

THE PLOT THICKENS

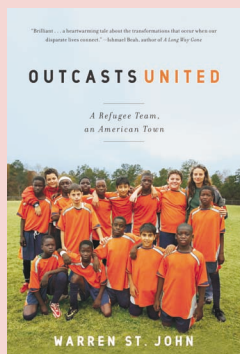
mysterious
galaxy
BOOKS OF MARTIANS, MURDER, MAGIC & MAYHEM

FROM YOUR PARTNERS IN CRIME AND IMAGINATION

More March 2010 ...

One Book, One San Diego!

Outcasts United by Warren St. John



San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders notes: "This is the fourth year of the One Book, One San Diego program. I support this initiative because it brings together our community and encourages residents to join others in the shared experience of reading the same book. The program encourages residents to participate in related events throughout the year, discuss the ideas raised by one book and examine how these ideas connect with our daily lives.

"*Outcasts United* is the story of a refugee soccer team, a remarkable woman coach and a small Southern town turned upside down by the process of refugee resettlement. In the 1990s, that town, Clarkston, Georgia, became a resettlement center for refugees and a modern-day Ellis Island for scores of families from war zones in Liberia, Congo, Sudan, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. The town also became home to Luma Mufleh, an American-educated Jordanian woman who founded a youth soccer team to help keep Clarkston's boys off the streets. These boys named themselves the 'Fugees' – short for refugees.

"*Outcasts United* follows a pivotal season in the life of the "Fugees," their families and their charismatic coach as they struggle to build new lives in a fading town overwhelmed by change. Theirs is a story about resilience in the face of extraordinary hardship, the power of one person to make a difference and the daunting challenge of creating community in a place where people seem to have so little in common."

On Sunday, April 18, at noon, our own Suzanne Dupree will lead a discussion of this fascinating look at the strength of community.

Mysterious Galaxy's involvement with One Book, One San Diego is one way we are working with the other Independent Booksellers in San Diego. Even if this year's title is not in your normal reading range, we do hope you will join us for an interesting discussion.

The Value of Community

Mysterious Galaxy is an independent genre bookstore that is passionate about creating and maintaining a community of readers, authors, and booksellers.

This is our mission statement. That's what we're here to do. And it's something that has expressed itself in different ways over the nearly 17 years we've been in business as booksellers.

First and foremost, we are genre booksellers because these are the kinds of books we are most passionate about (but not exclusively). And we work to foster a sense of community among authors and readers in our genres in and beyond San Diego, by providing signed first editions of these titles, by participating in genre conventions, and by hosting events in the store and off-site.

We try to make sure you are informed about the best books in our genres, through our reviews in print and electronic newsletters and other on-line presences. We appreciate your enthusiastic response to programs like our Signed First Mystery Program and our Signed First Edition Picks for speculative fiction in which we highlight new books that we think are especially noteworthy.

Since we are an independent bookstore we are enthusiastically supportive of independent retailing through organizations like IndieBound, working together with our neighboring independent businesses, and working with other independent booksellers in San Diego and Los Angeles. One current example is One Book, One San Diego which is being underwritten by the independent bookstores of San Diego. You can read more about this in the left sidebar on this page.

Another expression of this community is our enthusiasm for books outside our selected genres, including selected titles from the IndieNext Picks list and Terry's Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy program. Through Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy which is based in Los Angeles (where Terry now lives), we are introducing a group of enthusiastic readers to new (mostly debut) authors who they would not otherwise have an opportunity to meet. At the same time, Terry is introducing her community to non-profit literacy organizations that benefit from the proceeds of these events. More information about this program can be found in this newsletter (see the back page) and on our web site.

We also work in our community to support author and speaking events with book sales at local libraries, outside conferences, local businesses, and meetings. Because we want our community to continue to grow, we work with local schools and libraries to bring authors to younger readers, to foster their love of the written word.

And because we value independence in many forms, we make a point of highlighting titles from some small and independent presses. These titles are spotlighted on our web site, and via a periodic newsletter.

Because we are booksellers in the early 21st century, we recognize that while we still believe that paper and board books are the perfect delivery vehicle for the written word, we also make a variety of electronic books available to our customers. In March, you will hear more from us about ebooks in our electronic newsletter, *The Virtual Plot*.

We value our customers. And we hope that we provide value to you. We are always open to talking about ways we can better meet your needs as booksellers. Talk to us when you are in the store, call us, or find one of us at a conference. We are always available by email and appreciate your comments on our web site or Facebook fan page.

And in these difficult economic times, we want to remind you that our programming and services are supported by your purchases. We know that you have choices about where to spend your book budget, and we appreciate that you shop with us. Please let us know if we can support our community in even more ways.



Rave Reviews

A Local Habitation: An October Daye Novel by Seanan McGuire

San Francisco's half-fae private investigator Toby Daye, introduced in last year's *Rosemary and Rue*, is back and faced with a mysterious killer in a maze that's half faerie lands and half computer company cubicles. Toby's liege asks her to travel semi-covertly to the County of Tamed Lightning, a controversial fairy land in Fremont, where his niece, the Countess, has inexplicably become incommunicado. Not only must Toby investigate for Sylvester without arousing the ire of any of the neighboring faerie lands, but also she is asked to be responsible for a half-fae teenager, in training as a page. The Countess is also head of a company that makes faerie-compatible technology; unfortunately, her staff is getting picked off one by one, and their bodies are being left behind rather than collected by the traditional Night Haunts. *A Local Habitation* is a fun mix of fantasy *noir* and haunted house mystery, and I look forward to more of Toby's adventures. DAW pbo, \$7.99.

– MeH

continued on page 2

Volume 18 Number 4

Forthcoming Lists in their New Home

While listing forthcoming titles in our print newsletters is a long-standing tradition, readers know that due to space constraints, that listing has always appeared in abbreviated form, with a more complete list on our web site. In order to have the complete list accessible to the greatest number of readers, we are removing this feature from the print Plot. The full lists, with highlighted titles, are available in pdf format from the Forthcoming menu on our website. If you do not have access to our website, please ask any staff member for a printed copy of one of our posted months the next time you're in the store.

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. Current titles slated for discussion in the new year are:

- » *L.A. Outlaws* by T. Jefferson Parker on **Wednesday, March 24, at 7:00 PM.**
- » *Wolf's Gambit* by W.D. Gagliani on **Wednesday, May 5, at 7:00 PM.**
- » *Bone Dance* by Emma Bull on **Wednesday, May 26, at 7:00 PM.**
- » *Accidental Sorcerer* by K.E. Mills on **Wednesday, June 16, at 7:00 PM.**

Sign up for our special Book Group editions of *The Virtual Plot* by modifying your profile.

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

MORE GRAPHIC NOVELS AT MYSTERIOUS GALAXY

Ben and Michael, inspired by their love of graphic novels, have started to create a new section devoted to titles they love. They also want to start a book club. Interested? Please contact the store.

The Virtual Plot

*Don't miss any late
breaking news.
Sign up at
www.mystgalaxy.com*



*Mysterious
Galaxy is proud
to be an
independently
owned bookstore!*

Penny Warner, A Killer Party Author

Signs *How to Host a Killer Party*

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 PM

Thursday, March 11, at 7:00 PM, MG hosts a multiple-mystery author bash, which draws its Killer Party theme from the first book in a new series by award-winning mystery and how-to author Penny Warner, *How to Host a Killer Party*. San Francisco party planner Presley Parker, recently downsized from her teaching job, is trying to launch her event coordination business, Killer Parties. When she is offered the mayor's nuptials / fundraiser gig on Alcatraz, it seems like a great way to get her new business noticed. However, when the originally designated party planner is murdered and Presley is the main suspect, it's not the kind of attention she was seeking. Penny will bring along some party favors to share with attendees, and the book contains party planning tips at the beginning of each chapter.

Rhys Bowen, A Killer Party Author

Signs *The Last Illusion*

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 PM

Multiple-award winner Rhys Bowen will present *The Last Illusion*, the ninth Molly Murphy mystery, at the Killer Party with a flourish. The unconventional turn of the century private eye and her police officer fiancé are attending a magic show in the Bowery when a stage illusion takes a sudden and fatal turn. Molly is brought in to help prove the famous Harry Houdini's innocence in either sabotaging his stage rival's equipment, or having a hand in the magician's mysterious disappearance. Rhys also offers this teaser: the 10th in this series is titled *Bless the Bride*. Can it be that Molly is finally going to get married? Rhys's most recent Royal Spyness title, *Royal Flush*, has been nominated for an Agatha Award for the Best Novel. Rhys joins her fellow party authors on Thursday, March 11, at 7:00 PM.

Margaret Grace, A Killer Party Author

Signs *Mourning in Miniature*

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 PM

In a recent interview, Margaret Grace, AKA Camille Minichino, observed: "Imagining common objects as furnishings for a dollhouse is a different way of viewing the world," she said, "but so is observing the world from a scientific perspective." As readers of her earlier mysteries know, she has a doctorate in physics. One of her favorite topics is how miniatures and physics are both models of the world. Her amateur detective, Gerry Porter, shares her passion for making dollhouses, and solving murders, sometimes assisted by her granddaughter. Both Gerry and Maddie are on the case at a class reunion in *Mourning in Miniature*. Margaret will share tips and treats with readers at the event on Thursday, March 11, at 7:00 PM. Next up, in April: *Monster in Miniature*, with a Hallowe'en-themed haunted dollhouse.

Diana Orgain, A Killer Party Author

Signs *Motherhood is Murder*

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 PM

In Diana Orgain's Maternal Instincts Mystery Series, child development is juxtaposed with Kate Connolly's development as a sleuth. Kate debuted in *Bundle of Trouble*, in which she had to balance the needs of a six-week old baby with the need to investigate murders with family ties. In *Motherhood is Murder*, Kate and her husband are enjoying a rare adult outing on a cruise with other members of Kate's first-time-mom's club, when one of her fellow members falls victim to foul play. Diana will bring notebooks to share with attendees at the event, and discuss the traits that sleuthing, writing a novel, and new motherhood have in common on Thursday, March 11, at 7:00 PM.

Kenneth Wishnia

Signs *The Fifth Servant*

Friday, March 12, 7:00 PM

The Fifth Servant was selected by Indie Booksellers for the February 2010 Indie Notables: "The bloody body of a young girl is found in the shop of a Jewish butcher in medieval Prague. A Talmudic scholar works against a deadline to solve the murder and save his community from annihilation. *The Fifth Servant* is dense, full of philosophy, history, and the pulse of a community under siege." – Becky Milner, Vintage Books, Vancouver, WA. According to his bio, Kenneth Wishnia has lived and worked (and been chased by riot police) on three continents, including several years in Scotland, France and Ecuador. His previous crime fiction has been nominated for the Edgar and Anthony awards. Help MG welcome this author and discuss the fascinating history behind his work on Friday, March 12, at 7:00 PM.

Tucson Festival of Books

University of Arizona Campus

Saturday, March 13 and Sunday, March 14

Mysterious Galaxy is excited to be taking part in the second year of this successful and well-received event. The Tucson Festival of Books is sponsored by the Arizona Daily Star and hosted and organized by the University of Arizona; net proceeds will promote literacy in Southern Arizona through the Tucson Festival of Books Foundation. Participating authors include: J.A. Jance, Janis Ian, Suzanna Arruda, Jennifer Lee Carrell, Charles de Lint, Frank Beddor, Jeanne Stein, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Craig Johnson, C.J. Box, Sarah Monette, Elizabeth Bear, Robert Crais, Karen Joy Fowler, Jeffrey J. Mariotte, Michael McGarrity, Dennis McKiernan, Robert Crais, Jennie Shortridge, Timothy Zahn and many more! Mysterious Galaxy will have a variety of gifts with purchase available from our publishing partner, Penguin Group (USA). Our signing schedule will be posted to the Festival's page on our website.

Blake Charlton

Signs *Spellwright*

Sunday, March 14, 2:00 PM

On Sunday, March 14, at 2:00 PM, words are magical, and time is important (it's the start of Daylight Savings) when Blake Charlton signs and discusses his debut epic fantasy novel, *Spellwright*. (See Maryelizabeth's review on Page 3.) Blake offers some background to the creation of his world: "In writing *Spellwright*, one of my primary goals was to create an epic fantasy that added something original, in the modern sense, to the tradition of epic fantasy and language. In my attempt to do so I drew upon my personal experiences as a dyslexic and upon my studies of the molecular languages of DNA and proteins, first as an undergraduate then as a medical student. Using those experiences I asked myself, what the world would be like if you could peel written words off the page and make them physically real?"

David Rosenfelt

Signs *Down to the Wire*

Tuesday, March 16, 7:00 PM

Tuesday, March 16, at 7:00 PM, readers will get *Down to the Wire* with David Rosenfelt and his new standalone thriller. In addition to acclaim for his Andy Carpenter legal series, David has received starred reviews in Publishers Weekly for both his previous thriller, *Don't Tell a Soul*, and for *Down to the Wire*. Chris Turley, a reporter who lives in the shadow of his father's journalistic legacy, is thrust into the spotlight when a bomb goes off and he rescues victims, on the scene because he is waiting for an anonymous source. What seems like an opportunity to write the stories of his career quickly is twisted into a nightmare by the lethal actions of his "helper." Fans will be pleased to note that David's next Andy book, *Dog Tags*, will be on our shelves on August 25th.

Rave Reviews Continue (from the front page)

Bite Me by Christopher Moore

Report on *Continuing Vampiric Activity in San Francisco, Including Vampire Cats, Perky Minions and a Japanese Swordsman/Artist, Not to Mention a Misty Love Story and the Usual Suspects*

I've been reading Christopher Moore since he burst on the scene with *Practical Demon-Keeping* in 1992 and I showed up at a signing with a dozen copies of the book (and we discovered we were both originally from the same crappy small town in Ohio). A direct descendant of Mark Twain and Kurt Vonnegut (and before anyone gets their genealogical shorts in an uproar, I mean spiritual descendant), Moore is scary smart, funnier than a chihuahua attacking a balloon, and as good a storyteller as you're likely to encounter on a bookstore shelf. In *Bite Me*, a direct descendant of *Bloodsucking Fiends* and *You Suck*, Moore treats us to the further adventures of Jody, Tommy, Abby, Foo Dog, the Emperor of San Francisco and his trusty companions, Lazarus and Bummer, as well as the rest of the gang as they battle Chet, a giant vampire cat, and his litter of vampire kitties, who are sucking the blood from half the street people in San Francisco. Add to that mix a fearless swordsman and three powerful old vampires from out-of-town, and things just get more intense. What makes Moore's novels so compelling and always worth reading is not just that they are extremely funny and well-written (which they are), but that something subtle and serious is always happening just beneath the surface of his stories—nothing heavy handed, mind you (did I mention that he's scary smart?), but elements that quietly resonate in your mind long after you have finished reading. If you are already a fan, what fun awaits you here; if you have yet to encounter Christopher Moore, what fun awaits you here. William Morrow, \$23.99.

– Guest Reviewer Terry Hertzler

Apple Turnover Murder by Joanne Fluke

June in Lake Eden with its wedding showers, baby showers, and special events is always busy for Hannah Swensen and the group at the Cookie Jar. This June they have an assembly line making apple turnovers for a charity function and Hannah has been drafted to assist the Amazing Herb in his magic show – again. Mike is analyzing himself and his relationship with Hannah. Having returned from a reunion with college friends, Norman is distant and distracted. Bill has received a fantastic job offer and Andrea is upset because she may be forced to move.

Already stressed, Hannah didn't need Professor Bradford Ramsey's existence added to her problems. Hannah finds the professor dead. Murdered. Hannah adds detective to her list of June activities. With the help of family and friends, she will have to investigate Bradford's past; he was a man with many enemies.

This book is as delightful as the previous Hannah Swensen Mystery stories.

The reader enters into Lake Eden's parties, catches up on the latest gossip, and enjoys tasting new recipes. As always, the ending leaves the reader with questions that will have to be answered in the next installment. Kensington, \$24.00.

– Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale

The Sapphire Sirens by John Zakour

This time out our hero, Zachary Nixon Johnson, Last PI on Earth, finds himself on the island of Lantis, hot on the trail of a queen-killer. His life is so fun! Loads of travel, interesting people, world-saving ... oh, and lots of questions, questions, questions:

Will Zach find the killer without getting too stomped on?

Will Zach's holographic sidekick (don't tell him I said that) ever let Zach get a word in edgewise?

Will Zach start to enjoy his disguise as an Amazon warrior a little *too* much?

Stay tuned!

Another highly entertaining outing for our boy Zach. Ol' Zach can never catch a break.

Every year brings more super-powered females bent on making Zach's life just that more interesting. Good thing he has lots of help (and armored underwear).

And me, you ask? (Okay, you didn't ask, but I'll tell you anyway.) Why, I've been walking around all day with a little smile on my face. Don't know why, though. Perhaps it has something to do with all those blue (sapphire?) hairs I keep finding in my house, perhaps not. You'd think that such highly superior women (just ask them) would have better hair products. DAW pbo, \$7.99.

– PMH

A Night Too Dark: A Kate Shugak Novel by Dana Stabenow

If readers have learned anything in the course of reading Dana Stabenow's Alaska novels, it's that death is frequent, violent, and often unexpected in our 49th state. So when a gold miner's truck is discovered abandoned, and bits of a bear's dinner that were formerly a man are discovered near Niniltna, it's a logical conclusion that the remains belong to the truck's owner. State trooper Jim Chopin asks for Kate Shugak's help as a PI to follow-up on the situation, which seems straightforward – until the "dead man" turns up wandering in the wilderness, deepening the mystery of what happened, and who the deceased actually is. The new gold mine dominates the town and the interactions of Kate and Jim's neighbors, reflecting the real controversy in contemporary Alaska. Another satisfying sexy pageturner from Dana. Minotaur, \$24.99. Signed first editions available while supplies last.

– MeH

Altar of Eden by James Rollins

People are always asking Jim why he hasn't written a book about animals (seen' as how he used to be a veterinarian). Well, folks, here is the latest James Rollins book – a stand alone that will sweep you up and have you holding your breath. You want animals?? Well, here are animals you'd never want in your home or your backyard. Someone has been messin' with genes and strange things are popping out all over. A fishing trawler shipwrecks off the swamp in Louisiana. Lorna Polk is a Louisiana state veterinarian and she is asked to take a look at what was found in that trawler. Some of the animals are captured and Lorna is checking them out. She finds that not only are they not "built" the same as other animals, but also show a great deal more intelligence than she's ever seen before. Almost human-like. Case in point, there are no animals like these – not on this world. Follow Lorna and a U.S. Border Patrol Agent as they ruffle feathers and shed some skin to find out what this is all about. Be prepared to run. William Morrow & Company, \$27.99.

– DB

Heresy by S. J. Parris

A historical thriller set in Tudor England in 1583, *Heresy* introduces the erudite and excommunicated Giordano Bruno, an Italian Catholic priest on the run from the Inquisition. The book cover says: "Choose a side, Know your enemies, Stay alive." In the academic setting of Oxford, being ambivalent about religion or having an interest in philosophy or alchemy can be treasonous. It can also be deadly, and as soon as Fra Bruno arrives to debate Copernicus' theories (and on a secret mission for Queen Elizabeth's master spy, Sir Francis Walsingham) a series of grisly, macabre murders commences. The tension between doctrine and science, between the cloistered scholars and newly entitled and enriched students builds to a thrilling climax of good v. evil. The heretic Bruno has to solve the murders in order to save himself and

Lisa Lutz

Signs *The Spellmans Strike Again*

Thursday, March 18, 7:00 PM

Spellman fans, fear not. According to Lisa Lutz's web site, "while word has been spreading that *The Spellmans Strike Again* is the final installment of the Spellman series, America's favorite dysfunctional P.I. family will likely be back after a brief rest." Meanwhile, she has been hard at work on two new writing ventures, both of which are different from anything she's done before. Lisa strikes again at MG on Thursday, March 18, at 7:00 PM. In their fourth outing, Izzy and her assorted family members are engaged in their more than fair share of family drama, and multiple cases, some of which are even for paying clients. And Izzy has just been put in charge of the family agency, lucky girl! (See Terry's review on this page.)

Suzanne Arruda

Signs *Treasure of the Golden Cheetah*

Friday, March 19, 7:00 PM

Suzanne Arruda invites you to be an armchair traveler with her on Friday, March 19, at 7:00 PM. Suzanne will sign and discuss *Treasure of the Golden Cheetah*, the newest mystery in the Jade del Cameron Series, set in exotic East Africa in the 1920s, the days of Isak Dinesen, Beryl Markham, and Denys Finch-Hatton. In her new adventure, the photojournalist is on safari for a film shoot when murder strikes. Attendees will get to play "Who Wants to be Jade del Cameron" with Suzanne for spiffy prizes, including autographed hand knit memo-holding snakes, autographed keychains, a handcrafted-beaded bookmark, and (grand prize) an autographed book bag with the latest cover on it.

Robert Levinson

Signs *The Traitor in Us All*

Saturday, March 20, 2:00 PM

Jeffery Deaver says, "Robert Levinson's *The Traitor in Us All* offers up a delicious blend of the best in thriller writing: a keenly drawn hero, sharp plotting and dialogue, intelligent intrigue and a dash of the past—yesterday's Cold War harrowingly emerging in the present. A great read." Bob notes that the "turncoat entertainer" in the book is modeled on a historical figure (and probably someone Bob knew, since he knows everyone!). The art on the jacket cover is a detail from an oil painting by James Strombotne, an important American artist, whose work is in major museums and private collections worldwide. A limited number of reproductions of the cover, suitable for framing, signed by both artist and author, will be available to attendees at our event on Saturday, March 20, at 2:00 PM.

David Corbett

Signs *Do They Know I'm Running?*

Monday, March 22, 7:00 PM

In *Do They Know I'm Running?* eighteen-year-old Roque Montalvo must travel from California's East Bay to El Salvador to help Tio Faustino illegally reenter the U.S. Faustino has been arrested in an illegal-immigration sweep in Oakland and immediately deported. Faustino's son has made the arrangements for passage with MS-13, the Salvadoran multinational gang. But Roque soon learns that he must also shepherd a mysterious Arab as well as rescue Lupe, a beautiful, terrified, embittered, young Salvadoran woman, who is given to a psychotic MS-13 lieutenant en route. San Diego readers who are interested in crime and other border issues can meet David Corbett on Monday, March 22, at 7:00 PM. Fans should also note that David's short story "Dead by Christmas" appears in *Phoenix Noir*.



Tell your friends in Arizona to visit us at the Festival for a great weekend ...
March 13 and 14, 2010.



Rave, Rave, Rave ...

uncover the treasonous plot to save the Queen. The plot is surprisingly thrilling and the details historically accurate. The atmosphere of the cold, dank stone architecture and pedantic academics reminded me of *The Name of the Rose*. An excellent and intelligent mystery by Parris, a pseudonym for an English journalist. Doubleday, , \$24.95

— sd

The Spellmans Strike Again by Lisa Lutz

One of my favorite things about my winter vacation is that I get to read the latest installment by Lisa Lutz about a family of PIs that is so dysfunctional (and hilarious) that it will make any family you know of, including your own, look tame by comparison. I look forward to reading every zany word in a world that has its own set of rules and expectations. And the Spellmans are striking *everywhere* in this not-to-be-missed fourth installment.

Izzy is spying on her brother and her sister, because she is being blackmailed into doing so by her mother in the first case and because her sister always acts suspiciously in the second. Her parents' most recent activity is Lost Wednesdays and none of their children want to know what really goes on during these Wednesdays when they are banned from their home (and Izzy's office). Izzy is having issues with Ex-boyfriend #12 (so named even before she breaks up with him). Her friend Morty is still trying to convince his wife to let him come back to San Francisco and gives Izzy every sordid detail of his life in exile during their weekly phone calls. And meanwhile, she is really trying to become a functioning adult (finally) and a responsible caretaker of the family business.

I can't do justice to all of the shenanigans; you will just have to pick up a copy as soon as it arrives: on our shelves in March with a visit from Lisa too! Simon & Schuster, \$25.00

And the worst thing about my winter vacation is when I get to the last page of one of Lisa's books ... and know I have to wait an entire year, not just for vacation, but also to spend more time with the Spellman family.

— tlG

Spellwright by Blake Charlton

Imagine a world in which the pen is quite literally mightier than the sword – or at least words can indeed hurt you, more than sticks and stones. Blake Charlton has taken a classic wizarding / Ivy League school setting, and infused it with a special magic – the magic of words. In a world where words are magic and powerful, a dyslexic sorcerer is generally at best a low-level mage, and at worst a danger to himself and others. Nicodemus Weal is such a spellwright, working carefully to assist those who can manipulate magic without misspelling; once he was thought to be a figure of prophecy, but his disability seems to dispel that likelihood. However, he still finds himself emeshed in the midst of several battling factions when his mentor is accused of murder. A fascinating new magic system and a debut author to watch. Tor, \$24.99. Meet Blake on Sunday, March 14.

— MeH

Tracy Hickman

Signs *Dragonlance: Secret of the Dragon*

Saturday, March 27, 2:00 PM

Tracy Hickman, co-creator with Margaret Weis of The Dragonlance Saga, visits MG on Saturday, March 27, at 2:00 PM. Tracy will focus on *Dragonlance: Secret of the Dragon*, the second of six novels set in the World of Dragonships. Skylan Ivorson is a sea-raider of the Vindras and eventually becomes the Chief of Chiefs of all Vindras clans, an honor he truly feels he deserves as one who has been blessed by Skoval, the god of war. But sometimes a blessing is a curse in disguise, as he is caught in a conflict between old and new gods. MG will have bookplates signed by Margaret available for attendees at the event. Tracy will also offer fans a sneak peek at *Song of the Dragon*, a new fantasy work with co-author Laura Hickman, launching the Annals of Drakis this summer.

Jesse Kellerman

Signs *The Executor*

Thursday, April 1, 7:00 PM

Award-winning playwright, author and Scrabble player Jesse Kellerman visits MG on Thursday, April 1, at 7:00 PM. Jesse will be joined by his father, Jonathan Kellerman. Jesse's latest novel, *The Executor*, was described by Publishers Weekly as an "outstanding novel of psychological suspense." Grad student Joseph Geist, suspended from school for his lack of accomplishments, finds himself engaged as a "conversationalist." In exchange for room and board, he supplies an elderly woman with a spirited educated philosophical debate partner. But when the woman's nephew objects to the arrangement, Joseph finds himself entangled in difficulties, trying to determine the best course of action.

Jonathan Kellerman

Signs *Deception*

Thursday, April 1, 7:00 PM

Jonathan Kellerman published his first Alex Delaware novel, *When the Bough Breaks*, in 1985. Now in addition to *Deception*, which is the 25th in the series, Jonathan has also written a half-dozen non-Delaware novels, written and illustrated two books for children, and a nonfiction volume on childhood violence. Jonathan signs and discusses *Deception* at MG on Thursday, April 1, at 7:00 PM with his son, Jesse. Alex, described as Jonathan's "Walter Mitty fantasy" is called in by LAPD Lt. Milo Sturgis to provide his assistance on a murder case. A prestigious school, a murdered teacher who claimed to have video evidence of three other teachers engaged in sexual harassment, and multiple levels of secrets draw the detecting duo together.

From April into Summer:

This could be our best season yet.

Take note now!

- **Awesome April** : Patricia Briggs – April 7; Jim Butcher – April 9; Christopher Moore – April 10; *L.A. Noir 2* and *Orange County Noir* – April 11; Peter May – April 12; Michele Scott – April 12; John Barnes – April 13; Dan Wells – April 14; C.J. Box – April 15; Raymond E. Feist – April 16; D.P. Lyle – April 17; Naomi Hirahara – April 17; One Book, One San Diego Book Discussion – April 18; Larry Karp – April 22; Jacqueline Winspear – April 22; Jennifer Lee Carrell – April 23; The Los Angeles Times Festival of Books – April 24 & 25; Alafair Burke – April 26; Rachel Caine – April 27; Ed Lin – April 28
- **Then May**: San Diego County Library Page One Event with Vernor Vinge – May 1; Ken Kuhlken – May 2; P.J. Tracy – May 4; MG's 17th Birthday Bash with Janni Lee Simner, Beth Fantaskey, Charlaire Harris and Emily St. John Mandel – May 8; Robin Hobb – May 14; Thomas Perry – May 15; Dani & Eytan Kollin – May 16; Richelle Mead – May 19; Deborah Coonts – May 22; Christopher Farnsworth – May 23; Phoenix Comicon – Memorial Day Weekend
- **Summer Begins**: Lynn Flewelling – June 5; Supernatural Summer with Kim Harrison, Ellen Schreiber, Kimberly Derting, and Kelley Armstrong – June 6; Vicki Peterssen – June 11; Lisa Brackmann – June 12; Simon Wood – June 13; Juliet Blackwell – June 18; Sophie Littlefield – June 18; Jeffery Deaver – June 25; P.F. Chisolm – June 27 ... and more hot summer events and authors!

Requiem in Vienna by J. Sydney Jones

Requiem in Vienna is a procedural mystery that takes place in 1899, during Gustav Mahler's tenure as Court Opera Director in Vienna. Jones, an authority on Vienna, has written a series of excellent books, both nonfiction and fiction, and excels in historical thrillers. An interesting and diverse set of main characters, including lawyer Karl Werthen (newly married to ardent feminist, Berthe Meisner) and visiting criminologist, Hans Gross, become involved in solving a series of incidents surrounding Mahler that turn from accidents into murder. In the tradition of other *fin de siecle* Viennese stories like *The Fig Eater* and *The Little Book* that combine fictional and actual characters, this story includes a scheming Alma Schindler and Arnold Schoenberg. *Requiem in Vienna* highlights the social tension between Austrian aristocracy and Jewish intelligentsia, as well as the contemporary obsession with music, furniture, art and journalism. There's plenty of action in the opera house, as many of us fans know, and here we find stage accidents, murdered musicians, crushed singers, poisoned conductors, and artistic envy that provide enough motives to keep all three detectives frantically trying to save Mahler. This is a perfect book for a January winter day – stay by the fire, drink Viennese coffee, put on Mahler's 9th Symphony and enjoy a satisfying whodunit. St. Martin's Minotaur, \$24.99.

— sd

Cat's Claw: A Calliope Reaper-Jones Novel by Amber Benson

Having been sucked back into her family's mythic level drama in *Death's Daughter*, Callie would prefer to resume her mostly mortal life in New York City without supernatural complications. But an unexpected visitor with a disturbing message sends her back to her family home, where her father's assistant informs her she's been given an ultimatum by Cerebus, Guardian of Hades – help him with a problem, or return his daughter, Runt. Since Callie and her family have become very fond of Runt, Callie accepts the challenges. Along the way she meets denizens of a number of different world mythologies, including a number of Egyptian demi-gods, and gets a hint that her true love, the Devil's Protégé, may not be as irretrievably gone as she previously thought. Ace pbo, \$7.99. Signed first editions available while supplies last.

— MeH

YOUNG ADULT TITLES WE ALL LOVE

We continually include many reviews of young adult literature. We know you read and enjoy these titles as much as we do. So, pick one up ... and after you have enjoyed it, please pass them on to your children or a younger loved one.

Captivate by Carrie Jones

Despite being the half-pixie daughter of a pixie king father and a human mom, high school student Zara is less than enchanted with her recent discovery that magic is real, and pixies are mostly pretty evil. Having survived a conflict with her father in the Maine woods in

continued on page 4

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AT MYSTERIOUS GALAXY THIS MONTH:

Suzanne Arruda

Rhys Bowen

Blake Charlton

David Corbett

Margaret Grace

Tracy Hickman

Jesse Kellerman

Jonathan Kellerman

Robert Levinson

Lisa Lutz

Diana Orgain

David Rosenfelt

Penny Warner

Kenneth Wishnia

See inside for dates and times.

And More Rave Reviews ...

Need, Zara, her shape-changer boyfriend, and their two best friends remain wary, and are working on a collection of pixie encounter survival tips. However, it seems that in creating a solution to their previous problem, they have created a power void and now there's a new pixie king in town, determined to fill it. Astley, the new king, is also working to persuade Zara that she should relinquish her feelings for Nick, and become his queen. All this, and homework and high school athletics can keep a girl dangerously busy. Jones has a unique take on mythology and writes diverse believable characters – perfect for Holly Black and Melissa Marr fans. Bloomsbury, \$16.99. – *MeH*

The Ranger's Apprentice: Erak's Ransom by John Flanagan

Will always wanted to be a warrior, but his slight build and wiry frame means that his dream of glorious battle as a knight was not meant to be. He soon learns he is, however, destined for a greater path amongst the rangers. A secretive and mysterious group, the rangers guard the Kingdom of Araluen as well as act as the eyes and ears of the King.

In the seventh installment in the *Ranger's Apprentice Series*, when the leader of the Skandians is kidnapped, a group of rangers and warriors is sent to rescue him, but what awaits them is a desert land that holds far more than they bargained for. With a knack for fast paced adventure and enjoyable wit, Australian Author John Flanagan has sculpted one of the most enjoyable young adult fantasy series published today. Philonel, \$17.99. – *MS*

The Miles Between by Mary E. Pearson

Another winning YA entry by local fave, Mary Pearson, is different from *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* (one of my favorites from last year), but still hits all the right notes.

Destiny Faraday has always kept her distance from her classmates at every school she has ever attended, and there have been a large number of them. She makes a point to be kicked out of any school before she creates any long lasting relationships. And this trend was continuing until one day at Hedgebrook Academy when a sequence of events seems to take on a life of its own and she ends up on the ultimate road trip with three classmates. Where this led them surprised even a veteran reader like me ... and the ride was worth it. Buy this book for anyone in your life who is, or ever has been a teenager who thinks that the world has conspired against them. Henry Holt, \$16.99. – *tlg*

The Sixty-Eight Rooms by Marianne Malone illustrated by Greg Call

Best friends Jack and Ruthie are excited about a school outing to the Chicago Art Institute. After touring the African exhibit, the class is allowed to take a brief detour to the Children's Room. The Thorne Rooms are located in this section of the museum and the students get to look at the miniature rooms. Each room represents a time period and is accurate in all details. Befriending one of the guards, Jack and Ruthie get a peak into the corridor behind the miniatures. The two friends find a key in the corridor. Imagine their shock when the key, which does not affect Jack, shrinks Ruthie and she becomes five inches tall. Ruthie, enthralled with the rooms and the furnishings, wants desperately to return to the museum. The two children return to the museum and the Thorne Rooms when Ruthie's parents go out of town. Jack figures out he can shrink if Ruthie is

holding his hand and together they begin to tour the rooms. They find landscapes and people behind the rooms and are able to interact with them. Then Ruthie finds a miniature pencil in one of the rooms. A modern pencil. A cup from one room has been moved to another room and another century. Has someone found the key in the past? How many others have found the key over the years? The investigation of the rooms and their history is only part of the story. The guard befriended by the two children has a sad past. Jack and his mother may have to move because of financial problems. While the story and investigation surrounding the Thorne Rooms is engaging, the very real problems involving the present are glossed over and resolved in an almost magical manner. The book starts slow but builds up after the halfway point. Random House Young Readers \$16.99.

– *Guest Reviewer Sandra Hale*

The Agency: A Spy in the House by Y.S. Lee

In an author's note, Y.S. Lee perfectly sums up the sensibility of this Victorian mystery: "If a top secret women's detective agency existed in Victorian England, it left no evidence – just as well, since that would cast serious doubt on its competence." Convicted child thief Mary Quinn has been taken in by the staff at Miss Scrimshaw's Academy for Girls. After reaching her late teens, Mary is working as an instructor at the school, but dissatisfied with her position as a teacher. Then she discovers that a select number of the students who display an aptitude for the job are trained in another vocation – undercover work. Yee's novel is a beautiful illustration of how women and other minorities were invisible in many ways in the Victorian culture, perfectly positioning them to be detectives. When Mary is hired by a merchant suspected of smuggling as a companion to his daughter, her new skills are severely put to the test. Candlewick, \$16.99. – *MeH*

LADIES, LUNCH, AND LITERACY

Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy has its own webpage on our website. Check out our programming and what we are reading. This is our recommendation for March.

The Irresistible Henry House by Lisa Grunwald

This book delighted me ... from beginning to end. In 1946, on the campus of Wilton College in western Pennsylvania, a major in Home Economics was all the rage for women and the Practice House was one of the toughest requirements in the program. The Practice House was run by Martha Gaines, a widow with a dour temperament and the long-held belief that there is only one way to do things. This is especially true regarding her rules for raising the "practice babies" that entered the lives of these women during their turn in the Practice House. Henry House was one of these babies and this is his story.

The reading of *The Irresistible Henry House* is equal parts a study in human relationships and a blast to the past. Live through the 1950s and 60s with Henry as he grows up and then comes of age working for Disney Studios and experimenting with drugs and free love. This is one of those books that I didn't want to end. Every page was a charming, nostalgic, and poignant trip through our own histories. This is a story that can't possibly be true, but yet ...

Meet Lisa for lunch on Tuesday, March 23 in Manhattan Beach with *Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy*. In March from Random House, \$25.00. – *tlg*

Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy 2010

Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy is an off-site event program that invites select authors to lunch in a personalized setting. At the moment, this program is based in Manhattan Beach and is now in its third year.

Through LLL, we have built a community of readers who have had an opportunity to meet many debut authors before they become household words. (For example, last year, Kathryn Stockett spoke to Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy about her debut, *The Help* which has gone on to become a huge book group favorite and huge bestseller.)

Not only do participants have an opportunity to own a potentially collectible signed first edition but they have also supported a number of non-profit literacy-based organizations with part of the proceeds from each event. The beneficiaries have included WriteGirl, The Wonder of Reading, and School on Wheels. These organizations have also benefitted when LLL participants support them through volunteer efforts and additional monetary support.

Finally, most of the lunches are held at local, independently owned venues introducing us to wonderful owners, new restaurants and hotels, and a great lunch.

THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMMING

So far this year, Manhattan Beach's Ladies, Lunch, and Literacy program has brought two best selling authors to lunch. Beth Hoffman charmed us on February 12 with her debut *Saving CeeCee Honeycutt*. This book is already in its 5th printing and the word is spreading like wildfire. Later in February, LLL had a special event for Sarah Blake for her new novel *The Postmistress*. *The Postmistress* hit the New York Times Bestseller list the first week of its publication.

On Tuesday, March 23, Lisa Grunwald will have lunch at the locally, independently owned Tin Roof Bistro in Manhattan Beach with LLL. Terry went crazy for this book, which is both nostalgic and captivating. Her review is on this page.

Anyone is welcome to attend an LLL event. You do not need to be a lady to join us! If you cannot attend, signed first editions are often available just after the event. We still have a limited number of our 2010 LLL picks. But act quickly, they are selling fast!

Questions? Please email terry@mystgalaxy.com

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