Review FICTION

really clear. The novel takes incisively limned characters and sharp insights into civic corruption and embeds them in what is supposed to be a contemporary retelling of the biblical story of Abraham, patriarch of the Jews. But it's really just a strained account of real estate shenanigans gone wrong, adding up to little. Of course, Bacharach (The Bend of the World) furthers the biblical allusions by including a scene where Abbie goes after Isaac with a knife, but in the end, the only sacrifice made here is the reader's time spent on this frustratingly incoherent novel. (Mar.)

The Last Great American Magic L.C. Fiore. Can of Corn Media, \$17.99 trade paper (372p) ISBN 978-0-692-71707-3

Fiore's fictionalized story of Shawnee war leader Tecumseh focuses on his relationship with his brother, Tenskwatawa, as well as his apocryphal love for Rebecca Galloway. Tecumseh is determined from a young age to play his part in the fight to keep white men from overrunning Shawnee and other Indian lands. His father and later his older brother, Chiksika, are killed in battle, leaving Tecumseh to lead his band of Shawnee and, later, an increasingly large confederation devoted to halting the settlers. Rebecca, once a captive in his village, is the daughter of a judge who wants Tecumseh to sign a treaty ceding Shawnee lands. Tecumseh refuses but falls in love with Rebecca. Tenskwatawa is portrayed as weak, a drunkard, and a gambler, until he returns from death imbued with great power. Even then, he is not a competent general and the Indian settlement of Tippecanoe is sacked by the forces of William Henry Harrison. Tecumseh's Shawnee descendants may well tell his story differently but this works adequately as a piece of fiction. (BookLife)

Mystery/Thriller

Song of the Lion

Anne Hillerman. Harper, \$27.99 (304p) ISBN 978-0-06-239190-2

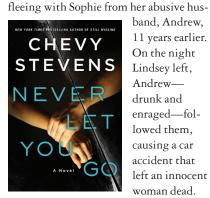
At the start of Hillerman's thoughtful third Southwestern mystery (after 2015's Rock with Wings), a bomb detonates in the parking lot of Shiprock High School, where police officer Bernadette "Bernie"

Manuelito is looking forward to watching an alumni basketball game in the gym. Bernie discovers a gravely injured man at the scene, but it seems the real target was Aza Palmer, a lawyer scheduled to mediate a meeting among Native Americans, environmentalists, and others to discuss a controversial proposed resort on Navajo land. Bernie's husband, Sgt. Jim Chee, is assigned to guard the reluctant Palmer and navigate the tricky waters of protesters and residents with different tribal affiliations, languages, and concerns. Meanwhile, Bernie consults veteran investigator Joe Leaphorn, who has contributions to make to the case during his ongoing recovery from a serious gunshot wound. Though seasoned mystery readers may guess the perpetrator before the tense denouement, the book offers insights on the strength of family ties and the possibilities of redemption after a history of pain. Agent: Elizabeth Trupin-Pulli, IET Literary Associates. (Apr.)

★ Never Let You Go Chevy Stevens. St. Martin's, \$26.99 (416p)

.

ISBN 978-1-250-03456-4 Lindsey Nash, the narrator of this superlative psychological thriller from bestseller Stevens (Those Girls), has built a good life for herself and her teenage daughter, Sophie, in Dogwood Bay, a lakeshore town in British Columbia, since



band, Andrew, 11 years earlier. On the night Lindsey left, Andrew drunk and enraged-followed them, causing a car accident that left an innocent woman dead.

Andrew went to prison, but now he's out, and Lindsey is certain he'll make her pay for every day he spent behind bars. When the local police are unable to assist Lindsey after an increasingly frightening series of incidents (a pet bird killed, a dog poisoned, a hit-and-run), Lindsey turns for help to her friend and self-defense teacher, Marcus, a former psychiatrist with a tragic past who develops into a love

Testament Is Dying A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment Brent A. Strawn ★ The Old Testament Is Dying: A **Diagnosis and** Recommended

Advertisement

The Old

His through th His love endures

Treatment Brent A. Strawn Baker Academic, \$29.99 paper (336p) ISBN 978-0-8010-4888-3

In this intriguing analysis, Candler School of Theology professor Strawn sounds an alarm, equating the Old Testament with a dying language, the loss of which threatens devastating consequences for Christianity and humanity. Using linguistic investigations, Strawn describes both the "vicious disdain" for the Old Testament deity professed by biologist Richard Dawkins and the New Atheists, and the extreme "religious rhetoric" of television evangelist Pat Robertson as "pidgins": "greatly abbreviated languages that facilitate the bare minimum of communication." Arguing that the second-century heresies of Marcion, who found irreconcilable differences between the deities represented in the Old and New Testaments, have endured, Strawn suggests that the "pidginization reflected in Christian liturgy" led to the rise in German anti-Semitism and eventually the Holocaust. He argues that the Old Testament language was "reduced, then subsumed, then transformed, and . . . entirely forgotten" in the "creole" preached by prosperity gospel "happiologists" like Joel Osteen. Following these depressing analyses with "A Path to Recovery," Strawn emphasizes the need to save dying languages and become bilingual, concluding that "the Old Testament must be used-extensively and regularly . . . in formative moments of Christian practice and education." This engaging scholarly work deserves serious attention from today's church leaders. (Mar.)

www.BakerAcademic.com

[Q&A] PW TALKS WITH MARCUS SEDGWICK Total Recall

Sedgwick's crime novel set in fin-de-siècle Paris, *Mister Memory* (Pegasus Crime; pub month, Mar.; Reviews, Jan. 9), explores the implications of remembering everything.

Where did the plot idea come from?

In the early part of the 20th century, the Russian psychologist Alexander Luria studied the case of a man called Solomon Shereshevsky, who had an

extraordinary memory. After investigating him for 20 years, he concluded there were no limits to his memory at all, that it was, functionally, infinite. Though he had what seemed an amazing gift, it actually made his life very difficult.

How did you avoid scientific anachronism in your writing?

I was careful when I made my notes to place more emphasis on the older theories and treat the modern views more as points of interest for me, rather than points for the text of my book. To give one example of the way things have changed, the "filing cabinet" model of memory-that we experience something, and then store it away in a memory bank, which we can access later—is somewhat outdated now. The current view holds that each time we remember something, we reconstruct a memory from several different centers of the brain, and that each time we remember it, we construct it anew and possibly slightly differently. Memory, according to the modern experts, is not some fixed and dependable record, but a flexible and frequently untrustworthy tool.



What themes does this book share with your others?

I think the main theme that I've addressed elsewhere is obsession. Characters who can't let go of some

> thing are the cornerstone of many stories, because they represent the extremes that lie within us all—that we all live in danger of becoming obsessed by something, at times, that we will allow to rule our lives. And, to be honest, obsession is key to a writer because you can't write a book unless you are yourself

obsessed by the story you're writing. Only obsession will ensure that you sit down in your writing room every day until you have put 100,000 words or so on paper.

Do you approach writing your YA fiction differently?

No. If I was going be provocative, I would argue that writers who do approach writing for young people differently do so at great risk of being patronizing to their audience and producing books that are not very good. In all walks of life, we seem to frequently underestimate young adults: what they are interested in, and capable of, and what they can cope with in a variety of ways. The result is that we patronize them. Is it any wonder then that they stop listening to the adult world and make their own -LENNY PICKER way?

interest. Stevens's taut writing and chilling depiction of love twisted beyond recognition make this a compelling read from the first page to the last. 150,000copy first printing; author tour. Agent: Mel Berger, William Morris Agency. (Mar.)

In This Grave Hour: A Maisie Dobbs Novel Jacqueline Winspear. Harper, \$27.99 (352p) ISBN 978-0-06-243660-3

The plot of bestseller Winspear's uneven 13th Maisie Dobbs novel (after 2016's Journey to Munich) has promise. Shortly after Neville Chamberlain's announcement on Sept. 3, 1939, that Britain is at war with Germany, Maisie receives a summons-to her own London flat—from Francesca Thomas, a member of a Belgian resistance movement during WWI. Thomas asks the psychologist and investigator to look into the murder of a Belgian refugee, railway engineer Frederick Addens, who was shot execution-style. Scotland Yard has made little progress on what for them is a low-priority case. Maisie agrees to help, despite her reservations about her client. Unfortunately, Maisie shows a lack of acuity when she not only endorses her late mentor's dubious aphorism, "Coincidence is a messenger sent by Truth," but also agrees that it merits displaying on her office wall, so as to be the first thing that she and her staff see every workday. The mystery fails to grip, and the quality of the prose falls short of Winspear's usual high standard. Agent: Amy Rennert, Amy Rennert Agency. (Mar.)

Wait for Dark

Kay Hooper. Berkley, \$27 (336p) ISBN 978-0-425-28094-2

In bestseller Hooper's bustling 17th Bishop/Special Crimes Unit novel (after 2015's *Fear the Dark*), four residents of Clarity, N.C., suffer fatal "accidents" in a month. Unit chief Noah Bishop, a "tall, wide-shouldered and athletic man with an almost-too-handsome face," sends a team of four agents headed by Hollis Templeton and including Templeton's partner, Reese DeMarco, to investigate these suspicious deaths in the little mountain town. Each team member has one or more psychic powers (e.g., DeMarco "possesses an apparently unique double shield, Copyright of Publishers Weekly is the property of PWxyz LLC and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.