and best police procedurals. On March 3, 1950, 18-year-old Lowell Mitchell, a freshman at Parker College in Bristol, Massachusetts, vanishes. The police investigation unfolds over five weeks, from Lowell's disappearance to the case's resolution. Though there's not much action, Waugh builds suspense by raising doubts about motive and character. Did Lowell run away? Is she dead? The search for answers to these and other questions will keep readers turning the pages, though some will be put off by the cruelly casual sexism: "girls" only go to college to find a husband, and the "only reasonable explanation" for a teenage girl's disappearance is her sneaking off to have an illegal abortion. Series editor Leslie Klinger's annotations offer fascinating insights into the postwar milieu. Those looking for a period mystery where ordinary cops are the good guys will be rewarded.

*And from Stark House, more in its noir reprints, admired by Patrick:*

Flagg, John. [Woman of Cairo/Dear Deadly Beloved](#) (\$19.95)  
Keene, Day. [Dead Man's Tide/Dangling Carrot/Big Kiss-Off](#) (\$21.95)

Malzberg, Barry N. [Oracle of the Thousand Hands/In My Parents' Bedroom](#) (\$15.95)

Neely, Richard. [Plastic Nightmare/While Love Lay Sleeping](#) (\$19.95).

Toney, Wilson. [Not Worth That Much/Money Is the Drug](#) (\$15.95).

## NEW IN HARDCOVER

*Note: I have read Ms or PDFs printed out of all the Signed Books in this Booknews. Alas I can't manage it for too many of the rest of the February books so I am forced to quote sources. The situation is improving from March on but it's still a struggle to read ahead. Thanks for supporting us during these testing times.*

Armstrong, Kelley. [A Stranger in Town](#) (St Martins \$27.99). A propulsive sixth novel set in the off-grid Canadian Yukon sanctuary of Rockton begins with Det. Casey Duncan and her boyfriend, Sheriff Eric Dalton, encountering a female hiker at the forest's edge. Her bare feet are bloody and frostbitten, she has an infected abdominal wound, and she is babbling in Danish. With translation assistance from a Nordic studies professor who lives in Rockton, the woman reveals that she and three companions were attacked by a "wild man." A search for survivors turns up a campsite strewn with partially dismembered corpses. The ambush appears to be the work of "hostiles"—former residents of Rockton who have reverted to a primal state—but something about the scene sits wrong with Eric and Casey. Their misgivings multiply as their investigation progresses. Armstrong's unique setting and clever premise play pivotal roles in this multifaceted mystery, which satisfies as a self-contained puzzle and significantly advances the series' arc. Abundant plot twists amplify tension, while poignant interactions between psychologically complex characters add heart and heft. For thriller fans seeking something different.... I have read this [Casey Duncan series](#) with pleasure.

✦ Atkins, Lucy. [Magpie Lane](#) (Mira \$26.99). By chance, Scottish nanny Dee, the unreliable narrator of this brilliantly orchestrated thriller, meets Nick Law, the newly appointed master of an Oxford University college, who's in desperate need of her services. Nick, a former BBC director who was hired, some say, because of his useful celebrity contacts, is facing opposition from the academic old guard. His beautiful, young, ebullient Scandinavian wife, Mariah, a restorer of historic wallpaper, isn't helping matters. Meanwhile, Nick's eight-year-old daughter from his first marriage, Felicity, has been selectively mute since the death of her mother four years earlier. When meeting Dee for the first time, Mariah bumbles, "Honestly, Nick's right, it feels like kind of a miracle he met you. You're like Mary Poppins, dropping onto our roof!" But is Dee a benign presence or a sinister one? The answer to that question continually shifts with each new and illuminating revelation about the Law household and Dee's history. When Felicity vanishes one night, all that speculation comes under the jaundiced eye of the police. Fluid prose, peppered with original metaphors, carries the reader along. This is an intelligent, witty, spooky, compelling novel.

✦ Bauer, Belinda. [Exit](#) (Grove \$26). In Gold Dagger winner Bauer's darkly comic thriller, an elderly widower discovers no good deed goes unpunished when his act of charity goes horribly wrong. As a member of the Exiteers, an anonymous, secret group in Devon that supports the right to die, 75-year-old widower Felix Pink witnesses the suicides of terminally ill patients. Afterward he disposes of the evidence to ensure that the deaths appear natural. But on an outing with new partner Amanda, a normally smooth operation quickly turns disastrous when the duo accidentally helps the wrong patient to die. Was it an accident or a setup for murder? After urging Amanda to leave so he can take the blame, Felix awaits the police before remembering his dog at home. "But he couldn't be arrested. Not yet. Not until he had made sure Mabel would be alright." The septuagenarian flees over a garden fence just as PC Calvin Bridge and his partner arrive to investigate. The unambitious Calvin is happy to be back in uniform after a brief stint as a plainclothes detective, despite DCI Kirsty King's belief in his investigative talent. But this odd case forces him to leave his comfort zone. Bauer's lively and amusing comedy-of-errors narrative alternates between Felix's and Calvin's perspectives as both men seek answers. This is the British Crime Club alternative to the Russ Thomas *Nighthawking* for those who want the UK signed *Nighthawking* in April.

✦ Calkins, Susanna. [The Sign of the Gallows](#) (Severn \$28.99). A dead man at a crossroads. A secret message. A ring with a warning about death. Printer's apprentice Lucy Champion is caught up in a strange and puzzling murder case in this twisty historical mystery set in 1667 London. On her way to a new market to peddle her True Accounts and Strange News, printer's apprentice Lucy Champion quickly regrets her decision to take the northwestern road. Dark and desolate, the path leads her to the crossroads—and to the old hanging tree. She doesn't believe in ghosts, but she's not sure ghosts don't believe in her. But before she even reaches the crossroads, she's knocked off her feet by two men in a hurry. What were they running from? To her dismay, she soon discovers for herself: there, dangling from the tree, is the body of a man. Did he commit self-murder, or is there something darker afoot? Ordered only Upon Request.

Cosimano, Elle. [Finlay Donovan is Killing It](#) (St. Martin's \$26.99). John reviews this debut, our **February Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**: Finlay Donovan is not killing it. Her ex-husband Steve is playing financial hardball with Finlay ever since she dumped him for cheating on her with a bimbo real estate agent. Finlay's two preschool children are a handful at the best of times, but now without her kids' nanny Veronica (who was just dismissed by Steve in a cost-cutting move), Finlay is at her wit's end. So, is it any surprise that Finlay is weeks (okay, months) behind turning in her latest romantic suspense manuscript to her editor? However, when a woman later overhears Finlay talking plot to her editor at a lunch meeting and believes Finlay may be the solution to her own marital problems, things really get interesting. Not since Evelyn E. Smith created genteel, lady hitman Susan Melville with her book *Miss Melville Regrets* has there been such a clever use of the premise of an accidental hitman as a protagonist. Writing with a deliciously acerbic sense of wit and the perfect sense for the ridiculous in life, YA novelist Cosimano, whose teen suspense book *Nearly Gone* was an Edgar nominee, hits all the marks with this fun and funny series debut that is wonderfully reminiscent of Susan Isaacs at her best (think *Compromising Positions*).

Gailey, Sarah. [The Echo Wife](#) (Forge \$24.99). If the trust-no-one domestic suspense drama is your genre, then this book takes it up a level...and is, I think, terrifying. Dr. Evelyn Caldwell is a brilliant researcher in cutting edge genetics. Her marriage to Nate has crumbled over his desire for a child and her refusal to compromise her career with one. Nate has a mistress, Martine. One day Evelyn, whom we meet when she is accepting a prestigious award and trying not to fall apart as her marriage does, receives a request from Martine to phone her back. When Evelyn reluctantly agrees to meet Martine, she can't help but notice the gentle swell of Martine's belly.... And off we go on unnerving story of betrayal and revenge and....that is very well done.

✦ Harrod-Eagles, Cynthia. [Cruel As the Grave](#) (Severn \$28.99). I have enjoyed the Bill Slider police procedurals set in contemporary London for at least two decades. I am not alone. Here's a Starred Review for this new entry: "In Harrod-Eagles' clever, frequently funny 22nd police procedural featuring Det. Chief Insp. Bill Slider, Slider and his friend and partner, DS Jim Atherton, arrive at the London apartment of Erik Lingoss, a personal trainer, to find the man dead, his head bashed in, and Erik's recently jilted girlfriend, 19-year-old Kelly-Ann Hayes, covered in blood. Though pressured to pin the murder on Kelly-Anne, Slider isn't convinced of her guilt. A search of the victim's apartment leads to a series of tantalizing suspects, including Erik's wealthy private clients and a long list of discarded lovers. Sparkling dialogue complements a plot that provides satisfyingly shifting motives and persons of interest. However, it's Harrod-Eagles' ability to create authentic relationships between Slider and his colleagues and family that lifts this series into a league of its own. Slider's marriage to Joanna, a concert musician, is certainly one of the most well-balanced in detective fiction." Ordered only Upon Request.

Haynes, Natalie. [A Thousand Ships](#) (Harper \$27.99). When the poet asks Calliope the muse to sing, she grants his request, but only shows him events as they affect the women, telling the reader, "They have waited long enough for their turn." In shifting

chronological order and settings across the Mediterranean region, readers see the war's impact. Hecabe and the Trojan women face slavery and degradation at the hands of the Greeks. Sea-goddess Thetis grieves for her son Achilles, but also regrets the insult of having a mortal son. Abandoned in Ithaca, Penelope writes Odysseus increasingly wry letters about his unusual difficulty in escaping the beds of beautiful women. A host of wives, mothers, warriors and goddesses come forward with insightful comments on the true cost of war and who must pay it. Haynes draws on Homer for material but also looks farther afield, to Euripides, Ovid and others, even including a blink-and-miss-it exchange similar to a moment from the classic film *The Clash of the Titans*.

The Indie Next Pick adds: "From *The Aeneid* to *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, classic stories of the Trojan War are implicitly reliant on the role of women, however reticent they are portrayed. Finally — finally! — we have a retelling that does women, girls, and goddesses justice. Through the perspective of women in various places and times during the war, Natalie Haynes constructs an epic collage that follows the warriors, refugees, oracles, muses, wives, and daughters of Troy, Greece, and beyond in one of the most famous conflicts in world history."

✦ Herron, Mick. [Slough House](#) (Soho \$27.95). What looks like a break out entry for Herron's brilliant, often satirical, spy series set in contemporary London. See Signed books for more.

Hobson, Brandon. [The Removed](#) (Ecco \$26.99). In telling the story of a Native family in Oklahoma who lost a teenage son to a shooting, *The Removed* examines the power of inherited trauma and the strength of family to keep people together. The book is told in the voices of the various family members left after the death of their son/brother and explores the effects on their lives of their Cherokee ancestors who walked the Trail of Tears. Mixing several points of view along with Native myth, Hobson brings a powerful story to light where the reader really steps into the shoes of each character. The loss, sadness, and despair are palpable, but so are hope and healing, by the end. A truly beautiful book that cries out to be read.

Hopkins, Ben. [Cathedral](#) (Europa \$28). This compelling and sweeping medieval saga considers the building of a cathedral and a realignment of society immerses readers in the cutthroat world of 13th-century Rhineland. In the town of Hagenburg, the construction of the titular cathedral draws together residents from all walks of life. A farmer apprentices as a stonemason to work on the cathedral. The bishop's treasurer chases the funding while wrestling with the politics of the church and the Holy Roman Empire. But this is a time of massive cultural shifts. Money is becoming more important than land as a source of power, and the church will need relationships with the people who have it, including the Jewish residents of Hagenburg. A rising class of merchants and guild members demand a voice alongside the nobility and clergy in the building of the cathedral. Women are finding this evolving world of trade allows them to accumulate power, and nonlinear chapters set in the 14th century provide glimpses of greater changes to come. *The Cathedral* is an expansive fictional epic addressing themes of art, religion and power in the mode of Ken Follett or Umberto Eco. The large cast of characters can at times be challenging to track, but presents an impressive assortment of society. It also means that readers cannot assume any of the characters are safe; with so many prominent ones, there is no reason to believe that any one of them in particular will survive to the end.

Jacobson, John J. [All the Cowboys Ain't Gone](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). In Jacobson's rollicking debut, a young Texas cowboy heads overseas at the turn of the 20th century. Lincoln Smith, son of a legendary Texas Ranger and Vassar-educated mother, performs in a traveling Wild West show in 1899 after his expulsion from Dartmouth, where he was decidedly out of step with his peers. After the show folds and Lincoln's girlfriend ditches him, he joins the French Foreign Legion and makes his way to the Middle Eastern kingdom of Mur. Along the way, he meets two American treasure hunters who also plan to enlist. While he's there, Mur is under attack by dervishes worshipping the crocodile god, Thanatos, though this is just a feint for a covert German attempt to wrest control of the oil-rich kingdom away from the French. To fight the dervish-German alliance, Lincoln and the two American enlistees team up with Amanda Montier, the French ambassador's kidnapped daughter; Omar, a plucky Arab teenager raised on western dime novels; and three Legionnaires known as Athos, Porthos and Aramis. Armed with only his wits, big heart and his father's keepsake Winchester, Lincoln is an old-fashioned hero worth rooting for. Jacobson ingeniously colors in Lincoln's adventures with elements of Dumas, Jules Verne, and P.C. Wren's *Beau Geste* mixed with much Indiana Jones-style derring-do.

Johansen, Roy. [Blink of an Eye](#) (Grand Central \$28). Delilah Winter is one of the hottest pop stars on the planet, so how in the world was she kidnapped right in the middle of a show at the famous Hollywood Bowl? If anyone can figure it out, it's Dr. Kendra Michaels, who works with local and federal authorities on only the most impossible cases. Blind for the first twenty years of her life until a revolutionary surgical procedure allowed her to regain her sight, Kendra uses her powers of observation—honed during her years in the dark—to detect what other investigators don't. She agrees to lead the race to rescue the young singer before time runs out. Joined by Jessie Mercado, the singer's former bodyguard and a military hero, Kendra closes in on the hideout location but not before casualties mount up. Desperate for leads, Kendra must set aside her personal feelings when agent-for-hire Adam Lynch also volunteers his special skills to aid in the search. But as the abductor's true purpose becomes clear, the trio uncovers a wild plot....

Jones, Robert, Jr. [The Prophets](#) (Putnam \$27). A singular and stunning debut novel about the forbidden union between two enslaved young men on a Deep South plantation, the refuge they find in each other, and a betrayal that threatens their existence. "A new kind of epic...A grand achievement...While *The Prophets'* dreamy realism recalls the work of Toni Morrison...its penetrating focus on social dynamics stands out more singularly." —*Entertainment Weekly*

Lee, Chang-Rae. [My Year Abroad](#) (Riverhead \$28). A New Jersey college student finds himself unexpectedly connected to a gaggle of international criminals. Tiller Bardmon's roommates, a mother and son he met in the Hong Kong airport, are in witness protection after helped the authorities catch her gangster husband. His present day situation, in the book, is layered against his memories of the previous year, when a caddying job led to a trip overseas with an Asian entrepreneur. The author "nests stories within stories" in this picaresque novel.

Mallery Susan. [The Vineyard at Painted Moon](#) (Harlequin \$27.99). Mackenzie Dienes seems to have it all—a beautiful home, close friends and a successful career as an elite winemaker with the family winery. There's just one problem—it's not her family, it's her husband's. In fact, everything in her life is tied to him—his mother is the closest thing to a mom that she's ever had, their home is on the family compound, his sister is her best friend. So when she and her husband admit their marriage is over, her pain goes beyond heartbreak. She's on the brink of losing everything. Her job, her home, her friends and, worst of all, her family. Staying is an option. She can continue to work at the winery, be friends with her mother-in-law, hug her nieces and nephews—but as an employee, nothing more. Or she can surrender every piece of her heart in order to build a legacy of her own. “Great relationship fiction with the bonus of learning the inner workings of the wine industry. For fans of Kristin Hannah.”

McGarrahan, Ellen. [Two Truths and a Lie](#) (Random \$28). In this powerful memoir, a private investigator revisits the case that has haunted her for decades and sets out on a deeply personal quest to sort truth from lies. Journalist-turned-PI McGarrahan brings readers along on her affecting quest to discover the truth about who killed two law enforcement officers in 1976 Florida. State trooper Phillip Black and a visiting colleague, Canadian constable Donald Irwin, spotted a car in a rest area containing five sleeping people: Jesse Tafero; his girlfriend, Sunny Jacobs; their two young children; and Tafero's friend Walter Rhodes. Shortly after Black radioed that he saw a gun in the car, multiple shots rang out, leaving the officers dead. Based on Rhodes's testimony, Tafero and Jacobs were convicted of the homicides. In 1990, Tafero was electrocuted, an execution McGarrahan witnessed in her role as a reporter for the Miami Herald. McGarrahan knew from attending a play based on the crime and its aftermath that Rhodes confessed to pulling the trigger less than a year after Tafero and Jacobs were convicted, then he recanted. She subsequently embarked on her own investigation, which included travel to Ireland to interview Jacobs and to Australia to interview Jacobs's son. Ultimately, she reached a definitive conclusion about who was responsible for Black and Irwin's murders. McGarrahan's blend of detective work and insights into the criminal justice system make this must reading for fans of Errol Morris's *The Thin Blue Line*.

Oyler, Lauren. [Fake Accounts](#) (Catapult \$26). “A woman in a tailspin discovers that her boyfriend is an anonymous online conspiracy theorist in this “absolutely brilliant take on the bizarre and despicable ways the internet has warped our perception of reality” (*Elle*, on one of the Most Anticipated Books of the Year). This debut follows a blogger who realizes her boyfriend is spreading alt-right conspiracy theories online. Flashing back to how they met in Berlin, through their long distance relationship, and the aftermath of her decision to end things, makes for an “incisive, funny work” that “brilliantly captures the claustrophobia of lives led online and personae tested in the real world.” “Social media has lurked in the background of contemporary literary fiction...but here it feels, finally, fully and thoroughly explored, with style and originality...I felt sharpened by it, grateful for its provocations.” —Parul Sehgal, *The New York Times*.

Patterson, James/Matt Eversmann/Chris Mooney. [Walk in My Combat Boots](#) (Little Brown \$30). True stories from combat crafted from hundreds of original interviews by James Patterson, and First Sergeant US Army (Ret.) Matt Eversmann, part of the Ranger unit portrayed in the movie *Black Hawk Down*.

Raman, RV. [A Will to Kill](#) (Polis \$26). Here we have “a modern-day take on the classic locked-room murder mystery, transported to a remote mansion high in the hills of southern India—and our **February International Crime Book of the Month**. ‘People drown in rivers, fall down stairs, have heavy objects fall on them, die of suffocation in airless rooms or dungeons, and even get scared to death.’ Here at the possibly haunted Greybrooke Manor in Nilgiris, a dozen guests have gathered at the invitation of Bhaskar Fernandez, an eccentric patriarch whose squabbling extended family is tediously dependent on his largesse. Bhaskar is convinced that someone is trying to kill him and has included on his guest list Harith Athreya, a canny private detective charged with looking into a series of suspicious incidents. To disincentivize any would-be killer, Bhaskar has drawn up two wills allowing for two different possibilities: one if he dies of natural causes, the other in the case of his murder. (Bhaskar is a lover of mysteries and enjoys his little games.) The roads are rendered impassable by a landslide. The lights go out. Greedy relatives and hangers-on circle like so many piranhas. And before we know it, there is indeed a murder.... Who did it? There is a lot to pay attention to: an art scam, a drug ring, the falsification of identities, not to mention a spot of adultery. But Athreya is a fine detective with a curious mind, a cool eye for the chance detail, a skill in synthesizing disparate threads and a talent for resisting the insults of the requisite police officer assigned to the case.”—*NY Times*.

Reardon, Bryan. [Let Her Lie](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). In the mood for a serial killer thriller? Theo Snyder is at the end of his rope. One minute he was on top of the world, his documentary film *The Basement* a massive critical and commercial hit, the next crestfallen when his latest film was canceled after an embarrassingly public misstep (never IMHO clearly defined). As his desperation grows to continue making documentaries, he makes a bold decision: to pursue the story of the notorious “Halo Killer,” Jasper Ross-Johnson. To that end Theo badgers a wealthy and connected friend who has not deserted him for an introduction to a first class private eye. At first, things are looking up. Jasper is willing to talk, the footage of the prison meetings is spectacular, and famed investigator Zora Neale Monroe joins him on the project. Theo is sure he's getting close to something no one else has discovered: the truth about why Jasper was captured before he could kill his final victim, a something that will restore Theo's reputation. Someone else was on the beach the day that Jasper is caught, someone who knows a lot more than they're telling.... This is a convoluted narrative with lots of psycho-drama and manipulation seasoned with revenge. And it does have a bold premise

Robb, J D. [Faithless in Death](#) (St Martins \$28.99). “The murder of sculptress Ariel Byrd in her West Village apartment drives bestseller Robb's well-crafted 52nd police procedural set in mid-21st-century New York City. Oddly, the 911 call reporting Ariel's murder comes from the Upper East Side, from Gwen Huffman, the scion of a rich and powerful family. When Lt. Eve Dallas of the New York City Police and Security Department questions Gwen in the company of her lawyer-cum-fiancé, Eve finds many inconsistencies in Gwen's story that are soon revealed as lies. Aided by the FBI; Eve's husband, Roarke (a billionaire technology guru); and some plucky housewives, Eve and her colleagues in the NYPSD uncover a deadly conspiracy that includes some of the most influential men in the country. Robb skillfully balances the personal and professional lives of her protagonists, all

the while maintaining a quick pace that keeps the investigation squarely in the frame. The final triumph of right over might will leave readers exhilarated,” says *PW*. These books are like catnip to me, something to dive into for a fast-paced ride when escape calls.

✦ Tudor, CJ. [The Burning Girls](#) (Random \$27). Not your classic English village mystery but a dark and twisty tale involving the rector, a woman with deep secrets, etc. See Signed books for a review.

✦ Westerson, Jeri. [Spiteful Bones](#) (Severn \$28.99). Crispin Guest, London’s famed Tracker, untangles the mystery around a bound skeleton found in a manor wall in 1398 London. Like all books published by Severn, the supply chain is limited. Ordered only Upon Request.

### SOME FEBRUARY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Burgess, Doug. [Dark Currents](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). This is a new edition of *Fogland Point*, one of the best books I edited over the past 20 years for Poisoned Pen Press (which we sold to Sourcebooks in January of 2019). Everything about it is wonderful. Authors Hank Phillippi Ryan, Michael Koryta, and Nick Petrie give it rave reviews. It has a great landscape in small Little Compton, a seaside village, wonderful characters, pirates! An unusual love story. And tackles issues like dementia. I don’t see anything in the packaging that does it justice but I ask you to trust me and if you missed *Fogland Point*, give this one a try.

When David left home three years ago, he never looked back. Now, the only connection to his tiny New England hometown is his grandmother Maggie, whose mind is unraveling as she slowly succumbs to dementia. But when her best friend turns up dead and she may be the sole witness to the crime, David has no choice but to return to a place that never accepted his new identity and only ever wanted him gone. Maggie’s testimony is shrouded in doubt—in between moments of lucidity she talks about things that never happened, about apparitions, disappearances, and murders. But are they really only stories? After a man’s death sets off a hauntingly familiar chain of events, it seems there’s some truth to Maggie’s words. With a body count on the rise, David begrudgingly tunes back into the rural voices of the tight-knit community to seek out the truth. And while David returns home a changed man, he finds that the ghosts of his past have waited for him

Cha, Steph. [Your House Will Pay](#) (\$17.99). Patrick is a real champion of this breakout book for Cha, winner of the 2020 Los Angeles Times Book Prize. In a Los Angeles ready to boil over after another senseless shooting of an African American teenager, Korean American Grace Park lives quietly with her immigrant parents, while African American Shawn Matthews confronts the reawakened trauma of his sister’s 1991 killing. A subsequent tragedy puts the two families on a collision course that sums up racial tension today.

Connelly, Michael. [Fair Warning](#) (\$16.99). Jack McEvoy, first met in Connelly’s first break from Harry Bosch in *The Poet*, returns. “There’s something for everyone in this jam-packed plot: murder, arson, professional rivalry, salty cop talk and noisy domestic disputes that turn very ugly very quickly. Me, I go for the procedural details: who does what and how things get done from the minute the cops on shift at the Hollywood Division are sent to investigate a murder. Connelly is pretty much the current

dean of procedural writers.”—Marilyn Stasio, *New York Times Book Review*

Lecoat, Jenny. [The Girl from the Channel Islands](#) (Graydon House \$17.99). Hedy Bercu came to Jersey as a nanny but now that it is occupied by the Germans she finds it hard to keep a secret: she’s Jewish. Then she falls in love with a German officer. The sacrifices that Hedy and her friends make to protect each other are tremendous. The Indie Next Pick: “A beautiful love story unfolds between a German officer and a Jewish woman amidst the horror and atrocities of WWII. Set in Jersey in the Channel Islands, this historical novel, with its many twists and turns, will keep you on edge. Secrets and lies become the norm for survival along with crafty plans to evade discovery. The bravery of the characters keeps the reader focused on the triumph of the human spirit against all odds. Lecoat has turned a personal connection and a family history into an engaging, touching novel!”

✦ MacNeal, Susan Elia. [The King’s Justice](#) (\$17). How far can a multitasking woman be pushed before she breaks? British-born, American-raised Maggie Hope has held an amazing series of jobs since moving to war-torn London. She’s worked for Winston Churchill, traveled as a spy to Berlin and Paris, and escaped from a Scottish island where someone has been killing exiled Special Operations Executive agents. And she’s [now] faced with a new serial murder case when suitcases filled with bones turn up in the Thames...A bit of code-breaking and some deeper insight into Reitter break open the case but put Maggie in the killer’s crosshairs. Action-packed, intertwined mysteries featuring an introspective heroine and packed with little-known historical details.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. [The Maggie Hope](#) series is best read from the beginning.

✦ Raybourn, Deanna. [A Murderous Relation](#) (\$17). Veronica Speedwell and Revelstoke “Stoker” Templeton-Vane have finally decided to act on their long-standing attraction to each other when an urgent telegram from a friend of the royal family Lady Wellingtonia Beauclerk puts romance on hold in Raybourn’s rollicking fifth Victorian mystery. It’s October, 1888, and Prince Albert Victor, the heir to the British throne, has given a diamond star marked with his initials to Madame Aurore, who runs the Club de l’Étoile, a “palace for debauchery.” Lady Wellingtonia asks the duo to retrieve the gift, which could cause scandal; worse, she has received anonymous letters suggesting that the prince may be involved in the Ripper murders terrorizing London. Stoker and Veronica attend the club’s weekly masked ball hoping to find out more. Instead, they encounter the prince dressed up as a woman, Madame Aurore’s murdered corpse, and thugs who imprison them in a warehouse. Raybourn delivers fast-paced action, sexual tension, quirky characters, and clever repartee, but she also crafts quiet scenes—most memorably, a meeting with one of the Ripper’s future victims—rich with deeper emotion. “The mystery here coincides with the killing spree of Jack the Ripper. There’s a touch of the Amelia Peabody series in Raybourn’s rollicking fifth Victorian mystery.” And on March 2 we get the sixth: [An Unexpected Peril](#) (Berkley \$26).

Sandford, John. [Masked Prey](#) (\$17). Lucas Davenport #30? Yes indeed. He’s been a Federal Marshal for awhile which allows him to range around doing what he likes best, “to hunt.” He’s rich enough to retire, but what would be the challenge there? Instead, Senator Elmer Henderson of Minnesota, a political ally, once

again needs his help. Audrey Coil, the 17-year-old daughter of a colleague on the Senate Armed Forces Committee, has uncovered a website that could pose a danger to herself and other children of Senatorial families. When Audrey, who operates a fashion blog, looked into whether the blog's images of her were being used elsewhere on the web with the aid of her fellow student photographer using facial recognition tech, she found photos on a website with pictures of other children of elected officials. The site, named 1919, code for the SS, has a Nazi connection, and its discovery leads to fears that someone may threaten the children as a way of influencing public policy. Davenport tenaciously investigates right-wing groups to figure out who's behind 1919 and to forestall any violence while we readers get to track the devolution of an engineer who, denying he's a Nazi, believes 1919 is a rallying cry for fascists to save the US. On April 13 we get [Ocean Prey](#) (Putnam \$29) along with a virtual event with John.

Swanson, Peter. [Eight Perfect Murders](#) (\$16.99) was one of 2020's buzziest books. Years ago, bookseller and mystery aficionado Malcolm Kershaw compiled a list of the genre's most unsolvable murders, those that are almost impossible to crack—which he titled “Eight Perfect Murders”—chosen from among the best of the best including Agatha Christie's *A. B. C. Murders*, Patricia Highsmith's *Strangers on a Train*, Ira Levin's *Death Trap*, A. A. Milne's *Red House Mystery*, Anthony Berkeley Cox's *Malice Aforethought*, James M. Cain's *Double Indemnity*, John D. Macdonald's *The Drowner*, and Donna Tartt's *A Secret History*. But no one is more surprised than Mal, now the owner of the Old Devils Bookstore in Boston, when an FBI agent comes knocking on his door one snowy day in February. She's looking for information about a series of unsolved murders that look eerily similar to the killings on Mal's old list. Here is an ever-unfolding puzzle... Mal frequently confides in the reader, showing that he knows more than he is letting the FBI believe. But what exactly does Mal know, and what might he be guilty of? These questions will plague readers and follow them throughout the book. Look in March for our signed copies of [Every Vow You Break](#) (Harper \$27.99).

✎ Todd, Charles. [A Divided Loyalty](#) (\$16.95). A woman has been murdered at the foot of a megalith shaped like a great shrouded figure. Chief Inspector Brian Leslie, one of the Yard's best men, is sent to investigate the site in Avebury, a village set inside a prehistoric stone circle not far from Stonehenge. In spite of his efforts, Leslie is not able to identify her, much less discover how she got to Avebury—or why she died there. Her killer has simply left no trace. Several weeks later, when Ian Rutledge has returned from successfully concluding a similar case with an unidentified victim, he is asked to take a second look at Leslie's inquiry. But Rutledge suspects Chief Superintendent Markham simply wants him to fail. Leslie was right—Avebury refuses to yield its secrets. But Rutledge slowly widens his search, until he discovers an unexplained clue that seems to point toward an impossible solution.... See Signed Books for the next Rutledge brought to you and us on February 13 in our virtual event.

Weisel, Frederick. [The Silenced Women](#) (Poisoned Pen \$16.99). This wonderful debut is among the last books I acquired as editor for the Press and I will do a book chat with him soon. Our blogger Lesa reviews: When a woman's body is found in Santa Rosa's largest park, it brings back all of Lieutenant Eddie Mahler's memories of an earlier case. His Violent Crime Investi-

gations (VCI) team was convinced they had the murderer of two young women whose bodies were found in the same park, but there wasn't enough evidence. Mahler was blamed for that earlier failure to arrest the killer. He suffers from crippling migraine headaches, even talks to one of the dead victims, but he's able to direct his team, including the newest member. Eden Somers has a gift for analyzing evidence, but she burned out working as an FBI analyst. She immerses herself in this case, and worries that, like Mahler, she might be endangering herself. The team's intense investigation leads them to conclude they may be looking at a different killer for the latest victim. But the new killer has the skills to target the team itself. This start of a cinematic new series is an intense police procedural. Readers will be immersed in the investigation by a talented team, while also privy to the actions of a brilliant killer.”

### SOME NEW LARGE PAPERBACKS

Blacke, Olivia. [Killer Content](#) (Berkley \$16). A refreshing twist on both the fish out of water story AND the amateur sleuth genre. Bayou transplant Odessa Dean has a lot to learn about life in Brooklyn. So far she's scored a rent free apartment in one of the nicest neighborhoods around by cat-sitting, and has a new job working at Untapped Books & Café. Hand-selling books and craft beers are easy for Odessa, but making new friends and learning how to ride the subway? Well, that might take her a little extra time. But things turn sourer than an IPA when the death of a fellow waitress goes viral, caught on camera in the background of a couple's flash-mob proposal video. Nothing about Bethany's death feels right to Odessa—neither her sudden departure mid-shift nor the clues that only Odessa seems to catch. As an up-and-coming YouTube star, Bethany had more than one viewer waiting for her to fall from grace. Determined to prove there's a killer on the loose, Odessa takes matters into her own hands.

✎ Boyd, Damien. [Beyond the Point](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). The 9<sup>th</sup> for DI Nick Dixon, one of my very favorite British policing series. Happily we are able to supply the entire [Nick Dixon series](#) so order up and dive in. This begins when the body of a young woman is found on the building site of a nuclear power station, work grinds to a halt. The body bears all the hallmarks of yet another random murder at the hands of the escaped killer. Then Dixon finds a motive. Fighting for his place on the Major Investigation Team, following a trail of fingerprints and DNA across west Somerset, he soon uncovers a family's desperate search for the truth, exposing a web of corruption and death that will shake the billion pound construction project to its very foundations. But who can be trusted when so much money is at stake?

Next, [Down Among the Dead](#) (\$15.95). When a badly decomposed body is discovered during an archaeological dig on the Sedgemoor battlefield, Avon and Somerset police are notified immediately. The remains are recent, and Detective Chief Inspector Peter Lewis knows exactly who they have found. A single stab wound from a curved blade implicates convicted serial killer Daniel Parker, who Lewis arrested fifteen years ago. With Parker's appeal hearing imminent, Lewis comes under intense pressure to pin this new murder on him quickly and quietly. It's an open and shut case—and Lewis should know—so why then does he insist on assigning it to DI Nick Dixon? As Dixon starts to re-examine the original investigation, shocking revelations come in from the forensics team. And just as Dixon's worst fears begin to surface, another body is found...

✘ Brody, Frances. [The Body on the Train](#) (\$17.99). When Scotland Yard hits a dead end in Brody's intricate 11th Kate Shackleton mystery, private detective Kate takes over investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of an unidentified man discovered on a goods train at London's King's Cross Station in 1929. The Yard refuses to share any more information, citing national security. Kate's initial inquiries reveal another unsolved murder at about the same time, and she must feel her way as she seeks answers while not treading on official toes or alarming a skittish populace. Her investigation leads her to the Midlands, where she speaks with farmers, miners, and others over a broad spectrum of society. Kate is determined to get to the truth before an innocent young man becomes a convenient scapegoat to mask bureaucratic ineptitude. This well-told tale is enriched with vignettes of daily life at a time in England when threats of strikes and fears of communist incursion were rampant. Readers must be on their toes to catch the subtle hints Brody skillfully drops. This is an excellent British series.

Constantine, Liv. [The Wife Stalker](#) (\$16.99). There is more than one side to a story! Joanna recounts how Leo Drakos leaves her and their two young children for another woman. Piper, "the other woman" tells how she set her sights on Leo and seduced him. Leo is instantly smitten with Piper and takes steps to remove Joanna permanently. Combining incriminating information and a payoff, he bribes Joanna to leave. He tells his two young children that their mother has died, and invites Piper into their family. Meanwhile, Joanna digs into Piper's duplicitous past, suspecting foul play. Piper assumes Joanna's place in the Drakos home, but resents the time and attention that Leo gives his children. Joanna refuses to retreat, continuing to delve into Piper's past. She secretly stalks her family, to safeguard the children and expose Piper's lies....And....

Gentry, Amy. [Bad Habits](#) (\$14.99). "If you've ever wondered how the Talented Mr. Ripley would fare in a Ph.D. program, *Bad Habits* is the book for you. With deft, crisp prose and unerring wit, Amy Gentry charts a singular young woman's perilous ascent to the academic firmament—and then unravels all the secrets she had to keep to get there. By turns wicked and tender, ghastly and hilarious, *Bad Habits* is Amy Gentry's best book yet—and the most fun I've had in ages." —Elizabeth Little

Goldfarb, Bruce/Judy Melinek. [18 Tiny Deaths](#) (\$15.99). Did you know one of the most influential figures in developing modern forensics was a grandmother without a college degree? Frances Glessner Lee, born a socialite to a wealthy and influential Chicago family in the 1870s, was never meant to have a career, let alone one steeped in death and depravity. Yet she developed a fascination with the investigation of violent crimes and made it her life's work. Best known for creating the Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death, a series of dollhouses that appear charming—until you notice the macabre little details: an overturned chair, a blood-spattered comforter, and the bodies—splayed out on the floor, draped over chairs—clothed in garments that Lee lovingly knit with sewing pins. In *18 Tiny Deaths*, official biographer Bruce Goldfarb shares how Lee used her wealth, influence and sewing needles, to become the mother of modern forensics.

Hendricks, Greer. [You Are Not Alone](#) (\$16.99). Shay Miller is not having a good day. She's been laid off from her job, her roommate (whom she secretly adores) has a new girlfriend, and on her

way to a promising interview, she's the only witness to a woman's suicide at the subway station. More invested than she'll even admit to herself, Shay tries to find out more about the victim. She learns the woman's name and address and ends up at Amanda Evinger's memorial service, where she's befriended by two sisters, Cassandra and Jane Moore. The Moores are beautiful, stylish, and everything Shay wishes she could be. But are they what they seem, and why do they need her friendship so desperately?

Lawhon, Ariel. [Code Name Hélène](#) (\$16). It is 1936 and socialite Nancy Wake is an intrepid NZ/Australian expat living in Paris who has bluffed her way into a reporting job for Hearst newspaper when she meets the wealthy French industrialist Henri Fiocca. No sooner does Henri sweep Nancy off her feet and convince her to become Mrs. Fiocca than the Germans invade France and she takes yet another name: a code name. As Lucienne Carlier, Nancy smuggles people and documents across the border. Her success and her remarkable ability to evade capture earn her the nickname The White Mouse from the Gestapo. With a five million franc bounty on her head, Nancy is forced to escape France and leave Henri behind. He was subsequently executed. When she enters training with the Special Operations Executives in Britain, her new comrades are instructed to call her Hélène. And finally, with mission in hand, Nancy is airdropped back into France as the deadly Madame Andree, where she claims her place as one of the most powerful leaders in the French Resistance, armed with a ferocious wit, her signature red lipstick, and the ability to summon weapons straight from the Allied Forces. But no one can protect Nancy if the enemy finds out these four women are one and the same, and the closer to liberation France gets, the more exposed she—and the people she loves—become. Amazingly this is based upon the actual remarkable life of Wake.

MacRae, Molly. [Thistles and Thieves](#) (\$16.95). American expat Janet Marsh, one of the four proprietors of Yon Bonnie Books in Inversgail, Scotland, is riding her bicycle in the hills when she spots a body lying next to a damaged bicycle. Malcolm Murray, a retired doctor, appears to have had a fatal accident. Or was it foul play? A few days later, a box of first editions arrives mysteriously at Yon Bonnie with a note asking that the books be looked after. Janet and her colleagues have a hunch the books belonged to Malcolm or maybe his brother, Gerald. The stakes rise when Janet and company find Gerald stabbed to death in his cottage. Third in the [Highland Bookshop Mysteries](#) and should be welcome to fans of Paige Shelton's Edinburgh Scottish Bookshop series

McBride, James. [Deacon King Kong](#) (\$17). In September 1969, a fumbling, cranky old church deacon known as Sportcoat shuffles into the courtyard of the Cause Houses housing project in south Brooklyn, pulls a .38 from his pocket, and, in front of everybody, shoots the project's drug dealer at point-blank range. The reasons for this desperate burst of violence and the consequences that spring from it lie at the heart of the National Book Award winner's latest novel.

Michaud, Martin. [Without Blood](#) (Dundurn \$17.99). Michaud's intriguing prequel to 2020's [Never Forget](#) (\$16.99) follows three days in the life of Montreal DS Victor Lessard as he investigates a hit-and-run, the stabbing death of a senior hospital administrator, and a dead man found in the trunk of a stolen car. Against medical advice, Simone Fortin—the hit-and-run victim—leaves



the hospital and tries to locate Miles Green, the young man who came to her aid after she was struck by a speeding car. Simone's quest takes a strange turn when she learns that Miles has been in a coma for years. Has she entered a parallel reality? The tension rises as a stone cold killer stalks Simone, and Lessard comes to realize that the two murder cases and the hit-and-run may be linked. Michaud keeps the reader guessing as to what's real and what's dream. Those who like their mysteries with a surreal touch will be rewarded.

Patterson, James/Maxine Paetro. [The 20th Victim](#) (\$16.99). Three victims, three bullets, three cities. The shooters' aim is as fear-somely precise as their target selection. When Sergeant Lindsay Boxer realizes that the fallen men and women excel in a lucrative, criminal activity, she leads the charge in the manhunt for the killers. As the casualty list expands, fear and fascination with this suspicious shooting gallery galvanizes the country

Stabenow, Dana. [No Fixed Line](#) (\$14.95). Here's a Starred Review for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Kate Shugak: "A plane crash in the Alaskan wilderness kicks off Edgar winner Stabenow's excellent 22<sup>nd</sup> Kate Shugak following after [Less Than a Treason](#) (\$12.95). Former State Trooper Jim Chopin, Kate's beau, is called out of retirement to go to the crash site, where he discovers two survivors, children who don't speak English. When the children turn out to be trafficked refugees kept by a drug-smuggling pedophile, PI Shugak, who operates from the national park that contains the crash site, investigates. She goes up against powerful foes from both inside and outside Alaska, including two goons sent by the smuggling ring. As plenty of villains have learned over the decades, this is a woman who shouldn't be underestimated and has plenty of fight left in her. Stabenow's affection for her characters, in particular Chopin, shines through, as does her fondness for the Alaskan country she knows so well."

Stabenow, Dana. [Fire and Ice](#); [So Sure of Death](#); [Better to Rest](#); [Nothing Gold Can Stay](#) (\$15.95 each). Order now and get all four Liam Campbells Signed by Dana. For the fifth see Signed Books.

✎ Tudor, CJ. [The Other People](#) (\$17). Gabe Forman, the protagonist of another nightmarish novel from Thriller Award-winner Tudor, is running late for dinner when he spies his five-year-old daughter, Izzy, in the window of a stranger's car. He gives chase, but loses the vehicle in traffic. When he calls home, police inform him that an intruder shot and killed both Izzy and his wife. Though his father-in-law positively identifies the bodies, Gabe knows what he saw, and he abandons everything to travel England's M1 motorway in search of Izzy. Three years later, Gabe discovers the abductor's abandoned car, which contains clues pointing to a dark web group that helps wronged parties find justice. But why target Gabe's family—and where is Izzy? Tudor intersperses Gabe's hunt with scenes spotlighting a woman named Fern and seven-year-old Alice, who have spent three years on the run. Tudor's work falls into that very dark current running through some British crime fiction.

✎ Young, Samantha. [Much Ado about You](#) (Berkley \$16). The cozy comforts of an English village bookstore open up a world of new possibilities for Evie Starling in this charming new romantic comedy "Feeling overlooked in her career and her personal life, Shakespeare-loving Evie Starling takes a leap of faith and goes to Northern England to run the Much Ado about Books bookshop. There, she meets a very sexy farmer who makes her want to

break her one and only rule for her trip: no men. For readers who loved *The Tourist Attraction* and Natalie Tan's *Book of Luck and Fortune*."

## OUR FEBRUARY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Baldacci, David. [A Minute to Midnight](#) (\$9.99). Atlee Pine #2. FBI Agent Atlee Pine's life was never the same after her twin sister Mercy was kidnapped—and likely killed—thirty years ago. Now, after a lifetime of torturous uncertainty, Atlee's unresolved anger finally gets the better of her on the job, and she finds she has to deal with the demons of her past if she wants to remain with the FBI.

Bentley, Don. [Without Sanction](#) (\$9.99) Matt Drake #1. Matt Drake, an operative struggling with PTSD in the aftermath of a mission gone wrong, is forced to confront his biggest failure in order to prevent an ISIS splinter cell from creating a weapon of mass destruction. *Kirkus* concluded their rave review with "This is a novel with an emotional core, and that may be what makes it stand out from other thrillers of a similar ilk. A page-turner with the kind of small details that lend it authenticity."

Castillo, Linda. [A Simple Murder](#) (St Martins \$9.99). A Kate Burkholder Short Story Collection. Together for the first time in print, this collection of six short stories, starring chief of police Kate Burkholder, includes "A Hidden Secret," in which Kate is called in to investigate the case of an abandoned baby left on the Amish bishop's front porch.

Cussler, Clive/Graham Brown. [Journey of the Pharaohs](#) (\$9.99). Numa Files #17. Kurt Austin and the NUMA crew race to identify a link between an ancient Egyptian treasure, a 1927 daredevil aviator's disappearance and the sinking of a modern fishing trawler to prevent a scheme by a cutthroat arms dealer. *Kirkus* said "This is fast-paced, nonstop fun. Cussler fans will gobble it up."

✎ Foley, Lucy. [The Hunting Party](#) (\$9.99). A group of thirty-something Oxford friends celebrate New Year's Eve in the Scottish Highlands as a historic blizzard hits, trapping and isolating them, only to discover one of them is a murderer. *PW* was just one review source that loved this debut saying "Foley spins her story skillfully through multiple narrators, and if she's less sure-handed with character, this still makes for a cracklingly suspenseful story for a long winter's night."

Fox, Candice. [Gone By Midnight](#) (\$9.99). When Sara Farrow's son goes missing from a locked hotel room, she frantically turns for help to Crimson Lake's unlikeliest private investigators—disgraced cop Ted Conkaffey and convicted killer Amanda Pharrell. *PW* ended their review with "Quirky, no-nonsense characters complement the suspenseful plotting, which includes a multitude of twists. Readers will look forward to seeing more of Ted and Amanda."

Hannah, Darci. [Murder at the Beacon Bakeshop](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Beacon Bakeshop #1. With her Memorial Day opening marred by a protest group and the murder of her ex-fiancé's girlfriend, Lindsey, who converted an old run-down lighthouse into a bakery café, must save her business and herself when she is named the prime suspect. *Kirkus* had this to say "Red herrings, romance, and yummy recipes combine in this charming new series."

Ricciardi, David. [Black Flag](#) (\$9.99). Jake Keller #3. When two American ships are captured by Somali pirates, CIA agent Jake Keller goes undercover as a rival to lure out the gang's mastermind, an unconventional plan that is complicated by Keller's growing feeling for a Greek shipping heiress. *PW* again about the latest in this terrific new testosterone series "The complicated plot and furious action build to a final, head-snapping twist. Ricciardi has hit his stride with this outing"

Rose, Karen. [Say No More](#) (\$7.99). In this follow-up to *Say You're Sorry*, cult escapee Mercy Callahan teams up with homicide detective Rafe Sokolov to track down the leader of the twisted cult that would reclaim her dead or alive. *PW* ended their starred review with "While violence and sexual assault mark this as not for the faint of heart, readers looking for high-octane romantic suspense won't be able to resist."

Thompson, Victoria. [Murder on Pleasant Avenue](#) (\$7.99). Gaslight #23. When Gino Donatelli is wrongly implicated by the police in a brutal murder, Frank and Sarah navigate long-simmering precinct resentments to uncover the truth. The latest in Edgar-award nominated Thompson's series is the just the ticket for fans of Anne Perry's Thomas and Charlotte Pitt mysteries.

#### NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Benet, George. [The Hoodlums](#) (Stark House \$9.99). Kirk Wagner has been released from prison and is back in the Windy City. He did his time, didn't rat out Martin, kept him in the clear. But how he'd like to bust Martin if he shows his face again. Kirk just wants some of the good life—a new Cadillac, nice clothes, expensive cigars... and Jeannie. But they're all just out of his reach. Then Martin shows up, and offers Kirk a job fronting fake bills, and suddenly Kirk decides to give him another chance.

Blake, Deborah. [Furbidden Fatality](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Catskills Pet Rescue #1. After saving a local pet sanctuary, which gives her new purpose in life, 29-year-old lottery winner Kari Stuart must catch the scent of a killer when the town's suspicious dog warden turns up dead on her property.

Connolly, Sheila. [Fatal Roots](#) (\$9.99). County Cork #8. Informed by Cork University students that her inherited property is believed to be the home of a mystical fairy fort, Boston expat Maura Donovan disregards local superstitions before a student's disappearance leads to a shocking discovery.

DiRico, Maria. [Long Island Iced Tina](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Catering Hall #2. While at her friend's lavish baby shower at a rival catering hall, Mia Carina discovers that murder and theft are also in attendance when a stolen painting is discovered and the body of a party guest is found floating in the marina.

Flower, Amanda. [Farm to Trouble](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Farm to Table #1. To save the family farm, Shiloh Bellamy is determined to create a sustainable organic farm against her father's wishes, but when her investor turns up dead, more than her dreams are at stake

Griffin, J.M. [Hop 'til You Drop](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Jules & Bun #3. When a hare-raising scene interrupts their egg hiding for the Hop 'Til You Drop Easter egg hunt, Jules and her rabbit Bun, with whom she can communicate telepathically, must find out who murdered their unpleasant supervisor.

Grisham, John. [Camino Winds](#) (\$9.99). In this follow up to *Fair Warning*, novelist Mercer Mann's continued efforts to find literary inspiration in the idyllic region are complicated by mysterious intrigues.

Hollis, Lee. [Poppy Harmon and the Hung Jury](#) (\$8.99). Desert Flowers #2. If Poppy Harmon didn't believe she was in too deep as the only female juror in a high-profile assault case involving an infamously hot-tempered crooner, she's sure of it upon meeting blast-from-her-past Rod Harper. A former TV co-star from her short-lived acting days, Rod is as dashing as ever, and now he wants to partner again—this time to locate his missing daughter.

Jackson, Lisa. [Distrust](#) (Kensington \$9.99). This omnibus collection combines two of Jackson's books *Renegade Sun* and *Midnight Sun* that she wrote for Silhouette romance more than thirty years ago.

James, Miranda. [Cat Me If You Can](#) (\$7.99). Cat in the Stacks #13. Charlie and Diesel along with Charlie's fiancée, Helen Louise Brady, are heading to Asheville, North Carolina to spend a week at a boutique hotel and participate in a gathering of a mystery reader's club. But when an intrusive, uninvited guest turns up dead, only one mystery club member with a connection to the deceased appears to have a motive to kill. Could the answer really be that simple?

Karney, Jack. [Cut Me In](#) (Stark House \$9.99). Karney wrote about working class heroes and old-school cops in the 1950s. In this reprint of one of his classic stories, a crooked cop is torn between his greed for the good life and his loyalty to the adopted family of the woman he loves.

Kelly, Diane. [Murder with a View](#) (St Martins \$7.99). House-Flipper #3. Carpenter Whitney Whitaker, her cousin Buck, and guard-cat Sawdust just scored a hot property near downtown Nashville in a tax sale. While the Music City Motor Court might not be much to look at now, the two plan to transform the motel's twelve units into six one-bedroom condominiums with popular mid-century styling. But surprises await when Whitney discovers a squatter living in Room 9 and her cat Sawdust uncovers a body in the bed next door.

Liebert, Emily. [Pretty Revenge](#) (\$9.99). When Kerrie O'Malley, jobless and in an unfulfilling relationship, sees the very woman who destroyed her life on television, she'll stop at nothing to achieve the retribution she deserves.

Pershing, Amy. [A Side of Murder](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Cape Cod Foodie #1. Returning home to Cape Cod after her successful life as a chef in New York City crashes and burns, food writer Samantha Barnes must deal with a new boss, her old flame, and a dead body that no one seems to want to do anything about.

Pessin, Al. [Blowback](#) (Kensington \$9.99). In need of a covert operative to infiltrate the forces of a jihadist bent on waging an all-out war against the west, the Defense Intelligence Agency's Bridget Davenport enlists U.S. Army Lieutenant Faraz Abdallah to re-enter the terrorists' deadly world to save America.

Regan, Lisa. [The Girl with No Name](#) (\$7.99). Detective Josie Quinn is faced with a heart-breaking decision – risk one life to save many others – when an attack on a single mother, whose newborn baby is missing, is linked to a spate of killings across the country.

Ross, Barbara. [Shucked Apart](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Maine Clam-bake #9. When oyster farmer Andia Greatorex is murdered after being robbed of a bucket of oyster seed worth \$35,000, Julia Snowden decides to help the Maine State police major crimes unit investigate before someone else ends up in a watery grave.

Scottoline, Lisa. [After Anna](#) (\$8.99). Marrying a wonderful woman after years of loneliness and single fatherhood, John finds his newfound happiness turned upside-down by the arrival of his beautiful sociopath teen daughter, whose campaign to destroy their family and untimely murder force John to prove his innocence.

Woods, Stuart. [Hit List](#) (\$9.99). Stone Barrington #53. When Stone Barrington finds his name on a hit list, he plans to lie low until the culprit is caught. But when this foe shows no sign of stopping until his deadly objective is realized in full, Stone is left with no choice but to face the problem head-on.