

The Book Rack Newsletter

It just makes sense to buy your books at The Book Rack!

Vol 7, #12
December 2014
3937 41st Ave Dr., Moline
309-797-1985
4764 Elmore Ave, Davenport
563-355-2310

Store Hours: 10:00 - 6:00 Monday - Sunday

<http://www.thebookrackqc.com/>
BookRackQC@Gmail.com

"Writers aren't exactly people, they're a whole lot of people trying to be one."

F. Scott Fitzgerald

A Poetic Line that has passed into common usage:

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

John Milton, Paradise Lost

Please Note: The Book Racks will be close Christmas Day and New Years Day and will close at 4:00 PM Christmas Eve and New Years Eve.

December Holidays and such:
We have a wonderful schedule of book signings by our local authors in December.

Dec 1 (Monday) – Local Author **George Eaton** will be celebrating the release of

and signing copies of his book, “Rock Island Arsenal”, 11:00 – 1:00 at the Moline Book Rack

2 (Tuesday) - Local Author **George Eaton** will be celebrating the release of and signing copies of his book, “Rock Island Arsenal”, 11:00 – 1:00 at the Davenport Book Rack

6 (Saturday) – Local author **Tom McKay** will be signing copies of his book, “West Fork”, at The Moline Book Rack, 11:00 – 1:00.

6 (Saturday) – **Joan Mauch**, author of “The Waterkeeper's Daughter”, “The Mangled Spoon” and “Halifax” will be at The Book Rack in Davenport, signing copies of her books 11:00 – 1:00.

7 (Sunday) – Local Author, **Sean Leary**, will be at The Book Rack in Davenport, 12:00 – 2:00 signing copies of his several customer favorite titles

7 (Sunday) – **Joan Mauch**, author of “The Waterkeeper's Daughter”, “The Mangled Spoon” and “Halifax” will be at The Book Rack in Moline, signing copies of her books 11:00 – 1:00.

20 (Saturday) – Local Author, **Sean Leary**, will be at The Book Rack in Moline, 12:00 – 2:00 signing copies of his several customer favorite titles

We hope you will stop in and visit with these very talented local authors. If you can't make it on the days they are at the stores, please check out their books in our Local Author shelves at both stores.

Get your Book Rack Gift Certificates for those readers on your list!

Add some of your credit and double the value of the gift certificate. How?? Give a \$25.00 gift certificate and \$25.00 of your store credit and you make the gift certificate a \$50.00 value!! What a great deal!

Science Fiction Jackpot! Just a reminder...

We recently acquired a collection of 2000+ paperback SciFi books. This collection has many titles, authors and series we've not previously seen. We're in the process of processing and cleaning them and then will be adding them to our store shelves as time and space allow. Make sure you have your SciFi Request list up-to-date at The Book Rack. We expect to match many, many requests as these books are entered into the system. If you do not have your list in the system we can't know you want a certain book.

Holiday themed books are on display at The Book Racks. We have hundreds of fiction, non-fiction, hard cover, paperbacks, children, adult all for you. They are on the front shelves at both stores for your

browsing convenience. We'll add more titles as they come in so the selection will continually change. Several of our great local authors have Holiday books, as well, so check our Local Author shelves while you are in the store. /

Free Verse is a regular, monthly, feature by one of our wonderful Quad Cities area local authors. Each month we enjoy writing by a different talent. These articles and poems are on a variety of topics bound to be of interest to many of our readers. Please help spread the word by forwarding the newsletter to others. Give these folks as wide an audience as possible, please.



Inspiration prevents Writers Block

By Ellen Tsagaris

I suppose I'm a little perverse; I have the opposite problem most writers suffer. I don't get writers block. Instead, I don't have enough time or keyboard speed to write up all the ideas I have. A good problem to have, I admit, in many ways.

What prevents writers block for me? I'm always open to inspiration. The whole world becomes my notebook. For instance, my morning commute is about 25 minutes.

I use that time to think about writing projects, and to observe as I drive. Last winter, while I waited to get on the bridge, I was treated to

a sight I'd never seen. On a cold, bitter January day, 4 coyotes crossed in front of my car. They walked to the riverbank and crossed the frozen river, disappearing into the little island that dot the Mississippi in our stretch of the Midwest.

I got a pretty good blog post for my blog on Green Living out of that one.

I also like to listen to the radio. I love all types of music, but I also like talk radio, NPR, old radio dramas, you name it. For awhile, I had Sirius and luxuriated in the sounds of Marta Stewart Radio, Book Radio, The Halloween and Christmas Channels, and Neil Diamond Radio. My girlfriend and I liked cruising down 23d Avenue just so we could listen to Howard Stern. We went 5 miles out of our way for ice cream, just to listen to old Howie rant. That gave me a lot of fuel for thought, too. At one point, I wrote a post that was read on Morning Live. My latest chapbook, *Crazy Assed Humans: The Dolls Reply*, was the result of an encounter I had with Tabloid TV and a book of poems I read on Kindle.

Probably books and reading are my greatest inspirational tools. I think I read ten books at once, and belong to two writers groups and one book group. I never get tired of reading, and still like to go through the newspaper and magazines, even catalogs of all sorts.

History books and historical novels get me to think, too. I always second guess what I might have done if I were in that era. Pretty soon, what I think turns into a poem, or comes out of the mouths of my characters.

By the same token, artists' monographs are great places to get ideas. Style, color, subject, all of them jar something in my writer's brain.

So, while I'd love to be The Madwoman in the Attic, tapping away, uninterrupted in my literary solitude, I know it isn't possible. My best ideas come from world interaction, and sometimes, I have to quit my books, to write my books.

Dr. Ellen Tsagaris is program chair for the Criminal Justice, Legal Studies, and Paralegal Studies Departments at Kaplan University, Davenport campus. She is also a dedicated college professor,

blogger, doll curator, and a lifelong poet. She holds a PhD in English from Southern Illinois University, a Master of Arts in English and Juris Doctor from The University of Iowa, and a Bachelor of Arts in English/Spanish from Augustana College. Some of her interests include research and writing. Dr. Tsagaris' books available at The Book Racks include The Subversion of Romance in the Novels of Barbara Pym

Book Reviews:

I'm delighted to have two new reviewers this month to share their thoughts on a couple books, Dave Moyer and Nicole Steinbaugh.

The first reviewer is local author *Dave Moyer*, the author of the novel "Life and Life Only" and several published short stories and essays. He is a regular reviewer for Joseph's Reviews <http://josephsreviews.wordpress.com/> and previously contributed reviews to The New York Journal of Books. Dave's book is, of course, available from the Local Author shelves at both Book Racks. Please give it a serious consideration when you are next in the stores.

Valley Tale of Lost Hope, Perseverance, Oppression

Amy Tan's seventh adult novel *The Valley of Amazement* is a triumph. In *Valley* Tan, most noted for her debut novel *The Joy Luck Club*, comes back with a vengeance after an eight-year hiatus.

As the story opens in 1905, main character Violet Minturn is a petulant child living with her mother, Lulu Mimi, who runs the courtesan house Hidden Jade Path. The title is rife with meaning and comes from a mysterious painting, the origins of which are revealed at the end of the story. It is Violet's prized memory of her mother, who is coerced into abandoning her for her home country of America by corrupt Chinese gangsters.

As a result Violet is coerced into the courtesan lifestyle, losing her

freedom and dignity. She becomes hardened when her first love doesn't work out. She experiences love again only to endure more unthinkable tragedy. Only the most optimistic of sorts could hope for a happy ending after this, though there is closure.

In the bizarre reality of the courtesan culture, at least according to this novel, these women consider themselves noble with a higher status than ordinary prostitutes. Perhaps this is because they sign long-term contracts with one man, who, of course possesses other courtesans in addition to his wife. Perhaps it is because they live a relatively comfortable lifestyle or can aspire to become second or third wife. Most of them do eventually end up as prostitutes in their early 20s, at which point they are considered "old". It's not too difficult to make sense of it when one considers that Chinese women had to train their feet not to be too big, which was apparently considered unattractive. Obviously, the culture was what it was—highly oppressive to women.

Chapter Four, in which Violet is trained in the nuances of her new profession, is entitled "Etiquette for Beauties of Boudoir". It read like "Proverbs for Courtesans", which would have been interesting if it wasn't so demented.

There are many examples of outstanding writing throughout the book. One example: "Those were the reasons we both know how deep love was, the shared pain that would outlast any pain we caused each other" (p. 555). The best way to sum it up is that Tan is a master storyteller who, in *Valley of Amazement*, lives up to her billing.

This review originally appeared on the Joseph's Reviews site:

<http://josephsreviews.wordpress.com/>

Our second new reviewer is **Nicole Steinbaugh**, one of our terrific staff working **The Book Rack**, Moline, and attending college.

Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood

"After everything that's happened, how can the world still be so

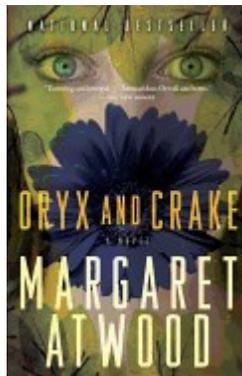
beautiful? Because it is.”

What if you could take away everything that's wrong with the world?
What if you could lay waste to greed, disparity, hunger, envy, murder?
What if, to achieve this, you had to wipe out most of the human race?
Would you?

Crake would.

Told through the lens of a post-apocalyptic survivor, and Crake's high school friend, Margaret Atwood's work of speculative fiction is a distress call to our age. Atwood writes with all the humor, grit, and “narrative panache” required of a story of this scope. It appeals largely to our fascination with the end of times- and also the dilemma of our hope for a better world.

To quote Nicole: “We got a copy of a book in that I really love!” High praise and recommendation.



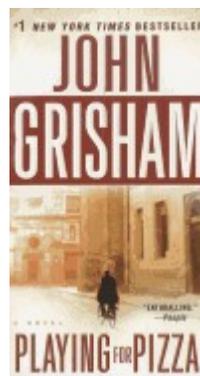
Playing for Pizza by John Grisham

Rick Dockery is the third-string quarterback for the Cleveland Browns. In the AFC Championship game, to the surprise and dismay of virtually everyone, Rick actually gets into the game. With a seventeen-point lead and just minutes to go, Rick provides what is arguably the worst single performance in the history of the NFL. Overnight, he

becomes a national laughingstock--and is immediately cut by the Browns and shunned by all other teams.

But all Rick knows is football, and he insists that his agent find a team that needs him. Against enormous odds, Rick finally gets a job--as the "starting" quarterback for the Mighty Panthers . . . of Parma, Italy. The Parma Panthers desperately want a former NFL player--any former NFL player--at their helm. And now they've got Rick, who knows nothing about Parma (not even where it is) and doesn't speak a word of Italian. To say that Italy--the land of fine wines, extremely small cars, and "football americano"--holds a few surprises for Rick Dockery would be something of an understatement. (From the cover)

This was a fun book. I like sports oriented books, though this is not your typical one. It's a feel good story, an Italian food story and a love story, as well as sports. I've not been a big Grisham fan, but this may change that. I give it a B+ and recommend it highly.

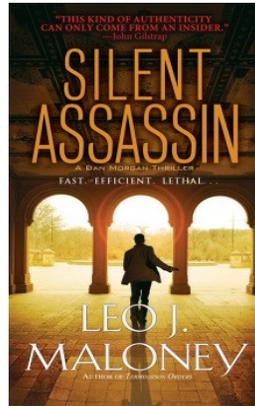


Silent Assassin by Leo J Maloney (2013)

Code named Cobra, former CIA agent Dan Morgan is pulled in when every other option has failed. His mission: to find Nikolai Novokoff, a ruthless KGB officer turned international arms dealer. Locate the weapons of mass destruction that the rogue terrorist is threatening to unleash on the world. And, terminate with extreme prejudice. In the

world of clandestine ops, where the line between friends and enemies is constantly shifting, especially in the halls of Washington, Morgan must survive a merciless maze of deceit – and risk everything – to stop a madman. (from the cover)

A pretty good thriller. Not in the same league as Child, Silva, Clancy or Baldacci, but worthy of your consideration. I give it a B-.



Purgatory Ridge by William Kent Krueger. (2001)

With precise and atmospheric prose, award-winning author William Kent Krueger "prolongs suspense to the very end" ("Publishers Weekly") of this impossible-to-put-down thriller when he unleashes spine-tingling mayhem on a tiny logging town and sends hardscrabble former sheriff Cork O'Connor to investigate....

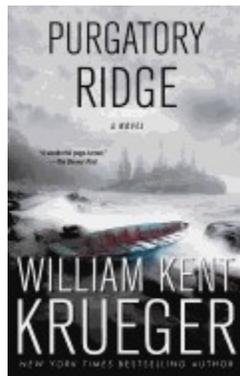
Not far from Aurora, Minnesota (population 3,752), lies an ancient expanse of great white pines, sacred to the Anishinaabe tribe. When an explosion kills the night watchman at wealthy industrialist Karl Lindstrom's nearby lumber mill, it's obvious where suspicion will fall. Former sheriff Cork O'Connor agrees to help investigate, but he has mixed feelings about the case. For one thing, he is part Anishinaabe. For another, his wife, a lawyer, represents the tribe.

Meanwhile, near Lindstrom's lakeside home, a reclusive shipwreck survivor and his sidekick are harboring their own resentment of the

industrialist. And it soon becomes clear to Cork that harmony, both at home and in Aurora, will be on the back burner for some time....

(Publisher's Marketing)

My first Krueger book was quite good. The plot was unique, entertaining and complex. I give it a solid B and a recommendation. If you like John Sanford, CJ Box or Louise Penny, you'll like our neighbor from the North (Minnesota), William Kent Krueger.



The Great Game; A Professor Moriarty Novel by Michael Kurland
(2014)

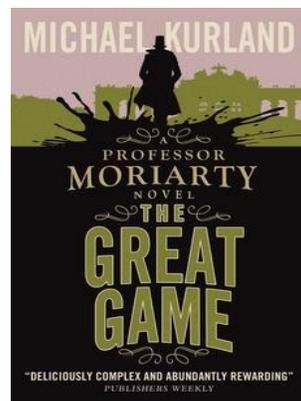
Labeled the “Napoleon of Crime” by an obsessed Sherlock Holmes, Professor James Moriarty is a prominent scientist, a keen analytical mind, and a dabbler in less than savory doings. Two friends and former associates—Benjamin Barnett and his wife, the former Cecily Perrine—are traveling in Europe when they realize that they have become objects of scrutiny from persons unknown. Things turn deadly when they find themselves in the midst of an attempted assassination of a German prince. Meanwhile in Vienna, the younger son of a British nobleman—indulging in “The Great Game” of amateur spying—finds himself framed for the murder of his paramour and the assassination of an Austrian Duke. In London, an unknown caller arrives at Moriarty's door on a matter of great urgency and is shot by a

crossbow bolt loosed by unseen hands.

While a lesser man might be daunted, Moriarty is merely intrigued and begins to investigate. What Moriarty uncovers is a cabal that seems to be using assassination to destabilize the rule of the crowned heads of Europe. But he also senses that there is something even bigger than this operating—a conspiracy behind the conspiracy—and detects the workings of a mind quite possibly as clever as his own. Using his contacts, friends, and the not-so-desired help of his often nemesis Sherlock Holmes, Moriarty must save his friends and outwit his most cunning opponent while the fate of history hangs in the balance.

(From the book cover)

I picked this book up when traveling in Dublin, Ireland this summer and read it on the way home. (I don't sleep on planes!) It was a good book. Kind of Robert Downey, Jr. type of character and action, but a decent, fun book. It's a newly released title, not yet available from our distributor, but, will hopefully soon be. Kurland has numerous titles on his list, but many are out of print or simply not easily found. I recommend you give him a try, and, when you discover you LOVE him, make sure he's on your Request List! I give him a B. If you like fanciful mysteries pretending to be serious, you'll like Kurland.



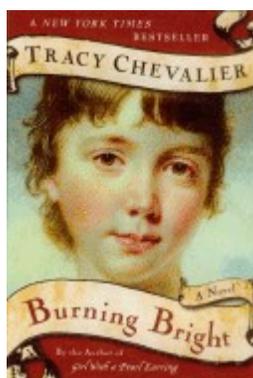
The Office of Desire by Martha Moody

Alicia, Brice, and Caroline are the ABCs--three close friends who have been brought together while working at the cozy medical practice of Drs. Markowitz and Strub in Midburg, Ohio. A nurse, an office manager, a receptionist, and two male doctors, these are five very different people who, working closely for years, have become indispensable fixtures in one another's lives. The doctors couldn't be more different, but they met in medical school and fell into partnership. Single mom Alicia, misfit Brice, and cancer survivor Caroline have been with them from the beginning. But when Alicia falls in love with one of the doctors, suddenly everything changes. A marriage, an illness, a romance, a religious epiphany, a financial scandal – all of these individual events unfurl in the immediate wake of the newly charged environment and require the characters to redefine their roles in one another's lives.

Told with warmth and wit, *The Office of Desire* deftly reveals how the friendships that occur in a place of work – friendships that arise out of circumstance – can be the most important in our lives. It is an insightful, engaging story of the unlikely alliances that develop by chance, and what happens when those relationships are tested or altered. (from the cover)

A very fine book for those who like to delve into the complexities of human interaction and the many twists and turns that result. I really got into it and give it a rousing B+ and recommend it. If you like Rita Ciresi, A. Minette Ansay, Lorna Landvick or Judith Krantz you may well like this book.

Burning Bright by Tracy Chevalier



Tracy Chevalier, author of the international bestseller "Girl With a Pearl Earring," returns with another brilliantly rendered historical tale set in the waning days of eighteenth-century London. Poet, artist, and printer William Blake works in obscurity as England is rocked by the shock waves of the French Revolution. Next door, the Kellaway family has just moved in, and country boy Jem Kellaway strikes up a tentative friendship with street-savvy Maggie Butterfield. As their stories intertwine with Blake's, the two children navigate the confusing and exhilarating path to adolescence, and inspire the poet to create the work that enshrined his genius.

No. 13 Hercules Building, Lambeth, 1792. Poet, artist, and printer William Blake – local eccentric and political radical – works anonymously amidst the raucous din of a teeming, jittery London. Across the Channel, revolution is imploding in France. Nearby, the renowned Astley's Circus is rehearsing its upcoming show; and next door the Kellaway family, recently arrived from the countryside, is moving in. Maggie Butterfield, the streetwise daughter of a local rogue, is looking for trouble – or at least a friend. When she and young Jem Kellaway are drawn into Blake's spell, the chance meeting of three unusual souls sets the stage for an impassioned journey. Jean and Maggie spark the imagination of the poet, influencing one of the greatest and most mystical works in English literature, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*.

Burning Bright evokes the full pagentry of Georgian London: its circus

spectacles, mustard factories, pubs and bawdy songs, the grandeur of Westminster Abbey, and the secrets of Cut-Throat Lane. Behind these lie the greater movements of an era; the influence of a nearby revolution, the mustering of forces loyal to the Crown, and the agonies of being an independent thinker in an age suspicious of dissent.

Chevalier brilliantly captures an era and a sense of place, at the same time deftly evoking an artist's vision. Overflowing with energy, enterprise, and the power of creation, *Burning Bright* brings us a vivid story of the unpredictable, exhilarating passage toward Adulthood.
(from the cover)

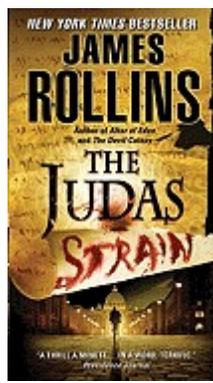
I listened to this audio book while driving to Minnesota. It made the trip fly by. It was engrossing and very well performed by Jill Tanner. Whether you read the book or listen, I think you'll find it very well written and entertaining. I give it an A- and highly recommend it to you.

The Judas Strain by James Rollins (2007)

From the depths of the Indian Ocean, a horrific plague has arisen to devastate humankind--unknown, unstoppable . . . and merely a harbinger of the doom that is to follow. Operatives of the shadowy covert organization SIGMA Force, Dr. Lisa Cummings and Monk Kokkalis search for answers to the bizarre affliction aboard a cruise liner transformed into a makeshift hospital. But a sudden and savage attack by terrorist hijackers turns the mercy ship into a floating bio-weapons lab. Time is an enemy as a worldwide pandemic grows rapidly out of control. As the seconds tick closer to doomsday, SIGMA's commander, Gray Pierce, must join forces with a beautiful assassin who tried to kill him--following the trail of the most fabled explorer in history into the terrifying heart of an astonishing mystery buried deep in antiquity and in humanity's genetic code. Humankind's

ultimate betrayal will come from within... (from the publisher's materials)

Claudia & I listened to this on our way to Minnesota, and back. It's a 16 hour audiobook! It was at times hard to keep up with all the players and scenarios, since there were 3 parallel streams going up to nearly the end. Lots of action throughout. I liked it – Claudia not so much – but I think we'd both recommend it to those who like long, complex thrillers. Rollins write very well. I'd give it a solid B.



No Tomorrow by Tom Wood. (2014)

Victor the assassin returns in the new novel from the author of "The Killer," "The Enemy," and "The Game."..

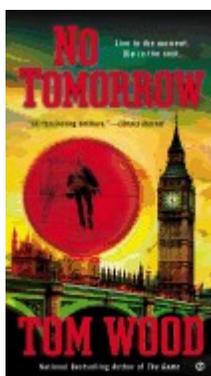
THE JOB IS SIMPLE

When Victor is called to meet with an old friend who ultimately betrayed him, what he thought was an ambush is in fact a plea for help. As a Russian gangster, Norimov is accustomed to death threats, but now an unknown enemy wants more than his life. They intend to kill everyone he cares about, including his missing daughter Gisele. This time, Victor's job is not to kill but to protect. Unfortunately, locating Gisele is his first mistake--because someone is watching his every move.

ESCAPE IS IMPOSSIBLE

Before she went into hiding, Gisele had uncovered a secret worth killing for--and now Victor has brought the enemy right to her doorstep. The least he can do is help her escape. But the ruthless network they're up against has the police, MI5, and every major news outlet joining in the manhunt across London. (From the publisher's materials)

I do like Victor, the Assassin, and Wood is a fine suspense writer. Non-stop action, but no superman-like skills or characteristics. Just a good, bad guy who's really good at what he does and is the guy you want on your side. If you like Jack Reacher, Jack Ryan or Jason Bourne, you certainly should/will like Victor. I give it a A- and highly recommend it.

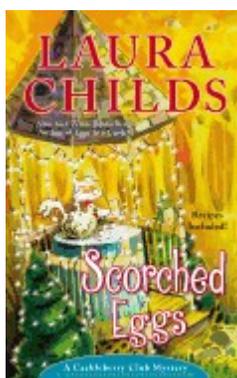


Upcoming New Releases:

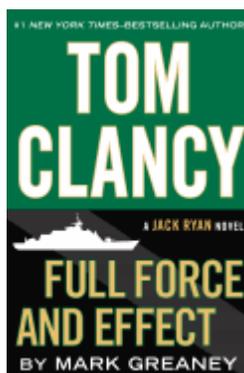
Check out the prices following the title of the book. The first price is the publisher's price. The second price is the **Book Rack** price, when picked up at one of the stores. There is no shipping charge when you pick up your order. Order now by calling one of the stores or stopping in. We do ask for prepayment on all special orders.

Hardcover:

Laura Child – Scorched Eggs – 25.95/20.80

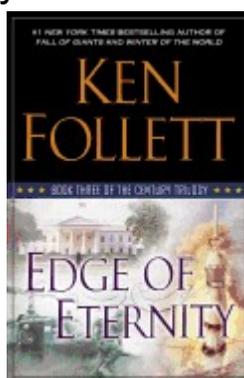


Tom Clancy – Full Force and Effect – 29.95/24.00

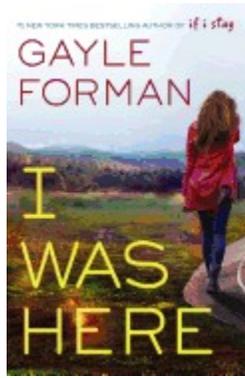


Anita Diamant – The Boston Girl – 26.00/20.80

Ken Follett – Edge of Eternity – 36.00/28.80



Gayle Forman – I Was Here – 18.99/15.20

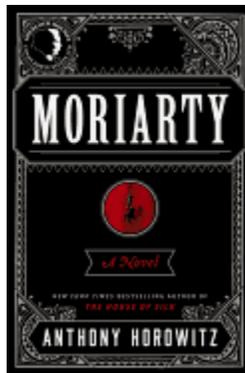


Tess Gerritsen – Die Again – 27.00/21.60



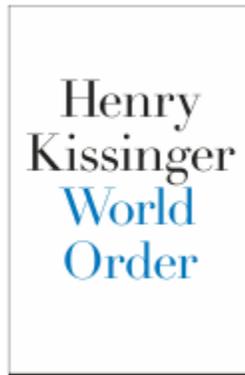
Jack Higgins – Rain on the Dead – 26.95/21.60

Anthony Horowitz – Moriarty – 26.99/21.60

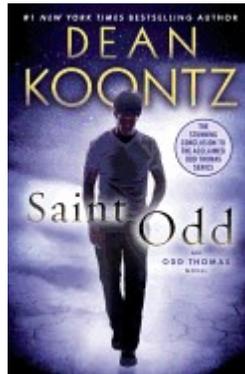


Jan Karon – Somewhere Safe with Someone Good – 27.95/22.40

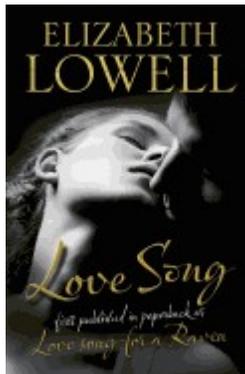
Henry Kissinger – World Order – 36.00/28.80



Dean Koontz – Saint Odd – 28.00/22.40

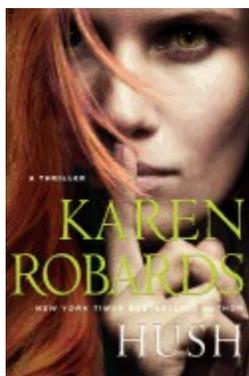


Elizabeth Lowell – Love Song – 27.95/22.40

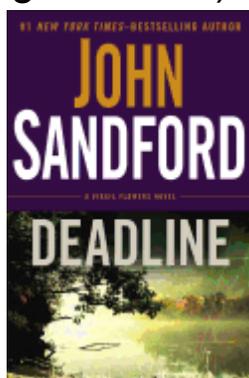


Ian McEwan – The Children Act – 25.00/20.00

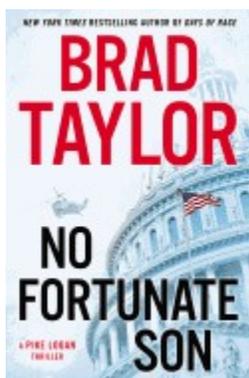
Karen Robards – Hush – 26.00/20.80



John Sanford – Deadline (Virgil Flowers) – 27.95/22.40

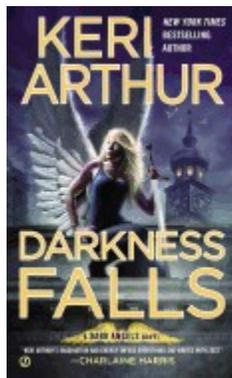


Brad Taylor – No Fortunate Son – 26.95/21.60

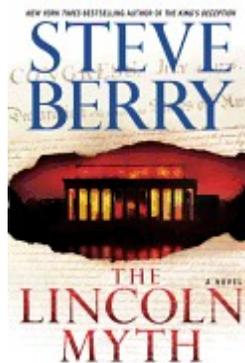


Paperback:

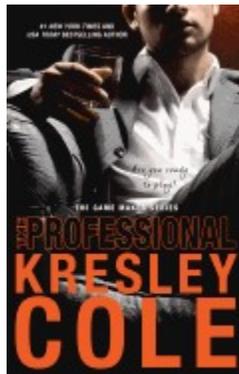
Keri Arthur – Darkness Falls – 7.99/6.40



Steve Berry – The Lincoln Myth – 9.99/8.00

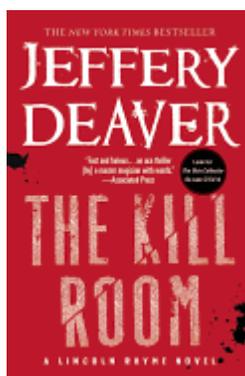


Kresley Cole -The Professional – 7.99/6.40

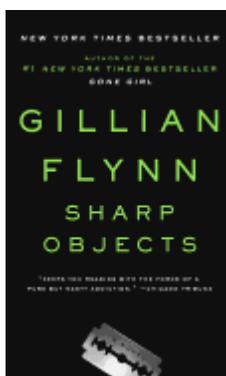


Robin Cook – Cell – 9.99/8.00

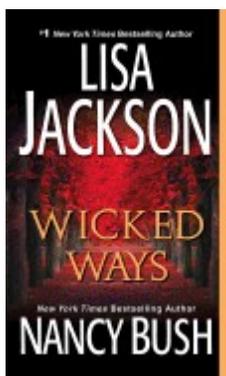
Jeffrey Deaver – The Kill Room – 10.00/8.00



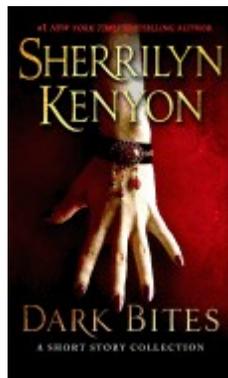
Jillian Flynn – Sharp Objects – 9.99/8.00



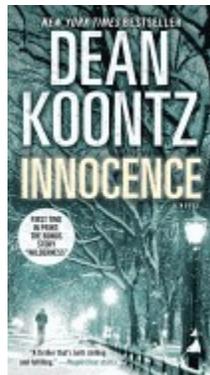
Lisa Jackson – Wicked Ways – 7.99/6.40



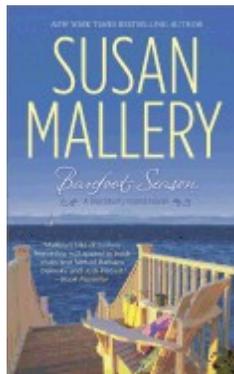
Sherrilyn Kenyon – Dark Bites – 8.99/7.20



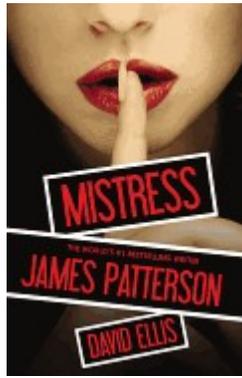
Dean Koontz – Innocence – 9.99/8.00



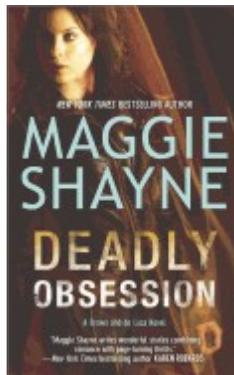
Susan Mallery – Barefoot Season – 7.99/6.40



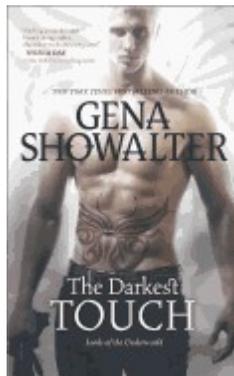
James Patterson – Mistress – 10.00/8.00



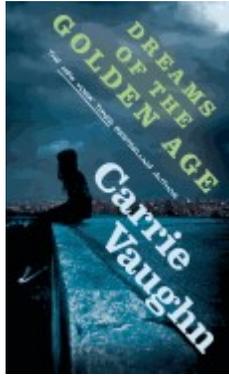
Maggie Shayne – Deadly Obsession – 7.99/6.40



Gena Showalter – The Darkest Touch – 7.99/6.40



Carrie Vaughn – Dreams of the Golden Age – 7.99/6.40



Stuart Woods – Carnal Curiosity – 9.99/8.00

