

January sees some strong literary debuts, says *Cathy Rentzenbrink*



How I remember the joy of January in a bookshop when after what seems like several years of looking at the same tinselled books, the bookseller

heart flickers with the joy of having something new to sell. Good to see some literary debuts again, I hear of publishers who are heartbroken at failing to acquire *The Night Guest* by Fiona MacFarlane and I was very struck by the blood-spattered boldness of *Boxer Handsome* by Anna Whitwam. I also enjoyed *Eat Your Heart Out* by Zoe Pilger, shades of Shelia Heti but British and much funnier. Of course, January opens a year of anniversary commemorations of the First World War. The surrounding publishing will be mainly non-fiction but there are a few novels, three of them and an anthology in this preview, including an impressive debut, *Wake*, by Anna Hope and Helen Dunmore's highly accomplished *The Lie*, both of which take us to 1920 and give us compelling characters unable to come to terms with what they've done and witnessed. How neat would it be if Dunmore, the inaugural winner of The Orange Prize, was the first winner of it under the sponsorship by Bailey's? I would certainly raise a glass to that.

BOOK OF THE MONTH



Helen Dunmore
The Lie

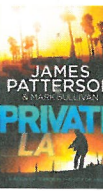
Hutchinson, 16th, £14.99, hb, 9780091953928

"Frederick died before the worst of the mud."

Orange Prize-winning Dunmore's new novel takes us to the Cornish coast in 1920. Daniel Branwell has survived the war but is wracked with memories and hallucinations. As Daniel ekes a living off the land he returns again to the story of his friendship with Frederick and his sister Felicia and the events that led to Frederick's death. This is a stunning, understated novel that breathes with authenticity and we are so steeped in Daniel's past that his current danger takes us by surprise. Surely a must for all the prize lists. This is Dunmore's first novel for Hutchinson after 20 years at Penguin and Hutchinson has given me five signed proofs for readers of this column. Tweet me @cathyreadsbooks and tell me why you'd like one.



TOPSELLERS



James Patterson
Private LA

Century, 2nd, £9.78, 9781780890210

Thom and Jenn are two of the best stars in the world parents of three children. When couple disappears ranch, investigate Morgan is on the secrets abound of the super far difficult to penetrate BookScan ★★



James Patterson
First Love

Century, 30th, £9.78, 9781780892474

A stand-alone first love inspired Patterson's perspective Axi and Robinson country road trip horribly wrong get into trouble police. BookScan ★★



Christos Tsiolkas
Barracuda

Atlantic Br tpb, 9781

The author's return

RATINGS BASED ON PREVIOUS SALES: ★★★★★ 50,000+ | ★★★★★

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