

THE PLOT THICKENS

mysterious
galaxy

BOOKS OF MARTIANS, MURDER, MAGIC & MAYHEM

FROM YOUR PARTNERS IN CRIME AND IMAGINATION

SPECIAL HOLIDAY GUIDE TO THE BEST BOOKS IN THE GALAXY 2009 ...

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 14

Print Plot Home Delivery

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS

For those of you who subscribe to the printed and mailed version of our newsletter, *The Plot Thickens*, the time has come to renew for 2010. For those of you who missed home delivery last year, now's the time to sign up. For just \$20.00 you get all of the MG news, reviews, and information you can handle, delivered to your mailbox for the entire year.

Not on our Email Mailing List?

If you prefer to have your MG news delivered via email, make sure you are signed up on our website to receive our *Virtual Plot*. Subscribers receive three to four emails a month from us. Inside you will find out about author events, recent reviews, and sometimes even a special promotion, only for our email subscribers.

If you have any questions about how to sign up, please contact a staff member. We will be happy to help you!

A Gift for You

Make a purchase any time in December and receive a Special Sales Coupon redeemable on New Year's Day!

Ask the staff for details.



Gift Cards are available at Mysterious Galaxy and redeemable at more than 380 independent bookstores nationwide.

Holiday Catalogs are in the Store

The 2009 Holiday Catalog from the Southern California Independent Booksellers Association is now available at Mysterious Galaxy. In previous years, we have mailed the catalog to you with this Holiday edition of *The Plot Thickens*. This year we are asking you to pick up your copy when you are at the store. As an added benefit, when you visit the store in December and make a purchase we will give you a coupon good for our annual New Year's Day sale. See you soon!

'Tis the Season to Give Thanks

This year we want to extend our November Thanksgiving celebration into the Holiday season. These are some of the things the staff at Mysterious Galaxy are grateful for:

- Our customers' enthusiasm and participation in book-related events. By attending our in-store events and supporting both internationally best-selling and new-on-the-scene authors, you are helping send the message to our publishing partners to keep sending authors to San Diego. We love seeing you supporting us and our authors at a variety of off-site events including book festivals, kids' author events at schools and libraries, and our new efforts at creating a book community in the South Bay.
 - Teachers and librarians who keep solidifying the love of reading in generation after generation.
 - Our publishing partners for including us on author tours and for fostering imagination and creativity in so many authors.
 - Our publisher sales reps who do everything from making sure we have pristine condition first editions for our author events to sharing their own picks directly with you, like Random House's Wade Lucas at our December 5 Eat! Read! Party! Event.
 - The selections in our Holiday Picks, which in addition to being books we want to share with you, are also books we're thankful to have read ourselves
- Finally, we are thankful for you ... our customers and our friends.

The Entire Mysterious Galaxy Family

MG Holiday Awards (& Gift Ideas!)

Patrick's Top Picks of 2009.

- Sandman Slim* by Richard Kadrey. I escaped from Hell and all I got was this lousy t-shirt ... and the ability to kick some major ass. Eos, \$22.95.
- The Windup Girl* by Paolo Bacigalupi. Paolo sees the future. It's the end of the world as we know it. Dystopia. Thailand. Artificial people. Patrick sees the future. Hugo/Nebula nominee. Nightshade, \$24.95.
- Makers* by Cory Doctorow. Lester and Perry invent things ... and change the world. The author of *Little Brother* shows us the future. Beware! (Cory rules.) Tor, \$24.99.
- The Maze Runner* by James Dashner. Lord of the Flies meets *The Matrix*, with a twist of lemon. Young adult. Delacorte Press, \$16.99.
- Time Travelers Never Die* by Jack McDevitt. A trip through time and space with Jack McDevitt as your guide. An excellent adventure, indeed. Ace, \$24.95.
- The Unincorporated Man* by Dani Kollin & Eyton Kollin. Wall Street meets *Brave New World*. Might not be a bad idea to buy a couple shares of these brothers while they're still affordable. Signed copies available ... but not for long. Tor, \$25.95.
- The Magicians* by Lev Grossman. Harry Potter for adults. Pick a card, any card. Okay, don't; see if I care. Viking, \$26.95.
- The Warded Man* by Peter Brett. Demons, wards, and an illustrated bad ass. The first book in a new series. Del Rey, \$25.00.

Patrick's Book Awards.

- The Dead and Loving It Award** goes to (tie): *It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Zombies: A Book of Zombie Christmas Carols* by Michael P. Spradlin. Zombies? Christmas carols? What's not to love? The perfect stocking stuffer for the zombie lover in your life. Harper tpo, \$9.99. -And- *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: The Hardcover Gift Edition, Now with 30% More Zombies* by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith. The smash mash-up gets a new (hard) cover and a bunch more brain eaters. Quirk, \$24.95.
- The Future Ruler of the World Award** goes to *I Am a Genius of Unspeakable Evil and I Want to Be Your Class President* by Josh Lieb. From the flyleaf: "What is evil?" you ask. To which I reply "Who are you? Friedrich Nietzsche?" To which you respond, "Duh...wha? Me no understand." Then I put you back in your cage. Razor Bill, \$15.99.
- The Vampires Don't Sparkle Award** goes to *Fevre Dream* by George R.R. Martin. Martin and Vampires, two great tastes that taste great together. This one doesn't suck. Or sparkle. Bantam Spectra tp, \$16.00.
- The Whole Lotta Love ... and Other Bodily Fluids Award** goes to the *Sookie Stackhouse Box Set* by Charlaine Harris. The first eight novels in the most awesome series that inspired HBO's *True Blood*. Ace box set, \$63.92.
- The Hey! That's Kinda Brilliant Award** goes to Tor for putting a facsimile Robert Jordan signature in *The Gathering Storm: Book Twelve of the Wheel of Time*, written by Jordan and Brandon Sanderson. Actual signature by Brandon Sanderson, while they last. Tor, \$29.99.

Treats from Terry ...

My YA Stash: I have discovered many wonderful hours with these books aimed at the Young Adult crowd.

- Fire* by Kristin Cashore. This was simply one of the best fantasies I have ever read ... Dial, \$17.99.
- Wake* by Lisa McMann. I loved this first book in a trilogy about a very true-to-life teen who has a special talent for entering other people's dreams. Simon Pulse, \$8.99.

More Holiday Picks can be found on the first page of our special insert

Forthcoming Books

DECEMBER MURDER

- Ash, Maureen: *Murder for Christ's Mass* (pbo)
- Barbieri, Maggie: *Final Exam* (Murder 101)
- Berry, Steve: *The Paris Vendetta*
- Birdsell, Donna: *A Widow in Paradise* (tpo)
- Birken, Gary: *Code 15* (pbo)
- Bliss, Miranda: *Murder Has a Sweet Tooth (#5 Cooking Class)* (pbo)
- Bruen, Ken: *London Boulevard*
- Canadeo, Anne: *Knit, Purl, Die (#2 Knitting)* (tpo)
- Cardieri, Anthony J: *Luck of the Draw*
- Childs, Laura: *Eggs Benedict Arnold (#2 Cackleberry Club)* (pbo)
- Clark, Cassandra: *The Red Velvet Turnshoe*
- Crawford, Isis: *A Catered Birthday Party (#6 Libby & Bernie Simmons)*
- Dennison, Hannah: *Expose! (#3 Vicki Hill)* (pbo)
- Dobson, Joanne: *Death Without Tenure (#6 Karen Pelletier)*
- Doetsch, Richard: *The 13th Hour*
- Erhart, Margaret: *The Butterflies of Grand Canyon* (tpo)
- Estleman, Loren D: *Alone (#2 Valentino)*
- Ferris, Monica: *Thai Die (#12 Needlecraft)* (pap)
- Frazer, Margaret: *A Play of Treachery (#5 Joliffe)* (pbo)
- Gash, Jonathan: *The Face in the Pool* (Lovejoy)
- Goldberg, Lee: *Mr. Monk in Trouble*
- Grafton, Sue: *U Is for Undertow*
- Hall, M R: *The Disappeared*
- Hime, James: *Where Armadillos Go To Die*
- Holt, Hazel: *Mrs. Malory and Any Man's Death* (pbo)
- Jance, J A: *Trial by Fire (#5 Ali Reynolds)*
- Jones, Stan: *Village of the Ghost Bears (#4 Nathan Active)*
- Lawrence, C E: *Silent Screams* (pbo)
- McLean, Russel D: *The Good Son*
- Murphy, Shirley Rousseau: *Cat Striking Back* (Joe Grey)
- Neggars, Carla: *Cold River* (pbo)
- O'Shaughnessy, Perri: *Dreams of the Dead* (Nina Reilly)
- Oppengaard, David: *Wormwood, Nevada*
- Palov, Chloe: *Ark of Fire* (pbo)
- Parks, Brad: *Faces of the Gone*
- Pearce, Michael: *Dead Man in Naples (#6 Seymour of the Special Branch)*
- Roberts, Wendy: *Dead And Kicking (#3 Ghost Dusters)* (pbo)
- Smith, Alexander McCall: *La's Orchestra Saves the World* (Stand-Alone)
- Thurlo, Aimee & David: *Earthway* (Ella Clah)
- West, Eugenia Lovett: *Overkill*

DECEMBER MISC.

- Miller, Laura: *The Magician's Book: A Skeptic's Adventure in Narnia* (tp)
- Milo, Paul: *Your Flying Car Awaits: Robot Butlers, Lunar Vacations, And Other Dead-Wrong Predictions ...* (tpo)

DECEMBER MARTIANS AND MAGIC

- Screaming Science Fiction: *Horrors From Out of Space* (tp)
- Eds. Rabe / Greenberg: *Spells of the City* (pbo)
- Bear, Elizabeth: *Chill* (pbo)
- Card, Orson Scott: *Hidden Empire*

continued on the back page

Eat! Read! Party!

Saturday, December 5

A Holiday Banquet of Authors from All Genres at 5:00 PM

Gift Books with Random House Rep Wade Lucas and Local Author Marv Gold at 7:00 PM

Karl Alexander signs *Jaclyn the Ripper*

Author and screenwriter Karl Alexander's best known work is probably *Time After Time*. If the title doesn't ring a bell, we guarantee the synopsis will (for both the book and film): In 1893, the infamous Jack the Ripper steals H.G. Wells' time machine and journeys to 1979. Outraged, Wells follows and chases the Ripper through San Francisco determined to bring him back to justice in Victorian England. Along the way, he meets Amy Catherine "Jane" Robbins, a modern American woman, and they become time-crossed lovers. Wells and Amy return to his time at the end of the previous story, but when Amy tries to return to San Francisco to reassure her parents about her well being, she causes a time ripple that frees Jack from his prison, and puts him back on the streets on a killing spree - in a woman's body. Hence *Jaclyn the Ripper*. Karl is currently working on a science fiction novel.

Emily Brightwell signs *Mrs. Jeffries and the Yuletide Weddings*

Cozy mystery author Emily Brightwell helps set the holiday tone of our event with her first appearance at MG and her hardcover series debut with *Mrs. Jeffries and the Yuletide Weddings*. The best-selling Victorian Era London Murder Mysteries feature the detective team of housekeeper Mrs. Jeffries and Scotland Yard Inspector Gerald Witherspoon. Between the Inspector's formal detecting and Mrs. Jeffries' ability to be privy to the secrets that servants often have access to, the duo is up to solving any mystery, even when a murder disrupts two sets of upcoming nuptials. With twenty-six books in the series, we hope to see both fans who have been reading since it began with *The Inspector & Mrs. Jeffries*, and mystery fans who are new to the series.

Hannah Dennison signs *Exposé!*

If you don't already know the *Scoop!* on Vicky Hill, introduced in *A Vicky Hill Exclusive!*, our Holiday Party presents an excellent opportunity to become familiar with Vicky and her creator, Hannah Dennison. Despite her ambitions, Vicky remains a trainee newspaper reporter who dreams of becoming a famous investigative journalist but finds herself stuck writing obituaries for her small town's paper, the *Gipping Gazette*. In *Exposé!*, Vicky is covering the town's snail races and discovering that her obituary of Gipping-on-Plym's local celebrity, Scarlett Fleming, is stirring up a host of family secrets that someone would kill to keep.

Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl sign *Beautiful Creatures*

The theme of *Beautiful Creatures*, the debut young adult novel by Southern CA authors Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl, is summed up on their web site, "Some Loves Are Meant to Be ... Others Are Cursed." (See MaryElizabeth's review on page 3.) The book is the product of combining Kami's love for Southern Literature with Margaret's passion for fantasies and the supernatural. Some of you may have been lucky enough to receive a reader's copy of this at Comic-Con, when Kami and Margie appeared in the Hachette booth. When Lena Duchannes moves to Gatlin, high school basketball player Ethan Wates is sure they are destined to be together. But a dark magical history, reaching back to the Civil War, and Lena's pending magical coming of age threaten to jeopardize their love.

Nancy Holder signs *Possessions and Saving Grace: Cry Me a River*

MG last hosted local and national best-selling author Nancy Holder when her latest Wicked book, *Wicked: Resurrection*, came out this summer. Shortly after, the big news was that the series has been acquired by Dreamworks Studio. But Nancy hasn't been resting on her laurels, and in addition to the Wicked series, will be signing and discussing *Possessions and Cry Me a River*. *Possessions* is Nancy returning to her horror roots, and is the first in a series about a superposh boarding school high in the mountains of Northern California, and the mean / possessed girls who attend it. Nancy's kept her foot in the adult market as well, with her new original tie-in novel based on the popular cable series, "Saving Grace." In *Cry Me a River*, Oklahoma City Police Det. Grace Hanadarko faces a case with issues of about faith, redemption, and the notion of suicide as the one unforgivable sin.

Linda O. Johnston signs *Howl Deadly and Back to Life*

Linda O. Johnston offers both animal-loving readers of mysteries and paranormal romance some options. The eighth in her Kendra Ballantyne, Pet Lawyer and Petsitter, mystery series, *Howl Deadly*, finds Kendra's idyllic retreat with millionaire boyfriend Dante DeFrancisco disrupted by the disappearance of a she-wolf from his sanctuary. This summer's *Back to Life* involves a romance between a Valkyrie and the SWAT officer she impulsively restores to life. She also has a short paranormal romance in the shape-shifter collection, *Awakening the Beast*.

Tim Maleeny signs *Jump*

At the 2008 Holiday Party, attendees were treated to a tease by Tim Maleeny for *Jump*. His standalone novel was called "a perfectly blended cocktail of escapism, with or without the beach towel," by *Publishers Weekly*, and *The Boston Globe* says, "If you threw in the air the pages of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* and Elmore Leonard's *Get Shorty*, and then invited Monty Python to stitch them back together, you might end up with something like *Jump*, Tim Maleeny's hilarious novel." Really, how could anyone resist that description? Tim's various Cape Weathers novels are also readily available again.

Elle Newmark signs *The Book of Unholy Mischief*

We can only hope to aspire to the culinary heights experienced in local author Elle Newmark's *The Book of Unholy Mischief*. This delectable historical mystery made it onto both Linda Tonnesen and Suzanne's Picks. Luciano, our hero, is a poor street urchin with quick hands and a quick mind. It's 1498 Venice, and dangerous times, whether you live on the streets or in the palace of the doge, the most powerful man of Venice. Luciano is chosen as kitchen apprentice by the doge's chef. The city is abuzz over rumors of a book, a very powerful book, containing magical potions for eternal life, love spells, alchemy, and who knows what else. When Luciano learns that the book contains love spells, his interest grows, for he is a boy caught in the web of unrequited love.

Cindy Pon signs *Silver Phoenix: Beyond the Kingdom of Xia*

While we have been fortunate to have the funny and talented Cindy Pon join us at a number of off-site events since this spring's release of her first novel, *Silver Phoenix: Beyond the Kingdom of Xia*, the Holiday Party is our first chance to host her in the store. Suzanne is a particular fan of her young adult Asian fantasy - part of her review follows: "*Silver Phoenix* has all the components of a YA fantasy: magic, talking demons and monsters based on Chinese mythology, good v. evil and a universal quest. In this case, the exotic fantasy adventure has a heroine, Ai Ling, who meets the chivalrous and reticent Chen Yong as they join together to travel to the Emperor's Palace. Although each of the main characters has their own story line, after they meet, the strength of their relationship and their combined abilities gives the reader an action filled page turner. Pon provides a stunning landscape, a setting both believable by our notions of Chinese geography and mysterious and fantastical."

Harry Turtledove signs *Liberating Atlantis*

The Master of Alternate History, Harry Turtledove, returns to MG after too long an absence. Harry launched his Atlantis series a couple of years ago, with *Opening Atlantis*, setting the mythic continent between Europe and "Terranova," and applying his usual meticulous imagination based on historical facts to describe the battles for territory that would occur. In *Liberating Atlantis*, the struggle continues between the forces of England, and Victor Radcliff and his American revolutionaries. *The Golden Shrine*, the latest in his alternate Bronze Age epic, just hit the shelves recently as well, as well as this summer's *Hitler's War*.

E. Van Lowe signs *Never Slow Dance with a Zombie*

E. Van Lowe is all about the Zombie Love, and will join us to explain how his love of zombies and work in television, including on Disney's hit show "Even Stevens," combined to produce his teen novel, *Never Slow Dance with a Zombie*. (See Suzanne's Holiday Picks.) Despite her best intentions and creating a "high school manifesto" at the end of middle school, Margot Jean Johnson has not had the high school experience she hoped for. However, when a significant portion of the student body is zombified, new horizons open up - if she and her best friend can survive long enough to change their course.

Gift Books Presentation - Wade Lucas and Treats from Chef Isabel

Local Random House Representative (representatives get the publishers' books to booksellers, so we can share them with you!) Wade Lucas presents some of the hottest books of Fall 2009 and Winter 2010, and a line-up of Gift Book Ideas! Those of you who were fortunate enough to join Wade at our summer Rep Picks event already appreciate his knowledge and enthusiasm. At 7:00 PM, Wade will not only be sharing his passion for some recent and forthcoming titles, but also sharing a selection of gift book suggestions for clients and friends, and for those of you with employees to motivate.

One of the fabulous books he will be recommending is *Isabel's Cantina: Bold Latin Flavors from the New California Kitchen*, by local chef Isabel Cruz. In the spirit of IndieBound, Chef Isabel will be providing us with some treats from her Pacific Beach restaurant.

Local Author Marv Gold signs Gift Book *Silverstein & Me*

Clairemont author Marv Gold sold us on his memoir of his friend this way: "Shel Silverstein passed away a little over ten years ago, but a whole nuther generation has started sharing his poetry and art, and his iconic madcap imagination. This is revealed in a definitive first memoir of Shel, *Silverstein & Me*, by his lifelong pal. This only authorized memoir tells of Shel's whacky pranks from childhood to his untimely death at 68. It's been well reviewed by BloggerNews, Tommy Smothers, Hugh Hefner and others. I's been excerpted in Playboy, and is still recommended in their book section. And it's especially appealing as a holiday gift item." Marv will read a seasonally appropriate excerpt from the book. We will have a selection of Shel Silverstein's books to bundle with your signed first edition of *Silverstein & Me*.



Rave Reviews Begin Here

'U' is for Undertow by Sue Grafton

Our favorite private detective, Kinsey Milhone, is back in Sue Grafton's latest, *'U' is for Undertow*. Kinsey is making ends meet in her PI business by doing investigative insurance work, background checks and fraud investigations, when a client comes to her with an unusual request. An article in the local newspaper about famous kidnappings in the past, one of which took place right in their own city, has sparked a long-buried memory. Her client has remembered that while exploring the woods while visiting a friend, he saw two guys burying a bundle and feels it could be related to the kidnapping. The fact that he was only six years old at the time and can't remember the friend's name or where he lived - except near these woods - doesn't give Kinsey

much hope or many facts to work with. With the tenacity we have come to love and appreciate, Kinsey delves into the case, and things become very interesting as the layers of mystery and time are peeled away from the case and Kinsey's own past. True Kinsey fans will be well rewarded. G. P. Putnam, \$27.95.

Signed first editions will be available after our December 10 lunch with Sue- LDB

Precious Dragon by Liz Williams

The third Detective Inspector Chin book finds our heroes, Chin and his demon partner Zhu Irzh, escorting an envoy from Heaven on a diplomatic mission to Hell. This

Betty Webb

Signs *Desert Lost*

Monday, December 7, 7:00 PM

Get your last author event fix of the year – and pick up a New Year’s Day Sale coupon with your books – when Betty Webb visits on Monday, December 7, at 7:00 PM. Earlier in the series, Arizona private detective Lena Jones went undercover in a polygamist cult in *Desert Wives*. In *Desert Lost*, the discovery of a woman’s corpse in the Arizona desert leads Lena to help the woman’s sister wife look for the killer, presumably someone connected to the polygamist cult they both are members of. Don’t forget that Betty has a very different series, featuring zookeeper Teddy Bently and set on the California coast, beginning with *The Anteater of Death*. In addition to being an author herself, Betty also spent two decades as a journalist and literary critic, as well as a zookeeper and an assortment of other fascinating jobs.

New Year, Great Savings!

Special Sales Day on Friday, January 1, 2010!

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

TGIF! A traditional favorite returns with special deep discounts – don’t miss your chance to save! Our Special Sales Coupon New Year’s Day Event takes place on **Friday, January 1, from 10 AM to 2 PM** only. Starting on “Black Friday,” November 27, customers making an in-store purchase receive a special coupon entitling them to some great discounts and bargains! To receive the coupon, just visit the store between November 27 and New Year’s Eve, and make a purchase. Then, on New Year’s Day, start things off right by joining us at the store for some special deals! Coupons will *not* be available during the sale, so make sure you come by beforehand to earn one. Coupons are honored for in-store sales only. Also, due to the circumstances of this special day, the staff asks you do *not* turn in receipts for gift certificates during the sale.

Looking Ahead into 2010:

A sneak preview of what we have planned so far ...

- * **One Book, One San Diego** reads *Outcasts United*
- * **January Begins with:** Kris Neri – January 7; John Crowley, January 8; Daniel Suarez – January 9; T. Jefferson Parker – January 10; Steve Hamilton – January 10; John Lescroat – January 15; Carrie Vaughn – January 16; Carol Berg – January 30
- * **Valentines for Everyone in February** (so far): Connie Willis – February 3; Jeffrey Siger – February 9; Kelli Stanley – February 12; Southern CA Writers Conference – February 13 – 15; Melinda Wells – February 20; ConDor with GOH C.J. Cherryh – February 26 – 28; Joanne Fluke – February 27
- * **MG March Madness:** Killer Party – March 11; The Tucson Festival of Books – March 13 & 14... and that’s just the beginning of wonderful author visits and conferences!



More Rave Reviews

is bad news for our heroes, especially Zhu, since the trip will require a visit with his family. What’s worse, Mom threw out Dad and now has a new boyfriend, the Minister of War. Then the heavenly envoy goes missing and the trail leads right back to Zhu’s family.

Meanwhile, a boy is born to newlywed ghosts. You can bet he is no ordinary boy. Hint: note the book’s title, *Precious Dragon*. He is also in grave danger from the forces of both Heaven and Hell. There’s a rumble brewing in the cosmos. Chin and Zhu must track down the missing emissary before all Hell breaks loose-really!

This mash-up of ancient Chinese mythology, fantasy and detective fiction represents the best of the cross-over novel between fantasy and mystery. If you have not yet investigated the fantasy world of Inspector Chin, begin with *Snake Agent*. Also in paperback is *Demon and the City*. All three are Nightshade paps, \$7.99, with more to come. – LNT

The Glass of Time, The Secret Life of Miss Esperanza Gorst, narrated by Herself, by Michael Cox

A perfect, complex, convoluted period mystery, *The Glass of Time*, takes place in England, 1876. Cox is so skilled at evoking the Victorian era he includes a “Note on the Text” and footnotes by a fictional professor of “Post Victorian Fiction.” The young orphan narrator, Esperanza, has been sent to Evenwood, the manor of Baroness Tansor, as a maid by her mysterious Parisian guardian. This gothic thriller is complete with footnotes offering pedantic literary and financial facts (you have to love Victorian literature!). The cast of characters, and their hilarious names, are worthy of a Tolstoy cast, from the butler, Mr. Pocock to the lawyer, Armitage Vyse. As Esperanza, a truly well-named Victorian heroine, continues her undercover mission, no more clear to her than us, she discovers hidden identities, obsession, revenge, seduction, love, murder, mayhem, and betrayal. The richness of atmosphere and the compelling mystery had me awake most of the night until the final page (nearly 600 of them). If you enjoyed *Drood* by Dan Simmons and have a hankering for Wilkie Collins, this will be your new favorite. Cox’s first novel, *The Meaning of Night*, has several characters in common to *The Glass of Time*, but they can be read in any order. W. W. Norton, tp,\$14.95. – sd

Between The Dark and the Daylight edited by Ed Gorman&Martin H. Greenberg

This compilation of 27 short stories contains contributions by the best crime and mystery authors. In “Father’s Day,” the beginning story by Michael Connelly, Harry Bosch investigates death of an infant. Sookie Stackhouse and Amelia Broadway try to figure out who is breaking into the insurance office of their agent in Charlaine Harris’ short story. The book’s title comes from the story by Tom Piccirilli. This beautifully written, twisted story concerns a father who wants to impress his son so badly he steals a hot air balloon – with unexpected consequences. There are stories by Bill Crider, T. Jefferson Parker, Patricia Abbott and others. Literally something for every mystery reader. And, if the varied stories are not enough to attract you,Jon L. Breen gives a comprehensive overview of the 2008 year in mystery. Bleak House Books \$24.95, simultaneous tpo, \$14.95. – Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale

Black Blood by John Meaney

The sequel to *Blood Song* delivers a necro-punch of gothic noir filled with the imagery of a fully developed world in Tristopolis, where energy is produced from incinerating the bones (and spirits) of its dead citizens. We are definitely *not* in Kansas, Dorothy.

Creating not a fantasy reworking of our reality, but a uniquely realized alternate world with magic-based technology, here you will find zombies kept “alive” by plugging in their cold, black, transplanted artificial hearts. Wraiths, bound to their elevator homes, are ignored by the humans, slaves here to do their bidding. In the middle is police lieutenant Donal Riordan (a warning to those who haven’t read the first book) seeking revenge for the death of his lover, Laura. He is also tracking down a powerful cabal of conspirators known as the Black Circle before they can carry out their political/magical takeover of the government. Meanwhile, the Unity Party’s power is building, gaining popularity among the humans on a platform of anti-zombie paranoia. Watch out non-humans. Grab your money, valuables and family and go into hiding or head out to the country where folks are a bit more tolerant of the undead. Otherwise you may find yourself being rounded up and put into camps, or worse. A zombie bookseller is killed when overly zealous citizens torch his bookstore. I have never (really!) before read a fantasy where throughout the books I am consistently surprised by a unique,

descriptively meaty, morbidly imaginative world. If this doesn’t convince you to read these books, how about a necro-ninja assassin! I will say no more. *Bone Song*, Bantam pap, \$6.99. *Black Blood*, Bantam Spectra tpo, \$15.00. – LNT

The Gatekeeper by Michelle Gagnon

While private security consultant Jack Riley tries to find a teenage runaway who has accidentally set her father up for a charge of treason, his fiancée, FBI agent Kelly Jones, is investigating the murder of a controversial senator who favors closing the US borders. Jack traces the only identifiable face on video tapes to an ex-con. According to the prison warden, Mack Krek was a model prisoner although a member of the Aryan Brotherhood. The warden informs Jack that the rate of recidivism amongst members of the Brotherhood has dropped drastically in the last year or two. She believes someone is organizing them. Kelly’s investigation takes her to Marco Guzman, nicknamed Psycho, leader of the Hispanic gang MS-13. They are in possession of the gun used to murder the senator. As Jack and his new partner follow the leads and try to save 16 year old Madison Grant and her father, Kelly and her new partner follow the tracks of well-organized gang members. Someone is uniting gang members and militia groups for a common purpose. The unexpected twists and turns keep the reader guessing and turning pages. Michelle Gagnon is an author well worth checking out. Mira Books pbo, \$7.99. – Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale

Beautiful Creatures by Kami Garcia & Margaret Stohl

The fertile ground of the Southern Gothic novel is the perfect setting for this story of star-crossed (moon-crossed?) teenage love. High school student Ethan Wate both revels in and is chafed by the comforting consistency of his small town. With the recent death of his mother, and the large-scale retreat into his den of his father, Ethan enjoys knowing that some things can be counted on to remain the same. At the same time, he wants to do more than date the cookie-cutter cheerleaders he is expected to choose because he is a member of the basketball team. When the girl of his dreams (literally) moves to town to live with her reclusive semi-outcast uncle, Ethan falls hard. Even when it becomes clear that Lena’s life is more complicated than he could imagine, because of her supernatural heritage. Will history repeat itself? Can they overcome their destinies? *Beautiful Creatures* deals with common teen issues, like desperately wanting to be an individual – just like everyone else. A rich and rewarding read for those in their teens, and those who remember them well. Meet Kami and Margie at our Holiday Party on Saturday, December 5! Little, Brown, \$17.99. – MeH

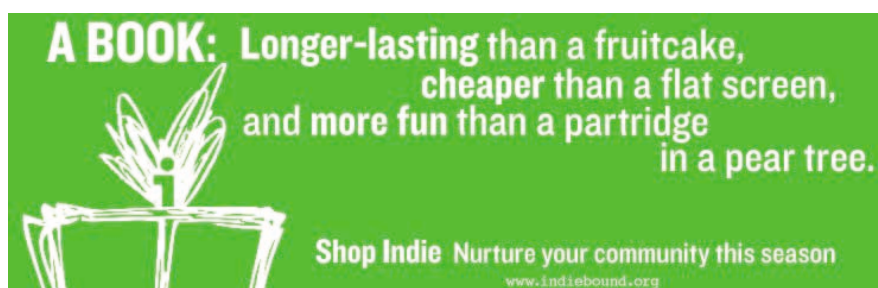
The Magician’s Elephant by Kate DiCamillo

Magic, says Kate DiCamillo in her new novel, *The Magician’s Elephant*, “begins with the impossible and ends with the impossible and is impossible in between. That is why it is magic.” And magic is what DiCamillo, author of *The Tale of Despereaux*, *Because of Winn-Dixie* and other stories for young people and adults who remember what it was like being young, has created here. A tale of longing and restoration, of impossible things made possible, this book may just be DiCamillo’s best yet. It combines the wistfulness of the most compelling fairy tales with a magic realism reminiscent of Calvino or Peter S. Beagle’s *A Fine and Private Place*, although in theme it may be closer to *The Last Unicorn*. Immediate judgments are just that, of course, and only time and readership will grant or withhold renown, but *The Magician’s Elephant* may well become an instant classic, with a place on the shelf (my shelf anyway) with Jarrell’s *The Animal Family*, Sendak’s *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* and *Where the Wild Things Are*, L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time* and other favorites. Adults who don’t read children’s or young adult literature are missing some of the richest rewards available between the covers of books. Read *this* book. It is not only filled with language that will make you stop and reread lines for the pure pleasure of the words, but it also is imbued with a sly sweetness that will leave you smiling. Candlewick Press, \$16.99 – Guest reviewer Terry Hertzler

Leviathan by Mr. Scott Westerfeld, Illustrated by Mr. Keith Thompson

The author described this adventure tale as Victorian Manga and the incredibly accurate and detailed illustrations by Keith Thompson are an integral part of this alternate history. The story takes place at the beginning of The Great War and along with its suspenseful, action-packed adventure it offers insight into the universal questions of why we fight wars and how to balance moral authority and national patriotism. This Young Adult fantasy definitely fits in the steampunk genre and will appeal to readers of all ages. In this alternate version of the events precipitating WWI, the Central European powers are the “Clankers,” with an arsenal of steam driven iron war machines. Westerfeld’s hero, Prince Alek, navigates one such walking machine, the Stormwalker, as he flees from the killers of his parents, Archduke Ferdinand and his wife. Across the Channel, The Darwinists reign, using their knowledge of evolutionary “life threads” to fabricate their own munitions – an arsenal of animals, including the Leviathan, a living zeppelin. The

Rave Reviews continue on the back page



And More Reviews... (continued from page 3)

heroine, a spunky Deryn, disguises herself as Dylan to enlist in the British Air Service, and accidentally flies a Huxley ascender and is rescued midair by the crew of the Leviathan. As Alek and Deryn join forces in Switzerland, the question is why is the Leviathan risking all to reach the Ottoman Empire? Is it the secret cargo or the vindictive agenda of the mysterious head keeper of the London Zoo who has a vendetta with Winston Churchill? Read it, find out and hold your breath, along with the rest of us, for the sequel. Simon Pulse, \$19.99. — *sd*

Alienated by David O. Russell and Andrew Auseon

Greg Brennick and Vince Haskell are best friends and co-publishers of a two page newspaper entitled "The Globe." Long time friends, they are united in their goals to research and interview aliens that live in their town. Greg loves the notoriety he gets from his front page stories and hopes the paper will help him become popular some day. Vince tries to do the right thing in his life and is concerned about the fates of the aliens they have exposed. Wolf Boy, Hip Hop Sasquatch, Mold Man - all aliens exposed by "The Globe" - have vanished. As if their differing goals are not enough, they are both interested in a girl by the name of Lucy. Up to now they have agreed to remain friends with her but show their interest. Using his Uncle Fred's address book, Greg has found the location of a really infamous alien. Greg interviews the man, writes the story, exposes him to the town, and ruins his life. Vince is so upset by Greg's selfish actions, he stops hanging around with him. He does not want to work with Greg or be his friend. Already at odds, the boys begin to fight over Lucy. This book explores actions and loyalties in an unusual manner. The two boys are forced to analyze their friendship as well as their relationships with relatives, neighbors, and friends. It is entertaining and has an unexpected twist at the end. Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, \$16.99.

— *Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale*

Dracula The Un-Dead by Dacre Stoker and Ian Holt

This sequel to the original *Dracula* is a remarkable mixture of fiction with real people and events. The authors have abandoned Bram Stoker's journal format for a more modern style of writing. Graphic violence and action-filled scenes propel the reader forward and re-introduce a familiar cast of characters. Twenty-five years ago, four men united to avenge one woman and save another. The actions they were forced to take altered their lives. The survivors are estranged from each other, three of them united only in the love of a dead woman. When Dr. Jack Seward, morphine addicted and divorced, dies mysteriously in front of a Paris theater, secrets not mentioned for a quarter of a century are disturbed. A London policeman forced to investigate Seward's room finds a diary. As more members of the small group are murdered, the mutilated bodies of prostitutes found at the scene, combined with entries in Seward's diary, motivate the police inspector to disinter Lucy Westenra's body. His discovery causes him to reopen the Whitechapel murder case with Dr. Abraham Van Helsing as a suspect.

Quincey Harker, knowing nothing of his parents' past, applies for a job at Bram Stoker's theater and finds the man attempting to produce a play based upon his book, *Dracula*. Against Stoker's wishes, Quincey involves Basarab, the most famous actor of his time, in the production of the stage play. Finding characters in the novel named for his parents as well as men he has known all of his life, Quincey ransacks his parents' house and finds the notes on the hunt for *Dracula*. Events continue to propel the story towards a final confrontation at Carfax Abbey. While I was disappointed in the re-invention of the character of *Dracula* in this story, I would not hesitate to recommend it to readers. And I will definitely read this novel every time I read the original book. Dutton, \$26.95.

— *Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale*

Night of Demons by Tony Richards

More than 400 years ago, Salem witches fled to Raine's Landing, Massachusetts. They intermarried with citizens, raised families, practiced magic, and cursed the town. No one born there can leave. No one from the outside can enter the town and remain. Ross Devries, an ex-cop, and Cassandra Mallory, his sometimes backup, are the last defense against the evil that can overwhelm the town. Because most people in the town practice magic to some extent, evil seems to seek the Landing. Cornelius Hanlon, named Shadow Man by the authorities seeking him for multiple counts of murder, has come to town. Hanlon hears voices continuously, which helps him tune out the warnings from the town. Lieutenant Detective Lauren Brennan, following Hanlon into town, is oblivious to the voices because of her determination to catch the Shadow Man. The first person Hanlon murders is the town's leading adept. From the master witch, he steals a force of magic that gives him power beyond his wildest dreams. Turning into a mist, he is able to take over the body of a man and force him to murder his entire family. When the daughter of the adept joins forces with Cornelius in hopes of gaining control over the stolen wand, he is given the ability to transform people into images of their inner demons. As more and more malcontented people transform into dragons, over-sized apes, and demons, more of the town is placed in jeopardy. When Cass is turned by the insane couple, Ross Devries realizes he is the last chance for his town. Raine's Landing is facing the apocalypse. This book has non-stop action, unexpected twists, and rushes to its conclusion. *Night of Demons* is the second book involving Raine's Landing. It stands alone because the reader is given the necessary background to understand the town and its citizens. Never boring, the book is a page turner. Harper pbo, \$7.99.

— *Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale*

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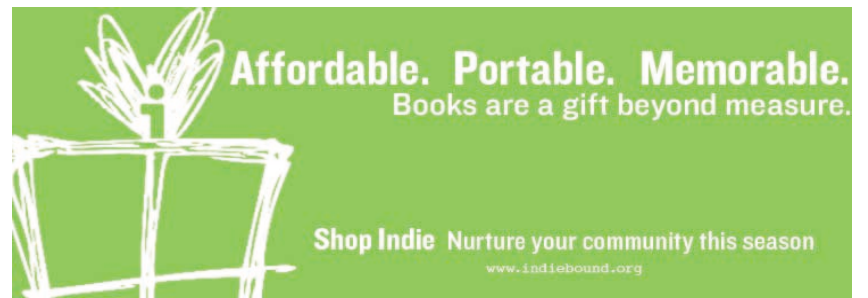
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December Forthcoming Books (continued from page 1)

- ❑ Carlson, Jeff: Plague Zone (#3 Ruth Goldman) (pbo)
- ❑ De Lint, Charles: Muse and Reverie (Newford Stories)
- ❑ Demarce, Virginia: 1635: The Tangled Web (Ring of Fire) (tpo)
- ❑ Kenner, Julie: Torn (#2 Blood Lily Chronicles) (pbo)
- ❑ Kirkpatrick, Russell: Beyond the Wall of Time (pbo)
- ❑ Knaak / Tabet: Beastmaster: Myth (tpo)
- ❑ Knight, E E: Dragon Rule (#5 Age of Fire) (tpo)
- ❑ Levitt, John: Unleashed (#3 Mason & Louie) (pbo)
- ❑ Paxson, Diana L: Marion Zimmer Bradley's Sword of Avalon
- ❑ Resnick, Mike: Starship: Flagship (#5)
- ❑ Robbins, David: Endworld #3: Twin Cities Run (pbo)
- ❑ Rollins, James: Altar of Eden (Stand-Alone)
- ❑ Scalzi, John: The God Engines
- ❑ Snyder, Lucy A: Spellbent (pbo)
- ❑ Taylor, Travis S: One Good Soldier
- ❑ Williams, Liz: The Iron Khan (Detective Inspector Chen)
- ❑ Wright, Susan: Confessions of A Demon (pbo)
- ❑ Zahn, Timothy: The Domino Pattern
- ❑ Zahn, Timothy: Cobra Alliance (#1 Cobra War)
- ❑ Zakour, John: The Sapphire Sirens (#7) (pbo)
- ❑ Brown, Nathan Robert: The Complete Idiot's Guide to Werewolves (tpo)
- ❑ Masterton, Graham: Blind Panic (pbo)
- ❑ Neiderman, Andrew: Guardian Angel (pbo)
- ❑ Rollo, Gord: Strange Magic (pbo)
- ❑ Yarbrow, Chelsea Quinn: Burning Shadows (Count Saint-Germain)

DECEMBER METRO MYTHOS

- ❑ Ed. Wilson: Ardeur: Unauthorized Essays on L.K. Hamilton's Anita Blake Series (tpo)
- ❑ MacAlister, Fox et al: My Zombie Valentine (pbo)
- ❑ Maverick, Liz: Crimson & Steam (#8 Crimson City) (pbo)
- ❑ Showalter, Krinard et al: Heart of Darkness (pbo)
- ❑ Ed. Tele: The Mammoth Book of Time Travel Romance (tpo)
- ❑ Ashwood, Sharon: Scorched (#2 Dark Forgotten) (pbo)
- ❑ Feehan, Christine: The Scarlett Curse (pbo)
- ❑ Harper, Molly: Nice Girls Don't Live Forever (pbo)
- ❑ Kelley, Karen: Dating Outside Your DNA (tpo)
- ❑ Kenyon, Sherrilyn: Born of Ice (#3 League) (pbo)
- ❑ Kittredge, Caitlin: Demon Bound (#2 Black London) (pbo)
- ❑ Myles, Jill: Gentlemen Prefer Succubi (pbo)
- ❑ Phoenix, Adrian: Beneath the Skin (#3 Maker's Song) (pbo)
- ❑ Saintcrow, Lilith: Flesh Circus (#4 Jill Kismet) (pbo)
- ❑ Walker, Shiloh: Hunter's Need (pbo)
- ❑ Willis, Clare: Once Bitten (pbo)

IN SERIES

- ❑ Ed. Martin: Suicide Kings (Wild Cards)
- ❑ Knaak, Richard A: The Gargoyle King (Dragonlance:#3 Ogre Titans) (pbo)
- ❑ Odom, Mel: Wrath of the Blue Lady (Forgotten Realms: The Wilds) (pbo)
- ❑ Mack, David: Star Trek: Mirror Universe: The Sorrows of Empire (pbo)
- ❑ Karpshyn, Drew: Star Wars: Darth Bane: Dynasty of Evil
- ❑ Lee, Mike: Nagash the Unbroken (Warhammer: #2 Time of Legends) (pbo)
- ❑ Roberson, Chris: Sons of Dorn (Warhammer 40000: Imperial Fists) (pbo)

DECEMBER MAYHEM

- ❑ Ed. Lowder: The Best of All Flesh: Zombie Anthology (tpo)
- ❑ Ed. Lowder: The Dead That Walk: Flesh-Eating Stories (tpo)

DECEMBER MUNCHKINS

- ❑ Baggott, Julianna: The Ever Breath
- ❑ Curley, Marianne: Old Magic (tpo)
- ❑ Hunter, Erin: Warriors: Omen of the Stars #1: The Fourth Apprentice
- ❑ Lake, Nick: Blood Ninja
- ❑ Lasky, Kathryn: Lone Wolf
- ❑ Meyer, Stephenie: The Twilight Saga: The Official Guide
- ❑ Patterson / Charbonnet: Witch and Wizard
- ❑ Summy, Barrie: I So Don't Do Spooky
- ❑ Vaught / Redmond: Oathbreaker #2: A Prince Among Killers (tpo)
- ❑ Vincent, Rachel: My Soul To Save (#2 Soul Screamer) (tpo)



7051 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., #302
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92111
(858) 268-4747
mgbooks@mystgalaxy.com

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- » *Jessica's Guide to Dating on the Dark Side* by Beth Fantaskey. This one had my heart from the very first page ... so perfect at eliciting emotions and laughter ... a wonderful visit to a time long gone ... with vampires attached (of course!). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$17.00
- » *If I Stay* by Gayle Forman. A poignant look at what's at stake as Mia must decide if it is worth it for her to fight for her life. Once you start, *If I Stay*, you will not want to leave. Dutton, \$16.99.

My Favorite Things: These mystery series continue to delight me:

- » *The Revenge of the Spellmans* by Lisa Lutz. This series just gets better and better. This was the most fun I have had with a book in a long time. Simon & Schuster, \$25.00.
- » *Evil at Heart* by Chelsea Cain. Cain outdoes herself every time! Amazingly gruesome and compelling ... all at the same time. Minotaur, \$24.99.
- » *A Deadly Silver Sea* by Bob Morris. High entertainment value, vintage Morris humor, timing, and perfect endings. St. Martin's pap, \$7.99.
- » *New Tricks* by David Rosenfelt. Still one of my most beloved series in the entire store. The latest is no exception. Grand Central Publishing, \$24.99.
- » *Retribution* by Jeanne C. Stein. This vampire series is always a winner for me. I like the set up for the next book and the way Anna has begun to define a family. Ace pbo, \$7.99.

New Discoveries: These first books in a mystery series were new to me and have made me a fan.

- » *Desolate Angel* by Chaz McGee. A great start to a detective series with a ghost in the starring role. Berkley Prime Crime pbo, \$6.99.
- » *Charmed and Dangerous* by Candace Havens. This fun new series has a kick-ass witch with a great sense of humor and adventure. Berkley Sensation pbo, \$7.99.
- » *Karma Girl* by Jennifer Estep. I loved every moment of this superhero / romance, the first in the Bigtime series. Berkley Sensation pap, \$7.99.
- » *Wife of the Gods* by Kwei Quartey. I enjoyed this debut from Ghanaian author Quartey and I look forward to reading more about his flawed detective, Darko Dawson. Random House, \$24.00.
- » *Secondhand Spirits* by Juliet Blackwell. I loved this new addition to the paranormal mystery genre. Lily Ivory is a great character with lots more to discover about herself and the many men in her life. Signet pbo, \$6.99.

Maryelizabeth's Gifts

- » **Fey and Faeries and Furry Friends, TX style:** The Blood Lines series by Maria Lima. In the new book, *Blood Kin*, Keira Kelly deals with matters of the blood – specifically her maternal link to the Sidhe and her Canadian family members – in the third book in this paranormal series with a very individual voice. Pocket Books pbo, \$7.99.
- » **Fake Psychic Recruited in Supernatural Battle:** *High Crimes on the Magical Plane* by Kris. Any adventure that begins with the protagonist almost being sideswiped by a clown car can only get weirder. Meet Kris at MG in January. Red Coyote Press tp, \$16.95.
- » **Best Mystery Partly Set in a Fictional Version of My Home Town:** *Doubleback* by Libby Fischer Hellmann. A kidnapping, mysterious illicit bank transactions, and a suspicious death in Chicago lead video producer Ellie Foreman to request help from P.I. Georgia Davis again. The fiscal trail leads to a pseudo-military organization with troubling connections all over the Midwest, and at the southeastern Arizona border. Bleak House Books, \$24.95.
- » **Clank! Clank! Beyond Leviathan:** *Boneshaker* by Cherie Priest offers late 19th century Seattle with airships and zombies! Tor tp, \$15.99. *Boilerplate: History's Mechanical Marvel* by Guinan and Bennett is a fun celebration of the world's first robot soldier, with lavish

illustrations. Abrams, \$24.95. And if you aren't sure what steampunk is all about, try the Steampunk anthology, edited by the Vandermeers. Tachyon tpo, \$14.95.

- » **Witches and Weirdness and Weapons:** *Bitter Night* by Diana Pharaoh Francis. In the first of a new series, we meet Max, who foolishly agreed to what she thought was a philosophical proposal by her college roommate one evening, only to find herself forged (extremely painfully!!!) into a living magical weapon. Watch for the MG shout-out on page 47. Pocket Books pbo, \$7.99.
- » **Something Really Different in Epic Fantasy. Really.:** *Flesh and Fire* by Laura Anne Gilman. *Flesh and Fire* is remarkable not only for Laura Anne's inventive wine-making based magic system, but also for its rare vintage of overall story and theme. Rather than the traditional focus on a protagonist's coming of age and becoming a hero, she has multiple characters dealing with a world in which the established magic system seems to be unraveling, and they must all make decisions and adjustments. I read my copy accompanied by a bottle of Sonoita Vineyards' 2006 Pocket Books, \$26.00.
- » **Hands on Celebrations of Food and Other Passions:** *Slow: Life in a Tuscan Town* by Dougl's Gayeton. Welcome Books, \$50.00. This photo essay work is the perfect gift for any foodie on your list – or your own bookshelf. And Julie Powell's *Cleaving: A Story of Marriage, Meat and Other Obsessions*, is just as forthright and as *Julie & Julia* was, but this time the topics are her obsessions with an extra-marital lover, and learning the classic art of butchery. Little, Brown, \$24.99.
- » **Back in Print! Yay!** Very little is more frustrating for a bookseller than when some of our favorite books are not available to recommend. I am happy to say that this no longer applies to *Bone Dance: A Fantasy for Technophiles* by Emma Bull (Orb tp, \$15.99.) or *Orchestrated Death* by Cynthia Harrod-Eagles, one of the fabulous Bill Slider mysteries (Felony & Mayhem tp, \$14.95.).
- » **Cinderella with a Twist:** *Ash* by Malinda Lo. This time the orphaned heroine is caught between her "fairy godfather" and the King's Huntress. Malinda's young adult novel manages to be totally original while faithfully incorporating many elements of the original tale. Little, Brown, \$16.99.

Linda's List

Best Holiday Books for the Young at Heart (and featuring my cat Moochie's namesake):

- » *The Gift of Nothing* and *Wag*, both by Patrick McDonnell. In *The Gift of Nothing*, Mooch searches for a prezzie for his pal Earl. But Earl is a happy mutt with everything he needs: love, food, good pals, and a happy home. What could Mooch give him? Why, Nothing! Little Brown, \$19.99.
- » In *Wag*, we pay homage to Patrick McDonnell's own pal, Earl. A sweet tribute to a pooch who will always be remembered, with much fwapping and joy of life. Little Brown, \$15.99.
- » **Best Vampire Gift Books** – teen (or teens at heart) editions:
 - » *The Morganville Vampires* by Rachel Caine. The first two stories, *Glass Houses* and *The Dead Girls' Dance*, in this fun series about a teen girl who picks the wrong college town to continue her higher education. Teen angst magnified by the dangers of living in a town run by vampires. NAL tp, \$9.99.
 - » *The Twilight Journals* by Stephenie Meyer. Four pretty journals with Twilight Saga cover art and designed in red and black throughout with images and quotes from each of the books, along with some of the classic works of literature that inspired them. All in a Keepsake Tin. Take note, Twilight fans. Little Brown, \$24.99.
 - » **Best Debut Mystery:** *The Book of Unholy Mischief* by Elle Newmark. A Renaissance setting with yummy descriptions of Venice, a secret ancient book, and lots of cooking by Chef Ferraro and his imaginative apprentice,

Luciano. Meet local author Elle at our holiday party on Dec 5. Washington Square Press tp, \$15.00.

- » **Best Pre-teen Poisoner with a 'tude:** *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie* by Alan Bradley. Meet 11-year-old sleuth Flavia de Luce. Be glad, be very glad, that you are not her sibling. Flavia turns her intelligent eye towards clearing her father's name. But, never fear readers, a sister's revenge, and a highly toxic lipstick tube, tread just below the surface of Flavia's mischievous mind. Cue "Jaws" theme, please. Delacorte, \$23.00.
- » **Best Zombies Like You've Never Seen 'Em Before Series:** *Bone Song* and *Black Blood* by John Meaney. Keep looking around and checking your reality when you read these because it's so easy to fall into the noir gothic fantasy known as Tristopolis, a city run on necro-power. Here's to zombies with superpowers-faster than a speeding bullet, well, quick on their feet anyway, and heightened senses- no, they don't smell like graveyards. Elevator wraiths have a sense of humor, if you treat them nice. If not, watch out for that first step. Bantam pap, \$6.99 and Bantam tpo, \$15.00.
- » **Best Man in a Skirt Book:** *American on Purpose: The Improbable Adventures of an Unlikely Patriot* by Craig Ferguson. It's a Great Day for America Everybody! Especially when you can gaze upon a man wearing a patriotic kilt while you read this autobiography. Here is a wild Scotsman with a drinking and drug problem who ends up as a sober, happily married (I think) man with his own talk show, and a best-selling book. Yes, American citizen Craig Ferguson has convinced me that it is a great day for America every day (as long as we have our sense of humor). Harper, \$25.99.

Linda Rae's Picks

- » **Non-Genre Enjoyment:** *The Leisure Seeker* by Michael Zadoorian. It is a road trip for an elderly couple who choose life over being stuck in a rest home or hospital. It is narrated by Ella who is feisty and determined to have one last trip with her husband John who is suffering from dementia. There are a few exciting moments, some true enjoyment for the couple and, of course, some sad moments. I suspect that the older you are, the more you will enjoy it. Harper, \$24.99, (Harper tp in January 2010 \$13.99).
- » **Another Non-Genre Must Read:** *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society* by Mary Ann and Annie Barrows. Although there is some humor in this book and a little romance, this shows the stark reality of life under Nazi rule on a British isle. The reality of their life is almost incomprehensible to me. Ransom House tp, \$14.00.
- » **The End of One of My Favorite Young Adult Series:** *The Journal of an Adventure Through Time and Space* by D.J. MacHale. *Book Ten: The Soldiers of Halla* was recently released and I finally read it. I didn't want this series to end! This is an exciting science fiction adventure for young and old alike. Books one through eight are available in Simon & Schuster pap \$8.99 and books nine and ten are available in Simon & Schuster hardcover \$17.99. We still have a couple of signed copies of Book Ten.
- » **Other Young Adult Books That I Read And Enjoyed:**
 - » *Bones of Faerie* by Janni Lee Simmer. This is a post apocalyptic novel following a war between humanity and Faerie. Both sides were devastated and a young girl, Liza, must leave the human enclave where she has spent her life. Random House, \$16.99.
 - » *The Magician of Hoad* by Margaret Mahy is set in a world with magic. Heriot Tarbas was born with some power and is taken away by the king when he is a boy to become the Magician of Hoad. In this story, there are royal politics, fighting between champions, betrayal, revenge, and a love story. McElderry Books, \$18.99.
 - » **One Of My Favorite Reads This Year:** *Soulless* by Gail Carriger, an urban fantasy set in Victorian times. Alexia has no soul which is probably a disadvantage in any time! After accidentally killing a vampire

who was behaving badly at a private ball, Alexia has more adventures with vampires, werewolves and ghosts. This is a very enjoyable beginning for a series that also has an element of humor. Orbit pbo \$7.99.

Christine's Choices...

- » *The Killing Hour* by Lisa Gardner. This suspense novel about the hunt for a serial killer had me from the start. After a three year killing spree, the "Eco-killer" suddenly goes silent. Several years pass and suddenly he strikes again. His killings escalate. All the while he continues to leave clues each becoming more difficult to decipher. The challenge to end his reign of terror is taken up by Georgia Bureau Special Agent Mac McCormack, rookie FBI Agent Kimberly Quincy, her father former FBI profiler Pierce Quincy, and his partner Conner. Bantam Books pap, \$4.99.
- » *The Stepsister Scheme* by Jim C. Hines. Jim Hines loves to mess things up a bit. The phrase "and they lived happily ever after" does not apply here. Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White are now Danielle, Talia and Snow. They get into sword fights, chase after kidnappers, confront Trolls and do all sorts of non-traditional princess activities. It's a fun read. DAW Books pbo, \$7.99.
- » *The Lost Fleet: Dauntless* by Jack Campbell. Attention Non Military Science Fiction Readers. I am not a big fan of the genre but this was a surprise. Our hero, Captain John "Black Jack" Geary has been in suspended animation in space for one hundred years. Suddenly found and revived he discovers that he has become the stuff of legends. It falls to Jack to unite the fleet and stave off the enemy. Jack is an appealing and interesting character, worth the foray out of your normal reading. Ace pbo, \$7.99.
- » *Defending Angels* by Mary Stanton. Inheriting an uncle's law practice, Brianna Winston Beaufort moves to Savannah. She soon discovers that her uncle's clients weren't run of the mill. Her first client is dead. Dead but requesting justice is done before he faces the Celestial Court. The characters are quirky and intriguing. Berkley pbo, \$7.99.
- » *9 Dragons* by Michael Connelly. Harry Bosch is getting older (aren't we all?), his knees cracking as he stands up from reviewing the victim. A convenience store murder, a robbery gone badly has significance for Harry. A chance encounter ten years before with the deceased has Harry taking a closer look at the circumstances of the case. His investigation leads him to the Asian gangs in Los Angeles and eventually to the Triads in Hong Kong. Things become personal when Harry's daughter is kidnapped. What ensues will have a major impact on Harry's life. Intertwined plot lines kept my interest to the very last sentence. Hachette, \$27.99.
- » *The Lost Witness* by Robert Ellis. I am a big fan of Robert's first book in this series, *City of Fire*, and he didn't disappoint me with this latest novel. Once again LA Homicide Detective Lisa Gamble is working a gruesome murder investigation. Who is the victim? Why was she killed? The plot is fast paced, full of twists and turns. The story is peppered with intriguing characters – a US Senator, a reporter, an auto dealership owner/TV personality and of course, the lost witness. Minotaur, \$25.95.

Sam's Top 9 of '09 ...

- » **Best New Author** goes to Kristin Cashore for both *Graceling* and *Fire*. With a fresh take on magic, a unique world, believable characters, adventure, mystery and even sweet romances, Kristin Cashore tops my chart for favorite fantasies of the year. And y'all know I read a lot of fantasy. Graphia Books tp, \$9.99 and Dial Books, \$17.99.
- » **Best Poisoned Pen** (or lipstick, as the case may be) is claimed by Alan Bradley for *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie*. This quirky English mystery involves snooty older sisters, a war veteran with PTSD, dead mothers, magicians, rare stamps and an 11-year-old girl who is very much fascinated by poisons. You know it has to

be good in order to get Sam to read a mystery! Delacorte Press, \$23.00.

» **Best Post-Apocalyptic Book About Zombies** is easily given to *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* by Carrie Ryan. Reminiscent of M. Knight Shyamalan's *The Village* in setting, *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* examines what would happen if the zombies won: what would people do? Where would they go? Could they even survive? In this grim world, Carrie beautifully illustrates both the fear and beauty of human nature. Oh yeah, it's also YA... but don't let that stop you adults from picking up this gem of a book. Delacorte Press, \$16.99.

» **Best Continuing Series** goes to the Mercy Thompson Novels by Patricia Briggs (*Moon Called, Blood Bound, Iron Kissed* and the newest of the bunch, *Bone Crossed*). You say you like urban fantasy? And Jim Butcher, Charlaine Harris and Kim Harrison are your favorites? You *really* haven't picked up these books yet? What's wrong with you?! Ace Books pbos, \$7.99 each, and Ace Books, \$24.95.

» **Best Paranormal Romance** is stolen by Maggie Stiefvater for *Shiver*. Any fan of werewolves, unrequited love, and sexy boyfriends will be a fan of this book. Yes, it's perfect for those *Twilight* lovers out there, but it's also perfect for those *non-Twilight* lovers, too. (Take you fans of Melissa Marr or Kristin and PC Cast, for instance.) A great gift for the hard-to-buy-for teenager and young-at-heart woman (like me!). Scholastic, \$17.99.

» **Best Humorous** is happily handed to John Connolly for *The Gates*. Fans of *Good Omens* will get a kick out of this tale of the gates of hell and how they are opened by quantum physics and stupid suburbanites. Fear and hilarity (with an overly-clever dachshund taking main stage) ensues. Get your signed copy and keep this one in your collection! I anticipate reading and rereading this one aloud. Atria Books, \$24.00.

» **Best Sequel** is awarded to *The Silver Blade* by Sally Gardner. I think I actually squealed when I saw this follow-up to *The Red Necklace* in the store. No, really. Sally's gorgeous tales of historical fiction, romance, magic and fantasy are a veritable wonderland and I'm always willing to put down what I'm reading when one of her titles arrives. And that's saying something! Dial Books, \$17.99.

» **Best Non-Genre Book** is, hands-down, *Paper Towns* by John Green. I never wrote a review about this book: it wasn't because I didn't love John's prose, the incredible insight, the humor, the wit, the moments of clarity and the examination of what it is to grow up and to fully blossom into an individual. No, I never wrote a review because I struggled to find words for how I felt about this marvelous novel. Or even to describe what it's about. If you're not familiar with John's work, do yourself a favor and take a risk on *Paper Towns*. If you are familiar, and you haven't read it yet, what the heck are you waiting for? Speak tp, \$9.99.

» **Best Pop-Up Adaptation** is won by *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. I can still hear my father's voice reading this beloved classic to me when I was eight years old. And now I can read this excellently playful collector's volume to my nieces when they turn eight. I can't wait. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$35.00.

Michael Makes Merry

» **The "Funniest Vampires Since Bloodsucking Fiends and Bite Me" Award** goes to *The Reformed Vampire Support Group* by Catherine Jinks. In the vein of Christopher Moore's fantastically funny vampires, Jinks spins a tale starring our friends in which vampires don't sparkle, but the story definitely does. Harcourt, \$17.00.

» **Fantastic Fantasy in a Blood Stained World: The Night Angel Trilogy** by Brent Weeks. A dark and gritty tale of the underworld and the magical assassins that live in the shadows, Weeks makes a splash in his trilogy with deeply interesting characters, a twisted and shocking plot of intrigue and betrayal. Orbit, \$7.99 each.

» **Fantastic Fantasy for Fans: The Rogue Agent Trilogy** by K.E. Mills. The first two books in Mills' soon to be complete trilogy are magically funny tales of a failed wizard, doomed in a disturbingly odd set of strange events. Not only will you come to care for the characters but also laugh out loud as they go through humorous and quirky trials and tribulations. Orbit pbos, \$7.99 each.

» **Fantastic Fantasy with a Unique and Beautiful Style: Lamentation** by Ken Scholes creates a world reeling from loss, full of devious political machinations and populated with fascinating multidimensional characters. The second book, *Canticle* is also available. Signed Copies available while supplies last. Tor, \$24.95; pap \$7.99.

» **The Effects of War Upon Human Nature: The Company** by K.J. Parker. This standalone novel from the author of *The Engineers Trilogy* is a beautifully written, deep and insightful book. Orbit tp, \$14.99.

Diane's Delights 2009

» **#1 Zombie Book: Patient Zero** by Jonathan Mayberry – splash splash bloody story – high action – hold on to your seat – fights! St. Martin's Griffin tpo, \$14.95.

» **#1 Techno Thriller: Daemon** by Daniel Suarez – amazing information and storytelling about computers in the future – scary, fast, exciting action. Dutton Books, \$26.95.

» **#1 Horror – Vampire Category: The Strain** by Guillermo del Toro & Chuck Hogan – plane lands, all power cuts off, nobody answers from inside – new ideas about vampires. William Morrow & Company, \$26.99.

» **#1 Mystery/ Fun Book: Charmed and Dangerous** by Toni McGee Causey – funny, fast paced, & "charming" – this book "feels good!" Berkley pbo, \$7.99.

» **#1 Hot & Passionate Paranormal Romance: Lover Avenged** by J.R. Ward – sets you on fire – trust me. NAL, \$24.95

» **#1 Favorite Mystery Series: Waking Nightmare** by Kylie Brant – first in a series of awesome mysteries – excellent stories and characters – pull up next to a fireplace for these. pbo, \$7.99.

Ben's Best:

» **Painting a Darker Picture for Peter Pan: The Child Thief** by Brom. "It all started when I was reading an original text of Pan... I came across a section where Peter 'thins the lost boys' when they got too old, and I thought, 'Man that's dark' and I ran with it," Brom explains. Within a couple of pages Peter brutally murders a man and doesn't so much rescue lost children as much as kidnaps them for his own amusements. It's dark, disturbing, and most of all beautifully written. Brom defiantly? proves himself in his prose. Eos, \$26.99.

» **Brutal and Fantastic First Novel: Boulevard** by Stephen Jay Schwartz. Sexual deviant and homicide detective Hayden Glass is investigating a crime involving a politician's daughter. While pursuing a sadistic sexual predator, he is forced to face his own addiction. Not for the faint at heart. Forge, \$24.99.

» **Unlike Any Memoir I Have Ever Read: Manhood for Amateurs: The Pleasures and Regrets of a Husband, Father, and Son** by Michael Chabon. Michael Chabon tells us about those moments that made him the man he is today. Through a series of essays, he recounts memories of learning to cook with his mother, the day he discovered man purses, sitting in the man cave of his new father-in-law, and the day his children asked how many times he smoked pot. "A number of times." Wildly funny and partially sad (in that feeling sorry for the guy sort of way). Harper, \$24.99.

» **Channeling Kurt Vonnegut and Graham Chapman: Apathy: and Other Small Victories** by Paul Neilan. After a long hard night of drinking and swiping salt shakers (over the loss of his job), Shane wakes covered in a mound of the stolen table salt and looking less than innocent to the homicide detectives standing over him. Having been informed

that his dentist's homely, deaf assistant has been murdered and he is the prime suspect, Shane finds the rest of the week to be filled with shenanigans...and salt shaker kleptomania. At first, you will find yourself wondering if it is okay to laugh, but by the end, you won't be able hold it in. Griffin tp, \$17.95.

» **A Pocket Universe in the Middle of London: Something from the Nightside** by Simon R. Green. John Taylor hasn't been home in some time. When he left, he left with a bullet in his back and running from an unstoppable evil who only wants one thing, him. Now he works as a PI in London, and he just got a job finding a teenage girl, somewhere in the Nightside, his old home. In the Nightside, it's always three o'clock in the morning and dawn never comes, you can buy and sell anything (including your own soul), no one cares what you do so long as you don't do it to them. It is believed that the Nightside is so dark God himself can't see inside. So why would John go back? Well...the money is really good. Ace pbo, \$7.99.

» **Action. Amazing plot. All Sorts of Twists. And It's Sexy.: Altered Carbon** by Richard K. Morgan. Two pages in, Takeshi is shot in the chest with a shotgun. He reaches into the hole, grabs his own heart and compresses it so that he can get enough oxygen to his brain to fire another couple of rounds. Then he dies. Page seven he wakes up on another planet in someone else's body and doesn't think anything of it. This cyberpunk novel has everything. Del Rey pap, \$7.99.

Suzanne Shares Special Stories

My circle of family and friends has a long standing obsession with zombies and vampires. So for those of us who have *had it* with the more conventional choices of this genre, from Stoker to Stephanie Meyer, my stocking stuffers and last minute gifts will include:

» *Never Slow Dance with a Zombie* by E. Van Lowe, debut author and Emmy Award TV nominee and authority on zombie uprisings and guest at our holiday party. It is no surprise that the local high school student body has become zombies. *We always knew that!* Tor tpo, \$8.99.

» *The Vampire Seduction Handbook* by Luc Richard and Liza Corbett. An alternative to Bella's method. Skyhorse Publishing tpo, \$12.95.

» *Vampire Haiku* by Ryan Mecum. A poetry journal kept by a Mayflower pilgrim turned into a vampire. The history of America – in haiku – by a vampire. It's not Keats, it's bizarre and it's better! Books tpo, \$9.99.

» *The Little Book of Curses and Maledictions for Everyday Use* by Dawn Rae Downton. New Year's Resolution: practice your cursing daily. Skyhorse Publishing tpo, \$12.95.

» **In honor of buying local.** don't forget our local authors: In T. Jefferson Parker's newest, *Iron River*, Charlie Hood is back and he is fighting the good fight on the California Mexican border – an iron river awash in smuggled arms. Dutton, \$26.95, available January 5, 2010. Don Winslow's San Diego County based mysteries and the hard-to-find *California Fire and Life* and his other works of genius have been reissued. These include my favorite anti-hero, Frankie Machine. Vintage, \$13.95 to \$14.95.

» **My interest in art and gourmet cooking** has yielded old favorites and new discoveries in stock: Rex Stout's quintessential detective Nero Wolfe has been a favorite since high school. Who could resist an agoraphobic, literate gourmand? I used to try to cook meals based on the books. An easier method for menu selection might be *Too Many Cooks and Champagne for One*, Bantam tp, \$15.00. *The Book of Unholy Mischief* by Elle Newmark. Death in Venice (again!), the Renaissance and cooking for the Pope, an enthralling mystery from a local author. Washington Square Press tp, \$15.00.

» **My personal obsession with Italy and the Ottoman Empire** is continually satisfied by a series of mysteries, all awaiting me ... and you on our shelves: *The Sultan's Seal* and *The Abyssinian*

Proof by Jenny White. Magistrate Kamil Pasha is a detective worthy of the Ottoman Empire. Norton tps, \$13.95. And *The Bellini Card, The Janissary Tree* and *The Snake Stone* by Jason Goodwin. Three historical mysteries featuring Yashim the eunuch detective. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, each \$14.00.

» **And my continuing fascination with the Victorian mystery.** my favorite fall mystery: *The Glass of Time* by Michael Cox is a perfect period mystery, with young orphan heroine, huge country house staffed by over 16 characters and visited by several more, secret identities, past injustices and romance. Norton tp, \$14.95.

Young Adult some of the best science fiction and adventure is found right here:

» *Leviathan* by Scott Westerfeld and illustrated by Keith Thompson. The author described this adventure tale as "Victorian Manga," and the illustrations are truly worthy of the well developed alternate history. The imagery and imagination are elaborate, suspenseful and action packed. Simon Pulse, \$19.99.

» *Going Bovine* by Bray. I submit this for Future Ruler of the World Award – Cameron, angst-ridden adolescent who, in addition to the normal ailments of his age, has Mad Cow Disease. He goes on a quest for a cure and the road trip of all time accompanied by a punk angel, a garden gnome and a hypochondriac dwarf. Who wouldn't want to go on that ride? Delacorte Press Books for Young Readers, \$17.99.

Lori Burns Recommends:

» **Psychic Eye Mysteries by Victoria Laurie** ...starring psychic Abby Cooper. If her clients don't provide her with enough mystery and drama, her FBI boyfriend fills in. Abby's intuitive guides help her find the bad guys, direct the good guys and convince the skeptics. Start with Book One: *Abby Cooper Psychic Eye* and don't stop until Book Seven: *Doom with a View*. Obsidian pbos, \$6.99 each.

» **The Kitty Norville series by Carrie Vaughn** ... Kitty is no pussy cat. She is a werewolf and the DJ of "The Midnight Hour" radio talk show. The controversies, problems and fascination with vampires and werewolves revealed on her show throw Kitty into some hairy scrapes. Things are tense when werewolves and vampires don't follow the human laws, and Kitty strives to weed out the good from the bad in this fast paced series. Book One is *Kitty and the Midnight Hour*. Book Five was released in 2009, *Kitty and the Dead man's Hand*. Grand Central Publishing pbos, \$6.99 each.

» **Mary Russell/Sherlock Holmes series by Laurie King:** If you have always loved Sherlock Holmes and have not discovered this series, you are in for a treat. Imagine Sherlock Homes coming out of early retirement with a partner who matches his intelligence and detecting abilities. The fact that she is a woman that compliments his personality and his work is a major plus. Book One: *The Beekeeper's Apprentice*, Picador tp, \$14.00. Book Nine was released in 2009: *The Language of Bees*, Bantam, \$25.00.

» **And for Young Adults:** The Simon Bloom series by Michael Reisman ... Finally – a great young adult series that incorporates fantasy and real science in a fun and intriguing way. Simon Bloom's ordinary 6th grade life changes in a second when he accidentally comes into possession of the magical "Teacher's Edition of Physics." In the pages of this teacher's edition, the formulas for controlling gravity, reducing friction and other laws of physics are revealed. Simon and his friends discover they can use these formulas to prevent the book and its powerful contents from falling into the hands of evil. Book One is *Simon Bloom: The Gravity Keeper*. Puffin pap, \$8.99. Book Two: *Simon Bloom: The Octopus Effect*, Dutton, \$16.99. Recommended for ages 8 -12.

We are constantly reading and updating our staff picks. Watch for them soon on our "new and improved" web site.