

# BOOKNEWS from

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR

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

*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.

Note that we have opened a [YouTube channel just for John Charles'](#) many author interviews, most of which do not appear in our regular calendar but are supplemental and varied. Watch at your leisure.

Reflecting back on the holidays, read this entertaining and informative article about [How Christmas Murder Mysteries Became a British Tradition....](#)

### SATURDAY JANUARY 11 2:00 PM LIVE

#### An Historicon with John

**Dianne Freeman** discusses [An Art Lover's Guide to Paris and Murder](#) (\$27)

**Clara McKenna** discusses [Murder at Glenloch Hill](#) (\$27)

**Rob Osler** discusses [The Case of the Missing Maid](#) (\$27)

**Jeri Westerson** discusses [The Mummy of Mayfair](#) and [Rebellious Grace](#) (Severn House \$29.95 each)

### SUNDAY JANUARY 12 2:00 PM LIVE

**Jayne Ann Krentz** discusses [Shattering Dawn](#) (Berkley \$29)

A new entry in Krentz's Lost Night Files series

This is her first live appearance here since 2019

### SUNDAY JANUARY 12 6:00 PM VIRTUAL

**Scott Turow** discusses [Presumed Guilty](#) (Grand Central \$30)

Revisiting Rusty Sabich

Signed copies available

### TUESDAY JANUARY 14 1:00 PM VIRTUAL

**Jenny Elder Moke** discusses [She Doesn't Have a Clue](#) (St Martins \$17)

Mystery/romance/wine at a destination wedding

### TUESDAY JANUARY 14 LIVE 7:00 PM LIVE

**Thomas Perry** discusses [Pro Bono](#) (Penzler \$27.95)

Another clever financial caper...and more

### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15 12:00 PM LIVE

#### Debuts our Author Afternoons Series

**Michele M. Feeney** discusses [Like Family](#) (Black Rose Writing \$19.95)

This new program is designed to bring you daytime events on diverse subjects

A novel of found family during the 1918 flu epidemic in rural Michigan

### FRIDAY JANUARY 17 5:00 PM LIVE

#### Young Adult Event with John

**Kim Bussing** discusses [The Princess Swap: Cinderella and the Beast](#) (Random House Children's Books (\$17.99)

The magical first edition paperback of *Cinderella and the Beast* (or, *Beauty and the Glass Slipper*) will feature dual-toned sprayed edges!

### FRIDAY JANUARY 17 7:00 PM Live and Virtual

SciFi Friday discusses Hirron Ennes' [Leech](#) (\$18.99)

### SATURDAY JANUARY 18 10:00 AM-1:00 PM LIVE IN OUR ANNEX

#### Local Authors Fair

Join us in supporting independently published local authors in various genres for talk and sales

### SATURDAY JANUARY 18 10:30 AM Live and Virtual

**Croak and Dagger** discusses Ariel Lawhon, [The Frozen River](#) (\$18)

### SATURDAY JANUARY 18 5:00 PM LIVE

**Alice Feeney** discusses [Beautiful Ugly](#) (Flatiron \$28.99)

A twisty thriller set on an isolated Scottish island with literary tropes

Our January British Crime Subscription Club Pick

[Read this profile](#) of the British bestseller

### MONDAY JANUARY 20 7:00 PM LIVE

**Kyle Paoletta** with host Phoenix critic Mark Athitakis

Paoletta discusses [American Oasis](#) (Knopf \$30)

Fascinating study of the arid Southwest as host to cities growing in climate crisis

**TUESDAY JANUARY 21 7:00 PM LIVE**

**A Thomas & Mercer Mystery Trio**

Tracy Clark discusses [Echo](#) (\$16.99)

Victor Methos discusses [The Silent Watcher](#) (\$28.99)

Barbara Nickless discusses [The Drowning Game](#) (\$16.99)

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 22 7:00 PM Live**

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses James Sallis' [Drive](#) (\$14.99). Great movie!

“A perfect piece of noir fiction” – *The NY Times*

**THURSDAY JANUARY 23 5:00 PM VIRTUAL**

**Alison Gaylin with Talia Lavin**

Gaylin discusses [We Are Watching](#) (Harper Collins \$30)

Signed books available

Levin discusses [Wild Faith](#) (Grand Central \$30)

**THURSDAY JANUARY 23 7:00 PM LIVE**

**Debut author Sash Bischoff** discusses [Sweet Fury](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27.99)

A modern echo of F. Scott Fitzgerald and dark Hollywood

**SATURDAY JANUARY 25 11:00 AM Live**

**The Cookbook Club** will receive a visit and talk from the Blue Zones group. The City of Scottsdale is partnering with this group to promote healthy cooking and eating habits based on the Blue Zone diet and discuss [The Blue Zones American Kitchen](#) (National Geographic \$35).

**SATURDAY JANUARY 25 5:00 PM LIVE**

**Book Launch**

**Dana Stabenow** discusses [Abduction of a Slave](#) (Head of Zeus \$28.99)

Cleopatra's Eye of Isis copes with fraud and war clouds in Cyrenaica

Our copies come with gorgeous bookmarks and cards of key figures and events in 47 BC Alexandria

**MONDAY JANUARY 27 7:00 PM LIVE**

**All About Agatha's Kemper Donovan** discusses [Loose Lips](#) (Kensington \$28)

A literary cruise nearly swamps the Ghostwriter with intrigue and murder

**TUESDAY JANUARY 28 12:00 PM LIVE**

**An Author Afternoon Event**

**Monique Daigneault** discusses [The Survive and Thrive Toolkit for Leaders](#) (Mango Media \$18.99)

This new program is designed to bring you daytime events on diverse subjects

**TUESDAY JANUARY 28 5:00 PM VIRTUAL**

**Debut author Kevin Wade** discusses [Johnny Careless](#) (Celadon Books \$27.99)

Our January First Mystery Subscription Club Pick  
Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29 5:00 PM VIRTUAL**

**Fiona Davis** discusses [The Stolen Queen](#) (Dutton \$29)

A story of Egyptology (1936/37), an ancient Queen, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1978) tied to pioneering women  
Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29 7:00 PM Live**

**John McMahon** discusses [Head Cases](#) (St Martins \$28)

A series start and our January Crime Subscription Club Pick

**THURSDAY JANUARY 30 6:00 PM**

**Closed for a ticketed special event**

**SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1 2:00 PM LIVE**

**James Byrne** discusses [Chain Reaction](#) (St Martins \$29)

A rollicking new thriller for Gatekeeper Dez

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

Feeney, Alice. [Beautiful Ugly](#)

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

Osler, Rob. [The Case of the Missing Maid](#)

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

McMahon, John. [Head Cases](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Wade, Kevin. [Johnny Careless](#)

**Hardboiled/Noir Club** One Signed First Printing per month  
Ames, Jonathan. [Karma Doll](#)

**Historical Fiction Club** One First Printing per month  
Davis, Fiona. [The Stolen Queen](#)

**Historical Fiction Paperback Club** One Unsigned paperback per month

TBA

**Notable New Fiction** One Signed First Printing per month  
Bischoff, Sash. [Sweet Fury](#)

**Romance and Relationships** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month  
Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Shattering Dawn](#)

## SIGNED BOOKS

Ames, Jonathan. [Karma Doll](#) (LittleBrown \$28). After narrowly escaping with his life at the hands of a murderous Hollywood pimp, detective Happy Doll, bullet-ridden but healing, has landed on a remote Mexican beach. In a humble shack and with his dog for company, Doll settles into a peaceful idyll of Buddhist study. But then trouble, as it always does, comes to paradise. Doll is the witness to a murder for which he is framed, and now, with an expired passport and the Mexican authorities on his tail, he must sneak across the border back to L.A. by any means necessary, with the goal of bringing the true murderer to justice. But it's not just trouble that expels Doll from paradise! His dark past reaches for him, like a hand from the grave. Which makes it perfect for our **January Hardboiled Crime Book of the Month**.

Bischoff, Sash. [Sweet Fury](#) (Simon & Schuster \$27.99). This debut, our **January Notable New Fiction Subscription Club Pick**, will interest any F. Scott Fitzgerald fan: obsessive love, misogyny, deceit, revenge — dig in. Then there's the film industry background, the probing of Hollywood's dark underbelly. Margot Livesey says, "I love what it reveals about contemporary mores, about our love of cinema and the way we still too often judge women as either heroines or victims." Joyce Carol Oates finds it to be "a wildly imaginative, very dark romance of a kind that would have shocked Fitzgerald, that icon of the Roaring Twenties. Filled with surprises, unpredictable in its denouement, this audacious first novel is a subversive and highly entertaining exploration of the theme of 'romance' itself."

*PW* calls it "a beguiling tale of abuse and ambition.

Thirty-something movie star Lila Crayne has long dreamed of starring in a feminist retelling of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*. She's finally made it happen, with her fiancé, Kurt Royall, as director. In preparation for the role, she undergoes psychotherapy with Jonah Gabriel, claiming Kurt is abusing her. Jonah, who met Lila while they were students at Princeton, has a long-standing obsession with her, which threatens his relationship with his fiancée, Maggie. Lila, meanwhile, will stop at nothing to make the film about 'female empowerment,' and she manipulates those working on the film, including the screenwriter, to tell the story the way she wants it. As Jonah fantasizes about saving Lila, Kurt and Maggie begin piecing together competing and distorted versions of the truth, as Maggie secretly reads Jonah's notes from his sessions with Lila, and Lila threatens to spill the beans about Kurt's alleged abuse. Bischoff reveals one surprising secret after another, all the way until the bombshell final twist. It's an inspired first outing."

Brennan, Allison. [See How They Hide](#) (Mira \$28.99). Brennan reunites Detective Kara Quinn and FBI special agent Matt Costa. Jane Merrifield, a 22-year-old college senior in Ashland, Oregon, and Robert Benson, a 47-year-old antique store owner in Weems, Virginia, have both had their throats slit and their bodies strewn with hundreds of dried red poppies. Quinn and Costa know they're looking for at least two killers, since the homicides occurred within a three-hour window, but both victims were kind and well-liked, making it difficult to pinpoint a motive. The investigation eventually leads Quinn and Costa to Jane's roommate, Riley Pierce, who has information about an isolated community in the Colorado mountains that might be

key to solving the murders. "Fans will appreciate seeing how the relationships between members of Costa's mobile response team evolve, including a softening of the dynamic between Quinn and forensic psychiatrist Dr. Catherine Jones, and the climax is legitimately nail-biting." Brennan became a local author some years ago with a move to Phoenix and will appear in a live event later in 2025.

Burke, Alafair. [The Note](#) (Knopf \$29). When May Hanover—a Chinese American assistant district attorney turned law professor in New York—agrees to spend a long weekend with two old friends in East Hampton, it's a welcome reunion, and for May, a break from prepping for the next semester while planning her wedding to fiancé Josh. The trio first met about 15 years ago at an arts camp, and May has stayed in touch with Lauren Berry, an accomplished Black classical musician. But until recently, she hadn't heard from Kelsey Ellis, the golden-blond daughter of a rich man, since Kelsey married a rising star chef who was subsequently murdered—a death that many online true-crime aficionados attribute to her. That's not the only scandal in the trio's baggage, secrets that come to light and across a detective's radar when the driver of a car who belligerently stole the women's parking spot as they went for a night out goes missing—and turns into a murder case....

Read an [interview with Alafair](#) on this book and more in *the NY Times Book Review*. And here's a [link to an interview with Alafair](#) about the real life event that inspired this story.

Bussing, Kim. [The Princess Swap: Cinderella and the Beast](#) (Random House Children's Books (\$17.99)). What would happen if Cinderella found herself in the Beast's castle, and Beauty woke up in some evil stepmother's home? Fairy tales meet Freaky Friday in this debut middle-grade series, where there's a magical mix-up for every princess. Local author Kim Bussing visits with the first book in her new series, which begins when Cinderella and Beauty have swapped places.

The magical first edition paperback of *Cinderella and the Beast (or, Beauty and the Glass Slipper)* will feature dual-toned sprayed edges!

Byrne, James. [Chain Reaction](#) (St Martins \$29). I love having a high action book that is so much fun. Dez Limerick is so good natured and so skilled he's irresistible. I've loved his earlier appearances in [The Gatekeeper](#) (\$9.99) and [Deadlock](#) (\$9.99). Surely there's a movie calling his name. Lesa, our blogger, agrees with me, calling *Chain Reaction* "a fast-paced, explosive thriller with a charming hero, Russian terrorists on U.S. soil, high-stakes money schemes, and a worthy opponent."

She adds: "In his previous life, Dez Limerick was a gatekeeper, trained to covertly open locked doors and keep them open as long as necessary. Now, at 35, he's retired, living in California, and taking occasional gigs as a bass player and pianist. When a friend needs his musical skills, he flies to Newark, NJ, to help a band inaugurate a new convention complex. As Dez explores the Liberty Center, he notices a number of men armed with Russian rifles. He's just settled into a martini bar when there's an announcement that a Russian terrorist group has taken over the convention center, and they'll kill anybody who tries to escape. Dez sees a couple killed before

he decides to take on the terrorists. He teams up with a thief, and together they thwart the terrorists' plans. But someone seems to know just what Dez will do. When he recognizes that several victims were not shot with Russian weapons, he turns the information over to the FBI. Will it be enough to stop the plan that's now steamrolling along?"

Clark, Tracy. [Echo](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Chicago Police Detective Harriet "Harri" Foster has a cause célèbre on her hands: The body of Brice Collier, son of billionaire Sebastian Collier, is found in a field near the campus of the college he attended. Things get worse when Foster learns that the murder echoes one decades ago involving the elder Collier. Meanwhile, Foster is dealing with some major issues of her own, as she fends off a stalker and grapples with the death of her former police partner. *Echo* is the third in Clark's series focused on Foster, but it stands firmly on its own.

The *NY Times Book Review* adds: "The Chicago detective Harriet Foster still operates in a fog after the deaths of her former partner and child. But Harri, as she's called, refuses to allow her pain to subsume her investigative work. The case she's just been assigned will definitely offer distraction: the death of Belverton College student and 'golden boy' Brice Collier, son of the school's biggest donor, found dead near campus. 'Brice Collier died of fatal ethanol intoxication, meaning he consumed far more alcohol than his body could tolerate,' the medical examiner tells Harri and her partner, before surprising them: 'This has happened before. Thirty years ago. Same field. Same cause of death.' Though that long-ago death was ruled a hazing accident, it turns out that Brice's father and a friend — who happens to be Belverton's current president — were implicated in it. Clark's understanding of how the search for justice can be perverted into revenge is acute, and informs the gasp-inducing conclusion."

I add that Chicago native Clark is also the author of the Cass Raines Chicago Mysteries. Clark received Anthony Award and Lefty Award nominations for Cass' series debut [Broken Places](#) (\$18.99).

Davis, Fiona. [The Stolen Queen](#) (Dutton \$29). This engrossing dual time-line story set partly in 1936 Egypt and partly in 1978 Manhattan, is our **January Historical Mystery Subscription Club Pick**. If you've read Elizabeth Peters' Amelia Peabody mysteries, or the fiction fashioned around archaeologists and Agatha Christie I keep recommending by Lindsay Jayne Ashford called [The Woman on the Orient Express](#) (\$14.95), or the fine non-fiction by Lynne Olson, [Empress of the Nile: The Daredevil Archaeologist Who Saved Egypt's Ancient Temples](#) (\$23), Kara Cooney's [The Woman Who Would Be Queen](#) (\$20), or Sheppard's [Women in the Valley of the Kings](#) (\$29.95), you will devour this. It's also a splendid read for museum junkies, visitors to NY's Metropolitan Museum of Art, or anyone interested in The Met Gala inaugurated by *Vogue* editor Dianna Vreeland (or seen the film [First Monday in May](#) which is an absolute delight).

"[Davis] knows how to mix the worlds of high glamour and serious intrigue. She's outdone herself with this latest story, which involves a missing Egyptian artifact, a night at the Met Gala with Diana Vreeland, and the possibility of a centuries-old curse being reawakened. You might never look at the first Monday in May the same way again." —*Town & Country*

"New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art takes center

stage in a fast-paced tale that spans from 1936 Egypt to 1978 Manhattan. Davis is known for framing stories around New York City landmark buildings, and in *The Stolen Queen*, the Met comes to life on the page with her trademark touch. But she also delves into Egypt's Valley of the Kings, and into some fascinating mysteries related to both ancient Egypt and to a 20th century tragedy. You'll fall in love with the strong Charlotte and the plucky Annie as they face the reawakening of a legendary curse and the surfacing of long-buried secrets, all to the chaotic and fascinating backdrop of Diana Vreeland's famed Met Gala in its 1970s heyday. *The Stolen Queen* is a powerful ode to both the magic of New York City and the resilience of the human spirit, set both in the storied Met and in the rock-cut pharaohs' tombs of Egypt." —Kristin Harmel

Fiona has signed all of her books for us and I recommend reading them in no particular order since they stand alone. Fans of Linda Fairstein will be pleased to tour more, or the same, NYC landmarks and institutions in fiction. Here it's the Met and more specifically its Temple of Dendur and Egyptology collection.

Donovan, Kemper. [Loose Lips](#) (Kensington \$28). Lesa reviews the second mystery by the host of "All About Agatha" podcast: Under the pseudonym Belle Curren, the ghostwriter wrote *The Busy Body* mystery based on her experiences in Maine. Now, a friend and rival from grad school days, Payton Garrett, invites her to teach mystery writing on a cruise ship, the "Get Lit Cruise" that hosts 300 women and three men. When Payton and her wife experience poisoning symptoms during a dinner, and a staff member dies, Belle and the ship's doctor step up to act as detectives. Looking back at the cruise, Belle has already warned readers there will be three murders on this trip, so it comes as no surprise when there are several more deaths. Despite her deep dive into sidekick territory, it's a shock to Belle when the killer is revealed.... If you missed it last year, [The Busy Body](#) (\$17.95) is a lot of fun to read.

\* Feeney, Alice. [Beautiful Ugly](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). "The queen of twist does it again! Our **January British Crime Subscription Club Pick** delivers, but for me the deep magic of this book is the remote Scottish island Feeney creates as the landscape of the story. However its literary tropes and plot to match will intrigue you too.

Wives think their husbands will change but they don't. Husbands think their wives won't change but they do. British author Grady Green hits the pinnacle of his publishing career on the same night that his life goes off the rails—first his book lands on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and then his wife, Abby, goes missing while driving home. A year later, Grady is a mere shadow of his former self: out of money and out of ideas. So, when his agent, Abby's godmother, suggests that he spend some time on the Isle of Amberly, in a log cabin left to her by one of her writers, it seems as good a plan as any. With free housing for himself and his dog and a beautiful, distraction-free environment, maybe he can finally complete the next novel. But from the very beginning, Grady's experiences with Amberly seem weird, if not downright ominous... "As Grady falls deeper and deeper into insomnia and alcoholism, he begins to realize his being on the island is no accident—and that should make him very afraid....the book's slow unfolding of dread, mystery, and then truth is both creative and well-paced. Every chapter heading is an oxymoron,

like the title, reminding us of the contradictions at the heart of every story.”

Feeney, Michele M. [Like Family](#) (Black Rose Writing \$19.95). Feeney, a local attorney and a director at the ASU Law School delivers a story of found family in a terrifying time where three strong women navigate the challenges of the 1918 flu pandemic and the societal prejudices they confront as an unmarried, childless Irish-American teacher takes in an orphaned Polish-American girl while struggling to re-open the one-room schoolhouse, maintain her independence, take ownership of her family’s farm, launch her personal life. Feeney is from Michigan before her 25 years here in Arizona.

Finder, Joseph. [The Oligarch’s Daughter](#) (Harper \$30). **Out January 28, Signed here February 3, our February Crime Subscription Club selection. And our copies come with an exclusive art print designed by Finder** who here demonstrates that he’s not only a thriller writer but well versed in bad actors and bad deeds in business as well as politics.

Paul Brightman is living under an assumed name in a small New Hampshire town when a Russian operative tries to kill him. Six years earlier, despite warnings from well-meaning friends, he married a beautiful photographer whose Russian father had amassed a fortune through questionable business dealings. Although Paul planned to keep his father-in-law at arm’s length, he became immersed in a dangerous world, with the FBI hounding him to become an informant against the family of the woman he loves. In the present day, forced into survival mode, he takes to the woods, racing to stay one step ahead of the ever-present threat of a million-dollar bounty on his head. His only way out is to unravel a decades-old conspiracy. This isn’t a standard political thriller plot but, as I already noted, tangles the characters in financial schemes as did, say, the best of Christopher Reich.

Freeman, Brian. [Robert Ludlum’s The Bourne Vendetta](#) (Putnam \$30). “The throughline in the Bourne series is that someone is always out to get him. Maybe they want him dead. Maybe they want him in bed. And, once, he took a bullet to the head, which is the whole premise. The ‘nowhere man’ remembers nothing of his past identity, and he works for a shadowy agency called Treadstone, the new head of which is a woman named Shadow. The elusive prize everyone seeks is a hacked database commonly referred to as the Files. The Files are filled with secret dirt about powerful people, every blackmailer’s fondest dream. Whoever controls this data could either destroy the deep state or protect it indefinitely. Everybody wants the information: the ‘FBI, CIA, NSA, DOJ. Plus most of our enemies overseas.’ One such enemy is Cody, a Russian thug operating in Estonia. The files are on a laptop, and it doesn’t seem to occur to anybody that there could be copies in other places, but that doesn’t get in the way of a good story....”—*Kirkus Reviews* (which I enjoy for their snark).

Freeman, Dianne. Freeman, Dianne. [An Art Lovers Guide to Paris and Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). Go back in time to the 1900 Paris World’s Fair in Paris. Here is a whirl of a tour but with depth. “Freeman’s superbly plotted seventh Victorian cozy finds Frances Hazelton and her husband, George, tracking down a killer in the City of Light. The action kicks off when George’s aunt Julia requests that he and Frances come to Paris from England to investigate the suspicious death of her former

lover and fellow artist, Paul Ducasse. After they arrive during the World’s Fair, Frances learns that George has kept several secrets for his aunt, including the existence of Julia and Paul’s illegitimate daughter, Lisette. When Julia dies in an apparent accident at the fair, George inherits her estate. Overwhelmed, he and Frances launch an investigation.”—*PW* Starred Review.

Gaylin, Alison. [We Are Watching](#) (Harper Collins \$30) delivers a timely thriller about the nefarious workings of cults and conspiracy theorists. Meg Russo and her husband, Justin, own a bookstore in the small town of Elizabethville, N.Y. The couple lives a quiet life with their 18-year-old daughter, Lily, a musician intent on following in the footsteps of her off-the-grid grandfather, who achieved minor rock stardom years earlier. While driving to Ithaca, N.Y., to move Lily into college, the family gets in a nasty car crash; Justin dies, and Meg, who was behind the wheel, blames herself. Back in Elizabethville, she finds the bookshop vandalized and videos across the internet accusing her and her family of practicing satanism. Quickly realizing that she, Justin, and Lily have become the targets of a QAnon-like conspiracy cult, Meg wrestles with revealing secrets she’s been hiding from her daughter for decades, including the story behind a book Meg published when she was a teenager, and details about Lily’s grandfather. Gaylin matches her lucid, propulsive prose with crackerjack plotting.

Alison’s conversation partner for her zoom event is Talia Levin whose book is titled [Wild Faith](#) (Grand Central \$30).

Hendrix, Grady. [Witchcraft for Wayward Girls](#) (Penguin \$30). “A beautifully haunting, thought-provoking story about societal views and motherhood that dabbles with witchcraft. There are moments where you laugh, feel scared, and even cry. That’s the beauty of this book: everything comes with a price.”

Kerr, Jakob. [Dead Money](#) (Random \$30). **Our February First Mystery Pick.** Kerr puts his background as a lawyer and tech executive to good use in his impressively unpredictable debut. Mackenzie Clyde, an attorney from humble beginnings, now works as an investigator for Hammersmith, one of San Francisco’s hottest venture capital firms. When Trevor Canon, head of tech startup Journy, is discovered dead in his office and the SFPD fail to make headway on the case, the founder of Hammersmith—whose firm made a \$5 billion investment in Journy—uses his influence to bring in the FBI. Mackenzie joins FBI agent Jameson Danner, the son of a U.S. senator, in leading the investigation, and the pair soon discovers that, before Trevor’s death, he inserted a clause into his will freezing his assets (including Hammersmith’s investment) until his murderer is caught. It gradually becomes clear that only a Journy executive would have had the access necessary to kill Trevor, but each one has an airtight alibi—except for the chief technology officer, who’s just disappeared. After setting the stage for a standard, albeit glitzy, murder mystery, Kerr takes the narrative on a series of hairpin turns before arriving at a jaw-dropping finale.

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Shattering Dawn](#) (Berkley \$29). John reviews this new entry in the Lost Night Files: When PI Gideon Sweetwater disrupts the kidnapping of Amelia Rivers, they escape and return to the ruins of the hotel in the California desert where Amelia lost a night to amnesia before gaining some unusual powers. Now the two are desperately trying to find a way to stop a killer and the people who are conducting illegal experiments with

a dangerous drug designed to enhance psychic abilities. Krentz delivers another nerve-chilling blend of suspense and romance enhanced with just the right dash of paranormal thrills.

\* MacBird, Bonnie. [The Serpent Under](#) (Collins \$36). Sherlockians, alert! The 6<sup>th</sup> Sherlock Holmes Adventure by MacBird enlivens January. Holmes and Watson take on a high profile case at Windsor Castle, a boy drowned in the Serpentine, and a crusading women's rights activist who suspects a traitor in her organization. The cases send them into danger into locales as varied as the Palace itself, a dockland cannery, an arts and crafts atelier, and a Gypsy encampment. But is there peril underfoot as well – right at 221B Baker Street? Unsigned US edition listed below in Some New Hardcover.

Maldonado, Isabella. [A Killer's Code](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99). Maldonado's inspired third adventure for Daniela Vega finds the FBI agent reeling from new developments relating to her father's death. A decade after Dani's testimony put her mother, Camile, in a psychiatric facility for killing her father, evidence has emerged exonerating Camile. As a result, Dani plans to take time off work to repair her and her mother's rocky relationship. Those hopes get dashed when the FBI director receives a flash drive from recently dead hit man Gustavo Toro, whom Dani met while working undercover. In video message on the flash drive, Toro explains that it contains a code that, once deciphered, will reveal who hired him to carry out his killings and offer key evidence in a host of unsolved crimes. Daniela is roped onto the team tasked with cracking the cipher, and she unravels dark secrets from Toro's past. As in the previous books, Maldonado leverages her law enforcement background to lend the proceedings weight and authenticity, while flashbacks predating Toro's death ratchet up the suspense

\* McKenna, Clara. [Murder at Glenloch Hill](#) (Kensington \$27). Set in Edwardian Britain, American transplant Stella, and British aristocrat, Viscount "Lyndy" Lyndhurst, newlyweds, take a weekend trip to the Scottish countryside and learn how sinister bad sportsmanship can be when a prestigious golf tournament becomes a deadly game of murder. Stella and spouse have a stake in that Lyndy's brother is a competitor. Alas so is the men's roguish father. It's fun to read about competitive golf in this era, especially if, like me, you watch the British Open.

McMahon, John. [Head Cases](#) (St Martins \$28). In our **January Crime Subscription Club Book of the Month** investigative savant Gardner Camden tracks a vigilante who targets serial killers. Camden—a member of the FBI's Patterns and Recognition team—has history with the vigilante's first victim, Ross Tignon, whom the investigator suspected of three murders in Florida a decade earlier. Though Camden believed Tignon died in a fire seven years ago, he'd instead moved to Texas, where a killer caught up with him. Before the team can make much progress on the Tignon case, rumors start swirling that their unit might be dissolved. Then another suspected serial killer turns up dead. With pressure boring down from all sides, the team comes to believe that the murderer has privileged information about unsolved serial killer cases—meaning that a member of the FBI is likely involved. McMahon introduces several clever wrinkles to this classic cat-and-mouse setup, while making the socially awkward Camden and his colleagues three-dimensional enough to sustain future installments. With pulse-pounding action and

enough surprises to blindside even seasoned mystery fans, this is a stunner.

Methos, Victor. [The Silent Watcher](#) (T&M \$28.99). Victor Methos immigrated to the United States from Kabul, Afghanistan, at the age of nine and wrote his first short story in English at the age of ten. He is the bestselling author of over 50 novels and has been nominated for the prestigious Edgar® Award for best novel for his work, *A Gambler's Jury*, and is the recipient of the 2020 Harper Lee Prize for Legal Fiction for, *The Hallows*. Here in his new book he takes us to Las Vegas.

Morrow, Bradford. [The Forger's Requiem](#) (Grove \$28) takes you "inside the world of expert forgery, rivalrous fury, and generations of dark family secrets, with Mary Shelley's voice and life woven throughout. This is a dark and somewhat confusing tale for plot but clear on the lure and gravitational pull of forgery (viewed as a creative process) and filled with literary lore.

Mosley, Walter. [Been Wrong So Long it Feels Like Right](#): (LittleBrown \$29). A family member's terminal illness leads P.I. Joe King Oliver to the investigation of his life: tracking down his long-lost father, and meanwhile, a new case pits King's professional responsibility against his own moral code. More in February when Patrick does a virtual event with Walter.

Nickless, Barbara. [The Drowning Game](#) (\$16.99). Sisters Nadia and Cass Brenner are heirs to Ocean House, a decades-old empire that builds superyachts for the rich and powerful: emirs, oligarchs, and titans of industry throughout America and Europe. They're a next-generation success with the design of their soon-to-be-commissioned megayacht for a Chinese billionaire. But the sisters' entrée into the coveted Asian market is tragically cut short when Cass falls from a fortieth-floor hotel balcony. A Singapore detective rules suicide. Nadia's been in the yacht business too long not to be suspicious. Especially when she discovers Cass's involvement in dangerously illicit activities. Pulled into the same web of betrayal, lies, and secrets that trapped her sister, Nadia may end blowing up her family and get herself killed.

Okorafor, Nnedi. [Death of the Author](#) (Harper \$30) Limited Edition. Disabled, disinclined to marry, and more interested in writing than a lucrative career in medicine or law, Zelu has always felt like the outcast of her large Nigerian family. Then her life is upended when, in the middle of her sister's lavish Caribbean wedding, she's unceremoniously fired from her university job and, to add insult to injury, her novel is rejected by yet another publisher. With her career and dreams crushed in one fell swoop, she decides to write something just for herself. What comes out is nothing like the quiet, literary novels that have so far peppered her unremarkable career. It's a far-future epic where androids and AI wage war in the grown-over ruins of human civilization. She calls it Rusted Robots.

When Zelu finds the courage to share her strange novel, she does not realize she is about to embark on a life-altering journey—one that will catapult her into literary stardom, but also perhaps obliterate everything her book was meant to be. From Chicago to Lagos to the far reaches of space, Zelu's novel will change the future not only for humanity, but for the robots who come next. “

A book-within-a-book that blends the line between writing and being written, *Death of the Author* is metafiction that manages to combine the razor-sharp commentary of *Yellowface*

with the heartfelt humanity of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*” says the publisher.

Osler, Rob. [The Case of the Missing Maid](#) (Kensington \$). **Our January Cozy Crime Subscription Club Pick** won my heart for two reasons: first, Harriet Morrow is a terrific lead character, and second, Osler brilliantly captures Gilded Age Chicago, a city infrequently depicted in fiction. Here’s rave for this book included in five outstanding Cozy Crimes: “It’s 1898 and Harriet Morrow can’t believe her luck in landing a job as the first female detective at the prestigious Prescott Agency in Chicago. Assigned to find Agnes Wozniak, the missing live-in maid employed by a wealthy neighbor of her boss, Morrow follows clues that take her into the heart of the city’s Polish community and also lead her to places where LGBTQ folks like herself secretly gather. As she gets closer to the truth of what happened to Wozniak, Morrow must depend on her wits and courage — as well as her newly minted shooting skills — to solve the case.” I add that this is not a novel with a sexual agenda.

Dana Stabenow, here for the winter, writes this: “Fun ride, via bicycle, through 1898 Chicago, as you clutch on behind 21-year old Harriet Morrow, formerly a bookkeeper and now the newest hire at the Prescott Detective Agency. Harriet’s first case is to find her boss’ neighbor’s missing maid, and the task leads her from the wealthiest neighborhoods to the Polish immigrant community with some interesting stops in between and some even more interesting revelations right there at the agency. Good start to a new series....”

Paoletta, Kyle. [American Oasis](#) (Knopf \$30). Living in the Southwest means being routinely scolded by outsiders. How can you live in a place so unsustainable? With that kind of politics? With that kind of culture, or, rather, the lack of it? Rarely does a summer pass in my home city without somebody standing up a roundtable with a title like “Should Phoenix Exist?” In his book journalist and Albuquerque native Paoletta does a little bit of scolding, too. Yes, the region’s development outpaces its resources. And it is indeed a gaudy and strange place — he’s not wrong to liken Las Vegas to “a pop-up ad the country didn’t mean to click on.” But Paoletta also understands that we underestimate and segregate the Southwest at our peril. No part of the country is immune from drought or reckless development, which is to say that the Southwest’s critics are often committing an epic feat of projection. The region is not America’s weird cousin but its starkest mirror. And, if we’re willing to see it clearly, a source for solutions. But making that case means rejecting some of the region’s most familiar origin stories.

[Read more](#) of what Phoenix-based critic Mark Athitakis writes about Kyle’s book in his thoughtful review I’ve just quoted. Mark is our January 20 host.

Patterson, James. [Holmes Is Missing](#) (LittleBrown \$30 with bookplate signed by Patterson). Success has come quickly to Holmes, Marple & Poe Investigations. The New York City agency led by three detectives—Brendan Holmes, “the brain,” Margaret arple, “the eyes,” and Auguste Poe, the “muscle”—with famous names and mysterious pasts is one major case away from cementing its professional reputation. But as a series of child abductions tests the PIs’ legendary skills, the cerebral Holmes’s absence leaves a gaping hole in the agency roster. Only by closing ranks and solving the mystery within can they recover.

Perry, Thomas. [Pro Bono](#) (Penguin \$27.95). Perry fan, like me, Dana Stabenow reviews: Teenaged Charlie Warren rescues—mostly—his mother from a grifter who has married her for her money. Fourteen years later he’s a lawyer in L.A. when another woman who is being robbed of her savings walks into his office, who is then kidnapped outside his office but not for the reason any of them (or you) think. And the chase is on. Charlie is a smart, capable hero whose bullshit detector is better than just about anyone else’s and which keeps him a step and a half ahead of everyone (who appear to be legion) who is trying to stop him from uncovering their crimes and recovering the money they have embezzled. A thrill-house ride from Perry this outing, who saves the creepiest part for the last chapters, but I won’t spoil.

[Hero](#) (\$16.95), last year’s propulsive LA-based thriller, was named a Best Mystery of the Year by both [Kirkus](#) and [Booklist](#). Many of you will want a new Jane Whitefield from Perry, or perhaps a further Butcher’s Boy?

Sallis, James. [Difficult Lives](#) (Soho Press \$15.99) presents Sallis’ seminal biographical essays on crime fiction pioneers Jim Thompson, David Goodis, and Chester Himes restored to print and joined by a handpicked collection of essays, reviews, and introductory writings on noir fiction. At the time of its original publication by Gryphon Books in 1993, *Difficult Lives* was a pioneering work of literary investigation. Sallis’s subjects of Himes, Goodis, and Thompson were as enigmatic as they were out-of-print, and literary scholarship on the subject of their lives and works scant. As the title of the collection indicates, the three men led difficult lives, and although they forever changed the history of crime writing, they all passed in relative isolation.

Stabenow, Dana. [Abduction of a Slave](#) (Bloomsbury \$28.99). Cleopatra, seventh of her name, all-powerful ruler of Egypt, has found her most able and trusted agent in Tetisheri, her Eye of Isis. And generally keeps Sheri near at hand. So when Tetisheri asks permission to visit the Kingdom of Cyrenaica, she is surprised – and suspicious – when her queen grants her leave from Alexandria. A middleman in Cyrenaica has ceased communication and Tetisheri’s uncle, a master trader, is on a mission to find out why. But there are others in Cyrenaica with hidden agendas: Julius Caesar’s spies, Caesar’s sworn enemy Mettelus Scipio, and the ever duplicitous King Juba I. Tetisheri soon realizes why Cleopatra consented to her mission, for Cyrenaica is a web of intrigue that also includes Pompey’s widow and an army readying to take on the might of Caesar, who is massing his legions in Sicily. With war on the horizon, Tetisheri’s skills will be stretched to the limit as she also tries to decipher a murder mystery and possible fraud. The battle scene is dramatic as are the war elephants—try to envision them. Heartbreaking.

Turow, Scott. [Presumed Guilty](#) (Grand Central \$30). I still remember when [Presumed Innocent](#) (\$19.99) published in 1986—the conversations, the debates, the questions. It’s a pioneering work in the Unreliable Narrator genre and a genuine legal thriller. Turow and I both grew up in Winnetka, a decade apart. We both went to New Trier High School and Stanford before he went on the Harvard Law and wrote [One L](#) (\$18), his first book and still one of my favorites. So I took a special interest in his first novel.

And now he revisits a 70+ Rusty Sabich from the perspective of being himself 75 and I ask, how much of himself has he put into Sabich in a book that is both a legal thriller and a reflection on aging, a long eventful life, and a future, as well as

what a swath of America—Midwestern America through the lens of a fictional county lying somewhere between Chicago, Wisconsin, and Minnesota—has become in his lifetime? Questions like what would things look like if a white couple in such a place adopted a Black baby who would grow up forever an outsider? How does the legal system tilt towards presuming such a man guilty of a shocking crime? How do later marriages and blended families work? There is a lot to unpack here.

In an interview Turow writes: “The inspiration for *Presumed Guilty* is one I carried with me for a long time, although it’s hardly unique to me: the resonance of a situation in which someone you love and trust is accused of a serious crime. The recognition that Rusty would have a role in this kind of drama is of more recent vintage. After going back to Sandy Stern in [The Last Trial](#) (\$16.99, I began to think I might enjoy one more go-round with Rusty Sabich. So Rusty Sabich has turned his back on Kindle County and his former life, in the wake of the events of [Innocent](#) (\$18.99) and his release from prison. Seeking refuge, he has settled in Skageon County, a farming and recreational area two hours north. Although he arrived assuming he was going to live as a kind of numbed recluse, he eventually finds himself, at 70, restored by falling in love with the younger local grade school principal. Thus he is deeply challenged when she calls on Rusty to defend her son Aaron, a baby she and her former husband adopted from a Black family to raise in an almost totally white community, who is accused of his girlfriend’s murder.”

Wade, Kevin. [Johnny Careless](#) (Celodadon \$27.99). **Our January First Mystery Pick. It’s not too late to sign up for the First Mystery Subscription Club to secure your signed copy. Three months minimum. Six months membership gets a bonus \$30 Gift Certificate to spend as you wish.**

*Blue Bloods* showrunner Wade makes a splashy debut with this stirring procedural about a veteran cop’s probe into the death of his former best friend. After a traumatizing case, Jeep Mullane leaves the NYPD to become the chief of a new police department in the wealthy part of Long Island where he grew up. While Jeep investigates a rash of car thefts, his colleagues discover a faceless male corpse on a beach in the small town of Bayville. The dead man bears a tattoo that identifies him as Johnny Chambliss, Jeep’s best friend from high school. Horrified, Jeep begins poking around Johnny’s affluent family for answers and stumbles onto a frightening web of corruption.

Wade smoothly toggles between Jeep’s present-day investigation and his friendship with Johnny, shedding light on their class differences and the events that led them to lose touch in adulthood. Wade’s gift for suspense is as well honed as one would expect from his film and TV credits—the real surprise is his character work, which goes deep enough that readers will find themselves thinking about Jeep and Johnny long after they’ve turned the final page. Haunting and heartbreaking, this is a winner.” —*PW* Starred Review. So say I, too, and also our good friend author John Sandford.

\* Westerson, Jeri. [The Mummy of Mayfair](#) and [Rebellious Grace](#) (Severn \$29.95 each). Veteran author Westerson brings us two new books. The first is a new adventure for the Baker Street Irregulars—“A highly enjoyable look at the Great Detective’s methods from the viewpoint of his less-accomplished peers.” London, 1895. Although their last high-profile case was a huge success, private detectives Tim Badger and Benjamin Watson

know they can’t afford to turn down any work, despite financial assistance from their mentor, Sherlock Holmes. So when the eminent Doctor Enoch Sawyer of St Bart’s Hospital asks Badger if the duo will provide security for a mummy unwrapping party he is hosting, Badger doesn’t hesitate to take the job. After all, how hard can guarding the doctor’s bizarre Egyptian artifacts be? Answer: very. Start this series with [The Isolated Séance](#) (\$18.99).

The second is another in the *King’s Fool* series set in the court of Henry VIII where, having had Anne Boleyn beheaded, Henry has wed Jane Seymour, likely nudged into it by her brothers Edmund and Thomas, who will survive her. Lesa writes, “It’s the Christmas season of 1536, and the court of King Henry VIII is celebrating, even as Henry deals with a religious rebellion; 9,000 people are marching on his palace to demand the restoration of the monasteries and Catholicism in England (an event that will come to be known as the Pilgrimage of Grace). There’s also a gruesome murder to contend with: one of the queen’s servants was recently killed, and his body was found in the palace. Two weeks later, the corpse was dug up and disemboweled, which attracted Henry’s attention. But with Henry now distracted by the Pilgrimage of Grace, his jester Will Somers must investigate the murder....” Start this series with [Courting Dragons](#) (\$18.99).

## NEW SHELF WEALTH RELEASES

By which I mean, readers, consider buying physical books as if buying works of art. This is a huge trend driven in part by advances in printing that make it more affordable.

Read a [long and illustrated article](#) on what I call Shelf Wealth in the *NY Times* and check out our selection when you shop on line or in store. You can even find some in paperback.

Baum, L. Frank. [The Wizard of Oz](#) (Penguin \$30) plus in this triple volume: *The Emerald City of Oz* and *Glinda of Oz*, the next two volumes in the series. Who won’t love the emerald color of the design? A beautiful cover, Toto on both endpapers, the original illustrations, the silver slippers on the back, and a fore-edge painting. Absolutely one of the best gifts you could ever give a kid (or an adult), and it’s three books in one for only \$30! The Oz books were the treasure of my childhood in the originals but they wore out, so this new edition is catnip for me.

Corland, Mai. [Four Ruined Realms \(Deluxe Limited Edition\)](#) (Entangled \$32.99) featuring gorgeous sprayed edges with stenciled artwork, as well as exclusive endpapers and special design features.

I thought [Five Broken Blades](#) (\$32.99) was the most vibrant and beautiful SW edition last year. Here is the sequel: The King of Yusan may be the greatest liar of them all. His sister’s ring is in his sights, and he will do anything to get what he wants. Even manipulating the five blades to steal it... Bonded by a common enemy, then divided by deceit, the blades must rely on their skills to pull off King Joon’s pursuit or risk his legendary wrath. A foreign rule of law stands between them and Quilimar, the Queen of Khitan. Now they have one month to steal the powerful Golden Ring of the Dragon Lord. But that impossible task might be easier than trusting one another, even though their lives, their families, and the realms depend on it. They can all agree on one thing: the king can’t win.

Casati, Cassandra. [Babylonia](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). From the author of *Clytemnestra* a new novel with painted edges, luxe gold



foil, and full color endpapers giving you a peek into the gripping world of Ancient Assyria! Abandoned as an infant on the shore of the river where her mother, the goddess Derceto, drowned herself, headstrong Semiramis believes she is destined for greatness. Betraying the abusive villager who raised her, she seizes the opportunity to marry the king's right-hand man and journey to Assyria to seek her fortune. There, foreign armies are threatening invasion, while palace spies operate in the shadows, so Semiramis must use all her strength and ingenuity to keep herself on the path toward power. Based on the ancient Middle Eastern legend of a warrior queen, Casati's sweeping epic incorporates the era's brutality but also its cultural richness.

Yaros, Rebecca. [Onyx Storm Deluxe Edition](#) (Entangled \$32.99). Third in the mega-selling series featuring Violet Sorrengail who, after nearly eighteen months at Basgiath War College, knows there's no more time for lessons, no more time for uncertainty. It is time to journey beyond the failing Aretian wards to seek allies from unfamiliar lands to stand with Navarre.

### CLASSICS

Magarshack, David. [Ben Ben Strikes Eleven](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.99). Sir Robert Boniface, the industrial and financial tycoon—and stalwart of the British Cabinet—has been found shot dead in his blue limousine on a warm Friday evening in the Vale of Health, Hampstead Heath. Nearby, a rejected portrait of Sir Robert is found riddled with bullets in the studio of the now-missing artist Matt Caldwell. Called to the scene, Inspector Beckett of Scotland Yard suspects murder. By the time Superintendent Mooney joins the case, the suspects have tripled and the mystery continues to spiral. Delving into the psychology of murder, Magarshack's novel explores the struggle between immense power and corruption—which heaven knows is a major question being asked today just as it was when this British Library Crime Classic published.

### COZIES

Burke, Ava. [Haunting and Homicide](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Tallulah "Lou" Thatcher has a gift: she can see dead people. Her ability to see ghosts helps her host viral ghost tours through New Orleans' historic Garden District. When rival tour guide Adam Brandt—who accused her of faking her encounters to undercut his business—is found murdered, Lou is the only one who can see him....his ghost, that is.

Delany, Vicki. [The Incident of the Book in the Nighttime](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). Though she's British, Gemma Doyle lives in West London, Massachusetts, where she manages her great-uncle Arthur Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Bookshop and Emporium along with her friend Jayne Wilson, who runs the tea room. Now her sister, Pippa—who works for the British government in a secretive role—is marrying her friend Grant Thompson, an American book dealer, and Gemma and Jayne pop over for the wedding. As Gemma leaves the wedding venue, she's amazed to be accosted by her ex-husband, Paul Erikson. The bookshop they used to own together is in trouble financially, but Paul claims to have a rare book that might save it, and he asks her to come take a look at it. Gemma doesn't trust Paul, so she asks Pippa's new husband, a book dealer, to accompany her to the bookstore. When they arrive, they find Paul's strangled body in his office. Feeling inexplicably guilty, Gemma drags her friends around London as she searches for the priceless book.... Strong

characters and some fun Sherlockian stuff characterize this cozy series from the prolific Canadian Delaney.

\* Delemach, Emilie Nikota. [The House Witch and When the Cat Spells War](#) (Penguin UK \$9.99). "The perfect cozy fantasy romance (aka cottagecore) for lovers of heartwarming stories." A UK import

\* George, Nicholas. [A Deadly Walk in Devon](#) (\$17.95). If you've ever considered going on a walking tour in the English countryside, think again! Avoid jet lag and join the intriguing group of trekkers in Nicholas George's debut and wander along a trail full of treacherous twists and turns with retired San Diego police detective Rick Chasen. Still grieving the death of his long-time partner, Chase reunites with his dear friend and fellow Anglophile Billie Mondreau for a seacoast holiday of historic sightseeing. Assigned a pair of guides from the tour company Wanderers, Chase and Billie join seven other like-minded Americans looking forward to an English getaway. All except for Ronald Gretz. The wealthy entrepreneur behind the international Golden Sunset nursing home chain who suffers a series of increasingly threatening accidents until....

Look for the sequel this month: [A Lethal Walk in Lakeland](#) (Kensington \$27).

Gilbert, Victoria. [Schooled in Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99). A mystery writer must solve a real murder case before an innocent girl is condemned in this series debut. Jennifer "Jen" Dalton is an author and educator at Clarion University in Virginia. She loves her job, but some of her petty coworkers look down on her for writing genre fiction. As members of the English department, they wish to encourage students to pursue higher literary aspirations. When a humiliating confrontation between an uppity professor and one of Jen's students, Mia, escalates, no one thinks much of it. Until his dead body is found along with evidence incriminating Mia.

Moke, Jenny Elder. [She Doesn't Have a Clue](#) (St Martins \$17). Deb reviews: This delightful paperback adult debut by is the perfect mashup of romance and mystery: a locked room murder on an isolated island full of lust, longing, duplicity and a hunky Australian. The main character, bestselling author Kate, receives a mysterious invitation to her former fiance's wedding, and chaos ensues. Every romance trope and setup is skillfully woven into the plot: poisonings, drownings, secret passages and wild animal chases included. Can Kate solve the murder before the murder is pinned on her? Great fun. YA author Moke makes her adult debut with this winning romantic mystery that John will discuss with her virtually on January 14 1:00 PM.

Osler, Rob. [The Case of the Missing Maid](#) (\$27). See Signed Books for my recommendation for this our **January Cozy Crimes Subscription Club Selection** set in Gilded Age Chicago. Note that the titles by Dianne Freeman and Clare McKenna are historical cozies as well.

### A FEW NEW IN HARDCOVER

**More to come in January Part 2. This is weighted with historicals because they dominated my Advance Reading Copies. I've had to order many January titles to read and review.**

Abrams, Stacy. [Powers of Persuasion](#) (Penguin \$29). Deb recommends this new book by Abrams, writing as Selena

Montgomery. Politics, public service, an unlikely romance and AI all combine together in this re-introduced story for Abrams fans. She never disappoints.

\* Bennett, S J. [A Death in Diamonds](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99).

I have spurned this series by Bennett featuring a young Queen Elizabeth II, here age 30 in 1957, as sleuth up to now, but as John made it one of his January picks I decided to try it. And boy, for an Anglophile, it's really catnip. Those who watched the 2012 Olympics opener with Daniel Craig and the Queen got a glimpse of her sense of humor, which is on display here.

But while the Queen (and recorded events that are true) is the linchpin of the series, the sleuthing is mostly carried out by an excellent woman, a code breaker trained at Bletchley Park during WWII, who although a mere typist becomes part of the Queen's Private Office—in fact, the best part. The other characters, the Queen's family—her mother, sister, and husband, her staff, the dogged policeman, the good and bad guys and gals in a large cast, are well drawn. Plus a very clever plot artfully told; how the two brutal murders that open the story are solved by two women working across an enormous social divide is a mystery until the end. Recommended to fans of Allison Montclair's clever post-war Britain series.

Cannell, Michael. [Blood and the Badge](#) (St Martins \$30). Louis Eppolito and Stephen Caracappa, two decorated NYPD detectives who covertly acted as mafia informants and paid assassins in the Scorsese world of 1980s Brooklyn. For more than ten years, they moonlighted as the mob's early warning alert system, leaking names of mobsters secretly cooperating with the government and crippling investigations by sharing details of surveillance, phone taps and impending arrests. The Lucchese boss called the two detectives his crystal ball: Whatever detectives knew, the mafia soon learned. Most grievously, Eppolito and Caracappa earned bonuses by staging eight mob hits, pulling the trigger themselves at least once. Incredibly, when evidence of their wrongdoing arose in 1994, FBI officials failed to muster an indictment. The allegations lay dormant for a decade and were only revisited due to relentless follow up by Tommy Dades, a cop determined to break the cold case before his retirement. Eppolito and Caracappa were finally tried and then sentenced to life in prison in 2009, nearly thirty years after their crimes took place. Cannell's *Blood and the Badge* is based on entirely new research and never-before-released interviews with mobsters themselves, including Sammy "the Bull" Gravano.

Crais, Robert. [The Big Empty](#) (Putnam \$30). So welcome back, Elvis, and, of course, his partner Joe Pike — do NOT call him a sidekick — as Crais reunites his private detectives. "Crais" brand of melding sly humor with a hard-boiled story driven by the smart-mouthed Elvis and the taciturn yet lethal Pike hasn't stalled during the three-year absence. LA private eye Elvis is hired by Traci Beller, a 23-year-old influencer whose prowess in baking has brought her 8.2 million followers. 'The Muffin Girl,' as fans call Traci, already has a series of cookbooks and merchandise but is poised for even more success. Traci hires Elvis because ten years ago her father, Thomas, disappeared without a trace. The van for his heating and air-conditioning company, which he owned with his brother, was never found following his last job. No trace of Thomas has ever been found, despite other high-profile detective agencies Traci has hired. Traci

also has never quite forgiven her mother for seeming to move on so quickly after Thomas vanished. Her mother calls Thomas' disappearance Traci's 'curse.' Elvis finds ignored witnesses while retracing Thomas' last steps as he and ex-Marine Pike uncover a conspiracy...."—Oline Cogdill.

Dove, Laurie L. [Mask of the Deer Woman](#) (Berkley \$29). I wanted to like this more than I did. It's just not in the class of Marcie Rendon or Vanessa Lillie. Dove's debut tackles the epidemic of missing Indigenous women with a contemporary tale set on a fictional Kansas reservation. Newly appointed tribal marshal Carrie Starr has just arrived at the Saliquaw reservation dragging the remains of her career and personal life behind her. Her first case is a young woman who has gone missing, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. Starr knows that Indigenous women have been going missing for decades, but discovering proof that the crimes were mismanaged and ignored, even by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, seems impossible. Dove juggles many issues and addictions plus Carrie's role as an outsider due to her mixed heritage (Irish-American mother, Indigenous father) and introduces a kind of spirit guide rising from Carrie's father's stories. This novel is too ambitious and might have been better as non-fiction.

\* Dunlap, A. Rae. [The Resurrectionist](#) (Kensington \$28) is an historical mystery debut set in 1828 Edinburgh where an upper crust young man who has not been able to settle in life despite studies at Oxford arrives to try his hand at medical school with the aim of becoming a surgeon. His situation is made more difficult when his family goes broke thanks to the father's gambling habit. James Willoughby finds residence in a somewhat seedy tavern where other students lodge including the dashing Scots dissectionist Aneurin MacKinnon. James quickly works out Nye is a bodysnatcher when a lookout post he took for a few pence makes James an unwitting accomplice. It grows more dangerous when James too begins bodysnatching, when (the real) Burke and Hare terrorize the streets, and when James realizes his romantic feelings are for the unsuitable Nye. This is a Gothic dark academia tale, well crafted.

Garcia, Jessie. [The Business Trip](#) (St Martins \$29). Here's another book I wanted to like but did not. The premise is straight from Julie Clark's 2020 first mystery [The Last Flight](#) (\$16.99): two women meet accidentally at the airport (Clark) or on a flight (Garcia). Identities get switched. Someone dies. There's a surprise twist. The difference to me lies in how relatable the characters are. There are some enthusiastic reviews out there but my job is to give you my take.

\* Grey, Iona. [The Housekeeper's Secret](#) (St Martins \$29). Intrigued by the review I quote, I ordered a copy and found I agreed. The rigid hierarchies and rules of the Downstairs in the country house of a fading aristocratic family illustrate why so many turned away from domestic service after WWI. The nearly granular detail grips you.: "The upstairs-downstairs historical novel is practically a genre in itself. *The Housekeeper's Secret*, which transports us to the Derbyshire countryside in 1911, has all the right elements: an isolated and slightly seedy 50-room mansion, a beautiful housekeeper who looks way too refined for her station, a suspiciously eager new footman, various superstitious maids and a strangely silent local boy, as well as an arrogant, recently installed heir, determined to make the most

of his mousy bride's fortune. Add the servants' whispers about an unsolved disappearance at a long-ago shooting party and you have a plot Daphne du Maurier would have applauded." —*The New York Times* selecting "6 Engrossing Historical Novels to Keep the Chill Away"

Grippando, James. [Grave Danger: A Jack Swyteck Novel](#) (Harper \$30). "No sooner has he promised to cut back dramatically on the criminal defense cases that have made his reputation and poisoned his marriage to FBI undercover agent Andie Henning than Jack Swyteck accepts a custody case whose stakes are even higher. Farid Bazzi, a partner in six hotels in Iran, contends that his wife, Ava Bazzi, broke out of a Tehran prison after her arrest by the morality police, grabbed their 6-year-old daughter, Yasmin, and fled to Miami. The revelation that the client determined to keep Yasmin is actually Farid's second wife, Ava's sister Zahra, uncovers the first of many lies by every party, which Jack will have to wade through in representing her. In time, dueling claims over whether Ava is dead or alive, and mounting pressure from shadowy U.S. government representatives on both Jack and Andie to avoid pursuing any inquiries about Ava in order to protect their government's negotiations over the release of antiquities broker Brian Guthrie. Hours after a surprising development delivers a victory for Jack and his client, another equally unexpected development plunges them into a new round of woes. Here is a dizzying series of textbook lessons in how aggrieved litigants weaponize legal procedures, and vice versa."—*Kirkus Reviews*

\* Hay, Alex. [The Queen of Fives](#) (Graydon \$28.99) is a rollicking adventure through upper-crust, historical British society, with deceit, double-crossing, and twisty intrigue that will keep readers guessing through the explosive final act."—*Booklist*. In 1898, London con artist Quinn Le Blanc, known as the Queen of Fives, sets her sights on Max, the wealthy Duke of Kendal, whom she plans to marry and fleece out of his fortune. Pretending to be an heiress, she finagles an invitation to a party at Buckingham Palace, where she catches Max's eye while pretending to stop a fake royal assassination plot. Quinn has exactly five days to spring her trap. Standing in her way are Max's sister and their formidable stepmother, both of whom have reasons for not wanting to see the marriage take place. As Quinn and Max get to know each other, she realizes she's not the only one well-versed in the art of deception. Hay has conceived of a wholly original take on Victorian London and populated it with a gallery of colorful underworld types. The plotting will have readers on the edges of their seats as one twist after another sets the stage for a series of jaw-dropping revelations. Hay's 2023 debut [The Housekeepers](#) (\$18.99) was a British Crime Book of the Month Pick and somewhat similar in its historical con artistry.

Jones, Kristi. [Murder in the Ranks](#) (Crooked Lane \$30). In the outpouring of WWII stories, mostly focused on women rather than the military, this is a rare look at the theater in Algiers where Eisenhower is squaring up to Rommel before organizing the invasion of Sicily. And where in 1943 a newly minted squad in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, a precursor to the WACs that lacked officially being a full fledged military unit with benefits, is stationed in a convent. They are there to help with the crushing paperwork and such. When Ruth, the most dedicated and rule observing, dies from a fall off the Algiers Opera House, squad leader Dorothy Lincoln rejects the quick verdict of suicide

and insists Ruth must have been murdered. Devastated, Dottie insists on an investigation which in time proves her right along with exposing other misdeeds. "Jones soars when cataloging the sexist forces pushing against Dottie and her squad, and Dottie makes for an appealing, three-dimensional protagonist" with an appealing voice. Her personal predicament overcomplicates things but gives promise of a sequel I look forward to.

Larsen, Melissa. [The Lost House](#) (St Martins \$28). For those of you who'd like to enjoy the beauty and mystery of Iceland in winter, this is your book. It also plays into the rise of podcasters as investigators and the public's fascination with true crime as the heart of this mystery lies in the murder of a young wife/mother and her daughter and the locals' suspicion that the killer was the husband. It drove him away to California with his young son to reboot his life. Now, half a century later, he having died, his granddaughter returns to the remote town of Bifröst, where podcaster Nora who is delving into the unsolved case is staying and where the crime took place, to seek answers herself. This good story really puts "cold" into a cold case.

Deb adds this: Agnes adored her grandfather, loved him more than her father, to be honest. When a true crime podcaster reaches out to her family to investigate why her grandfather fled Iceland, presumed to be the murderer of his wife and baby daughter, Agnes travels from sunny San Francisco to dark and chilly rural Iceland to find out the truth. Family secrets revealed, and the long shadows of previous crimes come to light. I love this kind of mystery, where each conversation brings you a little closer to the truth, and reveals a little more about Agnes to herself.

Lee, Fonda & Shannon. [Breath of the Dragon](#) (Wednesday Books \$21,) is a fantasy YA collaboration between the World Fantasy Award and Locus Award winner and the daughter of Bruce Lee and CEO of the Bruce Lee Family Companies about a warrior eager to prove himself. It comes with a bright package and sprayed edges for readers 13-18+.

\* MacBird, Bonnie. [The Serpent Under](#) (Harper \$26.99). Sherlockians, alert! The 6<sup>th</sup> Sherlock Holmes Adventure by MacBird enlivens January. Holmes and Watson take on a high profile case at Windsor Castle, a boy drowned in the Serpentine, and a crusading women's rights activist who suspects a traitor in her organization. The cases send them into danger into locales as varied as the Palace itself, a dockland cannery, an arts and crafts atelier, and a Gypsy encampment. But is there peril underfoot as well – right at 221B Baker Street? See Signed Books for the UK edition.

\* Murrin, Orlando. [Knife Skills for Beginners](#) (Kensington \$28). I wanted to like this debut by master chef Murrin set in a London cooking school with a kind of locked-room mystery to solve after a food critic becomes a suspect in the murder of a celebrity chef. I did not.

\* Penner, Sarah. [The Lost Apothecary Collector's Edition](#) (Park Row \$30). This excellent debut was a 2021 Historical Fiction Pick and is now being reissued if you missed it in a snazzy new edition. This is in part to pave the way for April 29's big book for Penner, [The Amalfi Curse](#) (\$30), set in Positano and featuring shipwrecks and sunken treasure and great stuff, that she has agreed to sign for us. Meanwhile enjoy, or revisit: A forgotten history. A secret network of women. A legacy of poison and

revenge from 18th Century London to today's city... or rather 2021's London.

Robinson, Rebecca. [The Serpent and the Wolf](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28.99). The Indie Next Pick: It's for fans of *Bridgerton*, with a suitor worthy of a romance anime or K-drama. Rebecca has managed to balance this delicious slow burn with a vivid world of magic and politics rivaling our most-read epic fantasies today. I hope you will love this book as I do, and that you will find it to be your exciting new Romantasy obsession."

Sakhlecha, Trisha. [The Inheritance](#) (Viking \$29). The Agarwal siblings have gathered on a private island off the coast of Scotland, ostensibly to celebrate their parents' 40th anniversary, but really to hear their father's succession plans and to learn who will inherit the family's massive fortune. Each of the three believes they deserve the largest share of profits: Aseem, who's currently working for his father but torn between loyalty to his family and his wife, Zoe; Myra, the high-achieving golden child who has recently stumbled financially; and Aisha, whose devil-may-care lifestyle rubs everyone the wrong way. A peek behind the velvet curtain of extreme wealth and privilege, Sakhlecha's glamorous thriller portrays a dysfunctional family doing despicable things in the name of love.

Segura, Alex. [Alter Ego](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). Segura's sequel to [Secret Identity](#) (\$18.99, pits the lo-fi world of comics against high-octane forces like corporate greed, Hollywood machinations, and big-screen superhero franchises. This premise may not have made a great comic, but it makes a rollicking good thriller that begins in 2018, when journalist Laura Gustines dies in a carjacking in Queens, having just conducted an interview with Carmen Valdez. (The name will be familiar to readers of *Secret Identity*.) The interview was to be the hallmark of Laura's planned book about forgotten female comics creators—after all, Carmen had a hand in making the 1970s series *The Legendary Lynx*, not long after which she seemed to vanish. From the carjacking, the novel skips around in time and place, the narration now courtesy of spunky-slovenly comics artist and, later, filmmaker Annie Bustamante, whose fortunes are tied to the whims of the movie industry and, truth told, to her alcohol consumption. A *Legendary Lynx* fan, Annie has a tantalizing opportunity to revamp the comic, but at what price? And what, she's determined to learn, did happen to Carmen Valdez? *Alter Ego* is front-loaded with exposition, but once Segura has set the scene, the story takes flight.

Simpson, Rosemary. [Death Takes the Lead](#) (Kensington \$27). In the spring of 189a, professional sleuth Prudence MacKenzie travels to New York to catch an afternoon rehearsal with her friend, Lydia Truitt. Lydia's cousin, Septimus Ward, is at work on a new Broadway show called *Waif of the Highlands*. The play stars celebrated actor Barrett Hughes, who's also credited as its writer, director, and producer. Recently, however, Septimus revealed to Lydia that he wrote the script, giving Hughes the credit only in exchange for leverage with casting decisions; he's since come to regret the arrangement and plans to insist his credit be restored. A few days later, Septimus dies by poison, and Prudence is summoned to his home. Though the police believe his death was accidental, Prudence and Lydia suspect foul play, so they go undercover as seamstresses with the *Waif of the Highlands* costume department to investigate.

\* Walters, Minette. [The Players](#) (Blackstone \$28.99). England, 1685. Decades after the end of the English Civil War, the country is once again divided when King Charles II's illegitimate son, the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, arrives in Dorset to incite rebellion against his Catholic uncle, King Charles' Catholic brother James II. Armed only with pitchforks, Monmouth's army is quickly defeated by King James II's superior forces and charged with high treason. Those found guilty will be hanged, drawn, and quartered. As Dorset braces for carnage, the formidable Lady Jayne Harrier and her enigmatic son, assisted by the reclusive daughter of a local magistrate, contrive ways to save men from the gallows.

A reader writes: "Minette Walters has moved beyond the familiar historical fiction featuring the fight for power in court circles, to giving one such person a life outside the court where he meets and pursues a woman whose intelligence, and physical disability would make her eminently unsuited to the superficial life at court. Beginning with the Duke of Monmouth's attempt to take the throne, the spying and intrigue as well as the blood stained, and tragic warfare enacted in his name Walters propels the reader into the familiar. However, with the introduction of Althea Ettrick the story moves into unique territory." I add that despite his title as the Merry Monarch, I believe Charles II flunked a primary duty of a king which is to secure an acceptable heir—never his brother a Catholic in a Protestant majority country. Charles had bastards galore but no child with his sterile Portuguese princess wife.

Wilkerson, Charmaine. [Good Dirt](#) (Random \$30) is a multigenerational tale about a family haunted by tragedy. A treasured family heirloom, a stoneware jar crafted by an enslaved ancestor, was shattered the day 10-year-old Ebby's brother Baz was killed during a home invasion. Years after the unsolved crime took place, Ebby's family just wants to avoid attention, but when Ebby is left at the altar, her humiliation is public and unbearable. A fresh start in France, where nobody knows her story, seems like a path toward healing until her ex-fiancé and his new girlfriend appear, forcing her to face uncomfortable truths and inspiring her to investigate the true history of the beloved jar that shaped her family for generations.

Yang, Jane. [The Lotus Shoes](#) (Park Row \$28.99). Readers of Lisa See will want to grab this debut by Australian author Yang. The time is late 19<sup>th</sup> Century China. Rural communities are strictly tied to the past while nearby Hong Kong is Westernized. Little Flower, daughter of an unexpectedly widowed mother who elects to sell her to a wealthy family rather than face starvation, had started down the path of foot binding as only "golden lilies" marked an honorable woman fit for marriage and motherhood. Bound feet are uncommon for a *mujzai* (slave maid) as is Little Flower's stellar skill with embroidery, her passion. Her mistress Linjing Fong is spoiled and lazy and to thwart any hope of Little Flower's escape from servitude, forces her to unbind her feet. When scandal around Linjing's birth casts both young women out, they end up in the Celibate Sisterhood that supports its members with the sale of silks and embroidery. Here Little Flower has the edge, her natural feet don't matter, and in time she attracts the attention through her artistry of a powerful nobleman, pushing Linjing to sabotage things again, putting Little Flower under a death sentence. Yang powerfully depicts a tradition-

bound society and the women within it, often cruel to each other, while looking towards a different future.

Yardley, Ellen. [Eleanor and the Cold War](#) (Kensington \$27). When the body of an aspiring Swedish starlet is discovered in Washington DC's Union Station, Kay Thompson—secretary to Eleanor Roosevelt—and the former first lady side with a handsome young detective to expose the dark truth about a transatlantic murder mystery.

### SOME NIFTY NONFICTION

Brands, Hal. [The Eurasian Century](#) (Norton \$29.99). The thesis Brands advances is this: We often think of the modern era as the age of American power. In reality, we're living in a long, violent Eurasian century. That giant, resource-rich landmass possesses the bulk of the global population, industrial might, and potential military power; it touches all four of the great oceans. Eurasia is a strategic prize without equal—which is why the world has been roiled, reshaped, and nearly destroyed by clashes over the supercontinent. Since the early twentieth century, autocratic powers—from Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II to the Soviet Union—have aspired for dominance by seizing commanding positions in the world's strategic heartland. Offshore sea powers, namely the United Kingdom and America, have sought to make the world safe for democracy by keeping Eurasia in balance. America's rivalries with China, Russia, and Iran are the next round in this geopolitical game. If this new authoritarian axis succeeds in enacting a radically revised international order, America and other democracies will be vulnerable and insecure.

Epstein, Greg. [Tech Agnostic: How Technology Became the World's Most Powerful Religion, and Why It Desperately Needs a Reformation](#) (The MIT Press, \$29.95). And Marietje Schaake, author of [The Tech Coup: How to Save Democracy from Silicon Valley](#) (Princeton University Press, \$27.95). The titles say it all on issues we as readers should dig into.

Fletcher, Catherine. [The Roads to Rome](#) (Pegasus \$32). Here's a look at imperialism, specifically that of Rome and how its roads facilitated both travel and empire. I advise printing out the somewhat too small map at the front of the volume so you can refer to it without constantly flipping the pages back and forth. It's also a nifty guide for today's travelers who walk, drive, or train across the landscape of the ancient roads; Fletcher helpfully puts in her own travels as well as Footnotes, a Bibliography, and more, enhance. I add that when traveling in Japan I've looked up and followed some of its imperial roads which also are indelibly printed on the modern landscape.

Milten, Giles. [Nathaniel's Nutmeg](#) (Picador \$21). A paperback with Foreword by William Dalrymple reissued on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication. I read it back then and was enthralled; I reread it and am caught again. The subtitle is "The True and Incredible Adventures of the Spice Trader Who Changed the Course of History," but Milten in depicting the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Western lust for spices, notably cloves which were thought to have medicinal properties, shows how it led to the formation of early shareholder associations like the Dutch East India Company and how those early corporations became power players in politics just as we see burgeoning around us today—not just with the tech bros. Why did the Dutch trade a tiny island called Run for another island, Manhattan? Here's why.

Olson, Parmi. [AI, ChatGPT, and the Race That Will Change the World](#) (St Martins \$30). Read this as a thriller or however you like. I find it so scary I am not going to pick it up.

Reeder, Lydia. [The Cure for Women: Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi and the Challenge to Victorian Medicine](#) (Putnam \$30). Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi, daughter of a publishing magnate and member of New York City's high society, was a revolutionary woman. She was the first woman to be accepted to the École de Médecine at the Sorbonne in Paris, conducted groundbreaking research about the menstrual cycle, and recruited hundreds of fellow society women to the suffragist cause. She published numerous books as an individual, and brought her medical knowledge to a wider audience with her husband, Abraham Jacobi. Reeder recounts this history via an engaging nonfiction narrative that begins in the mid-19th century, with some of the first American women physicians, and concludes with Jacobi's death in 1906 and boldly pulls no punches when describing the hypocritical behavior of many men of that time.

### AND FOUR NEW MEMOIRS

Hollis, Rachel. [What If You Are the Answer?](#) (Author's Equity \$29.99). Hollis raises questions that might nudge you towards personal growth and expanded happiness. This is also a publication by a publishing venture designed to return greater profits to the author which while laudable will, in my opinion, only work for authors already having established a large following and success. In short, making them richer, but not affording an opportunity to new voices.

Leon, Donna. [Wandering through Life](#) (\$17). My friend and fellow opera lover Leon whose marvelous Commissario Brunetti series will be coming to the small screen again, not as a German production but one in English headed by Julian Fellowes, writes about her unexpected journeys, almost accidentally landing her in Venice and into a writing life. It's a delightful read.

Shields, Brooke. [Brooke Shields Is Not Allowed to Get Old](#) (Flatiron \$29.99 SIGNED). Her thoughts on aging as a woman.

Urtubia, Lucio. [To Rob a Bank Is an Honor](#) (AK Press \$22, translated from the Spanish by Paul Sharkey). Spanish forger and revolutionary Urtubia (1930–2020) recounts his life and crimes in this enthralling autobiography. Beginning with his early years growing up in Basque country, where poverty was a "spur to creativity," Urtubia makes clear that his own political commitments as an anarchist are grounded in his youthful experiences of working alongside his family and community ("The keystone of existence is doing right by one's neighbor"). Urtubia's early life seems a whirlwind: conscripted into Franco's army but discharged for his involvement in a smuggling scheme, Urtubia ended up in Paris, working as a stonemason by day (he worked on "the magnificent Gallimard Bookshop"), and printing pamphlets and documents for radical left-wing organizations by night. He transitioned to forging paychecks for striking workers, and, eventually, to a large-scale counterfeiting operation. As much a craftsman as a revolutionary, Urtubia describes his processes in evocative terms: he worked overnight teaching himself to produce "top quality photoengraving" while "making sure no evidence was left behind." Soon Urtubia's outfit was producing books of checks by the hundreds of kilos: "Without violence... we had come across a source of funding for all revolutionary... movements across the globe." Urtubia was eventually caught

and arrested, but released due to lack of evidence. The author's unique voice, irascible and wise, adds a great deal of charm to this meandering memoir. It's a wonder.

## SOME JANUARY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

**As this Booknews is not a full January sweep of new publications this list of Picks may change in Part 2.**

Burke, James Lee. [Harbor Lights](#) (\$18). Eight stories move from the marshlands on the Gulf of Mexico to the sweeping plains of Colorado to prisons, saloons, and trailer parks across the South. A boy and his father watch a German submarine sink an oil tanker as evil forces in the disguise of federal agents try to ruin their family. A girl is beaten up outside a bar as her university-professor father navigates new love and threats from a group of neo-Nazis. A pair of undercover union organizers are hired to break colts for a Hollywood actor, whose "Western hero" façade hides darkness. An oil rig worker witnesses a horrific attack on a local village while on a job in South America and seeks justice through one final act of bravery.

\* Burrows, Steve. [A Siege of Bitterns](#) (One World Publications \$15.99). I am once again recommending the winner of the 2015 Arthur Ellis Award (Canada) for Best First Novel. It starts the Birder Murder Mystery series which takes you to marvelous places with newly appointed police inspector Domenic Jejeune. He doesn't mind ruffling a few feathers. Indeed his success has elevated him into a poster boy for the police. The problem is Jejeune doesn't really want to be a detective at all; he much prefers watching birds. Recently reassigned to the small Norfolk town of Saltmarsh, located in the heart of Britain's premier birding country, Jejeune's two worlds collide with the grisly murder of a prominent ecological activist. His ambitious police superintendent foresees a blaze of welcome publicity, although doubts soon emerge when Jejeune's best theory involves a feud over birdwatching lists. A second murder does little to bolster confidence. Jejeune must call on all his birding knowhow to solve the mystery and deal with unwelcome public acclaim.

You don't have to be a birder enthusiast to enjoy the series. Stand by while we order many more by Burrows who has solved the problem Canadian authors face by gaining a publisher who distributes outside Canada.

Cavanagh, Steve. [Kill for Me, Kill for You](#) (\$18.99). This British author, a pal of Ian Rankin, will visit us in April at last. Yay. Meanwhile here's a new paperback recommended by Alex Michaelides, Janice Hallett, and Anthony Horowitz, and me. The *Publishers Weekly* Starred Review reads:

"Cavanagh keeps readers on their toes in this tense and tricky revenge thriller about grieving women in New York City. Amanda White's stalking of Wallace Crone, a well-connected sex offender she is sure has gotten off the hook for assaulting and murdering her six year-old-daughter and driving her husband to suicide, lands her a restraining order and a mandate to attend a grief support group on the Upper West Side. Drunken conversations with fellow group member Wendy lead the pair to concoct a *Strangers on a Train*-style pact in which Wendy will kill Crone and Amanda will kill the man Wendy claims raped and murdered her daughter three years earlier. In a parallel narrative, 39-year-old Manhattan real estate agent Ruth Gelman survives a home invasion during which she's stabbed multiple times. Unable to give the NYPD more than a thin description of her attacker,

she's left dependent on her husband, Scott, for her safety, and mired in a state of near-constant paranoia. The initial link between the stories is Detective Andrew Farrow, but as the plot gathers steam, the overlaps become more and more substantial and startling. Cavanagh seeds the narrative with a series of explosive, game-changing reveals that, combined with an uncommon attunement to the central characters' emotional arcs, make for a wild, deliciously satisfying ride. Even seasoned genre fans will find themselves white-knuckling this roller coaster."

Du Brul, Jack. [Clive Cussler The Heist](#) (\$19). With the economy and potentially our banking system going to be stressed by the conflicting agendas of the new administration, here's a terrifically told thriller look back at the formation of the Federal Reserve system, replacing individual state banking systems, with detective Isaac Bell. The year is 1914, and Bell is attending a meeting of the newly minted Federal Reserve onboard a yacht with his father, Ebenezer, and President Woodrow Wilson. Shortly after Wilson is called away on an emergency, a mysterious aircraft attempts to bomb the boat. Bell shoots at the bomber until it flees and plans to begin an investigation into the incident. But first, he's pulled into two seemingly unrelated cases. Socialite Jackson Pickett—a friend of Bell's boss, Joseph Van Dorn—has been arrested for the murder of his wife, heiress Fedora Scarsworth-Pickett. Then the Federal Bureau of Engraving is robbed to the tune of nearly a billion dollars. Finding the money and ferreting out the cause of Fedora's death takes plenty of first-class sleuthing...Here's hoping the series has more adventures like this one in store. It does—look for [Clive Cussler The Iron Storm](#) (Putnam \$32) Signed here by DuBrul in May. We still have a few [Signed Firsts](#) (\$32) too.

Finn, AJ. [End of Story](#) (\$18.99). Enter the world of Sebastian Trapp, a reclusive novelist made rich by a long-running detective series and notorious by personal tragedy. On New Year's Eve 20 years earlier, Sebastian's first wife and teenaged son disappeared from separate locations, and Sebastian remains, in the public eye, the primary person of interest. Recently diagnosed with kidney failure and given months to live, Sebastian invites—to the consternation of his second wife, Diana, and adult daughter, Madeleine—Manhattan crime fiction critic Nicky Hunter to move into his Victorian San Francisco mansion while interviewing him for a private memoir. From there, a cat-and-mouse game unfolds as Nicky and Sebastian, both charming but perhaps equally unreliable, chase each other through the labyrinth of Sebastian's life toward the secrets at its core. Meanwhile, Madeleine receives unsettling texts from someone purporting to be her long-lost younger sibling. Given the grand surroundings and rich array of eccentric characters, comparisons to the *Knives Out* film franchise will be inevitable, but Finn cuts much deeper as he resolves the puzzle(s).

Gardner, Lisa. [Still See You Everywhere](#) (\$18.99). Frankie Elkin is an expert at finding the missing persons that the rest of the world has forgotten, but even she couldn't have anticipated this latest request—to locate the long-lost sister of a female serial killer facing execution in three weeks' time. Few could find sympathy for "the Beautiful Butcher" who had led 18 men home from bars before viciously slitting their throats. Now, with only 21 days left to live, Pierson has finally received a lead on the whereabouts of the sister who was kidnapped over a decade ago, and she needs Frankie's help to find her. It sends Frankie

to a remote island in the middle of the Pacific where she goes undercover at the base camp. Her challenge: A dozen strangers. Countless dangerous secrets. Zero means of calling for help. And then the storm rolls in.... This series begins with [Before She Disappeared](#) (\$17) and [One Step Too Far](#) (\$17). Frankie's 4<sup>th</sup>, [Kiss Her Goodbye](#) (Grand Central \$28), releases in August 2025.

\* Jewell, Lisa. [None of This is True](#) (\$18.99). Celebrating her 45<sup>th</sup> birthday at her local pub, popular podcaster Alix Summer crosses paths with an unassuming woman. Josie Fair is also celebrating her 45th birthday. They are, in fact, birthday twins. A few days later, Alix and Josie bump into each other outside Alix's children's school. Josie has been listening to Alix's podcasts and thinks she might be an interesting subject for her series. She is, she tells Alix, on the cusp of great changes in her life. Josie's life appears to be strange and complicated, and although Alix finds her unsettling, she can't quite resist the temptation to keep making the podcast. Slowly she starts to realize that Josie has been hiding some very dark secrets, and before she knows it, Josie has inveigled her way into Alix's life—and into her home. But, as quickly as she arrived, Josie disappears. Only then does Alix discover that Josie has left a terrible and terrifying legacy in her wake, and that Alix has become the subject of her own true crime podcast....

Notaro, Laurie. [The Murderess](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$16.99) presents a haunting true-crime novel about Winnie Ruth Judd, one of the twentieth century's most notorious and enigmatic killers. It's October 1931. When Winnie Ruth Judd arrives at the Los Angeles train station from Phoenix, her shipping trunks catch the attention of a suspicious porter. By the time they're pried open, revealing the dismembered bodies of two women inside, Ruth has disappeared into the crowd. The search for, and eventual apprehension of, the Trunk Murderess quickly becomes a headline-making sensation but down the years there is much more sensation and still unanswered questions. If you've read Jana Bommersbach's excellent [The Trunk Murderess](#) (\$18.99) then here's another look at the complicated life of Judd.

Pease, Amy. [Northwoods](#) (\$17.99). This knockout First Mystery Club selection of 2024 was such a hit not only with me but with William Kent Krueger that he shared the zoom event for Amy with me. Actually he led the conversation while I listened. The dark underbelly of an idyllic Wisconsin resort town is revealed in the aftermath of a murder.

The *NY Times* liked it too: "Eli North has returned to Shaky Lake, after a harrowing tour of Afghanistan, struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder. His mother, Marge — the town sheriff — throws him a lifeline: She loves her son, and thinks that working as her deputy might offer him a way out of the darkness. But when Eli, responding to a disturbance call from a lakeside resort, discovers the body of a teenager named Ben crumpled in a small fishing boat. Marge becomes convinced that 'Ben's death and Eli's life might be intertwined somehow.' She's right, of course, and as Eli grapples with his problems, self-medicating with alcohol, the investigation plunges him into an abyss of ruthless pharmaceutical companies and personal betrayals. Pease's writing reflects the reality and the bleakness of living in a place like Shaky Lake. Through Eli, we see the damage, but also the promise of a way into the sunlight."

Perry, Thomas. [Hero](#) (\$16.95). Justine Poole drifted into her job as a private security agent. Now, in her mid-20s, she provides

security for the wealthy and famous of Los Angeles. One night, things go wrong. Five men follow an older couple onto their property, but Justine is already there. She shoots and kills two of the men, and the others are arrested. The media is hungry for Justine's name and photo, wanting to make her a hero, but her boss wisely realizes that the media might turn on her, branding her a murderer. This plays right into the hands of Mr. Conger, a bad boss who's angry that a young woman has killed two of his crew, harming his credibility. So he hires Leo Seal, who will kill anyone for a price, to hunt her down. Leo doesn't count on the evasive smarts of a wily young woman who knows the LA streets and how to hide from a stalker. After he kills her boss, Justine can only rely on herself in a deadly, sometimes leisurely, game of cat-and-mouse. See Signed Books for Tom's new novel where once again he toys with the characters—and us.

#### NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACK

Akbar, Kaveh. [Martyr!](#) (\$18). A young Iranian American aspiring poet and recovering addict grieves his parents' deaths while fantasizing about his own. "Haunted by death, the book also teems with life in the inventive beauty of its sentences, the vividness of its characters, and the surprising twists in its plot," says Junot Diaz in his review for the *NY Times* which includes *Martyr!* in its 10 Best Books of 2024.

Bennett, Robert Jackson. [The Tainted Cup](#) (\$20). In Daretana's greatest mansion, a high imperial officer lies dead—killed, to all appearances, when a tree erupted from his body. Even here at the Empire's borders, where contagions abound and the blood of the leviathans works strange magical changes, it's a death both terrifying and impossible. "This fantasy mystery novel introduces two dynamic detectives in a strange and frightening world, as if Nero Wolfe were solving mysteries in Area X... *The Tainted Cup* is a thoroughly satisfying delight from start to finish."—*The New York Times Book Review*

Burton, Tara Isabella. [Here in Avalon](#) (\$18.99). "Adeptly warping traditional fairy tropes, Burton weaves a lush ode to searching for the magic in life. Thanks to a neglectful mother, sisters Rose and Cecilia all but raised themselves in New York City. Whereas flighty Cecilia took off to search for love and adventure on her 18th birthday, Rose stayed put, building a stable life that includes a good job as a coder and a strong, loving relationship with Caleb, her boyfriend of five years. Now Cecilia's back in town, and though Rose loves her sister deeply, years of witnessing Cecilia drift, coupled with the criticism of her sister she's heard from others, has Rose questioning Cecilia's place in her life. Then Cecilia begins to act even more erratically, talking about fairies and a mysterious, possibly mystical cabaret called Avalon before disappearing. Now Rose must choose whether to follow the magic and bring her sister home or remain rooted in the real world. Dreams and desires play a central role in this modern-day hero's journey."—*PW*. There is much to ponder here as we head into 2025 and our own choices.

Cameron, Marc. [Breakneck](#) (\$17.95). A train ride through the austere beauty of Alaska's icy wilderness becomes a harrowing fight for survival at the Gateway to the Arctic in the thrilling new Arliss Cutter adventure from longtime Poisoned Pen favorite Cameron.

\* Clark, Cassandra. [Night of the Wolf](#) (\$18.99). *The Canterbury Tales* are key to the plot here. Friar Rodrick Chandler, who once

worked for the crown as an interrogator and a spy, is on the outs with the new regime. Henry IV, viewed by many as a usurper, has implemented a new law, under which heretics are to be publicly burned at the stake. Chandler narrowly escaped that fate after he interfered with efforts to incriminate Geoffrey Chaucer, and he gets embroiled in a whodunit after the wife of a wool merchant dies under suspicious circumstances. Though her fall from the roof of her home, where she was apparently visiting her private garden, appears to be an accident, her husband suspects foul play. Chandler's investigation coincides with his efforts to secure the only existing copy of *The Canterbury Tales* from the king's forces, who would destroy it. Clark's use of period detail is unparalleled. Recommended to fans of Candace Robb.

De La Motte, Anders. [The Mountain King](#) (\$19.99). Why not ScandiNoir for January? Smilla Holst and Malik Mansur, a college-age couple with a penchant for exploring abandoned buildings in southern Sweden, disappear. Leonore Asker, head of the Serious Crime Command in Skåne, is on the case—at least until national bigwig detective Jonas Hellman arrives from Stockholm to assist her. The two have history: they carried on an affair that ended when Asker reported Hellman for misconduct. Hellman schemes to have Asker moved off of the case and she is swiftly demoted to manage a team of “HR nightmares” in the Resources Unit and discovers that her new colleagues have been working on a seemingly trivial vandalism case involving an extraordinarily detailed model railroad in nearby Hässelholm. As the plot slowly unfolds, that vandalism becomes key to discovering what happened to the missing college students, and to uncovering several other crimes carried out by a figure who calls himself the Mountain King.

Due, Tanarive. [The Reformatory](#) (\$19.99) is a well regarded horror of a story set in Jim Crow Florida that follows Robert Stephens Jr. as he's sent to a segregated reform school that is a chamber of terrors where he sees the horrors of racism and injustice, for the living, and the dead.

Geissinger, JT. [Ruthless Creatures: Queens and Monsters](#) (Tordotcom \$19.99) is a “scorchingly hot mafia romance about two people bound together by a debt that must be collected. No matter the cost.”

Grippando, James. [Goodbye Girl](#) (\$18.99). A feud between a pop-singing phenom and her ex-husband pulls Florida lawyer Jack Swytek into a whirlpool of murder, betrayal, and modern-day piracy. 18th in a series you who like *The Lincoln Lawyer* can enjoy.

Hayes, Terry. [The Year of the Locust](#) (\$22.99). We waited forever for the author of [I Am Pilgrim](#) (\$19.99), a mega international hit, to give us a new book. And now CIA spy Kane, a Denied Access Area spy for the CIA, ignoring boundaries, knows when to run, when to hide—and when to shoot. But some places are too dangerous, even for a man of Kane's experience. The badlands where the borders of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan meet are such a place—a place where violence is the only way to survive. Kane travels there to exfiltrate a man with vital information for the safety of the West—but instead he meets an adversary who will take the world to the brink of extinction.

Hunter, Stephen. [Front Sight: Three Swagger Novellas](#) (\$19.99), gives us stories that follow each generation of the iconic Swagger

family—grandfather Charles, father Earl, and my favorite, Bob Lee. We are in the Chicago stockyards with Charles, in a small Maryland town hit by a bank robbery with Earl, and dealing with a Hot Springs, Arkansas, homicide with Bob Lee. I have no new book to report at this time, alas. While I am on Hunter I recommend two of my very favorites: [The 47<sup>th</sup> Samurai](#) (\$9.99) featuring Earl and Bob in two time frames; [Basil's War](#) (\$16.95), a spy story set in WWII France featuring a swashbuckling British agent and thrill seeker who abandons sleeping with Vivien Leigh to set out on a crucial mission. This is truly a James Bond intrigue but with a solid basis in fact.

Kuang, R F. [Yellowface](#) (\$18.99). Authors June Hayward and Athena Liu were supposed to be twin rising stars. But Athena's a literary darling. June Hayward is literally nobody. Who wants stories about basic white girls, June thinks. So when June witnesses Athena's death in a freak accident, she acts on impulse: she steals Athena's just-finished masterpiece, an experimental novel about the unsung contributions of Chinese laborers during World War I. So what if June edits Athena's novel and sends it to her agent as her own work? So what if she lets her new publisher rebrand her as Juniper Song—complete with an ambiguously ethnic author photo? Doesn't this piece of history deserve to be told, whoever the teller? That's what June claims, but....

Kubica, Mary. [She's Not Sorry](#) (\$18.99). A woman is brought into the ICU where our narrator is a nurse. The patient is in a coma after falling from a pedestrian bridge over the railway tracks. At first it's believed the woman attempted suicide, but soon details emerge that suggest she might have been pushed. Our nurse is drawn into this woman's case, and we follow her as she becomes more and more invested in uncovering the truth. Meanwhile, a woman from her past unexpectedly shows up, having just left her abusive husband. These two stories swirl around each other, building in intensity, until they collide....

Lynch, Paul. [Prophet Song](#) (\$18). The winner of the 2023 Booker Prize give us an object lesson. On a dark, wet evening in Dublin, scientist and mother-of-four Eilish Stack answers her front door to find two officers from Ireland's newly formed secret police on her step. They have arrived to interrogate her husband, a trade unionist. Ireland is falling apart, caught in the grip of a government turning towards tyranny. As the life she knows and the ones she loves disappear before her eyes, Eilish must contend with the dystopian logic of her new, unraveling country. How far will she go to save her family? And what—or who—is she willing to leave behind? “In masterfully controlled and powerful prose, [Lynch] yanks the reader headlong into the experience of living in a country that is taken over by an authoritarian government — slowly, slowly, and then suddenly and completely.”

Marlantes, Karl. [Cold Victory](#) (\$18). In 1947, military attachés gather at a party. An American and a Russian diplomat agree to a friendly ski race across the Finnish countryside as the Cold War is heating up.” Marlantes moves from the jungles of Vietnam to the spectral tundra of a very cold Cold War—era Finland where innocents abroad fail to foresee consequences... [he's] better than Tom Clancy when it comes to the human element, but he's similarly fascinated by militaria and historical detail.”—*Kirkus Reviews*



Morrell, David. [The Brotherhood of the Rose](#) (\$19). They were orphans, Chris and Saul—raised in a Philadelphia school for boys, bonded by friendship, and devoted to a mysterious man called Eliot. He visited them and brought them candy. He treated them like sons. He trained them to be assassins. Now he is trying desperately to have them killed. This is the Jack Carr Book Club selection for January so a 15% discount applies. And here you can partially envision the series that Gregg Hurwitz writes called Orphan X.

\* Paris, BA. [The Guest](#) (\$18). Unhappily married English couple Iris and Gabriel are returning home to the village of Markham after a two-week holiday. During their vacation, Gabriel, a doctor, came across a fatal bike accident while out jogging one morning. The 18-year-old victim was a former player on the youth soccer team Gabriel once coached, and he remains plagued both by his failure to save the young man and by the fact that his final words were “Tell mum I’ll never forgive her.” When the couple arrives home, they’re shocked to discover that their friend, Laure, has moved in. Laure explains that her husband has fathered a child with another woman, and she needs space to clear her head. She vastly overstays her welcome, however, leading Iris and Gabriel to question her motives. Then the couple meet their new neighbors, whose gardener, Joseph, develops a connection with Laure—and whose shady past eventually throws all their complicated entanglements into disarray. Paris deftly juggles the many characters and plot strands on the way toward a wild climax. The results are electrifying.

Prose, Nita. [The Mystery Guest](#) (\$18). Molly Gray is not like anyone else. With her flair for cleaning and proper etiquette, she has risen through the ranks of the glorious five-star Regency Grand Hotel to become the esteemed Head Maid. But just as her life reaches a pinnacle state of perfection, her world is turned upside down when J. D. Grimthorpe, the world-renowned mystery author, drops dead—very dead—on the hotel’s tearoom floor. I am delighted to say that Prose will visit us with a new Molly mystery on April 10 7 PM. Calendar it now.

\* Richell, Hannah. [The Search Party](#) (16.99). You are invited to join six old friends for one wild weekend at Cornwall’s newest glamping spot. The guests: The anxious hosts with everything at stake. The boho hippies concealing a private darkness. The TV celebrity with his hot new wife and an even hotter temper. The exhausted new parents with a secret to hide. The one that won’t make it home alive. The tents are up. The bonfire is lit. Get ready for one hell of a party. A UK import reflecting the heavy trend of the destination thriller which really all are a play on Christie’s *And Then There Were None*.

Theroux, Paul. [Burma Sahib](#) (19.99) explores one of English literature’s most beloved and controversial figures—George Orwell—and the early years as an officer in colonial Burma that transformed him from Eric Blair, the British Raj policeman, into Orwell the anticolonial writer. At age nineteen, young Eton graduate Eric Blair set sail for India, dreading the assignment ahead. Along with several other young conscripts, he would be trained for three years as a servant of the British Empire, overseeing the local policemen in Burma. But doing all of this while grappling with his own self-worth, his sense that he was not cut out for this.... Having traveled in Burma from Mandalay to Yangon a little over a decade ago I can see that Burma has not

recovered from colonialism, rejecting the good like infrastructure with the bad, nor been able to craft a unified country or unpretentious government.

\* Westerson, Jeri. [The Isolated Séance](#) (\$18.99). Lesa reviews: “What happens to Sherlock Holmes’s street urchins, the Baker Street Irregulars, when they outgrow their usefulness? Timothy Badger follows in the footsteps of his mentor and becomes a consulting detective. As much as Badger tries, he only occasionally stumbles on a clue, so he partners with Benjamin Watson, a Black man who has turned his hand to a little of everything. They’re desperate for a successful case when Holmes sends Thomas Brent to them. Brent was valet to Horace Quinn until the night Quinn held a séance in his house. The oil lamp went out, and by the time Brent found a light, Quinn was dead with a knife in his chest. It’s a tough case for the duo as they’re followed by a determined woman reporter and trace a suspect to a Travellers’ camp; while investigating, Badger ends up in jail and has to be bailed out by Holmes. Westerson writes about Victorian street life and desperation in a pastiche relieved by humor.” See Signed books for the sequel. She also writes the 14th Century Crispin Guest mysteries and the Henry VIII era King’s Fool series and brings us the sequel to that on January 11.

#### OUR JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Baldacci, David. [Simply Lies: A Psychological Thriller](#) (\$10.99). Two women—one a former detective, the other a dangerous con artist—go head-to-head in an electrifying game of cat and mouse.

Bartz, Julia. [The Writing Retreat](#) (\$10.99). While attending a month-long writing retreat at the estate of a feminist horror writer who issues a life-changing challenge, Alex, determined to win this seemingly impossible contest, ignores the strange happenings around her until the disappearance of a fellow writer leads her on a desperate search for the truth.

Clark, Mary Higgins/Alafair Burke. [It Had to Be You](#) (\$10.99). Burke continues, and continues to update, the late Mary Higgins Clark’s bestselling series about true-crime TV producer Laurie Moran. The celebration of twins Simon and Ethan Harrington’s college graduations 10 years ago was curdled when longtime babysitter/dogwalker Jenna Merrick entered the family’s Cape Cod vacation home a few hours later to find the place deserted except for the bodies of Sarah and Richard Harrington, the twins’ parents, turning the site from a party scene to a crime scene.

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [The Night Island](#) (\$9.99). The disappearance of a mysterious informant leads two people desperate for answers to an island of deadly deception in this new novel in the Lost Night Files trilogy which is continued with book three signed here on January 12. See Signed Books.

#### JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACKS

Beaton, M C. [Death of a Spy](#) (\$8.99). Hamish Macbeth #36. Sergeant Hamish Macbeth and his new assistant officer; the enigmatic American James Bland, whose true mission is to track down the members of a Russian spy network, deal with it the usual crop of traffic incidents, lost wallets, lost dogs, and lost people, but a spate of burglaries committed by a man dubbed “Spiderman” give Hamish cause for serious concern.

Chow, Jennifer J. [Star-crossed Egg Tarts](#) (St Martins \$9.99), Magical Fortune Cookie #2. As Felicity Jin prepares for the Lum-Wu wedding at Pixie Park, she discovers groomsman

Miles Wu dead beneath her egg tarts display, prompting her to investigate his murder and clear her best friend Kelvin, who is implicated in the crime.

Evanovich, Janet. [Dirty Thirty](#) (\$10.99). Stephanie Plum #39. Trenton, New Jersey's most underappreciated bounty hunter, Stephanie Plum, while taking care of her boyfriend's giant orange dog, tracks the former security guard of a local jeweler who supposedly stole a fortune of diamonds.

King, Stephen. [Thinner](#) (\$11.99). Reissue. After an old gypsy woman is killed by his car, lawyer Billy Halleck is stricken with a flesh-wasting malady and must undertake a nightmarish journey to confront the forces of death.

Murphy, Nora. [The New Mother](#) (\$9.99). New mother Natalie Fanning, left mostly alone with her newborn son, has no one to help her until her neighbor Paul provides the lifeline she needs, but she soon discovers it's no coincidence he befriended her as she becomes a pawn in his twisted game.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder at an Irish Chipper](#) (\$8.99). Irish Village #10. Taking a holiday by the sea to eat enough fish and chips to support the struggling business of the aptly named Mrs. Chipper, newlyweds Siobhan and Macdara Flannery instead find the proprietor murdered and place their long-delayed honeymoon on hold to catch a slippery killer.

Patterson, James. [Obsessed: A Psychological Thriller](#) (\$10.99) Michael Bennett #15. When a killer becomes obsessed with his oldest daughter, Detective Michael Bennett will do anything to keep his family safe.

Tata, A.J. [The Phalanx Code](#) (\$9.99). Garrett Sinclair #3. Garrett Sinclair escapes from prison to rescue his team from the manipulations of two tech moguls and learns of a devastating family secret in the process.