

The Book Rack Newsletter

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

Vol 9, #1

January 2016

4764 Elmore Ave, Davenport

563-355-2310

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

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

Happy New Year from your friends at The Book Rack!

*May your 2016 be safe, healthy, prosperous
and full of great friends, loving family and
enjoyable books!*

Reading Trivia for December

What famous American writer called a volume of his short stories "Rolling Stones?"

See below for the trivia answer

Did you know?

"Miguel Cervantes wrote "Don Quixote" in Seville prison after being jailed for debt in 1597.

January Holidays and Events at The Book

Rack:

January is :National Bath Safety Month & Hot Tea Month – Just be careful when you drink tea while you bathe!

Jan 1 – New Years Day – The Book Rack will be closed

6 – Cuddle-up Day

9 – Christopher Owen book signing 1:00 – 3:00.

10 – Peculiar People Day

13 – Make Your Dream Come True Day

18 – Martin Luther King Birthday

18 – Winnie The Pooh Day - The Birthday of Winnie's author A.A. Milne

26 – Spouses Day

28 – Fun at Work Day – Not having fun at your work? Stop by The Book Rack and let us cheer you up!

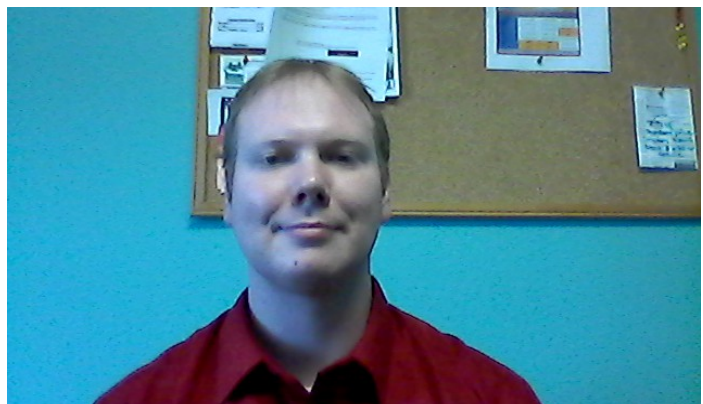
Featured Local Author:

Christopher Owen will be at The Book Rack January 9 1:00 – 3:00 signing copies of his book of poetry, “Deeper

Than A Metaphor.” This is a book of poems about many different aspects one can encounter during their lifetime. Expect to read things that range from nature at its most beautiful moments or humanity enduring its most difficult times. Other miscellaneous subjects include sports, man's best friend, revenge, and vanity. I believe the wide range of poems in this book should be able to appeal to almost anybody. The poems provide a creative way at looking every day ordinary things in a unique perspective.

Christopher Owen, born and raised in the northeastern part of Iowa. He is a man who loves sports, traveling, and spending time with his family. While he did not set out to be an author, one could say with his natural ability to write he did not have a say in it.

Christopher graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a bachelors degree in marketing. He is hoping to make a full career out of writing.



We hope you will stop in and visit with this very talented local author. If you can't make it on the day he is at the store, please check out his book on our Local Author shelves.

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.

The January edition of Free Verse is by Ellen Tsagaris, author of “The Bathory Chronicles”

The chapter below comes from the first book of a young adult series I am writing about Erzebet Bathory, maligned by hearsay for the last 400 years as “The Blood Countess.” In reality, she was a wealthy widow with royal relatives who wanted her money and her 27 estates. Reading her actual letters is poignant and telling; she was alone when her country was fending off the last of the Ottoman Empire, and she was the child of Calvinist and Lutheran parents in a predominantly Catholic countries. Frail of health but knowledgeable in healing, she traveled among her many estates, and wrote endless letters ensuring her granaries would be full. Often, she fretted over how she would feed and protect those under her charge. She was walled up under house arrest the last four years of her life, and there has never been any direct or credible evidence against her. Her servants, whose language she did not speak, were brutally executed and tortured.

Chapter 1: Erzebet

The last light of the dying sun glowed blood red against the darkening, angry sky. The moon, full, the face of Hecate glaring in disdain and disapproval, was visible just above the highest castle turrets. They had chosen this time of day deliberately, she was sure. The last light of the sun bathed her anguished, furious face, even as she screamed at her tormentors and captors. “This is not justice! How dare you shame the Bathory name this way! You let greed and superstition guide you, not law, not truth! Where are my accusers? Will no one speak for me? For my mother’s and father’s good name? For the charity I gave this village! A curse on you, on all of you, on the black souls of those damned, lazy harlots, on those who prey on a solitary widow! My children! MY

CHILDREN!!! WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE ARE MY CHILDREN?!"

Wearing her finest gown, the red velvet overskirt with cloth of gold underskirt, one last strand of pearls around her neck, and the heavy ring with the Bathory crest, the one that opened, with her dear Ferenc's picture in it, on her left ring finger, Erzebet was half pushed, half dragged into the narrow tower room that would be her last home. There was a small, curtained bed, a chair, a small table, a tiny alcove that served as a bathroom with a basin, and a series of stone selves built into the wall. This would be her prison, forever, till she died and was pried out. There wasn't room even for a rat. "Defiled is my name full sore.." the old lute song rang in her head, written by another doomed by her family and friends on hearsay and calumny, one whose misery ended with quick death, the kind, clean stroke a French headsman's axe.

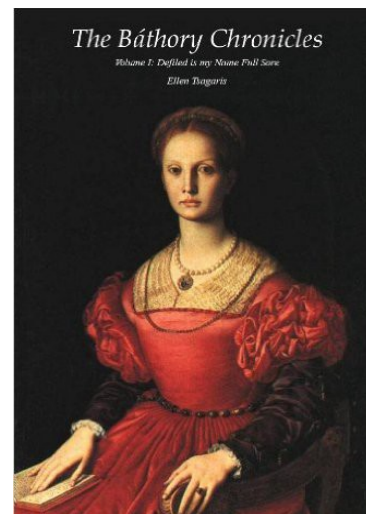
Erzebet would have a slow death, the last four years of her life, solitary, denied the visits of her children, well, of her daughters, who even now were sobbing, trying to break through the crowd of jailers holding their mother, "Mamma, Mamma, and MAMMA!!!!!"

Her sons were there, too, but they were silent. One grinned, a self-satisfied smirk on his face; he would soon be Count Bathory, owner of twelve large estates, a small fiefdom, chests of gold and jewels, and the responsibility to hold off the Turks, for as long as he could. Her younger son stared straight ahead, but tears ran silently down his face. He seemed frozen, glued to the spot, not unlike the living dead she was accused of being.

Erzebet tasted blood alright, now, but it was her own, drawn from her own bitten lips, coughed up from her sore throat, raw from shrieking at the men who would lock her up in her own castle for life.

They hurled her into the tiny room, slammed the huge oaken door, with only a small square to pass food, and some light, her daughters still keening for her, as tough she were dead. "But I am, she thought, but I will be." On the way out, one of the jailers whispered to her as he drew the giant door closed, "Do not despair, my lady, I will bring you books, your sewing, what you desire to pass the time. Only I will tend to you and bring your food, no one will know. I will pass messages from your daughters, Have faith, my lady, have faith . . ."

With that, the darkness closed in on Erzebet. "I shall go mad, " she thought.



Ellen Tsagaris is a college professor, blogger, doll curator and a lifelong poet. She has written poetry since childhood and her poetry has appeared in several periodicals.

Sappho is her first poetry collection. Ellen also teaches various creative writing workshops for the Midwest Writing Center, and her prior publications include the book, *The Subversion of Romance in the Novels of Barbara Pym* (1998, Popular Press).

Book Reviews:

Our first book review is by Jodie Toohey and first appeared January 15, 2015 in Jodie's blog, <http://bookreviewsbyjodiet.blogspot.com/>.

THE TIME TRAVEL TRAILER by Karen Musser Nortman



[Karen Musser Nortman](#) is a fellow Iowa Author I met while at a publishing event in West Liberty, Iowa, in November, 2014. Because there were so many books I wanted to buy written by several talented authors, I could only purchase one of Karen's. [The Time Travel Trailer](#) sounded the most intriguing to my historical-fiction tastes. I finally got a chance to read it at my in-laws over the Christmas holiday, after I'd finished my MBA.

The Time Travel Trailer provides a glimpse of life during several different time periods. The first thing I noticed was the realness of the writing. Life with the teen daughter, especially during the earlier part, is totally accurate. There is also plenty of humor with

distinctive character voices. I especially enjoyed the mother's, Lynne's, slightly sarcastic voice.

Nortman's historical facts are weaved beautifully throughout the story and ground it in time - we get information about happenings, court cases, and events we've likely heard about before. The story is told through short, easily digestible chapters; you can pick it up, read a few chapters, quickly do what you have to do, and jump right back in without having to thumb through to see how many pages the next chapter has so you can decide if you have time to start reading. As I read, I was continuously curious about what Lynne and Dinah would find and in what year they would find themselves placed.

The story is told through Lynne's and Dinah's point of view (Lynne's in first person and Dinah's in third) in no-particular-order alternating chapters or chapter groups. After the first few chapters from Dinah's point of view, I wasn't sure of the purpose of the alternating viewpoints and wondered if it would add to the story. As the story unfolded, however, I learned how Dinah's unique perspective fit in and I can't think of a way the author could've handled it differently.

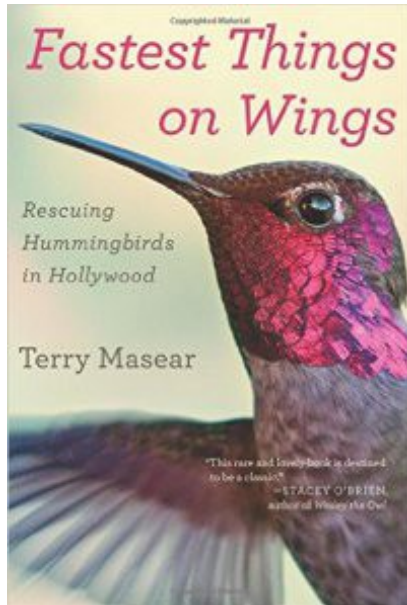
The Time Travel Trailer, in addition to providing an interesting history lesson, develops into a double mystery - what happens along the way and what happened with the trailer's original owner. As mentioned above, during the first approximate one-third of the book, I wondered where the story was going, but then the suspense picked up, keeping me turning the pages and reading "just one more chapter" before putting it down for the night. Nortman doesn't disappoint in her mystery writing ability, either; the end provides a satisfying conclusion.

The Time Travel Trailer was a great read. It had good suspense that pulled me through the story, so on a can't-put-it-down-scale of one for I couldn't even finish it to ten for I was up until the wee morning hours, I give it an eight and a half.

This book would be great for those who enjoy camping, time-travel stories, mysteries, or history. It's enjoyable on many levels.

Source: Ernst, Lyle & Sigafus, Kimberly. (2014). *The Mida*. McIver Publishing: Freeport, Illinois.

Elusive Hummingbird



Fastest Things on Wings: Rescuing Hummingbirds in Hollywood by Terry Masear (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$25.00, 306 pages)

When Frank and I first moved into West Hollywood, twenty years ago, it took me three months to attract one hummingbird to my feeder. Now, with the explosion in the local population that has resulted from over five hundred releases and their progeny, new sugar feeders immediately draw dozens of interested birds.

Hummingbirds, the zippy little colorful creatures that fascinate the young and old alike – humans and felines, are well documented in *Fastest Things on Wings*. Educator-writer Terry Masear has dedicated her “free time” to rescue and rehabilitate hummingbirds that have dropped from nests, been caught by cats, or fallen down while perched on tree branches trimmed by city maintenance workers. You name it, and Ms. Masear has heard of a way that these little birds have been put in peril. She takes calls from people who have found them in dire straights.

As there are two sugar feeders hanging from a gazebo just outside our kitchen door and a large bougainvillea climbing nearby, the daily visitors are often the subjects of excited viewing. Other than the recipe for their food (one-half cup of white granulated sugar dissolved in two cups of boiling water that is then left to cool) there’s not much this reviewer knew about our little buddies.

During the months that I don’t have to teach classes in the morning, I gather fresh

flowers for the fledglings in large flight cages and young adults in the aviary.

Ms. Masear, like her subjects, flits between narratives of her own experiences fueled by an undeniable dedication to rescuing and rehabilitating the tiny birds and a somewhat repetitive discourse on the growth and development of hummingbirds in general. This back and forth between the styles is interspersed with in depth segments chronicling the challenges presented by one or two standout birds in particular. Ms. Masear's writing style tends toward very long sentences. This book could have benefited from more editing.

The book includes color photos toward the last half of the text. These photos provide the reader with the opportunity to get up really close to the little buzzing wonders.

Well recommended to hummingbird and nature lovers.

Ruta Arellano

A review copy was provided by the publisher. "This is a book that is actually a book about love." Los Angeles Times

Dave Moyer is an educator, and the author of Life and Life Only: A Novel.

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

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

The next review is by Claudia:

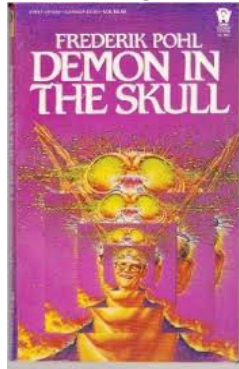
The Liberation of Gabriel King by K.L. Going is a childrens book with interesting characters and great lessons.



Set in Georgia in 1976, African American Frita Wilson is intent on “liberating” her best friend, a white boy named Gabriel Allen King, from his lengthy list of fears including spiders, bullies and fifth grade. After graduating from the fourth grade, the two set out to overcome their individual lists of fears before entering fifth grade. Gabe’s listed fears are

Frita's outward focus, but the real hateful prejudice that Frita is subjected to leads to insights and ability for both Gabe and Frita to face down their fears. While references to Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign may be lost on younger folks, this is a good book to read and discuss with your children.

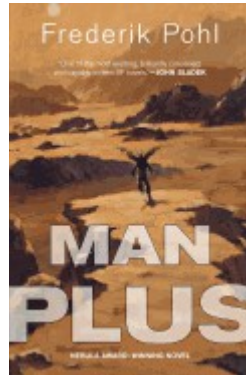
Demon in the Skull by Frederick Pohl (1984) Previously published as A Plague of Pythons in 1965.



The world as it had been vanished almost overnight as new masters took it over. Somehow, at any time, they could reach into the minds of men and women and completely control them, make them do anything. And the new masters seemed to delight in making their puppets perform unspeakable acts against their friends and family. One man no longer had a family for that reason. He wandered the world and found it smashed like a spoiled child's plaything, until he found the secret behind the mental demons. But what could one person do against such godlike power? Something had seized his mind, something that rode his body like a speed maniac would drive a stolen car – for he had committed atrocities against his friends and neighbors, he had done unspeakable things – and yet his own conscious mind had only stood aside and watched in horror. For a demonic intelligence had taken over inside his skull and left him a helpless observer. He was not unique. It was happening all over the world – society was breaking down in an epidemic of crimes, vicious and senseless, and it would seem as if the world had been invaded by a legion of invisible devils from some interplanetary hell. There had to be a solution, and when at last he found a clue, he set out to pursue it to the bitter end.

I love Science Fiction! There is no limit to its topic or the capabilities of its characters. Sometimes it is scary close to current reality and others it's light years away. This book is particularly interesting in the geopolitical closeness and the nationalities of the key players. The science is in a different dimension, however. I couldn't figure out just what was happening or how Cochran was going to defeat those controlling his mind until the end. Pohl is a wonderful author. While this specific book may be in short supply, pick up one, or more, of his early titles and give him a read. This book was only 158 pages, which is about typical for the 1980s, so you won't have to invest much money or time to find out if you've been missing a new favorite author. I give it a B+ for its readability, creativity and just plain enjoyment.

Man Plus by Frederick Pohl (1976)

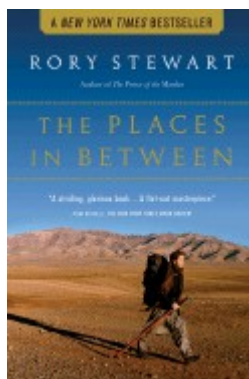


In the not-too-distant future, a desperate war for natural resources threatens to bring civilization to a crashing halt. Nuclear warships from around the globe begin positioning themselves as the American government works feverishly to complete a massive project to colonize Mars. Former astronaut Roger Torraway has agreed to be transformed by the latest advances in biological and cybernetic science into something new, a being that can survive the rigors of Mars before it is terraformed. Becoming Man Plus will allow him to be the linchpin in opening the new Martian frontier but not without challenging his humanity as no man has ever been challenged before.

A bestselling, Nebula Award winning novel when first published more than thirty years ago, this book is now more relevant than ever, as the battle between corporate interests and those who seek to save Earth's natural resources steadily escalates. The question of where man will go once the world's food, water, and oil have run out has yet to be answered. "Man Plus "by Frederick Pohl is a brilliantly imagined, compelling possible scenario that has enthralled countless readers.

Have you seen or read "The Martian"? A few parts in Man Plus occurring on the Martian surface are similar and the common theme of colonizing Mars is as intriguing in "Man Plus" as in "The Martian", though the approach is radically different. The ending is also strikingly different and fascinating. I can see why it won the Nebula Award and give it an A-.

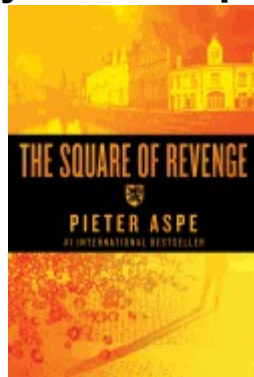
The Places In Between by Rory Stewart (2004)



In January 2002 Rory Stewart walked across Afghanistan-surviving by his wits, his knowledge of Persian dialects and Muslim customs, and the kindness of strangers. By day he passed through mountains covered in nine feet of snow, hamlets burned and emptied by the Taliban, and communities thriving amid the remains of medieval civilizations. By night he slept on villagers' floors, shared their meals, and listened to their stories of the recent and ancient past. Along the way Stewart met heroes and rogues, tribal elders and teenage soldiers, Taliban commanders and foreign-aid workers. He was also adopted by an unexpected companion-a retired fighting mastiff he named Babur in honor of Afghanistan's first Mughal emperor, in whose footsteps the pair was following. Through these encounters-by turns touching, confounding, surprising, and funny-Stewart makes tangible the forces of tradition, ideology, and allegiance that shape life in the map's countless places in between.

Claudia & I listened to the audio book, read by the author, on a recent trip. Goodreads contributors give it a 3.87 out of 5 and I'd concur giving it a B. It's quite an interesting travelogue through Afghanistan just after the fall of the Taliban and before they began to attack, again. I don't think another reader could have done nearly as well as the author given the many names and use of the various dialects of the country.

The Square of Revenge by Pieter Aspe (2013)

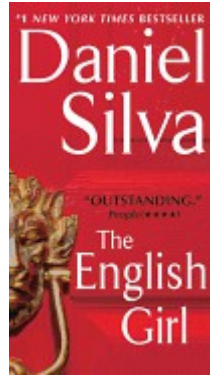


The beautiful medieval architecture of Bruges belies the dark longings of her residents. When the wealthy and powerful Ludovic Degroof's jewelry store is broken into, nothing is stolen, but the jewels have been dissolved in jars of aqua regia, an acid so strong it can even melt gold. In the empty safe is a scrap of paper on which a strange square has been drawn. At first, Inspector Van In pays little attention to the paper, focusing on the bizarre nature of the burglary. But when Degroof's offspring also receive letters with this same square, Van In and the beautiful new DA Hannelore Martens find themselves unraveling a complex web of enigmatic Latin phrase and a baroness' fallen family and Degroof's relationship with a hostage grandchild, ransomed for a priceless collection of art.

This book surprised me. I didn't have great expectations when I picked it up, but found

it thoroughly enjoyable. Inspector Pieter Van In and Assistant Prosecutor Hannelore Martens make an engaging pair of “crime fighters” and the setting in Bruges, Belgium is new to me and described very well. The story line is quite unique and one mystery lovers should appreciate. This is Aspe's first US release, but hopefully not his last. Take the first chance you have to grab one of his books. You will not be disappointed. I give it a B+.

The English Girl by Daniel Silva (2013)



One girl

Seven days

No second chances

Madeline Hart is a rising star in British government: beautiful, intelligent, driven to succeed by an impoverished childhood. But she also has a dark secret: she is the lover of Prime Minister Jonathan Lancaster. When she disappears on the island of Corsica, it's clear her kidnappers know about the affair and intend to make the PM pay dearly for his sins. Fearful of a scandal that could destroy his career, Lancaster decides to handle the matter privately, and not involve the police.

Enter Gabriel Allon assassin, art restorer, and spy who must find Madeline within seven days before she is executed. With the clock ticking, Allon is thrust into a deadly game of shadows in which nothing is what it seems and where the only thing more dangerous than his enemies is the truth. . . ." Another masterpiece by Silva. Gabriel Allon is the best protagonist on the planet and he continues to mature! I love Silva's books and this one is on the top tier of his collection. A brilliantly conceived thriller with more twists and double-backs than you can imagine. It's a credible plot intricately developed with no wasted text. I give it an A+ and highly recommend it and Silva to anyone who loves spy thrillers. If you haven't read him you are missing a truly great author and series.

Reading Trivia for December

What famous American writer called a volume of his short stories “Rolling Stones?”

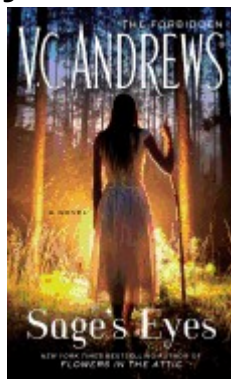
Answer: O. Henry (William Sydney Porter), in 1913. Earlier, he had founded a humorous weekly called The Rolling Stone.

Upcoming New Releases:

Check out the prices following the title of the book. The price is the publisher's price. The **Book Rack** price is normally 20% lower. When you pick it at the store there is no shipping cost, though we can also ship it to you. Order now by calling one of the stores or stopping in. We do ask for prepayment on all special orders. **You can also add any of these titles to your request list.** Some will come in soon and others may take a while, but most will get to you eventually. The genre follows the price.

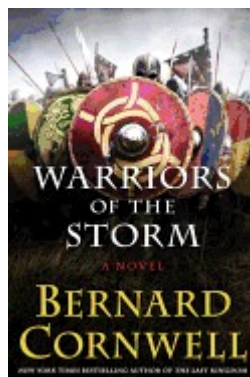
Hardcover and Trade Paperback

VC Andrews – Sage's Eyes – 27.99 – General Fiction



Chris Bohjalian – The Guest Room – 25.95 – General

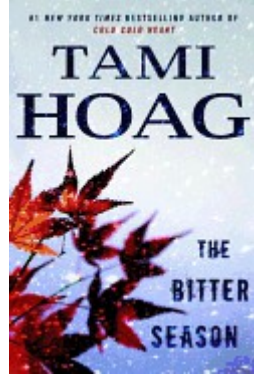
Bernard Cornwell – Warriors of the Storm – 27.99 – Historical



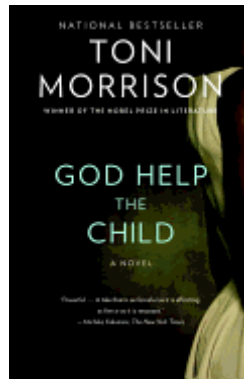
Tim Dorsey – Coconut Cowboy – 25.99 – General

Alan Dean Foster – Star Wars: The Force Awakens – 28.00 - SciFi

Tami Hoag – The Bitter Season – 28.00 - Espionage Thriller



Lisa Jackson – After She's Gone – 26.00 – Romantic Thriller
Toni Morrison – God Help the Child – 14.95 – General



Jo Nesbo – Blood on Snow – 13.95 - Espionage Thriller
Joyce Carol Oates – The Man Without A Shadow – 27.99 –
Psychological Suspense



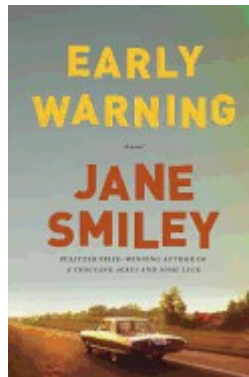
Tracie Petersen – Beyond the Silence – 14.99 – Religious Fiction

Ian Rankin – Even Dogs in the Wild – 26.00 – Mystery/Detective

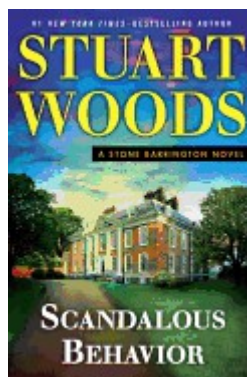


Karen Robards – Darkness – 26.00 – Romantic Suspense

Jane Smiley – Early Warning – 15.95 – General



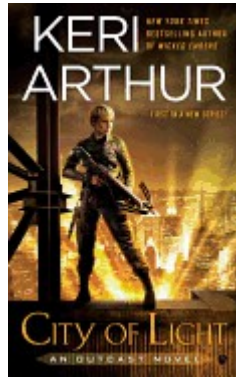
Stuart Woods – Scandalous Behavior – 27.95 – Espionage Thriller



Mass Market Paperback

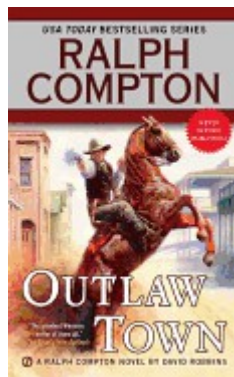
Catherine Anderson – New Leaf – 7.99 – Romance

Keri Arthur - City of Light – 7.99 – Fantasy



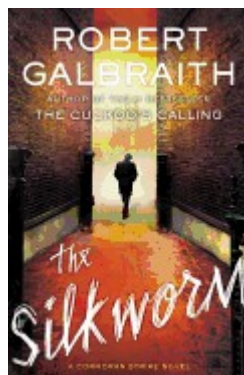
Steve Berry – Patriot Threat – 9.99 – Thriller

Ralph Compton – Outlaw Town– 6.99 – Western



Kate Douglas – Redemption – 7.99 - Romance

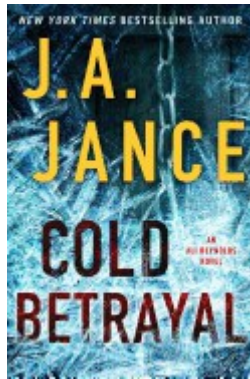
Robert Galbraith – The Silkworm – 9.99 – Mystery



Tess Gerritsen – The Sinner – 9.99 - Thriller

Stephen Hunter – I, Ripper – 9.99 - Thriller

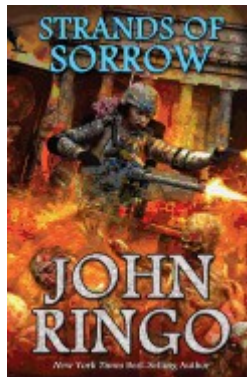
JA Jance – Cold Betrayal – 9.99 – Thriller



Joan Johnston – Shameless – 7.99 - Romance

James Patterson – Burn – 9.99 – Thriller

John Ringo – Strands of Sorrow – 7.99 – Sci Fi



Cotton Smith – Ride Away – 6.99 - Western

Brad Taylor – No Fortunate Son – 9.99 - Thriller

