

BOOKNEWS from

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sales@poisonedpen.com tel (888)560-9919
http://poisonedpen.com

4014 N. Goldwater Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-947-2974



MARCH MADNESS....

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](#)

SUNDAY MARCH 4 2:00 PM

Kent Anderson signs [Green Sun](#) (Mulholland \$27)

TUESDAY MARCH 6 7:00 PM Double Thrills

Jack Carr signs [The Terminal List](#) (Atria \$26) Debut thriller

J Todd Scott signs [The Far Empty](#) (\$9.99)

WEDNESDAY MARCH 7 7:00 PM

Brad Parks signs [Closer Than You Know](#) (Dutton \$26)

Christopher Rice signs [Bone Music](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95)

THURSDAY MARCH 8 7:00 PM

Isabella Maldonado signs [Phoenix Burning](#) (Midnight Ink \$15.99)

Phoenix cop Miranda Cruz #2

FRIDAY MARCH 9 7:00 PM

Candice Fox signs [Crimson Lake](#) (Forge \$25.99)

Surprise Me! Pick

SATURDAY MARCH 10 10:30 AM

Coffee and Crime Club: share your favorite Mary Higgins Clark novel

MONDAY MARCH 12 7:00 PM

Sophie Hannah signs [Keep Her Safe](#) (Harper \$26.99)

A 2017 book set here in Phoenix

Francine Matthews signs [Death on Nantucket](#) (Soho \$24.95)

Merry Folger #5

Charles Todd signs [The Gate Keeper](#) (Harper \$26.99)

Inspector Ian Rutledge

TUESDAY MARCH 13 2:00 PM

Alison Gaylin signs [If I Die Tonight](#) Harper \$26.95)

For Megan Abbott/Mary Higgins Clark/Laura Lippman fans

TUESDAY MARCH 13 7:00 PM

Philip Margolin signs [The Third Victim](#) (St Martins \$26.99)

Starts a new Portland legal thriller series

WEDNESDAY MARCH 14 7:00 PM

Lars Kepler signs [The Sandman](#) (Knopf \$27.95)

Is there a Scandinavian Hannibal Lecter?

THURSDAY MARCH 15 6:30 PM A Surprise Duo!

Alma Katsu signs [The Hunger](#) (Putnam \$27)

March SciFi/Horror Club Pick

Brad Meltzer signs [The Escape Artist](#) (Grand Central \$28)

Who is Nola Brown? Is she dead?

FRIDAY MARCH 16 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday Club: Select your own book

SATURDAY MARCH 17 10:30 AM

Croak and Dagger discusses Gerard Stembridge's

[What She Saw](#) (Harper \$15.99)

A thriller set over the course of twenty-four hours in Paris.

SATURDAY MARCH 17 2:00 PM Debut Mystery

Nova Jacobs signs [The Last Equation of Isaac Severy](#)

(Touchstone \$25) March First Mystery Club Pick

MONDAY MARCH 19 7:00 PM

JA Jance signs [Duel to the Death](#) (Touchstone \$25.99) Ali Reynolds

TUESDAY MARCH 20 7:00 PM Audio Books!

Steve Berry signs [The Bishop's Pawn](#) (St Martins \$28.99)

A link to a private podcast will be included with our copies

John Lescroart signs [Poison](#) (Atria \$26.99 March 20) Dismas Hardy #17

Scott Brick who reads Steve's audio books as well as those by a host of other authors joins in the conversation.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 21 7:00 PM

J Todd Scott signs [High White Sun](#) (Putnam \$26)

Sheriff Cherry of Big Bend County, Texas

Willy Vlautin signs [Don't Skip Out on Me](#) (Harper \$22.99)

FRIDAY MARCH 23 7:00 PM

James Sallis and the Three Dog Band

SATURDAY MARCH 24 1:00 PM

Simone St. James signs [The Broken Girls](#) (Berkley \$26)

Is Vermont's 1950 Idlewild Hall haunted?

SATURDAY MARCH 24 2:00 PM

John Hart signs [The Hush](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Sequel to 2010 Edgar Winner [The Last Child](#) (\$16.99)

MONDAY MARCH 26 7:00 PM Book Launch Party

ASU Kerr Cultural Center, 6110 N Scottsdale Rd,
Scottsdale 85253

CJ Box signs [Disappeared](#) (Putnam \$27) Joe Pickett

Our copies come with an exclusive bookmark designed by Box

TUESDAY MARCH 27 7:00 PM British Crime Night

Charles Finch signs [The Woman in the Water](#) (St Martins \$25.99)

Charles Lenox series prequel

Jacqueline Winspear signs [To Die but Once](#) (Harper \$27.99)

Maisie Dobbs

THURSDAY MARCH 29 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime Club discusses Roberto Arellano's [Havana Lunar](#) (Akashic \$14.95)) Cuban literary noir

SUNDAY APRIL 1

We are closed

**EVENT BOOKS**

Anderson, Kent. [Green Sun](#) (LittleBrown \$27). Patrick writes of the **March Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**: "It's been 22 years since the publication of *Night Dogs*, which James Crumley called "the best cop never ever written." Now, Anderson returns with a brilliant and timely book that blows the dust off of genre conventions and breathes new life into the form. The time is the early 1980's and Hanson, a former Special Forces sergeant, has returned to police work after a few years teaching English literature. He patrols the ghetto streets of East Oakland alone in his patrol car, and has managed to gain the respect of the community by his firm but humane enforcement of the social contract. Hanson, who had expected to die in Vietnam, has no fear of death but is highly attuned to the signs and omens all around him. In a series of unforgettable and sometimes hallucinatory episodes, Anderson presents a police novel unlike any you've read before. Don't miss this one." Or the Walter Mosley. The pendulum has swung from January and early February serial killer thrillers to splendid procedurals.

Berry, Steve. [The Bishop's Pawn](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Our copies come with a private link to a podcast between Steven and his audio book reader Scott Brick who will be joining the March 20 event. And a bookmark designed by Berry. Is this lucky 13 for Cotton Malone? In fact, it shows him as a rookie investigator, Berry illustrating his errors as a new field op in "an effective conspiracy yarn centered on Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. In the present, Malone has a secret meeting in Atlanta with an unnamed man who sent him a note stating, "Fifty years have passed. Bring them." Flash back to 18 years earlier. Malone, a member of the JAG Corps, is recruited by the Justice Department's Stephanie Nelle to handle a special assignment—to retrieve a waterproof case containing a stolen Double Eagle coin, worth millions, from a sunken boat off the south Florida coast. Malone makes the dive, only to find that he hadn't been told the truth; the case is also the target of some armed men and turns out to contain confidential documents relating to an FBI program connected with King's murder in Memphis in 1968. "Berry makes Malone accessible to newcomers to the series.

Box, CJ. [Disappeared](#) (Putnam \$27). Our copies come with a nifty Joe Pickett books bookmark we've designed. This is one of several March books I've been saving to read (when I am not writing to you), so I'm stealing a number of reviews for now. Watch the Enews and Booknews for more personal takes. "The 18th installment of this hugely popular series delivers everything fans want: a compelling mystery, high-stakes action in a beautiful

setting, and enjoyably humorous interaction between characters they've come to know and love. There's a reason we keep coming back for more." —*Booklist*. Wyoming's new governor isn't sure what to make of Joe Pickett, but he has a job for him that is extremely delicate. A prominent female British executive never came home from the high-end guest ranch she was visiting, and the British Embassy is pressing hard. Pickett knows that happens sometimes—these ranches are stocked with handsome young cowboys, and "ranch romances" aren't uncommon. But no sign of her months after she vanished? That suggests something else. At the same time, his friend Nate Romanowski has asked Joe to intervene with the feds on behalf of falconers who can no longer hunt with eagles even though their permits are in order. Who is blocking the falconers and why? The more he investigates both cases, the more someone wants him to go away....

Carr, Jack. [The Terminal List](#) (Atria \$26). Our **March Thriller Club Pick** is fuelled by revenge. A veteran Navy SEAL (Carr actually is one), Lieutenant Commander James Reece, leads a team in Khost Province, Afghanistan, that is wiped out in a prepared ambush, as is the air support crew sent in to rescue the survivors. Something is off. Truly off—on his homecoming Reece learns his family has been ambushed and murdered too. Brutally—and that all this is the work of homeland players, not foreigners. Learning that many of his men and he himself have developed deadly brain tumors, Reece resolves to spend his end days taking down the list of conspirators he's compiled. And he brings his entire skill set to it. Nothing here is original in thrillers. The financier is heartless; the officials corrupt, the extra traitor inevitable. What distinguishes this start of a series is Carr's authentic, so alive voice (the thing I always read for first), the wealth of experience he draws upon to create both characters and their actions (like Brad Taylor, no?), and his weapons expertise. Even Stephen Hunter who is a hard, hard critic of guys with guns, gives Carr a thumbs up. And, Carr's sense of humor often lights this debut up.

✂Finch, Charles. [The Woman in the Water](#) (St Martins \$25.99). A new [review in the Washington Post](#) is fun to read. And spot on in admiring "Lenox's dealings with his family as well as his frustrated passion for the lovely Elizabeth — Lady Elizabeth — who is 19, charming, beautiful and inconveniently married to another man....Hippos, brass frogs, Russian trips, unattainable love, the doomed Thames Ophelia — fans of the Lenox novels will enjoy these glimpses of Charles's early life. And those new to his work will find here a persuasive portrait of Victorian England." And the *NY Times* reviews: "Prequels are fun because you get an intimate glimpse of your favorite detectives while they're still wet behind the ears and not so full of themselves. Charles Lenox, a gentleman sleuth who goes on to great things in the charming Victorian novels of Charles Finch, is a mere whippersnapper, fresh out of Oxford and determined to set himself up as a 'consulting detective' (a profession that barely existed in 1850). As a member of the aristocracy, Lenox has access to Metropolitan Police bigwigs, but to establish himself as a private consultant he must solve a case on his own — ideally, a cunning mystery like the one he and his clever valet, Graham, contend with here. The London newspapers have received a letter from someone who boasts of having 'the perfect crime' and promises more to come. Suspecting a string of homicides has

already begun, Lenox gets permission to poke into a previous, possibly related murder. This young woman's 'well-kept teeth' indicate that she was not a prostitute but someone of substance, someone who might even have been a member of Lenox's own social circle." If you haven't read Finch, begin here, then [binge on the rest](#).

Fox, Candice. [Crimson Lake](#) (Forge \$25.99). Sydney homicide detective Ted Conkaffey, the pariah narrator of this engrossing suspense novel from Ned Kelly Award-winner Fox, is halfway through his trial for the rape and attempted murder of a 13-year-old girl when the NSW director of public prosecutions withdraws the charges, since the evidence isn't strong enough to satisfy a jury beyond a reasonable doubt. Per Australian law, Ted could be prosecuted later if more evidence emerges. [This is actually a situation similar to a person found Not Proven under Scottish law.] After his wife asks him for a divorce, Ted moves north to Crimson Lake, Queensland, where he hopes to remain incognito. Ted's lawyer puts him in touch with Amanda Pharrell, a convicted killer who has become a PI after serving eight years in prison. Ted and Amanda decide to partner on an investigation to find a missing bestselling author. This is one of the most arresting set ups for lead characters I've read in a long time. Meanwhile, Ted wrestles with harassment from local cops, a reporter on his tail, and vigilante attacks against him. What really gripped me is the character shown by Ted and of Amanda in their situations and the remarkable final decision by Amanda that may propel them into the future. The character studies are amazing and the wet North Queensland landscape (watch out for crocs!) a perfect backdrop for our **March Surprise Me! Club Pick**.

Gaylin, Alison. [If I Die Tonight](#) (Harper \$26.99). John reviews: "All teenagers lie. That is what single mother Jackie Reed tells herself when her older son Wade seemingly goes from being a nice—albeit shy—kid to a surly, secretive teenager. However, when a fellow classmate of Wade's is struck down by a carjacked automobile and the Havenkill police turn up to ask Jackie if she knows exactly where Wade was that night, Jackie begins to wonder exactly what kind of secrets Wade might be keeping. Shamus award-winning and Edgar nominated Alison Gaylin deftly manipulates the multiple character points of view in her latest riveting novel of psychological suspense into a secrets-steeped plot that will have readers guessing just exactly what happened right up to the novel's stunning conclusion. Put these factors together with Gaylin's spot-on ability to dial into every parent's worst fear, and you have a book that perfect for fans of Mary Higgins Clark style suspense as well as book clubs in search of their next great read." I add that Megan Abbott and Laura Lippman readers will like Gaylin.

Hannah, Sophie. [Keep Her Safe](#) (Harper \$26.99). A 2017 book set here in Phoenix. He's the most famous murder victim in America. What if she's not dead? Pushed to the breaking point, Cara Burrows flees her home and family and escapes to a five-star spa resort [Sanctuary, or The Phoenician?] she can't afford. Late at night, exhausted and desperate, she lets herself into her hotel room and is shocked to find it already occupied—by a man and a teenage girl. A simple mistake at the front desk . . . but soon Cara realizes that the girl she saw alive and well in the hotel room is someone she couldn't possibly have seen: the most famous murder victim in the country, Melody Chapa, whose parents are serving natural-life sentences for her murder. Cara

doesn't know what to trust: everything she's read and heard about the case or the evidence she saw with her own eyes. Did she really see Melody?

Hart, John. [The Hush](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Hart presents an impressive sequel to his 2010 Edgar winner [The Last Child](#) (\$16). It continues the saga of Johnny Merrimon and his friend Jack—more evil awaits them. "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." —*Richmond Times-Dispatch*. "Chandler himself would be a big fan of John Hart for reasons clearly on display in *The Hush*... Like Chandler, Hart is a brilliant novelist as well as mystery writer, a lyrical wordsmith as comfortable turning a phrase as tension-riddled screws." —*Providence Journal*. All of which shows that Hart's fiction is unclassifiable. I sometimes think of Pat Conroy as I wished he'd written... displaying "a rare ability to combine the most propulsive of popular fiction with beguilingly rich characters."

Jacobs, Nova. [The Last Equation of Isaac Severy](#) (Touchstone \$25). I am mad for this **First Mystery Club Pick**, such a lively, original voice and a great story premise well executed and filled with surprising twists. The apparent suicide of a legendary mathematician drives Jacobs's intricate and moving first novel. Isaac Severy, renowned for having developed complex predictive equations for seemingly random events, such as "the erratic pattern of melting ice in the Arctic," dies in the backyard hot tub at his L.A. home after being electrocuted by a string of Christmas lights. His granddaughter, Hazel Severy, the owner of a struggling Seattle bookstore, receives one last letter from him, postmortem. In the letter, Isaac states that he hopes not to evade the assassin who has been following him; asks Hazel to destroy his "work in Room 137," except for one equation, which she must hand over to a man whose "favorite pattern is herringbone"; warns her not to stay in his house after October 31st; and tells her that he is but the first of three people who will die. Hazel attempts to honor her grandfather's cryptic last requests and solve his murder.

Jance, JA. [Duel to the Death](#) (Touchstone \$26.99). Jance enters into Don Winslow territory with her Lucky 13th for Sedona-region's Ali Reynolds. After taking down the man responsible for his best friend's death, Stuart Ramey thinks the case is finally closed. That is, until Stu finds himself left with a multimillion dollar fortune in Bitcoin in a desperate bid by Frigg, a rogue A.I. program created by the killer, to keep itself from being fully deactivated. To sort out his situation and take Frigg down for good, Stu enlists the help of Ali Reynolds and the rest of his cyber security colleagues at High Noon Enterprises. But they are not the only ones who know about Frigg's existence. Graciella Miramar, an unassuming accountant to all appearances, is actually the right-hand woman to *El Pescado*, the leader of a dangerous drug cartel. She'll do anything to get her hands on that program. With Frigg's help, Graciella hopes to take over her father's criminal underworld and become wealthy beyond her wildest dreams. But

Stu—and *El Pescado* and his henchmen—may not be so easily defeated. Jance started crime fiction in Seattle but today, IMHO, writes most powerfully about locations in Arizona.

Katsu, Alma. [The Hunger](#) (Putnam \$27). Alma joins Brad Meltzer at 6:30 on March 15 for what promises to be an amazing evening. And she's earned this Starred Review for our March SciFi/Horror Club Pick: "Katsu injects the supernatural into this brilliant retelling of the ill-fated Donner Party. In the prologue, set in April 1847, a team of rescuers sets out to find the last survivor of the expedition, Lewis Keseberg, but they locate only his abandoned cabin. "What looked like a human vertebra, cleaned of skin" and a "scattering of teeth" lie outside in the snow. Flash back to June 1846. George Donner is leading a wagon train to California. Those headed west often leave letters under rocks in the hope that an eastbound traveler will retrieve them and take them to the nearest post office. In one place, one of Donner's teenage daughters finds hundreds of such letters, all with the ominous message: "Turn back or you will die." Then a young boy disappears and is later found savagely mutilated, as if by an animal. The members of the party come to suspect that shape-changers are responsible for the carnage, and they encounter increasing challenges to their survival. Fans of Dan Simmons's *The Terror* will find familiar and welcome chills."

Kepler, Lars. [The Sandman](#) (Knopf \$27.95). For most of us it's the series lead that hooks us. And Detective Inspector Joona Linna is an international sensation. "Joona is blond and dimpled, with Special Ops training and eyes a granite shade of blue. There's nothing ghoulish about him except the cases toward which his conscience is always dragging him. Serial killers, broken families and heartbreaking lost or tortured children are among his specialties, and *The Sandman* is an adroitly nerve-racking book full of all those things." Yet, as the *NY Times* sums it up, this book's hook is the villain, a Swedish Hannibal Lector. "With its tight, staccato chapters and cast of dangerous wraiths lurking everywhere, it's a nonstop fright. It's able to shift its focus frequently with no loss of tension. It begins about as harmlessly as it can, with a nice new doctor doing his first day's work at a high-security hospital ward for the criminally insane. (When you finish the book, take another look at that sentence.) This doctor's biggest challenge is having to deal with Jurek Walter, a frail old man who is this story's version of Hannibal Lecter. Even though Jurek doesn't do much, there's something about the way he blows out a cloud of moist breath and then writes "Joona" on a steamy surface that hints at vengefulness. Sure enough, he holds a grudge. Thirteen years earlier, Joona interfered with the Sandman scheme, which had Jurek spiriting away the wives and children of his enemies. They never came back, and if all went well, their husbands or fathers would be driven to suicide. These are the memories that warm Jurek's heart on lonely days. And now.... This is truly hair-raising from the first scene in the psych ward to the last. I add that Kepler is the pen name for Swedish husband and wife Ahndoril who are visiting us in March when they won't melt (unlike other Scandinavian aces who have unluckily come in summer to Phoenix).

Lescroart, John. [Poison](#) (Atria \$26.99). The 17th Dismas Hardy begins when a former client who did her time begs for his help. Abby Jarvis found a job as a bookkeeper with Grant Carver and his prestigious company. When Carver kills himself, his will specifies a huge windfall for her. Then a second autopsy reveals

that he was poisoned with aconite, and she becomes the No. 1 suspect—after all she was clearly embezzling funds from the company. Hardy feels compelled to help Jarvis, not only because he truly believes that she didn't kill Carver, but also because he can't stay away from the courtroom even though he's flirting with "retirement" after being shot during his 16th investigation. "Lescroart's characters play key roles in this marvelous mystery. In addition to Hardy playing the role of Perry Mason, police Lieutenant Abe Glitsky and private investigator Wyatt Hunt are also like their counterparts from the iconic series, with Hunt asking the tough questions from the potential suspects. The way the narrative flows also invokes key atmospheric moments paying a wonderful homage to the world created by Erle Stanley Gardner."—Jeff Ayers. In a coincidence, aconite is the poison used in a terrific 1890 Paris mystery, Gary Inbinder's [The Man Upon the Stair](#) (Pegasus \$25.95), one of my favorite books in February!

Maldonado, Isabella. [Phoenix Burning](#) (Midnight Ink \$15.99). Phoenix cop Miranda Cruz #2. "In Maldonado's breathless sequel to 2017's [Blood's Echo](#) (\$15.99), Phoenix homicide detective Veranda Cruz continues her obsessive crusade to take down the Villalobos cartel, a Mexican criminal dynasty led by its ruthless and sadistic patriarch, Hector "El Lobo" Villalobos. When the South Side Soldados, a South Phoenix gang with ties to a rival Colombian cartel, threaten to take a piece of Villalobos territory, a violent turf battle turns the city streets into a war zone. Leading a special task force with assistance from the FBI and agents brought up from Mexico, Veranda becomes the focus of media scrutiny when the cartel seems to always be one step ahead of her. Veranda wonders whether there might be a leak from within the department. Also, might Adolfo Villalobos, El Lobo's underestimated son, be trying to prove his mettle as a possible successor to his father's empire? What becomes clear is that Veranda's family history and fate are inextricably tied to the Villalobos clan, and that the secrets of her own past could destroy everything, and everyone, she holds dear. "Maldonado's a writer to watch, and she showcases her own extensive law enforcement background in this tightly plotted police procedural."—*PW* Starred Review

Margolin, Phillip. [The Third Victim](#) (St Martins \$26.99) revolves around newly hired lawyer Robin Lockwood and her mentor and boss, legendary criminal defense attorney Regina Barrister, who may be experiencing the symptoms of early-onset Alzheimer's. Lockwood is thrown into the fire when Barrister agrees to represent an affluent attorney arrested for the kidnap, torture, and murder of two young women. The third victim escaped as depicted in a harrowing scene that opens the story. All evidence points to the accused lawyer. While Barrister secretly struggles with a deteriorating memory, Lockwood finds connections between the case and a lawsuit involving a crooked cop with a penchant for abuse. Margolin has rebooted his legal thrillers with a corker of a plot idea that I admit caught me completely off guard. I love legal thrillers and look forward to more from the re-energized Portland attorney/author who sets most of his books around his home city. This was in a hot a contest with Fox, Kepler, and Rice for the most surprising books of March...of those I've read so far.

Mathews, Francine. [Death on Nantucket](#) (Soho \$24.95). Published in 2017, the 5th for Police Chief Merry Folger who on the eve of her long-postponed wedding is forced into dealing with a family drama centered on a bestselling (if long fallow) author that again, will truly surprise you. I found it amazing.

Meltzer, Brad. [The Escape Artist](#) (Grand Central \$28). Mortician Jim Zigarowski, the hero of this stellar series launch from bestseller Meltzer, works the U.S. government's most top-secret and high-profile cases at Dover Air Force base in present-day Delaware. Zig's world changes when a military plane mysteriously crashes in the Alaskan wilderness and the body of soldier Nola Brown, who as a child saved his daughter from an explosion at a Girl Scout camp, arrives on his table. As Zig prepares the body, he discovers that the scars he knows Nola sustained at camp are missing! When he finds a crumpled piece of paper in the woman's stomach (the only safe vessel for it in a plane crash), a warning for Nola, his suspicions are confirmed: this isn't Nola. Zig is determined to discover what happened to her and whether she's safe. I add that dead on the plane is the Librarian of Congress, the President's close friend, a most unlikely passenger in this place. The closer Zig gets to the truth, the more dangerous it becomes. Soon he finds himself in the middle of Operation Bluebook, a secret government program that goes back to Harry Houdini. "With its remarkable plot and complex characters, this page-turner not only entertains but also provides a fascinating glimpse into American history"—always a Meltzer strength. I'm hoping this is a series start as Zig and Nola are too good to shut down.

Parks, Brad. [Closer Than You Know](#) (Dutton \$26). Working mother Melanie Barrick's life is turned upside down after the police find a half-kilo of cocaine in her home and social services takes her three-month-old son, Alex, away from her and her husband. Melanie, who has been through a lot in her life—stints in foster care as a child and, most recently, a rape—must somehow prove her innocence or lose Alex and her freedom. As chief deputy commonwealth's attorney Amy Kaye builds a seemingly airtight case against Melanie, she also struggles to identify a serial rapist who has been victimizing women in the area for decades. A second domestic noir from the popular Parks.

Rice, Christopher. [Bone Music](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). I love this book! Brilliantly written, imaginatively conceived. Wow! The whole vibe of damaged women survivors and pain so prevalent this winter drives an unusual story with a slightly futurist note akin to the Jane Hawk thrillers by Koontz. I wanted to make this the March Surprise Me Club Pick as much as I did Fox's *Crimson Lake*. When Trina Pierce was nine months old, she was abducted by serial killers Daniel and Abigail Banning, who killed her mother. The criminally insane Bannings raised Trina as their own for seven years until they were apprehended. Trina was sent to live with her father, who exploited her by profiting from a series of horror movies based on her ordeal that untruthfully portray her as a killer. Trina eventually escaped her father and established a new identity as Charlotte Rowe—Charley. She now lives in a remote house outside Scarlet, Arizona, with massive security, fearful of stalkers. Meanwhile, her psychiatrist, keen to use her for research, tricks her into taking a drug that gives her superhuman strength. And so the pages turn powered by action and ethics...

Scott, J. Todd. [High White Sun](#) (Putnam \$26). The Starred Review: "Scott's superb sequel to 2016's [The Far Empty](#) (\$9.99—checking on HC firsts for March 21) combines multifaceted characters with edge-of-the-seat suspense. The savage bludgeoning of river guide Billy Bravo, which obliterated part of his face, leads Texas sheriff Chris Cherry's deputies—veteran Ben Harper and rookie Amé Reynosa—to confront John Wesley Earl, a leader

of a vicious prison gang, the Aryan Brotherhood of Texas. Their efforts to find proof linking the ABT to the murder are derailed by a surprising revelation from an FBI agent, making Chris's pursuit of justice even harder. The reverberations of the brutal 1999 murder of Texas Ranger Bob Ford also affect the homicide investigation. Scott excels at presenting the juxtaposition of the horrific and the mundane ("Her daddy had died on a stretch of dirty concrete ten steps from her window, and afterward cops came and got the body and took some pictures and tossed their cigarette butts on the place where he'd drawn his last breath, leaving behind only a yellow chalk outline"). Ace Atkins fans will relish this gritty crime novel." Todd is an ATF Agent working from Mesa and so we will see a lot of him.

St James, Simone. [The Broken Girls](#) (Berkley \$26). With a time jump structure moving you from 1950 to 2014 Vermont, this is a very powerful story embracing the idea of a murder victim haunting a site. Timely themes of violence toward women and abuses of power resonate throughout. It reminds me of one of Vicki Delany's best, a standalone set in Ontario. [More Than Sorrow](#) (\$15.95) too is powered by an old crime echoing in the present and scaring the pants off the characters (and the reader). So in 2014, journalist Fiona Sheridan's interest in finding out the truth about her sister's murder—which occurred 20 years earlier near Idlewild Hall, an abandoned girls' boarding school—is revived by the news that the property is being restored by a mysterious out-of-towner. Fiona's boyfriend and the police in his family, however, don't want her digging too deep. Flashback to 1950, when four roommates at Idlewild build deep friendships while dealing with the sinister presence of Mary Hand, a veiled ghost whom generations of students claim haunts the garden where her dead baby is buried. Mary is a pervasive but subtle influence who makes everyone in both eras feel "so horribly afraid." All the characters must also cope with human-produced horrors such as torture and neglect. The two story lines converge...

✽Todd, Charles. [Casualty of War](#) (Harper \$26.99). Our copies come with a wedding invitation designed to complement the story. Here's the *NY Times* review: "Inspector Ian Rutledge haunts Charles Todd's mysteries like an unhappy ghost, wandering among the living but more at home among the dead. The shell-shocked veteran of World War I is investigating a murder in Wolfpit, a village that once served as a holding pen for trapped wolves. But by the winter of 1920 the place has evolved into a comfortable cage for trapped souls, notably the wounded veterans and grieving widows who make up much of its shrunken population. The very decent detective feels obliged to bring about justice on behalf of a murder victim. Here Rutledge is honor bound to restore the good name of a young man who may not have been guilty of the homicide that, even in death, hangs over his head. And the only way to do that is to find the real killer. As always in this singular series, the mother-and-son team who write as Charles Todd position their mystery within the broader context of a nation frozen in postwar depression. Viewing the world through Rutledge's eyes, we can't help noticing that there are very few able-bodied young men left in the village. Even young women are in scant supply, many having been lured to the cities by the well-paid work offered by factories in need of laborers while the men were off on the battlefield. The melancholy tone that distinguishes the Rutledge series is a reminder that war never ends for the families and friends of lost loved ones. It just retreats into the shadows."

Vlautin, Willy. [Don't Skip Out on Me](#) (Harper \$22.99). **Our March Modern Firsts Club Pick** has earned numerous raves, not least from Patrick. Here are more: "In this powerful novel, Vlautin writes about characters whose big dreams and plans are often stunted by fate and circumstance, but who've managed to find a way to push through, bruised but with hard-won wisdom. Young Horace Hopper is half-Irish, half-Paiute Indian, and he has spent most of his life as a ranch hand. While herding sheep in the stark, isolated mountains near Tonopah, Nevada, Hopper listens to heavy metal music and struggles with the shame of being abandoned by his parents. Hopper's guardian, the aging rancher Eldon Reese, suffers crippling back pain and faces an uncertain future as his way of life becomes less and less tenable. Reese and his wife love Hopper dearly and consider him a son, but the young man soon leaves for Tucson to pursue his dream of becoming a professional boxer. Hopper, now calling himself "Hector Hidalgo," finds a washed-up trainer and manages to get some fights throughout the Southwest and Mexico. A series of injuries, however, soon threaten to derail his career before it's really off the ground. In this excellent novel, Vlautin's reverence for the land recalls writers such as Jim Harrison and John Steinbeck."—*PW* Starred Review. The UK's *Guardian* reviewer calls this, "a meditation on loneliness."

✦Winspear, Jacqueline. [To Die But Once](#) (Harper \$27.99). OK, here's but a sketch of the new Maisie Dobbs. Stay tuned for more after I read it. Spring 1940. With Britons facing what has become known as "the Bore War"—nothing much seems to have happened yet—Maisie Dobbs is asked to investigate the disappearance of a local lad, a young apprentice craftsman working on a "hush-hush" government contract. As Maisie's inquiry reveals a possible link to the London underworld, another mother is worried about a missing son—but this time the boy in question is one beloved by Maisie. More in the Easter Booknews.

MARCH BOOK BUYERS CLUB PICKS

British Crime: Wilson, Andrew. [A Different Kind of Evil](#)
Cozy Crime: O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Churchyard](#)
Discovery: Wilson, Carter. [Mister Tender's Girl](#)
First Mystery: Jacobs, Nova. [The Last Equation of Isaac Severy](#)
Hardboiled Crime: Anderson, Kent. [Green Sun](#)
History: Mangan, Christine. [Tangerine](#)
History Paperback: Wilson, Andrew. [A Different Kind of Evil](#)
Modern First Editions: Vlautin, Willy. [Don't Skip Out on Me](#)
SciFi/Fantasy: Katsu, Alma. [The Hunger](#)
Surprise Me! Fox, Candice. [Crimson Lake](#)
Thriller: Carr, Jack. [The Terminal List](#)

SIGNED BOOKS SO FAR FOR MARCH

✦Arlen, Tessa. [Death of an Unsung Hero](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Out in March, Signed May 5 at our annual Cozy Con. Clementine Talbot, the Countess of Montfort, embarks on a controversial new venture in 1916—a hospital at her family's Haversham Hall dedicated to treating soldiers who have returned from France with mental scars, overseen by her loyal servant, Mrs. Jackson. The phenomenon of shell shock is still not widely accepted, and Clementine encounters resistance from those who view the apparently fit men as cowards. When one of their charges, Capt. Sir Evelyn Bray, who received numerous accolades for his bravery under fire, is bludgeoned to death while working in the kitchen garden, suspicion quickly falls on another patient. Clementine

and Mrs. Jackson must solve the case before the other patients suffer further psychological damage as a result of the added stress. The surprising solution will reward careful readers. The way Arlen integrates the traumas of WWI into a golden age whodunit plot will please Charles Todd fans. My one quarrel with Arlen is that I think she has moved forward in time much too rapidly and thus left much pre-War material unexplored.

Cussler, Clive. [The Rising Sea](#) (Putnam \$29). On sale March 13; Signed by Cussler and with a bookmark listing the NUMA Files written with Graham Brown and with his signature. An alarming rise in the world's sea levels—much larger than could be accounted for by glacier melt—sends Kurt Austin, Joe Zavala, and the rest of the NUMA scientific team rocketing around the globe in search of answers. What they find at the bottom of the East China Sea, however, is even worse than they imagined: a diabolical plan to upset the Pacific balance of power—and in the process displace as many as a billion people. A rare alloy unlike anything else on earth, a pair of five-hundred-year-old Japanese talismans, an assassin so violent even the Yakuza has disowned him, an audacious technological breakthrough that will become a very personal nightmare for Kurt Austin—from the shark-filled waters of Asia to the high-tech streets of Tokyo to a forbidden secret island... risk all, win all.

✦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 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.

Gwin, Mimrose. [Promise](#) (Harper \$27). An Indie Next Pick. Two of our staff, John Charles and Sharon, are mad for this book which drills in to April 5, 1936, tornado that careened into the thriving mill town of Tupelo, Mississippi, leaving 200 dead. But

that didn't count the unknown number of African Americans who made up over a third of the town's population. Gwin focuses on those unreported casualties. Sharon writes, "This book felt real. I've never survived a devastating tornado, I've not lived in the south in 1936, I've never been a black washerwoman nor a white teenage girl in a segregated southern town, but I felt their lives and their thoughts and their survival experience after a natural disaster. The author told their stories in a manner that compelled me to keep reading in order to know they made it, to know what they went through, what happened to their families, to their town. The characters were vivid and alive—I was captured by them from beginning to end, and by the process of learning to know them and their stories. I also experienced a place and a time in our history while reading this book. A well written story, a thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening read ..."

Hannah, Kristin. [The Great Alone](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Already the #1 bestseller. A former Viet Nam POW comes home a volatile man, riven by PTSD (less well recognized then). After losing yet another job he impulsively moves his family to 1974 Alaska. It too is unpredictable...also unforgiving and untamed. Not the landscape where a family in crisis can deal. Will Leni, age thirteen, cope with it, her family...and survive? Hannah drops by to sign our firsts on March 12.

✎Imrie, Celia. [Sail Away](#) (Bloomsbury \$32). The phone hasn't rung for months. Suzy Marshall is discovering that work can be sluggish for an actress over sixty—even for the former star of a 1980s TV series. So when her agent offers her the plum role of Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* in Zurich, it seems like a godsend. Until, that is, the play is abruptly cancelled in suspicious circumstances, and Suzy is forced to take a job on a cruise ship to get home. Meanwhile Amanda Herbert finds herself homeless in rainy Clapham. Her flat purchase has fallen through, and her children are absorbed in their own dramas. Then she spots an advertisement for an Atlantic cruise, and realizes three weeks on-board would tide her over—and save her money—until the crisis is solved. As the two women set sail on a new adventure, neither can possibly predict the strange characters and dodgy dealings they will encounter. Contemporary humor, not crime...although maybe there is one or two.

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....

Krueger, William K. [Corpus Delicti Signed and Numbered](#) (ASAP \$28). Krueger tells me this: "When wealthy Louise Esterville goes missing during a horrible snowstorm in Minnesota's North Country, Sheriff Cork O'Connor's investigation plunges him into a deep examination of the human heart, both its darkest places and its most tender. "Corpus Delicti" was Kent's first short story to feature his iconic protagonist. It was bought for a pretty penny almost twenty years ago, but never published. The why of that remains a mystery to this day, even to Kent."

Leon, Donna. [The Temptation of Forgiveness](#) (Grove \$26 US Signed tip-ins). See April Books for the Signed UK Edition (which I collect and many of you do, too). Guido Brunetti is puzzled as to why his superior is being suspiciously pleasant, and worrying that Sra. Elettra may well be over-reaching 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.

✎Mackintosh, Clare. [Let Me Lie](#) (Sphere UK \$34). One year ago, Caroline Johnson chose to end her life brutally: a shocking suicide planned to match that of her husband just months before. Their daughter, Anna, has struggled to come to terms with their loss ever since. Now with a young baby of her own, Anna misses her mother more than ever and starts to ask questions about her parents' deaths. The police say it was suicide. Anna says it was murder. They're both wrong. And I say this one is a twister and, interestingly, inspired by an actual event. Sadly there is no one really to like except for the baby's father, Anna's therapist....

Mangan, Christine. [Tangerine](#) (Ecco \$28). The spirit of Patricia Highsmith's sociopathic social climber Tom Ripley is alive in Mangan's transportive debut. And you could add that this sharp novel reads like *Single White Female* rewritten as collaboration between Paul Bowles and Mary McCarthy Alice Shipley and Lucy Mason met as freshman at Bennington in the early 1950s and became the best of friends. Now, after a year apart, they meet again in 1956 in Tangier, where Alice and her new husband, John McAllister, have moved for his job. Alice doesn't especially enjoy living in Tangier, which is too foreign for her liking. Lucy, meanwhile, revels in the raffish individuals found in the souk. A suspected dalliance by John paves the way for Lucy to reassert her position with the emotionally fragile and easy-to-manipulate Alice. **Our March History Club** Pick takes us to a place and time we have not yet visited with the club. A note to me from the editor, a friend of Paul Bowles back in the day: "The book on my mind is Christine Mangan's beautiful and haunting debut novel, *Tangerine*. The story, set in 1956, focuses on Alice and Lucy, two college friends with a terrible secret, who are reunited in Tangier. I won't go into deep plot summary, but this book is evocative in the best ways – and, very good! How welcoming and eerie, then, to see in *Tangerine* shades of Bowles' own work as well as that of gothic masters like Patricia Highsmith and Shirley Jackson. But Christine does it with a voice all her own—she has harnessed the beauty and tumult of mid-20th century Morocco into an incredibly intimate setting. The result is a novel simmering with tension, heartbreak and suspense." And an electric portrait of Tangier. Publishes March 27 and thus will deliver I expect in April.

✎Parsons, Tony. [Girl on Fire](#) (Random UK \$32). When terrorists use a drone to bring down a plane on one of London's busiest shopping centers, it ignites a chain of events that will draw in the innocent and the guilty alike. DC Max Wolfe of West End Central

finds himself caught in the crossfire between a tech-savvy terrorist cell and a revenge-seeking, Bible-quoting murderer called Bad Moses. And when Max's ex-wife suddenly reappears to reclaim custody of his beloved daughter Scout, he finds himself fighting the greatest battle of all...

Patterson, James. [Fifty Fifty](#) (Little Brown \$28). After Detective Harriet Blue is banished from working her brother's murder case and sent to the Outback to get some space, she uncovers a plot to destroy an isolated mining village. She is certain that her brother is incapable of having committed these horrific crimes. Determined to clear his name, no matter the cost to her career, she attends Sam's hearing. The outburst she unleashes earns her reassignment—to the Outback. Will she make it out alive in time to save her brother from life in prison? Let's call it "Fifty-Fifty..." By a lucky coincidence we are able to offer copies of this February release signed at The Pen by both Patterson and Australian coauthor Candice Fox.

Patterson, James. [Red Alert: NYPD #5](#) (Little Brown \$28). On sale March 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.

Proznini, Bill. [The Bags of Tricks Affair](#) (Forge \$25.99). When calamity strikes the unsuspecting, they turn to Carpenter and Quincannon, Professional Detective Services, to recover their money and what's left of their dignity, and perhaps even to save their lives. When one such case leaves Sabina Carpenter the only witness to a murder, the family of the culprit vows to stop at nothing to keep her silent. The threat leaves former Pinkerton Agent John Quincannon deeply concerned for Sabina's safety, but there's no rest for the wicked and so the crime-solving duo must split up to tackle two separate con games, run by two villains with deadly bags of tricks at hand. And when Sabina's life is put in danger, John must rush to save her while grappling with the terrifying realization of exactly how much she means to him. 6th in this Gilded Age San Francisco series.

Rosenfelt, David. [Fade to Black](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Rosenfelt deploys one of his best cons (he really could have been a career criminal were he a guy with actual rather than literary bravado!) in New Jersey cop Doug Brock's second case after getting himself shot going off script in 2016's entertaining and crafty [Black-out](#) (\$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. Another candidate for the Surprise Me Club for sure. 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). What an amazing book in a month full of them! I read this just after reading the new series start by Chris Rice—see Event Books—and marveled. YA author Sharpe makes her adult debut with a high-

tension 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. Harley's detailed characterization, especially compared to more role-bound descriptions of the supporting characters, makes her easy to root for 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 drug-trade blood feud. A book to read alongside the terrific novel *Bone Music* by Christopher Rice reviewed in Event Books and in its way, the Event Book by Candice Fox. This may well end up being one of the April Club Picks but as it publishes in March am noting it here.

Urrea, Luis Alberto. [The House of Broken Angels](#) (LittleBrown \$27) "is an unforgettable family epic, a sweeping story that takes place over one weekend in San Diego in which a family unspools stories—legendary, mythic, and utterly entertaining—that have been passed down to them and which bring to life a vivid rendering of the Mexican-American immigrant experience in America."—Caroline Rogers, *Southern Living*. Buzz Feed calls it, "a vivid portrait of one Mexican-American family in San Diego and the complexities of immigration and heritage. The patriarch of the De La Cruz family decides to throw a huge birthday party in the last days of his life, but his mother also dies in the days leading up to the event, leading to a bittersweet celebration of both of their lives and their family's legacy." You may recall that Urrea won his Edgar for Best Short Story for a contribution to [Phoenix Noir](#) (Akashic \$15.95) edited by Patrick.

White, Randy Wayne. [Caribbean Rim](#) (Putnam \$27 – no date yet, he's traveling). I'm 40 pages in and can say that it begins with a bang with a long Author's Note that sets us up for a rollicking thriller in the Bahamas where dives for sunken treasure loom large. Doc Ford is on the heels of a middle-aged nerdy kind of professor with archaeological oversight responsibilities who has gone off the rails—and with a former graduate student who is some 20 years younger. This is a sparkier voice for White and filled, so far, with vivid images that bring the whole landscape—in part, "a vast blue schematic of salt and karst geology," roaring to life. On land too: "Overhead, in the high green fronds, parrots rioted in the tradewind heat." Obeah, Spanish coins, shipwrecks... oh, my.

Wilson, Carter. [Mister Tender's Girl](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99). Our **March Discovery Club Pick** focuses on Alice Hill, a 20-something owner of a coffee shop in Manchester, N.H., who is friendly but cautious. That's because she is also Alice Gray, the victim of an infamous attack in her native England. At the age of 14, Alice was lured and viciously stabbed by twin sisters who were "com-

manded” by Mister Tender, a character from a graphic novel. And Mister Tender was the creation of Alice’s father, who was killed on the streets of London just a few years ago. A thriller made more chilling by its true-life inspiration, the Slender Man trial. Alice is a survivor, but hanging by a thread. She’s consumed by debilitating panic attacks and struggles to maintain a relationship with her mother and brother, who are locked in a destructive reliance on each other. When Alice receives a copy of Mister Tender: Last Call in the mail, she discovers that someone is out to finish both the novel and Alice herself, once and for all. “Everything seems endlessly connected,” Alice says at one point, “yet I can’t figure a single thing out.”

BRITISH LIBRARY CRIME CLASSIC

Meredith, Anne. [Portrait of a Murderer](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.95). Yet another Starred Review for a BLCC. “Adrian Gray was born in May 1862 and met his death through violence, at the hands of one of his own children, at Christmas, 1931.” So opens this exceptional entry in the British Library Crime Classics series from Meredith (1899–1973), an undeservedly obscure author better known for the books she wrote as Anthony Gilbert. Since the fatal bludgeoning in the victim’s home in King’s Poplars was both “instantaneous and unpremeditated,” the usual suspicions of financial and other obvious motives on the part of Gray’s six children— Richard, Amy, Olivia, Isobel, Brand, and Ruth—and their families may not be relevant. Psychological depth enables Meredith to maintain engagement even after the killer’s identity is disclosed, and she effectively shifts points of view, incorporating that of the murderer in the crime’s aftermath and that of a character who may hold the key to achieving justice. Simple prose conveys personality in just a few words (‘He was a bachelor, cared for by a housekeeper whom he did not recognize when they met in the streets.’). Golden age fans will be enthralled.”

BOOKS FOR ST PATRICK’S DAY

Plus lots of novels by Maeve Binchy and Patrick Taylor; and for an American Irish experience, Rhys Bowen’s Molly Murphy mysteries. For older action adventure, some Jack Higgins; Daniel Silva’s [The Marching Season](#) with Michael Osborne; and James R. Benn’s [Evil for Evil](#) with Billy Boyle, both focused on The Troubles. You can always ask for recommendation from Patrick, our resident Celt.

Banville, John. [Time Pieces: A Dublin Memoir](#) (Knopf \$26.95). Here’s part of the review of the Booker-Prize winner’s memoir: Autobiography is inevitable, but in Banville’s case memory has always been sublimated into the pure invention of his chiseled prose. And if Banville is an unlikely memoirist, Dublin seems an even more unlikely setting. As he remarks in *Time Pieces*, Joyce’s imaginative hold on the city was so great that ‘the place was of no use to me as a backdrop for my fiction’ until the late birth of his alter ego Benjamin Black. So the appearance of this utterly delightful book, called a memoir in its title but, perhaps more accurately, a ‘quasi-memoir’ in the body of the text, is an unexpected windfall. It is not, admittedly, a memoir of the usual egocentric sort in which the author’s experiences and acquaintances are reconstituted for the reader’s consumption, introspection is indulged and old scores are settled. Banville is not in the business of holding a mirror up to his own face and seeing the fairest of them all. Rather, he allows himself to be glimpsed in a glass darkly... You could begin by first reading James Joyce, [Dubliners](#) (\$12.95).

Black, Benjamin. [Christine Falls](#) (\$17) the first of a crackerjack 1950s Dublin-based mystery series by Banville, writing as Black. Quirke is a surly pathologist living in 1950s Dublin. One night, after having a few drinks at a party, he returns to the morgue to find his brother-in-law tampering with the records on a young woman’s corpse. The next morning, when his hangover has worn off, Quirke reluctantly begins looking into the woman’s history. He discovers a plot that spans two continents, implicates the Catholic Church, and may just involve members of his own family. He is warned—first subtly, then with violence—to lay off, but Quirke is a stubborn man. As you can see if you order [the sequels](#).

Bruen, Ken. [Dublin Noir](#) (Akashic \$15.95). An anthology of stories in the Urban Noir series by a variety of first-rate authors including Bruen, Eoin Colfer, Jason Starr, Laura Lippman, Olen Steinhauer, Peter Spiegelman, Kevin Wignall, Jim Fusilli, John Rickards, Patrick J. Lambe, Charlie Stella, Ray Banks, James O. Born, Sarah Weinman, Pat Mullan, Gary Phillips, Craig McDougal, Duane Swierczynski, and Reed Farrel Coleman.

And if you never read Bruen’s first for Galway cop Jack Taylor, star with [The Guards](#) (\$16.99), still one of the most arresting series starts I recall.

Davies, David Stuart, ed. [Irish Ghost Stories](#) (Macmillan Classics \$12.95). A collection of tingling tales of poltergeists, supernatural experiences, haunted houses, death warnings and banshees Blend the wild and fevered Irish imagination with their wonderful facility for recounting a dark, compelling tale, add a dash of the supernatural, and you have a potent brew of spine-tingling tales from, among others, Sheridan Le Fanu, Bram Stoker, Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats and Rosa Mulholland.

Harrison, Cora. [A Gruesome Discovery](#) (Severn \$28.99). Ireland. 1925. Like all who seek charitable contributions, Reverend Mother Aquinas is used to being gifted some fairly dubious items. But nothing like this. On opening the evil-smelling trunk, labeled ‘old books’, the Reverend Mother is horrified to discover it contains the dead body of one of Cork’s richest merchants, wrapped in decomposing animal hides. Many had reason to loathe the hides and skins merchant: his rebellious, republican son; his frustrated, clever daughter; his neighbors; his business rivals; and those whose unbaptised babies were buried on the site of his new tanning yard. But when suspicion falls on a former lay sister from her convent, the Reverend Mother decides she must help find the real killer. Ordered Upon Request.

McCullough, David. [Wars of the Irish Kings](#) (Crown \$25.99) “moves through a time when history and storytelling were equally prized, into the age when history was as much propaganda as fact. This remarkable book tells of tribal battles, foreign invasions, Viking raids, family feuds, wars between rival Irish kingdoms, and wars of rebellion against the English. While the battles formed the legends of the land, it was the people fighting the battles—Cuchulain, Finn MacCool, Brian Boru, Robert the Bruce, Elizabeth I, and Hugh O’Donnell—who shaped the destiny and identity of the Irish nation.

McKinty, Adrian and Stuart Neville, eds. [Belfast Noir](#) (Akashic \$16.95). The choices made by editors McKinty and Neville celebrate lowlifes, convicts, hookers, private eyes, cops and reporters, and, above all, the gray city at the heart of each story. Contributors include Lee Child and Brian McGilloway.

McKinty's remarkable crime novels set in and around Belfast have won numerous awards. The latest, Sean Duffy #6, is [Police at the Station and they Don't Look Friendly](#) (\$15.95). Neville, another noir master with several under his belt, most recently wrote [So Say the Fallen](#) (\$15.95), #2 for DCI Serena Flannigan but labeled Belfast Novels #6; start the [Belfast Novels](#) with [The Ghosts of Belfast](#) (\$9.99).

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Churchyard](#) (Kensington \$25). At the start of O'Connor's captivating third Irish Village mystery, Father Kearney summons Siobhán O'Sullivan, who's about to start her first day at Kilbane Gardai Station, to St. Mary's Churchyard, where the body of a man lies in the snow. Someone fatally shot the victim, later identified as American Peter Mallon, the patriarch of the wealthy Mallon family. Fingers point to everyone involved with filming a documentary in Kilbane about the Mallons' Irish heritage. Siobhán is dismayed to discover that she must report directly to her ex-boyfriend Det. Sgt. Macdara Flannery, who's been temporarily called up from Dublin to help close the case. They forge an uneasy partnership as they question suspects and uncover a tangled web of brotherly betrayal and unresolved heartbreak. Our March Cozy Crimes Club Pick follows after [Murder in an Irish Churchyard](#) and [Murder at an Irish Wedding](#) (\$7.99 each).

OUR MARCH LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Abbott, Jeff. [Blame](#) (\$14.99). Two years ago, Jane Norton crashed her car on a lonely road, killing her friend David and leaving her with amnesia. At first, everyone was sympathetic. Then they found Jane's note: *I wish we were dead together*. So was Jane trying suicide and killed David instead? If only she could remember but amnesia won't go away and she can't defend herself. Even now Jane is filled with questions: Why were they on that road? Why was she with David? Did she really want to die? Most of all, she must find out who has just written her an anonymous message: *I know what really happened. I know what you don't remember...* but does she? This is a complex multi-narrator story of betrayals, truly a Trust No One, American style.

Gaind, Arjun. [Death at the Durbar](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95). Agatha Christie Does Delhi. The Starred Review: "George V's visit to India in 1911 provides the backdrop for Gaind's excellent sequel to 2016's [A Very Pukka Murder](#). The king has come to Delhi for the third Durbar, a celebration of empire, which revives an ancient Indian tradition of holding "an assembly of vassals and satraps... to pay homage and swear fealty to their overlord." Among those present is Maharaja Sikander Singh, who has an impressive facility for making Sherlockian deductions, which he soon has occasion to employ: the body of an almost-naked teenage girl is discovered hanging from one of the rafters of the elaborate tent constructed for the monarch's use. Since the Durbar was intended in part to discourage Russian and German ambitions toward India, the placement of the corpse suggests an effort to embarrass the empire. The victim is identified as a dancer, Zahra, whose mother's murder a much-younger Sikander was unable to solve. Golden age fans will appreciate how Sikander works his way through an array of suspects. Once again, Gaind successfully blends detection with history."

Harper, Jordan. [She Rides Shotgun](#) (\$16.99). Our June, 2017, First Mystery Club Pick, up for many awards. What a voice. This debut reminds me a bit of the darkly funny, propulsive work of

Johnny Shaw where love and loyalty lay alongside violence and a constant threat of death. It began when Nate made enemies in prison of the Aryan Steel gang which, despite its head being confined in solitary, puts out a bounty on him figuring that its members on the outside will nail him. To up the score, they murder his ex, and target his 11-year-old daughter Polly. Father and daughter go on the lam with scarcely any time to prepare or for Polly to mourn her mother. She's forced to transform from a child into a warrior, and her dad to learn to love her unconditionally. But will this be enough for them to survive the existence he's carved out for them, to evade whatever stone-cold killer(s) is coming their way propelled by Steel? *True Grit* is too soft an analogy, but you get the idea....

✠Harris, CS. [Where the Dead Lie](#) (\$16). It's London 1813. Sebastian St. Cyr, Viscount Devlin, is shocked by the torture and murder of a boy dumped on the grounds of an abandoned factory. It's the first alert to a pattern of missing children and will ask too much of his physician friend Paul who's still fighting wounds and PTSD from engaging with the French, as well as risking his own life. His tiger, is wife Hero, his child, his various relations all play their roles. And I am pleased that there is a resolution to on-going personal conflict in an otherwise dark story. [12th in an excellent series](#). The 13th publishes in April: [Why Kill the Innocent](#) (Berkeley \$26). Can't wait!

✠Horowitz, Anthony. [The Magpie Murders](#) (\$16.99). A June, 2017, #1 Indie Next Pick and earlier, one of our British Crime Club Picks, now in paperback. "Who better than the talented Anthony Horowitz to create this marvelous mystery within a mystery? Yes, we're treated to two mysteries for the price of one: One set in a peaceful village in England during the 1950s with the one and only Detective Atticus Pund taking the case, and the other set in contemporary times with a book editor who becomes an amateur sleuth. Horowitz pays tribute to the golden age of British crime with references to mysteries created by the likes of Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie. How many hidden gems can you come up with? A perfect book to read in a cushy chair with a cup of tea (hot or iced)."

Kanon, Joseph. [Defectors](#) (\$17). One of my favorite authors give us a tale of an American spy, the Cold War's most notorious defector, who gave up his country for the safety—and prison—of Moscow, but never lost his gift for betrayal. In 1961, he elects to write his memoirs and sucks in his publisher brother who'd always adored him, for a meet-up in Moscow. I don't know about you but I always speculate on what life was like after guys like Burgess and the Cambridge spies, or even leakers like Snowden, found themselves in new countries and cultures. Was it worth it, did it even make sense to them? Kanon has such a gift for putting himself inside his characters' heads, and always gets his period detail not just convincing, but right

Leon, Donna. [Earthy Remains](#) (\$16). Guido Brunetti is at headquarters one hot July day, questioning an arrogant lawyer accused of drugging a young woman he met at a party who subsequently died. When Brunetti has a heart seizure during this contentious interview, he winds up in the hospital. Prescribed complete rest, he later takes his wife's suggestion of staying at a villa on a sparsely inhabited island in the Venetian Lagoon. There he befriends Davide Casati, the villa's caretaker and a keeper of bees, some of which are mysteriously dying. Then, during a fierce storm, Davide disappears. Brunetti undertakes a search that leads

to the discovery of his friend's body and boat. Was Davide's death an accident? He had been grief stricken since his wife's death, Brunetti learns, and recently remorseful over the demise of his beloved bees. Along the way to the poignant ending, Brunetti develops insights into nature and humankind's failure to protect it, as well as the nature of guilt and its role in a man's life. Leon's own weariness with Venice as a cruise ship icon overrun with tourists and with the Italian bureaucracy has been showing for some time in her work and is reflected in Brunetti. It is underlined in her 2018 Brunetti reviewed above in Signed Books.

✠Nugent, Liz. [Unraveling Oliver](#) (\$16). Oliver Ryan has the perfect life. Elegant and seductive, he wants for nothing, sharing a lovely home with his steadfast wife, Alice, who illustrates the award-winning children's books that have brought him wealth and fame. Until one evening, after eating the dinner Alice has carefully prepared, Oliver savagely assaults her and leaves her for dead. But why? The people who know Oliver can only speculate about the reasons behind his brutal act: his empty-headed mistress Moya, vain and petulant; Veronique, the French chatelaine who tragically lost everything the summer she employed him in her vineyard; Alice's friend Barney, who has nursed an unrequited love for her since childhood; Oliver's college pal Michael, struggling with voiceless longings that have shamed him for years. What none of them understands is the dark secret that lies behind his immaculate façade. Then slowly, revelations come to light as the layers of Oliver's past are peeled away... "Think *Making a Murderer* via Patricia Highsmith: an elegant kaleidoscope novel that refines and combines multiple perspectives until its subject is brought into indelible, tragic focus." —A. J. Finn

Parks, Brad. [Say Nothing](#) (\$16). "Parks does a fantastic job conveying every parent's worst fear while also showcasing the marital conflict and mistrust that erupts in the midst of a crisis. The complications and twists build to an unexpected climax that is both perfect and gut-wrenching... Fans of Harlan Coben and Lisa Gardner will love this thriller. Don't stay silent, tell everyone." —*LJ* Starred Review. See Event Books for Parks' 2018 domestic noir.

Patrick, Renee. [Dangerous to Know](#) (\$16.99). Set in December 1938, Patrick's sassy second mystery takes the reader on an exhilarating ride through Hollywood in its heyday. Trouble may be brewing in Europe, but in Hollywood it seems to be business as usual. The biggest question in most people's minds is: who will David O. Selznick choose to star in *Gone with the Wind*? Lillian Frost, social secretary to one of the most prominent men in Los Angeles, is a friend of Paramount's premier costume designer, Edith Head. When Edith asks her to do a little favor for Marlene Dietrich, how can she refuse? Her brief is simple: find pianist Jens Lohse. The more she noses around, the more dangerous her life becomes. Real-life celebrities such as Billy Wilder, Dorothy Parker, Errol Flynn, Jack Benny, and George Burns populate this meticulously researched book, in which the most outlandish incidents are verifiably true. Lovers of old movies, fabulous gowns, and historical gossip will be enchanted. We are. Start with the first Frost/Head investigation [Design for Dying](#) (\$15.99).

Wagner, David. [Funeral in Mantova](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95). *Library Journal* writes: "Rick Montoya, an American translator living in Rome, is hired by wealthy American Angelo Rondini to be his guide and interpreter in Mantova. Angelo was born in Italy,

but his parents emigrated when he was an infant. Now, he's back for the funeral of his cousin Roberto, whom he never knew. But, Inspector Crespi has questions about the death of the well-to-do dairy farmer. Rick discovers that there are a number of people who didn't like Roberto. There were squabbles about land, fishing, and politics. As he investigates further, Rick also uncovers questions about Angelo's own history. Following *Return to Umbria*, Wagner's fifth series outing features a likable amateur sleuth who carefully analyzes other people. Rich in details of the food and culture of Italy's Lombardy region, this atmospheric mystery will be appreciated by fans of Martin Walker's French-flavored "Bruno" mysteries. Readers of Frances Mayes's *Under the Tuscan Sun* will enjoy the colorful descriptions." As will those who dove into Rhys Bowen's [The Tuscan Child](#) (\$26.95 Signed).

PW adds this: "He treats readers to just enough information about the production of parmigiano reggiano cheese and the art, architecture, and history of Mantova, as well as lovingly detailed and mouth-watering descriptions of every great meal that comes Rick's way. This is a book for armchair travelers as much as it is for mystery lovers." **Wagner will visit us September 2-3 for our RebusFest conference with Ian Rankin and many authors at the Arizona Biltmore.** At which time we are publishing revised, expanded editions of the first two Rick Montoya mysteries with more food and wine.... But you can [order all 5 now](#).

✠Wilson, Andrew. [A Different Kind of Evil](#) (Washington Square \$15.95). Agatha Christie makes a plausible amateur detective in Wilson's stellar sequel to 2017's [A Talent for Murder](#), a crafty whodunit worthy of the queen of mystery herself. January 1927 finds the famed author aboard the *SS Gelria* headed for the Canary Islands. During a walk on deck, Agatha hears a scream and arrives just in time to see passenger Gina Trevelyan climb over the ship's railings. Agatha and another passenger, Helen Hart, who's been having an affair with Gina's husband, do their best to talk Gina down, but the woman jumps to her death. The suicide devastates Agatha, whose own husband was unfaithful. John Davison, of the British intelligence services, distracts her from her emotional pain by enlisting her to investigate the murder of one of his agents, Douglas Greene, on Tenerife. Greene was bludgeoned to death, and his corpse was left in a cave, drained of blood and mummified. Wilson does a superior job of balancing surprising plot developments with a sensitive portrayal of his lead's inner life. Amazingly Wilson crafts a Christie as a modern domestic noir in the spirit of Claire Macintosh and Gillian Flynn, which is why I picked it for both our **March History Paperback** and **British Crime Club Pick** despite somewhat stiff writing.

Winslow, Don. [The Force](#) (\$16.99). No need to repeat all the raves for this great NY cop novel by Winslow! Here's one from 2017: "In addition to being the most exciting, suspenseful, Machiavellian book I have read this year, *The Force*, Don Winslow's nineteenth novel, could serve as the set text for an entire course on ethics. In its pages notions of right and wrong, justice and law, integrity and duplicity, professional duty and personal obligation are dissected, extrapolated, and rearranged in every sort of macabre permutation.... Winslow brings the same mastery of the anatomy of corruption to this book that he brought to the Mexican drug trade and our ruinous "war on drugs" in *The Power of the Dog* and *The Cartel*, his brilliant duo of narco-thrillers. Laying bare the intertwined ganglia of criminal enterprise, law en-

forcement, the justice system, and politics, he displays a deep and unsavory knowledge of how things work in NYC, from the distribution of street territory among various ethnic criminal gangs to the running of the 'Iron Pipeline,' whereby guns from southern states with negligible gun laws make their way up Interstate 95 into the arsenals of northern crime bosses and onto the streets. Finally — and, if I may say so, gloriously — he illustrates the sanitized involvement of real estate moguls, judicial officials, and the mayor's office in the whole dirty business..."

SOME NEW BOOKS FOR MARCH

✚Amis, Kingsley. [Colonel Sun](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). A republication of the first James Bond novel published after the death of Ian Fleming in 1964, this classic thriller follows James Bond on a mission to a small Aegean island to track down M's kidnappers: the malign Colonel Sun Liang-tan and his ex-Nazi commander cohort, the deadly Von Richter. Amis died in 1995.

Armstrong, Kelley. [This Fallen Prey](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Armstrong set up a community in the Canadian Yukon as an off-the-grid refuge (for profit) for people who need to disappear (the sort of place Thomas Perry's Jane Whitefield would like to have taken her clients). In Detective Casey Butler's 3rd Rockton investigation, Oliver Brady is an accused murderer the Rockton powers-that-be agreed to take in exchange for a large sum of money from a classified source. Unprepared to house a dangerous criminal, the residents scramble to build a facility to imprison him. But they're split on whether Brady is innocent and being mistreated, or a risk to others; riots, maybe even a lynching, threaten to erupt. When Brady escapes with the help of a town insider, he leaves a trail of carnage in his wake. Butler and her boss, Eric Dalton, face difficult decisions—and the perils of the wilderness—working to resolve this mess.

✚Bell, Natasha. [Exhibit Alexandra](#) (Crown \$26). 'A lot of what I'm writing almost definitely never happened. I wasn't there, obviously. I was missing.' So says Alexandra Southwood, a University of York art history lecturer who has vanished. Early on, Bell signals that her debut thriller—centering on Alexandra and Marc, her husband, who refuses to stop searching for her—isn't going to be just another missing person mystery. "But the full extent of her audacity only becomes evident toward the end of this ingenious optical illusion, which may leave some readers gasping in admiration and others angry at being played." I wasn't angry, but a more self-serving exposition of action taken by a character I have seldom read—which once again underlines the lengths authors, especially British authors where the domestic noir rage has swamped publishing, will go to stand out in a super-crowded field. So many of these plots shout "contrived."

Bohjalian, Chris. [The Flight Attendant](#) (Doubleday \$26.95). Flight attendant Cassie Bowden: a self-destructive alcoholic who favors one-night stands, a gifted liar, a petty thief. But she's also someone we can relate to: a soul damaged during childhood, terribly alone, and desperate for love... What she discovers one morning in a sumptuous Dubai hotel suite is instantly sobering—blood-soaked sheets and the dead body of the handsome American hedge fund manager she met on her flight over. Even worse for Cassie, the assassin who executed him already regrets sparing the passed-out flight attendant. "It's a killer set-up. Readers who enjoyed the imperfect heroine in Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* and the anxiety-ridden paranoia of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's

Crime and Punishment will be hooked by this murder mystery." —*Library Journal* Starred Review. Bohjalian is a well-regarded writer of literary fiction, not crime, so don't view this as a thriller.

Callow, Simon. [Being Wagner](#) (Vintage \$16). This fabulous book, dazzling and informal (in pub speak: "accessible"), delves into revolutionary musical titan Richard Wagner whose life would never fly in fiction so fantastic it is. I went to Milan for a week a few years back to attend Wagner's Ring Cycle at La Scala conducted by Daniel Barenboim and realized once again I love the music and loath the libretti (all written by RW). As you read this the entire #MeToo comes to life—Wagner took advantage of men and women equally, among the most famous being King Ludwig of Bavaria, an eventual suicide, though RW likely didn't have sex with the men. What Callow underlines is what price genius, how much can art excuse the man?... with no answers. Which is part of the present debate.

Carey, Peter. [A Long Way from Home](#) (Knopf \$26.95). The two-time Booker Prize-winning author now gives us a wildly exuberant, wily new novel that circumnavigates 1954 Australia, revealing as much about the country/continent as it does about three audacious individuals who take part in the infamous 10,000-mile race, the Redex Trial, a 10,000-mile car race through the unforgiving Australian outback. During the 1950s, Willie Bachuber, a man devoted to maps, takes part and is confronted with equally unforgiving revelations about his personal and cultural history that no map could chart. A sense of place is complicated. As Westover writes at one point, "I could have said, 'That place has a hold on me, which I may never break.'" [A Long Way from Home](#) (Faber \$42 Signed).

Castner, Brian. [Disappointment River](#) (Doubleday \$27.95). Having sailed on Crystal's 2016 Northwest Passage cruise I could not pass up a true adventure by the author of *The Long Walk* subtitled "Finding and Losing the Northwest Passage." Smart move—this is a zinger, both a travel memoir and an historical narrative by Castner who retraces the 1789 route of Alexander Mackenzie (1,124 miles by canoe) who followed the great river now bearing his name from its source at the Great Slave Lake northwest to where it empties into the Beaufort Sea. Its total drainage basin — 1.8 million km² — is the largest of any river in Canada and second only to the Mississippi-Missouri system in North America. The epic journey is marvelous to read but what riveted me is the life of Mackenzie, a Scot beyond hardy and intrepid, who never quite gave up on the idea of the trade route. He was 200 years too early. But he did end up home, and a knight.

Childs, Laura. [Plum Tea Crazy](#) (Berkley \$26). "At the start of Childs's savory 19th Tea Shop mystery, Theodosia Browning, owner of the Indigo Tea Shop in Charleston, S.C., and her debonair friend and tea sommelier, Drayton Conneley, witness the fatal fall of banker Carson Lanier from the widow's walk of a stately mansion on the night of the annual Gaslight and Galleons Parade. Theodosia is the first to arrive on the scene, where she discovers that Lanier has been shot with a bolt from a crossbow. Suspects start springing up like mushrooms after a rain shower, among them a soon-to-be ex-wife, lovers, business partners, and a cranky handyman. Of course, of equal importance to finding out who killed the banker is matching blackcurrant scones with steaming cups of custom-blended plum-flavored Ceylonese tea. Rounding out the volume are recipes, teatime tips, and a list of

tea resources, including tea websites and blogs. Childs serves dedicated cup-of-tea-and-a-cozy readers exactly what they long for.”

✎Cohen, Tammy. [They All Fall Down](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). Here is yet another riff on *Trust No One* but set inside a high-risk psychiatric unit. Hannah isn't sure how she got there—what she did—to mar her perfect life in London. And more frightening: two women have died since her admission, one of them the friend she has made. The deaths are ruled suicides—surely there isn't a serial killer picking off patients? Hannah's mother Corinne is worried sick and skeptical of Hannah's fears. But then Corinne, with no one to trust, has to start sorting out inconsistencies surrounding charismatic unit director Dr. Roberts. I came close to this for the British Crime Club as the real motive underlying much of what happens is both clever and chilling. This is Cohen's 9th novel and IMHO an uptick for her.

Copenhaver, John. [Dodging and Burning](#) (Norton \$25.95). Complex and multilayered, Copenhaver's outstanding debut combines a murder mystery with a coming-of-age tale. In 2000, Bunny Prescott, a mystery author living in Washington, D.C., receives an old crime scene photo in the mail from an anonymous source. The photo, which she recognizes, moves her to get back in touch with a person she knew long ago, Ceola Bliss. Flash back to the summer of 1945 in Royal Oak, Virginia. Jay Greenwood, a wounded soldier and avid photographer, shows Bunny, then 18, and Ceola—the 12-year-old sister of his best friend, Robbie, who died in WWII—a picture he took of a dead woman he found in the woods outside Royal Oak. When the three go look for the body, they find only a pair of bloody shoes. Jay's connecting the photo to a missing woman in a nearby town raises more questions that Jay is hesitant to answer. Copenhaver's darkly lyrical exploration into the consequences of war—and prejudice—in small-town America will resonate with readers long after the last page is turned

Dovalpage, Teresa. [Death Comes in Through the Kitchen](#) (Soho \$25.95). A debut set in Cuba and chock full of recipes, food, betrayals, murder.... Great reviews. It publishes in late March so more on this in the Easter Booknews. And Dovalpage will be attending our September 2-3 Conference at the Arizona Biltmore.

Downie, Ruth. [Memento Mori](#) (Bloomsbury \$28 with **SIGNED BOOKPLATE**). Ruso and Tila have happily left Rome and are back in *Aquae Sulis* (modern day Bath, Peter Lovesey territory and one of Britain's most atmospheric Roman sites). The Imperial builders created a splendid health spa around a natural hot spring that was already sacred to the locals. It is here, in this popular spa town that the wife of Ruso's best friend, Valens, is found dead in the village's sacred—and possibly cursed—waters. Tragedy—made the more so when Valens is the primo suspect. Naturally medicus Ruso and his bride can't accept that. “Downie's exploration of the rising political tension between the British and the Romans deliciously wades through their petty squabbles and a collection of blood-curdling curses. Will Ruso and Tilla be able to help their friend avoid execution? Or, is he as guilty as charged? Lovers of historical mysteries will thrill to the unfolding mystery in this the 8th in Downie's excellent *Medicus* series.” I'm a fan from the first. And all Lindsey Davis readers should dip into Downie's series, as well as those who like Rosemary Rowe's *Britannia*-set mysteries in nearby Gloucester.

Emezi, Akwaaka. [Freshwater](#) (Grove \$24). There is a Nigerian boom in fiction. Here is the Indie Next Discovery (Debut) Pick: “A full and arresting examination of the search for a sense of belonging to one's self, *Freshwater* reads like the result of a successful dinner party hosted by Chimamanda Adichie, with a guest list featuring Octavia Butler, Neil Gaiman, Salman Rushdie, Helen Oyeyemi, and several preeminent cultural and sociological scholars. *Freshwater* follows Ada, a child born with ‘a foot on the other side,’ through her early life in Nigeria and her emigration to America, where she is trailed by many forces from the lands she left behind. It gives us new vocabulary and territories for exploring the awkwardness of intersections that we encounter—gender, culture, tradition, history, personal mythology—and how one might go about locating herself in the pull of so many competing influences.” The author's skill in depicting mental illness is remarkable.

✎Feeney, Alice. [Sometimes I Lie](#) (Flatiron \$26.99). Amber wakes up in a hospital. She can't move. She can't speak. She can't open her eyes. She can hear everyone around her, but they have no idea she can. Amber doesn't remember what happened, but she has a suspicion her husband had something to do with it. Alternating between her paralyzed present, the week before her accident, and a series of childhood diaries from twenty years ago, the central question is: Is something really a lie if you believe it's the truth? Interestingly a book I ordered from the UK (no US edition being listed) is more or less the same story but with a man in the hospital bed, a man with locked-in syndrome. The unreliable or incapacitated narrator is yet another wrinkle in this *Trust No One* genre.

✎George, Elizabeth. [The Punishment She Deserves](#) (Viking \$27.99). Wow. I remember when [A Great Deliverance](#) (\$16) published; it was one of our bestsellers when I opened *The Pen* in 1989. George visited us with her second or third mystery. And here we are with the 20th for Inspector Lynley. The cozy, bucolic town of Ludlow is stunned when one of its most revered and respected citizens—Ian Druitt, the local deacon—is accused of a serious crime. Then, while in police custody, Ian is found dead. Did he kill himself? Or was he murdered? When Barbara Havers is sent to Ludlow to investigate the chain of events that led to Ian's death, all the evidence points to suicide. But Barbara can't shake the feeling that she's missing something. She decides to take a closer look at the seemingly ordinary inhabitants of Ludlow and soon she and DI Thomas Lynley are forced to confront the past as they try to solve a crime that threatens to tear apart the very fabric of a quiet, historic medieval town in England. I love Ludlow with its pastoral air, its medieval bulls market, and its ruined castle where I watched a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* on its crumbling walls. At 690 pages, this is a generous read.

Giordano, Mario. [Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions](#) (Houghton \$24). The start of a series appears to be a Sicilian amateur sleuth cozy, and indeed it is intended to be such, but it illustrates how difficult it is to make a successful cultural transfer. Giordano, son of Italian immigrants to Munich, sets his story in the island's marvelous landscape, but his sensibility is German, not Italian. It begins, “On her sixtieth birthday my Auntie Poldi moved to Sicily, intending to drink herself comfortably to death with a sea view.” Poldina, the Bavarian widow of an Italian tailor descended from immigrants to 1920s Munich, was herself a costume designer. She's still stylish but has put on weight, is giving in to depression, and has sold her house in Augsburg to finance

her remaining life in Sicily. Family there wants her to move in with them at Catania, but Poldi instead buys a ruin to renovate in Torre Archirafi. Presto, her young handyman goes missing and is found murdered. An investigation ensues entangled with a “smoldering” police inspector, a missing statue (the lion), and the constant distraction of the island’s glorious cuisine. The narrator is Poldi’s nephew, an aspiring writer delegated by the German family to keep an eye on her.

✎Hollinghurst, Alan. [The Sparsholt Affair](#) (Knopf \$28.99). From the winner of the Man Booker Prize, a masterly novel that spans seven transformative decades as it plumbs the complex relationships of a remarkable family; an immediate best seller upon its publication in England, hailed by the *Observer* as “perhaps Hollinghurst’s most beautiful novel yet.” In 1940, David Sparsholt arrives at Oxford, his sights set on joining the Royal Air Force. Handsome, athletic, charismatic, he is unaware of his powerful effect on others—especially on Evert Dax, the lonely and romantic son of a celebrated novelist who is destined to become a writer himself. With the world at war, and the Blitz raging in London, Oxford exists at a strange remove: a place of quiet study, but also of secret liaisons under the cover of blackouts. A friendship develops between David and Evert that will influence their lives for decades to come. “Superlatives are made to describe this extraordinary work of fiction. The world of art and literature and the evolving world of gay society and culture in Britain [are] brilliantly realized. Hollinghurst is especially good at evoking yearning, and, indeed, his novel will inarguably leave his readers yearning for more.” —*Booklist* Starred Review. [The Sparsholt Affair](#) (\$46 Signed UK edition –2 remain).

✎Huber, Anna. [A Brush with Shadows](#) (Penguin \$16). In the 6th entry in an atmospheric pre-Victorian series, Lady Kiera Darby journeys back to her husband’s past – both literally and metaphorically – to solve a mystery swirling around his childhood home. It’s July, 1831. Having solved a difficult case in Ireland, Sebastian Gage and Kiera, who having married a man of higher rank keeps his name and title even though she’d prefer to be Mrs. Gage, rush to Dartmoor on a summons from Sebastian’s elderly and sick grandfather. Sebastian hasn’t returned to Langstone Manor in fifteen years because of haunting memories from his difficult youth after his mother’s death. Cousin Alfred, the heir, has vanished from the moors, which he knew intimately, and has been missing for days. His younger brother Rory dismisses it as typical of Alfred’s feckless ways. The household more or less agrees. But then.... It’s always fun to read about Dartmoor from Doyle’s *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to Daphne DuMaurier’s *Jamaica Inn* to Laurie R. King’s *The Moor*. Huber immerses you in the landscape. I hope the numerous language gaffes in the ARC are corrected (sigh). And it’s great fun when one of mystery’s best known tropes proves to be true.

James, Miranda. [Claws for Concern](#) (Berkley \$26). Charlie Harris may be a proud new grandfather, but he and Diesel still have work to do at Athena College and the small Mississippi town’s public library. He’s too busy to deal with true-crime writer Jack Pemberton, who wants Charlie as the subject of his latest book—and who won’t take no for an answer. Charlie is in fact busy enjoying his new grandson when a mysterious man with a connection to Charlie’s family starts visiting the library, bringing with him troubling questions about an unsolved murder... 9th in the Cat in the Stacks Mysteries.

✎Kent, Christobel. [The Day She Disappeared](#) (Farrar \$27). The *NY Times* reviews: The marshland setting of Christobel Kent’s psychological thriller holds a “particular magic” for an old man named Victor, who appreciates the desolate beauty of this bleak spot “where the sea turned into a river.” Victor’s less enchanted neighbors are more likely to turn their backs on the view and crowd into a pub like the Bird in Hand, where the mood is cheery and the barmaids, Nat and Beth, are pretty and friendly. But when Beth fails to show up for work, Nat is the only one who cares enough to look for her. Kent doesn’t play games with the whodunit plotting, and the novel’s water imagery is properly eerie. But her higher aim is to expose the blunt social prejudice against attractive young women like Nat and Beth. ‘Good riddance, I say,’ one old biddy curses the missing barmaid. ‘They need to learn, women like that,’ she adds. With neighbors like this, who needs a serial killer?’ I quote this review to underline that we, or rather I, Barbara, do not always agree with even a prestigious critic. I disliked this book, finding no one but Victor in it to care about and he wasn’t enough to carry me through a depressing and tawdry story where one of the “attractive” women boasts she left school at 16 as she had nothing to learn there. Clearly, considering how she leads her life to an inevitable sad end. At least this book isn’t title “The Day the Girl Disappeared.”

✎McAlpine, Gordon. [Holmes Entangled](#) (Seventh Street \$13.95). Readers curious about an elderly Sherlock Holmes who was never a Victorian gentleman may enjoy this offbeat pastiche from Edgar-finalist McAlpine—[Woman with a Blue Pencil](#) (\$13.95). In 1943, Jorge Luis Borges hires an unnamed PI in Buenos Aires to read what purports to be an unpublished memoir in Holmes’s own hand entitled *Uncertainty*. In the manuscript, dated 1928, Holmes claims that Dr. Watson has misled the public about his retirement, saying he has spent five years “disguised as a variety of visiting lecturers at Oxford and Cambridge Universities.” Holmes is dumbfounded when Arthur Conan Doyle appears at Cambridge and is able to identify him even though he’s disguised as classical physicist Heinrich von Schimmel. The author was told where to find Holmes by the spirit of Stanley Baldwin at a séance, despite Baldwin’s being alive and serving as prime minister. Even weirder twists follow in a novel that explores the idea of parallel universes and the nature of existence. Do not expect a Holmes pastiche; this is metafiction.

McCammon, Robert. [The Listener](#) (Cemetery \$25) is inspired by the tragic epidemic of kidnapping during the desperate years of the Great Depression. One took place in 1934 New Orleans. McCammon says, “This is a book I’ve been wanting to write for several years. It got to be so bad that the *New York Times* began running a box at the top of the front page listing who had been kidnapped, and among those victims, which ones had been returned to their families. Desperate times, indeed. *The Listener* isn’t exactly supernatural, though there is a ‘strange’ element.

✎McDermid, Val. [Report for Murder and Common Murder](#) (\$17). Val drew on her early career as a journalist in starting her life in crime. Now republished in a combined volume, Lindsay Gordon #1 and #2. In *Report for Murder*, freelance journalist Lindsay is strapped for cash. Why else would she agree to cover a fund-raising gala at a girls’ public school? But when the star attraction is found garroted with her own cello string instants before she is due on stage, Lindsay finds herself investigating a vicious murder. In Lindsay Gordon #2, *Common Murder*, when her former lover

is accused of murder in a women's peace camp, Lindsay must bring all of her expertise as an investigative reporter into play. Order the companion volumes: [Final Edition and Union Jack](#) (\$17), Lindsay Gordon #3 and #4; and

[Booked for Murder and Hostage to Murder](#) (\$17), #5 and 6.

More good news: Val's wonderful Kate Brannigan mysteries, set in Manchester, the books she was writing when we first became friends back in the day, are coming back with republication in July. I will keep you posted.

O'Farrell, Maggie. [I Am, I Am: 17 Brushes with Death](#) (Knopf \$25.99). In a collection of striking essays, novelist Maggie O'Farrell describes the too-close encounters with death she and her loved ones have experienced. Inspired by her daughter's severe case of anaphylaxis, the Costa Novel Award-winning author explores her "Seventeen Brushes with Death" in forms that range from her childhood encephalitis to a chance meeting with an apparent serial killer! O'Farrell, a British bestseller, has written much excellent women's fiction.

Oliveira, Robin. [Winter Sisters](#) (Viking \$27). "When people speak of Albany, they usually mention the daunting weather. And there's a lot of weather in this stunning mystery is set back in 1879, when New York's capital city is hit by a blizzard that buries the parents of 10-year-old Emma and 7-year-old Claire and hurls the girls into the streets. Dr. Mary Stipp, who ministers to prostitutes, makes it her mission to find the missing girls. But evil men get to them first, and it takes another violent act of nature — a raging flood — to flush them out of their basement prison. Rescuing Emma from rapists is even more of a challenge because the age of consent in this not-so-enlightened era is 10. Oliveira writes with feeling about social issues like abortion and prostitution, and her grasp of causes like women's suffrage is firm. Like many others, Dr. Stipp has found that the freedoms she enjoyed during the Civil War quickly vanished in its aftermath. 'Therein lay the advantage of wartime,' she notes. 'Men were too busy killing one another to take heed of women's activities.'" —*NY Times Book Review*

Parks, Alan. [Bloody January](#) (Ecco/World Noir \$17). An exciting, evocative first-in-series noir novel set in 1973 Glasgow, a city on the cusp of a heroin epidemic, featuring detective Harry McCoy. When an 18-year-old boy shoots a young woman dead in the middle of a busy Glasgow street and then commits suicide, McCoy knows it can't be a random act of violence. With a newbie partner in tow, McCoy uses his underworld network to build a picture of a secret society run by Glasgow's wealthiest family, the Dunlops. Drugs, sex, incest; every nefarious predilection is catered to, at the expense of the lower echelon of society, an underclass that includes McCoy's best friend from reformatory school — drug-Tsar Stevie Cooper — and his on-off girlfriend, a prostitute, Janey. But with McCoy's boss calling off the hounds, and his boss' boss unleashing their own, the Dunlops are apparently untouchable. McCoy has other ideas. For fans of McIlvanney's Laidlaw books, early Denise Mina, Ian Rankin....

✚Robotham, Michael. [The Secrets She Keeps](#) (\$17). Robotham is a marvelous stylist as his many awards attest. Here he writes a one-off suspense story, alternating the voices of Agatha and Meghan as their pregnancies progress, wildly different personalities/lifestyles are stressed, and suppressed secrets emerge. This is an excellent example of the Unreliable Narrator and showcases

Robotham's skills at portraying obsession linked to surprises as shown in his Gold-Dagger-winning Joseph O'Laughlin series.

Rotella, Sebastian. [Rip Crew](#) (Mulholland \$27). Leo Méndez, the former chief of the Diogenes Group police unit in Tijuana, Mexico, is now a journalist living in San Diego, Calif., in Rotella's strong third series thriller (after 2014's *The Convert's Song*). When Méndez's old boss in Mexico asks for his help exposing the Blake Acquisitions Group, a U.S. firm that's apparently in cahoots with Mexican narcopoliticians, he agrees to do so. Meanwhile, Méndez's old PI friend, Valentine Pescatore, wants Méndez's help investigating the murders of 10 women shot execution-style in a Tecate motel. The horrific crime is assumed to have been perpetrated by an unknown "rip crew," a gang that specializes in ripping off drug smugglers. Méndez and Pescatore's investigations merge, and both men fight off several assassination attempts. "Rotella is as good at setting up action scenes as he is at springing them (which is saying something: the shootouts are terrific). The crisp dialogue feeds the sculpted plot and vice versa. There is nary a wasted moment in the book or one in which Rotella isn't in complete command. The entertaining combo of Pescatore and Méndez is icing on the cake. Rotella's latest is a tense, gritty thriller—perfectly seedy when it needs to be and near-perfect in its overall execution." —*Kirkus Reviews*

Sager, Riley. [Final Girls](#) (\$16). The "final girl" is a trope familiar to film scholars and horror-movie fans. "She's the young woman who makes it out of the slasher flick alive, the one who lives to tell the tale. After she survives a mass murder, the media tries to make Quincy into a final girl, but she refuses to play that part. Instead, she finishes college, finds a great boyfriend, and builds a comfortable life for herself on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She's managed to bury her trauma under a mountain of Pinterest-ready sweets—she runs a successful baking blog—and psychological repression. Then another final girl, a woman who's tried to be a mentor to Quincy, dies of an apparent suicide. The suspense ratchets up with a mysterious murder, violent late-night escapades in Central Park, and the appearance of multiple suspects in past and present crimes "Sager" is a pseudonym I haven't yet cracked.

Salvatore, R.A. [Child of a Mad God](#) (Tor (\$25.99)). When Aoleyn loses her parents, she is left to fend for herself among a tribe of vicious barbarians. Bound by rigid traditions, she dreams of escaping to the world beyond her mountain home. The only hope for achieving the kind of freedom she searches for is to learn how to wield the mysterious power used by the tribe's coven known as the Song of Usgar. Aoleyn may be the strongest witch to have ever lived, but magic comes at price.... There is some chance that Salvatore may attend our May 23 Eleventheden SciFi bash. Check our website calendar from time to time for more info.

Sanders, Ben. [The Stakes](#) (St Martins \$25.99). Rip-offs are a dangerous game, but heist man Miles Keller thinks he's found a good strategy: rob rich New York criminals and then retire early, before word's out about his true identity. New town, new name, no worries. Retirement can't come soon enough, though. The NYPD is investigating him for the shooting of a hitman named Jack Deen, who was targeting Lucy Gates—a former police informant and Miles's ex-lover. Miles thinks shooting hitmen counts as altruism, but in any case a murder charge would make life difficult. He's ready to go to ground, but then Nina Stone

reappears in his life. Nina is a fellow heist professional and the estranged wife of LA crime boss Charles Stone. Complicating matters is the fact that the gun thug in question is Bobby Deen, cousin of the dead Jack Deen—and Bobby wants vengeance. The stakes couldn't be higher, but Nina has an offer hard to refuse.... Interestingly, Sanders is a New Zealander who has chosen to write American crime fiction.

Sigurdardottir, Yrsa. [The Legacy](#) (St Martins \$25.99). The Icelandic author begins a new series featuring the psychologist Freyja and the police officer Huldar. The only person who might have the answers to a baffling murder case is the victim's seven-year-old daughter, found hiding in the room where her mother died. And she's not talking. Newly-promoted, out of his depth, detective Huldar turns to Freyja for her expertise with traumatized young people. Freyja, who distrusts the police in general and Huldar in particular, isn't best pleased. But she's determined to keep little Margret safe. It may prove tricky. The killer is leaving them strange clues in a code they may not be able to crack....

Spillane, Mickey. [The Last Stand](#) (Titan \$22.99). Max Allan Collins has devoted decades of his life to Spillane. When Spillane died in 2006 he left behind the manuscript of a final novel and Collins now presents it on Spillane's 100th birthday and adds a novella from 50 years back. "Collins, the frequent collaborator of Spillane's later years, notes the bedrock importance of revenge to the author's most characteristic work. That's an acute observation about 'A Bullet for Satisfaction,' presumably written in the early 1950s, in which Homicide Capt. Rod Dexter, kicked off both the investigation into political kingpin Mayes Rogers' murder and the Gantsville police force when he accuses District Attorney Frank Graham of being a rotten apple, goes into Mike Hammer mode, cleansing Gantsville by summary violence. But it's much less true of *The Last Stand*, a far less action-driven and even (gasp!) meditative tale in which pilot Joe Gillian, stranded in God's country when his ancient airplane conks out, bonds with Sequoia Pete and his Native American community over an arrowhead Joe's found that seems to be a source of limitless energy..." — *Kirkus Reviews*

Sullivan, Matthew. [Midnight at the Bright Ideas Bookstore](#) (\$17). Lydia Smith lives her life hiding in plain sight. A clerk at the Bright Ideas bookstore, she keeps a meticulously crafted existence among her beloved books, eccentric colleagues, and the BookFrogs—the lost and lonely regulars who spend every day marauding the store's overwhelmed shelves. But when Joey Molina, a young, beguiling BookFrog, kills himself in the bookstore's upper room, Lydia's life comes unglued. Always Joey's favorite bookseller, Lydia has been bequeathed his meager worldly possessions. Trinkets and books; the detritus of a lonely, uncared for man. But when Lydia flips through his books she finds them defaced in ways both disturbing and inexplicable.... That's the set up. But don't expect this to be a cozy or romantic bibliomystery. Joey's story is dark and tragic and had no happy ending. I felt like committing murder myself.

☞Thompson, Laura. [Agatha Christie: A Mysterious Life](#) (Pegasus \$35). I put this in in part because it relates to Andrew Wilson's March British Crime Club Pick reviewed in Our March Large Paperback Picks. Biographer Thompson, running on emotion as much as facts, some of which she can't ascertain, delves into Christie's personal history, "painting a charming picture of her

subject's childhood and young adult years." A lifelong observer of people's quirks and character traits, she was "more astute in her art than in her life," Thompson says. She points to Christie's convoluted relationships with her first husband, Archie, and her daughter, Rosalind—contrasting them with Poirot's cool detachment and Miss Marple's keen insight into human nature. Thompson also makes much of the six novels Christie wrote under the pen name Mary Westmacott, especially *Unfinished Portrait*, which draws heavily on her life experiences. Fans have long been intrigued by Christie's 11-day disappearance in 1926, when her first marriage was on the rocks and her health (physical and mental) was in question. Thompson narrates this episode from Christie's perspective, so that the interlude takes on a dreamlike quality. The book picks up speed after that, focusing on her career as a novelist and playwright, and her seemingly infinite ability to conceive brilliant mystery plots. Thompson praises her "supremely deceptive simplicity" as a writer and the sparkling clarity of her books. Later Thompson focuses on Christie's second marriage, to the archeologist Max Mallowan, and the increasing difficulty of being Agatha Christie the woman (and writer) while managing Agatha Christie the commodity and public figure. "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.

Welsh, Kaite. [The Wages of Sin](#) (\$15.95). "What better setting for a Gothic murder mystery than 19th-century Edinburgh? Especially with resurrection men plundering the cemeteries and lady 'undergradettes' permitted to dissect cadavers at the university's famed medical school. Kaite Welsh relishes these surroundings in her pungent first book..." —*NY Times Book Review*. Sarah Gilchrist has fled London and a troubled past to join the University of Edinburgh's medical school in 1892, the first year it admits women. She is determined to become a doctor despite the misgivings of her family and society, but Sarah quickly finds plenty of barriers at school itself: professors who refuse to teach their new pupils, male students determined to force out their female counterparts, and—perhaps worst of all—her female peers who will do anything to avoid being associated with a fallen woman. Desperate for a proper education, Sarah turns to one of the city's ramshackle charitable hospitals for additional training. The St Giles' Infirmary for Women ministers to the downtrodden and drunk, the thieves and whores with nowhere else to go. One of them, Sara's patient Lucy, goes to the university dissecting room where an appalled Sara recognizes her....

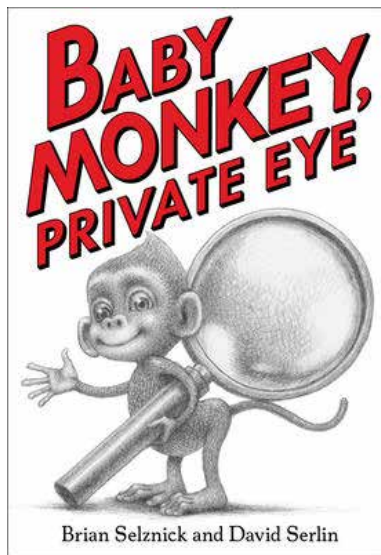
Wendig, Chuck. [The Raptor and the Wren](#) (Saga/SimonSchuster \$27.95). Wendig is a favorite author of our SciFi guru Pat King. In the fifth book of the "wildly entertaining" Miriam Black series, Miriam continues her journey to find answers on how to change her fate and begin to make right some of what she's done wrong.

Wilson, Sam. [Zodiac](#) (\$15.95). South African Wilson sets his debut in the corrupt African dystopia of San Celeste, in which people are segregated not by race or religion but by their zodiac sign. Capricorns sit at the top of society, while Aries are considered the violent underclass. A child born on an undesirable birthday causes the family's status to plummet. Detective Jerome Burton of the SCPD and astrological profiler Lindiwe Childs reluctantly team to investigate a series of murders of people with

different signs. Are the murders the start of a revolution or a serial killer at work? Meanwhile, Daniel Lapton, the scion of a family owning an international chain of hotels uses his wealth and power to search for the daughter he learned about only after his father's death. Something different with a challenging time line.

ONE FOR YOUNG READERS

Selznick, Brian. [Baby Monkey: Private Eye](#) (Scholastic \$16.99). Using a pared-down vocabulary and luxuriant, chiaroscuro drawings, Selznick and artist David Serlin make it work—brilliantly.



Four oddball robbery victims show up at Baby Monkey's Sam Spade-worthy office, including a chef whose pizza has gone missing and a clown who has had his red nose stolen. Baby Monkey's basic MO is always the same: look for clues, take notes, eat a snack, put on pants, and solve the crime (generally by looking right outside his office door). The tight, repeating structure gives Selznick plenty of opportunity to riff on the details: in each chapter, Baby Monkey has a different (and triumphant) wrestling match with

his pants, and the furnishings of his office change to match the profession of each client (for those who can't guess these Easter eggs, a key and index are included). "Hooray for Baby Monkey!" are the last words of this endearingly funny graphic novel/picture book/early reader—it's a sentiment that readers of all ages will wholeheartedly affirm. Ages 4–8.

A TRIO FOR TEENS

Guterson, Ben. [Winterhouse](#) (Holt \$16.99). This urban fantasy set in a hotel full of secrets for Middle Grade Readers gets an Indie Next Pick: "Do you like curling up with a cup of cocoa and a puzzle on a snowy day? Warm and captivating, this story of a brainy orphan and a mysterious hotel is full of delightful word games, a deliciously wintery setting, and appealingly odd characters. A trip to an enchanting hotel full of secrets sends our hero, Elizabeth, on an unexpected journey to find out who she really is. Heartfelt and magical, this is a must-read for fans of *Book Scavenger* or the *Mr. Lemoncello's Library* series. It's the perfect book to be snowed in with!" Illustrated by Chloe Bristol.

Holland, Sara. [Everless](#) (HarperTeen \$17.99). "Welcome to the kingdom of Sempera, a world where you can sell your blood and your time, where the rich stay young and the poor die young. Desperate to save her father, Jules returns to the one place where she is most in danger: Everless, home of the Gerlings, where Jules and her father were once servants. Holland has created complex characters and powerful women and done some impressive world-building, and each mystery that unfolds only increases the danger for Jules. As Jules discovers the truth behind the lies on which her past is built, she begins to see the world around her in a new light. A thrilling start to a new series!" Ages 13+

OUR MARCH SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Albert, Susan W. [Last Chance Olive Ranch](#) (\$7.99). China Bayles #25. When a killer McQuaid put away years ago escapes from prison and heads toward Pecan Springs, China is sent away against her will to the Last Chance Olive Ranch, whose new owner is facing an increasingly violent estate challenge. *PW* called the latest China Bayles "absorbing" and concluded with "the lore and tips about olive oil production and use lend interest, and the book closes with an enticing collection of recipes."

Child, Lincoln. [Full Wolf Moon](#) (\$9.99). Traveling to an isolated writers' retreat deep in the Adirondacks, Jeremy Logan, an investigator who specializes in unexplained phenomena, discovers a dead hiker whose wounds suggest an unnatural attack before encountering numerous suspects and a woman scientist struggling with the death of her father. *Kirkus* ended its review with "mixing timeless legends of lycanthropy into a Jekyll-and-Hyde dynamic won't be everyone's cup of tea, but there's enough reading fun to while away an afternoon."

Coel, Margaret. [Winter's Child](#) (\$7.99). O'Malley and Holden #20. Investigating the death of a lawyer hired by a Native American couple to help them adopt an abandoned child, Vicky and Father John unravel a connection between the child, the lawyer's death, a missing Arapaho, and a Wind River secret. *PW* had this to say "This is an excellent entry point for new readers, many of whom will be moved to seek out earlier books in the series."

Connelly, Michael. [The Wrong Side of Goodbye](#) (\$9.99). Harry Bosch #21. California's newest private investigator, Harry Bosch, searches for a reclusive billionaire's possible heir, a case with odd links to his own past, and volunteers to find a serial rapist for a small cash-strapped police department. *Kirkus* concluded with "the dark forces arrayed against the hero turn out to be disappointingly toothless, but everything else clicks in this latest chapter of a compulsively good cop's odyssey through the City of Angels.

Grisham, John. [Camino Island](#) (\$9.99). After being laid off from her teaching position, Mercer Mann is approached by a mysterious woman with a generous offer to go undercover and infiltrate bookstore owner Bruce Cable's life to learn his secrets. Here is *Kirkus* again "How all these threads join up is a pleasure for Grisham fans to behold; there's nothing particularly surprising about it, but he is a skillful spinner of mayhem and payback.

Hamilton, Glen. [Every Day Above Ground](#) (\$9.99). Searching for a fortune in hidden gold revealed to him by a terminally ill ex-con, Van Shaw is compelled to rescue the man's innocent daughter from a mysterious predator with ties to an illegal bare-knuckle fighting ring and darker underworld operations. *PW* loved this saying "the suspenseful, fast-moving plot is a good match for the empathetic, nuanced lead.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Village](#) (\$7.99). Siobhán O'Sullivan and her five siblings have a lot on their plate already so the last thing they need is for a body to turn up at their bistro in the small village of Kilbane, County Cork. *LJ* gave high marks to "this entertaining combination of Maeve Binchy's old-world Irish charm and Janet Evanovich's roguish humor.

Scottoline, Lisa. [Betrayed](#) (\$9.99). Judy Carrier struggles with torn feelings about her friend Mary DiNunzio's happiness, as

well as racing to the side of her cancer-stricken aunt, whose close friend, an undocumented worker at a local farm, has died under suspicious circumstances. *Kirkus* gave Scottoline's latest a mixed review but it did conclude with "exemplary first and second acts are enough to make this the most successful melding to date of Rosato & DiNunzio's cases and Scottoline's family-centered stand-alones."

NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Connelly, Michael. [Angels' Flight](#) (\$9.99). Harry Bosch #6. An activist attorney is killed in a cute little L.A. trolley called Angels Flight, far from Harry Bosch's Hollywood turf. But the case is so explosive—and the dead man's enemies inside the L.A.P.D. are so numerous—that it falls to Harry to solve it. Now the streets are superheating. Harry's year-old Vegas marriage is unraveling. And the hunt for a killer is leading Harry to another high-profile L.A. murder case, one where every cop had a motive. The question is, did any have the guts?

Coyle, Cleo. [Dead Cold Brew](#) (\$7.99). Coffeehouse Mysteries #16. A happy engagement between Clare and her NYPD detective boyfriend is hampered by a mysterious inheritance, the poisoning of their ring designer and a cold case involving a sunken ship, an Italian curse, a charming jewel thief and a shocking family secret.

Hagberg, David. [Tower Down](#) (\$9.99). When a freelance killer begins blowing up Manhattan's pencil towers, killing innumerable people, CIA legend Kirk McGarvey investigates suspicions that a high-ranking Saudi Arabian government official is behind the attacks.

Haines, Carolyn. [Sticks and Bones](#) (\$7.99) Southern Belle #17. Clashing with an arrogant local writer whose best-selling memoir is being turned into a documentary, private investigator Sarah Booth Delaney is hired by the film crew to discern the truth about the writer's story only to find herself targeted by someone who would kill to protect a long-held secret.

Hooper, Kay. [Wait for Dark](#) (Berkley \$9.99) FBI Special Crimes #17 Investigating a string of accidents in a North Carolina city, Hollis; her telepath partner, Reese; and their Special Crimes Unit team uncover the work of an evil, methodical killer.

Lane, Kelly. [Dipped to Death](#) (Berkley \$7.99). When her ex-boyfriend, Dudley Dexter Codman the Third, arrives in town, only to be found drowned in a pond several days later, Eva Knox starts fishing for answers after it is discovered that he was poisoned by her family's olive oils..

Lester, Kent. [Seventh Sun](#) (Tor \$8.99). A scientist investigates an outbreak of a primordial organism that is wreaking havoc off the coast of Honduras, threatening aquatic life and potentially triggering a worldwide outbreak that could result in human extinction and which may have been released by a multi-national conglomerate.

Mofina, Rick. [Last Seen](#) (Mira \$9.99). When their 9-year-old son, Gage, disappears at a local carnival, reporter Cal Hudson and his wife, Faith, as they frantically search for Gage, find just as much suspicion cast on them as any ill-meaning stranger when dark secrets are revealed and the line between love and violence is crossed.

White, Randy Wayne. [Heat Islands](#) (\$9.99) Reissue of Doc Ford #3. Marine biologist Doc Ford finds his quiet life in his Sanibel Island stilt house interrupted by the murder of Marvin Rios, the island's most disliked resident.

Wiken, Linda. [Marinating in Murder](#) (Berkley \$7.99) Dinner Club #3. When Culinary Capers Dinner Club member and police officer Alison Malkovich is accused of murdering her ex-husband, J.J. and the Culinary Capers gang step in to help her prove her innocence and serve up the real killer.