

BOOKNEWS from

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FEBRUARY BOOKNEWS

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.

... for a short month it's super long on special days, celebrations, and several thousand of new books

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1 2:00 PM Live

James Byrne discusses [Chain Reaction](#) (St Martins \$29)
Dez Limerick rollicks along

MONDAY FEBRUARY 3 7:00 PM Live

Joseph Finder discusses [The Oligarchs Daughter](#) (Harper \$30)
Our February Crime Collectors Subscription Club Book
We sold out of the 100 art prints created by Finder for the book

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4 6:00 PM Virtual

Jonathan Kellerman discusses [Open Season](#) (Random \$30)
Alex Delaware & the LAPD's Milo Sturgis are genuinely baffled in this one
Signed books on sale

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5 6:00 PM Virtual

Walter Mosley with Patrick
Walter Mosley discusses [Been Wrong So Long It Feels Like Right](#): (LittleBrown \$29)
PI Joe King Oliver
Signed books in stock

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 6 6:00 PM Virtual

William Boyle with Patrick
Boyle discusses [Saint of the Narrows Street](#) (Soho \$28.95)
Signed books available for our February Hardboiled Crime Pick

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7 6:00 PM Live

Christopher Farnsworth discusses [Robert B Parker's Buried Secrets](#) (Putnam \$30)
Jesse Stone

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 8 10:00 AM Live

Local Authors Fair
Support independently published authors

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 8 5:00 PM Live

Robert Dugoni with Jeff Langholz
The authors discuss [Hold Strong](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99)
A novel based on a true WWII event in the Pacific

MONDAY FEBRUARY 10 6:00 PM Virtual

Allison Montclair discusses [An Excellent Thing in a Woman](#) (Severn \$29.99)
Post war London and a new start for the Right Sort Marriage Bureau women
Signed books available

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 11 6:00 PM Virtual

Steve Berry discusses [The Medici Return](#) (Grand Central \$30)
Cotton Malone & Vatican intrigue—a bit of Dan Brown here
Signed books available but slightly late

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 12 7:00 PM Live

Gregg Hurwitz discusses [Nemesis](#) (St Martins \$30)
Orphan X
Our copies come with Challenge Coins as appear in the book

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13 2:00 PM Virtual

Marie Benedict discusses [The Queens of Crime](#) (St Martins \$29)
Special recipe cards included in our Signed copies
Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Ngaio Marsh, Baroness Orczy solve a crime on their way to admittance into the invitation only Detection Club (Martin Edwards is the current Chairman)

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 13 6:00 PM Virtual

John Sayles with Patrick
Sayles discusses [To Save the Man](#) (Melville House \$29.99)
Signed copies on sale now ... a book for fans of Tommy Orange

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 15 10:30 AM Live and Virtual

Croak and Dagger discusses [The Sunset Years of Agnes Sharp](#) (\$18.95)

MONDAY FEBRUARY 17 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

James Rollins and illustrator Soraya Corcoran
Rollins discusses [A Dragon of Black Glass](#) (Forge \$32.99)
Book #3 in the Moonfall series
Our copies each come with 2 exclusive maps Signed by Rollins & the artist Soraya Corcoran

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18 3:00 PM virtual

Sophie Sullivan with John

Sullivan discusses [Get Lost with You](#) (St Martins \$18)
Small town sweet romance

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18 7:00 PM

Mark Greaney with Jack Stewart

Greaney discusses [Midnight Black](#) (Berkley \$29.99)
The Grey Man on a personal mission inside Russia

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 19 6:00 PM Live Offsite

Coinneach MacLeod with Diana Gabaldon

They discuss [The Hebridean Baker: The Scottish Cookbook](#)
(Sourcebooks \$29.99)

TICKETS: [\\$35 admits one](#) includes one copy of the cookbook
[\\$40 admits two](#) includes one copy of the cookbook

Location: Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 4140 N Miller
Road 85251

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20 6:00 PM Virtual

Stephen Spotswood discusses [Dead in the Frame](#) (Knopf \$28)

The Nero Wolf Award winner discusses a new Pentecost and
Parker 1947 investigation

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21 7:00 PM Live

Sara Gran discusses [Little Mysteries: Nine Miniature Puzzles](#)
(Dreamland Books \$18.95)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 11:00 AM Live

The Cookbook Club discusses Kevin/Jeffrey Pang's [A Very
Chinese Cookbook](#) (America Test Kitchen \$35)

Bring a dish to share

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 7:00 PM Live and Virtual

SciFi Friday discusses Becky Chambers' [Monk & Robot series](#)

MONDAY FEBRUARY 24 7:00 PM Live Offsite

CJ Box discusses [Battle Mountain](#) (Putnam \$32)

The 25th Joe Pickett AND Nate Romanowski (plus Geronimo
Jones, falconer)

Location: Scottsdale United Methodist Church, 4140 N Miller
Road 85251

Free to attend

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 25 12:00 PM Live

Author Afternoon Event

Karen Schaler discusses [Every Day Is Christmas](#) (Hawktail
\$16.99)

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 1:00 PM Virtual

Gillian McAllister discusses [Famous Last Words](#) (Harper \$30)

A truly baffling plot

Our March British Crime Book of the Month

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 7:00 PM Live

Callan Wink discusses [Beartooth](#) (Spiegel & Grau \$28)

Two brothers, Yellowstone... a book for Box fans

Our March Notable New Fiction Subscription Book of the Month

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27 5:00 PM Virtual

Allison Epstein discusses [Fagin the Thief](#) (Knopf \$28)

Our February Historical Fiction Subscription Book

Dickens couldn't do it better per all Starred Reviews

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 27th 7:00 PM Live

Hardboiled Crime discusses Fuminori Nakamura's [The Thief](#)
(\$16.95)

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 7:00 PM Live

Dr. Ian K. Smith discusses [Eat Your Age](#) (Harper \$30)

Defy the effects of aging with thoughtfully calibrated nutrition

This event is open to you but staged for medical students

Dr. Smith is also a crackerjack crime writer of a Chicago PI series
and we will have copies on hand

OUR FEBRUARY BOOK SUBSCRIPTION CLUB PICKS

We select a book and charge it to you. Free shipping to US Customers.

It's a Book in a Box treat each month. We do ask that you sign up for a minimum of 3 months.

To join, gift, or request information please email sales@poisonedpen.com

British Crime Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per
month

McCluskey, Laura. [The Wolf Tree](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per
month

TBD

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

Finder, Joseph. [The Oligarch's Daughter](#) (Signed copies sold
out)

First Mystery Club One Signed First Printing per month

Kerr, Jakob. [Dead Money](#)

Hardboiled/Noir Club One Signed First Printing per month

Boyle, William. [Saint of the Narrows Street](#)

Historical Fiction Club One First Printing per month

Epstein, Alison. [Fagin the Thief](#)

Historical Fiction Paperback Club One Unsigned paperback
per month

Koe, Amanda Lee. [Delayed Rays of a Star](#)

Notable New Fiction One Signed First Printing per month

Butler, Nickolas. [A Forty Year Kiss](#)

Romance and Relationships One unsigned hardcover or
paperback per month

Slator, Annabelle. [The Launch Date](#)

SOME SIGNED BOOKS FOR FEBRUARY

* Benedict, Marie. [The Queens of Crime](#) (St Martins \$29). The concept is that in 1930 London Dorothy L. Sayers rallies Agatha Christie, Margery Allingham, Ngaio Marsh, and Baroness Orczy to crack a case so they will be respectfully admitted into the newly formed Detection Club whose first chair is G.K. Chesterton. The club, a social not a professional organization, admits members by invitation only. Perhaps the authors by solving an actual, not fictional case, can gain the male members' respect—and club membership. It's a clever idea. I've been a guest at meetings of the club in London and known its recent past Chairs HRF Keating, Simon Brett, and Martin Edwards, well enough to regard this as fiction, not actual club history. Still, you'll have fun with it.

Interestingly enough there is a March book coming called [The Four Queens of Crime](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99/ also \$19.99), featuring Christie, Sayers, Marsh, and Margery Allingham, Library Journal's Debut Mystery of the Month. Therein the four are hosting a gala to raise money for the Women's Voluntary Service to help Britain prepare for war. Baronet Sir Henry Heathcote has loaned Hursley House for the event, and all the elites of London society are attending. The gala is a brilliant success, despite a few hiccups, but the next morning, Sir Henry is found dead in the library. John and I look forward to reading it, maybe getting Signed copies.

Berry, Steve. [The Medici Return](#) (Grand Central \$30). Berry, proponent of History Matters, draws upon Vatican history and politics and that of Florence's mighty Medici family in a new thriller for Cotton Malone who apparently is never going to be fully retired and run his Copenhagen bookshop. He's drawn back into action by his former handler, Stephanie Nelle, after the Vatican is roiled by a scandal: a church official on trial for embezzlement and theft has implicated Cardinal Jason Richter—a close friend of the current pope, who will vote in the College of Cardinals to elect his successor—in his schemes. Malone breaks into Richter's home and verifies that he's in possession of stolen items, but suspects the cardinal has been framed. By whom? A populist Italian politician working to parlay purported Medici ancestry and the revelation of a loan between family and a Renaissance Pope into papal backing in the upcoming election? Power plays among Cardinals as the Pope actually signals early retirement?

By the way you can bone up on the Medici by watching Ken Burn's documentary on *Leonardo da Vinci* on PBS. The second two hours could have been edited to one, but the first two are fabulous. And Vatican politics by watching the film *Conclave* based on Robert Harris' book [Conclave](#) (\$18),

Box, C J. [Battle Mountain](#) (Penguin \$32). **This is special—the 25th book in the Joe Pickett series. CJ has signed every one of them for us at The Pen.**

We open on Nate Romanowski stalking Alex Soledad, the man who killed Nate's wife, up a frozen creek to an isolated cabin. There's a fire but Soledad isn't among the bodies. Nate is so shaken he drops off the grid with his two falcons to reset. Fellow falconer Geronimo Jones tracks him down and enlists in hunting down Soledad and...Dallas Cates whom we've also learned to hate for the damages he's inflicted. Elk season arrives and two hunting guides head to a primo spot in the Sierra Madre range, only to encounter an armed group. It doesn't end

well. Joe Pickett then gets a call from the Governor asking for help in finding his missing son-in-law in the Sierras.... For help Joe enlists the help of a local, a rookie game warden named Susan Kany (new character!). So two groups on the hunt – will their journeys merge?

Boyle, William. [Saint of the Narrows Street](#) (Soho \$28.95). Patrick reviews: "Boyle's rapidly become one of my favorite writers. As with Pelecanos and his DC-set novels, Boyle dissects America through the microcosm of one neighborhood in Brooklyn. The insular pull of the neighborhood, that sense that many of his working class characters feel trapped and yearn to escape (this runs through all of the books) leads to a lot of desperate schemes that usually don't work out so well. His new novel, his most ambitious to date, centers on one young woman's accidental killing of her abusive husband, her tragic mistake of covering up the crime, and the ramifications of this act of desperation played out over decades. Things get especially interesting when the young son grows up and becomes obsessed with finding his father. If you don't know Boyle's work start here."

Bray, Libba. [Under the Same Stars](#) (Macmillan \$24.99). For Teens and up, a three-eras historical. In 1940s Germany, Sophie is excited to discover a message waiting for her in the local Bridegroom's Oak from a mysterious suitor. Meanwhile, her best friend, Hanna, is sending messages too—but not to find love. As World War II unfolds in their small town of Kleinwald, the oak may hold the key to resistance against the Nazis. In 1980s West Germany, American teen transplant Jenny feels suffocated by her strict parents and is struggling to fit in until she finds herself falling for Lena, a punk-rock girl hell-bent on tearing down the wall separating West Germany from East Germany, and meeting Frau Hermann, a kind old lady with secrets of her own. In Spring, 2020, New York City, best friends Miles and Chloe are slogging through the last few months of senior year when an unexpected package from Chloe's grandmother leads them to investigate a cold case about two unidentified teenagers who went missing under the Bridegroom's Oak eighty years ago.

Brooks, Geraldine. [Memorial Days: A Memoir](#) (Viking \$28) is a beautifully written story of grief over the loss of a spouse. I appreciate how honest Brooks is with her grief over the death of husband Tony (a terrific writer himself), addressing her regrets as well as her intense love for her partner. Our Deb says, "The author of such fabulous books as *Horse, Year of Wonders* and *People of the Book* takes us on her journey after her husband's sudden, untimely death. Written in a stream of discovery style, no subject is taboo as she re-discovers life in an alien terrain. A gifted writer fights her way back, by giving us a stunning glimpse into her amazing life and love."

Butler, Nickolas. [A Forty Year Kiss](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99) delivers the story of Charlie and Vivian, two people in their 60s who reconnect after a failed marriage in their 20s. Charlie is recently retired and a three-time divorcé who finds himself thinking more and more about his first wife, whom he considers to be his only true love. He messages her on Facebook, and the two reconnect... "While Nick dedicates the novel to Nora Ephron—and indeed it's deftly written and should translate

seamlessly to the screen—it might be more evocative of Kent Haruf in *Plainsong* or *Our Souls at Night*. Its Midwest is weathered and described with affection and restraint; its people are presented whole and in context, the seldom-seen brought into vivid focus, their yearnings and failings intact. Our **February Notable New Fiction Subscription Pick** has “the courage to suggest it’s not too late—for romance, or transcendence, or just to be better. It’s a book for the midnight optimist that is waiting inside us all.” — Leif Enger.

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?”

Dugoni, Robert/Jeff Langholz. [Hold Strong](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). Signed by both authors who anchored this novel in a true story. Sam Carlson is a projectionist in small-town Minnesota, where fantasies unspool in glorious black and white—for him and for his sweetheart, college-bound math whiz Sarah Haber. When the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, Sam is sent to the Philippines and captured as a POW. Brutalized but unbroken by the Bataan Death March and POW camps, Sam is one of 1800 starved and weakened prisoners herded into the cargo hold of a barbaric hell ship called the *Arisan Maru*, his survival doubtful. Determined to use her math skills on the home front, Sarah is recruited to Washington, DC, into the covert field of code breaking. When Sarah intercepts a message about a Japanese convoy, the US Navy’s mission is clear: sink the *Arisan Maru* and send it to the bottom of the South China Sea. Now, the lives of the two young lovers are about to inadvertently collide in one of the most shocking acts of World War II. This is a fine read for fans of James R. Benn’s and Stephen Hunter’s WWII novels. The paperback edition: [Hold Strong](#) (\$16.99)

* Epstein, Alison. [Fagin the Thief](#) (Knopf \$28). Our **February Historical Fiction Subscription Club Pick** is not an easy read: it doesn’t gloss over the horrors of living dirt poor in Victorian London, nor the virulent Anti-Semitism. Epstein’s third novel has earned a constellation of Starred Reviews.

“In creating an origin story for the legendary thief, Epstein deftly addresses *Oliver Twist*’s longstanding

‘Fagin problem,’ not by sanitizing or disowning him, as other adaptations have done, but by lending him a humanity that Dickens’s caricature did not. It’s a lively, finely drawn reimagining and a deeply reverent corrective of a literary monument.”—*Library Journal*.

“More than a simple reimagining of Dickens’s most troubling villain, *Fagin the Thief* is a haunted look at the loneliness of Victorian London’s underworld. Epstein’s rogues and thieves are at once tenderly imagined and savagely cruel, carving out precarious lives in the shadow of the gallows and the jail. Clever, cowardly, soft-hearted and selfish all at once, Jacob Fagin sheds the constraints of his original story and demands the right to speak for himself.”

“In this magnificent retelling of *Oliver Twist*, Epstein focuses on one of the original novel’s most controversial characters, Jacob Fagin. The son of a thief, Jacob is raised after his father’s execution by his seamstress mother, Leah, in East London. At 11, he glimpses a pickpocket at work and persuades the man to teach him the trade, at which he proves to be a natural. Leah warns him about the dangers, but he can’t resist the chance for an income far greater than what he could earn at the menial jobs available to lower-class Jews.... Epstein’s Fagin, rarely admirable but surprisingly sympathetic, is an unforgettable creation, and her vibrant secondary characters [*Oliver Twist*, Bill Sykes, Nancy] and depictions of Victorian London add to the novel’s power. Dickens’s fans and critics alike will love this.”

Finally, as often happens, another Dickens moment now: A.J. West, [The Betrayal of Thomas True](#) (Orenda \$26.99)! Part queer romance, part historical thriller, it follows the titular character as he explores the queer underground of early 1700s London. The author describes it as “magical gay Dickens.”

Estleman, Loren D. [Smoke on the Water](#) (Forge \$28.99). It’s always a pleasure to spend time with Detroit PI Amos Walker in one of mystery’s longest running PI series. As the smoke from Canadian wildfires chokes Detroit, Walker is tasked with investigating a fatal hit-and-run. The victim is Spencer Bennett, a junior law associate with the Waterford Group, and he supposedly had a file of confidential documents on him when he died. But those documents have now gone missing, and the firm is dead set on Walker finding them. As Walker digs deeper into the events leading to Bennett’s death, all signs are pointing towards the crash being anything but accidental. Summer in Detroit was hot enough before the smoke descended, but as the temperature rises and more bodies crop up in connection to the missing file, Walker will have to track down those documents—and unearth why they were worth killing over.

Farnsworth, Christopher. [Robert B Parker’s Buried Secrets](#) (Putnam \$30). Paradise isn’t paradise, and the Parker legacy lives on now with Farnsworth. Chief of Police Jesse Stone is on his way home from a long shift when a call comes in for a welfare check on an elderly resident of the wealthy seaside Massachusetts town. Inside a house packed with junk and trash is a man’s dead body. It’s a sad, lonely end for the hoarder, but nothing criminal—until Jesse finds the photos of murder victims strewn around the corpse which is lying on top of \$2 million in cash. Now Jesse faces danger from an aging mobster and maybe inside his own department where he has made a new hire.... This is a dark book with little humor to lighten it but Jesse is more honest with himself as a cop and as a person.

Finder, Joseph. [The Oligarch's Daughter](#) (Harper \$30). Finder 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.

Goodman, Allegra. [Isola](#) (Random House \$28.99). A February Indie Next Pick "For those who loved *Frozen River* and *The Mercies*, this is a riveting historical fiction read — from court to a cave, from France to the mighty St. Lawrence River, from love to grief. Marguerite makes her way as a survivor, a tutor, a storyteller, a lover." I love that she battled and beat off polar bears while intentionally marooned on an island in the river by her pissed off guardian after she took a lover on the voyage.

Gran, Sara. [Little Mysteries: Nine Miniature Puzzles](#) (Dreamland Books \$18.95), Gran fan boy Patrick offers this description: "Who destroyed Professor Wolf's prize-winning tomatoes? What's behind the mysterious goings-on at Killington Manor? And why does life sometimes feel like we're stuck in a mystery, with few clues and no solutions? In her first collection of short stories featuring both new characters and characters from the beloved Claire DeWitt series. "Sara Gran is a one-off, for sure. I was entranced when I first read *Come Closer*, her classic modern noir, and I've followed her career closely ever since. Her last novel, *The Book of the Most Precious Substance*, blew me away. If you've never read Sara Gran, this magical new collection of stories is a great place to start."

Greaney, Mark. [Midnight Black](#) (Berkley \$29.99). Court Gentry aka "The Gray Man" is on a mission to rescue his girlfriend, Zoya Zakharova, who is imprisoned in Russia. He starts in Eastern Europe and fights his way into Russia using a Cold War era underground network to make it into the country. Despite danger all round, the Gray Man will stop at nothing to free Zoya. Starting with gangsters in Eastern Europe to FSB deep in Russia, Court leaves a trail of bodies in his wake. He gets a help along the way from familiar faces Matt Handley and Zack Hightower.

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Nemesis: An Orphan X Novel](#) (St Martins \$30). **Our first 100 signed copies each come with Challenge Coins which form part of the plot.**

Tommy Stojack might be Evan's best friend in the world. He's a gifted gunsmith who has created much of Evan's own weapons and combat gear. But now, he has apparently crossed one of Evan's hardest lines and their argument explodes into open warfare. Now Evan has no choice but to track and face down his only friend. In the meantime, Tommy has left town in order to honor his own promise to help a dead friend's son. While

Tommy is fighting to save the son with everything he's got, Evan arrives with vengeance in mind. But as deadly as the former Orphan X is, there is an even more dangerous threat about to arrive on the scene.... Truly Evan is never able to escape his past. And Hurwitz throws in a curve ball as to Evan's future.

Jenoff, Pam. [Last Twilight in Paris](#) (Park Row \$28.99) is set in Lévitán, a department store in the center of Paris during WWII that was used as a Nazi labor camp, and "illuminates a shocking and little-known piece of WWII history—a Parisian store where Jews were imprisoned and forced to sell plunder from Jewish homes. It's a mesmerizing tale of love, female friendship, and heroism..."—Lisa Scottoline

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Open Season](#) (Random \$30). People come to Los Angeles to chase their dreams. Sometimes they find themselves cast into a nightmare. The body of an aspiring actress is found dumped near a hospital emergency room. She's been drugged and murdered and the motive for the callous crime remains maddeningly out of reach. Then a prime suspect materializes. Another Hollywood hopeful. Only to be shot dead by a sniper using a weapon that turns out to have been catalogued in a previous murder. It's not long before more bodies begin piling up. What makes the murderous spree baffling is the apparent lack of connection among the victims or any credible motive. Is this the work of a random thrill killer, the toughest of all cases to unravel? But as psychologist Alex Delaware and Homicide Detective Milo Sturgis dig deeper they're faced with an even knottier scenario.

I think only Kellerman could write this book by drawing on his years as a practicing psychologist and also when writing of Alex's partner, a luthier, of his longtime passion for, and collecting of, guitars. I also feel, still feel, enormous compassion for the loved ones of the various victims. The investigation also takes the detectives, and you, on a considerable tour around metro Los Angeles, fun for readers of Michael Connelly and, say, Joe Ide.

Kerr, Jakob. [Dead Money](#) (Random \$30). Kerr puts his background as a lawyer and tech executive to good use in his impressively unpredictable debut, **Our February First Mystery Subscription Club Pick**. 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.... And then Kerr takes the narrative on a series of hairpin turns before arriving at a jaw-dropping finale.

Klune, TJ. [The Bones Beneath My Skin](#) (Tor \$29.99) is a supernatural road-trip thriller featuring an extraordinary young girl and her two unlikely protectors on the run from cultists and

the government. We will have a very limited quantity of Signed copies. The Indie Next Pick: “As a man facing the loss of his job and his family, he returns to a secluded cabin in the woods to find he is not alone. The characters, in true Klune form, were vibrant and the world is vivid.”

Lawson, Mike. [Untouchable: A Joe Demarco Thriller](#) (Grove \$27). Brandon Cartwright was a rich guy worth a couple billion bucks—inherited, of course—meaning he hadn’t worked a single day in his life. Instead, he knew how to party, and the people he partied with were all sorts of rich and famous: politicians and movie stars and British royalty and Russian oligarchs. So when Brendan Cartwright is executed in his own home, the cops soon conclude that he was most likely killed by one of those rich, powerful partygoers. But when former Speaker of the House John Mahoney emerges from a clandestine meeting with the head of the National Archives, he learns there’s evidence suggesting that the President of the United States was somehow involved with Cartwright’s death. Mahoney needs someone who can investigate from the shadows—and naturally, he puts his fixer, Joe DeMarco, on the case—so, is the President guilty?

“Lawson loads the action with everything fans expect from the series—banter between DeMarco and Emma, new information about DeMarco’s hit man father, perfidy at the highest levels of government—and then pushes the plot into uncharted, pitch-black territory, adding a welcome jolt of gravity to DeMarco’s adventures.”

Macleod, Coinneach. [The Hebridean Baker: The Scottish Cookbook](#) (Sourcebooks \$29.99). It’s less about the recipes than the presentation and the charming Scotsman’s lifestyle. It’s totally worth coming to the ticketed event plus Diana Gabaldon will be in conversation with him again and signing her own books. No, *Outlander 10* is not yet set for publication. We can hope for 2026. For tickets see the Events listing. Or order a copy in the usual way.

Moehling, Joshua. [Long Time Gone](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). **Out in February, Signed here April 1.** Moehling takes us into Ben Packard’s tragic past, adroitly peeling back the layers of his brother’s disappearance thirty years ago. With great skill, he evokes the snow-encrusted terrain and characters in his fictional Minnesota town, Sandy Lake, balancing humor with intense detective work. Above all, Packard, a gay man and member of law enforcement, defies stereotypes of police and gay men; he is a new sort of law enforcement hero, rich with complexity and fresh in his perspective; it’s a thrill to follow his journey through this series!” — John Copenhaver.

* Montclair, Allison. [An Excellent Thing in a Woman](#) (Severn House \$29.99). I love the Sparks & Bainbridge series as the two women find their strengths and places in post-war London. Despite their very different social classes, they work well together. Montclair, aka our old friend Alan Gordon, has moved to a British publisher. I urge you who love British crime to read the earlier books if you have not before they go out of print.

“Montclair seamlessly blends fair-play detection, immersive period detail, and dashes of humor in her latest historical featuring matchmakers Iris Sparks and Gwendolyn Bainbridge. It’s 1947. Sparks is mourning her lover, gangster Archie Spelling, who died in a shoot-out soon after he proposed to her. Bainbridge hopes that getting back to work at the duo’s

matchmaking firm, the Right Sort Marriage Bureau, will help lift Sparks’s spirits. The partners get a diverting challenge when Jeanne-Marie Duplessis, a dancer who trained with the Paris Opéra Ballet but has been reduced to performing in nightclubs, seeks their help finding a husband in the next nine days so she can remain in England. Sparks and Bainbridge spring into action, but their initial objective becomes moot when Duplessis is found strangled to death in a BBC TV studio. Montclair’s light, comic touch and gift for well-placed clues are on full display.”—*PW*

Series fan Dana Stabenow writes: “Montclair has done wonders with the two characters this outing, tidying up their backstories in a very satisfying way and at the same time setting their feet on an entirely new path as regards their, ah, secondary employment which neatly resolves this incessant stumbling over a new body every outing. Which could become a little too convenient if she let it. Which she doesn’t. Bravo!”

Mosley, Walter. [Been Wrong So Long it Feels Like Right](#): (LittleBrown \$29). Patrick writes, “I really admire what Mosley is doing with these Joe King Oliver books. In the third installment, the former NYC police officer turned private investigator is given a special task by his 90+ year-old grandmother: she wants Oliver to find his father so she can see him one last time before she dies. The last time Oliver saw his old man was when he was a child and his father incarcerated. Meanwhile, Oliver takes another case to find a woman and her child who fled from her husband in California. A terrific read and classic Mosley.”

Rollins, James. [A Dragon of Black Glass](#) (Forge \$32.99). What better way to escape the cold and snow than to join Nyx and her companions as they journey into the sun-blasted region of their world, where the heat is scorching, and its sands are fraught with dangerous beasts? It’s a grand, sprawling adventure.

With the apocalyptic threat of moonfall looming ever closer, Nyx and her allies must venture into the eternally sunblasted lands to search for an ancient weapon buried untold millennia ago. All the while, enemies close upon her flanks, and a greater danger lurks ahead. For beneath a desert turned to glass, hidden from the scorching heat, life thrives—both wondrous and monstrous. But a more fearsome menace lies even deeper, where an ancient army has been seeded to protect a secret from any who dare seek it out. Yet, can Nyx truly trust those at her side? Or even herself?

We launch this third volume here at The Pen on February 17. Our copies Signed by Rollins and by artist Soraya Corcoran come with TWO handsome postcards. Yes, you’ll get both—featuring colorized maps on one side & a view of the world on the other. They’ll make perfect bookmarks to help guide you through Nyx & company’s journey into uncharted territories. One postcard will have the “Barrens” map. The other postcard will have the “Eastern Crown” map. And on the reverse of both cards will be the image of the tidally locked world.

Sayles, John. [To Save the Man](#) (Melville House \$29.99). We really liked the director/screenwriter/actor/novelist’s last book, [Jamie MacGillivray](#) (\$24 deluxe paperback), an historical epic sweeping us from Scotland’s 1746 Battle of Culloden to the New World, when we did a sparkling conversation with Diana Gabaldon for its release. Now filmmaker and novelist Sayles “offers an electrifying and convincing chronicle of resistance.

Patrick writes: “I must say, I’m a little intimidated at the

prospect of interviewing someone like Sayles, a modern master whose work I have admired for so long (and whose films I've been rewatching). As filmmaker and novelist, he has often dealt with themes of social justice, and in this new book, Sayles turns his attention to one of the darkest chapters in American history: the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890. As news of the tragedy reaches the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, a military-like boarding school founded on Charles Platt's directive that "To save the man, we must first kill the Indian," the students are forced to make a choice to assimilate or to be true to their old ways."

Smith, Dr. Ian K. [Eat Your Age](#) (Harper \$30). Dr. Smith, crime writer and #1 bestseller in non-fiction like this, returns to us on February 28 to do an event with Mayo for women medical students that will be streamed. This book about ways to use diet as part of aging was featured on *Good Morning America*. I have a copy to digest and urge you to get one too.

Spotswood, Stephen. [Dead in the Frame](#) (Knopf \$28). Bisexual sleuth Willowjean "Will" Parker must clear her boss, Lillian Pentecost, of a phony murder charge in 1940s New York City. After returning from an idyllic vacation with her girlfriend, Parker finds Pentecost being led from her home in handcuffs. The senior detective has been charged with killing wealthy eccentric Jessup Quincannon, a collector of memorabilia connected with infamous murders. Quincannon died during one of his notorious Black Museum soirées, where his crime-obsessed acquaintances gather to discuss the art of murder; Pentecost was invited to the event and feared the topic of conversation would be the brutal murder of her own mother. Motive and opportunity point to Pentecost as Quincannon's killer, and she's sent to the NYC Women's House of Detention to await trial. Will, meanwhile, is certain of her mentor's innocence, and pokes around some of Manhattan's most unsavory upper-crust circles to prove it. "Spotswood's newest title takes on another closed-door mystery to great effect. He balances the tension, the red herrings, and the clues well, and fans of the series will be in for a treat. Mystery readers {will] enjoy the twists and turns that make these titles a joy to read." —Library Journal Starred Review. 5th in this series; we've talked with Spotswood for all of them and offered Signed copies as well.

Tyler, Anne. [Three Days in June](#) (Knopf \$27). A daughter's wedding stirs up discomfort for her divorced parents, especially her mother who has been passed up for promotion at age 61. "As in Tyler's previous work, there's not much of a plot, but the pleasure is in learning how her characters tick, as Gail time and again fails to find the proper tact. By the end of the story, messy human relationships are proven to be worth all the trouble they cause." The Indie Next Pick: "Sixty-something Gail is suddenly without a job, her daughter is getting married tomorrow, and her ex shows up without a place to stay for the wedding (and he's brought a CAT!). Things get weird. Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Tyler specializes in finely detailed evocations of life on our complicated planet.

Unger, Lisa. [Close Your Eyes and Count to 10](#) (Park Row \$30). **Out February 25, Signed here March 4.** "Adele Crane's life was shattered when her seemingly wonderful husband, Miller, vanished along with millions of dollars embezzled from the tech company he founded. Adele has been struggling to make

a living and raise her traumatized kids: fiercely independent Violet and sweet-natured introvert Blake. Always athletic, she's rebuilt her confidence with half-marathons and an online presence as a health influencer. So, it makes sense when Blake suggests she apply for a streaming reality competition for influencers called Extreme Hide and Seek. Contestants are taken to some challenging location, where they hide from the Extreme team. Last one found wins \$1 million. That's how Adele finds herself on remote Falcão Island, the site of Enchantments, a luxury resort built in the 1980s but long abandoned and now about to collapse. It's quickly apparent that the Extreme team itself is on the verge of chaos"...and murder—*Kirkus* Starred Review. Fans of Heather Gudenkauf's [Everyone Is Watching](#) (\$17.95) will relish this. Also of Clare Macintosh and Ruth Ware.

Wink, Callan. [Beartooth](#) (Spiegel & Grau \$28). Deb is wild for this and it gets an Indie Next Pick that says "Callan Wink has an ability to describe the look and smell of a setting like I've never experienced. Our **March Notable New Fiction Pick** is a meditative and startling literary heist tale about two struggling brothers. "Their father has recently died, leaving them with medical bills they can't pay, and other expenses are piling up at the family cabin. Older brother Thad is desperate to keep things together; his younger brother, Hazen, didn't have any of Thad's practical sense but more than his fair share of restlessness. Enter the Scot: mysterious, up to no good, and refusing to take no for an answer, the Scot is looking to enlist the strapped brothers for a dangerous—not to mention illegal—job in the protected lands of Yellowstone... Wink is very much at home in rugged but beautiful settings, and he takes his time to look around at both the grandeur and the rot, the rippling muscles of this landscape and its bones. Rather than painting a static portrait, Wink makes this place the timeless one of the American West. Wink is very much at home in rugged but beautiful settings, and he takes his time to look around at both the grandeur and the rot, the rippling muscles of this landscape and its bones. Rather than painting a static portrait, Wink makes this place the timeless one of the American West evokes the breathtaking beauty of Yellowstone in its tense exploration of the complicated love and survival of two brothers."

A BLIND DATE WITH A BOOK

For February we are bringing back [A Blind Date with a Book](#) (\$20). The PP staff selects a favorite, it's wrapped in brown paper and twine and has the staffer's name on it, maybe a tiny review. Visit the display in the store or be brave and risk a mail order that will be selected by Jen Johans (not Jen Cook) for you. **Note: order at your own risk, the BDWAB is not returnable.**

SOME OLDER ROMANTIC MYSTERY

To celebrate Valentine's Day, some old favorites John and I recommend

* Collins, Manda. [A Lady's Guide to Mischief and Mayhem](#) (\$16.99). Distancing herself from London notoriety when her latest sensational article leads to a high-profile arrest, Lady Katherine clashes with a handsome detective inspector after witnessing a murder upon her arrival in the country.

Harris, Joanne. [Chocolat](#) (\$17). Her debut fiction, a bestseller, a marvelous 2000/01 movie, a repressed French village at odds, a

pinch of magic, a surprising love story and another delicious one about...chocolate.

Lawhon, Ariel. [The Frozen River](#) (\$18). A 2023 book and still a big bestseller is a winner on all levels: plot, character, 18th Century small town New England setting. But I include it here because the portrait Lawhon draws of the midwife's long and loving marriage and how the husband supports his brave and unconventional wife is just beautiful. My husband just told me he's loving reading it now which reminded me to include it here if you have missed it.

Peters, Elizabeth. [The Crocodile on the Sandbank](#) (\$10.99). The first in the marvelous Amelia Peabody mysteries set mostly in Victorian Egypt. It's a love story between two prickly and ambitious archaeologists, warm, funny—and with a murder to solve.

St. James, Simone. [Silence for the Dead](#) (Penguin \$18). Kitty Weekes, a nurse, obtains a position at Portis House, a former mansion being used to treat shell-shocked soldiers, but when strange forces seem to be haunting the men and causing nervous attacks, Kitty tries to uncover the truth.

Stewart, Mary. [Nine Coaches Waiting](#) (Chicago Review \$16.95). A governess in a French château encounters an apparent plot against her young charge's life in this unforgettably haunting and beautifully written suspense novel by the Queen of Romantic Suspense. John picks this but I add I included it in *Parade's* 100 Best Romances of All Time.

NEW VALENTINE'S DAY BOOKS

Ascher, Aurora. [My Funny Demon Valentine](#) (Kensington \$19.95) puts "a fresh spin on paranormal tropes in this wickedly funny, warm-hearted demon romance with just the right amount of spice from the bestselling author of *Sanctuary of the Shadow*. Our Deluxe Indie Edition features stenciled edges, full color inside cover printing with exclusive art, and special design features.

Chetwynd, Catana. [My Heart's Content Journal](#) (Andrews McNeel \$19.95). This guided journal, illustrated in her signature style, is for couples, friends, family, and anyone who wants to learn more about themselves and their personal relationships. With insightful questions, fun activities, moments for deeper reflection, and lighthearted illustrations and stickers, *My Heart's Content: A Journal for Everyone* offers every person the chance to spend some quality time on themselves. Planning for the future, reflecting on the past, soaking up the present, and learning more about ourselves and the ones we love.

Holt, Katie. [Not in My Book](#) (Alcove Press \$19.99). Rosie writes romance novels and listens to Taylor Swift on loop. Aiden is a literary fiction writer who doesn't believe in happy endings. They're about to write a book together—what could go wrong? Indie Next adds: "WOW! I loved this book. Great characters, great uses of several romance tropes in a great way, and I was crying through the last few pages. An exciting debut..."

Lippman, Elinor. [Every Tom, Dick, and Harry](#) (Harper \$27.99). Such an elegant writer, sharply witty yet affectionate drawing her characters, and giving you two love stories in two generations. Actually three as one story arc is that of parents for a child still seeking her way. It's a small town where first parents and now child operate an estate sale business, said child has a roommate,

a friend of her father who was her high school teacher, he's a widower, and child's potential suitor is the socially awkward Chief of Police. This is so true of the book: "a charming, laugh-out-loud tale of love and criminality, a pitch-perfect romantic comedy."

Vickers, Elaine. [Heartfelt](#) (Simon Kids \$19.99) is a cozy picture book about a child who finds that small acts of kindness can change the world. We have a large number of books for Young Readers and recommend picking one up and adding a Valentine for those lucky kids.

Weaver, Brynne. [Scythe & Sparrow](#) (Zando \$19). Not sweet but spicy. From the author of [Butcher & Blackbird](#) (\$18) and [Leather & Lark](#) (\$19) comes the final book in the Ruinous Love Trilogy—a friends-with-benefits dark romantic comedy packed with murder, mayhem, and spice. Doctor Fionn Kane is running from a broken heart, one he hopes to mend in small-town Nebraska, far away from his almost-fiancé and his derailed surgical career. It's a simpler life: head down, hard work, and absolutely no romantic relationships. He wants none of the circus he left behind in Boston. But then the real circus finds him. Motorcycle performer Rose Evans has spent a decade on the road with the Silveria Circus, and it suits her just fine, especially when she has the urge to indulge in a little murder when she's not in the spotlight. But when a kill goes awry and she ends up with a broken leg, Rose finds herself stuck in Nebraska, at the home of the adorably nerdy town doctor. Too bad not every broken heart can be sewn back together.

Wilton, Traci. [Mrs. Morris and the Venomous Valentine](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Charlene Morris's historic Salem B&B, which is brimming with models for a contentious photo shoot, but his arrow goes astray when someone is murdered on Valentine's Day...

Zamolo, Lucia. [An Elephant on My Chest](#) (Tra Publishing \$19.99). Young German author Lucia Zamolo talks about heartbreak with so much clarity that the book itself is like a cure for cloudy thoughts. A graphic novel for no matter what age.

THE LUNAR NEW YEAR

Hwang, Aaron. [Chinese Mythology](#) (Running Press \$19.99). Do you know how the world began? Or why there is wind and rain? Have you ever felt lucky and wondered where luck comes from? Are you curious about the unseen and unknown? The myths in *Chinese Mythology* date back to ancient China, where the Jade Emperor ruled from the Heavens alongside other deities, and when the world was filled with supernatural figures, including snake-women, animal tricksters, ghosts, demons, dragons, and more. Journey through the world's creation and the rule of heaven to the powerful shaping of earth and the rise of humanity in these stunning, exciting, and mystical tales from China, collected for readers ages 7-10 but I have ordered a copy for myself!

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

There is so much to choose from.... Here are five new novels

Grant, Gail Milissa. [The Sable Cloak](#) (Grand Central \$28). The American Midwest, 1940s. An upper-middle-class African American family in the pre-Civil Rights era navigates heartbreaks and triumphs. Jordan Sable is a prosperous undertaker turned political boss who has controlled the Black vote in St. Louis for decades. He and his formidable wife Sarah have worked to make

their renowned funeral home a success in their shared vision for the future. Then tragedy bursts through their carefully constructed empire, forcing them to rally around an unconventional solution. But at what cost?

Lubrin, Canisa. [Code Noir: Fictions](#) (Soft Skull \$32). Windham Campbell Prize-winning poet Lubrin makes her fiction debut with a thrilling and inventive collection centered on Black life in the Caribbean and the Caribbean diaspora. Each of the 59 entries follows a full-page drawing by artist Torkwase Dyson that incorporates a passage from the 1685 Codes Noirs, the French laws for chattel slavery.

Murray, Victoria Christopher. [Harlem Rhapsody](#) (Penguin \$29). In 1919, a high school teacher from Washington, D.C arrives in Harlem excited to realize her lifelong dream. Jessie Redmon Fauset has been named the literary editor of *The Crisis*. The first Black woman to hold this position at a preeminent Negro magazine, Jessie is poised to achieve literary greatness. But she holds a secret that jeopardizes it all. W. E. B. Du Bois, the founder of *The Crisis*, is not only Jessie's boss, he's her lover. And neither his wife, nor their fourteen-year-age difference can keep the two apart. When her first novel is released to great acclaim, it's clear that Jessie is at the heart of a renaissance in Black music, theater, and the arts. She has shaped a generation of literary legends, but as she strives to preserve her legacy, she'll discover the high cost. I add that the author, who died in 2024, has a remarkable story of her own well worth looking up.

Viel, Neena. [Listen to Your Sister](#) (St. Martins \$19). Deb writes, "A unique horror debut. Imagine the classic horror tale, blood drenched walls, appearing and disappearing ghosts and things that go bump in the night. Imagine that horror on top of your daily struggles: no money to fix your broken down car, rats coming in your apartment, racial profiling by the police, ramen for dinner again and you have the incredibly stylish and truly horrifying new book by Neena Viel. Three young black siblings, struggling to stay alive, dropped into a nightmarish cascade of events: will their ties to each other be enough to survive?"

Wilkerson, Charlotte. [Good Dirt](#) (Random House \$30). A repeat review from January for a compelling and well written layered story reaching back in time, so historical too. I enjoyed it. On an autumn day in 2000, two armed burglars break into the Freemans' house to find the children, Baz and Ebby, at home unexpectedly. The encounter results in Baz's murder; Old Mo is shattered into fragments, and 10-year-old Ebby experiences a trauma that will haunt her for the rest of her life. Wilkerson continues her narrative years later with a different kind of tragedy, as Ebby's wealthy white fiancé, Henry, fails to show up for their wedding. Ebby begins to ask questions about Old Mo and the circumstances of its attempted theft, as she reckons with the pain Henry caused her and the lingering trauma from Baz's death. The jar, made under enslavement, holds more history than even Ebby can guess, and Wilkerson reaches back a few centuries to excavate some of that history through the stories of skilled potter Moses, his brother-in-law, Willis, and their descendants.

CLASSICS

Bennett, Margo. [Someone from the Past](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.99). Bennett's last crime novel, originally published in 1958, is in many ways her finest, and now joins the ranks of the British Library Crime Classics. Alarmed that a series of anonymous

threats she's been receiving have escalated, London magazine editor Sarah Lampson asks Nancy Graham, her old roommate and colleague at Diagonal Press, to help figure out which of her former lovers is intent on killing her. But it's already too late, for one of the candidates, artist Donald Spencer, reports to Nancy the next morning that Sarah's dead in her bed. Determined to make sure the police don't suspect Donald, who's become her own boyfriend, Nancy hurries over to Sarah's place and methodically cleans up every trace of evidence that points to Donald's presence there. Unfortunately, her conscientious labors only ensure that she's taken in for questioning by Detective Inspector Crewe. Stretching the truth, Nancy ultimately digs herself in so deep that Crewe brands her "the worst liar in the business." She certainly is one of the most entertaining.

Woolrich, Cornell. [The Black Curtain](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). In a nightmare scenario, Frank Townsend has an apparently minor accident on his way home but he arrives to find his wife gone and doesn't recognize his apartment. He had gone to work on a normal day but didn't return for more than three years. Suffering from amnesia, he has to rediscover who he is, where he has been, and what he has done. A curtain has fallen to cut off all memories of his life. First among the memories he wants to recover is whether he has committed the murder of which he has been accused. Noirist Woolrich gets a Foreword by George Pelecanos in this reissue of the second of his celebrated "black" books, following *The Bride Wore Black*, which established his reputation as America's greatest noir writer. It was adapted into film as the classic *Street of Chance*, starring Burgess Meredith and Claire Trevor.

COZIES

Burns, V M. [The Next Deadly Chapter](#) (Kensington \$17.95). All Sam wanted was to make a good impression on her fiancé Frank's mother, the very proper Dr. Camilia Patterson. But when Nana Jo and the lively ladies of Shady Acres Retirement Village throw a surprise bridal shower for Sam at the Four Feathers Casino—watch out! Things spin out of control faster than a roulette wheel. Fortunately, Sam knows when to fold 'em and slips back to her room to work on her latest historical mystery set between the wars, in which a houseguest meets a grim end at an English country manor. A double cozy treat.

* Connolly, Rebecca. [The Crime Brulée Bake Off](#) (Shadow Mountain \$16.99) starts a Claire Walker Mystery Series. Claire Walker is thrilled when she is selected to be a contestant on Britain's Battle of the Bakers, which will be filmed at Blackfirth Park, one of England's stately homes (and the private residence of Jonathan Ainsley, the Viscount of Colburn). Jonathan is trying to keep the estate solvent and would be just as happy if the show filming on his park did not also showcase the historical family murder from 250 years earlier, when the 10th Viscountess of Colburn was strangled and drowned in the mill pond. Alas—or as Claire would exclaim, "crepes alive"—a contestant is soon found dead in the same pond. The estate is locked down, and Claire and Jonathan are drafted into helping solve the murder....

Davis, Krista. [The Wagtail Murder Club](#) (Penguin \$30). On her way home to Wagtail, Virginia, where the inn she co-owns is located, Holly Miller spots a cage. Stopping to look more closely, she rescues a black Lab pup left inside with some toys and a note reading, "My name is Squishy. I am a very good boy. Please

take care of me.” Wagtail is a vacation destination for animal lovers, a town where pets are welcome everywhere. Taking care of Squishy is the least of Holly’s problems. A man just released from prison after having served 12 years for murder has returned to Wagtail.... The pets are the stars of this cozy.

Eames, Andrea. [A Harvest of Hearts](#) (Kensington \$28) is a cozy fantasy debut that may not appear until early March but it fits the Valentine season. In the tradition of *Howl’s Moving Castle* meets *The House in the Cerulean Sea*, a whimsical and unforgettable cozy fantasy about adventure, common sense, and the power of love, as a cheeky butcher’s daughter, a befuddlingly handsome sorcerer, and his clever talking cat unlock magical secrets in the dark heart of their kingdom...

George, Emily. [A Cold Dose of Murder](#) (Kensington \$17.95). Chloe still can’t believe the magic carpet ride her life has become. From a career-and-romantic crash-and-burn as a Parisian pastry chef, she turned things around by starting the Baked by Chloe cannabis café in her seaside hometown of Azalea Bay, California. Now one of the town’s hottest spots, the café has earned a coveted booth in the Bay’s famous summer ice cream festival and Chloe is excited to introduce her cannabis-infused flavors. Plus, a rave review by influential podcaster and food critic Calista Bryant is sending Chloe’s sales into orbit—with no bad vibes in sight ... Until Chloe finds Calista sprawled toes-up under an ice cream food truck. A cozy and cannabis, breaking new ground.

* Maxwell, Alyssa. [Two Weddings and a Murder](#) (Kensington \$27). June 1922. Phoebe Renshaw and Owen Seabright are to be wed, and lady’s maid Eva Huntford could not be more delighted for her lady’s happiness. But she is disturbed by one notable absence from the ceremony—her beau, Police Constable Miles Brannock. When Miles finally does appear, breathlessly running into the reception at Foxwood Hall, he brings grim news: he’s found Chief Inspector Isaac Perkins murdered, shot in his home in his favorite parlor chair with his own gun. Worse, a Scotland Yard detective arrives in Little Barlow to take over the case.

* Miller, C L. [The Antique Hunter’s Death on the Red Sea](#) (Atria \$28.99) explores the dark underbelly of the antiques trade. Spunky 47-year-old Freya Lockwood and her vivacious aunt Carole have recently inherited Crockleford Antiques from the late Arthur Crockleford in the English village of Little Meddington. In addition to running Arthur’s shop, Freya and Carole carry on Arthur’s work exposing the black-market trade in art and antiquities. To that end, Freya accepts an invitation to serve as an in-house expert for an antiques-themed cruise from Cyprus to Jordan—an engagement she assumes Arthur had agreed to before his unexpected death. While onboard, her true mission is to ferret out the identity of a mysterious dealer known only as The Collector, who heads an international thieving syndicate. It proves a difficult task, considering that the ship is awash with double-dealers, fraudsters, and at least one killer...

O’Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Garden](#) (Kensington \$27). Everything’s coming up roses for Garda Siobhán and the rest of O’Sullivan family in quaint Kilbane, County Cork, Ireland. While Siobhán studies for her Detective Sergeant exams, her brother, Eoin, prepares for the grand opening of his new restaurant, The O’Sullivan Six, and concocts a plan to enter Kilbane’s Top Garden Contest to boost business. But trouble brews when Eoin

hires a mercurial landscape designer known for her killer designs. His new partner’s unflattering reputation and questionable practices nearly eclipse her talents—and plunge the prestigious competition into chaos. Still, a winning garden emerges from the controversy, with a spectacular golden statue in the center of the display. But in a devastating twist, the work of art leads to a shocking discovery....

ESPECIALLY ARRESTING BRITISH CRIME

Calling attention to some we particularly recommend

* McAllister, Gillian. [Famous Last Words](#) (Harper \$29.99) has a particularly stressful story proposition. You’re a happily married London wife and mother. Imagine you’ve just dropped off your daughter at the nursery when you discover that your husband is part of a hostage situation in the city. Then imagine your surprise when you discover your husband isn’t a hostage. He’s the gunman. It gets worse. Seven years later, Adam’s betrayal rears its ugly head again. Will Cam turn to amateur sleuthing, or put everything behind her and find closure? McAllister uses her standard smooth and emotional style to make sure all the puzzle pieces click together. This fabulous, astonishingly plotted and compellingly written story is **our March British Crime Book of the Month**.

* McCluskey, Laura. [The Wolf Tree](#) (Putnam \$30). Words almost fail me when it comes to describing this debut by an Australian author. Dana’s finds that “the plot is creepy enough for Alfred Hitchcock, dark enough for Raymond Chandler, and convoluted enough for Agatha Christie.” Our staff Deb says, “Who to trust and what is everyone hiding? My favorite kind of mystery, for fans of Tana French and Laura Lippman.”

The setting is a community of some 200 souls living on a remote, storm-lashed island off the west coast of Scotland where a young man has been found dead at the base of the abandoned lighthouse. Sent in to confirm whether it was a suicide, SOP for someone dead just 18 years old, is an oddly matched pair of cops from Glasgow. DI Georgina Lennox, called George, is eager to get back to investigating after an accident sidelined her for months and gives her hideous headaches for which she’s sneaking pain meds. Her partner, Richie, is less enthusiastic, especially since this assignment takes him away from his wife and children. The 206 locals living on Eilean Eadar have a range of reactions to their arrival—from the accommodating to the hostile. The inspectors have walked into a simmering disagreement between one faction of islanders that wants to keep to tradition and another that wants to modernize and increase tourism. Additionally the locals resent the fact that the only thing the island is known for is the mysterious disappearance of three lighthouse keepers a century before. The police investigation takes them not only into the last days of the deceased but on a winding exploration of the hidden ways and beliefs of a community largely untouched by the outside world for hundreds of years. Then George hears howling in the night and sees a figure wearing a wolf mask watching her from outside her croft, and she begins to wonder how far the islanders might go to keep its secrets. Tiny spoiler: there’s nothing supernatural in the story – the horrors are all human.

Since Ann Cleeves’ Shetland novels and TV adaptations are considered British I’m making this terrifying story our **February British Crime Subscription Book of the Month**. Last month’s Pick by Alice Feeney also took you to an isolated

Scottish island but is a completely different story. Still, there's something about islands that's compelling right now.

For more fabulous new British Crime, I also nominate a trio of historicals: SJ Bennett, CJ. [A Death in Diamonds](#) (Crooked Lane \$29.99), 1957 England and the Royal Household become entangled in a baffling murder you will believe the author can't resolve successfully. You'd be wrong.

Iona Grey, [The Housekeeper's Secret](#) (St Martins \$29), Upstairs but mostly Downstairs in a 1911 Northern England country house with meticulous attention to the hierarchy and rituals of the Servants Hall. Also there's a murder.

Allison Montclair's [An Excellent Thing in a Woman](#) (Severn \$29.99 – see Signed Books). Post-war London with ties back to wartime service. We strongly recommend reading the whole series in order but as this winner starts a new story Arc for the women of the Right Sort Marriage Bureau you can begin here.

MORE NEW IN HARDCOVER

Armstrong, Kelley. [Cold As Hell: A Haven's Rock Novel](#) (St Martins \$28). It's winter, and Detective Casey Duncan and her husband, Sheriff Eric Dalton, are expecting their first child in a few weeks. In their off-the-grid sanctuary town, deep in the Yukon forest, problems have surfaced once again. One night, a woman resident is drugged and dragged into the forest but fortunately escapes unharmed. As (bad) luck would have it, a severe snowstorm hits Haven's Rock just as Casey and Eric begin their investigation. Actually investigations as more mayhem piles on. The wilderness surrounding Haven's Rock is itself a major character in the book, and Casey's approaching due date adds urgency to the plotline.

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [An Island of Suspects](#) (St Martins \$28). This series set in France's beautiful, often mysterious, oyster haven province of Brittany, has long been a favorite. In fact Rob and I are planning a driving trip through Brittany skirting previously visited St. Malo and Mont St. Michel. Our sleuth is the grumpy, dogged, clever Commissaire Georges Dupin (who prefers *steak frites* and gallons of *café*), and the setting here is Brittany's biggest and most famous island Belle-Île (we've added it to our itinerary) with a famed delicacy in its Belle-Île lamb. The murder drawing Georges to this paradise is that of Patric Provost, a rich and powerful landowner loathed by all and apparently the target of a blackmail scheme of one million Euros. While in general I am in favor of catching killers, in this gem I wish Dupin had failed! It was so close...

We recommend the entire series starting with [A Death in Brittany](#). AND just out, almost missed it, [Death of a Master Chef](#) (\$18), a tricky one with fabulous food and set in Saint-Malo, a gateway to Mont St. Michel.

* Beaton, MC. [Death of a Smuggler](#) (Grand Central \$28). RW Green continues the Hamish Macbeth series by the late Beaton here. All Hamish Macbeth wants is a quiet life in his peaceful home in the Highland village of Lochdubh. But when his newly-assigned constable arrives, he presents Hamish with a surprise and a secret. Getting to the bottom of the secret becomes the least of Hamish's problems when he meets a family who has a score to settle with a sinister man who has mysteriously gone missing. Discovering a murdered woman's body puts further pressure on Hamish, especially when it becomes clear that the

murdered woman and the missing man are linked. To Hamish's horror, he then finds himself working on the murder case with the despicable Detective Chief Inspector Blair—his sworn enemy....

Doctorow, Cory. [Picks and Shovels: A Martin Hench Novel](#) (Tor \$28.99) returns you to the world of *Red Team Blues* to bring us the origin story of Martin Hench and the most powerful new tool for crime ever invented: the personal computer. The year is 1986. The city is San Francisco. Here, Martin Hench will invent the forensic accountant—what a bounty hunter is to people, he is to money—but for now he's an MIT dropout odd-jobbing his way around a city still reeling from the invention of a revolutionary new technology that will change everything about crime forever, one we now take completely for granted. When Marty finds himself hired by Silicon Valley PC startup Fidelity Computing to investigate a group of disgruntled ex-employees who've founded a competitor startup, he quickly realizes he's on the wrong side.....

Eskens, Allen. [The Quiet Librarian](#) (LittleBrown \$29). This gripping not to say moving contemporary story of the fallout from the savagery of the Balkans War takes me back to Dan Fesperman's brilliant first novel *Lie in the Dark* for a deeper understanding of that conflict and those caught in it. Eskens toggles his tale between present day Minnesota and the war in Bosnia. In early 1990s Yugoslavia, Nura Divjak lives with her Muslim parents and younger brother in a farmhouse near Tuzla (in what is now Bosnia). When her family is murdered by Serbian soldiers, Nura joins the Bosnian army and falls in love with a fellow soldier named Adem. During an ambush, Nura is captured and meets a woman named Amina Junuzovic in prison. After Adem dies in battle, Amina helps Nura escape, and together, the pair flee to the United States, where Amina gives birth to Sara, the daughter of a Serb who raped her, and Nura reinvents herself as a meek librarian named Hana. Thirty years later, when Amina is thrown off her balcony, "Hana" becomes Nura once again, determined to hunt down the killer before he comes after Dylan, Amina's grandson...

This is more than a detective story despite the presence of a cop often at odds with Hana. I agree with the *Booklist* Starred Review: "No typical whodunit, this is an intense and emotional story about grief, loss, and the horrors of war...Hana Babic is a compelling character readers can't help but root for, even if they disagree with her actions. This book is perfect for fans of intense mysteries and those who like fiction featuring real-life history."

Evison, Jonathan. [The Heart of Winter](#) (Penguin \$28) traces the history of a 70-year marriage mostly lived on Bainbridge Island, Washington on the occasion of Abe's 90th birthday and Ruth's diagnosis of oral cancer with difficult recovery and pressure by the children to sell their home. Valentine Month isn't all about young love as this moving novel and that by Butler, Nickolas. [A Forty Year Kiss](#), in Signed Books underlines. I like it that in both the husbands are no Sir Lancelots but try to grow into better partners.

Fawcett, Heather. [Emily Wilde's Compendium of Lost Tales](#) (Random \$29). Emily Wilde has spent her life studying faeries. A renowned dryadologist, she has documented hundreds of species of Folk in her *Encyclopaedia of Faeries*. Now she is about to embark on her most dangerous academic project yet: studying the inner workings of a faerie realm—as its queen. Along with

her former academic rival—now fiancé—the dashing and mercurial Wendell Bambleby, Emily is immediately thrust into the deadly intrigues of Faerie as the two of them seize the throne of Wendell's long-lost kingdom, which Emily finds a beautiful nightmare filled with scholarly treasures. Why not another of Fawcett's razor-teeth fairy tales?

* Feito, Virginia. [Victorian Psycho](#) (Liveright \$24.99). This Gothic verging into Horror is a kind of imitation of the Brontës—and packaged as such with black & white engravings—and is, incredibly, The #1 Indie Next Pick for February. I hated it. However it gets this rave: “Grotesque, wildly funny, and utterly weird, this novel will have you hooked as the bloodthirsty new governess enters the dysfunctional halls of Ensor's House. What's her secret? Does she know? Feito takes the Gothic and tames it like a misbehaving charge.” Wildly funny? I am not a reader of Horror and clearly out of touch. I mention Indie Next Picks from time to time, but I don't subscribe to many of them. Still, you may.

Gates, Bill. [Source Code](#) (Knopf \$30) is a memoir in which Gates reflects on what he now realizes was a neurodivergent childhood. I don't know if he discusses Melinda divorcing him or their (now separate) philanthropy, Warren Gates, etc. but I believe it's focused on him as a youth, his origin story. Hence the particularly apt title! Our signed copies will sell out as you read this.

Hannah, Kristin. [The Nightingale Deluxe Edition](#) (St Martins \$35). The advent of modern printing techniques that make for Shelf Wealth in, mainly, Romantasy but spreading has encouraged the republication of some big hits in captivating packaging. Here the WWII story that was Hannah's breakout book is a bonus.

I add that Sarah Penner's [The Lost Apothecary](#) (Park Row \$30) has emerged in January in a Collector's Edition with sprayed edges and gilt cover design and colorful endpapers, a Reader's Guide, recipes, and a preview of [The Amalfi Curse](#) (Park Row \$30) set in contemporary Positano, which she will sign for us here at The Pen on May 3. I highly recommend *The Lost Apothecary*, a 2021 Historical Mystery Pick of the Month, and its long unsolved 18th Century London murders tackled 200 years later by an aspiring historian running from her own demons

Ivey, Eowyn. [Black Woods, Blue Sky](#) (Random \$29). Myth and reality fuse together in the Alaskan wilderness from Ivey, author of *The Snow Child*. Single mom Birdie, 26, occasionally drinks too much. When sober, she devotes herself to caring for her six-year-old daughter, Emaleen, a precocious girl who believes in witches. After Birdie falls for a mysterious and badly scarred man named Arthur, she and Emaleen move with him to his remote cabin. At first, life is bucolic, full of mushroom hunting and berry picking on the mountains, and Birdie is excited by Arthur's primitive lifestyle. But when Emaleen catches him walking the woods in a bear skin, things take a dangerous turn for mother and child. “Blending fairytale with harsh reality, this is an achingly beautiful hymn to all of nature's cruelty and allure.”

Larsen, Ward. [Dark Vector](#) (Forge \$29.99). In the wilds of Siberia, a top-secret Russian fighter goes missing on a test flight. The Russian Air Force begins a search, oblivious to their error: they are looking in the wrong spot. The pilot, Colonel Maxim Primakov, has crash landed during an attempted defection. The

new chief of CIA clandestine operations, David Slaton, wants desperately to find him, but only one man is in a position to reach Primakov—Tru Miller, a rookie operator. Slaton plots a rescue deep inside Russia, not realizing that he will have to outfox the one other man who knows the truth. Victor Dubonin is a general in Russian intelligence. His search for Primakov is deeply personal—and if he doesn't succeed it will cost him his life. Larsen kicks off a thriller series highly praised by Brad Thor, Kyle Mills, and Don Bentley who says it “lights off the afterburners on page one and never slows back. Fans of Craig Thomas's classic *Firefox* will love this contemporary tale of a Russian defector, a top-secret plane, and the American spy who must risk everything to recover both. Pure, unadulterated fun!”

Marshall, Kate Alice. [A Killing Cold](#) (Flatiron \$28.99). Within months of meeting handsome scion Connor Dalton at a party, Theodora “Theo” Scott—who has significant gaps in her memory of the early years of her life—eagerly accepts his marriage proposal. As the novel opens, Theo is preparing to accompany Connor to his family's vast, isolated winter estate, even as she fears that his relatives suspect her of gold-digging. Those anxieties spike when Theo receives a series of unsettling anonymous text messages just before they arrive designed to keep her away from Connor. Once Theo settles in at the Daltons' estate, she attempts to suss out who's been threatening her, while also contending with an eerie feeling that she's been on the property before. Just when you think you know where this is headed, it becomes full of twists and turns. Good for fans of Riley Sager and, as our friend JT Ellison avows, for fans of Stacy Willingham and Gillian Flynn too.

Meyer, Deon. [Leo: A Benny Griessel Novel](#) (Grove \$28) finds the South African police detective longing to return to the high-stakes missions he and his partner, Vaughn Cupido, embarked on before they were exiled from Cape Town for exposing corruption within South Africa's top intelligence agency. Griessel's dreams take a hit when his former commander, Mbali Kaleni, who'd promised to reinstate him and Cupido after the uproar quieted down, resigns without explanation. Before the detective can find out what happened, he and Cupido are assigned to investigate the death of a female mountain biker in the usually sleepy village of Stellenbosch. The victim was found with a broken neck and animal bite marks on her legs. Meanwhile, wildlife guide Christina Jaeger's former partners in crime enlist her in a daring million-dollar theft, which doesn't go as planned. “Meyer expertly interlaces his main narrative threads in shrewd and unpredictable ways, remaining one step ahead of readers as he ushers the plot to a rollicking conclusion.”—*PW* Starred Review

* Moyes, Jo. [We All Live Here](#) (Penguin \$30). Deb reviews: “Moyes writes a particular kind of book: always filled with loveable characters in exasperating circumstances. Death, divorce, the dubious pleasures of dating again and a long lost father are featured in this one and it does not disappoint—all 400 plus pages. If you need an uplifting read right now, this one's for you.”

Nesbø, Jo. [Blood Ties](#) (Knopf \$30) takes us back to the small town of Os, where ruthless brothers Carl and Roy Opgard are doing quite well until a new highway threatens to disrupt access to their town. Meanwhile, the town's sheriff has reopened a set of

unsolved murder cases from the past, including the killing of his own father. When fresh bodies turn up, the situation intensifies — and we cannot wait to see where Nesbø takes us next.

New Yorker Magazine Inc. [A Century of Fiction in the New Yorker](#) (Knopf \$50). With this vivid selection, the magazine's fiction editor Treisman showcases how our fiction has changed over time, and reminds us that past literary fashions continue to ripple outward in the fiction we love today. What does a Donald Barthelme mean to the craft of short fiction now? What will a Yiyun Li mean to the next generation of readers and writers? This exquisite tour of the form as practiced at its highest level will leap directly into the hearts of readers while underlining the magazine's influence on our literary culture over the last century

O'Connor, Joseph. [The Ghosts of Rome](#) (Europa Editions \$28). The pulse-pounding second volume in O'Connor's Roman Escape Line trilogy after [My Father's House](#) (\$18.95) which I thought stupendous! follows Vatican Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty and his co-conspirators, known as the Choir, as they help Allied soldiers and Jews escape Nazi-occupied Rome in 1944. Gestapo commander Paul Hauptmann is bent on breaking up the group—his wife and two children are being held hostage in Germany by Heinrich Himmler until he hunts down and captures the Choir's members, including Contessa Giovanna "Jo" Landini. The plot heats up when two escaped POWs and a wounded Polish pilot are trapped in Rome. The youngest Choir member, 19-year-old Blon Kiernan, risks her life to find a sympathetic doctor to operate on the Pole before he dies. Then, in a tense extended sequence, Jo and the Choir try to spirit the three escapees to safety right under Hauptmann's nose. The suspenseful 1944 chapters are interspersed with snippets of BBC interviews with former Choir members in the 1960s and an unpublished memoir by Jo, which provide a layered historical perspective. O'Connor captivates with his vigorous portrayal of wartime Rome.

To pair with it I recommend James R. Benn's [Death's Door](#) (\$16.95) which is titled from one of the five entrances to Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome and brilliantly limns the dance those inside the Vatican including Jewish refugees conducted to counter the surrounding Nazis.

Patterson, James/James O Born. [Paranoia](#) (LittleBrown \$30). NYPD Detective Michael Bennett will stop at nothing to protect family: his wife, his kids—and his fellow officers.

Pliego, Ande. [You Are Fatally Invited](#) (Random \$30). Another meta adventure in crime fiction, this debut features a writers' retreat gone terribly wrong. On a dark and stormy island, six thriller novelists assemble for a week of games and puzzles hosted by legendary author J. R. Alastor. The inevitable dead body appears—really and truly and quite messily dead. And the party is just getting started.

Robb, J D. [Bonded in Death](#) (St Martins \$30) introduces us to a highly specialized undercover organization of twelve elite agents from years past — after one of them drops dead. Lieutenant Eve Dallas finds the Rossi case frustrating. She's got an elderly victim who'd just arrived from Rome; a widow who knows nothing about why he'd left; an as-yet unidentifiable weapon; and zero results on facial recognition. But when she finds a connection to the Urban Wars of the 2020s, she thinks Summerset—fiercely loyal, if somewhat grouchy, major-domo and the man who'd

rescued her husband from the Dublin streets—may know something from his stint as a medic in Europe back then. And then....

Rogers, Megan. [The Heart Is a Star](#) (Simon & Schuster \$28). There are a number of tough reads coming out this winter and this one about fraught and failed relationships and generational trauma is a wow. The Melbourne based author is a terrific prose stylist, knows her medicine, especially for Layle Byrnes, the MD anesthesiologist who's the narrator, and has good pacing. But the real reason I mention this debut aside from the fact we try to read and mention as many debuts as we can, is that Rogers does a deep dive into Australia and Tasmania, well worth reading. I gather there is already a film option. If you like writers like Liane Moriarty or Jane Harper, Rogers is for you.

* Romney, Rebecca. [Jane Austen's Bookshelf](#) (Simon & Schuster \$29.99) reveals some riveting detective work with an investigation into the women writers who made an impact on Austen—and why readers know so few of them. Along the way, she asks who gets to decide the canon, how does it evolve over time, and are readers themselves complicit? Romney is not only an expert antiquarian book dealer and a passionate and knowledgeable reader, but also a marvelous writer. Her journey begins with one book, *Evelina* (1778) by Frances Burney, discovered on a "house call" to a collector like herself. Assembling this collection's criteria (e.g., Austen's favorite women writers; which books and editions; condition; etc.), she notes, "A reader falls in love with the story in the book. A collector falls in love with the story of the book." From there, Romney offers brief bios of Austen and the eight women writers who influenced her enough to earn a place in it. Those paint a larger picture of women in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Romney unlocks the mystery of which authors influenced Jane Austen and why they disappeared from the literary canon.

Schneiderhan, Caitlin. [The Medici Heist](#) (Square Fish \$20.99). What fun, a companion read to the new Steve Berry (see Signed Books). Welcome to Florence, 1517, a world of intrigue and opulence, murder and betrayal. Seventeen-year-old con artist Rosa Cellini arrives in the city the same day that the Medici Pope, Leo X, returns to take up the reins of power. This is not a coincidence. The new Pope is extorting a mountain of indulgence money from the people of Florence to bolster his power and standing, and Rosa has a plan to take it back. To pull off the Renaissance's greatest robbery, she'll recruit a team of specially-chosen, highly-skilled misfits: Sarra the tinkerer, Khalid the fighter, and Giacomo, the irrepressible master of disguise. To top it all off, and to smooth their entrance into the fortress-like Palazzo Medici, Rosa even enlists the reluctant help of the famed artist Michelangelo. But as the authorities draw closer and the Medici's noose pulls tighter around the land, what began as a robbery may become a rescue.

Shannon, Samantha. [The Dark Mirror](#) (Bloomsbury \$31.99) expands the world of her Bone Season series in this pedal-to-the-metal fifth. It opens with series heroine Paige Mahoney awakening in an unfamiliar hotel somewhere outside of the Republic of Scion without any memory of the past six months. Paige, a 20-year-old with ESP, works to make her way back to her home and the struggle against the Sargas, a subgroup

of the Rephaim, “immortal humanoids of the Netherworld,” who traveled to Earth after a Rephaim civil war and have been attempting to control human clairvoyants. Her journey takes her through Venice, where she learns of a new Sargas plot: Operation Ventriloquist, a scheme to overtake governments “from within” by turning their leaders into puppets. “The stakes are high, the pace is rapid, and Shannon’s gift for evocative prose makes the shadowy streets of Venice come alive.” May be a change of pace here for Donna Leon readers?

Shigematsu, Kiyoshi. [The Blanket Cats](#) (Penguin \$28). Comfort reads keep coming from Japan, infused with magical elements. A peculiar pet shop in Tokyo has been known to offer customers the unique opportunity to take home one of seven special cats, whose “magic” is never promised, but always received. But there are rules: these cats must be returned after three days. They must eat only the food supplied by the owner, and they must travel to their new homes with a distinctive blanket. Here we get seven customers, each of whom is hoping a temporary feline companion will help them escape a certain reality....

My absolute favorite in this genre is [What You Are Looking for Is in the Library](#) (Hanover Square \$21.99), a Times Best Book of 2023 wherein Tokyo’s most enigmatic librarian, Sayuri Komachi, is able recommend the perfect book to change the visitor’s life.

* Tiffany, Grace. [The Owl Was a Baker’s Daughter](#) (Harper \$30). “Sixty-one-year-old Judith Shakespeare insists that she favors neither side in the 17th-century battle between Britain’s Puritan Roundheads and the Cavalier forces of Charles I. Nevertheless, the playwright’s midwife daughter must flee her native Stratford when the fractious political atmosphere yields a charge of witchcraft against her. The title is borrowed from a line Shakespeare gave to Ophelia that goes on to explain: “We know what we are, but know not what we may be.” What Judith may be, when she reaches the questionable safety of London, is a co-conspirator with an old flame, a wolfish actor who’s been reduced to clandestine performances in pubs now that the Parliamentarians have closed the city’s theaters. The (wildly dangerous) performance of a lifetime awaits him in the besieged Royalist stronghold of Oxford, and he insists that only Judith can help him get there....”—Alida Baker, *NYTBR*, on this entry in the Continuing Adventures of Judith Shakespeare.

Walker, Karen Thompson. [The Strange Case of Jane O](#) (Random House \$28). “After Dr. Henry Byrd is summoned by police to see Jane O. at the psychiatric hospital, they want him to reveal her confidential information: has she really lost three days under a dissociative fugue, or is she faking it to cover up a crime? This unique novel explores the idea of alternate and parallel realities, grief, friendship, and trust.” I am intrigued by this Library Reads Pick for February so I’ve ordered a copy. The publisher says further about what is terms a speculative mystery, “Are Jane’s strange experiences the result of being overwhelmed by motherhood, or are they manifestations of a long-buried trauma from her past? Why is she having visions of a young man who died twenty years ago and who warns her of a disaster ahead? Jane’s symptoms lead her psychiatrist ever deeper into the farthest reaches of her mind and cause him to question everything he thinks he knows about so-called reality—including events in his own life.”

Welsh-Huggins, Andrew. [The Mailman](#) (Mysterious Press \$26.95). We’ve raved about James Byrne’s Dez Limerick in [Chain Reaction](#) and John McMahon’s [Head Cases](#) (both Signed and in stock) to kick off 2025. Here’s another new and lethal and out-of-the-ordinary protagonist leading a new series. I especially recommend it to fans of Dez. Freelance deliveryman Mercury Carter won’t let anything stop him from completing his delivery—not even a violent kidnapping, a desperate car chase through the Midwest, or the far-reaching conspiracies of a dangerous crime syndicate. Carter has special skills from his former life as a federal agent with the postal inspection service, skills that make him particularly useful for delivering items in circumstances as dangerous as these.

OUR FEBRUARY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Baldacci, David. [A Calamity of Souls](#) (\$19.99). It is set in a tumultuous year in southern Virginia, where a murder case sets a duo of white and Black lawyers against a deeply unfair system as they work to defend their wrongfully-accused Black defendants. Young Jack Lee is a Freeman County lawyer. He’s White and he is asked to defend Black war veteran Jerome Washington who is accused of murdering an elderly White couple. This novel, ten years in the making, aligns with *To Kill a Mockingbird* and John Grisham, especially *A Time to Kill*, in the way it underscores the racial divide of 1968.

Black, Cara. [Murder at La Villette](#) (\$18.95) features the requisite host of colorful characters who spill out of the biker bars and tattoo parlors of the 19th arrondissement, a bevy of chic disguises, and a few slick car chases. But as usual, the star of the show is the city Aimée loves. Even when she’s accused of the murder of her ex, Melac, the father of her child, who has been threatening to move Chloe to Brittany by taking Aimee to court. Stunned by a concussion, covered in incriminating evidence, cut off from her usual network, Aimee must go deep into the city to uncover who’s framing her.” Cara says this is the last case for her PI Aimee LeDuc, a series that has toured us around the City of Light in all its glory and diversity for 24 years. She is still writing, no fear there....

* Blake, Matthew. [Anna O](#) (\$18.99). Indie Next: “This is the most inventive thriller I’ve read in a while. I won’t say much so readers can fold down their own corners or tab the pages for clues and try to piece together the riddle, but I will say: the writing is stellar and the plot is crazy good.” We had fun doing the virtual US launch for a debut about a young woman who commits a double murder while sleepwalking (or does she?). I recommend to fans of Michaelides’ [The Silent Patient](#) (\$17.99).

Carson, Scott. [Lost Man’s Lane](#) (\$19.99). Michael Koryta, writing as Carson, evokes the best of Stephen King in this exceptional coming-of-age tale about a young man confronting the supernatural menace that’s taken root in his hometown, 1999 Bloomington, Indiana. While the menace is truly creepy, the story of the boy, of all the teens in fact, is the kind that powers a Great American Novel. Koryta, who began writing when he was like 21 and is only 41 now, captures the inner thoughts and outward actions of 16-year-old Marshall Miller so vividly it can send you down memory lane yourself.

Coben, Harlan. [Think Twice](#) (\$19.99). Myron Bolitar is back—or was in the 2023 hardcover, now a large paperback. Sports agent Myron is contacted by the FBI when the DNA of a previous

client, Greg Downing, is found at a murder scene. But Greg is dead—or at least that’s the last Myron knew. With his partner, Win, Myron sets out to discover if Greg is truly dead and how his DNA has now shown up. With help from multiple people and insight from the FBI, Myron and Win realize they’re dealing with a serial killer who is framing others, effectively closing the cases.

Jones, Stephen Graham. [The Angel of Indian Lake](#) (\$19.99).

Ok, fans of real horror strap in for the latest from Jones. This final book in the trilogy picks up four years after *Don't Fear the Reaper* as Jade returns to Proofrock, Idaho, to build a life after the years of sacrifice—only to find the Lake Witch is waiting for her....

Koe, Amanda Lee. [Delayed Rays of a Star](#) (\$16.95). I’ve drawn on a 2020 book for our **February Historical Fiction Paperback Subscription Club Pick**. It was an NPR Best Book of the Year and a CrimeReads Historical Fiction Best Book of the Year. At a chance encounter at a Berlin soirée in 1928, the photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt captures three very different women together in one frame: up-and-coming German actress Marlene Dietrich; Anna May Wong, the world’s first Chinese American star; and Leni Riefenstahl, whose work as a director of propaganda art films would first make her famous—then, infamous. The trajectories of these women’s lives wind from Weimar Berlin to LA’s Chinatown, from the Bavarian Alps to the Champs-Élysées, and the different settings they inhabit are as richly textured as the roles they play and the legacy each woman left behind.

McTiernan, Dervla. [What Happened to Nina?](#) (\$18.99). Irish author McTiernan now living in Western Australia writes a crackerjack story that echoes the tragedy of Gabrielle Petito. “The first voice in the book belongs to Nina Fraser, 20 years old and spending the weekend with her controlling boyfriend, Simon Jordan, at his parents’ secluded Vermont country house. She wants to end their relationship. A few days later, Simon is back in their hometown, saying that they broke up. But Nina has disappeared. As disturbing details about their relationship emerge, the Jordans hire a lawyer and start stonewalling. Social media muddies the story, of course, especially when the Jordans hire a P.R. firm to spread false rumors about Nina and her parents. Rory, Simon’s father, is rich and ruthless. ‘Nobody trusts facts anymore,’ he says. Despite its title, the central question posed by this disturbing, enthralling book is less concerned with what happened to Nina (you’ll find out soon enough), but how the parents — all broken, terrified and desperate in their own ways — respond to the exigencies of the moment.

Parker, T. Jefferson. [The Rescue](#) (\$19.99). Our 30+ year history with TJ has been memorable for his 3 Edgar award-winning books, his couple of series, and his creative standalones. Here’s the newest in paperback. At a Tijuana animal shelter, journalist Bettina comes across what seems to be a Mexican street dog slated for extermination. She’s not sure why, but she takes him. She bonds with him immediately, naming him Felix. Alas, Felix had a different name in a former, shadier life. It was Joe then. The story of Joe’s past unfolds—he was shot in a drug heist gone bad, but a veterinarian saved him, then Bettina found him in the vet’s clinic. When Bettina writes about Felix’s rescue online, the cartel that lost money (a million and a half in cash, five kilos of fentanyl, uncut) learns he’s still alive. They take vengeance very seriously. Readers see the story unfold from the dog’s

perspective—very well done, as well as from Bettina’s, Teddy’s, and Dan’s viewpoints.

Silva, Daniel. [A Death in Cornwall](#) (\$19.99). Gabriel Allon has deep ties to Cornwall and here a police procedural, British politics, and art coalesce into a memorable read. Gabriel Allon here is fully retired as a spy and is recruited by a policeman down in Cornwall whom Gabriel met when the cop was a kid to look into the murder of an Oxford professor. Is it the work of the local serial killer with his hammer, or is there a larger picture? A real picture by Picasso which involves the Louvre which wants to return the looted painting to its rightful heir (just murdered in Montmartre), the Geneva Freeport, haven to wealthy collectors and worse, and bad behavior in the British Establishment. Lots of familiar characters, none from Israel, and a return to Corsica and Gabriel’s most implacable enemy, make this a joy for series fans but a new reader can plunge right in.

Slaughter, Karin. [This is Why We Lied](#) (\$19.99). For GBI investigator Will Trent and medical examiner Sara Linton, McAlpine Lodge seems like the ideal getaway to celebrate their honeymoon. Set on a gorgeous, off-the-grid mountaintop property, it’s the perfect place to unplug and reconnect. Until a bone-chilling scream cuts through the night. Hotel manager Mercy McAlpine has been murdered in one of the property’s cabins. Will and Sara jump into action with a vicious storm raging and the one access road to the property washed out, the murderer must be someone on the mountain....

Stefánsson, Jón Kalman. [Heaven and Hell](#) (Biblioasis \$17.95). In a remote fishing village, a boy and his best friend spend the lonely hours on shore reading and talking about poetry. When the friend, absorbed in a borrowed copy of *Paradise Lost*, forgets his oilskin one morning and the crew is unexpectedly caught at sea in a savage winter storm, tragedy strikes. Overwhelmed by grief—and his crewmates’ indifference to what has happened—the boy leaves the village, determined to return the book to its owner. The hardship and danger of the journey is of little consequence: he’s already resolved to join his friend in death. But when he reaches the town where he intends to end his days, he couldn’t have imagined the stories and lives he finds.” Indie Next calls this “[A] small, lyrical epic. Fans of Claire Keegan will love this one.”

NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACK

Atwood, Margaret. [Fourteen Days: A Collaborative Novel](#) (\$18.99). We sold over 1500 copies of the hardcover last year thanks to an event with two of the contributors to the stories making up this fundraiser for the Guild – Douglas Preston and Diana Gabaldon. The concept is that during COVID a group of people each told a story.

Bamford, Krystelle. [Idle Grounds](#) (Scribner \$26.99). Another Indie Next Pick for February: “Prepare to be consumed by this eerie debut. In the late 1980s a group of cousins venture into an impenetrable New England forest in search of a missing child from their group. Like many youthful escapades, their mystery is much more innocent than the one they uncover.” And their surroundings grow stranger.

Bowen, Rhys/Clare Broyles. [In Sunshine or in Shadow](#) (\$19). Fearing a summer typhus outbreak in Manhattan, a pregnant Molly takes the couple’s children to stay with Daniel’s mother in Westchester. Quickly bored, she decides to visit her friends

Sid and Gus at an artists' colony in the Catskills. On a walk in the woods, Molly discovers a bullet-riddled corpse and launches an inquiry. Her initial investigation leads her to a land dispute involving a real estate developer with plans to build a resort catering to Jewish patrons. Fearing the police will settle on a Jewish suspect out of prejudice, rather than following the trail of evidence, Molly digs in. Enjoy the landscapes of NY State, so rural over a century ago, and the beginnings of the "Borscht Belt" that among other things produced many of the 20th Century's best knows comedians.

* Casey, Jane. [The Outsider](#) (Harper \$18.99). The country-house lifestyle of the Carter family may seem picture-perfect, but they aren't what they appear to be. Undercover cop Rob Langton has one aim – to bring the family down—and then realizes they aren't just dangerous criminals. Casey "employs the conventions of spy fiction to devastating effect, as she skewers nativist populism, the enablers of domestic violence, and the arrogant patriarchy of the old boys' club in an understated thriller that quietly thrums along at a breakneck pace – think *Succession* with an undercover agent of chaos tossed into the maelstrom and you won't be too far off the mark ..."—*The Irish Times*

Durst, Sarah Beth. [The Warbler](#) (Lake Union \$16.99). The talented Durst burst upon us last year with her lovely Cottagecore Romantasy (meaning cozy, not spicy) [The Spellshop](#) (Forge \$29.99). Here's another: Ten months. That's the longest Elisa has stayed anyplace, constantly propelled by her fear that if she puts down roots, a family curse will turn her into a tree. But she's grown tired of flitting from town to town and in and out of relationships. When she discovers a small town in Massachusetts where mysterious forces make it impossible for the residents to leave, she hopes she can change her fate. As Elisa learns about the town's history, she understands more about the women in her family, who seem doomed to never get what they want. Now she believes she's stuck, too—is that a patch of bark on her arm? But her neighbor's collection of pet birds sings secrets that Elisa can almost understand....

* Fields, Helen. [Profiler](#) (Harper \$18.99). The US edition of *Profile K* which Lisa Gardner calls "that kind of old school serial killer thriller that has you reading, muttering and gasping the entire way." Midnight Jones is an analyst trained to understand the human mind. But everything changes when, in the course of her work, she discovers Profile K's file. K is for Killer (hello, Sue Grafton). And as the news rolls with the brutal murder of a local woman, no one believes what she tells them: that he is capable of so much worse. Profile K will kill again – and, terrifyingly, Midnight realizes that the moment she found his file was the moment she became his next target.

Flower, Amanda. [I Died for Beauty](#) (\$19). Amherst, 1857. The Dickinson family braves one of the worst winters in New England's history. Emily Dickinson and her maid, Willa Noble, have never witnessed anything like it. As Amherst families attempt to keep their homes warm, fears of fire abound. And sure enough, a blaze breaks out just down the street from the Dickinson in Kelley Square, the Irish community in Amherst, and a young couple is killed, leaving behind their young child. Their deaths appear to be a tragic accident, but Emily suspects not....

Glass, Seraphina Nova. [The Vacancy in Room 10](#) (Graydon House \$18.99). A 2025 Edgar Award Nominee! *The Paris*

Apartment meets *The Wrong Family*, this tale of crime, passion and murder is set in a run-down apartment complex packed with shady characters willing to go to deadly lengths to keep their darkest secrets from the stranger in their midst.

Look out for Seraphina Nova Glass's next novel, [Nothing Ever Happens Here](#) (\$18.99) in on sale February 11th. When Shelby Dawson survives a harrowing attack that should have left her dead, she tries to move past it—for herself, and for her family. Fifteen months later, with the help of her best friend, Mackenzie, she finally feels safe again in the snowy Minnesota town she calls home. But when an anonymous note appears on her windshield bearing the same threats her attacker made, Shelby realizes that her nightmare has only just begun. As new evidence surfaces, and a group of well-meaning senior citizens accidentally makes the case go viral online, the situation quickly goes from bad to worse

Horst, Jorn Lier. [The Katharina Code](#) (SimonSchuster \$19.99). Why not visit Norway this winter with the first in The Cold Case Quartet by an author who has won numerous awards for Scandicrime? Katharina went missing twenty-four years ago. Each year on the anniversary of her disappearance, Chief Inspector William Wisting rereads her files, searching for the answer he could never find; the code he could never solve. And he visits Katharina's husband, Martin Haugen, the brokenhearted man he could never help. Until now. This year is different. Another woman is missing under similar circumstances. But so is Katharina's husband. Wisting has to find him, but is he rescuing a dear old friend or playing a deadly game with a killer?

Kenitz, Daniel. [The Perfect Home](#) (Scribner \$17.99). If you haven't tired of the *Gone Girl* genre of domestic suspense, here's a riff on the concept: "A dark and twisting cat-and-mouse tale in which a marriage set in the public's glaring eye turns into a real killer.... Dawn Decker is an American everywoman and the salt to her husband Wyatt's sweet, media-friendly charm on their Tennessee-based home renovation reality TV show, *The Perfect Home*. While Dawn bristles at the trappings of their D-list celebrity status, Wyatt hungers for greater fame. The couple also faces infertility issues stemming from Wyatt's low sperm count. He secretly orders experimental fertility drugs, and they conceive, but his personality takes a dark turn. When Dawn discovers his horrifying plot to manufacture a tragedy in order to skyrocket their celebrity status, she takes their infant twins and goes on the run. Wyatt then appears on national television to turn the public against her....

King, Stephen/Richard Chizmar. [The Wendy Trilogy](#) (Gallery \$21.99) in a "Bind-UP" of Button Box, Magic Feather, and Final Task. In other words, the whole trilogy in one volume.

Lawson, Mike. [Kingpin](#) (\$17). I'm not sure how believable this series about a Washington DC fixer for a powerful Senator is going to be going forward – in fact Lawson just told me his next is a standalone story –but here's the latest for DC fixer Joe DeMarco in paperback. For the knockout sequel see Signed Books.

Nelson, Suzanne. [The Librarians of Lisbon](#) (Zando \$18). Patrick and I loved Robert Wilson's brilliant and award-winning WWII novel [A Small Death in Lisbon](#) (\$9.99—I'll look for a larger paperback edition.) Here's another WWII story set in the Portuguese capital. Lisbon stands alone as a glamorous city

on the brink of chaos, harboring spies trading double-edged secrets. Among them are Selene Delmont and Beatrice Sullivan, Boston librarians turned Allied operatives. Officially enlisted to collect banned books, both women are undercover agents tasked with infiltrating the Axis spy network. Soon, they're caught up in games of deception with two of Lisbon's most notorious men—the outcast Portuguese baron, Luca Caldeira, and the lethal spy, code name Gable. As Selene charms her way through lavish ballrooms with Luca, the more bookish Bea is plunged into Gable's shadowy world of informants. But when a betrayal unravels a carefully spun web of lies, everything they've fought for is thrown into jeopardy.

Remember also that David Lewis' delightful series start [A Jewel in the Crown](#) (Kensington \$27), a 2024 Historical Fiction Pick just nominated for an 2025 Edgar for Best First Novel, winds up the action in wartime Lisbon.

North, Claire. [The Last Song of Penelope](#) (Orbit \$19.99). A beggar has arrived at the Palace. Salt-crusted and ocean-battered, he is scorned by the suitors—but Penelope recognizes in him something terrible: her husband, Odysseus, returned at last. Yet this Odysseus is no hero. By returning to the island in disguise, he is not merely plotting his revenge against the suitors—vengeance that will spark a civil war—but he's testing the loyalty of his queen. Has she been faithful to him all these years? And how much blood is Odysseus willing to shed to be sure?

Orange, Tommy. [Wandering Stars](#) (\$18). The Pulitzer Prize finalist traces the legacies of the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864 and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School through three generations of a family in a story that is by turns shattering and wondrous. Refer to Sayle's new novel in Signed Books for more on the Carlisle School.

Patterson, James/Maxine Paetro. [The 24th Hour: Is This the End of the Women's Murder Club ?](#) (\$19.99). SFPD Sergeant Lindsay Boxer, Medical Examiner Claire Washburn, Assistant District Attorney Yuki Castellano, and crime writer Cindy Thomas gather at one of San Francisco's finest restaurants to celebrate exciting news: Cindy is getting married. Before they can raise their glasses, there's a disturbance in the restaurant. A woman has been assaulted. Claire examines the victim. Lindsay makes an arrest. Yuki takes the case. Cindy covers it. The legal strategy is complicated by gaps in the plaintiff's memory—and the shocking reason behind her ever-changing testimony.

Summers, Georgia. [The City of Stardust](#) (Orbit \$19.99). Violet Everly is the last of her line. For centuries, her family has seen their best and brightest taken as punishment for a crime no one remembers, for a purpose no one understands. Violet has ten years to find her mother, Marianne, the latest victim of the curse. If she fails, she will take Marianne's place. As her hunt leads her into a seductive magical underworld of power-hungry scholars, fickle gods, and monsters bent on revenge, time starts to run out.

Wilson, Carter. [Tell Me What You Did](#) (Sourcebooks \$17.99). Poe Webb hosts a popular podcast in which anonymous guests confess their crimes and asks if murderers are always the bad guys. Her show grants simultaneous anonymity and instant fame. Then a guest stuns her by confessing to having killed Poe's mother. Poe is stunned—she knows who did it. She did.

FEBRUARY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Alexander, Ellie. [Killing Me Soufflé: A Bakeshop Mystery](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Bakeshop #20. At the Whaleshead Resort on the Oregon coast, chefs Sterling and Stephanie are thrilled to open their new restaurant with a fresh menu, but excitement turns to horror when their boss, Erik Morton, falls to his death down a cliff, prompting Jules and her team to investigate the suspected foul play.

Coben, Harlan. [I Will Find You](#) (\$10.99). An innocent father serving life for the murder of his own son receives evidence that his child may still be alive, and must break out of prison to find out the truth.

Connelly, Michael. [Resurrection Walk](#) (\$10.99). Lincoln Lawyer #7. With the help of his half-brother, retired LAPD Detective Harry Bosch, defense attorney Mickey Haller sets out to prove the innocence of a woman in prison for killing her husband, a sheriff's deputy, putting Mickey in the crosshairs of a killer who doesn't want the case reopened—or the truth coming to light.

Hepworth, Sally. [The Soulmate](#) (\$9.99). When her husband becomes a local hero, saving person after person from ending their lives until one night he doesn't, Pippa discovers he knew the victim and wonders if she jumped or was pushed—a question that cracks the foundations of the life they've built.

Miranda, Megan. [Such a Quiet Place](#) (\$10.99). When the woman implicated in the murder of a couple in their formerly idyllic and close-knit neighborhood returns to Hollow's Edge, suspicion spreads like a virus and it soon becomes apparent to Harper Nash that not everyone told the truth about the night of the murder.

MORE SMALL PAPERBACKS

Campbell, Rick. [The Bin Laden Plot](#) (\$9.99). Trident Deception 7. Discovering his mission to stop one of the U.S.'s fully automated unmanned underwater vehicles that has gone rogue is actually meant to cover up dangerous acts of corruption, even treason, Captain Murray Wilson and SEAL Jake Harrison become the targets of an assassin too powerful for either of them to take on alone.

Clark, Mary Higgins. [I Heard That Song Before](#) (\$10.99). Reissue. Marrying the son of her father's wealthy employer, twenty-eight-year-old gardener's daughter Kay Lansing becomes increasingly disturbed by the suspicion surrounding her husband, Peter, in regard to the mysterious deaths of his first wife and a high-school senior.

Corry, Jane. [Coming to Find You](#) (Doubleday \$10.50). Nancy's mother and stepfather have been brutally killed. After a trial that gripped the nation, her stepbrother has been convicted of the double murder. But the end of the trial is just the beginning of a new nightmare for Nancy: the press is rabid, certain that she is hiding something. Certain that she knows more than she's telling about that night at the farmhouse.

Kent, Kathleen. [Burn](#) (\$9.99). Detective Betty #2. Reissue. A Dallas detective struggles to adjust at work and home after a run-in with an apocalyptic cult while trying to track down crooked cops and the cult leader who had taken her hostage.

Patterson, James. [Cross Down](#) (\$10.99). Alex Cross #30. Detectives Alex Cross and John Sampson join forces again to protect the Cross family from a shadow force advancing on the nation's capital.