

The Book Rack Newsletter

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Vol 8, #6

June 2015

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Walter Pitkin

Reading Trivia:

John Clayton Jr. was the childhood name of what well-known fictional character?

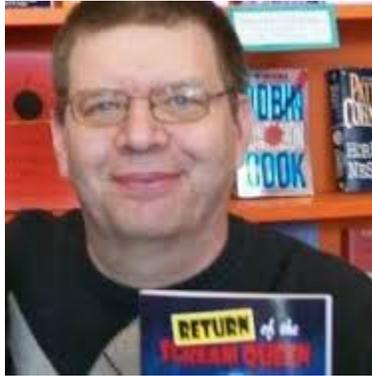
See below for the answers

June Events at The Book Rack

June 6 – Michael McCarty book signing at The Book Rack in Davenport, 1:00 – 5:00

June 27 – Steve Conness book signing at The Book Rack in Moline, 11:00 – 1:00

Free Verse is a regular, monthly feature by one of our wonderful Quad Cities area local authors. This month we're pleased to publish an article by Michael McCarty, [The Book Rack's](#) best selling local author.



A Book Excerpt from MODERN MYTHMAKERS – Interview With Ray Bradbury:

MICHAEL McCARTY: What is the inspiration for the short story “The Crowd”?

RAY BRADBURY: “The Crowd” is a true story in many ways, because when I was fifteen years old, I used to hang out down around Vermont and Washington Boulevard here in Los Angeles, near a graveyard. One night when I was visiting a friend, I heard a car crash outside. We ran out and discovered there was this accident on the street in which five people dropped dead right in front of us. They were staggering around from the wreck and they fell down and died. Within moments, a crowd gathered from nowhere, which was especially strange, because most of the surroundings were the graveyard. There was nowhere for the crowd to come from. The shock of that terrible event stayed with me for years. When I was in my twenties, I wrote it down and turned it into “The Crowd” which I sold to *Weird Tales* (magazine) for fifteen dollars. And that is how “The Crowd” occurred.

McCARTY: *Farewell Summer* is your first sequel to a novel. You have written sequels to your short stories in the past, but never a novel. Why did you decide to write a sequel to *Dandelion Wine*?

BRADBURY: *Farewell Summer* is *Dandelion Wine Part Two*. They were both written at the same time, fifty-five years ago. Therefore, I didn’t have to think about it. I saved the second half and published it

fifty-five years later. It's a sequel, but I didn't have to think about it because it was part of the original story and the publishers decided that *Dandelion Wine* was too long, so they wanted me to cut it in half, which I did. I published the first half as *Dandelion Wine* and *Dandelion Wine Part Two* was called *Farewell Summer*.

McCARTY: In *Farewell Summer* there is an age-old conflict: the young against the elderly in Green Town. Whose side do you sympathize with the most and why?

BRADBURY: Both sides, because I am both of them. All the characters in the book are me. Douglas (Spaulding) is me as a youth, the Colonel (Calvin C. Quartermain) and all of his friends are me when I am old. So I am not on either side; I am on both sides and that is what the whole book is about.

McCARTY: Themes that used to be the driving force of much of Science Fiction in the Golden Age, like interstellar travel, seem to have lost some of their appeal. Agree or disagree?

BRADBURY: I agree, because they haven't had any appeal to me. If you look at all my science fiction stories, you won't find anything there about interstellar travel. I wrote about other things, human things. People, real people moving on to create civilization on Mars (*The Martian Chronicles*). Mars isn't about interstellar travel and all my other fantasy and science fiction in *The Illustrated Man* or *Golden Apples of the Sun* are about dinosaurs; things like that instead of interstellar travel.

McCARTY: What do you think are the main preoccupations with Science Fiction today?

BRADBURY: In my case, I hope readers are interested in my stories and hopes for the future and going back to the moon and gathering our energies together and moving on out to Mars. We should have never left there, and if I can encourage people to back the government to build the rockets to go back to the moon, I hope to do that. And then, sometime in about thirty years, we'll move on to Mars. After Mars, we'll move out to the other planets, moving around other suns, like Alpha Centauri (a multiple star in the Centaurus whose three components represent the bright object in the constellation.) That gives us a chance to be immortal. We can't stay on Earth because Earth isn't going to last forever, but we (mankind) want to last forever. Therefore, space travel is very important and there isn't enough of that being written about in science fiction today. I hope my fellow writers will write about that more often.

I will be doing a story, sometime in the future, about an entire church of priests who go out into the universe in their search for God, not realizing that God is buried in their hearts. You don't search for it (God) in other places. It is in your breast, in your psyche and in your soul – I hope to work on that more and publish it in about two years.

Featured Authors:

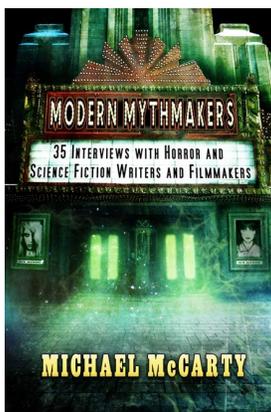
Michael McCarty, whose writing you sampled above in Free Verse and another of our very popular local authors, will be at **The Book Rack** in **Moline** on **Saturday, June 6, 1:00 – 5:00PM**. Mike will have copies of his latest books, including Modern Mythmakers, a collection of 35 interviews from horror and science fiction's most influential writers and filmmakers, including Ray Bradbury, Dean Koontz, Richard Matheson, John Carpenter, John Saul, Joe McKinney, the *Night of the Living Dead* crew (including John Russo, Kyra Schon and Russ Streiner), Elvira, Whitley Strieber, Christopher Moore, and more.

Foreword by: Alan Dean Foster

Afterword by: The Amazing Kreskin

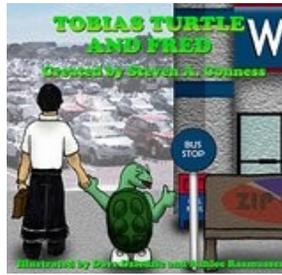
Cover by: Ben Baldwin

Edited by: Joe Mynhardt

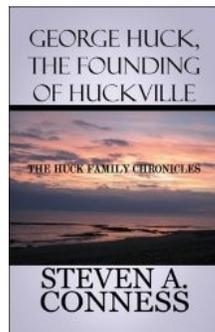


Steven Conness, local author of Tobias Turtle and Fred and George Huck, The Founding of Huckville: The Huck Family Chronicles will join us at the **Davenport Book Rack, Saturday, June 27, 11:00 – 1:00** to visit with you and sign copies of his books.

In Tobias..., Freeloaders. We've all encountered them at one time or another. Tobias Turtle is lazy, self-absorbed, and lives his life preying on the generosity and pity of others. Yet he is not too lazy to have one ridiculous get-rich-quick scheme after another. As a counter-point is human Fred, the hard-working, level-headed and long-suffering victim of Tobias' mooching ways, and attempted voice of reason, who has taken Tobias in and tries, unsuccessfully, to reform him. Allegorically, Fred might be seen as the traditional American citizen, who has come up believing the way to be happy and successful is hard work, moderation in all things and a dedication to help others. Tobias is that element of society that believes in getting something for nothing, in quick-fixes and laziness, self-absorption and excess.



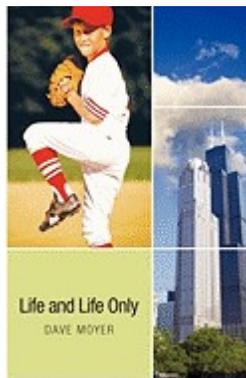
In Huckville..., This is the first in a series of books called The Huck Family Chronicles. The story starts off in the 1600s and it tells why George Huck leaves his family in England and travels to the new land looking for adventure. George seeks adventure but he is too busy with his new friend, Indian maiden "Happy Beaver". George is accepted into her tribe with open arms. He and Happy Beaver eventually have seventeen children together. George builds a school and lodge and this is the beginning of Huckville. George decides to write books about the adventures of all the settlers who stop by the village. He sends the books to England to be sold. These books are the historical account of the founding of Huckville.



Stop in and visit with these talented authors.

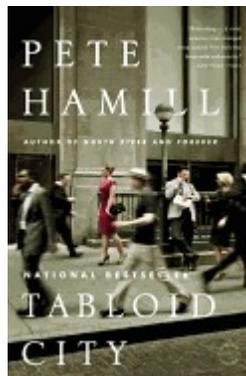
Book Reviews:

Our first review is, of course, from Dave Moyer, 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.



“Someone’s got it in for me, they’re planting stories in the press”
--Bob Dylan
“Idiot Wind”

Pete Hamill’s *Tabloid City* (2011) chronicles the experiences of old-time newspaper man, Sam Briscoe, and his struggles to keep his paper *The New York World* viable in the modern era of overly saturated electronic and cable media.



The story is told in datelines, rather than chapters. Written in three parts, “Night”, “Day”, and “Night, it basically takes place over a period of a day and a half, not accounting for flashbacks and the storytelling required to fill in certain gaps related to the characters’ lives and relationships.

This choppy approach, which attempts to parallel the journalistic style and mimic the pace of New York city and newsroom life, both hits and misses. At the beginning, it is difficult to sense any flow to the story or understand how the characters relate or why they are important. Once this is established, the story works better.

Most of the characters are detached and wanting for love and/or acceptance. They find the drive to keep moving through external means. Sam, who describes himself as married to the newspaper, Malik Watson, a Muslim zealot, Cynthia, a wealthy business woman and socialite, etc.

***Tabloid City* will be a pleaser for some. It is fast paced, laced with intrigue, set in New York, and, after a bit of a confusing start, the middle of the novel is a very enjoyable. At this point, the reader can read in short bursts or extended periods of time without**

losing track of the story, or interest in it for the matter.

The ending falls a bit short. It is hard to figure exactly what purpose some of the characters serve; and, while the ending of the novel is tragic and had potential to satisfy, it is a bit disappointing that some of the characters who were very prominent early on did not play a more significant role in bringing the story to a close.

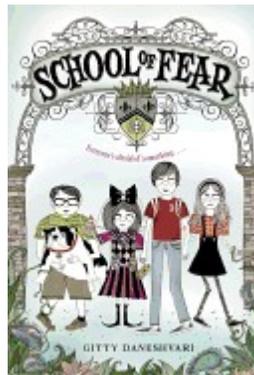
Recommended

This review originally appeared on the Joseph's Reviews site:
<http://josephsreviews.wordpress.com/>

The next 2 reviews are from Claudia!

School of Fear by Gitty Daneshvasri (2010)

FICTION – CHILDREN

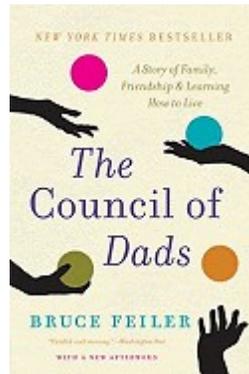


“Everyone’s afraid of something... Madeleine Masterson is afraid of bugs, especially spiders. Theodore Bartholomew is petrified of dying. Lulu Punchalower is scared of confined spaces. Garrison Feldman is terrified of deep water. Which is why this may be the scariest summer of their lives. Worse than detention or summer school. Even worse than the orthodontist. The foursome must face their phobias at the exclusive and elusive School of Fear. The school is unusual, to say the least. But “terrifying” would be a more accurate description. The curriculum is simple: Conquer your fears in six weeks or find out just how frightening failing can be.” (From the back cover.) In addition to following the four kids’ journeys in facing their individual and collective fears, the reader learns a new fear definition at the first of each chapter (e.g., “Chapter 1 Lachanophobia is the fear of vegetables.”) We follow Madeleine, Theo, Lulu and Garrison as they leave their families and are transported to the secretive School of Fear, located at the decrepit Summerstone mansion and run by ancient, former beauty queen Mrs. Wellington, “your teacher, headmistress, and all-round center of the universe at School of Fear” and Schmidty, “the groundskeeper slash cook slash office assistant.” From the moment the kids are faced with arrival by crane, scores of doors along the inside hallway and inedible food, we know this is no usual school.

Friendship, bravery, some gross stuff and surprises all make for fun time for elementary readers.

***THE COUNCIL OF DADS – MY DAUGHTERS, MY ILLNESS, AND THE MEN WHO COULD BE ME* BY BRUCE FEILER (2011)**

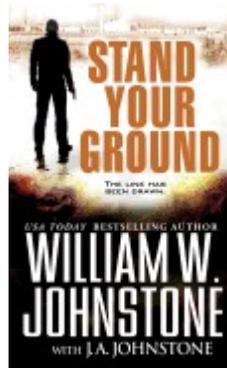
NONFICTION – ADULT



AFTER DIAGNOSIS OF CANCER AND THOUGHTS OF HIS YOUNG TWIN DAUGHTERS NEVER KNOWING HIM, BRUCE FEILER WROTE A LETTER TO SIX MEN FROM IMPORTANT STAGES IN HIS LIFE, ASKING “THE COUNCIL OF DADS”, “WILL YOU BE MY VOICE?” THE BOOK RECAPS SOME OF FEILER’S SIGNIFICANT LIFE EXPERIENCES BEFORE THE DIAGNOSIS, AS WELL AS SPEAKING SPECIFICALLY TO EACH OF THE 6 MEN HE HAS CHOSEN TO HELP GUIDE HIS DAUGHTERS IF AND WHEN NEEDED. FEILER WRITES OF THE VERY TOUCHING AND HUMAN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST. GOOD BOOK.

The rest of the reviews are mine!

Stand Your Ground by William W. Johnstone (2014)

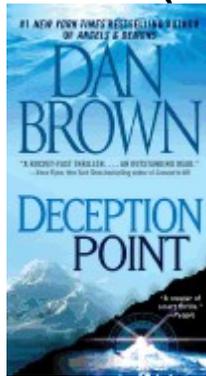


After the President closes Guantanamo Bay to hold civilian trials for the terrorists, some of them are relocated to Hell's Gate Prison in West Texas. Until a group of fanatical sleeper-cell shock troops launch an all-out assault to 'liberate' their jailed comrades. There's just one problem: they don't know that Army Ranger Lucas Kincaid

is working at Hell's Gate. With the town's high school team held hostage and in danger of being executed one by one, Kincaid assembles a ragtag band of survivors and aging hardcore cons into a lethal fighting force to keep the unholy warriors from their deadly mission. And Kincaid and his men are on their own - everyone, from the President on down, orders Kincaid to give in to the terrorists' demands. But warrior Lucas Kincaid, out-numbered and out-gunned, won't back down.

I've read Johnstone's westerns and thoroughly enjoyed them, but had not read any of his contemporary thrillers, until now. I Found the basic premise and story line interesting and well written. Unfortunately, Johnstone overlaid his personal political bias. I understand the need to establish the slant of the characters, but he continually overcooked it and I gave up after 100 pages. I read political commentary, but don't want it in my face in every chapter of a novel. I give this book a C- and plan to stick to his westerns!

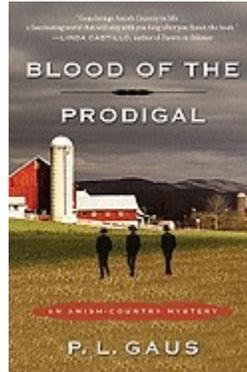
Deception Point by Dan Brown (2003)



A shocking scientific discovery. A conspiracy of staggering brilliance. A thriller unlike any you've ever read.... When a NASA satellite discovers an astonishingly rare object buried deep in the Arctic ice, the floundering space agency proclaims a much-needed victory -- a victory with profound implications for NASA policy and the impending presidential election. To verify the authenticity of the find, the White House calls upon the skills of intelligence analyst Rachel Sexton. Accompanied by a team of experts, including the charismatic scholar Michael Tolland, Rachel travels to the Arctic and uncovers the unthinkable: evidence of scientific trickery -- a bold deception that threatens to plunge the world into controversy. But before she can warn the president, Rachel and Michael are ambushed by a team of assassins. Fleeing for their lives across a desolate and lethal landscape, their only hope for survival is to discover who is behind this masterful plot. The truth, they will learn, is the most shocking deception of all.

Really a well done thriller! We all know how well Brown did with his DaVinci Code trilogy and Deception Point is just as great a novel, though not as well known. I give it an A- and a strong recommendation.

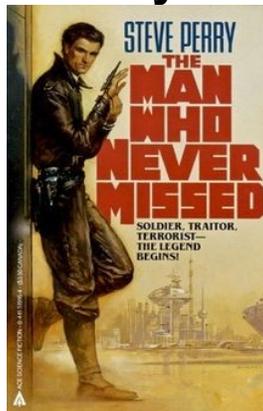
Blood of the Prodigal, an Amish-Country Mystery by P.L. Gaus (2000)



The Amish, or “plain people”, and English, or “vain ones,” share a home in the pastoral hills of Ohio. As summer approaches, boyhood friends and lifelong residents pastor Caleb Troyer and Professor Michael Branden anticipate a season of fishing for bass, until a ten-year-old boy disappears from the home of the Amish bishop who had exiled the boy’s father a decade earlier. “Say little. Listen a lot” are Troyer and Branden’s simple watchwords and they begin, at the behest of Bishop Eli Miller, to work the case. Following the bishop’s mysterious strictures, the pair is plunged into the traditionally closed Amish society whose followers, innately suspicious of English ways., have been suddenly made vulnerable to the dangers of the world. When the man suspected of seizing the boy turns up dead, Sheriff Bruce Robertson takes up the investigation – only to uncover truths that many, especially the bishop, would prefer to leave undisturbed. Deeply atmospheric and morally complex, this book is the first in a riveting series that explores a fascinating culture of a people set purposely apart from mainstream America.

A very good mystery. Set in the Amish country it gives a peek into that culture, but is first and foremost a mystery. I give it a B+ and a solid recommendation.

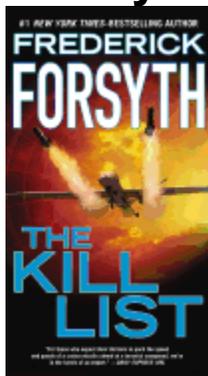
The Man Who Never Missed by Steve Perry (1985)



“A single man cannot hope to change an entire galaxy!” These words of caution were lost on Emile Khadaji. He was a man on fire., burning with desire for justice in a universe ruled by the brutal forces of the Galactic Confederation. Once he had been a member of those forces. He had taken part in terrible slaughters in the name of law and order. Then one day he had walked away from the battlefield a new man. A man no one knew, with a secret plan that he shared with no other. Not his mysterious mentor, who taught him how to use his body as a deadly weapon. Not even with the beautiful exotic whom he loved – and had to leave. For on the planet Greaves, the Shamba Freedom Forces are gathering. No one ever sees them. No one can understand how they bring Confed to its knees. No one knows who they are. Until Khadaji is ready for them to know...

Another really good SciFi novel! I give it an A- and recommend highly books by Steve Perry for their creativity and just fun reading.

The Kill List by Frederick Forsyth (2014)

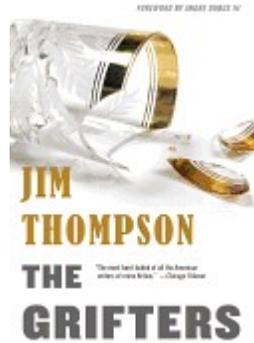


In northern Virginia, a secret agency named TOSA (Technical Operations Support Activity) has one mission: to track, find, and kill those so dangerous to the United States that they are on a short, very close-held document known as the Kill List. Now a new name has been added: a terrorist of frightening effectiveness called the Preacher, who radicalizes young Muslims living abroad to carry out assassinations. Unfortunately for him, one of his targets is a retired Marine general, whose son is TOSA's top tracker of men.

The Preacher has made it personal--and now the hunt is on....

I love Forsyth's books and this one is every bit as good as his previous titles. The pace is unrelenting as is Tracker. The scope is global. If you like thrillers, this book is not to be missed. I give it an A!

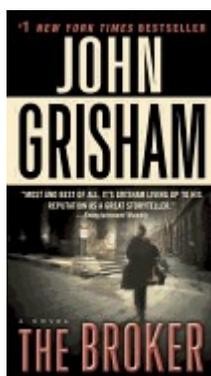
The Grifters by Jim Thompson (1963)



To his friends, to his coworkers, and even to his mistress Moira, Roy Dillon is an honest hardworking salesman. He lives in a cheap hotel just within his pay bracket. He goes to work every day. He has hundreds of friends and associates who could attest to his good character. Yet, hidden behind three gaudy clown paintings in Roy's pallid hotel room, sits fifty-two thousand dollars--the money Roy makes from his short cons, his grifting. For years, Roy has effortlessly maintained control over his house-of-cards life--until the simplest con goes wrong, and he finds himself critically injured and at the mercy of the most dangerous woman he ever met: his own mother. **THE GRIFTERS**, one of the best novels ever written about the art of the con, is an ingeniously crafted story of deception and betrayal that was the basis for Stephen Frears' and Martin Scorsese's critically-acclaimed film of the same name--;Provided by publisher.;To his friends, to his coworkers, and even to his mistress Moira, Roy Dillon is an honest hardworking salesman. He lives in a cheap hotel just within his pay bracket. He goes to work every day. He has hundreds of friends and associates who could attest to his good character. Yet, hidden behind three gaudy clown paintings in Roy's pallid hotel room, sits fifty-two thousand dollars--the money Roy makes from his short cons, his grifting. For years, Roy has effortlessly maintained control over his house-of-cards life--until the simplest con goes wrong, and he finds himself critically injured and at the mercy of the most dangerous woman he ever met: his own mother. **THE GRIFTERS**, one of the best novels ever written about the art of the con, is an ingeniously crafted story of deception and betrayal that was the basis for Stephen Frears' and Martin Scorsese's critically-acclaimed film of the same name--;Provided by publisher. (Publishers Marketing)

A classic worthy of the name. I give it a B+. An interesting book that gives you an insight into the con game. I learned a lot! No an uplifting book but very well written.

The Broker by John Grisham (2012)

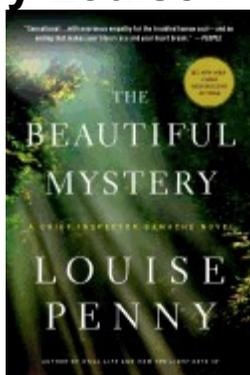


In his final hours in office, the outgoing President grants a controversial last-minute pardon to Joel Backman, a notorious Washington power broker who has spent the last six years hidden away in a federal prison. What no one knows is that the President issues the pardon only after receiving enormous pressure from the CIA. It seems that Backman, in his heyday, may have obtained secrets that compromise the world's most sophisticated satellite surveillance system.

Backman is quietly smuggled out of the country in a military cargo plane, given a new name, a new identity, and a new home in Italy. Eventually, after he has settled into his new life, the CIA will leak his whereabouts to the Israelis, the Russians, the Chinese, and the Saudis. Then the CIA will do what it does best: sit back and watch. The question is not whether Backman will survive--there is no chance of that. The question the CIA needs answered is, Who will kill him?

My first Grisham book was not one I could recommend highly. The Broker, however, is a real winner. Very exciting and well crafted. Pick it up. You'll be glued to your favorite reading chair!

The Beautiful Mystery by Louise Penny (2012)



No outsiders are ever admitted to the monastery of Saint-Gilbert-Entre-les-Loups, hidden deep in the wilderness of Quebec, where two dozen cloistered monks live in peace and prayer. They grow vegetables, they tend chickens, they make chocolate. And they sing. Ironically, for a community that has taken a vow of silence, the monks have become world-famous for their glorious voices, raised in ancient chants whose

effect on both singer and listener is so profound it is known as "the beautiful mystery."

But when the renowned choir director is murdered, the lock on the monastery's massive wooden door is drawn back to admit Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and Jean-Guy Beauvoir of the Surete du Quebec. There they discover disquiet beneath the silence, discord in the apparent harmony. One of the brothers, in this life of prayer and contemplation, has been contemplating murder. As the peace of the monastery crumbles, Gamache is forced to confront some of his own demons, as well as those roaming the remote corridors. Before finding the killer, before restoring peace, the Chief must first consider the divine, the human, and the cracks in between. (From the cover)

I've often praised Louise Penny and her Chief Inspector Gamache series. Well, this is her best that I've read! Very interesting setting painted so beautifully by Penny's writing. The unexpected appearance of the Chief Superintendent, Gamache's superior and antagonist, complicates the investigation on both a professional and a personal basis. Mysteries don't get much better than this one! I give it an A and a strong recommendation.

Reading Trivia Answer:

John Clayton Jr. was the childhood name of what well-known fictional character?

Tarzan, whose title was Lord Greystoke.

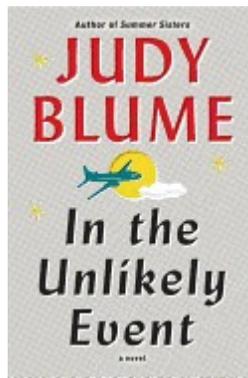
Upcoming New Releases: I'm changing the approach for this section, only listing a few titles that seem to me to be potentially quite good. I'll include a brief description of each. Your feedback is always appreciated. Just drop me a note at:

BookRackQC@Gmail.com.

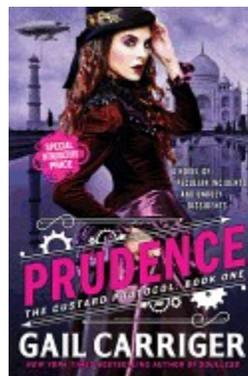
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Hardcover:

Judy Blume – In the Unlikely Event – 27.95/22.40



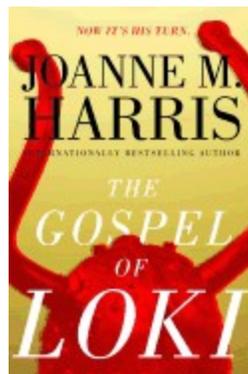
Terry Brooks – The Defenders of Shannara – 28.00/22.40
Gail Carriger – Prudence; The Custard Protocol Book One – 20.00/16.00



Twenty-year-old Prudence "Rue" Akeldama and her friends journey in a gaudy dirigible to India in search of a superior type of tea for her adoptive father, a wealthy vampire, only to run headfirst into danger, intrigue, and local politics.

Tom Clancy/Grant Blackwood – Under Fire; a Jack Ryan Novel – 28.95/23.20

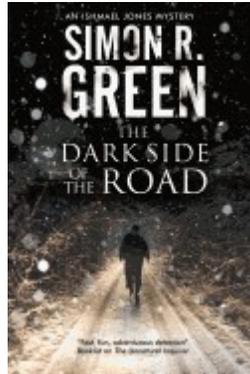
Joanne M. Harris – The Gospel of Loki – 25.99/20.80



This novel is a brilliant first-person narrative of the rise and fall of the Norse gods--retold from the point of view of the world's ultimate trickster, Loki.

Mary Higgins Clark – The Melody Lingers On – 26.99/21.60

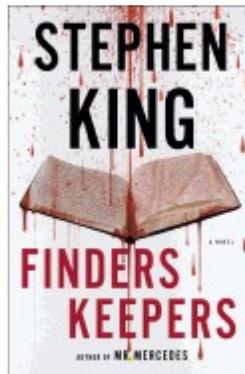
Simon R. Green – The Darkside of the Road – 28.95/23.20



Ishmael Jones is someone who can't afford to be noticed, someone who lives under the radar, who drives on the dark side of the road. He's employed to search out secrets, investigate mysteries and shine a light in dark places.

Sara Gruen – At the Water's Edge – 28.00/22.40

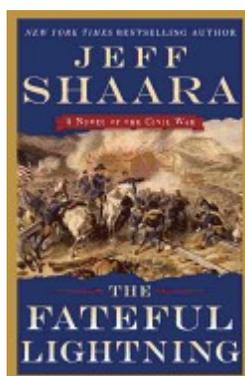
Stephen King – Finders Keepers – 30.00/24.00



James Patterson – Truth or Die – 28.00/22.40

James Rollins – The Bone Labyrinth – 27.99/22.40

Jeff Shaara – The Fateful Lightning – 28.00/22.40



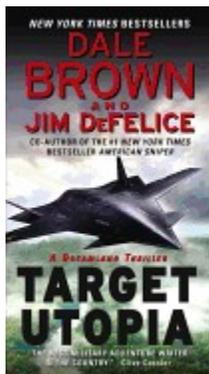
November, 1864. As the Civil War rolls into its fourth bloody year, the tide has turned decidedly in favour of the Union. A grateful Abraham Lincoln responds to Grant's successes by bringing the General east, promoting Grant to command of the entire Union war effort. In Grant's place, William T. Sherman now commands the Federal forces that occupy all of Tennessee.

Daniel Silva – The English Spy – 27.99/22.40

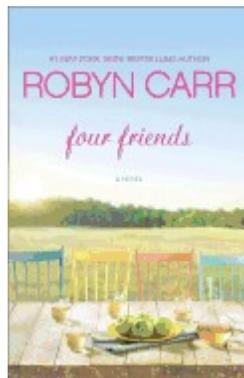
Danielle Steel – Country – 28.00/22.40

Paperback:

Dale Brown – Target Utopia – 9.99/8.00

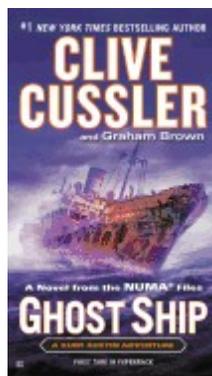


Robyn Carr – Four Friends – 7.99/6.40



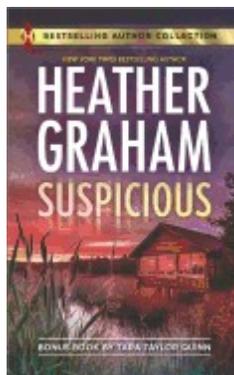
Ralph Compton – Shotgun Charlie – 6.99/5.60

Clive Cussler – Ghost Ship – 9.99/8.00



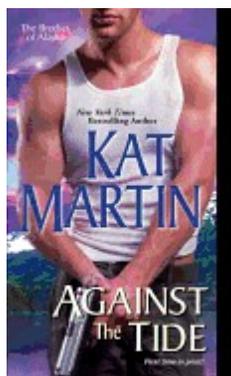
Janet Evanovich – Top Secret Twenty-one – 8.99/7.20

Heather Graham – Suspicious – 6.99/5.60



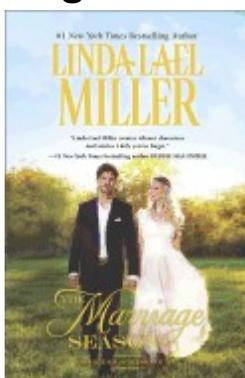
William W. Johnstone – Shot in the Back – 7.50/6.00

Kat Martin – Against the Tide – 7.99/6.40

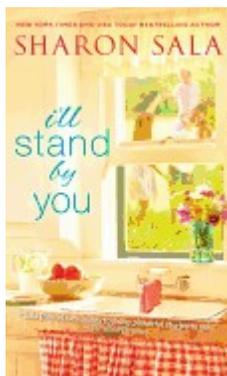


Brad Metzler – Fifth Assassin – 8.00/6.40

Linda Lael Miller – The Marriage Season – 7.99/6.40

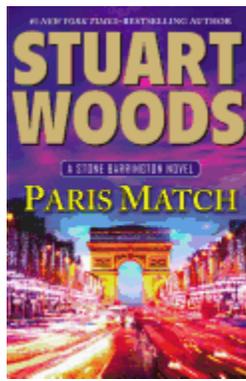


Sara Sala – I'll Stand By You – 7.99/6.40



Brad Thor – Act of War – 9.99/8.00

Stuart Woods – Paris Match – 9.99/8.00



Sherryl Woods – The Calamity Janes: Gina & Emma – 7.99/6.40

