

# BOOKNEWS from

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

### AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

*Some Events will be webcast on Facebook Live*

### Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#)

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 5 7:00 PM

**Douglas Preston** signs [Verses for the Dead](#) (Grand Central \$28), presigned by **Lincoln Child** who joins in by Skype. Plus there's a very cool vintage postcard with a message written by Agent AXL Pendergast.

**Location:** Kerr Center 6110 N. Scottsdale Road 85253

(Note: turn into Rose Lane at the light, then take the first left to the Kerr Center which is not precisely on Scottsdale Road. Plenty of parking)

**Time:** Doors open 6:00 PM, Program at 7:00

**This event is free but admission to the signing line requires the purchase of *Verses for the Dead* from The Poisoned Pen. You may bring one personal book to be signed as well**

#### TUESDAY JANUARY 8 7:00 PM

**Brad Taylor** signs [Daughter of War](#) (Dutton \$27)  
Pike Logan thriller #13

#### THURSDAY JANUARY 10 7:00 PM

**Thomas Perry** signs [The Burglar](#) (Grove \$26)  
Ellie Stowell, professional burglar, and now...a target

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 12 2:00 PM

**Carol Potenza** signs [Hearts of the Missing](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Winner of the 2017 Tony Hillerman Prize and our **December 2018 First Mystery Book of the Month Club Pick**  
**Mette Ivie Harrison** signs [Not of This Fold](#) (Soho \$26.95)  
Mormon Bishop's Wife Linda Wallheim #4

#### TUESDAY JANUARY 15 7:00 PM

**Lyndsay Faye** signs [The Paragon Hotel](#) (Putnam \$26)  
From Harlem to Portland during Prohibition

#### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 16 7:00 PM

**Greer Hendricks/Sarah Pekkanen** sign [An Anonymous Girl](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
From the authors of [The Wife Between Us](#)  
Our copies will each come with a custom "Beauty Blender" while supplies last

#### THURSDAY JANUARY 17 7:00 PM

**Nick Petrie** signs [Tear it Down](#) (Putnam \$26)  
Peter Ash #4

**Matthew Quirk** signs [The Night Agent](#) (Harper \$26.99)  
Is there a Russian mole in the White House?

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 19 2:00 PM

**Rosemary Simpson** signs [Let the Dead Keep Their Secret](#) (Kensington \$26)  
Gilded Age Mystery #3  
Host **Karen Odden** signs [A Dangerous Duet](#) (Harper \$15.99)  
A Victorian Mystery

#### MONDAY JANUARY 21 7:00 PM

**James Rollins Book Launch**  
**James Rollins** signs [Crucible](#) (Harper \$28.99)  
Sigma Force #13  
Pre-order a signed copy now and receive an exclusive collectible—a must-have for James Rollins's fans!

#### JANUARY DISCUSSION CLUBS

**Coffee & Crime:** Saturday January 10:30 AM: AL Herbert, [Murder with Fried Chicken and Waffles](#) (\$7.99)  
**SciFi Friday:** January 14 7:00 PM: Madeline Miller, [The Song of Achilles](#) (\$16.99)  
**Croak & Dagger:** Saturday January 15 10:30 AM: Claire Macintosh, [I Let You Go](#) (\$9.99)  
**Hardboiled Crime:** Wednesday January 23 7:00 PM: Alan Parks, [Bloody January](#) (\$17)

## EVENT BOOKS THROUGH JANUARY 21

Faye, Lyndsay. [The Paragon Hotel](#) (Putnam \$26 Jan. 15). I am struck by this review from a Faye fan. “This book has got everything, moving back and forth between the mafia-ruled streets of New York, to the speakeasies of the West Coast, heavy on the ambiance (which I love), and written with a sense of grit and glamour that is delivered in equal proportions. The New York narrative will hook you with the story of what is, in essence, the tale of a young spy-in-training. And in 1921 Portland, Oregon, you’ll be drawn in by the quirky, charismatic cast, the secrets among them, and by Portland’s lesser-known history of seriously virulent segregation—the Ku Klux Klan has brutally come to town. The dialogues click along smartly and at a quick pace, and Nobody’s voice is definitely unique and true to both her character and the times (meanwhile, she constantly modulates her appearance/habits/interactions with the characters to become “the Nobody” that fits each respective situation – also fun). Extremely well-researched (as all Lyndsay Faye books tend to be).” Our **January History/Mystery Book of the Month** is written in the slang of 1921 which Faye gleaned from reading a trove of Ernest Hemingway letters and addresses issues you might well not expect to find in Oregon but are historically true. This is a challenging read that illuminates our time through the lens of an earlier period in America. For an excellent interview with Faye that underlines why this is our Pick, read this [column in BookPage](#).

Harrison, Mette Ivie. [Not of This Fold](#) (Soho \$26.95 Jan. 12). The 4<sup>th</sup> investigation by the bishop’s wife is Signed here on January 12 (weather permitting her arrival from Utah) with Carol Potenza. “...In Harrison’s exceptional fourth Linda Wallheim mystery, Gwen Ferris, who has been active in the church’s Spanish ward, has befriended Gabriela Suarez, a young mother of three, whose husband has been deported to Mexico. One day, Gabriela leaves a phone message for Gwen that suggests she’s in some sort of trouble, and that night, her strangled body turns up at a gas station. Gwen prevails on her good friend Linda to help bring Gabriela’s killer to justice. Tension rises between Linda and her Mormon bishop husband, Kurt, who worries about her interfering in police matters. Meanwhile, Linda fears that their youngest son, Samuel, who’s on a mission in Boston, may be encountering prejudice from fellow Mormons because he’s openly gay. The culprit will surprise few, but Harrison maintains the suspense as the action builds to an altogether fitting resolution, in which an unexpected character plays a major role. Readers of all faiths will relate to kindhearted, thoughtful Linda, a devout Mormon who isn’t afraid to question the policies and leadership of the LDS church.”—*PW* Starred Review. While you wait [order the first three for Linda](#).

Hendricks, Greer/Sarah Pekkanen. [An Anonymous Girl](#) (St Martins \$27.99 Jan. 16, both authors). Jessica Farris is a young woman struggling to earn enough through booking appointments as a makeup artist to keep herself and and... well, not saying. One evening while glamorizing two careless young NY college students, she overhears an appointment being confirmed for a study conducted by psych professor Dr. Shields. The pay is \$500. The student blows it off. Jessica can’t help but think, why not claim it, answer a few questions, collect her money, and leave?

So she shows up and sits in. Then Dr. Shields suggests further appointments. As the questions grow more and more intense and invasive and the sessions become outings where Jess is told what to wear and how to act, she begins to feel as though Dr. Shields may know what she’s thinking...and what she’s hiding. In a way it’s comforting. Yet as Jess’s paranoia grows, it becomes clear that she can no longer trust what in her life is real, and what is one of Dr. Shields’ manipulative experiments. What is really going on? This is a variation on the Trust No One genre.

Perry, Thomas. [The Burglar](#) (Grove \$26 Jan. 10). Jane Whitefield, mistress of concealment and making people disappear, is much missed by me. Jane’s genius is not her iron grip on poise but her total command of whatever tools she needs along with their unhesitating deployment. Jane has a kind of twin in Elle Stowell, a slight young woman whose career path is robbing the homes of Bel Air’s rich. She’s a master of blending in—until she hits the home of a former financial services exec turned art gallery owner. Heading for the master bedroom in Nick Kavanagh’s apparently empty home, Elle finds Nick and two naked socialites dead in Nick’s bed from shots to their heads. And a concealed video camera. Is it running? Did it record the crimes? Did it record her? And if all this is true, what to do? The premise of Larry Block’s and Tim Hallinan’s series featuring career burglars is, set a thief to catch a thief. Or here, a killer(s) before he kills you.

Petrie, Nick. [Tear It Down](#) (Putnam \$26 Jan. 17). Petrie writes, “For me, storytelling is a moving target. I planned *Tear It Down* as a kind of disaster novel, set in Memphis because it’s the largest city in the New Madrid Seismic Zone, home to four of the largest North American earthquakes in recorded history. Memphis also has a deep, rich, and troubled social history, so the story could begin with built-in conflict. Then I started developing characters. Wanda Wyatt, a photojournalist who’d spent most of her career covering war zones. Eli Bell, a young black street musician who gets himself in trouble with a Memphis gangster. Albert Burkitts, a white Mississippi farmer caught between his unpaid bills and his ex-con younger brother. And of course Peter Ash, our hero. But these characters and their challenges were so much fun to write about that the earthquake never showed up.” Instead Peter arrives chez Wanda who’s been suspecting some kind of stalker and finds a huge dump truck has just crashed into her home... Does it then become a tear down?

Potenza, Carol. [Hearts of the Missing](#) (St Martins \$26.99 Jan. 12). Pueblo Police Sergeant Nicky Matthews is assigned to the suicide of a young woman linked to a list of missing Fire-Sky tribal members. Further investigation probes deeply into what it means to be a Fire-Sky Native and victims chosen and murdered because of their genetic makeup. The killer is not only taking their lives but determined that the spirits of those targeted will wander forever, lost to their family and to their ancestors. In an interview Potenza remarks, “My sister-in-law, who works as a police officer on a reservation, never saw visions until she started working out there. It made a huge impression on me. I gathered her stories over the years and started using them in my writing. I’ve also been doing some ride-alongs with the police and conservation officers at the pueblo, and they have all been telling me more of these vision stories. I’ve got some great ghost

stories.” Actually this is not a woo-woo at all but has some believable science as well as a truly evil villain. Glowing reviews drove this to a quick second printing so don’t delay ordering your first. Here’s the Indie Next Pick: “When a suicide seems to be linked to other missing Fire-Skye people, Nicky defies her boss and investigates. Ancient beliefs and culture, greed, revenge, and modern-day genetics all mix together in this beautifully written police procedural.”

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Verses for the Dead](#) (Grand Central \$28 Jan. 5). A new Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s NY field office upends Agent Pendergast’s life. Pendergast is abruptly forced to accept an unthinkable condition of continued employment: the famously rogue agent must now work with a partner. So junior Special Agent Coldmoon too is assigned to a gruesome case in Miami Beach where a young woman has had her throat slashed and her heart cut out in a gruesome crime. The heart, left on a local cemetery gravestone along with a note, is apparently a link to a suicide some years earlier in Maine. This confounding MO is repeated, linked to another woman’s suicide. But the seeming lack of connection between the old suicides and the new murders is soon the least of Pendergast’s worries—outside of having to work with Coldmoon and report to Director Pickett.... This is pure Pendergast and filled with both thrills and uncommon information.

Quirk, Matthew. [The Night Agent](#) (Harper \$26.99 Jan. 17). Is there a Russian mole inside the White House? Talk about a loaded question...an excellent one to ask as Quirk diverges from the straight thriller to write a spy story. Idealistic young FBI Agent Peter Sutherland, a surveillance specialist, is surprised by an assignment to the White House Situation Room. Despite his low profile, by-the-book approach and record, he’s never escaped the taint of his father’s past. Dad, a section chief in FBI counterintelligence, was suspected of selling secrets to the Russians. It cost him his career, his marriage and reputation and, in time, his life. Peter has never known what was true of his dad. But he does know how easily breaking even one rule can upend a life. So when one 1:05 AM the SR phone rings and a terrified young woman delivers an enigmatic message, Peter’s responses are surprising. He begins an odyssey that pits him against ruthless operatives, skilled assassins, and the full force of the Bureau. And in keeping with the times, could it be that the underlying question is...? Like Hurwitz’s new Orphan X to be Signed January 30, Quirk imagines what might be the character of the President?

Rollins, James. [Crucible](#) (Harper \$28.99 Jan 21—this is the day before publication date and our copies come with a custom collectible created just for you). Never let it be said that the fearless Rollins doesn’t dare to tackle big subjects. Here he starts off during the waning days of the horrific Spanish Inquisition and sets his sights on witches. But there’s more. Out for a drink with his best friend and colleague Monk Kokkalis, Commander Gray Pierce arrives home on Christmas Eve to find his house ransacked, his pregnant lover missing, and Monk’s two young daughters vanished into the night. The only witness to this attack is Monk’s wife, Kat, who is found beaten, bleeding, and comatose on the kitchen floor. Halfway around the world, the U.S ambassador to Portugal is ambushed at a prestigious scientific symposium of women scientists. She and her colleagues are

murdered, their bodies burned beyond recognition. The culprits behind this brutal attack are tied to an ancient sect, one that is determined to return the world to a time of darkness and ignorance, to when witches were burned at the stake. Rollins writes “To stop this cabal and learn the truth about the attack upon their families, Gray and Monk must follow arcane clues tracing back to the time of the Spanish Inquisition—and to the dark mysteries surrounding a medieval text known as the *Malleus Maleficarum*. *Crucible* is a HUGE story, dealing with a subject matter that personally terrifies me and serves as a cautionary tale about a real-world threat looming just around the corner. It’s a danger that Stephen Hawking once described as the ‘worst event in the history of civilization.’ That Elon Musk fears it will lead to World War III. Even Russian president Vladimir Putin has said that whoever controls this event will control the world. To face this crisis head-on, each teammate will be challenged to his very limits and be forever transformed. So brace yourselves—this is Sigma’s most daunting and personal adventure to date.”

Simpson, Rosemary. [Let the Dead Keep Their Secrets](#) (Kensington \$26 Jan. 19). Simpson’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Gilded Age mystery publishes in December and is Signed here January 19 in conversation with Karen Odden. “We are strolling the world of NYC in 1889, being thrilled by the architecturally beautiful homes, the lush period clothing, and the electricity in the air that seems to foresee this city’s expansion into becoming the ultimate metropolis. Prudence MacKenzie is a socialite who learned law from her late father who was a judge. She is now a P.I. and her partner’s name is Geoffrey Hunter. Born and bred in the South, he is a gentleman as well as an ex-Pinkerton detective. Their wealth of knowledge and skill help in this brand new case dropped at their door; a case that involves the sudden death of a mother and her newborn. The identical twin of the deceased woman hires Prudence and Geoffrey to find out if her own feelings are true; she believes that her sister was murdered by the horrible husband she married. What’s worse is this man remarried almost immediately and this second wife is now pregnant and could possibly be his next victim. Post-mortem photography is the popular historical forensics method that this book focuses upon in order to solve the crime. When Prudence and Geoffrey are led to the photographer, they uncover the fact that the photo was retouched, which means someone is hiding something. They need a negative, and fast! Although this can be read as a standalone novel, reading all of these mysteries is a sheer journey of enjoyment and fun. All are page-turners, and bringing this particular killer to justice before other women are mysteriously killed is truly riveting.”—Amy Lignor. *PW* adds, “Simpson’s New York is gritty and dark, and she convincingly portrays the era’s fascinating macabre spiritualist beliefs, class and gender stereotypes, and racial prejudices.”

Taylor, Brad. [Daughter of War](#) (Dutton \$27 Jan. 8—publication day). Amena, a 13-year-old Syrian refugee, has landed with her family in Monaco, where she and her younger brother pickpocket tourists to survive. One day the theft of an iPhone from a Syrian intelligence agent lands them in deadly trouble. The phone contains information about a Syrian plan to use a North Korean biological agent known as Red Mercury, a deadly poison that kills then renders itself safe and untraceable, on an American Special Forces outpost. Pike and his team are in Monaco on a separate mission when they stumble on the Red Mercury plot. Soon Amena is fleeing from the Russians, the Syrians, and the North

Koreans, all of whom want the phone. Taylor's military thrillers featuring Pike Logan and the Taskforce's counterterrorism agents have always drawn on his professional expertise for meticulous plots, but in this 13th our luck is in that the resourceful Amena more or less steals the show. "Taylor has already established himself as a master of special-ops thrillers, and this one will only add to his stellar reputation... Taylor adds human depth to his usually plot-driven novels, and the result is one of his best books to date." —*Booklist* (starred review)

## SIGNED BOOKS FOR JANUARY

*More will be added in the next Booknews. Some of these will not arrive until later in January but we urge you to order them now to avoid disappointment. And more Signed titles will be added as January moves along so please check the Enews or [sign up for it](#) if you don't subscribe. Thank you.*

Bradley, Alan. [The Golden Tresses of the Dead](#) (Orion \$48). In Flavia de Luce's 10<sup>th</sup> outing, set in 1950s England, the ghoulish central question is: "How had an embalmed finger found its way from the hand of a dead woman in a Surrey cemetery into the heart of sister Ophelia's wedding cake at Buckshaw?" Though only in her early teens, chemistry prodigy Flavia has formed a private detective agency with Arthur Dogger, her late father's valet, at the family estate of Buckshaw which Flavia now owns. The digit turns out to have come from the corpse of a guitar impresario and presents Flavia and Dogger with their first case. The sleuths also get their first client when Anastasia Prill asks for their help in recovering some sensitive stolen letters relating to her father's homeopathic practice, an inquiry that turns into a homicide investigation. "Bradley, who has few peers at combining fair-play clueing with humor and has fun mocking genre conventions, shows no sign of running out of ideas," says the *PW* Starred Review. Since he lives on the Isle of Man we have to import signed copies from London.

Burke, James Lee. [New Iberia Blues](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). Patrick writes, "Dave Robicheaux may be getting on in years but he's certainly not ready to ride into the sunset, as Burke proves in his masterful new novel. As a longtime reader of Burke, I'm always in awe of the lush, poetic language, the visionary attention to time and the presence of the ghosts of the past among the living. This time out, Robicheaux discovers the crucified body of a woman floating in the surf close to a famous movie director's beach-front property. As more bodies are found, each staged in what appears to be a ritualistic, symbolic manner, Robicheaux and his longtime Sancho Panza, Clete Purcell, find themselves on the hunt once again. Dave's daughter Alafair, now a successful novelist in her own right, plays a prominent role this time out. Reading Burke is like spending time with an old friend, and his moral compass is reassuring in these troubled times." Yes, it's Dave Robicheaux, in his 22<sup>nd</sup> investigation running through dark corners of Hollywood, the mafia, and the backwoods of Louisiana.

Chakraborty, SA. [Kingdom of Copper](#) (Harper \$26.99). Nahri's life changed forever the moment she accidentally summoned Dara, a formidable, mysterious djinn, during one of her schemes. Whisked from her home in Cairo, she was thrust into the dazzling royal court of Daevabad—and quickly discovered she would need all her grifter instincts to survive there. Now, with Daevabad entrenched in the dark aftermath of a devastating battle,

Nahri must forge a new path for herself. But even as she embraces her heritage and the power it holds, she knows she's been trapped in a gilded cage, watched by a king who rules from the throne that once belonged to her family—and one misstep will doom her tribe. Book 2 in the Daevabad Trilogy after [The City of Brass](#) (\$16.99), a 2018 SciFi Book of the Month Club Pick, so club members will surely want this sequel.

Dean, Will. [Red Snow](#) (OneWorld \$36). One suicide—the licorice factory owner climbs up the tallest chimney and jumps. One cold-blooded murder. Are they connected? And who's really pulling the strings in the small Swedish town of Gavrik? Black Grimberg licorice coins cover the murdered man's eyes. The hashtag #Ferryman starts to trend as local people stock up on ammunition. Tuva Moodyson, deaf reporter at the local paper, has a fortnight to investigate the deaths before she starts her new job in the south. A blizzard moves in. Residents, already terrified, feel increasingly cut-off. Tuva must go deep inside the Grimberg factory to stop the killer before she leaves town for good. But who's to say the Ferryman will let her go? Nordic Noir for our **January Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**. Order early as we have a limited number of copies.

Dorsey, Tim. [No Sunscreen for the Dead](#) (Harper \$28). Serge and Coleman are back on the road, ready to hit the next stop on their list of obscure and wacky points of interest in the Sunshine State. This time, Serge's interest is drawn to one of the largest retirement villages in the world—also known as the site of an infamous sex scandal between a retiree and her younger beau that rocked the community. What starts out as an innocent quest to observe elders in their natural habitats, sample the local cuisine, and scope out a condo to live out the rest of their golden years, soon becomes a Robin Hood-like crusade to recover the funds of swindled residents.

Fabbri, Robert. [Emperor of Rome](#) (Atlantic UK \$39). Rome, AD 68. Vespasian is tasked with the impossible. Should he quell the revolt in Judaea, as Nero the emperor has instructed, or must he resort to the unthinkable and sabotage his own campaign? If his conquest succeeds, he risks becoming the sole object of the mad emperor's jealousy. If he fails, then his punishment will be severe. The fate of his men and his beloved son, Titus, all hang in the balance. But unknown to Vespasian, Nero has committed suicide, catapulting Rome into political turmoil. Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, is caught between the warring factions of Aulus Vitellius, a cruel opportunist, and the noble Marcus Salvius Otho, who finds himself severely outnumbered. Seeing no aid on the horizon, Sabinus must rely on wit, and wit alone, to ensure the safety of his family. With a contested throne and an army at his disposal, now may finally be Vespasian's time? I ordered this mostly for fans of Lindsey Davis' Falco series and also because Fabbri should be better known as a writer of Roman fiction.

Grant, Andrew. [Invisible](#) (Ballantine \$27 out in January but Signed here Feb. 5). Here is the coveted *PW* Star for this new start by Grant: "After successfully carrying out a highly tricky mission in Istanbul that serves to sabotage Iran's nuclear ambitions, U.S. Army intelligence operative Paul McGrath, the hero of this superior thriller from Grant, receives a letter from his estranged father two years after it was written, thanks to the inefficient military mail system. McGrath's choice of career alienated his father, a pacifist, but the senior McGrath offers hope for

the two of them to reconcile in the letter. When McGrath finally reaches the house in Westchester he grew up in, he's stunned to learn that his father has died, apparently from a heart attack, following a heated argument with his shady business partner, Alex Pardew. The circumstances immediately trigger guilt in McGrath over his refusal to be that partner. Things get worse when the NYPD suspect McGrath of being behind his father's death, leading McGrath to turn investigator. Grant capably combines a riveting plot and depth of character. His best outing to date, this standalone marks Grant as a rising genre star."

Hoag, Tami. [The Boy](#) (Dutton \$28 out Dec. 31, Signed here Jan. 22). I'm waiting for an ARC so this is what I know: Though it's a stand-alone, this new novel stars detectives Nick Fourcade and Annie Broussard of Hoag's *A Thin Dark Line* (1997). They're investigating a break-in that has left Genevieve Gauthier's seven-year-old son dead but Genevieve inexplicably unharmed. Why would the murderer leave any witnesses? Why does the boy's 13-year-old babysitter vanish the next day?

Jones, Stephen Mack. [Lives Laid Away](#) (Soho \$28). "Hard-driving noir, with a strong dose of neighborhood camaraderie; for read-alike comparisons, think Easy Rawlins and his close-knit L.A. neighborhood,"—*Booklist*. Or Joe Ide and South LA. Plus the food is superb. Jones effectively dramatizes the Trump administration's approach to illegal immigration in his superior second novel featuring ex-cop August Snow. Snow was forced out of the Detroit PD after he began digging into allegations that the former mayor was corrupt. The wrongful dismissal lawsuit he filed yielded a multimillion-dollar payday, and Snow has chosen to invest that money in his old neighborhood of Mexicantown. The community he is working to help comes under threat from an ICE crackdown, an initiative that coincides with the death of 19-year-old Isadora del Torres, an undocumented alien who leaped into the Detroit River while dressed as Marie Antoinette. Snow learns that the dead teenager was the victim of a vicious human trafficking ring that may involve corrupt immigration agents. Snow, who is of mixed African-American and Mexican heritage, is an uncompromising crusader with a sense of humor reminiscent of Robert Parker's Spenser. He merits a long literary life."—*PW* Starred Review. [August Snow](#) was the 2018 Hammett Prize and Nero Wolfe Award winner.

Meltzer, Brad. [The First Conspiracy](#) (Flatiron \$32). Our **January Modern Firsts Book of the Month**. Not only is it timely, but Meltzer writes history with the same style and propulsion (and fine plotting) that he writes fiction—thus, a terrific choice. In 1776, an elite group of soldiers were handpicked to serve as George Washington's bodyguards. Washington trusted them; relied on them. But unbeknownst to Washington, some of them were part of a treasonous plan. In the months leading up to the Revolutionary War, these traitorous soldiers, along with the Governor of New York William Tryon and Mayor David Mathews, launched a deadly plot against the most important member of the military: George Washington himself. This is the story of the secret plot and how it was revealed. It is a story of leaders, liars, counterfeiters, and jailhouse confessors. It also shows just how hard the battle was for George Washington—and how close America was to losing the Revolutionary War. Taking place during the most critical period of our nation's birth, *The First Conspiracy* tells a remarkable and previously untold piece of American history that not only reveals George Washington's

character, but also illuminates the origins of America's counterintelligence movement that led to the modern day CIA.

Montgomery, Jess. [The Widows](#) (St Martins \$28). "Montgomery's debut features two tough-as-nails, strong-willed women whose empathy leaves a lasting impression. A simultaneous examination of women's rights, coal mining, prohibition, and Appalachian life, this is a fantastic choice for historical fiction fans."—*Library Journal* (starred). "*The Widows* is the story of a community in crisis: the Pinkertons are waging war against miners and the law, and no one is safe from their recklessness. But two brave women take a stand, committing themselves to saving their community and families. Jess Montgomery's gorgeous writing can be just as dark and terrifying as a subterranean cave when the candle is snuffed out, but her prose can just as easily lead you to the surface for a gasp of air and a glimpse of blinding, beautiful sunlight. This is a powerful novel: a tale of loss, greed, and violence, and the story of two powerful women who refuse to stand down."—Wiley Cash, echoed by Julia Keller. And certainly a good choice for fans of Sharyn McCrumb's *Ballad Mysteries*. I add that novel was inspired by the true story of Ohio's first female sheriff, Lily Ross, who became acting sheriff when her husband Daniel was killed over in 1917 France. Was it an accident or a war casualty? Or...? Find out by ordering our **January First Mystery Book of the Month**.

Pronzini, Bill. [The Flimflam Affair](#) (Forge \$27). Carpenter and Quincannon, Professional Detective Services, is a fixture in San Francisco at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the future is unclear, Sabina and John know one thing for certain; they will protect their clients from flimflammers, thieves, and murderers, and do whatever it takes to run these dregs of society into the arms of the law. Sometimes, that requires a subtle touch. Professor A. Vargas, self-styled medium extraordinaire, and his partner Annabelle, use guile and trickery to swindle bereaved men and women eager to contact the spirits of deceased loved ones. John and Sabina must not only unmask these charlatans, but also solve the riddle of an impossible murder in the midst of a séance. Other cases involve brute force and personal danger. Such as the theft of a burglarproof safe mysteriously emptied of gold bullion. And John's pursuit of a ruthless gang of counterfeiters, whose leader appears to be a man from John's past in the Secret Service—a man thought long dead. Adding spice to these exploits is Sabina and John's personal relationship, which is rapidly progressing to an exciting new level. 7<sup>th</sup> in series.

Rowland, Laura Joh. [The Hangman's Secret](#) (Crooked Lane \$28). "Rowland's engaging team of sleuths and a colorful rogues' gallery of suspects make her third Victorian mystery a genuine page-turner."—*Kirkus Reviews*. Which goes on to report, "London, 1890. Photographer Sarah Bain's success as an amateur sleuth has led to a job as a crime-scene photographer for the *Daily World*. Together with her handsome sidekick, Lord Hugh Staunton, and street urchin and factotum Mick O'Reilly, Sarah's summoned to a grisly scene. Pub owner and sometime hangman Harry Warbrick appears to have hanged himself. His severed head rests in a noose above a pool of blood. But evidence at the scene convinces Sarah that this was not suicide but murder. Malcolm Cross, Sarah's rival at the *World*, mocks her account. In announcing an in-house contest to ferret out the truth before the police, Sir Gerald Mariner, the paper's shrewd owner, pits Sarah against Cross (not to mention law enforcement)..."

Souders, Paul. [Arctic Solitaire](#) (Mountaineer Books \$26.95). How did photographer Souders find himself alone aboard a tiny boat, enduring bad weather and worse cooking, while struggling to find his way across more than a thousand miles of Hudson Bay? It was all for a picture. He dreamed of photographing the Arctic's most iconic animal, the polar bear, in its natural habitat. It was a seemingly simple plan: Haul a 22-foot fishing boat northeast a few thousand miles, launch, and shoot the perfect polar bear photo. Of course it didn't go that way.... A dozen left in stock.

Wilson, F. Paul. [The Void Protocol](#) (Forge \$29). Something sits in a bunker lab buried fifty feet below the grounds of Lakehurst Naval Air Station. The product of the Lange-Tür technology confiscated from the Germans after World War II occupies a chamber of steel-reinforced ballistic glass. Despite experimentation for nearly three-quarters of a century, no one knows what it is, but illegal human research reveals what it can do. Humans with special abilities have been secretly collected—abilities that can only have come from whatever occupies the underground bunker in Lakehurst. And so it sits, sequestered on the edge of the New Jersey Pine Barrens, slowly changing the world. Wilson concludes his medical thriller trilogy featuring Rick Hayden and Laura Fanning as they confront the entities responsible for the supernatural events of *Panacea* and *The God Gene*.

Winters, Ben. [Golden State](#) (Little Brown \$27.99). Patrick writes, “Following up a groundbreaking novel like [Underground Airlines](#) (\$15.99) is a tall order for any writer, but Winters pulls it off and then some with this brilliant, unsettling novel, our **January SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**. Laszlo Ratesic works for the Speculative Service in an alternate society known as the Golden State, which stands where California once stood. The alternate utopian society has become a refuge for like-minded individuals escaping from the systemic corruption and lies that have splintered the country. In the Golden State, truth is held as the supreme virtue and knowingly contradicting the truth is a crime. It's Lazlo's job to investigate and stop these crimes and he is one of the few people allowed to harbor untruths to speculate on how the crime occurred. Of course, this seeming paradise comes at quite a cost in the form of constant surveillance and recording. When those in power have the monopoly on 'truth' and can use it for their own ends, does truth have any currency left? Winters doesn't shy away asking the difficult questions about where we are today and where we might be headed.”

Critic Hank Stephenson adds, “Winters is an expert at combining social commentary with gripping mystery plots, and the novel never slows down enough to be accused of didacticism. With rich characters, frequent twists and tense set pieces, Winters always nails the hardboiled basics. And even as Ratesic's unquestioning faith in his society erodes, it remains a provocative and compelling alternative to the uncertainty that can seem to undergird modern life.”

#### OUR TOP NEW YEAR LARGE PAPERBACKS

☞ Finch, Charles. [The Woman in the Water](#) (\$17.99). The *NY Times* reviews the first in a “prequel trilogy”: “Prequels are fun because you get an intimate glimpse of your favorite detectives while they're still wet behind the ears and not so full of themselves. Charles Lenox, a gentleman sleuth who goes on to great things in the charming Victorian novels of Charles Finch, is a

mere whippersnapper, fresh out of Oxford and determined to set himself up as a ‘consulting detective’ (a profession that barely existed in 1850). As a member of the aristocracy, Lenox has access to Metropolitan Police bigwigs, but to establish himself as a private consultant he must solve a case on his own — ideally, a cunning mystery like the one he and his clever valet, Graham, contend with here. The London newspapers have received a letter from someone who boasts of having ‘the perfect crime’ and promises more to come. Suspecting a string of homicides has already begun, Lenox gets permission to poke into a previous, possibly related murder. This young woman's ‘well-kept teeth’ indicate that she was not a prostitute but someone of substance, someone who might even have been a member of Lenox's own social circle.” Finch signs the second prequel, [The Vanishing Man](#) (St Martins \$26.99), here Feb. 20.

Gardner, Lisa. [Look for Me](#) (\$16). Boston cop DD Warren is preparing to hunt a puppy for their five-year-old son with her husband, when her phone buzzes. “Red ball,” she says. Meaning all Boston homicide detectives are summoned. And with reason: the crime scene, an ordinary, small, two-story home contains the bodies of a man, a woman, and a young sister and brother, the former wrapped protectively around the latter. It's a slaughter by gun. Missing is the 16-year-old, the eldest child of the dead woman. Her three kids have different fathers; the dead man is her boyfriend, a nice guy, the one she moved back into the area with when she finally got sober after losing her kids to foster care. So is Roxanna a hostage? A runaway (with the family's two blind dogs?). Maybe the perp? To work this case DD reluctantly joins forces with Flora Dane, a survivor of horrendous captivity and now dedicated to saving others. Can they make sense of the clues left behind by Roxanna who may be silently pleading, “Look at me.” Gardner presents a new DD Warren/Flora Dane, [Never Tell](#) (Dutton \$27), here on publication day, Feb. 19.

Harper, Jane. [Force of Nature](#) (\$16.99). Australia's Harper wrote a huge international hit debut [The Dry](#) (\$15.95). Her portrait of a landscape and community seared and scarred nearly to the breaking point by drought (and a cleverly conceived murder investigation) sticks in your mind. So her protagonist Aaron Falk is now back, and headed into the Victorian bush in the winter. Five women have been coerced into a corporate team-building exercise there. Five reluctant execs go in. Four come out. And each of them tells Falk and the team a different story.... Harper visits us for the first time on February 7 with her 3<sup>rd</sup> novel, [The Lost Man](#) (Flatiron \$27.99), a standalone set in the Outback.

Kepler, Lars. [The Sandman](#) (\$16.95). As the *NY Times* sums it up, this book's hook is the villain, a Swedish Hannibal Lector. “With its tight, staccato chapters and cast of dangerous wraiths lurking everywhere, it's a nonstop fright. It's able to shift its focus frequently with no loss of tension. It begins about as harmlessly as it can, with a nice new doctor doing his first day's work at a high-security hospital ward for the criminally insane. (When you finish the book, take another look at that sentence.) This doctor's biggest challenge is having to deal with Jurek Walter, a frail old man who is this story's version of Hannibal Lector. Even though Jurek doesn't do much, there's something about the way he blows out a cloud of moist breath and then writes “Joona” on a steamy surface that hints at vengefulness. Sure enough, he holds a grudge. Thirteen years earlier, Joona interfered with the Sandman scheme, which had Jurek spirit away the wives and children

of his enemies. They never came back, and if all went well, their husbands or fathers would be driven to suicide. These are the memories that warm Jurek's heart on lonely days. And now.... This is truly hair-raising from the first scene in the psych ward to the last. I add that Kepler is the pen name for Swedish husband and wife Ahndoril and that the first three in [the Joona series](#) have been retranslated and republished:

Luna, Louisa. [Two Girls Down](#) (\$16). Best known as a YA author, Luna ventures into adult thriller territory with a real nail-biter. Single mother Jamie Brandt parks in a shopping center in Denville, Pa., leaving her two daughters—10-year-old Kylie and eight-year-old Bailey—in the car while she goes into a Kmart to buy a birthday present. When she returns to the car, the children have disappeared. The devastated Jamie's take-charge aunt, Maggie Shambley, asks California bounty hunter Alice Vega to locate the girls. The complicated, blunt-talking Alice, who may be on the autism spectrum, has an uncanny knack for finding people. When the Denville police chief rejects Alice's help, despite being besieged by budget cuts, low morale, and a rising oxycodone and meth epidemic, she teams up with Max Caplan, a disgraced former cop turned PI who knows the local area. Luna nicely charts how the aloof Alice comes to embrace a personal relationship. The brisk plot combines psychological suspense with solid action.

Moore, Jonathan. [The Night Market](#) (\$14.99). It's late Thursday night, and Inspector Ross Carver is at a crime scene in one of the city's last luxury homes. The dead man on the floor is covered by an unknown substance that's eating through his skin. Before Carver can identify it, six FBI agents burst in and remove him from the premises. He's pushed into a disinfectant trailer, forced to drink a liquid that sends him into seizures, and then is shocked unconscious. On Sunday he wakes in his bed to find his neighbor, Mia—who he's barely ever spoken to—reading aloud to him. He can't remember the crime scene or how he got home; he has no idea two days have passed. Mia says she saw him being carried into their building by plainclothes police officers, who told her he'd been poisoned. Carver doesn't really know this woman and has no way of disproving her, but his gut says to keep her close.

Olson, Neil. [The Black Painting](#) (\$15.99). Here we have a secluded mansion, fractious family, buried secrets, something big at stake. Olson enlivens the form by introducing a self-portrait by Goya, a painting not only hugely valuable but, if its rumored history is true, fatally dangerous.... "The volatility of memory, the treacherous crucible of family lore, and the myths and mysteries of Goya's Black Paintings all come hypnotically together in Neil Olson's outstanding novel. With taut, confident prose and breathless plotting, Olson leads us through a dark and dazzling kaleidoscope of a story."—Paula McLain

Perry, Thomas. [The Bomb Maker](#) (\$16). "Thomas Perry has skillfully captured the super stressful world of the LAPD Bomb Squad, and gotten deep into the head of a mad bomber. This is the ultimate cat-and-mouse game, a story so tense and riveting that you'll find yourself holding your breath as the timer ticks off the seconds. *The Bomb Maker* is a unique achievement, a wonderful mix of psychological thriller and high-tech entertainment. Perry always delivers."—Nelson DeMille. For Perry's new book *The Burglar*, see Event Books.

⌘Rhys, Rachel. [Dangerous Crossing](#) (\$17). 1939: Europe is on the brink of war when young Lily Shepherd boards an ocean

liner in England, bound for Australia. She is ready to start anew, leaving behind the shadows of her past. The passage proves magical, complete with live music, cocktails, and fancy-dress balls. With stops at exotic locations along the way—Naples, Cairo, Ceylon—the voyage shows Lily places she's only ever dreamed of and enables her to make friends with those above her social station, people who would not ordinarily mingle with her. She even allows herself to hope that a man she couldn't possibly have a future with outside the cocoon of the ship might return her feelings. But Lily soon realizes that she's not the only one hiding secrets in this tense Golden Age-style mystery by Tammy Cohen writing as Rhys.

Swinson, David. [Crime Song](#) (\$15.99). Frank Marr was a good cop with a bad habit, until his burgeoning addictions to alcohol and cocaine forced him into retirement from the DC police. Now barely eking out a living as a private investigator, he agrees to take on a family case: a favor for his aunt, who was like a second mother to him growing up. Frank's surveillance confirms that his cousin Jeffrey is involved with a small-time drugs operation. Modest stuff, until Frank's own home is burglarized, leaving a body on the kitchen floor: Jeffrey. Worse, Frank's .38 revolver—the murder weapon—is stolen, along with his cherished music collection, his only possessions of sentimental value: dozens of vinyl albums that belonged to his late mother. Only Frank's stash, his dwindling supply of the cocaine he needs to get through the day, is untouched. Why? Clearly, his cousin was deeper in the underworld than anyone realized. With the weight of his family, his reputation, and his own life on the line, he'll have to find the culprit by following the stolen goods... 2<sup>nd</sup> in series after [The Second Girl](#) (\$15.99), both highly recommended by Patrick.

#### THE JANUARY BRITISH LIBRARY CRIME CLASSIC

Symonds, Julian. [Belting Inheritance](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). *Here is a long review from the Classic Mysteries website for this reissue of a 1964 mystery by Julian Symonds, who is remembered today primarily for his literary criticism of mysteries.*

"There is nothing quite like the prospect of an inherited fortune to provide a motive for all sorts of mischief in a traditional or classic mystery plot. Here's a very good example for you. Consider the case of a British family that lost two sons in the battles of World War II. Hugh and David Wainwright, the two older sons of the Wainwright family, were duly reported, first as missing in action, then presumed dead. The Wainwright family, as with so many other families caught up in that conflagration, mourned their dead, but tried to pick up the broken pieces of their lives and continue at Belting, their family home, under the influence of Lady Wainwright, the family's rather autocratic matriarch.

And then, many years later, as Lady Wainwright's health began to fail, and her two younger sons, Miles and Stephen Wainwright, began to anticipate inheriting a legacy that might be considerable, a letter arrives at Belting one morning, signed by someone claiming to be David Wainwright—who, according to the letter, had survived the war. He had been captured early in the war, lived through horrible experiences including torture, first as a German prisoner of war and later, for many years, in a Russian prison camp. But he was now free and planned to return to Belting to rejoin his family.

Lady Wainwright was overjoyed that her son had survived and was returning. Stephen and Miles were horrified,

seeing what they believed to be an impostor attempting to grab the family inheritance when their mother died. And it wasn't too long before the man calling himself David Wainwright came to Belting and the family began trying to prove—or disprove—his claims. And it wasn't very long after that until someone was murdered at Belting....”

## NEW BOOKS FOR THE NEW YEAR

*Here are some publishing by January 15*

Benedict, Marie. [The Only Woman in the Room](#) (Sourcebooks \$25.99). Hedy Lamarr, movie star. And we now know, so much more. “In her rousing historical novel, Benedict imagines lesser known aspects of Hedy Lamarr’s life—before she took the film world by storm in the ‘40s, and her later efforts as a hobbyist inventor during her acting years. Benedict paints a shining portrait of a complicated woman who knows the astonishing power of her beauty but longs to be recognized for her sharp intellect.”

Demurger, Alain. [The Persecution of the Knights Templar: Scandal, Torture, Trial](#) (Pegasus, \$27.95) chronicles the downfall of the Knights Templar by French King Phillip IV.

✚Duncan, Francis. [Behold a Fair Woman](#) (Sourcebooks \$14.99). Mordecai Tremaine’s hobby of choice—crime detection—has left him in need of a holiday. A break away from that gruesome business of murder will be just the ticket, and the picturesque island of Moulin d’Or seems to be just the destination. Amid the sunshine and the sea air, Mordecai falls in with a band of fellow holidaymakers and tries to forget that such a thing as foul play exists. Then a body is discovered. With a killer stalking the sand dunes, it falls to Mordecai to piece together the truth about just who has smuggled murder onto the island idyll.... 5<sup>th</sup> in a [reissued series](#) from an earlier age.

Fernandez, Marc. [Mala Vida](#) (Arcade \$24.99). Present-day Spain, a time of economic crisis and resurgent populist nationalism. The radical right has just won the election after twelve years of Socialist rule. In the midst of this political upheaval, a series of murders is committed, taking place from Madrid to Barcelona to Valencia. The victims include a politician, a real-estate lawyer, doctor, a banker, and a nun. There is no obvious connection between them. As the country prepares for a return to a certain moral order, radio crime reporter Diego Martin is trying to keep his head above water in anticipation of the expected media purge. When he decides to look into the first murder, he doesn’t have the faintest clue that his investigation will lead far beyond his local beat and put his life at risk. For what he uncovers exposes the roots of a national scandal: the theft of babies from the victims of the Franco regime, crimes—never prosecuted—that were orchestrated by now well-connected citizens who will do anything to avoid exposure. “Almodóvar meets Orwell in this acclaimed, fast-paced contemporary noir novel exposing the most shameful secrets of the Franco era—a finalist for the *Grand Prix des Lectrices d’Elle* and winner of the *Prix Plaidoiries* for a crime novel at the *Festival Clameur(s) of Dijon*.”

Fink, Joseph. [It Devours](#) (\$16.99). Nilanjana Sikdar is an outsider to the town of Night Vale. Working for Carlos, the town’s top scientist, she relies on fact and logic as her guiding principles. But all of that is put into question when Carlos gives her a special assignment investigating a mysterious rumbling in the desert

wasteland outside of town. This investigation leads her to the Joyous Congregation of the Smiling God, and to Darryl, one of its most committed members. Caught between her beliefs in the ultimate power of science and her growing attraction to Darryl, she begins to suspect the Congregation is planning a ritual that could threaten the lives of everyone in town.

Forstchen, Will. [48 Hours](#) (Forge \$26.99). In 48 hours, the Earth will be hit by a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) from the Sun, a “Carrington Event” that has the power to shut down and possibly destroy the world’s electrical infrastructure. To try and prevent permanent damage, everything goes dark prior to the hit: global communications are shut down; hospital emergency generators are disconnected; the entire internet, media broadcasting, and cell phone systems are turned off. Will the world’s population successfully defend itself in the wake of the CME, or will mass panic lead to the breakdown of society as we know it? One can’t help but note the high number of books speculating on this subject out this month along with books about people who will save it and us.

Garfield, Brian. [Death Wish](#) (\$13.95). Here’s a blast from the past: Paul Benjamin, a successful accountant in New York City, is enjoying a three-martini lunch when his home is broken into by a gang of drug addicts. For just a handful of money, they savagely beat Paul’s wife and daughter, leaving his wife dead and his daughter comatose. Grief-stricken and forced to reevaluate his views, Benjamin becomes disillusioned with society and plots his revenge on the perpetrators, whom the police are unable to bring to justice. Armed with a revolver and total disregard for his own safety, he sets out to even the score. Adapted into the 1974 feature film starring Charles Bronson, *Death Wish* is now a new major motion picture starring Bruce Willis, Vincent D’Onofrio, Elisabeth Shue, etc.

Goodkind, Terry. [Siege of Stone](#) (Forge \$31.99). Set in the world of the Sword of Truth saga, familiar allies, dangerous magic, and creatures created by twisted sorcery all work at cross purposes to either save or destroy Ildakar. 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Nicci Chronicles after *Death’s Mistress* and *Shroud of Eternity*.

Hammer, Chris. [Scrublands](#) (Flatiron \$26.99). Karen reviews: Australian author, Hammer, begins his debut novel with a stunning opening that will keep you engaged until the end of the story. Priest Bryant Swift, mingles with parishioners outside the church before the service begins. He leaves, presumably to make final preparations. When he next appears, he is holding a rifle and kills five parishioners, before he is stopped by a bullet. One year later, war-time correspondent, Martin Scarsden, is assigned to visit Riversend, to report on how the community is coping. What he finds is a town in decay, oppressive heat, and a diminishing population with no hope that things will get better. Scarsden insinuates himself into the town’s life and culture, discovering the opinions of Swift are varied. Some describe him as charismatic, popular among young people, while others see him as less than a stellar representative of the church. Adding to that mystery is the discovery of two bodies, identified as German backpackers who went missing around the time of the church shootings. Are they connected? In a search for the answers, Scarsden discovers more small town secrets and how citizens have been coping. The reader is always aware of the fierce heat and the struggles of the citizens of Riversend. A terrific read.

✂Hannah, Mari. [The Death Messenger](#) (St Martins \$28.99). This British police procedural set in Northumbria is chiefly of interest for the disease that lies behind a series of revenge killings executed by someone with a video camera of the crimes who provides narration. I gave you a bit of a spoiler but without it you might not read that far as the execution of the story is a bit jumbled and the lead cops are too.

Hannah, Sophie. [How to Hold a Grudge](#) (Scribner \$20). From *Resentment to Contentment—The Power of Grudges to Transform Your Life*. “Secretly, we all hold grudges, but most of us probably think we shouldn’t, and many of us deny that we do. To bear a grudge is too negative, right? Shouldn’t we just forgive and move on? Wrong, says self-appointed grudge guru Sophie Hannah, in her groundbreaking and irreverent self-help guide. Yes, it’s essential to think positively if we want to live happy lives, but even more crucial is how we get to the positive. Denying our negative emotions and experiences is likely to lead only to more pain, conflict, and stress. What if our grudges are good for us? What if we could embrace them, and use them to help ourselves and others, instead of feeling ashamed of our inability to banish negative emotions and memories from our lives? With contributions from expert psychotherapists as well as extracts from her own extensive catalog of grudges, Hannah investigates the psychological origins of grudges and also offers not-so-obvious insights into how we should acknowledge—and embrace—them in order to improve the quality of our interpersonal relationships and senses of self. Grudges do not have to fill us with hate or make us toxic, bitter, and miserable. If we approach the practice of grudge-holding in an enlightened way, it will do the opposite—we will become more forgiving.” An interesting thesis from a woman who writes crime fiction, no?

Harrison, Cora. [Murder at the Queen’s Old Castle](#) (Severn \$28.95). As the flood of Trust No One/shocking revelations continues to dominate British mystery, here’s an old fashioned investigation that earns a *PW* Star: “Harrison is at the top of her game in her sixth whodunit set in 1920s Cork, Ireland, featuring the Reverend Mother Aquinas. Joseph Fitzwilliam, the notoriously tight-fisted owner of a ‘shop selling cheap clothes and household linens’ known as the Queen’s Old Castle, has offered to let the reverend mother take her pick of water-damaged goods to distribute to the city’s poor. While doing so, the religious leader is horrified to see Joseph, who’s clutching a small barrel-shaped canister used for transporting change, fall over a railing outside his office on an overhead platform to his death. The canister smells of gas, suggesting he was poisoned. Joseph’s hysterical widow, who witnessed his fatal fall, cries murder, then points her finger at 14-year-old shop employee Brian Maloney, accusing the boy of mistakenly killing her husband instead of herself. While the politics of the time are not central to the plot as in other entries, the fair-play puzzle is among Harrison’s finest.”

Housewright, David. [First, Kill the Lawyers](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Minneapolis private eye Holland Taylor is called on to bail out the only people in the Twin Cities more morally compromised than he is: members of the bar. “David Helin was handling Brooke St. Vincent’s divorce; Doug Jernigan, the defense of accused rapist Robert Garrow; Scott Mickelson, a bribery action against Mayor Mary Feeney; Cormac Puchner, a class-action suit against Standout Investments; and John Kaushal, the criminal defense of Clark Peterson, accused of killing his wife. All of them

have been keeping secret online files indicating that their clients were a lot guiltier than their attorneys were willing to admit, and all of those files have been stolen by an unusually well-informed and resourceful hacker. Who took the files and leaked them to the whistleblowers of NIMN (Not in Minnesota)—and why, given the very different nature of the proceedings, were these five attorneys plucked from all the ornaments of the state’s bar and targeted for extortion or unmasking? That’s what they pay Taylor and his partner, Freddie Fredericks, \$20,000 to find out. What they don’t count on is the skeletons that will come tumbling out of corporate closets in the search or the unlikely common denominator that Taylor and Freddie uncover all too soon....”

Johnston, Tim. [The Current](#) (Algonquin \$27.95). Karen reviews: Johnston’s previous novel, [Descent](#) (\$15.99), was a *New York Times* bestseller and *The Current* is sure to follow according to the starred reviews in *Publisher’s Weekly* and *Kirkus Reviews*. Caroline Price offers to drive her friend, Audrey Sutter, home to see her father, Tom, who is dying of cancer. Outside a small Minnesota town, the car plunges into an icy river. Audrey survives, Caroline does not. The incident awakens memories of ten years ago when a similar accident happened, killing 19-year-old Holly Burke. Tom Sutter was sheriff at the time and Holly’s father was never convinced that Sutter had done a thorough investigation on what really happened. Some viewed it as an accident, others a deliberate push by another car. It is easy to speculate on motives, as there are many. Holly’s father, Gordon, and Tom Sutter have cautious conversations concerning the death of one daughter and a similar accident, with a daughter surviving.... The word “nuanced” comes up often when describing Johnston’s writing. Rather than skim across the symptoms of an event, he digs into the underlying causes that promoted it. An engrossing read.

✂Kelly, Julia. [Light Over London](#) (Gallery \$26). There is no end to novels drawing on various aspects of WWII with its diversity of theaters and, rich supply of heroes large and small—tragedies and victories, too. This is a superior entry in a crowded field moving back and forth in time from the point of view of Cara, a young antiques dealer unsure of her qualifications and troubled by dilemmas facing her personally and professionally, and of wartime women focused on Louise Keene. What bridges the stories is a diary written by Louise in 1941 and found by Cara while appraising an antiques-stuffed London house. Louise, living a mundane country life, defies her parents and joins the women’s branch of the British Army in the anti-aircraft unit. The official secrets act then comes into play as does a romance. To find a more traditional sort of British fiction one almost has to go to historicals or blends like this.

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [Untouchable](#) (Berkley \$27). Jack Lancaster, a consultant to the FBI, seems to have an affinity to the cold; cold cases, that is. A fire is lit within him when it comes to solving cases that law enforcement has put away, thinking that they are completely unsolvable and not worth their time. Jack wants to uncover missteps in the justice system. He wants to make sure those accidents and suicides are not actually murder. His deep dedication to this quest comes from the fact that Jack is a survivor. Almost losing his life in a fire, arson cases have always been something that he leans toward solving. He has not only helped family members of victims, but he has brought himself to the forefront of many conversations because of his uncanny ability to get into the mind of a killer and solve the crime. This passion has

not only taken over his life, but it's messed up his personal life as well. The only one he can talk to or go to for help is a meditation therapist by the name of Winter Meadows. This time out, Jack must deal with one, Quinton Zane, a villain who is still very much alive. Quinton has his own agenda. He has worked hard to take control over Jack's biological family's hedge fund and now the man in power is working to eliminate all of the foster sons who could gain money from the fund... starting with Jack. This is one of those cat-and-mouse thrill rides that seems never to end. Krentz visits us on May 25 so you can hang onto this and get it signed then.

✂Lodge, Gytha. [She Lies in Wait](#) (Random \$27). On a scorching July night in 1983, a group of teenagers goes camping in the forest. Bright and brilliant, they are destined for great things, and the youngest of the group—Aurora Jackson—is delighted to be allowed to tag along. The evening starts like any other. Some of them slip off into the woods in pairs, others are left jealous and heartbroken. But by morning, Aurora has disappeared. Her friends claim that she was safe the last time they saw her, right before she went to sleep. An exhaustive investigation is launched, but no trace of the teenager is ever found. Thirty years later, Aurora's body is unearthed in a hideaway that only the six friends knew about, and Jonah Sheens is put in charge of solving the long-cold case. Back in 1983, as a young cop in their small town, he had known the teenagers—including Aurora—personally, even before taking part in the search. Now he's determined to finally get to the truth of what happened that night. "Into the woods"... a familiar trope of fairy tales. Tana French among others made it wildly popular again. I am waiting for a reading copy when I'll determine whether this or another candidate or two will be our January British Crime Book of the Month.

MacRae, Molly. [Crewel and Unusual](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). Yarn shop owner Kath Rutledge is looking forward to the grand opening of the Blue Plum Vault, a co-op of small shops on Main Street in Blue Plum, Tennessee. But in the week before the grand opening, Kath and her needlework group, TGIF (Thank Goodness It's Fiber), hear rumors of an unpleasant rivalry developing between two of the new shopkeepers. Nervie Bales and Belinda Moyer declare each other's embroidery patterns and antique embroidered linens fakes, copies—and stolen goods. Kath is caught in the middle when she's asked to use her textile expertise to decide if there's any truth to the accusations. Then, the day before the grand opening, an exquisite tablecloth that Kath has fallen in love with—the pride of Belinda's shop—is found cut to shreds. Belinda accuses Nervie of the outrage, but Nervie has an airtight alibi: she was at Kath's shop, the Weaver's Cat, teaching a crewel embroidery class. Despite worries over the rivalry and vandalism, the opening is a success—until Belinda is found dead, stabbed in the back with a pair of scissors from the Weaver's Cat.... Here is our **January Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** complete with a small town setting and a resident shop ghost.

Mayo, Simon. [Mad Blood Stirring](#) (Pantheon \$25.95). The war of 1812 is over, but for the inmates at Dartmoor Prison, peace—like home—is still a long way away. On New Year's Eve 1814, the American sailors of the *Eagle* finally arrive at Dartmoor prison, bedraggled, exhausted, but burning with hope. They've only had one thing to sustain them during the harrowing voyage—a snatched whisper overheard along the way. The war is finally over. Joe Hill thought he'd left the war outside these walls but it's

quickly clear that there's a different type of fight to be had within. The seven prison blocks surrounding him have been segregated; six white and one black. Inspired by true events, this novel recounts the remarkable story of the first ever all-black Shakespeare production, staged by segregated American prisoners of war. "An astonishing account of an explosive piece of neglected history. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is woven through a tense prison drama. Epic." —Sir Kenneth Branagh

Moshfegh, Ottessa. [McGlue](#) (Penguin \$15). ... a splashy new edition ... Moshfegh's first book [which begins in 1851 Salem, Mass.] introduces the kind of character, in all his psychological wildness and vivid grotesquerie, that her others are known for... — *Booklist*. I mention this since Moshfegh had a hit in 2018 with [My Year of Rest and Relaxation](#), an escape-from-the-world novel absolutely lost on me, but much praised.

Obioma, Chigozi. [An Orchestra of Minorities](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Set on the outskirts of Umuahia, Nigeria and narrated by a *chi*, or guardian spirit, Man-Booker Prize finalist Obioma tells the story of Chinonso, a young poultry farmer whose soul is ignited when he sees a woman attempting to jump from a highway bridge. Horrified by her recklessness, Chinonso joins her on the roadside and hurls two of his prized chickens into the water below to express the severity of such a fall. The woman, Ndali, is stopped her in her tracks. Bonded by this night on the bridge, Chinonso and Ndali fall in love—and the novel develops into a "contemporary twist on," says the publisher, "*The Odyssey*," with a nod to *Romeo and Juliet*. I list this to underline the increasingly global span of publishing.

Paquette, Suzanne. [Modern Memory Quilts](#) (C&T Publishing \$28.95). A handbook for how to capture meaningful moments through incorporating bits of treasured clothing into a contemporary aesthetic—such a rewarding New Year's project.

Patterson, James/Candice Fox. [Liar, Liar](#) (LittleBrown \$28). In the third for Australia's Harriet Blue, a very good cop who, in the space of a week, has committed theft and fraud, resisted arrest, assaulted a police officer, and is considered a dangerous fugitive from the law. It's all because of one man, Regan Banks. He viciously killed the only person in the world who matters to Harriet—and he plans to kill her next. As she recklessly speeds toward the dark side—and finally crosses it, Harriet won't stop until Regan pays for the many lives he has taken. You who attended Fox's signing or her appearance the next night last March with Patterson have already met [Harriet Blue](#) in her first two investigations, another contribution to the rising Australian crime wave.

✂Rous, Emma. [The Au Pair](#) (Berkley \$16). I wanted to like this debut. But it spun off into so many contrived plot twists it felt like reading a soap opera. I wish publishers would stop riding the flood of Trust No Ones, aka domestic suspense plots, from Britain where you'd think no intimate or familial relationship could possibly be honest and true. Here we find Seraphine, a 25-year-old who, in the wake of her father's death, despairs of getting answers to why she doesn't look like either of her brothers, or why her mother committed suicide at the family's remote Norfolk estate on the day she and twin Danny arrived in 1992. And what was the role of the au pair, one Laura Silveira? I did not buy the solution to this drama—see if you do.

✂Sansom, CJ. [Tombland](#) (Mulholland \$28). Spring, 1549. Two years after the death of Henry VIII, England is sliding into chaos.

The nominal king, Edward VI, is eleven years old. His uncle, Edward Seymour, Lord Hertford, rules as Edward's regent and Protector. In the kingdom, radical Protestants are driving the old religion into extinction, while the Protector's prolonged war with Scotland has led to hyperinflation and economic collapse. Rebellion is stirring among the peasantry. Matthew Shardlake has been working as a lawyer in the service of Henry's younger daughter, the lady Elizabeth. The gruesome murder of one of Elizabeth's distant relations, rumored to be politically murdered, draws Shardlake and his companion Nicholas to the lady's summer estate, where a second murder is committed. As the kingdom explodes into rebellion, Nicholas is imprisoned for his loyalty, and Shardlake must decide where his loyalties lie.... The [Shardlakes](#) are superb, more readable IMHO than Hilary Mantel writing in this period. We recommend them all, best read in order.

Scribner, Keith. [Old Newgate Road](#) (Knopf \$26.95). "Cole, the hero of Scribner's fourth novel, fled as far from his upbringing as possible, leaving his native Connecticut for Portland, Oregon. But he's back in East Granby because his high-end construction business demands quality chestnut wood like the kind used to build a tobacco drying shed back in his hometown. He's sidestepping family problems in Oregon: an estranged wife, Nikki, and a teenage son, Daniel, who's courting school expulsion for his defiant freegan\* attitude. But he's got family problems back east, too, where his father, Phil, has returned home after a prison stint for murdering Cole's mother. Ignoring dad is tempting but difficult since he's displaying symptoms of Alzheimer's. That's a lot of domestic drama to carry (not to mention Cole's run-ins with a former bully), but Scribner mostly handles it with grace and a fine eye for detail around his Connecticut setting; he writes beautifully about the hills and tobacco fields that define the area. The novel's real turf, though, is the bleak emotional territory of abuse, and Scribner writes with brutal intensity about the violence Cole's father rained down on his family and how that anger has been passed down through Cole and Daniel..."—*Kirkus Reviews*.

\* a person who rejects consumerism and seeks to help the environment by reducing waste, especially by retrieving and using discarded food and other goods.

Senécal, Patrick. [Seven Days](#) (\$16). One sunny fall day, Dr. Bruno Hamel's life changes forever. His beloved seven-year-old daughter, Jasmine, is the victim of a tragic crime. Grief-stricken, Hamel sets in play a meticulous plan. He will kidnap the man responsible for his daughter's death and make him pay horribly for what he has done. He manages to ambush a police transport and disappear with his target. But Hamel hasn't accounted for Hervé Mercure, a detective with a troubled past who becomes certain he can track down Hamel by studying clues in his past—and in the increasingly unsettling phone calls Hamel makes to his partner, Sylvie. Here is a "thriller about a monster who becomes a victim and a victim who becomes a monster. From Patrick Senécal, the Quebec author who has sold over a million books worldwide." Suggested for fans of Stephen King's *Misery* and Jo Nesbø's *The Snowman*.

Simenon, George. [Maigret in Court](#) (Penguin \$13). Inspector Maigret comes to the defense of Gaston Meurant, a quiet Parisian picture framer accused of slitting his aunt's throat for money and smothering a small child. Maigret can't reconcile the violent portrait the court is painting with the man his investigations have

revealed. But in order to save an innocent life from the gallows, Maigret must expose some dark secrets about Meurant, secrets that may expose him to a whole other kind of danger. A high-stakes courtroom setting brings out a side of Maigret's brilliant mind rarely before seen in this—the 55th reissue in the Maigret series.

Stevens, Taylor. [Liars' Paradox](#) (Kensington \$26). If you are looking for nonstop action, a pervasive sense of threat (actual) and paranoia (imagined?), then this trademark Stevens featuring twins Jack and Jill and their mostly absent mother Clare is for you. What is Clare running... and running from? She's trained the twins to be two killing machines and left them with a series of caretakers in various countries. Why? And now when her home in Texas is, literally, blown, will they live long enough to learn answers?

Yates, Christopher. [Grist Mill Road](#) (\$18) is a dark, twisted, and expertly plotted Rashomon-style tale. The year is 1982; the setting, an Edenic hamlet some ninety miles north of New York City. There, among the craggy rock cliffs and glacial ponds of timeworn mountains, three friends—Patrick, Matthew, and Hannah—are bound together by a terrible and seemingly senseless crime. Twenty-six years later, in New York City, living lives their younger selves never could have predicted, the three meet again—with even more devastating results. "*Grist Mill Road* is a terrific thriller. A horrid childhood crime carried secretly to adulthood, with menace lurking around the corner, and guilt hanging heavy overhead. Alfred Hitchcock would have optioned the plot in the blink of his gimlet eye. A gripping read." —Jason Matthews

Woods, Stuart. [A Delicate Touch](#) (Putnam \$28). "Stone Barrinton arranges for a safe located in the Brooklyn mansion of the late Eduardo Bianchi, 'a mysteriously powerful man reputed to have been at the top of the Mafia,' to be opened on the behalf of Eduardo's grown daughter. Inside, besides millions in cash, are criminal histories prepared by Eduardo of a number of high-level mob bosses, all of whom are dead, except for Henry Thomas, formerly Gianni Tommassini. Long ago, Henry founded an investment bank, 'with much of its original funding from the Five Families.' Henry's son, Jack, has run the bank for the last 20 years, and Jack's son, Henry II, is a popular New York congressman. What are the Thomases up to now? Stone joins forces with *New York Times* reporter Jamie Cox to find out. Meanwhile, Henry becomes aware that Stone is on his trail and orders his henchmen to use any means to stop Stone. As usual, Woods tells a fast, enjoyable crime story seasoned with tantalizing views of the lifestyles of the rich."—*PW*

#### NEW YEAR'S SMALL PAPERBACKS

✂Delaney, JP. [The Girl before](#) (\$9.99). Seizing a unique opportunity to rent a one-of-a-kind house, a damaged young woman falls in love with the enigmatic architect who designed the residence, unaware that she is following in the footsteps of a doomed former tenant. *SLJ* ended their review with "readers who gobbled up Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* and Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* will be clamoring for this page-turning psychological thriller, which is already being made into a movie by Ron Howard."

Dodd, Christina. [Dead Girl Running](#) (\$7.99). Surviving a gunshot wound to the head and struggling to remember an entire year of her life, Kellan Adams finds herself on the run from a husband she hopes is dead and takes a job at a Pacific Coast resort, where

she is embroiled in a murder investigation that makes her question both her past and her sanity. *LJ* had this to say “Complex, intense, and engrossing, this riveting romantic thriller has a chilling gothic touch and just enough red herrings and twists to keep readers on edge.”

✚Finlay, Mick. [Arrowood](#) (Mira \$7.99). In 1895, London private investigator Arrowood, who despises Sherlock Holmes’s methods and attracts the lower class clients that would not approach Holmes, investigates a disappearance and a stabbing that lead him against a notorious gang leader. *Kirkus* was just one review source raving about Finlay’s book saying “Finlay has a fine time recasting the friendship between Holmes and Watson, as Arrowood and Barnett repeatedly quarrel, swap obscenities and threats, and pummel each other. A great concept worked out with more grit than inspiration. The inevitable franchise has already been optioned for television, a medium you can only hope will hang on to the best bits here and toss out the rest.”

Hearne, Kevin. [Scourged](#) (\$7.99). In a conclusion to the series, Granuaile McTiernan joins immortals Sun Wukong and Erland Shen in a fight against the Yama Kings in Taiwan, while Archdruid Owen Kennedy tries to keep the world safe for his apprentices and the future of Druidry, and Atticus races to save Gaia and see another sunrise.

Hillerman, Anne. [Cave of Bones](#) (\$9.99). Bernadette Manuelito #4. Preparing to speak at an outdoor character-building program for at-risk teens, Tribal Police Officer Bernadette Manuelito discovers the camp in a panic over a missing instructor and a traumatized girl’s discovery of a human skeleton in the wilds of the mythology-steeped lava wilderness bordering the Ramah Navajo Reservation. *Bookpage*, among others, has loved Anne’s take on her late father’s series saying “*Cave of Bones* has a terrific storyline that’s suspenseful and atmospheric, with strands of Navajo folklore woven into every page.” Look for Hillerman to sign #5 here on 11 April.

Kellerman, Jonathan. [Night Moves](#) (\$9.99). Alex Delaware #33. While LAPD homicide detective Milo Sturgis investigates the murder of a John Doe in an upscale LA home, he calls on psychologist Alex Delaware to untangle the web of corrupted love, greed, and broken trust that is exposed. *PW* said “Newcomers will find this an easy entry point into this long-running series.”

Leonard, Elmore. [Last Stand at Saber River and the Law at Randado](#) (\$7.99). A combined reprint of two older Leonard classics includes *Last Stand at Saber River* in which Paul Cable returns to his Southern home after the Civil War to find it overtaken by Yankee sympathizers, and *The Law at Randado* in which newly installed sheriff Kirby Frye is run out of town when he opposes vigilante justice.