

BOOKNEWS from

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FEBRUARY IS FOR (BOOK) LOVERS...

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

Some Events will be webcast on Facebook Live

Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 5 7:00 PM

Andrew Grant signs [Invisible](#) (Ballantine \$27)
Series debut

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 6 7:00 PM

Gray Basnight signs [Flight of the Fox](#) (Down & Out \$18.95)
EG Scott signs [The Woman Inside](#) (Dutton \$27)

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 7 7:00 PM

Jane Harper signs [The Lost Man](#) (Flatiron \$27.99)
Standalone set in Australia's Outback

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 8 7:00 PM

Charles Todd signs [The Black Ascot](#) (Harper \$26.99)
Inspector Ian Rutledge #21

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 9 2:00 PM Valentine Tea

Jenn Ashley signs [Murder in St Giles](#) (\$12.99)
Captain Lacey Regency Mystery #13
Beth Kendrick signs [In Dog We Trust](#) (Berkley \$15)
Romantic comedy
Jenn McKinlay signs [The Good Ones](#) (Berkley \$7.99)
Happily Ever After #1

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 10 2:00 PM

Jones, the 2018 Hammett and Nero Wolfe Award winner in conversation with Joe Ide
Stephen Mack Jones signs [Lives Laid Away](#) (Soho \$28)
August Snow #2
Joe Ide signs [Wrecked](#) (Mulholland \$27) IQ #3

MONDAY FEBRUARY 11 7:00 PM Pub Party!

Rhys Bowen signs [The Victory Garden](#) (Lake Union \$24.95)

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 13 7:00 PM

Lee Goldberg signs [Killer Thriller](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95)
February Thriller Club Pick, a satire

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 15 7:00 PM

Darynda Jones signs [Summoned to the Thirteenth Grave](#)
(St Martins \$27.99)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 16 2:00 PM Mystery Tea

Diane Freeman signs [A Lady's Guide to Etiquette and Murder](#)
(Kensington \$26)
Countess of Harleigh Mystery #1
Minerva Spencer signs [Dangerous](#) and [Barbarous](#)
(Kensington \$7.99 each)
The Outcasts #1 and #2

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 17 2:00 PM

Charles Finch signs [The Vanishing Man](#) (St Martins \$26.99)
Book #2 in a prequel trilogy for Lennox
I plan to discuss book reviewing with Finch also

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 19 7:00 PM

Lisa Gardner signs [Never Tell](#) (Dutton \$27)
DD Warren and Flora Dane
Karen Rose signs [Say You're Sorry](#) (Berkley \$26)
A Sacramento serial killer thriller

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 20 7:00 PM

Mark Greaney signs [Mission Critical](#) (Berkley \$27)
The Gray Man #8

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 21 7:00 PM

Tosca Lee signs [The Line Between](#) (Howard Books \$26)

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 22 7:00 PM

James Sallis and the band play

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 23 Parisian Party

Jane S. Gabin signs [The Paris Photo](#) (Wisdom \$18.99)
Mark Pryor signs [The Book Artist](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95)
Hugo Marston in Montmartre

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 24 2:00 PM Historical Fiction

Beth Cato in conversation with Judith Starkston
Judith Starkston signs [The Priestess of Ishana](#) (Tessa \$19/95)

MONDAY FEBRUARY 25 7:00 PM Pub Party

Robert Anglen in conversation with Don Winslow
Don Winslow signs [The Border](#) (Harper \$28.99)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 26 7:00 PM

Joanne Fluke signs [Chocolate Cream Pie Murder](#) (Kensington \$27)
Baker Hannah Swensen #24

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 27 7:00 PM

John F. Ross signs [The Promise of the Grand Canyon](#) (Penguin \$30)

FEBRUARY DISCUSSION CLUBS

Coffee & Crime: Saturday February 9 10:30 AM:

PD James, [An Unsuitable Job for a Woman](#) (\$16)

SciFi Friday: February 8 7:00 PM: Nicholas Eames,
[Kings of the Wyld](#) (\$15.99)

Croak & Dagger: Saturday February 16 10:30 AM:

Dervla McTiernan, [The Ruin](#) (Penguin \$16)

Hardboiled Crime: Thursday February 28 7:00 PM:

Oakley Hall, [So Many Doors](#) (Titan \$9.95)

EVENT BOOKS

Ashley, Jenn. [Murder in St Giles](#) (\$12.99 Feb. 9). Captain Lacey, a Waterloo veteran and a favorite of mine, says, “When Brewster, my bodyguard, comes to me about a murder of a pugilist—and what’s more, says his wife has summoned me—I must hasten to St. Giles to find a killer before Brewster is arrested for the crime. This is made difficult because my wife’s late husband’s odious cousin has materialized to try to wrest her son into his care. After all, seven-year-old Peter is a viscount, and his cousin wants to get closer to the title. But how close? If Peter’s life is in danger, I must remain, but Brewster risks hanging for the death of his wife’s brother-in-law. He’s done too much for me to turn my back on him, but the devil if I’ll let the Breckenridge cousin get his clutches on Peter. It will take all my perseverance, and a few wiles, to plough through these difficulties. In the meantime, I meet a Runner who teaches me about crime and punishment in this enlightened age, and Brewster’s old trainer, who made him the excellent pugilist—and thief—he is today.” Yay!

Basnight, Gray. [Flight of the Fox](#) (Down & Out \$18.95 Feb. 6). Sam Teagarden does not carry a gun or know karate. He is a math professor whose principal weapon is his intelligence. On day in the near future, Sam receives a file containing “a series of encoded entries handwritten in an old spiral notebook” from FBI archives librarian Stuart Shelbourn. Dating decades back, the letters have never been deciphered, and Stuart thinks Sam, who once worked for the CIA as a cryptologist, might like to take a crack at them. Is this a trigger for the sudden drone attack on his home in Bethel, NY? Taking no chances, Sam flees to NYC where weirdly he’s hunted by cops and three apparently black ops agents. It must be the letters. Sam works out they were written by FBI agent Clyde Tolson, the reputed lover of J. Edgar Hoover, to the FBI director. And when, running for his life, Sam decodes them, dark secrets emerge that, if published, will radically alter the public’s view of 20th Century American history. This kind of beware-your-government scenario is more plausible today than we might wish, no? Baldacci fans, alert.

Bowen, Rhys. [The Victory Garden](#) (Lake Union \$24.95 Feb. 11—the day before publication day). As the Great War continues to take its toll, headstrong Emily Bryce is determined to contribute to the war effort despite the strictures of her parents who mourn the death of their only son. She is convinced by a cheeky and handsome Australian pilot that she can do more, and it is not long before she falls in love with him and accepts his proposal of marriage. When he is sent back to the front, Emily, now 21 and able to act, volunteers as a “land girl,” tending to the neglected grounds of a large Devonshire estate. It’s here that Emily discovers the long-forgotten journals of a medicine woman who devoted her life to her herbal garden. The journals inspire Emily, and in the wake of devastating news, they are her saving grace. Emily’s lover has not only died a hero but has left her terrified—and with child. Since no one knows that Emily was never married, she adopts the charade of a war widow, supported by two fellow land girls, and surprisingly by the aging aristocratic owner of the manor. As Emily learns more about the volatile power of healing with herbs, using the journals will bring her to the brink of disaster, but may open a path forward. This is Bowen writing in the vein of *In Farleigh Field* and *The Tuscan Child*. Look for a

new Lady Georgie in August.

Also available in paperback: [The Victory Garden](#) (\$14.95).

Finch, Charles. [The Vanishing Man](#) (St Martins \$26.99 Feb. 20). This is the second of a “prequel trilogy” after last year’s [The Woman in the Water](#) (\$17.99). Fans of the series, which set the earlier Lenox novels in the 1860s, will know what’s coming in the detective’s personal and professional life, but that in no way decreases the pleasure of this account of his earlier life. Finch’s nimble prose, edged with humor, makes this twelfth in the Charles Lenox series a pure delight.” —*Booklist* Starred Review. Lenox, nervously trying to establish his chosen career as a detective (his brother is in Parliament) and deeply mourning the death of his landowner noble father, accepts a commission from the immensely powerful Duke of Dorset, a commission which causes Lenox to reflect on the Upper Ten Thousand and their privileges, pride, riches, and influence. A theft has occurred from the Duke’s private library which forces him to confide a deeply secret family trust to Lenox involving a portrait reputed to be Will Shakespeare. Yet, oddly, the portrait that has been stolen is that of the Duke’s grandfather. As the Duke and Lenox interact, Lenox’s social and professional reputations may be ruined, but he’s dogged in working the case. And loving his childhood friend, the married and pregnant Lady Jane, silently. Then comes a murder and a treasure hunt.... “Rich in period minutiae, [*The Vanishing Man*] unveils the frightening power of the uppermost classes.” —*Kirkus Reviews*. I love prequels: there is so much to explore about how Lenox came to be who he is.

Fluke, Joanne. [Chocolate Cream Pie Murder](#) (Kensington \$27 Feb. 26 – publication day). Not even Lake Eden’s nosiest residents suspected Hannah Swensen would go from idealistic newlywed to betrayed wife in a matter of weeks. But her bakery The Cookie Jar becomes the setting of star-studded TV special about movies filmed in Minnesota. This should have been a sweet chance to shine a lot on the bakery, but unsavory scandal erupts when a murder victim is found in her bedroom. Upping the heat, Hannah and an old flame to solve this messy case.... This treat contains some 30 original recipes. Fluke acknowledges that food is unquestionably the main character in her cozies.

Freeman, Dianne. [A Lady’s Guide to Etiquette and Murder](#) (Kensington \$26 Feb. 16). We’re lucky to have Freeman as a local author. We’ve reviewed this before so I add this praise from Rhys Bowen: “A delightful tale of shenanigans among the British aristocracy. Lady Frances feels very real—not too smart and spunky but no shrinking violet either.”

Gabin, Jane S. [The Paris Photo](#) (Wisdom \$18.99 Feb. 23). The story uncovers the story of Private Ben Gordon and his relationship with a young mother, Simone, and her son just after D-Day. The relationship between Ben and Simone is complicated by the horrific, unknown truth: Simone’s husband has been deported, and killed, in a concentration camp. Ben and Simone’s story takes place over two years, but decades later, it is stitched together by Ben’s daughter, Judith. She discovers an old box of photos and in it, a picture of her father in a Parisian home with two women and a young boy. The researcher in her is intrigued. Wishing to learn more about her father, she decides to see if she

can find the boy. What she discovers is much than historical facts. Set partially at the end of WWII, partially in the recent present, linked by a picture taken in Paris in 1945, *The Paris Photo* interweaves mystery, romance, and historical research, depicting the way traumas of wartime loss persist and ripple into the present.

Gardner, Lisa. [Never Tell](#) (Dutton \$27 Feb. 19 – publication day). In *DD Warren #10*, the Boston PD Sergeant Detective and victim advocate Flora Dane again team up. A man is dead, shot three times in his home office. But his computer has been shot twelve times, and when the cops arrive, his pregnant wife Evie is holding the gun. D.D. recognizes Evie from the death of Evie's father, killed in a supposed shooting accident. Flora, watching TV coverage, recognizes Conrad from the time she was held hostage—her captor apparently knew Conrad. And Flora never tried to track Conrad down. “Gardner has outdone herself with this powerful novel about three women, two murders, and uncountable secrets! From its stunning opening to its last thrilling page, *Never Tell* will captivate, surprise, and satisfy you.”—Lisa Scotoline, who signs her own new novel [Someone Knows](#) (Putnam \$27) for us in early April.

Goldberg, Lee. [Killer Thriller](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95 Feb. 13). Everybody loves Ian Ludlow's action novels—especially the CIA—because the spies know something the public doesn't: his fictional plots come true. Goldberg has a wonderful time spoofing the international thriller but drawing on his own knowledge both of publishing and being an author, but of Hollywood. The action sequences he orchestrates are hilarious. And underneath this is a very real threat from the Chinese that might, like Ian's plots, come true. I think we need a lift for February and so this is our **Thriller Club Book of the Month**. It opens with Ian on book tour in Seattle before events propel him to Hong Kong with his resourceful assistant Margo French, a lesbian who claims to be broke and desperate, to research his wildest story yet—a deadly global conspiracy by Chinese intelligence to topple the United States. What Ian doesn't know is that his horrifying scenario is happening and that the Chinese mistakenly believe he's an undercover superspy assigned to foil their scheme. Now Ian is trapped in his own terrifying thriller, on the job at the filming of the movie based on the exploits of his hero Clint Straker, freelance spy for hire, on the run from assassins, and racing against time to prevent an epic disaster. He's written himself into a corner that could cost his life...and his country. And little is as it first appears to be.... Also in paperback: [Killer Thriller](#) (\$15.95). Meet Ian Ludlow, and Clint Straker, first in [True Fiction](#) (\$24.95), but I'd go for this second thriller where both really hit their strides.

Grant, Andrew. [Invisible](#) (Ballantine \$27 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.” I add for our **February Surprise Me Book of the Month**, that by adopting a kind of invisible job, McGrath will be granted total security clearance and access to the entire building; at the same time, everyone will most likely ignore or fail to realize that the “janitor” may be listening in. This new kind of hero begins a series.

Greaney, Mark. [Mission Critical](#) (Berkley \$27 Feb. 20). CIA contract agent Court Gentry (aka the Gray Man), who has received a last-minute summons to Langley, is picked up by a CIA Gulfstream in Zurich. The plane stops in Luxembourg City, where a team of CIA agents boards with a hooded prisoner. The next stop is an English air base, where the Americans are to hand over the prisoner to MI6 for interrogation about a possible mole at Langley. On landing, gunmen mow down the two transaction parties on the tarmac, grab the prisoner, and drive him away in a van. Court pursues the van in a powered glider he commandeers. Meanwhile in the U.S., Court's love interest, former Russian intelligence officer Zoya Zakharova, is being questioned at a CIA safe house. When the safe house comes under attack, Zoya is the only one in the house to escape. Are the two assaults related? Intense scenes with higher body counts follow, underlining once again that Greaney knows what military action fans want and delivers in spades. This is a generous 513 action-studded pages and while it is a standalone I'd recommend reading a earlier [Gray Man](#) or two as beneficial, especially the last one, [Agent in Place](#).

Harper, Jane. [The Lost Man](#) (Flatiron \$27.99 Feb. 7). Australia's outback, with its brutal climate and equally bruising isolation, looms as large as any character in this stark standalone from bestseller Harper. The huge properties in Queensland underline both loneliness and family connection. For years, the three Bright brothers—divorced dad Nathan, the eldest; family man and everybody's favorite, middle child Cameron; and the mentally challenged youngest, Bub—have maintained an uneasy equilibrium on adjacent cattle ranches. That flies out the window the week before Christmas when Cameron goes missing; his desiccated corpse is subsequently discovered a few miles from his perfectly operational truck in the shadow of the eerie headstone known as the stockman's grave. “The atmosphere is so thick you can taste the red-clay dust, and the folklore surrounding the mysterious stockman adds an additional edge to an already dark and intense narrative. The truth is revealed in a surprising ending that reveals how far someone will go to preserve a life worth living in a place at once loathed and loved.” —*Booklist*. Harper won the CWA Gold Dagger for [The Dry](#) (\$9.99 or \$15.99) and went on to write [Force of Nature](#) (\$16.99). See the section below on the Rising Australian Crime Wave for further reading.

Jones, Darynda. [Summoned to the Thirteenth Grave](#) (St Martins \$27.99 Feb. 15). Charley Davidson, Grim Reaper *extraordinaire*, is pissed. She's been kicked off the earthly plane for eternity—which is exactly the amount of time it takes to make a person stark raving mad. But someone's looking out for her, and she's allowed to return after a mere hundred years in exile. Is it too much to hope for that not much has changed? Apparently it is. Bummer. She's missed her daughter. She's missed Reyes. She's missed Cookie and Garrett and Uncle Bob. Now that she's back on earth,

it's time to put to rest burning questions that need answers in this final volume in her bestselling Grim Reaper series.

Jones, Stephen Mack. [Lives Laid Away](#) (Soho \$28 Feb. 10).

“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. The *NY Times* reviews: “A clever, punchy tale set in one of today’s more romantic locales: Detroit. A city climbing back from ruin is a great backdrop for redemptive stories like this one, about a native who is renovating houses on his childhood street to try and rebuild the neighborhood he grew up in. Jones is also a playwright and a poet, which means he knows how to make every word count. This timely story of ICE raids with a sinister motive has heart and muscle aplenty. August Octavio Snow is a big Detroit booster.... Jones picks up his gung-ho protagonist where the author left him in his first novel, [August Snow](#) the 2018 Hammett Prize and Nero Wolfe Award winner—cleaning up his beat-up neighborhood in Mexicantown. Using the millions awarded from his successful case against the Police Department, this ex-cop has already rescued his childhood home and is now renovating the other houses on his street. Snow thinks his old job is safely behind him—until a girl in a Marie Antoinette costume is tossed off the Ambassador Bridge. The victim is 19-year-old Isadora (Izzy) Rosalita del Torres, an undocumented worker who went missing in a government raid, and her battered body indicates she was being exploited by sex traffickers. Snow swings into action-hero mode and recruits a posse of friends and neighbors for a vigilante mission that dovetails with his crusade against ICE raids....” *PW* adds in its Starred Review: “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.”

Kendrick, Beth. [In Dog We Trust](#) (Berkley \$15 Feb. 9). A part-time dog walker’s life is dramatically changed when she’s named trustee and legal guardian for a pack of pampered Labrador retrievers. Black Dog Bay, a fictional seaside town in Delaware that’s become a refuge to the broken-hearted and romantically challenged over four previous novels. This installment features 27-year-old Jocelyn Hilliard, who runs a linen and laundry service for area condos and rental units with her mother and wise-cracking best friend, Bree. Jocelyn has her life upended when she rescues a dog from a busy street and, as a result, is offered a job caring for and walking a pack of Labrador retrievers—pedigreed, pampered, future world champion show dogs—who are owned by rich curmudgeon Peter Allardyce. When the elderly Mr. Allardyce dies several months later, his will surprisingly appoints Jocelyn as the guardian and trustee for the beloved Labs, and ignites trouble. “Kendrick’s breezy style and quick wit enliven more serious themes centered on family, love, work, class differences and the universal human need for love and forgiveness.”—Kathleen Gerard. A delightful read or gift celebrating Valentine’s Day!

Lee, Tosca. [The Line Between](#) (Howard Books \$26 Feb. 21). When Wynter Roth is turned out of New Earth, a self-contained doomsday cult on the American prairie, she emerges into a world poised on the brink of madness as a mysterious outbreak of rapid early onset dementia spreads across the nation. As Wynter struggles to start over in a world she’s been taught to regard as evil, she finds herself face-to-face with the apocalypse she’s feared all her life—until the night her sister shows up at her

doorstep with a set of medical samples. That night, Wynter learns there’s something far more sinister at play and that these samples are the key to understanding the disease. Now, as the power grid fails and the nation descends into chaos, Wynter must find a way to get the samples to a lab in Colorado. This is former military man Chase Miller, who has his own reasons for wanting to get close to the samples in her possession, and to Wynter herself. Lee is writing a thriller but even more it is a compelling look at what drives people into cults as well as what those that depart them, voluntarily or expelled, endure. “Events could have easily veered towards the unbelievable, but Lee’s deft hand keeps the reader engaged. Perfect for fans of cinematic, plot-driven novels” — *Booklist*. Lee is the award-winning *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Progeny*, *Firstborn*, *Iscariot*, *The Legend of Sheba*, *Demon: A Memoir*, *Havah: The Story of Eve*, and the *Books of Mortals* series with Ted Dekker. [The Progeny](#) is being adapted for a TV drama developed by the CW Television Network next year.

McKinlay, Jenn. [The Good Ones](#) (Berkley \$7.99 Feb. 9). Ryder Copeland is an accomplished architect and one heck of a father... not to mention tall and sexy. Maisy Kelly has read enough of her great-aunt Eloise’s romance novels to recognize a hero when she sees one. Ryder is drawn to the shy, curly haired professor who hires him to convert the Victorian house she’s inherited from her aunt into a romance bookstore. Attracted to a woman for the first time since his divorce, Ryder finds himself wishing for a future with Maisy, but he has never wavered from his plan to leave the small town of Fairdale, North Carolina, so he can give his daughter the life she deserves. But suddenly he’s not so sure... “With her flair for wit-infused writing and gift for crafting easily relatable characters perfectly on point, McKinlay launches her new Happily Ever After series on an exceptionally high note. Not only is *The Good Ones* a brilliantly conceived and constructed contemporary love story; it is also a beautifully written love letter to the romance genre from someone who understands just how important these books are to their readers.”—*Booklist* Starred Review

Pryor, Mark. [The Book Artist](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95 Feb. 23). Hugo Marston, head of security for the U.S. Embassy in Paris, puts his life in danger when he investigates the murder of a celebrated artist, all the while fending off an assassin looking to settle an old score against him. It all begins one night in Montmartre when Hugo’s boss, the US Ambassador, diverts him from a soirée to escort an American artist to the party. Instead the woman refuses and they end up in a kind of dinner date. She’s preparing an exhibition of her unusual sculptures (constructed out of books!) at the Dalí Museum, a big step up for her. When murder strikes at the museum, Hugo does a kind of dance with the French cop in pursuit of the killer while his romantic life provides an unexpected complication. I’m a big fan of this series for its setting, for Hugo, and for Pryor’s excellent plots. Read the [Marstons](#) in order, starting with [The Bookseller](#).

Rose, Karen. [Say You’re Sorry](#) (Berkley \$26 Feb. 19). Long-time romantic thriller author Rose does not disappoint with her hardcover debut, opening her Sacramento series with a brisk pace, high stakes, and fully realized characters. When Daisy Dawson is attacked one night, she manages to fight off her assailant. In the process, she grabs a mysterious locket from the attacker that’s connected to a cult. Gideon Reynolds, an FBI agent and survivor of the cult, is called in by his Sacramento PD friend Rafe, who

wants him to protect Daisy and help her find and identify the person who attacked her, who may be a serial killer. As Gideon and Daisy develop a connection, Daisy, a recovering alcoholic, tries to manage her sobriety alongside an intimate relationship she wasn't ready for, while Gideon wrestles with his memories of the cult. The duo must overcome these issues and more while undertaking their shared mission to stop a dangerous villain. The thriller elements heavily outweigh the romantic ones, but fans of Lisa Gardner and J.D. Robb will enjoy this series start. And not coincidentally, Rose visits us in company with Lisa Gardner.

Ross, John F. [The Promise of the Grand Canyon](#) (Penguin \$30 Feb. 27). Great stuff. John Wesley Powell, a man who, as an explorer, dared to lead the first successful expedition down the Colorado through the Grand Canyon—and, as an American visionary, waged a bitterly-contested campaign for environmental sustainability in the American West. Ross brings photos.

Scott, E.G. [The Woman Inside](#) (Dutton \$27 Feb. 26). A debut from Scott, a publishing professional and a screenwriter working together. This is the ultimate betrayals novel for fans who really liked *Gone Girl*. Two inveterate liars, both amoral, a posh Long Island setting.... It's a train wreck in the making. Troubled soul mates Rebecca and Paul are cheating on each other after two decades of marriage, with Rebecca spinning into opiate addiction and getting fired from her pharma rep job and discovering that Paul, her contractor husband who went broke, is planning a new life without her. Or is he? I go with *Kirkus* which advises, "Although it's as shallow as the grave an inconvenient body is buried in, this thriller does offer some nastily entertaining twists." Expect to see a mini series made from it.

Spencer, Minerva. [Dangerous](#) and [Barbarous](#) (Kensington \$7.99 each Feb. 16). John Charles booked Spencer, he being a fan, but I am a sucker for Regencies. So apparently is this reviewer: *Dangerous* is: "The diverting first in Spencer's Outcasts Regency series features a matched set of high-ranking misfits whose love affair doesn't even begin to play out until after their wedding. Lady Euphemia "Mia" Marlinton was kidnapped at the age of 15 and spent the next 17 years in the harem of a ruthless Middle Eastern monarch. When she finally escapes and returns home to London, it's to a father who wants her properly wed and out of his house—the sooner, the better. Hiding the truth of her extended absence proves problematic when she meets Adam de Courtney, aka the Murderous Marquess, whose first two wives died under mysterious circumstances. He immediately sees through her hilariously implausible cover story. They're drawn to each other by both physical chemistry and their mutual outcast status, but their secrets threaten to drive them apart. The fast-paced plot is elevated by Mia and Adam's wicked repartee, savvy wit, and energetic libidos." *Barbarous* is the gleeful second book in the series. We're a bit late for the perfect Valentine event but you can snag these before Feb. 14 and then show up, no?

Starkston, Judith. [The Priestess of Ishana](#) (Tessa \$19.95 Feb. 24). A malignant curse from the Underworld threatens Tessa's city with fiery devastation. The young priestess of Ishana, goddess of love and war, must overcome this demonic darkness. Charred remains of an enemy of the Hitolian Empire reveal both treason and evil magic. Into this crisis, King Hattu, the younger brother of the Great King, arrives to make offerings to the goddess Ishana, but he conceals his true mission in the city. As a connection

sparks between King Hattu and Tessa, the Grand Votary accuses Hattu of murderous sorcery and jails him under penalty of death. Isolated in prison, Hattu's only hope lies in Tessa to uncover the conspiracy against him. Unfortunately, the Grand Votary is Tessa's father, a rash, unyielding man, and now her worst enemy. To help Hattu, she must risk destroying her own father. Step into this exotic world of historical fantasy, with its richly imagined details of the Bronze Age, evocative of the Near East where a defiant priestess confronts her foes, armed only with ingenuity and forbidden magic. Starkston is the president of our local chapter of the Historical Novelists Society.

Todd, Charles. [The Black Ascot](#) (Harper \$26.99 Feb. 8). Rutledge survived World War I shellshocked and living with the ghostly voice of Hamish, a comrade who died in his arms. While driving home to London after a difficult case he intervenes in a potential rooftop hostage disaster. And then helps the former soldier find his missing family. The grateful man can only repay Rutledge's kindness by giving him a tip that one of the most wanted men in Britain, may be back. Alan Barrington, who was accused of murder over a decade earlier vanished during the inquest, has been missing since 1910. Did Barrington arrange the car crash that killed the woman he loved and nearly did for the man she'd married when left a suicide's widow. Rutledge's boss gives him the unwelcome job of following up the clue, which begins the inspector's unrelenting search for the truth. Rutledge starts out by investigating Barrington's friends, including his lawyer and estate agent, both of whom have known him for years. When each refuses to confirm or deny that he's still alive, Rutledge begins to dig deeper into the lives of the four Oxford friends who loved the dead Blanche, a search that takes him to the Lakes Country as well as covering quite a lot of ground. Love the Catholics' history and architectural legacies. And the arresting moment when Rutledge visits a care center for shellshocked veterans and sees himself in the men. 21st in a superb series. [Order them all](#) and read them in order.

Winslow, Don. [The Border](#) (Harper \$28.99 Feb. 25 – the day before publication day). For over forty years, Art Keller has been on the front lines of America's longest conflict: The War on Drugs. His obsession to defeat the world's most powerful, wealthy, and lethal kingpin—the godfather of the Sinaloa Cartel, Adán Barrera—has left him bloody and scarred, cost him the people he loves, even taken a piece of his soul. Now Keller is elevated to the highest ranks of the DEA, only to find that in destroying one monster he has created thirty more that are wreaking even more chaos and suffering in his beloved Mexico. But not just there. Barrera's final legacy is the heroin epidemic scourging America. Throwing himself into the gap to stem the deadly flow, Keller finds himself surrounded by enemies, not only in the cartels but within his own government. Another thriller that imagines the worst enemy to be...within. Winslow is telling a terrifying story but making a statement as well about border security, the real issues. Completes the story arc begun in [The Power of the Dog](#) and [The Cartel](#) (\$16.95 each).

At dinner January 31 both Ian Rankin and Linwood Barclay gave this big book (700 pages) a rave to me. Patrick adds, "A breathtaking achievement. Winslow's Cartel series will stand as the definite drug world chronicle for years to come. His courage and commitment to telling the true story behind our disastrous fifty-year War on Drugs and the world it has wrought cannot be

overstated, nor can his almost Shakespearean limning of characters.”

FEBRUARY BOOKS OF THE MONTH

British Crime Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Michaelides, Alex. [The Silent Patient](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Kent, Serena. [Death in Provence](#)

Discovery Club One paperback or hardcover per month

Gulvin, JM. [The Contract](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First per month

Tyce, Harriet. [Blood Orange](#)

Hardboiled Crime Club One signed First per month

Love, Melissa Scrivener. [American Heroin](#)

History/Mystery Club One Signed First per month

Dag, Niklas Natt och. [The Wolf and the Watchman](#)

History Paperback One per month

Ivar, Katja. [Evil Things](#)

Modern First Editions One Signed First per month

James, Marlon. [Black Leopard Red Wolf](#)

SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Club One Signed First per month

Lyons, Jenn. [The Ruin of Kings](#)

Surprise Me! Club One Signed First Per Month

Grant, Andrew. [Invisible](#)

Thriller Club One Signed First per month

Goldberg, Lee. [Killer Thriller](#)

SIGNED BOOKS

Barton, Fiona. [The Suspect](#) (Bantam UK \$32). A “gap” year for the British is somewhat like the “Rumspringa” the Amish accord their teenagers—a year off to explore the world and themselves. Barton’s third shines a harsh mirror on what happens when the kids are impulsive, use poor judgment, fail to prepare for potential hazards, and want to hide all this from their parents. For example, heading off ill-prepared to Thailand where a son has basically dropped from sight and two girls make poor decisions and end up dead. That mirror also shines on parents and particularly upon a mother, journalist Kate Waters, who puts defending her child above...everything. Barton, herself a reporter, once again draws upon the profession in modeling character and plot.

Chakraborty, SA. [Kingdom of Copper](#) (Harper \$28). Chakraborty plunges right back into the action set up in [The City of Brass](#) (\$16.99)—a fabulous 2018 series start and SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month—with uneasy alliances, bitter rivalry, and explosive secrets in this richly developed fantasy set in an alternate 18th-century Egypt. In the aftermath of a thwarted escape and ensuing battle, heartbroken series heroine Nahri weds the king’s heir; Prince Ali, seen as a threat to the king, is exiled and flees into the desert ahead of assassins; and Nahri’s mother, Manizheh, uses warrior Dara’s ring to recall him into service. Five years pass and Nahri remains in Daevabad, trapped by a vicious king who’s using the lives of her people to force her compliance. But Ali’s return sets in motion a chain of events that pushes the kingdom to the brink of civil war and intersects with Manizheh’s campaign to recapture the city. Nahri must decide whom to trust when, once

again, she is surrounded by death and betrayal. “Chakraborty raises the tension and the stakes with emotional dilemmas that bring out the best and worst in these conflicted characters. This intriguing fantasy series appears to be well on its way to an exciting conclusion.”—*PW* Starred Review

Choo, Yangze. [The Night Tiger](#) (Flatiron \$28). Quick-witted, ambitious Ji Lin is stuck as an apprentice dressmaker, moonlighting as a dancehall girl to help pay off her mother’s Mahjong debts. But when one of her dance partners accidentally leaves behind a gruesome souvenir, Ji Lin may finally get the adventure she has been longing for. Eleven-year-old houseboy Ren is also on a mission, racing to fulfill his former master’s dying wish: that Ren find the man’s finger, lost years ago in an accident, and bury it with his body. Ren has 49 days to do so, or his master’s soul will wander the earth forever. As the days tick relentlessly by, a series of unexplained deaths racks the district, along with whispers of men who turn into tigers. Ji Lin and Ren’s increasingly dangerous paths crisscross through lush plantations, hospital storage rooms, and ghostly dreamscapes. *The Night Tiger* pulls us into a world of servants and masters, age-old superstition and modern idealism, sibling rivalry and forbidden love. A plus—it’s a coming of age story twice over. It may arrive in February but will be our **April Modern Firsts Book of the Month Club**. I have to grab gems when they publish. Or, as in last November regarding a Pick for this Club, skip a month if there is no good candidate.

Dag, Niklas Natt och. [The Wolf and the Watchman](#) (Murray \$35). 1793, Stockholm. King Gustav of Sweden has been assassinated, years of foreign wars have emptied the treasuries, and the realm is governed by a self-interested elite, leaving its citizens to suffer. On the streets, malcontent and paranoia abound. A body is found in the city’s swamp by a watchman, Mickel Cardell, and the case is handed over to investigator Cecil Winge, who is dying of consumption. Together, Winge and Cardell become embroiled in a brutal world of guttersnipes and thieves, mercenaries and madams, and one death will expose a city rotten with corruption beneath its powdered and painted veneer. “Brawny, bloody, intricate, enthralling—and the best historical thriller I’ve read in twenty years.”—AJ Finn on our **February History/Mystery Book of the Month** which follows the aftermath of the real events Verdi drew upon to write his opera *The Masked Ball*.

French, Tana. [The Wych Elm](#) (Viking UK \$36). With no US Signed firsts possible, you can order this. One night changes everything for Toby. He’s always led a charmed life—until a brutal attack leaves him damaged and traumatized, unsure even of the person he used to be. He seeks refuge at his family’s ancestral home, the Ivy House, filled with memories of wild-strawberry summers and teenage parties with his cousins. But not long after Toby’s arrival, a discovery is made: a skull, tucked neatly inside the old wych elm in the garden. As detectives begin to close in, Toby is forced to examine everything he thought he knew...

Griffiths, Elly. [The Stone Circle](#) (Quercus \$43). DCI Nelson has been receiving threatening letters telling him to ‘go to the stone circle and rescue the innocent who is buried there’. He is shaken, not only because children are very much on his mind, with Michelle’s baby due to be born, but because although the letters are anonymous, they are somehow familiar. They read like the letters that first drew him into the case of *The Crossing Places*, and to Ruth. But the author of those letters is dead. Or not?

Meanwhile Ruth is working on a dig in the Saltmarsh—another henge, known by the archaeologists as the stone circle. Then bones are found on the site, and identified as those of Margaret Lacey, a twelve-year-old girl who disappeared thirty years ago. As the Margaret Lacey case progresses, more and more aspects of it begin to hark back to that first case of *The Crossing Places*, and to Scarlett Henderson, the girl Nelson couldn't save. The past is reaching out for Ruth and Nelson. . . . Love this series for its atmospheric landscapes and quirky characters although the “love story” is growing irksome. Best read in order: [order them all](#)

✂Halls, Stacey. [The Familiars](#) (Zaffre \$32). I ordered this for your James Rollins fans who have devoured [Crucible](#) (\$28.99 Signed) with its witches and parallel modern treatment of women scientists. 1612, Lancashire. The Pendle Witch Trials approach. Young Fleetwood Shuttleworth is with child again. As the mistress of Gawthorpe Hall, she is anxious to provide her husband with an heir. But none of her previous pregnancies have come to term. Then she discovers a hidden letter from her physician that warns her husband that she will not survive another pregnancy. Distraught over the frightening revelation, Fleetwood wanders the woods of Pendle Hill, where she meets a young local woman named Alice Gray. A midwife, Alice promises Fleetwood she can help her deliver a healthy baby. But soon Alice is drawn into the frenzied accusations of witchcraft sweeping the countryside. Even the woodland creatures, the “familiar,” are suspected of practicing the dark arts. Can Fleetwood trust that Alice is really who she says she is? As the two women's lives become intertwined, Fleetwood must risk everything to prove Alice's innocence in order to save her own unborn child. The hunt for witches reaches fever pitch. This rich and compelling novel draws its characters from historical figures as it explores the lives and rights of seventeenth-century women, ultimately raising the question: Is witch-hunting really just women-hunting?

Havill, Steven F. [Lies Come Easy](#) (Poisoned Pen \$20). **This review arrived recently from a reader and spurs me to a reminder of this wonderful book. As did *True West Magazine's* designating it one of the Best of the West 2019—so we offer it at a special low price.** “Posadas County is located on the New Mexico border with Mexico. The characters are a blend of ages, nationality, characteristics and everything else you would find in a border town community, again, very realistic. The law is enforced by the Posadas County Sheriff's office, the National Forest Rangers, New Mexico State Troopers and FBI. These agencies must all work together to insure the safety and solve crimes. The story line gives many examples of how a small law enforcement agency operates to get the job done. While this is a murder mystery, it's much more about the people who live and work in Posadas County. The first crime in this book is one you'd see in the newspaper headlines. A Deputy Sheriff picks up a 2 year old little boy who is riding his scooter in the snow on the side of a busy highway. After a short while, they discover the boy's father put him out on the road because he was noisy. Really! This serves to introduce you to several of the characters who will to the rest of the book. There are many side stories that eventually blend together to become one that will keep you guessing for quite awhile. The upside to this book is I now have 22 more books on my TBR pile.” You can also buy the paperback: [Lies Come Easy](#) (\$15.95).

James, Marlon. [Black Leopard Red Wolf](#) (Penguin \$30). An epic novel from Marlon James, the Man Booker Prize-winning author of *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, could be called an African Game of Thrones. In the first novel in his Dark Star trilogy, myth, fantasy, and history come together to explore what happens when a mercenary is hired to find a missing child. Wrought with blood, iron, and jolting images, this swords-and-sorcery epic set in a mythical Africa is also part detective story, part quest fable, and part inquiry into the nature of truth, belief, and destiny. This is our **February Modern Firsts Book of the Month. And our pre-orders come with limited edition enamel pins while supplies last!**

I add it is a February Indie Next Pick: “Marlon James' *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* is a shot across the bow of fantasy literature: bold, fresh, and filled with brutal wonder and endless imagination. James' tale set in a fantastical ancient Africa follows a hunter known only as Tracker as he trails the scent of a lost boy, meeting a shape-shifting leopard along the way. At turns hallucinatory, dreamlike, and nightmarish, *Black Leopard, Red Wolf's* world envelops the reader in its stink, grime, sweat, and blood. Never has a magical world felt quite so otherworldly and yet frighteningly tactile at the same time. This is literary fantasy as you've never encountered it before and a truly original tale of love, loss, power, and identity.”

And there is a [By the Book](#) piece about James in the *NY Times Book Review* on point.

Johnson, Tim. [The Current](#) (Algonquin \$27.95 in stock, Signed March 1). Johnson writes, “In *Descent*, it was actually the Rockies that inspired the story. I was working as a carpenter up there when I began to write about the Courtland family, and it's the Rockies that draw them so far from home. But when their daughter does not return from a run up the mountain, their awe turns to something else entirely as they wait—and wait—to see if she will ever come down again. What begins as setting becomes essential to plot and theme—and to the title itself. Likewise, when I began *The Current*, I didn't know how essential the river would become to the story, other than as the locale of the drowning of two young women, 10 years apart. But as I got deeper into the lives of the survivors of those two tragedies, the river became a bridge across time—or through time; it freezes and thaws and flows and freezes again, but it never stops reminding them of what connects them, and what they've lost. They are all in the same current. Living in the Rocky Mountains was my research for *Descent*, and I used the names of local landmarks and streets—only to be told later, by readers familiar with the area, how wrong I'd gotten it all. So when I began *The Current*, I knew that the small town in which the novel is set, including the river, would be entirely fictional. Of course, as an Iowan, it's not a great stretch to imagine a small town in Minnesota in the dead of winter. I just pushed it all north for a colder, stranger sense of place and people....”

The Indie Next Pick: “Tim Johnston's brand of storytelling is a curious hybrid of conventional crime fiction and observation of human nature that demands attention. In *The Current*, Johnston goes beyond the sensational and asks relevant questions when tragedy strikes, addressing real topics that come with the loss of a loved one and the questions that follow a horrific crime. As with Johnston's previous novel, *Descent*, his latest concludes with a wallop you will not see coming.” And I remind you Karen reviewed this in the January Booknews.

Ifkovic, Ed. [Run Cold](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). The *PW* Starred Review: “Set in 1957, Ifkovic’s excellent 10th and final Edna Ferber mystery takes the Pulitzer Prize–winning writer to Alaska, the setting of her forthcoming (and last) novel, *Ice Palace*. In Fairbanks, Edna meets old, cantankerous Jack Mabie, who bills himself as “the meanest man in Alaska” and claims to have killed dozens of men decades earlier during the gold rush era. “Takes a lot of gumption and spit to get folks to hate your guts, ma’am,” he tells Edna, who replies: “Strangely, I get my enemies to hate me simply by being myself.” Jack’s subsequent beating death suggests someone bore him a serious grudge. When two people with ties to Jack die violently, Edna believes the crimes are linked to an incident in the past: ‘Nothing lies buried under Arctic snow for very long. The crevasses eventually spit up their secrets.’ Distinctive characters, intelligent dialogue, and a credible solution to the crimes ensure that the series ends on a strong note. Fans will be sorry to see the last of Edna’s sleuthing adventures.” As am I who has loved editing Ed and Edna. The series skips around the time line of Edna’s life and work. Start in 1955 with [Lone Star](#) (\$9.99) and the making of a movie from her novel *Giant* where, of course, you can hang out with James Dean. Introduction by David Morrell.

Kellerman, Jonathan. [The Wedding Guest](#) (Ballantine \$30). Alex Delaware #34. Summoned to a run-down former strip joint, Delaware and Sturgis find themselves crashing a wild Saints and Sinners–themed wedding reception. But they’re not the only uninvited guests. A horrified bridesmaid has discovered the body of a young woman, dressed to impress in pricey *haute couture* and accessorized with a grisly red slash around her neck. What’s missing is any means of identification, or a single partygoer who recognizes the victim. The baffled bride is convinced the stranger snuck in to sabotage her big day—and the groom is sure it’s all a dreadful mistake. But Delaware and Sturgis have a hundred guests to question, and a sneaking suspicion that the motive for murder is personal.

Love, Melissa Scrivener. [American Heroin](#) (Crown \$28). “Edgar finalist Love’s outstanding sequel to 2017’s [Lola](#) (\$16), also a First Mystery Book of the Month, delves deeper into the complicated persona of Lola Vasquez, who’s a loving mother to her adopted eight-year-old daughter, Lucy, and godmother to her community, often paying for groceries or the rent for neighbors in her apartment complex in Huntington Park, a ‘South Central–adjacent suburb of L.A.’ On the other hand, she’s also a ruthless drug lord... [who] inadvertently starts a drug war with a rival gang. Love crafts a first-rate plot, but this crime thriller’s real strength is the character study of Lola, who eschews preconceived notions of what a drug lord should be.”—*PW* Starred Review. Love is for Joe Ide fans. An enthusiastic Patrick makes this our **February Hardboiled Crime Book of the Month**.

Lyons, Jenn. [The Ruin of Kings](#) (Forge \$27). “Kihrin, a street thief turned prince, unearths his complicated family history and faces devious magic-wielding foes in this intricate epic fantasy series launch by Lyons (the War in Heaven series). Set in a world of gods and magic, the frame story alternates between the perspectives of Kihrin and his jailer, a mimic named Talon, as they tell different parts of Kihrin’s tragic adventures. Kihrin’s enemies covet his protective Stone of Shackles, and in his journey to great power he crosses dragons, demons, and gods who seek to either aid or imprison him. Double crosses and hidden motivations

pepper several plots for godly power. Though the hero’s journey structure and classical fantasy elements are familiar, the complex mysteries and revelations feel novel and offer plenty of room for rereading and analysis. There’s more mystery than action in this tightly plotted tome, and its lore and memorable characters will leave epic fantasy fans eager for the second volume.”—*PW* Starred Review for our **February SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**. This sprawling epic fantasy should remind readers of Patrick Rothfuss (*Kingkiller Chronicle*) series, in its pacing and narrative structure, or George R.R. Martin (*Game of Thrones*), in its scope and all-encompassing bloody-mindedness.

Michaelides, Alex. [The Silent Patient](#) (Orion \$32). See Karen’s review of our unsigned British Crime Book of the Month in Some New Books for February. I ordered some Signed UK firsts of his debut as well. Supply is limited so please order ASAP. The Indie Next Pick adds: “An outstanding thriller centered on a spellbinding mystery with a shocking twist; in other words, you are going to love this book. Alicia was a talented painter and devoted wife until the night she was discovered still as a statue and covered in blood, having apparently killed her husband. The answer as to why has remained locked inside of Alicia, who stops speaking following the murder. Six years later, Theo, a young psychologist, is determined to get the mysterious Alicia to spill all of her secrets. The final surprise will have you rethinking every riveting scene in this brilliant debut.”

Parks, Alan. [February’s Son](#) (Canongate \$32). Detective Harry McCoy’s first day back at work couldn’t have gone worse. New drugs have arrived in Glasgow, and they’ve brought a different kind of violence to the broken city. The law of the street is changing and now demons from McCoy’s past are coming back to haunt him. But vengeance always carries a price, and it could cost McCoy more than he ever imagined. The waters of Glasgow corruption are creeping higher, as the wealthy and dangerous play for power. And the city’s killer continues his dark mission....

✽Tyce, Harriet. [Blood Orange](#) (Grand Central \$26 – out in Feb. signed here March 4). Rising London criminal defense lawyer Alison Wood, the complex and deeply flawed narrator of British author Tyce’s arresting debut, welcomes her first murder case—something she has worked toward for 15 years. Her client, Madeline Smith, who was arrested for stabbing her husband to death, wants to plead guilty. But Alison tries to persuade Madeline to consider other options. Meanwhile, Alison’s personal life is in shambles. As Alison prepares for Madeline’s case, she begins to see disturbing similarities between her client’s life and her own. This is bound to shake some of you as you read our **February First Mystery Book of the Month** as Tyce doesn’t spare us booze and sex, but you’d be bored if we always offer a comfort read. Ian Rankin had Tyce as a student, he tells me, and is a very big supporter of criminal barrister Tyce’s debut. Alison is so not Rumpole of the Bailey.

BRITISH LIBRARY CRIME CLASSIC

Symons, Julian. [The Colour of Murder](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). “A shy, frustrated London husband’s infatuation with another woman ends in murder in this reprint of a 1957 book, which won the Crime Writers Association Best Novel award on its first publication. The *NY Times* calls it, “A book to delight every puzzle-suspense enthusiast.” It opens with a statement to a consulting psychiatrist by John Wilkins, the assistant manager of a London department store’s complaints department, who has

been suffering from blackouts. John is unhappily married to May, and dates the origin of his present, unspecified legal dilemma to an encounter with an attractive librarian, Sheila Morton. He lies to Sheila about his marital status and persuades her to go to the theater with him. Although Sheila rebuffs his advances, John begins talking to May about divorce—and to his uncle about a recent criminal case in which a man was acquitted of murdering his spouse. His situation comes to a head in Brighton, where he takes May on vacation, knowing that Sheila will be there as well... “This perfect choice for Poisoned Pen’s British Library Crime Classics series wears its 60 years with surprising lightness.”—*Kirkus Reviews*. In its Starred Review, *Booklist* reminds us that Symons is “a writer long acknowledged as a trailblazer in psychological suspense...Symons keeps readers on their toes with his unreliable narrator and numerous misdirections, but he amply rewards us with a story that makes us think.” So despite its 60 years this mystery falls squarely into today’s Domestic Suspense genre more often written by women.

Don’t overlook January’s BLCC by Symons: [The Belting Inheritance](#) (\$12.95).

OUR FEBRUARY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Camilleri, Andrea. [The Overnight Kidnapper](#) (Penguin \$16).

“You either love Andrea Camilleri or you haven’t read him yet. Each novel in this wholly addictive, entirely magical series, set in Sicily and starring a detective unlike any other in crime fiction, blasts the brain like a shot of pure oxygen. Aglow with local color, packed with flint-dry wit, as fresh and clean as Mediterranean seafood — altogether transporting.” —A.J. Finn. In his 23rd case, while trying to break up a fight on Marinella beach, Sicily’s Inspector Salvo Montalbano hits the wrong man and is stopped by the Carabinieri. When he finally gets to the office, the inspector learns about a strange abduction: a woman was abducted, drugged, and then released unharmed a few hours later. This first victim, then another, then a third, are all low-level bank employees. Hmm. Meanwhile Montalbano’s team must look into an arson case and the disappearance of the torched shop’s owner. The stakes rise as the cases intertwine and two bodies turn up. Montalbano punctuates his deductions with wry observations and classical allusions; he follows his frequent lunches at Enzo’s trattoria by seaside walks where he gets his best thinking done. “The aging detective’s insights into the darker side of human nature allow him to cut through the red herrings as the action builds to a crisp, decisive ending. The Sicilian dialect of the police station’s switchboard operator, as rendered in Sartarelli’s adept translation, provides comic relief.” I can’t recommend *Inspector Montalbano* and *The Young Montalbano* on MHZ-TV highly enough.

Dovalpage, Teresa. [Death Comes in Through the Kitchen](#) (\$15.95). At the start of this dazzling culinary mystery, laid-back, spiritually shambolic 36-year-old San Diego, California, reporter Matt Sullivan arrives in Cuba just before the 2003 Black Spring crackdown on dissidents, not to investigate human rights violations but to marry (he hopes) 24-year-old food blogger Yarmila Portal, whom he mostly knows through online interactions. But Yarmi doesn’t meet him at the airport, and in dizzying succession, Matt discovers her body in a running shower in her Havana apartment, lands in police custody, and learns from Lt. Marlene Martinez that Yarmi had a young lover, Pato Macho. In a typically rich scene, both laugh-aloud funny and bone-chilling, Matt is grilled about his email suggesting Yarmi write a report for

the CIA (i.e., the Culinary Institute of America). Matt instantly understands the confusion of acronyms, but will his interlocutor believe that the almighty spy agency allows a mere cooking school to share its initials? Matt’s travails are interspersed with Yarmi’s recipe-filled blog posts, bringing her to life after death, and the procedural narrative spirals to a smoky finish involving lucid dreaming, Santeria, gender fluidity, and the ultimate magic realism of politics. Those expecting a traditional food cozy will be happily surprised with the paperback of last May’s First Mystery Book of the Month.

Giordano, Mario. [Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions](#) (\$14.99). On her sixtieth birthday, Auntie Poldi retires to Sicily, intending to while away the rest of her days with good wine, a view of the sea, and few visitors. But Sicily isn’t quite the tranquil island she thought it would be. When her handsome young handyman goes missing—and is discovered murdered—she can’t help but ask questions. Soon there’s an investigation, a smoldering police inspector, a romantic entanglement, one false lead after another, a rooftop showdown, and finally, of course, Poldi herself, slightly tousled but still perfectly poised. Transport yourself to the rocky shores of Torre Archirafi, to a Sicily full of quirky characters, scorching days, and velvety nights. And according to author David Hewson, amazing food.

✚Harris, CS. [Why Kill the Innocent?](#) (\$16). “Harris’s fascinating 13th mystery set in Regency-era London centers on the plight of Princess Charlotte, heiress presumptive to the throne, who’s being encouraged to marry William, Prince of Orange, a union designed to benefit her father’s political agenda. This chapter in a wonderful series draws more on real history for the plot than on the complicated relationships of the characters that make this series so compelling. Harris works to keep it all fresh and I am addicted. Order all the [Sebastian St.-Cyr Mysteries](#) with their gripping blend of domestic noir, romance, history, and amazing mystery plots.

Hamilton, Ian. [Fate: the Lost Decade of Uncle Chow Tung](#) (Anansi \$15.95). Readers of the Booknews know that I am crazy about Canadian Hamilton’s remarkable series about accountant Ava Lee whose unconventional love life and globe-trotting quests are so lively and distinctive. Ava’s life changed and became shaped, by the Hong Kong Triad kingpin known as Uncle. And now, setting the first of a spin-off series revealing the origin story of Chow Tung and his rise to power after his escape from China to 1969 Hong Kong, Hamilton enriches the Ava Lee series as well. As the young Uncle becomes first the Fanling Triad’s White Paper Fan (administrator) and executes the coup that ends with him as the new Dragon Head (or Mountain Master, the triad’s leader), we see in his carefully orchestrated campaign, outwitting more senior members and embracing the common rather than a personal benefit, how he became the man who mentors Ava Lee.

Hart, John. [The Hush](#) (\$16.99). Hart presents an impressive sequel to his 2010 Edgar winner [The Last Child](#) (\$16). More evil awaits Johnny Merrimon and his friend Jack. “A testament to friendship, an exploration of family, a meditation on slavery and its legacy, a lament on the prison of the past, and a grisly and gritty ghost story—*The Hush* displays Hart at his best. With richly imagined characters and depth of ingenuity, Hart forges a thoughtful and disturbing novel, one that delivers shocks in his story and joy in his storytelling. The author, who splits his time

between North Carolina and Virginia, builds on his trademark take on the literary Southern gothic; the result is his most powerful work yet, one that plants a flag at the intersection where William Faulkner and Stephen King meet in unexpected harmony.” – *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. “Chandler himself would be a big fan of John Hart for reasons clearly on display in *The Hush*... Like Chandler, Hart is a brilliant novelist as well as mystery writer, a lyrical wordsmith as comfortable turning a phrase as tension-riddled screws.” – *Providence Journal*. All of which shows that Hart’s fiction is unclassifiable. I sometimes think of Pat Conroy as I wished he’d written... displaying “a rare ability to combine the most propulsive of popular fiction with beguilingly rich characters.”

Jenoff, Pam. [The Lost Girls of Paris](#) (Park Row \$16.99 SIGNED). A Starred Review: “Jenoff’s terrific, fast-paced novel follows a network of female WWII operatives in a smartly constructed narrative. In 1946 New York, young war widow Grace Healy stumbles upon a suitcase at Grand Central with photographs of 12 women inside. She follows a cold but irresistible trail through New York and Washington, D.C., determined to learn about the women and, in the novel’s second story line, uncovers information about the girls’ leader, the indomitable Eleanor Trigg: “Her style was brusque, unfeminine and unquestionably stern.” Eleanor had recruited Marie Roux in 1943 for the Special Operations Executive (SOE) to work with the French Resistance as an undercover radio operator. Marie’s deployed to work in France with an intense, handsome circuit leader. As much as Marie often shows courage and pluck, some of her behaviors are misguided, including putting lives at risk for her budding romance when she pursues her own ideas rather than SOE orders regarding dangerous field operations. Despite Marie’s sometimes dubious decisions, her colleagues in the field do show more guile as they fight in the Resistance, and Jenoff allows their distinct personalities to shine. This is a mesmerizing tale full of appealing characters, intrigue, suspense, and romance.”

Ivar, Katja. [Evil Things](#) (Bitter Lemon \$14.95). It’s 1952 in Finnish Lapland (I was there two years ago and it’s not yet 21st Century territory). *PW* stars this: “Amid the overarching threat of East vs. West conflict, Ivar’s stellar first novel and series launch revolves around two crucial struggles for emancipation—that of the nation of Finland after centuries of foreign rule, and that of Finnish women. Hella Mauzer, the first female Helsinki murder squad detective, is dispatched to a remote Lapland village near the Soviet border by her chauvinistic boss to investigate an old man’s disappearance. Embittered by the death of her entire immediate family during WWII and her recent breakup with her married lover, the 30ish, stiletto-tongued Hella tries to behave professionally like a man, but she defies male authority by using her instinct for detecting half-truths and her compassion for the weak to try to solve what initially appears to be a minor missing person case. With the discovery of the body of a Soviet doctor, it mushrooms into something much more complex involving institutional corruption and international intrigue. The unusual setting and psychologically complex heroine” contribute to making this our **February History Paperback Book of the Month**. I found it riveting!

Lawson, Mike. [House Witness](#) (\$16). This 11th investigation in the Washington fixer Joe DeMarco series scores a 2019 Edgar nomination. Minority Leader of the House and DeMarco’s long-

time employer John Mahoney has kept more than one secret from his wife over the years, but none so explosive as this: He has a son, and that son has just been shot dead in a bar in Manhattan. Mahoney immediately dispatches DeMarco to New York to assist prosecutor Justine Porter, but with five bystanders willing to testify against the killer—rich-boy Toby Rosenthal—the case seems like a slam-dunk. That is, until Porter begins to suspect that someone is interfering with those witnesses, and that this may be connected to a pattern of cases across the country. Is there someone who is getting witnesses out of the way when the fate of a wealthy defendant is on the line? With the help of Porter’s intern, as outrageously smart as she is young, DeMarco becomes determined to follow that question through to its violent resolution in what turns out to be this series’ most unexpected plot yet. We have 2 Signed firsts left in stock.

Mangan, Christine. [Tangerine](#) (\$16.99). It’s North Africa—Tangiers—in the 1950s when the ex-pat life was more glamorous, and more limited, than in our age of mass travel. The last person Alice Shipley expected to see since arriving in Tangier with her new husband was Lucy Mason. After the accident at Bennington, the two friends—once inseparable roommates—haven’t spoken in over a year. But there Lucy was, trying to make things right and return to their old rhythms. Perhaps Alice should be happy. She has not adjusted to life in Morocco, too afraid to venture out into the bustling medinas and oppressive heat. Lucy—always fearless and independent—helps Alice emerge from her flat and explore the country. But soon a familiar feeling starts to overtake Alice—she feels controlled and stifled by Lucy at every turn. Then Alice’s husband, John, goes missing in this stylish soft thriller was a 2018 Modern Firsts Book of the Month.

Parks, Brad. [Closer Than You Know](#) (\$16). Working mother Melanie Barrick’s life is turned upside down after the police find a half-kilo of cocaine in her home and social services takes her three-month-old son, Alex, away from her and her husband. Melanie, who has been through a lot in her life—stints in foster care as a child and, most recently, a rape—must somehow prove her innocence or lose Alex and her freedom. As chief deputy commonwealth’s attorney Amy Kaye builds a seemingly airtight case against Melanie, she also struggles to identify a serial rapist who has been victimizing women in the area for decades. A second domestic noir from the popular Parks.

Raybourn, Deanna. [A Treacherous Curse](#) (\$15). Our blogger Lesa Holstine reviews: “In 1888 London, Victorian adventuress Veronica Speedwell is intrigued by the newspaper reports about the calamities of the Tiverton expedition in Egypt, including stories of the appearance of Anubis, god of the underworld, and a curse attached to a recovered sarcophagus. In addition, the project’s photographer, John de Morgan, and his wife have disappeared with a priceless diadem taken from the newly discovered tomb of an Egyptian princess. It’s only when she and her working partner, the scientist Stoker, are called to meet with the head of Special Branch that she learns Stoker was once married to Mrs. de Morgan. Her husband had been the friend who had abandoned Stoker to die in the Amazon. To save Stoker’s reputation, the duo team up to investigate the truth behind the expedition and the couple’s disappearance. While readers of Elizabeth Peters’ ‘Amelia Peabody’ mysteries will enjoy this title, it is fans of *Jane Eyre* who will truly appreciate the third volume in Raybourn’s historical series. Her intricately plotted and dramatic story

features a strong-willed, independent woman who is the intellectual equal of the brooding Stoker.” I add I much enjoyed all the Egyptology. [A Curious Beginning](#) and [A Perilous Undertaking](#) (\$15 each) come first. Raybourn signs the 4th, [A Dangerous Collaboration](#) (Berkley \$26), on March 13.

Vlautin, Willy. [Don't Skip Out on Me](#) (\$15.99). In this powerful novel, Vlautin writes about characters whose big dreams and plans are often stunted by fate and circumstance, but who've managed to find a way to push through, bruised but with hard-won wisdom. Young Horace Hopper is half-Irish, half-Paiute Indian, and he has spent most of his life as a ranch hand. While herding sheep in the stark, isolated mountains near Tonopah, Nevada, Hopper listens to heavy metal music and struggles with the shame of being abandoned by his parents. Hopper's guardian, the aging rancher Eldon Reese, suffers crippling back pain and faces an uncertain future as his way of life becomes less and less tenable. Reese and his wife love Hopper dearly and consider him a son, but the young man soon leaves for Tucson to pursue his dream of becoming a professional boxer. Hopper, now calling himself "Hector Hidalgo," finds a washed-up trainer and manages to get some fights throughout the Southwest and Mexico. A series of injuries, however, soon threaten to derail his career before it's really off the ground. "In this excellent novel, Vlautin's reverence for the land recalls writers such as Jim Harrison and John Steinbeck."—*PW* Starred Review. The UK's *Guardian* reviewer calls this, "a meditation on loneliness."

THE RISING AUSTRALIAN CRIME WAVE

I am often asked what is the next Big Thing – here's an answer. With Jane Harper joining us February 7 – don't miss it! – I highlight more from Down Under

Bailey, Sarah. [Into the Night](#) (Grand Central \$26). Sarah Bailey's follow-up to her debut novel, [The Dark Lake](#) (\$14.99), rejoins Detective Sergeant Gemma Woodstock after her life has fallen apart. She's divorced, and her son lives with her ex, so she has moved to Melbourne, where she is now a small fish in a big pond. Her new partner, Nick Fleet, has little charm or professionalism, and her new boss doesn't yet trust her instincts or abilities. When rising star Sterling Wade is murdered on a film set, however, Gemma is sucked into another life-consuming case that distracts her from her personal failings. But is his death as disconnected from her own life as she thinks? And what could it possibly have to do with the homeless man murdered just a day before?

Bailey is part of the rising tide of Australian crime which I'm enjoying. "With a seemingly endless cast of potential suspects, Bailey excels at keeping the reader guessing through every turn in the plot. Rather than *The Dark Lake's* insistence that none of the characters could do such a thing, *Into the Night* seems to suggest that nearly everyone could have, or did. While the plot is fast-paced and engrossing, it is Gemma herself who allows this workplace thriller to feel fresh. A female reboot of the hardboiled detective, Gemma is both brilliant and haunted, addicted to sex rather than drugs, and frequently stunted by her naïveté despite her experience. Bailey crafts these character tensions with such precision and depth that the reader is left to wonder what the difference between a dazzling hero and a down-and-out workaholic really is." –Alice Martin

Carey, Peter. [A Long Way from Home](#) (\$16.95). The two-time Booker Prize-winning author gives us a wildly exuberant, wildly

new novel that circumnavigates 1954 Australia, revealing as much about the country/continent as it does about three audacious individuals who take part in the infamous 10,000-mile race, the Redex Trial, a 10,000-mile car race through the unforgiving Australian outback. During the 1950s, Willie Bachuber, a man devoted to maps, takes part and is confronted with equally unforgiving revelations about his personal and cultural history that no map could chart. A sense of place is complicated. As Westover writes at one point, "I could have said, 'That place has a hold on me, which I may never break.'"

Dale, John, ed. [Sydney Noir](#) (Akashic \$15.95). Nothing lasts in Sydney, especially good fortune: lives are upturned, shops are sold, roads dug up, trees and houses knocked down, premiers discarded, and entire communities relocated in the name of that economic mantra—growth and progress. Just when you think the traffic can't get any worse and the screech of the 747s descending over your roof can't get any louder and the pavements can't get any dirtier, along comes a wild electrical storm that batters the buildings and shakes the power lines and washes the garbage off the streets and you stand, sheltered under your broken broly in the center of Sydney, admiring this big beautiful city...What never changes, though, is the hustle on the street. My father was a detective in the vice squad shortly after the Second World War, and he told stories of busting SP bookies in Paddington and Surry Hills, collaring cockatoos stationed in the laneways of South Sydney, and arresting sly-groggers. Policing back then was hands-on for the poor and hands-off for the rich. Crime and Sydney have always been inseparable: a deep vein of corruption runs beneath the surface of even its most respectable suburbs. Includes brand-new stories by: Kirsten Tranter, Mandy Sayer, John Dale, Eleanor Limprecht, Mark Dapin, Leigh Redhead, Julie Koh, Peter Polites, Robert Drewe, Tom Gilling, Gabrielle Lord, Philip McLaren, P.M. Newton, and Peter Doyle.

Gentill, Sulari. [A Murder Unmentioned](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). The gun used in Rowland Sinclair's father's death some thirteen years earlier has turned up in a drained dam at the family's country homestead in Yass. And when Rowland offends right-wing New Guard leader Eric Campbell, Campbell uses his influence to set the police to renew their inquiries into Henry Sinclair's death. Henry's friends had all been led to believe that the wealthy landowner had died in a much more respectable way. Rowland and his elder brother, Wil, had avoided any discussion of the event ever since—in fact the whole family had ducked the issue for over a decade, keeping secret that Sinclair senior was murdered. The possible involvement of the teenage Rowly and his older brother's intervention has been under the radar as well. But now the finger of blame is pointing squarely at Rowland, the Sinclair black sheep, a man careless of what society and the authorities think of him. So he and the trio of artist friends who live in his Sydney suburban mansion, and generally have his back, avail themselves of a racing green Gypsy Moth (Rowland is a pioneer in air travel) and a yellow Mercedes sports car (another frightening mode of transport) to arrive in New South Wales' Southern Tablelands, bent on clearing Rowly's name. With cameo appearances from historical figures—Bob Menzies in the Sinclair kitchen, Edna Walling in the garden, and Kate Leigh grinning lasciviously at Rowly in a jailhouse crowd, this is a classic Agatha Christie country house murder—and the humor doesn't cloak

Gentill's penetrating look at the tumultuous 1930s Down Under which reflect our own times.

A reader writes: "...a fun read with a genuine mystery attached. It is a much more intimate novel than the others in the series, concentrating as it does on Rowly's past and his relationship with his brother, Wil. I found it quite moving in parts when I wasn't smiling at the antics of Rowly's friends and series regulars, Milt, Clyde and Ed. The main theme of the novel is the ties that bind. Milt, Clyde and Ed do not hesitate to support Rowly in his time of need and series readers will be used to this but the bond between Rowly and Wil is a revelation and wonderful to read. I found the novel heartwarming. The mystery at the heart of the novel is just that. Because Rowly and Wil have never talked about the murder of their father they both assumed the other did it. So if not them, who? I couldn't work it out before the reveal. If that wasn't enough to keep me busy there are a variety of subplots and twists to contend with. I was gripped from start to finish." 6th in series. The paperback will publish in December, 2019.

Hammer, Chris. [Scrublands](#) (Atria \$26.99). A #1 bestseller in Australia and getting big buzz in the States. That quirky newsletter I credit elsewhere says this as an addendum to Karen's rave in the January Booknews: "What's so stellar about it? Well, we dare you to come in and read the opening prologue and NOT take the book home. It's such a stunning opening to a Rashomon-style narrative about a dying town and the people who are trying to not die with it. It reminds us of Thomas Maltman's *Little Wolves*, which we adored a few years back (and still do, for that matter). Martin Scarsden comes to Riversend, the dusty setting of Hammer's *Scrublands*, on assignment to write an article about how the town is coping with the tragedy that occurred there a year earlier. Very quickly, he discovers how muddy the narrative is of that terrible day when the beloved parish priest coldly killed five men. And then, more secrets are uncovered, and things get progressively darker and stranger."

Patterson, James/Candice Fox. [Liar, Liar](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Patterson is not the point here. It is Fox, an Australian star who teamed up with Patterson, as she reported to us when here last March, to write about the interesting Aussie cop Harriet Blue. Here, a very good cop gone bad... or so it appears. Harriet has committed theft and fraud, resisted arrest, assaulted a police officer, and become 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 she nails Regan. Meet Harriet (and Fox) in [Never, Never](#) and [Fifty, Fifty](#) (\$9.99 each).

NEW BOOKS FOR FEBRUARY

Charles Finch has written a terrific piece for the [NY Times Book Review](#) on 6 Winter Thrillers covered in this Booknews and the last. He's insightful and unsparring. Charles will be with us February 17 and I plan to discuss his book reviewing with him as well as his new Victorian novel, book two in the Charles Lennox series prequel trilogy.

Anders, Charlie Jane. [The City in the Middle of the Night](#) (Tor \$26.99). Nebula Award winner Anders sets this riveting genre-bender on a tumultuous planet split into frigid darkness and searing sunlight. On the lighter side, in the rigidly controlled city of

Xiosphant, shy student Sophie adores her friend, the outspoken Bianca. After Sophie takes the fall for Bianca's petty theft, she's left to die in the frozen wasteland, but she establishes a psychic bond with the creature that saves her. This connection gives her heartbreaking insight into the world of a sentient race Sophie dubs the Gelet, who have been hunted relentlessly by humans. Sophie later reunites with Bianca, now a violent revolutionary, and they fall in with a group of smugglers, including the fierce Mouth, who seeks an artifact linking her to her nomadic ancestors. After an outbreak of violence, they flee Xiosphant, and Sophie is shocked to learn that Bianca wants to use the Gelet, labeling them "animals." Anders's worldbuilding is intricate, embracing much of what makes a grand adventure: smugglers, revolutionaries, pirates, camaraderie, personal sacrifice, wondrous discovery, and the struggle to find light in the darkness. This breathlessly exciting and thought-provoking tale will capture readers' imaginations. "Watching Charlie Jane Anders grow into her full power is like what it must have been like to see the Ursula K. Le Guin of the late 1960s become the Ursula K. Le Guin of *The Left Hand of Darkness*."

Appel, Rene. [Amsterdam Noir](#) (Akashic \$15.95). "In spotlighting a city known worldwide for sex workers and marijuana, the editors avoid the obvious... Taking the road less traveled is a winning strategy for the editors. The 15 dark takes they've collected provide a variety of methods, motives, and menace, while their movie-themed chapters anchor the varied menu firmly in the noir tradition." —*Kirkus Reviews*. The films are: *Out of the Past*, *Kiss Me Deadly*, *Touch of Evil*, and *They Live by Night*.

Armstrong, Kell. [Watcher in the Woods](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Armstrong had an ace idea for her Casey Duncan series, creating a hideaway town for criminals and victims seeking refuge deep in the Yukon, financed by some kind of corporation. Duncan is Rockton's only detective in its police force of three, and in her 4th investigation she's facing a US Marshal who has shown up demanding the release of one of Rockton's residents. Not just Casey but her lover, Sheriff Eric Dalton, is skeptical about this, and when the Marshal is shot dead and the only possible suspects are the townspeople (so Agatha Christie), it's up to them and Casey's estranged sister who's been smuggled into Rockton to help with a medical emergency, to figure out who would kill to keep the Marshall from getting his man, or woman, before the killer strikes again. I like this offbeat thriller series; best to [order all four](#) and read in them in order.

Barry, Jessica. [Freefall](#) (Harper \$27.99). A woman opens her eyes and realizes she's just survived a plane crash in the Rockies. One might expect her immediately to find a way to signal or call for help, but the woman, Allison, does not. Instead, she smashes her phone. It soon becomes clear she's being pursued by someone with deadly intentions, and the last thing she wants is to be tracked or found. Though injured and lacking food and supplies, Allison sets out to get off the mountain and save herself. Back in Maine, Allison's mother, Maggie, has received the worst news of her life. Her daughter was on a plane that crashed, and while Allison's body hasn't been recovered, no one could've survived. The pilot is dead, and the press is reporting that Allison is, too. But Maggie hangs on to hope, and after she digs more into the crash and the reason her daughter was on the plane, Maggie believes her hunch is correct. So why hasn't Allison contacted her—or anyone—to say she survived? Alternating Allison's and Maggie's

voices, this pacy thriller paints a resourceful Allison who does not turn into a superhero.

Bellotto, Tony. [Bellini and the Sphinx](#) (Akashic \$15.95). Latin American style permeates a series set in Brazil which has been made into feature films starring private eye Remo Bellini who works a São Paulo beat. This case begins with the missing dancer Ana Cintia Lopez and two of her colleagues, Camilla and Dineia, who disappear. What is the role of the voluptuous prostitute Fatima? And who killed a renowned surgeon? It takes a plunge into the city's underworld to unravel these mysteries....

✚Brackston, Paula. [The Little Shop of Found Things](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Looking for a charming escape featuring a fledgling antiques shop to support a newly divorced woman crippled with arthritis and her single daughter who's done a little time, a mysterious structure at the bottom of the garden with a history centuries old, a determined ghost seeking to save her daughter from hanging in 1605, and a bit of time travel...this is for you. Xanthe the modern daughter has a gift, feeling energy from old objects, that makes her just the ticket for a successful antiques business and also for some 17th Century sleuthing. A charmer left behind gives some promise of a repeat adventure.

Chabon, Michael. [Bookends: Collected Intros and Outros](#) (Harper \$16.99). Rob found a quirky newsletter and this is a review from it: "Frankly, this is a book of essays written about other people's works, which we may or may not have read (or even care to read). It's like going to a cocktail party and running into some person who insists on talking to you about some great piece of literature that you really don't care about and all you really DO care about is getting to the bar over there in the corner and ordering a cold gin martini. But, then, foolishly, we cracked open *Bookends* and sonovabitch! we got sucked in. Damn you, Michael Chabon. Yes, we would put off elbowing our way through crowded living room in order to get a martini to listen to you natter on about Lewis Hyde or M. R. James or Michael Moorcock or Ray Bradbury. Or D'Aulaires' *Norse Myths*—which, if you haven't been swayed so far by this loquacious recital of the marvels of literature, this will be the one that does you in."

Crider, Bill. [That Old Scoundrel Death](#) (St Martins \$27.99). When Sheriff Dan Rhodes faces a suspect holding a gun on him, he's afraid he wasn't paying attention. He's still fast enough to get the pistol from the man and manage the confrontation. But it's yet another indication that Rhodes might be aging out of the role of Blacklin County sheriff. In fact, as he investigates a murder in an old schoolhouse, saves a woman from a fire that burns down that same schoolhouse, and works the day-to-day cases for a sheriff in a small Texas county, he continues to warn people he might not run in the next election. He still has to deal with the social media that strives to make him a hero and the wealthy families who think they're above the law. Retirement certainly looks good to the aging sheriff. The late Crider has written a satisfying final ending to Rhodes's career, a loss for those who enjoy small town mysteries and low key sleuths. Crider had warning his life was ending and so this title and story are a kind of final testament from an esteemed, long-run-career nice guy and author. We will miss him.

✚Cumming, Charles. [The Moroccan Girl](#) (St Martins \$27.99). When novelist Kit Carradine is approached by a mysterious man calling himself Robert Mantis, he knows his dearest wish

has come true—the British government wants to use him as a spy. Kit's assignment involves traveling to Morocco and slipping a passport to Lara Bartok, formerly involved with a group known as Resurrection. Resurrection started as an international movement against corrupt politicians and mouthpieces, but their actions quickly evolved into terrorism as they began kidnapping and even murdering high-profile right-wing figures. In Morocco, Kit runs into an American agent who could burn him; after Mantis fires him, he continues to look for Bartok, and when he finds her, he has to help her escape from the Russians who are chasing her. The two share several intimate days as they get away to Gibraltar and back to England; once home, Kit must face the fact that no one he has encountered is who they said they were, and the novel ends with a twist and a shootout as old enemies resurface. There is an odd pace to Cumming's (*A Divided Spy*, 2017, etc.) novel; the early scenes unfold with an almost old-fashioned slowness, full of allusions to *Casablanca* and Cary Grant, that lends a romantic haze to the very 21st-century spy games..."—*Kirkus Reviews*. This was published in the UK as *The Man Between* I note for those who bought the Signed UKs.

Daheim, Mary. [A Case of Bier](#) (Morrow \$24.95). Vacations can be murder. No one knows that better than Judith McMonigle Flynn, owner of Seattle's popular Hillside Manor B&B. After a busy summer, she desperately needs some R&R. Leave it to her thoughtful husband, Joe, to surprise her with a trip to the Canadian Rockies. Thrilled to be getting away, Judith's overjoyed when Cousin Renie and Bill agree to join them. Though the husbands have made the arrangements, how bad can a short time away in the beautiful mountains be? Judith and Renie are about to find out! While the accommodations certainly leave something to be desired, the other guests are the real prize. They've gathered on the mountainside to give a relative a proper and permanent send-off—a nice gesture, until Judith realizes that it's all premature.... this is the 31st in Daheim's cozy Bed & Breakfast series.

Davis, Krista. [The Diva Cooks Up a Storm](#) (\$15.95). When a trendy, underground dinner club leaves some guests six-feet-under the table, entertaining professional and amateur sleuth Sophie Winston hopes she has all the right ingredients to put a murderer on ice.... This latest paperback in a long-running cozy series comes with recipes and entertaining tips.

Dreyer, Benjamin. [Dreyer's English](#) (Random \$25). Benjamin Dreyer sees language the way an epicure sees food. And he finds sloppiness everywhere he looks. Dreyer, copy chief at Random House, presents a splendid book that is part manual, part memoir, and chockfull of suggestions for tightening and clarifying prose. These begin with his first challenge to writers: "Go a week without writing 'very,' 'rather,' 'really,' 'quite,' and 'in fact.'?" ("Feel free to go the rest of your life without another 'actually,'?" he says.) Dreyer goes on to write with authority and humor about commonly confused or misspelled words, punctuation rules, and "trimmables," or redundant phrases (the most memorable he ever encountered was, "He implied without quite saying"; Dreyer was so "delighted" he "scarcely had the heart" to eliminate it from the manuscript). But Dreyer's most effective material comprises his recollections of working with authors, including Richard Russo, who after noticing a maxim posted in Dreyer's office from the *New Yorker's* Wolcott Gibbs—"Try to preserve an author's style if he is an author and has a style"—later called him to ask, "Would you say I am an author? Do I have a style?" This work is that rare

writing handbook that writers might actually want to read straight through, rather than simply consult. An excellent choice for readers, too, in choosing voices that intrigue you.

Evanovich, Jane. [The Big Kauhuna](#) (Putnam \$28). A stoner, an Instagram model, a Czech oligarch, and a missing unicorn. Nick Fox and Kate O'Hare have their work cut out for them in their 6th adventure that this time Janet writes with husband Peter instead of Lee Goldberg.

✚Fforde, Jasper. [Early Riser](#) (Viking \$28). If you've been missing Thursday Next, this is not she. Fforde goes in a new direction, alas not yet read by me. So here is one take: "In this richly detailed, dystopic novel from Fforde, most of the population of Wales hibernates in huge Dormitoria through the unbearable Winter... The sprightly characters, such as the murderous Villains maintaining the habits of English sophisticates, and the intimately feuding pair of Chief Consul Toccata and Aurora, the head of HiberTech security, bring absurdity into the ambiance, but behave understandably enough to be credible. Charlie's confused but determined mundanity is a relatable anchor in this wild winter world, leavened by Fforde's surrealist humor. Douglas Adams fans will enjoy the vibe." And another: "Charlie's journey...is so absorbing, and Fforde's wit so sharp, the reveal that the narrative is also a commentary on capitalism comes across as a brilliant twist... Whip-smart, tremendous fun, and an utter delight from start to finish." —*Kirkus* Starred Review

✚Finlay, Mick. [The Murder Pit](#) (Mira \$15.99). If you love darkly gothic atmospheres, Arrowood is your man. He's the poor man's answer to Sherlock Holmes. His cases are gritty rather than elegant, and frankly this one, and Arrowood, are both disgusting. When Mr. and Mrs. Barclay, parents of a disabled daughter hire him to find out if she's alright, or gone missing, after her wedding to a farmer's son, he steps into a real pit. First it's the rural pig farms where her in-laws live, and then it's into a horrific Victorian world of... well, if I say what word it is it's a complete spoiler.... Let me say it's worth reading the Afterword for more information but I agree completely with this assessment of the book and the character of Arrowood in the [NY Times Book Review](#). British crime fiction often displays an affinity for down and dirty (dirty in the literal sense).

Grippando, James. [The Girl in the Glass Box](#) (Harper \$27.99). Florida lawyer Grippando, 2017 winner of the Harper Lee Prize for Legal Fiction, continues his long and excellent string of legal thrillers for Miami attorney Jack Swytek. It's a thriller but the story that focuses on the plight of undocumented El Salvadorian Julia Rodriguez. Her barista gig at Café de Caribe ends the moment she emphatically rejects the advances of cafe manager Duncan McBride, who promptly dimes her out to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Only Julia's heroism and quick thinking prevent her 14-year-old daughter, Beatriz, from being swept up along with her. Brought to Jack's attention by her aunt, Cecelia Varga, and Jack's grandmother, Beatriz only wants to be reunited with her mother. But that's one tall order. Julia's not eligible for asylum because she was charged with a felony back in El Salvador: aborting the baby who was the product of one of the many rapes she suffered at the hands of her husband, brutal gangster Jorge Rodriguez. Flexing his muscles in court, Jack gets Julia released from detention just in time for her to discover Duncan McBride's corpse in her bathtub. Then Jorge arrives to

torpedo her chances for asylum based on facing imminent danger back home.... I admire Grippando's fearless tackling of issues swirling in the real world as he crafts his books.

Gulvin, JM. [The Contract](#) (Faber \$22). Our **February Discovery Book of the Month** features a Texas Ranger, old style. What a guy! Patient, persistent, fearless, Texas Ranger John Q is called in when a gun store robbery in Deacon's Mount leads to a dramatic if puzzling chase. And on to 1967 New Orleans where John Q is out of his jurisdiction, possibly out of his depth, and becoming the only link to a series of murders like that of a pharmacist and of a pimp. A blues singer is missing. The DA's office is leaking and a mysterious old man wields an iron grip. Who is trying to set John Q up or send him home? And why? It's a terrific "why." I loved following the dauntless Ranger and also the revelations in the end game. Excellent history as well as mystery. Plus, "Gulvin's narrative has a distinctly cinematic feel and his setting...lends an eeriness that lingers throughout. The final twist is a doozy, and the devil is in the story's cleverly seeded details."—*PW* on John Q's first, [The Long Count](#) (\$22)—set in the 1967 Panhandle—and equally apt here for his second. John Q is Old School West, evoking an image of those film icons like Wayne and Stewart.

Hall, Oakley. [So Many Doors](#) (Titan \$9.95). The legendary lost crime novel from Pulitzer Prize finalist Oakley Hall, instructor of Ann Rice, Amy Tan, Richard Ford, and Michael Chabon. It begins on Death Row, with a condemned man refusing the services of the lawyer assigned to defend him. It begins with a beautiful woman dead, murdered—Vassilia Caroline Baird, known to all simply as V. That's where this extraordinary novel begins. But the story it tells begins years earlier, on a struggling farm in the shadow of the Great Depression and among the brawling "cat skimmers" of Southern California, driving graders and bulldozers to tame the American West. "And the story that unfolds, in the masterful hands of acclaimed author Oakley Hall, is a lyrical outpouring of hunger and grief, of jealousy and corruption, of raw sexual yearning and the tragedy of the destroyed lives it leaves in its wake." Unpublished for more than half a century.

Holt, Anne. [No Echo](#) (\$17). On a cold December evening, celebrity chef Brede Ziegler is discovered stabbed to death on the steps of Oslo's police headquarters, sending a shock wave through the city's hip in-crowd. Chef Ziegler had many famous associates and more than a few enemies among them. Was his murder a random act of violence or did someone want him dead? Police investigator Billy T. is stymied by conflicting information about the kind of man Ziegler was. It seems nobody really knew him: not his glamorous wife, his business partner, nor the editor of his memoir-in-progress. The case is hopeless until Hanne Wilhelmsen returns to Oslo after a six-month stay in Italy and teams up with Billy T. Working together, they are pulled deep into the nefarious world inhabited by Ziegler. Was he at all the chef he claimed to be? Holt writes Nordic more on the Christie side than the Noir. 6th in series.

Hearne, Kevin/Delilah Dawson. [Kill the Farm Boy](#) (\$16). In an irreverent new series in the tradition of Monty Python, the bestselling authors of the Iron Druid Chronicles and Star Wars: Plasma reinvent fantasy, fairy tales, and floridly written feast scenes. The authors sign the sequel, [No Country for Old Gnomes](#) (Del Rey \$28), here on April 19.

Houston, Pam. [Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country](#) (Norton \$25.95). There is an unusually high number of Indie Next Picks that I draw to your attention for February. Here's one: "I can't decide if Mineral County, Colorado, is a piece of heaven or if it's actually heaven. Either way, it is a wondrous Rocky Mountain paradise — a paradise beset by bitter cold, fires, and various degrees of hardship, but always exquisite beauty. Pam Houston has 120 acres of it, and readers get a glimpse of life and death on the ranch in this marvelous combination of memoir and nature writing. Both deeply personal and wide-reaching, *Deep Creek* is about the human capacity to feel grief and joy all at once for the ground beneath one's feet and the planet as a whole." Iggulden, Conn. [The Falcon of Sparta](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). 401 BC. In the ancient world, one army was feared above all others. The Persian king Artaxerxes rules an empire stretching from the Aegean to northern India. As many as fifty million people are his subjects. His rule is absolute. Though the sons of Sparta are eager to play the game of thrones... Reading Iggulden is both an exciting adventure and a path to history that shaped our world. He is a UK bestseller.

Jenoff, Pam. [The Lost Girls of Paris](#) (Park Row \$16.99). The Indie Next Pick: "Pam Jenoff specializes in finding a piece of history that has not been fully explored and that often leaves one thinking truth is stranger than fiction. This time her protagonists are a group of British women recruited to blend into the French countryside and sabotage the Nazi network in preparation for D-Day. The story, told from the perspective of three women, ties up a whodunit in a satisfying knot with a little romance, but it's really a lot more about women finding out who they are and what role they can play in making a difference in the world." See our February Large Paperback Picks for a little more.

✂Kent, Christobel. [What We Did](#) (Farrar \$27). This is not a mystery nor a thriller but a novel looking deeply into the long-term effects of a child's abuse and the way that Bridget, jerked out of the normal life she's made when the man who created the dark chapter of her life turns up in her university town, finds empowerment. Though a rash act leads to other consequences. There are twists enough to call this psychological suspense, engendered in part by portraying the damage from secrets we keep from our families. "...this is a novel of the #MeToo era; a story about all the jagged fragments that so many women have kept hidden in shame, about the moments they remember from their pasts that make them wonder, "Did I deserve this? Did I ask for it?" This book, through Bridget's story, unequivocally answers, "No." Some of you may recall Kent wrote some mysteries set in Florence with PI Sandro Cellini.

Kent, Serena. [Death in Provence](#) (Harper \$26.99). If the author were not British living in France I'd have made this the First Mystery Book of the Month in a heartbeat, but signed copies are not possible. Thus this debut and start of a series with British divorcee Penelope Kite who rashly falls in love with an old stone house and property in a small village in the Luberon (fantastic views other than the body in her swimming pool) is our **February Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**. I don't think Cozy is quite apt, it's not at all cute, but it does keep sex and violence off the page, the landscape is superb, the food and drink also (I've got to get serious about the region's delicious rosé), and the French realtor and her driving are hilarious. Death by car is an ever present threat and cyclists are at risk. So it begins when

Penny is fed up with Surrey and her step-children and falls for the Peter Mayle dream. The house needs serious work apart from the murder investigation. The lawn and garden are disasters. The neighbors and the villagers are not as frank as she would wish. Still, there is immense promise in property and people... take it from there.

Kepler, Lars. [Stalker](#) (Knopf \$27.95). Can't get enough of Nordic Noir? Here is Joonas Linna #5. Recently returned from compassionate leave, the Swedish National Crime Unit detective reunites with hypnotist Erik Maria Bark in a search for a seemingly unassailable sadistic killer. The Unit receives a video of a young woman in her home, clearly unaware that she's being watched. Soon after the tape is received, the woman's body is found horrifically mutilated. With the arrival of the next, similar video, the police understand that the killer is toying with them, warning of a new victim, knowing there's nothing they can do. Put on the case, Linna recalls that years before, he had put a man away for an eerily similar crime, and now he's beginning to think that an innocent man may be behind bars—and a serial killer still on the loose.... [Order the whole series](#)—the first three have been retranslated for you.

Kim, Un-Su. [The Plotters](#) (Knopf \$25.95). Professional assassin Reseng was pulled from a garbage can as an infant, raised in a nunnery until age four, and then fostered by a killer in a "gloomy, labyrinthine library." After learning to read at nine, Reseng avoids boredom and loneliness by devouring books, reading everything from Sophocles to Calvino in between his murderous assignments. Then Reseng discovers a bomb in his toilet. And his search for the bomb's maker leads him to two orphaned sisters, a cross-eyed librarian from his past, and onward to a plot that may—or may not—save the world. A world that is almost ours but somewhat parallel in that North Korea is.... I think our January Discovery Book of the Month deserves another mention and we recommend this debut for you seeking something different.

King, Crystal. [The Chef's Secret](#) (Touchstone \$26.99). King serves up a delectable read stuffed with passion, danger, and a plot worthy of Dan Brown. This fast-paced, engrossing novel brings Renaissance Rome and the Vatican to life through the eyes of a famous papal chef. You won't be able to put it down." When Bartolomeo Scappi dies in 1577, he leaves his vast estate—properties, money, and his position—to his nephew and apprentice Giovanni. He also gives Giovanni the keys to two strongboxes and strict instructions to burn their contents. Despite Scappi's dire warning that the information concealed in those boxes could put Giovanni's life and others at risk, Giovanni is compelled to learn his uncle's secrets. He undertakes the arduous task of decoding Scappi's journals and uncovers a history of deception, betrayal, and murder—all to protect an illicit love affair. As Giovanni pieces together the details of Scappi's past, he must contend with two rivals who have joined forces—his brother Cesare and Scappi's former protégé, Domenico Romoli, who will do anything to get his hands on the late chef's recipes. "The luscious prose captures the full scale of the sumptuous feasts for which Scappi was known." This appears to have a paperback edition as well: [The Chef's Secret](#) (\$16.99). [Feast of Sorrow](#) (\$15.99) by King is one of my all-time favorite novels of Ancient Rome, filled with politics (Apicius), mystery, romance, feasts, and the compiling of the world's oldest cookbook. Try it for a Valentine's Day gift. Yum

Land, Stephanie. [Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive](#) (Hachette Books \$27). This is the No. 1 Indie Next Pick for February: "Stephanie Land's *Maid* is a must-read of the highest order, a memoir of a single mother struggling to survive while performing the household labor that many of us take for granted. While at once deeply personal — you'll fall hard for Stephanie and her daughter, Mia — it is also essential social commentary about how we treat the myriad domestic laborers who toil in our homes, oftentimes unseen and unappreciated. Read it alongside *Nickel and Dimed* or *Evicted* for a stunning, unforgettable look at American poverty and determination."

Another take: "This memoir chronicles the three years the author spent cleaning houses to support herself and daughter. I think it's an important book as more Americans live at or below the poverty line. I'm hopeful that Land's book will be widely read and inspire people to change their point of view regarding those doing jobs most of us wouldn't consider, and the situation of their fellow citizens." Foreword by Barbara Ehrenreich.

Lawson, Mike. [House Arrest](#) (Grove \$26). Lawson, a 2019 Edgar nominee for his 2018 novel, [House Witness](#) (\$28 Signed—see our February Large Paperback Picks as well), in his long series about DC power makers, is working territory that is daily breaking news. As the fixer for Congressman John Mahoney in Washington, D.C., Joe DeMarco has had to bend and break the law more than a few times. But when Representative Lyle Canton, House Majority Whip, is found shot dead in his office in the U.S. Capitol and DeMarco is arrested for the murder, DeMarco knows he's been framed. Locked up in the Alexandria Jail awaiting trial, he calls on his enigmatic friend Emma, an ex-DIA agent, to search for the true killer. Emma's investigation leads her to Sebastian Spear, the ruthless and competitive CEO of the multi-billion-dollar Spear Industries. Spear had a motive for killing Lyle Canton: Canton's wife, Jean, had once been Spear's high school sweetheart and the one true love of his life—until Canton won her over. Now Jean was dead, killed in a car crash while driving drunk, and Spear blamed Canton for the accident. But the case the F.B.I. has built against DeMarco is airtight, and not a single piece of evidence points to the grieving CEO. Using her cunning and her D.C. connections, Emma sets out to prove that Spear has been using some fixers of his own.

Letts, Elizabeth. [Finding Dorothy](#) (Ballantine \$28). The Indie Next Pick: "In examining the meeting between Judy Garland and Maud Baum, Letts weaves two narratives: Hollywood in 1938-39, and Baum's childhood and marriage to L. Frank Baum, author of the book that inspired the movie. A fascinating behind-the-scenes story for Oz fans."

Lipman, Elinor. [Good Riddance](#) (Houghton \$25). Another Indie Next Pick—so much fiction in the February list: "An annotated yearbook is an interesting plot device, and Lipman populates it with likable characters that you can't help but root for and with 'villains' so ridiculous that you can't help but laugh at them. Perfectly paced, engagingly written, and fun. For fans of Adriana Trigiani."

Michaelides, Alex. [The Silent Patient](#) (Celadon \$26.99). Karen reviews our **February British Crime Book of the Month**: "This suspenseful story echoes *Alceste*, a Greek tragedy. Alicia is a successful artist, her husband, Gabriel a popular fashion pho-

tographer. One evening he returns home late, she shoots him in the face five times and never says another word. Theo Faber, a psychotherapist, sees her as a challenge and is eager to work with her and discover why the seemingly happy marriage went so far awry. He gets no response in his attempts to communicate with her and decides he needs to do some detective work to gain insight to this intriguing client. As he learns more about Alicia, he is able to re-frame his questions and conversation, noting her subtle responses that encourage him to keep going. Michaelides has earned a boxed, starred review from Publishers Weekly as well as high praise from Lee Child, Preston & Child, and David Baldacci. This is his first novel." For UK Signed copies, see Signed Books above.

Miller, Emma. [The Amish Sweet Shop](#) (Kensington \$15.95). It's almost Valentine's Day, the busiest time of the year at Beechy's Sweets. Authors Laura Bradford, Miller, and Mary Ellis team up to dish up a trio of cozies for you to enjoy.

Mosley, Walter. [Down the River unto the Sea](#) (\$15.95). Joe King Oliver was one of the NYPD's finest investigators, until, dispatched to arrest a well-heeled car thief, he is framed for assault by his enemies within the NYPD, a charge which lands him in solitary at Riker's Island. A decade later, King is a private detective, running his agency with the help of his teenage daughter, Aja-Denise. Broken by the brutality he suffered and committed in equal measure while behind bars, his work and his daughter are the only light in his solitary life. When he receives a card in the mail from the woman who admits she was paid to frame him those years ago, King realizes that he has no choice but to take his own case: figuring out who on the force wanted him disposed of—and why. Patrick recommends this highly.

Parks, Alan. [February's Son](#) (Norton \$18). See Signed Books for a review of this the US edition.

Parra, Nancy J. [A Case of Syrah, Syrah](#) (\$15.99). Restless after moving to her Aunt Jemma's small winery in Sonoma County, Taylor O'Brian decides to start her own wine country tour company. She books her first trip with the staff from a yoga studio. When Laura, the group's leader, is found dead with Taylor's corkscrew planted in her neck, Taylor becomes the prime suspect, especially since she had a disagreement with Laura and her husband. Although her own attorney tells her to stay home, Taylor insists on asking questions and showing up at the wrong spot. I find Taylor juvenile; read it for the wine country stuff.

Patterson, James/Max DiLallo. [The Chef](#) (LittleBrown \$28). A food gig in New Orleans... dangerous. In the Carnival days leading up Mardi Gras, Detective Caleb Rooney comes under investigation for a murder he is accused of committing in the line of duty—as a Major Crimes detective for the New Orleans Police Department. Has his sideline at the Killer Chef food truck given him a taste for murder? While fighting the charges against him, Rooney makes a pair of unthinkable discoveries

Quinn, Kate. [The Huntress](#) (Harper \$26.99). In the aftermath of the Nuremberg trials, most people want to move on from World War II stories. But British journalist Ian Graham, who lost his brother, Sebastian, in the war, has given up writing to spend his life hunting down Nazi criminals. Ian and his business partner, Tony, join forces with Ian's estranged Russian wife, Nina Markova, in a quest to track down Seb's murderer, a woman known

as *die Jägerin*: the Huntress. Kate Quinn’s gripping novel follows the trio as their story intersects with that of Jordan McBride, a young aspiring photographer in Boston, and her stepmother, Anneliese, whom Jordan suspects isn’t telling the whole truth about her past. Building on her success with *The Alice Network*, Quinn constructs three intertwining narratives.”—Katie Noah Gibson. Expertly plotted, with questions of justice at its center, the quality of the prose may be its most exciting feature. Recommended.

Riley, Lucinda. [The Moon Sister](#) (Atria \$27). In Riley’s “Seven Sisters” series, the father of the adoptive D’Aplie siblings has left each a clue to her particular origins. Here, Tiggy D’Aplie meets a Spanish gypsy who tells her the story of Lucía Amaya-Albaycin, a celebrated flamenco dancer who, back in 1912 must choose between art and love. But this chapter in Riley’s riff on the Pleiades actually begins in today’s Scottish Highlands where Tiggy is working as a wildlife consultant on the Kinnaird estate before the gypsy’s words send her off to find her Spanish roots. Why not escape literature, it’s good for you?

Robb, JD. [Connections in Death](#) (St Martins \$28.99). 48th in series. Robb, aka Nora Roberts, slams Lt. Eve Dallas of the NYPD into an investigation running from a stratospherically upscale housewarming for her friend Nadine Furst, the journalist/screenwriter who won an Oscar for fictionalizing Eve’s own adventures, to the mean—really mean—streets of the 2061 city.

✎Robinson, Peter. [Careless Love](#) (Harper \$26.99). A young woman, a student, is found dead in an abandoned car on a lonely country road. The death looks like suicide, but there are too many open questions for Banks and his team to rule out foul play. The victim didn’t own a car. She didn’t even drive. How did she get there? Where—and when—did she die? Did someone move her, and if so, why? A man in his sixties is found dead in a gully up on the wild moorland. He is wearing an expensive suit and carrying no identification. Post mortem findings indicate that he died from injuries sustained during a fall. Was it an accident—did he slip and fall? Or was he pushed? Why was he up there? And why are there no signs of a vehicle near where he fell? As the inconsistencies multiply and the mysteries surrounding these two cases proliferate, a source close to Annie reveals a piece of information that shocks the team and impacts the investigations. An old enemy has returned in a new guise.... Reading old pro Robinson and settling into Yorkshire is such a treat. I miss the Inspector Banks TV series for its wonderful scenery even if it didn’t stay true to the series—thank the Lord.

Rogneby, Jenny. [Any Means Necessary](#) (Other Press \$16.99). Rogneby’s debut, [Leona: The Die Is Cast](#) (\$16.95) is a Nordic Noir I truly admire. Leona Lindberg is a terrific character—an inspired but crooked cop involved in a “near-sociopathic hallucinogenic struggle to pay off her debt and make a better life for her school-aged daughter.” In this she is amoral with few boundaries. But in working her cases in Stockholm’s Violent Crimes Division...look out. The fame she won in *The Die Is Cast* makes her the choice to interview a bomber who failed to blow up the Swedish Parliament but cost him his legs. Meanwhile she’s involved in a scheme to heist an armored car to deal with the debt. This is a variation on the structure of “the burglar” crime novel. Admittedly Leona’s predicament is fresher in her debut case, but read on to see how Rogneby and Leona handle her second.

“As a character, Leona asks a lot of the reader. She is

savvy, decisive, and resourceful, in many ways admirable, but she is also relentlessly selfish, willing to inflict pain and misery to get what she wants...She differs from typical noir antiheroes—she’s not a disappointed idealist but rather an amoral pragmatist. But never mind. This installment is more completely plotted and more involving than the first, and if Leona seems a little inhuman, well that’s Leona being Leona. Leona’s back! Lock the hen-house!” —*Kirkus Reviews*

✎Rubenhold, Hallie. [The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper](#) (Houghton \$27). Polly, Annie, Elizabeth, Catherine and Mary-Jane are famous for the same thing, though they never met. They came from Fleet Street, Knightsbridge, Wolverhampton, Sweden, and Wales. They wrote ballads, ran coffee houses, lived on country estates, they breathed ink-dust from printing presses and escaped people-traffickers. What they had in common was the year of their murders: 1888. The person responsible was never identified, but the character created by the press to fill that gap has become far more famous than any of the five. For more than a century, newspapers have been keen to tell us that “the Ripper” preyed on prostitutes. Historian Rubenhold discovers this is untrue and has functioned to suppress the real stories. Here she sets the record straight, revealing a world of poverty, homelessness and rampant misogyny. They died because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time—and because they were women living in Victorian London.

Ryan, Annelise. [Dead of Winter](#) (Kensington \$26). And it is in Sorenson, Wisconsin, where medicolegal death investigator Mattie Winston is adjusting to life at home with her newly expanded family, among them her ex-husband’s pregnant wife. At the local ER, a battered and bruised teenage girl has been brought in by a mysterious man who claimed she’d fallen out of a car. The staff is suspicious, but while they attend to the teenager, the unidentified man slips out. Then the girl dies, but not before informing social worker Hildy Schneider that the man had her little sister as well. Human trafficking, a boss returning from medical leave, a domestic abuse case... It’s a full plate for Mattie in her 10th in series.

✎Sayers, Dorothy L. [The Gospel in Dorothy L. Sayers: Selections from Her Novels, Plays, Letters, and Essays](#) (Plough Publishing \$5). This entry in The Gospel in Great Writers Series is put together by Carole Vanderhoof. CS Lewis is a contributor to this modestly priced work (\$5 is not a typo).

Scharer, Whitney. [The Age of Light](#) (Little Brown \$28). Here’s another Indie Next Pick—I think I am drawn to so many this month as a respite from the chaos of current affairs and a surfeit of same-old fiction. Thus: “Art lovers will enjoy this sexy, brilliant novel about Man Ray and Lee Miller set in Paris during the Jazz Age. Ray met Miller shortly after she arrived in Paris, young and just learning her craft. He became her mentor and lover, an intense relationship with the older man nurturing the younger woman’s talent. But as Miller grew into her art and the relationship shifted, Ray’s ego needed to be first. By WWII, Miller is at the height of her powers, and she leaves behind the safety of shooting portraits for the battlefields of Europe, documenting the horrors of concentration camps. Following Miller from her youth to old age, Scharer explores the passions and creativity of two larger-than-life characters.” I don’t know that I agree that it was Man Ray’s ego that helped sunder the couple and the spiral down for Lee (untreated for PTSD after her wartime photographs,

especially at the concentration camp) was not his fault. Lee was the victim of her own lack of self-definition and wild impulses which sabotage the relationship just as much.

Sigurdardottir, Yrsa. [The Reckoning](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Iceland's landscape and insular culture fascinate, both aspects of Nordic Noir which lends itself to police procedurals. Ragnar Jonasson will visit us April 24 and thus we can enjoy a thorough discussion of this island bestseller. Sigurdardottir is another star and in this 2nd in her Children's House series after [The Legacy](#) (\$17.99), Detective Huldar and child psychologist Freyja, she explores another shocking crime against children. I won't say more other than to note that any regular reader of crime fiction will recognize what underlies the traumatized children. And that it would be best to read [The Legacy](#) first.

Simenon, George. [Maigret and the Old People](#) (Penguin \$13). When a wealthy aristocrat is found murdered in his home, Inspector Maigret must navigate a high-stakes case in the moneyed world of Paris's upper crust. #56. Awesome.

Sloan, Holly Goldberg/Meg Wolitzer. [To Night Owl from Dogfish](#) (Dial \$). For ages 10+, a book about two girls from opposite coasts who are brought together—initially against their will—when their single fathers begin dating. Recommended to readers of Judy Blume and also *The Parent Trap* and told entirely in emails and letters as Meg Cabot was earlier wont to do.

✎Smith, Alexander McCall. [The Good Pilot Peter Woodhouse](#) (Knopf \$16). Here is the perfect companion to Rhys Bowen's *The Victory Garden* (see Event Books). A British farm girl, an American pilot, and a German soldier are brought together by an unlikely hero: a (very cute) border collie.

Swinson, David. [Trigger](#) (LittleBrown \$27). [Crime Song](#) (\$15.95, just out), Swinson's last, jolted Frank Marr, a good cop with bad habits—booze and cocaine—into sobriety. Forced into retirement from the DC police, he's eking out a living as a PI. And now he risks his precarious balance on a mission instigated by an old friend: help prove him innocent of shooting an unarmed man. Frank then recruits to the team a young man he nearly executed some years before. The detective and the criminal then charge into the DC drug wars where their lives will be fully at risk. I like the irony: a good man trying not to go bad and a bad man trying to do good.

✎Tudor, CJ. [The Hiding Place](#) (Crown \$27). Joe never wanted to come back to Arnhill. After the way things ended with his old gang—the betrayal, the suicide, the murder—and after what happened when his sister went missing, the last thing he wanted to do was return to his hometown. But Joe doesn't have a choice. Because judging by what was done to that poor Morton kid, what happened all those years ago to Joe's sister is happening again. And only Joe knows who is really at fault. Lying his way into a teaching job at his former high school is the easy part. Facing off with former friends who are none too happy to have him back in town—while avoiding the enemies he's made in the years since—is tougher. But the hardest part of all will be returning to that abandoned mine where it all went wrong and his life changed forever, and finally confronting the shocking, horrifying truth about Arnhill, his sister, and himself. Because for Joe, the worst moment of his life wasn't the day his sister went missing. It was the day she came back. Tudor gets a big play from his publishers but not from me—I don't like anyone in the book, or in his first one, and I don't want to waste time on them.

Weisgarber, Ann. [The Glovemaker](#) (Skyhorse \$24.99). Karen and I have both marked this one to read when it arrives. Meanwhile here is a Starred Review: “Weisgarber's marvelous third novel is set in the rugged canyon country of southern Utah during the winter of 1887–1888 as a Mormon woman struggles to hold her faith in the face of religious persecution and her fear of the law. Deborah's husband is overdue to return from a trip, having left her alone in the remote hamlet of Junction, Utah Territory, a collection of eight Mormon families living their faith as each sees fit. One winter night, a stranger arrives at Deborah's cabin asking for help, speaking in a code that she knows means he's a polygamist running from the law. He is pursued by a U.S. marshal, and, despite her fear, Deborah hides him, then passes him on to her brother-in-law, Nels, to guide to safety. A tense encounter between the marshal, Nels, and the stranger results in an act of violence and reveals that there's more to the marshal's pursuit of the stranger than meets the eye. The moment of violence rocks and divides the small Mormon community; when two more strangers arrive, Deborah and Nels must protect their faith and their community without further violence, while dealing with tender feelings for each other. This is a rich, powerful, and wholly immersive tale grounded in Utah and Mormon history.

Young, Hester. [The Burning Island](#) (Putnam \$26). Freelance journalist Charlotte “Charlie” Cates is reeling from the media frenzy following her partner's unwelcome disclosure that clues from dreams are what helped her rescue a missing child—the most recent of several. Charlie can't wait to ditch the news vans outside their home in Tucson, for a working Hawaiian getaway. But once in the Big Island's remote Kalo Valley, she discovers that she's only swapped one firestorm for another when she learns that the subject her sly, publicity conscious editor has suggested she profile, Dr. Victor Nakagawa, is not only a prominent volcanologist and triathlete but also the father of 16-year-old Lise, who disappeared six weeks earlier. And though most members of the family seem convinced the popular but rebellious teen simply ran away, Charlie's alarming dreams scream otherwise. What she doesn't see coming—until it may be too late—is the danger to herself.

“I hate to say goodbye to Charlie Cates, the fierce and endearing heroine whose dark visions drive her to help missing children, living or dead. Young masterfully crafts a dread-tinged atmosphere of dense forests and fog-shrouded volcanoes on the Big Island of Hawaii as the backdrop for Charlie's final adventure. Not knowing whether her visions show the past or the future, Charlie races to save a missing girl before it's too late. The suspense ratchets higher as Charlie begins to wonder whether she will survive to return to her own children and the family she has built with Noah. A haunting and immersive mystery, and a deeply satisfying finale to the trilogy.”—Laura McHugh

Zgheib, Yara. [The Girls at 17 Swann Street](#) (St. Martins \$27.99). And the final Indie Next Pick: “A mesmerizing glimpse inside a rehab program for victims of anorexia. This fictional account of one young woman's life-saving journey is eye-opening with its descriptions and statistics. For readers who enjoy fiction about social and psychological issues, and books by Wally Lamb and Chris Bohjalian.”

OUR FEBRUARY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

✎Alexander, Rebecca. [A Baby's Bones](#) (Titan \$7.99). After archaeologist Sage Westfield finds the bones of a woman and an infant in a sixteenth-century well who were victims of a murder,

local residents tell her of legends about witchcraft and a haunted cottage, but Sage's involvement becomes complicated when a student is killed by being pushed into the well.

Berenson, Alex. [The Deceivers](#) (\$9.99). John Wells #12. After an incident in Dallas that appears to be a terrorist attack, former CIA agent John Wells is dispatched to Colombia to locate an old asset, a mission involving a Russian plot that proves to be the most deadly of his career. *PW* concluded their review with "After a long initial detour to South America, the plot picks up speed and moves swiftly toward a satisfying finale. As usual, Berenson's knowledge of geopolitical issues and government intelligence strategies impresses."

Baker, Bree. [No Good Tea Goes Unpunished](#) (Sourcebooks \$7.99). Seaside Café #2. Catering her childhood friend's beachfront wedding was a dream come true for Everly Swan—and, with hundreds of guests in attendance, great exposure for her new iced tea shop and café. But when the well-to-do groom is found floating face down in the surf, the locals of Charm, North Carolina, turn their suspicions to his new bride, leaving Everly with the task of tracking down the real killer. This charming and breezy new series is tailor-made for fans of Laura Child's Tea Shop series.

✦Paris, B A. [Behind Closed Doors](#) (\$9.99). The friends of a seemingly perfect socialite couple begin to see cracks in the façade when they realize that the husband and wife are never apart and that there are bars on one of the couple's upstairs windows. *LJ* was just one of the raves for this debut saying "Paris switches chapters between the present and the recent past, taking us along on Grace's journey and keeping the suspense level high. In the same vein as *Gone Girl* or *Girl on the Train*, this is a can't-put-down psychological thriller."

Randall, Shari. [Drawn and Buttered](#) (St Martins \$7.99). Lobster Shack #3. With high season behind them, ballerina on-the-mend Allie Larkin and Aunt Gully are finally lying low. But then an unexpected guest arrives at the lobster shack: a crustacean so huge he's dubbed Lobzilla around Mystic Bay and on social media. At the same time in exclusive Rabb's Point, a strange burglary breaches the elegant home of Royal Parrish. Allie takes it upon herself to help with the investigation but, before she can get to the bottom of the case, another alarm sounds: the Lazy Mermaid's Lobzilla has gone missing and is on the loose!

Robards, Karen. [The Ultimatum](#) (\$7.99). Following her swindler father's death on a mission, Bianca St. Ives starts a mostly-aboveboard security company but is drawn back into the world of deceit when her father's family is threatened by forces who believe he is still alive. *Kirkus*, among other review sources, gave this a rave saying "Robards begins a new series with a fascinating main character, blazing action, a Jason Bourne-esque central mystery, and an intriguing cliffhanger ending. Barely-there romance promises to heat up in subsequent title(s). Fresh, sexy, and eminently readable."

Westlake, Donald. [Brothers Keepers](#) (\$9.95). What will a group of monks do when their two-century-old monastery in New York City is threatened with demolition to make room for a new high-rise? Anything they have to. "Thou Shalt Not Steal" is only the first of the Commandments to be broken as the saintly face off against the unscrupulous over that most sacred of relics, a Park Avenue address. After being out-of-print for almost three decades

this classic from Mystery Writers of America Grandmaster Westlake is back. *PW* had this to say "If this isn't a typical Westlake heist caper, the action does feature frantic searches for 100-year-old lease agreements, bugging devices, and a touch of burglary and arson. And what reader can resist the punning reference to "felonious monks"? Even a minor work such as this one from this gifted writer is an unalloyed pleasure."

White, Randy Wayne. [Caribbean Rim](#) (\$9.99). Doc Ford #25. When a discriminating director of the Florida Division of Historical Resources and his young assistant go missing, Doc Ford navigates a high-stakes mission to fight a murder charge against his amateur archaeologist friend.

Kirkus had this to say "The extravagant criminal tally includes impersonation, abduction, assault and battery, the reckless operation of seagoing vessels, and enough homicide to seriously thin the cast of treasure hunters and the people hunting them. Despite the reflective tone of the tale, the plot is driven by so many boats moving at such top speeds that you have to hope there are no sharks in the neighborhood. If there are, poor them."

NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Beaton, M C. [Death of an Honest Man](#) (\$7.99). Hamish Macbeth #34. When an insensitive newcomer to the village of Cnothan is found dead, Sergeant Hamish Macbeth confronts a bewildering array of suspects at the same time his clumsy police sidekick, Charlie, resigns in protest of his treatment by Chief Inspector Blair.

Bell, Ted. [Overkill](#) (\$7.99). Alex Hawke #10. After his son is kidnapped while on vacation in the Swiss Alps, counterspy Alex Hawke calls on his trusted colleagues and recruits a top hostage rescue team, but an unexpected threat complicates their mission

Blanchard, Alice. [A Breath After Drowning](#) (Titan \$7.99). When psychiatrist Kate Wolfe learns that her younger sister's murder may have been one of many committed by a serial killer, she searches for the truth and unearths disturbing family secrets, while becoming the target of a killer.

Childs, Laura. [Plum Tea Crazy](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Tea Shop #19. When it is discovered that banker Carson Lanier was hit by a crossbow, Theodosia is challenged to identify the killer among multiple suspects, including an estranged wife, a disgruntled co-worker, and a real-estate partner.

✦Feeney, Alice. [Sometimes I Lie](#) (\$9.99). In this psychological thriller by a former BBC News producer, a coma patient with shut-in syndrome, unable to move or speak, must listen to those around her to figure out what happened and who is responsible for her injuries

Griffin, Laura. [Stone Cold Heart](#) (Pocket \$7.99). Sara Lockhart, one of the nation's top forensic anthropologists, is called into an investigation that threatens to rock a small community to its core when abandoned human remains are found in a Texas gorge.

Hagberg, David. [Flash Points](#) (Forge \$9.99). When an unpredictable new American president is elected, retired CIA assassin Kirk McGarvey is challenged to stop a dual plot involving terrorist assassins and staged attacks on volatile world regions designed to expose the new president's inability to fulfill his duties.

Haines, Carolyn. [Charmed Bones](#) (\$7.99). Southern Belle #18. Called to an urgent school board meeting involving a dispute between local conservatives and a trio of Wiccan practitioners who

want to open a school, Sarah and her partner, Tinkie, investigate when the Wiccan sisters are implicated in the untimely death of their landlord.

Haseldine, Jane. [Worth Killing For](#) (Kensington \$9.99). After a long absence, Julia Gooden's father returns and motivates her to search for her missing brother, while her investigation of the killing of a city councilman's nephew leads her to discover a kidnapping ring, forcing to face her own family secrets.

Johansen, Iris. [Double Blind](#) (\$9.99). Kendra Michaels #6. Hired gun Kendra Michaels joins forces with private investigator Jessie Mercado and agent-for-hire Adam Lynch to investigate the murder of a man with connections to a mysterious wedding video and the conviction of a serial killer.

Kashian, Tina. [One Feta in the Grave](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Kebab Kitchen #3. When an obnoxious local businessman is found dead after a fight with her best friend Katie, Kebab Kitchen manager Lucy Berberian sets out to find the real killer before the wrong person gets skewered.

Klein, Libby. [Restaurant Weeks Are Murder](#) (Kensington \$7.99). When harmless pranks during the high-profile Restaurant Week challenge end in the murder of a judge, who died after taking a bit of her cannoli, Poppy McAllister becomes the prime suspect in the case and must quickly whip up the real killer.

Matthews, Olivia. [Alibis & Angels](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Mayhem and Mass #3. Sister Lou, aided by her loyal sleuthing partners—her nephew and a reporter, must convince a killer to give up murder for Lent after the mayor's director of finance is found dead.

Perry, Carol J. [Final Exam](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Witch City #8. When the police dredge up a vintage sports car containing human remains, reporter Lee Barrett, at the behest of her aunt, uses her keen skills of detection to expose a killer who is looking to settle an old score.

Ricca, Brad. [Mrs. Sherlock Holmes](#) (St Martins \$9.99). *Mrs. Sherlock Holmes* tells the true story of Grace Humiston, the lawyer, detective, and first woman U.S. District Attorney who turned her back on New York society life to become one of the nation's greatest crime-fighters during an era when women were still not allowed to vote. After agreeing to take the sensational case of missing eighteen-year-old Ruth Cruger, Grace and her partner, the hard-boiled detective Julius J. Kron, navigated a dangerous web of secret boyfriends, two-faced cops, underground tunnels, rumors of white slavery, and a mysterious pale man, in a desperate race against time.

Weiss, Kirsten. [Pie Hard](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Pie Town #3. When the bossy producer of a reality cooking show that has come to the struggling Pie Town is murdered, Val Harris and her flaky pie crust expert, Charlene, must follow the crumbs to solve the crime and keep the town from falling apart.

White, Randy Wayne. [The Man Who Invented Florida](#) (\$9.99). Reprint. Doc Ford #3. When solitary marine biologist Doc Ford focused his telescope on the woman in the white boat, he didn't know his life was about to be capsized: that his conniving uncle Tucker Gatrell would discover the Fountain of Youth, that *The National Enquirer* would write about it, and that the law would beat down his door in search of three missing men.

Woods, Stuart. [Turbulence](#) (\$9.99). When Stone Barrington

encounters a noxious politician while on vacation in Florida, he is unwittingly embroiled in the scheme of some shady associates who seek to cause upheaval in the United States