

I LOVE A MYSTERY®

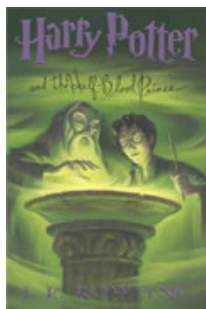
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5460 Martway, •Mission, KS 66205•(913) 432-2583

www.iloveamystery.com

Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince

July 16th, the release date for *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, is fast approaching!



It's come to our attention that we may be the only independent bookstore in the universe that hasn't celebrated past Harry Potter release dates with parties. Since everyone on our staff (except for Caitlin) is too old and tired to want to stay up for a Friday midnight party, we've decided to celebrate the launch of *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* by opening an hour early on Saturday, July 16th. Join us for pastries from 9:00 to 11:00, and maybe you can still be the first in your age group to get your copy of the new Harry Potter book.

And a Harry Potter Gift from Us...

For a limited time, I Love a Mystery will be offering a special Harry Potter gift card, produced by Scholastic Press and Book Sense, to commemorate the release of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. As of now, these gift cards will only be available in the Kansas City area at I Love A Mystery. If you pre-order *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince* (Scholastic, Inc., \$29.99) and pay for it by June 15th, we will give you a free \$5.00 Harry Potter gift card when you pick up your book. Pre-order two copies of the book, and you'll receive a free \$12.00 gift card. Give the book as a gift and then redeem the card at I Love a Mystery to get something for yourself (you can keep the card as a future Harry Potter collectible). Hurry—we'll only be accepting pre-orders for this special offer until our supply of Harry Potter cards is gone!

(While they last, you can also buy the cards like any other I Love a Mystery gift card. Great gift for grade-school graduation!)

SIGNED BOOK SALE

Help! Please! We're bursting at the seams. We've done a comprehensive, high level review of the situation, and after much study and discussion, we've determined that—are you ready?—we have too many books! Our solution, at least for now... **One-half off used signed books priced over \$15.** (Excludes collectible books at front desk.)
Sale prices good through June 30th.

Ladies Do Murder

Libby Fischer Hellmann & Patricia Sprinkle

A lively presentation by two award-winning mystery authors about their books, the act of murder, and why they do it (on the page). Sisters in Crime members Libby Fischer Hellmann and Patricia Sprinkle will discuss mysteries and much more. Books will be available for purchase and signing. Co-sponsored by Johnson County Library and **I LOVE A MYSTERY**. Tuesday, May 31st, 7:00 PM at Lackman Library, 15345 W. 87th St. Pkwy., Lenexa.

Notes and News

✓ **2005 Edgar® Winners:** *Best Novel: California Girl*, by T. Jefferson Parker; *Best First Novel By An American Author: Country of Origin*, by Don Lee; *Best Paperback Original: The Confession*, by Domenic Stansberry; *Best Critical/Biographical: The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Short Stories*, edited by Leslie S. Klinger; *The Simon & Schuster--Mary Higgins Clark Award: Grave Endings*, by Rochelle Krich

✓ **A tip for aspiring rock stars**, from David Hiltbrand, author of *Deader than Disco: A Jim McNamara Mystery* (HarperCollins, \$6.99): "Limit your tattoos to 75% of your skin surface. That way, if the recording career goes south, you still have some space left for commercial endorsements.



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

Please let us know how we can best meet yours.

Do you Know...

1. What bestselling author and former actress left the soap opera *Santa Barbara* when her character was crushed to death by a giant neon letter “C”?
2. What famous author is a former trampoline artist with Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus?
3. Robert B. Parker created the character of Sunny Randall at the request of what actress?
4. How many times James Patterson’s first book was rejected before finally being accepted by a publisher?
5. Which (presumably starving) author accepted a commission in the mid-70s to write an etiquette manual for a ring of call girls?

(Answers on page 5)

Reading Group News

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

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

Books scheduled for discussion: June 16th—*Tourist Season*, by Carl Hiaasen; July 21st—*In the Company of Liars*, by David Ellis (NOTE THE CHANGE IN SCHEDULE); August 18th--*Sleeping Dog*, by Dick Lochte.

- **Agatha Christie Reading Group**—usually meets on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:00. Call or ask at the store for location.

Coming this Fall--Mark your Calendar!

The DaVinci Cod: A Fishy Parody, by Don Brine

A hilarious send-up of the world's most read novel. First there was the bestselling *Bored of the Rings*, then came *Barry Trotter*, now we bring you a very fishy and laugh-out-loud funny parody, *The DaVinci Cod*. (Perennial, trade paperback original, \$9.95, on-sale 10/18/05).

Staff Picks

Karen's Staff Picks—

★ **Wildcat Wine**, by Claire Maturro (William Morrow, \$23.95). “It’s hard being Lillian Belle Rosemary Cleary.” Or so it seems to Lilly Cleary, a malpractice attorney with obsessive-compulsive disorder and a tendency to get dragged into murder cases. Lilly’s life is full of colorful characters, including her current client, Ghandi Singh, a psychic whose current specialty is counseling woman who think they’ve been abducted by aliens. Lilly is frantically preparing for the appeal in Gandhi’s malpractice case, when she is distracted by the arrival of her friend and former lover Farmer Dave, with a truckload of stolen muscadine wine and a paper bag stuffed with cash. Before you can say “orthorexia nervosa” (fear of eating anything except organic foods), Lilly is involved in several murder cases, including the death of one of her law partners and—my personal favorite—Dead Earl, owner of the stolen muscadine wine. Another very funny mystery from Claire Maturro (the first Lilly Cleary mystery was last year’s *Skinny Dipping*). SIGNED COPIES AVAILABLE

★ **The Innocent**, by Harlan Coben (Dutton Adult, \$26.95). Harlan Coben—the master of twists and turns—has done it again. **The Innocent** grabs you with the first line (“You never meant to kill him.”), and never lets go. Matt Hunter is a 20 year-old college student whose bright future is ruined when he accidentally kills another student while trying to break up a fight. No one knows better than Matt that a single decision can change a life forever, but nine years after being released from prison, he’s cautiously settled into a new life, married to the love of his life and with a baby on the way. Then, without warning, Matt’s life is turned upside down again when he receives a shocking video message from his beloved wife’s phone, showing her in a hotel room with a

strange man. Before he has time to catch his breath, things go from bad to worse for Matt when a mysterious man who’s been following him is murdered, and he becomes the easy suspect. Set aside some time for this one, because you won’t want to put it down. As a bonus, the book includes a short story about sports agent Myron Bolitar, Coben’s series character, making his first appearance in five years. SIGNED COPIES.

★ **Stuffed**, by Brian Wiprud (Dell, \$6.99). Don’t you get so tired of reading books about the illicit trade in bear gall bladders? Just kidding—I’m not tired of them, even though I have read two books this month with that theme. But I digress...if you’re up for a rambling, crazy, funny, irreverent, out-in-left-field mystery, do yourself a favor and read **Stuffed**, the sequel to Wiprud’s **Pipsqueak** (winner of the Lefty Award for Most Humorous Crime Novel). Wisecracking New York City taxidermy dealer Garth Carson is back, and once again up to his eyebrows in a sinister plot, this time involving a stuffed white crow in a bell jar. **May 31st release.**

★ **The Dead**, by Ingrid Black (St. Martin’s Minotaur, \$23.95). Five years ago, Ed Fagan, a Dublin serial killer known at the Night Hunter—acquitted in court, but generally assumed to be guilty-- disappeared while ex-FBI agent Saxon was writing a book about the case. When the killings start again and a Dublin newspaper receives a letter from someone claiming to be Fagan, the police ask Saxon for her help. I was initially put off by Saxon, the cranky former FBI agent who’s the main character in this debut mystery. I was hooked by the end of the first chapter, though, when Saxon says—in her first person narrative—

Elliott wouldn’t believe me when I said that Ed Fagan was dead—why should he?—but I didn’t have that luxury. Only the dead can haunt the quick, and I had

been haunted by Fagan from the last moment I saw him. Fagan was as dead as he’d ever be, and I knew it because I’d killed him myself five years ago. He wasn’t coming back.

The book ended up being an engrossing puzzle with—in my mind— a slightly disappointing ending.

★ **Sudden Death**, by David Rosenfelt (Mysterious Press, \$23.95). How’s this for an intriguing jacket blurb by bestselling author Janet Evanovich: “Absolute fun...Anyone who likes the Plum books will love this book.” It certainly got my attention, although it actually refers to one of Rosenfelt’s previous Andy Carpenter books, **Bury the Lead**. In this case, defense attorney Carpenter (who can afford to be choosy about his clients after inheriting \$22 million from his father) is persuaded to take on the case of an NFL football player accused of killing a teammate. Since his client was taken into custody after an armed police standoff at his home, where the body of the dead player was discovered in a closet, it looks like an open-and-shut-case. Carpenter’s instincts tell him that his client is innocent (otherwise he wouldn’t have taken the case), but he’s hard-pressed to come up with any hard facts to convince the jury.

So did **Sudden Death** live up to my Evanovich-heightened expectations? Pretty much. I really liked the book, and Andy Carpenter is my kind of hero: a wisecracking nice guy--funny, dog-loving, devoted to his friends and slightly insecure. The other main characters are colorful and equally likeable. I would not necessarily recommend **Sudden Death** for everyone who loves Evanovich, however. The book is very funny, but the humor is in the narrative; you won’t find the crazy situations and zany antics that characterize the adventures of Stephanie Plum and Lula. However, **Sudden Death** is sure to appeal to anyone who enjoys

Staff Picks (cont'd)

a fast, funny book with a warm heart. (Fans of Tim Cockey's Hitchcock Sewell series or Earl Emerson's Thomas Black series—both either temporarily or permanently interrupted—take note: you're going to like Andy Carpenter.)

★Karen's Quick Picks★

★ *In the Company of Liars*, by David Ellis (G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$24.95). Wow! Once or twice a year a book comes along that blows everyone on the staff away. *In the Company of Liars* is such a book. After you've read it, you'll want to discuss it with everyone you know, so plan to join us on July 21st, when our reading group will be discussing this intriguing book. (Read Linda's and Becci's staff picks for more detail on the plot.)

Becci's Staff Picks—

★ *The Fat Man's Daughter*, by Caroline Petit (Soho, \$24.00). It is not a secret that I like historical mysteries set in exotic locations and this book is no exception. It is set in Hong Kong in 1937. The Chinese and Japanese are at war, but the antique business which created much wealth in Hong Kong is still going strong. When Leah Kolbe's shady dealer father dies unexpectedly, leaving her penniless, she is offered the "opportunity" to travel to Manchuko to smuggle some valuables out of the Japanese held province. The trip is filled with mystery and wonderfully captures a sense of time and place.

★ *The Smoke Room*, by Earl Emerson (Ballantine, \$24.95). Earl Emerson tells a classic story; it all starts with a small cover-up which escalates into bigger and bigger crimes. In this case, narrator Jason

Gum is the rookie firefighter at his station. Jason has a bright future to look forward to until the day he is late to a fire. A fellow firefighter is all too eager to help Jason cover up his tardiness, but this of course comes with a price. Real-life firefighter Emerson has a clever, witty writing style which is very entertaining (reminiscent of his Thomas Black series). He gives us an unforgettable view into the smoky, perilous world of the firefighter.

★ *The Spice Box*, by Lou Jane Temple (Berkley, \$22.95) Lou Jane is back with a new food-themed series, which follows a spice box—and the cooks who use it—through history! The first book in the series, *The Spice Box*, is set in 1860 New York, and features an Irish immigrant, Bridgett Heaney.

Bridgett is hired as the cook for the family of a wealthy department store owner Isaac Gold. On her first day on the job, she discovers the body of Mr. Gold's youngest son stuffed in the pantry bread box. Bridgett is eager to prove her worth to the family, so she applies her street smarts to help solve the mystery behind the young man's death. The culinary taste of the period, the glimpses of upstairs/downstairs staff of a wealthy family and the depiction of the streets of early New York all contribute to making this a very enjoyable mystery. SIGNED COPIES

★Becci's Quick Picks★

★ *In the Company of Liars*, by David Ellis (Putnam, \$24.95). I found this book very intriguing. The reverse chronology (each chapter takes place on the day before the current chapter) held my attention to the very end. This is a book that keeps you thinking long after you turn the last page. Linda and I both read this book and we are still debating the ending. SIGNED COPIES.

★ *Suspicion of Rage*, by Barbara Parker (Dutton, \$24.95). When Gail Connor and her new husband, Anthony Quintana, travel to Cuba to visit Anthony's family, Anthony is contacted by the CIA to encourage his brother-in-law to defect to the US. A violent murder, terrorist plot, family ties and lost love all contribute this very literate thriller set in the bleak, decaying Cuba of today.

Linda's Staff Picks—

In the Company of Liars, by David Ellis (G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$24.95). And now for something completely different....this is it. Ellis starts this book at the end of the story and works his way backward in time to the beginning. A woman is dead, having apparently committed suicide while she was on trial for the murder of her lover. Each chapter goes back in time and the story gets more complicated: there's her college-age daughter, an ex-husband, the FBI and a Pakistani terrorist, among other characters. Lots of surprises, and once I knew what really happened I excitedly went back to the beginning of the book and read several chapters again. Now I can't wait to talk to someone else who's read it! SIGNED COPIES AVAILABLE.

★Linda's Quick Picks★

★ *Prince of Fire*, by Daniel Silva (G.P. Putnam's Sons, \$25.95). The story of Israeli spy Gabriel Allon continues. His cover is blown when the Palestinians set a trap, then he tries to prevent a terrorist attack in France from the middle of a no-win situation. This is Silva's personal comment on the problems in the Middle East.

Answers to Do You Know...

1. Harley Jane Kozak (author of *Dating Dead Men* and *Dating is Murder*); 2. Mickey Spillane; 3. Helen Hunt; 4. 31 times; 5. Bill Pronzini

Our Customers Recommend

Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder: A Hannah Swenson Mystery, by Joanne Fluke (Kensington, \$6.50). Occasionally I will randomly pick a “book one” of a series and give it a go, and this time it paid off. I really liked the main character, and appreciated the fact that she wasn’t perfect. It’s always nice to read about someone a little more “down to earth” and realistic, someone you could actually picture meeting. The plot was well-paced and interesting, and the first book got me interested enough to go out and buy further books in the series! And while I have not yet tried any of the recipes in the book, they do look like they would be delicious and fairly easy to make.

The plot: Hannah owns and operates a bakery in Minnesota called, cutely enough, “The Cookie Jar.” One early morning the town’s favorite milk delivery man, Ron, is found shot in the alley behind her shop. “Unofficially” teamed with her brother-in-law and town policeman, Bill, Hannah sets out to find the killer—and uncovers a lot of other secrets in this sleepy town. Meanwhile, her socialite mother is bound and determined to get her wed as soon as possible—to the local dentist, the sweet and gentle (and boring, Hannah thinks) Norman. But Bill’s new handsome partner, Mike, catches Hannah’s eye... And as long as she can keep him from knowing she’s doing police work, that relationship has some merit...—**Recommended by Michelle Sherry.**



Strawberry Shortcake Mystery: A Hannah Swenson Mystery, by Joanne Fluke (Kensington, \$6.50). Book two of the series, and it’s as good as the first—maybe even a little better. The character development is as good as before, and the mystery is a little more well-constructed. Hannah’s personal life and the relationships with those around her are portrayed well, giving you a real sense of the setting and personalities involved in this small, sleepy tourist town.

The plot: Hannah is a judge for a baking contest when a fellow judge (and the well-respected basketball coach at the local high school) is murdered. Suspicion is immediately cast upon his wife, who Hannah and Mike know was physically abused by her late husband. But Hannah is sure that she didn’t do it, and teamed with her sister, Andrea, they set out to clear their friend’s good name—and to catch the real killer, before the killer catches them! Meanwhile, Hannah’s beginning to think that good ‘ole Norman might not be so boring after all... And she still has to make sure that Mike doesn’t catch her in the act of investigating. **Recommended by Michelle Sherry.**



Blueberry Muffin Murder: A Hannah Swenson Mystery, by Joanne Fluke (Kensington, \$6.50). Book three of the series, and I liked it for a different reason than the first two. The mystery was less intriguing, but the relationships between the characters really got my attention. Hannah is now dating both Norman and Mike (though she is rather old-fashioned; it doesn’t go beyond kissing!) and can’t decide between them. It’s the classic conundrum—every woman wants the dashing, exciting, handsome hero type (Mike) on occasion, but at the end of the day, it really is nice to curl up with the comfortable, familiar, easy-going type that can just make you laugh (Norman). She finds Mike very physically attractive, but he really irritates her with his chauvinist attitude. And Norman just makes her feel good, and his pudgy balding appearance is starting to grow on her... So which will she go for, a life of adventure and sparks, or a comfortable, happy (though perhaps less exciting) life? It’s got me interested enough to go out and buy some more books in the series. Still haven’t tried the recipes, though!

The plot: National cooking super-star Connie McIntyre is coming to Lake Eden’s Winter Festival, but her fabulous cake is ruined in transit. So she borrows Hannah’s kitchen to bake another one, and has the bad manners to get murdered there! The police lock Hannah out of her kitchen and she sets off to find the killer so she can get things back to normal. There are no lack of suspects, as Connie was not well-liked, and Hannah and Andrea have to weed through all of them before they can uncover the real killer. But will even more town secrets, and a ghost, keep Hannah and her sister from uncovering who was behind this plot?—**Recommended by Michelle Sherry.**

Our Customers Recommend (cont'd)

Peach Cobbler Murder: A Hannah Swenson Mystery, by Joanne Fluke (Kensington, \$22.00). Peach Cobbler is number seven in the Hannah Swenson series featuring the part-time sleuth, full-time baker and owner of the Cookie Jar bakery, as well as her family, friends and citizens of Lake Eden, Minnesota. Hannah's business is "biting the dust" due to a new bakery that has opened across the street. Before long, one of the owners of the new bakery is found dead, surrounded by peach cobbler, and Hannah becomes one of the suspects—so of course she must set out to find out who murdered her rival in business, with the help of her sister.

This series is like a breath of fresh air due to language, plot, murder descriptions and romance. It is a book that one can recommend to the whole family from grandma to teenager. Each book includes recipes; so don't read ***Peach Cobbler Murder*** on an empty stomach! Warning, one may gain weight while reading this book! Joanne Fluke's books cannot be taken too seriously as you may have to stop reading and bake some cookies! These mysteries are fun and warm cozies—like eating some warm baked cookies just from mom's oven. If you are new reader, you may want to catch up by reading the first book, ***Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder***, and work your way back to ***Peach Cobbler Murder*** to get to know about the people that are in Hannah's life.

Joanne Fluke has a friendly website, www.murdershebaked.com, with corrections to some of her recipes in the last two books. The next book in the Hannah Swenson series is ***Cherry Cheese Cake Murder***—yum!—

Recommended by Nancy Langford



Murder List, by Julie Garwood (Ballantine, \$7.99). This book strikes a good balance. There's just enough violence to make you take the killer seriously, enough suspense to keep you on edge, and enough romance to create a fun diversion. Overall, it's an entertaining read that keeps you guessing. —***Recommended by Pam Sitton.***



In the Presence of the Enemy, by Elizabeth George (Bantam Books, \$7.99). I liked this book because of the unfolding of all the characters. The book starts with a kidnapping, but goes deep into political & media mores and ambition. The suspense is unrelenting and this is a book difficult to put down; at over 500 pages, plan to spend some time. There was not a wasted word in all 500 pages, however. The book is "unputdownable", not only for the whodunit, but for each character's reaction to events and relationships to each other. The totally satisfactory conclusion also meets the best standard of mystery writing.—***Recommended by Sandi Moore.***



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

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

Did you pick up this Newsletter at the Store?

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

WHAT OTHER BOOKSELLERS ARE READING:

Selected Book Sense Picks & Book Sense Notables

A SLIGHT TRICK OF THE MIND, by **Mitch Cullin** (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, \$23.95) "This well-written novel reveals Sherlock Holmes in a totally different light -- a man struggling with his past, his emotions, and his rapidly fading mental keenness. Awesome!" --**Linda Grana, Lafayette Book Store, Lafayette, CA**

COMPANY MAN, by **Joseph Finder** (St. Martin's, \$24.95) "For Nick Conover, a good 'company man,' who only wants what's best for his family and his company, life is just beginning to descend into a nightmare. I'm going to read lots more from Joseph Finder." --**Pam Headrick, A Thirsty Mind, Lakeway, TX**

THE THIRD SECRET: A Novel of Suspense, by **Steve Berry** (Ballantine, \$24.95) "This provocative thriller -- a compelling story of Vatican intrigue, Marian apparitions, and church secrets -- is nothing short of miraculous! Only a blessed few writers could take so much factual material and spin it into a suspenseful novel. This is the next great read that fans of *The Da Vinci Code* have been praying for." -
--**Joe Drabynak, Chester County Book & Music Company, West Chester, PA**

DARK HARBOR, by **David Hosp** (Warner, \$24.95) "This story is a taut, gripping mystery that grabs you from the opening and doesn't ease up. Hosp does a great job of conveying Boston and its wide variety of neighborhoods. This is a satisfying thriller in the finest tradition of the genre." --**Karen Keyte, Books Etc., Falmouth, ME**

THE HISTORIAN: A Novel, by **Elizabeth Kostova** (Little, Brown, \$25.95) "History and intrigue are the foundations of this dark and wonderful novel, a scary and beautiful story about a dark quest for Dracula. Taking the reader all over Europe, *The Historian* mixes history with fantasy and creates a chilling literary thriller." --**Luisa Smith, Book Passage, Corte Madera, CA**

THE PRACTICE OF DECEIT: A Novel, by **Elizabeth Benedict** (Houghton, \$23.95) "A smart, sexy, subtle, suburban thriller that pits a sensitive-guy psychologist against a scheming lawyer who, not coincidentally, happens to be his wife." --**Joyce Gray, Mitchell Books, Fort Wayne, IN**

Memorable First Lines...er, Paragraphs

"Unlike the rest of you, I cheerfully admit to my own utter selfishness. I am self-made, self-absorbed, self-serving, self-referential, even self-deprecating, in a charming sort of way. In short, I am all the selfs except selfless. Yet every so often I run across a force of nature that shakes my sublime self-centeredness to its very roots. Something that tears through the landscape like a tornado, leaving nothing but ruin and self-examination in its wake. Something like Bob." --**Falls the Shadow**, by William Lashner (William Morrow, \$24.95).

Discounts And Free Stuff

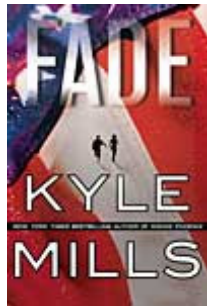
- \$ We've got some great black t-shirts to promote *Out of Range*, the new Joe Pickett mystery by C. J. Box (Putnam, \$24.95). Here's the deal: buy two copies of *Out of Range* and receive a free t-shirt, while supplies last. Introduce a friend to C. J. Box, and get a t-shirt for yourself! (Note: we still have signed copies of *Out of Range* available.)
- \$ Win a large basket of gardening goodies, including a \$20.00 Book Sense gift certificate (redeemable at I Love a Mystery®). Enter the "**Here Comes More Trouble!**" contest (sponsored by Heather Webber, author of *Trouble in Spades: A Nina Quinn Mystery*) at www.heatherwebber.com. Also, in honor of Gracie the Chihuahua, a donation will be made in the winner's name to the Humane Society. The contest runs from 4/26/05 to 8/31/05.
- \$ Here's your chance to help ensure I Love a Mystery's place in bookstore history: a new contest just for bookstores, from Julia Spencer-Fleming. The author of *In the Bleak Midwinter* (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$6.99) makes this offer: every bookstore owner or employee that sells more than 40 copies of her new book, *To Darkness and to Death: A Clare Fergusson/Russ Van Alstyne Mystery* (St. Martin's Minotaur, \$23.95), will get their name in the acknowledgements section of the next Millers Kill book. According to Julia, "This is a small way of repaying the independent booksellers who have truly launched my career as a writer. I hope the page is full!" Many of you will remember Julia Spencer-Fleming from her terrific visit to I Love a Mystery last year.

Signed Books on Hand

David Ellis, *In the Company of Liars* (Putnam, \$24.95)
Harlan Coben, *The Innocent* (Dutton Books, \$26.95)
Earlene Fowler, *Delectable Mountains* (Berkley, \$23.95)
William Lashner, *Falls the Shadow* (William Morrow, \$24.95)
Ian Pears, *The Portrait* (Riverhead Books, \$19.95)
C. J. Box, *Out of Range* (Putnam, \$24.95)
James Crumley, *The Right Madness* (Viking, \$24.95)
John Lawton, *Flesh Wounds* (Atlantic Monthly Press, \$23.95)
Beverle Graves Myers, *Painted Veil* (Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95)
Beverle Graves Myers, *Interrupted Aria* (Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95)
Jonathan King, *A Killing Night* (Dutton, \$23.95)

And more....

Coming in June from St. Martin's Press & Bloomsbury USA:



Fade, by Kyle Mills (St. Martin's Press, \$24.95).

A secret department of Homeland Security is recruiting agents to work undercover in the Middle East, and the director wants his second-in-command, Matt Egan, to bring aboard an old friend, Salam Al Fayed—better known as Fade.

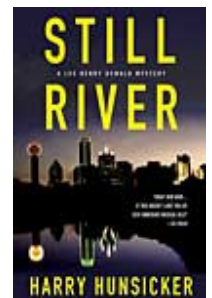
He seems perfect for the job: A New Yorker and ex-Navy Seal, he is the son of immigrants and he speaks perfect Arabic. Trouble is, he's "retired;" he got shot in the back in the line of duty, and the U.S. government refused to pay for the risky surgery that could have helped him. Now Fade lives the life of a hermit, walking around with a bullet lodged near his spine and liable to shift at any moment, and the last thing he wants to hear is that his country needs him.

Against Egan's wishes, the director forces the issue and tries none too subtly to "persuade" Fade to join the team. But Fade, angry and hopeless, is prepared to fight back at any cost; the ensuing confrontation is a bloody one. And the chase is on—will Matt be able to find his friend-turned-fugitive before Fade can take the ultimate revenge?

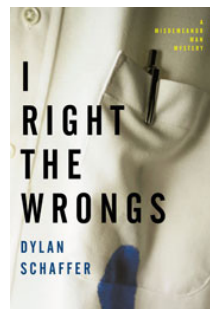
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Still River: A Lee Henry Oswald Mystery, by Harry Hunsicker (St. Martin's, \$23.95)

It's not easy being named Oswald, not in the city where Lee Harvey grabbed his fifteen minutes of infamy and choked it to death. For Lee Henry Oswald, a private investigator, Gulf War vet, and terminal loner, it's just one more burden to face as he trudges through the gritty underbelly of the concrete and glass metropolis that is Dallas in the new millennium. A simple assignment turns deadly when Oswald asks the right questions in the wrong places, and finds himself drawn into a shadowy world of smooth-talking drug lords and double-dealing real estate developers. In the end, he learns that blood is not always thicker than water, especially the muddy tributaries of the Trinity River, where he confronts the deadly results of his own decisions as he races to save the life of his partner. First in a series.



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I Right the Wrongs, Dylan Schaffer (Bloomsbury USA, \$23.95)

Despite his recent successes in the courtroom, Gordon Seegerman is intent on sticking to his low-end practice, dealing with misdemeanors for the Santa Rita, California, public defender's office. His priority is his Manilow cover band, which is on the verge of hitting it big. But when the cops bust the state's leading high school quarterback for dog-napping and possession of marijuana, and then the dog's owner's wife winds up dead, Gordon finds himself back in the wrong sort of spotlight, and back at work. And work has never meant so much trouble. The judge has a pathological disregard for the law. The city is on the verge of a violent eruption. And the client looks like he might be the next homicide victim. Forced into the most serious case of his life, Gordon discovers the truth behind a decades-old murder and learns a shocking lesson: he may not be the *Misdemeanor Man* after all. *Copyright Bloomsbury USA*



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**Mysteries to die for, selected monthly by IMBA,
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Who better to pick the best mystery books of the month than the people who run mystery bookstores?

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

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5, MAY, 2005

Trip Wire: A Cook County Mystery, by Charlotte Carter (Ballantine (Striver's Row) \$12.95). **Recommended by Tom & Enid Schantz, The Rue Morgue (Boulder, CO)**

Cassandra Lisle was once a meek, well-behaved black college student living with her well-connected great-uncle Woody and his wife Ivy in a nice apartment in Hyde Park. Then in 1968 Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were murdered, and violence erupted at the Democratic National Convention and in Cassandra's own life. Now Cass (Sandy to her new friends) is living in an interracial hippie commune in Chicago's North Side, all of them blissed out on love, sharing, rock music, anti-war politics, and recreational drugs.

But the good times quickly come to an end when two of her roommates are murdered, including Wilton, a young black man with whom Cass shares a special bond. Angry and afraid, Cass isn't entirely dismayed when Uncle Woody, who still loves her fiercely although he's mightily displeased with her new lifestyle, leans on a cop who owes him a favor to keep an eye on the investigation.

The politics and culture of the late sixties define the story and shape the characters of the young people who are at its heart, especially blunt, defiant, vulnerable Cass, who loses not only her dearest friend but most of her dreams when Wilton dies and she finds out who he truly was. Luckily, she also takes one more step toward finding out who she truly is.



The Poet's Funeral by John M. Daniel (Poisoned Pen Press, \$24.95). **Recommended by Maggie Mason, Looking for Books (San Diego, CA)** Guy Mallon may be diminutive in size, but he is a very smart man. He left a job in a bookstore in Northern California and packed up his belongings which included a vast poetry collection. His goal was Los Angeles, but fate stepped in when he had car trouble in Santa Barbara. The result was Guy's purchase of a used book store, the reason for the purchase might make a book scout have nightmares. In a history section was an inscribed copy of Jack Kerouac's first book. Guy expanded his business to include publishing poetry. Heidi Yamada was his first poet, and her skill is debated. All do seem to agree she was unique.

The book takes place at the ABA in Las Vegas in 1990. The American Bookseller Association's trade show is THE big event in the publishing industry. Guy has taken a booth to promote his line, and his partner in life and business, Carol, is there to help with the duties. Heidi is there to promote a new book, as are many other players in the book trade.

When Heidi is found dead at a private party, the police seem to want to treat it as an accident. Guy gets involved in the investigation, and also gets involved, against his and Carol's will, with a photographer who flaunts her Publisher's Weekly business card. Guy solves the murder, and gives a good insight into the world of publishing as seen by a small press owner.

My first ABA was in Las Vegas, so this was especially interesting to me. I was overwhelmed by the convention, and Daniel has captured the feel of the show. (He neglected to mention Clive Cussler having some of his vintage cars on display, but hey, Guy was working and probably missed it. I'm not a fan of poetry, but I still enjoyed this book. Daniel did make a disclaimer that he used the Rock Bottom Reminders before they were formed, but they fit in well with the flavor of the novel. Thanks to Poisoned Pen Press for discovering this gem.



In the Company of Liars, by David Ellis (Putnam, \$24.95 0399152). **Recommended by Carolyn Lane, Murder by the Book (Portland, OR)** Already in the fast lane of legal thrillers, Ellis' work is approaching the coveted "diamond lane," where every novel is a bestseller and every plot a winner. *Company of Liars* breaks ground for plotting, in that the first chapter presents the story's conclusion and each succeeding chapter unveils preceding action. It's also beautifully crafted to conceal unexpected clues, thus revising the reader's understanding of "what happened" many times over.

Three lines of events--at first seemingly disparate--become intertwined as the reader moves backward in time: mystery writer Allison Pagone is on trial for murdering her alleged lover, Sam Dillon, a lobbyist; Pagone's ex-husband is under scrutiny for allegedly influencing legislation to expedite the availability of a new drug; and a terrorist group is conducting a covert operation to kill millions of innocents.

I liked this book quite a lot, although I initially had questions about its final, breathtaking revelation. But when I made a remark to that effect in our newsletter, I immediately heard from author Ellis himself, who assured me I can trust all of his words, last to first.



The Inside Ring by Michael Lawson (Doubleday, \$24.95). **Recommended by JB Dickey, Seattle Mystery Bookshop (Seattle, WA)** The main character is a trouble-shooter for the Speaker of the House of Representatives. He's "loaned out" to the Director of Homeland Security after an attempt on the President leaves some questions about the Secret Service detail - the Inside Ring. Besides having a lively writing style ("Now the bedrooms were empty and the only thing in the upper story of DeMarco's home was a punching bag, a fifty pounder that hung black and lumpy from a ceiling rafter like a short, fat man who had hung himself."), the book has a terrifically cynical view of how the world really works. Debut thriller by a Seattle author.



Dead Run, by P. J. Tracy (Putnam, \$23.95). **Recommended by Karen Spengler, I Love a Mystery (Mission, KS):** This third book in the "Monkeewrench" series by mother-daughter writing team P.J. Tracy is short on the snappy dialogue that characterized the first two books, but chock full of suspense. The action focuses on the women of the Monkeewrench team: capable, tightly-wound Grace McBride and queen-sized fashion-plate, Annie Berlinsky, who are traveling to Green Bay with the Monkeewrench computerized detective software—and FBI agent Sharon Mueller—to help with a serial killer case. An unplanned side trip and some inconvenient car trouble lead the group to the town of Four Corners—a town which is eerily quiet and oddly deserted, even for rural Wisconsin. Before long, Grace, Annie and Sharon find themselves the prey in a deadly cat-and-mouse game.



And one that almost got away:

Deception, by Denise Mina (Little, Brown, \$13.95) **Recommended by Jill Hinckley, Murder by the Book (Portland, OR).** Susie Harriott gets a phone call one day, tells her husband Lachlan that she's going out for a pack of cigarettes, and isn't heard from again till the police call the next day to say she's been arrested for the murder of a serial killer whom she, as prison psychiatrist, had seen prior to his release. The evidence is damning, and she refuses to deny the suggestion that they had been lovers. Her husband is determined to prove her innocent in spite of herself, and, with this justification, begins to read the private diaries and papers Susie had kept hidden from him. The mystery is a corker, but it is Lachlan's personal evolution that ratchets up the suspense and produces the better of the two gasp-producing twists at the end. Mina writes electrifying prose, shot through with flashes of

dark humor. At a time in my life when I've become a bit of a jaded reader, a book like this reminds me why I love mysteries - and why mysteries from Scotland are increasingly elbowing their way to the vanguard of the field.



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 6, JUNE, 2005

A Confidential Source by Jan Brogan, Mysterious Press, \$24.95, ISBN 0892960078 **(Recommended by Jim Huang, The Mystery Company, Carmel, IN)**: What Jan Brogan does so well in **A Confidential Source** is show us how her protagonist, reporter Hallie Ahearn, screws up, while still making us believe in her.

Ahearn is new to Providence, Rhode Island, back in the newspaper business after a hiatus that followed a difficult experience at a Boston newspaper (chronicled in Brogan's first novel, **Final Copy** -- same protagonist, same personal and professional situation but, oddly enough, a different name). Ahearn is a witness to a murder, an apparent supermarket robbery gone wrong. Then she gets a promising tip connecting the murder victim, the store owner, to gambling and loan sharks. The tip comes from a source who asks to remain nameless -- and Ahearn has good reasons of her own for keeping the source confidential.

Despite conduct that stops short of flawless, we trust Ahearn. Brogan does a great job in stepping us through Ahearn's job, conducting interviews, checking facts and putting together stories. Every detail is both believable and fascinating, and when Ahearn's story blows up on her, it's hard to fault her -- not that her employer doesn't try, putting added pressure on her to bring in a story. When the signs point to shenanigans at the state lottery, Ahearn doggedly pursues leads into the worlds of gambling and Rhode Island politics.

A Confidential Source is convincing and compelling, an intelligent and thoughtful examination of how reporters get it wrong and how they get it right.



Confessions of a Teen Sleuth by Chelsea Cain, Bloomsbury USA, \$15.95, ISBN 1582345112 **(Recommended by Jean Utley, Book'em Mysteries, S. Pasadena, CA)**: For those of us who grew up with Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, Trixie Belden, Judy Bolton, and the rest of the

cadre of fictional teenage detectives, have I got a book for you! This is on top of my list of the best books of 2005 so far, and it'll take an unbelievable book to knock it off. I'm speaking of the incredible parody of Nancy Drew (she's 75 this year, you know) called **Confessions of a Teen Sleuth**, by Chelsea Cain. Here's the premise:

Nancy has left behind a manuscript of the true autobiography of her life. Her old college roommate, Carolyn Keene, wrote some books about Nancy's purported adventures, but they were not the truth. Nancy married Ned Nickerson but she was never really in love with him, since the love of her life was really Frank Hardy (you know, Joe's brother).

In this book, Nancy sets us straight about her titian locks, her roadster, her friends Bess and George. She updates us on her adventures since the books, including her World War II duties, her time in Haight Ashbury during the sixties, and her family and friends.

What I haven't told you is how absolutely hysterically funny this book reads. I laughed out loud at something in each chapter, and the characters behave exactly as they should. The writing style replicates the early stories so well, and the drawings are dead ringers for the old illustrations in the series books. I can tell you already that everyone who read our family set of Hardy Boys books is getting a copy of this book for Christmas. If I can wait that long.



The Right Madness by James Crumley, Viking, \$24.95, ISBN 0670034061 **(Recommended by Patrick Millikin, Poisoned Pen, Scottsdale, AZ)**: First introduced in the modern classic **The Last Good Kiss**, C.W. Sughrue takes the stage in **The Right Madness**, Crumley's most satisfying effort in years. After spending the last few years dodging the *contrabandistas* who'd nearly killed him in **Bordersnakes**, Sughrue is back in Missoula, enjoying the good life with his young wife, playing in the local 'old farts' softball league, taking the occasional missing kid case to pay the bills, sipping cocktails in the bars downtown. His domestic tranquility quickly slips away when he reluctantly agrees to help his close friend, psychiatrist Will MacKinderick, track down some stolen confidential case files. MacKinderick suspects that one of his patients is the culprit, and when they start dying in bizarre, violent ways, Sughrue begins to question his own sanity and rues the day he ever decided to take the job. Beautifully written, and with enough heart to make a grown man shed a tear into his pint glass, **The Right Madness** is yet another reminder to all wannabe hardboiled crime writers: this is how it's done. My only complaint about Crumley is that he doesn't write enough.



A Killing Night by Jonathon King, Dutton, \$23.95, ISBN 0525948651. (**Recommended by Sue Wilder, Murder on the Beach, Delray Beach, FL**): Max Freeman, ready to emerge from the isolation of his shack in the Everglades, responds to a call from his ex-girlfriend Detective Sherry Richards. She asks him to help her prove that an ex-cop is abusing and killing young women in South Florida. There's one big glitch: the suspect, Colin O'Shea saved Max's life when they were both cops in Philadelphia. Max is hesitant to take on the investigation. He questions O'Shea's morals, but does not want to see a potentially innocent man accused of these crimes. Max's loyalty is tested on many fronts: O'Shea as a brother-in-blue and the man who saved his life, Detective Richards' need for support in the honest pursuit of a murderer. While investigating O'Shea's questionable past in Philadelphia, Max is also forced to confront his own unresolved past history.

Although the book is not gritty, Max has several brushes with danger, making the story very suspenseful. The plot is well-structured, propelled by the characters' realistic actions. Mr. King's ability to use just enough words keeps the momentum at a high level without sacrificing any details. **A Killing Night** is the fourth book in the Max Freeman series. This is a series that seems to get better with each book, a big statement considering that the first book in the series, **Blue Edge of Midnight**, won the Edgar Award. Mr. King continues to develop Max Freeman's character, and it is safe to say that Max has become a permanent member of the famous private investigators' club.



Resurrection Road by Kathryn Wall, St. Martin's Minotaur, \$23.95, ISBN 0312337930 (**Recommended by Deb Andolino, Aliens & Alibis Books, Columbia, SC**): I've been a fan of Kathy Wall's ever since her first book – **In For A Penny** – so I am delighted to see her Bay Tanner series continuing. This is the fifth in the series.

The books are set in Hilton Head, South Carolina and the surrounding low country where Bay has lived all her life. Being well-known in a community can be either a curse or a blessing depending on what's happening. Bay finds both as she becomes the suspect in the disappearance of a young man, Carter Anderson. Bay's father, a retired lawyer, tries to assist in her quest to determine why she is being investigated. As the web of evidence points more and more to Bay's guilt, it becomes clear that the answers lie in her past.

This is the best of the series so far. Kathy's writing gets stronger with each book. This book -- and the entire series -- are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

