

# 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 2010 ...

VOLUME 18 NUMBER 15

## 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 2011. 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.

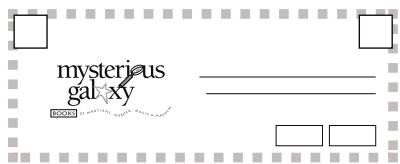
## Book Group Discussions

Enhance your reading enjoyment by participating in one of our lively book discussions with Fearless Leader Christine and other genre readers. Whether you've "done the reading assignment" or are curious about whether you should add a particular title to your own To Be Read pile, participation is open to all readers. Check the Events Section of our web site for reminders and date changes. The final title and date slated for discussion in 2010 is:

*Missing White Girl*  
by Jeffrey J. Mariotte

Wednesday, December 1, at 7:00 PM

Remember, MG is happy to arrange for books in quantity with reader's guides and more for book group members. Ask us for more details!



Mysterious Galaxy Gift Certificates may be the perfect gift for someone you love. Let us create a gift certificate for you in just the right denomination!

## A Gift for You

Make a purchase any time from November 26 through December and receive a Special Sales Coupon redeemable on New Year's Day!

Ask the staff for details.

## Holiday Cheer from the Mysterious Galaxy Staff

As is our tradition each Holiday Season, we share our most memorable reads of the year with you in this newsletter. And as is also our tradition, Patrick sets the bar high for the rest of us with his humorous approach and his book selections, which are beyond reproach. We all try to keep up, but ... Well, enjoy them all (anyway!)

### Patrick the Elf

Hello, I'm Patrick the Elf. Santa has asked me to get his faithful reindeer books this holiday season. Books! For beings who don't even have opposable thumbs! Geesh! Guess I'll be reading them as well as picking them out. An elf's job is never done. Go figure. And not just any old books, oh no. These books must suit the recipient all the way to the antlers ... so that's books for nine very different personalities. No easy taskmaster, our Jolly Ol' St. Nick. Perhaps my woes will help you find the perfect book for your reindeers. Only one place to get all of these: Mysterious Galaxy, the elf's best friend. Awesome.

Well here goes ...

**Dasher** loves novels with everything so it's got to be Justin Cronin's *The Passage* (Ballantine Books, \$27.00.) Equal parts *The Stand*, *They Thirst*, *I Am Legend*, and *A Canticle for Leibowitz* ... among others. Written by a college English professor whose daughter asked him to write a book about a little girl who saves the world. Well, Justin's doing that, but I think he kinda destroyed it first. This is a must-have for the got-to-have-it-all person in your life.

**Dancer** doesn't dance. Imagine that. Dancer is partial to mystery/suspense. Dancer's getting *Savages* by Don 'The Don' Winslow. Sheer awesomeness wrapped in bright orange (Simon & Schuster, \$25.00). This one will have Dancer dancing for sure. All night long. Oh, and *The Reversal* by Michael Connelly (Little, Brown \$27.99, signed). Mickey Haller and Harry Bosch and ... who could ask for anything more?

**Prancer** does prance. A lot. Prancer likes kids' novels, says YA authors "get to the frickin' point" quicker than the adult variety. Can't argue with that. Really. Ever tried to argue with a flying quadruped? Anyway, for Prancer we have Paolo Bacigalupi's *Ship Breaker* (Little, Brown, \$17.99), awesome future dystopian environmental SF, and the awesome chase novel *I Am Number Four* by Pittacus Lore (Harper, \$17.99). This one's so cool that's it's gonna be a movie early next year. They're even re-issuing it in hardcover with a new movie tie-in dust jacket. Never heard of that before. And because kids' books are less expensive, Prancer's also getting *Among the Ghosts* by Amber Benson and Sina Grace (Aladdin, \$15.99) because Prancer is still a yearling at heart, plus there's ghosts. Enough said.

**Vixen** is rather particular about books. Vixen demands perfection, likes time-travel, and loves award-winning novels. Vixen will be receiving all of Connie Willis' time-traveling awesomeness: \$7.99 Bantam paperbacks *The Doomsday Book* and *To Say Nothing of the Dog*, and \$26 hardcover signed first editions of *Blackout* and *All Clear* (also Bantam). Ol' Vixen will be over the Moon for these.

**Comet** is all about Fantasy, so Comet's getting *The Way of Kings*, Book One of the Stormlight Archive, by Brandon Sanderson (Tor, \$27.99.), 1000 pages of sheer joy and the first of ten. Old Comet's set for a least a decade! Woo Hoo! Comet will also receive *Towers of Midnight*, the Thirteenth Book in the Wheel of Time by Robert Jordan and Brandon Sanderson (Tor, \$29.99) because Comet loves this series. And lastly, a couple set in what might be our distant future: *The Desert Spear* by Peter V. Brett (Ballantine, \$26.00) because Comet devoured *The Warded Man* (Ballantine, \$7.99) last year, and *Antiphon* by Ken Scholes (Tor \$25.99) because Comet loved the first two in that series, *Lamentation* and *Canticle* Tor, \$7.99 each). Don't get Comet started on whether or not either of these series is really fantasy.

**Cupid**. Cupid is a bit ... odd. You'd think Cupid would love books about love, but no. Hard SF is the name of the game for Cupid so Cupid's getting *Directive 51* by John Barnes (Ace, \$25.95, signed) because a good end-of-the-world novel is always appreciated, and *Zero History* by William Gibson (Putnam, \$26.95) because ol' Gibson spins an awesome tale with many viewpoints which always seem to come together in the explosive end.

**Donner** has to have novels with zombies in them. Just eats them up. Weird. Probably has something to do with a certain party back in 1846. For Donner we have Nightshade's two zombie anthologies: *The Living Dead* (\$15.95) and *The Living Dead 2* (\$15.99). Perhaps these short stories will make ol' Donner hungry for novels by the many authors included in these culinary gems. May add another zombie book here, as there are plenty to choose from ... Mysterious Galaxy's got a zombie section!

**Blitzen**. Blitzen's a bit like Donner in regards to a particular love of the macabre. Blitzen has a tendency to drink a bit when not on the job, so a good dark story is the order of the day to keep this reindeer on the wagon ... er ... sleigh. For Blitzen we have *Sandman Slim* (Eos paperback, \$7.99) and its sequel, *Kill the Dead* (Eos, \$22.99) because Blitzen loves the Patricia Briggs and Jim Butcher and Simon R. Green novels and these are like those ... and then some. These will keep Blitzen a little less blitzed and a lot more zen.

**Rudolf**. Rudolf is impossible, one big pain in my cute little elf bottom. Rudolf wants everything or nothing depending on when the question is asked. For Rudolf we have the world famous Mysterious Galaxy Gift Certificate, the perfect gift for the impossible reindeer in your life. Since Rudolf hardly ever sleeps (that obnoxious nose!), I think I'll put that gift certificate in an EAT. SLEEP. READ. mug. Hot chocolate, baby. Yum!

And as long as I'm here at the Galaxy, I might as well get something for the Big Guy as well. As you can imagine, Santa's tastes are as broad and eclectic as he is. The Kringle Library is bigger than the Library of Congress, but somehow he

## Bunny's Bag Bursting with Bounty

We know that everyone expects a gift of a unique and special book from our loyal Mysterious Galaxy customers; however, this year we are giving you the opportunity to accessorize your gift with fun additions. We are trying to make our store your "one stop shop" for everyone on your list.

\* We have been busy little elves searching the market place for unusual items that our book lover friends might find exciting. So far we have ordered some addictive games such as *crossword cubes*. This is a crossword dice game that can be played alone or as a group and is guaranteed to amuse. Look for other games such as *Farkle*, *Canasta*, and *Pride and Prejudice Trivia* to name a few.

\* Santa's elves have also discovered some quirky booklovers t-shirts. How does a "Will work for Books", "The Book was Better" or "Read Irresponsibly" t-shirt sound? Definitely a great gift to give along with that special book.

\* The expansion of our card department will include Christmas cards as well, eliminating any need to shop elsewhere. You simply must send a "Book Lovers Christmas" card this year. We are also carrying a wider selection of greeting cards so look to us for birthday and other special occasion cards.

\* For the music lovers among us, check out our selection of CDs hand picked by National Public Radio arriving in our store after November 11th.

\* We are expanding our bookmarks, journals and notebooks as well - great for work gift exchanges or stocking stuffers.

\* Do not forget our EAT, SLEEP, READ department which boasts such items as t-shirts, mugs, key chains, magnets and license plate frames.

Stop by Mysterious Galaxy often during the holiday season and we promise to help you check items off that shopping list, with time to spare to catch up on your reading!

## Holiday Catalogs are in the Store

The 2010 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!

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

continued on the back page

## Holidays 2010 Events and Authors

### Jeri Westerson

Signs *The Demon's Parchment*  
Saturday, November 13, 2:00 PM

Take a walk down the dark streets of fourteenth century London on Saturday, November 13, at 2:00 PM, with *The Demon's Parchment*, the new Crispin Guest medieval *noir* novel by Jeri Westerson. The disgraced knight turned "Tracker," assisted by his young orphaned apprentice, is asked to track missing documents that may hold the key to a series of dreadful murders of young boys – documents sought by the court's Jewish physician, and rumored to be capable of summoning demons.

### Miles Corwin

Signs *Kind of Blue*  
Sunday, November 14, 2:00 PM

Former *Los Angeles Times* crime reporter Miles Corwin visits MG on Sunday, November 14, at 2:00 PM with his debut crime novel, *Kind of Blue*. Detective Ash Levine left the LAPD after a witness in one of his homicide cases was murdered; now he has been brought back on the force to lend his investigative skills to finding the killer of a legendary ex-cop ... and maybe redemption. Miles has also written two non-fiction books about LAPD homicide detectives, in addition to his crime reporting.

### A Night of Mystery

Andrew Kaufman signs *While the Savage Sleeps*  
Jenny Hilborne signs *Madness and Murder*  
Friday, November 19, 7:00 PM

Join us for a Night of Mystery on Friday, November 19, at 7:00 PM. Both local debut mystery authors' novels were originally available as electronic publications, before their print incarnations. Andrew Kaufman's writing background includes an Emmy nomination for his time at KFMB-TV here in San Diego, and work at KCAL in Los Angeles. In *While the Savage Sleeps*, the first in his series of forensic paranormal mysteries, two strangers are drawn to the town of Faith, New Mexico, and a dark secret hiding beneath the town's surface. Drew may offer attendees a preview of *Savage Soul*, the next in the series.

Jenny Hilborne was born in England, lives in Southern California, and set her first mystery, *Madness and Murder*, in San Francisco. The idea for the novel came from her experiences working in the competitive world of real estate. A woman who is the target of a determined predator, and a police officer who is willing to risk the safety of innocents to get his target are on a collision path. Jenny's road to publication is a Southern CA Writers Conference success story.



### America Unchained

Saturday, November 20, all day

Sometimes seemingly small acts have an impact bigger than you ever imagined. Take family spending. You may think you're just fulfilling your family's wants or needs when you shop or dine out. *Think again.*

The choice of *where* you spend your money makes a big difference to your community. Spending your money with local independent businesses – like Mysterious Galaxy, Game Empire, or Comickaze – puts it to work directly helping your local economy and creating jobs — just one way your community benefits from its independent businesses.

Stop by Mysterious Galaxy and make a purchase on November 20, and receive a special thank you gift from us as you maximize the impact of your dollars, make a statement about the importance of local independent businesses to the local economy, and inject *potentially millions more* into it through joining other residents in shopping, dining out and doing business with local independent businesses.



### MaryJanice Davidson

Signs *Me, Myself and Why?* and *Undead and Unfinished*  
Sunday, November 21, 2:00 PM

MaryJanice Davidson fans rejoice! Whether you are a Betsy fan, a Mermaid fan, a Wyndham Werewolf fan, a Royal series fan, or a Jennifer Scales fan, we hope you will join the fun on Sunday, November 21, at 2:00 PM when we welcome the best-selling author. This summer's *Undead and Unfinished* found Betsy Taylor, queen of the vampire community, on a sojourn to Hell that includes time travel and meeting her past generations. This Fall's *Me, Myself and Why?* sets an FBI agent with multiple-personalities on the trail of a multiple murderer. (See Terry's review at the bottom of this page.) This is a numbered event. Numbers for the signing line are available with purchase of *Undead and Unfinished* or *Me, Myself and Why?* from Mysterious Galaxy, on sale now.



### Sandra Brannan

Signs *In the Belly of Jonah*  
Sunday, November 28, 2:00 PM

If the cover of *In the Belly of Jonah* drew you to pick up a copy already, you probably noticed that Sandra Brannan included tickets to a drawing at her Sunday, November 28, event. Sandra will be giving away Mysterious Galaxy gift certificates and special t-shirts to some of the lucky attendees at the 2:00 PM event. Fans of Margaret Coel and Sandra West Prowell will want to take note of this debut, as Colorado amateur detective Liv Bergen finds herself assisting the FBI when a young woman's "artistically" mutilated body turns up on the limestone quarry she is working to reclaim.

## Rave Reviews Begin Here

### The Neighbors Are Watching by Debra Ginsberg

In the summer of 2007, the teenage daughter Joe Montana knew he had but never engaged with, turns up on his doorstep in San Diego's North County. Diana is heavily pregnant, and her mother, Yvonne, has turned her over to her father's care, in hopes he can more successfully communicate with her. Diana doesn't really connect with her father, and drives his fairly-recent wife, who knew nothing of Joe's parental status, to the comfort of alcohol. In a neighborhood filled with uneasy relationships and secrets, connections are forged and secrets are shared: but when the new mother disappears during the mandatory evacuation during the October fires, who among the neighbors knows where she may have gone, or why? Debra offers readers a contemporary *Peyton Place*, rife with local details. Join Debra at our Holiday Party on Saturday, December 11. Shaye Areheart, \$23.99. – MeH

### Angel Interrupted by Chaz McGee

I have been waiting for more than a year for the follow up to my favorite mystery series debut of last year, *Desolate Angel* and it was well worth the wait. Once again we are drawn into the world of Kevin Fahey, who is determined to be more evolved as an Angel than he ever was when he was alive and a cop who drank too much, was lousy at his job, and never knew how to cherish those he loved. He now spends his time watching the living world, particularly Maggie Gunn, a detective with whom he is hopelessly in love and with whom he has decided to partner with when she is on a case. This case involves the murder of a much beloved nurse and the abduction of a small boy. Fahey is able to do some detecting on his own and penetrate the living world in interesting and unusual ways, but it is his determination to have a better understanding of both his worlds that gives this series a boost to the top of my favorite list. Berkley Prime Crime pbo, \$7.99. – tlg

### Cryoburn by Lois McMaster Bujold

Interplanetary diplomat and Imperial Lord Auditor Miles Vorkoisgan is very smart and eternally ingenious, which always makes spending time with him great fun! Emperor Gregor has dispatched him mostly solo (or at least sans family) to look into the dealings of the cryo cartels on Kibou-daini, a planet where cryonics are the norm – as long as one has the financial, emotional and legal wherewithal. When a kidnapping gone awry ends up with Miles dazed and lost in the creepy Cryocombs, his rescuer is the adolescent son of an opposition leader, who has been involuntarily frozen for her efforts. Armsman Roic and the other staff at the embassy are drawn into the intrigue as well. A thoughtful action-packed look at the future technology of not-quite-death. Highly recommended. Signed copies available while supplies last. Baen, \$25.00. – MeH

### 61 Hours by Lee Child

I was lucky enough to be in the audience while author Lee Child was being interviewed at Bouchercon. He said that he wanted our hero, Jack Reacher, to be in snowy weather for this novel. When asked how he researched the settings of his novels, Lee remarked that he usually watched movies about the area he wanted to write about so he watched *Fargo* for this book. Then he realized that no one in their right mind would go to Fargo, North Dakota, during the winter so he switched the setting to South Dakota.

Jack Reacher has hitched a ride on a seniors' tour bus bound for Mount Rushmore when the bus crashes during an accident on an icy, snowy interstate. The passengers and Jack are forced to take refuge in the nearby town as they wait for a replacement bus. It soon becomes clear that something is not right in this town and that a woman's life is in danger as she challenges the town's law enforcement. The more the local law enforcement tries to hide it, the more Jack strives to figure out what is going on and soon realizes that this is not just a "local, small town" issue. The suspense will make you hold your breath as Jack hurries to unravel the secret before the woman is killed by a professional assassin who the reader knows is just hours away from the town.

*61 Hours* just came out in paperback (Dell, \$9.99), and Lee Child's new Jack Reacher novel, *Worth Dying For*, was just released (Delacorte, \$28.00). We have signed hardcover copies of both novels at the store. Lee said he didn't really intend for *61 Hours* to be a cliff hanger but it is, and you will want to buy both books to give as gifts so your gift recipient doesn't call you in the middle of the night in frustration. – LDB

### Me, Myself and Why? by MaryJanice Davidson

Only one author I know could pull off this premise: three "sisters," Cadence, Shiro, and Adrienne, all work for BUFFO (Bureau of False Flag Ops), a branch of the FBI consisting of a collection of misfits with psychological impairments who work together to solve crimes. And, of course, our heroines are not "normal" sisters. They are multiple personalities who together make a powerful team that combines their strengths to solve crimes. Mixed in is their psychiatrist who wants them to merge; a very sexy romantic interest who actually likes all "three" of them; and the usual cast of whacky characters to keep us laughing and turning the pages. The most amazing thing about this book is that Davidson actually pulls this off as she describes how the three of them work together to find a serial killer who (you guessed it?) kills victims three at a time. They call him (her?) the ThreeFer Killer.

It's fun. It's kooky. It's MaryJanice Davidson, true to her own fun self! St. Martin's Press, \$24.99. – tlg

### Fever of the Bone by Val McDermid

Criminal profiler Tony Hill and Det. Chief Inspector Carol Jordan are set on separate paths in *Fever of the Bone*, as Carol's new chief constable determines that Tony's help – and perhaps even the very existence of her dedicated unit – may have too high a cost. Tony take the time to deal with the sale of his father's house, and finds himself making unexpected emotional and professional connections in his new locale. Meanwhile, Carol and her team struggle with a clever and careful murderer, who contacts his young victims via a social network site. Another passionate and deeply disturbing thriller from the multiple-award winning author. Harper Original tpo, \$14.99. – MeH

### Afterlife: The Resurrection Chronicles by Merrie Destefano

While this near-future science fiction *noir* thriller is packaged to look like an urban fantasy, and should have cross-genre appeal to that audience, its roots are far more Philip K. Dick than Laurell K. Hamilton. One New Orleans family holds the secret to the technology that allows people to be resurrected – but only a finite number of times. Chaz

*Continued on page 3*

# Eat! Read! Party!

Saturday, December 11

A Holiday Banquet of Genre Authors at 6:00 PM

Mysterious Galaxy is pleased to offer visions of sugarplums and stocking stuffers at our **Eat! Read! Party! Holiday Event** on Saturday, December 11, starting at 6:00 PM. We will have six (and maybe more!!) authors whose works solve a variety of genre (and gift giving opportunity) needs, and some light holiday refreshments. We will also conclude our “Read! Celebrate! Give!” program for Monarch School (see the back page) with a grand drawing (with lots of winners) and lots of surprises.

## Suspense Author Debra Ginsberg and The Neighbors are Watching

One of the treats at our party will be a “stunt bundt,” baked by Debra Ginsberg in tribute to the treats brought to the Neighborhood Watch gatherings in her new suburban *noir* novel, *The Neighbors are Watching*. (See Maryelizabeth’s review on Page 2.) Debra’s previous suspense novel, *The Grift*, was a New York Times Notable Book for 2008 and Winner of the 2009 SCIBA T. Jefferson Parker Mystery Award.

## Contemporary Fantasy Author S.G. Browne and Fated

Scott Browne, who entertained readers with his zom/rom/com novel, *Breathers*, was *Fated* to be at the Holiday Party. Or maybe Destiny steered his path. *Fated* chronicles the adventures of Fabio, who in his role as Fate, has an adversarial relationship with Death and Destiny, is in a forbidden relationship with a mortal, and may be disrupting the entire cosmos. Scott interviews Fate, Destiny, and a couple of Deadly Sins on his website. Scott also wrote the introduction to *The Undead that Saved Christmas*.

## Cross-Genre Mystery Author Juliet Blackwell and If Walls Could Talk and Art Mystery Author Hailey Lind and Arsenic and Old Paint

*If Walls Could Talk*, they would probably tell us that Juliet Blackwell and Hailey Lind are the same person! When Julie / Juliet / Hailey is not writing her Haunted Home Renovation Mystery series, or her Art Lovers Mystery series (or her Witchcraft Mystery series), she runs her own mural/faux finish design studio, specializing in the aesthetic renovation of historic homes. All these passions come together in her work. In *If Walls Could Talk*, historic home renovator Mel Turner meets up with the ghost of a colleague who recently met his demise via power tools; the clue to his murder may be literally contained within the mansion she is restoring’s walls.

Hailey not only is the author of *Arsenic and Old Paint*, but also she is the cover artist. Former forger Annie Kincaid is drawn back into the world of art crime when the FBI Art Squad requests her help on an investigation. But when the case involves not just fraud and forgery, but her Uncle Anton is attacked, her involvement becomes much more personal.

## Superhero Science Fiction Author Gini Koch and Alien Tango

It’s more aliens, more intrigue, and more mayhem when Katherine “Kitty” Katt, Alien Super-Being Exterminator, introduced in this spring’s *Touched by an Alien*, returns. Anti-alien conspiracies, threats from outer space, and a couple of killer alligators are all in a day’s work, but internal alien conspiracies bring a new meaning to the terms chaos and confusion for the Alpha Centauri liaison as she engages in an *Alien Tango*. Arizona author Gini Koch offers something for the science fiction fan and the conspiracy theorist on your holiday list.

## Editor Lyle Perez-Tinics and The Undead That Saved Christmas

Temecula zombie editor, author and reviewer Lyle Perez-Tinics helps spread some undead holiday cheer. *The Undead That Saved Christmas* is the heart-chilling anthology with stories across the spectrum of holiday mythology. The perfect stocking stuffer that doesn’t include a box of shotgun shells or a macheté, *The Undead That Saved Christmas* includes stories, illustrations, poems, carols and comics. Proceeds from sales benefit the Hugs Foster Family Agency and will help them give their foster children gifts this holiday season.

## Gift Books Presentation with Random House Rep Wade Lucas and HarperCollins Rep Gabriel Barillas at 7:30 PM

Local Representatives (representatives get the publishers’ books to booksellers, so we can share them with you!) Wade Lucas (Random House) and Gabriel Barillas (HarperCollins) present some of the hottest books of Fall 2010 and Winter 2011, and a line-up of Gift Book Ideas! At 7:30 PM, Wade and Gabe will not only be sharing their passion for some recent and forthcoming titles, but also sharing a selection of gift book suggestions for your employees, clients and friends.

## Kami Garcia & Margaret Stohl

Sign *Beautiful Darkness*

Monday, December 13, 7:00 PM

Help us celebrate our final author event of 2011 and the sequel to last year’s wildly popular *Beautiful Creatures* on Monday, December 13, at 7:00 PM. Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl return readers to the mysterious Gothic southern town of Gatlin, and the family secrets that high school sweethearts Ethan Wate and Lena Duchannes unearthed. In *Beautiful Darkness*, Ethan and Lena face new challenges as the Casters Chronicles continue ... challenges they can face together, but forces are at work to tear them apart.

## Looking Ahead into 2011:

Our 2011 calendar begins with our New Years Day sale (See the back page for details) and includes events with the Southern CA Mystery Writers Association, T. Jefferson Parker, Patricia Briggs, Michael Koryta, and lots more!

## Rave Reviews (continue from page 2)

Dominique works as a Babysitter, assisting Newbies to life in their new incarnations, while his brother runs Fresh Start. Destefano deals with a number of practical and philosophical considerations: in a world of finite resources, one must choose between resurrection and reproduction, making children rare and treasured; what does resurrection by science mean to those who believe in karma?; and is there a chance for true immortality? Highly recommended. Eos pbo, \$7.99. — MeH

### Room by Emma Donoghue

This is one book you never thought you would read (and might not want to read at first glance). The subject is painful and the point of view is not one you can relate to easily. But once you pick this book up it is impossible to put down. Let me amend that. After you get accustomed to the voice and the uniqueness of the situation, you are too far into the story to let it go.

This is how it begins: Jack is celebrating his fifth birthday. You immediately notice that he speaks differently than a normal 5-year-old. He is both younger and older than his years and this is because the only world he has ever known is the Room he lives in. Everything he has and knows is a result of whatever Old Nick gives him, what his mother teaches him, and what he learns from the TV, where he is only allowed limited access. His mother has been captive and locked in this Room for seven years. She has accomplished an incredible feat with the world she has created for herself and her son. And that is where the story begins.

There are multiple parts to this story, but there will be no spoilers here. What I can say though, is that I thought it was a perfect book. It was perfect in pitch, the characters were true to their natures for the situations in which they found themselves, and it has been a long time since I have read an ending to a book that was so perfect. Little Brown & Company, \$24.99. — tlg

### The Radleys by Matt Haig

Fans of both Joss Whedon and *The Society of S* have a new vampire family to delight in — *The Radleys*. Peter and Helen, a doctor and a homemaker in their small English village, are dealing with the trials of being parents of teenagers: pale, rash-prone, quiet Rowan, who is bullied; and recently vegan and even paler Clara, whose best friend stirs Rowan’s deepest adolescent passions. They are also keeping a huge secret from the village and their offspring: they are vampires. When an obnoxious schoolmate tries to force himself on Clara, she reacts in an unexpectedly lethal fashion. Reconnecting with their blood addiction and Peter’s scoundrel of a brother stirs up the increasingly complex family dynamics. I hope to see more of Haig’s modern vampires. Free Press, \$25.00. — MeH

### I Shall Wear Midnight by Terry Pratchett

*I Shall Wear Midnight* is being promoted as the final adventure of Tiffany Aching and the Wee Free Men. This makes me very sad. It also makes me want everyone to share my wonderful experience of reading this series. When I first read about Tiffany and the Nac Mac Feegles in *The Wee Free Men*, I believe I may have bruised a rib from laughing so hard. So if you have never read this series, start there. In this latest and last (*sigh*) episode, Tiffany has grown into a talented 16 year old witch, caring for the people of the Chalk with the grace and humility of a potentially great witch. But before she decides to be all grown up and “Wear Midnight”, she is challenged by the “Cunning Man”, a very old disembodied evil that seeks ignorance and uses it—“Poison goes where poison’s welcome”—against witches. Tiffany needs to face this challenge, with the help of the Mac Feegles, and prove her worth. The other challenges Tiffany faces include rejection by that idiot boy Roland, a feud between the people of the Chalk and the Mac Feegles over an abused girl, and the Mac Feegles destroying the King’s Head pub and piecing it back together back-to-front. Crivens! Needless to say, I highly recommend the Tiffany Aching series. Begin with *The Wee Free Men*, \$6.99, or double the pleasure with the first two in one volume, *The Wee Free Men: The Beginning*, \$9.99.

Also, *Hat Full of Sky*, \$6.99 and *Wintersmith*, \$7.99. *I Shall Wear Midnight*, all Harper titles, \$16.99. — LNT

### Superman: Earth One by J. Michael Straczynski

So many have already reshaped the Superman epic, laying out the story from the beginning, that we know the story by heart. Some of them actually do a pretty good job like Mark Waid’s *Birthingright*, and some of them take great liberties like Mark Millar’s Russian version, *Red Son*. So what makes J. Michael Straczynski’s *Earth One* different? How about the fact that it’s written by Straczynski! (If the name sounds familiar, think Babylon 5 and Rising Stars. That was him.)

In this version, Clark Kent is headed to the big city, Metropolis, but has no idea why or what he’s going to do when he gets there. So like any super-powered youth, he goes out for the NFL, wins a national science award, becomes renowned architect/economist, etc. Let’s not forget a part-time journalist at the Daily Planet. None of which makes him happy. All through his life he has had to walk on eggshells, in constant fear of his own strength. It isn’t until a being named Tyrell and his robotic alien horde appear in the sky, announcing that the Earth is doomed, that Clark finds his place in the world. No holding back ... and when the dust settles Clark/Superman cracks a smile and finally has something to be proud of.

Few people could pull off a coming of age Superman story and have it hold up to the myth that we all know. Luckily Straczynski is one of those few. Shane Davis (Green Lantern) illustrates. DC Comics. \$19.99. — BEN

### The Gingerbread Cookie Murder by Joanne Fluke, Laura Levine, Leslie Meier

The three mysteries in this book star recurring characters from the authors’ books and cover a range of styles and topics. Hannah Swenson, Joanne Fluke’ character, works to solve the murder of a neighbor while preparing her cookie store for Christmas, delivering cookie orders, and feeding the town. As usual, amidst the camaraderie of good friends, the reader gets recipes. A fun read.

Jaine Austen, leading character in Laura Levine’s story, tries to solve the murder of an egotistical doctor/philanderer. While she works on the who-done-it, her mother spoils Prozac the cat and her father accidentally abuses an unpleasant neighbor while fighting with a maniacal mechanical tree. This is a laugh-out-loud tale.

Leslie Meier’s story takes a more serious turn. Lucy Stone is trying to have a fun-filled Christmas in spite of the unpleasant turn her life is taking. Her son and family are going on a cruise, her daughter plans to work during the holiday, and a young boy from the town has been kidnapped. Because she knows the boy and his parents, Lucy begins to dig into the disappearance. The more she digs, the more questions appear. With recipes at the end of the tale, the reader can

*Continued on the back page*

## Not on our Email Mailing List?

If you prefer to have your MG news delivered via email, make sure you have 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!*

## New Year, Great Savings!

Saturday, January 1, 2011!  
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

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 **Saturday, January 1, from 10 AM to 2 PM** only. Starting on "Black Friday," November 26, 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 26 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.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Read, Celebrate and Give

Because our August school supplies project for Monarch School was so popular and well received, we have decided to create a similar project for the Holidays. We thank all of you who graciously contributed backpacks and school supplies for the Monarch kids.

For those of you who don't know, Monarch is a partially privately funded school downtown whose student population consists entirely of homeless children. In fact, homelessness is a requirement to attend Monarch. Monarch School has been our non profit partner for many years.

The teachers at the school tell us that besides school supplies, which are always welcome, the children also need toiletries. We would also like to donate a few toys or electronic gadgets to brighten up the children's Holiday Season.

To participate, bring school supplies, gifts for children, and toiletries to Mysterious Galaxy from November 29 to December 11. All participants will be entered in a drawing for Mysterious Galaxy Gift Certificates, MG merchandise, and other goodies. Our drawing will take place at our Holiday Party on December 11.

We think this is a great opportunity to shop for the season and perform a kind deed for the less fortunate all at one time. Join all of our wonderful customers in our joint "Read, Celebrate and Give" project for 2010.



\* \* \* \* \*

## Clarion Writers Workshop 2011

Clarion is widely recognized as a premier training ground for aspiring writers of fantasy and science fiction short stories. The 2011 writers in residence are Nina Kiriki Hoffman, John Scalzi, Elizabeth Bear, David Anthony Durham, John Kessel and Kij Johnson. Each year 18 students, ranging in age from late teens to those in mid-career, are selected from applicants who have the potential for highly successful writing careers. Students are expected to write several new short stories during the six-week workshop, and to give and receive constructive criticism. Instructors and students reside together in UCSD campus apartments throughout the intensive six-week program. Application period: December 1 – March 1. Applicants must submit two short stories with their application. Workshop: June 26 – August 6, 2011. [clarion.ucsd.edu](http://clarion.ucsd.edu)

\* \* \* \* \*



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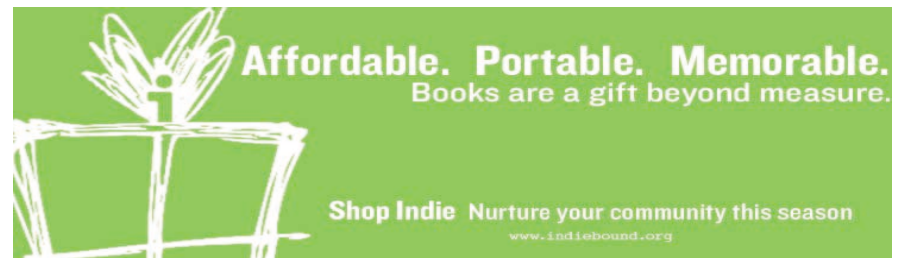
## More Rave Reviews

only hope Lucy will have a family-filled Christmas and find the person responsible for the kidnaping. Kensington Books, \$23.00  
– Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale

### The Fat Man: A Tale of North Pole Noir by Ken Harmon

Gumdrop Cole, a 1300 year old elf, has never been cheerful. The son of one of Snow White's sisters, his family life was pretty rough. Gumdrop ended up in Kringle Town, the North Pole, where Santa took the young runaway under his wing. After years of leading the Coal Patrol, Gumdrop has been fired and replaced. Convinced by an outsider that no children were bad, Santa has increased toy production to guarantee toys for all. Bitter at the turn in his life, Gumdrop decides to punish the parents of naughty children. After all, bad children have bad or indifferent parents. But when a father punished by Gumdrop turns up dead, the aging elf finds himself on the run. With town reporter Rosebud Jubilee chasing his story, and estranged from his best friend, Gumdrop has to clear his name -and do it alone. His quest for the actual murderer takes Gumdrop throughout the North Pole. On Misfit Isle, Gumdrop investigates the deformed toys. He travels through the Forest of Mistletoe (a nasty plant that can turn an elf into a monster dwarf who hungers for blood, discouraging the reader from kissing under said plant), to Pottersville, a city filled with the darker, more dangerous citizens of the North Pole. There Gumdrop uncovers a plot to kill Santa and a conspiracy to end Christmas. Now the lonely elf must find a killer, save Santa, and figure out who is masterminding this horrendous plot.

This story twists fairy tales and Christmas stories. The reader will never view Santa's reindeer, Tiny Tim, or unloved toys in the same way. It is fun, fast paced, and unusual. Highly recommended. Dutton, \$19.95.  
– Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale



## Signed Books Make Great Gifts!

Recent signed books and new arrivals through the holiday season include:

- \* Berry, Steve: *The Emperor's Tomb*. Ballantine, \$26.00.
- \* Child, Lee: *Worth Dying For*. Delacorte, \$28.00.
- \* Connelly, Michael: *The Reversal*. Little, Brown and Co., \$27.99.
- \* Cornwell, Patricia. *Post Mortuary*. Putnam, \$27.95.
- \* Donaldson, Stephen: *Against All Things Ending*. Putnam, \$29.95.
- \* Gibson, William: *Zero History*. Putnam, \$26.95.
- \* Gilman, Felix: *The Half-Made World*. Tor, \$25.99.
- \* Grisham, John: *The Confession*. Doubleday, \$28.95.
- \* Huso, Anthony: *The Last Page*. Tor, \$25.99.
- \* Lake, Jay: *The Sky that Wraps*. Subterranean, \$40.00.
- \* Lehane, Dennis: *Moonlight Mile*. Wm. Morrow, \$26.99.
- \* Moore, Graham: *The Sherlockian*. Twelve, \$24.99.
- \* Niven / Lerner: *Betrayer of Worlds*. Tor, \$25.99.  
(Signed by Niven, bookplate signed by Lerner)
- \* Wambaugh, Joseph: *Hollywood Hills*. Little, Brown and Co., \$26.99.

Contact the store now to purchase your copy! Supplies are limited! Check our website for new signed first edition updates.

## Special Discounting Opportunities

If you are wild about a book you read this year and plan to give it to all of your friends and family (or to your employees and vendors), please give us an opportunity to discuss a volume discount for you. Contact Bunny Hand for more information.

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missed *The Windup Girl* by Paolo Bacigalupi last year, so this year's he's getting the trade paperback edition (Nightshade, \$14.95). *The Windup Girl* is a gritty, future dystopian novel set in Thailand. It's won almost every award out there, Nebula and Campbell and Hugo, oh my! And because he likes a good history-mystery tome, he'll also be getting Ken Follett's *Fall of Giants* (Dutton, \$36.00). Book One of the Century Trilogy. And because he's got about 300 days of vacation coming, I think I'll get him all six books in the Lost Fleet series by Jack Campbell (Ace pbos, \$7.99 each). He does love his military SF.

*Patrick the elf ... out!*

## Michael the Readin' Reindeer

I'm Michael, the readin' reindeer. You may not have heard of me, for you see, I'm not one of the lucky "regulars" that the boss uses every year. Which is hardly fair! It's been 220 years since I graduated from the academy and I'm still on the back-up roster. What's a reindeer gotta do to get these old farts that are pulling the sleigh now to retire? And some of the gifts they recommend to the boss are whack! If Santa really wants help picking out good gifts for the younger generation, I'm the reindeer to go to, 'cause this holiday season I've got the scoop on all the good books for the younger kin on your shopping list! Even I, at the North Pole, can find everything I need for holiday shopping at Mysterious Galaxy...(they have a website)...(what a great invention these hoof-sized keyboards were...)

We begin with **ages 9 to 10**, for whom the Head Elf should be bringing the latest in an absurdly amusing series from Brandon Sanderson, *Alcatraz vs. The Shattered Lens* (Scholastic, \$17.99). Once again Alcatraz Smedry must save the day with nothing but his wit, bizarre family, and ability to break things. Bizarre, whacky action ensues, like a rollercoaster pulled by twenty-four reindeer careening through the forest in the dead of winter. And if the youngster on your list has not read this amazing series then be sure to grab the first for them, *Alcatraz vs. The Evil Librarians* (Scholastic pap, \$6.99).

For **11 to 12 year olds**, Rick Riordan's new book, and a follow-up to his best selling Olympian Series, *The Lost Hero*, (Hyperion, \$18.99) is sure to bring a smile! We return to Camp Half-Blood in *Hero*, where a new generation will inherit an epic quest, and their only chance for success is some rather familiar demi-gods. A great read for the whole family, Riordan not only makes classic Greek Mythology interesting, (he does take a few liberties here and there) but also provides fast-paced fun like the flurry of an out-of-control-snowstorm. Also for fans of *Percy Jackson* is the graphic novel adaptation of *The Lightning Thief*, (Hyperion, \$19.99, tpo, \$9.99)

For **13 to 14 year olds**, I recommend Scott Westerfeld's second book in his alternate history masterpiece *Behemoth* (Simon Pulse, \$18.99) be placed under your pine scented vegetation. Set in a World War I full of gargantuan creatures of man's own creation and advanced mechanical devices, as Europe spirals further into war, Deryn and Alek must overcome their differences if they are to have any chance of surviving. Not only do you get an amazing story of a strange but familiar world at war, you also get illustrations-a-plenty by Keith Thompson throughout the book, each one like a little stocking stuffer. This also holds true for the first in the series, *Leviathan* (Simon pap, \$9.99).

For **15 to 16 year olds**, I would remind the elves of *I Am Number Four* (HarperCollins, \$17.99) by Pittacus Lore. A great action adventure story that

mashes classic 1950's sci-fi with modern teen angst, (in a good way) for a rollickin' adventure not dissimilar to the gift-giving elf running through the stables with mistletoe. And get this, the movie comes out in February, just like a left over present that got lost under the sofa and you find two months later...

Err... not that that would ever happen... I mean the boss would never...

gotta go...

...and to all a good night.

## Ben D. Snowman

Hi, I'm Ben D. Snowman. So, the time has come to give out gifts again, and I am at a loss. Most people around here don't really talk to me. My therapist says I have a "sunny" disposition. I say seasonal depression. But what do you expect being a snowman? (which is a little derogatory. I prefer "Thermally Challenged.") No long walks on the beach for this guy.

Patrick and his little band of elves are off to Miami for vacation, and the reindeer are, of course, working through the night. It's just Mrs. Claus and me at home. I need something really good to keep me company. Being a cold-blooded person, as it were, I do all my shopping online. So I went to [mystgalaxy.com](http://mystgalaxy.com) and put books from every section on my wish-list.

From the **Mystery/Thriller** section, I picked out *Beat* by Stephen Jay Schwartz (Forge, \$24.99). In his first book *Boulevard*, Schwartz introduced me to Hayden Glass, a sex-addicted LAPD homicide cop investigating a string of murders involving his favorite prostitutes. Now he's in San Francisco in search of a missing woman, and finds himself in the middle of a massive sex slave organization, the Russian mafia, and dirty San Fran cops all around. Schwartz writes with the kind of grit you could previously only find in James Ellroy and Charles Bukowski.

From the **Science Fiction/Fantasy** section I acquired *The Left Hand of God* by Paul Hoffman (Dutton Books, \$25.95). Thomas Cale was born inside the fortress of the faithful Redeemers. In his short life, he has been tortured into submission, and trained in the Redeemer ways. After accidentally learning of the true nature of the Redeemers, Cale runs and learns that there is a whole world outside those walls. He soon finds himself in the Memphis, the capitol of sin and debauchery. Soon after, Cale is caught in the middle of a war between the faithful and the sinners.

I found *Pariah* by Bob Fingerma (Tor, \$14.99) in the **Horror** section. I usually don't get into zombie novels, mostly because I don't have to worry too much about zombies—they'd freeze if they tried to invade the North Pole, seeing that the weather reports say it we have a 100% chance of snow for the next 200 years. *Pariah*, on the other stick hand, is not like any zombie book I have ever read. It's a year after the horde invaded, and people are used to living in barricades, avoiding the plagued, and scavenging for food. The locked-up tenants find a young teenage girl, untouched by the zombies, and walking among the dead. Needless to say, it gives new hope and even more skepticism to the survivors.

Choosing among the **Graphic Novels** was a hard choice, but I finally landed on *Cowboy Ninja Viking* by A J Lieberman (Image Comics, \$17.99). What's more awesome than roaming the open trails, or battling until Valhalla comes, or fighting for family honor in ancient Japan? How about all three at once! It's kind of like Chuck Norris roundhouse kicked a tornado while working on a time machine with Nikola Tesla, so they could slap Arthur Conan Doyle in the face, for being so smug, and still manage to fit in a game of Indian Leg Wrestling with Mr. T. It's that epic. So this guy, Dr. Sebastian Ghislain

turned a bunch of patients with multiple personality disorder into deadly assassins, who all escaped. Except for one. The Cowboy Ninja Viking must now track down and eliminate a bunch of crazy assassins.

From the **Paranormal Romance** section I picked out *Steamed* by Katie Macalister (Signet Books, \$7.99). It about this computer tech named Jack Fletcher, who's sister messes up one of his experiments, which transports them to a whole new world. Jack wakes up to find aerocorps captain Octavia Pye standing over him. And the rest is a romance novel. It's the perfect blend of romance, science fiction, and the every growing in popularity category, steampunk.

And finally there's the **Young Reader's Section**. I nabbed *Beautiful Darkness* by Kami Garcia & Margaret Stohl (Little, Brown and Company, \$17.99). In the first one, *Beautiful Creatures*, Ethan Wate, living in a little town called Gatlin, meets a mysterious woman named Lena Duchannes. She reveals to Ethan that Gatlin is a cross point to another world, and was built to contain it. Also, her family has been cursed by Gatlin with supernatural powers. I wouldn't call it a curse to be a superhero, but that's just me. Now, Ethan and Lena face off with the strange history of Gatlin, while their own secrets test their relationship. It's not hard to imagine Garcia and Stohl giving *Twilight* a run for its money.

I think that covers it. Knowing that I have a healthy stocking of books coming warms my metaphorical heart ever so slightly. If I had a heart it would be made of coal, like my buttons, eyes and mouth. Merry Christmas to me and any other kindred, bibliophile spirits picking out signed first editions at Mysterious Galaxy Bookstore this winter.

*BD Snowman*

## Eb-Bun-ezer Scrooge

I do not want to be a Scrooge, however, I am in the mindset to speak of my ghosts of Christmas past, present and future.

My **past ghosts** are the two novels I have read. Unlike Ebenezer, I found these two gems to be a pleasant memory and a snow covered lane I would recommend strolling along. The first specter is *Think of a Number* by John Verdon (Random House, \$22.00). It is the story of a clever serial killer and perfect for the holidays since the first murder is committed in a snowstorm and suggests an ingenious way to hide your tracks.

The next ghost of my past is *Black Sun* by Graham Brown (Bantam pap, \$7.99). It is also a good tie in to the Holidays as it is based on the apocalyptic date December 21, 2012 when some believe the world will end. In the novel it did not happen, so perhaps we can enjoy a few more merry seasons.

I move on to the **ghosts of my present**, which are *Room* by Emma Donoghue (Little Brown and Company, \$24.99) and *Delivering Happiness* by Tony Hsieh (Business Plus, \$23.99). The first is the story of a five-year-old boy who has been raised by his loving mom in one room. I am still reading but I presume they are kidnap victims, the Christmas tie in being that the villain is "Old Nick".

The second is a Christmas story for sure if you have ever bought shoes online from Zappos.com. It is the success story of the founder of this company and his insistence on customer satisfaction. Visit the website and give yourself the gift of happiness!

My **future ghosts** are many and I hope to be sitting by the fire and my tree enjoying them very soon. I soon will be reading *The Good Sister* by Drusilla Campbell (Grand Central tpo, \$13.99), a novel highly recommended on IndieBound of three generations of women plagued by violence, secrecy and lies. Some can relate that to the holidays

as we spend perhaps too much time with family in close quarters.

Speaking of family visits, my next future read is *By Nightfall* by Michael Cunningham (Farrar, Straus and Giroux \$25.00). In this case Peter, a 40 year old married heterosexual, finds himself intrigued by his much younger brother-in-law who arrives for an extended visit.

My next two specters of the future are love stories to emphasize the true meaning of Christmas. *The True Memoirs of Little K* by Adrienne Sharp (Farrar, Straus and Giroux \$25.00) is the story of Mathilde Kschessinska, a star performer in the Russian Imperial Ballet before and during the Russian Revolution and the lover of Nicolas II.

The next love story is *Matched* by Ally Condie (Dutton Books \$25.00) in which Cassie chooses between perfection and passion, an age old dilemma.

Ghosts of Christmas aside, I move on to the New Year and some forthcoming novels that I received at SCBIA in Oakland. Now that was an early Christmas to be sure!

*Blind Your Ponies* by Stanley Gordon West (January 2011 from Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill (price?)) is the story of broken and dejected Sam Pickett who finds hope and a future in the very strange "spirit" of Willow Creek, Montana.

*Enough About Love* by Herve Le Tellier (February 2011 from Other Press, \$14.95 tpo) captures the euphoria of desire between husbands, wives and lovers. Perhaps not something on your list of New Years resolutions, however, it sounds like fun to me.

Lastly, *Exit the Actress* by Priya Parmar (February 2011 from Touchstone, \$16.00 tpo) is a rags to riches story set in seventeenth century England.

*Happy Holidays to all,  
may your ghosts be as  
pleasurable as mine!*

## Linda's Ho-Ho-Ho Holiday List

I really needed to pick fun books and gifts because, like a lot of you, I wanted cheerful inspiration during these economically challenging times. So be of good cheer and enjoy these bargain Holiday picks, if you are so inspired.

Maybe you want to chose a **funny mystery** to read: *Maybe This Time* by Jennifer Crusie gives you a hilarious bump-in-the-night mystery / romance. North's ex Andie is helping him take care of two orphans living in a creepy, isolated old house with the worst housekeeper since Mrs. Danvers. But with all the comings and goings in this revolving door of a house, Andie will need to be fast on her feet if she wants to save the kids, settle down the ghosts, dump the housekeeper, get rid of the extra guests, and get back with her true love. Love, romance, a jealous fiancée, delinquents, ghosts, an exorcist, a medium, a parapsychologist, an avenging ex-mother-in-law come together in this delightful romp. St Martin's, \$24.99.

**Do you like dogs?** Do you think they are funny beings? Then the pick of the litter for you is *Blonde Bombshell* by Tom Holt. The planet Ostar is run by dogs, and they have humans as pets. They are very unhappy with Dirt (aka Earth). It's a noisy, loud planet and deserves to be blown to smithereens. But when super-intelligent bomb Mark Two shows up to do the deed, he decides to send a probe in human form to further investigate this peculiar planet. *Blonde Bombshell* is a funny, snarky comedy of romance, unicorns, computer intelligence, werewolves (possibly), alien politics and the use of octopi as computer processors (best if slightly ripe after death before using). Orbit, \$13.99.

**Speaking of snarky**, *The Snark Handbook: Insult Edition: Comebacks, Taunts, Retorts and Effronteries* by Lawrence Dorfman has material to use in day-to-day life, including streamlined instructions on when and how to mock your peers; how to respond to your better half with (snark) humor, and the use of snarkism throughout history. Yeah, there was a previous edition of *The Snark Handbook*, but this is the one you want. Believe me, I know. Skyhorse Publishing, \$12.95.

## Mysterious Galaxy's Holiday Picks (continued from the front of this page)

**For the young at heart, *I Shall Wear Midnight*** by Terry Pratchett (read my review) features Tiffany Aching and those wee free blue men, the Nac Mac Feegles. Find out how the Mac Feegles "help" their Hag o' the Hills combat the "Cunning Man"; a very old disembodied evil plotting to destroy witches. Crivens! Harper, \$16.99.

**Everyone should read *It's a Book, because, for one thing, IT'S A BOOK!*** *It's a Book* by Lane Smith features a donkey (yep, he's a jackass) with a laptop and a monkey with a book, in an armchair face-off, talking about reading. Delightful illustrations combined with lessons to be learned about the merits of reading a book suits both kids and adults. Roaring Brook Press, \$12.99 and worth every penny.

**Geek alert!** Yep, I loved the Star Wars: Millennium Falcon: 3-D Owner's Guide, a 3-D cardboard construction of the Millennium Falcon published by Scholastic Press. Beginning with the greeting "Congratulations on your purchase of a Corellian Engineering Corporation YT-1300 light freighter!" turn the pages to open sections of the ship, revealing the internal workings with sidebar explanations of the Falcon's technology and quotes from Han (and Chewy). Don't get cocky, kid. *Star Wars: Millennium Falcon* is for all ages! Scholastic Press, \$21.99.

### MORE FUN STUFF:

I love the Skulls i-clips Magnetic Page Markers that we just stocked. They are white skulls on a black background I-clip laminated folding magnet and can be used as a secure bookmark, a fridge magnet, or a paper clip. Each i-clip is 3/4" wide x 1" high, folded. Sold in a package of 6 for \$3.95.

### MORE SKULL FUN:

- » Check out the Black Skull & Crossbones Designer Pen, a roller ball pen of solid brass construction with lacquer finish. White skulls on a black background. Cool skull box included. \$14.95.
- » The Keep Out! Skulls Beaded Bookmark is \$2.95.
- » The Skull & Crossbones Boxed Note Cards are a box containing 14 cards and 15 designer envelopes. Cards measure 3 1/2" x 5." Printed on high-quality card stock. Blank interiors. \$8.99.
- » And the latest addicting game here at the store: *Crossword Cubes*, the crossword dice game. Roll 13 dice to create words from lettered dice in a crossword style (think *Scrabble*). See Bunny's article about our new sidelines for more information.

### Terry's Gifts to Give and Receive

Never one to follow directions, there is very little humor in my suggestions ... and absolutely no holiday spirit. But, my recommendations are heartfelt and these are my favorite books from 2010.

### NEW DISCOVERIES

This year I was wowed by a few new authors. These series are just outstanding.

- » *Wanna Get Lucky?* by Deborah Coonts; Great character, fun story ... could be the start of a beautiful friendship! Forge, \$24.99
- » *Sprinkle with Murder* by Jean McKinlay; I have to admit that I loved it, cupcakes and all ... Add Angie's seven brothers, Mel's meddling Mother, and a couple of secret crushes, and you have some of the ingredients for a likable cast and a fun beginning for this series. Berkley pbo, \$6.99.
- » *Secondhand Spirits* and *A Cast-Off Coven* by Juliet Blackwell; A great addition to the paranormal mystery

genre, Lily Ivory is an interesting witch with a back story that is slow to reveal, leaving (Lily and) us more to discover about who she will become and what the future holds, personally and professionally. Both Signet pbos, \$6.99.

- » *The Singers Gun* by Emily St. John Mandel; A well-told story that unfolded in layers and ended on just the right note. Unbridled Books, \$24.95.

### MY OLD FAVORITES STILL ROCK!

Many of my favorite authors, their standalones, and their series continue to delight me. For me, these authors and their books are always a sure thing!

- » *The Lock Artist* by Steve Hamilton; A standout standalone from a great mystery author ... a heart-felt story with great twists and turns! Minotaur Books, \$24.99.
- » *Savages* by Don Winslow; This in-your-face, spare-no-one, adrenaline rush of a novel is as addictive as the drugs that Ben and Chon create and "dispense." This novel will have you shivering in your boots because you know that this is as much fact as it is fiction. Simon & Schuster, \$25.00.
- » *The Spellmans Strike Again* by Lisa Lutz; And Lisa does it again! A hilarious romp with San Francisco's most dysfunctional family of PIs. You must read it to believe it! Simon & Schuster, \$25.00.
- » *Doom with a View* by Victoria Laurie; Laurie continues to hold my interest as she tests her characters strengths and wits. For lovers of cozy mysteries with an interest in psychics and how they work, this series is a must read. Signet pbo, \$6.99.
- » *Dog Tags* by David Rosenfelt; I will never tire of this series which is for anyone who loves to laugh when they read, likes a good legal thriller, and loves dogs. Grand Central Publishing, \$24.99.

### MY 2010 LADIES, LUNCH, AND LITERACY PICKS

This was a great year for Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy. I found some fabulous titles that those of you who read outside of our genres must try. Most are signed first editions.

- » *The Irresistible Henry House* by Lisa Grunwald; This is a book you want to hug ... for all its quirkiness and the irresistible truth behind the story. Random House, \$25.00.
- » *I Thought You Were Dead*, A Love Story by Pete Nelson; A wonderful tale of love, redemption, and a very special dog. Algonquin Books, \$23.95.
- » *The Postmistress* by Sarah Blake; A glimpse back in time to America and Europe just as WWII is heating up. There are many scenes that will stay with you long after you turn the last page. Amy Einhorn Books, \$24.95.
- » *The Lonely Polygamist* by Brady Udall; A beautifully written account of a man with four wives and 17 children ... in all of its hilarity and bittersweet moments. W. W. Norton & Company, \$26.95.
- » *How to Read the Air* by By Dinaw Mengestu; This is a beautifully written portrait of the ordinary and extraordinary lives of one family and a glimpse at the immigrant experience in America. Riverhead, \$25.95.

### MY FAVORITE YOUNG ADULT READS

Some of my favorite titles from this past year can be found in our MG Junior section:

- » *the sky is everywhere* by Jandy Nelson; This YA debut hit all the right notes and dealt with grief over

the death of a loved one in an extremely sensitive and poignant way. Lennie comes of age dealing with guilt, loss, and love, all at the same time. Dial, \$17.99.

- » *The Miles Between* by Mary E. Pearson; a sequence of events takes on a life of its own and results in the ultimate road trip for four classmates. The end surprised even a veteran reader like me. Henry Holt and Co., \$16.99.
- » *DUFF* by Kody Keplinger; I was riveted to this well turned out debut YA entry for the high school set. This young writer is one to watch. Poppy, \$16.99.

### A MISH MOSH OF TREATS

As is apparent by the lists that precede this entry, I am partial to mystery, fantasy, YA fiction in any genre, and mainstream fiction. But sometimes I read out of the box. This year, these four titles got my attention:

- » *Stitches* by David Small; An amazing (and effective) way to tell a story of a dysfunctional family life ... via a ground-breaking graphic novel. W. W. Norton & Company, \$15.95.
- » *Delivering Happiness* by Tony Hsieh; As engrossing as a page-turning thriller and as wise as any book I have ever read on business and life. Business Plus, \$23.99.
- » *Maybe This Time* by Jennifer Cruise; an over-the-top, typical Cruise tale of romance, comedy, some suspense, and oh yeah, ghosts ... Lots of them. St. Martin's Press, \$24.99.
- » *My Name is Memory* by Ann Brashares; I loved everything about this multi-lifetime love story except for the fact that I found out it was the first book in a trilogy ... on the last page!! Riverhead, \$25.95.

### CATCHING ON ...

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Stieg Larsson; Okay, I get it. I'm a fan. I'm hooked!! Vintage, \$14.95.

### MY FAVORITE NEW SERIES OF 2010!!

And I am not alone, judging by the number of copies we have sold, in being a huge fan of Gail Carriger's new series (*Soulless*, *Changeless*, *Blameless*) that is part regency romance, part urban fantasy, and part 19th century comedy of manners. All from Orbit, \$7.99.

### MerryElizabeth's Hot Chocolate and a Warm Pet Suggestions

During the holidays Mysterious Galaxy's shelves turn into a Winter Wonderland of goodies to give! Huzzah! Okay, so it may be true year-round, but work with me here...

### HOW COOL ARE THESE?

Haynes – the famous Haynes publishers of workshop manuals – has produced the *Star Trek U.S.S. Enterprise Owners' Workshop Manual NX-01, NCC-1701, NCC-1701-A to NCC-1701-E*. Just the title should be enough to strike delight in the hearts of Trekkies everywhere. Includes sections on transporters and parallel universes. Gallery Books, \$27.00.

Epic fantasy readers and role-playing gamers will find a trove of gorgeous renditions of the sorts of beings and artifacts (especially edged weapons) they are likely to encounter in fantastic realms in *Fantasy: An Artist's Realm*, written and illustrated by Ben Boos. Signed copies available while supplies last. Candlewick, \$19.99.

*Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void* by Mary Roach. Mary asks astronauts, cosmonauts, and the scientists who work with them the important questions about body functions in space, and more! This is the kind of book that will inform countless conversations with family and friends, as you discover odd science facts. W.W. Norton & Co., \$25.95.

### CEPHALOPODS 'R' US

2010 was an excellent year for squids in speculative fiction, including: Squid worshippers and other strange beings in Kraken by China Miéville (Del Rey, \$26.00); Sheri Tepper's *The Waters Rising*, with its endangered land population, including a delightful talking horse (Eos, \$26.99); and on the lighter side, *Kid vs. Squid* by Greg Van Eekhout, a look at the ultimate best / worst seashore summer vacation ever (Bloomsbury, \$16.99).

### IN SHORT

- » While I love losing myself in other worlds at length, sometimes all I want is a story I can read before I find Jeff removing my glasses because I think I'm reading, but I'm really asleep...
- » Guaranteed to produce strange dreams – *What I Didn't See and Other Stories* by Karen Joy Fowler (Small Beer Press, \$24.00).
- » Exotic mysteries for a good cause – *Haiti Noir* ed. by Edwidge Danticat (Akashic Ltd. Hardcover, \$24.95) includes stories set before and after the January 2010 earthquake. A portion of proceeds goes to recovery efforts.
- » A who's who of contemporary speculative fiction – *The Best of Talebones* ed. by Patrick Swenson (Fairwood Press, \$18.99). You may not know every contributor to this volume yet ... but you will!

### POP CULTURE POT POURRI

Steampunk is hot! And I was predisposed to love Cherie Priest's *Dreadnought* (Tor tpo, \$14.99) even before I knew she drew on the Civil War nursing experiences of Louisa May Alcott as she continues her Clockwork Century stories.

Urban fantasy is hot! One of my favorite new series is Allyson James' mixed mythology series, set in a fictional version of the Northern Arizona desert, starting with *Stormwalker* and continuing with *Firewalker* (Berkley pbos, \$7.99).

*DC Superheroes: The Ultimate Pop-Up Book* by Matthew Reinhart. Okay, the individual pop-up figures are a little odd, but the team and cityscape pop-ups are a great way to immerse oneself in the DCU. Little, Brown and Co., \$29.99.

Fairy tale *noir* with a contemporary twist – I admit, I'm a bit late to the game – the ongoing comic just published its 100<sup>th</sup> issue – but I encourage all adult lovers of fairy tales and nursery rhymes to check out Bill Willingham's Fables collections, starting with *Legends in Exile* (Vertigo tpo, \$14.99).

*Whether you give and receive presents for one night, eight, twelve, or another number, we can help you find the right book for everyone on your list!*

Books are a Gift Beyond Measure

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