

I LOVE A MYSTERY®

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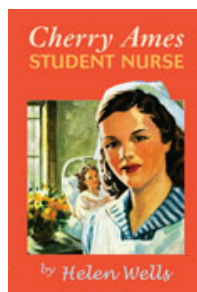
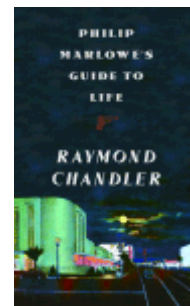
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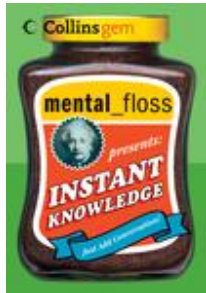
Behind on Your Shopping? Here They Are: The Gift Ideas You've Been Waiting For

Philip Marlowe's Guide to Life, by Raymond Chandler; Marty Asher, ed. (Knopf, \$14.95). Raymond Chandler's classic gumshoe Philip Marlowe is the quintessential American detective. His effortless masculinity, smoldering sexuality, and verbal fleetness remain the embodiment of cool. He liked liquor, women, and working alone. And, in a world defined by betrayal, mistrust, and double-dealing, Marlowe's rough exterior belies an unshakable code of honor. *Philip Marlowe's Guide to Life* is an elegant, A-Z compendium of Marlowe's ever-more-relevant observations about crime, women, work, sex, good, evil, and life in the big city.

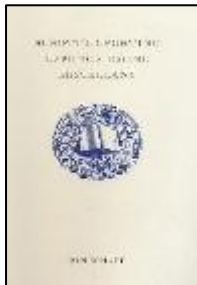


Cherry Ames is back, just as you remember her! Springer Publishing Company has re-released the first four volumes of the **Cherry Ames nursing series**: *Student Nurse*, *Senior Nurse*, *Army Nurse*, and *Chief Nurse* (Hardcover, \$14.95 each). With a true yearning to make a difference in the world, Cherry Ames leaves her hometown and enters nursing school, embarking on a lifetime of adventures. Also available in a four-volume deluxe-boxed set (special order only, \$39.95)

The Nancy Drew Cookbook : Clues to Good Cooking (Spiral-bound, Grosset and Dunlap, \$9.99) With recipes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner (plus those meals in between), this cookbook has the right dish for everyone. And because the recipes tie in to the most famous Nancy Drew mysteries, this book is a must-have for every fan of the world's greatest super sleuth! More than one hundred easy recipes, some with Nancy's special cooking secret. Includes "Detective Burgers," "Double Jinx Salad," "Twisted Candles Peach Crisp," and many more. Ages 9-12, or Nancy Drew fans of any age. (Reprint; originally published in hardcover in 1973.)

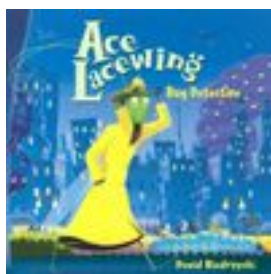
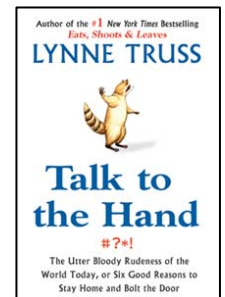


Mental_floss presents Instant Knowledge, by Will Pearson & (Collins Gem, \$7.95, paperback). This tiny gem (roughly the dimensions of a 3 x 5 card) is a perfect stocking stuffer. **Book Description:** Blended with titillating facts, startling revelations, and head-scratching theories collected from around the world, *Instant Knowledge* will jumpstart riveting exchanges at cocktail parties, the watercooler, or any powwow. To experience the clean, rich flavor at home, just tear into a topic of your choice, and add conversation. It's that simple!



Schott's Sporting, Gaming, and Idling Miscellany, by Ben Schott (Bloomsbury USA, \$14.95). What other sporting book will explain the rules of elephant polo; the perils of the Cresta Run; the link between crosswords and the devil; the story behind the Nike "swoosh"; or why surfing is the "Sport of Kings" (in Hawaii)? Which other volume will list the seven deadly sins of golf; the secrets of Houdini's Code; or the myriad personalities of the Pac-Man ghosts?

Talk to the Hand: The Utter Bloody Rudeness of the World Today, or Six Good Reasons to Stay Home and Bolt the Door, by Lynne Truss (Gotham, \$20). When did society stop valuing basic courtesy and respect? It's a topic that has been simmering for years, and Lynne Truss says it's now reached the boiling point. Taking on the boorish behavior that for some has become a point of pride, *Talk to the Hand* is a rallying cry for civility. In a recent U.S. survey, 79 percent of adults said that lack of courtesy was a serious problem. For all of those fed up with anti-social behavior and suffering in silence, realize that you are the majority! *Talk to the Hand* is a colorful call to arms--from the wittiest defender of the civilized world. By the author of *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*.



From **Ace Lacewing, Bug Detective** (Charlesbridge Publishing, \$15.95): *"It was a night like any other night in the city. Hot and sticky. Great weather if you're a bug. Everyone's a bug in Motham City. Some good, some bad. Bad bugs are my business."* An instant noir classic for ages 4-8, filled with snappy dialogue, witty puns and fabulous illustrations.

[Readers] "will happily sink their mandibles into this buggly brouhaha."--Kirkus Reviews

Our Mission: We do our best to meet each customer's needs

Please let us know how we can best meet yours.

Notes and News

- ★ A treat for fans of tv crime dramas: **Da Vinci's Inquest**, a Canadian import filmed in Vancouver, which is currently showing in repeats in the U.S. The show, which features coroner Dominic Da Vinci, airs weekdays at 2 & 11 p.m. on WGN; 8 p.m. Saturday on KCWE-29; and midnight Saturday on KMBC-9. For those who've already discovered this interesting forensic program, the good news is that it's been showing in Canada since 1998, so there should be plenty of episodes to catch up on.
- ★ George Clooney and Cate Blanchett are filming the movie, *The Good German*, a murder mystery set in Berlin after World War II, based on the book by Joseph Kanon (trade paperback, Picador, \$14).
- ★ NBC Universal Cable is launching a new cable channel, **Sleuth**, on January 1, 2006. **Sleuth**, which will focus on the crime, mystery and suspense genres, will draw its programming from the film and television libraries owned by NBC Universal. Initial offerings appear to be heavily weighted towards '80s crime dramas like *Miami Vice* and *The A Team*. The new network will be distributed by Time Warner Cable.
- ★ Michael Connelly is currently working on the next Harry Bosch novel, which will be released in 2006. It is called *Echo Park*.

Reading Group News

New members welcome in all groups, but please call (913) 432-2583 to confirm date, time and scheduled book (in other words, everything's subject to change).

- **100 Favorite Mysteries of the Century Reading Group**—7 p.m. on the third Thursday of every month at I Love a Mystery

Books scheduled for discussion: January 19th—*Devil in a Blue Dress*, by Walter Mosely

- **Agatha Christie Reading Group**—usually meets on the fourth Monday of every other month at 7:00 (alternates with Rue Morgue Press Reading Group). Call or ask at the store for location.

Books scheduled for discussion: February—to be announced;

Rue Morgue Press Reading Group-- usually meets on the fourth Monday of every other month at 7:00 (alternates with Agatha Christie Reading Group). Call or ask at the store for location.

Books scheduled for discussion: January 23rd—*Our First Murder*, by Torrey Chanslor

Pass the “Woostershur” Sauce

A Necessary Guide to British Pronunciation

Think you’ve mastered British proper names if you can say “Worcestershire” and “Gloucestershire” without a slip? But what if you’re lost in the countryside and you need to ask directions to Prinknash? (That’s “prinnij”, for the initiated). Here are a few more challenges for the adventurous traveler!

1. **Derby** – that’s “darby”, not as in “Kentucky Derby”.
2. **Warwick** – that’s “worrick”.
3. **Marlborough** – if you’re thinking of the cigarette, you’ve missed again. It’s “mawl’-bruh”.
4. **Thame** – pronounced “tame”, not as in the river Thames (“timz”).
5. **Hertford** – pronounced “Harford”.
6. **Cholmondeley** – that’s a castle in Cheshire, and it’s “chumley” to you, chum.

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Now that you’ve boned up on your British place names, how about a nice British police procedural from one of our favorite American authors. **Mourn Not Your Dead**, by Deborah Crombie (the fourth Gemma James/Duncan Kincaid novel) is on sale now in a new paperback edition (Avon, \$6.99).

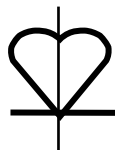
October/November Brain Teaser Solution

I’m sorely disappointed. No one came forward with the solution to the brain teaser in the last newsletter (we offered a \$5.00 gift certificate to anyone who came to the store with the answer to a puzzle that’s featured in a current mystery book, with an additional \$5.00 certificate for identifying the book where I found the brain teaser.). This was the puzzle, which is from **The Oxford Murders: A Mystery**, by **Guillermo Martinez** (MacAdam/Cage, \$23): Complete the fourth item in the following series (think standardized test question, like the SAT).

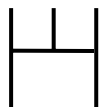


The solution, supposedly as easy as 1-2-3: the above symbols represent the numbers 1, 2 and 3, facing their mirror images.

For example, 2 is



The fourth item, number 4, would look something like this:



By the way, after an exhaustive internet search for the answer to this brain teaser, I finally found the solution in a reference to a Simpson’s episode about Lisa. I was pretty pleased with myself until I showed the puzzle to my fifteen year old goddaughter (Becci’s daughter), who—with the help of the clue, “it’s as easy as 1-2-3”—figured out the answer immediately.

Staff Picks

Karen's Staff Picks—

★ *Sacred Cows*, by Karen E. Olson (Mysterious Press, \$21.95). Veteran New Haven crime reporter Annie Seymour's life is taking an exciting turn. Even though her investigation of the suspicious death of a Yale co-ed cum high-priced escort is being thwarted by the powers-that-be at every turn, she must be getting close to a breakthrough, since someone's trying to kill her. Her sometime boyfriend is the head detective on the case, but she's oddly attracted to the handsome Frank Sinatra look-alike who seems to be stalking her. And she's just discovered that her lawyer mother is sleeping with the all-powerful owner of her newspaper. Annie is cranky and cantankerous and like many other series characters, she drinks more than is good for her; nevertheless *Sacred Cows* is an appealing debut mystery, and Annie Seymour is a keeper.

★ *The Moon Tunnel*, by Jim Kelly (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$24.95). Have I mentioned lately how much I love this series? The superb writing and complex characters that I met in *The Water Clock* and revisited in *Fire Baby* are back in Kelly's third book, *The Moon Tunnel*. Journalist Philip Dryden leads a life of desperation: five years ago, when Dryden was a successful Fleet Street journalist and his wife Laura was a London actress, a devastating crash left Laura with "locked-in syndrome". Now Dryden works for a tiny rural Cambridgeshire newspaper, so he can be close to the care center where his wife passes her days. The guilt-ridden Dryden hasn't been behind the wheel since his wife's accident; these days, his closest companion is his eccentric driver "Humph" Holt ("the only cabbie in Britain with a two-door taxi: a triumph of indifference over reality"). With little else to fill his time, Dryden doesn't hesitate to delve into a fifty-year-old mystery that the authorities have written off: excavators at the

archaeological dig of a World War II POW camp have discovered the body of a man trapped in an underground tunnel. Dryden is puzzled by two things, however—the bullet hole in the dead man's forehead and the direction of his body. He was crawling in, not out. (Starred reviews in both Booklist and Publishers Weekly.)

★ *Last to Leave*, by Clare Curzon (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$23.95). This satisfying book is an excellent choice for anyone who loves classic British police procedurals in the vein of Dorothy Simpson or Ruth Rendell. This is the eighteenth Mike Yeadings Thames Valley mystery, although oddly, the book description says that it's the eleventh. Just as strange: the jacket copy says that Clare Curzon also writes under the pseudonyms Rhonda Petrie and Marie Buchanan. Actually, Marie Buchanan is the author's real name; Clare Curzon is the pseudonym). No room left for a plot summary, but you won't need it; if you're looking for another British author to try, you're going to like this series. Don't worry about reading the books in order—it isn't necessary (or probably possible, since the series started in 1983 and many of the books are out-of-print).

★ *Bloodless Shadow*, by Victoria Blake (Berkley, \$14). London P.I. Samantha Falconer has her share of demons, but the four-time world judo champion thought that she had put her ghosts behind her when she left Oxford. Now her brother has asked her to return to her native city to investigate the disappearance of a friend's wife. Sam is loathe to go back to Oxford, with its memories of an unhappy childhood and, more recently, her discovery of a young murder victim's body. Nevertheless, she agrees to go, as a favor to her brother. When Sam starts receiving threatening letters about the case, she doesn't know who to trust. And when she receives a letter from her beloved father—dead for 28 years—she

wonders whether she can trust even her own history. This is outstanding debut mystery making its first appearance in the U.S. In this well-written book, Blake has created a complex character and a compelling story.

★ *As Dog is my Witness*, by Jeffrey Cohen (Bancroft Press, \$16.95). This is a very sweet and very funny mystery about the misadventures of stay-at-home dad/freelance journalist/reluctant detective Aaron Tucker. Aaron has sworn off detecting, and he has his hands full with an overdue screenplay re-write and the impending visit of his wife's hilariously obnoxious family. Even so, he can't say no when he's asked to find out why a young man with Asperger's syndrome (a condition the accused shares with Aaron's teenage son, Ethan) has confessed to a murder that Aaron's sure he didn't commit. On the way to solving the case, Ethan ends up teaching his dad a thing or two about detecting, and Aaron ends up teaching his insufferable brother-in-law a thing or two about family ties. *As Dog is my Witness* is a wholesome, feel-good mystery about a devoted family man and his endearing family; it will make you laugh, and in the process you might even learn something about Asperger's syndrome.

★ Karen's Quick Picks ★

★ *Dear Departed*, by Cynthia Harrod-Eagles (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$24.95) Another solidly entertaining Bill Slider mystery (the tenth) finds the London detective on the hunt for a serial killer—or is it a copycat? A well-written police procedural that's less dark and angst-ridden than some popular English cop series; more Dorothy Simpson than Ian Rankin.

★ *Ash & Bone*, by John Harvey (Harcourt, \$25.00). John Harvey's books, on the other hand, are full of darkness and angst, but fans of his

Staff Picks (cont'd)

Charlie Resnick series (one of my all-time favorites, as many of you know) will rejoice to find that Harvey has started a new series. This is actually the second book about retired Detective Inspector Frank Elder (the first was *Flesh and Blood*, Carroll and Graf, \$25). Here's what Booklist had to say about *Ash & Bone* in a starred review, "It's great to have Harvey back on the beat, writing the kind of full-throttle realistic procedurals that made his Charlie Resnick series a classic of the genre. ... Perhaps no other crime writer combines unflinching realism with bedrock humanity as convincingly as Harvey."

★ *Guilt Trip*, by Ben Rehder (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$24.95). Take Carl Hiaasen's oddball characters and zany plots; add a nice-guy continuing character in the person of Blanco County, Texas, game warden John Marlin and you've got a good idea of the appeal of this hilarious crime novel.

Becci's Staff Picks—

★ *No Reservations Required*, by Ellen Hart (Fawcett, \$6.99). This is the eighth entry in a culinary mystery series featuring Sophie Greenway, the owner/manager of Maxfield Plaza Hotel and her radio talk show husband, Bram Baldrick. Sophie is drawn to investigate the murders of two acquaintances: Ken Loy, a Twin City businessman, and Bob Fabian, owner of the Minneapolis Time Register newspaper. A year ago Loy accidentally killed Fabian's wife in a car accident. Now both men have been murdered on the same night, and Sophie wants to find the link between the two men. This is a cozy with well developed, interesting characters. I really liked Sophie and her husband and look forward to meeting them again in the next book.

★ *St. Albans Fire*, by Archer Mayor (Mysterious Press, \$24.95). I highly recommend this series. Joe Gunther is a former cop who now works for the

Vermont Bureau of Investigation. When Gunther is called in to investigate a barn fire where a young man and some livestock perished, he quickly recognizes it as an arson fire. Was the fire set by the family to collect insurance or is the fire part of something more sinister in the countryside around St. Albans?

"The strength of this durable series has always been its insularity: local settings; sharp, small-town characterizations; home-grown police procedures."--*Kirkus Reviews*

★ *Who's Sorry Now?: A Grace & Favor Mystery*, by Jill Churchill (Morrow, \$23.95). In Jill Churchill's sixth Depression-era mystery, impoverished siblings Lily and Robert Brewster have their hands full: a train porter has been murdered, someone has painted a red swastika on the shop window of an elderly tailor, and back at their own home, Grace & Favor cottage, a very old skeleton has been unearthed. This is a great book for a cold winter's night--a cozy to enjoy with comfortable characters and the right amount of historical detail.

★ *Cop Hater*, by Ed McBain (Pocket, \$7.99). Loved it--now I know why the 87th precinct was such a long running series. This first book introduced the city and started by introducing the detectives in the 87th precinct. Several off-duty policemen from the precinct are shot, with few clues and virtually no connections to each other. McBain writes about his city's heat wave until you feel the misery of his characters in a now almost forgotten time when air conditioning wasn't commonplace. I left the book wanting to know what happens next in the 87th precinct.

Audrey's Staff Picks—

★ *Done Gone Wrong*, by Cathy Pickens (St. Martin's Press, \$23.95). After her misfortunes in *Southern Fried*, attorney Avery Andrews is offered a job. Jake Baker, a plaintiff's lawyer, asks her to help in a trial against a well known pharmaceutical company. She gets more than she bargained for

when a doctor, Mark Tillman, who seemed desperate to talk to her winds up dead. Things go from bad to worse as Avery tries to juggle her new case and a search for why Mark Tillman came to such an untimely death. Set in Charleston, South Carolina, *Done Gone Wrong* brings warmth into a serious case.

Maggie's Staff Picks—

★ *The Scorpion's Gate*, by Richard A. Clarke (Putnam \$24.95). This first work of fiction by Clarke, the sometimes controversial former security and intelligence advisor to four presidents, is both fascinating and frightening. It is set a few years in the future, after the U.S. is out of Iraq and the new enemies on the horizon are China and Iran. The House of Saud has been overthrown and what was once Saudi Arabia is now Islamya. The Saudi princes are living in California, hoping that the U.S. will support an invasion of Islamya to reinstate them. Everybody is after the oil, which the Islamyians wish was in someone else's desert. Given Clarke's background and recent events in the U.S., I assumed this book would deal with terrorists or in some way focus on what is happening in Iraq. Instead, it's a good old-fashioned spy story, with a little military action thrown in to spice it up. I liked it a lot. It should be noted that there is a subplot that is a thinly disguised shot at a few prominent people in Washington, but not enough that one's political bent should be a deterrent to reading it. It's clearly fiction and a thoroughly enjoyable read.

★ *Dead Famous*, by Carol O'Connell (Berkley, \$7.99) The "Mallory" series is the most quirky, off-beat mystery fiction I have ever read. Through flashbacks and complicated story lines, the series has traced the life of seriously flawed perfectionist Kathy Mallory from the time she was a small child on the streets of New York to her current status as the only female detective in NYC's elite Special Crimes Unit. In *Dead Famous*, Mallory is hot on the trail of a serial killer whose targets had been jurists in a nationally publicized

Staff Picks (cont'd)

murder trial. Frustrated with her lack of progress in catching the killer, she attempts to get her former partner off indefinite sick leave and back onto active duty. Her partner, known only as Riker (as she is known only as Mallory), suffers from serious psychological problems following a near-fatal police shoot-out. To further complicate the case, it appears that Riker is somehow connected to the serial killer. As Mallory goes about solving the case in her usual unscrupulous way, the reader is led through more psychological twists and flips than a roller coaster. Mallory fans will love this one. O'Connell has done it again.

★ *Thirty-Three Teeth*, by Colin Cotterill (Soho, \$24). This is the second book in the new series about Laotian medical examiner, Dr. Siri Paiboun. The first book, *Coroner's Lunch*, was reviewed as one of Karen's staff picks in the last newsletter. If you haven't read either, you are missing a real treat. The books are set in mid-70's Laos, as this small agricultural country undergoes the forced transition from a monarchy to a communist state. The characters, setting and story lines are intriguing. The dialogue is clever, especially the witty lunchtime exchanges between Dr. Paiboun and his lifelong friend and newly installed member of the Laotian Politburo. In the first book, the about-to-be-retired Dr. Paiboun is installed as

the new national Medical Examiner of Laos, an "honor" he neither sought nor wanted. In this second book, Dr. Paiboun is called in to investigate the strange death of a government bureaucrat who appears to have jumped or been pushed off a government records building. At the same time, the doctor is also investigating a series of vicious and fatal animal attacks. Since Dr. Paiboun is the coroner for the whole country of Laos, there are various other subplots interwoven into the story, all complicated by the ridiculous party bureaucracy that Dr. Paiboun always manages to circumvent. Although it's an odd little mystery series, it's a "don't miss" in my book.

Our Customers Recommend

Candy Apple Red, by Nancy Bush (Kensington, \$19.95). **Place:** Lake Chinook, Oregon; **Time:** The Present. I really liked rookie investigator Jane Kelly and the supporting characters in the book, especially Binks the Pug, a short-legged sidekick Jane acquires during the investigation. Jane has landed in Lake Chinook, having followed her (now ex-) criminologist boyfriend, Tim Murphy, to his hometown. The ex has been gone four years when Jane becomes involved in the investigation of a "family annihilation" committed by Murphy's best friend Bobby Reynolds. When Tim Murphy reappears in Lake Chinook, the tidy life Jane has created for herself begins to unravel. I enjoyed this mystery very much and I liked Jane a lot. I'm looking forward to her next adventure. (This author might appeal to people who enjoy Janet Evanovich books.) **Recommended by Cindy Wessley.**

We're always looking for customer recommendations that we can use in our newsletter and on our web-site.

Each month, we will give away a free \$10.00 **I LOVE A MYSTERY**® gift certificate to one of the customers who submits a recommendation. Here are the rules: the books you recommend must be in print and the recommendations must be on the form we provide. You can obtain a form and the complete set of rules at the store, by calling us at (913) 432-2583 or by emailing kas@iloveamystery.net.

Spotlight on Michael Innes & John Creasey

For British police procedural fans who want to get back to basics—to the typical Scotland Yard, country manor, "constable on the beat" mysteries—I suggest picking up a **Michael Innes** or **John Creasey** (or one of his many aliases, like **J.J. Marric**). I read a book by each author for the first time this past month and found them delightful. Their books are very likely all out of print, since we only have them in used books at the store (and we have plenty of those!). As the weather gets colder and you are tempted to curl up next to the fire with a good mystery, you can't lose with a "who-done-it" from either of these venerable and prolific British writers. *Contributed by staff member Maggie Wood*

Did you pick up this Newsletter at the Store?

You can subscribe to the newsletter by email: send your request to news@iloveamystery.net. Or, for a \$25 annual membership fee, join our Gold Dagger Club, receive 10% off of all your purchases and have the newsletter delivered to your home. Gold Dagger Club Members also receive a \$5.00 birthday gift certificate and an invitation to a special members-only holiday party.

BOOK SENSE PICKS: What Other Booksellers Are Reading

The Color Of Law, by Mark Gimenez (Doubleday, \$19.95). “Good looking, arrogant, and rich, Mr. A. Scott Fenney is living the American dream, but his world is rocked when he learns he must take on a pro bono case to defend a heroin-addicted hooker. Watch out for the ending of this terrific debut novel!”—**Sue Rawls, Davis-Kidd Booksellers, Jackson, TN**

The Great Stink, by Clare Clark (Harcourt, \$25). “Splendidly putrid. Set in the underground of Victorian London, Clark’s gripping historical novel blends a tale of corruption with a murder most foul. Clark has blended Dickensian characters into the malodorous setting of Victorian London and has given life to aspects of the period that few have touched upon.”—**Will Peters, Annie Bloom’s Books, Portland, OR**

Evil Intent, by Kate Charles (Poisoned Pen, \$24.95). “When Callie Anson is appointed curate in All Saints Parish in Paddington, she has to learn her new job in a charged atmosphere. After a conservative priest is murdered, suspicion centers on a woman priest who had openly argued with him. It’s up to the police to sort out all of the conflicts and arrive at the truth.”—**Linda Walonen, Bay Books, San Ramon, CA**

Goodnight Nobody: A Novel, by Jennifer Weiner (Atria, \$26). “Weiner’s latest is funny and smart, with a good murder thrown in -- think *The Stepford Wives* meets *Desperate Housewives*. I finished it in one weekend and ended it feeling lighter and happier.” --**Jan Warner-Poole, Storyteller Books, Vancouver, WA**

The Mayor Of Lexington Avenue: A Novel, by James Sheehan (Yorkville Press, \$14.95 paper). “It’s hard to believe that this is James Sheehan’s first novel. A long-time trial attorney in Florida, he has written a legal thriller set in a small Florida town that is utterly fascinating. We hope this is just the beginning of a long literary career.” --**Virginia Hobson Hicks, Books on the Bluff, Townsend, GA**

Jamaica Me Dead, by Bob Morris (St. Martin’s Minotaur, \$22.95). “This is a smart, well-written, and very funny thriller! A former football player is asked to go to an anything-goes resort in Jamaica to help out a former buddy—who soon ends up dead. Tremendously entertaining.”—**Carol Schneck, Schuler Books & Music, Okemos, MI**

Six For Gold: A John the Eunuch Mystery, by Mary Reed and Eric Mayer (Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95) “*Six for Gold* weaves a mystery into the fabric of life in the Sixth century under the Roman Emperor Justinian. John, Lord Chancellor to the emperor, is dispatched to Egypt on a secret mission, while in Constantinople, his friends seek the solution to a murder for which he has been falsely accused.”—**Linda Walonen, Bay Books, San Ramon, CA**

Enjoy this sweet beginning...

Double Shot Chocolate Cake

16 servings

10 ounces unsalted butter

**10 ounces bittersweet chocolate, broken
into small pieces (recommended brand-- Godiva dark)**

3/4 cup plus 3 tablespoons extra-fine granulated sugar

**2 tablespoons Dutch-style cocoa
(recommended brand: Hershey's Premium European-Style)**

8 large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Confectioners' sugar

Sweetened whipped cream or best-quality vanilla ice cream

Preheat the oven to 350. Butter a 10 x 1 1/2-inch heavy-duty round cake pan. Line the bottom with parchment cut to fit. Butter the parchment. Set aside. Fill a 16 x 11 inch roasting pan with 1 inch of hot water, place the roasting pan on a baking sheet, and put it into the oven.

In the top of a double-boiler, melt the butter with the chocolate. When the ingredients are melted, remove the pan from the heat to cool slightly. Sift the sugar with the cocoa twice, then whisk it into the melted chocolate mixture.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs until they are foamy. Add the vanilla and the chocolate mixture. Blend with a spatula until very well mixed. Carefully pour the batter into the prepared cake pan. Gently place the cake pan in the water-filled roasting pan.

Bake about 40 to 50 minutes, or until the cake begins to shrink slightly from the sides and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Place on a rack to cool for 15 minutes, then invert carefully and peel off the paper. Allow to cool completely.

Just before serving, carefully place a 9- or 10-inch cake stencil on top of the cake. Sift confectioners' sugar over the stencil, then remove the stencil.

Serve with the sweetened whipped cream or best-quality vanilla ice cream.

From *Double Shot* (Goldy Bear Culinary Mysteries), by Diane Mott Davidson (HarperTorch, \$7.99).

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By popular demand (I'm sure somebody asked for this, didn't they?), we're reprinting last year's Christmas poem. Rest assured that all problems resulting from this heinous crime have been resolved, and our I Love a Mystery gift certificates are back to normal. We never did find our stolen "M", but we were able to replace it with a near-perfect match (although I must say that the insurance settlement was woefully inadequate).

'Twas the Week Before Christmas

'Twas the week before Christmas and all through the store,
The staff was all busy; shoppers streamed in the door.
The cozies were selling like hotcakes that day,
While procedurals flew off the "Staff Picks" display.

"I know what I need," said the latest arrival—
"A gardening book or Greek Orthodox bible."
"Just myst'ries," said Maggie, "that's all that we sell.
And all things related, and coffee as well."

Another dazed shopper came in through the door,
All red-cheeked and bundled, just chilled to the core.
"May I help you?" asked Becci, "You look puzzled," Bec said.
"I need presents for Grandma and Dear Uncle Ned—
But I'm thinking of treating myself first, instead."

"I'll have this book and that one, a sweatshirt and mug,
And a tote bag to carry small Holly, my pug.
Some music and coffee will be just the ticket—
And I need the first tale by that Lemony Snicket."

"I'll ring you up here", Linda said, "when you're ready,
But what about Grandma and old Uncle Neddie?"
"My gosh, I forgot," claimed the customer, meekly—
"And I'm all out of time," she continued on, bleakly.

"Gift certificates suit, when you're running so late;
Our customers love them," declared our young Cait.
"A perfect idea," our last shopper agreed;
Two twenties should do it-- that's just what I need!"

"I'll print those out now; it won't take but a sec,"
Caitlin said, then she called out, "Come over here, Bec."
"This certificate's faulty, and that one as well.
Whoever composed these things clearly can't spell."

"Blame Karen," said Maggie, "she's the one who designed them.
But wait, it's no error; we've been robbed--help me find 'M!'"
So Becci and Linda and Maggie and Cait
Looked as quick as they could, while the customer waited.

They quickly abandoned the search on that day,
So the beleaguered shopper could be on her way.
But they've searched high and low on these last several days,
And still haven't determined who messed with our phrase.

For it turns out that all our certifi'cates were spoiled,
And attempts at repair were consistently foiled.
It's a puzzle that stumps us; it's gone, not a trace
Of our Chiller font "M", 56 point, uppercase.

Well Maggie's inserted new 'M's everywhere
(57 point 'M' adds just the right flair).
So don't worry at all 'bout that last minute gift,
Our certificates are ready to give you a lift.

It was just that one day, sure a dark one in history,
That we sold gift certificates from I LOVE A _YSTERY.

Genre-Bending Fiction (not quite mysteries, but close):

Despite the Falling Snow, by Shamim Sarif (St. Martin's Press, \$24.95).



In present-day Boston, seventy-year-old Alexander Ivanov has built a successful business empire. A kind, passionate man, he has managed to bury the tragic memories surrounding his early life in post-Stalinist Russia with his charismatic late wife, Katya---or so he believes.

Into his life come two women: one will open up the heart Alexander has protected for so long; the other is determined to uncover the truth about what really happened to Katya all those years ago.

Despite the Falling Snow journeys back to the snowbound streets of 1950s Moscow, revealing a city of secrets and treachery, a world of true love lost and friendships betrayed. For only by confronting the past can Alexander move on to his future.



Four & Twenty Blackbirds, by Cherie Priest (Tor Books, \$13.95).

Although she was orphaned at birth, Eden Moore is never alone. Three dead women watch from the shadows, bound to protect her from harm. But in the woods a gunman waits, convinced that Eden is destined to follow her wicked great-grandfather--an African magician with the power to curse the living and raise the dead.

Now Eden must decipher the secret of the ghostly trio before a new enemy more dangerous than the fanatical assassin destroys what is left of her family. She will sift through lies in a Georgian ante-bellum mansion and climb through the haunted ruins of a 19th century hospital, desperately seeking the truth that will save her beloved aunt from the curse that threatens her life.



Shade, by Neil Jordan (Bloomsbury, \$14.95, trade paperback)

Narrated by the ghost of Nina Hardy, an actress who is murdered in the opening scene of the book, *Shade* tells the story of two pairs of siblings growing up in Ireland in the first half of the century. Through a childhood that memory gives the luster of romance, and the tragedy that strikes as the children reach adolescence and the two boys leave for the Great War, these unforgettable characters reach the 1950s to play their roles in a murder ultimately revealed as the opposite of the senseless crime it seems.

“Seduces readers with the first sentence...Far from a filmmaker moonlighting as a fiction writer, he’s a novelist at the top of his craft.”—*People* (four stars)



Two Trains Running, by Andrew Vachss (Pantheon, \$25).

Locke City is controlled by boss Royal Beaumont, who took it by force many years ago and has held it against all comers since. Now his domain is being threatened by an invading crime syndicate, and there are other players awaiting their turn onstage as well. Emmett Till's lynching has inflamed a nascent black revolutionary movement. A neo-Nazi organization is preparing for race war. Juvenile gangs are locked in a death struggle over useless pieces of "turf." And some shadowy group is supplying them all with weapons. With an IRA unit and a Mafia family also vying for local supremacy, it's no surprise that the whole town is under FBI surveillance. But that agency is being watched, too. Beaumont ups the ante by importing a hired killer, Walker Dett, a master tactician whose trademark is wholesale destruction. But there are a number of wild cards in this game, including Jimmy Procter, an investigative reporter whose tools include stealth, favor-trading, and blackmail, and Sherman Layne, the one clean Locke City cop. But Layne is guarding a secret of his own, one that could destroy more than his career.



Genre-Bending Fiction (cont.)



The Traveler, by John Twelve Hawks (Doubleday, \$24.95)

Maya is hiding in plain sight in London. The twenty-six-year-old has abandoned the dangerous obligations pressed upon her by her father, and chosen instead to live a normal life. But Maya comes from a long line of people who call themselves Harlequins—a group of warriors willing to sacrifice their lives to protect a select few known as Travelers.

Gabriel and Michael Corrigan are brothers living in Los Angeles. Since childhood, the young men have been shaped by stories that their late father was a Traveler, one of a small band of prophets who have vastly influenced the course of history. Gabriel and Michael, who may have inherited their father's gifts, have always protected themselves by living “off the Grid”—that is, invisible to the real-life surveillance networks that monitor people in our modern society.

Summoned by her ailing father, Maya is told of the existence of the brothers. The Corriganes are in severe danger, stalked by the ruthless Tabula—mercenaries who have hunted Travelers for generations. This group is determined to inflict order on the world by controlling it, and they view Travelers as an intolerable threat. As Maya races to California to protect the brothers, she is reluctantly pulled back into the cold and solitary Harlequin existence. Part thriller, part fantasy, this book received a starred review in *Publishers Weekly*.



Snow Flower and the Secret Fan, by Lisa See (Random House, \$21.95)

Lily is haunted by memories—of who she once was, and of a person, long gone, who defined her existence. She has nothing but time now, as she recounts the tale of Snow Flower, and asks the gods for forgiveness.

In nineteenth-century China, when wives and daughters were foot-bound and lived in almost total seclusion, the women in one remote Hunan county developed their own secret code for communication: nu shu (“women’s writing”). Some girls were paired with laotongs, “old sames,” in emotional matches that lasted throughout their lives. When Lily and Snow Flower are pledged as “old sames” at the tender age of seven and Snow Flower sends Lily a silk fan on which she has composed a poem of introduction in nu shu, their friendship is sealed. As the years pass, through famine and rebellion, they reflect upon their arranged marriages, loneliness, and the joys and tragedies of motherhood. The two find solace, developing a bond that keeps their spirits alive. But when a misunderstanding arises, their lifelong friendship suddenly threatens to tear apart. Starred review in *Publishers Weekly*.



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**Mysteries to die for, selected monthly by IMBA,
the Independent Mystery Booksellers Association**

Who better to pick the best mystery books of the month than the people who run mystery bookstores?

Each month, the 60 quirky stores that make up IMBA submit their favorite recent reads to a rotating editor who then trims the list to five. The general rule is that the book must be published within a three month period. However, since mystery booksellers don't really like rules, they created a category called "the one that nearly got away" to include books that fall outside that period. Every selection is a gem that otherwise might have gotten lost among the more than 100 mysteries published each month.

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IN A TEAPOT by Terence Faherty, (The Mystery Company \$18.) **Recommended by Barbara Peters, The Poisoned Pen, Scottsdale, AZ.**

I love the resurgence of noir, though this is a soft-boiled version set in the Hollywood of 1948 when the film industry was changing and the British colony could feel the shift (worldwide as Empire dissolved). WWII veteran Scott Elliott, top op of Hollywood Security, draws an odd assignment, protecting a pending project by quelling rumors about one of the British stars and a burlesque queen. Scott is right to think there's something decidedly off.. The movie lore is terrific, the ticking-clock here is the wedding of Scott to the lovely Ella Englehart, a game girl with a real mouth on her, and best of all, this novella is admirably brief, much like the almost instant noir classic *DRIVE (Poisoned Pen)* by James Sallis, published in Sept. In an age of bloat, lean is both mean and marvelous.



THREE STRIKES YOU'RE DEAD by Robert Goldsborough (Echelon Press, \$12.99). **Recommended by Karen Spengler, I Love a Mystery, Mission, KS.**

The year is 1938, the place is Chicago . Crime boss Al Capone is in prison and pitching great Dizzy Dean--admittedly past his prime--has just been traded to the Cubs. When a reform candidate for mayor is gunned down, the police are happy to pin the murder on the mob, but crime reporter Steve "Snap" Malek isn't so sure. For one thing, Capone's minions have delivered a message to Snap: the organization had nothing to do with the politician's death. On the way to identifying the murderer, Snap encounters lots of real life characters, including actress Helen Hayes, future Chicago mayor Richard Daley, Al Capone and of course Dizzy Dean, in an appealing sub-plot. In *Three Strikes You're Dead*, Goldsborough (who authored seven Nero Wolfe mysteries with the permission of the Rex Stout estate) has created an atmospheric story full of historic details that make you feel like you just stepped onto Clark Street in pre-war Chicago . This is one that almost got away.



WAY PAST LEGAL by Norman Green (Harper \$6.99). **Recommended by Barbara Tom, Murder by the Book (Portland , OR).** Norman Green specializes in criminals with heart. While his protagonists are victims of their environment, they are also active participants, until a singular event pushes them to lift themselves out. So here, Manny Williams must save his young son, to whom he's mostly been a stranger, from growing up in the same dysfunctional way he had. He also finds he has to flee a two-timing partner in crime --and the Russian mafia as well. Toss in Manny's hobby: bird-watching! Green brings together these disparate elements without losing sight of what makes his story human: a father and a son getting to know each other. Manny and Nicky flee to rural Maine, an area that is as far from the noisy, anonymous street-life of New York City as one can imagine. A multitude of strangers help and shield the pair.

Green has the ability to make his people real and understandable -- even his minor ones are three-dimensional - though he also uses the stereotyped and conventional Maine traits of recalcitrance and sobriety. The brutality and tough talk of his work (which includes the much-praised Shooting Dr. Jack) place it in the "noir" genre, but the inherent sweetness of his characters and their continuing search for redemption give it nobler dimension than many of Green's contemporaries in the field.



MADONNA OF THE APES by Nicholas Kilmer, (Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95). **Recommended by Kate Mattes, Kate's Mystery Books, Cambridge , MA .**

I have been a big fan of Nicholas Kilmer's Fred Taylor mysteries since the first one *Harmony in Black and White* (Poisoned Pen, PRICE) was published. Kilmer, has spent most of his life teaching art, both history and design, and now spends his non-writing time as an art dealer and painter. So rest assured, he is very knowledgeable. His books are a great gift for art lovers.

Each book in this series centers on a well-known artist and we learn lots of great little tidbits about each of their lives and loves; as well as hallmarks to some of their best work. Often we learn about the best forgers of a particular artist as well brilliant swindlers-not to mention, all the shady characters so finely and lovingly drawn that populate the art world. Cambridge-based Fred Taylor works for Clay Reed who is an art dealer and philanthropist. Fred is an art restorer, scout and jack of all trades. We have never known how their relationship started until *Madonna of the Apes* was published. It is a prequel to the

series. They meet as Reed acquires what he believes is a DaVinci...but needs to establish provenance. A chest with a painting on the inside lid was purchased legally from a con artist who was trying to sell Clay a fake Cezanne. Fred is his witness and they form an uneasy bond since they can't discuss the chest with anyone else and they are both driven to find out if it is a DaVinci, and if so, how it wound up in the apartment on Charles Street where they discovered it. Kilmer writes with an enthusiasm and finesse rarely found in combination. The excitement and energy, even passion, for great art permeates the plot and is certainly as good as a trip to a museum. In addition, Kilmer writes with a fluidity and ease that make his books a pleasure to read.



Deadgame by Kirk Russell (Chronicle Books, \$23.95). **Recommended by Tom & Enid Schantz, Rue Morgue, Lyons, Colorado**

Fiction can raise your consciousness as well as educate you, but unless it fulfills its primary goal of entertaining the reader we're talking about trees falling in an empty forest. Kirk Russell's third John Marquez mystery novel delivers on all three levels as the former DEA agent, now working undercover for the California Game and Fish Department, goes after sturgeon poachers.

Admittedly we were never big caviar fans, but after learning how the eggs are harvested, we're definitely sticking with peanut butter on our crackers from here on out. When you think caviar, you think Russians, and Marquez's overworked team suddenly finds itself caught up in a crime ripe with international repercussions. Fans of Nevada Barr's national park series will find much to enjoy in *Deadgame*, especially in its complicated and very human hero. Marquez wants nothing more than to put the bad guys away but he knows that sometimes a law officer can keep a kid from becoming a felon by looking the other way—once.

