

The Book Rack Newsletter

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

Vol 7, #6

June 2014

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The test of literature is, I suppose, whether we ourselves live more intensely for the reading of it.

Elizabeth Drew

June Holidays and such:

National Accordion Awareness Month

National Adopt a Cat Month

Week 1 – Fishing Week

May 1 – National Flip a Coin Day

4 – Hug Your Cat Day – Not too hard a hug.

5 – World Environment Day

6 – National YoYo Day

7 – Sal Marici will be signing copies of his newly released book of poetry at **The Book Rack** in Moline, 11-1:00.

7 – Joan Mauch will be signing copies of her books at **The Book Rack** in Davenport, 11-1:00.

8 – Name Your Poison Day

13 – Blame Someone Else Day (First Friday the 13th of the year)

14 – Steve McAfee will be signing copies of his new book at **The Book Rack** in Moline, 11-1:00

14 - Sal Marici will be signing copies of his newly released book of poetry at **The Book Rack** in Davenport, 11-1:00

15 – Father's Day

18 – International Panic Day

21 – Summer Solstice!!

21 – Wilson McCallister will be available to sign copies of his books at [The Book Rack](#) in Davenport, 11-1:00

26 – Forgiveness Day

28 - Wilson McCallister will be available to sign copies of his books at [The Book Rack](#) in Moline, 11-1:00

29 – Hug Holiday

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING!! This edition is our longest one yet. I make no apologies, since it is sent out only once each month. So much happens in a month and I have so many “great” ideas to include that I let each issue determine its own length, absent any preconceived notion of how long it “should” be. I hope you enjoy it. Your feedback is always appreciated.

Special alert on some books recently added to our already great selection of quality used books:

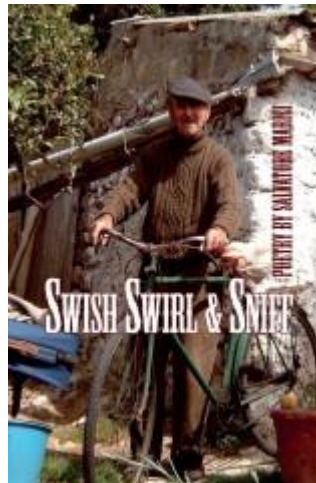
60+ Manga Graphic Novels from such series as Clamp, Negima, Kim in Todoke and Rosario + Vampire, to name a few. Nearly 100 new gaming books, such as Dungeons & Dragons; Forgotten Realms; Generic Universal Roleplaying System (GURPS) and Rifts, to name a few. Many of these are in our Amazon.com listings, but you can find them via our web site and use your credit to reduce their special (higher) prices. These books are generally in Very Good to Like New condition. Don't delay for the best selection. About ½ of each collection is at each store.

Also added are a nice collection of comic books! Yes, COMIC BOOKS!! These are mostly Marvel superhero and include a few

of the best known (Spiderman & The Incredible Hulk) but mostly lesser known (Moon Knight & The Infinity Gauntlet) and older titles. They are priced generally @\$5.00 and you CAN use your credit toward ½ of our price. All of these are at our Davenport store. You can also see them and buy them at our web site. Get in quickly while the selection is best.

Featured Local Authors:

Sal Marici will be at [The Book Rack](#) in Moline June 7 and at The Book Rack in Davenport June 14, 11-1:00 both days.

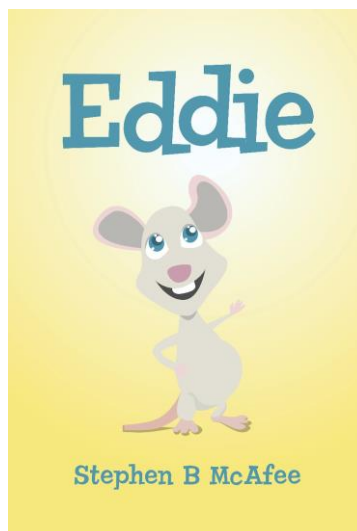


Salvatore Marici is the author of two poetry books. The first, a chapbook, *Mortals, Nature, and their Spirits*. He was the 2010 Midwest Writing Center's poet-in-residence. He has won and placed in several poetry contests. His work has appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, most recently: *Circle Magazine*, *Slow Trains*, *Descant*, *Nefarious Ballerina*, *Sweet Lemons 2: International Writings with a Sicilian Accent*, *Spillway Magazine*, and *Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland*. Marici served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala and he is a civil servant retiree, who worked for the

Army, mainly with the job title Agronomists. At both jobs, he managed natural resources. He performs his poetry during the Bucktown Revue in the Quad Cities

Full flavored, wise, and wildly alive, Salvatore Marici's poetry rings and beats in your head as he travels through the Amazon, Guatemala, Sicily, doctor's offices, arenas, kitchens, and the Midwest. From one poem to the next, there is a connected cord. The imagery these poems project will have you swishing, swirling, and sniffing amidst the senses as well as becoming at one with the present. An enchanting array of rhythmic encounters, sensual visions, perceptive reflections of mysteries and magic, that will have you dancing and mingling with spirits, talking to, and laugh with deities. Wild imagery of both exotic and mundane places, but all thrive in his writing. Poetry that has you tasting, smelling, and savoring the flavor of a kitchen.

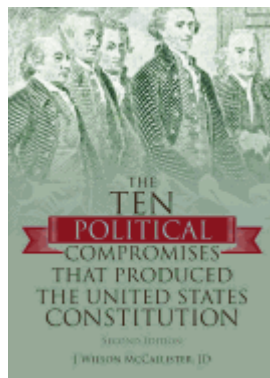
Steve McAfee will be at [The Book Rack](#) in Moline, June 14, 11-1:00 signing copies of his book, Eddie.



Eddie is the story of a properly raised mouse, a good mouse, a refined mouse and his adventures sharing a house with humans

who hate mice. His mother and father are very wise and sophisticated. They teach him that he must be clean, honest and appreciative of the humans, but most of all; he must be invisible to them. The humans bring a furry puppy into the house; he and Eddie form a strong friendship. Eddie shows the puppy how to adjust to life with humans and the puppy helps Eddie to conceal his existence in the house. When Eddie meets by accident an orphan female mouse who wants nothing to do with him, things get interesting. She doesn't like Eddie, she hates and is afraid of puppies and does everything she can do to be mean to them. But Eddie is smitten. The relationship between Eddie, the puppy, the humans and the female mouse make for a combination of interesting adventures, happiness and tears, successes and failures along with dangers and romance.

Wilson McCallister will be available to sign copies of his books June 21 in Davenport & June 28 in Moline, 11-1:00 both times. His books are **The Ten Political Compromises That Produced the United States Constitution.**



The cooperation that existed among the States during their struggle for Independence began to evaporate as the euphoria over victory dissipated. Independence had been won, but it did not meld thirteen independent states into one; it solidified their individual independence. The Continental Congress had to find ways to pay off the costs of the

War under the framework created under the Articles of Confederation, implement the Peace Treaty, treat with foreign nations, and deal with constantly emerging conflicts and civil unrest within and among the newly liberated states. The Articles, however, did not provide a mechanism for dealing effectively with foreign trade, nor was there any mechanism for enforcing compliance with the treaty of peace. It became apparent to Congressional and state leaders alike that some form of national government that could exercise power over national issues was necessary if the country was to survive. So, a call went out for a convention of delegates to meet in Philadelphia in the Summer of 1787 to take into consideration the situation of the United States, and devise such further provisions as shall appear to them necessary to render the constitution of the Federal Government adequate to the exigencies of the Union. All the states except Rhode Island answered the call, and from late May to the middle of September, 1787, fifty-five of the Country's most creative minds engaged in the most remarkable exercise in constitution-making the world had ever seen. The Ten Political Compromises that Produced the United States Constitution chronicles the circumstances that led to the Philadelphia Convention, the competing state and federal interests that had to be accommodated there, and explains why multiple compromises were required to produce the document, which may not have been the best that could have been produced, but, perhaps, the only one that could have been produced under the circumstances.

Wilson also authored The History, Law, and Politics of Federal Impeachment: From the Early Precedents to the Impeachment and Trial of President Bill Clinton.

Joan Mauch, Author of The Mangled Spoon and Halifax.

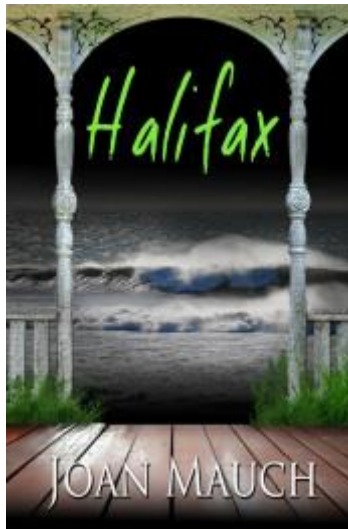


The Mangled Spoon: Chapter One

The woman pressed into a tight space between the Dumpster and the brick wall, and waited. Rhythmic drumming of rain pelted the metal receptacle, splashing onto her bare skin. Her stomach growled, a reminder she hadn't eaten in a long time. She shivered and wrapped both arms tightly around her body. Her teeth chattered as wind from Lake Michigan picked up, blowing food wrappers down the alley.

After what seemed more like days than hours, the restaurant closed and workers streamed out the back door. Anxious to examine the discarded food, she ignored competition from some very large rats. Her gnawing hunger quickly overcame the stench of rotting garbage as she lifted the Dumpster lid and thrust her hands inside. Anything even partially edible would do—half a pork chop, some bread, an apple that wasn't too rotten—anything to fill her aching void.

After digging in the trash for the better part of twenty minutes, she managed to find a good-sized hunk of meat and was about to sink her teeth into it when a bright light flooded the space and a man's voice boomed out, "This is the Chicago Police. Turn around and put your hands in the air. Do it. Do it right now."



Forty year old Eleanor Hurley leads a life of quiet desperation. Living with her nagging mom in the shadow of her accomplished sister, she holds dead-end jobs running a fun house in the summer and as a cafeteria lady at a middle school during the year. She's often the butt of disparaging remarks that make her feel like even more of a failure. Well, hold on because everything's about to change.

Joan will be at [The Book Rack](#), Davenport, June 7, 11-1:00.

Free Verse is a regular, monthly, feature article by one of our wonderful Quad Cities area local authors. Each month we enjoy writing by a different talent. These articles 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.

This month's edition features Sean Leary's Reptilia.



Sean Leary began his career scribbling sci-fi Comics Buyers Guide professional writing columns for the at age 11. Since then, he's sung in punk bands, had his artwork displayed in various galleries and directed and acted in a few indie films, but he's always remained a writer first and foremost, as evidenced by almost three dozen books published.

His latest imagination explosions are the novels The Blood of Destiny and The Arimathean, which are about, respectively, the 12 disciples as ninjas battling satan to prevent him from turning Jesus' body into a zombie antichrist, and, the three Magi as ninja wizards battling demons to protect Joseph and Mary on the road to Bethlehem. Both are available at The Book Rack, along with many of his other titles. The third novel in the Arimathean saga, DisIntegration, promises to be equally strange and entertaining.

Leary's other current projects include the children's books, Nine Little Ninjas and Baby Bird, and the erotic road trip novel, Speed of Sound, which has been called "50 Shades of Gray meets On The Road." They'll be done sometime in 2014 and you can get more info on them, and his other projects, at www.seanleary.com.

REPTILIA

By Sean Leary

Into the midst of the candlelit enclave, a battle room wide and

fortressed in marble, the sliver of a man dropped, clad in a white so brilliant it seemed to glow against the indefinite light with armor of moss green leather and gold strapped about him. He held in his hand a wooden scabbard, carved with various sigils of silver and gold, and with a quick move it leapt to his hand and erupted into a blade of sacred flame, emerald green.

The black-swathed figures about the room were shocked, disquieted for just a half-second at his arrival, but quickly recovered and began circling him, closing in on their quarry.

They were lithe and lanky, clad in ebon battle garb that allowed for the wisp of movement while snaking tight at the curve of muscles twitching in anticipation of battle. Their swords were drawn and ready, ebonblades, with worn ruby quartz handles grasped tight, emitting violet black columns of flame in a distinct fang, unholy swords with the power to disrupt and dismiss supernatural flesh and inflict blinding pain and death to humans in direct proportion to their level of fear.

The colorless blade of a man in the midst of them stood stoic.

He scanned the room, clad in the same fitted garb as his attackers, watched passively as they advanced upon him.

Until, at the last moment, as they were mere feet away, he assumed a defensive stance, girding himself for battle.

The first rushed him, quickly and deftly avoided with an economy of motion that allowed him to just as easily slip from the attacks of two others, whose flailing blades jolted two other advancing attackers into death with a swing of his emerald blade.

The ivory figure leapt high into the air, spinning and hovering, as four more sent their swords whirring in the direction of the space he had been in, only to find their companions, sending more to the ground, limp and unmoving.

Scampering across the wall, defying gravity, the glowing wraith hit the floor with the grace of a panther before slicing through

the ranks of the demon throng, their swords just missing him, finding only each other, until only two ebon-clad fighters remained, cautiously advancing on the white figure standing calmly between them, measuring their paths of attack.

Avoiding the pitfalls of their companions, the two attacked not in unison, but as individuals, the first rapidly slicing an irregular pattern in the air before his target, attempting to distract and disorient him, before making a swift jab inward at his heart.

But in one lightning fast movement, the ivory shadow slipped aside from the blade, forcing the attacker off balance, allowing the man in white to grasp his wrist, and in one deft, expert twist, enabled him to wrest the ebonblade from his grasp.

Now armed with two blades, the ghost spun in a furious arc, striking down both of his remaining predators, and standing alone, amidst the fallen.

With a thought, he dispatched the ebonblade into its ruby quartz sheath, and flung it across the room.

At that moment, a crow cried and a gong sounded, and a stone portal opened at the far end of the room.

Emerging from behind the ancient gateway was another warrior, larger than the rest, yet still with the same thin, wiry gait.

He was swathed in warriors' robes of the same cut, but colored a deep crimson, with the same cowl hiding his face, only the crimson glimmer of his eyes visible in a sliver of shadow. His hand held a sinister ebonblade, wrapped in snakeskin.

In his hand was a handle of onyx and silver runes, far more ancient than any ebonblade, a sword of legend, of demonic power, a sentient weapon only able to be wielded by a warrior of the most diabolical order. In an instant, it was ablaze, a majestic plume, a massive deadly claw of crimson flame.

The warrior in red leapt towards the man in white, sword raised to strike. At the last moment, the ivory figure darted through the

air, out of his grasp, as the red warrior dropped to the ground, his blood-colored blade swung in a mighty swath.

The white figure leapt to a bejeweled chest at the fore of the room, and with a swipe of sacred flame from his hand, it opened, revealing an ancient crystal that glowed an eerie neon green, securing the chain between their two dimensions.

In an instant, the red warrior attacked and the two swords met in a brilliant burst of light that crackled and burst like thunder.

With an echo of strikes and parries that left fading halos of light about the two warriors, the blades slashed and crashed into one another with increasing fury, the pair of fighters captured in a dance of deliberate destruction, each attempting to get the better of the other in an increasing frenzy.

Until with one Herculean swing, the red warrior's blade dislodged his opponent's emerald blade from his grasp, sending it sailing across the temple floor.

Seizing upon his opening against his unarmed opponent, the crimson-clad demon swung downward without a second's thought.

And within that moment, his prey eluded him, slicing away from the fiery blade as the white warrior scissored a leg across the shins of the red warrior pitched forward, sending him stumbling to the ground.

Quickly gaining command from his opponent's fall, the white warrior outstretched a long-fingered hand and with a magnetic force the warrior's lost wooden scabbard was once more in his hand and it erupted with emerald holy flame. The crimson warrior's sword rang down but it was blocked and parried as the white warrior leapt to his feet. The crimson demon struck again, but was once more thwarted and he was knocked to the floor.

The white warrior stood above the red warrior and with an invisible, magnetic pull of unstoppable force, the blade handle

was yanked from the hand of the stunned, fallen demon and spun fast and sure into the grasp of the white warrior, where its flamed blade was extinguished, the handle flung to the far end of the temple.

The red warrior, dazed and fallen, sat up slightly, reached up, and removed his cowl, revealing a sharp, dark face, reptilian, half-human, half-lizard. He tried to attack the white warrior, tried to claw at him with his razor sharp talons, but the warrior was too quick, and with a mighty swing of his emerald holy sword, he sliced back the demon's attack. With another herculean blow into the demon's chest, he sent him skittering back to the nether realms with his reptilian brethren.

Back to the forbidden dimension bearing the same name they had dared to call the white warrior's land, when they had taken it over so many years ago.

Reptilia.

The throne room cleared of the demonic entities, the white warrior focused his attention upon the crystal, which began to growl and moan as reptilian ebony figures whirled about inside it, trying to gain entry into the earthen dimension.

But with a hurricane strike downward, the ivory warrior's holy blade shattered it, destroying it, and the link between the dimensions, and sending the ashen souls of the reptilians back to their nether world.

With the demons dispatched, the white warrior found his brethren and freed them from their invisible shackles locking them in the glowing cauldron next to the throne. Freed from the prison dimension they joined him as he walked to a massive tapestry upon the wall and tore it from its space.

Touching his holy sword's flame to it, it ignited, and the fire burned fast about its woven map, marked with the word, "Reptilia."

“And so they shall be banished from this land evermore,” the white figure said.

“And so they shall, Padraic,” one of his fellow warriors said, putting a hand upon his shoulder.

Padraic strode confidently to the palace wall where the tapestry had hung, and, pulling an ancient scroll from his belt, he strapped it to the wall.

Worn and faded, bloodied and stained, it was a map.

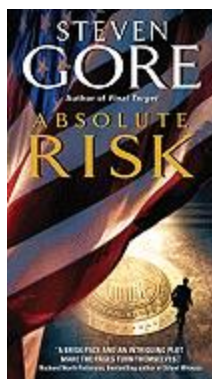
Of his country.

The country he had reclaimed.

“And so shall our land be forever more named,” said Padraic, “Ireland.”

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Book Reviews: This month was particularly enjoyable finding and reading new titles to review. It was like searching for, finding and relishing a rich patch of particularly prime Morel mushrooms at the end of a season of good, but not great, season. Among the books reviewed are some “prime” authors to add to your list of “must tries”!



Absolute Risk by Steven Gore (2012)

A terrorist bombing in Asia . . . A dead FBI agent in Marseilles . . . Bank accounts linked

to a genius finance professor in Boston . . . Can investigator Graham Gage make the connection before his world collapses? Days after failing to arrive for a secret meeting with the Federal Reserve chairman, FBI agent Michael Hennessy's body is found at the base of a cliff. But was it suicide or murder? A call from the chairman sends Gage hunting for the truth. As a desperately ill U.S. president prepares to hand over power to his vice president--a man in the thrall of religious extremists--Gage follows a trail of deceit and terror to a conspiracy that threatens to plummet the world into chaos. But for Gage, there is even more at stake. His wife is trapped between an uprising in Central China and the ruthless Chinese government. And unless Gage exposes the greatest treachery of our age before the clock counts down, Faith will die. (from the publisher)

I was pleasantly surprised at how well this worked. It was complex, thoughtful and ranged around the world and across the good and evil of nations and individuals. It gets an A- from me and a high recommendation

Daddy's Girl by Lisa Scottoline (2008) (Did you know her name rhymes with tortellini; not turpentine? I didn't until I

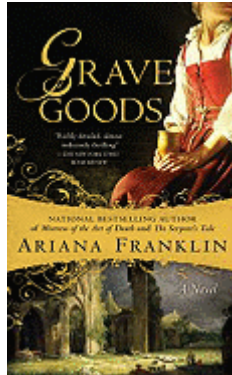


listened to this book on CD.)

Natalie Greco loves being a teacher, even though she can't keep her students from cruising sex.com during class. She loves her family, too, but her boyfriend fits in better with the football-crazy Grecos than she does. Then a colleague, handsome Angus Holt, talks Nat into teaching a class at a local prison, and her world turns upside down. A violent prison riot breaks out, and Nat rushes to save the life of a mortally wounded guard whose last words are: "Tell my wife it's under the floor." Nat delivers the cryptic message, but before she knows it, she's suspected of murder and hiding from cops and killers alike. She is forced on the run to solve the riddle of the dead man's last words and to save her own life. (from the publisher)

A very good read! Great characters, lots of twists and turns and plausible. I was always

anxious to get back to it, after having to set it aside. I give it an A- and strongly recommend Scottoline and “Daddy’s Girl” to you.



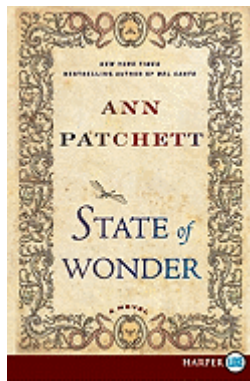
Grave Goods by Ariana Franklin (2010)

When a fire at Glastonbury Abbey reveals two skeletons, rumor has it they may belong to King Arthur and Queen Guinevere. King Henry II hopes so, for it would help him put down a rebellion in Wales, where the legend of Celtic savior Arthur is strong. To make certain, he sends Adelia Aguilar, his Mistress of the Art of Death, to Glastonbury to examine the skeletons.

At the same time, the investigation into the abbey fire will be overseen by the Bishop of St. Albans, father of Adelia's daughter. Trouble is, someone at Glastonbury doesn't want either mystery solved, and is prepared to kill to prevent it...

A look into forensic science in 1176 and its use to try and solve the mystery of King Arthur's death and burial. A good period mystery. If you enjoy such this is a good one. Ariana Franklin (the pen name of Diana Norman) is a very good writer. I give it a B.

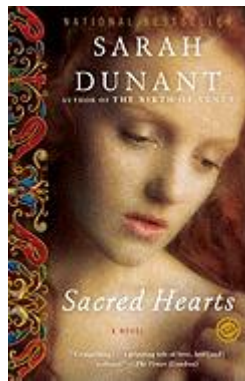
State of Wonder by Ann Patchett (2012)



State of Wonder is a provocative and ambitious novel set deep in the Amazon jungle. Dr. Marina Singh, a research scientist with a Minnesota pharmaceutical company, is sent to Brazil to track down her former mentor, Dr. Annick Swenson, who seems to have all but disappeared in the Amazon while working on what is destined to be an extremely valuable new drug, the development of which has already cost the company a fortune. Nothing about Marina's assignment is easy: not only does no one know where Dr. Swenson is, but the last person who was sent to find her, Marina's research partner Anders Eckman, died before he could complete his mission. Plagued by trepidation, Marina embarks on an odyssey into the insect-infested jungle in hopes of finding her former mentor as well as answers to several troubling questions about her friend's death, the state of her company's future, and her own past. Once found, Dr. Swenson, now in her seventies, is as ruthless and uncompromising as she ever was back in the days of Grand Rounds at Johns Hopkins. With a combination of science and subterfuge, she dominates her research team and the natives she is studying with the force of an imperial ruler. But while she is as threatening as anything the jungle has to offer, the greatest sacrifices to be made are the ones Dr. Swenson asks of herself, and will ultimately ask of Marina, who finds she may still be unable to live up to her teacher's expectations. In a narrative replete with poison arrows, devouring snakes, and a neighboring tribe of cannibals, *State of Wonder* is a world unto itself, where unlikely beauty stands beside unimaginable loss. It is a tale that leads the reader into the very heart of darkness, and then shows us what lies on the other side. (From the publisher)

This is, I guess, an intriguing portrayal of human nature in a unique environment – the Amazon jungle. It's not a book I would ever think of reading again, though it was not poorly written. Maybe it was too subtle or slow paced for my liking. It just never got a hook into me. I give it a C.

Sacred Hearts by Sara Dunant (2010)



The year is 1570, and a new novice has just been forced into the Italian convent of Santa Caterina. Ripped by her family from the man she loves, sixteen-year-old Serafina is sharp and defiant. Her first night inside the walls is spent in an incandescent rage so violent that the dispensary mistress, Suora Zuana, is dispatched to the girl's cell to sedate her. Thus begins a complex relationship of trust and betrayal. As Serafina rails against her incarceration, disorder and rebellion mount inside the convent, while beyond its walls, the dictates of the Counter-Reformation begin to impose a regime of oppression that threatens what little freedom the nuns have enjoyed. Acclaimed author Sarah Dunant brings the intricate Renaissance world compellingly to life in this rich, engrossing, multifaceted love story encompassing the passions of the flesh, the exultation of the spirit, and the deep, enduring power of friendship.(From the publisher)

This review states it far better and more succinctly than I ever could: "A cast of complex characters breathe new life into the classic star-crossed lovers trope, while affording readers a look at a facet of Renaissance life beyond the far more common viscounts and courtesans. Dunant's an accomplished storyteller, and this is a rich and rewarding novel."-"Publishers Weekly"

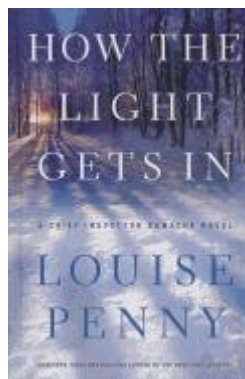
I enjoyed Sacred Hearts, give it a B and encourage you to consider it.

The Tourist by Olen Steinhauer (2012)



Burnt-out CIA agent, Milo Weaver, is forced to head into the field one last time. Milo was once a "tourist" -- an undercover agent with no home, and no identity. He has since retired and is now a mid-level manager at the CIA's New York headquarters. He's acquired a wife, a daughter, and a brownstone in Brooklyn, and left his old life behind. But when the arrest of a long-sought-after assassin sets off an investigation into one of Milo's oldest colleagues and exposes new layers of intrigue in his old cases, Milo goes back undercover to find out who's holding the strings once and for all.)from the publisher)

Steinhauer is often compared favorably to LeCarre, one of the greatest spy novelists of the 20th century. This is a fair comparison. The Tourist has excellent characters and an exciting, well crafted plot. I highly recommend this book and author and give it an A-.



How the Light Gets In by Louise Penny (2013)

Christmas is approaching, and in Quebec it's a time of dazzling snowfalls, bright lights, and gatherings with friends in front of blazing hearths. But shadows are falling on the usually festive season for Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Most of his best

agents have left the Homicide Department, his old friend and lieutenant Jean-Guy Beauvoir hasn't spoken to him in months, and hostile forces are lining up against him. When Gamache receives a message from Myrna Landers that a longtime friend has failed to arrive for Christmas in the village of Three Pines, he welcomes the chance to get away from the city. Mystified by Myrna's reluctance to reveal her friend's name, Gamache soon discovers the missing woman was once one of the most famous people not just in North America, but in the world, and now goes unrecognized by virtually everyone except the mad, brilliant poet Ruth Zardo.

As events come to a head that could profoundly impact not just Quebec, but Canada as a whole, Gamache is drawn ever deeper into the world of Three Pines. Increasingly, he is not only investigating the disappearance of Myrna's friend but also seeking a safe place for himself and his still-loyal colleagues. Who can you trust? How high in the government does the problem permeate? Is there peace to be found even in Three Pines, and at what cost to Gamache and the people he holds dear?

This was my first Penny book, but it definitely won't be my last. She's now on my short list of favorite authors. The suspense starts to build from the first chapter and relentlessly grows by the page. Are the puzzles Gamache working to solve related, or separate?

"How the Light Gets In "is the ninth Chief Inspector Gamache novel and is currently available in hardcover and as an audio book. It will be released in trade paperback format in July 2014. I give it an "A" and highly recommend it to you.

Book Recommendations:

Best Historical Fiction as voted by members of Goodreads.com. Historical fiction encompasses novels that re-create a period or event in history and often use historical figures as some of its characters. To be deemed historical, a novel must have been written at least fifty years after the events described. At The Book Rack, we place some of these titles in different genre. That genre is shown in (parenthesis). You'll notice how consistent we are..... :-p

[Memoirs of a Geisha](#) by Arthur Golden - Speaking to us with the wisdom of age and in a voice at once haunting and startlingly immediate, Nitta Sayuri tells the story of her life as a geisha. It begins in a poor fishing village in 1929, when, as a nine-year-old girl with unusual blue-gray eyes, she is taken from her home and sold into slavery to a renowned geisha house. We witness her transformation as she learns the rigorous arts of the geisha: dance and music; wearing kimono, elaborate makeup, and hair; pouring sake to reveal just a touch of inner wrist; competing with a jealous rival for men's solicitude and the money that goes with it. In *Memoirs of a Geisha*, we enter a world where appearances are paramount; where a girl's virginity is auctioned to the highest bidder; where women are trained to beguile the most powerful men; and where love is

scorned as illusion. It is a unique and triumphant work of fiction--at once romantic, erotic, suspenseful--and completely unforgettable. (General & Historical Fiction)

Gone with the Wind – Margaret Mitchell - Margaret Mitchell's epic novel of love and war won the Pulitzer Prize and went on to give rise to two authorized sequels and one of the most popular and celebrated movies of all time.

Many novels have been written about the Civil War and its aftermath. None take us into the burning fields and cities of the American South as **Gone With the Wind** does, creating haunting scenes and thrilling portraits of characters so vivid that we remember their words and feel their fear and hunger for the rest of our lives. (Classics)

The Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett – In a time of civil war, famine and religious strife, there rises a magnificent Cathedral in Kingsbridge. Against this backdrop, lives entwine: Tom, the master builder, Aliena, the noblewoman, Philip, the prior of Kingsbridge, Jack, the artist in stone and Ellen, the woman from the forest who casts a curse. At once, this is a sensuous and enduring love story and an epic that shines with the fierce spirit of a passionate age. (General & Historical Fiction)

Outlander by Diana Gabaldon - First in a three-book series that combines time travel, humor, and passionate romance. While Claire and her husband visit an ancient stone monument in 1945 England, Claire is suddenly thrust back to the year 1743--and becomes torn between two vastly different men in two irreconcilable lives. (General, Historical & Historical Romance)

The Other Boleyn Girl – Phillips Gregory - A rich, compelling novel of love, sex, ambition, and intrigue surrounding the Tudor court of Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, and the infamous Boleyn family. (General & Historical Fiction)

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak - Set during World War II in Germany, Zusaks groundbreaking novel is the story of Liesel Meminger, a foster girl living outside of Munich. Liesel, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing, encounters something she can't resist: books. (Young Adult)

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant - The red tent is the place where women gather during their cycles of birthing, menses, and even illness. Like the conversations and mysteries held within this feminine tent, this sweeping piece of fiction offers an insiders look at the daily life of a biblical sorority of mothers, wives, and daughters. (General & Historical Fiction)

Water for Elephants by Sara Gruen - An atmospheric, gritty, and compelling novel of star-crossed lovers, set in the circus world circa 1932. When Jacob Jankowski, recently orphaned and suddenly adrift, jumps onto a passing train, he enters a world of freaks, grifters, and misfits, a second-rate circus struggling to survive during the Great Depression, making one-night stands in town after endless town. A veterinary student who almost earned his degree, Jacob is put in charge of caring for the circus menagerie. It is there that he meets Marlena, the beautiful young star of the equestrian

act, who is married to August, the charismatic but twisted animal trainer. He also meets Rosie, an elephant who seems untrainable until he discovers a way to reach her. (General Fiction)

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens - With his sublime parting words, "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done..." Sidney Carton joins that exalted group of Dickensian characters who have earned a permanent place in the popular literary imagination. His dramatic story, set against the volcanic fury of the French Revolution and pervaded by the ominous rumble of the death carts trundling toward the guillotine, is the heart-stirring tale of a heroic soul in an age gone mad. A masterful pageant of idealism, love, and adventure -- in a Paris bursting with revolutionary frenzy, and a London alive with anxious anticipation -- "A Tale of Two Cities is one of Dickens's most energetic and exciting works. (Classics & Childrens)

Girl with the Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier - Housed in a splendid 17th-century palace in The Hague, the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis is home to some of the world's most beloved paintings--including Vermeer's Girl with a Pearl Earring--and has become a destination for art enthusiasts from around the world. This engaging, accessible companion volume to a long-awaited exhibition guides readers through the highlights of the collection as if they were wandering the historic rooms themselves. (General & Historical Fiction)

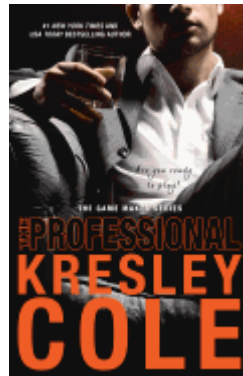
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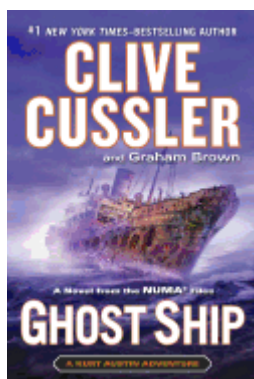


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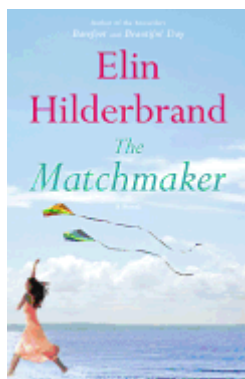
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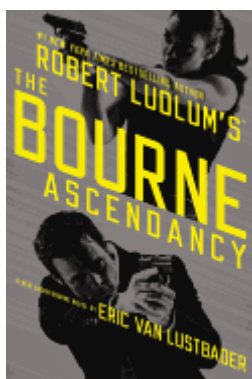
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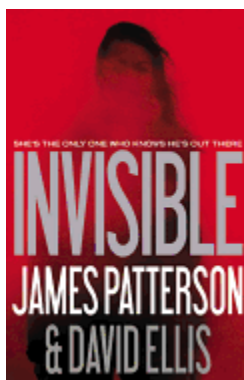
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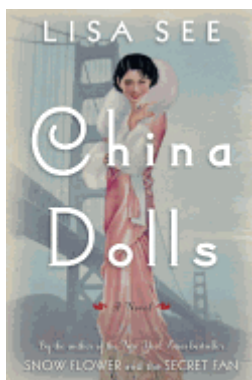
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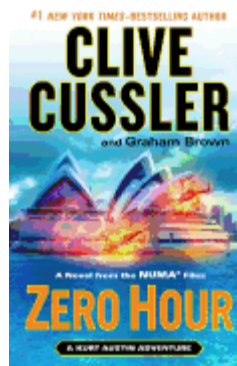
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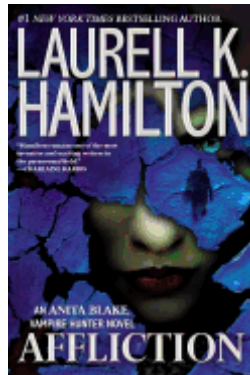
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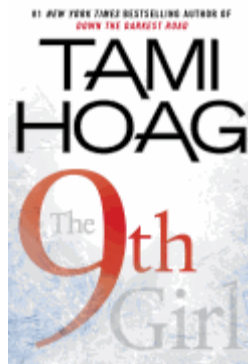
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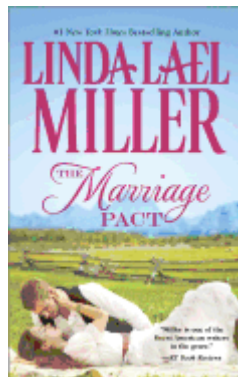


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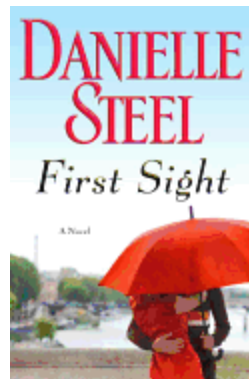
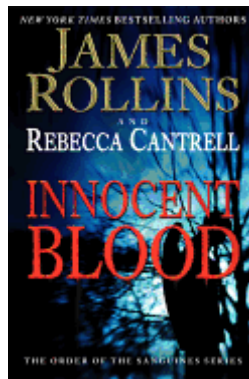
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