



THE FOLLOWING IS A TENTATIVE LIST OF NEW FICTION RELEASES FOR FEBRUARY, 2010. NOTE: MOST TITLES ON THIS LIST ARE ON ORDER FOR THE LIBRARY AND CAN BE RESERVED, BUT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL THE RELEASE DATE.

COMPILED BY JUDY KAMIAT, WEST BOYNTON BRANCH LIBRARY

Lorraine Adams, **THE ROOM AND THE CHAIR**, (336 pgs) 2/9

Ejecting from a plummeting jet high over the Potomac River is only one of fighter pilot Mary Goodwin's problems in this war on terror page-turner from Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and novelist Adams (*Harbor*). A sense that something more than a simple malfunction downed her plane dogs Mary, but self-doubts springing from a dark past discourage her from digging any further and she soon ships out to Afghanistan. Stanley Belson, night editor of the *Washington Spectator*, has a similar hunch about the crash and he pushes his newsroom protégé to investigate. Operating in the shadows near the center is Will Holmes, the chair of a secret intelligence program. As the many subplots connect and evolve, something approaching a romance between Will and Mary sprouts in Afghanistan; Mary is hounded by tragic events; and Will's operation spins out of control. "The dovetailing of Adams's cynical assessment of newsroom ethics and political maneuvering places this nicely among macroview novels of contemporary political intrigue." *Publishers Weekly* "This well-researched literary novel offers an unflinching look at the dangerous world we live in." *Library Journal*

Alex Berenson, **THE MIDNIGHT HOUSE**, (400 pgs) 2/9

After saving New York City in 2009's *The Silent Man*, CIA agent John Wells, the hero of bestseller Berenson's espionage series, retreats to rural New Hampshire in his fourth outing. He hikes and thinks, accompanied only by his dog, Tonka, but soon enough, John hears from Ellis Shafer, "his sort-of boss at the agency," who calls him back to Washington, D.C., for a new assignment. An unknown assassin is targeting members of Task Force 673, a now-disbanded secret unit whose job was interrogating terrorists, in particular "high-value detainees," by any necessary means. Five of the 10-person squad are missing or dead, with the rest in mortal danger. In his pursuit of the killer, John encounters all manner of political intrigue, including convoluted plots set in motion by agency chiefs vying

for control of America's security apparatus, who rely on low-level field spies to carry out their various and bloody plans. "A compelling espionage series." ***Publishers Weekly*** "Arguably Berenson's best thriller yet, this outstanding novel stands on the top rung of commercial spy fiction." ***Library Journal*** "A superbly crafted spy thriller that doubles as a gripping mystery; the reader has no idea who the killer is until Wells figures it out." ***Kirkus Reviews***

Sarah Blake, **THE POSTMISTRESS**, (336 pgs) 2/9

Weaving together the stories of three very different women loosely tied to each other, Blake takes readers back and forth between small town America and war-torn Europe in 1940. Single, 40-year-old postmistress Iris James and young newlywed Emma Trask are both new arrivals to Franklin, Mass., on Cape Cod. While Iris and Emma go about their daily lives, they follow American reporter Frankie Bard on the radio as she delivers powerful and personal accounts from the London Blitz and elsewhere in Europe. While Trask waits for the return of her husband—a volunteer doctor stationed in England—James comes across a letter with valuable information that she chooses to hide. "Blake captures two different worlds—a naïve nation in denial and, across the ocean, a continent wracked with terror—with a deft sense of character and plot, and a perfect willingness to take on big, complex questions, such as the merits of truth and truth-telling in wartime." ***Publishers Weekly*** "Even readers who don't think they like historical novels will love this one and talk it up to their friends." ***Library Journal (Starred Review)***

Christopher Bohjalian, **SECRETS OF EDEN**, (384 pgs) 2/2

The morning after her baptism into the Rev. Stephen Drew's Vermont Baptist church, Alice Hayward and her abusive husband are found dead in their home, an apparent murder-suicide. Stephen, the novel's first narrator, is so racked with guilt over his failure to save Alice that he leaves town. Soon, he meets Heather Laurent, the author of a book about angels whose own parents' marriage also ended in tragedy. Stephen's deeply sympathetic narration is challenged by the next two narrators: deputy state attorney Catherine Benincasa, whose suspicions are aroused initially by Stephen's abrupt departure (and then by questions about his relationship with Alice), and Heather, who distances herself from Stephen for similar reasons and risks the trip into her dark past by seeking out Katie, the Haywards' now-orphaned 15-year-old daughter who puts into play the final pieces of the puzzle. "A masterfully human and compassionate tale." ***Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)*** "Specificity and complexity and. . .a somber power." ***Kirkus Reviews*** "A fantastic choice for book clubs, this novel deals beautifully with controversial topics of domestic abuse, faith, and adultery w. Fans of Jodi Picoult and Anita Shreve will enjoy this breathtaking piece of fiction. ***Library Journal***

Carla Buckley, **THE THINGS THAT KEEP US HERE**, (416 pgs) 2/9

Peter and Ann Brooks are a divorcing couple struggling to maintain civility for the sake of their young daughters when the unthinkable happens: a virulent outbreak of avian flu quickly burgeons into a pandemic. As their Ohio town goes into lockdown, Peter returns to his family with his beautiful graduate assistant in tow. Sequestered in their suburban home, this group must band together to face a world gone suddenly chaotic, where food is scarce, utilities fail, and neighbors attack one another for a tankful of gas. "Buckley raises important questions about trust, loyalty and forgiveness." *Publishers Weekly* "Medical thriller meets domestic drama in this timely debut. This vivid depiction of suburban America gone bad is riveting. It has the potential for broad appeal and could attract fans of authors as diverse as Jodi Picoult, Robin Cook, and P.D. James." *Library Journal* **FIRST NOVEL**

Jackie Collins, **POOR LITTLE BITCH GIRL**, (480 pgs) 2/9

Collins picks up the saga of the Santangelos with spoiled-brat Annabelle Maestro, the daughter of two Tinseltown icons, who runs a high-priced call-girl ring in New York with her coke-sniffing nogoodnik boyfriend, Frankie. Annabelle's mom's murder brings the black sheep home to L.A. to mourn for a parent she never loved—and to lean on the adventurous Denver, a quick-witted, sex-starved lawyer who's defending the No. 1 suspect in the murder, Annabelle's dad, film legend Ralph Maestro. But Denver also juggles the rescue of his missing best friend, Carolyn, who's fooling around with a horn dog U.S. senator, and a few hot one-night stands. "For all the convoluted connections, mismatches, and throw-away references to ripped-from-the-headlines news and celebrities, Collins is at her seasoned best with this raunchy, retro hot-sheets romance. And it's impossible not to fall for it. Again" *Publishers Weekly*

Don DeLillo, **POINT OMEGA**, (128 pgs) 2/2

Precocious filmmaker Jim Finley visits Richard Elster, a scholar and government consultant, to pitch an idea for a documentary about Elster. What begins as a project spiel, however, gradually becomes a series of intellectual exchanges that only intensify when Elster's daughter arrives for a visit. The three settle into a comfortable routine, only to be catapulted out of it by a completely unexpected plot twist that will leave even careful readers scratching their heads. DeLillo's prose is simultaneously spare and lyrical, creating a minimalist dreamworld that will please readers attuned to language and sound. Structural purists, meanwhile, will appreciate the novel's film-related framing device, which wraps around the main action like a blanket. "Though it be but brief, DeLillo's latest offering is fierce. An excellent nugget of thought-provoking fiction that pits life against art and emotion against intellect." *Library*

Journal "An icy, disturbing and masterfully composed study of guilt, loss and regret—quite possibly the author's finest yet." **Kirkus Reviews**

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, **ONE AMAZING THING**, (240 pgs) 2/2

When an earthquake hits, nine men and women of diverse ages and backgrounds are trapped in an Indian consulate. Cameron, an African American Vietnam vet, takes charge, striving to keep them safe. College student Uma, who brought along *The Canterbury Tales* to read while waiting for clerk Malathi and her boss Mangalam to process her papers, suggests that they each tell an "important story" from their lives. Their tales of heartbreak and revelation are nuanced and riveting and Divakaruni takes fresh measure of the transcendent power of stories and the pilgrimage tradition. True, the nine, including an older couple, a young Muslim man, and a Chinese Indian grandmother and her granddaughter, are captives of a disaster, but they are also pilgrims of the spirit, seeking "one amazing thing" affirming that life, for all its pain, is miraculous. "Moments of brilliance." **Publishers Weekly** "A storyteller of exquisite lyricism and compassion, Divakaruni weaves a suspenseful, astute, and unforgettable survivors' tale." **Booklist**

Louise Erdrich, **SHADOW TAG** (272 pgs) 2/2

Irene America is a beautiful, introspective woman of Native American ancestry, struggling to finish her dissertation while raising three children. She is married to Gil, a painter whose reputation is built on a series of now iconic portraits of Irene, but who can't break through to the big time, pigeonholed as a Native American painter. Irene's fallen out of love with Gil and discovers that he's been reading her diary, so she begins a new, hidden, diary and uses her original diary as a tool to manipulate Gil. Erdrich alternates between excerpts from these two diaries and third-person narration as she plots the emotional war between Irene and Gil, and Gil's dark side becomes increasingly apparent as Irene, fighting her own alcoholism, struggles to escape. "Erdrich ties her various themes together with an intriguing metaphor—riffing on Native American beliefs about portraits as shadows and shadows as souls—while her steady pacing and remarkable insight into the inner lives of children combine to make this a satisfying and compelling novel." **Publishers Weekly** "Erdrich's latest is a brilliant cautionary tale of the shocking havoc willfully destructive, self-centered spouses wreak not only upon themselves but also upon their children." **Library Journal** "A small masterpiece of compelling, painfully moving fiction." **Kirkus Reviews (Starred Review)**

Patricia Falvey, **THE YELLOW HOUSE**, (352 pgs) 2/15

Eileen O'Neill's family is torn apart by religious intolerance and secrets from the past. Determined to reclaim her ancestral home and reunite her family, Eileen begins working at the local mill, saving her money and

holding fast to her dream. As war is declared on a local and global scale, Eileen cannot separate the politics from the very personal impact the conflict has had on her own life. She is soon torn between two men, each drawing her to one extreme. One is a charismatic and passionate political activist determined to win Irish independence from Great Britain at any cost, who appeals to her warrior's soul. The other is the wealthy and handsome black sheep of the pacifist family who owns the mill where she works, and whose persistent attention becomes impossible for her to ignore. "This novel delivers the best of both worlds: secrets, intrigue and surprising twists will keep readers flipping the pages, while Falvey's insight and poetic writing tugs at the heartstrings of the most cynical audiences." ***Publishers Weekly*** "A host of interesting characters, surprising but plausible plot developments, and deftly incorporated details of the Irish struggle for independence add up to a debut novel sure to please fans of historical romance." ***Library Journal*** **FIRST NOVEL**

Joy Fielding, **THE WILD ZONE**, (384 pgs) 2/23

The Wild Zone, a South Beach (Miami Beach, Fla.) bar filled with lusty men—specifically, charismatic personal trainer Jeff Rydell; his cute visiting half-brother, Will, a Princeton graduate student; and Jeff's married best friend, Tom Whitman, a dishonorably discharged Afghanistan war veteran with some serious problems—provides the starting point for bestseller Fielding's nonstop thriller. A sexy bar patron, Suzy Bigelow, inspires the trio to make a wager on who can bed her first, and they even ask Jeff's live-in girlfriend, a Wild Zone bartender, for help. Suzy chooses Will for a platonic date, which has some distinctly unpleasant repercussions that involve not only wide-eyed Will but desperate, gun-loving Tom, whose wife takes their children and files for divorce. "Fielding combines a fast-paced plot with top-notch character development to create an atmosphere of brooding unease that explodes in a wonderfully wild resolution." ***Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)***

*****Joy Fielding will be visiting the Hagen Ranch Road Library on Wednesday, March 10 @2:00 PM. Please call (561) 894-7500 for more information.**

Tim Green, **FALSE CONVICTIONS**, (304 pgs) 2/10

This is Green's third novel featuring Dallas attorney Casey Jordan (after *Above the Law*). Casey is committed to working with the Freedom Project, a nonprofit group dedicated to exonerating the wrongly convicted. The group's founder, billionaire Robert Graham, offers Casey's legal clinic an annual pledge of \$1 million to take on a couple of high-profile cases a year. Using DNA analysis, Casey proves the innocence of Dwayne Hubbard, a black man who may have been framed by the police, judge, jury, and lawyers for a female college student's murder 20 years earlier. Meanwhile, TV news journalist Jake Carlson believes that Graham isn't the

altruistic, humble philanthropist he claims to be. Jake and Casey begin an uneasy alliance to scrutinize Graham's business dealings. "A brisk plot with plenty of surprises." *Publishers Weekly*

James Grippando, **MONEY TO BURN**, (368 pgs) 2/23

On the eve of his 35th birthday, Michael Cantella goes from being a star performer at a premier Wall Street investment firm to a financially wiped-out victim of identity theft. His Job-like troubles are just beginning as the fallout not only rocks his second marriage and his firm but sets him up for a life on the run. Grippando keeps the reader guessing why Cantella specifically is targeted and how the vicious and relentless personal attacks relate to the unexplained disappearance (and presumed death) of his first wife on their wedding day seven years earlier. "The dramatic tension remains high with a sadistic hired killer, high-stakes wheeler-dealers, and plenty of cinematic escapes. Scandals involving subprime lending, short selling, and Ponzi schemes provide a timely backdrop" *Publishers Weekly*

Laurell K. Hamilton, **FLIRT: Anita Blake Vampire Hunter Series**, (192 pgs) 2/2

When Anita Blake meets with prospective client Tony Bennington, who is desperate to have her reanimate his recently deceased wife, she is full of sympathy for his loss. Anita knows something about love, and she knows everything there is to know about loss. But what she also knows, though Tony Bennington seems unwilling to be convinced, is that the thing she can do as a necromancer isn't the miracle he thinks he needs. The creature that Anita could coerce to step out of the late Mrs. Bennington's grave would not be the lovely Mrs. Bennington. Not really. And not for long.

Kristin Hannah, **WINTER GARDEN**, (400 pgs) 2/2

Pacific Northwest apple country provides a beautiful, chilly setting for this family drama ignited by the death of a loving father whose two daughters have grown apart from each other and from their acid-tongued, Russian-born mother. After assuming responsibility for the family business, 40-year-old empty-nester Meredith finds it difficult to carry out her father's dying wish that she take care of her mother; Meredith's troubled marriage, her troubled relationship with her mother and her mother's increasingly troubled mind get in the way. Nina, Meredith's younger sister, takes a break from her globe-trotting photojournalism career to return home to do her share for their mother. How these three women find each other and themselves with the help of vodka and a trip to Alaska competes for emotional attention with the story within a story of World War II Leningrad. "Readers will find it hard not to laugh a little and cry a little more as mother and daughters reach out to each other just in the

nick of time." ***Publishers Weekly*** This tearjerker weaves a convincing historical novel and contemporary family drama with elements of romance. It is sure to please fans of Danielle Steel, Luanne Rice, and Nicholas Sparks." ***Library Journal***

Robert Harris, **CONSPIRATA** (352 pgs) 2/2

This is the second installment to Harris's ancient Rome trilogy (after *Imperium*). Beginning in 63 B.C.E. and told by Cicero's slave secretary, Tiro, this complex tale continues to chronicle Cicero's political career as he charms, co-opts, and bribes his way into the exalted position of consul, ruler of Rome. Although Cicero is known as a brilliant politician and philosopher, he was also a slick manipulator and shameless schemer, competing with equally sneaky rivals Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus. Cicero realizes that as the empire expands, the greatest threat to Rome comes from within, plotted by well-financed conspirators bent on turning the republic into a dictatorship. With fabulous oratory and trickery, Cicero uncovers and crushes an insurrection, exposing himself to great danger and possible assassination. Riots, murder, civil unrest, corruption, treachery, and betrayal mark Cicero's political legacy, resulting in a battle between him and Julius Caesar. "Gripping.... Harris proves once again that politics is an ugly game." ***Publishers Weekly***

Adam Haslett, **UNION ATLANTIC**, (320 pgs) 2/9

In Haslett's first novel (following Pulitzer and National Book Award finalist short story collection *You Are Not a Stranger Here*), a titan of the banking industry does battle with a surprisingly formidable opponent: a retired history teacher. Doug Fanning has built Union Atlantic from a mid-size Boston bank to an international powerhouse and rewards himself by building a rural palace in Finden, Mass. The land his house is built on, however, had been donated to Finden for preservation by Charlotte Graves's grandfather, and Charlotte believes she now has a claim on the lot. She may be right, and her disdain of modern decadence means bad news for Doug should she win in court. Meanwhile, high school senior Nate Fuller, who visits Charlotte for tutoring and Doug for awkward and lopsided sexual encounters, finds himself with the power to upset the legal and cultural war game. "Haslett's novel is smart and carefully constructed, and his characters are brilliantly flawed. This book should be of interest to readers fascinated but perplexed by the current financial crisis, as it is able to navigate the oubliette of Wall Street trading to create searing and intimate drama." ***Publishers Weekly (Starred Review) FIRST NOVEL***

Leslie Jamison, **THE GIN CLOSET**, (288 pgs) 2/16

Jamison's debut follows independent young New Yorker Stella and her estranged aunt Tilly as they form some version of a family. Stella is disenchanted with her life and job as a journalist's personal assistant; Tilly

is a professional lost soul, a former prostitute, and an unsuccessful recovering alcoholic. To all appearances, Stella is the savior, finding Tilly, who's been shunned by the family, to rescue her; but through alternating first-person accounts, the reader grows to view the two women as equals. Their experiences with men especially mirror one another's; Tilly has merely had worse luck. Stella describes wanting a man, "any man, who could offer his face as a label for my loneliness"; later, recalling men she's been with, Tilly says, "most of them I didn't even like that much, but they seemed like the easiest way to change my own life." "The relationship between Stella and Tilly is compelling, as are their relationships with auxiliary characters, like Stella's brother and Tilly's son, but what truly drives the novel is Jamison's gorgeous prose...beautifully written."

Publishers Weekly (Starred Review) FIRST NOVEL

Lori Lansens, **THE WIFE'S TALE**, (368 pgs) 2/20

Mary Gooch is beyond shock when her husband leaves the night before their silver anniversary party. Jimmy Gooch has always loved her, but with each new trauma—two early miscarriages, her father's death, even the loss of her feral cat—Mary has felt less worthy of his affection and more hungry. Now weighing 302 pounds, Mary can't seem to move past her malaise. Finding \$25,000 in their bank account, Mary flies, for the first time, from their small Canadian town to her mother-in-law's home in Southern California, determined to wait for her prodigal spouse. While there, she loses her appetite but discovers a measure of self-worth through the "kindness of strangers." "Mary is a wonderful character and Lansens's handling of her eventual transformation into someone capable of compassion and acceptance is handled with a light but assured touch."

Publishers Weekly "Lansens doesn't resort to an overnight makeover to save Mary. Instead, our heroine uncovers a hidden strength she had all along. Those who loved *The Girls* will be pleased that Lansens is back."

Library Journal

Eric Von Lustbader, **FIRST SNOW**, (xxx pgs) 2/16

Lustbader's sequel to *First Daughter* takes dyslexic Jack McClure, former ATF agent and now adviser to recently elected U.S. president Edward Carson, to Moscow, where Carson is negotiating an important treaty with Russian president Yukin. When minority whip Sen. Lloyd Berns dies in a mysterious hit-and-run accident on Capri, the president asks Jack to investigate. Accompanied by Annika, a beautiful Federal Security Bureau agent who's part of a complicated Russian trap, and Alli, Carson's 22-year-old daughter whom Jack saved from a bad guy in the previous book, Jack travels to Ukraine, where Berns was supposed to be on a fact-finding tour. In Kiev, Jack finds a secret agency called Trinadtsat, a shadowy group of Russian oligarchs, and plenty of trouble, including a retired American general out to have him killed. "Lustbader carefully weaves a

suspenseful political tale that keeps readers guessing what truth will be revealed. With an exciting pace, this is sure to appeal to political thriller enthusiasts who love conspiracy narratives with surprises down every dark, twisted alley." *Library Journal* The necklines are low and the body count is high; but Van Lustbader throws in enough twists and turns to keep things original and interesting. Stay tuned-but bet your bippy that there will be a sequel." *Kirkus Reviews*

Fern Michaels, **GAME OVER**, 2/28

Fighting for what's right has sometimes put the women of the Sisterhood on the wrong side of the law, but for the moment they have much to celebrate. They have enjoyed a relaxing Christmas holiday and have entertained family and friends at Myra and Charles' wedding. After the last guests leave the mountain, Annie convenes the sisters and announces that now is the time to secure the pardon promised them by President Martine Connor so that they may leave their lives of exile and adventure behind them.

Michael Palmer, **THE LAST SURGEON**, (384 pgs) 2/16

Former trauma surgeon Dr. Nick Garrity, who suffers from PTSD as the result of a suicide attack on his field hospital in Afghanistan, is now in charge of the Helping Hands RV, a mobile clinic that plies the streets of Baltimore offering medical aid to the homeless. Meanwhile, a high-priced hit man starts to commit a series of murders, his first victim being Belle Coates, a nurse in Charlotte, N.C. When Belle's sister, Jillian, who lives in Virginia, searches for her sister's killer, she finds a connection to Nick. Several missing homeless men lead everyone to a massive plot involving high-level politicians and a secret CIA program.

Robert B. Parker, **SPLIT IMAGE**, (288 pgs) 2/23

The body in the trunk was just the beginning. Turns out the stiff was a foot soldier for local tough guy Reggie Galen, now enjoying a comfortable "retirement" with his beautiful wife, Rebecca, in the nicest part of Paradise. Living next door are Knocko Moynihan and his wife, Robbie, who also happens to be Rebecca's twin. But what initially appears to be a low-level mob hit takes on new meaning when a high-ranking crime figure is found dead on Paradise Beach. Stressed by the case, his failed relationship with his ex-wife, and his ongoing battle with the bottle, Jesse needs something to keep him from spinning out of control. When private investigator Sunny Randall comes into town on a case, she asks for Jesse's help. As their professional and personal relationships become intertwined, both Jesse and Sunny realize that they have much in common with both their victims and their suspects-and with each other.

James Patterson & Michael Ledwidge, **WORST CASE**, (368 pgs) 2/1

The son of one of New York's wealthiest families is snatched off the street and held hostage. His parents can't save him, because this kidnapper isn't demanding money. Instead, he quizzes his prisoner on the price others pay for his life of luxury. In this exam, wrong answers are fatal. Detective Michael Bennett leads the investigation. As another student disappears, one powerful family after another uses their leverage and connections to turn the heat up on the mayor, the press--anyone who will listen--to stop this killer. Their reach extends all the way to the FBI, who sends their top Abduction Specialist, Agent Emily Parker. Before Bennett has a chance to protest the FBI's intrusion on his case, the mastermind changes his routine. His plan leads up to the most devastating demonstration yet--one that could bring cataclysmic devastation to every inch of New York.

Anna Lawrence Pietroni, **RUBY'S SPOON**, (384 pgs) 2/16

Cradle Cross in 1933 is a town in the heart of Black Country, England, still reeling from the Great War and dominated by a button factory in terminal decline. Into this exotically grim environment arrives a white-haired young woman from the coast named Isa Fly. Isa is a mysterious and magnetic presence who exerts a romantic pull on everyone she meets. Motherless, thirteen-year-old Ruby Tailor is instantly drawn to her, as is Captin, the proprietor of the local chip shop, a fifty-year-old bachelor and father figure to Ruby, and Truda Blick, the Oxford-educated spinster who's inherited the failing button factory. As the reasons for Isa's sudden appearance become less clear with each passing day, she is viewed with increasing suspicion by the tight-knit women of Cradle Cross who come to see her as the cause of the town's accelerating misfortunes and ultimately fear her as a witch. "Savored for character and atmosphere, fans of Hardy, Dickens, and, more recently, Michael Faber and Sarah Waters will find much to enjoy." *Publishers Weekly* "A spellbinding first novel, distinguished by unforgettable storytelling." *Kirkus Reviews* "This enthralling, suspenseful debut novel...has the feel of a grim fairy tale...Of the many riches it offers, it is the winning lead character, a lonely teen brave enough to have a dream despite her impoverished circumstances, who will capture readers' hearts." *Booklist (Starred Review)* **FIRST NOVEL**

J.D. Robb, **FANTASY IN DEATH**, (368 pgs) 2/23

Lt. Eve Dallas, a top homicide cop for the New York Police and Security Department (the law enforcement agency for a mid 21st-century New York City), faces one of the more challenging cases of her career. When someone cuts off the head of Bart Minnock, the genius founder of the computer gaming company U-Play, apparently while he was role-playing against an imaginary opponent in a prototype of a fantasy adventure that could rock the industry, Eve investigates. Security logs show no one entered Minnock's building around the time of his murder, presenting a

futuristic variation on the classic locked-room mystery. Aided by her husband, Roarke, who was a potential business rival of the victim, Dallas focuses on who would benefit from Minnock's death.

David Rollins, **HARD RAIN**, (400 pgs) 2/23

When the U.S. attaché to Turkey is murdered, the first thing Special Agent Vin Cooper notices is how the killing was carried out with military efficiency. Cooper's investigation pairs him with a former lover, Special Agent Anna Masters, as they cross borders into the Middle East and find that enemies are armed and extremely dangerous, lurking around every corner. Their investigation uncovers a shadowy web trying to topple governments by any means necessary, and the conspirators will stop at nothing to silence Vin Cooper. "This is Rollins's rip-roaring third novel to feature the tough, wisecracking Cooper (after *The Death Trust* and *A Knife Edge*). The exciting, violent ending promises more thrills to come." ***Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)***

Steve Rushin, **THE PINT MAN**, (272 pgs) 2/23

For Rodney Poole, a friendly and unassuming lover of clever wordplay and television sports of all stripes, Boyle's Irish Pub is a haven of good cheer, pleasantly pointless conversation, elaborate jokes, heated trivia contests, well-poured pints, and familiar faces. The crowd at Boyle's is his family, and with family all sins are forgiven. But reality cannot be kept at bay forever, and now Rodney's best friend and partner in inertia, Keith, is getting married and moving to Chicago. Since Rodney has for the most part enjoyed his bachelorhood vicariously through Keith, the prospect of being single, middle-aged, unemployed, and without his pal to while away the nights with is causing Rodney to rethink—or rather, create—his priorities. When Keith introduces him to the lovely Mairead, a cheerful career woman who seems to enjoy his bad puns, ambitionless nature, and love of literature, Rodney can spy an honorable path to grown-up-hood at last. But a series of comic mishaps jeopardize his budding relationship with Mairead, his friendship with Keith, and most serious of all, his place on a barstool in the idyllic world of Boyle's. "What sets the work apart is Rodney's sharp wit...Rushin emerges as one of the sharpest wits on the scene." ***Publishers Weekly* FIRST NOVEL**

Catherine Schine, **THE THREE WEISSMANS OF WESTPORT**, (304 pgs) 2/2

Betty Weissman is 75 when Joseph, her husband of nearly 50 years, announces he's divorcing her. Soon, Betty moves out of their grand Central Park West apartment and Joseph's conniving girlfriend, Felicity, moves in. Betty lands in a rundown Westport, Conn., beach cottage, but things quickly get more complicated when Betty's daughters run into their own problems. Literary agent Miranda is sued into bankruptcy after it's revealed that some of her authors made up their lurid memoirs, and

Annie, drowning in debt, can no longer afford her apartment. Once they relocate to Westport, both girls fall in love—Annie rather awkwardly with the brother of her stepfather's paramour, and Miranda with a younger actor who has a young son. An Austen-esque mischief hovers over these romantic relationships as the three women figure out how to survive and thrive. "It's a smart crowd pleaser with lovably flawed leads and the best tearjerker finale you're likely to read this year....compulsively readable." *Publishers Weekly* "Drawing on Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Schine (*The New Yorkers*) has written a witty update." *Library Journal* "Infectious fun." *Kirkus Reviews*

Dana Stabenow, **A NIGHT TOO DARK**, (336 pgs) 2/16

Global Harvest Resources is intent on opening the Suulutag Mine, where substantial deposits of gold, copper, and molybdenum have been found on state leases in the middle of the Iqaluk Wildlife Refuge, 50 miles from Niniltna. When Kate, "chair of the board of directors of the Niniltna Native Association," and state trooper Jim Chopin find bear-eaten human remains near the truck of Global Harvest roustabout Dewayne A. Gammons, they assume the remains are Gammons's. After all, there was a suicide note in Gammons's truck. Weeks later, a wounded and nearly catatonic Gammons emerges from the woods near Kate's homestead. More puzzles—and murder—follow. "Bestseller Stabenow deftly explores the environmental and economic impact of gold mining in her sizzling 17th novel to feature Alaska PI Kate Shugak." *Publishers Weekly*

Danielle Steel, **BIG GIRL**, (336 pgs) 2/23

Victoria Dawson has always felt like an outcast. When her little sister Grace is born, father Jim tells Victoria she was the "tester cake," and they finally got it right with the beautiful Gracie. Victoria grows up in her sister's shadow, and though she loves Gracie dearly, she's anxious to leave home. The pain doesn't stop there, though. Her father calls her first job at a prestigious private school in Manhattan "pathetic," and Victoria begins a battle with her weight and her belief that she is unlovable.

Peter Straub, **A DARK MATTER**, (416 pgs) 2/9

Four high school friends in 1966 Madison, Wis.—Hootie Bly, Dilly Olson, Jason Boatman, and Lee Truax—fall under the spell of charismatic "wandering guru" Spencer Mallon. During an occult ceremony in which Mallon attempts to break through to a higher reality, something goes horribly awry leaving one participant dead. Decades later, Lee's writer husband interviews the quartet to find out what happened. In Roshomon-like fashion, each relates a slightly different account of the trauma they experienced. Straub shows how the disappointments, downturns, and failed promise of the four friends' lives may have stemmed from this youthful experience, and suggests, by extension, that the malignant evil

they helped unleash into the world has tainted all hope ever since. "Brilliant in its orchestration and provocative in its speculations, this novel ranks as one of the finest tales of modern horror." ***Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)*** "Straub's latest offering in new wave horror will thrill his many fans and attract new readers." ***Library Journal*** "As dazzling a literary performance as anything Straub has ever written." ***Booklist***

Adriana Trigiani, **BRAVA, VALENTINE**, (352 pgs) 2/2

The second novel in Trigiani's Valentine trilogy (after *Very Valentine*) brings back Valentine Roncalli and her argumentative but loving Italian American family. With her grandmother remarried and living in Italy, Valentine and her brother are now in charge of the Angelina Shoe Company. She's a strong businesswoman, but family and romantic relationships knock her off stride. The marriage problems she sees in her own family don't allow her to trust in a man or her own happiness. Her discovery of a family scandal that leads to Buenos Aires only stirs up more family troubles and romantic difficulties. And the loss of a beloved friend forces Valentine to question her future and look past tearful farewells for love and happiness. "A charming valentine to love, forgiveness, and family." ***Publishers Weekly*** "Brimming over with life, her latest will be essential reading for fans of humorous, touching family fiction. Trigiani's readers will be hard-pressed to wait a year for the final installment." ***Library Journal***

*****Adriana Trigiani will be visiting the Hagen Ranch Road Library on Tuesday, March 2 @2:00 PM. Please call (561) 894-7500 for more information.**