

BOOKNEWS from

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Welcome to Spring!

AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...

Some Events will be webcast at <http://new.livestream.com/poisonedpen> and on Facebook Live

Listen to some of our programs on our new [podcast channel](#)

MONDAY APRIL 2 7:00 PM

Anne Hillerman signs [Cave of Bones](#) (Harper \$26.99)
Leaphorn, Chee, & Manuelito #4

TUESDAY APRIL 3 7:00 PM

Kevin Hearne signs [Scourged](#) (Del Rey \$27)
Iron Druid Chronicles #9
Luke Daniels who narrates Hearne's audio books joins the discussion and will sign a special poster for you. The *Scourged* Audio Book is available on Libro.fm; it's not available as a CD.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 4 7:00 PM Texas Noir!

Joe R. Lansdale signs [Jackrabbit Smile](#) (Mulholland \$26)
Hap & Leonard

THURSDAY APRIL 5 7:00 PM

Liam Callahan signs [Paris by the Book](#) (Dutton \$26)
April Modern Firsts Club Pick...a bookish adventure

SATURDAY APRIL 7 2:00 PM

Kent Harrington signs [Last Ferry Home](#) (Polis \$25.99 or \$15.99)
April Hardboiled Crime Club Pick

SUNDAY APRIL 8 2:00 PM

Sarah Tarkoff signs [Sinless](#) (Harper Voyager \$15.99)
Eye of the Beholder #1 Ages 13-17

MONDAY APRIL 9 7:00 PM Come Rock with Us!

The Doubletree Resort 5401 N Scottsdale Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85250

Free to attend, free valet parking. Cash bar!

Jeffery Deaver signs [The Cutting Edge](#) (Grand Central \$28)
Lincoln Rhyme and diamonds

Lisa Scottoline signs [After Anna](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Did the new husband murder Maggie's daughter?

EVENT BOOKS

Callanan, Liam. [Paris by the Book](#) (Dutton \$26 March 5). I can't remember at what age I learned to read but looking back it seems I've always been able to picture: "In an old house in Paris all covered in vines, lived twelve little girls in two straight lines." Ludwig Bemelman's *Madeline* transported me into the special world of Paris and his fans will relish visiting the magical city with Leah Eady, half of a couple brought together in Milwaukee by their shared love for French children's books. When years later, novelist Robert vanishes, Leah takes her girls to Paris hoping illogically but tenaciously to find him via an unfinished manuscript he'd left behind. Most of her days are spent trailing some Frenchman or other who just might be Robert, which in time leads her to an English-language bookstore. If you were given a chance to buy a bookstore in Paris, even a floundering one, what would you do? With nothing to lose, Leah says, *Mais oui*, and she and her girls gain a portal to delve deeper into the city and French classics—they call their bookstore The Late Edition, specializing in dead authors—as well as plumb the mystery of the missing Robert. A magical read from the author of 2004 Edgar Nominee for Best Novel [Cloud Atlas](#) (\$17), who says he was also inspired by Albert Lamorisse's classic *The Red Balloon*, makes our **April Modern Firsts Club Pick**. I urge all of you to order early so we can adjust to demand.

Note: in one of those weird publishing quirks Callanan published his *Cloud Atlas* at the same time as David Mitchell published *The Cloud Atlas*. The "the" is thus crucial....

Deaver, Jeffery. [The Cutting Edge](#) (Grand Central \$28.99). PrePub, so ask for your copy to be dated. "At the start of Thriller Award-winner Deaver's stellar 14th Lincoln Rhyme novel, William Sloane and Anna Markam, an engaged couple, enter the jewelry store of Jatin Patel, a master diamond cutter who works in Manhattan's diamond district, to pick up a ring. Unfortunately, a gunman wearing a ski mask is right behind them. After the intruder shoots William and Anna dead, he tortures and kills Jatin with a box-cutter. Vimal Lahori, an employee, arrives at the store, takes a shot in the side from the killer, and manages to escape. Rhyme and his usual team—Det. Lon Sellitto of the NYPD, lover Amelia Sachs, patrol officer Ron Pulaski, and lab expert Mel Cooper—investigate. The tension rises as Vimal tries to stay hidden, the killer hunts more victims, and the media receive a note from "The Promisor" threatening the deaths of more engaged couples. Deaver keeps the twists and surprises coming in this roller-coaster ride of a thriller."—PW Starred Review. Yes he does plus you can learn fascinating stuff about diamonds and the industry, bad stuff and good, while he plies misdirection (and a touching sentimentality) to keep you glued to the pages. Deaver's enjoyment of one of his best villains fuels this too. [Order the Rhymes](#), especially *The Burial Hour*, for more April thrills.

Harrington, Kent. [Last Ferry Home](#) (Polis \$25.99 or \$15.997). Polis has become home to a number of hardboiled crime veterans. Some of you will remember authors published by Dennis McMillan. Like Harrington, now back with our **April Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**. Patrick reviews: "Paralyzed by

grief and guilt after his wife's death in a sailboat accident, SFPD Detective Michael O'Higgins returns to his job after a leave of absence to catch a high profile double homicide. The victims are a wealthy Indian businessman, Rishi Chaundry and his young housekeeper, both found slain in the Chaundrys' Nob Hill mansion. The prime suspect seems to be the man's beautiful wife, Asha, but O'Higgins's instincts tell him otherwise. As he begins to investigate the Chaundry's business and political dealings, led by Rishi's father, a known business tycoon and politician, the detective becomes convinced that Asha Chaundry is poised to take the fall for a much larger and darker force behind the scenes. As O'Higgins struggles to come to terms with his own demons—not just his wife's tragic death but the memories of his own combat experience in Iraq—the case offers a possible way to go on. I've always been a big fan of Harrington's work and it is great to see him back with such a terrific, provocative novel."

Hearne, Kevin. [Scourged](#) (Del Rey \$27). Hearne creates the ultimate Atticus O'Sullivan adventure: an epic battle royal against the Norse gods of Asgard. Unchained from fate, the Norse gods Loki and Hel are ready to unleash Ragnarok upon the earth. They've made allies on the darker side of many pantheons and there's a globe-spanning battle brewing that ancient Druid Atticus O'Sullivan will be hard pressed to survive, much less win. Granuaile McTiernan must join immortals Sun Wukong and Erlang Shen in battle against the Yama Kings in Taiwan, but she discovers the fight is not at all about what she thinks it is. Gage's grandfather, the Viscount Tavistock, is gravely ill. To make matters worse, Gage's cousin, Alfred, has mysteriously vanished after wandering out to the moors. Viscount Tavistock is convinced that foul play is involved in Alfred's disappearance, and he implores Gage and Kiera to learn more. During their stay, Kiera soon learns the frightening truth about Langstone Manor – and about the troubling ghosts of the past and family curse that plague everyone who resides there. Hearne says this is the conclusion of his bestselling Iron Druid Chronicles...but, we'll see. Never say never.... [Order the series here](#). Including [Besieged](#), short stories from the Chronicles in paperback or hardcover.

NOTE: Hearne will appear with his audio book narrator Luke Daniels. There is no CD of *Scourged* but you can buy it from us via Libro.fm.

Hillerman, Anne. [Cave of Bones](#) (Harper \$26.99). This is a PrePub Party—ask for your book to be dated. Ever eager to explore territory not visited by her father Tony in his much loved Leaphorn and Chee mysteries, Anne heads to the Malpais, lava territory to the west of Albuquerque—you can visit the [National Monument](#) from I-40 driving south on Highway 53, or driving on 53 north from US 60. It is indeed difficult to navigate off road as it is filled with lava rock, tubes, caves. It's no surprise that a surly teen on a confidence building program for at-risk kids could become disoriented and go missing. Bernie Manuelito gets the call and from there things become involved and tenser—especially when the skeleton is discovered. The Malpais wilderness borders the Ramah Navajo Rez. 4th in the Leaphorn, Chee, & Manuelito series. BONUS: Order the brand new [Hillerman Indian Country Map and Guide](#) (\$19.95) which

is updated to include all of Anne's books as well as Tony's and includes nifty notes. I put mine with my collection. You can ask Anne to sign the map. [Order all the Hillermans here.](#)

Lansdale, Joe R. [Jackrabbit Smile](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Hap Collins and his longtime love, Brett Sawyer, have finally decided to tie the knot in Edgar-winner Lansdale's raucous 13th Hap and Leonard novel, but they've barely gotten the burgers and hot dogs on the grill for their East Texas-style wedding party when two uninvited guests arrive. The heavily tattooed man, Thomas Mulhaney, wears a white pride T-shirt, and his mother, Judith, looks to be out of backwoods Pentecostal central casting. Hap's best friend, Leonard Pine, a black Republican and Vietnam vet, prepares to escort them off the property in his usual inimitable way. But then the pair asks if they can hire the detectives to look into the disappearance of Thomas's sister, Jackie. Hap and Leonard hold their noses and agree to investigate. The trail leads them to the nearby town where Jackie, an accounting whiz with strange views on "interdimensional" travel, was last seen. There they meet a hog farmer known as Professor, who has plans of creating a segregated white utopia aided by assorted local yokels and a pair of lethal twin brothers. As always, Lansdale provides a wild, fun ride with an astute eye on social issues.

Scottoline, Lisa. [After Anna](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Noah Alderman, widower and single father, has remarried a wonderful woman, Maggie, and for the first time in a long time he and his son are happy. But their lives are turned upside down when Maggie's daughter moves in with them. Anna is a drop-dead gorgeous sixteen-year-old with a secret dark side. Unbeknownst to everyone, Anna is not simply a selfish beauty, but a dangerously disturbed sociopath. Anna sets out to systematically destroy the new life Noah has built, and when she turns up dead, Noah is at the top of the suspect list. Noah begins his own investigation in order to clear his name and save his family. I don't know how Scottoline thinks up one great plot after another—and such perfect characters to drive them. Join us April 9 as Lisa rocks with Deaver at the Doubletree Hilton. Cash bar! Free admission but as ever to enter the signing line you must purchase one book or the other from The Pen.

Tarkoff, Sarah. [Sinless](#) (Harper Voyager \$15.99). Eye of the Beholder #1 Ages 13-17. With shades of Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* and Ally Condie's *Matched*, this cinematic dystopian novel—the first in the Eye of the Beholder series—is set in a near future society in which "right" and "wrong" are manifested by beauty and ugliness. What if people had to wear their true disposition on their face? "What [begins] as girl-meets-boy escalates to geopolitical intrigue, espionage, daring rescues, and Grace's growing, bittersweet self-awareness of what it really means to be a good person. Clever worldbuilding elevates the story...and the plot is juicy enough to carry readers to the sequel." —*Kirkus Reviews*. Join Pat King as he talks about her debut to Tarkoff who has written for the CW series *Arrow*. Other TV writing credits include ABC's *Mistresses*, Lifetime's *Witches of East End*, and the animated series *Vixen* and *The Ray*.

SOMETHING SPECIAL

Bosker, Bianca. [Cork Dork](#) (\$17). *A Wine-Fueled Adventure Among the Obsessive Sommeliers, Big Bottle Hunters, and Rogue Scientists Who Taught Me to Live for Taste*. Ordinarily, I loathe thousand-yard subtitles, but I'll concede that this one at least

does some of the work for me. Bosker, once an editor at *The Huffington Post*, quit her day job to become a certified sommelier, and her adventures in this sodden universe of fanatics are a combination of rigorous — 20,000 different wines to memorize? — and raucous. "Thrilling... [told] with gonzo élan... When the sommelier and blogger Madeline Puckette writes that this book is the *Kitchen Confidential* of the wine world, she's not wrong, though Bill Buford's *Heat* is probably a shade closer." —Jennifer Senior, *The New York Times*. Named a Best Book of 2017 by NPR, *Fortune*, *Smithsonian*, *Bustle*, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, *Booklist*, etc, and now in paperback.

Gidwitz, Adam. [The Creature of the Pines: The Unicorn Rescue Society](#) (Penguin \$14.99). Discover the world of The Unicorn Rescue Society — an exciting and hilarious new middle grade globe-trotting fantasy series about friendship, adventure, and rescuing mythical creatures from danger. It begins with the Jersey Devil in the NJ Pine Barrens. Full illustrated. Brought to you by Newbery Honor-winning author Adam Gidwitz and Mixtape Club founders Jesse Casey and Chris Smith, and Hatem Aly, illustrator of *The Inquisitor's Tale*. Be sure to [watch this hilarious and clever book video](#) and you will be completely hooked by this rollicking premise and fresh style. And visit www.uniformrescuesociety.com

Arizona Historical League. [Tastes and Treasures Cookbook II](#) (\$30). A Storytelling Cookbook of Historic Arizona. The first was published in 2007.

✦Sackville-West, Vita. [A Note of Explanation: An Undiscovered Story from Queen Mary's Dollhouse](#) (Chronicle (\$19.95)). Beautifully illustrated, here is a previously unknown story by iconic author Vita Sackville-West. Originally written in Sackville-West's own hand on pages no larger than a postage stamp, the story has remained unpublished since the 1920s. The miniature book continues to reside in the library of the world's most elaborate dollhouse: Queen Mary's Dollhouse, which is on display to the public in Windsor Castle. Now published for the first time, this enchanting book, with its brilliant color illustrations, tells the story of a fashionable and inquisitive time-traveling sprite who pops in and out of fairy tales and has "a genius for being in the right place at the right moment." Queen Mary's Dollhouse is still on view at Windsor Castle. The illustrations can be glimpsed in this YouTube video. "An extraordinary story by Vita Sackville-West... This tale of a fashionable creature that flits in and out of fairy tales and historical epochs is made exquisite by Kate Baylay's art-deco-style illustrations." —*Wall Street Journal*. Vita Sackville-West (1892–1962) was a celebrated English writer and garden designer associated with the Bloomsbury Group. She is also known for inspiring Virginia Woolf's novel *Orlando* and for me, as the co-creator with her husband Sir Harold Nicolson of the gardens at their country home Sissinghurst which I have visited several times.

SOME NEW AND RE-REVIEWED SIGNED BOOKS

Albert, Susan Wittig. [Queen Anne's Lace](#) (Berkley \$27). Albert's fascinating 26th mystery featuring Pecan Springs, Tex., herbalist China Bayles elegantly weaves the third-person account of lace maker Annie Duncan, set in the late 1880s, with China's first-person narrative in the present day. When China decides to clear out a storage room above her shop, Thyme and Seasons, she discovers a box of old photographs that were taken when the building was still in the hands of its original owners. Her desire to find out

more about the people in the photos leads into the story of Annie Duncan, whose life utterly changes after her husband, Douglas, is killed in a train accident and she goes into early labor and gives birth to a stillborn boy. In the present, China's 14-year-old daughter's prize rooster is stolen at a local fair. Albert chiefly focuses on motherhood in this gentle outing, while schooling the reader on herbal remedies, such as those used as contraceptives at a time when the only alternative was abstinence. "Albert's long-running series shows no sign of flagging," says *PW*.

Anderson, Kent. [Green Sun](#) (LittleBrown \$27). An ex-cop and decorated Vietnam vet himself, Anderson paints his scenes with all the tattoos, dope and 9mm guns that characterize urban crime. Working through countless hangovers and hair-of-the-dog cures, Hanson builds an uneasy rapport with his community. He befriends the young bike-riding scamp Weege, earns the respect of drug kingpin Felix and woos the sexy black crime victim Libya. However, he's still "a soldier in Oakland's army of occupation." He may be a soft-touch outcast in the OPD, but he has no illusions. Calming—rather than busting—a couple of knife-fighting drunks, he hopes the best for them but reminds himself: "They were drunk and psychotic black men in Oakland. They'd never be okay." Anderson's *Green Sun* is a cop novel as hard and real as it gets." —Bruce Jacobs, echoing Patrick's review from the March Booknews.

Box, CJ. [Disappeared](#) (Putnam \$27). Is Cowboy Tinder a thing? What happened to the CEO of a high-profile British advertising agency, Kate Shelford-Longden, who has gone missing after vacationing at the Silver Creek Ranch outside Saratoga? And why does the new Governor of Wyoming care? Enough to pressure Joe Pickett into investigating. Throw in wind turbines (again!), wranglers, Joe's daughter Sheridan who is working as one at the ranch, and outlaw falconer Nate Romanowski and you have all you need for a rousing 18th Pickett. Also welcome are Box's underrated touches of wry humor, generally overlooked as one of his strengths.

Brodsky, Jordanna. [Olympus Bound](#) (Orbit \$27). "Intense and compelling.... Brodsky has delivered a terrific series that brings mythology to life as the gods struggle to survive in the modern reality. Great stuff!"—*RT Book Reviews*. "This rich, clever, and thoughtful concluding installment of the Olympus Bound trilogy picks up six months after the events of 2016's [Winter of the Gods](#), with Selene DiSilva, once known as the goddess Artemis, tracking her grandfather Saturn and the remnants of his Mithraist cult in order to stop them from sacrificing the kidnapped Zeus to usurp his power. Meanwhile, Selene's lover, the mortal historian Theo Schultz, believes Selene is dead and researches ancient rituals and traditions in hopes of resurrecting her. When they reunite in the Vatican, it's the prelude to a new quest that takes them to Mount Olympus itself, where the remaining gods gather for the first time in centuries. As in the previous volumes, Brodsky expertly weaves together ancient mystery cults, mythology, and science, producing a syncretic masterpiece that challenges the reader's assumptions and expectations at every turn. Her gods, with their numerous epithets and faded dignity, feel real and complicated, burdened by the weight of centuries' worth of legend and reinvention. This is a wholly satisfying conclusion to a story that adds another dimension to ancient themes and elements."—*PW* Starred Review. I love this series: Rick Riordan for grown ups. I devoured Bullfinch's *Age of Fables* in the 5th grade and all

my life have found a working knowledge of the gods is essential. So order the trilogy's first, [The Immortals](#) (\$15.99), and dig in.

Carr, Jack. [The Terminal List](#) (Atria \$26). Rave reviews for Jack and for his debut thriller continue to roll in. I hope to bring him back this year to converse with another author. Meanwhile don't delay securing a Signed First. This isn't my genre but I devoured it. Here are other raves: "Any fan of the novels by Brad Thor and the late Vince Flynn will realize that Jack Carr will soon be joining their ranks with what is sure to be the best debut thriller of 2018."—*The Washington Times*. "Crackerjack plotting, vivid characters both in and out of uniform, and a relentless pace to a worthy finish. It's a great start!" —Stephen Hunter. "So powerful, so pulse-pounding, so well-written – rarely do you read a debut novel this damn good." —Brad Thor

Davis, Lindsey. [Pandora's Boy](#) (Hodder \$44). Flavia Albia, daughter of Davis's longtime hero Marcus Didius Falco, must contend with the death of a girl on Quirinal Hill—reputedly owing to a love potion. The neighborhood witch who supplied it seems to be into darker stuff, and with the murder of one of Albia's friends, a whole Pandora's box of trouble opens. *LJ* calls this "Cozy doings in ancient Rome," but I never think of a Davis as a cozy but as novels with her unique sense of humor on display along with some pretty bloody doings.

✦ Duffy, Stella and Ngaio Marsh. [Murder in the Morgue](#) (Collins Crime Club \$35). Roderick Alleyn is back in a crime novel begun by Ngaio Marsh during the Second World War and now completed by Stella Duffy, who signs it. It's business as usual for Mr. Glossop as he does his regular round delivering wages to government buildings scattered across New Zealand's lonely Canterbury plains. But when his car breaks down he is stranded for the night at the isolated Mount Seager Hospital, with the telephone lines down, a storm on its way and the nearby river about to burst its banks. Trapped with him at Mount Seager are a group of quarantined soldiers with a serious case of cabin fever, three young employees embroiled in a tense love triangle, a dying elderly man, an elusive patient whose origins remain a mystery ... and a potential killer. When the payroll disappears from a locked safe and the hospital's death toll starts to rise faster than normal, can the appearance of an English detective working in counterespionage be just a lucky coincidence – or is something more sinister afoot?

✦ Fowler, Christopher. [Bryant and May: Hall of Mirrors](#) (Bantam UK \$40). 15th in a quirky, clever, always surprising British crime series. The year is 1969 and ten guests are about to enjoy a country house weekend at Tavistock Hall. But one amongst them is harboring thoughts of murder. The guests also include the young detectives Arthur Bryant and John May – undercover, in disguise and tasked with protecting Monty Hatton-Jones, a whistle-blower turning Queen's evidence in a massive bribery trial. Luckily, they've got a decent chap on the inside who can help them – the one-armed Brigadier, Nigel 'Fruity' Metcalf. The scene is set for what could be the perfect country house murder mystery, except that this particular get-together is nothing like a Golden Age classic. For the good times are, it seems, coming to an end. The house's owner – a penniless, dope-smoking aristocrat – is intent on selling the estate (complete with its own hippy encampment) to a secretive millionaire, but the weekend has only just started when the millionaire goes missing....

✂Goddard, Robert. [Panic Room](#) (Random \$43). High on a Cornish cliff sits a vast uninhabited mansion. Uninhabited except for Blake, a young woman of dubious background, secretive and alone, currently acting as house sitter. The house has a panic room. Cunningly concealed, steel lined, impregnable – and apparently closed from within. Even Blake doesn't know it's there. She's too busy being on the run from life, from a story she thinks she's escaped. But her remote existence is going to be invaded when people come looking for the house's owner, missing rogue pharma entrepreneur, Jack Harkness. Suddenly the whole world wants to know where his money has gone. Soon people are going to come knocking on the door, people with motives and secrets of their own, who will be asking Blake the sort of questions she can't –or won't –want to answer.

Hart, John. [The Hush](#) (St Martins \$27.99). *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* has this to say: "A testament to friendship, an exploration of family, a meditation on slavery and its legacy, a lament on the prison of the past—and a grisly and gritty ghost story. *The Hush* displays Hart at his best. With richly imagined characters and depth of ingenuity, Hart forges a thoughtful and disturbing novel, one that delivers shocks in his story and joy in his storytelling. The author, who splits his time between North Carolina and Virginia, builds on his trademark take on the literary Southern gothic; the result is his most powerful work yet, one that plants a flag at the intersection where William Faulkner and Stephen King meet in unexpected harmony."

Hearne, Kevin. [Squirrel on the Train](#) (Subterranean \$27). A reminder of a fun book to go with Hearne's April 3rd Iron Druid Chronicle. Oberon the Irish wolfhound is off to Portland to smell all the things with canine companions wolfhound Orlaith and Boston terrier Starbuck, and, of course, his human, ancient Druid Atticus O'Sullivan. The first complication is an unmistakable sign of sinister agendas afoot: a squirrel atop the train.

✂Hollinghurst, Alan. [The Sparsholt Affair](#) (\$39; 2 Signed UK Firsts left). "A gay man's search for love and artistic expression is at the center of Booker Prize-winner Hollinghurst's masterful sixth novel, written in elegant, captivating prose. Here, he shines a clarifying light on the gay and art worlds (often synonymous) through decades of British cultural and political change. The story sweeps along in five interlinked sections, in which the characters move through different stages of their lives and their country's history. Some of the characters are first observed at Oxford as they wait to be called up for military service during the tense early days of WWII.

Ifkovic, Ed. [Mood Indigo](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95 special hardcover price). "Set in New York during the winter of 1933, Ifkovic's outstanding ninth mystery featuring writer Edna Ferber opens at British playwright Noel Coward's 33rd birthday party at his penthouse overlooking the East River. The guests, who include such celebrities as composer Irving Berlin and actor Leslie Howard, are singing Christmas carols when..." —*Publishers Weekly* Starred Review. The plot for this 9th Ferber is so tricky it blindsides you. A look at Broadway in its storied Depression days when, before social media, influencers were even more powerful if to a smaller circle. Winchell. Benchley. Ferber. And certainly Coward whose American sojourn will surprise you. I love this book.

Jacobs, Nova. [The Last Equation of Isaac Severy](#) (Touchstone \$25) left me with the lasting realization that mathematics is a love language. Isaac has died and taken the secret of his last mathematical equation with him. Except that he has also hidden clues to a hiding place for this final work and shares these clues with his adopted granddaughter, Hazel, whom he has charged with finding his hidden treasure and getting it into the hands of a trusted colleague. But she's not the only one looking for his equation, and some of the other searchers are dangerous indeed. "A riveting narrative that delivers all the page-turning suspense of a mystery novel laced with insights into modern mathematics and quantum physics, and into the dynamics of family relationships. A brilliant first novel radiant with promise of even better to come." —*Booklist* Starred Review. This captivating story about a struggling bookseller whose recently deceased grandfather, a famed mathematician, sends [her] on a quest for an elusive and a potentially dangerous mathematical formula is cerebral, eccentric and endearing." —*Chicago Review of Books*

Jonasson, Ragnar. [The Darkness](#) (Joseph \$44). The Icelandic author goes with something new. Before Detective Inspector Hulda Hermannsdóttir of the Reykjavik Police is forced into early retirement she is told to investigate a cold case of her choice, and she knows just the one. A young woman found dead on remote seaweed-covered rocks. A woman who was looking for asylum and found only a watery grave. Her death ruled a suicide after a cursory investigation. But Hulda soon realizes that there was something far darker to this case. This was not the only young woman to disappear around that time. And no one is telling the whole story....

Lawson, Mike. [House Witness](#) (Grove \$26). As real/fake news swirls around us here is a look at a legendary fixer for the Speaker of the House in a series that began before Trump but certainly forecast today's daily revelations of real fixers and the fixed. However, Joe DeMarco's assignment is neither cruel nor cynical but has heart.

Leon, Donna. [The Temptation of Forgiveness](#) (Heinemann \$46). Guido Brunetti is puzzled as to why his superior is being suspiciously pleasant, and worrying that Sra. Elettra may well be overreaching in her hacking. A professor, a friend of his wife Paola, brings him what turns out to be a puzzling case that goes from a missing husband to the husband's death from a head wound on a bridge to an equally puzzling look at Venice's health care system. Beautiful writing; not sure how I feel about the plot resolution, some of which you have to imagine will happen, but you can sure feel Leon's increasing despair over Venice's tourist inundation and the sheer weight and ineptitude of Italy's bureaucracy on all levels and its detachment from the people in theory it is serving. I add some of the prose is simply stunning.

Mangan, Christine. [Tangerine](#) (Ecco \$28). We see in *Tangerine* shades of Paul Bowles' work as well as that of gothic masters like Patricia Highsmith and Shirley Jackson. "Thanks to her exquisite writing, Christine Mangan manages to create a lush, vivid picture of Tangier in the 1950s and bring to life a complicated and very dark friendship between two young women. Lucy and Alice are former college roommates whose relationship has long since gone sour. When they reunite in Tangier, Mangan milks the delicious tension for all it's worth and brings their story to a shocking conclusion. As the novel unfolds, it becomes com-

plicated. Lucy's devotion is perhaps a bit too intense. Alice's agoraphobia is variously attributed to her parents' death, or to a more sinister cause. Eventually, their memories of their shared past diverge enough that the question can no longer be ignored. Is this gaslighting? Mental illness? Surreality? Are these the simple mistakes of memory or is there a more ominous force at work? In an atmosphere of shimmering heat, multiple languages, shifting perspectives, and layers of history and mythology. The intrigue stars two ultimately unreliable narrators. "Its appeal lies in the lush, sensual setting; the metered release of information about the shadowy past; and especially in untangling the twisted mystery of the present."—Julia Kastner

Meltzer, Brad. [The Escape Artist](#) (Grand Central \$28). Leaping to #1 the week Brad was at The Pen is the start of a thriller series featuring a young woman believed to be dead and the Army mortician stationed at Dover Air Force Base who works out during autopsy that she isn't. Where it goes from there... you have to read this hit to find out.

Patterson, James. [Red Alert: NYPD #5](#) (Little Brown \$28). When New York's very rich gather at Pierre's Cotillion Room to raise money for those less favored by life, a terrible explosion brings back memories of 9/11. Then a prominent woman filmmaker dies on a lonely street corner, and detectives Zach Jordan and Kylie MacDonald of the elite NYPD Red task force are out all night as the crimes escalate. With Marshall Karp.

✚Perry, Anne. [Twenty One Days](#) (Ballantine \$28). In the first book of an all-new series, young lawyer Daniel Pitt races to save his client from execution, putting him at odds with his own father: Thomas Pitt, head of London's Special Police Branch. Publishes April 10, Signed here for us on April 12. A particularly clever plot: you can figure out one element early on but not how it all works out. While Narraway and Vespasia by now have died—it's 1910—Thomas Pitt and Charlotte are central to Daniel's handling of a capital case.

Rosenfelt, David. [Fade to Black](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Rosenfelt deploys one of his best cons here; he really could have been a career criminal were he a guy with actual rather than literary bravado! New Jersey cop Doug Brock is back after getting himself shot going off script in 2016's entertaining and crafty [Blackout](#) (\$7.99). Doug has joined an amnesia support group in hopes of coping with if not regaining his memories lost in the trauma. One day he's approached by group member Sean Conner who has discovered what appears to be a scrapbook of a murder and fears he might be involved—but he can't remember. If Doug can work the crime so to speak, Sean can do the right thing as a result. The twist: it was Doug who worked the case, but he too can't remember it. Then Sean's head is discovered in a park. Where this goes is brilliant. When I emailed David to set up the drop ship to him he advised me *Fade to Black* is one of his best. So true.

Sharpe, Tess. [Barbed Wire Heart](#) (Grand Central \$27). Our **April First Mystery Club Pick** is a change up from the January-March selections, being a high-tension, down and dirty thriller set in northern California. Harley McKenna, only daughter of North County's widowed drug king Duke McKenna, was brought up hating the Springfields, their competitors in the drug trade on the other side of the river. In order to survive, and to protect the abuse survivors at the women's safe house she runs with Native American woman Mo, Harley embarks on a clandestine campaign

to put the McKennas and the Springfields out of commission. In particular, she blows up meth labs on both sides in the hope that each will blame the other. A smart feminist who's relentlessly tough and profoundly compassionate, Harley takes advantage of the gender stereotyping that causes men to underestimate her, while protecting those who have been hurt by its effects. Extensive flashbacks from Harley's youth chart her transformation into a trained killer, giving context to her relationships with Duke's colleagues and enemies. But you root for her as she outsmarts everyone. Even though her plan becomes clear to the reader fairly early, seeing her success in executing it is highly satisfying. This is a deeply affecting story about the complex family dynamics of growing up in the midst of a blood feud—not unlike a moonshine war in Appalachia, but dirtier.

Shelton, Paige. [Lost Books and Old Bones](#) (St Martins \$25.99). In stock now, but Shelton will appear and sign at Cozy Con May 5 along with Tessa Arlen, Kate Carlisle, Jane Cleland, Vicki Delaney, C.S. Harris, Jenn McKinlay, and Ann Parker. Kansan Delaney Nichols still loves working at The Cracked Spine, an Edinburgh bookshop in the heart of the city that is filled with "curiosities and surprises" on every shelf—especially ones in the locked read warehouse. When friends, students at the medical school, come in to sell a collection of rare and illustrated medical books, Delaney's boss Edwin is smitten. He might even keep them for himself. Then one of Delaney's new friends is found murdered in the close [Scots for alley] behind the shop, Delaney can't stay out of the investigation, her third, proving that bookselling isn't for sissies. Lots of fun and informative, too, like the first two chapters in Delaney's new life which you can [order here](#).

Smith, Michael Farris. [The Fighter](#) (Little Brown \$27). Patrick reviews: "Mississippi writer Smith follows up last year's [Desperation Road](#) (\$15.99)—a Hardboiled Crime Club Pick—with a bold and emotionally wrought novel about a former bare knuckle fighter who's taken too many hits over the years. Jack's life is slipping away from him, and his lifetime of concussions has left him addled. He gobbles painkillers and keeps a notebook to keep straight his list of friends and enemies. His debt to Big Momma Sweet keeps mounting, and now the queen of the Delta underworld wants the balance paid. Jack finds an unlikely ally in Annette, a young temptress carnival worker who pushes Jack towards one last bout in the fighting pit that will clear the stakes one way or another. Peopled with a great cast of misfits doing their best in a world that's chewed them up and spit them out, Smith's new novel confirms his place as one the finest writers at work today."

A PREVIEW OF THE APRIL BOOK CLUB PICKS

British Crime Club One Unsigned paperback or hardcover per month

Burrows, Steve. [A Siege of Bitterns](#)

Cozy Crimes Club One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Orr, Jill. [Bad Break](#)

Discovery Club One Unsigned paperback or hardcover per month

Viskic, Emma. [Resurrection Bay](#)

First Mystery Club One Signed First per month

Sharpe, Tess. [Barbed Wire Heart](#)

Hardboiled Crime Club One Signed First per monthHarrington, Kent. [Last Ferry Home](#)**History/Mystery Club One Signed First per month**Parker, Ann. [A Dying Note](#)**History Paperback One per month**Parker, Ann. [A Dying Note](#) (paperback edition)**Modern First Editions One Signed First per month**Callahan, Liam. [Paris by the Book](#)**SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Club One Signed First per month**Miller, Madeline. [Circe](#)**Surprise Me! Club One Signed First Per month**Palmer, Michael. [The First Family](#)**Thriller Club One Signed First per month**Ricciardi, David. [Warning Light](#)**A TRIO OF SMART COZIES**

As we move from March, Women's History Month, to Mother's Day, here is a trio of smart cozies from Poisoned Pen Pres, all with empowered women sleuths

Murder in the Margins... a mixed-race archaeologist finds Memphis isn't all jazz. Enjoy those Peabody Hotel ducks in their cameo.

Evans, Mary Ann. [Undercurrents](#) (\$15.95). "The state of Tennessee hires archaeologist Faye Longchamp's cultural resources firm to examine land intended for a new campground in Sweetgum State Park, on the outskirts of Memphis, for any historically valuable relics that might be found there. On the first day of the dig, Faye hears unusual sounds in the woods, which lead her to a woman who has been badly beaten and hastily buried alive. The unfriendly police detective who arrives on the scene interrogates Faye, who has left her ID in her car. For the first time in her life, Faye, a person of color, starts to worry about 'being considered guilty-while black.' Wary of the police and concerned about the victim's young daughter, Faye is drawn into an investigation that points to a serial killer. Evans expertly juggles a host of likely suspects, all the while breathing life into the city of Memphis, from its tourist-filled center to its marginal neighborhoods and the spectacular wilderness of the state park."—*PW*. Evans will sign the hardcover edition Sept. 3 at our RebusFest 30.

Colorado's "Silver Queen" takes on Jack London's San Francisco

Parker, Ann. [A Dying Note](#) (\$26.95 Signed May 5; \$15.95). Inez Stannert, partner in a Leadville saloon and high-end bordello, relocates. Though managing the respectable D&S House of Music, she soon confronts her shady past—and murder. "Set in 1881, Parker's exuberant mystery brims with fascinating period details, flamboyant characters, and surprising plot twists.... Parker leaves the reader longing to see what Inez will get up to next."—*PW*.

"The Silver Rush series has been nominated for several crime-fiction awards, and it's easy to see why: Parker... has a real knack for making us feel as though we have been transported to another time and place, and her characters breathe life into the vividly evoked landscape."—David Pitt, *Booklist*

Working personal security in Atlanta flares an old case to life

Whittle, Tina. [Necessary Ends](#) (\$15.95). Tai Randolph and her partner Trey Seaver, a SWAT-trained corporate security agent,

are pulled into the orbit of the Talbot brothers, who have a major stake in the hit television series *Moonshine*, a Prohibition-era werewolf drama filmed in Atlanta. Presto, someone tries a hit on Nicholas Talbot.... "The sixth title... with the two damaged protagonists, after struggling with family and personal demons, finding answers and moving on with their lives. While the mystery is filled with complex characters, it's the uncertainty, pain, and awkwardness of the two leads that drives this intense story."—*LJ*. "A fine cast of believable—if eccentric—characters includes conniving actresses, jilted lovers, pushy financial backers, and stalker-fans, each with his or her own weighty agenda. Tai and Trey, with all their strengths and foibles, make a top-notch team."—*PW*

Meet these women—Faye, Inez, Tai—first—at an attractive \$9.99 price

Evans, Mary Ann. [Artifacts](#). 2004 Winner, Benjamin Franklin Award for Mystery/Suspense

Parker, Ann. [Silver Lies](#). 2004 – Winner, Willa Cather Award for Historical Fiction; Winner, Colorado Gold Award for Best Mystery; "Best Mysteries of 2003"—Pick by *Publishers Weekly* and the *Chicago Tribune*; 2003 - Spur Award Finalist; 2003 - Bruce Alexander Award Nominee

Whittle, Tina. [The Dangerous Edge of Things](#). A debut receiving triple Starred Reviews: *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal*, *Publishers Weekly*

A FEW SMALL PAPERBACKS

Blackwell, Juliet. [A Magical Match](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Witch and vintage store owner Lily Ivory and her friends are planning a 1950s-themed brunch when a figure from her past shows up unannounced, threatening her unless she returns something that belonged to him, Lily's fiancé, Sailor, steps in to defend her. After the same man is found dead later that day, Sailor is the primary suspect.

Clark, Mary Higgins. [All by Myself, Alone](#) (\$8.99). Fleeing the disastrous and humiliating last-minute arrest of her fiancé on the eve of their wedding, Celia, an expert on gems and jewelry, is hoping to escape from reality on a glamorous cruise ship. But it is not to be. On board in the most luxurious suite is the elderly and world-famous Lady Emily Harworth—soon found dead.

Crouch, Blake. [Dark Matter](#) (\$9.99). Before he awakens to find himself strapped to a gurney, surrounded by strangers in hazmat suits. Before a man Jason's never met smiles down at him and says, "Welcome back, my friend." In this world he's woken up to, Jason's life is not the one he knows. His wife is not his wife. His son was never born. And Jason is not an ordinary college physics professor, but a celebrated genius who has achieved something remarkable. Something impossible. So which of Jason's world is the dream...or nightmare?

Hamilton, Steve. [Exit Strategy](#) (\$9.99). Nick Mason has been given a true mission impossible: Infiltrate WITSEC, the top-secret federal witness-protection program that has never been compromised; locate the three men who put his boss Darius Cole behind bars for life; and kill them. But first he has to find them—they're ghost prisoners locked down around the clock in classified "deep black" locations by a battalion of heavily armed U.S. marshals.... The sequel to [The Second Life of Nick Mason](#) (\$16).

Hearne, Kevin. [Besieged: Stories from the Iron Druid Chronicles](#) (\$7.99). Original tales featuring Atticus O'Sullivan, the two-thousand-year-old Irishman. See Event Books for Atticus in his 9th novel.

Maden, Mike. [Tom Clancy Point of Contact](#) (\$9.99). Former U.S. Senator Weston Rhodes is a defense contractor with an urgent problem. His company needs someone to look over the books of Dalfan Technologies, a Singapore company—quickly. He turns to his old friend Gerry Hendley and asks for two specific analysts, Jack Ryan Jr., and Paul Brown. Brown has no idea Jack works for The Campus but the awkward accountant is hiding secrets of his own. This is the set-up for a terrific thriller Maden makes his own inside the Clancy franchise. Yay!

McKinlay, Jenn. [Wedding Cake Crumble](#) (Berkley \$7.99). For the Fairy Tale Cupcake crew, wedding bells turn to death knells. With Angie and Tate's wedding just around the corner, it's a happy time for Melanie Cooper and the bakery crew. Not only are they finessing the last minute details of the big day, but their bakery, Fairy Tale Cupcakes, has just been hired to bake cupcakes for the blockbuster book signing of a controversial author who wrote a steamy bestseller filled with juicy local gossip. But one by one, the people Angie has hired to work at the wedding begin turning up dead.

Reilly, Matthew. [Four Legendary Kingdoms](#) (\$9.99). Waiting for the next Clive Cussler after his #1 bestseller of March, [The Rising Sea](#) (\$29 Signed)? Look no further. Jack West, Jr. and his family are living contentedly on their remote farm when their lives are abruptly shattered. Jack is brutally kidnapped and he awakens in an underground cell to find a masked attacker with a knife charging at him. It seems he has been chosen—along with a dozen other elite soldiers—to compete in a series of deadly challenges designed to fulfill an ancient ritual.

Sandford, John. [Golden Prey](#) (\$9.99). Thanks to some very influential people whose lives he saved, Lucas Davenport is no longer working for the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, but for the U.S. Marshals Service, and with unusual scope. He gets to pick his own cases, whatever they are, wherever they lead him. And where they've led him this time is into real trouble starting in Biloxi, Mississippi. While you are waiting for Ace Atkins' next Quinn Colson, Lucas is your man.

SOME NEW BOOKS

Benson, Michael. [Space Odyssey](#) (SimonSchuster \$30). Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the film's release, this is the story of the making of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, acclaimed today as one of the greatest films ever made, including the inside account of how director Stanley Kubrick and writer Arthur C. Clarke created a cinematic masterpiece. "At last! The dense, intense, detailed, and authoritative saga of the making of the greatest motion picture I've ever seen. I now have reason to see Kubrick's 'proverbial "really good" science fiction movie' another 200 times. Michael Benson has done the Cosmos a great service."—Tom Hanks

Blum, Howard. [In the Enemy's House](#) (Harper \$29.99). The true story of a critical, recently declassified counterintelligence mission and two remarkable agents whose story has been called "the greatest secret of the Cold War." And as the Cold War heats up again and questions rage about Russian intelligence and Putin, Blum's book is a must read. In 1946, genius linguist and codebreaker

Meredith Gardner discovered that the KGB was running an extensive network of strategically placed spies inside the United States, whose goal was to infiltrate American intelligence and steal the nation's military and atomic secrets. Over the course of the next decade, he and young FBI supervisor Bob Lamphere worked together on Venona, a top-secret mission to uncover the Soviet agents and protect the Holy Grail of Cold War espionage—the atomic bomb. Opposites in nearly every way, Lamphere and Gardner relentlessly followed a trail of clues that helped them identify and take down these Soviet agents one by one, including Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. But at the center of this spy ring, seemingly beyond the American agents' grasp, was the mysterious master spy who pulled the strings of the KGB's extensive campaign, dubbed Operation Enormoz by Russian Intelligence headquarters.

✠Burrows, Steve. [A Siege of Bitterns](#) (One World \$14.99). Winner of the 2015 Arthur Ellis award and our **April British Crime Club Pick**. Newly appointed police inspector Domenic Jejeune doesn't mind ruffling a few feathers. Indeed his success has elevated him into a poster boy for the police. The problem is Jejeune doesn't really want to be a detective at all; he much prefers watching birds. Recently reassigned to the small Norfolk town of Saltmarsh, located in the heart of Britain's premier birding country, Jejeune's two worlds collide with the grisly murder of a prominent ecological activist. His ambitious police superintendent foresees a blaze of welcome publicity, although doubts soon emerge when Jejeune's best theory involves a feud over birdwatching lists. A second murder does little to bolster confidence. Jejeune must call on all his birding know how to solve the mystery and deal with unwelcome public acclaim, the mistrust of colleagues and his own insecurities.

Clark, Mary Higgins. [I've Got My Eyes on You](#) (SimonSchuster \$26.99). After a party when her parents are away, eighteen-year-old Kerry Dowling is found fully dressed at the bottom of the family pool. The immediate suspect is her boyfriend who had a bitter argument with her at the party. Then there is a twenty-year-old neighbor who was angry because she didn't invite him to the party. Or, is there someone else who has not yet been seen as a suspect?

Dallas, Sandra. [Hardscrabble](#) (Sleeping Bear Press \$15.99). I am a mad fan of Dallas' adult fiction. Here she writes a kind of Little House on the Prairie—1900s Colorado—for middle grade and up. In 1910, after losing their farm in Iowa, the Martin family moves to Mingo, Colorado, to start anew. The US government offers 320 acres of land free to homesteaders. All they have to do is live on the land for five years and farm it. So twelve-year-old Belle Martin, along with her mother and six siblings, moves west to join her father. But while the land is free, farming is difficult and it's a hardscrabble life. Natural disasters such as storms and locusts threaten their success. And heartbreaking losses challenge their faith. Do the Martins have what it takes to not only survive but thrive in their new prairie life? Told through the eyes of a twelve-year-old girl.

Dean, Debra. [Hidden Tapestry](#) (Northwestern University \$19.95). *Hidden Tapestry* returns to some of the themes that threaded through Debra Dean's first novel, [The Madonnas of Leningrad](#) (\$14.99): the heroism of ordinary people in wartime, the mixed blessings of love, and the power of art to save us. It reveals the unforgettable true story of Flemish American artist Jan Yoors—

childhood vagabond, wartime resistance fighter, and urban bohemian—and the two wives who shared his life. At the peak of his fame in the 1970s, Yoors's photographs and vast tapestries inspired a dedicated following in his adopted Manhattan and brought him international acclaim. Though his intimate friends guessed the rough outline of his colorful life, *Hidden Tapestry* is first to detail his astonishing secrets. It's a love story, an important cultural exploration of gypsy culture, and a tale of just how the human spirit can adapt to very difficult circumstances—and it's all true. "Debra Dean puts the stitches in the rich tapestry that was Jan Yoors' life, surely one of the most remarkable artistic stories of the twentieth century. She reveals his incredible life of exploration, adventure, and heroism, as well as his truly unique ménage. I'm hugely impressed with her research and writing—and green with envy that she found such a fascinating subject to write about."—Ross King

Jones, Cynan. [The Cove](#) (Catapult \$19.95). In the spirit of survival and renewal: out at sea, in a sudden storm, a man is struck by lightning. When he wakes, injured and adrift on a kayak, his memory of who he is and how he came to be here is all but shattered. He will need to rely on his instincts, resilience, and imagination to get safely back to the woman he dimly senses is waiting for his return. This is an extraordinary, visceral portrait of a man locked in a struggle with the forces of nature. This is a beautiful, brief, terrifying novel, recently excerpted in *The New Yorker* by the multi-award-winning author of *The Dig*, etc.

✚ Kelly, Helena. [Jane Austen, The Secret Radical](#) (\$17). One thing I love most about Jane is her work is still being read and discussed today as if it were fresh. Here is a book that suggests we read her for more than romance with social satire. "A sublime piece of literary detective work... Kelly shows us that the novels were about nothing more or less than the burning political questions of the day." —*The Guardian*. "Do we read Jane Austen's novels as she intended? In this riveting literary-biographical study, the answer is a resounding no... An interpretive coup that is dazzling and dizzying . . . You won't read Austen the same way again." —*The New Yorker*

Kerr, Philip. [Greeks Bearing Gifts](#) (Putnam \$27). All of us at The Pen agree: "A cynical, erudite, wise-cracking, fiendishly clever man, lover of women, hater of Nazis and yet obliged to work for them to survive, Bernie is a unique creation." And the late Kerr's 13th Bernie Gunther was, I know from his emails, extensively researched on site in Greece. "In typical top form, Kerr provides valuable insights into the times ... Inspired by real people and events, the latest novel by the celebrated author of the Berlin Noir trilogy is a deep but breezy work in which even the most trustworthy characters can harbor dark secrets. " —*Kirkus Starred Review*. Set in 1957, we find the former Berlin cop employed as a lowly mortuary assistant in Munich. Fortunately, a bit of detective work he does on the side leads to a new job as a claims adjuster for a local insurance company. His first assignment takes him to Athens to look into the case of the *Doris*, a small ship that was on an expedition searching for ancient Greek artifacts when it caught fire and sank. Bernie talks with the *Doris*'s owner, a German diving expert, who soon meets a violent end—possibly at the hands of a wanted Nazi war criminal, who in 1943 helped put thousands of Greek Jews (including the *Doris*'s original owner) on trains to Auschwitz. I add for Kerr's admirers: prior to his death, he completed *Metropolis*, the 14th and final Gunther

mystery, which will be published in 2019. The 12th Bernie is 2017's Edgar-nominated [Prussian Blue](#) (\$16).

Longworth, M L. [Secrets of the Bastide Blanche](#) (Penguin \$16). Over dinner at an upscale Manhattan restaurant on Sept. 22, 2010, mega-bestselling French author Valère Barbier auditions wine-savvy publishing tyro Justin Wong as the editor of his possibly last book. Mesmerizing, manipulative Barbier keeps Wong and the reader on edge: is his book to be a confession or a cover-up? His wife, the famed potter Agathe Barbier, died mysteriously in 1988. Was it an accident or murder? Flash back to France earlier in 2010. Barbier has bought an abandoned château, La Bastide Blanche, up the road from police commissioner Bruno Paulik; his wine maker wife, Helene; and their precocious 10-year-old daughter, Léa. Barbier and the Pauliks develop a social relationship—rich with details of daily life in Aix-en-Provence—that grows tense with suspicion, until... Series sleuth Antoine Verlaque looks into Valère's shady past, while his wife and fellow sleuth, Marine Bonnet, investigates why La Bastide was so long abandoned. Longworth frames this series entry as a conversation which either will, or won't, work for you. I read these as I do Martin Walker's Brunos for the food, wine, and enchanting details of the region and lifestyles. [Order all the Longworths](#), perfect for a spring reading binge.

See, Lisa. [The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane](#) (\$16.99). There are so many things to love about this book. "Delivering both poetry and plot" (*The New York Times Book Review*), a moving novel about tradition, tea farming, and the bonds between mothers and daughters. "The story begins small, plunging us into the immersive detail of a single grueling day picking tea with the young girl, Li-yan, her mother, A-ma, and the rest of their ethnic minority Akha family... What makes life bearable for the Akha is their belief system, which infuses every aspect of their daily lives. The full sweep of their practices is flawlessly embedded in See's prose... The hardships that confront Li-yan in her life are as compelling as the fog-shrouded secret groves where she and her mother cultivate a special healing tea. I could have hung out here in remote China forever, but See has wider ground to cover, including Chinese adoption, the international fine tea market and modern Chinese migration to the United States... A lush tale infused with clear-eyed compassion, this novel will inspire reflection, discussion and an overwhelming desire to drink rare Chinese tea." —Helen Simonson, *The Washington Post*

Vidich, Paul. [The Good Assassin](#) (\$16). Former CIA Agent George Mueller arrives in Havana in August 1958, during the last months of Dictator Fulgencio Batista's reign, to look into the activities of Toby Graham—an in-country CIA officer suspected of harboring sympathies for the rebels fighting the unpopular Batista regime. Specifically, Mueller's old friend Graham may be putting weapons into the hands of Castro's forces, in bold defiance of the United States arms embargo on the island. This is a terrific book. I am not alone in thinking so: "...opens up Hemingway's Cuba. Possessing Alan Furst's attention for period detail and the deft character touches of John Le Carré, Vidich has quickly carved out a place for himself among the very first rank of espionage writers. It's a masterful effort and the author's best work to date." —Michael Harvey. "Cold War spy fiction in the grand tradition—neatly plotted betrayals in that shadow world where no one can be trusted and agents are haunted by their own moral compromises." —Joseph Kanon

☞Ware, Ruth. [The Lying Game](#) (\$16.99). When Isa Wilde gets a text—"I need you"—from old friend Kate Atagon, she knows she must drop everything in London and go to a town on England's south coast, where the two attended Salten House, a cut-rate boarding school. Doctor Fatima Qureshy and casino dealer Thea West receive the same message. At school, the four girls perfected what they called the Lying Game, with myriad rules and intricate scoring. An incident that caused the girls to leave before their senior year looms large as Kate informs the group about a riverbank discovery—a human bone—that could unravel the foursome's 17-year pact of silence. I am not a fan of Ware's first two Domestic Noirs, but this one I can recommend, agreeing with the *Booklist* Starred Review: "Ware masterfully harnesses the millhouse's decrepit menace to create a slow-rising sense of foreboding, darkening Isa's recollections of the weeks leading to Ambrose's disappearance... with arguably her most complex, fully realized characters yet."

HERE ARE SOME RETRO RAVES

Mamet, David. [Chicago](#) (Harper \$26.99). Crackling with colorful, truncated street dialogue, David Mamet's historical novel Chicago exhibits the kind of talk-talk drama that earned his plays (*Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Speed-the-Plow*) a Pulitzer Prize and Tony nominations and his film screenplays (*The Verdict*, *Wag the Dog*) a couple Oscar nominations. Set in the rough and tumble city of Mamet's youth, Chicago is the story of Mike Hodges, a hungry young Tribune reporter working the city desk in the 1920s. Capone and the Italian Outfit ran the South Side; O'Banion and the Irish mob ruled the North. When his Irish girlfriend is murdered during a tryst in his barebones flat, the guilt-ridden Hodges tenaciously pursues her killer. His snooping leads up and down the shores of Lake Michigan, through the Windy City's speakeasies and whorehouses, and into cop bars and bootlegger supper clubs—ultimately uncovering an elaborate scheme to swipe guns to sell to the Irish Republican Army. A dialogue-driven crime novel, Chicago does for Mamet's historical hometown what George V. Higgins did for Boston.

☞Reed, Eric. [Ruined Stones](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95) continues the story of village policeman's daughter Grace Baxter who had a supporting role in [The Guardian Stones](#) (\$15.95). Grace has moved from 1941 Shropshire to icy cold, fog bound, blacked out Newcastle-on-Tyne to become an auxiliary police woman. Two bodies are found, arranged in reverse Swastika, in the ruins of an old Roman temple. As in the first book, pre-Christian beliefs remain strong and intertwine the plot. Also strong is prejudice against refugees, especially the Dutch who are mistaken for Deutsch. Grace struggles against a broken boss and chauvinist colleagues to bring closure to the paranormally and paranoidly inclined locals, slowly navigating a dark and dangerous beat to trace a twisting tale to a conclusion. But these are unhappy people in unhappy times and threads remain loose at the end. Reed paints a sharp picture of working class life and of criminals flourishing amidst a lack of police. Reed meticulously locates the story in history, even to the Nazi-deterring Cone of Power ritual. The setting is a refreshing change from the usual London-in-the-Blitz. And to add flavor there is a liberal sprinkling of glossaried Geordie. One to enjoy without haste.

☞Thompson, Laura. [Agatha Christie: A Mysterious Life](#) (Pegasus \$35)."No life is a code to be deciphered," Thompson writes.

"Omniscience is for Hercule Poirot. Real life knows less; it has the beauty of mystery." Christie captured that mystery brilliantly in her books, and Thompson does her best to explore—though never entirely to solve—the mysteries of author's life.

A FEW SCIFI/FANTASIES FOR EARLY APRIL

Bacigalupi, Paolo. [The Tangled Lands](#) (Saga \$26.99)
Belcher, R S. [Night Dahlia](#) (\$18.99)
Bledsoe, Alex. [Fairies of Sadieville](#) (Tor \$27.99)
Brodsky, Jordan. [Winter of the Gods](#) (\$15.99)
Butler, D J. [Witchy Winter](#) (Baen \$25)
Drake, David. [Though Hell Should Bar the Way](#) (Baen \$25)
Fry, Jason. [Star Wars Last Jedi Expanded E](#) (Dell \$28.99)
Goss, Theodora. [Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter](#) (Saga \$16.99)
Gratton, Tessa. [Queens of Innis Lear](#) (Tor \$26.99)
Neuvel, Sylvain. [Waking Gods: Book Two of the Themis File](#) (\$16)
Wendig, Chuck. [Raptor & the Wren](#) (Saga \$27.99)