

BOOKNEWS from

ISSN 1056-5655, © The Poisoned Pen, Ltd.
Volume 34, Number 14
Holiday Booknews 2022
sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-2974



SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENTS

(This is not our whole December calendar, but holiday highlights)

We will close Thanksgiving Day to celebrate with you
Opening Hours M-Fri 10 AM-7 PM; Sat 10 AM-6PM; Sun 12-5 PM

Note: Event times are now Mountain Standard time from Nov 7

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.

Note: The events marked "Live" offer Signed books. The virtual events do so when noted

SATURDAY DECEMBER 3 2:00 PM Live
Holiday Party with Kate Carlisle, Jenn McKinlay, Paige Shelton

Join the Ugly Christmas Sweater Contest
Shelton discusses [Winter's End](#) (St Martins \$26.99)
A new Wild Alaska

MONDAY DECEMBER 5 6:30 PM
Richard Paul Evans discusses [A Christmas Memory](#) (Gallery \$17.99)
A beautifully packaged story for holiday gifting
Signed books available

TUESDAY DECEMBER 6 Holiday Party Live
6:30 PM Francine Mathews discusses [Death on a Winter Stroll](#) (Soho \$27.95)
A holiday season murder for Nantucket Police Chief Merry Folger
7:00 PM Devoney Looser with /Stephanie Barron & Dana Stabenow
Looser discusses [Sister Novelists](#) (Bloomsbury \$30)
The Porter sisters paving the way for Austen and the Brontës

SATURDAY DECEMBER 10 2:00 PM Holiday Tea Live
Eileen Brady and Rosemary Simpson
Brady discusses [Last But Not Leashed](#) (Poisoned Pen \$8.99)
Veterinarian Kate Turner
Simpson discusses [Death at the Falls](#) (Kensington \$26)
A Gilded Age Mystery

SATURDAY DECEMBER 10 5:00 PM
Croak & Dagger Holiday Party
The club discusses Alexandra Benedict's [The Christmas Murder Game](#) (\$16.99)

THURSDAY DECEMBER 15 7:00 PM
Hardboiled Crime Christmas Party
The club discusses Ross Macdonald's [The Chill](#) (Black Lizard \$16)

FRIDAY DECEMBER 16 7:00 PM
SciFi Friday Christmas Party and discussion of Kazuo Ishiguro's [Klara and the Sun](#) (\$16.95)

THURSDAY DECEMBER 22 6:00 PM Christmas Party
Scarlett St. Clair with John Charles
St. Clair discusses [Queen of Myth and Monsters](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)
A Vampire Fantasy

SHOP LIKE NOVEMBER IS THE NEW DECEMBER

Books make the best gifts. They don't rot or age, they provide escape and stimulation and/or relaxation, they promote civil conversation, they're easy to wrap and ship. Can't make up your mind? Try a Poisoned Pen Gift Card in any amount or one of our new PP mugs for a suitable reading beverage.

POISONED PEN GIFTS

Poisoned Pen Books of the Month Clubs

Please consider giving a membership as a gift to someone, or to yourself, and sign up for the January-June 2022 cycle. With all the supply problems plaguing publishing belonging to a club is a good way to insure you will not miss out on a book. Nor will the lucky person(s) you gift a membership to. Please email Karen@poisonedpen.com for information and enrollment.

Poisoned Pen Mystery of the Month Club

This is a personalized club run by our Pat King who will be using a Google Form to secure information about gift recipients (can also be you!), preferences, payment, shipping information. Pat has been operating MOMs for about 20 years and really enjoys working with gift givers and members. Please email Pat@poisonedpen.com for information and enrollment.

[Poisoned Pen Gift Cards](#). Can be mailed as a physical card or emailed as a digital card, in any amount you choose. It can also be for a specific book.

Poisoned Pen Swag: visit our [Poisoned Pen merchandise store](#) for the latest in our exciting and updated two tee shirt designs and bookstore mugs. I love the white china with the brilliant red handle mug, perfect to pair with a book for gifts, or with a gift card. You order these directly from Bonfire, pay them, and they ship the tees or mugs to you. We do not carry them at the bookstore.

Additional PP swag:

[Mugs](#) (\$10) in red, black or white china with our logo

[Pen](#) (\$7.95) red and black

[Journal](#) (\$19.95) black cover with our logo

NEW for Audiobook fanciers:

First, we have a [Poisoned Pen Holiday audiobook landing page](#) at Libro.fm. Part of your purchase price is shared with the bookstore.

AND here is a [Libro.fm Gift Card for Audio Books](#) (aka a Credit Bundle, and we share in the sales revenue)



CHRISTMAS READING

Andrews, Donna. [Dashing Through the Snowbirds](#) (St Martins \$26.99). A cold and snowy Christmas season is in full swing with every corner of Meg’s large Victorian house in Caerphilly, Virginia, festooned with evergreen garlands, red bows, and cheery baubles, courtesy of her indefatigable mother. In addition to the large extended family, Meg is also playing host to 11 Canadian employees of AcerGen, a Toronto “wannabe Ancestry.com” and their boss, arrogant and slovenly Ian Meredith. Meg must cater to the whims of the Canadians for the sake of her brother Rob, whose company, Mutant Wizards, has landed a lucrative contract to revamp the AcerGen website now that they have expanded into home DNA testing. When Ian is murdered, credible suspects pop up around every corner: dissatisfied and possibly dangerous clients, stalkers, and disgruntled employees.

Andrews, Mary Kay. [The Santa Suit](#) (\$14.99). For readers who enjoy a sassy, sentimental holiday story with magical Christmas surprises. It features Ivy Perkins, who, surprised by the dramatic end of her six-year marriage, decides to leave the past behind for a fresh start in the small town of Tarburton, NC. There she purchases Four Roses Farm without having seen the property—something about the home calls to her. After arriving in Tarburton with her rescue pup Punkin and little else, Ivy meets Ezra Wheeler, her real estate agent, soon-to-be friend, and all-around great handyman helper. Ivy and Ezra unearth a mysterious object in a cupboard at Four Roses Farm: a Santa suit with a note attached, asking Santa to bring daddy home from the war....

⌘Benedict, Alexandra. [The Christmas Murder Game](#) (Sourcebooks \$16.99). Lily Armitage has no intention of ever returning to Endgame House. That is, until she receives a letter from Aunt Liliana promising that this year’s scavenger hunt will give her the keys to the family estate and the identity of her mother’s murderer. Twelve cousins, twelve clues, twelve keys, twelve days of Christmas. The snow is thick, the phone lines are down, and no one is getting in or out. Lily will have to keep her wits about her, because not everyone is playing fair, and there’s no telling how many will die before the winner is declared. There are some puzzles here to solve in a book akin to an Agatha Christie or the more recent *Daisy Darker* by Alice Feeney.

⌘Bowen, Rhys. [God Rest Ye, Royal Gentlemen](#) (\$17). A Christmas season country house party near the Sandringham estate brings Her Royal Spyness and circle into the fold of the Royal Family and of course, a murder mystery....made all

the more poignant now by the death of Queen Elizabeth since this story is edging up on the death of King George V. And the presence of Mrs. Simpson and the Prince of Wales is unnerving for the future.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Hiss and Tell: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery](#) (Random \$28). When a series of mysterious deaths spoil the Christmas season in Crozet, Virginia, Mary Minor “Harry” Harristeen and her beloved cats and dogs lend the police a helping paw.

Childs, Laura. [Twisted Tea Christmas](#) (\$8.99). Here’s a cozy stuffing stuffer you can give with one of our Poisoned Pen mugs, plus the novel comes with recipes and tea-time tips. Tea maven Theodosia Browning and her tea sommelier, Drayton Conneley, are catering a Victorian Christmas party at a swanky mansion in downtown Charleston. Drucilla Heyward, the hostess, is one of the wealthiest women in town. As the champagne flows and the tea steeps, Drucilla is so pleased with the reception by her partygoers that she reveals her secret plan to Theodosia. The Grande Dame has brought the cream of Charleston society together to reveal that she is planning to give her wealth away to various charitable organizations. However, before she can make the announcement, Theodosia finds her crumpled unconscious in the hallway. It looks like the excitement has gotten to the elderly woman—except that there is a syringe sticking out of her neck.

Edwards, Martin, ed. [A Surprise for Christmas](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). Edwards’s exceptional fourth anthology of golden age Christmas-themed mysteries (after 2018’s [The Christmas Card Crime and Other Stories](#)) features tales from heavy hitters such as G.K. Chesterton and Julian Symons as well as less familiar names. Set during a housewarming gathering in Sussex, Carter Dickson’s “Persons or Things Unknown” raises the question of whether sleeping in one of the rooms is safe. During the 17th century, a witness in that room saw a “man hacked to death, with thirteen stab-wounds in his body, from a hand that wasn’t there and a weapon that didn’t exist.” This ingenious story showcases Dickson’s ability at devising head-scratching impossibilities while playing totally fair with the reader. Ngaio Marsh’s Scotland Yarder Roderick Alleyn must solve a Christmas murder whose victim may have been killed by his radio in “Death on the Air.” And Margery Allingham has Albert Campion probe why a mailman was murdered on the holiday in “On Christmas Day in the Morning.” Obscure authors such as Ernest Dudley and E.R.

Punshon also impress. Edwards shows no sign of running out of quality material.

Also available: Mary Kelly, [The Christmas Egg](#); Martin Edwards, ed. [Silent Nights](#) (\$14.99 each).

Evans, Richard Paul. [A Christmas Memory](#) (Gallery \$17.99 SIGNED). A lovely little hardcover detailing a 1967 origin story.

Flores, Feather. [The Twelve Cats of Christmas](#) (Chronicle \$15.99). For young readers. Celebrate the holidays with twelve adorable cats—and one kitten—with this festive feline take on the classic carol “The Twelve Days of Christmas.”

✎Herron, Mick. [Standing by the Wall](#) (Soho \$16.95) is a one-volume collection of his Slough House spy series novellas including the never-before-published Christmas interlude “Standing by the Wall.”

✎Latimer, Rupert. [Murder after Christmas](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). This pseudonymous novel from 1944, one of the most obscure entries in the British Library Crime Classics, is also one of the most rewarding with its ‘lively riot of murder, holiday desserts, and misdirection, cleverly twisting the tropes of Golden Age detective fiction.

✎MacBird, Bonnie. [What Child Is This?](#) (Collins Crime Club \$36 SIGNED). What more perfect for the season than a Sherlock Holmes (and Dr. Watson) tale set in Christmastime Victorian London? Even better, this lovely volume is delightfully illustrated by Frank Cho with line drawings that complement the text. **The Unsigned US version is our December British Crime Club Book of the Month.** And you can give it to any reader on your list as Sherlock Holmes needs no introduction.

Mallery, Susan. [Home Sweet Christmas](#) (Harlequin \$17.99). Camryn Neff left her life in Chicago to return to small-town Wishing Tree, Wash., and take care of her teenage sisters after their mother’s death. While running her family’s custom gift-wrapping business, Camryn is selected by local matron Helen Crane as one of the candidates for “Project: Jake’s Bride,” a mission Helen’s embarked on to marry off her son. Camryn quickly rejects the idea of being involved—and spills the beans to Jake about his mother’s scheming. As their friendship blossoms into love, Camryn must question her life plans, having never intended to settle in Wishing Tree for good.). Interweaving two heartfelt love stories, Mallery expertly captures a festive yuletide spirit in her sparkling second Wishing Tree novel [The Christmas Wedding Guest](#) (\$16.99).

✎Marston, Edward. [The Railway Detective’s Christmas Case](#) (Allison & Busby UK \$40 SIGNED). December 1864. As a cold winter wind scours the Worcestershire countryside, an excursion train comes through a tunnel in the Malvern Hills to be confronted by a blockage on the line ahead. The driver manages to slow the train down so that the impact is minimized, but the passengers are alarmed. The first person to alight is Cyril Huddleday, the man in charge of the excursion to the delightful spa town of Great Malvern. He walks to the front of the locomotive and as he is talking to the driver, fireman and guard, Huddleday is shot dead by a sniper. Christmas is coming all too soon and Inspector Robert Colbeck and Sergeant Victor Leeming are under pressure to solve the case quickly. However, they are hampered by a number of disputes and enemies in the shadows behind the seasonal excursion, plus a heavy snow....

Meier, Leslie. [Christmas Card Murder](#) (\$8.99). Three seasonal mysteries by Meier, Lee Hollis, and Peggy Ehrhart.

Murphy, Julie/Sierra Simone. [A Merry Little Meet Cute](#) (Avon \$21.99) is a steamy plus-size holiday rom-com about an adult film star who is semi-accidentally cast as a lead in a family-friendly Christmas movie, and the former bad-boy pop star who is trying to prove himself to be a responsible actor she falls in love with. “Sparks fly, they cannot keep their hands off each other. Murphy’s diverse characterizations paired with Simone’s off-the-charts sexy scenes makes for a romantic and steamy happily-ever-after, brimming with sex and body positivity.”

O’Connor, Carlene et al. [The Christmas Scarf Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). SIGNED by O’Connor. They’re the coziest of wintertime accessories...unless, of course, they become accessories to murder! *USA Today* bestselling author Carlene O’Connor teams up with Maddie Day and Peggy Ehrhart for a holly jolly Christmas collection of seasonal stories, as their beloved series sleuths each solve cases revolving around hand-knit Christmas scarves.

✎Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Deliverance](#) (Ballantine \$23 SIGNED) is set in the same Victorian world as her William Monk mysteries. Dr. Crowe is an idealist who runs a free medical clinic on the riverbank of the Thames for anyone in need. When Crowe runs into Eliza Hollister, a former patient he treated after a traffic accident and for whom he has romantic feelings, he’s disturbed to see her verbally abused by Paul Dolan, whose father imports luxury goods. Crowe is even more upset to discover that Eliza has become engaged against her will to Dolan, in order to help her father, who’s in financial trouble. Crowe’s curiosity about the Dolans leads him to probe a fatal fire at a warehouse Eliza’s father owned, which was deemed accidental. What he learns leads him to dig deeper. Meanwhile, Scuff, Crowe’s assistant, who was rescued as a child by Monk and his wife from a life of scavenging the Thames at low tide, keeps the clinic running. The gripping plot is matched by moving portrayals of the clinic’s clientele. Readers drawn to Dickens’s searing portraits of the underprivileged will appreciate Perry’s homage to those characters. “This satisfying Christmas novella combines mystery, suspicion, upheaval, acts of kindness, and a Christmas miracle together to create a captivating story.....

Romeril, Christina. [A Christmas Candy Killing](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). Our November Cozy Crimes Book of the Month. Their chocolates are to die for—but things aren’t so sweet when a real killer comes to town, in this debut mystery perfect for fans of Joanne Fluke and Laura Childs. Identical twin sisters Alex and Hannah are the owners of Murder and Mayhem, a mystery bookshop that sells their famous poison-themed Killer Chocolates. But now, there’s a *real* killer in their midst. Shortly before Christmas, their septuagenarian neighbor, Jane, confides to Alex that a murderer from a true-crime show has taken up residence in the village. Unfortunately, she’s also shared her suspicions with town gossip Netta. The next morning, Alex shows up at Jane’s house to watch the show, but instead discovers Jane’s body, with a box of Killer Chocolates nearby.

Steadman, Catherine. [The Family Game](#) (Random \$28). In this addictive novel of suspense from Thriller Award finalist Steadman, there seems but a single hurdle standing between brainy, beautiful, bestselling thriller writer Harriet “Harry” Reed

and that storybook future with the man of her dreams, dashing tech entrepreneur Edward Holbeck: his famously eccentric estranged family. Just how eccentric is something the newly engaged recent British transplant starts to glimpse following Thanksgiving dinner at the clan's Manhattan mansion when, after swearing her to secrecy, charismatic paterfamilias Robert gives her a mysterious cassette on which he hints will be his thriller-in-progress. When Harry finally starts listening, it sounds less like a novel than a criminal confession; in addition, Robert details her own darkest secret. As the intrepid Harry attempts to covertly investigate how much of the tape might be true, bizarre Holbeck holiday celebrations—more Hunger Games than ho, ho, ho—put her in escalating peril. The bloodcurdling, cinematic climax plays out by moonlight Christmas Eve on the family's snow-shrouded Upstate New York estate.

Taylor, Patrick. [An Irish Country Christmas](#) (\$17.99). Barry Laverty, M.B., is looking forward to his first Christmas in the cozy village of Ballybucklebo, at least until he learns that his sweetheart might not be coming home for the holidays. But he has little time to dwell on his own romantic disappointment. Christmas may be drawing nigh, but there is little peace to be found on earth, especially for a young doctor plying his trade in the emerald hills and glens of rural Ireland. Along with his senior partner, Dr. Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly, Barry has his hands full in the same way that once did Yorkshire vet James Herriot.

FOR THOSE CELEBRATING HANUKKAH

Aronson, Sarah. [Brand-New Bubbe](#) (Charlesbridge \$16.99). When Jillian joins Bubbe for some mom-mandated matzo ball soup making, she realizes she has room in her heart (and stomach!) for one more grandmother. But how can she convince Noni and Gram she still loves them just as much? A super soup celebration, of course! Chaos in the kitchen leads to matzo ball soup, spicy gazpacho, meatball soup, and a trio of grandmas united in their love for their family. For ages 4-7.

Frank, Michael. [One Hundred Saturdays](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28). The remarkable story of ninety-nine-year-old Stella Levi whose conversations with the writer Michael Frank over the course of six years bring to life the vibrant world of Jewish Rhodes, the deportation to Auschwitz that extinguished ninety percent of her community, and the resilience and wisdom of the woman who lived to tell the tale is the recipient of the Jewish Book Council's Natan Notable Book Award. With nearly a century of life behind her, Stella Levi had never before spoken in detail about her past. Then she met Michael Frank. He came to her Greenwich Village apartment one Saturday afternoon to ask her a question about the Juderia, the neighborhood in Rhodes where she'd grown up in a Jewish community that had thrived there for half a millennium. Neither of them could know this was the first of one hundred Saturdays over the course of six years that they would spend in each other's company. During these meetings Stella traveled back in time to conjure what it felt like to come of age on this luminous, legendary island in the eastern Aegean, which the Italians conquered in 1912, began governing as an official colonial possession in 1923, and continued to administer even after the Germans seized control in September 1943. The following July, the Germans rounded up all 1,700-plus residents of the Juderia and sent them first by boat and then by train to Auschwitz on what was the longest journey—measured by both time and distance—of any of the deportations.

Ninety percent of them were murdered upon arrival. Probing and courageous, candid and sly, Stella is a magical modern-day Scheherazade whose stories reveal what it was like to grow up in an extraordinary place in an extraordinary time.

Hartov, Steven. [The Last of the Seven](#) (Harper \$26.99 SIGNED December 8). A lone soldier wearing a German uniform stumbles into a British military camp in the North African desert with an incredible story to tell. He is the only survivor of an undercover operation meant to infiltrate a Nazi base, trading on the soldiers' perfect fluency in German. However, this man is not British-born but instead a German Jew seeking revenge for the deaths of his family back home in Berlin. So begins a spellbinding novel of World War II based on the little-known history of the X Troop—a team of European Jews who escaped the Continent only to join the British Army and return home to exact their revenge on Hitler's military.

Kadish, Rachel. [The Weight of Ink](#) (\$16.99). Toni Morrison recommends this winner of a National Jewish Book Award and the Association of Jewish Libraries Jewish Fiction Award that interweaves the stories of two brilliant women, one living in 1660s London, the other an ailing 21st Century historian with a passion for Jewish history. When Helen is summoned by a former student to view a cache of newly discovered seventeenth-century Jewish documents, she enlists the help of Aaron Levy, an American graduate student as impatient as he is charming, and embarks on one last project: to determine the identity of the documents' scribe, the elusive "Aleph." Who was Ester Velasquez, an emigrant permitted to scribe for a blind rabbi, just before the plague hits the city? "This book is historical fiction with a side of philosophy set in London, and it explores choices for women in different time periods. What impacts your choices? Do you have candles to read by? Do you have access to books, mentorship and education? What will it take to bring your passions to life? You'll think about all that and more as you read this novel." —*Ms. Magazine*

Sassoon, Joseph. [The Sassoons, The Great Global Merchants and the Making of an Empire](#) (Knopf \$35). They were one of the richest families in the world for two hundred years, from the 19th century to the 20th, and were known as 'the Rothschilds of the East.' Mesopotamian in origin, and for more than forty years the chief treasurers to the pashas of Baghdad and Basra, they were forced to flee to Bushir on the Persian Gulf; David Sassoon and sons starting over with nothing, and beginning to trade in India in cotton and opium. With full access to rare family photographs and archives, here is a generational saga worthy of Jeffery Archer or Philippa Gregory of the making (and undoing) of the gilded Jewish Bagdadi Sassoons, who built a vast empire through global finance and trade—cotton, opium, shipping, banking—that reached across three continents and ultimately changed the destinies of nations.

Twitty, Michael W. [Koshersoul](#) (Amistad 28.99) is an eclectic recipe collection exploring the intersections between food and identity, and showcasing dishes designed for such religious and cultural celebrations as Yom Kippur, Hanukkah and Juneteenth. In his sensational debut, *The Cooking Gene*, Twitty introduced readers to his American journey as a Black, gay man of Southern heritage who entered Jewish culture and religion through food, his favorite medium. This book, the second entry of a planned

trilogy, presents his particular brand of “koshersoul” recipes inspired by Southern Jewish, Afro-Caribbean, West and Central African flavors, including Black-Eyed Pea Hummus; Yam Latkes; Senegalese-Inspired Chicken Soup; Swahili Roast Chicken; and Peach Noodle Kugel. A hearty immersion into Black and Jewish culinary traditions.

Wishnia, Kenneth, ed. [Jewish Noir](#) (Akashic \$17.99). An anthology of stories by a panoply of terrific writers—Marge Piercy, Harlan Ellison, S. J. Rozan, Nancy Richler, Moe Prager (Reed Farrel Coleman), Stephen Jay Schwartz, Wendy Hornsby, Charles Ardai—that embrace many “teachable moments” about the history of prejudice, the contradictions of ethnic identity, and assimilation into American society and culture.

And if you missed it don’t overlook Michael Chabon’s [The Yiddish Policeman’s Union](#) (\$16.99)—“an excellent, hyperliterate, genre-pantsing detective novel that deserves every inch of its...blockbuster superfame.”

BOOKS FOR FANS OF OTHER WORLDS

Jemison, NK. [The World We Make](#) (Orbit \$30). This second and final installment in her Great Cities duology follows 2020’s *The City We Became* (\$17.99), which features an alternate universe where great cities have a soul...and a dedicated Enemy. The metropolis of New York, manifested in six mortal avatars, must continue the fight against incarnated powers of xenophobia and racism. This time, they’re bringing other cities into the fight. Author Jemison is a required-curriculum kind of writer for fans of modern speculative fiction.

Roanhorse, Rebecca. [Tread of Angels](#) (Saga Press \$22.99 SIGNED). The latest genre buster from Rebecca Roanhorse is a dark fantasy noir set in an alternate version of the American West, circa 1883. It seems that in the humble mining town of Goetia, descendants of angels and demons live in uneasy proximity as they mine the powerful resource known as Divinity. Celeste, used to passing in privileged society, is actually a member of the Fallen, beings descended from rebel angels. When her sister is accused of murder, Celeste gets her demon on. Sounds awesome, doesn’t it?

Sanderson, Brandon. [The Lost Metal](#) (Tor \$29.99). Hard-core fans of epic fantasy will welcome this new book from Sanderson, widely recognized as one of the master world-builders in all of speculative fiction. His new title continues the story of *The Mistborn Saga* and features the usual fun: frontier lawmen and crusading detectives, strange magic and immortal demigods, century-spanning story arcs and the story universe known as the Cosmere. If terms like *allomancy* and *feruchemy* catch your eye, you’re in the right place..

Tan, Sue Lynn. [Heart of the Sun Warrior](#) (Harper \$27.99). The stunning sequel to [Daughter of the Moon Goddess](#) (\$17.99) delves deeper into beloved Chinese mythology, concluding the epic story of Xingyin—the daughter of Chang’e and the mortal archer, Houyi—as she battles a grave new threat to the realm. Full of action, Chinese mythology, and a touch of romance, this duology is a remarkable first series for Tan!

Wilson, Miles. [McKenzie Rising](#) (University of Nevada Press \$21). A cultural satire, *McKenzie Rising* follows the MegaMax Corporation’s venture to turn the upper McKenzie Valley into an upscale development, the Estates at Rancho Rio. Having already bought out the regional state university, MegaMax is

poised to complete its acquisition of the upper McKenzie, and its efforts are overseen by Marta Juggernaut, Wharton School MBA graduate and project manager at Rancho Rio, and by Mark Neighbors, Northwest Acquisitor for MegaMax. Their work is countered by a Dickensian ensemble of characters, many of whom are chronically sidetracked from the heroic community purpose by various amatory diversions. Given that the protesters include such locals as D.B. Cooper (the long-vanished airplane hijacker) and Sasquatch, in all his odoriferous glory, the reader is in for a rollicking but powerfully thought-provoking journey. Recommended for Young as well as Mature Adults...

GIFTS FOR BOOK LOVERS

Bythell, Sean. [Remainders of the Day](#) (Godine \$27.95). In his latest “Bookshop Diary,” the astringent Scot bookseller in Wigtown, a book lover’s paradise, with thousands of books across nearly a mile of shelves, a real log fire, and Captain, the portly bookshop cat, recounts another grumpy year behind his The Bookshop sales counter. You’d think that after twenty years, Bythell would be used to his quirky customers. Don’t get him wrong, there are some good ones among the antiquarian porn-hunters, die-hard train book lovers, people who confuse bookshops for libraries, and the toddlers just looking for a nice cozy corner in which to wee. He’s sure there are some good ones. There must be... I fell for Bythell on reading [Confessions of a Bookseller](#) (\$25.95) and [Seven Kinds of People You Find in Bookshops](#) (\$18.95) and recommend all three for themselves, and for fans of Paige Shelton and Molly MacRae’s bookshop mysteries set in Scotland.

Davis, Kenneth C. [Great Short Books](#) (Scribner \$28). From hard-boiled fiction to magical realism, the 18th century to the present day, *Great Short Books* spans genres, cultures, countries, and time to present an enchanting and diverse selection of acclaimed and canonical novels. From works in translation like Yu Miri’s *Tokyo Ueno Station* and Marguerite Duras’s *The Lover* to popular, acclaimed authors like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Stephen King, this compilation is a celebration of classics from the historic to contemporary—plus a few bestsellers. Each entry includes the novel’s opening lines, a spoiler-free plot summary, a “why you should read it” section, and suggestions for what to read next.

DK. [Remarkable Books](#) (DK \$30). Still my strongest recommendation for a gift to a book lover. This gorgeously, full color, illustrated volume covers 75 of the world’s most momentous titles – from *The Art of War* to *Anne Frank’s Diary* – and reveals their far-ranging impact. Get up close to see fascinating details, such as Vesalius’ exquisite anatomical illustrations in *Epitome*, Leonardo da Vinci’s annotated notebooks, or the hand-decorated pages in the Gutenberg Bible. Discover why Euclid’s *Elements of Geometry* was the most influential maths title ever published, and marvel at rare treasures such as the *Aubin Codex*, which tells the history of the Aztecs and the early Spanish colonial period in Mexico. *Remarkable Books* gathers stories, diaries, scientific treatises, plays, dictionaries, and religious texts into a stunning celebration of the power of books.

Edwards, Martin. [The Life of Crime](#) (Collins \$32.99). Diamond Dagger/Edgar/Agatha winner Edwards, President of the Detection Club, noted author, editor, and anthologist, presents the first major history of crime fiction in over a half century. I

think of him as the new HRF Keating and in this magnum opus Edwards distills more than two centuries of extraordinary books, authors, and ideas into a volume of compelling reading. I like the organization which makes it easy to dip in and out of sections and ponder what you've read there. Highly recommended and possibly in short supply.

Gauld, Tom. [Revenge of the Librarians](#) (Drawn & Quarterly \$24.95 SIGNED). Confront the specter of failure, the wraith of social media, and other supernatural enemies of the author of this delightful small volume of literary cartoons. Some particularly favored targets include the pretentious procrastinating novelist, the commercial mercenary of the dispassionate editor, the willful obscurantism of the vainglorious poet. Quake in the presence of the stack of bedside books as it grows taller! The brilliant red cloth cover is a real eye-catcher.

MacLeod, Mr. & Mrs. [How to Eat a Book](#) ((Union Square Kids \$17.99), a whimsical picture book for ages 3-8, brings out the whimsy in all curious children. Filled with beautiful and creative illustrations made from art dioramas, the story explains to children just how an adult soul feels when lost in a book. "A quirky, modern celebration of books—with hints of Shel Silverstein and a smattering of Edward Gorey. Fantastically illustrated with dipped pen-and-ink cutout art, photographed in a three-dimensional stage diorama, and hand colored, this debut children's picture book is a breakout hit from the talented Mrs. & Mr. MacLeod."

Murakami, Haruki. [Novelist as a Vacation](#) (Knopf \$28). Aspiring writers and readers who have long wondered where the mysterious novelist gets his ideas and what inspires his strangely surreal worlds will be fascinated by this engaging book from the internationally best-selling author. Haruki Murakami now shares with readers his thoughts on the role of the novel in our society; his own origins as a writer; and his musings on the sparks of creativity that inspire other writers. Lighthearted yet edifying, the anecdotes make for a fantastic look at how a key literary figure made it happen.

Mustich, James. [1000 Books to Read Before You Die](#) (\$35). A Life-Changing List. Celebrate the pleasure of reading and the thrill of discovering new titles in an extraordinary book that's as compulsively readable, entertaining, surprising, and enlightening as the 1,000-plus titles it recommends. "The ultimate literary bucket list." —*The Washington Post*. "If there's a heaven just for readers, this is it." —*O, The Oprah Magazine*

Simon, Annette Dauphin. [Spine Poems](#) (Harper \$27.99). "What a treat for any lover of books, words, poetry, and wonderment. The Indie Next Pick begins, "Simon began rearranging piles of books to create poems from their titles. I was fortunate enough to be present when this adventure took flight. . . . Simon has organized these spine poems into categories within Fiction and Non-fiction, and has paired them with related writings to inspire imagination and delight. Her last page aptly pictures two books with spines that proclaim "One Last Word" and "Mic Drop." Personally, I hope not."

Emma Smith. [Portable Magic](#) (Knopf \$28). "All books are magic. All books have agency and power in the real world," writes Shakespeare scholar in this entertaining history. With a focus on "bookhood," which includes "the impact of touch, smell, and hearing, on the experience of books," Smith makes a

colorful case that a book's form contains as much "magic" as its content. In a chapter on how a book becomes a classic, she points to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. The paperback of Carson's environmental manifesto made it available to a wide audience—the 40th anniversary edition, published in a "handsome" hardcover Library of America volume, confirmed it as a classic designed to last. A section on the popularity of paperbacks details how they were sent to soldiers during wartime, and a chapter on book burnings points out that the act is "powerfully symbolic and practically almost entirely ineffectual," plus reveals that through the destruction of unsold inventory, publishers themselves are the largest destroyers of books. With wit and verve, Smith concludes that a book becomes a book "in the hands of its readers... a book that is not handled and read is not really a book at all."

Vallejo, Irene. [Papyrus: The Invention of Books in the Ancient World](#) (Knopf \$35). Long before books were mass-produced, scrolls hand copied on reeds pulled from the Nile were the treasures of the ancient world. Emperors and Pharaohs were so determined to possess them that they dispatched emissaries to the edges of earth to bring them back. When Mark Antony wanted to impress Cleopatra, he knew that gold and priceless jewels would mean nothing to her. So, what did he give her? Books for her library—two hundred thousand, in fact. Here is a rich exploration of the importance of books and libraries in the ancient world that highlights how humanity's obsession with the printed word has echoed throughout the ages. "Accessible and entertaining." —*The Wall Street Journal*

And a little new & old fiction for book lovers:

Claire, Ann. [Dead and Gondola](#) (Bantam \$17). Returning to her Colorado hometown to run her family's historic bookshop with her sister, Ellie Christie discovers a dead man on the ski gondola and immediately suspects a mysterious stranger who left behind a first edition Agatha Christie novel. This cozy is filled with facts about Dame Agatha and can be read by teens as well as adults.

Dunning, John. [Booked to Die](#) (\$18). First published in 1992, this bestseller had an enormous influence on book collectors as it sent everyone rushing to their own shelves to check for valuable first printings and autographs. But in its structure it's a work of real genius as the hunt (with one of those great twists in the end!), for the killer of a Denver book scout embraces classic mystery forms: a police procedural, a private eye investigation, an amateur sleuth, a treasure hunt, as homicide cop Cliff Janeway, turning to his lifelong passion, opens a small bookshop—all the while searching for evidence to put the suspect away. When prized volumes in a highly sought-after collection begin to appear, so do dead bodies. Now Janeway's life is about to change in profound and shocking ways as he attempts to find out who's dealing death along with vintage Chandlers and Twains. This is our bestselling paperback ever.

✎Edwards, Martin, ed. [Murder by the Book](#) (British Library Crime Classics \$14.99). There is no better hiding place for clues—or red herrings—than inside the pages of a book. But in this world of resentful ghost writers, indiscreet playwrights, and unscrupulous book collectors, literary prowess is often a prologue to disaster. Readers should be warned that the most riveting tales often conceal the deadliest of secrets. Featuring much-loved Golden Age detectives Nigel Strangeways, Philip Trent, Detective Chief Inspector Roderick Alleyn, and others, a bookish

puzzle threatens an eagerly awaited inheritance; a submission to a publisher recounts a murder that seems increasingly to be a work of nonfiction; an irate novelist puts a grisly end to the source of his writer's block. With Martin Edwards as librarian and guide, delve into an irresistible stack of bibliomysteries, where "golden age-inspired puzzle masters [are] doing what they do best: bringing together readers, books, and felonies [in] perhaps the single best collection yet in this blue-chip series." — *Kirkus* Starred Review

And for a modern master of the literary whodunnit, try Anthony Horowitz's *The Word is Murder*, *The Sentence is Death*, *A Line to Kill*, and new, [The Twist of a Knife](#) (Harper \$29.99) all with Horowitz and Detective Daniel Hawthorne, or [Magpie Murders](#) (\$18), currently on PBS's Masterpiece Theater, with editor Susan Ryeland and her murdered author's detective Atticus Pünd.

Estleman, Loren D. [Paperback Jack](#) (Forge \$26.99 SIGNED). I so agree with the *NY Times Book Review*: As soon as I saw the title of Loren Estleman's latest, I knew the novel would be a love letter to the paperback industry of decades past — one that spawned so many tightly written mysteries bound with lurid covers. It's 1946, and though Jacob Heppleman, 29, has survived the war, he comes home changed by the horrors he witnessed. The dime magazine industry that once paid for his stories has "gone south with Hitler's brains," withering away as the market for pulp paperbacks has grown. So Heppleman transforms himself into Jack Holly — "a swashbuckler of a name" — and begins churning out crime novels, which sell because of his supposed connections to the underworld. A linotypist "cast Jack Holly's words in lead alloy, then used an ink roller to press the ink onto cheap newsprint, four pages per sheet," which were "trimmed, bound and shipped to every retail outlet in the U.S. that contained a paperback rack. There, some browser might pick it up, skim the description on the back ('He made his living off the misfortunes of others: until fate — and a blonde named Marcy — made it his dying!') ... and possibly plunk down two bits to read the rest." Estleman crams a sweeping historical epic — the action ends in the late 1970s, encompassing congressional hearings, mob ties, book conventions and grand romance — into a novel of utmost brevity. It is far more soulful than I expected. "Jacob would never get over the wonder of it, that a grown man should make up stories, write them down and expect sane people to buy them." Though I wished for more, I admired — as I always have — Estleman's ability to chisel every page, every sentence, down to the bone. We here are fans of Estleman's sweeping range of subjects which has won him numerous Western Writers of America and other awards.

✠Lorac, EC. [These Names Make Clues](#) (British Library Crime Classics \$14.99). "This metafictional masterpiece, which returns to print for the first time since its publication in 1937." Chief Inspector Macdonald has been invited to a treasure hunt party at the house of Graham Coombe, the celebrated publisher of *Murder by Mesmerism*. Despite a handful of misgivings, the inspector joins a guest list of novelists and thriller writers disguised on the night under literary pseudonyms. The fun comes to an abrupt end, however, when "Samuel Pepys" is found dead in the telephone room in bizarre circumstances. Challenge yourself to work out this puzzle before CI Macdonald. This edition includes an introduction by series editor Martin Edwards

Martin, Alexa. [Better Than Fiction](#) (Berkley \$17). Drew Young completely gets the irony of her life. She is a bookstore owner who hates to read. However, owning a bookstore was never Drew's life plan. Drew wanted to use her talents as a photographer to share the world with others, but when her beloved grandmother passed away and left her bookstore to Drew, does Drew really have any other choice but to put her dreams aside and focus all her energy on keeping the bookstore open? While attending a book signing at the store, best-selling romance novelist Jasper Williams offers Drew a solution to one of her problems. If Drew will show Jasper around Colorado — the setting for Jasper's next book — he will compile a list of books guaranteed to make Drew a book lover. The question for Drew is whether Jasper's offer is just what she needs to make the bookstore a success, or is she about to make a deal she will later regret?

GIFTS FOR FANS OF MEMOIRS AND NONFICTION

Bono. [Surrender: 40 Songs, One Story](#) (Knopf \$34). The artist, activist, and the lead singer of Irish rock band U2— has written a memoir: honest and irreverent, intimate and profound, *Surrender* is the story of the remarkable life he's lived, the challenges he's faced, and the friends and family who have shaped and sustained him.

Bowie, David. [Moonage Daydream: The Life & Times of Ziggy Stardust](#) (Genesis Publications \$60). "Where the film focuses on Bowie's entire life, the book is entirely about the rise and fall of the Ziggy Stardust character in 1972 and 1973 — "Eighteen months, that's all it was," Bowie writes in the book.

Buck, Rinker. [Life on the Mississippi](#) (Avid Reader \$32.50). At a time when our national identity is debated amidst divisiveness, in his latest bestseller Buck takes us back to when major aspects of being American were forged. I completely agree that this is "an epic, enchanting blend of history and adventure in which Buck builds a wooden flatboat from the grand flatboat era of the 1800s and sails it down the Mississippi River, illuminating the forgotten past of America's first western frontier. It isn't so much about the boat and the float as it is about the era's adventurous spirit (let's not overlook Mark Twain and his mythology here), confronting myths about our expansion West and the truth behind settler's push for land and wealth, what it meant to indigenous people, and how important the role of the flatboat and commerce on our major waterways, the era's superhighways, were to our economic success. In short, Buck portrays this watershed era of American expansion as it was really lived. Best of all, this is a book you can dip in and out of and really ponder.

Cornwell, Tim, ed. [A Private Spy](#) (Viking \$30). Letters of John LeCarre as written by the late author and edited by his son. This collection of never-before-seen correspondence is a treasure trove, revealing the late author's humor, generosity, and wit—a side of him many readers have not previously seen.

Dylan, Bob. [The Philosophy of Modern Song](#) (Simon & Schuster \$45). Dylan's first book of new writing since 2004's *Chronicles: Volume One*—and since winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016. Here, Dylan, who began working on the book in 2010, offers his extraordinary insight into the nature of popular music, writing over 60 essays on songs by other artists.

Harkup, Kathryn. [Superspy Science](#) (Bloomsbury \$28). For all James Bond fans, whether books or films, a really well researched

and entertaining dive into the “science, death, and tech” that powered both. Really fun, informative, and let’s face it, nostalgic.

Keeling, Miranda. [The Year I Stopped to Notice](#) (Icon Books \$19.95). Inspired by her popular Twitter account, *The Year I Stopped to Notice* brings together Keeling’s observations of the magic, humor, strangeness and beauty in ordinary life. “This book is a delight ... the world is full of little surprises, momentary little fountains of pleasure and beauty, that could be visible to all of us if we learned to stop and notice as Miranda Keeling does.”—Philip Pullman. Neil Gaiman calls it, ‘An odd, beautiful book ... Buy an extra copy to give to someone you love.’”

Martin, Steve. [Number One Is Walking](#) (Celadon \$30). Martin—comedian, writer, musician, and “one of the few actors to play a sadistic dentist twice”—teams up again with *New Yorker* cartoonist Bliss in this irresistibly charming ramble through Martin’s career in film (following *A Wealth of Pigeons*). In a series of short comics, Martin reminisces about life on the set of such films as *The Jerk*; *Three Amigos*; *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*; *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*; and *Bowfinger*. In Hollywood, Martin learns how to act natural in front of a camera, discovers that the secret to writing a screenplay adaptation is to follow “the course of a failed marriage,” and finds friends in fellow comedians such as John Candy, Diane Keaton, Carl Reiner, and Robin Williams. In Bliss’s whimsical drawings, meticulously caricatured celebrities rub shoulders with comic-strip characters and Martin periodically wanders away from the narrative to talk to Bliss’s dog. The softly shaded pencil art moves smoothly between photorealistic portraits and loose, gestural cartoons as the material demands.

Mukherjee, Siddhartha. [The Song of the Cell: An Exploration of Medicine and the New Human](#) (Scribner \$32.50) explores the history of cells and how humans manipulate them. From the author of *The Emperor of All Maladies*, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, and *The Gene*, a #1 New York Times bestseller, a volume of revelatory and exhilarating stories of scientists, doctors, and the patients whose lives may be saved by their work. He may be a crack doctor and scientist but he is also a brilliant stylist and a joy to read.

National Geographic. [The Stargazer’s Atlas](#) (\$65) invites readers to roam the night sky for constellations, planets and moons, eclipses, comets and meteor showers, auroras, and deep-sky treasures including nebulae and galaxies—many visible to the naked eye and all with binoculars or a backyard telescope. Beginning with basic space science and including a complete set of night sky maps for all four seasons in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, this fascinating book guides the reader toward the most rewarding observations. A unique chapter on astrotourism highlights ancient observatories, dark-sky preserves, and other global destinations for the sky-seeking traveler; a final chapter details current and future space missions and what they might discover. Richly illustrated with awe-inspiring imagery—including photos from space missions and telescopes, science-based artists’ interpretations, and explanatory graphics—the book also contains 170 maps and charts of planets, moons, and constellations, from Earth’s moon to moons of Saturn. Practical advice throughout helps readers see what they have been reading about, building key observational skills such as “star hopping” from easy-to-find stars to fainter deep-sky objects and focusing on “deep sky treasures:” areas rich in observable phenomena.

National Geographic. [Treasures of Egypt](#) (\$50). What could be a better, bigger book gift this 100th anniversary year of the discovery of King Tut’s tomb than a volume that explores kingdoms, cultures, tombs, and monuments now under serious threat from mass tourism, climate change, and alterations to the flow of the Nile? With simulations being considered for tourists, such as exist at France’s caves of Lascaux, these legacy in photographs presents ancient landmarks we may soon not see this way again.

Obama, Michelle. [The Light We Carry](#) (Crown \$32.50). There may be no tidy solutions or pithy answers to life’s big challenges, but she believes that we can all locate and lean on a set of tools to help us better navigate change and remain steady within flux. Here she “opens a frank and honest dialogue with readers, considering the questions many of us wrestle with: How do we build enduring and honest relationships? How can we discover strength and community inside our differences? What tools do we use to address feelings of self-doubt or helplessness? What do we do when it all starts to feel like too much?”

Parkinson, Hannah Jane. [The Joy of Small Things](#) (Faber \$15.95). British columnist Parkinson “is a specialist in savoring the small pleasures of life. She revels in her fluffy dressing gown (‘like bathing in marshmallow’), finds calm in solo cinema trips, is charmed by the personalities of fonts (‘you’ll never see Comic Sans on a funeral notice’), celebrates pockets, and gleefully abandons a book she isn’t enjoying. Parkinson’s everyday exaltations, selected from her immensely successful *Guardian* column, will utterly delight. In its way this is an adult version of *Ferdinand*, one of my favorite children’s books ever and one with a real message for how to live one’s life.

Pink, Daniel J. [The Power of Regret](#) (Viking \$28 SIGNED). Named a Best Book of 2022 by NPR and the *Financial Times*—and with good reason. I was hugely impressed listening to him speak recently and know from my own life experience that we can learn to forgive ourselves for mistakes but we never recover from regret over choices on which we did not act. Pink frames his ideas in a way that shows how understanding the power of regret can help shape more engaged lives.

Schiff, Stacy. [The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams](#) (Little, Brown \$35) chronicles the life of a key American revolutionary. Thomas Jefferson once asserted that if there were any leader of the Revolution, “Samuel Adams was the man.” Schiff, a Pulitzer winner, offers a riveting account of the titular founding father in this biography. Beginning the action with the start of the Revolutionary War, Schiff details how Adams was a both a man of action and a deeply religious figure. She also exposes how Adams left himself open to adverse interpretations of his life and legacy by destroying the majority of his personal papers. Schiff, our critic noted, “vividly recounts major events in the lead-up to the Revolutionary War, including the Stamp Act Crisis, the Boston Massacre, and the Boston Tea Party, and draws incisive sketches of Loyalist governor Thomas Hutchinson, Patriot lawyer James Otis, and others” in a book that’s “a must-read for colonial history buffs..”

Tarantino, Quentin. [Cinema Speculation](#) (Harper \$35). The long-awaited first work of nonfiction from the author of *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* is “a deliriously entertaining, wickedly intelligent cinema book as unique and creative as anything by

Quentin Tarantino himself. “In addition to being among the most celebrated of contemporary filmmakers, Tarantino is possibly the most joyously infectious movie lover alive. For years he has touted in interviews his eventual turn to writing books about films. Now, with *Cinema Speculation*, the time has come, and the results are everything his passionate fans—and all movie lovers—could have hoped for. Organized around key American films from the 1970s, all of which he first saw as a young moviegoer at the time, this book is as intellectually rigorous and insightful as it is rollicking and entertaining.”

Tyson, Neil DeGrasse. [The Starry Messengers](#) (Holt \$28.99 SIGNED). Bringing his cosmic perspective to civilization on Earth, Neil DeGrasse Tyson shines new light on the crucial fault lines of our time—war, politics, religion, truth, beauty, gender, and race—in a way that stimulates a deeper sense of unity for us all. In a time when our political and cultural views feel more polarized than ever, Tyson provides a much-needed antidote to so much of what divides us, while making a passionate case for the twin chariots of enlightenment—a cosmic perspective and the rationality of science.

SPECIAL ILLUSTRATED EDITIONS

Brothers Grimm. [Snow White and Other Grimms' Fairy Tales](#) (Harper \$32.50). The ninth book in the Harper Design's deluxe classic illustrated series offer an inventive fresh take on the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales with stunning full-color artwork and interactive features created by MinaLima, the award-winning design studio behind the graphics for the Harry Potter film franchise. This volume includes twenty-three of the most popular tales penned by German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, taken from their original collection *Children's and Household Tales*, first published in 1812, and includes *Cinderella* too.

Martin, George RR. [The Rise of the Dragon](#) (Clarkson Potter \$60). A visual history—featuring over 180 all-new illustrations—is a stunning introduction to House Targaryen, the iconic family who sat on the Iron Throne of Westeros while their dragons ruled the skies, at the heart of HBO's *Game of Thrones* prequel series, *House of the Dragon*.

Rimes, Shonda. [Inside Bridgerton](#) (Scribner \$45) brings you a behind-the-scenes look at the Netflix hit in lavish full-color plus you will meet the series writers, producers, directors, cast, crew, and talented creatives who brought Julia Quinn's novels to the screen.

Sapkowski, Andrzej. [The Last Wish](#) (Orbit \$40) introduced the world to the iconic monster hunter Geralt of Rivia; his beloved ward and the prophesied savior of the world, Ciri; and his ally and true love, the powerful sorceress Yennefer—and they took the world by storm. Now, experience the world of the Witcher with this deluxe hardcover edition of the story collection that started it all, featuring a beautiful new cover and eight gorgeous interior illustrations by a range of award-winning artists.

Seuss, Dr. [How the Grinch Stole Christmas](#) (\$19.99). A full color, jacketed edition of this children's holiday classic.

Tolkien, JRR. [The Silmarillion](#) (Harper Classics \$65). The forerunner story to *The Lord of the Rings* is illustrated throughout in color by Tolkien himself and with the complete text printed in two colors.

Tolkien, JRR. [The Fall of Númenor and Other Tales from the Second Age of Middle Earth](#) (Harper Classics \$40). Tolkien famously described the Second Age of Middle-earth as a “dark age, and not very much of its history is (or need be) told.” And for many years readers would need to be content with the tantalizing glimpses of it found within the pages of *The Lord of the Rings* and its appendices, including the forging of the Rings of Power, the building of the Barad-dûr and the rise of Sauron. It was not until Christopher Tolkien published *The Silmarillion* after his father's death that a fuller story could be told. Although much of the book's content concerned the First Age of Middle-earth, there were at its close two key works that revealed the tumultuous events concerning the rise and fall of the island of Númenor. Editor Brian Sibley has assembled into one comprehensive volume a new chronicle of the Second Age of Middle-earth, told substantially in the words of Tolkien himself from the various published texts, with new illustrations in watercolor and pencil by the doyen of Tolkien art, Alan Lee.

Zub, Jim, et al. [Dragons & Treasures: A Young Adventurer's Guide](#) (Clarkson Potter \$12.99). Ages 8-12 but hey.... This illustrated guide takes a deeper look at the abilities, personalities, and treasure collections of every major dragon type in *Dungeons & Dragons* and features easy-to-follow and entertaining explanations of how to identify and interact with these legendary beasts during your adventures. Advice, encouragement, and storytelling tips provide strategies for dealing with dragon encounters, hoards of treasure, and draconic artifacts, along with action-packed illustrations that will ignite your imagination.

GIFTS FOR CAT LOVERS

Abey, Kate. [Catitude](#) (Harper \$15.99). A hilarious, colorful collection of straight-talking, no-nonsense advice from very sassy cats. Favorite suggestions include:

- ☒ Embrace “Procatstination”: F*ck it off and do it tomorrow
- ☒ Focus on the sh#t you can control (like naps)
- ☒ Shine so bright that those b#tches need sunglasses

Cats have lived the right way for centuries, it's about time we started listening to them

Kott, Lynn. [Cat Tarot](#) (Chronicle \$19.95). 78 Cards & Guidebook in this “Whimsical and Humorous Tarot Deck & Stocking Stuffer for Kitten Lovers.”

Shaw, Hannah, et al. [Kitten Lady's CATivity Book](#) (Harper \$17.99). From *New York Times* bestselling author Hannah “Kitten Lady” Shaw and illustrator Megan Lynn Kott, an all-ages activity book of cat-related puzzles and projects, featuring plenty of takeaways to help vulnerable cats. Whether you're a seasoned cat owner, a first-time fosterer, or anything in between, her is a fun-filled keepsake

PUZZLES, TAROT, PLAYING CARDS....

Falls, Barry. [Jane Austen Playing Cards](#) (Laurence King \$14.99). Rediscover 5 Regency Card Games. Play cards with Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet as King and Queen of Hearts, Henry Crawford as Ace Rogue, and many more of Jane Austen's most memorable characters. Suits are themed on character traits, with hearts for the Heroines and Heroes and spades for the Fools and Bores. Add some 19th-century drama to your favourite card games or learn to play the ones featured in Austen's stories with the help of the accompanying booklet.

Rankin, Ian/Barry Falls. [The World of Ian Rankin](#) (Laurence King \$23.99). How great is this? A jigsaw puzzle packed with detail: Every single Rebus novel to date is referenced: can you spot them all? Poster and playlist: Comes with a poster detailing all the references and a playlist tailor-made by Ian Rankin himself of John Rebus's favourite songs so that you can fully immerse yourself in The World of Rebus.

Sony TV. [Outlander Puzzle](#) (\$19.99) and signed by Diana Gabaldon. 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle that "features a transporting image of Claire and Jamie enjoying a hilltop picnic in the Scottish Highlands."

And browse a collection of [Tarot Cards, Deck, etc](#) for more gift ideas or for your own fun.

GIFTS FOR TRAVELERS

Dying to hit the road? National Geographic has some books for you to browse for inspiration or armchair travel.

[100 Drives, 5,000 Ideas](#) (\$24.99)

[100 National Parks, 5000 Ideas](#) (\$29.99) and also [USA National Parks, Lands of Wonder](#) (DK \$30) which truly brings all 62 National Parks to life, celebrating the country's most breathtaking landscapes

[50 States, 5000 Ideas](#) (\$24.95).

[100 Hikes of a Lifetime](#) (\$35). The World's Ultimate Scenic Trails.

[1000 Perfect Weekends](#) (\$40). Great Getaways around the globe.

And more on our National Parks:

Mangelson, Thomas D, et al. [Seasons of Yellowstone](#) (Rizzoli \$55).

Featuring 150 of Mangelsen's most iconic photos that capture the majesty of all the seasons in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem—the most dramatic vistas, and all of the magnificent wildlife.

Established in 1872, Yellowstone is America's first national park and sits at the heart of the only remaining region in the Lower 48 states that contains all of the free-roaming, iconic mammals on the continent: wolves, elk, bison, grizzlies, and countless species of birds. This is North America's equivalent of the African Serengeti. For the park's 150th anniversary, Mangelsen has opened his vault of stunning photographs from every corner of the 2.2 million acres that make up Yellowstone and the adjacent Grand Teton. I've visited them both, separately and together, and urge you to do the same.

Share, Amber. [Subpar Parks](#) (Penguin \$22). Love the drawings and the sometimes snarky text but most of all reading the comments by visitors snubbing each park that is represented is... surprising in good and bad ways.

More on locations:

Keay, John. [Himalaya](#) (Bloomsbury \$30). Himalaya has drawn an illustrious succession of admirers, from explorers, surveyors, and sportsmen, to botanists and zoologists, ethnologists and geologists, missionaries and mountaineers. It now sits seismically unstable, as tectonic plates continue to shift and the region remains gridlocked in a global debate surrounding climate change. *Himalaya* is historian John Keay's striking case for this spectacular but endangered corner of the planet as one of its most essential wonders.

Finally, the *NY Times Book Review* has been doing a series Read Your Way Through.... Various cities. My favorite so far is on

[Istanbul by Elif Shafak](#), in part because it has been one of my very favorite cities to visit.

[Read Your Way Through London](#) by Bernardine Evaristo is another. And I've perused [Helsinki](#), [Rome](#), [Berlin](#), [Reykjavik](#), [Mexico City](#), and more.

We used to do BookTiks for you travelers before COVID grounded us. With more and more novels coming from international writers, you can ask us for a version of Read Your Way Through.... And we'll give you a few titles we can supply.

And if nothing else:

[Why We Travel: 100 Reasons to See the World](#) (Workman \$24.95). Get off the couch and go! Or at least dream about it.

COOKBOOKS MAKE GREAT GIFTS

[Here's a link](#) to a very wide selection. Below are titles new to October-December.

Allen, Lauren. [Tastes Better from Scratch Cookbook](#) (Taste \$34.99)

Ball, Serena. [Sustainable Mediterranean Diet Cookbook](#) (Benbe\$28.95)

Beranbaum, Rose Levy. [The Cookie Bible](#) (Houghton \$35)

Carle-Sanders, Theresa. [Castle Rock Kitchen: Wicked Good Recipes](#) (\$35) plus they are all linked to Stephen King and his home state Maine. Our copies come with Signed Bookplates from Carle-Sanders.

Crapanzano, Aleksandra. [Gateau: The Surprising Simplicity of French Cakes](#) (Scribner \$30)

Cressler, Mary. [Fire + Wine: 75 Smoke Infused Recipes](#) (Sasquatch \$24.95)

Ford, Eleanor. [The Nutmeg Trail: Recipes and Stories Along the Ancient Spice Routes](#) (Apollo Publishers \$40)

Garten, Ina. [GoTo Dinners](#) (Potter \$35)

Garza Family. [The Siete Table: Nourishing Mexican-American Recipes from our Kitchen](#) (Harper \$35)

Gladwin, Laura. [Happy Hour: A Cocktail Card Game](#) (Laurel \$17.99)

Johnson, Mike. [Simple Small Batch Baking: 60 Recipes](#) (Page \$22.99)

Laidlaw, Kim. [The Nightmare Before Christmas, The: The Official Cookbook and Entertaining Guid](#) (Insight Books \$29.99)

Leith, Prue. [Bliss on Toast: 75 Simple Recipes](#) (Bloomsbury \$26)

McKinlay, Jenn. [Fairy Tale Cupcakes Cookbook Signed](#) (Ivy \$12.99)

Murd, Noor. [Ottolenghi Test Kitchen: Extra Good Things](#) (Clarkson \$32)

Mylroie, Erin. [101 Greatest Soups on the Planet](#) (Page \$23.99)

Neveu, Megan. [Sugar & Spice: Creative Cookies](#) (Page \$22.99)

Pepin, Jacques. [Jacques Pepin Art of the Chicken](#) (Harper \$30)

Pepin, Jacques. [Jacques Pepin Quick & Simple](#) (Houghton \$35)

Santos, Jason. [Simple Fancy: A Chef's Big Flavor Recipe Book](#) (Page \$22.99)

Thompson, Tiffani. [Noodle Worship: Easy Recipes](#) (Page \$22.99)

Twitty, Michael W. [Koshersoul: The Faith and Food Journey](#) (Harper \$28.99)

Veseth, Mike. [Wine Wars II: The Global Battle for the Soul of Wine](#) (Rowman \$19.95)

Wilson, Camille. [Free Spirit Cocktails: 40 Nonalcoholic Drinks](#) (Chronicle \$19.95)