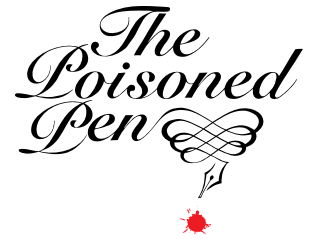


# BOOKNEWS from

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## Happy Holidays to All

Opening Hours M-Fri 10 AM-7 PM; Sat 10 AM-6PM; Sun 12-5 PM

Note: Event times are in Mountain Standard time

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

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.

### 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 5:00 PM

Jeff Lindsay discusses [The Three-Edged Sword](#) (Dutton \$28)

Super thief Riley Wolfe

Signed books available

### 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 1:00 PM

Peter Lovesey discusses [Showstopper](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Bath's Superintendent Peter Diamond and hit TV show

Signed UK [Showstopper](#) due in end of January

### TUESDAY DECEMBER 6 7:00 PM Holiday Party Live

Francine Mathews discusses [Death on a Winter Stroll](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Nantucket Police Chief Merry Folger

Then Devoney Looser with /Stephanie Barron & Dana Stabenow

Looser discusses [Sister Novelists](#) (Bloomsbury \$30)

The Porter sisters paving the way for Austen and the Brontës

Read this terrific in-depth article "[Stop Looking in Jane Austen's Shadow](#)"

### WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7 5:00 PM

Hannah Morrissey discusses [The Widowmaker](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

A Black Harbor mystery, sequel to [Hello, Transcriber](#) (\$16.99)

Signed books available

### WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7 7:00 PM

J. Todd Scott with Phillip Fracassi

Scott discusses [The Flock](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95)

Fracassi discusses [A Child Alone with Strangers](#) (Talos \$26.99)

### THURSDAY DECEMBER 8 5:00 PM

Marc Cameron with Peter Kirsanow

Cameron discusses [Tom Clancy Red Winter](#) (Putnam \$29.95)

Jack Ryan, Sr.

Kirsanow discusses [WEB Griffin The Devil's Weapons](#) (Putnam \$29)

The Men at War Series

### THURSDAY DECEMBER 8 7:00 PM Live

Steven Hartov discusses [The Last of the Seven](#) (Hanover Square Press \$26.99)

World War II's X Troop, an astonishing story

### 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)

### SUNDAY DECEMBER 11 4:00 PM

Sam Sykes with Pat King

Sykes discusses [Three Axes to Fall](#) (Orbit \$19.99)

The Grave of Empire Trilogy #3

Signed books available

### SUNDAY DECEMBER 11 5:30 PM

Stephen Spotswood discusses [Secrets Typed in Blood](#) (Knopf \$27)

Pentecost & Parker Mystery #3

Signed books available

**THURSDAY DECEMBER 15 6:00PM Live**

**Hank Schwaeble with Yvonne Navarro & Weston Ochse**  
Schwaeble discusses [Moonless Nocturne: Tales of Dark Fantasy and Horror Noir](#) (25 & Y Publishing \$17.95)  
Ochse signs [Red Unicorn](#) (\$26.99)  
Navarro and Ochse sign [Aliens vs. Predators: Rift War](#) (\$15.95)

**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 Live**

**Scarlett St. Clair with John Charles**  
St. Clair discusses [Queen of Myth and Monsters](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99)  
A Vampire Fantasy  
There is also a [hardcover edition](#) (\$25.99)

**OUR DECEMBER BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

**British Crime Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

MacBird, Bonnie. [What Child Is This?](#)

**Cozy Crimes Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Tector, Amy. [The Foulest Things](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month

Haven, Josh. [Fake Money, Blue Smoke](#)

**The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club** One Signed First Printing per month

Hartov, Steven. [The Last of the Seven](#)

**History/Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Hulme, Kate. [The Thirty-One Doors](#) (Sold out)

**Notable New Fiction** One Signed First Printing per month  
Meadows, Rae. [Winterland](#)

**International Crime** One Unsigned Hardcover or paperback per month

Christie, William. [The Double Agent](#)

**Romance & Relationships** One Unsigned Hardcover or 2 paperbacks per month

Green, Amy Lynn. [The Blackout Book Club](#) and Jane Porter, [Once Upon a Christmas](#)

**SHOPPING IN DECEMBER**

**Store Hours:** M-F 10 AM-7 PM Sat 10 AM-6 PM Sun 12-5 PM  
Closed at 5 PM December 24 and 31  
Closed December 25 and January 1-5 (inventory/clean up)

**Shipping dates:**

*To the lower 48 US states*

- By December 17 for regular USPS service
- By December 19 for USPS priority mail service
- By December 21 for USPS priority mail express
- By December 20 for UPS select
- By December 21 for UPS 2<sup>nd</sup> day air
- By Dec 14 for FedEx ground
- By Dec 20 for FedEx Express saver
- By Dec 21 for FedEx 2<sup>nd</sup> day

*For Alaska:*

- Dec 2 USPS ground
- Dec 17 USPS first class & priority mail
- Dec 21 USPS priority mail express

*For Hawaii*

- Dec 17 USPS first class & priority mail
- Dec 21 USPS priority mail express

*International Shipping*

Available but dicey after the first week in December

**GIFT CARDS**

A [Gift Card](#) is definitely better than trying to beat the shipping deadlines. Can be digital, sent anywhere—and at the last minute. It can be for any \$ amount or for a specific book

**SIGNED BOOKS**

Blake, Olivie. [Alone with You in the Ether](#) (Forge \$26.99). **Tip-ins.** Two people meet in the armory of the Art Institute by chance. Prior to their encounter, he is a doctoral student who manages his destructive thoughts with compulsive calculations about time travel; she is a bipolar counterfeit artist undergoing court-ordered psychotherapy. By the end of the story, these things will still be true. But this is not a story about endings. Instead the author of *The Atlas Six* “explores what it means to be unwell, and how to face the fractures of yourself and still love as if you’re not broken.”

Cumming, Charles. [Judas 62](#) (Penzler \$27.95). This is the US edition of a book we sold out in the UK edition in October of 2021. I recommended this crackerjack spy story then, and I do so again, pointing out that several writers of spy stories have taken up Russia in their plots before the invasion of the Ukraine. Here is *Kirkus* as well: “The horrible death of ceramics-factory worker Alexei Nikolaye after a disastrous—and top secret—leak from a Soviet bioweapons program in 1979 serves as prologue to the present-day murder of Russian émigré and retired spy Saul Kaszeta near his Adirondack cabin. In London, meanwhile, Lachlan Kite, a British intelligence agent, is dealing with his mother’s descent into Alzheimer’s when he receives an unwelcome visit. His colleague Cara Jannaway has unsettling news about a new addition to a hit list called JUDAS that contains the names of former Russian intelligence personnel living in the West, several of whom have been murdered. When Kite sees Peter Galvin, a former alias of his own, listed as JUDAS 62, he realizes that he must act to save himself and

his family, who know nothing of his intelligence work. As one character remarks, “the personal is operational.” So it is with Cumming, who creates fully fleshed characters whose storylines play out in a perilously realistic world.”

Evans, Richard Paul. [A Christmas Memory](#) (Gallery \$17.99 hardcover). It’s 1967, and for young Richard it’s a time of heartbreak and turmoil. Over the span of a few months, his brother, Mark, is killed in Vietnam; his father loses his job and moves the family from California to his grandmother’s abandoned home in Utah; and his parents make the painful decision to separate. With uncertainty rattling every corner of his life, Richard does his best to remain strong—but when he’s run down by bullies at his new school, he meets Mr. Foster, an elderly neighbor who chases off the bullies and invites Richard in for a cup of cocoa. Richard becomes fast friends with the wise, solitary man who inspires Richard’s love for books and whose dog, Gollum, becomes his closest companion. As the holidays approach, the joy and light of Christmas seem unlikely to permeate the Evans home as things take a grim turn for the worse. And just when it seems like he has nothing left to lose, Richard is confronted by a startling revelation.

Gabaldon, Diana. [Outlander Backlist](#) all in hardcover and in paperback. And on Monday December 5 we will add any special Outlander items to the webstore.

Givhan, Jennifer. [River Woman, River Demon](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). We are delighted that award-winning Latinx poet Givhan is paying us a visit mid-December. I was captivated by this book—“Sharp as glass shards and lush as the desert after the rain, the writing is the true magic here,” says one reviewer, who goes on to say: “Eva Santos Moon is a glass blower by trade and a *bruja* by heritage. Her husband, Jericho, a college professor, also runs a Magick shop, and they have two wonderful children whose names begin with X. But no amount of protection they can summon will help when they discover the body of Eva’s friend Cecelia in the river behind their house and Jericho is immediately arrested for her murder. Evidence emerges that suggests he may have been having an affair with Cecelia, but when Eva tries to talk to him about it, he suggests he may plead guilty to protect her. After all, it’s not the first time someone close to Eva has died; when she was 15, her best friend Karma drowned, and she was believed by some to be responsible. The trauma of this most recent death, and her suspicions about Jericho, instantly sends Eva back to a place of trauma; drinking and blacking out, she also begins to experience visitations from Cecelia’s ghost. Then a former love reenters her life, and Eva has to decide where her path of happiness lies—and how far she will go to find out the truth about Cecelia’s murder. There are all the expected thrills and chills as well as some unexpected ones, but the real gift here is Givhan’s command of language. She employs gorgeous metaphors and crass slang with precision. In a similar way, the mystical and the earthly are seamlessly intertwined, in place as well as in plot. It’s not often that we get a story of hoodoo and conjuring that presents these as religious elements rather than sensational ones. Eva embodies these complexities as well; she’s a memorable and multifaceted heroine.” I add that Eva suffers from PTSD over the death of Karma and whether had pushed Karma in to the water rather than tried to save her. Givhan has published earlier fiction.

Hartov, Steven. [The Last of the Seven](#) (Hanover Square Press \$26.99). Our **December Crime Collectors Book of the Month** is a propulsive read, a fact-inspired novel about a German Jewish soldier fighting for the British as a member of two secret, all-Jewish commando units disguised as Nazis, that will hook fans of Mark Sullivan, Robert Harris and Alan Furst. And it’s recommended by the wonderful author Steven Pressfield: “A classic WWII raid story in the behind-the-lines tradition of *The Guns of Navarone*, *The Last of the Seven* ticks like a detonator and explodes like a bomb. I read it [in] one rush and the book didn’t lose momentum the whole way. Hartov himself is the real deal, a veteran of IDF Intelligence and a paratrooper (currently a reserve major in the US Army). He delivers his tale with such vivid and authentic detail that you come away believing you too can speak *Hochdeutsch*, Yiddish, and Hebrew as you take on Hitler’s atomic labs deep in the heart of the Third Reich.” Hartov shares a little known but compelling slice of Second World War history where German Jewish escapees were employed behind enemy lines in British commando operations that carried extreme risk and high stakes. The plot is a nail-biter. The dialogue crackles. The characters are memorable. And the exotic settings are laid out with such historical precision that you’ll feel as if you are on the ground watching the horror, the sacrifice, the bravery, and the romance unfold in front of your eyes.

So how does it begin and unfold? A one-time merchant mariner and member of a Special Operations branch of Israeli Military Intelligence, Hartov starts the story in the North African desert in the spring of 1943. Having miraculously made it across an endless stretch of sand in the blistering heat on a shattered leg, Bernard Froelich convinces his British captors that despite his Nazi uniform, he is one of them. He is the last surviving member of an infiltration squad comprised of escaped German and Austrian Jews who, having lost their families in the Holocaust, are out for revenge. Boasting a gangrenous wound, Froelich is told his leg will be amputated before the charismatic, cigar-chomping American commander of an understaffed field hospital in an Italian monastery overrules the order and devises a makeshift way to set and heal the leg. Soon enough, Froelich is recovered enough to take charge of another all-Jewish team of fake Nazis whose mission is to parachute into a German village on the isle of Usedom to disrupt an advanced Nazi missile project.

Haven, Josh. [Fake Money, Blue Smoke](#) (Penzler \$26.95). An exceptional heist thriller makes our **December First Mystery Book of the Month**. It begins when former army sergeant Matt Kubelsky is picked up from an upstate New York prison—where he just served five years for killing an unarmed prisoner while in the army—by his ex-girlfriend, Kelly Haggerty, who’s hoping he might know someone who can pull off a robbery for her. Kelly’s been using skills learned studying art in college to make a decent living at counterfeiting (mostly foreign currency, easily passed in New York City, where she lives), but now she wants to make a big score: paying robbers in fake cash to steal some Klimt drawings, which she can sell to a Qatari gentleman wanted by the DEA for laundering cocaine money for Hezbollah. Matt happens to know a guy from prison, Bob Wharton, who was involved in armed robberies for a neo-Nazi group, and Bob agrees to take on the theft of the Klimts. “Haven stitches all this together seamlessly, and just when it seems that the story could be wrapping up, he piles on more action and twists. In addition, the

various locales and the little flourishes (executioner's scimitar, anyone?) raise this to the book equivalent of a blockbuster movie," says the *PW* Starred Review. In its own Starred Review, *Booklist* adds, "Darkly funny, horrifically violent, packed with bizarre twists, and full of outrageous schemes, brutal double crosses, and sadistic revenge. It's not for the squeamish, but it's a powerful book—tightly written, with an original plot, compelling characters, and a stunning conclusion."

**None of this praise surprises me since Haven is a pen name for JT Gelernter, author of the Patrick O'Brian-like historical adventures we have loved and sold to you: [Hold Fast](#) and [Captain Grey's Gambit](#) (\$25.95 each both SIGNED).** He's a real talent on the rise. AND he has a second and apparently even more killer crime novel publishing in June as well as a new Captain Grey later in the summer. We have ordered more signed copies of Captain Grey's adventures along with this Haven book since I love this series so. I am I think good at spotting strong new talent so you will be glad to have bought into JH Gelernter/Josh Haven this early.

Finally, read this [discussion about Haven and this book](#) by distinguished editor Neil Nyren.

Jones, Darynda. [A Hard Day for a Hangover](#) (St Martins \$28.99). New Mexico is truly the Land of Enchantment which aside from the glories of the landscape and its centuries old culture means things can get a little zany.... And so it is in the Sheriff Sunshine Vicram investigations. Here we have the conclusion of the trilogy and it's an excellent wrap. Sunshine, reluctantly enforcing law in Del Sol rather than Santa Fe, is coping with a series of missing women, murders, assaults, robberies, a sniper attack, an escaped prisoner, and a pregnant raccoon, not to mention the tourist town's resident flasher, who ends up in the emergency room with a knitting needle embedded in his neck, claiming to have been attacked by a gang. With the drama of Levi Ravinder whom she's loved forever and who is, surprise, the father of her daughter Auri. And then there's awesomely rebellious Auri, ruthlessly bent on becoming Del Sol's youngest investigator. When the Ravinder family, a true nest of vipers if not as street smart, decides to oust Levi from the business, things get truly off the rails. As Del Sol is "like Peyton Place on crystal meth," there's indeed a whole lot of sorting out to do. Fans will be delighted to see Sunshine and her kinfolk heading for a rosy future. I recommend starting with [A Bad Day for Sunshine](#) and then [A Good Day for Chardonnay](#) (\$17.99 each).

Lindsay, Jeff. [The Three-Edged Sword](#) (Dutton \$28). When your hit book series morphs into an even longer-running hit television show, what's a writer to do next? If you're Jeff Lindsay, you follow up your series on Dexter Morgan — the serial killer and blood-spatter expert who lets loose his most psychopathic tendencies upon those who have behaved more monstrously than he — with a series on Riley Wolfe, a talented master thief. "I have done a lot of totally impossible things," he informs the reader early on, "and yeah, I am always looking for more." This time he's in Botswana

Looser, Devoney. [Sister Novelists](#) (Bloomsbury \$30). The Porters were no ordinary family. Jane Porter and her sister, Anna Maria, were celebrated novelists known to admire Jane Austen, whose popularity had ebbed following her death. As did the Porters'. Looser here reminds us who they were. "Buried for 200 years, the story of the indomitable Porter sisters comes to light.

Household names in their time, these forgotten Regency novelists have gained an effective champion in Jane Austen biographer and scholar Looser. A triumph of literary detective work and storytelling, this is a must-read for the Austen and Brontë crowd." —*Kirkus* Starred Review. The *WSJ* adds: "*Sister Novelists* is the first biography of the Misses Porter, one that brilliantly if belatedly gives both women their due. ... One of the highlights of Ms. Looser's compelling biography is her impassioned defense of her subjects' achievements... Perhaps not all of their books would pass muster with modern readers... in which case, it might be enough to bring out a selection of the sisters' vivid and witty letters... we at least have Ms. Looser's fascinating account of their 'overtly polite but covertly audacious lives.'"

Looser is Regents Professor of English at Arizona State University and the author or editor of nine books on literature by women, including *The Making of Jane Austen*. Her writing has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *Salon*, *The Washington Post*, and *Entertainment Weekly*, and she's had the pleasure of talking about Austen on CNN. Looser, who has played roller derby as Stone Cold Jane Austen, is a Guggenheim Fellow and a National Endowment for the Humanities Public Scholar.

Mackay, Margaret. [Iain of New Scotland](#) (\$12.99) **with a Foreword by Diana Gabaldon and signed by her.**

Thirteen-year-old Iain Robertson is homesick for the Highlands of Scotland. It's September 1773, and he has just arrived in Nova Scotia with his parents and little sister after the long, disastrous, Atlantic voyage of the ship Hector. They wanted a new life in New Scotland — but the land agent lied to them. With no money, no food, no shelter, and winter fast approaching, how will they survive? Includes a Glossary of Celtic words and many bonuses for a Young Reader but also for any Outlander fan.

Mathews, Francine. [Death on a Winter Stroll](#) (Soho \$27.95). Festive Nantucket is a marvelous Christmas escape. Although Police Chief Meredith Folger is acutely conscious of the stress COVID-19 has placed on the community she loves. Although the island has proved a refuge for many during the pandemic, the cost to Nantucket has been high. Merry hopes that the Christmas Stroll, one of Nantucket's favorite traditions, in which Main Street is transformed into a winter wonderland, will lift the island's spirits. But the arrival of a large-scale TV production, and the Secretary of State and her family, complicates matters significantly. The TV shoot is plagued with problems from within, as a shady, power-hungry producer clashes with strong-willed actors. Across Nantucket, the Secretary's troubled stepson keeps shaking off his security detail to visit a dilapidated house near conservation land, where an intriguing recluse guards secrets of her own. With all parties overly conscious of spending too much time in the public eye and secrets swirling around both camps, it is difficult to parse what behavior is suspicious or not—until the bodies turn up.

McKinlay, Jenn. [The Plot and the Pendulum](#) (Berkley \$27). We sold out of signed copies of McKinlay's latest Library Lovers Mystery in October but now we have a few back in stock. It's true that Halloween in past but it will come around again so.... Library director Lindsey Norris is happy to learn the Briar Creek Public Library is the beneficiary of the Dorchester family's vast book collection. However, when Lindsey and the library staff arrive at the old Victorian estate to gather the books, things take

a sinister turn. One of the bookcases reveals a secret passage, leading to a room where a skeleton is found, clutching an old copy of *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*. Lindsey does a quick check of missing persons, using the distinctive 80s era clothing worn by the deceased to determine a time frame, and discovers that Briar Creek has an unsolved missing person's case from 1989. A runaway bride went missing just weeks after her wedding. No suspects were ever arrested and the cold case remains unsolved. Lindsey and the crafters crew decide that justice is overdue and set about solving the old murder mystery, using some novel ideas to crack the case.

Meadows, Rae. [Winterland](#) (Holt \$27.99). This timely story about Russians who as idealists under Stalin moved north of the Arctic Circle to work in mining and support the Fatherland as portrayed through the family of an aspiring gymnast a generation later in the 1970s is our **December Notable New Fiction Pick**. "With meticulous precision and smart, poetic prose, Meadows vaults us into the chilling and eerily relevant world of Soviet-era gymnastics. Get ready to fall in love with eight-year-old Anya, who offers us a heart-wrenching view of what it means to live, love and compete in a sport where one wrong move or the whisper of dissent can ruin you. This book is full of heart." Author Kristin Harmel sums up my take: "In the best of cases, books are more than just entertainment. Sometimes, they play a vital role in connecting us during divided times, across generations and cultures, reminding us that as human beings, we all have the common ground of love and want and pain. *Winterland* is one such book—an intimate look at the Soviet Union in the 1970s, a lost mother, and a daughter's journey to become a star Olympic gymnast, forced to choose between what's right for her and what's asked of her by a state that demands the impossible. Steeped in rich cultural detail and written with the confidence of someone who has spent much time in the trenches of gyms just like the ones Anya inhabits, *Winterland* will immerse you in rich period detail, the joy and anguish of first love, and the heartache of unimaginable loss and sacrifice. Both a searingly immersive tale and an important book for our times, *Winterland* is a must-read, for it will remind you that while we may live in a world divided, we are, as individuals, all similarly fragile, hopeful, and ultimately human at our core. Impeccably researched and beautifully written."

Morrissey, Hannah. [The Widower](#) (St Martins \$27.99) received this review in the *NY Times*: "Hannah Morrissey's debut novel, [Hello, Transcriber](#) (\$17.99), did an end run around the standard-issue police procedural, focusing more on the inner lives of her characters and adding a welcome sense of the gothic. That aesthetic returns in her nifty new noir which revisits the town, and police force, of Black Harbor, Wisconsin, where 'the city's grim atmosphere gnawed on people's morals.' It's wintertime, cold and bleak. Morgan Mori, a professional photographer, is more comfortable observing and shooting others than reflecting on the gaps that have wiped out her childhood memories. She's been hired to take photos for the Reynolds family at their 'seaglass colored mansion at the top of the bluff.' The wealthy, elite clan harbors many secrets, not the least of which concern what really happened when its patriarch, Clive, vanished two decades earlier. It isn't long before bodies begin turning up, some of them connected to Clive's disappearance, and at least one connected to Morgan herself. As the story alternates between Megan and a police detective named Ryan Hudson, it spirals ever further into

darkness. 'Morgan shivered. Invisible pins punctured her skin as though she were a voodoo doll. It didn't matter how many scalding showers she took. The winter was inside her, freezing her from the inside out.'" As will this story do to you. This is a very dark book, perhaps a welcome antidote to unrelenting holiday cheer?

The Indie Next Pick adds, "As the case of Clive Reynolds' disappearance 20 years ago unfolds, Detective Ryan Hudson discovers a link to his partner's murder. Skillfully woven together, the characters draw readers into a web of lies and deceitful actions that will keep them guessing who is the threat until the end."

Ochse, Weston. [Red Unicorn](#) (\$26.99). This is not your daughter's unicorn. No glittery pink stuffed animal. No. The Red Unicorn means certain death... Ex-Pat American Vietnam War Vet Amboy Stevens wants nothing more than to live in peace in 1982 Argentina. But with the Falkland Islands War raging, he is forced to protect a fellow six-fingered American girl who has lost her memory. They stumble upon a myth as ancient as humanity itself and are soon on the run from warlocks, Nazi treasure hunters, the cult of the unicorn, and sorcerers who want the pair for their own nefarious reasons. From Buenos Aires to the Island at the End of the World, they are chased, harassed, possessed, attacked, and beleaguered.

Bonus: Ochse and Yvonne Navarro sign [Aliens vs. Predators: Rift War](#) (\$15.95).

Penny, Louise. [A World of Curiosities](#) (St Martins \$29.99). Can it be the 18<sup>th</sup> in the Chief Inspector Armand Gamache series? And signed for us by Penny. It's spring and Three Pines is reemerging after the harsh winter. But not everything buried should come alive again. Not everything lying dormant should reemerge. But something has. As the villagers prepare for a special celebration, Armand Gamache and Jean-Guy Beauvoir find themselves increasingly worried. A young man and woman have reappeared in the Sûreté du Québec investigators' lives after many years. The two were young children when their troubled mother was murdered, leaving them damaged, shattered. Now they've arrived in the Quebec village of Three Pines. But to what end? Gamache and Beauvoir's memories of that tragic case, the one that first brought them together, come rushing back. Did their mother's murder hurt them beyond repair? Have those terrible wounds, buried for decades, festered and are now about to erupt? As Gamache works to uncover answers, his alarm grows when a letter written by a long dead stone mason is discovered. In it the man describes his terror when bricking up an attic room somewhere in the village. Every word of the 160-year-old letter is filled with dread. When the room is found, the villagers decide to open it up. As the bricks are removed, Gamache, Beauvoir and the villagers discover a world of curiosities. But the head of homicide soon realizes there's more in that room than meets the eye....

✚Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Deliverance](#) (Ballantine \$23) 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. . . . Anne Perry has once again created a Christmas tale that will captivate the reader and transport them straight to Victorian London during the holidays."—Historical Novel Society

Schwaeble, Hank. [Moonless Nocturne: Tales of Dark Fantasy and Horror Noir](#) (25 & Y Publishing \$17.95) is a collection of ten short stories from Bram Stoker Award-winner Hank Schwaeble that range from classic noir with a supernatural twist to futuristic techno-horror—and running the nightmarish gamut of everything in between. With an Introduction by the iconic F. Paul Wilson, *Moonless Nocturne* is "a gourmet platter of both red meat and rare delicacies not only for aficionados of horror, mystery, thrillers, and suspense, but any connoisseurs of fantastic fiction." Inventive and original, this collection has already been optioned for TV/film by Lonetree Entertainment.

"Prepare for an unchaperoned tour of places normally hidden from view, excursions into uncharted darkness and unpredictable terrain inhabited by things best left unseen. Ten tales that will haunt your imagination like the notes of a distant nocturne on a soundless night...an endless night...a moonless night. "Hank Schwaeble manages to craft spine-tingling chills where you least expect them and stories that resonate on every page." —Mark Greaney

Shelton, Paige. [Winter's End](#) (St Martins \$26.99). It's springtime in Benedict, Alaska, and with the warmer weather comes an unseasonably somber local tradition...the annual Death Walk. At the end of each brutal winter, citizens gather downtown and then break into groups to search the community for those who might have somehow gotten stuck at home. Beth Rivers sets off with her friend Orin and dog Gus, toward the cabin of an elderly resident, intending to check on him. When they reach the cabin, the old man is alive, but not in the best shape. Beth stays with him while Orin hurries to town for help, but it's not Orin who returns. Gril comes back with shocking news, and it soon becomes clear that Orin has also vanished. When they discover that their friend has been doing some top-secret research, they start to worry he's been exposed, or worse. Meanwhile, Beth continues on her own search, for her father, who allegedly is alive in Mexico, but won't return her calls....

Simpson, Rosemary. [Death at the Falls](#) (Kensington \$26). The Gilded Age springs to life in a tantalizing and hard-hitting tale of old money, new love, and grave suspicion, as newly-minted lawyer Prudence MacKenzie and ex-Pinkerton Geoffrey Hunter travel to Niagara Falls for a dangerous assignment.... **If you belong to the Historical Fiction Book of the Month Club I recommend you buy this terrific book as a holiday gift to yourself as well.**

October 1890: As Prudence and Geoffrey settle into the most elegant hotel in Canadian Niagara, they observe a popular tourist area torn between natural beauty and industrial power. Also attracting their attentions are the antics of daredevil Crazy Louie Whiting, determined to be the first person to navigate the falls without drowning. Shortly after their arrival, Crazy Louie sends a specially designed test barrel containing a sheep over the falls. But when the barrel is retrieved and opened, the battered body of a local Tuscarora Indian spills out. When Geoffrey and Prudence learn of the dead man's suspicions about rampant bribery among greedy land developers and local officials, they wonder if there's a connection to their client, Rowan Adderly. A young woman whose father disappeared while she was a child, the land she is due to inherit could be worth millions—and inevitably the sharks have come feeding. In a move to block Rowan's inheritance, her greedy grandmother has declared Rowan to be the illegitimate offspring of an illicit affair between her son and a seductive Irish songstress....

Spotswood, Stephen. [Secrets Typed in Blood](#) (Knopf \$27). The author of First Mystery Club pick [Fortune Favors the Dead](#) (\$16) and its sequel, [Murder Under Her Skin](#) (\$17; **SIGNED** \$20), now publishes a third novel to acclaim in the *NYTBR*: "I loved Stephen Spotswood's first two Pentecost and Parker mysteries, so I'm delighted to report that book No. 3 is another winner. This time, the world-famous private investigator Lillian Pentecost and her spiky, super-capable junior partner, Willowjean "Will" Parker, immerse themselves in the seedy world of pulp magazines, circa 1947. When Holly Quick walks into their office spinning a wild story of three murders imitating fiction — specifically, the fiction she publishes, pseudonymously, in places like *Strange Crime* magazine — Parker isn't inclined to believe it. Pentecost decides to take the case anyway. The differently abled Pentecost, whose multiple sclerosis is progressing, depends on her protégée to do much of the legwork. So Parker poses as a secretary — too-tight pencil skirts and all — at *Strange Crime*, hoping to ferret out clues. *Secrets Typed in Blood* reads as easy as fine whiskey goes down. Even when I guessed a plot twist, surprises awaited a few pages later. Mostly I was keen to spend time in Pentecost and Parker's company. I urge every mystery lover to get acquainted with them."—Sarah Weinman

St Clair, Scarlett. [Queen of Myth and Monsters](#) (Sourcebooks \$25.99). Library Reads raves: "Vampire King Adrian Aleksandr Vasiliev and his beloved Queen Isolde de Lara return in this searing erotic romance in which peril hides at every turn. St. Clair takes the reader on another high-stakes thrill ride as the couple works to establish their reign in a dark fantasy realm of mortals and immortals. Perfect for fans of Sarah J. Maas and *Guild Hunters*." Note that there is an [Indie Exclusive edition](#) (\$17.99) with a special foil cover, also signed by St. Clair. We have a limited number left.

[King of Battle and Blood](#) (\$16.99) begins the Adrian X Isolde series with the central question: Despite their undeniable chemistry, she wonders why the king—fierce, savage, merciless—chose her as consort. The answer will shatter her world.

Sykes, Sam. [Three Axes to Fall](#) (Orbit \$19.99). *PW* writes, "Sykes sticks the landing in the conclusion to his Grave of Empires epic fantasy trilogy—[God's Last Breath](#) and [The Mortal Tally](#) (\$16.99 each)—which takes readers on a final adventure through the ravaged realm known as the Scar. The

truly memorable series protagonist, Sal the Cacophony, was once known as the Red Cloud, whose ‘magic was like nothing the world had ever seen.’ That changed when her powers were stolen by wizards she once trusted, sparking a quest for revenge—and war. The bloody events that followed have shaken the usually self-assured warrior to her core. This book picks up from the devastating reveal of the prior volume: that Sal’s lover, Liette, has been possessed by a Scrath, ‘unbelievably powerful’ demonic beings who ‘wear people like suits.’ Sykes piles on the challenges for this series climax—Sal must save Liette, redeem herself for her role in killing civilians, and get closure for the loss of her powers—and manages to bring all to a truly satisfying ending. Admirers of Mark Lawrence’s *Book of the Ancestor* series will be especially enthralled.” Sykes is the son of Diana Gabaldon who has always encouraged him to find his own path to being a novelist.

### UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Cameron, Marc. [Tom Clancy: Red Winter](#) (Putnam \$29.95). In his sixth Jack Ryan thriller, former US Marshal and author Cameron, who lives in Alaska and won’t alas be visiting us this month, we open in 1985 West Berlin where newbie Foreign Service officer Ruby Keller, who’s having a snack at McDonald’s, gets caught up in a fracas that leaves her holding a floppy disc and a note from an unknown person who wants to defect to the West from East Berlin. Meanwhile, in the Nevada desert, East German Stasi agent Garit Richter witnesses the crash of an F-117 Nighthawk, an experimental stealth bomber. After killing two people, Richter steals a small chunk of the fuselage and goes on the run, headed back to his masters in East Germany. CIA analyst Jack is assigned the job of capturing Richter and overseeing the matter of the East Berlin defector. “Cameron has fun with the period references, including cell phones the size of bricks, Farrah Fawcett posters, IBM Selectrics, and dot matrix printers. This return to earlier days opens the field to further adventures of the young Jack Ryan”—not to be confused with Jack Ryan, Jr, whose adventures are currently penned by Don Bentley. I enjoy both Ryan series as authors continue to keep the Clancy universe alive.

Fracassi, Phillip. [A Child Alone with Strangers](#) (Talos \$26.99). When young Henry Thorne is kidnapped and held prisoner in a remote farmhouse surrounded by miles of forest, he finds himself connecting with a strange force living in the woods—using that bond to wreak havoc against his captors. Unknown to the boy, however, is that this ancient being has its own reasons for wanting the interlopers gone—there is something hidden beneath the house, tucked away in the dark, damp root cellar...waiting for its return. “Fracassi’s novel hits me like a cross between McCammon and ‘80s Stephen King. Might be one of them blockbusters readers love.” —Laird Barron

Kirsanow, Peter. [WEB Griffin: The Devil’s Weapons](#) (Putnam \$29). With the advent of World War II, Poland has been divided between Germany and the Soviet Union, and both countries are seeking scientist Sebastian Kapsky, who initially worked with leading aerospace engineers Walter Riedel and Werner von Braun but then rejected the Nazi perversion of science. He’s vanished in the Soviet occupation zone, and OSS head Col. “Wild Bill” Donovan sends in top agent Dick Canidy to rescue him. Thriller author Kirsanow, a lawyer and presidential appointee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, picks up Griffin’s *New York Times*

best-selling series so this will be his first appearance, tho virtual, at The Pen, and with veteran Marc Cameron.

✠ Lovesey, Peter. [Showstopper](#) (Soho \$27.95). It’s so lovely to sink into a new Lovesey: the comfort of old friends, polished prose, snappy dialogue and humor, and brilliant plotting leading to surprise solutions. No wonder he has won the Diamond and Gold Daggers and awards too numerous to count. Here again, joy, is Superintendent Peter Diamond testing wits with his officious and image-conscious boss, Assistant Chief Constable Georgina Dallymore, who now tells him it’s time for him to think about retiring. Bath’s top detective, Diamond, doesn’t believe in jinxes or retirement. So when he’s asked to investigate a top TV show plagued by a series of misfortunes, Diamond is unmoved. He’s no fan of the show, which glorifies criminals and mocks the police, and the disturbing incidents were spread across six years. It’s clear this is the press making a sensation out of nothing. So Diamond, a good mentor, puts the junior member of his squad on the case. But when young officer Paul Gilbert goes on location with the TV unit and witnesses another near-death incident, Diamond is forced to take an interest despite risking Georgina’s wrath. To make matters worse, the press gets wind of his involvement. But his troubles have scarcely begun. Devastating traps and surprises make this the most baffling case of his entire career.

Signed UK copies of [Showstopper](#) (\$36) will be available the end of January.

Scott, J. Todd. [The Flock](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Patrick writes, “Ten years back, Sybilla ‘Billie’ Laure and her young daughter escaped from the cult in which she’d been raised when the New Mexico compound went up in flames. It is now several years into the future and climate change continues to wreak havoc, with hurricanes, wildfires and freezes, not to mention another pandemic. Billie has settled with a new identity in rural Colorado and trying to live the quiet life when an intruder murders her husband and kidnaps her daughter. Billie is forced to confront her past and return to the ruined compound where the ashes of the old doomsday cult may be morphing into something new and crazier. Scott is one of my favorite writers and this new thriller perfectly captures the atmosphere of our times.”

### CLASSICS

Berkeley, Anthony. [Murder in the Basement](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). First published in 1932, this stellar mystery from British author Berkeley (1893–1971) is believed to be the first-ever “whowasdunin,” as mystery expert Martin Edwards notes in his introduction. After Reginald and Molly Dane, a recently married couple, move into their new house, Reginald explores the basement in the hope of unearthing hidden treasure. Instead, he spots a discolored portion of the floor, which, upon excavation, reveals the remains of a woman who was shot in the head. Despite the best efforts of Scotland Yard’s Chief Inspector Moresby, he’s unable to identify the victim. Moresby gets unexpected help from amateur sleuth and author Roger Sheringham, who shares an unpublished manuscript set at a boarding school that contains crucial clues. That manuscript, provided in full, is entertaining in and of itself, even without the connection to the corpse in the cellar. Berkeley’s adroit use of dry humor and plot twists help to maintain suspense even before the dead woman is named. This entry more than exceeds the high standards of the British Library Crime Classics reprint series.

Kelly, Mary. [The Spoilt Kill](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.95). I am making another pitch for you to read this particular favorite in the British Library Crime Classics series. Set in Staffordshire, England's pottery country, it is compellingly plotted with superbly rendered characters which explains why it won the Gold Dagger for Best Mystery back in 1961, beating out work by more famous contemporaries. Widely heralded as a perfect golden age mystery, this piece of British crime fiction marked a shift in the genre towards mysteries characterized by psychological elements.

Here is a recent Starred Review: "This innovative mystery from Kelly (1927–2017) effectively uses time shifts to create suspense. The owner of a Staffordshire pottery company has hired PI Hedley Nicholson to shadow an employee, designer Corinna Wakefield, because he suspects Corinna of stealing new designs on the behalf of a rival firm. After two weeks keeping an eye on Corinna while posing as a consultant, Nicholson joins a tour she's conducting of the pottery factory. In one building, while the people on the tour are distracted, Nicholson notices a shocked expression on Corinna's face after she raises the trapdoor of a vault that holds liquid clay. Inside is a dead body. Nicholson recognizes the person, whose identity remains a tantalizing secret well into the book. A lengthy flashback charts the events leading up to that grim find, and a final section focuses on the murder and industrial spying. Subtle characterizations enhance the well-crafted plot."

Rinehart, Mary Roberts. [The Album](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). Even in the early 1930s, Crescent Place is a neighborhood out of the past. The five Victorian mansions and the remote patch of pasture placed between them have the air of the 1890s, even as the city—once miles away from this idyllic retreat—encroaches and surrounds the enclave. But while these rarified residences may appear calm on the outside, their isolated interiors contain dark secrets, prolonged feuds, and generations of high-toned trouble. In these houses are a husband and wife who fight constantly, and another couple who hasn't spoken to each other in two decades. There is a widow in permanent mourning and a daughter whom the newspapers call psychotic. And there is a bedridden old woman who is about to be killed with an ax. When her murder shatters the well-mannered quiet of the cul-de-sac, the tabloids delight in trumpeting Crescent Place's peculiarities. But as the search for the killer intensifies, it becomes clear that the area's strangest secrets have yet to be revealed. The Album is enriched by sly social satire and set against the backdrop of the Great Depression.

## NONFICTION

Caruana, Karen. [The Philosophy of Gardening](#) (Invisible Publishing \$16.95). Here's a delightful little gift book. Why garden at all? These personal essays by writers, designers, and master gardeners dig into gardening's philosophical dimensions and tend to the aesthetic, cultural, political, and sociological implications of gardens and the people who keep them. Originally published in German, this delightful volume addresses gardening's most deep-rooted questions and highlights the magic that, year after year, makes us pick up a shovel. In its review the *NY Times* writes, "Find yourself cheerfully defenseless against the charms of a gardening collection that contains such phrases as: 'Nevertheless, moss is and often remains suspect by those who should, for myriad reasons, love it'."

Dawkins, Richard. [Flights of Fancy](#) (Zeus \$29.95). This is one of the most gorgeous books we have to offer this season. The illustrations, mostly in color, are stupendous and enhance the beautifully written text. Suitable for teens and adults, this is a book about flying – all the different ways of defying gravity that have been discovered by humans over the centuries and by other animals over the millions of years, from the mythical Icarus, to the sadly extinct but magnificent bird *Argentavis magnificens*, to the Wright Flyer and the 747. But it also means flights of digression into more general ideas and principles that take off from a discussion about actual flight—even about flight to Mars and beyond. Fascinating and elegantly written, this is a unique collaboration between one of the world's leading zoologists, thinkers, and writers, and a talented artist. The award-winning author of the *Selfish Gene*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *The God Delusion* and a string of other bestselling science books, Dawkins, a major contributor to the science of evolution, is a Fellow of the Royal Society and of the Royal Society of Literature. Read the [rave review from Dana Stabenow](#)

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. [Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults](#) (Lerner \$17.99). Drawing from her experiences as an Indigenous scientist, botanist Kimmerer demonstrated how all living things—from strawberries and witch hazel to water lilies and lichen—provide us with gifts and lessons every day in her best-selling book for adults, [Braiding Sweetgrass](#) (Milkweed \$20). Adapted for young adults by Monique Gray Smith, this new edition reinforces how wider ecological understanding stems from listening to the earth's oldest teachers: the plants around us. With informative sidebars, reflection questions, and art from illustrator Nicole Neidhard, this important book brings Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the lessons of plant life to a wider, and younger, audience.

Lovell, Henrietta. [Infused: Adventures in Tea](#) (Faber \$26.95). This is more than just another staid, romantic book about tea. Rather it is a gorgeously written, worldwide journey that describes the author's passion for loose-leaf tea. One reader said, "It's like Nigella Lawson wrote *H is for Hawk*." We've carried it since 2019 and constantly recommend it.

Manning, Paddy. [The Successor: The High-Stakes Life of Lachlan Murdoch](#) (Sutherland House \$24.95 large paperback.) "This is certainly a book for *Succession* fans!....Very entertaining and instructive." – *Financial Times* Readers' Best Books of 2022; «Despite decades of scrutiny of the family tensions that inspired HBO's viciously addictive television series *Succession*, Lachlan is remarkably little known outside Australia. So Paddy Manning's unauthorized biography *The Successor* is as well timed as it is cannily titled.» – *Vanity Fair*. Why should we care about the Murdochs? In addition to their newspapers, Fox News, etc, they own major publisher Harper Collins.

Mayor, Adrienne. [Greek Fire, Poison Arrows, and Scorpion Bombs](#) (Princeton \$19.95). You fans of historical mystery, or historical fiction or nonfiction, will love this gripping and groundbreaking history of how ancient cultures developed and used biological, chemical, and other unconventional weapons of war. Mayor illustrates that flame throwers, poison gases, incendiary bombs, and germ warfare are not modern inventions but rather that cultures around the globe have deployed biological and chemical weapons down the ages. In fact mythic treachery



such as that in the Trojan War illustrates her thesis which is based in part on the writings of ancient authors like Herodotus and on evidence from archaeological excavations.

Smith, Patti. [A Book of Days](#) (Random \$28.99) is an idiosyncratic visual book of days by the National Book Award-winning author of *Just Kids* and *M Train*, featuring more than 365 images and reflections that chart Smith's singular aesthetic—inspired by her wildly popular Instagram

Truby, John. [The Anatomy of Genres](#) (\$20) is an intriguing guide to understanding the major genres of the story world. Most people think genres are simply categories on Netflix or Amazon that provide a helpful guide to making entertainment choices. Most people are wrong. Genre stories aren't just a small subset of the films, video games, TV shows, and books that people consume. They are the all-stars of the entertainment world, comprising the vast majority of popular stories worldwide. That's why businesses—movie studios, production companies, video game studios, and publishing houses—buy and sell them. Writers who want to succeed professionally must write the stories these businesses want to buy. Simply put, the storytelling game is won by mastering the structure of genres. Truby's step-by-step guide to understanding and using the basic building blocks of the story world. He details the three ironclad rules of successful genre writing, and analyzes more than a dozen major genres and the essential plot events, or "beats," that define each of them.

Zelensky, Volodymyr. [Speeches from the Ukraine](#) (Crown \$16). Bringing together a new introduction by Volodymyr Zelensky with his most powerful war speeches, this book recounts Ukraine's story through the words of its president. It is the story of a nation valiantly defending itself from Russian aggression. And it is the story of a people leading the world in the struggle for democracy. And a call to stand up for liberty—if not now, then when?

## COZY CRIMES

Burns, V M. [Bookclubbed to Death](#) (Kensington \$16.95). A below-average cozy in the Mystery Bookshop series set in North Harbor, Michigan, where Market Street Mysteries bookstore owner Samantha Washington finds herself in trouble with the police when book club leader and prominent book reviewer Delia Marshall turns up dead in her shop.

Camp, Amber. [Canter with a Killer](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). This debut of a cozy series is recommended for you who love animals—not talking or sleuthing ones but actual horses, dogs, etc. And best of all, an attack donkey. He's my favorite. The story is set in Hillspring, Arkansas, where Mallory Martin who has left her marriage on good terms for a different life, and her job, starts a horse rescue. Things are going well until her cantankerous and wealthy neighbor who has a fancy show barn, and who is her relentless critic, is murdered in that barn. While there are several suspects, Mallory is somehow on top of Sheriff Grady Sullivan's list, possibly because someone has made her an easy patsy. What can she do but enlist a friend and a young rescue volunteer to clear her name?

Flower, Amanda. [Frozen Detective](#) (Hallmark \$15.99). A wealthy doctor invites many of his associates to spend a week at a giant, luxurious ski villa. Darby Piper, a seasoned private eye, and Tate Porter, her new partner at the detective agency, are among the

guests, going undercover as a romantic couple. They were hired by the doctor's much-younger wife to investigate anonymous threats against her husband's life. But before long, Darby and Tate are investigating a murder instead. As they dig up buried grudges, Darby's jealous ex-boyfriend on the police force thinks they're wasting their time. Are they?

Graves, Stephanie. [A Valiant Deceit](#) (\$16.95). Weaving intrigue, rural village life, and little-known historical facts about the role of carrier pigeons in WWII, and light romance, Graves continues the adventures of Olive Bright, a young pigeoneer who, along with her racing birds, has been conscripted to aid the fight against the Nazis. It's not the daring role she'd envisioned for herself, but balancing a pretend romance with the real murder mysteries in her quiet little English village of Pibley is more complicated than she imagined.... I find this series a charmer as well as informative—who knew there was an actual pigeon corps with heroic birds? See Our December Large Paperback Picks for more.

Herren, TG. [A Streetcar Named Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$28.99). Despite its terrible title which almost turned me off reading my Advance Copy, this series launch proved to be an entertaining cozy set in an atmospheric New Orleans that is vividly rendered by homegrown author Herren—interestingly using TG rather than Greg as his moniker. The lead character is lively, the antiques background is appealing, and I go with *Kirkus* which advises you to "Forget the puzzle and enjoy the snarky dishing on New Orleans society and its wannabes, murderous or just scurrilous." What's the story? Valerie Cooper, the narrator of the pseudonymous Herren's lively debut and series launch, is surprised to inherit a majority share in Rare Things Antiques and Estate Sales Company in New Orleans from an uncle of her late husband she didn't know existed—and just as surprised to discover how much she enjoys the work repairing antiques and researching their provinces. She's also relieved that she'll no longer have to consider selling her house—an antebellum double-style in the now desirable Irish Channel neighborhood—to make ends meet. Only her interactions with the venomous-tongued real estate agent Collette Monaghan mar her days. Collette, as the Boudicca Krewe Members membership chair, oversees admissions to the social club Valerie's good friend and neighbor, bestselling author Lorna Walmsley, is anxious to join. When Collette is murdered at the Boudicca Costume Ball, Valerie sets out to learn why Collette despised her and how the killer came to possess the murder weapon, an antique jeweled dagger from Rare Things—and uncovers a cache of secrets.

Tector, Amy. [The Foulest Things](#) (Turner Publishing \$15.99). This first Dominion Archives Mystery from Quebec archivist Tector, who has worked in Brussels and the Hague and is now settled in Ottawa, is a delight that will light up those who enjoyed Canadian Eva Jurczyk's [Department of Rare Books and Special Collections](#) (\$16.99). And so it is our **December Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. See our December Large Paperback Picks below for a more detailed description and also one for Tector's first mystery which involves diamonds, emeralds, courtesans, spies—and Paris!

## NEW IN HARDCOVER

Adler, Dahlia, ed. [At Midnight: 15 Beloved Fairy Tales Reimagined](#) (Flatiron \$19.99). Here are 14 reimagined fantastic fairy tales, and one original "new fairy tale" by Melissa Albert,

making for a whimsical, adventurous, bone-chilling and genre-spanning collection of tales that smartly riff on the referenced source material to explore contemporary values. “Intersectionally diverse and globally inclusive,” readers are transported across time and place—to locales such as British-occupied India, Russia, New York City’s Chinatown, and suburban U.S. neighborhoods—for an adventure fit for ages 12–up.

Brooks-Dalton, Lily. [The Light Pirate](#) (Grand Central \$28). Florida is slipping away. As devastating weather patterns and rising sea levels gradually wreak havoc on the state’s infrastructure, a powerful hurricane approaches a small town on the southeastern coast. Kirby Lowe, an electrical line worker; his pregnant wife, Frida; and their two sons, Flip and Lucas, prepare for the worst. When the boys go missing just before the hurricane hits, Kirby heads out into the high winds to search for them. Left alone, Frida goes into premature labor and gives birth to an unusual child, Wanda, whom she names after the catastrophic storm. As Florida continues to unravel, Wanda grows and adapts in a place remade by nature. Library Reads writes, “As the effects of climate change begin to overwhelm America, we meet Wanda, a girl born during and named after a devastating hurricane. With civilization faltering in the face of mounting challenges, she must learn to live differently. The depiction of climate change and its effects here are bone-chilling, but Wanda’s resilience is inspiring. For fans of *Station Eleven*.”

Burnham, Spencer. [Welcome to the Game](#) (Atlantic \$27). The *NY Times* reviews a book I’d get for you if the author didn’t live in England and cannot sign our copies. “Burnham, a onetime British rally driver, knows how to drive fast, very fast, without stopping or looking back. It’s pretty clear, from the opening pages of his breakneck debut that his personal fuel tank is just about empty. Grieving for his wife, who died in a gruesome accident, and caring for their daughter while his car dealership slowly goes under, Spencer is coping — barely — thanks to booze, pills, coke and the occasional Viagra-fueled sexual encounter. Then he meets Dominic McGrath, who runs a ‘profitable niche business ... currency movement, that kinda thing.’ Dominic needs a driver, a good one, and Spencer — out of other options — gets reeled into Dominic’s criminal enterprise. Henderson, a BBC television presenter, mixes a keen sense of the absurd with sly turns of phrase, like this about one of the McGrath criminal crew members: ‘Every outfit has a Denny — a guy who’s not especially capable but not useless, trusted but not a member of the inner cabal, only occasionally funny but always ready to laugh at the jokes of others.’ The vibe is George V. Higgins with a British accent, and the ride, though bumpy at times, gets readers to the destination.”

✠Christie, William. [The Double Agent](#) (St Martins \$27.99). This absolutely ace spy story based on a real character is our **December International Crime Book of the Month** as it ranges from wartime Iran to Britain to Italy. It’s 1943, and Alexsi Ivanovich Smirnov, once a Russian orphan, is in Tehran, where, having saved Winston Churchill’s life, he then shares his singular story with the Prime Minister at the British Embassy. After a hardscrabble childhood, Alexsi became a Russian spy after training by the Secret Service, and infiltrated Germany, becoming a high-ranking intelligence officer there. His plans apparently go beyond cooperating with the British. He undertakes a daring escape in the middle of the night. Posing as a poor Iranian, he

hitches a ride with a group of smugglers and, after near-fatal injuries incurred during an encounter with a rival group, finds himself in a hospital, chained to his bed. There are more twists and turns before Alexsi lands in British custody again. This time he’s taken to England as a prisoner, where he’s commanded to share the unabridged account of his life and exploits for British stenographers, an appealing challenge for an inveterate yarn spinner like Alexsi, who changes identities as easily as clothes and kills without remorse. Recruited by the SIS, and by “C” himself, Alexsi has once again become a double agent. After Russian assassins have made London too hot to hold him, betrayed by a Soviet agent inside the SIS (Kim Philby), Alexsi talks the British into sending him beyond the reach of the Soviets, into Italy with a new identity as a sergeant in the German army. Settled into the headquarters of Field Marshall Albert Kesselring, Alexsi finds himself at the nexus at a critical point in World War II, balancing between the various forces vying for control in the Vatican, the Italian resistance, and the brutal German Army determined to maintain control of Northern Italy. And Alexsi is finally forced to choose sides over his own survival.

Dana Stabenow adds, “It’s difficult to disentangle all the twists and turns in this protagonist’s life. Alexsi actually seems like a pretty decent guy, except for all those people he murders, while at the same time refusing to massacre anyone, to the extreme displeasure of the SS. He’s a polyglot, an excellent soldier in the Wehrmacht, an amazing source of information for the British, a Vicomte de Valmont-worthy seducer, and an escape artist on the level of Houdini. What’s not to love? The bloody parts are always relieved by flashes of humor that at times is almost slapstick (which feels like a pretty realistic picture of any war). Cameos from a bunch WWII luminaries from every possible side, a bunch of bad guys and a few good ones. This jury’s still out on which Alexsi is. A very enjoyable read with an excellent author’s note on how the lives of the real characters played out after the war.”

Dana and I both recommend reading this terrific novel paired with another gem, [M. King’s Bodyguard](#) (\$17), set in 1901 Britain where Kaiser Wilhelm could be assassinated while attending Victoria’s state funeral. See Our December Large Paperback Picks.

Cook, Robin. [Night Shift](#) (Putnam \$29). Colleagues turned spouses Dr. Laurie Montgomery and Dr. Jack Stapleton already have their plates full with crazy work schedules and family pressures. The last thing they need is a murder. When Laurie’s longtime friend, by all accounts healthy Dr. Sue Passero, dies mysteriously in the hospital parking garage, an autopsy is required, which falls squarely under Laurie’s purview as newly appointed chief medical examiner. So when Laurie asks Jack to take special care with the case, he can hardly refuse. With his curiosity sparked by the mystery around Sue’s death, the indefatigable Jack, compelled to resolve the case at hand, sets out to investigate on-site at Manhattan Memorial Hospital, even though it means blatantly defying the Office of Chief Medical Examiner’s rules. What started out as an inquiry into Sue’s tragic passing soon turns into a deadly and dangerous chess game between Jack and the clever and deranged killer....

✠Cornwell, Bernard. [Sharpe’s Command](#) (Harper \$28.99). The impossible is exactly what the formidable Captain Richard Sharpe is asked to do when he’s sent on an undercover mission

to a small village in the Spanish countryside, far behind enemy lines. For the quiet, remote village, sitting high above the Almaraz bridge, is about to become the centre of a battle for the future of Europe. Two French armies march towards the bridge, one from the North and one from the South. If they meet, the British are lost. Only Sharpe's small group of men – with their cunning and courage to rely on – stand in their way. But they're rapidly outnumbered, enemies are hiding in plain sight, and as the French edge ever closer to the frontline.

**NOTE:** We have 3 signed UK copies still available to claim: [Sharpe's Command](#) (Collins \$48).

Dale, Rachel Kapelke. [The Ingénue](#) (St Martins \$27.99). When former piano prodigy Saskia Kreis, whose career crashed in her early teens, returns home to Milwaukee after her mother's unexpected death, she expects to inherit the family estate, the Elf House. She's shocked when she learns that her mother, author and illustrator Evelyn Harper Kreis, has willed the house to Patrick Kintner, director of development at the University of Wisconsin. This is a man that Saskia shares a complicated history with, forcing her to reexamine her own past—and the romantic relationship that changed the course of her life—for answers. Can she find a way to claim her heritage while keeping her secrets buried, or will the fallout from digging too deep destroy her? Chapters often start with excerpts from Evelyn's 1990s book series, *Fairy Tales for Little Feminists*. These add substance to Saskia's own plight and her decision on how to continue her life's journey, and will resonate with readers in the post-#MeToo era. *My Dark Vanessa* meets *The Queen's Gambit* in this new novel of suspense. “*The Ingénue* is a beautiful fever dream of a story, a genre-blending mix of mystery and fairytale that metamorphizes into different stories as you're reading: an intimate look at the bonds between mothers and daughters, a searing exploration of who you are when you're no longer exceptional, a knife-edged tale of vengeance. It is utterly enthralling, provocative, and so smart it held me captive until the perfect, sinister end. A book for anyone who was told they were special and is still clawing their way back.»—Ashley Winstead

Dumas, Luke. [A History of Fear](#) (Atria \$27.99). “Did the devil really make him do it? That question haunts Dumas's stellar debut, a complex whydunit. American Grayson Hale, a University of Edinburgh postgraduate student, has been convicted of murdering a colleague, Liam Stewart, whose strangled corpse was found in a loch months after his disappearance. Hale confessed, but claimed he had been under the influence of the devil. Following Hale's apparent suicide in prison, journalist Daniella Barclay, who covered the case, obtains access to the murderer's memoir. Barclay presents Hale's own account of the events preceding the murder, which starts with his meeting a mysterious man who offers him much needed money if he agrees to help write a book on the history of the devil in Scotland. Despite misgivings over his employer and several false starts, Hale agrees, only to become trapped in a nightmarish world where he's harassed by winged fiends and seems to have become a catalyst for violence in others. Vivid prose enhances the twisty plot; Liam's Scottish accent is ‘melodic yet underpinned by something hard and jagged, like clear water flowing over a bed of pointed rocks.’ Admirers of Andrew Pyper's *The Demonologist* will be riveted.”—*PW* Starred Review

“The key is that we feel for Grayson as he leads us

up to the brink of his terrible deed. The characters surrounding him, from his ghoulish family to his annoying roommate to his eventual victim, come to life on the page, all part of Grayson's living nightmare. . . . It's a patient pursuit and a patient book, one that builds without the reader quite realizing it. It blurs the line between mental illness and something less definable, more supernatural and sinister. A muscular, enigmatic, and devilishly smart read.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review

✠Ellis, Kate. [Serpent's Point](#) (LittleBrown \$28.99). This very long-running British series is a good one for readers of Ann Cleeves. You can read this one without having read any of the earlier Wesley Petersons. We are looking into a British paperback source that is reasonably priced so we may score some. Meanwhile. . . . Serpent's Point in South Devon is the focus of local legends. The large house on the headland is shrouded in an ancient tale of evil, and when a woman is found strangled on the coastal path DI Wesley Peterson is called in to investigate. The woman had been house-sitting at Serpent's Point and Wesley is surprised to discover that she was conducting an investigation into unsolved missing persons cases. Could these enquires have led to her murder? While the case takes Wesley to Yorkshire and the Cotswolds, archaeologist Neil Watson is making a dramatic discovery of his own in the fields near the house. When a skeleton is uncovered, the pressure rises to find a killer, and Wesley and Neil realize that Serpent's Point holds more secrets than anyone could have imagined.

✠Fowler, Christopher. [Bryant & May: Peculiar London](#) (Random \$28.99). Fowler's valedictory 19th book featuring eccentric sleuths Arthur Bryant and John May offers no mysteries for the Peculiar Crimes Unit to solve, just anecdotes and history about London, which May himself qualifies as being both “personal” and “unreliable.” The stories told by Bryant and May as well as members of the series' supporting cast are replete with humorous trivia. For example, PCU stalwart Janice Longbright, whose mother was one of the unit's original members, shares that flowers or mushrooms shouldn't be picked from a certain cemetery “because the arsenic from so many embalmed Victorian corpses has poisoned the soil.” Bryant, in discussing the maritime history of the Deptford area, where the king's naval yard was once located, explains that the Jolly Roger didn't always identify pirates and was based on a Spanish symbol “signifying the victory of transcendence over mortal bones.” This is a fun last look at beloved characters for their devotees. Fowler has announced his terminal cancer, alas. We can only thank him for so many wonderful books.

Gable, Michelle. [The Lipstick Bureau](#) (Grand Central \$28.99). “Soldiers and politicians weren't the only players during World War II. Surprisingly, many of the unsung heroes were women. Gable has created a brilliant, gripping historical novel about one of those women. When the Office of Strategic Services was founded in 1942, 4,500 women worked to create and distribute misinformation to the Nazi invaders in Europe. Czechoslovakian Niki Novotná was one of those women. Highly skilled at creating propaganda to demoralize Hitler's troops, her contribution and that of many other women was a key part of the ultimate defeat of the Nazis. But her job comes at a personal cost. Separated from her husband while she works in Rome, her marriage begins to crumble. Then the Bureau is hit with charges that their tactics of disinformation and the use of POWs to disseminate that

disinformation, are in direct violation of the Geneva Convention. But their work continues until the end of the war and has a profound impact on the ultimate victory of the Allied troops. Well researched and smartly told, this novel is a must read for World War II buffs and those who like a peek behind the curtain of the role women played in it,” says *Library Journal*.

Green, Simon. [Haunted by the Past](#) (Baen \$25). Ishmael Jones knows all there is to know about solving mysteries. Together with his love and partner in crimes, Penny Belcourt, he specializes in cases of the weird and uncanny. Lucas Carr went to Glenbury Hall, an old country manor house turned hotel. He signed in at reception, took his key, and went upstairs to his room. But he never got there. Somehow he vanished along the way, with not a single clue to suggest what might have happened to him. Lucas belonged to the same mysterious organization that employs Ishmael and Penny, so they are sent in to solve the mystery. But when they arrive at grim and isolated Glenbury Hall, they discover it has a reputation as one of the most haunted old houses in England. None of the usual headless monks or walled-up nuns—just stories of lost souls that dance with the statues in the grounds; doors that won’t stay shut, and rooms that aren’t always there; and something that prowls the house in the early hours, endlessly searching. They say... it crawls. Does Lucas’ disappearance have something to do with the organization or the Hall’s haunted past? Ishmael and Penny have to work their way through a series of mysterious clues and misleading suspects, uncovering secret after secret, before they finally arrive at a truth that no one suspected. The problem with history is that it’s not always content to stay in the past. “The 11th book in Green’s fantastical mystery series pokes fun at the genre, with fun and plenty of cathartic resolution for readers who like rueful chuckles with their chills. Recommended for those who like antiheroes with more than a bit of snark.”—*Library Journal*

Higashino, Keigo. [A Death in Tokyo](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Tokyo Police Detective Kaga is faced with a very public murder that doesn’t quite add up. In the Nihonbashi district of Tokyo an unusual statue of a Japanese mythic beast—a *kirni*—stands guard over the district from the classic Nihonbashi bridge. In the evening, a man who appears to be very drunk staggers onto the bridge and collapses right under the statue of the winged beast. The patrolman who sees this scene unfold goes to rouse the man, only to discover that the man was not passed out, he was dead; that he was not drunk, he was stabbed in the chest. However, where he died was not where the crime was committed—the key to solving the crime is to find out where he was attacked and why he made such a super human effort to carry himself to the Nihonbashi Bridge. That same night, a young man named Yashima is injured in a car accident while attempting to flee from the police. Found on him is the wallet of the murdered man. Tokyo Police Detective Kyoichiro Kaga is assigned to the team investigating the murder—and must bring his skills to bear to uncover what actually happened that night on the Nihonbashi bridge. What, if any, connection is there between the murdered man and Yashima, the young man caught with his wallet? Kaga’s investigation takes him down dark roads and into the unknown past to uncover what really happened and why.

Lester, Kent. [The Third Instinct](#) (Forge \$28.99). Computer genius and prediction scientist Dan Clifford is with a new startup company that specializes “in the art of predicting the seemingly

unpredictable, like future burglary targets in midtown Atlanta or likely embezzlement opportunities in state government.” Dan’s superior hacking skills lead the FBI to ask for his help after a daring and seemingly impossible theft. An “organism posing a danger far worse than any coronavirus,” which Dan and his biologist girlfriend, Rachel Sullivan, discovered and contained in the previous book, was stolen from GenTropics Pharmaceuticals in Savannah, Georgia, despite being stored in a supposedly impregnable room. The FBI suspects bio-hackers calling themselves the Firemen are behind the crime with the intent of releasing a more lethal version of the pathogen. The answers may lie with Clifford. Unemployed and struggling with two years of pandemic isolation, he is rebuilding both his career and personal life. His plans to propose to his adrenaline-junkie girlfriend, Rachel Sullivan, are now interrupted as he’s tasked with infiltrating the Freiman to connect a maze of clues from the shadowy underworld of Savannah’s hacker community, to the ancient powerbrokers of Rome and in doing so, uncover a hidden agenda of big Pharma and a 2000-year-old battle for control of public opinion. Wow. Highly entertaining and definitely plot, not character, driven.

Lipman, Elinor. [Ms. Demeanor](#) (Harper, \$27.99). “Who knew house arrest could be sexy and fun? Library Reads recommends: “After a neighbor’s complaint about consensual al fresco sex, Jane finds herself with her law license suspended and wearing an ankle monitor for six months. Her sister persuades her to try food blogging and soon Jane’s cooking for another house-arrested tenant while trying to discover the identity of her accuser. This is a breezy fun read with a dash of romance and mystery for fans of Tom Perrotta and Jennifer Weiner.”

Lipsyte, Sam. [No One Left to Come Looking for You](#) (SimonSchuster \$26.99). Set in Manhattan’s East Village punk scene in 1993, this darkly comic novel is a twisty caper, a reverberant period piece and an affectionate parody of the youthful quest for authenticity. Dive bars, DIY music venues, shady weirdos, and hard drugs are plentiful. Crime is high but rent is low, luring hopeful, creative kids from sleepy suburbs around the country. One of these is Jack S., a young New Jersey rock musician. Sam Spade was searching for the Maltese falcon; Jack Shit (né Jonathan Liptak), from the punk band the Shits, is searching for his Fender Jazz bass. Just a few days before his band’s biggest gig, their lead singer goes missing with Jack’s prized bass, presumably to hock it to feed his junk habit. How does Jack know that the Earl stole his bass? Through a phone call from Jack’s friend at King Snake Guitars, where the Earl tried unsuccessfully to sell the instrument. Jack’s search for his buddy uncovers a sinister entanglement of crimes tied to local real estate barons looking to remake New York City—and who might also be connected to the recent death of Jack’s punk rock mentor. Along the way, Jack encounters a cast of colorful characters, including a bewitching, quick-witted scenester who favors dressing in a nurse’s outfit, a monstrous hired killer with a devotion to both figure skating and edged weapons, a deranged if prophetic postwar novelist, and a tough-talking cop who fancies himself a retro-cool icon of the homicide squad but is harboring a surprising secret. *No One Left to Come Looking for You* is a twisty caper, a reverberant period piece and an affectionate parody of the youthful quest for authenticity.

Lloyd, Chris. [Paris Requiem](#) (Pantheon \$26). Paris, 1940. As the city adjusts to life under Nazi occupation, Detective Eddie Giral

struggles to reconcile his job as a policeman with his new role enforcing a regime he cannot believe in, but must work under. He's sacrificed so much in order to survive in this new world, but the past is not so easily forgotten. When an old friend—and an old flame—reappear, begging for his help, Eddie must decide how far he will go to help those he loves. “Chris Lloyd’s wartime Paris is rougher than Alan Furst’s, and Eddie Giral, his French detective, is way edgier than Philip Kerr’s Bernie Gunther. Ranks alongside both for its convincingly cloying atmosphere of a city subjugated to a foreign power, a plot that reaches across war-torn Europe and into the rifts in the Nazi factions, and a hero who tries to be a good man in a bad world. Powerful stuff.”—*The Times*

Mohlin, Peter/Peter Nyström. [The Other Sister](#) (The Overlook Press \$27). A Starred Review for a ScandiNoir: “Mohlin and Nyström’s stellar sequel to 2021’s [The Bucket List](#) (\$17) more than delivers on the first book’s promise. Former FBI agent John Adderley, the son of an American father and a Swedish mother, had lived in Sweden until he was 12; in the previous book, he moved there in 2019 after being wounded in a drug bust gone wrong. Under an alias “created by the Swedish authorities on behalf of the FBI’s witness protection program,” he’s become a respected member of the Karlstad CID. When John’s former partner from the FBI, Trevor, whom he thought dead, surfaces in Karlstad, he fears that he’s been betrayed and is being set up for assassination. John’s efforts to discover Trevor’s true motives in reconnecting coincide with his assignment to the high-profile murder of a tech executive who designed an innovative dating app. This nail-biter doesn’t let John off the hook for some hard choices he’s forced to make as the action builds to a jaw-dropping climax. Readers will be counting the days to see where these gifted writers take their lead next.”

Smiley, Jane. [A Dangerous Business](#) (Knopf \$28). Smiley writes a mystery set in Gold Rush California. Monterey, 1851. Ever since her husband was killed in a bar fight, Eliza Ripple has been working in a brothel. It seems like a better life, at least at first. The madam, Mrs. Parks, is kind, the men are (relatively) well behaved, and Eliza has attained what few women have: financial security. But when the dead bodies of young women start appearing outside of town, a darkness descends that she can’t resist confronting. Side by side with her friend Jean, and inspired by her reading, especially by Edgar Allan Poe’s detective Dupin, Eliza pieces together an array of clues to try to catch the killer, all the while juggling clients who begin to seem more and more suspicious. Eliza and Jean are determined not just to survive, but to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West—a bewitching combination of beauty and danger—as what will become the Civil War looms on the horizon

Straley, John. [Blown By the Same Wind](#) (Soho \$27.95). “Cold Storage, Alaska, and its remote fishing community deals with an influx of outsiders, including real-life poet and peace activist Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, on leave from his abbey as a result of his antiwar activities; a pair of bigoted sport fishermen; and Boston Corbett, a bumbling FBI agent who has personal reasons for coming to Cold Storage. As the visitors mix with the locals, notably bar owner Ellie Hobbes, questions rise, among them: who’s responsible for the town’s recent series of petty burglaries and thefts? And why are the two sport fishermen suddenly interested in a mummified corpse known as the Old General stored in the bar’s root cellar? Serious crime, when it

finally arrives, does so with unexpected violence in the form of murder, hostage taking, and a riveting sea chase during a storm. Readers looking for action will be amply rewarded, but the book’s main appeal lies in the vividly drawn characters and the author’s enchanting descriptions of the Alaskan outdoors.”—*PW*. Not to mention the fascinating story of Merton which is based in part on the real one.

Thompson, Victoria. [City of Fortune](#) (Penguin \$27). Our blogger Lesa reviews: Thompson’s sixth “Counterfeit Lady” mystery is an entertaining, delightful caper novel with twist after twist. Elizabeth Miles Bates has tried to give up her life as a con artist, but sometimes she has to help someone. She and her lawyer husband, Gideon, are invited to the Belmont Stakes by one of his clients, Sebastian Nolan. There they meet his daughter, Irene, who has been worried about their horse, Trench. Trench stops dead in the middle of his race, leaving his jockey, Cal Regan, with a career-ending injury. Trench had been tampered with, and both Irene and Sebastian suspect her father’s longtime enemy. When Elizabeth realizes that Irene loves Cal, and is pregnant, she knows her father will never allow his daughter to marry a jockey with no prospects. So Elizabeth hatches a scheme to avenge the sabotage while getting money for Irene and Cal. She enlists her father’s help in finding a suitable woman to run a marriage scam, a woman who already has plans to dupe the greedy men of New York society. Captivating characters, such as Elizabeth and her mother-in-law, sparkle in this refreshing and amusing con narrative.

Theroux, Marcel. [The Sorcerer of Pyongyang](#) (Atria \$26). The author of *Far North*, a finalist for the National Book Award, returns with a mesmerizing novel about a North Korean boy of ten whose life is irrevocably changed when he stumbles across a mysterious Western book—a guide to *Dungeons & Dragons* that opens up a new and colorful world beyond that of the Dear Leader.

✦Westerson, Jeri. [Courting Dragons](#) (Severn \$29.99). Set in 1529, this impressive series launch introduces an unusual lead, Will Somers, Henry VIII’s actual court jester. In this role, Somers has free rein of the royal court, where he often overhears secrets. At Greenwich palace, Somers meets Don Gonzalo de Yscar, an aide to the ambassador to the Holy Roman Emperor. The two men form an attraction, and act on it, but it isn’t long before Somers chances upon Gonzalo’s corpse in the palace gardens, his throat slit. That shock is compounded when Somers receives an anonymous note stating that its sender knows of his liaison and threatening to inform the king of it unless he attends a midnight meeting—and reveals secrets about the monarch. To remove the threat to himself and the realm, Somers must learn who’s behind the murder and the extortion. Somers proves an able sleuth, and Westerson does a fine job evoking the period’s political intrigue. Devotees of Alan Gordon’s Fools’ Guild mysteries will welcome this promising series. Westerson is the author of the Crispin Guest medieval noir series.

✦Wilde, Darcie. [The Secret of the Lost Pearls](#) (Kensington \$26). Rosalind again gracefully navigates the snares of the haut ton of Regency London to resolve a problem rooted in family secrets. When Rosalind’s old friend Bethany Hodgeson requests her help in locating a missing pearl necklace, Rosalind takes up residence in her home. There, under the guise of assisting

Bethany's two sisters and her sister-in-law in making their debut into London society, Rosalind discovers an array of scandals and secrets, including a botched elopement, bigamy, and various machinations by overbearing parents and sly servants. The chapter headings include quotes from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*; and like Elizabeth Bennet, Rosalind seeks to know the truth of characters' motivations and feelings through acute observation of small actions that border on the private—a sudden flush, a hesitation, an overheard conversation, a brief disappearance. A sweet romance involving the handsome Adam Harkness of the Bow Street Runners enhances the complex puzzle surrounding the pearls. Fans of Dianne Freeman and Anna Lee Huber will enjoy this series.

Zeldis, Kitty. [The Dressmakers of Prospect Heights](#) (Harper \$27.99). For fans of Fiona Davis, Beatriz Williams, and Joanna Goodman, a novel “set against the backdrop of the not-always-so-roaring Twenties, is an only-in-America story of reinvention, rising above tragedy, and finding family.”—Lauren Willig. Brooklyn, 1924. As New York City enters the jazz age, the lives of three very different women are about to converge in unexpected ways. Recently arrived from New Orleans, Beatrice is working to establish a chic new dress shop with help from Alice, the orphaned teenage ward she brought north with her. Down the block, newlywed Catherine is restless in her elegant brownstone, longing for a baby she cannot conceive. When Bea befriends Catherine and the two start to become close, Alice feels abandoned and envious, and runs away to Manhattan. Her departure sets into motion a series of events that will force each woman to confront the painful secrets of her past in order to move into the happier future she seeks. Moving from the bustling streets of early twentieth century New York City to late nineteenth-century Russia and the lively quarters of New Orleans in the 1910s, *The Dressmakers of Prospect Heights* is a story of the families we are born into and the families we choose

#### OUR DECEMBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Collins, Flora. [A Small Affair](#) (Mira \$17.99). Vera meets Tom, a wealthy tech mogul, on a dating app at the urging of her fashion guru boss and bestie to get out of the office more. They go out a three times and then things just blow up. Then Tom and his wife, Odilie, the one he claimed to be divorcing—she's pregnant too—are found dead in their home. Vera is cast into the spotlight as the home wrecker responsible for their suicides and her high-flying life is destroyed, mostly by social media. Her boss fires her, her “friends” ditch her, she's too toxic to hire, and she's the target of threats. So she retreats to her mother's home in upstate NY where she lands in more drama. A year passes and then her one true urges her to attend a memorial for Odilie as a prelude for reclaiming her life, telling her she's a victim too. Why would she do this? You have to read to find out. Despite the mostly unlikeable characters and the toxic work, family, and social media milieus they inhabit, the writing of this slow burn domestic drama is so compelling I kept reading it to the end. Also what it takes to make a success of a fashion brand and the work style of someone whom Elon Musk would keep at Twitter is information good for me who's of an older generation. It's good to test my boundaries as a reader, so I pass that thought on. Finally, you can read an [interview with Collins](#) about this unusual book.

Cosby, SA. [My Darkest Prayer](#) (Flatiron \$16.99). Having blasted into the thriller stratosphere with *Razorblade Tears* and *Blacktop Wasteland*, Cosby earns a reissue of his debut novel. Here, former marine and deputy sheriff Nathan Waymaker, now working at his cousin's funeral home or tossing around the local riffraff at his favorite bar, he's is a man who knows how to handle the bodies. Nathan has built a reputation in his small Southern town as a man who can help when all other avenues have been exhausted. When a beloved local minister is found dead, his parishioners ask Nathan to make sure the death isn't swept under the rug. What starts out as an easy payday soon descends into a maze of mayhem filled with wannabe gangsters, vicious crime lords, porn stars, crooked police officers, and a particularly treacherous preacher and his mysterious wife. Nathan must use all his varied skills and some of his wit to navigate the murky waters of small town corruption even as dark secrets of his own threaten to come to the surface. Written in Cosby's inimitable voice, this is a treat while you await June and his next book.

✠Faye, Lyndsay. [Observations by Gaslight: Stories from the World of Sherlock Holmes](#) (\$16.95). Our blogger Lesa reviews: In the tradition of other Sherlock Holmes anthologies, “editor” Faye reports the discovery of a cache of letters and papers found in a long-abandoned safety deposit box. She claims to have put them in order as they seemed fitting, in a time frame that extends from 1878 to 1903. Six acquaintances of Holmes and Watson relate stories that reveal more about the personalities of the detecting pair. One letter is from Henry Wiggins, now a young solicitor in London. Wiggins led the group of street urchins who made up the Baker Street Irregulars; he writes of his first meeting with a disguised Sherlock Holmes, and their search for Henry's missing best friend. Irene Adler tells of one more adventure with Holmes, whom she now considers a friend. Chief Inspector Geoffrey Lestrade formed a reluctant friendship with the independent consulting detective, after revealing the reason he joined the police force. Even Mrs. Hudson, the landlady at 221B Baker Street, has a chance to reveal her fondness for “the boys.” Told in epistolary style, through letters and diary entries, this engaging anthology offers a sympathetic view of Sherlock Holmes. Faye's voice and knowledge of the original stories will appeal to fans. And, I add, her humor.

✠Graves, Stephanie. [A Valiant Deceit](#) (\$16.95). Olive Bright of the quiet little English village of Pibley supports the war effort by training her homing pigeons for a clandestine government organization stationed at a nearby manor. Her latest assignment, training the pigeons to carry messages for Resistance fighters in Europe, is interrupted when a mild-mannered acquaintance, Lt. Jeremy Beckett, is found dead. The police determine his death was an accident, but things don't add up—Beckett was carrying a coded message in his pocket and a map of Germany clutched in one hand. Was he a spy? Determined to find the truth, Olive solicits the help of her superior officer, the handsome but prickly Captain Jameson “Jamie” Aldridge. They must overcome their fraught relationship long enough to devise a trap for the real traitor. I find this series a charmer as well as informative—who knew there was an actual pigeon corps with heroic birds?

✠Hallett, Janice. [The Appeal](#) (\$17). At the start of British journalist, playwright, and screenwriter Hallett's ingeniously

plotted debut, two young lawyers face a Herculean challenge issued by a Queen's Counsel: blitzing through almost two years of emails, texts, and messages so they can assist with an appeal brief due within days. And the question: is the proper person in prison for the crime(s)? As they read, at first the communications among members of a London area amateur theater group seem unremarkable, even banal. But things get real when troupe leader Martin Hayward shares that his two-year-old granddaughter, Poppy, has been diagnosed with a rare brain tumor—for which the only hope is an astronomically expensive experimental US-produced drug not paid for by the National Health program. Though plans for the show proceed, an urgent appeal to raise funds for Poppy's treatment takes center stage. As crowd-funded contributions climb and someone ends up dead, Hallett skillfully lays an intricate and twisty trail of bread crumbs that leads to half a dozen suspects, which should delight those eager for the opportunity to sift through the evidence. It's a challenge for the reader as well for the two young solicitors. As a speed reader I thought I would dislike the story's structure, but in fact it rocketed along uninterrupted by the various communications. I worked out most of what was transpiring, but Not All! *The Appeal* was a Number One bestseller in the UK for good reason. I'll be zooming with Hallett in January about her 2023 US release [The Twyford Code](#) (Atria \$27).

✦Leonard, Niall. [M. King's Bodyguard](#) (Vintage \$17). How I love this book which is a Victorian version of James Bond moved into the Edwardian era when the Queen dies. Leonard is spot on depicting the key characters including the King and M's foil is superb. Dana Stabenow snatched this from my hand and writes: "In case you were wondering, the M is for Melville, as in William Melville, first head of Scotland Yard's Special Branch (pausing a moment for the James Bond theme to finish playing out in your head—and also think of Anne Perry's Thomas Pitt). But before then Melville was bodyguard to the royal family, which needs it in year 1901 with assassinations of royals by anarchists occurring all over Europe. And Victoria's huge state funeral bringing them in droves to London. Leonard makes it a lot more personal when seen through the eyes of the British cop in charge of stopping an attempt on the life of Kaiser Wilhelm by, in this case Akushku, a nihilist bomb-thrower with a realistic motive Leonard waits to reveal until the very end. Ideology, my ass. One of Akushku's accomplices is his polar opposite, a person of privilege who has turned a personal grudge into a revenge plot on an international level, with absolutely no thought as to what the fallout of their actions will be, making themselves the perfect of example of what Josephine Tey described as crooks who can get from A to B but not from B to C. The greatest threat and some of the twistiest turns come from Melville's opposite number in the German police, Gustav Steinhauer. Friend or foe? Melville's got a pretty good idea by the end. Here we get some great cameos of British aristocracy, including Prince Albert/King Edward VII (talk about a man led around by his dick), and redolent of the reeking self-satisfaction of men like Salisbury, who thought the British Empire would never die only so long as only men like themselves were in charge. Reminded me of Sergeant's portrait of Lord Ribblesdale."

✦Parks, Adele. [One Last Secret](#) (Mira \$17.99). British bestseller Parks is well known for her twisty plots. And a visit to a beautiful chateau in the South of France is welcome in late December—

and a frequent actual escape for many Brits. Kirkus calls her latest, "A chillingly addictive story of sex, money, romance, and revenge, which pithily sums it up. Plus Dora, a very expensive London escort, is an unusual heroine and however you feel about her choices, you can't turn away. She has all the right systems in place to keep herself feeling safe despite the potentially hazardous nature of her profession. Her manager, Elspeth, vets each client, explaining that Dora does not indulge certain fetishes. Elspeth ensures that no one has Dora's direct line, nor do they know her real name. Dora expects she'll continue in her line of work indefinitely—until the day a client beats her badly enough to send her to the hospital. Following the beating, Dora's one true friend, Evan, insists that she must quit. Dora is reluctant to take his advice, which she's heard many times before, until Evan, who has long been in love with Dora, proposes. To her surprise, she accepts and begins preparing to leave her old life behind. But then a longtime client calls begging Dora to escort him on a getaway where his friends will be coupled up. Dora reluctantly agrees to take on this final assignment, provided there will be no sex. Unfortunately, as the trip unfolds, she realizes she has stepped into something far more nefarious than a simply holiday. I found the pages kept turning and agree with this comment: "Dora reveals with Scheherazade-like skill telling details about her past, proves more than equal to the life-threatening struggle she's forced to face. This multilayered confection keeps readers reshuffling their suppositions with each new revelation." And read this [interview with Parks](#) about her book and work.

Pitzorno, Bianca. [The Seamstress of Sardinia](#) (Harper \$17). A bestselling Italian writer makes her American debut with this delightful dramedy of manners, family, romance, and fashion that is set on the island of Sardinia at the end of the nineteenth century—"a dazzling and original literary blend of Jane Austen and Adriana Trigiani." In 1900 Sardinia, a young woman's remarkable talent with a needle earns her a position as a seamstress with a wealthy family. Inside this privileged world far different from her own humble beginnings, the skilled sewer quietly takes measurements, sketches designs, mends hems—and in the silence, hears whispered secrets and stories of all those around her. Through the watchful young seamstress's eyes, this small Italian city and its residents emerge in all their vitality, vanity, and fragility. The rich mix of women and men produces love affairs and broken hearts; and even a murder (or was it suicide?). And at the center, watching and waiting is the seamstress herself, an intelligent, ambitious girl with a tender heart and her own impossible dream. Although we travel back over 120 years, the compelling characters navigating a society rigidly divided by wealth and shaped by outside forces could as well be living in 2022.

Tector, Amy. [The Foulest Things](#) (Turner Publishing \$15.99). This first Dominion Archives Mystery from Quebec archivist Tector, who has worked in Brussels and the Hague and is now in Ottawa, is a delight that will light up those who enjoyed Canadian Eva Jurczyk's [Department of Rare Books and Special Collections](#) (\$16.99). Agreeing with me that this should be our **December Cozy Crimes Mystery of the Month**, our blogger, librarian Lesa Holstine, enthuses, "Tector writes what she knows with her second novel, an intriguing inside look at archival politics. Jess Kendall has a one-year contract with Dominion Archives in Ottawa, Canada, but she's not starting out on the right foot. She nearly made the team late for an auction, but, in the end, they were able

to win the Jarvis ledgers. When working with the ledgers, Jess uncovers letters written in 1914 from artist Jeremy Cranford to Victoria Jarvis. As Jess researches the couple, she finds clues about an unknown masterpiece and hopes to keep it a secret so she can publish a paper. That is not all she finds, for she stumbles across a body in the art vault. Now Jess is tangled in a murder investigation as well as her own secret research. Contending with murder and backstabbing coworkers, it's hard to keep a secret without putting herself and her career in jeopardy. A fascinating mystery for readers who enjoyed Eva Jurczyk's debut.

I am so pleased with Tector I have hunted down her first novel, [The Honeybee Emeralds](#) (Turner \$19.99), "a fun and intelligent mystery wrapped in the exciting world of expat Paris. Along with chronicling four women's challenges with career, friendship, motherhood and love, she carries us away in a wildly entertaining story that includes missing emeralds, a storied diva, imperial sex scandals and a pinch of espionage. *The Honeybee Emeralds* anchors you in contemporary Paris while taking you on an intriguing journey across centuries" and posing a key question: How did the Honeybee Emeralds go from the neck of American singer Josephine Baker during the Roaring Twenties to the basement of a Parisian magazine?"

#### NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACK

Armstrong, Kelley. [The Deepest of Secrets](#) (\$17.99) is Armstrong's seventh novel set in Rockton, an off-grid Canadian Yukon refuge for people looking to disappear, Detective Casey Duncan and Sheriff Eric Dalton, her common-law husband, see their evening disrupted when someone posts a sign accusing Deputy Will Anders of committing homicide before coming to Rockton. Though it's true Anders shot his army unit's commanding officer while in a fugue state, Rockton runs on secrecy: nobody knows anyone's real identity or personal history, and revealing such information is forbidden. After a group demands Anders's exile and implies everyone who disagrees is hiding something equally heinous that warrants exposure, Casey and Dalton realize they must work quickly to find and punish the culprit before they lose control—particularly since the council that remotely governs Rockton wants an excuse to shutter it. Avalanching complications ensue. Armstrong shrewdly weaponizes her series' conceit against her characters, pairing demagoguery with paranoia to amplify tension and maximize stakes.

Azar, Shokoofeh. [The Enlightenment of the Greengage Tree](#) (Europa \$18). Rising Iranian literary star Azar's family story was shortlisted for the 2020 Booker Prize and the National Book Awards. Set in Iran in the decade following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, this moving, richly imagined novel is narrated by the ghost of Bahar, a thirteen-year-old girl, whose family is compelled to flee their home in Tehran for a new life in a small village, hoping in this way to preserve both their intellectual freedom and their lives. But they soon find themselves caught up in the post-revolutionary chaos that sweeps across their ancient land. Bahar's mother, after a tragic loss, will embark on a long, eventful journey in search of meaning in a world swept up in the post-revolutionary madness. Told from the wise yet innocent gaze of a young girl, *The Enlightenment of the Greengage Tree* speaks of the power of imagination when confronted with cruelty, and of our human need to make sense of trauma through the ritual of storytelling itself.

Belle, Kimberly. [The Personal Assistant](#) (Park Row \$17.99). With no advance copy at hand, I quote *PW*: "Alex Hutchinson, an Instagram influencer known to her legion of fans as Unapologetically Alex, is overjoyed when the number of her followers hits one million. In a celebratory mood, she and her personal assistant, AC, whip out the tequila, and one drink leads to too many. The next morning, Alex finds that a vitriolic post denigrating a former Disney star-turned-scandal magnet has been uploaded to her social media platform. While Alex has indeed dissed the former actor in the privacy of her own home, she can't remember posting these thoughts for all to see. Within minutes, the trolls are out in force, and Alex and her family become the target of death threats. She calls AC to help with damage control, but the young woman has disappeared. As Alex searches for AC, every new piece of information suggests unexpected possibilities that leave readers reexamining what they have accepted as the truth. As Alex says, 'perception is reality.'" As a person who has no personal SM, it's hard for me to enter into this world but it forms the landscape of many a domestic thriller. Author Heather Gudenkauf sums this book up as "A cautionary tale about what happens when you make an enemy in the social media age."

Gable, Michelle. [The Lipstick Bureau](#) (\$16.99). See New in Hardcover for a review of this WWII story.

Higashino, Keigo. [Silent Parade: A Detective Galileo Novel](#) (\$17.99). Rob is a fan of this stellar Japanese author. And here is a Starred Review: "In Higashino's stellar fourth mystery translated into English featuring physics professor Manabu Yukawa, the Tokyo police call in Yukawa to consult on a baffling case. The remains of Saori Namiki, a budding singing star who disappeared at age 19 three years earlier, have been found in a burned-down house. The house also contained the body of the stepmother of Kanichi Hasunuma, the prime suspect in the murder of a 12-year-old girl 23 years earlier. Charges were brought against Hasunuma, but were ultimately dismissed, leaving him free, and possibly the killer of Namiki as well. The challenge of finding more than circumstantial evidence against Hasunuma intrigues Yukawa, who must also crack a new homicide whose victim may have been killed in a sealed room. Higashino never allows plot to overwhelm his characterizations and explores the unintended consequences of law enforcement reliance on confessions to obtain convictions. In addition to brilliant twists, he provides shout-outs to impossible crime fiction classics. Golden age fans will welcome this flawless blend of police procedural and fair-play detection."

Kane, Darby. [The Last Invitation](#) (Harper \$17.99). What has Jessa gotten into when she grabs that invitation to join the Sophie Foundation? Once a month, its members meet over a civilized spread of wine and cheese, consider the outré behavior of a few men, and decide which one will die. Kane is the author of the film-optional *Pretty Little Wife* and *The Replacement Wife*. Here's an [interview with Kane](#) that sheds more light on her work.

Keneally, Thomas. [The Dickens Boy](#) (\$18.99). Edward Dickens, the tenth child of author Charles Dickens, has consistently let his parents down. Unable to apply himself at school and adrift in life, the teenaged boy is sent to Australia in the hopes that he can make something of himself—or at least fail out of the public eye. He soon finds himself in the remote Outback, surrounded by Aboriginals, colonials, ex-convicts, ex-soldiers, and very few



women. Determined to prove to his parents and more importantly, himself, that he can succeed in this vast and unfamiliar wilderness, Edward works hard at his new life amidst various livestock, bushrangers, shifty stock agents, and frontier battles. “By reimagining the tale of a fascinating yet little-known figure in history, this ‘roguishly tender coming-of-age story’ (*Booklist*) offers penetrating insights into Colonialism and the fate of Australia’s indigenous people, and a wonderfully intimate portrait of Charles Dickens, as seen through the eyes of his son.”

Indridason, Arnaldur. [The Darkness Knows](#) (\$18.99). “At the start of Indridason’s superb sequel to 2017’s [The Shadow District](#), a melting glacier reveals the body of Reykjavík businessman Sigurvin, who has been missing for 30 years. The discovery comes as a shock to retired detective Konrád, who worked on the case back then, and leads to the rearrest and imprisonment of Hjaltalín, a disgruntled associate of Sigurvin’s, who was arrested after Sigurvin vanished and released due to lack of evidence. Now dying, Hjaltalín insists that Konrád, who was never convinced of Hjaltalín’s guilt, find the real killer by striking at Konrád’s Achilles’ heel, his vicious sham-medium father, “a bit of a devil.” Konrád, who suspects he has inherited his father’s evil nature, fears he can’t restrain himself from violently attacking the criminals he pursues. Konrád painstakingly unravels a tangled skein of old betrayals and deceit in a city, Reykjavík, where he increasingly feels like a tourist, uncovering layer after layer of culpability. As in the old Icelandic sagas, the author strips bare such archetypal human concerns as revenge, honor, and family loyalty. Konrád, who still misses his beloved wife six years after she died of cancer, is an irresistible lead.”—*PW Starred Review*

Nakamura, Fuminori. [My Annihilation](#) (\$15.95). A man books into a mountain lodge. He’s hiding there under a false name, Ryodai Kozuka. Kozuka’s dead body lies folded up in his suitcase. There’s an open manuscript on his desk. He begins to read. It tells of a man who murdered four young girls in one month in 1988. The young narrator (he was only a third grader at the time) can’t shake off his fascination with the murderer but soon has his own issues to address, sexual and physical. He fantasizes about pushing his sister off a cliff. When she trips and falls but survives, he accepts his mother’s judgment that he’d tried to kill her. His mother sends him to a treatment center, where he begins to feel that someone else, not him, is taking over his personality. A doctor hypnotizes him to replace bad memories with new. Electroshock treatment follows, leading to the breakdown of whatever personhood he’d had. For those who enjoy the increasing range of Japanese crime fiction, I say this fiction is more experimental than mystery.

Parker, Elizabeth. [In the Shadow Garden](#) (Grand Central \$15.99). What could be better for December than a luminous debut about three generations of empathic witches combines mystery, magical realism, and a touch of romance—perfect for fans of *Practical Magic* and *Midnight at the Blackbird Cafe*. There’s something magical about Yarrow, Kentucky. The three empathic witches of the Haywood family are known for their shadow garden—from strawberries that taste like chocolate to cherry tomatoes imbued with the flavors of basil and oregano. Their magic can cure any heartache, and the fruits of their garden bring a special quality to the local bourbon distillery. On one day every year, a shot of Bonner bourbon will make your worst memory disappear. But the

Haywoods will never forget the Bonners’ bitter betrayal. Twenty years ago, the town gave up more than one memory; they forgot an entire summer. One person died. One person disappeared. And no one has any recollection of either. As events from that fateful summer start to come to light, there must be a reckoning....

Patterson, James/Mike Lupica. [The Horsewoman](#) (\$17.99) “is more than a thriller—it’s an eye-opening ride through the high-stakes world of equestrian show-jumping. Patterson and Lupica make a great team, writing at a full gallop and with faultless timing of the lives of three fearless women connected by blood, competition, and a passion for fast horses.” —Carl Hiaasen

Perks, Heidi. [The Whispers](#) (\$17.99). The discovery of an unidentified body on a beach in Clearwater, England, kicks this off. Grace Goodwin left Clearwater at 17 when her family moved to Australia. Now, 19 years later, she has returned with her young daughter, while her husband continues his job in Singapore. Feeling lonely, she longs to reconnect with Anna Robinson, her best friend from childhood. However, Anna has found a small group of best friends, and, try as she might, Grace just doesn’t fit in. After a girls’ night out at the pub, Anna goes missing, and Grace seems to be the only one who believes that harm may have come to her. With each passing day, Grace’s anguish rises. The suspense builds as Perks sets up expectations only to tease them apart.

Sten, Viveca. [Hidden in Snow](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$14.95). On the day Stockholm police officer Hanna Ahlander’s personal and professional lives crash, she takes refuge at her sister’s lodge in the Swedish ski resort paradise of Åre. But it’s a brief comfort. The entire village is shaken by the sudden vanishing of a local teenage girl. Hanna can’t help but investigate, and while searching for the missing person, she lands a job with the local police department. There she joins forces with Detective Inspector Daniel Lindskog, who has been tasked with finding the girl. Their only lead: a scarf in the snow. As subzero temperatures drop even further, a treacherous blizzard sweeps toward Åre. Hanna and Daniel’s investigation is getting more desperate by the hour. Lost or abducted, either way time is running out for the missing girl. Each new clue closes in on something that is far more sinister.... Something new from the author of the Sandhamn Murders.

Sturgis, Lillah, et al. [Dune: The Movie Graphic Novel](#) (Legendary Comics \$24.99). Here is the official graphic novel adaptation of the Academy Award-winning sci-fi epic DUNE directed by Denis Villeneuve, based on the acclaimed novel by visionary author Frank Herbert. This lavishly illustrated adaptation brings the vivid, mind-bending visuals of the landmark sci-fi masterpiece to life, offering readers a thrilling new way to see the future and experience DUNE, a hero’s journey where Paul Atreides, a brilliant and gifted young man born into a great destiny beyond his understanding, must travel to the most dangerous planet in the universe to ensure the future of his family and his people. As malevolent forces explode into conflict over the planet’s exclusive supply of the most precious resource in existence—a commodity capable of unlocking humanity’s greatest potential—only those who can conquer their fear will survive.

Wilson, Diane. [The Seed Keeper](#) (Milkweed \$16) follows a Dakhóta family’s struggle to preserve their way of life, and their sacrifices to protect what matters most. Rosalie Iron Wing has

grown up in the woods with her father, Ray, a former science teacher who tells her stories of plants, of the stars, of the origins of the Dakhóta people. Until, one morning, Ray doesn't return from checking his traps. Told she has no family, Rosalie is sent to live with a foster family in nearby Mankato—where the reserved, bookish teenager meets rebellious Gaby Makespace, in a friendship that transcends the damaged legacies they've inherited. On a winter's day many years later, Rosalie returns to her childhood home. A widow and mother, she has spent the previous two decades on her white husband's farm, finding solace in her garden even as the farm is threatened first by drought and then by a predatory chemical company. Now, grieving, Rosalie begins to confront the past, on a search for family, identity, and a community where she can finally belong. In the process, she learns what it means to be descended from women with souls of iron—women who have protected their families, their traditions, and a precious cache of seeds through generations of hardship and loss, through war and the insidious trauma of boarding schools.

### OUR DECEMBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Atkins, Ace. [Robert B Parker's Bye, Bye, Baby](#) (\$9.99). Spenser #49. When politician Carolina Garcia-Ramirez's chief of staff reaches out to Spenser for security Garcia-Ramirez is less than thrilled. But it turns out an FBI agent disagrees, warning Spenser that Garcia-Ramirez might be in real danger this time.

Baldacci, David. [A Gambling Man](#) (\$9.99). Archer #2. Aloysius Archer travels to 1950s California to apprentice with a legendary private eye and former FBI agent but immediately finds himself involved in a blackmail case concerning a wealthy well-connected politician running for mayor.

Brady, Eileen. [Last But Not Leashed](#) (Poisoned Pen \$8.99). Dr. Kate #2. As the only veterinarian at Oak Falls Animal Hospital, Dr. Kate Turner's life is complicated and busy, but it becomes even more so when the discovery of the body of Sookie Overman, a professional organizer, gets the town buzzing.

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Dark Horse: An Orphan X Novel](#) (\$9.99). Orphan X #7. As Orphan X, Evan Smoak was a government assassin for the off-the-books Orphan Program. Now as The Nowhere Man, Evan's latest mission involves rescuing the daughter of a Texas crime boss, who has been kidnapped by a ruthless drugs cartel.

Reichs, Kathy. [The Bone Code](#) (\$9.99). Temperance Brennan #20. On the way to hurricane-ravaged Isle of Palms, a barrier island off the South Carolina coast, Temperance Brennan receives a call from the Charleston coroner. The storm has tossed ashore a medical waste container containing two decomposed bodies wrapped in plastic sheeting and bound with electrical wire.

Scarrow, Simon. [Blackout: A Gripping WW2 Thriller](#) (\$8.99). Berlin Wartime #1. When a young woman is found brutally murdered in Berlin, Criminal Inspector Horst Schenke is under immense pressure to solve the case, swiftly. But as the investigation takes him closer to the sinister heart of the regime, Schenke realizes there is danger everywhere—and the warring factions of the Reich can be as deadly as a killer stalking the streets.

### NEW IN LATE DECEMBER

Alexander, Ellie. [Muffin But the Truth: A Bakeshop Mystery](#) (St

Martins \$8.99). Bakeshop #16. Jules Capshaw and the team at Torte have been hired to cater a weekend getaway on the mighty Rogue River. The executive team at a big city firm will be rafting the Rogue's rapids and gathering around the campfire for spooky stories, but their dysfunction quickly begins to show when Jules discovers one of the execs floating face down in the water.

Blacke, Olivia. [Vinyl Resting Place](#) (\$8.99). Record Shop #1. When Juni Jessup and her sisters Tansy and Maggie put all their beans in one basket to open Sip & Spin Records, a record-slash-coffee shop in Cedar River, Texas, they knew there could be some scratches on the track, but no one was expecting to find a body deader than disco in the supply closet.

Brown, Sandra. [Smoke Screen](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. When newswoman Britt Shelley wakes up to find herself in bed with Jay Burgess, a rising star detective in the Charleston PD, she remembers nothing of how she got there...or of how Jay wound up dead.

Caldwell, Emmie. [Knits, Knots, and Knives](#) (Penguin \$8.99). Craft Fair Knitters #3. For once things seem to be running smoothly for knitting enthusiast Lia Geiger until one of the "injured soldiers" at a Civil War reenactment turns out to be the very real victim of a murder, and Lia's friend and neighbor falls under suspicion.

Engberg, Katrine. [The Butterfly House](#) (\$9.99). Copenhagen-based police detectives Jeppe Korner and Anette Werner work together to solve a series of sordid murders that have roots in the care of vulnerable hospital patients and at-risk children.

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: Killer on the Court](#) (\$8.99). Murder She Wrote #55. Jessica is delighted when her nephew Grady invites her to spend a few days with his family in an oceanside New York bungalow. But Jessica's dreams of a relaxing visit are quashed when Grady's wife Donna finds her boss dead on the tennis court.

Flower, Amanda. [Honeymoons Can Be Hazardous](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Amish Matchmaker #4. Widowed matchmaker Millie Fisher's decidedly *not* Amish best friend, Lois Henry, is outspoken, colorful, and so hopelessly romantic, she's had four husbands. However, when the body of Lois's most recent ex's new wife is found murdered, Lois could soon go from Millie's boisterous best friend to her horrified new prison pen pal.

Harris, Sherry. [Rum and Choke](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Sea Glass Saloon #4. The Florida Panhandle Barback Games are coming up and Chloe Jackson's been drafted to represent the Sea Glass Saloon. The rivalries are so fierce that some of the participating bars even stoop to bringing in ringers. But when one of the ringers is found dead, Chloe has to figure out whether he went overboard by himself or may have had some help.

Hurwitz, Gregg, et al. [New Think](#) (Artists \$9.99). This *Black Mirror*-style anthology examines the cultural and political polarization of the country and the technocrats that have driven us to such extremes of thought that we need to present the present as something...futuristic. Each of the five issues is presented in a stand-alone tale.

King, Stephen. [The Running Man](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. A future world game show offers convicts a chance at freedom if they can run to escape hi-tech killers and Ben Richards is determined to do so.

Morgan, Alexis. [Death By Arts and Crafts](#) (Kensington \$8.99).  
Abby McCree #6.

When a killer's handiwork threatens Snowberry Creek's first-ever arts and crafts fair, committee member and amateur sleuth Abby McCree starts looking for clues.

Robb, J D. [Desperation in Death: An Eve Dallas Novel](#) (\$9.99).  
Eve Dallas #55.

When two abducted girls try to escape from the Pleasure Academy, one winds up injured, terrified, and wandering the streets of New York, and the other lies dead near the waterfront leaving Lt. Eve Dallas to find the person or persons responsible.