

# BOOKNEWS from

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## HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL...

### AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

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#### MONDAY DECEMBER 2 7:00 PM

##### BOOKS AT THE BILTMORE

A Christmas Party at the Arizona Biltmore all decked out for the holidays

Michael Connelly signs [The Gods of Guilt](#) (LittleBrown \$28)

Mickey Haller

#### THURSDAY DECEMBER 5 7:00 PM

Martin Cruz Smith signs [Tatiana](#) (SimonSchuster \$25.99)

Arkady Renko

#### SATURDAY DECEMBER 7 2:00 PM

Eddie Johnson, announcer for the Phoenix Suns, signs [You Big Dummy](#) (\$16) Athlete's Simple Guide to a Successful Career

#### TUESDAY DECEMBER 10 7:00 PM

Christopher Reich signs [Prince of Risk](#) (Knopf \$25.95) Dec.

Thriller Pick

#### WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 11 7:00 PM

James Rollins & Rebecca Cantrell sign [Innocent Blood](#)

(Morrow \$27.99) Order of the Sanguines #2

#### THURSDAY DECEMBER 12 7:00 PM

Gini Koch signs [Alien Research](#) (DAW \$7.99) Alien Series

#### SATURDAY DECEMBER 14 10:30 AM

Coffee and Crime discusses Cleo Coyle's [Holiday Buzz](#) (\$7.99)

Coffeehouse Crime

#### SATURDAY DECEMBER 14 1:00 PM NEW MEXICO PARTY

Rob will cook up something special featuring chiles

Steven Havill signs [Nightzone](#) (Poisoned Pen \$24.95) Posadas

County, NM

#### THURSDAY DECEMBER 19 7:00 PM

##### Hardboiled Crime Club Christmas Party

The club discusses Jonathan Latimer's [Solomon's Vineyard](#)

(\$14.95)

#### SATURDAY DECEMBER 21 4:00 PM

Mary Anna Evans signs [Rituals](#) (Poisoned Pen \$24.95) Faye

Longchamp

#### CLOSED DECEMBER 25 and JANUARY 1

(Open 10-5 December 24 and December 31)

#### 2013 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS

##### Fiction

James McBride, *The Good Lord Bird* (Riverhead Books)

##### Nonfiction

George Packer, *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

##### Poetry

Mary Szybist, *Incarnadine: Poems* (Graywolf Press)

*Young People's Literature*

Cynthia Kadohata, *The Thing About Luck* (Atheneum)

#### MORE CWA DAGGERS (UK)

CWA Goldsboro Gold Dagger: Mick Herron, [Dead Lion](#) (\$25.95)

Ian Fleming Steel Dagger: Roger Hobbs, [Ghostman](#) (\$14.95)

John Creasey Dagger: Derek B Miller, [Norwegian by Night](#) (\$26 or \$32 Signed)

#### 2013 HAMMETT PRIZE

Howard Owen, [Oregon Hill Signed](#) (\$29)

#### 2013 NERO WOLFE AWARD

Chris Knopf, [Dead Anyway](#) (\$27.99)

#### 2013 SHAMUS WINNERS

*Best Hardcover P.I. Novel*: Robert Crais, [Taken](#) (\$9.99 Jan)

*Best First P.I. Novel*: Michael Sears, [Black Fridays](#) (\$9.99/\$26 Signed)

*Best Original Paperback P.I. Novel*: Alison Gaylin, [And She Was](#) (\$7.99)

*The Eye* (Lifetime Achievement) Award: Loren D. Estleman

## EVENT BOOKS

Connelly, Michael. [The Gods of Guilt](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Critics are loving this new Mickey Haller novel. “A gripping novel, both in the courtroom and outside of it, and a testament to the melancholy maturing of Mickey Haller.”—*Booklist* Starred Review. “...plenty of drama, danger, and suspense in this gem of a legal thriller.”—*PW* Starred Review Mickey Haller gets the text, “Call me ASAP—187,” and the California penal code for murder immediately gets his attention. A high-tech pimp is accused of murdering one of his girls. When Mickey learns that the victim was his own former client, a prostitute he thought he had rescued and put on the straight and narrow path, he knows he is on the hook for this one. He soon finds out that she was back in LA and back in the life. And that far from saving her, Mickey may have been the one who put her in danger... For the audio version [Gods of Guilt](#) (Grove \$40). For other works by Connelly, [click here](#).

Evans, Mary Anna. [Rituals](#) (Poisoned Pen \$24.95). Every mystery from the pen of Mary Anna Evans surprises with its unorthodox mix of elements. In her eighth, *Rituals*, she mixes archaeology (museum cataloguing), with Spiritualism. Rosebower, a rural town in upstate New York not far from Seneca Falls, was founded by Spiritualists. Its citizens still talk to the dead on a regular basis—and not just for the benefit of the tourists who flock there. Spiritual tourism is the town’s main income stream. But Faye isn’t in Rosebower to commune with spirits. She’s there with her adopted teenage daughter, a prodigy on several counts, to complete a project for her fledgling firm: assessing a (questionable) museum collection. In a spirit of communal exploration, Faye and Amande attend a séance at the home of elderly Tilda Armistead, a powerhouse in Rosebower as well as a respected medium. An hour after her crystal ball shows Faye things no rational mind can explain, Tilda is dead. The evidence says that someone trapped Tilda in a small room, nailing its one door shut before setting Tilda’s Victorian home afire. There is no possible way for Tilda to have escaped the blaze, let alone drive for miles before finding Faye and dying in her arms. Yet Tilda did. So here is Faye, surrounded by people who had reason to kill Tilda. Anywhere but Rosebower, these people would be dismissed as crazy. As Faye watches the psychics and charlatans jockey for power, and sends an SOS to her shrewd husband Joe, Tilda’s sister, Myrna, is slowly dying.... Also in trade paper: [Rituals](#) (\$14.95).

Havill, Steven F. [Nightzone](#) (Poisoned Pen \$24.95). I meet a lot of authors in the science-fiction/fantasy realm. “World creation” is their game and it’s fascinating to hear them speak about how they do it. Steven Havill is an ace at this creation game. Falknerian too. I’d put his Las Posadas County down in New Mexico’s boot heel up against William Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi any day, and add in an analogy to Tony Hillerman’s Hillerman Country. For years we’ve sold hundreds of copies of maps to Hillerman Country at The Poisoned Pen; it’s a real place. We can’t do it for Posadas County, although we could point out Ruidoso and Lincoln, but it is a place equally real for Havill’s readers. Havill is an author who loves to write about how things work. He and I spoke a book or so back about all the features he’s awarded to this

imagined place. And he pointed out to me that the one thing he’d missed was a railroad. So here in *NightZone*, we get not only a narrow gauge line turned into a tourist attraction—think the Verde Canyon train here in Arizona, or the train from Durango to Silverton, Colorado—but a nifty little cable car running passengers up to the top of a huge mesa where an observatory complex built to eclipse the Very Large Array is the project of aging rancher Miles Waddell. What’s up with Waddell? While not hardscrabble, ranching in Posadas County has been mostly marginal. Recently, Waddell has fallen heir to about a third of a billion dollars and he’s elected to build a dream on that flat-top mesa. Dreams are dazzling. They’re also dangerous for not everyone shares in them. The first event occurs one night when two eco-terrorists make a statement by chain-sawing down power lines that feed Waddell’s development. One of the two men is killed by a bucking pylon. First, a flare. Then, darkness. From 20 miles away, former Posadas Sheriff William K. Gastner spots a pair of headlights as the dead man’s companion speeds from the scene. Charges quickly include murder when the fleeing conspirator is stopped by a cop and guns the lawman down. Hours later a second shooting occurs when Gastner stops to assist Sgt. Jackie Taber during an unrelated traffic stop. Always the last to pull a trigger, the now 74-year old Gastner becomes the focus of a second investigation by the over-stressed District Attorney and Sheriff’s Department. Meanwhile, Waddell’s troubles with rumor-mongers and anti-government thugs continue. A tired Gastner is unwilling to work security for *NightZone*, but security has become essential. We meet the usual suspects on both sides of the law as the narrative rolls on, reinforcing the whole sense of community readers get from this series. We also have the treat of young musical prodigy Francisco Guzman, Gastner’s godson, arriving on a national tour with members of his conservatory to put on a concert. The concert alone makes reading this moving book a special experience. [Nightzone](#) (\$14.95). For the earlier Posadas County novels, [click here](#).

Johnson, Eddie. [You Big Dummy](#) (\$16). Born in Chicago, with 17 years in the NBA and one in Greece, Johnson won the NBA 6TH man award in 1988-89 and retired as the highest scoring player ever off the bench. (19,202 points, this is his first book and his goal is to provide a “simple” Guide laying the groundwork for improving athletic and leadership abilities and targets financial and personal conduct issues. The stories and references are universal, designed to reach an athlete or fan regardless of his or her sport.

Koch, Gini. [Alien Research](#) (DAW \$7.99). When rumors of a new super-drug surface, the FBI comes to Jeff and Kitty Katt-Martini for help. It becomes quickly apparent that the drug is merely the tip of a deadly iceberg and a much more insidious plan is underway involving Titan Security, Gaultier Enterprises, and YatesCorp. As newly discovered A-Cs and hybrids begin to surface, each with expanded and deadly talents, more and more signs point to a new evil genius who’s using the A-Cs and their enemies both as guinea pigs. Then Area 51 and the Dulce Science Center go silent while Alpha Team, Airborne, and most of the worldwide A-C Security team are there for training. And if that’s not bad enough, Centaurion Division is hit with more bad, and deadly, news: Chernobog the Ultimate isn’t a hacker myth, he’s

a real person—and he’s on the bad guys’ side. This delightful romp has many interesting twists and turns as it glances at racism, politics, and religion en route. It will have fanciers of cinematic SciFi parodies referencing *Men in Black*, *Ghost Busters*, and *X-Men*. Meanwhile, readers who like the smart SF silliness of Douglas Adams’ *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* novels, Lois McMaster Bujold’s *Vorkosigan Saga*, Pat Murphy’s *There and Back Again*, and A. Lee Martinez’s *The Automatic Detective* will find it distinctively different, for Koch’s humor is more in the vein of MaryJanice Davidson in her *Undead* series, but darned amusing, all the same.”—*Booklist*. For Koch’s earlier work, [click here](#).

Reich, Christopher. [The Prince of Risk](#) (Knopf \$25.95). Talk about a slam-bang opener. And this book is by chance publishing during the hearings for a new head of the Fed—although Janet Yellen would not be replacing a murdered Ben S. Bernacke. Bobby Astor is a fearless New York hedge-fund gunslinger on the verge of making his biggest killing ever. But everything changes when his father, the venerable chief executive of the New York Stock Exchange, is murdered along with the head of the Federal Reserve when their sabotaged limo careens wildly on the South Lawn of the White House and the Secret Service reacts. In the moments before his death, Astor’s father sends Bobby a mystifying text message... a single word. Bobby, long estranged from his father, has no idea what the word means. As events roll, Bobby encounters another estranged figure from his past: Special Agent Alex Forza of the FBI, on a mission to block infiltrators into New York City. Meanwhile in Iceland, a zillionaire has bought up land in the remote interior, ostensibly to construct a posh resort, but actually as a global listening post. The action here is hot, events feel ripped from headlines, and mercifully there is no paranormal element in this well-constructed and suspenseful thriller which is surprisingly terrifying. It is thus our **December Thriller Club Pick**.

Rollins, James/Rebecca Cantrell. [Innocent Blood](#) (Morrow \$27.99). Order of the Sanguines #2. A vicious attack at a ranch in California thrusts archaeologist Erin Granger back into the folds of the Sanguines, an immortal order founded on the blood of Christ and tasked with protecting the world from the beasts haunting its shadows. Following the prophetic words found in the Blood Gospel—a tome written by Christ and lost for centuries—Erin must again join forces with Army Sergeant Jordan Stone and Father Rhun Korza to discover and protect a boy believed to be an angel given flesh. But an enigmatic enemy of immense power and terrifying ambition seeks the same child—not to save the world, but to hasten its destruction. For any hope of victory, Erin must discover the truth behind Christ’s early years and understand His first true miracle, an event wrapped in sin and destruction, an act that yet remains unfulfilled and holds the only hope for the world. The search for the truth will take Erin and the others across centuries and around the world, from the dusty plains of the Holy Land to the icy waters of the Arctic Ocean, from the catacombs of Rome to an iron fortress in the Mediterranean Sea, and at last to the very gates of Hell itself. Start with [The Blood Gospel](#) (\$27.99; \$9.99).

Smith, Martin Cruz. [Tatiana](#) (SimonSchuster \$25.99). Smith, like Reich, imagines a thriller rooted in real news. Fearless reporter Tatiana Petrovna falls to her death from a sixth-floor window in Moscow the same week that a mob billionaire, Grisha Grigorenko, is shot and buried with the trappings due a lord. No

one else makes the connection, but Arkady Renko is transfixed by the tapes he discovers of Tatiana’s voice describing horrific crimes in words that are at odds with the Kremlin’s official versions. The trail leads to Kaliningrad, a Cold War “secret city” that is separated by hundreds of miles from the rest of Russia. The more Arkady delves into Tatiana’s past, the more she leads him into a surreal world of wandering sand dunes, abandoned children, and a notebook written in the personal code of a dead translator. Finally, in a lethal race to uncover what the translator knew, Arkady makes a startling discovery that draws him still deeper into Tatiana’s past—and, paradoxically, into Russia’s future, where bulletproof cars, poets, corruption of the Baltic Fleet, and a butcher for hire combine to give Kaliningrad the “distinction” of having the highest crime rate in Russia. Complex, filled with black humor and some romance. Critics rave: “It would be a treat to watch the evening news with Martin Cruz Smith’s fabulist’s eye and see current events colorized through Renko’s dramatic filter. In *Tatiana*, Smith continues the tradition he began at the end of the Brezhnev era with *Gorky Park*, using Russia as his game board to make geopolitical conspiracy, well... fun. *Tatiana* ought to come with a decoder ring so readers who share the author’s fondness for brainteasers can try to crack the translator’s code on their own. Then again, struggling slowly from benighted dread into the glimmering dawn of fictional resolution is the reward of reading an Arkady Renko thriller. Figuring everything out too quickly would only spoil the game.”—*NY Times*. Riveting. Smith spins a complex plot involving the Russian mafia, a teenage genius struggling to crack the code of Petrovna’s notebook, and an excursion to Kaliningrad... The most intriguing ‘character’ after Renko is contemporary Russia—freer than it was at the height of the cold war, but at least as corrupt and vastly more unequal—into which Smith offers many insights.”—*PW* Starred Review. Order Smith’s previous work by [clicking here](#). Smith has recently revealed his battle with Parkinson’s disease which he may wish to discuss as part of his writing (and other) life.

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*Books*

Bradlee, Ben Jr. [Kid, The Immortal Life of Ted Williams](#) (Little Brown \$30). Williams was the best hitter in baseball history. His batting average of .406 in 1941 has not been topped since, and no player who has hit more than 500 home runs has a higher career batting average. Those totals would have been even higher if Williams had not left baseball for nearly five years in the prime of his career to serve as a Marine pilot in WWII and Korea. He hit home runs farther than any player before him—and traveled a long way himself. Born in 1918 in San Diego, Ted would spend most of his life disguising his Mexican heritage. During his 22 years with the Boston Red Sox, Williams electrified crowds

across America—and shocked them, too: his notorious clashes with the press and fans threatened his reputation. Yet while he was a God in the batter’s box, he was profoundly human once he stepped away from the plate. His ferocity came to define his troubled domestic life. While baseball might have been straightforward for Ted Williams, life was not. Nor his afterlife—his family won’t let him rest in peace.

Collins, Billy. [Aimless Love](#) (Random \$26). New and selected poems from the two-term US Poet Laureate.

Gooderham, Wayne. [Dedicated to... Signed](#) (Bantam UK \$20). Books are amongst the most personal of gifts. The book we choose to give a loved one is informed by our intimate knowledge of their personal histories and their tastes. Often, when we gift books, we love to explain the meaning behind our present by writing an inscription within its pages. Ordinarily, we hope the gift and its message will be enjoyed, placed lovingly on its new owner’s bookshelf and treasured forever. This is not always the case, though ... Gooderham is fascinated by second-hand books and curates a growing collection of those featuring intriguing inscriptions. The messages he finds range from the awkward scratchings of adolescent infatuation, to the resentful recriminations of a love affair gone sour and offer illuminating glimpses into their books’ own secret histories. This beautifully presented book will feature the very best from the author’s collection of dedications alongside the covers of the works in which they were found. From *Animal Farm* to *Pride and Prejudice*, there’s something here to please every book lover’s taste.

Hart, Matthew. [Gold](#) (SimonSchuster \$26). I absolutely loved Hart’s *Diamond*. He’s back with gold....a history, a hunt, a fever. True.

Kelly, Chris. [Downton Tabby](#) (SimonSchuster \$10). A parody of the TV drama featuring posh English cats.

Meltzer, Brad. [History Decoded: The Ten Greatest Conspiracies of All Time](#) (Workman \$24.95). A richly illustrated book where each chapter invites the reader along for an interactive experience through the addition of removable facsimile documents—the evidence! It’s a treasure trove for conspiracy buffs, a Griffin and Sabine for history lovers. For example: Is Fort Knox empty? Why was Hitler so intent on capturing the Roman “Spear of Destiny”? What’s the government hiding in Area 51? Where did the Confederacy’s \$19 million in gold and silver go at the end of the Civil War?

Munro, Alice. [Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Love](#) (\$15.95). From this year’s Nobel Prize winner for Literature.

Paterniti, Michael. [The Telling Room](#) (Random \$27). I never finished this gem back in July but snatched some time for it thinking it fits the season now—for foodies. However it turns out to be less about making a spectacular Spanish cheese in a tiny hillside village (caves are involved) than it is about the making of a writer (Paterniti, author of *Driving Mr. Albert* and a wealth of magazine pieces), the exploration of a geography (Spain) and a culture and a whole host of other things. As a grad student in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Paterniti got a job editing the newsletter put out by a hugely successful local deli. At first he erred in making it in his own voice, but then he learned to improve that of owner Ari. “There was something about all of it, not just

the perfection of Ari’s prose, but the story he told—the rustic cheesemaker, the ancient family recipe, the old-fashioned process by which the cheese was born, even the idiosyncratic tin in which it was packaged—that I couldn’t stop thinking about, even as I went on to contend with misplaced modifiers in a passage about marzipan.” Fabulous, no? Do not miss this delicious book.

Sims, Michael, ed. [The Dead Witness](#) (Walker \$20 trade paper). From 2012, a book I recently reread (some of the stories). It’s a great gift for any reader and includes class detective stories, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, from British and American authors: Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Wilkie Collins, Dickens, Poe, Doyle, and some you may not know like Mary Fortune. I didn’t know the whole roster’s work and so it was a discovery. Nice for a Young Adult reader too.

Suchet, David. [Poirot and Me Signed](#) (Headline \$43). A memoir.

Waters, Alice. [Art of Simple Food II Signed](#) (Crown \$35). Yum!

#### *Recommendations from Dana Stabenow*

Goodman, Matthew. [Eighty Days](#) (Random \$27.99). “On November 14, 1889, muckraking reporter Nellie Bly left New York City on the first leg of a round-the-world race to beat Phineas Fogg’s time of eighty days. Fogg, you will remember, was a fictional character created by French author Jules Verne. Bly would not know until she reached Hong Kong that she was also in a race with a real person, another American writer named Elizabeth Bisland. Bly had three days to get ready, Elizabeth about twelve hours, Bly was traveling east, Bisland west. Bly’s trip was funded by her employer, Joseph Pulitzer’s *The World* newspaper, Bisland’s by *The Cosmopolitan* magazine, for which she wrote freelance. The two women could not have been more unlike, as the trip was all eager Bly’s idea and reluctant Bisland was fairly dropped in it by her editor. Both publications were in it to raise circulation. This was a time when women were, quote, cherished, end quote out of anything that had anything to do with anything other than marriage and children. Just being reporters put Bly and Bisland beyond the pale.”—Dana Stabenow. Both of us also recommend the delightful [Frederica](#) (\$13.95) by Georgette Heyer whose Regency novels explore some of the dawning Age of Wonder: in this one a boy who at one point stows away on a hot air balloon!

Holmes, Richard. [Falling Upwards: How We Took to the Air](#) (Knopf \$25). Years ago I catalogued a collection on the Montgolfier brothers, early balloonists, while working at the Library of Congress. Fabulous. I, Barbara, am not at all surprised that Dana loves this book. She writes, “‘Romantic science can be dated roughly, and certainly symbolically, between two celebrated voyages of exploration...’ As in Captain Cook’s first expedition, begun in 1768, and Charles Darwin’s voyage begun in 1831. ‘This is the time I have called the Age of Wonder,’ Richard Holmes writes in his book of the same name, ‘and with any luck we have not yet quite outgrown it.’ Holmes hasn’t, he is positively giddy with delight over Joseph Banks discovering surfing in Tahiti. He falls head over heels in love with William Herschel’s sister Caroline, so essential to Herschel’s exploration of the heavens through a series of homemade telescopes, the only kind of telescope to be had at the time. The story of Humphrey Davy inventing the safety lamp that saved so many coal miners’ lives is so real he might have been an eyewitness, including all the times Davy blows up at Michael Faraday, not to mention all the times he blows up his lab. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley,

and Keats were fascinated and inspired by these new scientific explorations and discoveries, and employed many of them as images in their work. There is a whole chapter on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where Holmes traces the Monster's beginnings to lectures given at the Royal Society in London, which Shelley attended and which included the attempt by one philosopher to use a primitive form of electricity to shock a corpse back to life. Eeew. Holmes writes of what may have been our most polymathic age in deft and witty prose.

Reiss, Tom. [The Black Count](#) (\$16). "Born in 1762 on the French sugar plantation hellhole of Sainte-Domingue (now Haiti) of a French wastrel nobleman and a slave woman, Alex Dumas as a possession of his father would be literally pawned for a ticket back to France in 1775. Eight months later his father, having regained his patrimony, not that he ever lifted a finger to support or nourish it in any way, redeems his son and brings him to France, there to be raised as a gentleman. Highly intelligent and physically gifted, he becomes an outstanding swordsman. He enlists as a common dragoon in France's Revolutionary Army, and through his own merits on the battlefield rises at a dizzying pace to the rank of general, in command of his own armies. Because France has become the first nation on earth to emancipate men of every color, race and creed. "It was all made possible," writes Reiss. The tragedy of General Dumas is that he goes to fight in Napoleon's army in Egypt a free man. On the way home from that debacle Dumas' ship puts into the Kingdom of Naples for repairs and due to some confusingly chaotic local ructions he is imprisoned for two years in pretty dire conditions. Which imprisonment his son, Alexandre Dumas, uses as the basis of his novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo*. You'll even find out who the Abbe Faria was in real life. When Dumas is finally released, his health is shot and his world has changed. His republic has been supplanted by a three-man consulate, itself soon to become a one-emperor monarchy again. Due to the machinations of Napoleon (whom if you didn't despise before you will when you're done with this book), slavery is reinstated across his once-free nation and all its properties. Including Sainte-Domingue, Dumas' island birthplace."

*Gifts for the season...*

Amory, Cleveland. [The Cat Who Came for Christmas](#) (\$14). A seasonal favorite. T'was the night before Christmas when a bedraggled stray white feline entered the home, and heart, of Cleveland Amory. At first the relationship seemed a clash of two stubborn wills, but despite the battles, Polar Bear did finally recognize his new name, while he settled into a comfortable friendship. A delightful true tale for anyone who has ever been owned by a cat or any pet.

Baldacci, David. [The Christmas Train](#) (\$12). Another holiday reissue. Tom Langdon, a weary and cash-strapped journalist, is banned from flying when a particularly thorough airport security search causes him to lose his cool. Now, he must take the train if he has any chance of arriving in Los Angeles in time for Christmas with his girlfriend. To finance the trip, he sells a story about a train ride taken during the Christmas season. And then he boards the Southwest Chief....

Hamill, Pete. [The Christmas Kid and Other Brooklyn Stories](#) (\$15). Stories filled with nostalgia—for the world after the war, the days of the Dodgers and Giants, and even, for some, the years of Prohibition and the Depression.

Parker, Robert B. [Silent Night](#) (Putnam \$24.95). It's December in Boston, and Spenser is busy planning the menu for Christmas dinner when he's confronted in his office by a young boy named Slide. Homeless and alone, Slide has found refuge with an organization named Street Business, which gives shelter and seeks job opportunities for the homeless and lost. Slide's mentor, Jackie Alvarez, is being threatened, and Street Business is in danger of losing its tenuous foothold in the community, turning Slide and many others like him back on the street. But it's not a simple case of intimidation – Spenser, aided by Hawk, finds a trail that leads to a dangerous drug kingpin, whose hold on the at-risk community Street Business serves threatens not just the boys' safety and security, but their lives as well. Unfinished at the time of his death, *Silent Night* was completed by Parker's longtime agent, Helen Braun.

⌘Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Hope](#) (Random \$18). A Christmas novella portrays an unforgettable battle between goodness and evil in Victorian London—and a lonely woman's search for meaning in her life.

### GIFTS FOR YOUNG READERS

Pashley, Hilton. [Gabriel's Clock Signed](#) (Anderson \$32). A children's book for Christmas, perfect for eager readers of Jonathan Stroud: Bartemaeus meets Harry Potter (great cover art too). Jonathan is in terrible danger. After his home is attacked by faceless monsters in bowler hats, he wakes up in the strange village of Hobbes End. Built by a fallen angel and hidden deep within a forest, Hobbes End protects those who need to be safe—and nobody is more in need of protection than Jonathan. Jonathan is the only half-angel, half-demon in the universe, and now the forces of Hell want him for their own purpose. Aided by a vicar with a broken heart, a big man with a cricket bat and a very rude cat, Jonathan races to find the mysterious Gabriel's Clock. If he doesn't find it then his family and friends will die, but, if he does, then he risks starting a war between Heaven and Hell that could engulf them all. Gabriel's clock is ticking and time is running out...

Spelvin, Justin. [Take a Trip with Trucktown](#) (SimonSchuster \$3.99). For preschoolers, one of the Trucktowns. Gabriella is bored, but Rosie has a solution. ROAD TRIP! The trucks have never been out of Trucktown and everything they find in the country is new. Even though the smell of fresh grass, fresh apples, and fresh flowers is delicious, there's nothing quite like the smell of home! For more fun, try [Honk That Horn](#); [The Great Truck Rescue](#); [Snow Trucking](#); [Trucks Line Up](#); [Welcome to Trucktown](#) (\$3.99 each).

Stewart, Trenton Lee. [Mysterious Benedict Society Collection](#) (LittleBrown \$31). This paperback boxed set includes the four adventures in the New York Times bestselling series: *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, *The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Perilous Journey*, *The Mysterious Benedict Society and the Prisoner's Dilemma*, and *The Extraordinary Education of Nicholas Benedict*. Filled with page-turning action and mind-bending brain teasers.

Travers, PL. [Mary Poppins Boxed Set](#) (\$18.95). Three classics in one set timed for the film *Saving Mr. Banks!* *Mary Poppins*; *Mary Poppins Comes Back*; *Mary Poppins Opens the Door*. Introduce new readers to her magical world or reintroduce yourself.

Ylvis. [What Does the Fox Say?](#) (SimonSchuster \$17.99). A Picture book for ages 4-8 based on the song of the same name from Ylvis whose YouTube video has become a global phenomenon, having been viewed more than 200,000,000 times. [YouTube view](#) here.

## BRITISH BOOKS

Adkins, Roy & Lesley. [Jane Austen's England](#) (Viking \$26.95). I mentioned this back in August but with all things Austen on display for the holidays, here is another recommendation for this excellent history linked to Austen's chronology (and the books published after her death). This also works really well for Deanna Raybourn, Charles Finch, Tasha Alexander, etc, even if their period is Victorian, and of course for Georgette Heyer's Regencies and any other you like to read. Topics include courtships/weddings, breeding (getting an heir), child raising, fashions and filth, sermons and superstitions, wealth and work, leisure and pleasure, dark deeds, medicine men. Plus it has weights and measures, maps, and helpful stuff. Best of all, it's well written and fun to dip in and out as time permits.

Brett, Simon. [Strangling on the Stage](#) (Severn \$28.95). Jude has landed a starring role in the local AmDram Society's production of George Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*. It's an ambitious play, culminating in a dramatic execution scene: a scene that's played for real when one of the actors is found hanging from the stage gallows during rehearsals. A tragic accident—or something more sinister? Ordered Upon Request.

Countess of Carnarvon. [Lady Catherine, the Earl, and the Real Downton Abby](#) (\$15.99). A companion piece to the *New York Times* bestseller *Lady Almina and the Real Downton Abbey*, tells the story of Catherine Wendell, the beautiful and spirited American woman who married Lady Almina's son, the man who would become the 6th Earl of Carnarvon. The couple presided over Highclere Castle, the grand estate that serves as the setting for the hit PBS show. Using copious materials—including diaries and scrapbooks—from the castle's archives, the current Countess of Carnarvon brings alive a very modern story in a beautiful and fabled setting, paying particular attention to the staff who provide Highclere Castle with continuity between generations.

Crosby, Molly Caldwell. [The Great Pearl Heist](#) (\$16). In the summer of 1913, under the cover of London's perpetual smoggy dusk, two brilliant minds are pitted against each other—a celebrated gentleman thief and a talented Scotland Yard detective—in the greatest jewel heist of the new century. An exquisite strand of pale pink pearls, worth more than the Hope Diamond, has been bought by a Hatton Garden broker. Word of the “Mona Lisa of Pearls” spreads around the world, captivating jewelers as well as thieves. In transit to London from Paris, the necklace vanishes without a trace. Joseph Grizzard, “the King of Fences,” is the charming leader of a vast gang of thieves in London's East End. Grizzard grew up on the streets of Whitechapel during the terror of Jack the Ripper to rise to the top of the criminal world. Wealthy, married, and a father, Grizzard still cannot resist the sport of crime, and the pearl necklace proves an irresistible challenge. Inspector Alfred Ward patrols the city's dark, befogged streets before joining the brand-new division of the Metropolitan Police known as “detectives.” Ward earns his stripes catching some of the great murderers of Victorian London and, at the height of his career, is asked to turn

his forensic talents to finding the missing pearls and the thief who stole them. In the spirit of *The Great Train Robbery* and the tales of Sherlock Holmes, this is the true story of a psychological cat-and-mouse game set against the backdrop of London's golden Edwardian era.

Dams, Jeanne M. [Shadows of Death](#) (Severn \$28.95). Dorothy Martin and her husband, retired Chief Constable Alan Nesbitt, go to Orkney in Scotland to see some intriguing Stone Age excavations. When the donor of the dig is found murdered, Dorothy and Alan launch an unofficial investigation into the murder. Ordered Upon Request.

Dunn, Carola. [Heirs of the Body](#) (St Martins \$24.99). I've chosen this as our **December British Crime Club Pick** because not only does it, in my estimation, reach a new level for the series, it also explains through fiction the whole concept of entail, primogeniture, and the British legalities that define how property is owned and passed on to heirs—a fertile field for fiction all the way from Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to Dickens' *Bleak House* to Josephine Tey's *Brat Farrar* to today's drama *Downton Abbey* and Rhys Bowen's September mystery *Heirs and Graces*. Daisy Dalrymple, wife of Scotland Yard's Alec Fletcher. Daisy is The Honourable, an honorific reflecting her noble family, and is thought by them to have married beneath her and in consequence, she's worked to earn income which is unusual in the 1920s for women of her class. Her cousin Edgar, a vague, butterfly-collecting schoolteacher, inherited the Viscountcy and the entailed property when Daisy's brother died in the war, then her father. Edgar, approaching fifty and childless, is resolved to do something about locating his heir. The potential claimants derive from family trees, marriages and births with supporting evidence, and tracking down living descendants (who is the elder if from the same family?). Daisy is asked by the family lawyer to help vet the claimants who surface from his Empire-wide advertising and in time four claimants are invited to Edgar's 50<sup>th</sup> at Fairacres. They include one from Scarborough, one from South Africa, a mixed-race boy from Trinidad, and the pregnant wife of a sailor residing in Jamaica who has gone missing from his latest voyage.... Inevitably, murder ensues.

Fearnley-Whittingstall, Jane. [Recipes from an Edwardian Country House](#) (\$16). The Indie Next Pick: “For lovers of *Downton Abbey* and the Edwardian era, what fun to have a peek into the kitchens of the time and access to period recipes that have been modified for the present, including instructions for using food processors to simplify preparation. Just think, you can have an Abbey viewing party and serve your guests an authentic dinner to boot!” This nostalgic culinary journey through history makes a great gift.

Fetlocks, Gillian. [Downtrodden Abbey: The Interminable Saga of an Insufferable Family](#) (SimonSchuster \$16.99). A parody of the hugely popular show *Downton Abbey* featuring the Crawfish sisters, Brace the valet, and scheming lady's maid “Potatoes” O'Grotten. It begins with the sinking of the *Gigantic* and skewers every class across the Edwardian social pecking order.

Fowler, Christopher. [The Invisible Code](#) (Random \$26). When a young woman is found dead in the pews of St. Bride's Church—alone and showing no apparent signs of trauma—Arthur Bryant assumes this case will go to the Peculiar Crimes Unit, an eccentric team tasked with solving London's most puzzling murders. Yet

the city police take over the investigation, and the PCU is given an even more baffling and bewitching assignment. Called into headquarters by Oskar Kasavian, the head of Home Office security, Bryant and May are shocked to hear that their longtime adversary now desperately needs their help. Oskar's wife, Sabira, has been acting strangely for weeks—succumbing to violent mood swings, claiming an evil presence is bringing her harm—and Oskar wants the PCU to find out why. And if there's any duo that can deduce the method behind her madness, it's the indomitable Bryant and May. When a second bizarre death reveals a surprising link between the two women's cases, Bryant and May set off on a trail of clues from the notorious Bedlam hospital to historic Bletchley Park. And as they are drawn into a world of encrypted codes and symbols, concealed rooms and high-society clubs, they must work quickly to catch a killer who lurks even closer than they think.

Granger, Ann. [Bricks and Mortality](#) (\$15.99). Third in the Campbell and Carter series finds a killer stalking prey in a Cotswold village...

Harrod-Eagles, Cynthia. [Hard Going](#) (Severn \$28.95). The murder comes—much to Slider's family's disgust—during his week off, saving him from the horrors of a trip to the shopping centre with his two older children. The late Mr. Lionel Bygood, who looks, to all intents and purposes, like an old-fashioned sort of gentleman, has been bashed in the head with a bronze statue, in what Doc Cameron describes as 'our old friend the Frenzied Attack'. It soon emerges that Mr. Bygood was a philanthropist, well-known locally for giving help and advice to all who needed it, from all walks of life. But with all signs pointing to the victim knowing his killer, Slider and his team find themselves embroiled in an investigation that provides scant evidence or possible motive, but all too many suspects... Ordered Upon Request.

Harvey, John. [Good Bait](#) (\$14.95). When a 17-year-old Moldovan boy is found dead on Hampstead Heath, the case falls to DCI Karen Shields and her overstretched Homicide & Serious Crime Unit. Karen knows she needs a result. What she doesn't know is that her new case is tied inextricably to a much larger web of gang warfare and organized crime which infiltrates almost every aspect of London society.

Kelly, Chris. [Downton Tabby](#) (SimonSchuster \$10). Enjoy this chuckle featuring England's oldest and finest family of cats in people clothes. With beautiful (and scandalous) photographs and art, it tells the story of their lives and loves—and their maids and butlers and cooks' lives and loves—from the sinking of the *Kitanic* to the Jazz Age. Tolstoy's adage about each family being unhappy in their own way? What makes the Grimalkins different is they're cats. Posh, spoiled, stuck-up-but-charming, English cats. Okay, it's not just about cats and class warfare. It's also a parody of *Downton Abbey*...

Lawson, Valerie. [Mary Poppins, She Wrote](#) (\$16). A film tie-in to the story of author PL Travers' travel from London to Hollywood and Walt Disney.

McLoughlin, Rosemary. [Tyringham Park](#) (Atria \$16). Although this opens in 1917 Ireland at a country estate home to the Blackshaws, it's really a British Gothic. On a beautiful day, toddler Victoria Blackshaw disappears. The search is intense, upstairs and down, to no avail. As years pass, everyone is impacted by the loss, especially the elder sister Charlotte who comes to believe her mother would have preferred it be she

missing rather than the pretty baby. Charlotte's great wish is to escape Tyringham Park... but can she? This could be subtitled, Murder Will Out.

Mitchell, Gladys. [Speedy Death](#) (\$16). ). Rediscover Gladys Mitchell, one of the "Big Three" female crime fiction writers alongside Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers. Alasdair Bing's guests gather around his dining table at Chaynings, a charming country manor. But one seat, belonging to the legendary explorer Everard Mountjoy, remains empty. When the other guests search the house, a body is discovered in a bath, drowned. The body is that of a woman, but could the corpse in fact be Mountjoy? A peculiar and sinister sequence of events has only just begun... This is Gladys Mitchell's first book and it marks the entrance of the inimitable Mrs. Beatrice Adela LeStrange Bradley, psychoanalyst and unorthodox amateur sleuth, into the world of detective fiction. But instead of leading the police to the murderer, she begins as their chief suspect.

In [Devil at Saxon Wall](#) (\$16), Mrs. Bradley advises her highly-strung friend, Hannibal Jones, to retreat to a quiet, rustic village to find rest and inspiration for his writing. Saxon Wall seems the perfect rural retreat, and Jones is quickly intrigued by the odd characters among the villagers, their pagan beliefs, and by the mystery surrounding Neot House, where a young couple died soon after the birth of their first child. But when disagreements between the villagers and their vicar grow more malevolent, and a man is found bludgeoned to death, Jones calls in Mrs. Bradley, who proceeds to root out the devil of Saxon Wall by her own unorthodox methods.

Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Hope](#) (Random \$1). A Christmas novella portrays an unforgettable battle between goodness and evil in Victorian London—and a lonely woman's search for meaning in her life. See History/Mystery for more.

Purser, Ann. [Scandal at Six](#) (Berkley \$25.95). Spring has arrived in Long Farnden and with it, a mysterious infestation. Lois Meade's daughter has found her village store overrun by insects and reptiles. And Lois has no time to stop and smell the roses, if she's to stay one step ahead of the creepy crawlies. As Lois looks into the invasion, she becomes embroiled in yet another "ferretin' case," as her husband would say. Her investigation leads her to Robert Pettinson, a seemingly unhinged zookeeper, and his nephew. The two of them are knee-deep in illegal trade, and they don't take kindly to Lois poking her nose into their business. Lois enlists the help of her faithful cleaner Dot Nimmo and police inspector Hunter Cowgill to discover more about Pettinson and a suspicious death at the zoo. See New in Mass Markets for Lois' last case.

Raichev, RT. [The Riddle of Sphinx Island](#) (History Press \$14.95). Detective story writer Antonia Darcy and her husband Hugh Payne are asked to travel to Devon in order to prevent a murder on Sphinx Island, but they are far from enthusiastic as they suspect an elaborate joke. And when they hear that one of the house party guests is Romaine Garrison-Gore, another crime writer, they have no doubt that they will walk into a rather tedious variant of the Murder Weekend. After all, it is their 10th wedding anniversary and Major Payne's aunt, Lady Grylls, has been trying to think of a truly original present for them. But then they receive a rather sinister letter signed "The Riddler" and become curious—could the devil speak true? 8<sup>th</sup> in a "Golden Age" series of comedic yet spiky mysteries.

Rickman, Phil. [The Magus of Hay Signed](#) (Corvus \$46—sorry, there's a lot of shipping costs involved). When a man's body is discovered in the picturesque town of Hay-on-Wye, his death appears to be "unnatural" in every sense. Merrily Watkins, parish priest, single mother, and exorcist, is drafted in to investigate, in this 12th installment set around Hereford in the beautiful country bordering Wales (think Ellis Peters who used Shrewsbury to the north as her locus). A man's body is found below a waterfall. It looks like suicide or an accidental drowning until DI Frannie Bliss enters the dead man's home. What he finds there has him consulting Merrily Watkins, the Diocese of Hereford's official advisor on the paranormal. It's nearly forty years since the town of Hay-on-Wye was declared an independent state by its self-styled king. A development seen at the time as a joke. But the pastiche had a serious side. And behind it, unknown to most of the townsfolk, lay a darker design, a hidden history of murder and ritual magic, the relics of which are only now becoming visible. It's a situation that will take Merrily Watkins—on her own for the first time in years and facing public humiliation over a separate case—to the edge of madness.... The blend of country mystery and ghostly, procedure and paranormal, makes this elegant series one out of the ordinary.

Rowson, Pauline. [Death Surge](#) (Severn \$28.95). When a colleague's nephew goes missing, Detective Inspector Andy Horton is recalled from his sailing trip to France. But when the charred remains of a body are discovered in a disused tunnel at the Hulsea Lines in Portsmouth, what began as the hunt for a missing man becomes the search for a ruthless killer...

Sherez, Stav. [Eleven Days](#) (Faber \$26). A fire rages through a sleepy West London square, engulfing a small convent hidden away among the residential houses. When DI Jack Carrigan and DS Geneva Miller arrive at the scene they discover eleven bodies, yet there were only supposed to be ten nuns in residence. It's eleven days before Christmas, and despite their superiors wanting the case solved before the holidays, Carrigan and Miller start to suspect that the nuns were not who they were made out to be. Why did they make no move to escape the fire? Who is the eleventh victim, whose body was found separate to the others? And where is the convent's priest, the one man who can answer their questions? Fighting both internal politics and the church hierarchy, Carrigan and Miller unravel the threads of a case which reaches back to the early 1970s, and the upsurge of radical Liberation Theology in South America—with echoes of the Shining Path, and contemporary battles over oil, land and welfare. Meanwhile, closer to home, there's a new threat in the air, one the police are entirely unprepared for...Spanning four decades and two continents, *Eleven Days* finds Carrigan and Miller up against time as they face a new kind of criminal future.

Walsh, Jill Paton. [The Late Scholar](#) (Hodder \$39). The 1950s. Lord Peter Wimsey—now the Duke of Denver—is pleased to discover that along with a Dukedom he has inherited the duties of "visitor" at an Oxford college. When the fellows appeal to him to resolve a dispute, he and his Duchess, the author Harriet Vane, set off happily to spend some time in Oxford. But the dispute turns out to be embittered. The voting is evenly balanced between two passionate parties—equally balanced, that is, until several of the fellows unexpectedly die. The Warden has a casting vote, but the Warden has disappeared. And the causes of death of

the deceased fellows bear an uncanny resemblance to the murder methods in Peter's past cases, methods that Harriet has used in her published novels....

On a lighter note, read more about Sayers' work in Abbott, Victoria. [The Sayers' Swindle](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Jordan Kelly is delighted to make money tracking down rare and valuable mystery novels for her employer, Vera Van Alst, an avid collector and the most difficult woman in Harrison Falls, New York. But now her boss's complete set of Dorothy Sayers is missing, and finding them may lead Jordan to a murder suitable for Sayers's esteemed sleuth, Lord Peter Wimsey...

Weeks, Lee. [Cold as Ice](#) (SimonSchuster \$16). On a freezing cold winter's day, the body of a young woman is pulled from an icy canal in London. To D.I. Dan Carter it looks like a tragic accident rather than the work of a murderer. But D.C. Ebony Willis is not so sure. Why has the woman's face been painted with garish make-up and wrapped in a plastic bag? Meanwhile cosmetics saleswoman Tracy Collins receives a phone call. It's been twenty years since she gave up her daughter for adoption, so when Danielle gets in touch, she hesitantly begins to kindle a relationship with her and her grandson Jackson. But when Danielle suddenly disappears, Tracy is plunged into the middle of a living nightmare. With the discovery of another body, it becomes clear that Danielle is in grave danger. There is no time to lose as Ebony Willis must take on the most challenging assignment of her career—to play the role of the killer's next victim.

#### **INTERNATIONAL: WHERE IN THE WORLD...?**

Alexandra, Belinda. [Tuscan Rose](#) (Gallery \$16). A magical, richly woven World War II–era saga filled with passion, secrets, beauty. Florence, 1941. A mysterious stranger known as The Wolf leaves an infant with the sisters of Santo Spirito. A tiny silver key hidden in her wrappings is the one clue to the child's identity. . . . 15 years later, young Rosa must leave the nuns, her only family, and become governess to the daughter of an aristocrat and his strange, frightening wife. "Epic in scope, but also warm and intimate, *Tuscan Rose* is the story of Rosa, a young Tuscan woman who makes her way from the convent where she was raised and educated to the treacherous world beyond, where she must learn to support herself in a city teeming with Fascists and dissidents, aristocrats and trades people. Rosa is a wonderful, open-hearted character who endures all the hardships of the first half of the 20th century, from Fascism to the Nazi terrors, with courage and grace, never losing hope or giving up on the people she loves."

Bates, Quentin. [Chilled to the Bone](#) (Soho \$26.95). In her third case, Sergeant Gunnhildur Gísladóttir of the Reykjavik police force is called in to investigate the death of a man found tied to a bed in one of the Icelandic capital's nicest hotels. She finds no sign of criminal activity but suspects the death isn't just sex gone wrong. Could the death of the ship owner be related to a local gangster's recent return to Iceland after many years abroad? Gunnhildur's queries soon explode into a dangerous investigation where ruthless men will go to violent extremes to keep secrets.

Bernal, Rafael. [The Mongolian Conspiracy](#) (New Directions \$14.95). Introduction by Francisco Goldman who calls it "The best fucking novel ever written about Mexico City." Gotcha there,

no? So why this title? It's because the plot by Bernal (1915-72) is fueled by a rumor in FBI and KGB reports of a Chinese-Mongolian plot to assassinate both the Mexican and American presidents during the unveiling of a statue in Mexico City. The city police recruit ex-revolutionary Filiberto Garcia, a gun-for-hire, to check this out. Garcia kills various figures as he searches for clues in opium dens, curio shops, and Cantonese restaurants in the local Chinatown—and the clues appear to point to Cuba, not Mongolia. But as bodies pile up, Filiberto senses some slimy political deals may be manufacturing an “international” incident.... Reminiscent of Paco Taibo's tremendous work.

Carrisi, Donato. [The Lost Girls of Rome](#) (Mulholland \$26). Sandra Vega, a forensic photographer with the Milan police, refuses to believe the official ruling that her photojournalist husband David Leoni's death five months earlier was accidental. And what was David doing at a high-rise construction site in Rome during the middle of the night before he took his fatal plunge? Sandra's investigation leads her to the *penitenzieri*, a secret Catholic sect whose members categorize every major crime and often mete out their own punishments.

Christer, Sam. [The Rome Prophecy](#) (Overlook \$26.95). A woman has been arrested in the streets of Rome. She's young. She's beautiful. She's covered in blood. And she claims to be an ancient prophet in search of a mystical amulet hidden somewhere within the city. Ex-priest Tom Shaman teams up with a headstrong policewoman to unravel the mystery. But within Rome's churches and corridors of power, stealthy enemies are conspiring against them. And soon, the woman's deadly visions begin to come true.

De La Motte, Anders. [Game: A Thriller](#) (Atria \$15). Starts a Stockholm trilogy being likened to that of Stieg Larsson. See December Trade Paperback Picks.

Fletcher, Martin. [Jacob's Oath](#) (St Martins \$25.99). “Jacob survives Bergen-Belsen, in part because of his vow to kill the SS guard who beat his younger brother to death. Resisting recruitment to go fight to establish Israel, he returns to Heidelberg, his pre-Nazi home and also the home of his brother's murderer. In Berlin, Sarah, who has managed to hide from the Nazis for three years, is raped by a Russian soldier when the Russians take the city. She too has vowed to go to Heidelberg, the place where she and her missing lover agreed to meet if they were separated. The only Jews in Heidelberg, Jacob and Sarah meet and fall in love, but Jacob's vow to avenge his brother threatens to destroy their chance for happiness. Fletcher, formerly NBC News' Tel Aviv bureau chief and author of *The List* (2011), has crafted a moving love story, a vivid portrait of a devastated and chaotic Germany immediately after the war's end, and a remarkably insightful look into the minds of two survivors of the Holocaust. Fletcher's style is spare and graceful, and it enhances the power of this small gem of a novel.” —*Booklist*

Gage, Leighton. [Perfect Hatred](#) (\$14.95). The penultimate novel for the late Gage drew this praise from *Kirkus*: “In his own hard-boiled, agreeably literate and tourist-cautioning fashion, [Gage has] made South America's largest nation accessible to readers who might otherwise never have been exposed to its jungles—both the wild and urban varieties.” Chief Inspector Mario Silva and his team have a heavy work load with several high-profile cases. First, a suicide bombing that was apparently the work

of a militant Islamist group. Then, a gubernatorial candidate is assassinated in broad daylight at a campaign rally. Could the cases be related? To complicate Silva's investigation, a criminal with a very bad grudge against the Chief Inspector has been released from prison and is plotting ugly revenge.... Look for the final case for Mario Silva in January: [The Ways of Evil Men](#) (Soho \$26.95). It's been a brilliant career of dark, intricate fiction cut too short by cancer.

Hamilton, Ian. [The Red Pole of Macau](#) (Picador \$15). Family ties are stressed to the limit when intrepid forensic accountant Ava Lee must rescue her half brother, Michael, and his business partner, Simon, from a disastrous multimillion-dollar real-estate deal in Macau. When the developers turn out to be gangsters, Michael and Simon are threatened with bankruptcy and much worse. Ava struggles to salvage the deal and her family's money, but then Simon is kidnapped, and the rules of the game abruptly change. Determined to keep her mentor, Uncle, out of the affair, Ava is forced to turn to a former client, the cunning and seductive May Ling Wong, for help before time runs out.... This unusual, face-paced and hard-hitting international thriller series should hook you in as it has me. [Click here](#) for earlier Anna Lees.

Hlasko, Marek. [The Graveyard](#) (Melville \$15.95). Reissue. When Marek Hlasko sent this novel to publishers in Poland in the mid-1950s, it was uniformly rejected. When he asked why, he was told: “This Poland doesn't exist.” Long out of print, *The Graveyard* is Hlasko's portrait of a system built on such denial and willful blindness. Factory worker Franciszek Kowalski is on his way home one evening after drinking with an old friend from the People's Army when he unthinkingly yells some insults at a policeman. His outburst is taken as criticism of the government, and he is arrested and then expelled from the Party. Kowalski attempts to rehabilitate himself by gathering testimonies from the men he had fought alongside, but each meeting with his former comrades takes him further into the underworld that he realizes has been there all along. Written midway through Hlasko's meteoric career, *The Graveyard* set its author and the Polish Communist government implacably against each other, and it's easy to see why: Hlasko pulls no punches in portraying a regime that is maintained by constant surveillance, intimidation, and profound psychological manipulation.

Koch, Herman. [The Dinner](#) (\$14). An unnerving novel of domestic suspense set in an Amsterdam restaurant that can be likened to Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*. See December Trade Paperback Picks.

Leon, Donna. [My Venice and Other Essays](#) (Grove \$26). For many years, Leon, who is a perennial #1 bestseller in Germany, has written essays for European publications. Collected here are the best of these: over fifty funny, charming, passionate, and insightful essays that range from battles over garbage in the canals to the troubles with rehabbing Venetian real estate. She shares episodes from her life in Venice, explores her love of opera, and recounts tales from in and around her country house in the mountains. With pointed observations and humor, she also explores her family history and former life in New Jersey, and the idea of the Italian man.

Nesbø, Jo. [Cockroaches](#) (Harvill \$39). Detective Harry Hole arrives in a steaming hot Bangkok. The Norwegian ambassador has been found dead in a seedy motel room, and Harry has been

sent to investigate. It's clear that the Ambassador's family is hiding some secrets of their own, but few people are willing to talk. He needs to solve a crime and avoid a scandal. When Harry lays hands on some incriminating CCTV footage, things only get more complicated. The man who gave him the tape goes missing, and Harry realizes that failing to solve a murder case is by no means the only danger that faces the unwary. But in an unfamiliar city, who can you trust? An early case for Hole now in print in the UK.

Neuhaus, Nele. [Snow White Must Die](#) (\$14.99). The US debut for a German bestseller. See December Trade Paperback Picks.

Ohlsson, Kristina. [Silenced: A Novel](#) (Atria \$15). A teenage girl is viciously assaulted as she picks flowers in a field one night in midsummer 15 years back. The crime is never reported. Today, a man with no identification on his person is killed in a hit-and-run. He is never reported missing. Across the city, a priest and his wife are found dead in an apparent suicide. Fredrika Bergman is assigned to the case. What she and her colleagues discover is that a sinister evil, the roots of which date back decades, is the link behind these seemingly unrelated crimes. There's a reason why none of them were ever reported, and it has to do with a shocking and horrendous cover-up unlike anything Fredrika could have possibly imagined....

Pattison, Eliot. [Mandarin Gate](#) (\$15.99). Another zinger for former Beijing cop Shan who was exiled to Tibet and there has made a life. Amazing! See December Trade Paperback Picks.

Tursten, Helene. [The Golden Calf](#) (\$14.95). Detective Inspector Irene Huss—jujitsu champion, mother of teenage twin girls, and investigator on Göteborg Murder Squad—is handed another tough case. Three men have been shot in one of Göteborg's most fashionable neighborhoods, sending Huss and her colleagues on a goose chase through a tony world of expensive cars and fancy homes. All three victims seem to be tied to one person, the glamorous dot-com darling Sanna Kaegler-Ceder, but Sanna isn't talking, even when her own life seems to be at stake. If you can access MHZ-TV via Direct TV you know these novels make terrific television drama.

Wolfe, Gene. [The Land Across](#) (Forge \$25.99). An American writer of travel guides in need of a new location chooses to travel to a small and obscure Eastern European country. The moment Grafton crosses the border he is in trouble, much more than he could have imagined. His passport is taken by guards, and then he is detained for not having it. He is released into the custody of a family, but is again detained. It becomes evident that there are supernatural agencies at work, but they are not in some ways as threatening as the brute forces of bureaucracy and corruption in that country. Is our hero in fact a spy for the CIA? Or is he an innocent citizen caught in a Kafkaesque trap?

Zouroudi, Anne. [Doctor of Thessaly](#) (\$15). Genius detective Hermes Diaktoros' latest case. See December Trade Paperback Picks.

#### OUR TOP 12 DECEMBER PAPERBACK PICKS

De La Motte, Anders. [Game: A Thriller](#) (\$15). For those who devoured Stieg Larsson's trilogy. "Siblings are drawn into a dangerous cell-phone game with global ramifications. The first book in a thriller trilogy, former Swedish police officer

de la Motte's debut introduces us to early 30-something ne'er-do-well Henrik "HP" Pettersson, who has made a career of floating along and cutting corners. His sister Rebecca is his polar opposite. A bodyguard with an elite Swedish police unit and obsessive-compulsive tendencies, Rebecca is haunted by a past that clouds her perspective of the present. However, when a recovered cell phone draws HP into a mysterious game that rewards acts of increasingly dangerous vandalism and violence with Internet stardom, he thinks that he has finally discovered his groove. As HP falls deeper into the activities of the game, he realizes that he is just a pawn in a larger plan that could threaten international security and the safety of his older sister. With this discovery, a dark secret shared between siblings comes to light, Rebecca attempts to face the ghosts of her past, and HP strikes back against the enigmatic Game Master."—*Kirkus*. "Relentless pacing leads to a stunning finale as HP tries to be not just a player but a real hero."—*PW*. This has all the hallmarks of Scandinavian crime fiction: bleak world, lots of drinking, repressed secrets, stunted interactions.

Evans, Mary Anna. [Rituals](#) (\$14.95). Archaeologist Faye Longchamp and her adopted teenage daughter head to upstate NY near Seneca Falls on an assignment vetting a museum collection for an eccentric client. Faye's fledgling firm needs the contract. Who knew it would land her in the region's spiritualism tourism, arson, and murder? See Event Books for more.

Flynn, Gillian. [Gone Girl](#) (\$15). A huge bestseller since June, 2012, giving domestic suspense a giant push: marriage is a real killer. The *NY Times* finds that this, her 3<sup>rd</sup> novel, is "Ms. Flynn's dazzling breakthrough. It is wily, mercurial, subtly layered and populated by characters so well imagined that they're hard to part with—even if, as in Amy's case, they are already departed. And if you have any doubts about whether Ms. Flynn measures up to Patricia Highsmith's level of discreet malice, go back and look at the small details. Whatever you raced past on a first reading will look completely different the second time around."

Hamilton, Steve. [Die a Stranger](#) (\$15). Late one night, a plane lands on a deserted airstrip. Five dead bodies are found there the next morning. And now Vinnie LeBlanc is missing. Vinnie is a member of the Ojibwa Indian tribe and he just might be sometime PI Alex McKnight's best friend. So Alex can't help but be worried when he disappears. There's a deadly crime war creeping into Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and Alex never would have thought that his friend could be involved. But after an unexpected stranger arrives in town, Alex has to rethink things. As ever, Alex more or less meanders into complex, dangerous situations that can rip his and your heart right out...

Koch, Herman. [The Dinner](#) (\$14). Speaking of *Gone Girl*, here's a European version, a take-no-prisoners psychological thriller that takes place during one dinner for two couples on an Amsterdam night. The Lohman brothers, unemployed teacher Paul and politician Serge, a candidate for prime minister, meet at an expensive Amsterdam restaurant, along with their respective spouses, Claire and Babette, to discuss a situation involving their respective 15-year-old sons, Michel and Rick. At first, the two couples discuss such pleasantries as wine and the new Woody Allen film. But during this five-course dinner, from aperitif to digestif, secrets come out that turn everything toxic....

Neuhaus, Nele. [Snow White Must Die](#) (\$14.99). A 2013 Fresh Fiction Pick now in paperback. “German author Neuhaus makes her U.S. debut with this impressive multidimensional police procedural, which has already been published in 15 countries with more than three million copies in print. Convicted on circumstantial evidence of murdering two vanished 17-year-old girls, 30-year-old Tobias Sartorius returns home to Altenhain, a village near Frankfurt, after serving his 10-year sentence, to find his parents divorced and their lives as hopeless as his has become. The townspeople maintain a mafia-like code of silence to protect terrible betrayals past and present, even as the discovery of the skeletal remains of one of the missing girls leads Det. Insp. Pia Kirchhoff and Det. Sgt. Oliver von Bodenstern to suspect Tobias was innocent. Meanwhile, the two police officers get caught up in personal crises that realistically counterpoint the violence that greets Tobias’s attempts to re-establish his life, when yet another girl goes missing and masked villagers nearly kill him. Again and again, Neuhaus inserts the old Grimm fairy tale refrain—”White as snow, red as blood, black as ebony”—that describes Snow White, the role of one of the original missing girls in a high school play 10 years earlier, to underscore the grimmest of human emotions: white for icily plotted revenge, red for raging jealousy, black for homicidal madness.”—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

Pattison, Eliot. [Mandarin Gate](#) (\$15.99). Edgar-winner Pattison brings back Shan Tao Yun, a Chinese police inspector who lost his job, and almost his life, when he ran afoul of a high-ranking government official and was exiled to Tibet. Twists and turns since further shape Shan’s life which includes links to Native Americans. Shan has been living in the mountains with outlawed Buddhist monks and in time he becomes inspector of irrigation and sewer ditches in a remote Tibetan township. And there he runs into a horrendous crime scene. Strewn across the grounds of an old Buddhist temple undergoing restoration are the bodies of two unidentified men and a Tibetan nun. Shan quickly realizes that the murders pose a riddle the Chinese police might in fact be trying to cover up. When he discovers that a nearby village has been converted into a new internment camp for Tibetan dissidents arrested in Beijing’s latest pacification campaign, Shan recognizes coming disaster for himself and the district... In his 7<sup>th</sup> moving novel, “Pattison movingly delineates the difficulties of seeking justice under a police state in this brilliantly constructed and passionate whodunit.”—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review). [Click here](#) for the other Shans.

✠Royal, Priscilla. [Covenant with Hell](#) (\$14.95). “Once again, Royal utilizes a religious pilgrimage as the perfect backdrop for an expertly wrought and detailed medieval mystery. Wherever Prioress Eleanor and Brother Thomas travel, murder and mayhem are certain to follow. After they arrive at the Holy Shrines of Walsingham, in East Anglia, a nun falls mysteriously to her death from the bell tower. Though there are whispers of both suicide and an improper relationship, Eleanor and Thomas dig deeper, exposing a tarnished priest and untwisting a treasonous plot to assassinate King Edward. Royal does her usual superb job of dovetailing both the religious and the political subtext bolstering her tautly strung narrative. This historically authentic series is definitely on a par with the best of Peter Tremayne and Ellis Peters.”—*Booklist*. [Click here](#) for the earlier Prioress Eleanor mysteries.

Shannon, John. [Chinese Beverly Hills](#) (\$14.95). Jack Liffey’s former mistress reappears to plead for the P.I.’s help finding her missing niece. The hunt leads Liffey to Monterey Park, where he dives into an undercurrent of racial tension that puts the peace of the small suburb in jeopardy. Meanwhile, a fire burns in the hills above Los Angeles, offering a sinister reminder that few events in life are coincidental. But Liffey’s sudden troubles with racist gangs, teenage revolutionaries, and South African nut jobs are dwarfed by the threat his old mistress poses to his relationships with his new girlfriend and his recently reconciled lesbian daughter. What’s a hard-boiled dick to do?

✠Thomas, Samuel. [The Midwife’s Tale](#) (\$14.99). A debut set in 17<sup>th</sup> Century York where a death of a Puritan is not what it seems. Terrific portrait of the horrors of the English Civil War and also of the work of the midwife. See History/Mystery for more.

✠Todd, Charles. [Proof of Guilt](#) (\$14.99). A Summer, 1920, case for Inspector Ian Rutledge links an apparent hit-and-run in London with a firm importing and selling wine from Madeira. See History/Mystery for more. [Click here](#) for earlier work by Todd.

Zouroudi, Anne. [The Doctor of Thessaly](#) (\$15). New in the Seven Deadly Sins Series. *Booklist* writes, “[Diaktoros’] guided tour through the villagers’ envy, lost loves, and hard-edged justice is as enlightening as it is entertaining. Zouroudi’s straightforward style wisely allows room for the characters’ relationships to provide the story’s complexity. Recommended for those who would enjoy Alexander McCall Smith darkened a shade or two.” “Zouroudi’s latest mystery brings the Hellenic vibe tantalizingly close...The plot works well, but more diverting still is Zouroudi’s atmospheric portrait of this austere beautiful backwater.” Fun for those who enjoy the genius sleuth like Nero Wolfe. [Click here](#) for the earlier Hermes Diaktoros mysteries.

## FIRST NOVELS

Choo, Yangsze. [The Ghost Bride](#) (Harper \$24.99). Though ruled by British overlords, the Chinese of colonial Malaya still cling to ancient customs. And in the sleepy port town of Malacca, ghosts and superstitions abound. Li Lan, the daughter of a genteel but bankrupt family, has few prospects. But fate intervenes when she receives an unusual proposal from the wealthy and powerful Lim family. They want her to become a ghost bride for the family’s only son, who recently died under mysterious circumstances. Rarely practiced, traditional ghost marriages are used to placate restless spirits. Such a union would guarantee Li Lan a home for the rest of her days, but at a terrible price. After an ominous visit to the opulent Lim mansion, Li Lan finds herself haunted not only by her ghostly would-be suitor, but also by her desire for the Lims’ handsome new heir, Tian Bai. Night after night, she is drawn into the shadowy parallel world of the Chinese afterlife, with its ghost cities, paper funeral offerings, vengeful spirits, and monstrous bureaucracy—including the mysterious Er Lang, a charming but unpredictable guardian spirit. Li Lan must uncover the Lim family’s darkest secrets—and the truth about her own family—before she makes a fateful decision. A colorful tour of colonial Malacca combines with an imaginative story. Excellent, and recommended to readers of Lisa See. In its way this is much the same as an English Gothic.

Crompton, Richard. [Hour of the Red God](#) (Farrar \$30). Named one of 2013's Top Ten Crime Novels. "Former BBC journalist Crompton interweaves a complex whodunit plot with 2007 Kenyan politics in his spectacular fiction debut. Nairobi police detective Mollé, a single parent who lost his wife to the 1998 al-Qaeda bombing of the U.S. embassy, looks into the murder of a fellow Maasai tribe member, a woman whose genitals were freshly mutilated. Mollé's less-than-honest boss, who quickly labels the victim a prostitute, directs him to wrap things up quickly. But the dogged Mollé follows the evidence wherever it leads him, even if it means stepping on the toes of the rich and powerful, including popular evangelist George Nalo, whose charitable organization, Orpheus House, works to get prostitutes off the streets. As a bitterly contested election nears, the pressure on the detective to let things be only increases. The surprising but fair-play solution to the mystery packs a wallop—and instantly elevates the author, now a Nairobi resident, to the first rank of African crime writers."—*PW*

McLoughlin, Rosemary. [Tyringham Park](#) (Atria \$16). An Irish country house Gothic that opens in 1917.... See British Books for more.

Miller, Carol. [Murder and Moonshine](#) (St Martins \$25.99). This debut didn't appeal to me so I quote author Sarah Shaber: "Miller's first novel is a skillful and assured debut. Her characters are colorful and country, yet believable, like the real people who live in the modern South. Daisy, the book's heroine, has suffered the greatest losses anyone of her kind can bear, the death of family and the loss of home place, yet she soldiers on, working in the cafe her father used to own. When one day a man enters the cafe and drops dead, she's drawn into a mystery that involves the ATF, a redneck childhood friend, moonshine, greedy "city folks," and yet another murder! The solution helps her find her place in life again."

Oust, Gail. [Rosemary and Crime](#) (St Martins \$24.99). This one didn't grab me either. It fits into the cozy paperback original genre. Imagine a smart and spunky new amateur sleuth, small-town Georgia spice shop owner Piper Prescott. Recently divorced, Piper decides to pursue a dream she's secretly harbored: owning her own business, Spice it Up!, a spice shop in her adopted hometown, Brandywine Creek, Georgia. But Piper's grand opening goes awry when the local chef who's agreed to do a cooking demo is found stabbed. Not only did Piper find the body, she handled the murder weapon and doesn't have a witness to her alibi, making the case look like a slam dunk to brand new police Chief Wyatt McBride. Desperate to uncover the truth—and prove her innocence—Piper enlists the help of her outspoken BFF Reba Mae Johnson to help track down the real culprit. The pair compiles a lengthy list of suspects and work to eliminate them using their own creative brand of sleuthing techniques including stakeouts, breaking and entering, and one very unorthodox chocolate pie. Then Piper narrowly avoids being a victim of a hit-and-run...

Thompson, Sam. [Communion Town](#) (Bloomsbury \$25). "In his lyrical and suspenseful debut novel, English writer Thompson draws on horror, noir, and other genres to fashion the titular city through the eyes of 10 distinct inhabitants. A detective down on his luck scores a case that could make or break his career. A slaughterhouse worker witnesses a haunting murder that strains his relationship with his enigmatic boss. A caseworker recounts

the struggles of his immigrant clients. Friends and strangers swap stories at a bar while one man ventures outside, where horrific things supposedly happen after dark. And a janitor-by-day and rickshaw-driver-by-night dates a folk musician who introduces him to the guitar, which becomes a new obsession that both changes his life and hinders their relationship. While no overarching plot weaves the characters' stories together, *Communion Town* serves as the real protagonist, a fully realized place that Thompson—with often breathtaking prose and versatility—peoples with cynics, dangerous wanderers, and lonely outcasts. A shadowy city saturated with life and lore, and held together by human struggles."—*Booklist*

## NEW BOOKS

Adams, Alex. [Red Horse: A Novel](#) (Atria \$15). Book 2 in The White Horse Trilogy, a chronicle of a dystopian society.

Barbieri, Maggie. [Once Upon a Lie](#) (St Martins \$24.99). Maeve Conlon's life is coming apart at the seams. Her bakery is barely making ends meet, and one of her daughters spends as much time grounded as the other does studying. Her ex-husband has a new wife, a new baby, and a look of pity for Maeve that's absolutely infuriating. Her father insists he's still independent, but he's slowly and obviously succumbing to Alzheimer's. And now, her cousin Sean Donovan has been found dead, sitting in his car in a public park, shot through the head. There was never much love lost between Maeve and Sean.... At the core of this change of pace for Barbieri is an immigrant father trying so hard to do his best for his motherless daughter and in the process doing her a terrible wrong. "[A] riveting tale of ordinary cruelty and complicated heroism... All the characters are sharply drawn, particularly Maeve, whose dark humor and stoic attitude mask an unshakable moral core. The details of Maeve's connection to Sean and Michael unravel with excruciating slowness, and Barbieri skillfully avoids tipping her hand until the last possible moment, leaving readers both breathless and unnerved by the novel's conclusion." —*Publisher's Weekly* (starred review)

Block, Lawrence. [The Burglar Who Counted the Spoons Signed](#) (\$16). Everybody's favorite burglar returns in an eleventh adventure that finds him and his lesbian sidekick Carolyn Kaiser breaking into houses, apartments, and even a museum, in a madcap adventure replete with American Colonial silver, an F. Scott Fitzgerald manuscript, a priceless portrait, and a remarkable array of buttons. And, wouldn't you know it, there's a dead body, all stretched out on a Trent Barling carpet... This Bernie Rhodenbarr caper is being published by Block himself.

Butcher, Jim. [Jim Butcher's Dresden Files: Ghoul](#) (Diamond \$24.99). A graphic novel. From the mind of best-selling author Jim Butcher, an original Dresden Files story that pits Chicago's mystical detective against bloodthirsty rural monsters. Harry Dresden, a Chicago private investigator and wizard, heads to a small, isolated Missouri town terrorized by Nevernever monsters. The singularly unfortunate Talbot family has suffered a curse that has decimated their number for generations, and only our hero can save them... that is, if he can survive hostile lawmen, the dark secrets of townsfolk, an ancient guardian spirit, and two deadly carnivores! Can Dresden cleanse the Talbot bloodline of its curse without a blood sacrifice of his own?

Butler, Robert Olen. [The Star of Istanbul](#) (Mysterious Press \$25). The Pulitzer Prize winner and author of Patrick's Hardboiled Pick [The Hot Country](#) (\$15), turns to a new chapter of history that opens with the sinking of the Cunard liner *Lusitania* right off the Irish coast by German U-boats in 1915, one of the acts that moved America closer to entering the war. On board is Christopher Marlowe Cobb, hero of this series. Cobb, renowned as a war correspondent (see *The Hot Country*), has been asked to monitor a possible covert German agent, one Dr. Walter Brauer, a lecturer at King's College London. They are both sailing First (or Saloon) Class. Cobb makes Bauer's acquaintance, observes the man making a friend of a fellow passenger and Boston bookseller called Edward Cable. And Cobb is also intrigued by the glamorous film star Selene Bourgani who welcomes Cobb into her bed... sort of. Selene is mysterious, sad, and may be working for German intelligence. Then comes the torpedo, Cobb gets her to the Irish shore, and the story moves them forward in time to Istanbul for a surprise denouement. Terrific stuff, in the vein of Joseph Kanon but in the earlier world war.

Childs, Laura. [Tea for Three](#) (Berkley \$16). A nice gift for the fan of traditional mysteries: the first three tea-shop cases, set in Charleston. *Death by Darjeeling*: Theo is serving tea for two hundred or so at the annual historic homes garden party when one guest is found dead clutching a teacup. *Gunpowder Green*: While unveiling her newest flavor of tea at a yacht race, Theo hears the crack of an antique gun and a member of Charleston's elite falls dead. *Shades of Earl Grey*: Theo attends the engagement soiree of the season where a wedding ring—a family heirloom from Marie Antoinette's crown—goes missing. Includes a new foreword and 16 new recipes.

Clark, Mary Jane. [Footprints in the Sand](#) (\$14.99). "It's the dead of winter and struggling actress and wedding-cake decorator Piper Donovan is thrilled to be in warm and romantic Sarasota, Florid. She and her family are there to celebrate her beloved cousin's wedding. Not only is Piper creating the sugar-sand-dollar-festooned wedding cake, she's also the maid of honor. But a cloud seems to be hovering over the whole affair. Shortly after a bridesmaid mysteriously disappears, a kindly neighbor's car is run off the road and a prospective witness, an innocent Amish teenager, is threatened to keep silent. Then a body is found on the beach where the wedding will take place. Clark is not a writer of the same weight and style as her former mother-in-law Mary Higgins Clark.

Clemens, Judy. [Leave Tomorrow Behind Signed](#) (Poisoned Pen \$24.95). *PW* reviews: "In Clemens's heartfelt fifth Stella Crowne mystery the Pennsylvania dairy farmer has her hands full at the county fair, between mentoring her teen employee, Zach, and supporting her veterinarian friend, Carla Beaumont, who's in charge of making sure nothing's amiss with the fair animals. Stella's unfortunate discovery of the body of Rikki Raines, local country music star, lying dead under a pile of manure, leads to confrontations with the police and with reporters on behalf of herself and her friends, making her suddenly aware of the cheating and bad behavior going on in both the animal and pageant competitions. Meanwhile, she's fighting with her fiancé Nick's sister, Miranda, who wants her out of jeans and into fancy catering halls for the wedding Stella has no interest in planning. Clemens creates a cozy, safe-feeling community that needs a fierce defender like Stella to protect it from the bad eggs, and

readers will love her determination to make things right while letting everyone live the way he or she desires." Also in trade paperback: [Leave Tomorrow Behind](#) (\$14.95)

Cook, M Bridget/Rebecca Musser. [The Witness Wore Red](#) (Grand Central \$26). Rebecca Musser grew up in fear, concealing her family's polygamous lifestyle from the "dangerous" outside world. Covered head-to-toe in strict, modest clothing, she received a rigorous education at Alta Academy, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' school headed by Warren Jeffs. Always seeking to be an obedient Priesthood girl, in her teens she became the nineteenth wife of her people's prophet: 85-year-old Rulon Jeffs, Warren's father. Finally sickened by the abuse she suffered and saw around her, she pulled off a daring escape and sought to build a new life and family. The church, however, had a way of pulling her back in-and by 2007, Rebecca had no choice but to take the witness stand against the new prophet of the FLDS in order to protect her little sisters and other young girls from being forced to marry at shockingly young ages. The following year, Rebecca and the rest of the world watched as a team of Texas Rangers raided the Yearning for Zion Ranch, a stronghold of the FLDS. Rebecca's subsequent testimony would reveal the horrific secrets taking place behind closed doors of the temple, sending their leaders to prison for years, and Warren Jeffs for life.

Coyle, Cleo. [Billionaire Blend](#) (Berkley \$25.95). When a car bomb nearly kills the charming young tech whiz Eric Thorner, coffee house manager Clare Cosi comes to his aid and receives a priceless thank you. Not only does the billionaire buy her a barista's dream espresso machine, he hires her for an extraordinary project: creating the world's most expensive coffee blend. The police arrest Eric's alleged attacker, yet death continues to surround the unlucky mogul, leading Clare to question whether the lethal events are premeditated or merely freak accidents. Clare's boyfriend, NYPD detective Mike Quinn, has a theory of his own—one Clare refuses to believe. Meanwhile, Eric jets Clare around the world on a head-spinning search for the very best coffee, and Clare gets to know his world....

Dorst, Doug/JJ Abrams. [S](#) (LittleBrown \$35). A young woman picks up a book left behind by a stranger. Inside it are his margin notes, which reveal a reader entranced by the story and by its mysterious author. She responds with notes of her own, leaving the book for the stranger, and so begins an unlikely conversation that plunges them both into the unknown. The book: *Ship of Theseus*, the final novel by a prolific but enigmatic writer named V.M. Straka, in which a man with no past is shanghaied onto a strange ship with a monstrous crew and launched onto a disorienting and perilous journey. The writer, Straka, is the incendiary and secretive subject of one of the world's greatest mysteries... "Impressively smart, engaging... Filled with secrets and stories that are endlessly beguiling and inviting... Reading *S*, and trying to decode everything [was] an incredibly enjoyable, fun experience, as well as a particularly immersive one... For all its mysteries and intrigues, this is a book about the value of books, and what they can offer us that other storytelling mediums cannot." —*Wired*. An interesting collaboration by the *Jeopardy* champ and the filmmaker.

Ephron, Hallie. [There Was an Old Woman](#) (\$14.99). When Evie Ferrante learns that her mother has been hospitalized, she finds her mother's house in chaos. Sorting through her mother's belongings, Evie discovers objects that don't quite belong there, and begins to raise questions. Evie renews a friendship with Mina, an elderly neighbor who might know more about her mother's recent activities, but Mina is having her own set of problems: Her nephew Brian is trying to persuade her to move to a senior care community. As Evie investigates her mother's actions, a darker story of deception and madness involving Mina emerges

Estleman, Loren D. [Roy & Lillie](#) (\$14.99). Estleman, a longtime mystery and western writer, turns in an unusual sort of real-life-inspired novel. "The titular characters are Roy Bean, the legendary Texas judge (after turns as a "bartender, freighter, smuggler, duelist, seducer of women, and all-around wastrel") and Lillie Langtry, the British actress and professional beauty. A large part of Roy Bean lore revolves around his admiration, from afar, of Langtry, naming his saloon-courthouse the Jersey Lilly and its town Langtry in her honor. While the two corresponded through letters, they never met, and Estleman teases out of this history (aided by some admitted "implausible truth and accepted legend") a sort of fictionalized twin-track biography that traces the careers and personal lives of both. Not surprisingly, the Bean chapters are a much more natural fit for Estleman's wry sensibility, and he doesn't seem quite comfortable in the drawing rooms of British society. While the 'love story' is for the most part a subtle undercurrent, this spruced-up account of one of history's great unconsummated relationships remains pleasurable reading from a veteran storyteller."—*Booklist*. This gem is unclassifiable so I put it here in New Books. It's fun to explore a legend and a myth.

Flynn, Gillian. [Gone Girl](#) (\$15). Domestic suspense—marriage can kill you—that has launched a thousand books of similar vein. In short, in June 2012, the next new thing—and now in paperback.

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. [The Bully Pulpit](#) (SimonSchuster \$45) presents revealing portraits of Theodore Roosevelt and his close friend, handpicked successor and eventual bitter rival, William Howard Taft. And some of it reads like it happened today.

"Roosevelt comes across not only as the familiar swaggering Rough Rider ('that damn cowboy,' one opponent called him) but also as a savvy politician, who, like Ms. Goodwin's Lincoln, used his abilities to read the public mood and communicate with the country to advance his sweeping vision of change. Taft, in contrast, emerges as an amiable, well-intentioned man whose reluctance to use 'the bully pulpit' (Roosevelt's term for the national platform provided by the presidency to shape public opinion and mobilize action) helped undermine his tenure in the White House and open the way to a third-party challenge by Roosevelt in the presidential race of 1912. Possessed of a judicial temperament that made him uncomfortable with the hurly-burly of politics, Taft would eventually become chief justice of the United States years after his less-than-successful presidency. Without explicitly verbalizing them, *The Bully Pulpit* points up the many parallels (and crucial differences) between the Progressive era at the turn of the 20th century and the country today: a squeezed middle class; growing gaps between rich and poor; an escalating debate over the role that the federal government should play through regulation, taxation

and legislation; public frustration with a 'do nothing Congress'; questions about White House leadership; and an often poisonous schism within the Republican Party."—*NY Times*

Grafton, Sue. [Grafton A-W Set in Hardcover Signed](#) (\$680 with free shipping)

Greaney, Mark. [Dead Eye](#) (Berkley \$15). Ex-CIA master assassin Court Gentry has always prided himself on his ability to disappear at will, to fly below the radar and exist in the shadows—to survive as the near-mythical Gray Man. But when he takes revenge upon a former employer who betrayed him, he exposes himself to something he's never had to face before. Code-named Dead Eye, Russell Whitlock is a graduate of the same ultra-secret Autonomous Asset Program that trained and once controlled Gentry. But now, Whitlock is a free agent who has been directed to terminate his fellow student of death. He knows how his target thinks, how he moves, and how he kills. And he knows the best way to do the job is to make Gentry run for his life—right up until the moment Dead Eye finally ends it...

Greenwood, Arin. [Save the Enemy](#) (Soho Teen \$17.99).

Everything has been downhill since Zoey Trask's mother was murdered in a random mugging. Her younger brother, Ben, is on the autistic spectrum and needs constant supervision. It's senior year, and she's the new girl at a weird private school in Old Town Alexandria, VA, full of kids who seem too nice to be true—including a very cute boy named Pete. Aside from half-forgotten martial arts and survivalist skills that her widowed father insisted on teaching her (because that is excellent for her social life), Zoey has nothing to offer Pete or anyone else. Then Dad is kidnapped. Zoey suddenly finds herself sole caretaker of a younger brother she barely understands. Worse, Ben seems to hold the key to their father's disappearance in his Dream Diary, a bizarre journal of names and places Ben claims that their mother shares from beyond the grave....

Haas, Derek. [The Right Hand](#) (\$15). There has always been a need in the spy game for operations outside the realm of legality—covert missions so black no one in the American government, and almost no one in intelligence itself, is aware of their existence. The left hand can't know what the right hand is doing. Austin Clay is that right hand. Clay is sent to track down a missing American operative, a man who was captured outside of Moscow, in the Russian countryside. Soon he discovers the missing officer is only the beginning of the mission, and finds himself protecting a desperate woman who believes a mole has penetrated the top levels of the U.S. government, throwing the international balance of power into jeopardy. A change of pace for this author.

Hall, James W. [Going Dark Signed](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Earth Liberation Front, known as ELF, is a loosely knit organization comprised of environmental activists scattered around the country. These extremists take a "by any means necessary" approach to defending the planet. In the last decade ELF has been responsible for close to a hundred million dollars in damage mainly through arson. The FBI ranks them, along with other eco-radicals, as the number one homegrown terrorist threat. Flynn Moss, Thorn's newly discovered son, has naively fallen in with an ELF cell in Miami which has its sights on Turkey Point, the largest nuclear power plant in the state. This ELF group has concocted a non-violent plan to shut the nuke plant

down—nothing more than a huge publicity stunt to call attention to the dangers of nuclear power. But unbeknownst to some in the group, there are other members with a far more violent scheme in mind—to cause a radioactive catastrophe rivaling Chernobyl or Fukushima. With a growing sense of dread about the group’s true intentions, Flynn summons Thorn to help him escape from Prince Key, the remote island off the shores of Miami where the ELF group is camped. Unable to refuse this son he barely knows, Thorn heads off to Prince Key and quickly reaches a frightening realization....

Hamilton, Steve. [Die a Stranger](#) (\$14.99). Alex McKnight. See December Trade Paperback Picks.

Harrison, Jim. [Brown Dog: Novellas](#) (Grove \$27). Brown Dog, a bawdy, reckless, down-on-his-luck Michigan Indian, has earned cult status with readers in the more than two decades since his first appearance. For the first time, *Brown Dog* gathers all the Brown Dog novellas, including one never-published one, into one volume—the ideal introduction (or reintroduction) to Harrison’s irresistible Everyman.

Haskell Smith, Mark. [Raw: A Love Story](#) (Grove \$15). I loved this book. It is raw, lots of sex and action, and written with terrific style. *Booklist* agrees: “In this thoroughly enjoyable outing, consummate satirist Haskell Smith (*Baked*, 2010) pokes delirious fun at modern-day book publishing and reality TV. As the novel opens, reality-TV ‘star’ Sepp Gregory is on tour to promote his debut novel, *Totally Reality*. (He didn’t write the book, of course; the chap who penned the prose is super erudite Curtis, who told Sepp’s sordid life story so eloquently that even the *New York Times* gave it a rave review.) But ghostwriting isn’t a crime, right? It is for blogosphere luminary Harriet, who considers Sepp’s book one of the signs of literary Armageddon. She’s determined to ‘out’ the ghostwriter, even if it means sabotaging Sepp’s book tour. Which is exactly what she does. Before she knows it, Harriet, a bookish babe in her own right, finds herself on the road (and between the sheets) with Sepp. (An unlikely pair if there ever was one, Harriet ‘flashes’ her intellect, while Sepp ‘flashes’ his abs.) By turns racy and profound, Haskell Smith writes at Mach speed about what passes for culture in today’s often unreal world.”

Heat-Moon, William Least. [Here, There, Elsewhere: Stories from the Road](#) (\$18). William Least Heat-Moon’s greatest short-form travel writing. Personally selected by the writer, these pieces take us from Japan, England, Italy, and Mexico to Long Island, Oregon, Arizona, from small towns to big cities, ocean shores and inland mysteries, including Heat-Moon’s reflections on writing these pieces. Patrick and I recommend these stories highly.

Hess, Joan. [Murder as a Second Language Signed](#) (St Martins \$28). Longtime bookseller and single mother, Claire Malloy has recently married her long term beau and moved out of her less than opulent apartment into a sprawling, newly remodeled house. Her daughter, Caron, is making plans for college. All of which leaves Claire with something she hasn’t had in quite a while: spare time. When her attempts to learn French cooking start getting “mixed” reviews, she agrees to help Caron and her best friend Inez in fluffing up their college applications by volunteering as an ESL tutor with the Farberville Literacy

Council. But her modest effort to give back quickly becomes a nightmare when she’s railroaded onto the Board of Directors of the troubled nonprofit. Vandalism, accusations of embezzlement, epic budget problems, and a cacophony of heavily-accented English speakers are just the tip of the iceberg. Just as she decides that it might be best to extricate herself, Claire gets a frantic call from her husband, Deputy Chief Peter Rosen. One of the students, an older Russian woman named Ludmilla, famed for her unpleasantness, has been murdered in the offices of the Farberville Literary Council. For the first time ever, Peter actually asks Claire for her help....

Jones, Matthew F. [A Single Shot](#) (\$17). Reissue. “In a time when reliable standards of personal conduct have allegedly eroded and, no longer anchored by religious conviction or cultural cohesion, have diminished to irresolute situational postures and secular mumbles, an older, less elastic code of honor may seem vastly appealing, even heroic. To avert the confusions attendant on choice, such codes are simplified, starkly so, but clearly... Should it require the efforts of generations to uphold this code, to respond to the responses, so be it. John Moon, the resolute, pitiful and confused man at the heart of *A Single Shot*, one of the finest novels of rural crime and moral horror in the past few decades, has an inherited code of his own, but almost innocently violates it, and experiences a cascade of nightmares in response. He is a hunter, raised on the rules of hunting, the ethics of hunting, and can’t let a wounded deer slink into the thicket to die a slow agonizing death. So he follows as he should, obeying every tenet of the deerslayer code, chases up hills and over rocks, on and on, then down another hill until exhausted, when suddenly a bush wiggles, there’s a flash of brown, and he breaks the most important and basic rule of all, pulls that trigger. Moon is the creation of Matthew F. Jones, a hard, wonderful and very powerful writer you might not know yet, but ought to soon. But be forewarned, dear reader, Jones is a twisted motherfucker when sitting at his keyboard, twisted in the manner so many of us appreciate mightily, and will not spare your tender sensibilities should you be among those poor souls afflicted by such. He rakes you over the coals at a measured pace, unfurls wrath from six angles, and the Amen he delivers over John Moon will keep even other twisted motherfuckers awake nights.”—Daniel Woodrell

Kerley, JA. [The Death Box](#) (Collins \$15.99). Carson Ryder thought he’d seen everything ...A specialist in twisted crimes, Detective Carson Ryder thought he’d seen the lowest depths of human depravity. But he’s barely started his new job in Miami when called to a horrific scene: a concrete pillar built of human remains, their agony forever frozen in stone. Finding the secret of the pillar drags him into the sordid world of human trafficking, where one terrified girl holds the key to unraveling a web of pain, prostitution and murder. There’s just one problem: Ryder’s not the only one chasing the girl. And the others will kill to keep the secret safe.

King, Laurie R. [A Grave Talent; To Play the Fool; With Child](#) (\$15 each). Reissues of 3 Kate Martinelli mysteries by King, the first one published in 1992 and all set in San Francisco.

Kingsbury, Karen. [Fifteen Minutes](#) (Howard \$22.99). *PW* writes, “Inspirational fiction superstar Kingsbury considers the cost of fame in her new novel, which puts under the microscope the singing competitions that fill television airwaves. Zack Dylan

wants to save his family's Kentucky horse farm and sing for Jesus; competing on Fifteen Minutes seems like the answer, but he must leave his family and girlfriend Reese behind. Zack quickly learns that the price of success may be more than he anticipates. He's romantically linked with fellow contestant Zoey Davis, asked to eliminate references to his faith, and sing songs that contradict what he believes. But straight talk from Judge Chandra Olson, who paid a steep price for her fame, and hard words from his girlfriend Reese begin to open his eyes. What will fame cost him? Will the price be too high? Can he ever go back? Kingsbury wrings much emotion out of her tale that is sure to cause tears and also force readers to consider their own parts in elevating entertainers into the impossible stature of idol." Amen to that.

Lauren, Christina. [Beautiful Player](#) (Gallery \$15). When bookworm Hanna Bergstrom receives a lecture from her overprotective brother about neglecting her social life and burying herself in grad school, she's determined to tackle his implied assignment: get out, make friends, start dating. And who better to turn her into the sultry siren every man wants than her brother's gorgeous best friend, Will Sumner, venture capitalist and unapologetic playboy? Will takes risks for a living, but he's skeptical about this challenge of Hanna's...until the wild night... Take a break from crime.

Leonard, Elmore. [Bounty Hunter](#); [Escape from Five Shadows](#); [Forty Lashes Less One](#); [Law at Randado](#) (\$14.99 each). Reissues.

Manchester, William. [The Death of a President November 20-25 1963](#) (\$22 trade paperback). Restored to print in a new edition, the historian's account.

Mann, Don. [Seal Team Six: Hunt the Falcon](#) (LittleBrown \$26). A thriller from an actual SEAL. SEAL Team Six is chasing "The Falcon," an Iranian terrorist who has been stealing Libyan nuclear material. The hunt takes the team from Bangkok to Caracas in search of The Falcon's forces. Crocker convinces the powers that be to allow him to operate in Iran, and he and the team go in full black in order to take down their mark. Meanwhile, Crocker's estranged father—a former firefighter and hell-raiser who was kicked out of the Navy as a young seaman—reappears, forcing Crocker to recognize his life outside the shadows of SEAL life. It's not easy when work calls over 300 days of the year, and when it's this essential to take an enemy down.

Martin, George RR, ed. *Dangerous Women* (Forge \$29.99). STORY SIGNED BY GABALDON. All new and original to this volume, the 21 stories in *Dangerous Women* include work by twelve *New York Times* bestsellers, and seven stories set in the authors' bestselling continuities—including a new "Outlander" story by Diana Gabaldon, a tale of Harry Dresden's world by Jim Butcher, a story from Lev Grossman set in the world of *The Magicians*, and a 35,000-word novella by George R. R. Martin about the Dance of the Dragons, the vast civil war that tore Westeros apart nearly two centuries before the events of *A Game of Thrones*.

McNab, Claire. [Lethal Care](#) (Bella Books \$16.95). A new Inspector Carol Ashton lesbian mystery from one of the major writers in the field.

Meister, Ellen. [Farewell, Dorothy Parker](#) (\$15). A socially awkward movie critic finds her moxie in Meister's winsome tale. Violet Epps might pen scathing movie reviews, but in real

life she's too timid to break up with her louse of a boyfriend or stand up to a snippy assistant at work. When Violet visits the Algonquin Hotel, the favorite haunt of her idol, Dorothy Parker, she's shocked to discover the spirit of Dorothy Parker is still hanging around, connected to the hotel via its legendary guest book. Violet absconds with the book, taking it, and thereby her idol, home. The feisty and persistent Mrs. Parker urges Violet to buck up and fight for what she wants. Under Dorothy's guidance, Violet manages to dump her boyfriend, make a move on her cute kung fu instructor, and put the mouthy assistant in her place. But Violet's biggest challenge lies in her fight for the custody of her 13-year-old niece, Delaney, the daughter of her beloved older sister, Ivy, who died in a car crash with her husband. Meister's third outing is magical fun. "[Meister] reveals the pathos behind the pith, and she instructs readers about the enduring legacy of a writer who produced not just 'scathing reviews, clever jokes, quotable poetry, and insightful short stories' but also championed social causes. Classic Parker zingers sprinkled throughout the novel add sparkle."—*Washington Post*

Meltzer, Brad. [History Decoded: The Ten Greatest Conspiracies of All Time](#) (Workman \$24.95). A richly illustrated book where each chapter invites the reader along for an interactive experience through the addition of removable facsimile documents—the evidence! It's a treasure trove for conspiracy buffs, a Griffin and Sabine for history lovers. See Great Gift Ideas.

Mitchard, Jacquelyn. [What We Lost in the Dark](#) (Soho Teen \$17.99). Allie Kim's fatal allergy to sunlight, XP, still confines her to the night. Now that she's lost her best friend Juliet to an apparent suicide, the night has never felt darker—even with Rob at her side. Allie knows why Juliet killed herself: to escape the clutches of Garrett Tabor, whom the trio saw committing an unspeakable crime. Garrett is untouchable; The Tabors founded the world-famous XP clinic that keeps Allie and Rob alive and their small Minnesota town on the map. Allie can't rest until Garrett is brought to justice. But her obsession jeopardizes everything she holds dear.

Muller, Marcia/Bill Pronzini. [The Spook Lights Affair Signed](#) (Forge \$24.99). In 1895 San Francisco young debutantes don't commit suicide at festive parties, particularly not under the eye of Sabina Carpenter. But Virginia St. Ives evidently did, leaping from a foggy parapet in a shimmer of ghostly light. The seemingly impossible disappearance of her body creates an even more serious problem for the firm of Carpenter and Quincannon, Professional Detective Services. Sabina hadn't wanted to take the assignment, but her partner John Quincannon insisted it would serve as entrée to the city's ultra rich and powerful. That means money, and Quincannon loves the almighty dollar. Which is why he is hunting the bandit who robbed the Wells, Fargo office of \$35,000. Working their separate cases (while Sabina holds John off with one light hand), the detectives give readers a tour of The City the way it was. From the infamous Barbary Coast to the expensive Tenderloin gaming houses and brothels frequented by wealthy men, Quincannon follows a danger-laden trail to unmask the murderous perpetrators of the Wells, Fargo robbery. Meanwhile, Sabina works her wiles on friends and relatives of the vanished debutante until the pieces of her puzzle start falling into place. But it's an oddly disguised gent appearing out of nowhere who provides the final clue to both cases—the shrewd "crackbrain" who believes himself to be Sherlock Holmes.

Patterson, James. [12th of Never](#); [Christmas Wedding](#) (\$14). Plus 3 for Young Readers: [I Funny: A Middle School Story](#) and [I Even Funnier: A Middle School Story](#) (LittleBrown \$13.99 each); plus with Chris Grabenstein: [Treasure Hunters](#) (LittleBrown \$14.99).

Quinn, Peter. [Dry Bones](#) (Overlook \$25.95). There are lots of spy novels to read about WWII in progress but fewer about what was happening as it wound down and US interests shifted quickly to the Soviet drive into Europe as the Nazis retreated—the looming Cold War. And what about the rise of the OSS during wartime under Wild Bill Donovan, and where those on its team went at war's end. Joseph Kanon's [Istanbul Passage](#) (\$16) addressed this and now Peter Quinn writes not only a compelling (and truly literate!) thriller but provides a fascinating view of from the perspective of today on both men in power (the Dulles brothers, Ike, Donovan, Truman and FDR, etc) and those serving under them. It begins with a rough-weather flight from the UK to Prague that makes a forced landing in Nuremberg in January, 1946, and drops back to September, 1944, after Normandy and other events spell the end the Germans won't accept. Fintan Dunne and Richard Van Hull accept an ill-fated OSS mission to rescue an OSS team trapped during the Red Army's march towards Berlin while trying to abet Czech resistance. The mission goes south but not before detective Dunne and schoolmaster Van Hull uncover a secret that will change their lives. Dunne previously appeared in *Hour of the Cat* and *The Man Who Never Returned*.

Rappaport, Helen. [Capturing the Light: The Birth of Photography](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). During the 1830s, in an atmosphere of intense scientific enquiry fostered by the industrial revolution, two quite different men—one in France, one in England—developed their own dramatically different photographic processes in total ignorance of each other's work. These two lone geniuses—Henry Fox Talbot in the seclusion of his English country estate at Lacock Abbey and Louis Daguerre in the heart of post-revolutionary Paris—through diligence, disappointment and sheer hard work overcame extraordinary odds to achieve the one thing man had for centuries been trying to do—to solve the ancient puzzle of how to capture the light and in so doing make nature 'paint its own portrait'. With the creation of their two radically different processes—the Daguerreotype and the Talbotype—these two giants of early photography changed the world and how we see it. I've been to Lacock where Talbot worked; his spirit haunts it.

Redmann, JM. [Shoal of Time](#) (Bold Stroke Books \$16.95). Michele "Micky" Knight, a New Orleans PI, meets an out-of-town team of investigators who are working a human trafficking case. They want someone local to show them around. It sounds easy, and a woman with smiling green eyes is asking. But it stays easy only if Micky stops asking questions—and she's never been good at that. What starts out as a tourist tour of the underside of New Orleans turns into a risky game of cat and mouse, and twists even further as Micky is caught between the good guys and the bad guys, each willing to do whatever it takes—including getting rid of an inconvenient PI—to achieve their ends. Who can she trust? And who's trying to kill her?

Shenon, Philip. [A Cruel and Shocking Act](#) (Holt \$32). One of the many probes of the Kennedy assassination in this the 50<sup>th</sup> year since the cruel and shocking act.

Snyder, Maria V. [Taste of Darkness](#) (Harlequin \$14.95). Avry knows hardship and trouble. She fought the plague and survived. She took on King Tohon and defeated him. But now her heart-mate, Kerrick, is missing, and Avry fears he's gone forever. But there's a more immediate threat. The Skeleton King plots to claim the Fifteen Realms for his own. With armies in disarray and the dead not staying down, Avry's healing powers are needed now more than ever. Torn between love and loyalty, Avry must choose her path carefully. Historical/romantic fantasy.

Sparks, Nicholas. [A Bend in the Road](#) (\$15). Miles Ryan's life seemed to end the day his wife was killed in a hit-and-run accident two years ago. As deputy sheriff of New Bern, North Carolina, he not only grieves for her and worries about their young son Jonah but longs to bring the unknown driver to justice. Then Miles meets Sarah Andrews, Jonah's second-grade teacher. A young woman recovering from a difficult divorce, Sarah moved to New Bern hoping to start over. Tentatively, Miles and Sarah reach out to each other...soon they are falling in love. But what neither realizes is that they are also bound together by a shocking secret,

Stone, Nick. [Verdict Signed](#) (Sphere UK \$39). Terry Flynt is a struggling legal clerk, desperately trying to get promoted. And then he is given the biggest opportunity of his career: to help defend a millionaire accused of murdering a woman in his hotel suite. The only problem is that the accused man, Vernon James, turns out to be not only someone he knows, but someone he loathes. This case could potentially make Terry's career, but how can he defend a former friend who betrayed him so badly? With the trial date looming, Terry delves deeper into Vernon's life and is forced to confront secrets from their shared past that could have devastating consequences for them both. For years he has wanted to witness Vernon's downfall, but with so much at stake, how can Terry be sure that he is guilty? And what choices must he make to ensure that justice is done?

Stroby, Wallace. [Shoot the Woman First](#) (St Martins \$24.99). A half million dollars in drug proceeds, guarded by three men with automatic weapons. For professional thief Crissa Stone, and her team, stealing it was the easy part. But when the split goes awry in a blaze of gunfire, Crissa finds herself on the run with a duffel bag of stolen cash, bound by a promise to deliver part of the take to the needy family of one of her slain partners. In pursuit are the drug kingpin's lethal lieutenants and a former Detroit cop with his own deadly agenda. They think the money's there for the taking, for whoever finds her first. But Crissa doesn't plan to give it up without a fight, even as her mission of mercy puts her and a young child in mortal danger, with forces on both sides of the law closing in. After all, a debt is a debt....

Tosches, Nick. [Me and the Devil](#) (\$16). An aging New Yorker, a writer named Nick, feels life ebbing out of him. The world has gone to hell and Nick is so sick of it all that he can't even have a glass of champagne. Then one night he meets a tantalizing young woman who agrees to come back to his apartment. Their encounter is the most strangely extraordinary of his life. Propelled by uncontrollable, primordial desires, he enters a new and unimagined dimension of the forbidden and is filled with a sexual and spiritual ecstasy that is as intense as it is unholy. Suddenly Nick's senses are alive. But Nick's desire to sustain his rapture leads him to madness and a darkness literary outlaw Tosches well imagines.

Van Lustbader, Eric. [Robert Ludlum's the Bourne Retribution](#) (Grand Central \$28). Jason Bourne's friend Eli Yadin, head of Mossad, learns that Ouyang Jidan, a senior member of China's Politburo, and a major Mexican drug lord may have been trafficking in something far more deadly than drugs. Yadin needs Bourne to investigate. Bourne agrees, but only because he has a personal agenda: Ouyang Jidan is the man who ordered Rebeka—one of the only people Bourne has ever truly cared about—murdered. Bourne is determined to avenge her death, but in the process he becomes enmeshed in a monstrous world-wide scheme involving the Chinese, Mexicans, and Russians....

Weddle, Steve. [Country Hardball](#) (Tyrus \$24.99) is "a perfect combination of the brokenhearted and the just flat broke... Here's hoping Weddle never stops writing..."—Benjamin Whitmer. Roy Allison is a free man on his way back home, determined to make a better life. But, his will to overcome his dark past is challenged when he finds the home he returns to being dragged under by economic hard times, the costs of war, and the old bad habits people fall into when nothing new seems possible...

#### A DOZEN RECOMMENDED STOCKING STUFFERS

Blackwell, Juliet. [Home for the Haunting](#) (Signet \$7.99). San Francisco contractor Mel Turner is leading a volunteer home renovation project, and while she expects lots of questions from her inexperienced crew, she can't help asking a few of her own—especially about the haunted house next door...the place local kids call the Murder House. But when volunteers discover a body while cleaning out a shed, questions pile up faster than discarded lumber. Mel notices signs of ghostly activity next door and she wonders: Are the Murder House ghosts reaching out to her for help, or has the house claimed another victim? Now, surprised to find herself as the SFPD's unofficial "ghost consultant," Mel must investigate murders both past and present...

Coyle, Cleo. [Holiday Buzz](#) (Berkley \$7.99). At the Great New York Cookie Swap, pastry chefs bake up their very best for charity. Clare is in charge of the beverage service, and her famous Fa-la-la-lattes make the gathering even merrier. But her high spirits come crashing down to earth, when she discovers the battered body of a hard-working baker's assistant. Police suspect a serial attacker whose escalating crimes have become known as "The Christmas Stalkings." Clare's boyfriend, NYPD detective Mike Quinn, finds reason to believe even more sinister forces are involved. Clare isn't so sure—and when she finds a second bludgeoned baker, she becomes a target.

✠Cumming, Charles. [Trinity Six](#) (\$9.99). London, 1992. Late one night, Edward Crane, 76, is declared dead at a London hospital. An obituary describes him only as a 'resourceful career diplomat'. But Crane was much more than that—and the circumstances surrounding his death are far from what they seem. Fifteen years later, academic Sam Gaddis needs money. When a journalist friend asks for his help researching a possible sixth member of the notorious Trinity spy ring, Gaddis knows that she's onto a story that could turn his fortunes around. But within hours the journalist is dead, apparently from a heart attack. Taking over her investigation, Gaddis trails a man who claims to know the truth about Edward Crane. This terrific spy story imagining the identity of a 6th member of the infamous Cambridge Five was named a *Washington Post* Notable Fiction Book for 2011

Elkins, Aaron. [Dying on the Vine](#) (\$7.99). What for now appears to be the last case for the Skeleton Detective, Dr. Gideon Oliver, revels in the food, wine—and frauds—of Florence, Italy. And did we mention, feuds? Just the ticket for the holidays with its wealth of color and cuisine.

Evanovich, Janet. [Notorious Nineteen](#) (\$8.99). After a slow summer of chasing low-level skips for her cousin Vinnie's bail bonds agency, Stephanie Plum finally lands an assignment that could put her checkbook back in the black. Geoffrey Cubbin, facing trial for embezzling millions from Trenton's premier assisted-living facility, has mysteriously vanished from the hospital after an emergency appendectomy. Now it's on Stephanie to track him down. Unfortunately, Cubbin has disappeared without a trace, a witness, or his money-hungry wife. Rumors are stirring that he must have had help with the daring escape . . . or that maybe he never made it out of his room alive. Since the hospital staff's lips seem to be tighter than the security, and it's hard for Stephanie to blend in to assisted living, Stephanie's Grandma Mazur goes in undercover. But when a second felon goes missing from the same hospital, Stephanie is forced into working side by side with Trenton's hottest cop, Joe Morelli, in order to crack the case.

Grafton, Sue. [Kinsey and Me: Stories](#) (\$9.99). Stories featuring the legendary PI plus a series that Grafton wrote exploring the life and death of her mother and her family. Essential reading.

Hart, Carolyn G. [Cry in the Night](#) (\$7.99). Egyptologist Sheila Ramsay develops a newfound interest in MesoAmerican affairs after meeting an outspoken—and attractive—Mexico City curator, a harsh critic of museums that deal in stolen art. And her own museum gives her the perfect opportunity to see him again: a valuable Aztec manuscript needs to be returned to its rightful owners, the wealthy Ortega family. But things don't go as planned for Sheila south of the border. An anonymous note threatens her with death if she remains in Mexico City. The curator she longed to see treats her with contempt. And the Ortegas are as mysterious as they are charming. What Sheila has stumbled into is much bigger—and more deadly—than she ever envisioned.... Hart, a friend of the late Elizabeth Peters, steps into the same world....

Knott, Robert. [Robert B. Parker's Ironhorse](#) (\$9.99). "Hits with the intensity of an eight-gauge shotgun blast. *Ironhorse* is written by first-time novelist Robert Knott, taking over this series by the prolific Robert B. Parker. Knott was co-writer of the screenplay for the film version of *Appaloosa*, and it's obvious from *Ironhorse* that Virgil and Everett's fates are in excellent hands. Local readers will also enjoy the descriptions of 19th-century Oklahoma, as well as the joys and troubles of rail travel during that time, in addition to a rip-snorting tale full of sparse dialogue seasoned with wit as dry as an Oklahoma prairie wind and enough flying bullets and buckshot to fill a caboose."—*Tulsa World*. A bonus is the wealth of 19<sup>th</sup> Century railroad detail.

Laukkanen, Owen. [Criminal Enterprise](#) (\$9.99). From the outside, Carter Tomlin's life looked perfect: a big house, pretty wife, two kids—a St. Paul success story. But Tomlin has a secret. He's lost his job, the bills are mounting, and that perfect life is hanging by a thread. Desperate, he robs a bank. Then he robs another. As the red flags start to go up, FBI Special Agent Carla Windermere homes in on Tomlin from one direction, while Minnesota state

investigator Kirk Stevens picks up the trail from another. The two cops haven't talked since their first case together, but that's all going to change very quickly. Because Carter Tomlin's decided he likes robbing banks. And it's not just because of the money.... Laukkanen wears the mantle of the late Elmore Leonard well.

✦Purser, Ann. [Found Guilty at Five](#) (\$7.99). A wedding is always a happy occasion, even if village cleaner (Britspeak for maid service) Lois Meade must remind herself she isn't losing a daughter, but gaining a policeman. Her new son-in-law is in the Tresham force—and happens to be Inspector Cowgill's nephew—so now Lois has another link to the law. But when her youngest son invites a mysterious woman, Akiko, as a guest, Lois wonders why she refuses to talk about her past. And when a thief waltzes off with the young woman's cello, Lois enlists the inspector's help to find the valuable instrument. When Akiko herself goes missing, Lois discovers that this could be another in a string of murderous musical thefts...

Williams, Amanda Kyle. [Stranger in the Room](#) (\$7.99). Lieutenant Aaron Rauser is called to the disturbing scene of the strangling death of a thirteen-year-old boy. Meanwhile, Atlanta private investigator and ex-FBI profiler Keye Street, a recovering alcoholic, must deal with her emotionally fragile cousin, who has her own history of drug abuse and is now convinced that she is being stalked. But all hell breaks loose when another murder—the apparent hanging of an elderly man—hits disturbingly close to home for Keye. Though the two victims have almost nothing in common, there are bizarre similarities between this case and that of Aaron's strangled teen. With the threat of more deaths to come, Keye works on pure instinct alone

Woods, Stuart. [Unintended Consequences](#) (\$9.99). Suave Stone Barrington, attorney for the premier white-shoe law firm Woodman & Weld, he's seen more than his share. But when he travels to Europe under highly, treats himself and his readers to his upscale lifestyle as played out, along with various crimes, amidst Europe's upper crust. Great fun, and also great food as Stone eats out in Paris rather than Manhattan.

#### NEW IN MASS MARKET PAPERBACK

Abbott, Victoria. [The Sayers' Swindle](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Book Collector Mystery  
Archer, Jeffrey. [Best Kept Secret](#) (\$9.99)  
Becker, James. [Lost Testament](#) (Signet \$9.99)  
Bentley, Jennie. [Home for the Homicide: DIY Mystery](#) (Berkley \$7.99)  
Britton, Andrew. [Courier](#) (\$9.99)  
Carr, Robyn. [Virgin River Christmas](#) (\$7.99)  
Cass, Laurie. [Lending a Paw: A Bookmobile Cat Mystery](#) (Signet \$7.99)  
Clancy, Tom. [Threat Vector](#) (\$8.99)  
Conrad, Hy. [Mr. Monk Helps Himself](#) (\$7.99)  
Craig, Elizabeth. [Quilt Trip: A Southern Quilting Mystery](#) (Signet \$7.99)  
Davis, Krista. [Murder She Barked](#) (Berkley \$7.99)  
Ferris, Monica. [And Then You Dye: Needlecraft Mystery](#) (\$7.99)  
Gardner, Lisa. [Brandon's Bride: A Family Secrets Novel](#) (\$7.99)  
Graham, Heather. [Blood Red](#) (\$7.99)  
Grippando, James. [Blood Money](#) (\$9.99) Jack Swyteck  
Hamilton, Donald. [Matt Helm—The Shadows](#) (Forge \$7.99)  
Higgins, Kristan. [Perfect Match](#) (\$7.99)

Holloway, Emma Jane. [Study in Ashes Book Three](#) (\$7.99)  
Howard, Linda. [Shadow Woman](#) (\$7.99)  
Jance, JA. [Deadly Stakes](#) (\$9.99) Ali Reynolds  
Koch, Gini. [Alien Research](#) (DAW \$7.99) See Event Books  
Logan, Kylie. [Buttoned Up: Button Box Mystery](#) (Berkley \$7.99)  
Michaels, Fern. [Secret Santa](#) (\$7.99)  
Quinn, Julia. [Sum of All Kisses](#) (Harper \$7.99)  
Shelton, Paige. [Merry Market Murder: Farmer's Market Mystery](#) (Berkley \$7.99)  
Showalter, Gena. [Black and Blue](#) (Picador \$7.99)  
Singh, Nalini. [Archangels Legion](#) (J \$7.99)  
Steel, Danielle. [Sins of the Mother](#) (\$7.99)  
Tettensor, E L. [Darkwalker: A Nicholas Lenoir Novel](#) (\$7.99)  
Thayne, Raeanne. [Christmas in Snowflake Canyon](#) (\$7.99)  
Wallace, Joseph. [Invasive Species](#) (\$9.99)

#### HISTORY/MYSTERY

✦Buckley, Fiona. [A Traitor's Tears](#) (Severn \$28.95). The long-running Ursula Blanchard series opens a penetrating and always suspenseful window onto the mix of politics with the personal that Elizabethans—not just the nobility either—had to manage. July, 1573. Recently widowed, Ursula Blanchard is living a quiet life on her Surrey estate, caring for her infant son. But her peaceful existence is shattered when Ursula's neighbor Jane Cobbold is found dead in her own flowerbed, stabbed through the heart with a silver dagger—and Ursula's manservant Brockley is arrested for the crime. Determined to prove Brockley's innocence, Ursula seeks help from her old mentor Lord Burghley. But when a second death occurs and the queen's new spymaster, Francis Walsingham, gets involved, once again Ursula is reluctantly drawn into matters of espionage and affairs of state. Ordered Upon Request.

Dickinson, David. [Death at the Jesus Hospital](#) (\$16). The first man murdered was Abel Meredith, a resident at the Jesus Hospital Almshouse near London. The second victim, Roderick Gill, was bursar at the Allison's school in Norfolk. Sir Rufus Walcott, was slain in his own hall by the Thames. All had their throats cut. And all had strange markings on their chests, carved there by the murderer but which neither doctor nor coroner could identify. Lord Francis Powerscourt, brought in to solve this case of triple murder, had no shortage of suspects or suspicions. And all three victims had ties to Sir Peregrine Fishbourne, Prime Warden of the Guild of Silkworkers, who had visited all three men shortly before their untimely deaths. Powerscourt is certain knew that only when he had solved the mystery of the strange markings on the victims' bodies would he then be able to close the case. I'm a fan of this clever and well-written Victorian series.

Garrido, Antonio. [The Scribe](#) (Amazon \$14.95). Garrido takes us to the year 799, where King Charlemagne awaits coronation as the Holy Roman emperor. But in the town of Würzburg, the young, willful Theresa dreams only of following in the footsteps of her scholarly father—a quiet man who taught her the forbidden pleasures of reading and writing. Though it was unthinkable for a medieval woman to pursue a career as a craftsperson, headstrong Theresa convinces the parchment-makers' guild to test her. If she passes, it means access to her beloved manuscripts and nothing less than true independence. But as she treats the skins before an audience of jeering workmen, unimaginable tragedy strikes—tearing apart Theresa's family

and setting in motion a cascade of mysteries that Theresa must solve if she hopes to stay alive and save her family. A fugitive in the wilderness, Theresa is forced to rely on her bravery, her uncommon education, and the compassion of strangers. When she encounters Alcuin of York, a wise and influential monk with close ties to Charlemagne, she believes her luck might have finally changed. But the biggest secret lies between Charlemagne and her father. . . . This is a fascinating, dark and often ugly story, no pretty stuff, as is the ticket with European historical I find. Spaniard Garrido is the author of *The Corpse Reader* which won the Zaragoza International Prize for best historical novel published in Spain. This is his second novel to be translated into English.

Greenwood, Kerry. [Electra: Delphic Women Mystery](#) (Poisoned Pen \$22.95). “Greenwood fans will welcome her thoughtful second reinterpretation of a well-known Greek myth (after *Medea*). Troy has fallen, and the surviving Greek leaders have undertaken their various journeys homeward. The fate of their supreme leader, Agamemnon, is conveyed through the eyes of his daughter Electra, who begins her narrative by recounting, ‘I knew she was going to kill him when she laid out the sacred tapestries.’ As in her prior ancient historicals, Greenwood offers up several first-person storytellers, and makes them all convincing. The ignored Trojan seer Cassandra and the peripatetic Odysseus also lend their voices to the tale. Most significantly, Greenwood adds a new, but plausible wrinkle, basing her version on the assumption that revenge for Electra’s father’s death was not her sole motive in killing her mother, Clytemnestra, and her mother’s lover, Aegisthus. Among Greenwood’s other talents, she displays a gift for writing songs of the period.”—*PW* Starred Review. Don’t miss [Medea](#) (\$24.95 or \$14.95) and [Cassandra](#) (\$14.95). These seminal Greek stories take on new life in fiction. I read them all years ago in Classics.

✚Griffith, Nicola. [Hild: A Novel](#) (Farrar \$27). *PW* stars this terrific novel, as do I: “Griffith brings a sci-fi appreciation for alien culture and a woman’s perspective to this fictional coming-of-age story about real-life Saint Hilda of Whitby, who grew up pagan in seventh-century Britain. Daughter of a poisoned prince and a crafty noblewoman, quiet, bright-minded Hild arrives at the court of King Edwin of Northumbria, where the six-year-old takes on the role of seer/consigliere for a monarch troubled by shifting allegiances and Roman emissaries attempting to spread their new religion.” Those who love the spirit and detail of medieval life will eat this up. Highly recommended for its brutal yet beautiful portrait of 7<sup>th</sup> Century Britain, rife with violence and mysticism. Hild’s world is in transition. As the king’s seer she can never be wrong—and survive. But what is this new god? Although Griffith lives in Seattle, she’s a native of Yorkshire.

Harrison, Cora. [Cross of Vengeance](#) (Severn \$28.95). The Burren is a very special bit of Ireland both in geography and culture. Harrison has set a well-wrought mystery series there in the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century before the English under Elizabeth sent in troops and in time more or less destroyed the Celtic culture. September, 1517: when fire destroys the famous relic of the Holy Cross in Kilnaboy church and then a pilgrim is found murdered, it is up to Mara, as Brehon of the Burren, and her law students, to find out who did such a thing—and why. If you read Peter Tremayne’s very fine, and even longer-running, series featuring the Brehon Sister Fidelma of the early medieval period, you will enjoy making the jump to Harrison’s work.

✚Kasasian, Martin. [The Mangle Street Murders Signed](#) (Head of Zeus \$41). Gower Street, London, 1882: Sidney Grice, London’s most famous personal detective, is expecting a visitor. He drains his fifth pot of morning tea, and glances outside, where a young, plain woman picks her way between the piles of horse-dung towards his front door. Sidney Grice shudders—she is wearing brown shoes; only black will do for city wear. March Middleton, orphaned in her early twenties, is his ward and taking up residence (she smokes, his house is a smoke-free zone). March is no quiet spinster and resolves to help him on a new case which she can do since Sidney works for money and she has an inheritance. Backmail! And together they head from Bloomsbury to Mangle Street at the bequest of the new though impoverished client whose daughter has been butchered in her shop in the slums of Mangle Street. The husband claims he slept through it but is arrested. Often cruel (and eccentric) Sidney soon learns that (the also crafty) March can be rather useful after all. . . . Satire and some gruesomeness here, no cozy, and obvious nods to Conan Doyle. Starts a series and is our **December History/Mystery Club Pick**.

Kirk, David. [Child of Vengeance](#) (\$15.95). A bold and vivid historical epic of feudal Japan, based on the real-life exploits of the legendary samurai Musashi Miyamoto. Japan in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century was a land in turmoil. Lords of the great clans schemed against each other, served by aristocratic samurai bound to them by a rigid code of honor. Bannosuke is a high-born but lonely teenager living in his ancestral village. His mother died when he was a young boy, and his powerful warrior father Munisai has abandoned him for a life of service to his Lord, Shinmei. Bannosuke has been raised by his uncle Dorinbo, a monk who urges the boy to forgo the violence of the samurai and embrace the contemplative life. But Bannosuke worships his absent father, and when Munisai returns, gravely injured, Bannosuke is forced to confront truths about his family’s history and his own place in it. These revelations soon guide him down the samurai’s path—awash with blood, bravery, and vengeance. His journey will culminate in the epochal battle of Sekigahara—in which Bannosuke will first proclaim his name as Mushashi Miyamoto. Clearly for readers of Laura Joh Rowland and IJ Parker.

Meacham, Jon. [Thomas Jefferson The Art of Power](#) (\$20 trade paper) gives us Jefferson the politician and president, a great and complex human being forever engaged in the wars of his era. Philosophers think; politicians maneuver. Jefferson’s genius was that he was both and could do both, often simultaneously. Such is the art of power. “Thomas Jefferson hated confrontation, and yet his understanding of power and of human nature enabled him to move men and to marshal ideas, to learn from his mistakes, and to prevail. Passionate about many things—women, his family, books, science, architecture, gardens, friends, Monticello, and Paris—Jefferson loved America most, and he strove over and over again, despite fierce opposition, to realize his vision: the creation, survival, and success of popular government in America.” Named One of the Best Books of the Year by *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *The Seattle Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

LaPlante, Eva. [Marmee and Me](#) (\$16). Biographer Eve LaPlante mines the Alcotts’ intimate diaries and other private papers, some recently discovered in a family attic and others thought to have

been destroyed, to revive this remarkable daughter and mother. Abigail May Alcott—long dismissed as a quiet, self-effacing background figure—comes to life as a gifted writer and thinker. A politically active feminist firebrand, she fought for universal civil rights, an end to slavery, and women’s suffrage, and inevitably shaped the career of her daughter Louis May Alcott and the creation of *Little Women*.

✎Nickson, Chris. [Fair and Tender Ladies](#) (Severn \$28.95). 1734, Leeds. A young man arrives in Leeds searching for his missing sister—and ends up dead, his throat slit. Then the girl the young man came seeking is dragged from the river, drowned. Constable Richard Nottingham finds himself investigating two killings where nothing is as it seems. “The author’s willingness to shake up the status quo marks this as one of the best historical series set in the first half of the 18th century.” *Publishers Weekly* Starred Review. Ordered Upon Request.

✎Palliser, Charles. [Rustication](#) (Norton \$25.95). “Palliser juxtaposes Gothic melodrama, a metafictional frame, a vividly unreliable narrator, and a roiling mix of mysteries in this provocative Victorian thriller, his first novel since 1999’s *The Unburied*. Earthier in milieu and more rollicking in tone than *The Unburied* or his classic, *The Quincunx*, *Rustication* showcases the author’s originality, boldness, and range. Expelled from Cambridge in disgrace in 1863, 17-year-old Richard Shenstone returns to remote Thurchester and a family hiding in its own secrets.”—*PW* Starred Review. I add that I am not as taken with this novel as the *PW* reviewer: the vices are almost obligatory for the age, nothing creative; behavior is sordid all around; and mostly, there is no one to like or even admire—wait, not quite true, there is one man but his part while crucial, gets little play.

✎Parker, Kate. [The Vanishing Thief](#) (Berkley \$15). A nice idea forms the premise of this lightweight mystery but it lacks heft and period feel and at times is just silly. Georgia Fenchurch appears to be an unassuming antiquarian bookseller in Victorian London, but the life she leads is as exciting as any adventure novel. For Georgia is a member of the Archivist Society, a secret association of private investigators led by the mysterious Sir Broderick. When a frantic woman comes to Georgia claiming that her neighbor, Nicholas Drake, has been abducted by the notorious Duke of Blackford, Georgia and the Archivist Society agree to take the case. But Drake is no innocent—he is a thief who has been blackmailing many of the leading members of London society. To find Drake and discover who is behind his abduction, Georgia and her beautiful assistant, Emma, will have to leave the cozy confines of their bookshop and infiltrate the inner circles of the upper crust—with the help of the dashing but dubious Duke...

Parot, Jean Francois. [The Chatelet Apprentice](#) (Gallic Press \$16.99). As historical mysteries go, Victorian England has its charms; but dirty, pestilential 18th-century France really promises a walk on the wild side. In this “the first of 10 novels being translated by Michael Glencross and featuring Nicolas Le Floch, a young police inspector who’s a keen student of forensic science yet isn’t above some down-and-dirty street fighting. This is an age, after all, when the police routinely apply torture during interrogations and depend on “a host of informers, spies and prostitutes” to keep one step ahead of the criminals Nicolas’s first case, an investigation into the disappearance of a high-ranking police official, ushers this one-time country boy into the presence

of Louis XV at Versailles. Being French, Nicolas tends to brood on existential matters (“The young man wondered about the enigma of the human character”) while turning to philosophers like Pascal for guidance. But his is no high-society tale: he takes us into the dank cells of the Bastille, the reeking morgue of the Basse-Geôle, the boisterous brothels and taverns and stewpots and all the other places we really want to see.”—*NY Times* on our **December History Paperback Pick**.

✎Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Hope](#) (Random \$18). Although she lacks for nothing, Claudine Burroughs dreads the holiday season for forcing her to face how empty her life has become. She no longer expects closeness with her coldly ambitious husband, and she has nothing in common with their circle of wealthy, status-minded friends. The only time she is remotely happy is when she volunteers at a woman’s clinic—a job her husband strongly disapproves of. Then, at a glittering yuletide gala, she meets the charming poet Dai Tregarron and finds her spirits lifted. But scarcely an hour later, the charismatic Dai is enmeshed in a nightmare—accused of killing a young streetwalker who had been smuggled into the party. Even though she suspects that an upper-class clique is quickly closing ranks to protect the real killer, Claudine vows to do her utmost for Dai. But it seems that hypocritical London society would rather send an innocent poet to the gallows than expose the shocking truth about one of their own. Nevertheless, it’s the season of miracles and Claudine finally sees a glimmer of hope—not only for Dai but for a young woman she befriends who is teetering on the brink of a lifetime of unhappiness...

Reel, Monte. [Between Man and Beast: An Unlikely Explorer](#) (\$15.95). In 1856 Paul Du Chaillu marched into the equatorial wilderness of West Africa determined to bag an animal that, according to legend, was nothing short of a monster. When he emerged three years later, the summation of his efforts only hinted at what he’d experienced in one of the most dangerous regions on earth. Armed with an astonishing collection of zoological specimens, Du Chaillu leapt from the physical challenges of the jungle straight into the center of the biggest issues of the time—the evolution debate, racial discourse, the growth of Christian fundamentalism—and helped push each to unprecedented intensities. He experienced instant celebrity, but with that fame came whispers—about his past, his credibility, and his very identity—which would haunt the young man.

✎Royal, Priscilla. [Covenant with Hell Signed](#) (Poisoned Pen \$24.95). Another *PW* Starred Review for this series: “Royal’s 10th whodunit featuring Brother Thomas and Prioress Eleanor (after 2012’s *Sanctity of Hate*) perfectly mixes an accessible portrait of 1277 England—its culture and politics—with sympathetic characters and a suspenseful plot. Eleanor and Thomas embark on a pilgrimage from Tyndal to the shrine at Walsingham Priory in East Anglia. Shortly after they arrive, Thomas finds the broken body of Sister Roysia at the base of the Ryehill Priory bell tower, from which she just fell. The prioress of Ryehill, Ursell, is eager that her institution’s reputation not be tarnished by rumors that the nun took her own life, and pronounces the death an accident. But Thomas and Eleanor can’t ignore evidence of foul play—a fragment of cloth clutched in Roysia’s hand, indicating that she was not alone when she died. An impending visit from Edward I raises the stakes. Royal again demonstrates why she’s a worthy successor to Ellis Peters.”—*PW*. Also in trade paper: [Covenant with Hell](#) (\$14.95).

Thomas, Evan. [Ike's Bluff](#) (\$18). Upon assuming the presidency in 1953, Dwight Eisenhower set about to make good on his campaign promise to end the Korean War. Yet while Eisenhower was quickly viewed by many as a doddering lightweight, behind the bland smile and simple speech was a master tactician. To end the hostilities, Eisenhower would take a colossal risk by bluffing that he might use nuclear weapons against the Communist Chinese, while at the same time restraining his generals and advisors who favored the strikes. Ike's gamble was of such magnitude that there could be but two outcomes: thousands of lives saved, or millions of lives lost. A tense, vivid and revisionist account of a president who was then, and still is today, underestimated.

✂Thomas, Samuel. [The Midwife's Tale](#) (\$14.99). Our January, 2013, History/Mystery Club Pick in hardcover is a debut steeped in 17th Century York. Even as the city suffers at the rebels' hands, midwife Bridget Hodgson becomes embroiled in a different sort of rebellion. One of Bridget's friends, Esther Cooper, has been convicted of murdering her husband and sentenced to be burnt alive. Convinced that her friend is innocent, Bridget sets out to find the real killer. Bridget joins forces with Martha Hawkins, a servant who's far more skilled with a knife than any respectable woman ought to be. To save Esther from the stake, they must dodge rebel artillery, confront a murderous figure from Martha's past, and capture a brutal killer who will stop at nothing to cover his tracks. The investigation takes Bridget and Martha from the homes of the city's most powerful families to the alleyways of its poorest neighborhoods. As they delve into the life of Esther's murdered husband, they discover that his ostentatious Puritanism hid a deeply sinister secret life... The sequel pubs in January 2014: [The Harlot's Tale](#) Signed (St Martins \$27).

✂Todd, Charles. [Proof of Guilt](#) (\$14.99). An outstanding entry in the Inspector Rutledge canon ties Summer, 1920, London to the island of Madeira, a wine-centric economy controlled by the Portuguese. Wartime events shape the 1920 story which begins when a man is found lying on the road in a posh neighborhood, victim of a hit-and-run. But did the victim die there? And if not, why is his body there? A small clue leads Rutledge to a firm built on a two-family alliance that imports and sells wine from Madeira. The current head of the English branch is missing. Is he the motorcar victim? What about his sister? The London office clerk? And the Portuguese branch members? It's tricky and excellent reading! Look for a new Rutledge signed here January 29: [Hunting Shadows](#) (Morrow \$25.99).

Witter, Brett. [The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History](#) (\$17). At the same time Adolf Hitler was attempting to take over the western world, his armies were methodically seeking and hoarding the finest art treasures in Europe. The Fuehrer had begun cataloguing the art he planned to collect as well as the art he would destroy: "degenerate" works he despised. In a race against time, behind enemy lines, often unarmed, a special force of American and British museum directors, curators, art historians, and others, called the Monuments Men, risked their lives scouring Europe to prevent the destruction of thousands of years of culture. Focusing on the eleven-month period between D-Day and V-E Day, this fascinating account follows six Monuments Men and their impossible mission to save the world's great art. This was written before the latest chapters, especially the discovery of a Nazi trove

in Munich. Note: the book covers Europe except for Italy which was such a big story Edsel put it in a second book: *Saving Italy: The Race to Rescue a Nation's Art from the Nazis* (\$16.95). Lots of paintings were moved and shipped to countryside villas. Many great masterpieces start moving north. Two main people did what they could: an artist and a scholar. They move north through Italy, liberating it. There's this cool espionage back-story.