

The following is a tentative list of new fiction releases for **JANUARY, 2010**.
**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

Lenny Bartulin, **DEATH BY THE BOOK**, (256 pgs) 1/19

Bartulin introduces irrepressible Sydney, Australia, used-book dealer Jack Susko in what one hopes will be a long series. Susko's business is slow until he gets an odd request from a well-to-do businessman, Hammond Kasprowicz, who offers him \$50 for every copy he can locate of the works of an obscure poet, Edward Kass. Needing the cash, Susko suppresses his curiosity about the motive behind his client's request. As he begins to track down copies of Kass's books, Susko is unable to avoid getting emotionally entangled with Kasprowicz's daughter, Annabelle. After a few dead bodies crop up, the bibliophile becomes the object of unwelcome suspicion by a shady cop who knows about Susko's unsavory background. "A tight hard-boiled whodunit.... readers will find the smart-aleck amateur detective a winning lead character." ***Publishers Weekly*** "Poet Bartulin's debut is quirky and inventive enough to attract a niche audience of readers who fantasize about owning a bookstore and embarking on colorful adventures."

***Kirkus Reviews* FIRST NOVEL**

Belinda Bauer, **BLACKLANDS**, (240 pgs) 1/5

Twelve-year-old Steven's hardscrabble life in tiny Shipcolt, England, on the edge of Exmoor has a predictable monotony: he spends most of his free time with his best friend, Lewis, dodging the local bullies and trying to garner the favor of his mother, Lettie, and his Nan (grandmother), who seem to disapprove of his every move. The two women exist in a state of emotional limbo, still mourning the death of his Uncle Billy, who was abducted and murdered as an 11 year old by a serial killer serving time in a nearby prison. Steven enters into a bold plan—to find his uncle's killer and thus win the affection of his mother and grandmother. But once he begins a secret correspondence with the killer, Steven starts down a treacherous path that could endanger his own life. "A solid debut.... Bauer creates believable tension within the Lamb household as her characters shoulder enormous psychological burdens." ***Publishers Weekly*** "A compelling, fast-paced, and suspenseful drama that will keep readers engaged from the first page. Fans of Ruth Rendell will likely be drawn to Bauer's work." ***Library Journal*** "Bauer displays remarkable talent in pacing, plotting and, most important of all, getting beneath the skin of even her most repellent characters." ***Kirkus Reviews (Starred Review)***

FIRST NOVEL

Melanie Benjamin, **ALICE, I HAVE BEEN**, (368 pgs) 1/12

Benjamin draws on one of the most enduring relationships in children's literature in her debut, spinning out the heartbreaking story of Alice from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Her research into the lives of Charles Dodgson (aka Lewis Carroll) and the family of Alice Liddell is apparent as she takes circumstances shrouded in mystery and colors in the spaces to reveal a vibrant and passionate Alice. Born into a Victorian family of privilege, free-spirited Alice catches the attention of family friend Dodgson and serves as the muse for both his photography and writing. Their bond, however, is misunderstood by Alice's family, and though she is forced to sever their friendship, she is forever haunted by their connection as her life becomes something of a chain of heartbreaks. As an adult, Alice tries to escape her past, but it is only when she finally embraces it that she truly finds the happiness that eluded her. "Focusing on three eras in Alice's life, Benjamin offers a finely wrought portrait of Alice that seamlessly blends fact with fiction. This is book club gold." *Publishers Weekly* "This novel will have wide appeal as it includes history, romance, literature, and a great deal of suspense." *Library Journal* **FIRST NOVEL**

Robert Jackson Bennett, **MR. SHIVERS**, (336 pgs) 1/15

Set during the Great Depression this first novel relates a good man's desperate travels through the ruins of the American heartland on the trail of his child's murderer. As he tracks the eponymous fiend, Marcus Connelly discovers that he's not the only person whose life the killer has ruined. The Dust Bowl refugees pursuing Mr. Shivers gradually realize that he embodies an elemental force of destruction, and they begin sacrificing their own humanity for the sake of vengeance. The everyday horrors of a deserted, drought-blighted countryside are interrupted by frightening dreams and fragments of disturbing superstitions as Bennett's characters try to articulate what's happening and imagine a way back home. "Bennett makes dark fantasy feel like gritty realism, achieving a rare laconic eloquence that will captivate horror readers hungry for new voices....a remarkably assured first novel which reads like a cross between Stephen King and John Steinbeck." *Publishers Weekly* "Compelling and truly horrifying, this debut novel is highly recommended." *Library Journal* **FIRST NOVEL**

Lou Berney, **GUTSHOT STRAIGHT**, (304 pgs) 1/5

Charles "Shake" Bouchon steps out of a California prison resolved to stay "free and clear"; 48 hours later he's effectively double-crossed powerful Armenian L.A. mob boss Alexandra Ilandryan, ripped off dangerous Las Vegas powerhouse Dick "the Whale" Moby and impulsively rescued exotic con woman Gina Clement, who may be the most dangerous of the three.

Extremely rare, highly unusual religious artifacts play a key role as the 42-year-old Shake attempts to extricate himself from a situation that gets more complex and deadly by the hour. "Shake is a quick-thinking fellow with dreams of owning a restaurant, but if fate is kind, he'll return for the same kinds of adventures as those Berney recounts in this engaging debut. A fast-moving caper novel, which smoothly blends humor, action and romantic frisson." *Publishers Weekly* "The plot turns are constant, and the dialogue is sharp. The bad guys are wonderfully scary, and the locales are vividly drawn. Elmore Leonard might be very pleased to call GUTSHOT STRAIGHT his own." *Booklist (Starred Review)* **FIRST NOVEL**

Amy Bloom, **WHERE THE GOD OF LOVE HANGS OUT**, (224 pgs) 1/12

Bloom's new collection features two sets of connected stories that characterize the far-reaching trajectory of love within memorable groups of characters. In one grouping, William and Clare, literature professors in two parallel marriages, are drawn to each other in middle age after years as highly compatible friends. In the other, Lionel, the adolescent son of a well-known jazz musician, and Julia, recently widowed from that musician, are forced to redefine their relationship in the face of the man's death. In both sequences, realignments between children and adults are unpredictable but deeply felt. "A look at love in many forms through a keenly perceptive lens....quite sublime." *Publishers Weekly* "An eminently readable new collection." *Library Journal*

Jane Borodale, **THE BOOK OF FIRES**, (368 pgs) 1/21

Borodale's debut is the story of Agnes Trussel, who, in 1752, leaves the poverty-stricken countryside for London, intent on hiding her unwanted pregnancy and making a better life. On her journey, she meets Lettice Talbot, a beautiful young woman who promises to help her, but when Agnes loses track of her benefactress, she ends up as the apprentice to Mr. Blacklock, a moody pyrotechnist who is mourning his dead wife as he attempts to bring color to fireworks. Despite her difficulties with Blacklock's other domestic staff, Agnes grows to feel at home in London and enjoys her work, but she is constantly threatened by the imminent exposure of her pregnancy and haunted by the guilt of her theft of the stash of coins that funded her trip. "A delightfully diverting book." *Publishers Weekly* "Borodale deftly conjures up mid-18th century London in her spectacular debut...Readers who loved Jane Eyre will appreciate the atmosphere of tension and foreboding that permeates the narrative." *Booklist* **FIRST NOVEL**

Tracy Chevalier, **REMARKABLE CREATURES**, (320 pgs) 1/5

Tart-tongued spinster Elizabeth Philpot meets young Mary Anning after moving from London to the coastal town of Lyme Regis. The two quickly

form an unlikely friendship based on their mutual interest in finding fossils, which provides the central narrative as working-class Mary emerges from childhood to become a famous fossil hunter, with her friend and protector Elizabeth to defend her against the men who try to take credit for Mary's finds. Their friendship, however, is tested when Colonel Birch comes to Lyme to ask for Mary's help in hunting fossils and the two spinsters compete for his attention. "Chevalier handles the science with a deft hand, but her real subject is two women barred from the professional community of men who are also denied access to the more acceptable roles of wife and mother. Yet somehow Mary and Elizabeth thrive, and the novel glories in their substantial achievements against considerable odds. Shines a light on women usually excluded from history-and on the simple pleasures of friendship." *Kirkus Reviews*

Bernard Cornwell, **THE BURNING LAND**, (352 pgs) 1/19

This action-packed novel continues the saga of warfare for supremacy in Britain, a brutal period when Saxon and Danish swords, battleaxes, and treachery ruled the day. By now, Alfred the Great is old and feeble, unwilling and unable to repel the Danish invaders. He relies on trusty pagan warlord Uhtred, but Uhtred's temper and an unexpected violent act force Uhtred to break his oath of loyalty to Alfred and flee north with his men, intending to reclaim his ancestral home. En route, they face marauding Danish armies, betrayal, battles for a pirate treasure, and the curse of a vicious Danish witch, only to eventually be manipulated back into fighting for Alfred. "Vivid descriptions of merciless battlefield slaughter, rape, and destruction are artfully related by a masterful storyteller. Uhtred is victorious in some battles, but the outcome of others will have to wait for the sequel." *Publishers Weekly* "A master of historical fiction....Cornwell makes his subject material come alive. Better, his major protagonist is totally believable and human, if incredibly violent." *Library Journal*

Robert Crais, **THE FIRST RULE**, (320 pgs) 1/12

When garment importer Frank Meyer and his family are executed in their Los Angeles home at the start of bestseller Crais's second thriller to feature PI Joe Pike (after *The Watchman*), LAPD detectives soon connect Meyer to Pike, who knew each other from their days as military contractors. Pike is convinced that Meyer, who left soldiering to start a family, wasn't dirty, even though his murder is the seventh in a series of violent robberies where the victims were all professional criminals. Determined to clear his friend's name, Pike discovers that Frank's nanny and her family have ties to Eastern European organized crime. With the help of PI partner Elvis Cole, Pike engages in a dangerous—and not always legal—game of cat and mouse with some of the city's most dangerous crooks. "Pike emerges as an enigmatically appealing hero, whose lethal skills never overshadow his

unflappable sense of morality." *Publishers Weekly* "Not a word is wasted in this suspenseful, hair-raising page-turner....Crais is at his best here." *Library Journal* "Righteous vengeance, a reckless pace and just enough surprises to keep you turning the pages." *Kirkus Reviews*

Barbara Delinsky, **NOT MY DAUGHTER**, (352 pgs) 1/5

When Susan Tate's seventeen-year-old daughter, Lily, announces she is pregnant, Susan is stunned. A single mother, she has struggled to do everything right. She sees the pregnancy as an unimaginable tragedy for both Lily and herself. Then comes word of two more pregnancies among high school juniors who happen to be Lily's best friends-and the town turns to talk of a pact. As fingers start pointing, the most ardent criticism is directed at Susan. As principal of the high school, she has always been held up as a role model of hard work and core values. Now her detractors accuse her of being a lax mother, perhaps not worthy of the job of shepherding impressionable students. As Susan struggles with the implications of her daughter's pregnancy, her job, financial independence, and long-fought-for dreams are all at risk. "Delinsky has a knack for exploring the battlefields of contemporary life, and this emotionally intelligent new novel offers her fans what they want-high drama and romantic realism." *Kirkus Reviews* "Delinsky proves once again why she's a perennial bestseller with this thought-provoking tale.... timely, fresh, and true-to-life." *Publishers Weekly*

Tim Dorsey, **GATOR A-GO-GO**, (352 pgs) 1/26

Spring break, from its innocuous beginnings in 1935 to its drunken orgiastic present, provides the theme for Dorsey's 12th adventure to feature vigilante serial killer Serge A. Storms. When vengeful drug dealers and federal agents go after an innocent college student, Andy McKenna, who's come to enjoy Florida's Panama City Beach, Serge becomes Andy's protector. Along the way, Serge delivers rough justice in inventive and bizarre fashion to a mugger, a rude driver, and various others guilty of minor infractions. The reality show *Girls Gone Haywire* offers ample opportunities for scathing satire, as the show's producer becomes another one of Serge's targets. Meanwhile, Coleman, Serge's perennially stoned companion, acts as a guru to the spring breakers. "As usual, Dorsey leavens the slapstick humor with intriguing bits of Florida historical lore." *Publishers Weekly*

Gail Godwin, **UNFINISHED DEIRES**, (416 pgs) 1/5

Bestselling author Godwin brings readers back in time to the early 1950s in this story of Catholic school girls and the nuns who oversee them. As Mother Suzanne Ravenel begins a memoir of her 60-plus years at Mount St. Gabriel's School in Mountain City, N.C., she's forced to re-examine the

"toxic year" of 1951–1952, one of her worst at the school—beginning with the arrival of ninth-grade student Chloe Starnes, who's recently lost her mother, and Mother Malloy, a beautiful young nun assigned to the freshman class. Starnes and Malloy's arrivals presage a shift in the ranks of freshman Tildy Stratton's cruel clique, with significant consequences for all involved. Change, when it finally comes, stems from the girls' attempt to revive a play written years before by Ravenel. "Godwin captures brilliantly the subtleties of friendships between teenage girls, their ambivalence toward religion and their momentous struggle to define people—especially themselves. Poignant and transporting, this faux memoir makes a convincing, satisfying novel." *Publishers Weekly* "A strong story populated by a host of memorable characters-smart, satisfying fiction, one of the author's best in years." *Kirkus Reviews (Starred Review)*

Amy Greene, **BLOODROOT**, (304 pgs) 1/12

The novel is told in a kaleidoscope of voices and centers around an incendiary romance that consumes everyone in its path: Myra Lamb, a wild young girl with mysterious, haint blue eyes who grows up on remote Bloodroot Mountain; her grandmother Byrdie Lamb, who protects Myra fiercely and passes down "the touch" that bewitches people and animals alike; the neighbor boy who longs for Myra yet is destined never to have her; the twin children Myra is forced to abandon but who never forget their mother's deep love; and John Odom, the man who tries to tame Myra and meets with shocking, violent disaster. Against the backdrop of a beautiful but often unforgiving country, these lives come together—only to be torn apart—as a dark, riveting mystery unfolds. "Pitch-perfect voices tell a story loaded with lyric suffering and redemption-bound to be a huge hit." *Kirkus Reviews* "This stunning debut novel is a triumph of voice and setting." *Booklist (Starred Review) FIRST NOVEL*

James W. Hall, **SILENCER**, (288 pgs) 1/19

Hall's 11th thriller to feature Thorn (after *Hell's Bay*) finds his iconoclastic Key Largo, Fla. hero with a newly acquired fortune. Thorn is excited when his girlfriend, Rusty Stabler, presents a deal to protect 300 square miles of Florida from development and also put Earl Hammond's Coquina Ranch game-hunting operation out of business. Then Hammond is shot to death, Thorn is kidnapped—but Hall is just getting warmed up. While Thorn tries to figure a way out of the literal hole he's in, Rusty and Thorn's longtime friend Sugarman try to track him. Warped contract killers Jonah and Moses Faust, who deal in serial killer memorabilia, and Hammond's very different sons, ex-football star Browning and Miami cop Frisco, play large roles. "Hall steadily ratchets the suspense while seamlessly combining elements of Florida's natural history with elements of the state's early development and overdevelopment." *Publishers Weekly*

Jack Higgins, **THE WOLF AT THE DOOR**, (320 pgs) 1/19

In bestseller Higgins's 17th Sean Dillon thriller (after *A Darker Place*), Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin is behind a plot to kill Dillon and other members of the British prime minister's private intelligence army as payback for their being such a thorn in his side over the years. In London, Gen. Charles Ferguson, who's just left a late-night meeting of Commonwealth ministers, is walking toward his car when it explodes, killing his driver. In New York City, Maj. Harry Miller, who's in the U.S. to attend a U.N. meeting, goes for a stroll in Central Park, where he neatly turns the tables on a hired hit man. Extensive flashbacks explain how the attacks on each of the marked men evolved, with much space devoted to the chief assassin, Daniel Holley. "Higgins provides a more cerebral story than usual, but he doesn't stint on action. Though most of the plot threads tie up nicely, the ending makes clear that readers will be seeing Holley again." *Publishers Weekly*

Beth Hoffman, **SAVING CEECEE HONEYCUTT**, (320 pgs) 1/12

Cecelia Rose (CeeCee) Honeycutt tells the story of her tragic life and the strong women who stepped in to save her. At age 12, CeeCee realizes her mother, flouncing around Willoughby, OH, in prom dresses and matching shoes, is crazy and the town's laughingstock. Her father is never home, and nothing is going to change so CeeCee buries herself in books as an escape. But her true liberation comes after her mother's tragic death when great-aunt Tootie sweeps CeeCee off to Savannah. There, a group of powerful, independent women offer the young girl love, laughter, and a new chance at life. "Exemplifying Southern storytelling at its best, this coming-of-age novel is sure to be a hit with the book clubs that adopted Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*." *Library Journal* **FIRST NOVEL**

Kay Hooper, **BLOOD TIES**, (320 pgs) 1/26

When a serial killer tortures, dismembers, and dumps eight women in eight weeks in Tennessee and adjacent states, Noah Bishop, head of the FBI's Special Crimes Unit, gets on the case, along with Noah's touch-telepath and seer wife, Miranda, and special agent Hollis Templeton, a profiler-in-training and medium who can self-heal and see auras. Hollis and special investigator Diana Brisco, also a medium and healer, travel to the "gray time," a corridor between life and death where a young spirit, Brooke, helps them connect the killings to a past threat. "Series fans and newcomers alike will appreciate the appendixes, which include bios of Special Crime Unit agents and definitions of their various paranormal abilities." *Publishers Weekly*

David Hosp, **AMONG THIEVES**, (384 pgs) 1/11

In 1990, \$300 million worth of paintings were stolen from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in what remains one of the greatest unsolved art thefts of the twentieth century. Now, nearly twenty years later, the case threatens to break wide open. Members of Boston's criminal underground are turning up dead. But these are no ordinary murders. The M.O. of the attacks suggests the involvement of someone trained by the IRA. But when Scott Finn learns that one of his clients, Devon Malley, was part of the heist, he's quickly drawn into the crossfire, and into the renewed hunt for the missing artwork—a hunt that may cost Finn and his colleagues their lives. "Thriller readers won't be disappointed with the plot twists and surprise ending here, and Scott Finn fans will cheer his return." *Library Journal* "The still-unsolved 1990 robbery of the Gardner Museum gets a fictional investigation in a grittily realistic novel from Hosp." *Kirkus Reviews*

Stuart Kaminsky, **A WHISPER TO THE LIVING**, (256 pgs) 1/5

Inspector Rostnikov (*People Who Walk in Darkness*) and his team are looking for a serial killer who has murdered 40 people in Moscow. They also must navigate the dangerous political fallout when it becomes clear that the serial killer may have ties to some higher-ups in the Russian government. Then there is the matter of the British journalist who is digging into the dirty business of Russian organized crime. "With its outstanding depiction of police work, Kaminsky's long-running series is the closest we have come to Ed McBain's 87th Precinct procedurals. Sadly, Mystery Writers of America Grand Master Kaminsky died October 9th." *Library Journal*

Marian Keyes, **THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN THE SKY**, (480 pgs) 1/21

This novel follows seven neighbors whose lives become entangled when a sassy and prescient spirit pays a visit to their Dublin townhouse with the intent of changing at least one of their lives. But what will this metamorphosis be and who will the sprite choose? There's Matt and Maeve, the newlyweds struggling to overcome the first obstacle in their storybook romance; Lydia, the brassy but vulnerable cabbie; Katie, the just-turned-forty PR executive searching for a more gratifying life; and the eldest resident, Jemima, currently playing hostess to her son Fionn, who is in town to star as the hunky gardener in a hot new television show. "Keyes is an expert at weaving dark threads into cozy material, and in this ambitious outing, she's in top form." *Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)* "Keyes has been writing thoughtful novels about women's lives for years. She isn't afraid to tackle thorny subjects, but her appealing, relatable characters and gentle humor keep the tone light. Readers who enjoy intelligent, humorous women's fiction should give Keyes a try." *Library Journal*

Elizabeth Kostova, **THE SWAN THIEVES**, (576 pgs) 1/12

Psychiatrist Andrew Marlowe, devoted to his profession and the painting hobby he loves, has a solitary but ordered life. When renowned painter Robert Oliver attacks a canvas in the National Gallery of Art and becomes his patient, Marlow finds that order destroyed. Desperate to understand the secret that torments the genius, he embarks on a journey that leads him into the lives of the women closest to Oliver and a tragedy at the heart of French Impressionism. "Lush prose and abundant drama." **Kirkus Reviews** (Kostova is the author of the bestselling debut novel about Dracula, *The Historian*)

John Lescroart, **TREASURE HUNT**, (368 pgs) 1/12

Bestseller Lescroart's third Hunt Club thriller finds PI Wyatt Hunt near the end of his rope. Business has slowed to a trickle; Hunt's relationship with his old high school friend, homicide detective Devin Juhle, is on the rocks; his receptionist, Tamara Dade, has walked out; and Tamara's brother, Mickey, is his only remaining employee. When Mickey discovers the body of Dominic Como, San Francisco's most prominent civic activist, he proposes a way for Hunt's agency to get involved in the murder investigation and perhaps return to solvency. Como's extensive charities operated with a budget of about \$50 million—a sum large enough to put all sorts of murder motives into play. And just how jealous was Como's wife of her husband's young and pretty female driver? "A sharp-edged portrait of the myriad temptations San Francisco offers citizens with money and power." **Kirkus Reviews**

Madza Mengiste, **BENEATH THE LION'S GAZE**, (305 pgs) 1/11

Ethiopia's 1974 revolution tears a family in half in this debut novel.. Drought, famine and mutiny in the military are stretching Emperor Haile Selassie's regime to the breaking point, and when it finally tears, Hailu, a skilled and respected doctor in Addis Ababa, must find a way to shepherd his extended family through the ensuing violence. His task is made no easier by the fact that his son Dawit's fiery youthful convictions place him at odds with his more circumspect older brother, Yonas, a university professor with a wife and child. But when soldiers request Hailu to treat a gruesomely tortured political prisoner, he makes a fateful choice that puts his family in the military junta's crosshairs. "Mengiste is as adept at crafting emotionally delicate moments as she is deft at portraying the tense and grim historical material." **Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)** "A recent New York University graduate, Mengiste was voted a "new literary idol" by New York magazine and garnered a Pushcart Prize nomination. Her honors do not belie her skill, for this book is stunning."

Library Journal "An arresting, powerful novel that works on both personal and political levels." *Kirkus Reviews* **FIRST NOVEL**

Joyce Carol Oates, **A FAIR MAIDEN**, (176 pgs) 1/6

Sixteen-year-old Katya Spivak is out for a walk on the gracious streets of Bayhead Harbor with her two summer babysitting charges when she's approached by silver-haired, elegant Marcus Kidder. At first his interest in her seems harmless, even pleasant; like his name, a sort of gentle joke. His beautiful home, the children's books he's written, his classical music, the marvelous art in his study, his lavish presents to her — Mr. Kidder's life couldn't be more different from Katya's drab working-class existence back home in South Jersey, or more enticing. But by degrees, almost imperceptibly, something changes and posing for Mr. Kidder's new painting isn't the lighthearted endeavor it once was. What does he really want from her? And how far will he go to get it? "A short but satisfying novel."

Library Journal "Oates at her most restrained and hence best." *Kirkus Reviews* "Fans of Oates' gothic stylings will not be disappointed." *Booklist*

T. Jefferson Parker, **IRON RIVER**, (384 pgs) 1/5

Charlie Hood, a Los Angeles sheriff's deputy, joins Operation Blowdown, an attempt to staunch the near constant flow of money and guns across the U.S.-Mexican border. When a shootout during a botched weapons buy leaves the son of the head of a powerful Mexican cartel dead, the fight becomes personal as cartel soldiers cross the border to take revenge on Hood's team. Meanwhile, a faulty product has driven Pace Arms, a family-owned gun manufacturer, nearly to bankruptcy. Unbeknownst to Hood, the man brokering an illegal deal between Pace and another Mexican cartel chief for the production of a revolutionary handgun is Bradley Smith, the son of bank robber Allison Murrietta, the anti-heroine of *L.A. Outlaws*, the first book in the Hood series. "The indomitable Charlie is, as always, irresistible." *Kirkus Reviews*

Dolen Perkins-Valdez, **WENCH**, (304 pgs) 1/5

In her debut, Perkins-Valdez plunges into a dark period of American history, chronicling the lives of four slave women—Lizzie, Reenie, Sweet and Mawu—who are their masters' mistresses. The women meet when their owners vacation at the same summer resort in Ohio. There, they see free blacks for the first time and hear rumors of abolition, sparking their own desires to be free. For everyone but Lizzie, that is, who believes she is really in love with her master, and he with her. An extended flashback in the middle of the novel delves into Lizzie's life and vividly explores the complicated psychological dynamic between master and slave. Jumping back to the final summer in Ohio, the women all have a decision to make—will they run? "Heart-wrenching, intriguing, original and suspenseful, this

novel showcases Perkins-Valdez's ability to bring the unfortunate past to life." *Publishers Weekly* "A memorable first novel." *Library Journal* "A striking debut –compelling and unsentimental." *Kirkus Reviews* "Drawing on research about the resort that eventually became the first black college, Wilberforce University, the novel explores the complexities of relationships in slavery and the abiding comfort of women's friendships." *Booklist*
FIRST NOVEL

Douglas Preston, **IMPACT**, (368 pgs) 1/5

Wyman Ford, hero of *Tyrannosaur Canyon* and *Blasphemy*, returns in Preston's latest thriller, where the stakes involve not only the salvation of the world but also the solar system. A young woman in Maine sees a meteorite streak through the sky and decides to find the crater. A scientist working on Mars data finds something so startling that he is murdered to keep the information secret. And Ford heads to Cambodia to investigate the source of a new gemstone on the market that has radioactive properties. When he arrives, he realizes that the mine is an exit hole. How can a meteorite travel through the earth? "A solid thriller." *Publishers Weekly* "Preston has done it again. The thriller elements mix well with the science aspects of the story, and the author makes even the hard-to-grasp concepts easy to understand. Most readers will consume this in one sitting; not to be missed." *Library Journal*

Spencer Quinn, **THEREBY HANGS A TAIL**, (320 pgs) 1/5

In the follow-up to *Dog On It*, Quinn spins the tale of Chet and his human companion, Bernie. The private investigators are now investigating threats made against a pampered show dog named Princess. What seems like a joke turns out to be anything but when the dog's owner is abducted and Bernie's on-again-off-again girlfriend, reporter Susie Sanchez, also disappears. Could the disappearances be connected?

Ian Rankin, **DOORS OPEN**, (288 pgs) 1/15

Three friends descend upon an art auction in search of some excitement. Mike Mackenzie-retired software mogul, bachelor and fine art enthusiast-wants something that money can't buy. Fellow art-lover Allan Cruickshank is bored with his banking career and burdened by a painful divorce. And Robert Gissing, an art professor, is frustrated that so many paintings stay hidden in corporate boardrooms, safes and private apartments. After the auction-and a chance encounter with crime boss Chib Calloway-Robert and Allan suggest the "liberation" of several paintings from the National Gallery, hoping Mike will dissuade them. Instead, he hopes they are serious.

Anne Tyler, **NOAH'S COMPASS**, (288 pgs) 1/5

Liam Pennywell is a man of unexceptional talents, plain demeanor, modest means and curtailed ambition. At age 60, he's been fired from his teaching job at a "second-rate private boys' school" in Baltimore, a job below his academic training and original expectations. An unsentimental, noncontemplative survivor of two failed marriages and the emotionally detached father of three grown daughters, Liam is jolted into alarm after he's attacked in his apartment and loses all memory of the experience. His search to recover those lost hours leads him into an uneasy exploration of his disappointing life and into an unlikely new relationship with Eunice, a socially inept walking fashion disaster who is half his age. She is also spontaneous and enthusiastic, and Liam longs to cast off his inertia and embrace the "joyous recklessness" that he feels in her company. "Tyler's gift is to make the reader empathize with this flawed but decent man, and to marvel at how this determinedly low-key, plainspoken novelist achieves miracles of insight and understanding." ***Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)*** "Another winning effort by Tyler." ***Library Journal*** "By the end of the novel, the particulars of Liam's life really haven't changed that much, but he is utterly transformed. And so will be the reader." ***Kirkus Reviews***

Stuart Woods, **KISSER**, (304 pgs) 1/19

At the start of bestseller Woods's 17th Stone Barrington novel (after *Loitering with Intent*), the handsome New York lawyer smoothly picks up Carrie Cox, an aspiring actress who's recently moved from Georgia to New York City, at Elaine's, his favorite Manhattan restaurant. As usual, every beautiful woman Barrington encounters pursues him, including Carrie, art gallery assistant Rita Gammage, U.S. attorney Tiffany Baldwin, and mentally unstable Dolce Bianci, to whom he was once briefly married. In spite of all the female attentions, Barrington manages to shield Carrie from her ex-husband, protect young heiress Hildy Parsons from a con artist/drug dealer, and plot to take down Ponzi scammer Sig Larsen. "Too crafty to let Barrington sail unscathed through encounters with women or criminals, Woods devises plenty of snarls to provoke laughs and keep the action interesting in a series that excels at playing out male fantasies." ***Publishers Weekly***