

BOOKNEWS from

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Our Podcasts are now downloadable on [Google Music](#) and [iTunes](#)

A RED HOT JANUARY (Continued)

Please read the [New Year's Booknews](#) first

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

Some Events will be webcast on Facebook Live

Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#)

THURSDAY JANUARY 16 7:00 PM

Chris Hauty signs [Deep State](#) (Atria \$27)

Our First Mystery Book of the Month

SATURDAY JANUARY 18 2:00 PM High Tea

Beatriz Williams/Lauren Willig/Karen White sign [All the Ways](#)

[We Said Goodbye](#) (Morrow \$27.99)

As set in the Paris Ritz 1914-1963

THURSDAY JANUARY 23 7:00 PM

Chad Dundas signs [The Blaze](#) (Putnam \$26)

An investigation into the past in Montana

SATURDAY JANUARY 25 2:00 PM

Joseph Finder signs [ouseHH](#)

[House on Fire](#) (Dutton \$28)

PI Nick Heller of Boston returns

Our copies come with a special book of matches

SATURDAY JANUARY 25 4:00 PM

[Writers Workshop with Joseph Finder](#)

Putting the Thrill in Your Thriller: techniques for turning up the tension

Fee: \$35 includes copy of [House on Fire](#)

Putting the Thrill in Your Thriller: techniques for turning up the tension. *Booklist* recently proclaimed that *New York Times* bestselling author Joseph Finder "may well be the best contemporary thriller writer going." Finder also taught writing at Harvard. Learn from this "master of the modern thriller" some of the techniques used by some of the greats of the genre to create scenes of unforgettable tension.

SUNDAY JANUARY 26 2:00 PM Victorian Tea

Dianne Freeman signs [A Lady's Guide to Gossip and Murder](#) (Kensington \$26)

The second book in the Countess of Harleigh Mysteries

Ann Parker signs [Mortal Music](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.99/\$15.99)

Inez Stannert in 1870s San Francisco

Rosemary Simpson signs [Death Brings a Shadow](#) (Kensington \$26)

The fourth book in The Gilded Edge Mysteries

TUESDAY JANUARY 28 7:00 PM Double Publication Party

Lisa Gardner signs [When You See Me](#) (Dutton \$27)

DD Warren, Flora Dane, Kimberly Quincy Boston thriller

Gregg Hurwitz signs [Into the Fire](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Orphan

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 29 2:00 PM

Patrick leads a discussion of the first Haunted Library release, Gaston Leroux's [Phantom of the Opera](#) (Haunted Library \$15.95). Please read this edition as it comes with annotations and the discussion questions created for this handsome edition by award-winning anthologist and editor Leslie S. Klinger

THURSDAY JANUARY 30 7:00 PM

Joe Ide signs [High Five](#) (Mulholland \$27)

An IQ Novel

FRIDAY JANUARY 31 7:00 PM

James Sallis and Three Legged Dog Play

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1 2:00 PM Publication Party

Rhys Bowen signs [Above the Bay of Angels](#) (Lake Union \$24.95/\$14.95)

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 4 7:00 PM

Douglas Preston signs [Crooked River](#) (Grand Central \$29)

Lincoln Child presigns and joins in by Skype

Our copies include an exclusive photo of Lincoln on the Florida sand as well as an additional chapter for 2019's [Verses for the Dead](#)

JANUARY DISCUSSION CLUBS

Please buy your copy from The Pen. Anyone welcome but remember you risk spoilers if you don't read the selection in advance.

Coffee & Crime: Saturday January 11 10:30 AM

Beaton, MC. [Death of a Gossip](#) (\$8)

SciFi Friday: January 17 7:00 PM

Adeyemi, Tomi. [Children of Blood and Bone](#) (\$18.99)

Croak & Dagger: Saturday January 18 10:30 AM

Karin Slaughter. [Triptych](#) (\$9.99)

Hardboiled Crime: Wednesday January 29 7:00 PM

Brackett, Leigh. [Stranger at Home](#) (\$9.99)

EVENT BOOKS

Bowen, Rhys, [Above the Bay of Angels](#) (Lake Union \$24.95/\$14.95). Rhys says, “A young woman becomes a cook for Queen Victoria, travels with her to the South of France where she becomes involved in political intrigue and murder.” Rhys has told me that writing the book revealed to her what an appetite Victoria had and how much food was consumed. We see this from the perspective of a young woman who comforts a dying woman on a London street who, in her last moments, thrusts forward a letter offering employment in the kitchen at Buckingham Palace, So Isabella becomes Helen Barton from Yorkshire, takes the position, and so pleases Victoria that she is invited to accompany the queen to Nice. Unfortunately so does a threat of blackmail. And then another member of the royal retinue falls oddly ill and dies.... Louise Penny says, ‘I dare you to put it down once you’ve read the opening sentence.’”

Dundas, Chad. [The Blaze](#) (Putnam \$26). I didn’t read Dundas’ first novel [Champion of the World](#) (\$16), a Best Book of 2016 by several counts. His second is a thriller I’d recommend to fans of T Jeff Parker’s Roland Sinclair series. It’s not coincidental that so many authors signing at The Pen earn Starred Reviews—we work to bring the very best to you. This novel, our **January Crime Collectors Book of the Month**, has earned 3: “Another brilliantly woven story about second chances from Montana native Dundas.”—*Booklist*. And *Kirkus* says in its, “A wounded veteran and a strong newspaperwoman combine with a well-constructed plot to spin a plausible and engaging tale... This one wins far more on characters and danger than on bloodshed. Keep books like this coming, Chad Dundas.”

Yes, Montana is rich territory for crime writers. And here’s a full Starred Review for *The Blaze*: “Army veteran Matthew Rose, the hero of this exceptional thriller from Dundas, returns to his home town of Missoula, Montana, to settle the affairs of his estranged father, who recently committed suicide. Due to a brain injury Matthew suffered while stationed in Iraq, he has forgotten much of his childhood, including the falling out with his father, a poet and former community leader, and the breakup with his high school sweetheart, Georgie Porter, now a reporter who picks him up at the airport. Through Georgie, Matthew learns that he went from being a golden boy in academics and sports to being a withdrawn, unambitious teenager and a risk taker—a quality that he carried through to his military tour. Witnessing a house fire in which a college student is killed triggers Matthew’s memory of another fire that happened 15 years earlier. Looking into the new fire, Matthew is in danger as more murders and fires occur. Matthew and Georgie find a link to the old, unsolved fire that leads to a couple of unsolved crimes that may have haunted his father. Dundas’ insightful look at a former soldier’s attempts to reenter civilian life elevates this poignant, action-packed story. The plot soars with each believable twist and realistic characters worth rooting for.” I agree although I will say that you experienced thriller readers will most likely foresee the final twist before the story drives to it. That won’t spoil the ride.

Finder, Joseph. [House on Fire](#) (Dutton \$28). First, bestselling pro **Finder, author of any number of amazing, twisty thrillers, is teaching a workshop at 4:00 PM on January 25 after his sign-**

ing. A copy of the book comes with the registration fee. And here he shows us why he’s the perfect guy to teach the class:

Nick Heller, a kind of private eye/fixer, returns. Here’s a Starred Review that sums up my take: “Nick Heller takes on big Pharma in Thriller Award–winner Finder’s excellent fourth novel featuring the Boston PI. Sean Lenehan, who saved Heller’s life when they were in Afghanistan as members of a Special Forces team, has died from an overdose of the painkiller Oxydone. At Lenehan’s funeral, Heller is approached by Sukie Kimball, daughter of Conrad Kimball, the head of Kimball Pharma, which produces Oxydone. She explains that she attends the funerals of many of those who have died as a result of her family’s product in order ‘to bear witness to the victims of the drug that made us all rich.’ Sukie hires Heller to find and steal the smoking gun that will bankrupt Kimball Pharma and send Conrad to prison—a study that demonstrated Oxydone’s addictive nature suppressed before the drug was put on the market. Heller agrees. The stakes rise when he goes undercover as Sukie’s boyfriend at Conrad’s Katonah, N.Y., home, where a copy of the study might be hidden, and ends up investigating a murder. Fans of timely, thoughtful page-turners will be richly rewarded.” Note: this is not a preachy book on opioids, it’s a story fuelled by Finder’s tune-in to real issues.

Gardner, Lisa. [When You See Me](#) (Dutton \$27). Detective D. D. Warren, Flora Dane, and FBI Special Agent Kimberly Quincy—here’s a trio to be reckoned with. The three sleuths pursue the trail of recently deceased serial kidnapper Jacob Ness to the Georgia hills, trying to sort out his cases. There’s something positively creepy about the little town where they’ve landed, and soon they realize that Jacob has left behind secrets darker than anything he did while alive.... “The sinister factor starts early and builds quickly as Southern town charm gives way to deadly menace and dangerous secrets in this twist-a-minute novel. A string of murders, a crack FBI team and a voiceless girl desperate for revenge...”—Karin Slaughter.

Hauty, Chris. [Deep State](#) (Atria \$27). In the New Year’s Booknews I announced this debut, our **January First Mystery Book of the Month**, nailed me with both its exceptional narrative voice and its presentation of a female lead who is Reacher-like but on mission (you won’t know what it is). She’s a terrific series protagonist you will be happy to see return. An army boxing champ, she starts out a civilian life in the West Wing in an office the size of a closet among three antagonistic interns who sneer at her as being less privileged. She has hot sex on night with a Secret Service guy and the very next day she takes a report to the Chief of Staff only to find.... And it rolls from there. I pressed my ARC on Dana Stabenow, a tough critic, who agrees Hauty has a winner here.

Hurwitz, Gregg. [Into the Fire](#) (St Martins \$27.99). I thought [Orphan X](#) (\$9.99) was an exceptional thriller series start—it’s our recommended Airplane Book as once Nelson DeMille’s *The Charm School* was. And the 4th for Orphan X, [Out of the Dark](#) (\$9.99), had me rereading the concluding chapters several time. Now here we are at X’s 5th outing in which he’s wrestling with giving up his mission of helping those in crisis as sent to him by previous “clients” (not unlike the way the TV drama *Person of Interest* worked) and doing...what? Can he lead a civilian life

off mission? Does he want to? Kudos to Hurwitz for raising this dilemma for X and also for recognizing that a series in which the hero can forge no personal connections has to evolve or die. (Think of Barry Eisler's John Rain books which flunked this design in the end.) So what is the mission that X, aka Evan Smoak, takes on? It revolves around the torture/execution of accountant Grant Merriweather who gives up the name of his family black-sheep cousin Max before he dies as the person holding the key to...what? X, also known as the Nowhere Man, takes on saving Max. So X and his hacker protégé, Josephine Morales, then determine that a flash drive in Max's possession contains data detailing a money laundering scheme that ranges through L.A.'s criminal underworld. That's the set up. There are other plot dynamics in play and, as usual, Hurwitz ends with a line absolutely propelling you forward to the next book (presumably to publish in 2021—it had better!). Order the whole [Orphan X series](#) if you're new to it and set aside time to catch up before January 28 when Hurwitz appears here with Lisa Gardner.

Ide, Joe. [Hi Five](#) (Mulholland \$27). Helping elderly Mrs. Marquez get her dog Pepito back from a neighborhood hoodlum does not satisfy Isaiah Quintinabe's wish for a higher calling. The traditional notions of success bored him, nor did an upgrade to his place and his lifestyle. He has a girlfriend, Stella, a violinist who rare instrument she saved when it was stolen in Long Beach. But then he spots Grace. Grace—after two years, why is she back? And here is Dodson bringing him a case, a case where Beaumont has been shot and may not make it. Next, Christiana, daughter of the West Coast's biggest arms dealer, Angus Byrne. She's suspect numero uno in the murder of her boyfriend. Angus commands IQ prove Christianna innocent or he, Angus, will make sure Stella never plays, or lives, again. The big hitch here for IQ is that Christianna has multiple personalities, five of them. So IQ has to get clues from each to piece together what happened the night of the murder before the cops catch up.... [Order the first three IQs](#) to get up to speed in one of crime fiction's most original and award-winning series.

Parker, Ann. [Mortal Music](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.9/\$15.99). "Set in 1881, Parker's exuberant sixth Silver Rush mystery [A Dying Note](#) (\$15.99) brims with fascinating period details, flamboyant characters, and surprising plot twists...Parker leaves the reader longing to see what Inez will get up to next." —*PW*. And here in *Mortal Music* is the answer. By 1881 San Francisco was transforming into the "Paris of the West." Robber barons have put up mansions on Nob Hill. The elegant Palace Hotel welcomes wealthy guests. Society is eager to patronize the arts, music, and the opera. The city is expanding outward while rough neighborhoods like the Barbary Coast still flourish. And San Francisco is a magnet for immigrants of all ranks and stripes. A diva, Theia Carrington Drake, has returned to the city for several high-profile holiday concerts. They may be her swan song for her husband and manager Graham Drake, newly-minted publisher of the *San Francisco Times*, is politically ambitious and desires his wife to become a suitable hostess.

But first, the concerts. The soprano hears Inez play and demands Inez replace her accompanist. It's a golden chance, for the Golden Songbird performances will focus polite society on Inez's store and enhance business. True, Theia is autocratic and high strung, but her husband/manager Graham Drake, overcomes Inez's reluctance by sweetening the pot including the purchase of her most expensive piano. However, Theia is temperamental.

Trouble and death swirl around her. The first victim is her pet songbird, found brutally slain near the ruins of her signature gown. Drake hires private investigator Wolter Roeland de Bruijn, also relocated from Leadville and doing security for the elite Palace Hotel housing Theia's party, to uncover the perpetrator. He and Inez join forces to investigate. When the murder of another singer follows, suspects multiply, secrets emerge, and passions flare. *Mortal Music* is, no question, operatic in plot. It's very Verdi. It's also very Wilkie Collins, but to say more is a spoiler. Order the whole award-winning [Silver Rush Mysteries](#) series, perfect reading for winter days and nights.

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Crooked River](#) (Grand Central \$29). **Let me say first this book is a must read for any fan of Randy Wayne White and Doc Ford** whose new thriller, [Salt River](#) (Putnam \$28), publishes in February. **And also of Mary Anna Evans and her first book for (eventual) archaeologist Faye Longchamp, [Artifacts](#) (\$14.95).**

What a zinger this is from the opening scene where two children are shelling (gathering them) on a Sanibel Island beach and espy tennis shoes floating onto the sand—shoes each filled with a severed human foot. Then the Sanibel police chief has to take drastic action to preserve evidence (most of you will hate this!). Then a team of investigators gathers under the leadership of a Coast Guard commander who develops a theory that, no surprise, is challenged by Agent AXL Pendergast, still in the area after the events in [Verses for the Dead](#), who sets up his own line of inquiry. Roger Smithback of the *Miami Herald* meanwhile is trying his every ploy for a scoop, Pendergast's ward Constance takes an active role dressed in organdy, and the aforementioned police chief, Perelman, who switched gears from studying to be a rabbi to law enforcement officer, bemusedly cooperates with the unorthodox FBI Agent. All this in the first 50 pages. Bonus: the writing about Sanibel, Captiva, and the Florida coast is lyrical. Did I mentioned a Coast Guard op off the shores of a dreaded Cuban prison that is first terrifying and then hilarious?

Simpson, Rosemary. [Death Brings a Shadow](#) (Kensington \$26). Partners in detection Prudence MacKenzie and ex-Pinkerton Geoffrey Hunter's latest case takes them from New York City to Bradford Island, off the coast of Georgia, where Prudence's friend Eleanor Dickson is to be married. However, when Eleanor is found drowned, Prudence and Geoffrey switch gears from wedding guests to professional investigators in order to find out who murdered the heiress. "Simpson neatly exploits the gothic possibilities of her isolated setting and delivers a nuanced look at an America struggling to adjust to transformative change." —*Kirkus Reviews* on the 4th in a [Gilded Age series](#) we enjoy.

Williams, Beatriz/Lauren Willig/Karen White. [All the Ways We Said Goodbye](#) (Morrow \$27.99). Library Reads, or maybe Indie Next, writes: "Three time periods, three women, three authors combine for an absorbing read. Aurelie is ready to fight the Germans during World War I. Daisy, a woman with a collaborator husband, is embroiled in the fight against the Nazis. Babs, an Englishwoman in the 1960s, is anxious to find the truth about her dead husband. For readers who liked *The Alice Network* and *Sarah's Key*."

My review: You know going in that any novel bridging WWI into WWII and onto the aftermath of 1964 is going to hold tragedy—even if the geographical center of the stories

is the fabled Ritz Paris. The three Ws (they have fun naming an American law in the book as Willig, Williams, & White) are all experienced at linked stories. This one begins in 1914 with Aurelie, a young woman who becomes trapped on the wrong side of the German offensive front with her father, Comte Sigismund de Courcelles. The de Courcelles ancestral estate becomes the invaders HQ where Aurelie is thrown back into the company of handsome officer Max Von Sternburg. On to France, 1942, where Daisy Villon, raised by her glamorous American grandmother in a suite at the Ritz, agrees to assist in the Resistance—her grandmother points out that as she is Jewish, so Daisy too is at risk. And she takes wild risks, falling in love. Again, betrayal looms. Opening and closing the story is Babs Longford, a proper British widow of 1964 whose husband Kit was the love of her life. Yet she knows that their marriage was haunted by a woman known as La Fleur. An American led investigation of La Fleur takes Babs to the Ritz. IMHO Babs commits the greatest betrayal and comes off best, but you will have to decide that for yourself.

Williams, Beatriz. [The Wicked Redhead](#) (Morrow \$26.99/\$16.99). John Charles reviews: In 1924, Ginger Kelly wakes up in tranquil Cocoa Beach, Florida, having fled south to safety in the company of disgraced Prohibition agent Oliver Anson Marshall and her newly-orphaned young sister, Patsy. But paradise is short-lived. Marshall is reinstated to the agency with suspicious haste and put to work patrolling for rumrunners on the high seas, from which he promptly disappears. Gin hurries north to rescue him, only to be trapped in an agonizing moral quandary by Marshall's desperate mother. In 1998, Ella Dommerich has finally settled into her new life in Greenwich Village, inside the same apartment where a certain redheaded flapper lived long ago...and continues to make her presence known. Having quit her ethically problematic job at an accounting firm, cut ties with her unfaithful ex-husband, and begun an epic love affair with Hector, her musician neighbor, Ella's eager to piece together the history of the mysterious Gin Kelly, whose only physical trace is a series of rare vintage photograph cards for which she modeled before she disappeared. Williams follows up her 2017 novel [The Wicked City](#) (\$15.99) with another spellbinding dual timeline suspense story."

OUR JANUARY BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Please click on the club link to join the subscription for January-June

You can also opt to pay monthly for any of the clubs. Email Karen@poisonedpen.com for more information

[British Crime Club](#) One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Jan: Steadman, Catherine. [Mr. Nobody](#)

[Cozy Crimes Club](#) One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Jan.: Simon, Clea. [A Spell of Murder](#)

[First Mystery Club](#) One Signed First per month

Jan.: Hauty, Chris. [Deep State](#)

[The Book of the Month Club](#) One Signed First per month

Jan.: Dundas, Chad. [The Blaze](#)

[Historical Fiction Club](#) One Signed First per month

Jan.: Montgomery, Jess. [The Hollows](#)

[Fantastic Fiction](#) One Signed First per month

Jan.: Reid, Kiley. [Such a Fun Age](#)

SIGNED BOOKS

Colfer, Eoin. [Highfire](#) (Harper \$19.99). A hilarious and high-octane adult novel from this YA author about a vodka-drinking, Flashdance-loving dragon who lives an isolated life in the bayous of Louisiana—and the raucous adventures that ensue when he crosses paths with a fifteen-year-old troublemaker on the run from a crooked sheriff. Here's the Indie Next Pick: "*Highfire* hooked me from the first pages. Vern, a grumpy dragon languishing in the Louisiana swamps, believes he's the last of his species. Squib, a 15-year-old boy, is just trying to stay out of trouble and earn some money doing odd jobs. The intersection of these two one-of-a-kind characters sucks you in like a whirlpool." Think Carl Hiaasen's *Bad Monkey*.

Cummins, Jeanine. [American Dirt](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). "A literary thriller chronicling the migration of a mother and her young son. Under threat, Lydia and Luca leave their middle-class life in Acapulco and begin a traumatic journey to the border, evading cartels, thieves, corrupt police, and others forced into malevolent behavior by extreme violence and poverty. For readers who enjoyed *The Other Americans* (Laila Lalami) and *And the Mountains Echoed* (Khaled Hosseini). "I strive to write page-turners because I love to read them, and it's been a long time since I turned pages as fast as I did with *American Dirt*. Its plot is tight, smart, and unpredictable. Its message is important and timely, but not political. Its characters are violent, compassionate, sadistic, fragile, and heroic. It is rich in authenticity. Its journey is a testament to the power of fear and hope and belief that there are more good people than bad." —John Grisham, endorsed by Stephen King. Signed for us on February 21 and our **February Fantastic New Fiction Pick**.

Estleman, Loren D. [When Old Midnight Comes Along](#) (Forge \$28). The multi award winner racks up another Starred Review: "At the start of Edgar-finalist Estleman's stellar 28th Amos Walker mystery, the Detroit PI is retained by Francis X. Lawes, a local government official in charge of insuring procurement integrity, to find out what happened to his PR consultant wife, Paula. After Paula went missing six years earlier, her car was found abandoned in a bad neighborhood. She's widely believed to have been murdered, but Lawes, who's looking to remarry, is hoping for conclusive evidence she's dead. Walker learns that the police inquiry into the disappearance was handled by an old friend of his, John Alderdyce, who recently retired from the force. Alderdyce always believed that Lawes was behind his wife's murder, but he was never able to prove it. The plot thickens when Walker learns that the first police officer to find Paula's vehicle was gunned down soon afterward. Chandler and Hammett fans will feel right at home on the mean streets of Estleman's Detroit."

☞ Hannah, Sophie. [Haven't They Grown](#) (Hodder \$39). All Beth has to do is drive her son to his Under-14s away match, watch him play, and bring him home. Just because she knows that her former best friend lives near the football ground, that doesn't mean she has to drive past her house and try to catch a glimpse of her. Why would Beth do that, and risk dredging up painful memories? She hasn't seen Flora Braid for twelve years. But she can't resist. She parks outside Flora's house and watches from across the road as Flora and her children, Thomas and Emily, step out of the car. Except... Flora looks the same, only older—just as Beth would have expected. It's the children that are the problem.

Twelve years ago, Thomas and Emily Braid were five and three years old. Today, they are still five and three. They are Thomas and Emily without a doubt—Beth hears Flora call them by their names—but they are no older no taller. They haven't changed at all. Why haven't they grown?

✠Herron, Mick. [Catch: Slough House Novella #2](#) (Murray \$21). If life in the Intelligence Service has taught John Bachelor anything, it's to keep his head down. Especially now, when he's living rent-free in a dead spook's flat. So he's not delighted to be woken at dawn by a pair of Regent's Park's heavies, looking for a client he's not seen in years. John doesn't know what secrets Benny Manors has stolen, but they're attracting the wrong attention. And if he's to save his own skin, not to mention safeguard his living arrangements, John has to find Benny before those secrets see the light. Benny could be anywhere, provided it serves alcohol. So John sets out on a reluctant trawl through the bars of the capital, all the while plagued by the age-old questions: Will he end up sleeping in his car? How many bottles of gin can he afford at London prices? And just how far will Regent's Park go to prevent anyone rocking the boat?

✠Hornby, Gill. [Miss Austen](#) (Century \$32). 1840: twenty three years after the death of her famous sister Jane, Cassandra Austen returns to the village of Kintbury, and the home of her family's friends, the Fowles. She knows that, in some dusty corner of the sprawling vicarage, there is a cache of family letters which hold secrets she is desperate should not be revealed. As Cassandra recalls her youth and her relationship with her brilliant yet complex sister, she pieces together buried truths about Jane's history, and her own. And she faces a stark choice: should she act to protect Jane's reputation? Or leave the contents of the letters to go unguarded into posterity ... Based on a literary mystery that has long puzzled biographers and academics—why did Cassandra burn her sister's letters?—*Miss Austen* is a wonderfully original and emotionally complex novel about the loves and lives of Cassandra and Jane Austen.

✠Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Gathering](#) (Ballantine \$20). You may think that with the holidays over it's time to move on. But this is likely the final appearance of Vespasia and her new husband Victor Narraway so you long-time fans of the Pitts should grab this gem. Tom Nolan gives it a rave in the *WSJ*: “A tale of violence and espionage in a remote English country house. Victor Narraway, the former head of the London Special Branch (‘the department...that dealt with anarchists, saboteurs, and all purveyors of secret terror’) has come to the estate of some old friends with his new wife, Vespasia, for Christmas week. He aims to fulfill one last covert assignment: to receive falsified submarine plans from a fellow secret agent and houseguest, to be passed along to a hostile German government. Vespasia, related to a prominent London policeman, is not without knowledge of the world of crime—and suspects that her husband is hiding his true reasons for choosing this year's holiday venue. Things go badly awry after the midnight rendezvous: The agent from whom Victor takes the secret package is discovered the next morning near death after a cruel attack. So Victor and Vespasia work in tandem after all.” But the real reasons to read this treat are 1. The gorgeous descriptions of Cavendish Hall's gardens and rooms and 2. The deliciously bitchy dialogue—Lady Vespasia holds her own.

Reid, Kiley. [Such a Fun Age](#) (Putnam \$26). “Reid's debut sparkles with sharp observations and perfect details—food, décor, clothes, social media, etc.—and she's a dialogue genius, effortlessly incorporating toddler-ese, witty boyfriend-speak, and African American Vernacular English. For about two-thirds of the book, her evenhandedness with her varied cast of characters is impressive, but there's a point at which any possible empathy for Alix disappears. Not only is she shallow, entitled, unknowingly racist, and a bad mother, but she has not progressed one millimeter since high school, and even then she was worse than we thought... Charming, challenging, and so interesting you can hardly put it down.”—*Kirkus Reviews* on our **January Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month, already a bestseller.**

Blogger/role model/inspirational speaker Alix Chamberlain is none too happy about moving from Manhattan to Philadelphia for her husband Peter's job as a TV newscaster. With no friends or in-laws around to help out with her almost-3-year-old, Briar, and infant, Catherine, she'll never get anywhere on the book she's writing unless she hires a sitter. She strikes gold when she finds Emira Tucker. Twenty-five-year-old Emira's family and friends expect her to get going on a career, but outside the fact that she's about to get kicked off her parents' health insurance, she's happy with her part-time gigs—and Briar is her “favorite little human.” Then one day a double-header of racist events topples the apple cart...

✠Rowland, Laura. [The Woman in the Veil](#) (Crooked Lane \$28). Sarah Bain, a London newspaper crime scene photographer, is assigned to take pictures of the corpse of a naked woman with a mutilated face. But as she prepares to take the photo, Sarah realizes the woman is breathing. Sarah's boss, Sir Gerald Mariner, thinks “Sleeping Beauty” would make a great story, and fortunately Sarah's fiancé, DS Thomas Barrett, is on the case. Many claim to know Sleeping Beauty's identity, but Barrett quickly narrows the possibilities to three: artist August Legrand claims that she's his wife; Frances Oliphant insists the woman is her stepsister; 10-year-old Venetia Napier is sure the woman is her long-missing mother, Maude. When Sleeping Beauty finally awakes, she remembers...and Sarah learns that not all stories have a happy ending when one of the claimants is murdered. Is Sleeping Beauty really who she claimed to be? This is to confirm that this clever 4th Victorian Rowland is SIGNED.

VanderMeer, Jeff. [Dead Astronauts](#) (Farrar \$27). A messianic blue fox who slips through warrens of time and space on a mysterious mission. A homeless woman haunted by a demon who finds the key to all things in a strange journal. A giant leviathan of a fish, centuries old, who hides a secret, remembering a past that may not be its own. Three ragtag rebels waging an endless war for the fate of the world against an all-powerful corporation. A raving madman who wanders the desert lost in the past, haunted by his own creation: an invisible monster whose name he has forgotten and whose purpose remains hidden. Vandermeer presents a City with no name of its own where, in the shadow of the all-powerful Company, lives human and otherwise converge in terrifying and miraculous ways. At stake: the fate of the future, the fate of Earth—all the Earths.

CLASSICS

We are thinking of a monthly afternoon discussion group for classic mysteries.



The first is Wednesday January 29 @ 2:00PM to discuss Gaston Leroux's [The Phantom of the Opera](#), the first release from *The Haunted Library*. See the front page of this Booknews. If you are interested please email Bill@poisonedpen.com or call the store and talk to him.

Lorac, ECR. [Fell Murder](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). The January British Library Crime Classic is set in Lancashire and will reso-

nate with fans of Peter Robinson's Yorkshire series for policeman Alan Banks. And here is a review from a fan: "This Chief Inspector MacDonald series edition was originally written in 1944. It includes a short story entitled, 'The Live Wire.' Written at the height of her power, it's a fine balance of intrigue, setting and plot; with well established and likable characters. There is a noticeable love for rural English farm life and against this background a dastardly mystery unfolds. The Inspector is called in when local police are stymied by the murder of one of their local estate owners. The list of suspects is long and empath at a minimum. MacDonald uses his experience and expertise, his long-standing community values to find the killer among them. A great addition to this fine collection of British Crime Classics and one not likely forgotten any time soon. Other [Golden Age Classics by Lorac](#): *Murder in the Mill Race*; *Bats in the Belfry*; *Murder by Matchlight*; *Fire in the Thatch*.

Queen, Ellery. [The Siamese Twin Mystery](#) (Penzler \$15.95). A Starred Review for this republication: "First published in 1933, this entry in the American Mystery Classics series shows Queen (the pen name of Fredric Dannay and Manfred B. Lee) at his best, expertly combining plot and setting to heighten suspense en route to the satisfying solution. Amateur sleuth Ellery Queen and his father, NYPD homicide inspector Richard Queen, run into a forest fire while driving in Upstate New York. They take refuge in the mountain top home of surgeon John Xavier, where Richard has a bizarre night-time encounter with a creature resembling a giant crab—and a member of the household is shot to death and found clutching half of a playing card, apparently a clue to the killer's identity. With local law enforcement preoccupied with fighting the blaze, Richard is deputized to investigate, but another life is claimed before Ellery can put the puzzle pieces together. The claustrophobic impact of the fire moving closer and closer to the Xavier home, with no prospect of rescue, is palpable. This rivals Christianna Brand's *Green for Danger* as a classic of brilliant deduction under extreme circumstances."

Woolrich, Cornell. [Waltz into Darkness](#) (Penzler \$15.95). And here is another Star: "In this unrelentingly grim noir from Woolrich (1903–1968), first published in 1947 and set in 1880 New Orleans, Louis Durand, the owner of a prosperous coffee-import business, is looking forward to meeting the woman he's romanced via correspondence, who he hopes will offer him a chance for a happiness years after losing his first love to yellow fever. The Julia Russell who shows up at the dock doesn't match the photo he was sent, but he accepts her explanation that she didn't want him to be interested in her solely for her looks. The

two wed, and gradually it becomes clear that Julia has withheld more significant secrets, which end up leading to murder. The significance of Billy, a 'character that does not appear in the story' (mentioned in an opening list of characters), becomes chillingly clear by the end."

Waltz into Darkness enjoys the rare distinction of having been made into two different movies, one being Francois Truffaut's *Mississippi Mermaid*. Once again, a classic of one time becomes relevant to our time

SOME RE-REVIEWS

Gentili, Sulari. [Give the Devil His Due](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99).

For fans of Rhys Bowen, Kerry Greenwood and Jacqueline Winspear comes an adventure-packed romp that threads 1934 Sydney's upper class and its seedy underworld. Wealthy Rowland Sinclair, an artist with leftist friends and a free-wheeling lifestyle, reluctantly agrees to a charity race. He'll drive his beloved yellow Mercedes on the Maroubra Speedway, renamed the Killer Track for the lives it has claimed. His teammates are a young Errol Flynn and the well-known driver Joan Richmond. It's all good fun. But then people start to die...



The body of a journalist covering the race is found murdered in a House of Horrors. An English blueblood with Blackshirt affiliations dies in a Maroubra crash. Reporters stalk Rowly for dirt while bookmakers are after an edge. When someone takes a shot at him—it could be anyone. Then the police arrest one of Rowly's housemates for murder....

Maleeny, Tim, [Boxing the Octopus](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.95/\$26.95). I love this, a rave review in *The Irish Times!* "Maleeny's fourth novel to feature his laconic and reluctant private eye, *Boxing The Octopus* reads like a surreal blend of Raymond Chandler and Carl Hiaasen as the story wends its delightfully bonkers way through San Francisco's colorful underworld, embracing biological warfare, Sir Francis Drake, filthy Russian lucre and octopus DNA as it goes. If comic crime fiction is your thing, Maleeny delivers in spades." For fans of Donald E. Westlake, Ross Thomas, and Thomas Perry.

Hess, Annette. [The German House](#) (HarperVia \$26.99). "The author expertly unfolds the story of Eva Bruhns, a translator for the 1963 Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials, with such believability that the reader feels complicit in the denial of the past. As she hears testimonies, Eva discovers that anyone can be guilty of some horrific role in the war, however unaware they were of inhumane acts, or however prey to propaganda. The reader's nausea will build as Eva gets closer to the truth. This historical novel seethes with life and feels authentic at every turn."

Singh, Nalini. [A Madness of Sunshine](#) (Berkley \$27). "Singh's gorgeous descriptions of the wild west coast of New Zealand add a palpable air of danger to the 'harsh and unforgiving landscape' of this beautiful land 'at the bottom of the world.' Or so it seems to Anahera Spencer-Ashby when she returns to her childhood home of Golden Cove after the death of her husband. Still as "primal and untamed" as it was when she left to pursue a career as a concert pianist in London, the place now feels haunted — as indeed it is, by the memory of all the young women who have

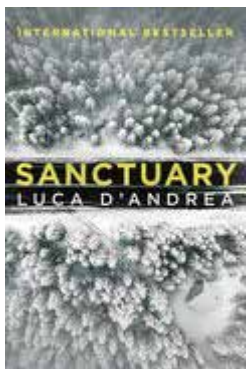
gone missing since she went away. Golden Cove has acquired a detective, Anahera discovers, a ‘problem’ police officer named Will Gallagher who’s been put out to pasture for undisclosed reasons and so is a perfect fit for this problem town. Will hasn’t been assigned to the region because of the many incidents of domestic violence that Singh describes with a kind of fierce lyricism; instead, he’s there to find a missing woman before she becomes another statistic. In Golden Cove, ‘people are good at hiding the bruises,’ if not so hot at mourning the dead.”—*NY Times Book Review*

For another terrific debut set in New Zealand where an American forensics expert (teeth) is challenged to identify a body boiled in one of Rotorua’s volcanic mud pot, and stays on to become an investigator into murder and Maori culture, read Sara E. Johnson’s [Molten Mud Murder](#) (\$15.95), our upcoming March Coffee and Crime Discussion Club selection.

Stanley, Michael. [Facets of Death](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). *The Seattle Times* rates this prequel for Botswana’s rotund cop Kubu as one of the four must-read books publishing in January for fans of International Mysteries: “*Facets of Death* is a prequel to his series about Botswana police detective David ‘Kubu’ Bengu, whose girth earned him his nickname: ‘Kubu’ is ‘hippo’ in Setswana. His older colleagues scorn the rookie cop, fresh from university and full of genial earnestness. Undaunted, Kubu dives into two cases: ongoing theft from the airport and a diamond heist that triggers multiple murders. Parallels to Alexander McCall Smith’s No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency series — also set in Botswana — are clear, but Kubu’s distinctive personality, juxtaposed against scenes of his country’s darker sides, helps his adventures stand out.” Besides, this is a fun heist novel with a clever scam going on at the Gabarone airport for extra kicks.

MORE JANUARY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

D’Andrea, Luca. [Sanctuary](#) (HarperCollins \$16.99). D’Andrea takes us to the rugged Dolomite Mountains of northern Italy. Marlene Wegener, the wife of a scary crime boss, is desperate to escape her husband. She steals a fortune and flees into the wilderness, but a car accident injures her badly and she takes refuge with a sympathetic mountain man — only to be trapped again, isolated in a snowstorm with danger still near. D’Andrea, justifiably a bestseller in Europe, deftly weaves local lore and culture, as well as eerie echoes of Marlene’s beloved fairy tales, into his intense story.



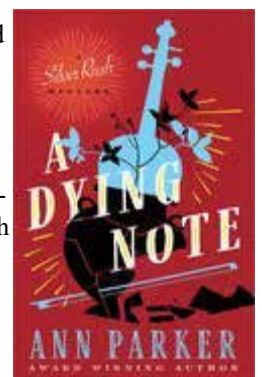
Jones, Stephen Mack. [Lives Laid Away](#) (\$16.99). “Detective fiction needs a shot in the arm every now and again. That was the feeling of reading Stephen Mack Jones ... The August Snow series is as promising as any crime fiction to come around in a long while, tapping into the iconoclasm and social justice streaks of midcentury noirs, but taking them in a modern direction, exposing human trafficking rings, abuses of immigrant communities, gentrification, and economic declines and revivals. It’s heady, exhilarating stuff.” The *WSJ* adds, “Jones’s action-packed book has echoes of Raymond Chandler’s banter and bursts of Dashiell Hammett’s violence, with a tip of the porkpie hat to Walter Mosley. What’s more, *Lives Laid Away* delivers a bracing amount

of rough humor and a whole lot of heart.” For fans of Walter Mosley and Joe Ide. And Loren D. Estleman who says, “Razor-sharp characterization, an engaging style, and Jones’s intimate knowledge of Motor City culture give us hope for an enduring series and many years of entertainment.”

Ide, Joe. [Wrecked](#) (\$16.99). “Ide opens the third book in his blazing IQ series, with the novelist’s equivalent of a stun gun... [IQ is] an appealing central character, propped up by a cast of crooks Elmore Leonard would envy... Ide is still the hottest of recently-emerged crime writers. He has populated Southern California with wildly entertaining characters, from those hinted at offstage to the motormouths whose priceless talk fills his pages.”—Janet Maslin, *New York Times*. “Joe Ide is one of the hottest mystery novelists at work... the wonder of love, the cruelty of war, the black world he knows well, the music he loves—all the beauty and cruelty and craziness he filed away in his mind before he began writing these novels. With *Wrecked*, Ide confirms that he’s among the most original new voices in today’s crime fiction.”—Patrick Anderson, *Washington Post*. See Event Books for Ide’s 4th IQ Signed here on January 30. Yay!

Kepler, Lars. [Stalker](#) (\$16.95). Can’t get enough of Nordic Noir? Here is Joona 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.

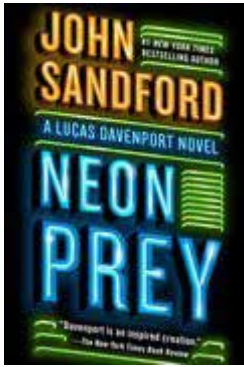
Parker, Ann. [A Dying Note](#) (\$15.99). Winner, Best of the West 2019, *True West Magazine*. It’s autumn of 1881, and Inez Stanert, still the co-owner of Leadville, Colorado’s Silver Queen saloon, is settled in San Francisco with her young ward, Antonia Gizzi. Inez has turned her business talents to managing a music store, hoping to eventually become an equal partner in the enterprise with the store’s owner, a celebrated local violinist. Inez’s carefully constructed life for herself and Antonia threatens to tumble about her ears when the badly beaten body of a young musician washes up on the filthy banks of San Francisco’s Mission Creek canal. Inez and Antonia become entangled in the mystery of his death when the musician turns out to have ties to Leadville, ties that threaten to expose Inez’s notorious past. And they aren’t the only ones searching for answers. For the sequel, *Mortal Music*, see Event Books.



Ryan, Hank Phillippi. [The Murder List](#) (\$14.99). Law student Rachel North will tell you, without hesitation, what she knows to be true. She’s smart, she’s a hard worker, she does the right thing, she’s successfully married to a faithful and devoted husband, a

lion of Boston's defense bar, and her internship with the Boston DA's office is her ticket to a successful future. Problem is—she's wrong, leading to a cat and mouse game she may not survive.

Sandford, John. [Neon Prey](#) (\$17). In his 29th nail-biter, Lucas Davenport must track a serial killer. Clayton Deese looks like



a small-time criminal, muscle for hire when his loan shark boss needs to teach someone a lesson. Now, seven months after a job that went south and landed him in jail, Deese has skipped out on bail, and the U.S. Marshals come looking for him. They don't much care about a low-level guy—it's his boss they want—but Deese might be their best chance to bring down the whole operation. Then, they step onto a dirt trail behind Deese's rural Louisiana cabin and find a jungle full of graves. The

SK clearly has been operating for years without notice. He is ruthless, and—as Davenport will come to find—full of surprises.... I really like the wide US range Davenport can work now that he's a Marshal. And I note there's something about Louisiana bad boys that brings out the bad boy in Lucas in spades.

Winters, Ben. [Golden State](#) (\$16.99). Patrick writes, "Following up a groundbreaking novel like [Underground Airlines](#) (\$15.99) is a tall order for any writer, but Winters pulls it off and then some with this brilliant, unsettling novel, Laszlo Ratesic works for the Speculative Service in an alternate society known as the Golden State, which stands where California once stood. The alternate utopian society has become a refuge for like-minded individuals escaping from the systemic corruption and lies that have splintered the country. In the Golden State, truth is held as the supreme virtue and knowingly contradicting the truth is a crime. It's Lazlo's job to investigate and stop these crimes and he is one of the few people allowed to harbor untruths to speculate on how the crime occurred. Of course, this seeming paradise comes at quite a cost in the form of constant surveillance and recording. When those in power have the monopoly on 'truth' and can use it for their own ends, does truth have any currency left? Winters doesn't shy away asking the difficult questions about where we are today and where we might be headed."

MORE NEW BOOKS FOR JANUARY

Adams, Ellery. [The Book of Candlelight](#) (Kensington \$26). As the owner of Miracle Books, Nora Pennington figures all the wet weather this spring is at least good for business. The local inns are packed with stranded travelers, and among them Nora finds both new customers and a new friend, the sixtysomething Sheldon, who starts helping out at the store. Since a little rain never hurt anyone, Nora rides her bike over to the flea market one sodden day and buys a bowl from Danny, a Cherokee potter. It'll make a great present for Nora's EMT boyfriend, but the next day, a little rain turns into a lot of rain, and the Miracle River overflows it banks. Amid the wreckage of a collapsed footbridge, a body lies within the churning water. Nora and the sheriff both doubt the ruling of accidental drowning, and Nora decides it's time for the Secret, Book, and Scone Society to spring into action. When another body turns up, it becomes clearer that Danny's death can't be blamed on a natural disaster. "Adams' new series blends magical realism, smart women, and small-town quirks

to create a cozy mystery that doubles as a love letter to books. Readers will fall in love with Nora's bookstore therapy and Hester's comfort scones. Not to mention Estella, June, hunky Jed the paramedic, and Nora's tiny house-slash-converted-train-caboose . . . a book that mystery fans—and avid readers—won't want to put down until they have savored every last crumb." — *RT Book Reviews* on the third in a series delicious for cozy fans.

Allende, Isabel. [A Long Petal of the Sea](#) (Ballantine \$28). This is her 20th work of fiction, a novel of refugees fleeing the Spanish Civil War for Chile. In the late 1930s, civil war grips Spain. When General Franco and his Fascists succeed in overthrowing the government, hundreds of thousands are forced to flee in a treacherous journey over the mountains to the French border. Among them is Roser, a pregnant young widow, who finds her life intertwined with that of Victor Dalmau, an army doctor and the brother of her deceased love. In order to survive, the two must unite in a marriage neither of them desires. Together with two thousand other refugees, they embark on the *SS Winnipeg*, a ship chartered by the poet Pablo Neruda, to Chile. Starting over on a new continent, their trials are just beginning, and over the course of their lives, they will face trial after trial. But they will also find joy as they patiently await the day when they will be exiles no more.

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Killing Tide](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Commissaire Georges Dupin, a thorough Parisian, is a stranger in his current posting, the rough-and-ready seacoast of Brittany — specifically, the village of Douarnenez, where the economy rests on harvesting the fruits of the treacherous Atlantic. One of the region's few female fishers has been found, her throat slit, in a container of rotting fish. Another murder follows, of a dolphin researcher, and Dupin's dogged queries lead him to plumb the tension between the region's independent fishers and the big fleets that threaten them. I have to say I love this series and its Brittany culture and landscape where oysters are a health food, but the TV adaptation on MHz-TV is another of those clunky German attempts to be French. Read them in order. There is a new translator who Rob thinks is less successful in conveying the idioms and humor of the first four in the series.

Correa, Armando Lucas. [The Daughter's Tale](#) (\$16.99). Berlin, 1939. The dreams that Amanda Sternberg and her husband, Julius, had for their daughters are shattered when the Nazis descend on Berlin, burning down their beloved family bookshop and sending Julius to a concentration camp. Desperate to save her children, Amanda flees toward the South of France. Along the way, a refugee ship headed for Cuba offers another chance at escape and there, at the dock, Amanda is forced to make an impossible choice that will haunt her for the rest of her life. Once in Haute-Vienne, her brief respite is interrupted by the arrival of Nazi forces, and Amanda finds herself in a labor camp where she must once again make a heroic sacrifice. Seven decades of secrets unravel with the arrival of a box of letters from the distant past, taking readers on a harrowing journey from Nazi-occupied Berlin, 1938, to the South of France during the war, to New York City, 2015.

Dunnett, Kaitlyn. [A View to a Kilt](#) (Kensington \$26). A series of blizzards have kept tourists away from Moosetookalook, Maine, and shoppers out of Liss MacCrimmon's Scottish Emporium. But as warmer weather brings promises of tartan sales and new

faces, melting snow reveals cold-blooded murder. Stunned by the murder mystery developing in her own backyard, Liss receives another shock. The victim is identified as Charlie MacCrimmon, an uncle believed to have died eleven years before Liss was born. No one has seen or heard from Charlie since he went off to fight in Vietnam. What secrets could he have been hiding for so many years, and who would want to kill a man long thought to be dead?

Eisenberg, Emma Copley. [The Third Rainbow Girl](#) (Hachette \$27). Blending memoir and true crime, Eisenberg's book recounts the 1980 murders of two young women in rural West Virginia—known as the “Rainbow Murders”—and her time living and working in Pocahontas County. Exploring the intersection of gender, class, and violence, Eisenberg reveals the way the murders inflicted trauma onto generations of Appalachians. Carmen Maria Machado calls the book “a staggering achievement of reportage, memoir, and sociological reckoning.”

The Indie Next Pick: “In this thoughtful and immersive chronicle of the 1980 murders that thrust West Virginia's Pocahontas County into the national spotlight, Eisenberg seeks to better understand not only the crimes and their aftermath, but also the lasting impact the region (which she came to know independent of her inquiry) had on her. A complex and captivating read, *The Third Rainbow Girl* weaves true crime with memoir to stunning effect.” A book for fans of Julia Keller and David Joy.

Elliot, Laura. [The Wife Before Me](#) (\$12.99). Amelia Madison's car slides into the sea off Mason's Pier. Her body is never found. Two years later, Elena Langdon meets Nicholas Madison. She is grieving the loss of her mother; he is grieving for his wife. Together they can help each other. Now Elena is living with Nicholas. But Elena doesn't really know him. She doesn't know what he is capable of. And she doesn't know what really happened to Amelia. Until the day she discovers the torn page of a letter and the words she reads chill her to the bone. You can see that the possibilities for Trust No One in this scenario are numerous.

✦ Elgar, Emily. [Grace Is Gone](#) (Harper \$16.99). Everyone in Ashford, Cornwall, knows Meg Nichols and her daughter, Grace. Meg has been selflessly caring for Grace for years, and Grace—smiling and optimistic in spite of her many illnesses—adores her mother. So when Meg is found brutally bludgeoned in her bed and her daughter missing, the community is rocked. Meg had lived in terror of her abusive, unstable ex, convinced that he would return to try and kidnap Grace...as he had once before. Now it appears her fear was justified. Jon Katrin, a local journalist, knows he should avoid getting drawn back into this story. The article he wrote about Meg and Grace caused rifts within his marriage and the town. Perhaps if he can help find Grace, he can atone for previous lapses in judgment. The Nichols' neighbor, Cara—contending with her own guilt over not being a better friend to Grace—becomes an unexpected ally. But in searching for Grace, Jon and Cara uncover anomalies that lead to more and more questions. Through multiple viewpoints and diary entries, the truth about Grace emerges, revealing a tragedy more twisted than anyone could imagine....

✦ Fellowes, Jessica. [The Mitford Scandal](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Louisa Cannon, still in the orbit of the inimitable Mitford sisters in 1928 London, finds herself caught in their mysteries for the third time—and longing to be reunited with her partner in sleuthing, Guy Sullivan of the CID. Since leaving her job as a servant

with the Mitford family, Louisa's been scraping by. One odd job finds her serving at a grand party in the London Season, where wealthy, debonair Bryan Guinness is wooing Diana Mitford when, suddenly and horribly, a maid peering at the glamorous scene falls through a skylight to her death. It seems a tragic accident, but Louisa had noticed Rose Morgan, another maid, accepting a mysterious packet from a rough-mannered stranger at the back door. When Rose disappears after the party, newly promoted Guy Sullivan refuses to let the matter drop. In a stroke of good fortune, Diana offers Louisa a position as her lady's maid, and they set off together on Diana and Bryan's honeymoon in Paris. Guy, acting on a tip about Rose, follows a hunch and his heart to find Louisa in Paris despite his own engagement to another woman.

Fleischmann, Raymond. [How Quickly She Disappears](#) (Berkley \$26). “In 1941 Alaska, a woman whose twin disappeared 20 years earlier crosses paths with a sinister stranger threatening to reveal the truth of what happened. Does she dare risk what little she has left to save her sister? For readers of moody thrillers such as *Watch Me Disappear* by Janelle Brown and *The Dry* by Jane Harper.”

Fogg, BJ. [Tiny Habits](#) (Houghton \$28). Based on twenty years of research and Fogg's experience coaching more than 40,000 people, *Tiny Habits* cracks the code of habit formation. Willpower is fickle and finite, and exactly the wrong way to create habits. You transform your life by starting small and being flexible. With breakthrough discoveries in every chapter, you'll learn the simplest proven ways to transform your life. Fogg shows you how to feel good about your successes instead of bad about your failures. Whether you want to lose weight, de-stress, sleep better, or be more productive each day, *Tiny Habits* is coaching you to change.

Forstchen, Will. [48 Hours](#) (\$17.99). A solar storm known as a coronal mass ejection has struck Earth in this intelligent near-future thriller. Parts of the U.S. are without electricity, and some cities declare martial law to maintain control. But even as Americans struggle to deal with limited resources, a team of astronomers at the Helio Observation Center, headed by Dr. Richard Carrington, have detected an intense solar flare, nicknamed Sauron's Eye, which has the potential of wiping out humanity. Carrington is summoned to the White House to report his findings directly to the president, who wrestles over how to respond without causing mass panic. Meanwhile, Darren Brooks, a former police chief who now heads security at a massive underground storage facility in Lake of the Ozarks, Mo., must resolve a moral dilemma after he learns that the site, which includes supplies that could enable thousands to survive the calamity, is to be taken over by the military. For fans of apocalyptic thrillers.

Gilbert, Victoria. [Bound for Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Our own blogger Lesa Holstine reviews: “Library director Amy Webber's only full-time assistant at the Taylorsford Public Library, Sunny Fields, is running for mayor. When a body is uncovered on the organic farm run by Sunny's grandparents, the small-town rumors fly, impacting Sunny's campaign. In the 1960s, the Fields had a commune on their property, and the corpse turns out to be a musician who disappeared from there. Amy has helped the police in the past, so, of course she's going to do some research for her best friend's grandparents. Where are the people who lived at the commune? An art collector and former drug dealer tries to warn

Amy, fearing the death goes back to a serious drug problem in the past. The murder of a former commune member, threats, and a shooting drag the library director deeper into the case. The story's menacing tone is alleviated by the antics of some kittens, but the past causes troubles for the town's residents. As with Cleo Coyle's 'Coffeehouse' mysteries, Gilbert's library mysteries are darker than many cozies. The well-developed characters and complex issues will appeal to fans of Jenn McKinlay and Miranda James."

Graves, Sarah. [Death by Chocolate Malted Milk](#) (\$15.95). Eastport, Maine, has plenty of salty local character. It also has a sweet side, thanks to Jacobia "Jake" Tiptree, her best friend Ellie, and their waterfront bake shop. This summer, Eastport's favorite lovebirds, kindergarten teacher Sharon Sweetwater and Coast Guard Captain Andy Devine, are getting married. The gala reception is sure to be the fête of the season, especially with a wedding-cake-sized whoopie pie courtesy of The Chocolate Moose. For Jake and Ellie, the custom-ordered confection will finally reel in some much-needed profits. But the celebratory air, and sweet smell of success, are ruined when Sharon's bitter ex-boyfriend Toby is murdered with a poisoned milkshake. With Andy jailed as the prime suspect and the wedding cancelled, it's up to Jake and Ellie to catch a poisonous predator.

NOTE; Graves' first Jake Tiptree, [Dead Cat Bounce](#) (\$7.99), is one of our all time best paperback bestsellers. Set in Eastport it is less a cozy than a great mystery where Jake, who fled NYC finance and her doctor husband to buy a fixer upper in Eastport, where she finds a dead man (ice pick) in her storeroom, a world-famous corporate raider, a local cop on the case, and her new neighbor Ellie inexplicably confessing to the crime. It's a gem, highly recommended. This is a year for discovering good reads to relax and retreat into, no? This series recently morphed into a cozy crimes one, above.

Greanias, Thomas. [Raising Atlantis](#) (\$12.99). Clive Cussler recommends, "Experience the first "outrageous adventure with a wild dose of the supernatural." During a top secret dig in Antarctica, the United States government discovers a stunning and ancient secret: the legendary lost city of Atlantis. Dr. Conrad Yeats, the foremost authority on megalithic architecture, is brought in along with his estranged father, General Griffin Yeats, and his former lover, the Vatican linguist Serena Serghetti, to explore this astonishing civilization hidden beneath the ice. But their investigation uncovers something shocking that threatens the very existence of humanity and together, they are thrust into a deadly race against the apocalypse. "*Raising Atlantis* grabs hold of you from the first page and pulls you into an astonishing world of scientific fact and fiction, suspense, and good old-fashioned adventure"—Nelson DeMille on this reissue from 2005.

Harris, Charlaine. [A Longer Fall](#) (Saga \$26.99) is the second of the Gunnie Rose series, in which Lizbeth is hired onto a new crew, transporting a crate into Dixie, the self-exiled southeast territory of the former United States. What the crate contains is something so powerful that forces from across three territories of this alternate universe want to possess it.

☞Huie, M. [Spitfire: A Livy Nash Mystery](#) (Crippen \$26.99). It's V-E Day 1946 in London. World War II is over. Former spy Livy Nash's war ended with betrayal and the execution of the man she loved. In the aftermath, her life changes when she meets the infamous Ian Fleming.

Hurston, Zora Neale. [Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick](#) (Amistead \$25.99). This collection of eight lesser-known stories written during Hurston's time as a student at Barnard in New York City showcase the author's range. While many know Hurston best for her fiction depicting rural life, these stories brim with the vibrancy and madcap liveliness of the Harlem Renaissance.

James, Miranda. [Careless Whiskers](#) (Berkley \$26). Charlie Harris has sworn off investigating murder and mayhem after a recent close call. Instead, he's delighted to cheer on his daughter, Laura, who's starring in a production of *Careless Whispers*. The theater department at Athena College is debuting the play written by a fledgling playwright with local connections and Charlie's son-in-law, Frank Salisbury, will be calling the directorial shots. Laura is upset to learn that Luke Lombardi, an overbearing actor she knew from her time in Hollywood will also be taking part in the production as a guest artist. Lombardi arrives with an entourage in tow and promptly proceeds to annoy everyone involved with the production. When he collapses and dies on stage, after drinking from a glass Laura handed him, she becomes the chief suspect in his murder. Charlie knows his daughter is innocent and, with the help of and his faithful feline Diesel, he's not going to let anyone railroad his little girl.

Jimenez, Simon. [Vanished Birds](#) (Del Rey \$27). In this gorgeous debut novel, love becomes a force that can shatter space and time. We first see Nia Imani through the eyes of someone she is always leaving behind: Kaeda, a boy growing up on a backwater planet visited once every 15 years by offworlders who come to collect its harvests. Nia is the captain of a faster-than-light ship that travels through Pocket Space. While Kaeda lives a decade and a half, Nia spends just a few months traveling between various resource-producing worlds like his, shipping goods for the powerful Umbai Company. It's not until a mysterious boy falls out of the sky on Kaeda's planet that Nia begins to form a connection she's not willing to walk away from. The boy doesn't talk, but he's drawn to music, particularly a traditional workers' song from Kaeda's world: Take my day, but give me the night. Kaeda teaches the boy to play the flute, and the music speaks to Nia. But there's something else about the boy, something that draws the attention of Fumiko Nakajima, the woman who designed the massive space stations that anchor this corporate-controlled empire. Something dangerous. Something that could change the universe. Spanning a thousand years, this sweeping novel takes the reader from the drowned cities of Old Earth to the vast reaches of Umbai corporate space but always anchors itself in human connection.

Jones, Tanen. [The Better Liar](#) (Ballantine \$27). For the past two months, Leslie Voigt Flores, an accountant, wife, and mother in Albuquerque, N.Mex., has been desperately trying to track down her little sister, Robin Voigt—the black sheep who left home 10 years earlier at 16—so that Leslie can collect \$50,000 from their father's estate. Under the terms of the will, no funds can be dispersed without both siblings being present, a condition designed to force the two to reconcile. After hitting an apparent dead end in Nevada, Leslie runs into a vivacious young woman with an eerie resemblance to Robin, a server/actor wannabe who introduces herself as Mary. Recently fired from her job, Mary has nothing to lose and agrees to help Leslie, but she quickly discovers that Leslie is not telling her the truth, though Mary has secrets of her own. The pair returns to New Mexico to play out a two-handed

con, with Mary pretending to be Robin. A debut in the Trust No One genre. The writing is admirable but I didn't find the obligatory big twist convincing.

Katz, Ani. [A Good Man](#) (Penguin \$17). "The billy club arrived with the first shipment of Christmas presents that year," says Thomas Martin at the start of Katz's powerful and unsettling debut. Thomas seems to have had it all—a loving wife and daughter, an upscale Long Island home, and a successful career in advertising—but he has sacrificed everything in a sudden, violent act of desperation. Thomas proceeds to tell his story in an effort to explain and perhaps find absolution. But the account of family life he provides, though enviable on the surface, contains disturbing revelations—his failure to protect his sister from sexual abuse, the ambiguous role he had in his father's death, his attitude toward the billy club—produces in the reader a sense of foreboding that builds with ever-increasing intensity to the inevitable and brutal climax. Throughout, Thomas insists on believing himself to be a good man, "if deeply flawed." Katz is in full control of mood and pacing. This masterly first novel is sure to attract an audience from outside the mystery/thriller genre."—*PW*

Krentz, Jayne Ann. [The Vanishing](#) (Berkley \$27). Catalina Lark and Olivia LeClair were 16 when they were exploring the caves around the tiny Pacific Northwest town of Fogg Lake. Fifteen years before, an incident in the caves had led to a large percentage of the population's showing paranormal abilities. Fogg Lake residents became extremely wary of strangers, and the town's children were "raised with a degree of caution that bordered on paranoia." That watchfulness may have saved the girls' lives the night they witnessed a murder in the caves. Years later, Catalina and Olivia have left home to start a private investigation agency in Seattle, and while they don't advertise their psychic talents, they do use them in their cases. Then Olivia mysteriously disappears. Catalina is just beginning to search for her when Slater Arganbright arrives in the city. Catalina once worked with Slater's uncle, Victor, the head of an "enterprise dedicated to paranormal research," but it ended badly, so she's not thrilled to meet his nephew. However as the two gather information, it begins to look like Olivia's disappearance is connected to the murder the women witnessed as teens and may be tied to a frightening plot to weaponize paranormal power.

Levitin, Daniel. [Successful Aging](#) (Dutton \$30). Neuroscientist Levitin looks at the science behind what we all can learn from those who age joyously, as well as how to adapt our culture to take full advantage of older people's wisdom and experience. Throughout his exploration of what aging really means, using research from developmental neuroscience and the psychology of individual differences, Levitin reveals resilience strategies and practical, cognitive enhancing tricks everyone should do as they age. *Successful Aging* inspires a powerful new approach to how readers think about our final decades, and it will revolutionize the way we plan for old age as individuals, family members, and citizens within society. Debunking the myth that memory always declines with age; Confirming that "health span"—not "life span"—is what matters; Proving that sixty-plus years is a unique and newly recognized developmental stage; Recommending that people look forward to joy, as reminiscing doesn't promote health. "Debunks the idea that aging inevitably brings infirmity and unhappiness and instead offers a trove of practical, evidence-based guidance for living longer and better."—Daniel H. Pink.

Embrace this, and let me add that a reading program is another road to good health and well being. Resolve to read!

Lovegrove, James. [The Manifestations of Sherlock Holmes](#) (Titan \$14.95). Twelve all new stories. The iconic Holmes and Watson duo find themselves swiftly drawn into a series of puzzling and sinister events: an otherworldly stone whose touch inflicts fatal bleeding; a hellish potion to unlock a person's devilish psyche; a fiendishly clever, almost undetectable method of revenge and many more—including a brand-new Cthulhu Casebooks story.

Lloyd, Catherine. [Death Comes to the Nursery](#) (Kensington \$26). Once known to all in her village as the rector's daughter, Lucy is now a mother herself—to a wonderful eighteen-month-old son, Ned. Upon discovering that she is expecting a second child, Lucy and Major Robert, her war veteran noble husband, are delighted. In anticipation of the new arrival, Lucy is set on expanding her nursery staff. When Agnes, her current nurse, recommends her cousin, it seems like the perfect solution. But trouble arrives along with the new nursery maid from London. Polly's flirtations provoke fisticuffs in the servants' hall and tumult in the village tavern, and on her afternoon off, she fails to return to the Kurland Estate. When a farmer finds her lifeless body in a drainage ditch, Lucy and Robert fear foul play. To their consternation, they learn their new nursery maid was not who they thought. I enjoy this well done, low key Kurland St. Mary series, Regency era, of which this is the 7th.

Luna, Louisa. [The Janes: An Alice Vega Novel](#) (Doubleday \$26.95). Private eye Alice Vegas returns in the sequel to [Two Girls Down](#) (\$16). On the outskirts of San Diego, the bodies of two young women are discovered. They have no names, no IDs, and no family looking for them. Fearing the possibility of a human trafficking ring, the police and FBI reach out to Alice Vega, a private investigator known for finding the missing, for help in finding out who the Janes were—and finding the others who are missing. Alice Vega is a powerful woman whose determination is matched only by her intellect, and, along with her partner Cap, she will stop at nothing to find the Janes before it is too late.

MacDonald, Andrew David. [When We Were Vikings](#) (Gallery \$27). "A beautifully written novel about a young woman—and unabashed Viking enthusiast—born with fetal alcohol syndrome. Zelda feels not quite 'normal,' but as she discovers through her quests, who really is? Perfect for fans of *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* and *The Silver Linings Playbook*" says Library Reads. The Indie Next Pick adds: "Readers rarely have the opportunity to see the world through the eyes of someone with a disability and experience their lives in a meaningful way. We rarely see people with Down syndrome or fetal alcohol syndrome depicted as truly feeling, flesh-and-blood people who experience love, lust, heartbreak, and disappointment, who face challenges as they strive for their dream. Zelda is my new hero! She is undaunted and unflappable as she grapples with her dreams and life experiences. Your journey with her will be all too brief, but it is one that will stay with you long after you read the last page."

Moore, Liz. [Long Bright River](#) (Riverhead \$26.). Mickey Fitzpatrick has been patrolling the 24th District for years. She knows most of the working women by name. She knows what desperation looks like and what people will do when they need a fix. She's become used to finding overdose victims: their numbers are growing every year. But every time she sees someone

sprawled out, slumped over, cold to the touch, she has to pray it's not her sister, Kacey. When the bodies of murdered sex workers start turning up on the Ave, the Chief of Police is keen to bury the news. They're not the kind of victims that generate a whole lot of press anyway. But Mickey is obsessed, dangerously so, with finding the perpetrator—before Kacey becomes the next victim. “A remarkable, profoundly moving novel about the ties that bind and the irrevocable wounds of childhood. It's also a riveting mystery, perfectly paced. I loved every page of it,” says Dennis Lehane. Library Reads adds, “A compelling literary police procedural set in an opioid ravaged Philadelphia neighborhood and centered on the relationship between two sisters whose lives have taken opposite paths. Your heart will ache as you grow to love the complex, strong, and incredibly vulnerable characters. For readers of Tana French and Dennis Lehane.” I am quoting people because I can't find the time to absorb some 496 pages. So, truly a big debut!

Napolitano, Ann. [Dear Edward](#) (Dial \$27) opens with a commercial airline crash, and as Ron Charles in the *Washington Post Book Review* put it, “Don't read this book on a plane. Or if you ever hope to fly again.” Hyperbolic, maybe, but the book follows Edward, the sole survivor and “world's most famous orphan,” and in alternating chapters returns to the final minutes of the crash. Based on a real crash, that of Air France Flight 447, this book should keep readers on the edge of their seats. “Dear Edward is that rare book that breaks your heart and stitches it back together during a reading experience that leaves you profoundly altered for the better. It's about the infinitesimal difference between being a victim and being a survivor, between living and being alive. Don't miss this one.”—Jodi Picoult

Oakley, Colleen. [You Were There Too](#) (Berkley \$16). “Mia is happily married to Harrison, but keeps dreaming about another man. One day her path crosses with this mystery man, and the results are devastating. This is a realistic, engrossing love story suited for fans of Liane Moriarty and Jodi Picoult,” says Library Reads.

Palahniuk, Chuck. [Consider This: Moments in My Writing Life after Which Everything Was Different](#) (Grand Central \$27) takes us behind the scenes of the renowned novelist's writing life, with postcards from decades on the road and the incredible examination of the power of fiction and the art of storytelling.

Parry, Ambrose. [The Art of Dying](#) (Canongate \$26). Set in 1849 Edinburgh, Parry's outstanding sequel to 2018's *The Way of All Flesh* (the author is the husband-and-wife writing team of Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman) finds Will Raven still apprenticed to real-life surgeon James Simpson. Will and his sometime love interest, Sarah Fisher, who was once Simpson's maid, join forces to prove Simpson's innocence after a former assistant and a professor of surgery accuse Simpson of being responsible for the death of a patient through negligence. Simpson's accusers claim that the woman on whom he performed a procedure died of a hemorrhage, as evidenced by the bloodstains on the mattress she died on. Simpson maintains that she died of inflammation. No autopsy was done to spare the feelings of the widower, himself a medical man. Chapters from the perspective of the unnamed killer, who expresses amusement that the murder has caused such a controversy, lend dark counterpoint to the inquiry. This is a terrific book and series.

Patrick, Renee. [Script for Scandal](#) (Severn \$28.99). A meaty, densely packed presentation of Tinseltown riven by by potentially murderous factions on the brink of World War II. Oscar-winning costume designer Edith Head slips her friend Lillian Frost, social secretary to a starstruck millionaire, the script of a film based on a real bank robbery that was committed three years before. According to the script, the robbery was conceived by a police detective, whose partner was killed in pursuit of the thieves. The dirty cop is called Jim Morris, who may be based on Gene Morrow, Lillian's police officer gentleman friend who investigated the robbery. As press interest in the film heats up, rumors start flying about Gene's involvement. “Patrick skillfully stitches together bits of authentic Hollywood history and provides star turns for the likes of Bette Davis and Fred MacMurray in this exuberant tale of murder, revenge, and sartorial splendor.” Can be Signed May 16 at our annual Cozy Con but because supply is limited, please buy it now

Quartey, Kwei. [The Missing American](#) (Soho \$25.95) launches an evocative new series starring Emma Djan, a young cop-turned-private eye in Accra, Ghana. (Quartey, a physician in California, is a Ghanaian native.) She's in search of a widowed American who has vanished after being lured to Ghana by an online scam artist. Meanwhile, Djan also handles the (seemingly unrelated) assassination of an anti-corruption presidential candidate. “The adventures of a tenacious African female sleuth will likely ring bells for fans of Alexander McCall Smith's best-selling Mma. Precious Ramotswe mysteries. *The Missing American's* unflinching portrayal of Ghanaian criminals, their fetish priest handlers and corruption at the highest levels makes this intriguing debut a more bracing antidote to its cozier cousin.”—*LA Times Book Review*

A Library Read Pick finds that Quartey “launches an evocative new series starring Emma Djan, a young cop-turned-private eye in Accra, Ghana. (Quartey, a physician in California, is a Ghanaian native.) She's in search of a widowed American who has vanished after being lured to Ghana by an online scam artist. Meanwhile, Djan also handles the (seemingly unrelated) assassination of an anti-corruption presidential candidate.”

Rankin, Ian. [Westwind](#) (LittleBrown \$27—Signed copies may be available the end of March when Rankin visits the East Coast). Rankin fans ready for a break from Inspector John Rebus' inimitably dour Edinburgh will welcome this reprinting of a state-of-the-art high-tech international thriller from 1990. As the U.S. prepares to pull all its troops from Europe in a prophetic “America First” move, two apparently unrelated incidents provoke panic among the Brits who face abandonment by their partners in the historic special relationship. One is the period of 3 minutes and 40 seconds during which the satellite Zephyr goes dark, losing all contact with its monitors on the ground. Although it soon returns from the blackness, controller Paul Vincent is deeply shaken by the interruption. He shares his fears with fellow monitor Martin Hepton, and soon both of them are up to their floppy drives in danger. The other problem is more serious from the get-go: The space shuttle Argos crashes to Earth in the middle of a heretofore routine flight, killing all five members of the American crew and leaving only Maj. Michael Dreyfuss, the sole British participant, alive. Like Vincent, Dreyfuss instantly senses that the failure of the craft on which he's hitched a ride is only the tip of a much larger iceberg.

Saavedra, Carola. [Blue Flowers](#) (Riverhead \$26). The award-winning Brazilian novelist crafts a case of obsession and mistaken identity told in part through letters sent to the wrong man. Marcos has just been through a divorce and moved into a new apartment. He feels alienated from his ex-wife, from his daughter, from society; everything feels flat and fake to him. He begins to receive letters at his new address from an anonymous troubled woman who signs off as A. and who clearly believes she is writing to the former tenant, her ex-lover, in the aftermath of a violent heartbreak. Marcos falls under the spell of the manic, hypnotic missives and for the first time in years, something moves him. The narrative alternates between the letters detailing the dissolution of A.'s relationship, and Marcos' "An enchanting and disturbing epistolary monologue charged with danger, mystery, desire, and longing, as seen through the eyes of a woman with nothing left to lose. This novel reminded me of Marais and Carrière in all the best ways—but better, and deeper, for its honesty and pure feeling. I can't stop thinking about it."

Scharer, Whitney. [The Age of Light](#) (\$16.99). 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.

✎Tudor, CJ. [The Other People](#) (Random \$27). Nightmarish is the way I describe Tudor's thrillers. They are not for me. Gabe is sitting in traffic when he notices the rusty car ahead. Suddenly a young girl who looks just like his daughter pops up from the backseat and mouths the word daddy. Gabe knows it couldn't possibly be his daughter Izzy, who is home with her mum. The car speeds off and Gabe weaves in and out of traffic in pursuit to no avail. Arriving home he discovers that his daughter and wife have been brutally murdered. Irrationally, Gabe is convinced that the girl in the car was Izzy, so he devotes his life to roaming the motorway searching for her and the car with the help of a mysterious man, the Samaritan. Meanwhile, Fran and her seven-year-old daughter Alice are running for their lives, trying to stay undercover, but how do you keep a child safe who sees visions of a mysterious girl in every mirror—visions that lead to mirrors shattering, near-drownings, and narcolepsy.

[The Hiding Place](#) (\$17). 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. For Joe, the worst moment of his life wasn't the day his sister went missing. It was the day she came back. Tudor's books are too grim for me, which puts me at odds with the folks at Thrillerfest who gave her the Best First Thriller award for [The Chalk Man](#) (\$16).

✎Weinberg, Kate. [The Truants](#) (Putnam \$26). Jess Walker has come to a concrete campus under the flat gray skies of East Anglia for one reason: to be taught by the mesmerizing and rebellious Dr. Lorna Clay, whose seminars soon transform Jess's thinking on life, love, and Agatha Christie through a course.. Swept up in Lorna's thrall, Jess falls in with a tightly knit group of rule-breakers—Alec, a courageous South African journalist with a nihilistic streak; Georgie, a seductive, pill-popping aristocrat; and Nick, a handsome geologist with layers of his own. But this is not a detective story like a Christie although there's a bit of her in the end game. Instead it's one of those tangled relationship studies where lives are shaped by individuals' pasts and then by the hothouse of academe. A very British novel where not a lot happens and nuance rules more than action although I rather like the serpent.

✎Wilde, Darcie. [And Dangerous to Know](#) (Kensington \$26). A Regency with a structure we've seen before—a gentle raised young woman reduced to near penury by a profligate parent but restricted from paid work who takes up private commissions. A body found at the gates of a noble house pairs Rosalind Thorne with a Bow Street Runner on a discreet inquiry. The reason to read this is if you are interested in Lord Byron and the scandals around him and also the family of the Melbournes, notably William Lamb, husband of Lady Caroline, lover of Byron and thought to be mad, who eventually became Prime Minister and guided the young Victoria.

White, Christian. [The Wife and the Widow](#) (St Martins \$26.99). This Australian crime novel opens with that not unfamiliar situation: a man supposedly off at a medical conference in London does not emerge from the plane on which he was flying home to I think near Melbourne. His wife and daughter, at the airport, are baffled. Soon his employer, a palliative death facility, reveals a further surprise. When the family including the missing man's parents reports him gone to the police, they don't get much response. But then an alarm company alerts them to a possibility. While the underlying motivation for all this is also not original, the way the story is told is...and delivers a surprise. So definitely worth reading.

MORE JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

French, Tana. [In the Woods](#) (\$9.99). The Irish bestseller's first novel, a First Mystery Book of the Month for us back in 2007, gets a small paperback edition as it airs as a Starz TV series. As dusk approaches a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984, mothers begin to call their children home. But on this warm evening, three children do not return from the dark and silent woods. When the police arrive, they find only one of the children gripping a tree trunk in terror, wearing blood-filled sneakers, and unable to recall a single detail of the previous hours. Twenty years later, the found boy, Rob Ryan, is a detective on the Dublin Murder Squad and keeps his past a secret. But when a twelve-year-old girl is found murdered in the same woods, he and Detective Cassie Maddox—his partner and closest friend—find themselves investigating a case chillingly similar to the previ-

ous unsolved mystery. Now, with only snippets of long-buried memories to guide him, Ryan has the chance to uncover both the mystery of the case before him and that of his own shadowy past.

Fluke, Joanne. [Chocolate Cream Pie Murder](#) (\$7.99). Hannah Swensen #24. The filming of a television special at broken-hearted Hannah Swensen's bakery is complicated by her shift ex, an intrusive gang of bodyguards and an untimely murder that compels her alliance with an old flame.

Hillier, Jennifer. [Jar of Hearts](#) (\$7.99). Winner of the 2019 Thriller Best Novel Award. Fourteen years after Angela's disappearance, her remains are discovered near her friend Georgina's childhood home, so when the latter is arrested, Detective Kaiser, who was friends with both girls in high school, must unravel the truth. *PW* had this to say "Hillier skillfully maintains the suspense through well-timed extended flashbacks and plenty of shocking, if sometimes improbable, twists. She's less successful in creating convincing characters; Geo's unhappily platonic high school bud turned Seattle PD detective Kaiser Brody functions as little more than a plot facilitator. Despite these issues, there's no denying her page-turner's grab-you-by-the-throat power."

Johnson, Craig. [Death Without Company](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Walt Longmire #2. When a resident at the Durant Home for Assisted Living is found poisoned, Sheriff Longmire finds her death proving as dramatic as her life, which was marked by connections to the coal-bed methane industry, a relationship with Longmire's predecessor, and an abusive husband. *Kirkus* ended their review with "Pile on thermal underwear, fire up the four-wheel drive and head for Durant. Walt and his idiosyncratic crew are terrific company-droll, sassy and surprisingly tenderhearted."

McKinlay, Jenn. [Buried to the Brim](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Hat Shop #6. Signed for us February 13. To clear Betty Wentworth's name in the murder of a dog-food sponsor, Vivian and Scarlett must enter the Pets and Wellness Society's annual dog show in Betty's place and dig up the dirt on the competition in order to collar the real killer

Perkins, SC. [Murder Once Removed](#) (\$7.99). Ancestry Detective #1. When a high-profile billionaire makes a history-changing claim on live television, genealogist Lucy Lancaster of Austin, Texas begins an investigation dating back to the mid-19th century before she is confronted by a modern descendant who would protect family secrets. *LJ* ended with "The winner of Minotaur's Malice Domestic Best First Traditional Mystery Novel competition, this debut features an intelligent genealogist detective, a strong supporting cast, some romantic tension, and information about Texas history that should appeal to readers of Rett MacPherson's genealogy mysteries as well as cozy lovers who prefer a dash of history in their mysteries."

Slaughter, Karin/Lee Child. [Cleaning the Gold](#) (Harper \$7.99). Jack Reacher and Will Trent short story crossover. Going undercover for an assignment at Fort Knox to solve a 22-year-old murder, Will Trent investigates chief suspect Jack Reacher, who would bring down a dangerous criminal ring at the heart of America's military.

MORE JANUARY SMALL PAPERBACKS

The inclusion of the publisher indicates a paperback original

Cahoon, Lynn. [A Field Guide to Homicide](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Cat Latimer #5. When their outing into the mountains leads to the

discovery of a dead man whom her boyfriend recognizes from his military days, Cat Latimer must solve this mystery before the killer takes a hike and claims another victim.

Campbell, Rick. [Treason](#) (\$9.99). The Russian military overthrows the president in a coup after he refuses a plan to retake Ukraine and the Baltic States leaving the U.S. scrambling to rescue the imprisoned leader and help take back control before a continental war erupts.

Childs, Laura. [Broken Bone China](#) (\$7.99). Tea Shop Mystery #20. Theodosia and Drayton cater a hot-air-balloon rally, where a horrific drone attack kills a software CEO in possession of a rare historical flag. Includes recipes and tea-time tips.

Collins, Kate. [Statute of Limitations](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Athena Spencer must live up to her warrior goddess namesake to protect her family from a killer and save their community from ruin after the powerful Talbot family threatens to raze the shops on Greene Street, resulting in murder.

Cummins, Fiona. [The Family Next Door](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Moving into their new home, Garrick and Olivia Lockwood soon discover that the darkest secrets reside on quiet, ordinary streets like theirs—and behind the doors of well-kept houses and neighbors' friendly faces.

Deveraux, Jude. [A Justified Murder](#) (\$8.99). When a longtime resident is found murdered by three possible methods, unlikely friends Sara, Kate and Jack assist the authorities, only to discover unexpected realities about the victim's true nature.

Finder, Joseph. [Company Man](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Despised after a massive layoff at his company, corporate CEO Nick Conover struggles to protect his two children from local hostilities but finds things spinning out of control when a stalker begins threatening his family and Nick is blamed for a murder.

Fox, Candice. [Redemption Point](#) (\$9.99). When the father of a kidnapped girl launches a plan to kill those he holds responsible, Ted Conkaffey races to identify the real abductor; while private detective Amanda Pharrel and Pip Sweeney conduct the latter's first homicide investigation.

Haseldine, Jane. [You Fit the Pattern](#) (Kensington \$9.99). When a string of grisly murders of women occur in the city, crime writer Julia Gooden investigates, only to find that the killer is hot on her trail.

Jackson, Lisa. [Unspoken](#) (\$7.99). Having left her hometown years before with her world shattered and her illegitimate baby dead, Shelby Cole decides to return home when she begins to receive anonymous letters that claim that her daughter is alive.

Jones, Sandie. [The Other Woman](#) (\$9.99). A blissful romance between Adam and Emily is challenged by Adam's manipulative mother, who resorts to dire measures to keep all other women out of her son's life.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Pub](#) (\$7.99). Irish Village #4. When competing card sharps stir up Siobhán O'Sullivan's quiet Irish village, a poker tournament turns into a game of Hangman.

Ryan, Annelise. [Dead of Winter](#) (\$7.99). Mattie Winston #10. Before she can even get settled into her new life in Wisconsin, medico legal death investigator Mattie Winston is drawn into the

ruthless world of human trafficking while investigating the murder of a young girl whose little sister has gone missing.

Ryan, Sofie. [Claw Enforcement](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Second Chance Cats #7. Local squabbles about property development have the town of North Harbor, Maine in quite a state of drama, and it seems like someone may even be upset enough to kill. So, when a local man involved in the real estate quagmire falls over dead at a reception to celebrate the harbor front's redevelopment, Sarah Grayson gets roped in to investigate by her own IT expert, Mr. P., who has long known the victim's stepfather.

Slaughter, Karin. [Tryptych](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Troubled by a rocky marriage and the recent loss of his partner, Atlanta detective Michael Ormewood launches an investigation into the savage murder of a local woman, and ex-con John Shelley may be the key to solving the case.

Stuart, Amy. [Still Water](#) (St Martin's \$7.99). After a mother and her son disappear from their town, Claire is hired to find them, but in her search she uncovers the tragic family history of their main benefactor and a disturbing secret about why the police are not interested in solving the case.

Wilson, F. Paul. [The Void Protocol](#) (\$9.99). A conclusion to the trilogy that began with *Panacea* and *The God Gene* follows the transformations of a confiscated, mysterious technology, hidden in a bunker lab below the grounds of Lakehurst Naval Air Station on the edge of the New Jersey Pine Barrens, which has been slowly changing the world throughout the decades since World War II.