

# BOOKNEWS from

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## AUGUST 17 IS THE FIRST ANNUAL BOOKSTORE ROMANCE DAY!

**AUTHORS ARE SIGNING...**

*Some Events will be webcast on Facebook Live*

Check out our new [YouTube Channel](#)

### WEDNESDAY AUGUST 7 6:30 PM

**The Transfixed Correspondence** (Sherlockians) meet to discuss "The Empty House", the triumphant return of Sherlock Holmes after three years of the Great Hiatus. Snacks! Non-members welcome.

### SATURDAY AUGUST 10 2:00 PM

**Rhys Bowen** signs [Love and Death Among the Cheetahs](#) (Berkley \$26)  
Her Royal Spyness

### TUESDAY AUGUST 13 7:00 PM

**CJ Box** signs [Bitterroots](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Cassie Dewell  
**T Jefferson Parker** signs [The Last Good Guy](#) (Putnam \$27)  
PI Roland Ford  
Our copies of both books come with photos of these two buddies fishing

### THURSDAY AUGUST 15 7:00 PM

[Ticketed Event](#) (\$27 book admits one; \$32 admits two with one book)  
**Sandra Brown** signs [Outfox](#) (Grand Central \$27)

### SATURDAY AUGUST 17 2:00 PM

**Official Romance Day**  
**Heather Redmond** signs [Grave Expectations](#) (Kensington \$26)  
**Eliza Emmett** signs [A Love Made to Measure](#) (Wild Rose \$12.99)  
**Liana de la Rose** signs [To Love a Scandalous Duke](#) (\$14.99)

### TUESDAY AUGUST 20 7:00 PM

**Douglas Preston & Lincoln Child** sign [Old Bones](#) (Grand Central \$28)  
Nora Kelly #1  
Lincoln Child participates by Skype

### THURSDAY AUGUST 22 7:00 PM

**Steve Cavanagh** signs [Thirteen](#) (Flatiron \$26.99)  
Lawyer Eddie Flynn

### FRIDAY AUGUST 23 7:00 PM

**Lisa Lutz** signs [The Swallows](#) (Ballantine \$27)

### SATURDAY AUGUST 24 2:00 PM

[Ticketed Event](#) \$28 admits one person with a choice of either book

**Billy Jensen** signs [Chase Darkness with Me](#) (Sourcebooks \$25.99)  
**Hank Phillippi Ryan** signs [The Murder List](#) (Forge \$27.99)  
Extra copies of both will be for sale  
[/www.poisonedpenevents.com](http://www.poisonedpenevents.com) or call the store

### MONDAY AUGUST 26 7:00 PM

**Bryn Greenwood** signs [The Reckless Oath We Made](#) (Putnam \$26)

### FRIDAY AUGUST 30 7:00 PM

**Karin Slaughter** signs [The Last Widow](#) (Morrow \$27.99)  
Will Trent

### TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 3 7:00 PM

**Stephen Coonts** signs [The Russia Account](#) (Regnery \$27.99)  
Coonts will be joined by 3 former CIA agents turned authors  
**Dave Austin** signs [Tehran's Vengeance](#) (\$12/99)  
**Thomas Pecora** signs [Guardian](#): Life in the Crosshairs of the CIA's War on Terror (Post Hill Press \$27.99)  
**Mike Trott** signs [The Protected](#) (Archway \$29.95)

### THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 5 7:00 PM

**William Kent Krueger** signs [This Tender Land](#) (Atria \$27)  
A coming of age story; think *Huck Finn*

### AUGUST DISCUSSION CLUBS

**Coffee & Crime**: No Meeting

**SciFi Friday**: August 16 7:00 PM

Valente, Catherynne. [Space Opera](#) (\$14.99)

**Croak & Dagger**: Saturday August 17 10:30 AM

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Fleur de Sel Murders](#) (\$17.99)

**Hardboiled Crime**: Thursday August 29 7:00 PM

Dennis, Ralph. [Atlanta Deathwatch](#) (\$16.99)

## EVENT BOOKS

Bowen, Rhys. [Love and Death Among the Cheetahs](#) (Berkley \$26 Aug. 10). Exotic animals, unbridled sex, free-flowing drugs, and murder are what visitors to Kenya's Happy Valley in the 1930s, can expect. After a harrowing five-day trip by airplane, flying boat, and train across the Alps, Lady Georgiana Rannoch does wonder why her brand new bridegroom, Darcy O'Mara, selected it for their honeymoon. She may no longer be 35th in line to the throne, but she's been bred to present a game face and carry on. Whatever Darcy may be up to, at a Buckingham Palace garden party shortly after their wedding, the queen charged Georgie with keeping an eye on the Prince of Wales who is on tour in Africa, fearing that the awful Mrs. Simpson might join him and they'd indulge in a secret wedding. The trip out was marred by tough conditions and the presence of Rowena Hartley, a mean girl at Georgie's school, and her sulky brother, Rupert, both on a visit to their father, who wants to see the children he's ignored for years now that he's become Lord Cheriton. And Mrs. Simpson joins them as they board the flying boat in the Med. On arrival Georgie learns that government official Freddie Blanchford has arranged for the newlyweds to stay with the widow Diddy Ruocco who introduces them to the expatriate wild life style. And after a party where it's all on display, one of the Brits is brutally murdered...

Bowen doesn't whitewash the dark side of the colonial life nor frame it in modern sensibilities. In fact, she "provides more social commentary than usual in this lighthearted series, revealing the careless bigotry and racism of the aristocratic Brits in Kenya, and the tale is all the better for it."—*Kirkus Reviews*. Buckle up!

Box, CJ. [Bitterroots](#) (St Martins \$27.99 Aug.13). **Our copies of Parker and Box come with a photo of the authors taken on one of their joint fishing trips.** In this outstanding novel from Edgar winner Box, erstwhile police officer Cassie Dewell, last seen in 2017's *Paradise Valley*, has rebooted her career and become a PI in Montana. A single mother, Cassie sometimes has to take work where she finds it, but her alarm bells go off when attorney Rachel Mitchell offers her a dubious assignment: investigating the arrest of millionaire Blake Kleinsasser, who has been charged with raping his 15-year-old niece, Franny Porché. The black sheep of his wealthy ranching family, Blake admits he was too drunk that night to remember whether he attacked Franny. Thus, gathering evidence that could clear Blake will be a huge challenge. How huge Cassie only gradually learns, as she canvasses the law enforcement of Lochsa County as well as the Kleinsasser family members. Local resistance soon escalates into serious peril when Cassie is arrested and thrown in jail on a trumped-up charge. Vividly etched characters and a realistic plot lift this outing, and the well-done Montana setting is a plus. Box remains at the top of his game.

Brown, Sandra. [Outfox](#) (Grand Central \$27 Aug. 15). FBI special agent Drex Easton, the hero of this engrossing thriller from bestseller Brown, is obsessed with catching a serial killer who has preyed on wealthy single women for more than 30 years. The cunning murderer, who uses various aliases, leaves no clues behind, only missing women and empty bank accounts. A lead takes Drex and his team to Mount Pleasant, S.C., where he poses as the new neighbor of the suspected killer, now using the name Jasper

Ford, who has a beautiful, much younger wife, Talia Shafer. Drex wants to find out whether Talia knows Jasper is a killer, but in the process he falls helplessly in love with her. In a further complication, another FBI agent, who hates Drex and wants to discredit him, tries to shut down the case. Drex sets a trap for Jasper, but his weakness for Talia threatens its success and the lives of his fellow agents. Well-defined characters complement the twisty plot, which ends with a gratifying final revelation. Brown once again shows that why she remains at the top of the suspense field.

Cavanagh, Steve. [Thirteen](#) (Flatiron \$26.99). Our **August Thriller Club Book of the Month** asks, what if the killer is on the jury? Cavanagh's third novel featuring New York defense attorney Eddie Flynn, a former con man now accredited at the bar, kicks off with this premise and juxtaposes the viewpoints of Flynn, brought in to help defend actor Bobby Solomon, who's accused of killing his wife in their Manhattan home, and Joshua Kane, who murders and connives his way onto the jury in the actor's trial. Some literal courtroom sleight of hand and sharp questioning by Flynn throws doubt on the seemingly airtight case of the prosecution, but Flynn's best chance to free Solomon is to identify another killer. His ex-FBI investigator Harper and her contact in the Bureau's Behavioral Analysis Unit provide a solid lead—a serial killer who has remained hidden by framing others for his crimes. Meanwhile, from within the jury, the ruthless Kane is able to discredit or kill the fellow jurors who won't vote his way. Cavanagh throws in false leads and red herrings to heighten the uncertainty. This tightly plotted page-turner delivers as both a legal thriller and serial killer investigation.

Legal thriller extraordinaire Steve Cavanagh has an uncanny aptitude for placing his star lawyer in plausibly impossible positions. Watching Eddie Flynn work his way out of them is any reader's sheer delight. At the beginning of *Thirteen*, he is the defense attorney for a former prostitute busted on drug charges. Flynn makes quick work of the prosecution's evidence and gets the case dismissed. In the process, however, he chalks up another enemy in the NYPD, which attorney Rudy Carp finds mighty appealing in a potential co-counselor. Carp is working on an explosive celebrity double-murder case and hopes Flynn will aid the defense in poking holes in evidence mismanaged by the police. If this tactic succeeds with the jury, Carp and Associates are that much farther ahead; if it doesn't, they can just as quickly fire Flynn and spin him as a vigilante with a vendetta against law enforcement officers. While the offer isn't entirely appealing at first, Flynn could use the generous fee Carp promises—as well as the possibility of greater stability, if he hopes to win back his wife and daughter. What's more, after meeting with Carp's client—top-tier movie star Bobby Solomon—Flynn believes the guy is innocent. "What Cavanagh could have written as a straightforward case of courtroom intrigue and rhetorical flourishes in the pursuit of truth and justice becomes exponentially more tense as serial killer Joshua Kane meticulously plans his infiltration of the jury for the Solomon trial. Fitting the profile associated with the most intelligent 1% of this criminal type, Kane goes to extreme lengths to fulfill his mission. His pattern of killing, framing and convicting may seem farfetched to some, but chillingly possible to true-crime fans." This will set you up for our August 24 duo of Billy Jensen and Hank Phillippi Ryan.

Coonts, Stephen. [The Russia Account](#) (Regnery \$27.99). “A crooked secretary of state plotting to be president, a dossier designed to smear her opponent, shady uranium sales to Russia, demands for impeachment, corrupt government officials, and a diabolical conspiracy to destroy America. Stephen Coonts has taken the threads of our present-day scandal and woven a dazzling novel of suspense.”—Gregg Jarrett. Expect this to carry a conservative, not a liberal, point of view.

De la Rose, Liana. [To Love a Scandalous Duke](#) (\$14.99). Family scandal drove Declan Sinclair into exile years ago. Now he’s called home, devastated to discover his brother has been murdered, making Declan the new Duke of Darington. As he tries to unravel what happened to his brother, the clues point to the man he blames for his exile. Declan resolves to ruin the culprit. If only the daughter of the man’s business partner, lovely Lady Alethea Swinton, didn’t tempt his resolve. Lady Alethea has cultivated her pristine reputation in the hopes of winning her father’s praise. When her childhood friend returns, Alethea finds she’s willing to court scandal and defy her father to help the handsome Duke uncover the truth behind his brother’s death. But his redemption would mean her family’s ruin...

Emmett, Eliza. [A Love Made to Measure](#) (Wild Rose \$12.99). Cora Larsen is well known on Regent Street where she creates dresses that are “the toast of the Season.” She is a gifted maker of men’s suits too, not that many Victorians are willing to have a woman take their measurements. Lord Galavyn believes in marrying for love, not convenience and refuses to consider an arranged marriage. One day, he walks through Cora’s door to collect a dress and is smitten with her forward-thinking social ideals. But, despite their growing friendship, he cannot persuade Cora to ignore the difference in their status and address him by his first name—Grant. When Cora loses the lease on her shop, she thinks it is simply a coincidence that the building belongs to Grant’s family. She doesn’t yet know she is in love with a man whose mother is the worst enemy one can imagine. Grant will do anything to keep Cora safe and employed, even if it takes helping her without her knowledge. What follows is a game of cat and mouse that will test Cora’s resolve and Grant’s love to their limits. (Calling him “Grant” is IMHO a false note for this period)

Greenwood, Bryn. [The Reckless Oath We Made](#) (Putnam \$26 Aug. 26). A hot-tempered, gritty Kansas woman living on the edge and an autistic man obsessed with medieval chivalry team up in an unforgettable heroic quest to rescue her abducted sister. Zhorzha Trego’s hardscrabble life takes a turn for the worse when older sister LaReigne, a volunteer at a local prison, is taken hostage with another woman by two escaped inmates. She learns the news while on a late-night train heading home to Wichita with her 5-year-old nephew, Marcus, after making a weed-smuggling run to Colorado. With a father who died in prison and a grieving mother who has become a 600-pound hoarder, the burden of supporting the family has fallen on redheaded Zee’s tall shoulders, and waitressing can’t even begin to cover her medical bills from a motorcycle accident that left her with chronic hip pain. The attention from the police and press causes Zee to lose her apartment, her job, and her car in short order. To the rescue arrives her eccentric knight, whom she had met at a physical therapy clinic two years earlier. Gentry Frank is on the spectrum; his inner voices convince him that he’s Zee’s champion. When he invites

her and Marcus to stay with his loving, multiracial adoptive family, the unromantic Zee begins to connect with her odd suitor. After the second female hostage is found murdered, Zee realizes the two of them must save LaReigne on their own... Greenwood’s upside-down contemporary fairy tale captivates with its wonderfully inventive storytelling and its compassionately drawn, flawed characters.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review for a book that is out of the ordinary.

Jensen, Billy. [Chase Darkness with Me](#) (Sourcebooks \$25.99 Aug. 24). Jensen decided early on in his journalism career that he would focus his work on unsolved murders and missing-persons cases. His book is both a memoir and a how-to guide for solving cases using social media, crowdsourcing, and old-fashioned sleuthing. Journalist Jensen spent fifteen years investigating unsolved murders, fighting for the families of victims. Every story he wrote had one thing in common—they didn’t have an ending. The killer was still out there. But after the sudden death of a friend, crime writer and author of [I’ll Be Gone in the Dark](#) (\$17.99), Michelle McNamara, Billy became fed up. Following a dark night, he came up with a plan. A plan to investigate past the point when the cops had given up. A plan to solve the murders himself. You’ll ride shotgun as Billy identifies the Halloween Mask Murderer, finds a missing girl in the California Redwoods, and investigates the only other murder in New York City on 9/11. You’ll hear intimate details of the hunts for two of the most terrifying serial killers in history: his friend Michelle McNamara’s pursuit of the Golden State Killer and his own quest to find the murderer of the Allenstown Four. And Billy gives you the tools—and the rules—to help solve murders yourself. *Chase Darkness with Me* is an examination of the evil forces that walk among us, illustrating a novel way to catch those killers, and we’ve teamed up local author Jensen with investigative TV reporter (41 Emmys) Hank Phillippi Ryan for a fascinating discussion. Have you ever wanted to solve a murder? Gather the clues the police overlooked? Put together the pieces? Identify the suspect?

Krueger, William Kent. [This Tender Land](#) (Atria \$27). Our **September Modern Firsts Book of the Month** is a coming of age story, a journey through the heartland... in short, a kind of Huck Finn written as only the author of [Ordinary Grace](#) (\$17) could write. There’s not much more I need to say other than, don’t miss it!

Lutz, Lisa. [The Swallows](#) (Ballantine \$27 August 23). Lisa writes to me this is one of her weird books... until I read it I can’t translate that but it may well be a version of Donna Tartt. A teacher at a New England prep school ignites a gender war—with deadly consequences that show how silence can tamp down decency. When Alexandra Witt joins the faculty at Stonebridge Academy, she’s hoping to put a painful past behind her. Then one of her creative writing assignments generates some disturbing responses from students. Before long, Alex is immersed in an investigation of the students atop the school’s social hierarchy—and their connection to something called the Darkroom. She soon inspires the girls who’ve started to question the school’s “boys will be boys” attitude and incites a resistance. But just as the movement is gaining momentum, Alex attracts the attention of an unknown enemy who knows a little too much about her—and what brought her to Stonebridge in the first place. Meanwhile revenge plots are afoot...

The Indie Next Pick: Stonebridge Academy, a private prep school of about 400 students located on 50 acres of dense woods, was to be the setting for Alex Witt's second try at being an instructor. Her first ended with a memory that made her skin crawl. Unfortunately, her time at Stonebridge would prove to be even more disturbing. Remember the age-old adage, 'Boys will be boys'? With *The Swallows*, we have a new adage: 'Girls will be tougher than boys.' This is a powerfully serious yet humorous look at the battle between the sexes and a timely and important book for all readers."

Parker, T. Jefferson. [The Last Good Guy](#) (Putnam \$27 August 13). **Our copies of Parker and Box come with a photo of the authors taken on one of their joint fishing trips.** 28-year-old Penelope Rideout, whose parents died 10 years earlier in a car crash, hires PI Roland Ford to locate her missing 14-year-old sister, Daley, who has a "wild streak." When Ford goes to interview Nick Moreno, Daley's 20-year-old "guaranteed loser" boyfriend, he ends up talking to some neighbors who saw Daley leaving Nick's condo with "two men she seemed to know." Inside the condo, Ford finds Nick shot to death. The ensuing search for Daley involves a megachurch and its charismatic pastor, an unusually secretive private security firm, and a decommissioned nuclear power plant. Parker seamlessly integrates the backstories of Daley and Penelope while interspersing Ford's ruminations on his own troubled life (Ford is "the last good guy" of the title). The author does a masterly job of ratcheting up the tension, and the often lyrical prose is a pleasure to read. This entry could well earn three-time Edgar Award-winner Parker a fourth Edgar, says one reviewer. Patrick, making this the **August Hardboiled Crime Club Pick**, adds, "One of our finest crime writers, Parker never rests on his laurels and is consistently raises the bar for himself. The new novel featuring Private Investigator Roland Ford is a stunner, exploring difficult questions about our troubled, divisive times and keeping it soulful and real."

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Old Bones](#) (Grand Central \$28 August 20 Signed by both). The authors have retired Gideon Crew, his ultimate fate battling his disease unknown (which is nice, we can hope he wins...) and launch a new series with two of my favorite characters from the AXL Pendergast thrillers: archeologist Nora Kelly and young Corrie Swanson, now a newly minted FBI agent having aced boot camp but needing seasoning. What better test to give them both than to have them apply science and psychology to an 1847-48 tragedy while upping the stakes with imaginative bonus plot lines?

The historical event is the tragedy that befell the Donner Party while it made a push to cross the Sierras into California. The ill-advised route it chose brought disaster when a blizzard befell the settlers. Marooned in some 20 feet of snow they began to starve, some died and, as modern archaeological excavations have confirmed, some ate the others to survive. If you think this isn't the stuff for fiction, ponder the success of Yann Martel's bestseller and movie *The Life of Pi* in 2002.

So being Preston and Child the authors ask, what if there were a third camp, its location lost to time? And what if the historian Clive Benton who brings Nora Kelly into locating and excavating the lost camp has a convincing theory two of the doomed settlers had robbed a third of a fortune in gold coins, now worth mega millions and perhaps hidden at the camp? And...

what if Corrie is pursuing an investigation into the murder of a man found in the exposed grave of one Florence Regis—who also has a link to the Donner Party—a case that leads her into the Sierras and to Nora?

I love the bones of the plot, the superb depiction of archaeologists at work and other science behind events. The two strong female protagonists share a dynamic reminiscent of that between Pendergast and his friend on the NYPD, Vincent D'Agosta. So it connects to the Pendergast-verse. Think part Stephen King but rooted in reality. If you have not read Preston and Child, *Old Bones* is an excellent place to begin.

Redmond, Heather. [Grave Expectations](#) (Kensington \$26 August 17). **It's official: August 17 is Romance Day.** Our specialist, John Charles hosts Redmond and two local authors in celebration.

Set in London in the summer of 1835, this clever reimagining of Charles Dickens's life, journalist Dickens is looking forward to his wedding to Kate Hogarth. Realizing that he has not seen his upstairs neighbor, Miss Haverstock, in several days, Charles takes Kate for a visit. In her rooms, the couple discovers the elderly spinster murdered. Two convicts have recently escaped from a nearby prison, and the neighborhood has suffered a rash of burglaries, leading Charles to suspect a fairly routine crime. Kate insists that the staging of the body—Miss Haverstock is wearing a yellowed wedding gown and a corkscrew is buried in her neck—indicates a complex personal motive instead. Second for this series after [A Tale of Two Murders](#) (\$15.95). Clearly the titles play on Dickens' novels.

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. [The Murder List](#) (Forge \$27.99 Aug. 24). Law student Rachel North will tell you, without hesitation, what she knows to be true. She's smart, she's a hard worker, she does the right thing, she's successfully married to a faithful and devoted husband, a lion of Boston's defense bar, and her internship with the Boston DA's office is her ticket to a successful future. Problem is—she's wrong, leading to a cat and mouse game she may not survive.

Slaughter, Karin. [The Last Widow](#) (Morrow \$27.99 August 30). Sara Linton and Will Trent are visiting her family in the Atlanta suburbs when explosions rock nearby Emory University. As the couple heads toward campus, they encounter a multiple-car accident. Dr. Sara stops to offer medical assistance and discovers that one vehicle contains several armed men—two with gunshot wounds—and a traumatized woman she recognizes as missing CDC epidemiologist Michelle Spivey. After a brutal fight that injures Will, the men take Sara and flee. Will is certain that Sara's kidnappers bombed Emory, and intelligence suggests the men are part of a paramilitary group that's planning something catastrophic. With the clock ticking, Will and his partner, Faith Mitchell, scramble to follow bread crumbs into the Appalachian Mountains left by a terrified but determined Sara. "Vivid characters and rapidly escalating stakes complement the riveting, adrenaline-fueled plot. Along the way, Slaughter examines such topics as misogyny, white nationalism, and the politicization of law enforcement. Fans will devour this visceral, gratifying thriller." Which is, I add, not just terrifying in the weaponizing and its domestic terrorism, but a richly satisfying journey, our **August Surprise Ms! Pick** with and into Will Trent in this 9<sup>th</sup> investigation to feature him. Slaughter has made sure that Will is different from Sara's deceased husband Jeffrey, a police officer in Grant County.

## AUGUST BOOKS OF THE MONTH

**British Crime Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

North, Alex. [The Whisper Man](#)

**Cozy Crimes Club** One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Handler, David. [The Man in the White Linen Suit](#)

**Discovery Club** One paperback or hardcover per month

Pobi, Robert. [City of Windows](#)

**First Mystery Club** One Signed First per month

Parry, H.G. [The Unlikely Escape of Uriah Heep](#)

**Hardboiled Crime Club** One signed First per month

Parker, T Jefferson. [The Last Good Guy](#)

**History/Mystery Club** One Signed First per month

Obrecht, Tea. [Inland](#) (Random \$27)

**History Paperback** One per month

Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at Half Moon Gate](#)

**Modern First Editions** One Signed First per month

Russo, Richard. [Chances Are...](#)

**SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Club** One Signed First per month

Hart, Rob. [The Warehouse](#)

**Surprise Me! Club One Signed First Per Month**

Slaughter, Karin. [The Last Widow](#)

**Thriller Club** One Signed First per month

Cavanagh, Steve. [Thirteen](#)

### SIGNED BOOKS

Booth, Stephen. [Drowned Lives](#) (Sphere \$45). When council officer Chris Buckley is approached by an odd old man demanding help in healing a decades-old family rift, he sends the stranger away. But then the old man is murdered, and the police arrive on the Chris's doorstep asking questions to which he has no answers. As Chris begins to look into the circumstances of the murder, he uncovers a deadly secret in the misty silt and mud of the local Lichfield canals that he'll realize was better kept buried. Booth has always excelled at making his landscapes, usually the Peak District, living characters. Set in and around the dark, misty canals of Lichfield, this appears to be a non-series book and thus an excellent choice for trying him.

Buxton, Kira Jane. [Hollow Kingdom](#) (Grand Central \$27). One pet crow fights to save humanity from an apocalypse in this uniquely hilarious debut from a genre-bending literary author. I'm struck by this review from a fellow bookseller: "*Hollow Kingdom* takes place at the end of the world in a not-so-alternate version of the present where humans (or Mofos as the narrator refers to them) have been infected with a technologically induced virus that turns them into literal zombies whose sole focus is to acquire a smartphone. But this book is not just about the apocalypse. It's about those who turn the end of the world into the beginning of a new one. Through the domesticated crow ST we are introduced to the college crows, to Winnie the Poodle, to Ghengis Cat, to The One Who Opens Doors, to a beautiful world that exists beyond human comprehension in the language of the trees and the conversations that happen below the ground. *Hollow Kingdom* is a reminder of how much we take for granted, how

much lies beyond our limited scope of understanding, and how much we have to lose if we don't start paying attention. Kira Jane Buxton has truly written a novel for the 21st century (or however much of it we get through!)" *Hollow Kingdom* combines dark subject matter with an oddball sense of humor in what proves to be a winning formula.

The author notes: "I grew up in Asia and the Middle East, attending international schools where I was always surrounded by a gorgeous and eclectic display of dialects. Just like us, animals in different parts of the world have distinctive dialects, to the extent that you can actually identify where an animal is from by listening to it (think sperm whales with Caribbean accents). I wanted to explore that in a lighthearted and fun way, as well as authentically capture how each character's voice and attitude came through for me..." I can say that the passages in various prose forms conveying the sentiments of different animals – an urban elephant herd from Thailand, a polar bear in Greenland, a camel in Dubai to name a few—in their unique voices is the big hook of this book for me. **Warning: there is a lot of profanity in ST's dialogue so if that will offend you, skip this. It is not a cozy.**

Coes, Ben. [The Russian](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Taking a break from his best-selling Dewey Andreas novels, Coes introduces Rob Tacoma. Rob has been picked as deputy by Bo Coll, head of the CIA's Special Operations Group, who is organizing a team to counter the breathtakingly violent Russian mafia. Rob's parents were killed by the Russians, then so is Bo, which means gloves-off conflict. Here's the *PW* review: "This nifty thriller from bestseller Coes introduces private operative Rod Tacoma, a former Navy SEAL and friend of the author's series hero, Dewey Andreas, who makes a cameo appearance. A faction of the Russian mob carries out two high-level assassinations—of a Republican senator and a Democratic governor, both leaders in the fight against the Russian mafia—as a warning to the U.S. government to get out of their business. The CIA forms a special kill unit to go after the Russians. After a pair of assassins kills the original team leader, Tacoma takes over the operation. The odds are stacked against him because the Russians own a traitor in the government, the senior California senator, who keeps the bad guys apprised of the operation from its very inception. In the exciting climax, Tacoma goes hand-to-hand with the Russian mob boss. Authentic tradecraft and top-notch action scenes propel the plot." Coes had to cancel his August 1 visit but is able to sign this exciting new thriller for us.

Crais, Robert. [A Dangerous Man](#) (Putnam \$29). Joe Pike was just leaving the bank where a lonely young teller called Isabel shyly tried to flirt with him when he spotted two guys abduct her as she stepped out for lunch break. Joe swings into action, chases them down, puts them down, and the two men are arrested. But the arrests are only the beginning of the trouble for Joe and Izzy, beginning with disbelieving cops. Then, after posting bail, the two abductors are murdered and Izzy disappears. Pike, pissed and worried, calls in his PI partner Elvis Cole, who uncovers a surprising story for Izzy's family, one with very old roots. The pace is brisk as is the action and suspense. It's like reading a Reacher to follow Joe Pike although Reacher doesn't have a partner or backup. In its spare dialogue it's also much like a film script. Following the plot connections Pike and Cole make as they move it along is the real joy.

I can't resist adding this from the *NY Times Book Review* which underlines my take: "But enough about plot. Let's talk cars. (This being California, people's rides are extensions of their existential selves.) One of the kidnappers drove a Dodge Challenger, an aggressively styled muscle car. John Chen, a forensic scientist who wants to be hip, has a "molten silver" Porsche Boxster. The cops, of course, pilot beat-up black-and-whites. As for Joe Pike, ex-Marine and former mercenary, he sits tall in a Jeep."

Evans, Mary Anna. [Catacombs](#) (Sourcebooks/Poisoned Pen \$26.99). Out in August, Signed here September 28. A deafening explosion rocks a historic Oklahoma City hotel, sending archaeologist Faye Longchamp-Mantooth crashing to the marble floor of the lobby. She's unhurt but shaken—after all, any time something blows up in Oklahoma City, the first word on everyone's lips is the same: "bomb". Faye is in town for a conference celebrating indigenous arts, but is soon distracted by the aftermath of the explosion, which cracks open the old hotel's floor to reveal subterranean chambers that had housed Chinese immigrants a century before. Faye is fascinated by the tunnels, which are a time capsule back to the early 20th century—but when the bodies of three children are discovered deep beneath the city, her sense of discovery turns to one of dread... *Catacombs* also introduces an elderly relative of Faye's husband Joe Mantooth: Cully, a famous Hollywood Western star who's retired (he says) back to Oklahoma and his Cree community.

✦Gregory, Susanna. [Sanctuary Murders](#) (Sphere \$50). . In 1360 Edward III issues a call to arms, as sporadic attacks by the French threaten to turn into a full-blown invasion. In Cambridge, fear of the enemy is magnified by the belief that foreign agents are lurking in the area. Tension runs ever higher as rumors and ignorance fan the flames of suspicion amid preparations for war. And then the first murder occurs—of a French scholar living in the town. At Michaelhouse, Brother Michael is now Master, but his reach of power in the University is under threat by the election of a new Chancellor and his cohort of dubious advisors. Soon, the Colleges begin to squabble amongst themselves, as well as with the town that never wanted a University in the first place. Amidst this atmosphere of swelling distrust, physician Matthew Bartholomew is called upon to investigate mysterious deaths in a nearby hospital. He quickly realizes that there is something odd about the inmates and their keepers—something dark and deadly, which seems to be connected to the growing number of murders in the town. Pressure mounts as the University and the town clamor for answers.

Hart, Rob. [The Warehouse](#) (Crown \$27). Our **August SciFi/Fantasy Pick** is a compelling thriller spot on with the rising spotlight on giant tech as well as on amazon. **And our copies come with a powerful interview with author Hart.** Background: the US has been ravaged by climate change and gun violence beyond recognition. Amidst the wreckage, an online retail giant named Cloud reigns supreme. Cloud brands itself not just as an online storefront, but as a global savior. Yet, beneath the sunny exterior, lurks something far more sinister. Paxton never thought he'd be working Security for the company that ruined his life, much less that he'd be moving into one of their sprawling live-work facilities. But compared to what's left outside, perhaps Cloud isn't so bad. Better still, through his work he meets Zinnia, who fills him with hope for their shared future. Except that Zinnia is not what she seems. And Paxton, with his all-access security credentials,

might just be her meal ticket. As Paxton and Zinnia's agendas place them on a collision course, they're about to learn just how far the Cloud will go to make the world a better place. To beat the system, you have to be inside it, and even then...

Hart casts an eye on a not-too-distant future where citizens clamor to get a job working for Cloud, a tech company that has supplanted the power and authority of governments in a world of climate collapse and dying democracies. The Cloud gaslights its workers into accepting abusive work environments and constant surveillance plus wage docking by forcing them to live in a campus. So along with the corporate spy thrills there's economic policy outlined. Julian Pavia, who also edited *The Martian* and *Ready Player One*, says that "the comparisons to the real-world online retailer that resembles the Cloud will be apparent to readers, who will be horrified by what the characters discover once they get their dream jobs. However, some relief may come from the fact that *The Warehouse* feels just far enough removed from reality that it's delicious and entertaining." Rather than the 1984 prediction it may well be. Entertaining as well as important, this a book I urge you to read for a variety of reasons.

Hunter, Stephen. [Citadel](#) (Mysterious \$9.95). I love this novella by Hunter from, I think, 2016, or earlier. We sold out but found more copies. It's one of his very best WWII stories. A captain in the British Army, Basil St. Florian has been tasked with a dangerous mission in the midst of World War II. He has been sent across the English Channel to find and photograph a manuscript that does not officially exist, one that may hold the key to a code that, if cracked, could prevent the deaths of millions. St. Florian's mission presents him with one challenge after another, and it doesn't help that the SS and the Abwehr are following his every move in a cat-and-mouse chase across occupied France. But St. Florian is willing to risk his life to get to the manuscript—even if the genius professor Alan Turing can't guarantee he'll be able to break the code.

Keller, Julia. [Cold Way Home](#) (St Martins \$29). Deep in the woods just outside Acker's Gap, West Virginia, rises a ragged chunk of what was once a high stone wall. This is all that remains of Wellwood, a psychiatric hospital for the poor that burned to the ground decades ago. And it is here that Bell Elkins – prosecutor turned private investigator – makes a grim discovery while searching for a missing teenager: A dead body, marred by a ghastly wound that can only mean murder. To solve the mystery of what happened in these woods where she played as a child, Bell and her partners – former sheriff Nick Fogelson and former deputy Jake Oakes – must confront the tangled history of Wellwood and its dark legacy, while each grapples with a private torment. Keller bases the wellspring of the plot on a true chapter in the troubled history of early treatment for psychiatric illness. This is a chapter that Pulitzer Prize-winning author Keller tells me she is passionate about. It also moves the lives of the characters in her splendid series forward in interesting ways.

Khan, Vaseem. [Bad Day at the Vulture Club](#) (Hodder \$39). The Parsees are among the oldest, most secretive and most influential communities in the city: respected, envied and sometimes feared. When prominent industrialist Cyrus Zorabian is murdered on holy ground, his body dumped inside a Tower of Silence—where the Parsee dead are consumed by vultures—the police dismiss it as a random killing. But his daughter is unconvinced. Inspector Chopra and his elephant sidekick are uneasy at entering this

world of power and privilege, is soon plagued by doubts about the case. Our staffer Pat King loves this series.

Lagercrantz, David. [Girl Who Lived Twice](#) (Quercus \$50). The girl with the dragon tattoo is finally ready to confront her nemesis, the only woman who is evidently and in many ways her match. Salander will not wait to be hunted. When she strikes it will be a double blow: vengeance for recent atrocities, and the settling of lifelong scores. For months now Salander has been closing in on her target. She has moved from Stockholm, her hair is newly styled, her piercings are gone. She could pass for any other businesswoman. But not all businesswomen have a Beretta Cheetah beneath their jacket. They do not wield the lethal power of a hacker's genius. They do not carry scars and tattoos to remind them that they have survived the unsurvivable. It begins with the discovery of Mikael Blomkvist's number at *Millennium* magazine in the pocket of an unidentified homeless man who died with the name of a government minister on his lips.

Lippman, Laura. [Lady in the Lake](#) (Morrow \$26.99). The Indie Next Pick for a book published July 23): "I continue to be in awe of Laura Lippman's ability to write novels that are so much more than mysteries. *Lady in the Lake* is, of course, a wonderful mystery with twists and turns and surprises—nothing is predictable. But it is also a beautiful character study and a sensitive look at the desire to have a meaningful life and how ambition can be motivating but also blinding. I loved the multiple voices in the novel—Laura's characters are never perfect and therefore come across as real people with real needs." Patrick finds this book to be, "an exquisite and complicated novel that reminded me of the sly, subversive tales of Patricia Highsmith. Set in 1960's Baltimore, the book centers on a female reporter's determination to solve the unsolved murder of a young African-American woman. Highly recommended." We add, "The racism, classism, and sexism of 50 years ago wrapped up in a stylish, sexy, suspenseful period drama about a newsroom and the city it covers."

⌘McDermid, Val. [How the Dead Speak](#) (Sphere \$42). With Tony Hill behind bars and Carol Jordan finally out of road as a cop, he's finding unexpected outlets for his talents in jail and she's joined forces with a small informal group of lawyers and forensics experts looking into suspected miscarriages of justice. But they're doing it without each other; being in the same room at visiting hour is too painful to contemplate. Meanwhile, construction is suddenly halted on the redevelopment of an orphanage after dozens of skeletons are found buried in the grounds. Forensic examination reveals they date from between twenty and forty years ago, when the nuns were running their repressive regime. But then a different set of skeletons are discovered in a far corner, young men from as recent as ten years ago. When newly promoted DI Paula McIntyre discovers that one of the male skeletons is that of a killer who is supposedly alive and behind bars—and the subject of one of Carol's miscarriage investigations—it brings Tony and Carol irresistibly into each other's orbit once again...

Obrecht, Tea. [Inland](#) (Random \$27). A novel grounded in the little-known history of lawless, drought-ridden Arizona Territory, 1893. Nora is an unflinching frontierswoman awaiting the return of the men in her life: her husband who has gone in search of water for the parched household, and her elder sons who have vanished after an explosive argument. Nora is biding her time with her youngest son, who is convinced that a mysterious beast

is stalking the land around their home, and her husband's 17-old cousin, who communes with spirits. Lurie is a former outlaw and a man haunted by ghosts. He sees lost souls who want something from him, and he finds reprieve from their longing in an unexpected relationship that inspires a momentous expedition across the West. The way in which Nora's and Lurie's stories intertwine is the surprise and suspense of this brilliant novel.

The Indie Next Pick for our **August History Book of the Month** adds (rather fulsomely): "I could live my whole life inside this novel and be perfectly happy. *Inland* has the stern gorgeousness of *Blood Meridian*, the cinematic perfection of *Station Eleven*, the fantasia-like atmosphere of *Cloud Atlas*, and the deep-heartedness of *The Winter Soldier*. This is the sort of novel that makes people want to get up and soldier on. I really loved this book."

Parry, H.G. [The Unlikely Escape of Uriah Heep](#) (Orbit \$27). Charley Sutherland is a literary scholar and prodigy with a secret gift: he can bring characters from books to life. As fun as a visit from the *Cat in the Hat* or teatime with Sherlock Holmes might sound, Charley's older brother, Rob, knows better—it always means trouble. But Uriah Heep, that unlovable character from *David Copperfield*, appears as one of Rob's law firm interns, and the brothers later discover an entire Dickensian street filled with characters Charley swears he didn't create. Suddenly what used to be a nuisance turns into a dangerous adventure as they realize other summoners exist. Charley attempts to understand the origin of the street, the threat of a rumored fictional "new world" and the identity of the other summoner (all while surviving attacks from the Jabberwocky and the fearsome and giant Hound of the Baskervilles, among others). Meanwhile, Rob digs further into reality and discovers even deeper mysteries surrounding their own family. It comes down to whimsical Charley, practical Rob and a wild cast of literary characters brought to life to save the real world from complete fictional takeover.

Our **August First Mystery Book of the Month** reminds me strongly of Jasper Fforde's s huge hit [The Eyre Affair](#) (\$17). **So much that I conjured up signed copies from the New Zealand author, an exclusive for The Pen.** Another fans adds, "*The Unlikely Escape of Uriah Heep*, H.G. Parry's debut novel, is a Dickensian booklover's delight, filled with the most popular characters from Western literature, from Heathcliff, Dorian Gray, and five brooding Mr. Darcys to more modern characters like Matilda and the Implied Reader, all navigating their own stories as well as the real world they've come to inhabit. Anyone who has ever wondered what it would be like to have a conversation with the Artful Dodger or to hold the legendary Excalibur in their hands will be in excellent company in the pages of this delightful literary fantasy." As one fictional creation puts it: "I think we've found ourselves in the middle of an adventure." **I recommend this gem to lovers of historical and literary fiction as well as to our Surprise Me! members and fans of intelligent cozies.**

Patchett, Ann. [Lambslide](#) (Harper \$18.99). Nicolette Farmer is running for class president, and the rest of the Farmer family tells her she'll win by a landslide. A pack of overconfident lambs mistakenly hear lambslide and can't believe there's a slide made just for them. But when they can't find one on the farm, there's only one thing left to do: take a vote! They campaign. They bargain. They ask all the other animals if they, too, would like a lambslide. Will the lambs ever get their special slide? Story by Patchett; illustrations by Glasser of the Fancy Nancy series.

Penny, Louise. [A Better Man](#) (St Martins \$28.99 on sale Aug. 27). It's Gamache's first day back as head of the homicide department, a job he temporarily shares with his previous second-in-command, Jean-Guy Beauvoir. Flood waters are rising across the province. In the middle of the turmoil a father approaches Gamache, pleading for help in finding his daughter. As crisis piles upon crisis, Gamache tries to hold off the encroaching chaos, and realizes the search for Vivienne Godin should be abandoned. But with a daughter of his own, he finds himself developing a profound, and perhaps unwise, empathy for her distraught father. Increasingly hounded by the question, how would you feel?, he resumes the search. As the rivers rise, and the social media onslaught against Gamache becomes crueler, a body is discovered. And in the tumult, mistakes are made.

Pronzini, Bill. [The Peaceful Valley Crime Wave](#) (Forge \$28). The prolific Pronzini pens a Western Mystery. Nothing much happens in Peaceful Valley, Montana. And that's just how Sheriff Lucas Monk likes it. Aside from the occasional drunken brawl or minor disturbance out on the reservation, he hasn't had to resort to his fists or sidearm in years. That is, until mid-October, 1914, when the theft of a wooden cigar store Indian sets off a crime wave like nothing Lucas has ever seen. Teenager Charity Axthelm goes missing, Reba Purvis's housekeeper is poisoned with cyanide Reba is sure was meant for her, and Lucas's gut tells him that this is only the beginning. It's not long before the first corpse shows up, bringing the peace in the valley to a thundering end. For fans of Loren D. Estleman and Reavis Wortham among others.

Robinson, Maggie. [Who's Sorry Now](#) (Sourcebooks/Poisoned Pen \$28). Set in 1925, Robinson's lively sequel to 2018's [Nobody's Sweetheart Now](#) (\$15.95) finds socialite Adelaide Compton staying in London with her younger sister, Cecilia, who insists on frequenting the newest and trendiest nightclubs. Unbeknownst to them, two of London's carefree young clubbers have recently been murdered. While enjoying a night out at the Savoy, Cecilia is poisoned. Enter the ghost of Rupert, Addie's philandering deceased husband, who has been assigned "by the Fellow Upstairs" to be Addie's guardian angel. Rupert's warning and Addie's quick thinking save Cecilia's life. The handsome Scotland Yard detective assigned to the case, Insp. Devenand Hunter, worked with Addie on her first investigation. They again join forces, confronting a series of potential suspects, including a Russian prince who's used to getting his own way with women, a recently impoverished aristocrat, and various arrogant toffs. "Readers will enjoy the lively exchanges between Addie, a thoroughly appealing narrator, and her two admirers, exasperating Rupert and smitten Devenand. Fans of witty, romance-infused paranormal historicals will love this." And the first one which is a good place to start. #3 will be out next June. For fans of Phryne Fisher and Ashley Weaver.

Royal, Priscilla. [The Twice-Hanged Man](#) (Poisoned Pen \$26.95). Autumn, 1282. As Edward I wages a bloody conflict with Wales, Prioress Eleanor escorts her younger brother, Robert, and his wife, who is in labor, from their Marcher lands to greater safety at a Wynethorpe manor in a village just inside the English border. They are joined by Brother Thomas, the Prioress's trusted friend, and Sister Anne, who helps navigate the difficult birth and delivers a baby girl. The local abbot begs her help—the village priest has been found dead and standing over him is, a reliable witness says, the ghost of Hywel, the village stonemason who was recent-

ly hanged for slaying some sleeping English soldiers. Bone tired, Brother Thomas questions the village hangman, who assures him that Hywel was hanged once and then, when the weight of the fat felon strung up alongside him broke the beam of the gallows, was hanged again. The experienced executioner checked all the bodily signs—Hywel was dead. But where is his grave? And what secrets are the mysterious locals keeping from the outsiders visiting their troubled home? In addition to a plot with echoes of modern issues like immigration and diversity, Brother Thomas' love for men both endangers him and opens the Prioress' eyes.

I am enchanted by a comment from one reviewer: "The history of a twice-hanged man was an actual 1307 canonization case for Thomas de Cantilope, a bishop and a Welsh rebel William Cragh, who was hanged twice the same day 1287. He survived it was said because of the intercession of prayers to Bishop de Cantiope. There was lots of other actual historical data used about this particular war or rebellion." In a way this is a medieval spy story and it's certainly one about borders and immigrants.

Russo, Richard. [Chances Are...](#) With his 14th novel and our **August Modern Firsts Book of the Month**, Pulitzer Prize-winner Richard Russo offers readers both vintage Russo themes and something new—a mystery to be solved. Russo has always excelled at writing empathetic and compelling novels dealing with small towns, loyalty, male bonding and unrequited love. His skill as a wordsmith is matched by his sly sense of humor and clever, tangy dialogue. *Chances Are...* adds a mystery element to the mix and creates an engrossing novel. A trio of 66-year-old men, dormmates in college, reunite at a Martha's Vineyard beach house to reconnect and remember Memorial Day weekend, 1971. That was the weekend the self-dubbed "Three Musketeers"—Lincoln, Teddy and Mickey—invited their beautiful female friend Jacy to join them. All three were secretly in love with her. After that weekend, she disappeared from their lives. Now, Lincoln is a successful real estate broker with six kids; Teddy is the publisher of a small university press who suffers debilitating panic attacks; and Mickey has become a hard-living rock musician. The mysterious, missing Jacy is the center of everyone's attention, then and now, as the novel continually flips back to the 1960s and '70s. Although all three were in love with her, how well did they actually know her?

The Indie Next Pick: "This book reads like a literary mystery. Forty years ago, a woman disappeared while at a get-together at Martha's Vineyard. Now, the four friends who were with her have returned to the scene, still driven by a need to know what happened. This latest story by Richard Russo has all the elements that make him one of the most popular authors today: characters we can relate to, settings that we see in our dreams, and a story both perplexing and satisfying. Fans and new readers alike will enjoy diving in."

✚Saunders, Kate. [The Case of the Wandering Scholar](#) (Bloomsbury \$32). It is 1851 and Mrs. Rodd has received an unusual commission: wealthy businessman Jacob Welland is dying of consumption and implores our redoubtable detective to find his beloved brother, whom he has not seen for fifteen years. Joshua Welland was an Oxford scholar; brilliant, eccentric and desperately poor. Nobody can say exactly when he disappeared from his college, but he took to wandering the countryside and one day simply failed to return. Since then, there have been several sightings of his lonely, ragged figure. Ten years ago a friend spotted

him in a gypsy camp, where he was rumored to be learning great secrets that would one day astound the world. Then a violent murder is committed and Scotland Yard is called to investigate. Mrs. Rodd's old friend Inspector Blackbeard doesn't want to hear any nonsense about gypsies or secrets, but Mrs. Rodd is convinced that something very sinister is lurking in this peaceful landscape.

Stephenson, Neal. [Fall, or Dodge in Hell](#) (Morrow \$35). We sold this out in early June but were able to snag a dozen more of this "wildly inventive and entertaining science fiction thriller—*Paradise Lost* by way of Philip K. Dick—that unfolds in the near future, in parallel worlds." In his youth, Richard "Dodge" Forthrust founded Corporation 9592, a gaming company that made him a multibillionaire. Now in his middle years, Dodge appreciates his comfortable, unencumbered life, managing his myriad business interests, and spending time with his beloved niece Zula and her young daughter, Sophia. One beautiful autumn day, while he undergoes a routine medical procedure, something goes irrevocably wrong. Dodge is pronounced brain dead and put on life support, leaving his stunned family and close friends with difficult decisions. Long ago, when a much younger Dodge drew up his will, he directed that his body be given to a cryonics company now owned by enigmatic tech entrepreneur Elmo Shepherd. Legally bound to follow the directive despite their misgivings, Dodge's family has his brain scanned and its data structures uploaded and stored in the cloud, until it can eventually be revived. In the coming years, technology allows Dodge's brain to be turned back on....

✦Sykes, SD. [The Bone Fire](#) (Hodder \$44). 1361. Oswald de Lacy is Oswald traveling with his family from Somershill Manor in Kent to the Isle of Eden, an island surrounded by marshes on England's south coast, to avoid the bubonic plague. Their destination is Castle Eden, a place of refuge offered by Oswald's friend Godfrey, Lord Eden. Once the castle portcullis lowers behind them, Oswald and his party are cut off from the outside world. Godfrey, who believes the pestilence to be a manifestation of divine punishment, has several other guests plus supplies to last for months. Soon after the nobleman asks Oswald to deliver two sealed envelopes in the event something happens to him, one addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Godfrey is found dead in a tool chest with a head wound. Oswald must ascertain which of the castle's other occupants is responsible, while keeping his family protected from the deadly contagious disease. "Sykes effectively uses her diligent research in the service of a memorable plot. This outing reinforces her place in the historical mystery genre's top ranks." The set up is akin to that of the Minette Walters reviewed in *New Books*.

✦Ware, Ruth. [The Turn of the Key](#) (Harvill \$32). When Rowan Caine stumbles across the online job posting for a live-in nanny position with a family in the Scottish Highlands, she should have ignored it. But the money is insanely good, and the family seems perfectly charming (and to be honest, Rowan is not exactly thrilled with her present day underpaid and underappreciated job working in a daycare facility in the city). However, the moment Rowan arrives at Heatherbrea House and begins hearing rumors that the place is haunted, she begins to rethink accepting the position. Then there is the matter of the oddly large number of women who had taken the job before Rowan only to leave under

mysterious circumstances. Add into this the warning from one of her new charges that "they won't like her," and the house itself, which is a fascinating mix of high-tech luxury (security cameras everywhere!) and old fashioned spookiness (right down to the creepy hidden garden filled with poisonous plants), All of this adds up to recipe for disaster for Rowan. If Ware's last novel, [The Death of Mrs. Westaway](#) (\$16.99), is a clever take on classic Agatha Christie style mysteries, then here we have one inspired by Henry James' classic *The Turn of the Screw*. Ware puts her own inventive, ingenious spin on the gothic ghost story, setting it in a cutting edge smart house with absolutely stunning results. Readers will be reading with all the lights on as they race to the climactic ending to see just who is minding whom in this engaging summer thriller."

#### CLASSICS

Gilbert, Michael. [Smallbone Deceased](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). A belated *PW* Starred Review: "In this ingenious reissue in the British Library Crime Classics series first published in 1950 from Gilbert (1912–2006), Henry Bohun starts work at the London law firm of Horniman, Birley and Craine at an unusually dramatic time. A month before his first day, firm founder Abel Horniman, a stickler for organization, was found dead at his desk, pen in hand. Horniman's son, Bob, who's catching up with correspondence, finds a letter relating to client Marcus Smallbone from another law office that was trying to contact him in connection with a trust. But when the sealed box that was supposed to contain the documents relating to that trust was opened, Smallbone's corpse was found instead. Chief Inspector Hazlerigg, who has worked with a friend of Bohun's, hopes that Bohun will be able to provide him with insider information—though his superior warns Hazlerigg not to be "like that mug in the detective story who confides all his best ideas to a friendly sort of character who turns out to be the murderer in Chapter Sixteen." Gilbert expertly combines fairly planted clues and self-referential humor. Well-drawn personalities and plausible twists are additional pluses. This high-quality whodunit deserves a wide readership."

Lorac, ECR. [Murder in the Mill Race](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). "Never make trouble in the village." You may know about your neighbor's sins and shortcomings, but you must never name them aloud. It'd make trouble, and small societies want to avoid trouble. When Dr Raymond Ferens moves to a practice at Milham in the Moor in North Devon, he and his wife are enchanted with the beautiful hilltop village lying so close to moor and sky. At first, they see only its charm, but soon they begin to uncover its secrets—envy, hatred, and malice. Everyone says that Sister Monica, warden of a children's home, is a saint—but then her body is found drowned in the mill-race, and the villagers do their best to keep their dark secrets to themselves...

#### Others:

Bagley, Desmond. [Bahama Crisis](#) (Collins \$12.99). Most of Bagley's nifty thrillers were still in print when I opened *The Pen* in 1989. I'm glad to see some filtering back. Here Tom Mangan was a sharply successful entrepreneur who lured the super-rich to his luxury hotels in the sun-soaked Bahamas. Then violent tragedy struck: his own family disappeared, and a series of misfortunes, accidents and mysterious epidemics began to drive the tourists away and wreck Mangan's livelihood. Fatally, he becomes determined to confront his enemy – and the hunt is on...

Orczy, Baroness. [Case of Miss Elliott](#) (Steerforth \$12.95). The Teahouse Detective, Volume 2. “Mysteries! There is no such thing as a mystery in connection with any crime, provided intelligence is brought to bear upon its investigation,” says a rather down-at-heel elderly gentleman to young Polly Burton of the *Evening Observer*, in the corner of the ABC teashop on Norfolk Street one afternoon. Once she has forgiven him for distracting her from her newspaper and luncheon, Miss Burton discovers that her interlocutor is as brilliantly gifted as he is eccentric: able to solve mysteries that have made headlines and baffled the finest minds of the police without once leaving his seat in the teahouse.

Start with [The Old Man in the Corner](#) (\$14.95), the first collection of mysteries featuring the Teahouse Detective—a contemporary of Sherlock Holmes, with a brilliant mind and waspish temperament to match that of Conan Doyle’s creation. Golden Age mysteries from the author of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*

Wright, LR. [The Suspect](#) (Felony & Mayhem \$14.95). This is the first novel in the Canadian writer’s award-winning series (Edgar, Arthur Ellis, etc). Karl Alberg of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, begins as a newcomer to the small village of Sechelt, a posting that he imagines will be a respite from his stressful life as a big-city cop. As the series progresses, his investigations uncover the dark side of idyllic small towns, some secrets bleak enough to make a man yearn for some nice straightforward urban crime. Alberg’s love interest, the librarian Cassandra Mitchell, is a fascinating character in her own right. [9 Alberg’s](#) are now available.

#### WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE LONG AUGUST DAYS?

*Try writing something, anything. And whom might you consult?*

King, Stephen. [On Writing](#) (\$17). I stole this rave from someone: “While on vacation last week I devoured this 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of a classic. It is extraordinary! Part autobiography, part style manual, part love letter to wife and family, and a whole lot of genuine pep talk to the aspiring writer, it is truly remarkable. I highly recommend for the professional or hobby writer of any kind (I intend to begin assigning it to my grad students, as only 50 pages or so is fiction-specific), whether you happen to enjoy King’s fiction or not. For those who do respect his work it has a whole other dimension, providing fascinating back-story to his life and approach to his craft. I count myself in both categories. King has certainly written some clunkers but some books (particularly *Doctor Sleep*) are beautifully written and compelling, and his imagery has had huge influence on modern culture. I was so excited about this book.”

Watson, Cecilia. [Semicolon](#) (Harper \$19.99). A page-turning, existential romp through the life and times of the world’s most polarizing punctuation mark. “Delightful.” —Mary Norris, *The New Yorker*. Stephen King, Hemingway, Vonnegut, and Orwell detest it. Herman Melville, Henry James, and Rebecca Solnit love it. But why? When is it effective? Have we been misusing it? Should we even care? Watson charts the rise and fall of this infamous punctuation mark, which for years was the trendiest one in the world of letters. But in the nineteenth century, as grammar books became all the rage, the rules of how we use language became both stricter and more confusing, with the semicolon a prime victim. Taking us on a breezy journey through a range of examples—from Milton’s manuscripts to Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letters from Birmingham Jail” to Raymond Chandler’s *The*

*Big Sleep*—Watson reveals how traditional grammar rules make us less successful at communicating with each other than we’d think. Even the most die-hard grammar fanatics would be better served by tossing the rule books and learning a better way to engage with language. “Great writers,” Watson says, “break the rules that would dole out semicolons as if they were ‘a controlled substance.’” Her message is that “punctuation is not about limits; it’s about making language richer.”—*NY Times*

Johnson, Kirk Wallace. [The Feather Thief](#) (\$17). For browsing: “This is a completely fascinating look at the art of Victorian salmon fly tying, and the lengths to which one enthusiast went to obtain exotic bird feathers in 2009. I especially enjoyed the historical chapters that went back to the 19th century expeditions of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace.”

#### OUR AUGUST LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Benn, James R. [Solemn Graves](#) (\$16.95). The D-Day invasion has so often been chronicled. What makes Benn’s 13<sup>th</sup> Billy Boyle investigation so special is the war theater—Normandy, being gradually liberated as the Germans horrifically defend it. And the role of the Ghost Army. It’s now summer, 1944, and US Army Investigator Boyle is assigned the case of Major David Jerome, the commanding officer of a signals company, who has been found with his throat slit in a *pressoir* [apple pressing/cider farm]. A glass near the body with a residue of morphine convinces Boyle that the murderer spiked the major’s drink to before killing him. Oddly, troops from Jerome’s company who were at the crime scene when Boyle arrived don’t hang around to be questioned—and Boyle must also account for the presence of young Yvonne Virot, a mute woman living in the villa, whose clothing is drenched with blood. Complicating Billy’s task are a morally suspect Resistance leader and the *pressoir*’s owner, a widow whose code name in the Resistance—Corday—evokes the excesses of the French Revolution. The opening of this can be hard to follow but it becomes clear when we recognize what we’re dealing with here. The twist in the end is a real surprise and reinforces the whole sleight-of-hand scenario. “Benn has never been better at integrating a whodunit plot line with a realistic depiction of life on or near the battlefield.” You can read this gem without ever having read a previous series entry. Or you can give yourself a huge treat and [read Benn](#) all the way through. And mark your calendar for October 15 when he joins Martin Limon to sign [When Hell Struck Twelve](#) (Soho \$27.95).

Braithwaite, Oyinkan. [My Sister the Serial Killer](#) (\$14.95). This debut from a Nigerian author is both sly and wrenching—and bloody. Korede, a nurse, has just received a call from her younger sister. Ayoola has just killed her third boyfriend and a quick Google search reveals that 3 murders = serial killer. What is a big sister to do? “Korede puts up with so much from her sister Ayoola (the serial killer). Braithwaite tells a dark, lively, and funny story of how begrudgingly cleaning up after someone else’s deadly habits is just one of those things one does for family.” But it’s more than that as Ayoola’s history is revealed. Still, there’s no ducking the fact that it will all come to grief if not in Braithwaite’s story. Our November 2018 First Mystery Book of the Month went on to become a bestseller and is now in paperback.

☒ Cleeves, Ann. [Wild Fire](#) (\$17.99). The 8<sup>th</sup> and final Shetland Mystery by Gold Dagger winner Cleeves. Drawn in by the repu-

tation of the Shetlands, a new English family moves to the area, eager to give their autistic son a better life and make a new start. But a spate of poison pen letters (!) and then a young nanny's body found hanging in the barn of their home, and rumors of her affair with the husband begin to spread like wild fire. With suspicion raining down on the family, DI Jimmy Perez is called in to investigate. His on-off lover and boss Willow Reeves, who will run the case, is dispatched from Inverness. Perez is already facing the most disturbing investigation of his career, when Willow drops a real bombshell.... Cleaves, a veteran and inventive writer who has movingly and beautifully described the Shetlands, says this 8<sup>th</sup> Shetland Mystery is the last she will write but the IMHO knockout TV series will continue. Long experience has taught me when authors say "last"—it often isn't. I recommend all the [Shetland Island Mysteries](#) and note that there is a new TV season available as well. The US edition is our September British Crime Book of the Month.

Evans, Mary Anna. [Catacombs](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.95). A deafening explosion rocks a historic Oklahoma City hotel, sending archaeologist Faye Longchamp-Mantooth crashing to the marble floor of the lobby. Faye is in town for a conference celebrating indigenous arts, but is soon distracted by the aftermath of the explosion, which cracks open the old hotel's floor to reveal subterranean chambers that had housed Chinese immigrants a century before. Faye is fascinated by the tunnels, which are a time capsule back to the early 20th century—but when the bodies of three children are discovered deep beneath the city, her sense of discovery turns to one of dread.... Evans appears on September 28 at The Pen to sign the hardcover [Catacombs](#) (\$26.95) as well as, if you wish, this paperback. Both release in August.

Gran, Sara. [The Infinite Blacktop](#) (\$16). "PI Claire DeWitt is headed for Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2011 when she's nearly killed by a crazed driver in Oakland. She manages to limp away from the scene, wondering who would have wanted to kill her. Flash back to Brooklyn in 1985, when Claire was the world's greatest teenage detective. As a devotee of Jacques Silette, the French author of an obscure book called *Détection*, she and best friends Tracy and Kelly solved many cases. That same year Tracy vanished without a trace, and her disappearance has haunted Claire ever since. Back in 2011, Claire has discovered a lead in Las Vegas involving a rare comic book that may hold the key to what happened to Tracy. In a third narrative strand, set in Los Angeles in 1999, the 20-something Claire, who needs hours to earn her PI license, takes on a cold case involving the strange deaths of two artists. Mixing classic tropes of teen detective fiction with elements of eastern philosophy and a profound sense of the absurd, Gran takes readers on an unforgettable journey."—*PW* Starred Review on a book heaped with praise by Patrick. The first two: [The City of the Dead](#); [The Bohemian Highway](#) (\$15.95 each).

Greaney, Mark. [Mission Critical](#) (\$17). CIA contract agent Court Gentry (aka the Gray Man), who has received a last-minute summons to Langley, is picked up by a CIA Gulfstream in Zurich. The plane stops in Luxembourg City, where a team of CIA agents boards with a hooded prisoner. The next stop is an English air base, where the Americans are to hand over the prisoner to MI6 for interrogation about a possible mole at Langley. On landing, gunmen mow down the two transaction parties on the tarmac, grab the prisoner, and drive him away in a van. Court pursues the van in a powered glider he commandeers. Meanwhile in the

U.S., Court's love interest, former Russian intelligence officer Zoya Zakharova, is being questioned at a CIA safe house. When the safe house comes under attack, Zoya is the only one in the house to escape. Are the two assaults related? Intense scenes with higher body counts follow, underlining once again that Greaney knows what military action fans want and delivers in spades. This is a generous 513 action-studded pages and while it is a standalone I'd recommend reading an earlier [Gray Man](#) or two as beneficial, especially the last one, [Agent in Place](#)

Johnson, Craig. [Depth of Winter](#) (\$16). Sheriff Walt Longmire bulls his way to Mexico where ruthless killer Tomás Bidarte holds Walt's grown daughter, Cady, captive in a remote mountain compound in the middle of the Chihuahua desert. Fortunately, one of his allies on this suicidal mission, a blind man known as the Seer, thinks to pass Walt off as real-life retired NFL star Bob Lilly, a ruse that works for a while and is based on Walt's giant size. Once Walt and his team arrive at the compound, the trouble really begins as Walt lurches from one dire situation to another. Humorous asides and witty dialogue provide welcome relief from the often grim circumstances in which Walt finds himself, including a stint in the stocks during a Day of the Dead celebration and the climactic confrontation with Bidarte, who plays matador to Walt's bull. Johnson returns on September 19 in a ticketed event at The Pen to sign [Land of Wolves](#) (Viking \$28), with Walt neck deep among the Absaroka County Basques.

MacNeal, Susan Elia. [The Prisoner in the Castle](#) (\$17). John Charles reviews: Forbidden Island is where the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) sends all of its problems. Of course, the SOE doesn't tell the agents it sends there the truth, but instead tells these future prisoners that they are being sent to the out-of-the-way island off the coast of Scotland for "special training." As the SOE's latest problem, Maggie Hope hates being on Forbidden Island. Maggie wants to be back in the thick of things doing her part to help win the war for the Allies instead of spending her days slowly being driven mad by boredom. However, any thoughts of ennui are soon banished when first one, then another, and then another of the small group of carefully trained agents on Forbidden Island begin dying. Agatha Christie fans will especially appreciate the deft way in which MacNeal tips her cap to the Queen of Crime's [And Then There Were None](#) (\$14.99), and the inventive manner in which MacNeal utilizes that classic mystery as inspiration for her own cleverly crafted storyline. [Order the whole series](#)

Manning, Max. [The Victim](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99). British author Manning, the author of [Don't Look Now](#) (\$15.99) explores the life-altering consequences that can ensue from split-second decisions. Connor Norton, a vicious psychopath, accosts Gem Golding, a public relations executive, outside a London convenience store, demanding her car keys and forcing her to the ground. From that point, the author portrays two vastly different versions of the future depending on whether Gem opts to act as "Gem, the Warrior" or as "Gem, the Victim." Characters affecting both future paths include DI Elliot Day, just demoted from Scotland Yard to the Hackney CID, who desperately wants to solve this apparently simple carjacking; Gem's boyfriend, Drew Bentley, a control freak who exploits Gem's carjacking incident to manipulate her while concealing a past relationship; and journalist Matt Revell, who uses Gem's story to further his career. The storytelling technique of manipulating the alternative story

lines up to the shocking ending irritated more than it seduced me, but for a portrait of a psychopath this is hard to beat. We are all fans of MW Craven's [Black Summer](#) (Constable \$46 Signed) which is another super chiller. The Brits have upped their psycho game this summer.

✂ Pearl, Matthew. [The Dante Chamber](#) (\$16). Five years after a series of Dante-inspired killings stunned Boston, a politician is found in a London park with his neck crushed by an enormous stone device etched with a verse from the Divine Comedy. When other shocking deaths erupt across the city, all in the style of the penances Dante memorialized in Purgatory, poet Christina Rossetti fears her missing brother, the artist and writer Dante Gabriel Rossetti, will be the next victim. The unwavering Christina enlists poets Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, and Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes to decipher the literary clues, and together these unlikely investigators unravel the secrets of Dante's verses to find Gabriel and stop the killings. Racing between the mansions of the elite and the seedy corners of London's underworld, they descend further into the mystery. "Displaying extensive knowledge of the period and the writers, Pearl builds an intricate, well-layered plot... His focus on Christina among several imposing male writers... is also a refreshing choice and produces a complex, appealing character. A thoroughly entertaining excursion to the literary England of the late 19th century with some ink-stained amateur detectives." — *Kirkus* Starred Review

Penny, Louise. [Kingdom of the Blind](#) (\$16.99). "This starts as a small-town mystery and becomes something grander and more frightening; Penny has upped her thrills-to-pain *au chocolat* ratio. As the first snowflakes of a major storm start to fall, Chief Superintendent Gamache is standing in front of a crooked house in the middle of the woods, unsure of whom he will find inside. Curiosity is what brings him here after receiving a vague invitation in the mail. But is there danger waiting beyond the door? It's what Gamache has been trained to anticipate. Currently suspended from his *Sûreté* post during the investigation into the controversial events of *Glass Houses* (2017), Gamache must remember he's here on unofficial business. He and two others who arrive at the house learn that they've been named executors of a will belonging to a woman they never knew in life. Stranger still, the woman, who called herself the Baroness, has left millions to her three children, money everyone is shocked to hear about. Her secretiveness was fueled by generations of family bitterness and resentment. And though it may seem like Gamache has all the time in the world to dive into this dark history, his attention is in fact divided: The deadly opioid that slipped untraced into Montreal under Gamache's watch is expected to hit the streets any day—a most unsettling thought...."—*Kirkus* Reviews

✂ Purser-Hallard, Philip. [Sherlock Holmes—The Vanishing Man](#) (Titan \$14.95). Purser-Hallard delivers one of the cleverest locked room mysteries ever tackled by Sherlock Holmes. In 1896, Thomas Kellway, who asserts that he has telekinetic powers (and that he has been "remotely influenced since before his birth by superior intelligences" from the planet Venus), approaches Sir Newnham Speight, the chairman of the Society for the Scientific Investigation of Psychical Phenomena, who has offered £10,000 to anyone who can demonstrate a psychic ability to the satisfaction of the society's leaders. In a controlled experiment, Kellway is locked one night in a small room next to a second locked room

containing a ball in a box that he will attempt to move with his mind. Despite Kellway's room being watched at regular five-minute intervals by two-person teams, he somehow vanishes, leaving Speight to wonder whether he's encountered a genuine claimant—or a brilliant hoaxer. Speight enlists Holmes and Watson to uncover the truth. John Dickson Carr and Anthony Boucher fans will be gratified at the logical explanation the master rationalist devises. This ranks among the top novel-length Sherlock Holmes pastiches.

Sherlockians will be pleased to know about [Mycroft and Sherlock: The Empty Birdcage](#) (Titan \$25.99) for September and Nicholas Meyer's return with [The Adventure of the Peculiar Protocols](#) (St Martins \$25.99) Signed here on October 30.

#### YOU ARE HOME...

Turk, Evan. [You Are Home: An Ode to the National Parks](#) (Atheneum \$18.99). "A stunning ode to our National Parks, this book is a gorgeous introduction to the many majestic natural places in the US. Even more impressive is the back matter which informs of the history of how these parks came to be owned by the government and made public, including the theft and forcible removal of Native peoples. An excellent addition to geography and history shelves, and a beautiful book to look through. "You can tell that a book is doing something right when you get to the end, see the map of all the National Parks in America, and start typing into your Google Maps the nearest ones to determine the distance from your home. For young readers (4-8) or older.

#### SOME NEW BOOKS FOR AUGUST

Abbott, Karen. [The Ghosts of Eden Park: The Bootleg King, the Women Who Pursued Him, and the Murder That Shocked Jazz-Age America](#) (Crown \$28). The Indie Next Pick: "This true crime story reads like a great murder mystery and will have you hooked from the start. Wonderful research pulls you right into the story, in which readers are introduced to George Remus, a bootlegging lawyer/millionaire during the prohibition Jazz Age, and Mabel Walker Willebrandt, who is given the job of prosecutor because the corrupt U.S. Attorney's office doesn't think she will pose a threat to their relationship with Remus. Willebrandt will prove them wrong. The tension, greed, and flair of *The Ghosts of Eden Park* make this the best nonfiction book of the summer!"

Adler-Olsen, Jussi. [The Washington Decree](#) (\$16). Karen reviews: "This standalone title opens with a Foreword by the author stating 'nothing is eternal ... mighty empires come and go.' He's chosen the United States as a platform to illustrate this concept. In 1992, Governor Bruce Jansen sponsors a quiz program with three winners – Rosalie Lee, an African American single mother, T. Perkins, sheriff of a small bucolic town, and Dorothy 'Doggie' Rogers, daughter of wealthy hotelier, Bud Curtis. The prize is a trip to China where the winners, plus an NBC reporter, and the relative of a staff member look forward to a celebration. The joy is quickly terminated when Jansen's wife is murdered. Sixteen years later, Jansen is running for President of the United States. With his second young, pregnant wife beside him, his charismatic presence offers hope for victory. Although Doggie's father, Bud Curtis, is opposed to Jansen's politics, he sees an opportunity in opening his hotel to a lavish celebration on election night. In the chaos of the celebration, Jansen's wife is shot and killed. In the harrowing aftermath, Curtis is accused of being the shooter... Here's an unusual book by the Danish bestseller.

Barrett, Lorna. [A Killer Edition](#) (Berkley \$26). The residents of Stoneham, N.H., a book lover's dream village, are gearing up for the Great Booktown Bake-Off. Even Tricia Miles, who owns the mystery bookstore Haven't Got a Clue, decides to enter the contest, not that she's a master baker. Boredom has set in since she promoted the efficient Pixie Poe to assistant manager, so Tricia is looking for new hobbies, including gardening. When Tricia and fellow shopkeeper Joyce Widman find the body of irascible Vera Olson in Joyce's garden, a "pitchfork thrust through its midsection," Tricia once again turns amateur sleuth. What at first appears to be a matter of tension between Vera and a neighbor leads Tricia to a more serious matter.... 13<sup>th</sup> in a cozy series.

Beck, Haylen. [Lost You](#) (Crown \$26). Married couple Libby and Mason Reese spend money and suffer years of heartache trying to have a baby. When they finally succeed, Mason tells her, "I can't do this." He walks out on the marriage. Three years later, Libby and son, Ethan, are vacationing at a resort. Ethan goes missing. Security is alerted. The police are called in. The authorities find him, but he's with a woman who looks just like Libby. The woman, Anna Lenihan, swears the child is hers. Both Libby and Anna have valid claims to Ethan, but neither of the women is a DNA match to him. Beck presents the stories of Libby and Anna without judgment, making them equally sympathetic and righteous in their thinking and actions. He shows that, although they aren't blood related, their lives have much more in common than their desperate desire for motherhood. Libby came from humble beginnings; the same goes for Anna. They even have similar problems with their mothers, and neither wants to put the child through what they endured. Tight writing, suspense, action and multiple moral dilemmas keep this story moving and questioning what the right thing is for the child. Stuart Neville, writing as Beck, harks to a dilemma that lies at the heart of Dennis Lehane's *Gone, Baby, Gone* (controversially resolved in both book and movie).

Buckhanon, Kalisha. [Speaking of Summer](#) (Counterpoint \$26). One night in December, Autumn Spencer's twin sister, Summer, walked to the roof of their shared apartment building and disappeared. Three months later, Summer's name is still not listed on New York's missing persons report, and Autumn is making no progress in finding out what happened to her sister that evening, despite increasingly panicked attempts to find answers. Was she kidnapped? Murdered? Did she jump? And if so, what happened to her body? As the narrative unfolds, it morphs from the story of a missing person into something bigger and more deeply disturbing. Autumn's desperation to close the 'gaping hole of not knowing' becomes an obsession, consuming her every waking moment even as her work, relationship, health and friendships begin to fray. "Buckhanon handles this shift so delicately that it is almost easy to forget that the story was ever about Summer, and not Autumn. *Speaking of Summer* is Autumn's story, Autumn's obsession and Autumn's keen desire to understand a world that dismisses the humanity of Black women, and the men who kill them, which takes center stage as Buckhanon's expertly paced novel builds to an unexpected conclusion.» —Kerry McHugh,

Chatfield, Tom. [The Gomorrah Gambit](#) (Morrow \$27). British technology philosopher Chatfield makes his fiction debut with an accomplished and chilling high-tech thriller. In the ominous opening chapter, a disillusioned publicist for the jihadist cause, who's caught in a battle in Syria in 2014, takes a photo of his

cousin's corpse and thinks: "Every life, every death, is now a message. Just add social media and wait for the shares to begin." Later that year in London, hacker and social misfit Azi Bello gets an urgent message from Sigma, an online friend who sends him documents that suggest 50 Islamic martyrs are actually alive and preparing for a massive terrorist attack called Gomorrah. Within minutes of the communication with Sigma, Azi—a self-taught expert on the dark web—gets a visit from Anna, a member of an unnamed intelligence service who knows every detail of his life and uses Azi to ensnare Sigma. Once Azi meets Sigma, the complex game is afoot, moving to Berlin and Greece and ultimately to California's Silicon Valley and a superwealthy think tank, the Existential Institute. Chatfield writes with real skill, intelligence, and, despite the grim story, humor.

Carcattera, Lorenzo. [Tin Badges](#) (Ballantine \$28). It's been quite awhile since we've had a NY cop novel from Carcattera. He's launching a series with retired New York police detective Tank Rizzo, a "tin badge" called upon to work a cold case, targets a big-time cocaine dealer. Rizzo's life is complicated. He's seeing the daughter of Carmine Tramonti, a restaurateur who once controlled betting activities for the mob. And following the death of his long-estranged brother, Jack, and Jack's wife in a car crash, Rizzo adopts his angry teenage nephew, Chris, who threatens to pull back the blinds on a dark family secret harbored by the ex-cop. Eventually, Chris, a computer whiz, becomes part of an offbeat task force force Rizzo puts together to nail the dealer, Gonzo. (Introducing a plotline that will play out in an announced sequel).

✠Cleverly, Barbara. [Invitation to Die](#) (Soho \$26.95). 2<sup>nd</sup> in a 1920s series featuring Cambridge's DI John Redfyre who of course has a wartime background. I have not yet read this and reviews are not enthusiastic for this as compared to her excellent Joe Sandilands series.

Cotterill, Coli. [The Second Biggest Nothing](#) (Soho \$26.95). An interesting read alongside the new Rhys Bowen (see Event Books) in that Dr. Siri Paiboun, having received a scary threat in 1980 Vientiane which is preparing a celebration of five years under Communist rule, takes us back to his youth and into 1932 Paris where colonialists who exploited Southeast Asia are pretty smug and one, now the President, is assassinated. Siri witnessed the backup hit man who may now be a possible author of the vow of vengeance, delivered by tying a note to the tail of his dog. With much current talk about "structured racism" today both these books are timely. The bonus here as one Starred Reviews put it is, "The eccentric Siri, who some believe to be possessed by a thousand-year-old shaman, has rarely been funnier or more astute. Cotterill is writing at the top of his game."

Davis, Fiona. [Chelsea Girls](#) (Dutton \$27). Growing up in the city, Hazel Ripley and her brother, Ben, are expected to follow in their actor father's footsteps, especially after he has a stroke that effectively ends his career. When Ben is killed in a plane crash in World War II, the burden of creative accomplishment falls solely on Hazel. Frustrated with her streak of understudy jobs and her mother's constant nagging, she signs up for a United Service Organizations tour and finds herself in Italy, suddenly thrust onstage in the company of several other young women. Hazel's friendship with fellow actress Maxine, and the experiences they share, will shape the next several decades of both their

lives. After returning from Italy, the women go their separate ways for several years. But when their paths cross again at the Chelsea in 1950, Hazel has written her first play, based on the wartime experiences she shared with Maxine. As Hazel struggles to get her play staged on Broadway, both women come up against the growing specter of McCarthyism and the insidious accusations plaguing the theater world. Davis tells her story from both Hazel's and Maxine's perspectives, highlighting the contrasts between them. But what I find interesting is the unfolding of why one woman became so fervently ensnared in Communism and as a spy for Russia.

Davis, Lindsey. [A Capitol Death](#) (St Martins \$27.99). An inauspicious death on the eve of Emperor Domitian's planned return to Rome in 89 C.E. sets the stage for Davis's superior seventh outing for informer Flavia Alba. The powers that be fear that the capricious Domitian will lash out, violently, after the possibly unnatural death of Gabinius, a worker helping to prepare for the imperial triumph to celebrate the emperor's recent military victory in the east. Gabinius apparently jumped to his death from the top of the Tarpeian Rock. But the initial consensus that he was a suicide is shattered by a witness who insists that a second person was near Gabinius at the time. When the question of what actually happened falls to Roman official Tiberius Manlius Faustus, he passes the inquiry on to his wife, Flavia, who finds no shortage of people who wished the dead man ill. Davis does her usual brilliant job of integrating the history of the period, warts and all (Domitian's ostensible victory was actually the result of his paying off the enemy's leaders), with a fast-paced and fair whodunit.

✎Delaney, JP. [The Perfect Wife](#) (Random \$27). Abbie wakes in a hospital bed with no memory of how she got there. The man by her side explains that he's her husband. He's a titan of the tech world, the founder of one of Silicon Valley's most innovative startups. He tells Abbie she's a gifted artist, a doting mother to their young son, and the perfect wife. Five years ago, she suffered a terrible accident. Her return from the abyss is a miracle of science, a breakthrough in artificial intelligence that has taken him half a decade to achieve. But as Abbie pieces together memories of her marriage, she begins questioning her husband's motives—and his version of events. Can she trust him when he says he wants them to be together forever? And what really happened to her, half a decade ago?

Ephron, Hallie. [Careful What You Wish For](#) (Harper \$26.99). I was drawn to this novel of suspense having once been married to a hoarder. There are all sorts of addictions that are hard for a partner to cope with. This one drove me away. And that is the question for newly minted professional organizer Emily Harlow, owner of Freeze-Frame Clutter Kickers. Emily likes to keep her things in order, but lawyer husband Frank loves to hit the yard sales on the weekends and has filled their home with stuff. One would think Emily could fix the issue of clutter at her own house, but she has a rule that you can only organize your own things, so Frank's finds are off-limits. While working, she meets Mrs. Murphy and Quinn Newell. Mrs. Murphy hires Emily to go through the possessions of her recently deceased husband, while Quinn Newell hires her company to declutter her garage. Emily crosses professional boundaries by getting a little tipsy during her initial consultation with Quinn. They both joke about getting rid of their sloppy spouses.... No, this isn't an update of *Strangers on*

*a Train*. It's a Trust No One drama, and well wrought by novelist and critic Ephron. How you feel about clutter may color your reading of it.

Fossum, Karin. [The Whisperer](#) (Houghton \$24). I have to quote the *NY Times Book Review* again: "Ragna Reigel takes the same bus and sits in the same seat ("by the window three seats back from the driver") every day on her way to and from work at a supermarket on the outskirts of the small Norwegian city of Kirkelina, where she's lived since childhood. She buys the same groceries at the same small Turkish shop in her neighborhood, and makes the same simple meals for dinner. "Her world had to be small and manageable, because then she was in control." Ragna has earned the right to her eccentricities. Her vocal cords were damaged years ago in a botched operation, leaving her with an ugly scar and the inability to speak above a whisper. With no friends or family, aside from a neglectful son who lives in Berlin, she has retreated into a cocoon of loneliness. What, then, has this sadly isolated woman ever done to cause someone to send her anonymous death threats? The first message left in her mailbox reads: "You are going to die." There are more to come, but the first one says it all. "The message was concise, that she was going to die, and that was true enough. Someone had just felt the need to point it out." Before that mystery is resolved, Ragna will find herself in prison being interrogated by Konrad Sejer, the astute and caring detective in Fossum's psychologically incisive series (translated this time by Kari Dickson)." Fossum was once scheduled to visit us but the publisher felt that to send a Norwegian to Phoenix in July or August was too risky!

Fry, Stephen. [Mythos](#) (Chronicle Books \$29.95). As a kid I read and essentially memorized Bullfinch's *Age of Fable* by the fifth grade, gaining a knowledge of Greek mythology which has informed my reading all my life. Here are Greek myths, stylishly retold by Stephen Fry. The legendary writer, actor, and comedian breathes life into ancient tales, from Pandora's box to Prometheus's fire, and transforms the adventures of Zeus and the Olympians into emotionally resonant and deeply funny stories, without losing any of their original wonder. "Classical artwork inspired by the myths and learned notes from the author offer rich cultural context. This collectible volume, complete with a textured case and full-color art throughout," says the publisher. You can think of this as Rick Riordan for grownups.

Goldin, Megan. [The Escape Room](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Sylvie and three other Stanhope higher-ups are in the lobby of an unfamiliar building in the South Bronx, where each has been invited by HR to attend an unscheduled Friday-night meeting. Among the four invitees is their boss, Vincent, who has also received a text telling him to bring everyone to the 80th floor for some sort of team-building activity. As soon as the four bankers enter the elevator, the doors shut and the car goes black before it starts to climb. When it stops, a monitor on the wall displays a message: "Welcome to the escape room. Your goal is simple. Get out alive." It isn't that simple; bloodshed seems inevitable. Whether you root for this ruthless quartet or for the person who ensnared them in a kickass variation on the locked-room mystery, you'll enjoy the fast pace and the depiction of career climbing and cut-throat competition, betrayals and strategies... and maybe summon up some sympathy for the entrapped who are, basically, only human.. As Sylvie, one of Stanhope's disillusioned highfliers, notes at one

point, “I always thought the only way out of this team was in a box.” In most of *The Escape Room*’s odd-numbered chapters, a roving point of view reports the Wall Streeters’ thoughts as they attempt to solve a half-dozen puzzles presented to them. This shrewd, brilliantly structured thriller doubles as a takedown of corporate culture.

☞Gregory, Philippa. [Tidelands](#) (Atria \$27.99). I was a fan of Gregory’s historical fiction before she became immersed in the Tudors and all their wars and drama. So I’m delighted she is starting a new series focused not on the glamour of royals and their courts but on the story of an ordinary 17<sup>th</sup> Century woman, Alinor, a not quite widow struggling to raise two children in the south coast’s marshy landscape. And she’s only in her twenties. One day she meets a young priest and in helping him reach the safety of the manor in this midsummer of 1648 when crown and parliament are duking it out for control of England, she gains a slight hold on a way forward. But then, as tides turn, what she grasped slips and we have to wait to see what the next chapter in a planned lengthy series brings. I was immersed in Alinor’s story and urge you to grab this and become so too.

Handler, David. [The Man in the White Linen Suit](#) (Harper \$15.99). Hoagy Carmichael has finally rediscovered his voice and is making progress on what he hopes will be his long-awaited second novel. Then Hoagy receives a call from his literary agent asking if he can meet with publishing’s most ruthless and reviled editor, Sylvia James. After disclosing that aging literary genius Addison James—also Sylvia’s father and main client—has not in fact written his last two bestselling historical sagas, Sylvia reveals her suspicions that Addison’s assistant—the true author—has run away with their most recent manuscript and is holding it for ransom. With clattering claims of a mugging, a stolen manuscript, and three murders, now it’s up to Hoagy and his short-legged sidekick Lulu to unravel this baffling, bizarre case which is our **August Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** as selected by John Charles and me.

Hannah, Darci. [Cherry Scones and Broken Bones](#) (Midnight Ink \$15.99). Whitney Bloom, the manager of the Cherry Orchard Inn in Cherry Cove, Wis., is less than enthusiastic about hosting acclaimed artist Silvia Lumiere at the inn. Despite Sylvia mistreating everyone with vicious abandon and running up unpaid bills in every way she can, most townspeople are mesmerized by her. When a body is found at the inn with cherry scones stuffed down the victim’s throat, Whitney falls under suspicion, since she baked the scones. Meanwhile, Whitney is busy juggling the two men in her life: town police officer Jack MacLaren and Tate Vander Hagen, a former boyfriend whom she’s seeing again on a trial basis. Fortunately, Jack doesn’t believe she’s guilty, but Whitney still needs to clear her own name. This rambles but the motive is clever.

☞Harris, Tessa. [A Deadly Deception](#) (Kensington \$26). London, July 17, 1889. Flower seller and sometime sleuth Constance Piper awakes from a deep sleep to hear the streets filled with the cry that Jack the Ripper has struck again. Constance’s first-person narrative alternates with that of Emily Tindall, Constance’s deceased mentor, who psychically guides her from beyond the grave. The victim is Old Alice Mackenzie, worker at Goulston Street Washhouse and a friend of Constance’s mother, Patience. While Constance questions the hardscrabble locals and weighs

the likelihood of Jack the Ripper’s involvement, Emily takes the reader on a wider journey, tackling both the background of the case and the investigation of police detective Thaddeus Hawkins. Hawkins determines that the murder is a copycat killing, the work of someone “connected to the Fenian cause of Irish Home Rule.” Spotting the eerie figure of a woman in black at Alice’s funeral, Constance appeals to Emily to tell her whether this woman is real or a specter, bringing her closer to a solution. The plot broadens out into wider working class issues in a character-driven narrative. 3<sup>rd</sup> in series.

Hart, Ellen. [Twisted at the Root](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Our blogger Lesa reviews: “Gideon Wise and Rashad May seemed happily married until Gideon was murdered in their apartment and Rashad went to prison for his husband’s death. Now, four years later, Rashad’s brother claims to have new evidence and wants Rashad’s former attorney, Ray Lawless, to investigate and reopen the case. Ray’s daughter, restaurateur and part-time private investigator Jane Lawless, agrees to look into the cold case. Suspects include Gideon’s daughter and son-in-law, as well as a family of fine-art consultants, the Chenoweths. Everyone has secrets, but Jane is shocked to discover that her brother, Peter, unexpectedly back from London, has secrets of his own involving the Chenoweth family. This intricately plotted mystery is filled with a cast of lying characters, and Jane has a complex, step-by-step investigation on her hands. Just as in life, the personal relationships are left unresolved. It’s obvious why Mystery Writers of America named Hart a Grand Master. Fans of unreliable narrator mysteries may want to try this one, which has an entire cast of dodgy suspects. Minnesotan Hart has been a trailblazer in LBQT mystery.

Holleeder, Astrid. [Judas](#) (\$17.99) is her chilling inside account of the life and trial of one of the world’s most infamous criminals, her older brother, Willem Holleeder. Holleeder is best known for the 1983 kidnapping of Alfred Heineken, CEO and chairman of the board of directors of the Heineken brewing company. In 2006, Willem was convicted and sent to prison, and his family breathed a sigh of relief—only to be freshly terrified upon his release in 2012. He is now on trial, charged with involvement in multiple assassinations, including that of his former partner and brother-in-law. Astrid and her sister are finally breaking their silence, testifying against Willem and exposing the crimes and horrific violence he has carried out. Astrid spent years as a double agent, earning her brother’s trust in order to obtain information that may put him behind bars for the rest of his life. This true crime is not only the intimate, gruesome account of a haunting family history with a lawless sociopath at its center but a richly drawn exposé of the Dutch criminal underworld.

Indridason, Arnaldur. [The Shadow Killer](#) (\$18). Icelander Eyvindur, a hapless traveling salesman, comes home from a trip to find that his partner, Vera, has left with all her clothes—then disappears himself. Meanwhile, Flóvent, a local policeman, examines the body of Felix Lunden, another salesman, shot by a bullet from an American military pistol, his forehead daubed with a bloody swastika. Lunden’s ethnicity may be important: he was the son of a Danish-German doctor living in Iceland, an important country to the Germans as a “home to some kind of pure Nordic, Germanic race.” That Lunden’s briefcase contains a spy’s cyanide capsule adds intrigue. The investigation takes Flóvent and his English-speaking partner, Thorson, who works with American MPs, into

the heart of a Reykjavik overrun by U.S. soldiers, the sordid German obsession with eugenics, and the two salesmen's lives. "Indridason's voice, straightforward and tinged with sadness, works particularly well here, as he coaxes out tragic secrets and captures the occupation's impact with intriguing period detail, particularly the social impact of Reykjavik's emerging nightlife and the Icelandic Nationalist Party's Nazi legacy." —*Booklist*

Jackson, Joshilyn. [Never Have I Ever](#) (Morrow \$26.99). Jackson weaves a masterful mystery with unexpected twists and turns on every page. The story follows Amy Whey, a Florida housewife with a dark secret safely buried in the past until a stranger shows up for her neighborhood book club and starts a game that hurtles her back into her deepest, most hidden secrets. This story kept me guessing until the very end and still managed to surprise me," says the Indie Next Pick of a beach read about a diving instructor who comfortable life as a devoted wife and mother in Pensacola, Florida. Then one night, a mystifying and charming new neighbor, Angelica Roux, arrives unannounced at Amy's door to join her book club. Roux takes over the book club and shifts the focus to playing a scandalous version of the game Never Have I Ever, and that's when Amy realizes that Roux knows her darkest secret. So what do we have here: a friend? a blackmailer? And what will Amy do either way?

Johansen, Iris. [Smokescreen](#) (Grand Central \$28). Early in this riveting standalone from bestseller Johansen (*Vendetta*), journalist Jill Cassidy, who has recently returned from Maldara, an African nation torn apart by civil war, arranges to see forensic sculptor Eve Duncan, the heroine of the author's main series, at Eve's home in Atlanta. Jill, who witnessed a massacre in the village of Robaku, Maldara, offers Eve the job of reconstructing the skulls of 27 schoolchildren killed by rebel soldiers. Moved by the stories of the victims, Eve agrees after some initial hesitation. Soon after arriving in Robaku, Eve discovers that Jill also wants her to reconstruct the skull of Nils Varak, the mercenary responsible for the uprising that caused the children's deaths. Jill is convinced that the Maldara government is engaged in a cover-up claiming that Nils is dead, and that the body they assert belongs to him is not his. Readers will keep guessing about the complex characters' underlying motivations as the plot races toward the stunning conclusion. Best known for her paranormal romantic suspense, Johansen should win new fans with this realistic page-turner.

Kuang, RF. [The Dragon Republic](#) (Harper \$26.99). In the aftermath of the Third Poppy War, shaman and warrior Rin is on the run: haunted by the atrocity she committed to end the war, addicted to opium, and hiding from the murderous commands of her vengeful god, the fiery Phoenix. Her only reason for living is to get revenge on the traitorous Empress who sold out Nikan to their enemies. With no other options, Rin joins forces with the powerful Dragon Warlord, who has a plan to conquer Nikan, unseat the Empress, and create a new Republic. Rin throws herself into his war. After all, making war is all she knows how to do. But the Empress is a more powerful foe than she appears, and the Dragon Warlord's motivations are not as democratic as they seem. The more Rin learns, the more she fears her love for Nikan will drive her away from every ally and lead her to rely more and more on the Phoenix's deadly power. combines the history of 20th-century China with a gripping world of gods and monsters, to devastating effect. Start with [The Poppy War](#) (\$15.99), rated by many as among the best books of 2018.

Lagercrantz, David. [The Girl Who Lived Twice](#) (Knopf \$27.95). Lisbeth Salander—the fierce, unstoppable girl with the dragon tattoo—has disappeared. She's sold her apartment in Stockholm. She's gone silent electronically. She's told no one where she is. And no one is aware that at long last she's got her primal enemy, her twin sister, Camilla, squarely in her sights. Mikael Blomkvist is trying to reach Lisbeth. He needs her help unraveling the identity of a man who lived and died on the streets in Stockholm—a man who does not exist in any official records and whose garbled last words hinted at possible damaging knowledge of people in the highest echelons of government and industry. In his pocket was a crumpled piece of paper with Blomkvist's phone number on it. Once again, Salander and Blomkvist will come to each other's aid, moving in tandem toward the truths they each seek. In the end, it will be Blomkvist who determines their fate. 6<sup>th</sup> in Stieg Larsson's bestselling series.

Lee, Tosca. [Jade War](#) (Orbit \$26). In the sequel to the World Fantasy Award-winning novel 2017's [Jade City](#) (\$15.99), which kicked off the Green Bone Saga, the Kaul siblings battle rival clans for honor and control over an Asia-inspired fantasy metropolis. On the island of Kekon, the Kaul family is locked in a violent feud for control of the capital city and the supply of magical jade that endows trained Green Bone warriors with supernatural powers they alone have possessed for hundreds of years. Beyond Kekon's borders, war is brewing. Powerful foreign governments and mercenary criminal kingpins alike turn their eyes on the island nation. Jade, Kekon's most prized resource, could make them rich – or give them the edge they'd need to topple their rivals. Lee's story combines political intrigue with sharply choreographed action scenes, but it's a character-driven family drama at its heart. This exciting continuation of the larger story line delivers a satisfying tale and sets the stage for the next installment.

Mackay, Malcolm. [Saviors](#) (Morrow \$17.99). Mackay's novels have been nominated for the Edgar Awards' Best Paperback Original, the CWA John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger, and the Theakston's Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year and after six books, Malcolm shifts gears from Glasgow's morally questionable criminal underworld to a new, fictional city on a loch in northern Scotland, where his protagonist is an unabashedly righteous, well-meaning detective. Darian Ross is a young PI struggling against his family legacy (father in prison, criminal brother) in the independent kingdom of Scotland. In earlier centuries, when the Scottish empire stretched all the way to Central America, Darian's home city was one of the country's busiest trading ports. But Scotland is not what it was, and the docks of Challaid are almost silent. The networks of power and corruption are all that survive of Challaid's glorious past.

Macneal, Elizabeth. [The Doll Factory](#) (Atria \$27). There is hardly an aspect of Victorian London that Macneal has not mastered in her "lush, evocative Gothic which chronicles a sadistic taxidermist's sinister obsession with an impoverished young painter." Macneal's immersive epic stays firmly rooted in historical fact. It isn't a conventional mystery. Lyndsay Faye calls this debut "a harrowing and bewitching adventure....Macneal is clearly engrossed in the Pre-Raphaelite movement and especially in the plight of women who were churned through the gristmill of poverty and spat out again." I add that Macneal is a potter in addition to a new author.

McHugh, Laura. [Wolf Wants In](#) (Spiegel & Grau \$26). In this intelligent thriller set in the opioid-ravaged town of Blackwater, Kansas, Sadie Keller and her sister, Becca, are desperate to know why their normally healthy brother, Shane, suddenly died. They suspect Shane's new wife, Crystle, and her relatives, the drug-dealing Pettits, are to blame. The Blackwater police have closed the case and are now preoccupied with a missing girl whose skull may have been found in the woods. Across town, 18-year-old Henley Pettit knows she will always be tainted by the "knotted threads of her family's misdeeds" if she stays in Blackwater. She worries her clandestine relationship with the scion of Blackwater's wealthiest man will further trap her. Henley desperately wants to start a new life anywhere else, away from her often-missing opioid-addicted mother and the crimes of her uncles. Elegant plotting, finely honed character studies, and lyrical prose draw the women's lives closer as Sadie and Henley deal with their own small-town ennui. This story underlines that told by Julia Keller in her new novel reviewed under Signed Books.

Meacham, Leila. [Dragonfly](#) (Grand Central \$28). At the height of World War II, a handful of idealistic young Americans receive a mysterious letter from the government, asking them if they are willing to fight for their country. The men and women from very different backgrounds—a Texan athlete with German roots, an upper-crust son of a French mother and a wealthy businessman, a dirt-poor Midwestern fly fisherman, an orphaned fashion designer, and a ravishingly beautiful female fencer—all answer the call of duty, but each for a secret reason of her or his own. They bond immediately, in a group code-named Dragonfly. Thus begins a dramatic cat-and-mouse game, as the group seeks to stay under the radar until a fatal misstep leads to the capture and the firing-squad execution of one of their team. But...is everything as it seems, or is this one more elaborate act of spycraft?

Milman, Derek/James Patterson. [Swipe Right for Murder](#) (Little Brown \$17.99). Fellow bookseller John McDougall writes, "I am obsessed with Derek Milman's queer take on *North by Northwest*. From the book starting with a Grindr hookup going horribly wrong to the Drag Race quoting villain that you also sort of root for, I love how unapologetically queer this YA narrative is. Milman's fast-paced thriller mixes LGBT history with a little bit of a revenge fantasy. He keeps the reader guessing along with Aidan as he tries to figure out which side is the right one." Ages 15+

Musso, Guillaume. [The Reunion](#) (Little Brown \$28). 25 years ago, on a French Riviera campus paralyzed by a snowstorm, beautiful 19-year-old Vinca Rockwell ran away with her philosophy teacher after they began a secret affair. For Vinca, "love is everything or nothing." She is never seen again. The once inseparable Manon, Thomas and Maxime — Vinca's best friends — have not spoken since graduation. Back then, under terrible circumstances, the three of them committed a murder and buried the body in the gymnasium wall, the same wall that is about to be demolished to make way for an ultramodern new building. Now, the three friends are about to meet again at their reunion. Will decades of lies unravel to reveal what really happened on that deadly winter night? Where has the missing teacher, Alex, been? You think you know how this will play out and you will be partly right, but then France's #1 bestseller throws a curve ball or two. Love the setting—not Peter Mayle but still, it's the South of France and thus witty, elegant, with whiplash in its zigzags. "This immensely satisfying thriller about a prep school scandal

and three friends' buried secrets had me turning the pages well into the night. *The Reunion* has everything a masterful thriller should: gut-wrenching suspense, a twisting story with blindsiding surprises, and a narrator with a mysterious past. It's no wonder that Guillaume Musso is one of France's most loved, bestselling authors."—Harlan Coben

North, Alex. [The Whisper Man](#) (Celdadon \$26.99). Rave reviews pour in. In the pseudonymous North's superb thriller, a police procedural with supernatural overtones, DI Amanda Beck heads the search for six-year-old Neil Spencer, who has gone missing from the English village of Featherbank. Neil may have been lured from his home by someone who whispered at his window at night, the same m.o. as incarcerated serial child killer Frank Carter (aka the Whisper Man), who was apprehended 20 years earlier by DI Pete Willis. Beck brings in Willis to assist, specifically because he's the only person Carter will talk to. Meanwhile, author Tom Kennedy, still reeling from his wife's death, seeks a fresh start in Featherbank with his seven-year-old son, Jake—a kid who doesn't just see dead people, he hears voices too. Jake talks to a little girl who isn't there and fears "the boy under the floor" in their odd new house. North knits the supernatural and the procedural together while ratcheting up danger. "Readers will have a tough time putting down this truly unnerving tale, with its seemingly unexplainable elements and glimpses of broken and dangerous minds." How can I resist making this **our British Crime Club Book of the Month**? I can't....

Patterson, James/Candice Fox. [The Inn](#) (LittleBrown \$28). The Inn at Gloucester stands alone on the rocky shoreline. Its seclusion suits former Boston police detective Bill Robinson, novice owner and innkeeper. As long as the dozen residents pay their rent, Robinson doesn't ask any questions. Neither does Sheriff Clayton Spears, who lives on the second floor. Then Mitchell Cline arrives, with a deadly new way of doing business. His crew of local killers breaks laws, deals drugs, and brings violence to the doors of the Inn. That's when Robinson realizes, with the help of journalist Susan Solie, that leaving the city is no escape from the reality of evil—or the responsibility for action. Teaming up with Sheriff Spears and two fearless residents, Army veteran Nick Jones and groundskeeper Effie Johnson, Robinson begins a risky defense....

Don't overlook the June Patterson written with David Ellis: [Unsolved](#) (\$28), 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Invisible Series.

Pobi, Robert. [City of Windows](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Here is the book of my heart this month—Patrick's, Karen's, and Rob's too. Brilliant astrophysicist Lucas Page, the distinctive hero of this outstanding series launch from Pobi, used to be an FBI agent who could survey a crime scene and automatically convert the topography to geometric forms and numbers. This ability would allow him, for example, to pinpoint the origin of a gunshot in the middle of a city. Then the loss of a leg, an arm, and an eye in a shoot-out put an end to his FBI career and his first marriage, but his mental acuity remained. Ten years later, Lucas teaches at Columbia University and writes books; he and his second wife are raising five foster children. When Lucas's former FBI partner, Doug Hartke, is fatally shot by a sniper while driving in Midtown Manhattan, he reluctantly agrees to help FBI special agent Brett Kehoe track down the culprit. Lucas quickly determines the sniper's rooftop location, but it was a close to impossible shot, "like trying to thread a needle while riding a mechanical bull set

to Motörhead.” More shootings occur, and the victims’ only connections are law enforcement careers. The tense plot is balanced by the prickly Lucas’s cerebral investigating skills. Our **August Discovery Book of the Month** promises to be Pobi’s breakout thriller and is one of my three top picks for August along with new books by Rob Hart and HG Parry, both reviewed in Signed Books. Which is where Pobi’s brilliant thriller would be found if he didn’t live in Canada.

Ray, Elka. [Divorce is Murder](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95). Shortly after returning to her sleepy hometown on Vancouver Island, Chinese-Canadian divorce lawyer Toby Wong runs into Josh Barton, who broke her heart as a teen at summer camp. Now a wealthy entrepreneur, Josh wants to divorce Tonya, the mean girl who made Toby’s life hell all those years ago. Not long after Toby takes Josh’s case, Tonya is found murdered. Josh is the prime suspect. Together with her fortune-teller mom and her pregnant best friend, Toby sets out to clear Josh, whom she still has a guilty crush on. While he seems equally smitten, can Toby trust him? The handsome cop charged with finding Tonya’s killer doesn’t think so....

✦Royal, Priscilla. [The Twice Hanged Man](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). A new medieval mystery for Prioress Eleanor and her team set in an English border town as Edward I heats up his war with Wales. The story is based on an actual event as you will see if you read the review under Signed books.

Schutt, Bill/JR Finch. [The Darwin Strain](#) (Harper \$26.99). Set in 1948, Schutt and Finch’s excellent third cryptozoological thriller after 2017’s [The Himalayan Codex](#) (\$9.99) takes American zoologist and operative R.J. MacCready to Greece to help his friend, real-life oceanographer Jacques Cousteau, who has an unsettling encounter with a terrifying something off the coast of the island of Santorini. While on a dive with two colleagues to explore the underwater caldera in the area known as the Devil’s Hole, Cousteau watches the two get torn apart by what looks like a black shimmering curtain. Cousteau escapes, but he’s arrested after the authorities don’t believe his cover story that a shark attacked his companions. MacCready manages to arrange Cousteau’s release, and together they find that a previously unknown life form, whose intelligence may rival that of humans, caused the deaths. The stakes rise when the Soviets take an interest in the discovery, which comes just as Cold War tensions are coming to a boil. A detailed and informative afterword lays out the historical and scientific background for the authors’ plausible speculations. Schutt and Finch are high among the successors of Michael Crichton.

Scottoline, Lisa. [Someone Knows](#) (\$17). Scottoline continues her standalone novels rather than those featuring the Rosato law firm with a book exploring the toxic effects of keeping secrets. Two decades ago, teenager Allie Garvey and a bunch of friends were fooling around in the woods when a prank they played went lethally awry. They kept it a secret, but for Allie not getting caught has been the worst of it, and as she heads home for a funeral, she’s ready to confess all. Yet even she isn’t ready when she finally learns what really happened.

Segura, Alex. [Miami Midnight](#) (Polis \$26). I am remiss in not getting to know Segura’s work. It’s on my agenda to change that. Meanwhile here’s a review from *LJ*: “Alcoholic ex-journalist and part-time PI Pete Fernandez suffers through all the familiar devices and conventions of the mystery genre—almost to

a breaking point. His friends die and mysteriously come back. Cohorts disappear for long periods and return; others struggle with addictions. Coincidence abounds. When mob boss Alvaro Mujica ‘hires’ a reluctant Miami-based Pete (and his ex-lover, Kathy) to uncover who killed his son, Javier, Pete and friends become targets of escalating violence and bloodshed. Javier, a talented jazz musician and heavy drug user, flits in and out of the jazz scene and drug world until his murder. Investigating his death puts Pete, Kathy, and crew squarely in the sights of a slew of mob assassins, bodyguards, tough guys, and henchmen. Even Pete’s good friend Dave Mendoza threatens him, as does ex-fiancée, Emily Sprague, not to mention Cuban law enforcement officials. .... Thrills, spills, and chills ratchet ever-upward to a satisfying finale.” Florida ace James W. Hall adds, “Topflight suspense, full of head-snapping twists, but what sets it apart is its richly detailed and engaging characters, especially Pete Fernandez whose troubled past rises up to threaten him and all he holds dear.” And Lisa Lutz calls this, “a fantastic noir.”

✦Shaw, William. [Play with Fire](#) (LittleBrown \$28). A gripping police thriller set in the ever-intriguing world of sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Think *Prime Suspect* 1973 meets a throwback episode of *Law and Order: SVU* set in the ’60s! Shaw is for fans of Tana French and Ian Rankin. Shaw, a former music journalist, is known for his meditative prose and his ability to seamlessly weave together complex story lines with a “brilliantly authentic” sense of place, and he counts Sara Paretsky and C. J. Sansom among his fans. His latest offering does not disappoint. Set in 1969, this story has it all: murder, conspiracy theories, romance, and spies. *PW* writes: “British author Shaw’s solid fourth mystery starring the Metropolitan Police’s Det. Sgt. Cathal Breen opens with the discovery of the body of guitarist Brian Jones, the former Rolling Stone, in his swimming pool.... Fans of Deborah Crombie will be pleased.” And *Booklist* raves: “Teenager’s violent, evasive killer and Cathal and Helen’s evolving, unsettled relationship create a new level of suspense for this must-read series of detail-saturated procedurals.”

Simenon, George. [Maigret and the Ghost](#) (Penguin \$13). During an undercover case, Inspector Maigret’s colleague Lognon is shot and rushed to surgery. The attack took place in a room he was sharing, unbeknownst to his friends and family, with a beautiful woman who has since disappeared. No one knows why he was there, but rumors are swirling that he was working on a case—something big. With all eyes on him, Inspector Maigret retraces Lognon’s secretive last few days and is drawn into the dark side of the Paris art world, where no one is as they seem. The republication program is with this release up to 62 of the Maigrets—you can truly order up the [Inspector’s investigations](#) and binge read!

Spillane, Mickey. [The Last Stand](#) (Titan \$9.95). A tarnished former cop goes on a crusade to find a politician’s killer and avoid the .45-caliber slug with his name on it. A pilot forced to make an emergency landing in the desert finds himself at the center of a struggle between FBI agents, unsavory fortune hunters, and the local Indian tribe to control a mysterious find that could mean wealth and power—or death. Two substantial new works filled with Spillane’s muscular prose and the gorgeous women and two-fisted action the author was famous for, topped off by an introduction from Max Allan Collins describing the history of these lost manuscripts and his long relationship with the writer

who was his mentor, his hero, and for much of the last century the bestselling author in the world. Collins finished up the MS so it would publish for Spillane's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday (he died in 2006).

Stevenson, Benjamin. [Trust Me When I Lie](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99). Australian stand-up comedian Stevenson's fiction debut presents a dark-hued story of a true-crime television producer whose miniseries is instrumental in freeing a wrongly convicted killer, a man who might not be so innocent after all. "I'm not a journalist," Jack Quick tells anyone who'll listen. His TV series on the murder of English backpacker Eliza Dacey, which throws serious doubt on the culpability of Curtis Wade, the restaurateur on whose property Eliza's strangled, mutilated corpse was found, made him just as famous as Curtis. When a new trial sets Curtis free four years after his conviction, what was and is Jack's role. And what new crimes will it spark? Aussie author Jane Harper praises the way Stevenson's debut "takes readers from the cut-throat media landscape to a sleepy town full of secrets." **Warning: the type size for this book is very small, so if your eyes aren't up for that try the ebook or the audiobook.**

Tokarczuk, Olga. [Drive Your Plow Over the Bones](#) (Riverhead \$27). The Indie Next Pick: "Janina is an eccentric middle-aged woman who translates William Blake, studies astrology, and is acutely attuned to the wilderness around her in rural Poland. When hunters and poachers begin to be gruesomely murdered, Janina informs the police that the animals are responsible. As the bodies mount, so does her involvement with the mystery, although her status as a crank and possible madwoman ensures that she's ignored. This is an extraordinary and disturbing tale — a mystery that becomes more complex as the story continues, accompanied by Janina's often witty observations on man, nature, justice, and identity. The ending of this hard-to-categorize novel, a finalist for the 2019 Man Booker International Prize, will knock the breath out of you. Don't miss this excellent translated work from an award-winning writer!"

Vargas, Fred. [This Poison Will Remain](#) (Penguin \$16). If you long for Paris this month—and given the temperatures it's better to read about it than be there—you want to discover Vargas. Her books have won numerous UK Awards and this is the 9<sup>th</sup> in the Commissaire Adamsberg Series. It earns a Starred Review: "In French author Vargas's brilliantly twisty ninth whodunit featuring eccentric Commissaire Jean-Baptiste Adamsberg, Adamsberg, who leads the Paris Serious Crimes Squad, makes quick work of a brutal vehicular homicide case to focus on his hunch that foul play was involved in the deaths of three elderly men, each of whom was bitten by a recluse spider. As its name suggests, this type of spider is not aggressive, and its venom is not usually lethal. But an uptick in such fatalities in France has led to panic that the spiders may have mutated or had their toxin's strength affected by global warming. The expert Adamsberg consults at the Natural History Museum shoots those theories down, and his colleagues are convinced that the age of the victims made them particularly susceptible to venom. The sleuth's doggedness identifies a link among the dead men, which he pursues. That the members of Adamsberg's investigative team are distinct individuals adds depth to the sophisticated and rewarding plot. Vargas deserves a wide American readership." Fans of Cara Black, Georges Simenon, and Mark Pryor, take heed.

Walters, Minette. [The Turn of Midnight](#) (Mira \$27.99). Walters has long lived in Dorset. She began this story in [The Last Hours](#) (\$26.99). It's a remarkable portrait of the Black Death and how one manor, Develish, quarantined itself thanks to the moat its brutal lord had constructed well before 1348, and his own miserable death from the plague. His widow, the much tried Lady Anne, and her faithful servants, have worked out they must stay inside Develish and not take pity on those dying around the manor. But with its stores dwindling and its corrupt steward a threat, they may have no choice but to leave. Dorsetshire was ground zero for the plague which arrived at a port in June. It's now nearing 1349. I found *The Turn of Midnight* to be gripping as well as highly atmospheric.

Ware, Ruth. [The Turn of the Key](#) (Gallery \$27.99). A very modern Gothic set in a smart house in the Scottish highlands. For more see Signed Books: [The Turn of the Key](#) (Harvill \$32).

Waxman, Abbi. [The Bookish Life of Nina Hill](#) (Berkley \$16). The Indie Next Pick: "What a joyous, charming, funny, and beautiful celebration of books and the people who love them. There is so much detail in both the wonderful, wide-ranging cast of characters and in the setting. Quirky in the very best sense of the word. I will certainly return to the world of Nina Hill again and again." The *Washington Post* says of this charmer: "Meet our bookish millennial heroine—a modern-day Elizabeth Bennet, if you will... Waxman's wit and wry humor stand out. She is funny and imaginative, and "Bookish" lands a step above run-of-the-mill romantic comedy fare." Our own John Charles is a fan and I expect to be when I get a moment to sit down and indulge. Booksellers don't get as much free range reading as you might expect.

David Wellington. [The Last Astronaut](#) (Orbit \$15.99). Wellington's terrifying exploration of near-future alien contact layers a shocking "what if" on the bones of current science and space exploration. Presented as a 2057 publication, the novel documents the encounter between the crew of the Orion 7, led by Cmdr. Sally Jansen, and the object dubbed 2I/2044 D1. Following the tragic events of the abortive 2034 Orion 6 Mars mission and the shuttering of the American space program, Jansen is largely retired. Then astrophysicist Sunny Stevens, a deep space researcher for a private corporation, makes the hugely significant discovery of 2I/2044 D1, an object that has altered course in an unnatural way and will come into alignment with Earth's orbit in six months. He brings this knowledge to the remnants of NASA, and Jansen is called back into action as the most eminently qualified leader, despite her remaining guilt and trauma from Orion 6. Gritting her teeth, she gathers her crew and sets out to see what intelligence is driving 2I/2044 D1 and what it portends for Earth. Within its lightless depths, the crew encounters bizarre and nightmarish creatures, and the tension and body count ratchet up. Readers will be riveted—and will want to keep all the lights on.

Whitehead, Colson. [The Nickel Boys](#) (Doubleday \$24.95). The Indie Next Pick: "With every book, Colson Whitehead proves his ever-growing genius. He's a master of the written word and truly one of the greatest living American novelists of our time. I didn't think it was possible for him to write something better than *Underground Railroad*, but he most certainly has — *The Nickel Boys* grabbed me at page one. It's a mystery and a thriller, a treatise on race and social injustice, and a literary masterpiece

all rolled into one. Ellwood and Turner are characters that will stay with me forever. This should be mandatory reading in every classroom.”

Woods, Stuart. [Contraband](#) (Putnam \$28). The great thing about a Stone Barrington is that no matter how horrible the real world, you can open one up and be transported to one where seductive women fall from the sky to Stone’s yacht (she’s a cop subbing as an EMT come to help with a pilot Stone fearlessly rescues from a plane down alongside in the harbor), you can dial up the staff for coffee, cocktails, or positioning off Miami with access to the Democratic candidate for President’s acceptance speech, summon a plane at will and fly it to a location near one of your many homes, have the NYPD drop you off at your city destination and make use of its resources for clients... in short it’s an enjoyable fantasy land where mostly good things happen despite the bad actors in play. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> Stone and I say, enjoy!

Yu, Ovidia. [The Paper Bark Tree Mystery](#) (Constable \$13.99). Su Lin is doing her dream job: assistant at Singapore’s brand new detective agency. Until Bald Bernie decides a ‘local girl’ can’t be trusted with private investigations, and replaces her with a new secretary—pretty, privileged, and white. So Su Lin’s not the only person finding it hard to mourn Bernie after he’s found dead in the filing room. And when her best friend’s dad is accused, she gets up to some sleuthing work of her own in a bid to clear his name. Su Lin finds out that Bernie may have been working undercover, trading stolen diamonds for explosives from enemy troops. Was he really the upright English citizen he claimed to be? Meanwhile, a famous assassin commits his worst crime yet, and disappears into thin air. Rumors spread that he may be dangerously close to home. Beneath the stifling, cloudless Singaporean summer, earthquakes of chaos and political unrest are breaking out. Then a tragic loss shakes Su Lin’s personal world to its core....

#### OUR AUGUST SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

*John Charles presents a bumper crop of books to enliven those warm August days and nights. Enjoy*

Burns, Catherine. [Penne Dreadful](#) (Sourcebooks \$7.99). Italian Chef #1. When she discovers that her husband Dylan didn’t die in an accident but was murdered, local chef Tessa Esposito infiltrates a local family business—the last place Dylan was seen alive—and finds that his many secrets might land her in hot water. Readers who miss Diane Mott Davidson’s superb culinary mysteries may want to give this new series a taste.

Delany, Vicki. [Silent Night Deadly Night](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Year Round Christmas #4. Merry Wilkinson, the owner of Mrs. Claus’s Treasures, Merry Wilkinson, during the week before Thanksgiving, must save her father’s role as Santa and her favorite holiday when her mother’s reunion with her college friends ends in murder.

Dodd, Christina. [What Doesn’t Kill Her](#) (\$8.99). Unlikely survivor Kellan Adams, suffering from a year-long gap in her memory, defends herself against an unimaginable menace in order to protect the family she never knew. *LJ* had this to say about best-selling Dodd’s latest “Action-packed, littered with dead bodies, and brimming with heartfelt emotion, this edgy thriller keeps the tension high. The cliff-hanger ending will have fans anxious for the next title.”

Eaton, J.C. [Molded 4 Murder](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Sophie Kimball #5. A bookkeeper for a private investigator, Sophie Kimball places herself in the crosshairs of a stone-cold killer when her mother believes she is being targeted by assassins after the death of a fellow resident in her retirement community. The husband and wife writing duo of this popular cozy series not only live in the Phoenix area, their charming series is set there to boot!

Gross, Andrew. [Button Man](#) (\$9.99). A disadvantaged but once happy Jewish immigrant family is brought together by the women’s garment trade and torn apart by the birth of organized crime in 1930s New York City. *Kirkus* concluded their review with “A highly satisfying story of family loyalty, persistence, courage, and crime.”

Harper, Jane. [Force of Nature](#) (\$9.99). When one member of a five-woman team of co-workers goes missing during a corporate retreat, federal police agent Aaron Falk uncovers dark secrets in his search for the woman, a whistleblower and major contributor to his latest case. *Kirkus* had this to say “Harper layers her story with hidden depths, expertly mining the distrust between Alice and her four colleagues, and the secrets that simmer under the surface. Lacks some of the scorching momentum of Harper’s first book but is nonetheless a spooky, compelling read.”

Mills, Kyle. [Vince Flynn Red War](#) (\$9.99). Mitch Rapp #17. When a terminally ill Russian president launches a massive campaign that threatens millions of lives, Mitch Rapp is dispatched by the CIA to prevent an all-consuming war. *Kirkus* was just one of the many raves for this stating “Notwithstanding the obvious formula, events lead to a dramatic, you-got-your-money’s-worth conclusion. Good, escapist fun as Mitch Rapp saves the Western world once again.”

Munier, Paula. [A Borrowing of Bones](#) (\$7.99). Mercy Carr #1. Retired MP Mercy Carr and her bomb-sniffing dog Elvis become embroiled in an investigation in the Vermont wilderness involving an abandoned baby, a missing mother, and a cold-case murder. *PW* summed up this nicely saying, “The portrayal of working dogs will appeal to fans of David Rosenfelt and Margaret Mizushima. The blend of lovingly detailed setting and lively characters, both human and canine, makes this a series to watch.”

Novak, Brenda. [Blind Spot](#) (\$7.99). Evelyn Talbot #5. With Jasper Moore, the privileged boy who attacked her when she was only sixteen, finally caught and in prison, Dr. Evelyn Talbot, founder and head psychiatrist at Hanover House (a prison/research facility for psychopaths in remote Alaska), believes she can finally quit looking over her shoulder. Boy was she wrong. If you are in the mood for psychologically intense suspense, Novak delivers the goods.

Nugent, Liz. [Lying in Wait](#) (\$9.99). Lydia Fitzsimons, the wife of a respected judge and mother to a beloved son, finds their home in Dublin thrown into devastating turmoil by her son’s discovery of dark family secrets. *LJ* loved this saying “Readers who love sinister psychological thrillers will tear through these pages to discover how far Lydia will go to keep her son at home, and what accidents will befall those who cross her.”

Petrie, Nick. [Tear it Down](#) (\$9.99). Peter Ash #4. Peter Ash tackles two difficult cases in Memphis involving an attack on a war photographer, a homeless street musician, a stolen cache of watches, vengeful gangsters, and a valuable Civil War heirloom.

*PW* is just one of the review sources who have fallen for Petrie's superb series. Here is a snippet from their latest review: "While logic sometimes takes a holiday as these dual stories unspool, and the finale's high-speed car chase strains credulity, there's no denying that Petrie is hell on wheels at mounting lethal action face-offs. A close cousin to Lee Childs's more analytical Jack Reacher, Peter Ash is one of today's more exciting action heroes."

Rollins, James. [Crucible](#) (\$9.99). Sigma Force #14. After his home is attacked and his pregnant girlfriend is kidnapped, Commander Gray Pierce and the Sigma Force confront deep spiritual mysteries tracing back to the Spanish Inquisition. Plenty of action here along with Rollins' trademark mix of science and personalities.

Rose, Karen. [Say You're Sorry](#) (\$7.99). FBI Special Agent Gideon Reynolds receives a vital piece of evidence on a cold case from a woman whose fighting skills helped her escape a serial killer still on the loose. "The thriller elements heavily outweigh the romantic ones, but fans of Lisa Gardner and J.D. Robb will enjoy this outing and be on pins and needles waiting for the next installments."

Stevens, Taylor. [Liars' Paradox](#) (\$9.99). Trying to lead normal lives, 26-year-old twins Jack and Jill, who were raised to deceive—and to kill—are drawn into a twisted game when their mother goes missing, pitting them against the CIA, KGB and a network of trained assassins—all of whom want them dead. *PW* notes that "the cinematic plot entertains, and a nail-biting conclusion gratifies while raising the stakes for book two."

#### NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Archer, Winnie. [Flour in the Attic](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Bread Shop #4. When longtime Santa Sofia resident Marisol Ruiz accidentally drowns, bread baker Ivy Culpepper, suspecting foul play since Marisol was a strong competitive swimmer, teams up with her partners in detection to stop someone from getting away with murder

Bickford, Susan. [A Short Time to Die](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Walking home on a foggy night in rural New York, Marly Shaw stops in the glare of approaching headlights. Two men step out of a pickup truck. A sudden, desperate chase erupts in gunshots and now a terrified girl is on the run—for the rest of her life. Thirteen years later, human bones discovered in California are linked to two missing people from Central New York. Sheriff's Detective Vanessa Alba and her partner dive into an investigation that lures them deep into the Finger Lakes region.

Black, Lisa. [Suffer the Children](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Cleveland forensics expert Maggie Gardiner and her partner, Jack Renner, investigate after two young people turn up dead at a secure facility for juvenile offenders.

Buckley, Julia. [Death in a Budapest Butterfly](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Hungarian Tea House #1. When one of her prized tea cups is used as a murder weapon, Hanna Keller, who runs her family's tea shop, finds herself in hot water and, with the help of her eccentric grandmother who reads tea leaves, must clear her name and save the family business.

Burnell, Mark. [The Rhythm Section](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Reprint. When Stephanie Patrick learns that a terrorist bomb was responsible for the plane crash that killed her family, she embarks on a plan for revenge that includes training to become a terrorist herself.

Calder, Eve. [And Then There Were Crumbs](#) (St Martins \$7.99). A Cookie House Mystery #1. When her new employer, bakery owner Sam Hepplewhite, is accused of murdering a greedy land owner who wanted to tear down his business, pastry chef Kate McGuire follows the trail of clues to catch a killer.

Cates, Bailey. [Cookies and Clairvoyance](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Magical Bakery #8. When her fiancé's coworker—and a fellow spellbook club member's boyfriend—is accused of murder, hedge witch and baker Katie Lightfoot, believing in his innocence, works with ornery detective Peter Quinn to prove it.

Chien, Vivien. [Wonton Terror](#) (St Martins \$7.99). Noodle Shop #4. When an explosion involving a nearby food truck, Wonton on Wheels, leaves one person dead and several others injured, Lana Lee and her best friend fall back into detective mode to make a killer get down in flames.

Childs, Laura. [Glitter Bomb](#) (\$7.99). Scrapbooking #15. Scrapbook shop owner Carmela Bertrand and her best friend Ava investigate a Mardi Gras parade float disaster that led to someone's death and the number one suspect is Carmela's ex-husband Shamus.

Cook, Robin. [Pandemic](#) (\$9.99). When a heart-transplant recipient abruptly dies under suspicious circumstances, veteran medical examiner Jack Stapleton follows leads to a gene-editing biotechnology and the unethical requirements of a megalomaniacal businessman.

Corrigan, Maya. [Crypt Suzette](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Five-Ingredient #6. While catering the debut of Bayport's newest bookstore, Val Deniston is drawn into a real-life murder mystery when the secretive woman renting a spare bedroom at her ghost-busting granddad's house is mowed down by a hit-and-run driver.

Coulter, Cather. [Paradox](#) (\$9.99). Savich and Sherlock #22. When divers discover the bones of multiple murder victims during a search of Lake Massey, agents Sherlock and Savich make a connection between the bones and an escaped psychopath who attempted to kidnap five-year-old Sean Savich.

Crawford, Isis. [A Catered Cat Wedding](#) (\$7.99). Mysteries with Recipes #14. When Susie Katz, the crazy cat lady of Longely, New York, is stabbed in the back during an extravagant wedding ceremony for her two Russian blues, caterers and sisters Bernie and Libby Simmons must paw through the clues to catch a killer.

Cussler, Clive. [Treasure](#) (\$9.99). Reissue Dirk Pitt #9. Dirk Pitt's hunt for ancient Egyptian treasure is sidetracked when the White House is threatened by terrorists from Egypt and Mexico and a cruise ship carrying the presidents of Egypt and Mexico is hijacked.

Driscoll, Sara. [Storm Rising](#) (Kensington \$9.99). FBI special agent Meg Jennings and her K-9 partner Hawk head to Virginia Beach to help with search and rescue after a hurricane, but they uncover a human trafficking ring run by the powerful and influential.

Dunnett, Kaitlyn. [Overkilt](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Liss MacCrimmon #12. Liss MacCrimmon's meddlesome mother is back in Moosetookalook, Maine, to serve a hefty portion of trouble for Thanksgiving, but when a scandalous murder case threatens to leave Liss alone at the table, family drama takes on a terrifying new meaning.

Erickson, Alex. [Death by Café Mocha](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Bookstore Café #4. While at a coffee lover's convention, Krissy Hancock finds trouble brewing when a contest ends in murder, prompting her to launch her own investigation—one that will keep her up all night.

Farrow, Sharon. [Mulberry Mischief](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Berry Basket #4. When a newcomer to the village is murdered and Oriole Point's oddest resident, the Lake Lady, disappears, Marlee Jacob soon discovers that the Lake Lady has a deadly past that is connected to famous family in town for the Harvest Health Fair.

Greaney, Mark. [Ballistic](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Gray Man #3. Forced on the run from his rain forest refuge, ex-CIA assassin Court Gentry discovers that his trusted friend, Eddie Gamboa, has been murdered by members of a notorious Mexican drug cartel and he decides to step into the ensuing drug war to protect his friend's family.

Hagberg, David. [Face Off](#) (\$9.99). Kirk McGarvey #23. When a missing Russian nuclear weapon is found heading to the United States, Putin enlists Kirk McGarvey's help to stop it and prevent World War III.

Harris, Charlaine. [Easy Death](#) (\$9.99). Gunnie Rose #1. In a United States fractured by FDR's assassination and the Great Depression, two Russian wizards hire a young gunslinger named Lizbeth Rose to help them cross Texoma and find a direct descendent of Grigori Rasputin.

Harris, Sherry. [Let's Fake a Deal](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Garage Sale #7. When an old friend from the Air Force base is framed for murder, former military spouse and professional organizer Sarah Winston must clear Michelle's name as well as her own when she is accused of selling stolen merchandise.

Henry, Julia. [Tilling the Truth](#) (Kensington \$7.99). When her friend Tamara O'Connor is framed for the murder of the woman standing in the way of her selling off a beautiful beachside property, Lilly Jayne and her Garden Squad must weed through the suspects and dig up the real killer.

Irving, Nicholas. [Reaper: Ghost Target: A Sniper](#) (St Martins \$9.99). A memoir by a Special Operations Direct Action Sniper traces his extraordinary career during the War on Terror, which was marked by his record-setting deployment to Afghanistan and his face-off against an enemy sniper known only as The Chechnian.

Jackson, Lisa. [Willing to Die](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Detectives Regan Pescoli and Selena Alvarez investigate the murders of Doctor Paul Latham and his wife, Brindel, found dead in separate beds in their beautiful San Francisco home.

Johansen, Iris. [Dark Tribute](#) (\$9.99). Kidnapped by a mysterious adversary from her grandfather's past, violin prodigy Cara Delaney struggles to escape and protect her loved ones from becoming casualties of dark forces from her tragic childhood.

Kelly, Sofie. [The Cats Came Back](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Magical Cats #10. After librarian Kathleen Paulson and her two cats find a dead body by the river during the town's music festival, they discover that the victim was a look-alike of a singer scheduled to perform at the festival and they begin their own investigation of the crime.

Martin, Kat. [The Conspiracy](#) (Harlequin \$8.99). Investigating the disappearance of his best friend, Chase Garrett, the wealthy owner of Maximum Security, uncovers unscrupulous business dealings at the same time he compromises his beliefs by falling for his friend's sister.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Hitting the Books](#) (\$7.99). Library Lover's #9. Dragged into a hit-and-run investigation after a stack of library materials is found at the scene, library director Lindsey Norris must piece together the clues to crack the case—especially once someone is murdered.

Meier, Leslie. [Silver Anniversary Murder](#) (\$7.99). Lucy Stone #25. Devastated to learn that her strong-willed maid of honor has died under suspicious circumstances while finalizing a fourth divorce, Lucy Stone embarks on a determined investigation through New York in pursuit of a desperate killer.

Morgan, Alexis. [Death by Jack-O'-Lantern](#) (Kensington \$7.99). When she finds ornery famer Ronald Minter dead in his pumpkin patch, Abby McCree and her tenant, a veteran named Tripp Blackston, must carve out the clues to prove the innocence of a homeless veteran who stands accused of crime.

Neggers, Carla. [Impostor's Lure](#) (Mira \$7.99). Sharpe and Donovan #8. The murder of a federal prosecutor found in possession of an art forgery places Sharpe and Donovan on a high-stakes manhunt that tests the limits of their skills.

O'Brien, Kevin. [Betrayed Wife](#) (Kensington \$9.99). When 16-year-old Eden shows up on her doorstep, claiming to be her husband's child by another woman, who has recently died, Sheila O'Rourke tries to be understanding until Eden sows discord among the family and strange—and dangerous—things start happening.

Ripley, J R. [The Woodpecker Always Pecks Twice](#). (Kensington \$7.99). Bird Lover's Mystery #4. When a member of her bird watching group is murdered, amateur sleuth Amy Simms, the owner of Birds & Bees, must swoop in to catch a killer.

Robards, Karen. [The Moscow Deception](#) (\$9.99). When a network of assassins target her, Bianca St. Ives learns that a high-risk heist may offer the information she needs to bring down the threat determined to bury her for good.

Robb, J D. [Connections in Death](#) (\$8.99). Eve Dallas #48. Homicide officer Eve Dallas investigates the death of child psychologist Dr. Rocelle Pickering's brother, a case that takes her into the underground world of tattoo parlors and strip joints to find his murderer.

Ryan, Annelise. [Needled to Death](#) (Kensington \$7.99). A dedicated mental health professional, Hildy Schneider becomes an amateur sleuth when one of her group therapy members reveals disturbing details about her late son's potential murder.

Unger, Lisa. [Under My Skin](#) (\$9.99). Emerging from grief a year after her beloved husband's unsolved murder, a haunted widow has nightmares and blackouts before realizing she is trapped in a surreal game of cat and mouse.

Wilton, Traci. [Mrs. Morris and the Ghost](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Salem B & B #1. To get her new bed-and-breakfast up and running in time for the Halloween tourist rush, young widow Charlene Morris, newly arrived in Salem, Massachusetts, must get a haunting houseguest out of the way by solving his murder.