

Nine

By Jan Burke

The novel introduces Los Angeles homicide detective Alex Hartwick, who is investigating the brutal murder of a notorious drug dealer. It soon becomes evident that this is just the first in a series of murders whose victims are all on the FBI's Most Wanted list, and Hartwick is plunged into a complicated case that's somehow connected to Kit Logan, a young man still tormented by horrific abuse at the hands of his serial-killer stepfather years earlier. From Hartwick's search for answers to the vigilantes' pursuit of their next Most Wanted victims, the story unfolds using numerous characters and many different points of view, racing toward unexpected revelations and a terrifyingly imaginative climax.

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By Ming Wu

The midlife crisis of Cary Grant, the founding of the KGB and the Neapolitan years of Mafioso Lucky Luciano are just three of the plot lines woven into this dense, playful and always surprising literary behemoth set mostly in the year of the book's title, at the height of the Cold War. Anchoring the tale with a relatively conventional narrative is a young Bolognese man named Robespierre (Pierre), who embarks on a transcontinental odyssey to find his father, Vittorio Capponi, a former Mussolini loyalist who left the Italian army to join the Communists in Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, Britain's spy agency MI6 approaches Cary Grant (who's in a career slump) with a bizarre proposal: the role of Yugoslavian leader Marshal Tito in a propaganda biopic. It seems impossible that the multitudinous names and story threads could converge, but, deliciously, they do in Yugoslavia, where Grant meets Tito, Pierre finds his father, and Luciano's driver Steve "Cement" Zollo tangles with the KGB, which is about to pull off a big hit.

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8.4

By Peter Heron

A cataclysmic moment in American history is about to repeat itself in this white-knuckle disaster thriller. Signs point to a contemporary recurrence of the devastating earthquakes that, in 1811 and 1812, ripped through the New Madrid Fault Zone, 140 miles of American heartland along the Mississippi River. Marina owner Lauren Mitchell discovers huge cracks in the Kentucky Lake Dam. Seismologist John Atkins, haunted by the tragic loss of his lover during the 1985 Mexico quake, witnesses abnormal animal activity on a visit to the University of Memphis. When beautiful West Coast seismologist Elizabeth Halloran supplies evidence that upcoming sunspots will trigger the New Madrid Fault, Atkins is still a little skeptical--until the first quake hits at Richter 8.4. After that, amid the chaos that engulfs the ruins of Memphis, the race is on to prevent the next quake in the sequence—if there is a sequence—with a daring and dangerous plan. No tale about science's dash to save civilization from nature would be complete without a contingent of pigheaded and skeptical bureaucrats foiling the protagonists' heroics; in this case a sycophantic group of earthquake experts naysay the probability of another big shake-up. Heron heightens the scuffle with a believable turf conflict between state authorities and the federal government. The end result is a combination of science and thrills that compares favorably with the best of Michael Crichton, but with a decidedly warmer touch. Heron's saga, with its meticulous seismic details and galvanizing descriptive immediacy, brings a human angle to the technology of natural disaster.

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NUMB3RS UP!



“In the company of friends, writers can discuss their books, economists the state of the economy, lawyers their latest cases, and businessmen their latest acquisitions, but mathematicians cannot discuss their mathematics at all. And the more profound their work, the less understandable it is.”

Alfred Adler, *New Yorker*, 47(1972), no. 53, 39 - 45.

“For the things of this world cannot be made known without a knowledge of mathematics.”

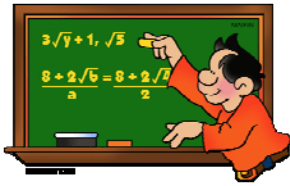
Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus part 4 Distinctia Prima cap 1*, 1267.

Sixty-Six

By Barry Levinson

Sixty-Six is film director Barry Levinson's first novel, and it can be read as a sequel to his most personal, and arguably his best film, *Diner*. Like that movie, this novel focuses on a group of friends who meet frequently at a local Baltimore diner to talk and reminisce. They also struggle poignantly to keep the magic of their childhood friendships alive while responding to the challenges of adulthood. However, they are now coping with the sweeping social unrest and the 1960s and the Vietnam War. Levinson handles all of this with his characteristic generosity and warmth.

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and on Book-on-Cassette



The Housekeeper and the Professor

By Yoko Ogawa

He is a brilliant math Professor with a peculiar problem—ever since a traumatic head injury, he has lived with only eighty minutes of short-term memory. She is an astute young Housekeeper, with a ten-year-old son, who is hired to care for him. And every morning, as the Professor and the Housekeeper are introduced to each other anew, a strange and beautiful relationship blossoms between them. Though he cannot hold memories for long (his brain is like a tape that begins to erase itself every eighty minutes), the Professor's mind is still alive with elegant equations from the past. And the numbers, in all of their articulate order, reveal a sheltering and poetic world to both the Housekeeper and her young son. The Professor is capable of discovering connections between the simplest of quantities—like the Housekeeper's shoe size—and the universe at large, drawing their lives ever closer and more profoundly together, even as his memory slips away. *The Housekeeper and the Professor* is an enchanting story about what it means to live in the present, and about the curious equations that can create a family.

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1633

By David Weber & Eric Flint

When a cosmic accident transports the city of Grantville from 20th-century West Virginia to the German province of Thuringia in 1632, the population quickly adjusted to its new surroundings and began the American Revolution more than a century before its actual time. A year later, the small but powerful country plunges into European politics with aplomb, armed with a knowledge of "history," a host of keen and imaginative minds, and a spectacular array of 20th-century weapons. Collaborators Weber (the Honor Harrington series) and Flint (1632, The Philosophical Strangler) take historic speculation to a new level in a tale that combines accurate historical research with bold leaps of the imagination. Fans of alternate history and military science fiction should enjoy this rousing tale of adventure and intrigue.

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26a

By Diana Evans

Two small furry creatures scurry through the night to their deaths—and are reborn as twins Georgia and Bessi. The middle daughters of Aubrey Hunter and his Nigerian wife, Ida, they occupy the attic room at 26a Waifer Avenue in London. When the twins are eight, the family takes a three-year sojourn in Nigeria, where they live a relatively grander life ("We had servants," Bessi later brags), but where Georgia has a terrifying run-in with a "ju-ju man" that changes her. The novel meanders as the girls grow, pausing to explore an intricate weave of childhood fantasy, African religion, nightmare, pop mythology and the intense inner world of identical twins. All the Hunters are drawn with care: hard-working Ida, who misses her mother so desperately that she converses with her daily in her head; hard-drinking Aubrey, whom liquor transforms into a Mr. Hyde; older sister Bel, rushing into adult sexuality; little Kemy, in love with Michael Jackson; and the twins, with their jokes, adventures and plans for a flapjack empire. This is a funny, haunting, marvelous debut.

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Number Ten

By Sue Townsend

In Townsend's latest British farce, the prime minister sets out to get in touch with the masses. Speaking at a press conference, Edward is caught unprepared by questions on the price of milk and the last time he took public transportation; the little fib he tells makes him a laughingstock. Edward decides a trip across the country will acquaint him with "the concerns of the majority of British people," and under the watchful eye of Jack Sprat, an intellectual but street-savvy police officer, Edward begins his journey—as Edwina. (It's reasoned that his wife's clothes, and later his own enthusiastically chosen ensembles, will allow Edward to remain incognito.) Edward and Jack visit the grave of Edward's mother, and they endure the pain and humiliation of public transportation before hiring a Pakistani cabdriver, who takes them to visit a poverty-stricken single mother in Leeds. Here, Edward suffers something like a heart attack, which lands him in the hospital—as ill-run as public transportation—and then the psychiatric ward, where he is described as "pathologically unable to commit to an opinion for fear of displeasing the questioner." In the meantime, Edward's loopy wife, Adele, quits taking her medication and gets a nose job, and Jack's mother opens her humble home to a bevy of crack addicts. The three story lines are masterfully and hilariously interwoven, and the book's delightfully absurd characters are unforgettable.

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1929

By Frederick Turner

Bix Beiderbecke was one of the great jazz musicians of the 1920s. A brilliant cornet player with an amazing ear, he drank himself to death at the age of 28 with illegal Prohibition liquor. Although Beiderbecke isn't as well known as some of his contemporaries, much has been written about the enigmatic Iowan. Literary journalist Turner offers a fictional take on Beiderbecke's life, giving readers an invigorating picture of what life was like for jazz musicians in the years leading up to the Great Depression.

Available at Wayne in Fiction

