

The Book Rack Newsletter

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

Vol 8, #1
January 2015
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

"Life is a bunch of short stories pretending to be a novel."

Anonymous

Did you know?

What writer was expelled from West Point for showing up for public parade wearing only a white belt and gloves?

Edgar Allen Poe

Please Note: The Book Racks will be closed New Years Day .

January Holidays and such:

Happy New Year!!

Blood Donor Month
Hot Tea Month
Hobby Month

- 1 – New Years Day – **The Book Racks** are closed today
- 3 – Humiliation Day – A time to acknowledge the negativity of humiliating

someone, or a group of people.

7 – Old Rock Day – Enjoy and appreciate old rocks (doesn't that apply to ALL rocks) and fossils.

10 – Peculiar People Day – See Old Rock Day (above)

16 – Appreciate a Dragon Day – Get yourself a great Fantasy Book with Dragons from our Childrens section or our Sci Fi & Fantasy section.

16 – National Nothing Day

18 – Winnie-the-Pooh Day

19 – Martin Luther King Day – [The Book Racks](#) will be open.

23 – National Hand Writing Day

26 – Spouses Day

28 – Fun at Work Day

31 – Backward Day

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.

Rule #1 for Every Writer: Be Mindful!

Ann Boaden



The deer was in my front yard. I saw it when I came home from dinner with friends. It lay at ease, long legs tucked under it, head alert. Against the grass that shimmered in my porch light, it was a shape of black velvet.

A foxglove is a fuchsia colored trumpet lined with lace like a doily. I saw that on a walk in England.

Geese straggle overhead, the dark rope of their V flapping loose across the

sky. Their cries are both absurd and haunting.

A kid with pink hair and jeans accorded around his oversized Nikes shuffles by—and looks up with a sudden, dazzling smile.

Who cares about these things? Readers care. As the best writers know, it's the small stuff of daily living, the quick, vivid sense impressions, the trivial movements of the human heart, as essayist E. B. White puts it, that connect people, build bridges from spirit to spirit. Connecting: that's what good writing is all about.

Writers fill a deep need when they make such connections. Because unfortunately, in our multi-tasking daily lives, we forget the little things. We forget to pause, to let our senses school us in the richness of our world. And when we forget that, we forget who we are. We abandon our full and real humanity. We disconnect from others.

So we need writers to remind and recall us.

That, I believe, is our deepest responsibility as writers. The poet and priest G. M. Hopkins said, "The world is charged with the grandeur of God." He meant charged like lightning. But also charged with responsibility for noticing and celebrating that grandeur. Whether you call it God, or the potent forces of beauty and terror in the world we so mysteriously and so briefly share, take up that charge to notice and celebrate.

Here are some ways you can do it:

- Practice mindfulness. Learn from your dog. That is, be aware of your world. Take the buds out of your ears. Lose the cell phone and the texting. Look around. Listen. Touch and sniff. Be endlessly curious, and excited about your curiosity.
- Keep a journal. Take it with you wherever you go, and jot down on site the things you notice. Don't think you'll remember them when you get home because you won't. They'll vanish, or worse, fade into cliché. Make notes while the impressions are fresh and vivid and uniquely *yours*.
- Do two things your mother warned you against: (1) eavesdrop on conversations and (2) stare at people. Try to do it unobtrusively, so you don't utterly betray Mom's training in elementary courtesy. Besides, if you're too obvious, people will notice and clam up. Write down what you see and hear.
- Again, learn from your dog. In her own way, with her nose to the ground, she's asking questions of her world. Do that in your human way. Ask: what do these things I've noticed *mean*? What's with that silent couple, forking down their roast beef at the corner table without

saying a word to each other? Who taught that teenager to be so gentle and patient with his frankly exasperating grandmother? And why do I notice these things? What about them—and me—makes them catch my attention? Life is full of little mysteries, and these hold the secrets of stories, poems, essays (a.k.a. creative nonfiction pieces). Seek them out!

And here's the payoff: being mindful of your world will not only make you a better writer; it will make you a richer, more interesting, and—dare I say it?—a happier person.

Ann Boaden is a part-time instructor in the Department of English at Augustana College and the author of the book "Light and Leaven: Women Who Shaped Augustana's First Century" available at [The Book Racks](#).

Book Reviews:

The first review is by 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 serious consideration when you are next in the stores.

Misery Bay Delivers the Goods

Steve Hamilton's *Misery Bay* is, in some ways, a typical crime novel. In many ways, however, it is far from typical or cliché. The characters have some moxie and they intrigue the reader, and the plot, which is the key to stories of this genre, is far from formulaic. Hamilton is adept at providing subtle twists and turns just at the point that the reader thinks they finally are on track to reach a satisfying conclusion to the story.

In this novel, a continuation of the Alex McKnight mysteries, the former cop and current private investigator, ever the hero, crosses many lines in pursuit of a serial killer. In the process, he teams up with police chief Roy Maven, an unlikely pairing, to face treacherous circumstances at virtually every turn.

The novel takes place primarily in the solitary terrain of the Upper Peninsula, Michigan, creating a perfect backdrop to the tenor of the tale and the characters that inhabit it.

And, for the true cop-lovers among us, there are cops everywhere: old ones, current ones, dead ones—they're everywhere!

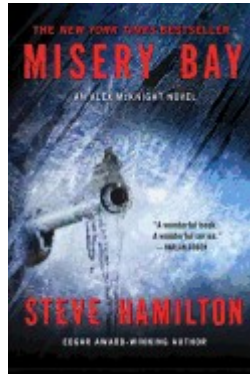
About a third of the way through, each chapter is introduced with director

comments on film scenes. At first, one can see that they generally relate to the story, but they don't truly make sense until much further into the story. This tactic is a bit annoying initially, but it does spark the reader's curiosity, and in the end, it clearly works as the story reaches its intriguing climax and ultimate resolution.

If one suspends belief just a bit (hey, this is a novel after all), and tolerates a few minor leaps of faith, there is little to quibble with. *Misery Bay* satisfies.

Purists might quibble with minor specific aspects of the dialogue, details of the police interactions, or the reality of the film scenes or script references, but none of that gets in the way of the reader's overall enjoyment of the story.

Well Recommended



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

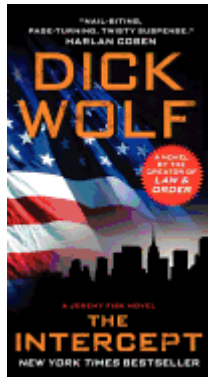
The Intercept, a Jeremy Fisk Novel, by Dick Wolf (2013)

Dick Wolf, the celebrated creator of the Law & Order television franchise, makes his literary debut with *The Intercept*, a taut, driving thriller reminiscent of the classic *The Day of the Jackal*.

Days before the July Fourth holiday and the dedication of One World Trade Center at Ground Zero, an incident aboard a commercial jet reminds everyone involved that vigilance saves lives.

But New York Police detective Jeremy Fisk--from the department's Intelligence Division, a well-funded anti-terror unit modeled upon the CIA--suspects that the event is a warning sign that another, potentially more extraordinary scheme has been set in motion. So when a passenger from the same plane disappears into the crowds of Manhattan, it's up to Fisk and his partner Krina Gersten to find him before the celebrations begin... And time is running out.(From the publisher's materials)

You may not recognize the name, Dick Wolf, but you surely know of his work as the creator of the Law & Order TV series. And, you will very likely know him far better as he expands the number of titles available. This is his debut novel and he scored very well with it. I really like his writing style – not much clutter, complex scenario, compelling characters. I give it a solid B+ and look forward to his next book with great expectations.



A Dead Man out of Mind by Kate Charles (1994)

'A woman priest at St Margaret's? Over my dead body!'

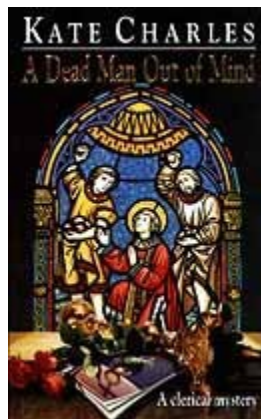
Dolly Topping, head of the national organisation 'Ladies Opposed to Women Priests' and wife of one of the churchwardens, feels that strongly about it. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Father Julian, the well-loved curate of St Margaret's, should have been killed in a burglary gone wrong. And doubly unfortunate that the Vicar, upwardly-aspiring William Keble Smythe, should choose to appoint a woman to replace him. From the moment that Rachel Nightingale enters the serene Anglo-Catholic world of St Margaret's, tempers and emotions run high; Christian charity is not much in evidence, even among those who espouse it most loudly.

Meanwhile, solicitor David Middleton-Brown finds his life complicated by difficult clients and a trying visit from Lucy Kingsley's teenage niece Ruth. Then he becomes involved as an unwilling pawn in a dangerous game of bluff and double bluff between a pair of scheming churchwardens and a Vicar with an agenda of his own. Why are Martin Bairstow and Norman Topping determined to sell the church's silver? Why is Father Keble Smythe prepared to allow them to do it? And what does it all have to do with the new female curate? Most importantly of all, perhaps, why has no one told David about what happened to their last curate?

Then another 'accidental' death at St Margaret's unites its parishioners in new heights of hypocrisy, and leaves Ruth Kingsley crying 'murder'. But David remains sceptical -

until he learns about Father Julian's death. With the encouragement of the Archdeacon and interference from Ruth, he and Lucy embark on a search for the truth about the 'dead man out of mind', and discover more than they ever wanted to know about greed, hypocrisy, ambition - and the cost of love. (from the author's web site)

An English ecclesiastic murder mystery – my first, I believe. The book starts fast with a murder in the first page. Then it slows to a casual English stroll through Pimlico and a diverse cast of characters. The first half of the book sets the stage, so to speak, before the action begins to accelerate. Being more of an action lover, this was rather a struggle to navigate. The last half, and particularly the final couple chapters, made the fight worth the effort, mostly. I give it a C+ and challenge you to figure out who the killer is before page 300. It's not a long book and it does keep you engaged in the last ½.

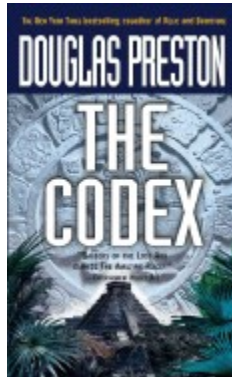


Codex by Lev Grossman (2004)

When hotshot young investment banker Edward Wozny is called to the home of an important and mysterious client, the last thing he expects is to be ordered to uncrate and organize a library of rare books. Edward's indignation turns to curiosity when he learns that among the volumes there may be hidden a unique medieval codex, a priceless treasure kept sealed away for many years and for many reasons. Enlisting the help of Margaret Napier, a passionate and brilliant medieval scholar, Edward learns the strange history of the codex's author, Gervase of Langford, as well as the dark, intricate tale that lies within the missing medieval text. As Edward's obsession with the codex deepens, friends introduce him to MOMUS, an addictive computer game set in a fantasy world that, perplexingly, begins to parallel the legend of the codex. Yet MOMUS confounds more than it clarifies, and it becomes evident that someone is trying to prevent Edward and Margaret from ever finding the elusive codex. As they race against an unknown enemy, the two begin to uncover secrets that the codex's powerful owner will do anything to keep hidden. An accomplished, powerful literary thriller, Codex explores dark mysteries of both the

medieval era and the present, keeping readers guessing right up until its astonishing conclusion. (from the cover)

Ian Pears has said, “Part literary history, part computer game, *Codex* is a dreamy, strange tale that blends the landscapes of New York and the electronic imagination. A thought-provoking and compulsively readable novel.” I’d agree with this, except maybe skip the “compulsively readable part. Not that I disliked it, but didn’t have a terribly hard time putting it down. I’d give it a C+. If you liked *The DaVinci Code*, but don’t generally read such long and complex books, give *Codex* a whirl. I think you’ll enjoy it.



The Expected One by Kathleen McGowen (2007)

A GRIPPING THRILLER AND A PROFOUND SPIRITUAL JOURNEY THAT REVEALS THE GREATEST STORY NEVER TOLD!

Two thousand years ago, Mary Magdalene hid a set of scrolls in the rocky foothills of the French Pyrenees, a gospel that contained her own version of the events and characters of the New Testament. Protected by supernatural forces, these sacred scrolls could be uncovered only by a special seeker, one who fulfills the ancient prophecy of "l'attendue" -- The Expected One.

When journalist Maureen Paschal begins the research for a new book, she has no idea that she is stepping into an ancient mystery so secret, so revolutionary, that thousands of people have killed and died for it. She becomes deeply immersed in the mystical cultures of southwest France as the eerie prophecy of The Expected One casts a shadow over her life and work and a long-buried family secret comes to light. Ultimately she, and the reader, come face-to-face with Jesus Christ, Mary Magdalene, John the Baptist, Judas, and Salome in the pages of a deeply moving and powerful new gospel, the life of Jesus as told by Mary Magdalene.

I listened to this on audiobook and enjoyed it. I give it a B and recommend it to those who enjoy religious suspense novels. It definitely kept my interest and attention. And, if you do like it, there are two more titles in her Magdalene Line series!

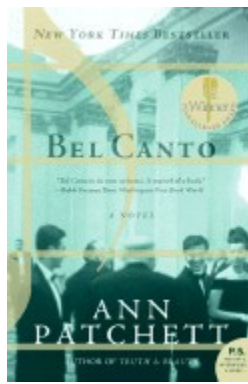


Bel Canto by Ann Patchett (2005)

Somewhere in South America, at the home of the country's vice president, a lavish birthday party is being held in honor of the powerful businessman Mr. Hosokawa. Roxanne Coss, opera's most revered soprano, has mesmerized the international guests with her singing. It is a perfect evening -- until a band of gunwielding terrorists takes the entire party hostage. But what begins as a panicked, life-threatening scenario slowly evolves into something quite different, a moment of great beauty, as terrorists and hostages forge unexpected bonds and people from different continents become compatriots. Friendship, compassion, and the chance for great love lead the characters to forget the real danger that has been set in motion... and can't be stopped.

The New York magazine stated it very well; "The author has taken what could have been a variation on "The Lord of the Flies" scenario and fashioned instead a "Lord of the Butterflies," a dreamlike fable in which the impulses toward beauty and love are shown to be as irrepressible as the instincts for violence and destruction."

What a wonderful book! Not my normal suspense/thriller fare, but a terrific read. It won the Pen/Faulkner Award and I give it an A and highly recommend it.



Still Life with Bread Crumbs by Anna Quindlen (2014)

A superb love story from Anna Quindlen, the #1 "New York Times" bestselling author of "Rise and Shine, Blessings, "and" A Short Guide to a Happy Life"

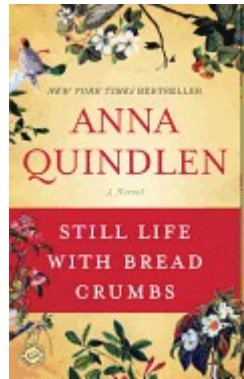
"Still Life with Bread Crumbs" begins with an imagined gunshot and ends with a new tin roof. Between the two is a wry and knowing portrait of Rebecca Winter, a photographer whose work made her an unlikely heroine for many women. Her career is now descendent, her bank balance shaky, and she has fled the city for the middle of nowhere. There she discovers, in a tree stand with a roofer named Jim Bates, that what she sees through a camera lens is not all there is to life.

Brilliantly written, powerfully observed, "Still Life with Bread Crumbs" is a deeply moving and often very funny story of unexpected love, and a stunningly crafted journey into the life of a woman, her heart, her mind, her days, as she discovers that life is a story with many levels, a story that is longer and more exciting than she ever imagined.

"There comes a moment in every novelist's career when she . . . ventures into new territory, breaking free into a marriage of tone and style, of plot and characterization, that's utterly her own. Anna Quindlen's marvelous romantic comedy of manners is just such a book. . . . Taken as a whole, Quindlen's writings represent a generous and moving interrogation of women's experience across the lines of class and race. "(From the publisher)

Another wonderful digression from my regular suspense/mystery/thriller fare. I thoroughly enjoyed "Still Life.." The evolution of Rebecca's life from high culture, success and wealth to solitude in a rural setting, waning career and lost stability and back to a new, more comfortable normal was enlightening and uplifting. I listened to this book as read by Carrington MacDuffie, after picking it up on a whim while traveling. It's a terrific book and performed wonderfully by MacDuffie. I give it an A- and highly recommend it in paper or on CD or MP3. It was a very pleasant read. DO you like

Dalia Ephron, Julia Glass, Anne Tyler or Kent Haruf?? Then you'll likely enjoy Anna Quindlen.



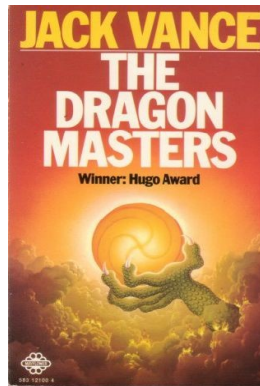
The Dragon Masters by Jack Vance (1963)

The story describes a human society living under pre-industrial conditions that has bred lizard-like intelligent aliens to function as warriors, and an encounter with a ship from the alien planet, containing both the same aliens, and humans bred by them for similar purposes. Aerlith is a planet of rocks and wilderness orbiting a distant bright star known as Skene which appears as "an actinic point" in the daytime. The sky is described as being black rather than blue. The planet's rotation is slow, taking several days. It is so slow that dawn and dusk are accompanied by storms that follow the boundary between day and night around the planet. The night has an effect on the "Dragons" of the title, making them more vicious and unmanageable. This means that all movement of the armies must take place during daylight. Humans live in valleys where the soil is good. Occasionally they make war on each other across the hills, passes and fells between their valley homes. Their technology is limited to steel and gunpowder. They also use semi-precious stones for decoration. After many years, a spaceship appears and abducts as many humans as can be caught. The settlements are also bombarded, ensuring that humanity will not rise above its present technological level. During one such raid, a charismatic leader named Kergan Banbeck captures a group of the alien raiders, who are accompanied by their human servants. Without their masters, the humans go mad and destroy the ship. The aliens, many-limbed lizard-like creatures known as "grephs", become prisoners of the humans they came to kidnap. (From Wikipedia)

This novella was awarded a Hugo in 1963. The Hugo Awards are a set of awards given annually for the best science fiction or [fantasy](#) works and achievements of the previous year.

I thoroughly enjoyed The Dragon Masters. It's a quick 122 page story with lots of very

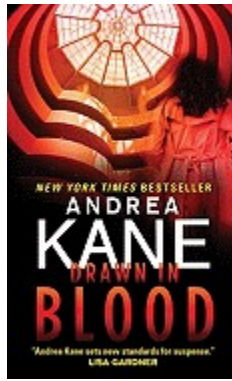
creative twists and turns. The various dragons play various roles as warriors for the humans, whether fighting competing humans or aliens. If you've never read science fictions, pick up a Hugo Award winning book and settle in for a great read. But, you have to open your mind to creatures, places and concepts your never conceived of, but, those are what HG Wells wrote about that have no become reality! Will we ever have trained dragons?? Who knows. I give The Dragon Masters an "A" - How could a Hugo Award winner get anything else!



Drawn in Blood by Andrea Kane (2009)

Former FBI Special Agent Sloane Burbank's seen her share of danger, but she never expected that danger to invade the lives of her family. Her mother's viciously attacked in the posh Manhattan apartment her parents share and it quickly becomes clear that this is no ordinary robbery. They were obviously after something of her father's, and she soon realizes he's in over his head. Determined to unearth the truth, Sloane discovers a deadly secret buried in his past that's made him the target of a power-hungry mobster with a lethal agenda and nothing to lose. Sloan is desperate to save her father, but to do so she must hold on to secrets of her own – especially from FBI Special Agent Derek Parker, the man she has grown to love deeply. She knows she must tell him everything, but how can she betray her father's confidence? Can a couple who's faced so much survive this ultimate test of trust? Will they survive at all? As the decades-old secret claims the lives of her father's oldest friends and the killer closes in on him, Sloane finds herself in foreign territory: alone, facing escalating personal danger, and hunting a moving target in a world where memories are long and loyalties are drawn in blood.

I give Drawn in Blood a B+ and a strong recommendation. It was suspenseful, well conceived and well written. If you like Lisa Gardner, Linda Howard or Kay Hooper, you'll probably like Andrea Kane.



The Book of Lost Things by John Connolly (2006)

High in his attic bedroom, twelve-year-old David mourns the death of his mother. He is angry and alone, with only the books on his shelf for company. But those books have begun to whisper to him in the darkness, and as he takes refuge in his imagination, he finds that David's reality and fantasy have begun to meld. While his family falls apart around him, David is violently propelled into a land that is a strange reflection of his own world, populated by heroes and monsters, and ruled over by a faded king who keeps his secrets in a mysterious book... The Book of Lost Things, which could help David return to his own world.

Wonderfully inventive from the first page to the last, The Book of Lost Things is a riveting fantasy and a dark reminder that we all must brave the journey from youth to adulthood.



This was a great adventure tale well suited for youth to adults of all ages. I listened to the audio book read by Steven Crossley, who did a terrific job with all the various characters. I give it an A and highly recommend it for all who might enjoy a delightful fantasy adventure akin to "Alice in Wonderland".

Upcoming New Releases:

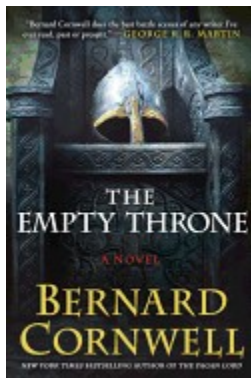
Check out the prices following the title of the book. The first price is the publisher's price. The second price is the **Book Rack** price, when picked up at one of the stores. There is no shipping charge when you pick up your order. Order now by calling one of the stores or stopping in. We do ask for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

Hardcover and Trade Paperback:

Isabel Allende – Ripper – 15.99/12.80 – When a string ODF strange murders occurs across San Francisco, a teenage girl plunges into her own investigation, probing hints and deductions that elude the police department. But the case becomes all too personal when her mother suddenly vanishes.

VC Andrews – Christopher's Diary: Echoes of Dollanganger – 26.99/21.60

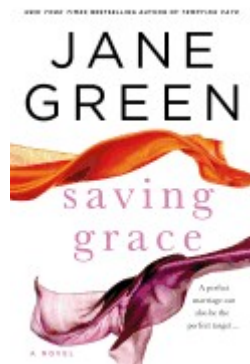
Bernard Cornwell – The Empty Throne – 27.99/22.40



Deborah Kay Davies – Reasons She Goes to the Woods – 15.99/12.80 – Pearl can be very, very good. More often she is very, very bad. But she's just a child, a mystery to all who know her. A little girl who has her own secrets for escaping to the nearby woods. What might those reasons be? And how can she feel so at home in the

dark, sinister, sensual woods – a wonder of secrets and mystery?

Jane Green – Saving Grace – 26.99/21.60

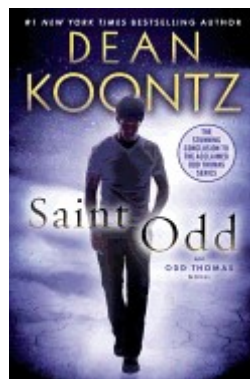


W.E.B. Griffin – The Assassination Option – 28.95/23.20

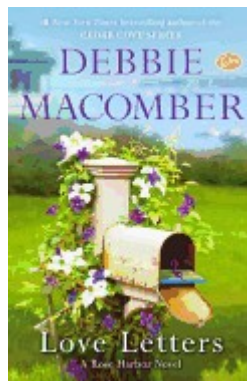
Charlie Horn – Death Visits the Caribbean: A Hank Tower Novel – 12.95/10.40 – Murder and Greed visit the beautiful island of St. Martin where four New York golfers invested seed money. They planned to distribute it on a certain date in 30 years. It's now worth \$52 million. The devil in the plan is that if one should die before that date, those still alive split his share.

Alex Kava – Breaking Creed – 26.95/21.60

Dean Koontz – Saint Odd – 28.00/22.40



Debbie Macomber – Love Letters – 26.00/20.80

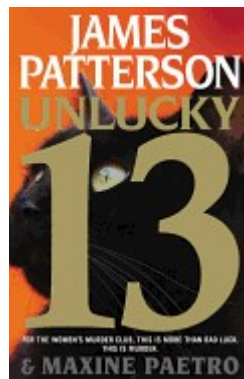


Fern Michaels – Sea Gypsy – 28.95/23.20

Linda Lael Miller – The Marriage Charm – 24.95/20.00

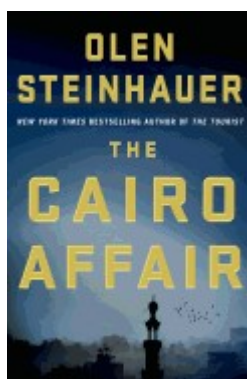
James Patterson – Private Vegas – 28.00/22.40

James Patterson – Unlucky 13: A Women's Murder Club Novel –
16.00/12.80

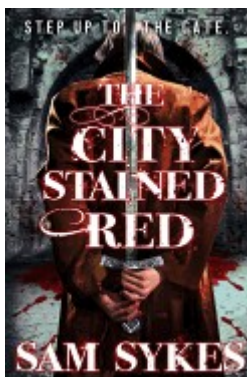


Matthew Reilly – The Great Zoo of China – 26.00/20.80

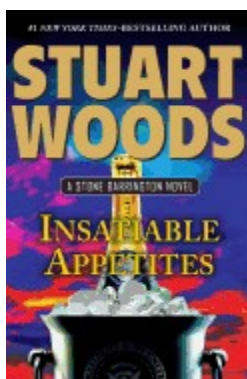
Olen Steinhauer – The Cairo Affair – 16.00/12.80



Sam Sykes – The City Stained Red – 16.00/12.80

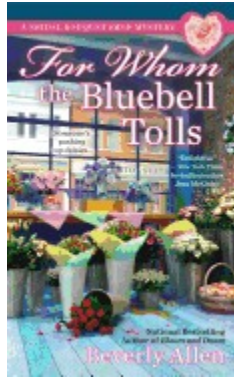


Stuart Woods – Insatiable Appetites – 27.95/22.40



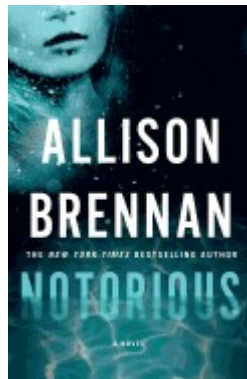
Paperback:

Beverly Allen – For Whom the Bluebell Tolls: A Bridal Bouquet Shop Mystery – 7.99/6.40

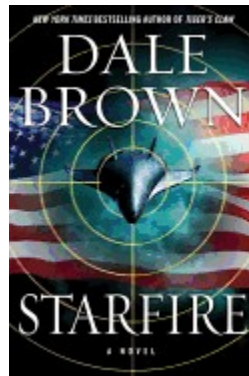


Jeffrey Archer – Be Careful What You Wish For – 9.99/8.00

Allison Brennan – Notorious – 9.99/8.00



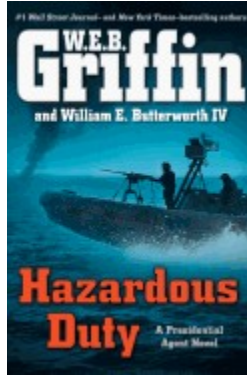
Dale Brown – Starfire – 9.99/8.00



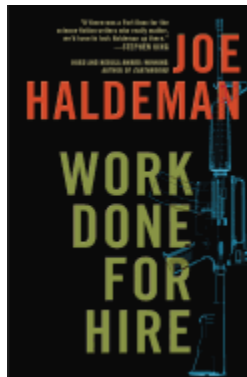
Meg Cabot – Awaken: An Abandon Novel – 9.99/8.00

Nelson DeMille – The Quest – 10.00/8.00

W.E.B. Griffin – Hazardous Duty: A Presidential Agent Novel – 9.99/8.00

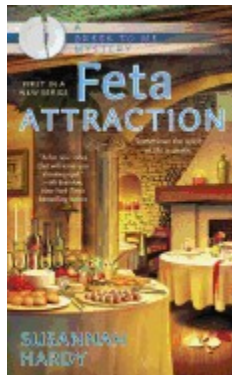


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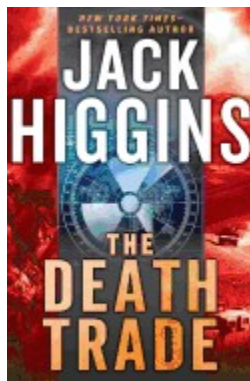


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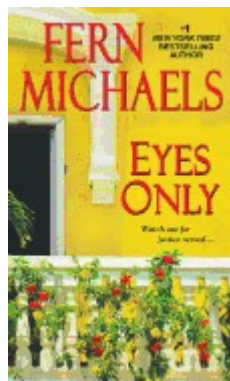


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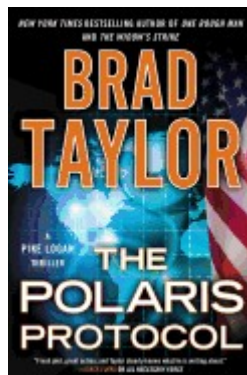
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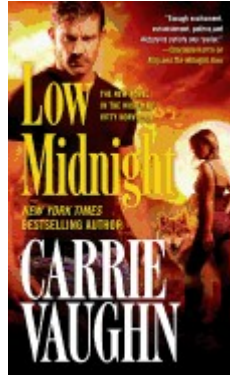
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