



JANUARY '12

Running the Rift

A Novel, by Naomi Benaron

"Named for the Rwandan god of thunder, Jean Patrick Nkuba is destined for Olympic glory. Pushing his body up the misty hills of his village, he dreams not only of fame, but also of bringing peace to his country and equality to his Tutsi compatriots. When the floodwaters of hatred and war with the Hutu burst out over his homeland, Jean Patrick must run a different kind of race in order to survive. Both beautiful and heart-rending, horrific and hopeful, this novel carries a message that deserves to be widely read."

—Amanda Hurley, Inkwood Books, Tampa, FL



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JANUARY '12

The Orphan Master's Son

A Novel, by Adam Johnson

"Sometimes we say that a book tries to be too many things. This thought-provoking novel is many things—an adventure tale, an examination of identity and the nature of the self, a meta-narrative, a political novel, a love story, a survivor story, and more—and it succeeds on all counts. Like the works of David Mitchell, *The Orphan Master's Son* is at once a joy to read, a challenging work, and, ultimately, a terrific and satisfying story."

—Mark LaFramboise, Politics & Prose Books and Coffee Shop, Washington, DC



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JANUARY '12

American Dervish

A Novel, by Ayad Akhtar

"At its simplest, *American Dervish* is a coming-of-age story. At its most complex, it is a story of religious faith, marital strife, human nature, love, envy, sexual awakening, betrayal, and racism. It is impossible to leave Akhtar's exceptional debut novel without experiencing the struggles and pain of young Hayat as he comes to terms with both his Muslim faith and his humanity."

—Lynn Riggs, Books & Company, Oconomowoc, WI



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The Invisible Ones

A Novel, by Stef Penney

"Penney delves deep into the Romany world in this story of the search for a gypsy woman who has disappeared. As the detective who seeks her discovers, each revelation leads to even more questions. His narrative alternates with that of a young boy to provide contrasting and conflicting perspectives that increase the tension and mirror the intricacies of the unique world being portrayed. Penney succeeds in both exposing myths and crafting a compelling mystery in this satisfying read."

—Bill Cusumano, Nicola's Books, Ann Arbor, MI



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The Journal of Best Practices

A Memoir of Marriage, Asperger Syndrome, and One Man's Quest to Be a Better Husband, by David Finch

"After five years of a struggling marriage, Finch's wife, Kris, made a breakthrough guess—her husband had Asperger syndrome. *The Journal of Best Practices* is David Finch's well-documented attempt to go beyond his previous efforts at fitting in and to actually learn to do things like listen, empathize, and 'go with the flow.' Finch still doesn't like flying in a plane or unsolicited wetness, but the results of his determination are not just meaningful to his family, but also an enlightening, endearing, and amusing chronicle for the rest of us."

—Daniel Goldin, Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee, WI



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JANUARY '12

The Demi-Monde: Winter

A Novel, by Rod Rees

"Like a literary love child of Neal Stephenson and Tad Williams, *The Demi-Monde: Winter*, the first in a proposed quartet, is a dark, dangerous adventure tale set in a vaguely steampunk virtual world populated by the avatars of some of history's most villainous characters. Eighteen-year-old Ella is thrust into a world unlike any she has ever known when she is hired to retrieve the president's daughter from a virtual environment that was originally created to train combat soldiers in guerilla warfare. A page-turner and a highly entertaining opening to a very promising series."

—Billie Bloebaum, Powells Books at PDX, Portland, OR



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JANUARY '12

The Gilder

by Kathryn Kay

"This is the story of a woman whose talents include the restoration and gilding of older works of art. Gilding becomes a metaphor for her inability to face the truths of her past, and she must remind herself that the process is not successful without repairing the foundation upon which the gold leaf is layered. In a tale filled with betrayal and repentance, missed opportunities and new beginnings, the layers of gold are transformed from denial of the past to real love in the present."

—Fran Wilson, Colorado State University Bookstore, Fort Collins, CO



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JANUARY '12

The World We Found

A Novel, by Thrity Umrigar

"Umrigar's latest recalls the halcyon days at university in 1970s Bombay, which were characterized by intense friendships, fierce ambitions and a determination to change the world, as remembered by four women whose lives have ended up radically different from their collegiate dreams: one, dying in America, whose last wish is to see her three friends, two living in upper middle class Mumbai, and the fourth who has been long-estranged from their circle. Painful secrets, both past and present, threaten to prevent the reunion. Blood may be thicker than water, but Umrigar proves that friendship is thicker than blood in this marvelous novel that is both fascinating and disturbing by turns."

—Emily Crowe, The Odyssey Bookshop, South Hadley, MA



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JANUARY '12



Believing the Lie

An Inspector Lynley Novel, by Elizabeth George

"Once again George has provided us with a great mystery involving favorite characters from past works, Inspector Lynley and Sgt. Havers. The subplots are as engrossing as we've come to expect, and this story offers some new elements as well in both the humorous description of Havers' 'makeover' and the choice of a remarkably beautiful and haunting setting in the Lake District of Cumbria. Yet another exciting page-turner from an accomplished master of the genre."

—Jeanne Regentin, *Between the Covers*, Harbor Springs, MI



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Blueprints of the Afterlife

A Novel, by Ryan Boudinot

"It's not just that there's a Seattle lurking, both familiar and eerily altered, in Boudinot's joltingly intense new novel set in a not-so-distant future; it's also that the people who inhabit *Blueprints of the Afterlife* take as given this strange new world. They give it battle, still going at life in full-tilted measure as much as anyone ever could—even if it means sometimes facing the clone of someone who is known or loved. This is a brave, daring, entrancing book, one that elicits empathy for the characters in it, even as it makes you look at the real world around you with different, startled eyes."

—Rick Simonson, *The Elliott Bay Book Company*, Seattle, WA



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JANUARY '12



All the Flowers in Shanghai

A Novel, by Duncan Jepson

"Devotion to the first child is a thousand-year-old tradition in China. As the second child, Xiao Feng received less love and attention than her older sister. When her sister dies just prior to being married to a man who repulsed her, Feng becomes the substitute, with duty taking precedence over personal desires. Her duty now means bearing a male heir and being forced to endure painful nightly visits from her unloved husband. Feng, once an innocent, tender, dreaming young girl, is turned into a hard and cruel young woman who makes heart-rending choices that will haunt and scar her forever. A story both poignant and powerful."

—Karen Briggs, *Great Northern Books & Hobbies*, Oscoda, MI



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JANUARY '12



The House at Tyneford

A Novel, by Natasha Solomons

"*The House at Tyneford* is a lovely, old-fashioned novel set at the beginning of World War II on a remote English country estate where Elise has come to work as a housemaid, after having fled the Jewish persecutions in Vienna. Told in retrospective, the tale details how Elise grows from a spoiled girl into an exceptionally strong and adaptable young woman who fights to save both the family she left behind as well as the family she has come to serve."

—Laura L. Hansen, *Bookin' It*, Little Falls, MN



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Country of the Bad Wolfes

A Novel, by James Carlos Blake

"In the early 1800s, Irishman Roger Blake Wolfe arrived in New Hampshire, married, and fathered twin boys. Within a year, he was arrested and executed for maritime piracy in Veracruz, Mexico. Thus begins the Wolfe family connection with Mexico. One twin, Samuel Thomas Wolfe, fought in the Mexican American War, deserted and joined the San Patricios on the Mexican side, married, and lived in Mexico City. His twin, John Roger Wolfe, became very wealthy and lived on a hacienda near Veracruz with coffee plantations and entire villages within his ownership. John Roger and his wife had twin boys, who are the very meat of the book—a sprawling, magnificent story of three generations of men, their fortunes, loves and losses, during a fascinating time in the history of the United States and Mexico."

—Susan Wasson, Bookworks, Albuquerque, NM



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JANUARY '12

The Partnership

Five Cold Warriors and Their Quest to Ban the Bomb, by Philip Taubman

"Nuclear war continues to be an apocalyptic threat for America and other countries. Five men, members of the Cold War brain trust, have campaigned to challenge the United States and other nations to reconsider their strategic policies regarding nuclear arsenals. *The Partnership* gives us an intimate look at these men—Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, Sam Nunn, Bill Perry, and Sidney Drell—their origins, their work together, and their dealings with Barack Obama and other world leaders. Meticulously researched and compellingly told."

—Sue Fleming, The King's English Bookshop, Salt Lake City, UT



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JANUARY '12

Glaciers

A Novel, by Alexis M. Smith

"This lovely, contemplative novel packs a bigger emotional punch than its size suggests. As with the title metaphor, so much resides under the surface of who we are in public, what we say, and what we do. Honest, bittersweet reflection makes *Glaciers* the perfect reading to start the new year."

—Ariana Paliobagis, Country Bookshelf, Bozeman, MT



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From the Memoirs of a Non-Enemy Combatant

A Novel, by Alex Gilvarry

"This is a bold book. It is bold in its style, its thesis, and its story. While Gilvarry's narrative and characters are big and playful, the underlying dilemmas are deadly serious: What happens to those falsely accused or mistakenly detained when the remedies of the American criminal justice system are unavailable to them? How does one prove one's innocence when the system is set up to prove one's guilt? Gilvarry skillfully navigates the space between black comedy and farce without delivering a polemic and instead gives us a novel that is delightful without being light."

—Catherine Weller, Sam Weller's Books, Salt Lake City, UT



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All Fall Down

by Megan Hart

"Sunny and her three young children are hustled out of the Family of Superior Bliss religious compound in the middle of the night by her mother and told to run and not look back. Her mother's parting gift was a slip of paper with the name of her birth father, who has no idea he has a daughter. With nowhere else to go, Sunny arrives at his home, where his childless wife welcomes them and an uneasy peace is made. With obvious echoes of Jonestown, this will be great for book group discussions."

—Patricia Worth, River Reader, Lexington, MO



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Agent 6

A Novel, by Tom Rob Smith

"The conclusion of the Child 44 trilogy is as fast-paced and exciting as the first two volumes. After his wife's senseless death while on a goodwill trip to America in 1965, Leo Demidov, former Russian secret police agent, has only one goal—to find and kill the perpetrator. The Soviet government has a different agenda, however, and Leo is forbidden to pursue the matter. A very stubborn man, Leo's dedication to investigating the truth of his wife's death never falters. A suspenseful Cold War espionage treat!"

—Susan Taylor, The Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany, NY



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Vulture Peak

A Novel, by John Burdett

"Burdett's Sonchai Jitpleecheep novels feature an incomparable detective faced with some unforgettable crimes. In *Vulture Peak*, he is sent by his corrupt boss to investigate a triple murder that appears to be linked to traffic in human organs. Along the way, he runs into a powerful and powerfully troubled set of twin sisters and joins forces with a bipolar investigator from Hong Kong. Burdett's writing draws you in so completely that you may have jet lag by the time you reach the end. Fantastic!"

—Carol Schneck, Schuler Books & Music, Okemos, MI



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A Charitable Body

A Novel of Suspense, by Robert Barnard

"Inspector Charlie Peace, Barnard's Yorkshire detective, plays a part in this mystery, but it is his wife, Felicity, who takes center stage. As a local novelist and scholar, Felicity is invited to join the board of Walbrook Manor, a stately home recently gifted to the nation. While Felicity digs into the Manor's past, someone else digs up a body and Charlie begins digging into the mysterious death. Barnard's mysteries reflect England's golden age of Agatha Christie whodunits, but his characters are modern, well-rounded, and sympathetic. A wonderful read."

—Wendy Foster Leigh, The King's English Bookshop, Salt Lake City, UT



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