

BOOKNEWS from

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“Independent bookstores are the lifeline of the intellect. They have to remain strong, especially in difficult times like these.”—**Stephen King**

MORE OF REIMAGINED APRIL

Note: All the times are Scottsdale time, 3 hours later than EDT

Our Virtual Events can be viewed on [Facebook Live](#) on the date/time given and anytime thereafter, and also the next day on [YouTube](#)

And you can share the links with your friends and post them to your own Social Media which supports the authors' work and ours. Thank you

These events have occurred and are on view

SATURDAY APRIL 18 1:00 PM

Angie Kim chats about the paperback release of [Miracle Creek](#) (\$17)

SATURDAY APRIL 18 2:00 PM Virtual Event

DJ Palmer chats about [The New Husband](#) (St Martins \$27.99)
Signed copies in stock

TUESDAY APRIL 21 5:00 PM Virtual Event

Marcia Clark chats about [Final Judgment](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95)

Samantha Brinkman
Signed copies in stock

THURSDAY APRIL 23 10:00 AM

Martin Edwards chats about the [British Library Crime Classics](#) series and his own fiction

And coming to you....

SATURDAY APRIL 25

Virtual Bookstore Day

Tori Eldridge makes it so for The Pen by posting a reading of her action-thriller short story, “Tough as Stone.” The video runs 29 minutes. It’s an exciting piece about a talk show therapist who’s trapped in her radio studio while a gunman hunts her down

And catch a Book Chat with CJ Box on our Home Page

TUESDAY APRIL 28 2:00 PM Book Launch

Jenn McKinlay chats about [Pumpkin Spice Peril](#) (Berkley \$7.99), the latest in her Scottsdale cupcake bakery cozy series – think Sprinkles with murders
Signed copies in stock

TUESDAY APRIL 28 3:00 PM

Lis Wiehl chats with Patrick about her true crime book [Hunting the Unabomber](#) (Thomas Nelson \$26.99)

SIGNED BOOKS

Albright, Madeleine. [Hell and Other Destinations: A 20th Century Memoir](#) (Harper \$29.99). Former secretary of state Albright weaves geopolitics with her own life story in this intelligent and personable memoir. . . . She proves to be a capacious storyteller, willing to share personal disappointments, such as the dissolution of her marriage, as well as professional accomplishments. This appealing memoir will charm readers interested in contemporary politics and women's issues. I will remember her most for her amazing, thoughtful, and powerful collection of pins that were on display in Phoenix in I think the Phoenix Art Museum, or possibly the Heard. Anyway they formed an unusual, insightful chronology of her career. Only a few copies remain.

Baldacci, David. [Walk the Wire](#) (Grand Central \$30). Did you know there is a London in North Dakota? There is! And that's where Amos Decker, an FBI consultant with a perfect memory (of course), heads to with FBI agent Alex Jamison. There's been a sudden boom in this thriving fracking town, and money and a flood of people naturally also brings problems...including murder. It's a mystery. You saw this coming. Anyhoo, Decker and Jamison have their work cut out for them starting with: why was this young woman autopsied and then dumped?... David signed these for us and they are going fast.

Clark, Marcia. [Final Judgment](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). When it comes to relationships and self-preservation, defense attorney Samantha Brinkman has always been cut and run. But it's different with her new lover, Niko, an ambitious and globally famous entrepreneur. Sam is putting her faith in him. She has to. He's also her new client—a suspect in the murder of an investor whose shady dealings turned Niko's good life upside down. He had the motive: revenge. As did many others who banked a fortune on the wrong man. That's a point in Niko's favor. So is his alibi for the day of the slaying. Until that alibi mysteriously disappears. As Sam's feverish search for another viable killer begins, the investigation only leads deeper into Niko's past and its secrets. Fighting for Nico is Sam's job....

Jones, Darynda. [A Bad Day for Sunshine](#) (St Martins \$27.99). A missing girl, a flasher named Doug, and an old flame that refuses to burn out. What else could go wrong on newly sworn-in sheriff Sunshine Vicram's first day? She finds her cup o' joe more than half full when the small village of Del Sol, New Mexico, becomes the center of national attention for a kidnapper on the loose. Del Sol is known for three things: its fry-an-egg-on-the-cement summers, its strong cups of coffee—and a nationwide manhunt? The Del Sol native has returned to town as the elected sheriff—an election her meddling parents entered her in—and she expects her biggest crime wave to involve an elderly flasher named Doug. But a teenage girl is missing, a kidnapper is on the loose, and all of it's reminding Sunny why she left Del Sol in the first place. Add to that trouble at her daughter's new school and a kidnapped prized rooster named Puff Daddy. Then enter sexy almost-old-flame Levi Ravinder and a hunky US Marshall, both elevens on a scale of one to blazing inferno, and the normally savvy sheriff is quickly in over her head.

McKinlay, Jenn. [Pumpkin Spice Peril](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Life is all sugar and spice for the Fairy Tale Cupcake bakers—Melanie Cooper is engaged to the delectable Joe DeLaura, Angie Harper and her husband Tate are savoring married life, and the bakery is bustling with happy customers. Until one of their most valued cupcake connoisseurs ends up dead. Local glass artist and cupcake lover Rene Fischer-Klein has always suffered from a wide variety of health issues. In an effort to cheer her up, her doting husband, Peter, brings her a four-pack of her favorite cupcakes every week. But when the police discover that Rene has been poisoned, there's no sugarcoating the fact that the last things she ate were the bakery's signature pumpkin spice cupcakes! With their lives and bakery at stake, it's up to Mel and Angie to find out who poisoned their artist friend and why, before their future is frosted for good. Think the Scottsdale Sprinkles—with murders. 12th in this [cozy series you can order by the dozen](#)

Muller, Marcia/Bill Pronzini, eds. [Deadly Anniversaries](#) (Harper \$26.99) celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Mystery Writers of America with a collection of 19 stories from the late Sue Grafton, William Kent Krueger, Peter Robinson, Laura Lippman and many more. Wedding anniversaries feature prominently, as in Max Allan Collins's diverting "Amazing Grace," in which a 50th anniversary cake becomes the catalyst for murder. Historical anniversaries, meanwhile, are central to Lee Child's clever "Normal in Every Way," in which knowledge of key dates from WWII enables a police file clerk to target a serial killer in 1950s San Francisco. Series characters also appear, notably the mother of S.J. Rozan's Lydia Chin in "Chin Yong-Sun Sets the Date," in which the mother foils an attempt to sabotage one wedding engagement and smooths the way for another. On a lighter note, a pair of red-neck thieves in Julie Smith's "Whodat Heist" pull off a big score on Superbowl Sunday only to be once again outmatched by their female partner. Other contributors include Jeffery Deaver, Laurie R. King, Peter Lovesey, and Margaret Maron. This is a must for mystery fans

Palmer, DJ. [The New Husband](#) (St Martins \$26.99). 30-something Nina Garrity thinks she has found Mr. Right after her unfaithful husband vanished, presumed drowned during a solo fishing trip, more than a year earlier. And most probably dead given that the boat's deck was covered in blood and no amount of searching, even with dogs, has revealed Glen—or his body. Mr. Right, one Simon Fitch, rescued the family's runaway dog and spared them further heartbreak. But Nina's 13-year-old daughter, Maggie, is hostile to Nina's now live-in relationship with widower Simon and resolves to do everything possible to sabotage it. Tension mounts as mother and daughter independently snoop into Simon and his past. Twists proliferate. The challenge for Palmer, son of the late bestseller Michael and brother to thriller writer Matthew, is to make Nina's pivot from Glen to Simon in such a short time convincing. Then... who can resist a dog rescuer?

The greatest danger to herself and her children are the lies people tell themselves. Palmer says, "I focused my research on how smart, capable, knowledgeable people can fall victim to self-deception and be made to question their reality, memory, or perceptions. I believe *The New Husband* will resonate on a

deeply personal level for anyone who's ever had their happily ever after dashed to pieces. But the story is also a universal one about family and the ties that both bind us and tear us apart—and, because it's a thriller, there's plenty of tension along the way.”

Pronzini, Bill. [The Stolen Gold Affair](#) (Forge \$28). Set in 1898, MWA Grand Master Pronzini's delightful eighth Carpenter and Quincannon mystery opens with a meeting at an exclusive San Francisco club between private detective John Quincannon and Everett Hoxley, “the head of a large corporation that owned several gold and silver mines in northern California and Nevada.” Hoxley hires Quincannon to go undercover as a miner in one of his mines in order to discover who has been stealing significant amounts of ore and gold dust. Meanwhile, shop assistant Gretchen Kantor tells Sabina Carpenter, Quincannon's detective partner, about a possible break-in at the home of her friend Vernon Purifoy. Soon an incensed Purifoy shows up demanding that Carpenter stay out of his affairs. “In her experience that sort of heavy-handed protest meant the individual had something to hide,” so she pursues some undercover work of her own. Attractive characters, a finely tuned plot, and fascinating snippets of California history distinguish this outing. Who could ask for more? Not me, for one.

Quick, Amanda. [Close Up](#) (Berkley \$27). The author, aka Jayne Ann Krentz, is doing a promotion on her own Facebook Page for signed books for The Pen on April 27 and we are doing a Virtual Event with her on May 9 @ 2:00 PM for a Mother's Day treat. Meanwhile she is signing and shipping copies to us for May 5 on sale date so please order now to secure yours! Here's John's review of the book: Taking crime scene photographs and head shots of aspiring actors might help pay the bills, but photojournalist Vivian Brazier dreams of one day earning a living as artist. However, it is Vivian's artistic training that leads her to see an important clue as to the identity of the murderer in the crime scene photographs taken of the Dagger Killer's latest victims. Of course, this puts Vivian squarely in the sights of a very clever killer, who didn't count on Vivian teaming up with private investigator Nick Sundridge in an effort to prevent another murder. Writing as Amanda Quick, best-selling Jayne Ann Krentz delivers another irresistible mix of suspense, sharp wit, and sophisticated sensuality in the third superbly entertaining addition to her Burning Cove series.

While Jayne will not be available to visit the store in person this year, we will be offering signed copies of *Close Up*, as well as a few [Close Up Special Reader Boxes](#) (\$55) that includes an unsigned copy of *The Woman in the Mirror*, a favorite of Jayne. While supplies last.

Scalzi, John. [The Last Emperox](#) (Forge \$26.99). The hugely popular Scalzi gets a true rave for this: “Hugo Award–winner Scalzi knocks it out of the park with the tightly plotted, deeply satisfying conclusion to his Interdependency Sequence space opera trilogy. The Flow streams, trade routes that connect the planets governed under the Interdependency, face an imminent collapse that will leave every world but the small planet End isolated and cause countless deaths. Emperox Grayland II works to thwart coup attempts long enough for her lover, physicist Marce Claremont, to work out how to save the population from this impending disaster. Meanwhile, Grayland's enemy Nadashe Nohamapetan consolidates her control of End while promis-

ing disgruntled, powerful noble families exclusive access to the planet in exchange for their political support. Scalzi allows the flaws, foibles, and core personalities of the returning characters—careful Grayson, ruthless Nadashe, and especially foul-mouthed mercenary Kiva Lagos—to steer the story, and his careful, long-game planning allows for pitch-perfect pacing that will keep readers energized from start to finish. Balancing existing character dynamics and surprising—but well-earned—reveals with interstellar politics and pressing ethical questions of sustainability and power, Scalzi sends his series out with a bang.” This is a great time to binge your way through [all three novels](#)

Sligar, Sara. [Take Me Apart](#) (Farrar \$27). When the famed photographer Miranda Brand died mysteriously at the height of her career in the 1980s New York City art scene, it sent shock waves through Callinas, California. Decades later, old wounds are reopened when her son, Theo, hires ex-journalist Kate Aitken to create an archive of his mother's work. From Miranda's vast maze of personal effects, Kate pieces together a portrait of a vibrant artist buckling under the pressures of ambition, motherhood, and marriage. As the summer progresses, Kate navigates vicious local rumors and her growing attraction to the enigmatic Theo, all while unearthing the shocking details of Miranda's private life and the possibility that Miranda was murdered. But Kate has secrets of her own, and when she stumbles across a diary that may finally resolve the mystery of Miranda's death, her curiosity starts to spiral into a dangerous obsession. With breathtaking and haunting imagery, *Take Me Apart* paints a vivid picture of two magnetic young women, separated by years, but bonded by shared struggles

This **April First Mystery Book of the Month** switches between the present-day narrative and various documents that the photographer left behind, so the reader gets to uncover the truth alongside the archivist. It's a pretty dark, atmospheric novel about gender and power and ambition. Debut novelist Sligar says, “I like to leave a book feeling a little unsettled. So for me, a perfect mystery has a satisfying solution but also acknowledges that some things about the human condition are always going to be unsolvable. Twists are cool, but personally I care more about characters and setting. If I'm not invested in the characters, then it's hard for me to care.” Her favorite crime writer is Tana French. And for someone new she recommends Angie Kim and Kim's debut [Miracle Creek](#) (\$17). Check out Kim's talk with me on The Pen's Facebook video page.

Wiehl, Lis. [Hunting the Unabomber](#) (Thomas Nelson \$26.99). Intent on bringing down the government and destroying technology, Ted Kaczynski, aka the Unabomber, terrorized American universities and airports for decades wit, co author of *Imperfect Justice: Prosecuting Casey Anthony*, investigates the case undertaken by the FBI, the postal service, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Wiehl relies primarily on the memories and documents of FBI agent Patrick Webb, the longest-serving member of the UNABOM task force, but also draws from the FBI's UNABOM file and the Kaczynski Papers special collection, held at the University of Michigan.” The “overwhelming volume of minutia” is, “because Kaczynski was ultra careful not to leave traces, crucial to identifying him, and Wiehl's laserlike focus is warranted. This meticulous history of the hunt for the Unabomber will appeal to true crime readers who enjoy immersive scene setting....”—*Library Journal*

NEW BOOKS

First, let me say that books are shifting publication dates during the pandemic. I have checked the below but warehouses and shippers are running behind and delays are inevitable. We are continuing with free shipping so we can get books out to you when they come in to the store. Thank you for understanding how stressed everything is

Second, with publishers working remotely there is no one to send ARCs (Advance Reading Copies) out and I can't stand to read digitally. So while all the signed books and books of the month have been read by me, a number of new titles below have not. Happily there are many of interest

Third, Mother's Day. Nothing says Love like book, right? Gift cards are the safest bet. We can also ship a book or a batch but it may run late. I do hope to resume curbside pickup on May 5 after we reopen. We are closed May 1-4 to take inventory and clean up the store.

Allan, Barbara. [Antiques Fire Sale](#) (Kensington \$26). That local theater diva of a certain age, Vivian Borne—a.k.a. Brandy's mother—is sheriff of Serenity County now, but still hot on the trail of precious antiques. On a tour of the historic Wentworth Mansion, the two dedicated dealers are aglow at the treasure trove of priceless objects...never dreaming everything will turn to ashes, hours later. A charred corpse in the ruins is identified as the mansion's caretaker, a one-time flame of Vivian's. But Tony Cassato—Brandy's beau and Serenity's Chief of Police—throws cold water on Sheriff Vivian's suspicions of murder. Then Brandy spots a certain familiar item for sale on the internet, and Mother suspects the fire was just a smoke screen. When their doggie detective, Sushi the Shih Tzu, sniffs out a second body in the woods, Mother and Brandy turn up the heat on a homicidal torch. Written by Max Allan Collins with his wife Barbara.

Barry, Max. [Providence](#) (Putnam \$27). Barry's follow-up to the immensely entertaining [Lexicon](#) (\$17), is yet another example of his ability to deliver big ideas in the form of breathlessly efficient sci-fi thrillers. The title comes from the name of the enormous spaceship, *Providence Five*, that carries the novel's four protagonists into a far-off war against aliens, colloquially called "salamanders." The spaceship largely runs itself, thanks to an advanced artificial intelligence, leaving the crew members to stew in routine and boredom. At first, the story belongs to a long tradition of books and films about isolated spacefarers slowly going insane, but *Providence* adds a number of twists and turns. The artificial intelligence pilots *Providence Five* deep into enemy territory, and its powerful weapons kill hundreds of thousands of salamanders before they can put up a fight. "Barry's futuristic warfare is conducted at a dispassionate remove that echoes the modern use of drones and missile strikes. Meanwhile, the crew engages in a propaganda offensive: posting messages on social media to maintain public support for a hugely expensive war with uncertain goals. Readers will not have trouble picking apart the political commentary baked into the plot, but *Providence* pushes past easy contemporary parallels to concern itself with existential questions of free will and purpose. For all the novel's heady ideas, though, Barry maintains a nonstop pace and an economical, riveting prose style." Good escape reading here.

Belfer, Lauren. [A Fierce Radiance](#) (\$16.99). No better time to reread or grab this gem of a novel taking us back to a time before penicillin when a small injury like skinning a knee playing squash could kill you. The drug was new and in short supply and in 1940s New York City a war was on. So many of the questions plaguing us now were true then. "Belfer's powerful portrayal of how people are changed in pursuit of a miracle" is all too familiar at the moment. I recommended this highly in 2011 and do so again.

Bolton, Sharon. [Split](#) (St Martins \$27.99). British glaciologist Felicity Lloyd, the protagonist of this tightly plotted spellbinder from British author Bolton (who used to write scary British mystery as SJ Bolton which I love), has come to South Georgia, a remote island off Antarctica, to escape her husband, Freddie, who has been pursuing her since leaving prison, where he'd been serving time for murder. Flash back nine months to Cambridge, England, where Felicity is seeing therapist Joe Grant, who's reeling from a divorce and a recent violent attack by a homeless woman. Joe strives to piece together the exact nature of Felicity's relationship with the imprisoned Freddie. Frightening notes left in her desk, break-ins at her home, and fugue states with disastrous consequences for Felicity lead Joe to question his patient's sanity. Eventually, Joe sets out for South Georgia to help Felicity, motivated in large part by the strong feelings he's developed for her. Employing multiple narratives and complex character histories, Bolton keeps the reader guessing to the end. True. Yet the real reason to read this nail biter is travel to the rarely visited islands in the South Atlantic which are bird havens and ecologists' dreams and attracting more cruise ships which will change them along with global warming. This is a terrific read I recommend.

Brenner, Kelly. [Nature Obscura](#) (Mountaineer Books \$17.95). Brenner brings an infectious curiosity to urban nature—whether unpacking how the tiny stickleback fish has, in a rare case of reverse evolution, transformed to lose and regrow its plates of armor in response to pollution, or considering whether lichens really ever die, as they increase reproduction the older and larger they get. With *Nature Obscura*, you need not venture far to discover a natural world teeming with life. And a definite uplift to spirits as well.

Brown, Janelle. [Pretty Things](#) (Random \$28). Love a good con? "Part psychological thriller and part morality tale, here is literary suspense at its best. Gorgeous prose, complex characters inhabiting the fascinating worlds of elite Instagram influencers and high-stakes scam artists, a thought-provoking dual narrative, a twisty plot with a shocking, never-saw-that-coming ending—this brilliant novel has it all! I read it in one day in one sitting, mesmerized, and I loved every moment."—Angie Kim

Brown, Rita Mae. [Whiskers in the Dark](#) (\$17). Joined by her crime-cracking cats Mrs. Murphy and Pewter, plus corgi Tee Tucker, postmistress Mary Minor "Harry" Haristeen tries to figure out who killed an old friend whose body is found by the Virginia hunt club's baying beagles. Meanwhile, an 18th-century family attempts to modernize their household routines giving you a narrative split between past and present.

Capin, Hannah. [Foul Is Fair](#) (Wednesday Books \$18.99). “Featuring a razor-sharp take on Lady Macbeth, this book is gripping. In the rise of antihero narratives in pop culture, this deserves to be up there with some of our favorites. It’s cathartic to see karma come around in the form of our protagonist, Jade. For Shakespeare fans, all of the nods to the original play are clever. Hannah Capin gets the balance just right between the source material and her own unique vision. As a tale of revenge, *Foul Is Fair* soars. No matter what happens in the book, we are always rooting for the girls,” says a Library Reads recommendation.

Chazin, Suzanne. [Voice with No Echo](#) (Kensington \$26). Holocaust survivor Max Zimmerman asks his friend Detective Jimmy Vega to help his synagogue’s longtime Salvadoran handyman, Edgar Aviles, whose temporary legal status has been rescinded. Edgar faces deportation, even though his wife is too ill to work and his son has leukemia. Jimmy can only refer Edgar to his girlfriend, Adele Figueroa, the director of an immigrant outreach center. Edgar’s case takes an unexpected turn when Jimmy is assigned to investigate the apparent suicide of Talia Crowley, the DA’s wife, found hanged in the basement of the couple’s Lake Holly, N.Y., mansion. Talia’s illegal immigrant housekeeper, who’s Edgar’s niece, has gone missing. Meanwhile, Jimmy must work with his estranged half-sister, ICE agent Michelle Vega-Lopez, whose determined attempts to reestablish bonds force Jimmy to confront his own painful past. This timely tale of the plight of immigrants whose uncertain status makes them vulnerable.

Child, Lee. [Blue Moon](#) (\$17). Landing in a new place, Reacher rescues an elderly man carrying an envelope full of cash, Aaron Shevick, from a would-be mugger in an unnamed American city. Reacher escorts the shaken Shevick home, where he meets the man’s wife and soon learns the couple is deeply indebted to loan sharks because of huge medical bills. Shevick is supposed to deliver the cash to an Albanian crook named Fisnik in a bar later that day, but when Fisnik doesn’t show, Reacher ends up impersonating Shevick at the rescheduled meeting with Fisnik’s replacement, a Ukrainian thug, who’s never met Shevick. A turf war has just begun between the city’s rival Ukrainian and Albanian gangs, and Reacher lands in the thick of it in his efforts to help the Shevicks. Reacher applies his keen analytical skills to numerous violent confrontations with bad guys who aren’t as smart as he is. Readers will cheer as Reacher and his allies, a resourceful waitress and two fellow ex-military guys he hooks up with, take the fight straight to the top of the criminal command chain. Child is at the top of his game in this nail-biter, his 24th Reacher. This fall the first Reacher written with Child’s brother, Andrew Grant, will publish.

Clark, Marcia. [Final Judgment](#) (Thomas and Mercer \$15.95). See Signed Books for a description of this final Samantha Brinkman thriller by Clark. This is the simultaneous paperback edition.

Dalcher, Christina. [Master Class](#) (Berkley \$27). In this disturbing dystopian tale set in the near future from the author of the unusual debut [Vox](#) (\$16), the U.S. government has adopted a ranking system for pre-college age students, dividing them into groups based on a constantly monitored quotient or Q score. The brightest attend elite schools, while those whose quotients are at the low end are taken away from their parents and bused to remote state boarding schools. The ranking system expands to adults, who are given preferential treatment in store checkout

lines based on their Q scores. This nightmare is the priority for federal secretary of education Madeleine Sinclair, whose first deputy, Malcolm Fairchild, is married to a teacher, Elena Fairchild, whose offhand remark to him years before during high school led to the current system: “Wouldn’t it be great if all the people we hated could carry their crappy GPAs around for life?” When Elena’s nine-year-old daughter is taken away to a boarding school, Elena is forced to confront the monstrous system she’s been complicit in. Dalcher combines the pace and tension of a standout thriller with thought-provoking projections of the possible end result of ranking children based on test scores. Admirers of *The Handmaid’s Tale* will be appropriately unsettled

Dazieri, Sandrone. [Kill the Angel](#) (\$17). Dazieri’s American debut is an epic tale that surprises at every turn—a twisty, mind-boggler that introduces not one but two memorable protagonists and hurls them into circumstances that threaten both their lives and sanity. Roman deputy police commissioner Colomba Caselli and private consultant Dante Torre contend with a train carriage full of dead bodies. “*Kill the Father* is a mind-bending, stunningly original page-turner that twists the concept of psychological thriller in a terrifying and wonderful way. In Dante and Colomba, Sandrone Dazieri has created two of the most memorable characters in modern crime fiction, a pair of damaged, noble heroes compelled to confront unimaginable evil. Bravo.”—Jonathan Kellerman, whose fans should grab this.

Davis, Krista. [The Diva Spices It Up](#) (Kensington \$26). Sophie Winston, Old Town, Virginia’s domestic diva, never considered ghostwriting as a side gig, until former actress and aspiring lifestyle guru, Tilly Stratford, trophy wife of Wesley Winthrope, needs someone to write her celebrity cookbook. Sophie agrees, hoping she’ll earn enough bread on this assignment to finish her bathroom renovations. But as it turns out, Sophie isn’t the first foodie to get a taste for recipe ghostwriting, and if the marginalia are any indication, this project could be a killer. Wesley claims professional ghostwriter, Abby Bergeron, suddenly abandoned Tilly’s cookbook with no warning. But Sophie quickly discovers that Abby may be more ghost than writer now...and her disappearance was no accident.

Elliott, David. [In the Woods](#) (Candlewick \$17.99). Elliott shares his love for woodland animals in a revealing, beautifully illustrated collection of verse for poetry lovers and budding naturalists. The animals in the dark woods are secretive, their inner lives a mystery. The stealthy bobcat, the inquisitive raccoon, and the dignified bear waking up from his winter nap are just a few of the glorious animals featured in this clever collection of poems and woodland scenes. This companion to *In the Sea*, *In the Wild*, and *On the Farm* is the first collaboration between David Elliott and Rob Dunlavey, whose colorful, expressive art pairs with the author’s charming poems to create a love letter to the animals of the forest. Ages 3-7

Feeney, Alice. [I Know Who You Are](#) (\$16.99). For London actress Aimee Sinclair, the narrator of bestseller Feeney’s shock-filled second thriller after 2018’s [Sometimes I Lie](#) (\$9.99), her past is much darker than the disturbing film with a famous director for which she desperately wants to audition—and her future seems to be barreling full tilt toward the stuff of nightmares. For starters, Aimee’s husband of two years, journalist Ben Bailey, vanishes from their Notting Hill town house the day after they

have a fight and she asks him for a divorce. The balance of their joint bank account also disappears, and there's security footage of a woman who could be her doppelgänger making the withdrawal.... Read this for the fast action, not the character development.

Fluke, Joanne. [Peach Cobbler Murder](#) (\$12.95). Reissued. As she sits in her nearly empty bakery on Groundhog Day, Hannah Swensen can only hope that spring is just around the corner—and that the popularity of the new Magnolia Blossom Bakery is just a passing fad. The southern hospitality of Lake Eden's two Georgia transplants, Shawna Lee and Vanessa Quinn, is grating on Hannah's nerves—and cutting into her profits—at The Cookie Jar. Things go from bad to worse when Shawna Lee and Hannah's sometime-boyfriend, Detective Mike Kingston, are no-shows to Cookie Jar business partner Lisa's wedding. When Hannah sees lights on at the Magnolia Blossom Bakery after the reception, she investigates—and finds Shawna Lee shot to death. Everyone in town knew the Cookie Jar's business was suffering—a fact that puts Hannah at the top of the initial list of suspects. But....

Galligan, John. [Bad Axe County](#) (\$16). Fifteen years ago, Heidi White's parents were shot to death on their Bad Axe County farm. The police declared it a murder-suicide and closed the case. But that night, Heidi found the one clue she knew could lead to the truth—if only the investigators would listen. Now Heidi White is Heidi Kick, wife of local baseball legend Harley Kick and mother of three small children. She's also the interim sheriff in Bad Axe. Half the county wants Heidi elected but the other half will do anything to keep her out of law enforcement. And as a deadly ice storm makes its way to Bad Axe, tensions rise and long-buried secrets climb to the surface. As a storm rages on, Heidi realizes that someone is planting clues for her to find, leading her to some unpleasant truths that point to the local baseball team and a legendary game her husband pitched years ago. With a murder to solve, a missing girl to save, and a monster to bring to justice, Heidi is on the cusp of shaking her community to its core—and finding out what really happened the night her parents died.

Gill, Jonathan. [Hollywood Double Agent](#) (Abrams \$27). Soviet spies! G-men! Blackmail! Assassins! Silly code names! This sounds like a movie, but they can all be found here in a biography of perhaps the world's most improbable secret agent. It wasn't just that Morros was short, bald, rotund, poorly dressed and otherwise superficially the anti-James Bond; he was also “ideologically uncommitted, constitutionally indiscreet, addicted to fame and money, and oblivious to the distinction between truth and fiction.” When researching *Hollywood Double Agent*, Gill couldn't rely on Morros's 1959 autobiography, *My Ten Years as a Counterspy*—even Morros's widow called it fiction. Instead, Gill turned to previously classified documents from the FBI and the KGB, and the result is a gob-smackingly good read. A piano prodigy in 1891 in Russia, Morros made a name for himself in the music biz working for Paramount Pictures in 1920s Manhattan. By 1934, Morros was one of the pillars of the Paramount operation, and Soviet agents appealed to him to help create an anti-fascist underground in Germany in exchange for cash. He worked this second job even after he moved to the West Coast to head Paramount's music department. Morros was realizing his dream of becoming a big-shot movie producer—until the demands of his sideline started to take over his life. You may glom onto this for the glitter, but stay for the intrigue.

Grisham, John. [Camino Winds](#) (Random \$28.99). Welcome back to Camino Island, where anything can happen—even a murder in the midst of a hurricane, which might prove to be the perfect crime... Just as Bruce Cable's Bay Books is preparing for the return of bestselling author Mercer Mann, Hurricane Leo veers from its predicted course and heads straight for the island. Florida's governor orders a mandatory evacuation, and most residents board up their houses and flee to the mainland, but Bruce decides to stay and ride out the storm. The hurricane is devastating: homes and condos are leveled, hotels and storefronts ruined, streets flooded, and a dozen people lose their lives. One of the apparent victims is Nelson Kerr, a friend of Bruce's and an author of thrillers. But the nature of Nelson's injuries suggests that the storm wasn't the cause of his death.

Here's the *Washington Post* take: “Grisham's amiable jape of a ‘beach book’ — the publisher's term — is a follow-up to [Camino Island](#) (\$9.99). In that one, bookstore owner and rare book dealer Bruce Cable stole F. Scott Fitzgerald manuscripts from the Princeton library and got away with it. In the new one, the ‘roguish though lovable character’ helps solve the murder of a thriller writer bludgeoned with a golf club during a hurricane on an island off the Florida coast where Cable lives with other well-heeled literary ‘misfits.’ The whole thing reads is as if the Hardy Boys were in their late 40s and had developed a taste for shrimp tacos and exquisite wines.” Love this review, bound to tempt you, no?

Guisewite, Cathy. [Fifty Things That Aren't My Fault](#) (\$17). From the creator of the iconic Cathy comic strip comes her first collection of funny, wise, poignant, and incredibly honest essays about being a woman in what she lovingly calls “the Panini generation.” We met Guisewite at the November Arizona Kidney Foundation Author Luncheon and sold out of this gem in a flash. This is the perfect time to read it.

Hagberg, David/Lawrence Light. [Crash](#) (Forge \$27.99). This financial thriller may read too close to the bone with its frightening doomsday scenario. Cassy Levin works in cyber security at the Manhattan headquarters of Burnham Pike, the nation's premier investment bank, and has discovered a computer worm that she believes will destroy BP's system and then spread to trading floors worldwide. Meanwhile, top executives at BP, who introduced the worm, and Spencer Nast, the American president's White House chief adviser on economic affairs, are plotting to crash the world economy, starting with the New York Stock Exchange, in order to enrich themselves. Cassy, who can't get anyone at BP to listen to her, confides in her fiancé, former Navy SEAL Ben Whalen, shortly before the bad guys kidnap her. Ben's efforts to rescue Cassy ratchet up the suspense. “Readers should be prepared for some mini-economics lessons, including an afterword on the ‘debt bomb’ by Light.”

Hillier, Jennifer. [Little Secrets](#) (St Martins \$26.99). A delightfully twisty psychological thriller perfect for fans of *You* and *Gone Girl*. Celebrity hairstylist Marin Machado, the heroine of this diabolically plotted psychological thriller of lust, obsession, greed, and betrayal, believes she's hit bottom during the 16 months since her four-year-old son was snatched while they were Christmas shopping at a Seattle's famed Pike Place Market—something for which she can't stop blaming herself, nor can her entrepreneur husband of almost 20 years, Derek. But that's before the

PI Marin hired after the case went cold shares her chance but devastating discovery that Derek's having an affair with a much younger woman, Kenzie, catapulting Marin into an even darker circle of hell. Following the initial shock of the revelation, the furious Marin feels empowered, almost exhilarated. But her rage also threatens to propel this sympathetic protagonist into a rash, potentially catastrophic decision, encouraged by her best friend and onetime boyfriend, an ex-con, who has his own devious agenda. I am not a serious fan of psychological thrillers but this one is really exceptional.

Hiller won the 2019 Thriller Best Novel Award for [Jar of Hearts](#) (\$7.99). I agree with Laura Lippman: "Trust Jennifer Hillier, a rising star in crime fiction whose work is like no one else's. That gut punch of an opener jumps to a twisty tale of trauma and grief and revenge, with extraordinary empathy for everyone involved." Also good for you who enjoyed *Lady in the Lake* and *Lock Every Door*.

Hitchcock, Jane Stanton. [Bluff](#) (\$15.99). I am giving this perfect escape reading another push—for you can't go wrong with "A smartly plotted upper-crust caper."—*Booklist*. Meet "Mad Maud" Warner—poker maven and former socialite who shoots a man in broad daylight in a restaurant full of witnesses—and walks away. Maud has grown accustomed to being underestimated and invisible, and she uses it to pursue the man she believes stole her mother's fortune and left her family in ruins. Her passion for poker has taught Maud that she can turn weakness into strength, and now she has dealt the first card in her high-stakes plan for revenge. One twist after another follows as Maud plays the most important poker hand of her life in this unexpected gem that will have readers rooting for her to get away with murder. A "Delicious novel of sweet revenge."—*Publishers Weekly* Starred Review. "Frothy fun with a backbone of feminist steel"—*Kirkus Reviews*.

Hooper, Kay. [Hidden Salem](#) (Berkley \$27). Nellie Cavendish has very good reasons to seek out her roots, and not only because she has no memory of her mother and hardly knew the father who left her upbringing to paid caregivers. In the eight years since her twenty-first birthday, very odd things have begun to happen. Crows gather near her wherever she goes, electronics short out when she touches them, and when she's upset, really upset, it storms. At first, she chalked up the unusual happenings to coincidence, but that explanation doesn't begin to cover the vivid nightmares that torment her. As a longtime member of the FBI's Special Crimes Unit, Grayson Sheridan has learned not to be surprised by the unusual and the macabre—but Salem is different. Evidence of Satanic activities and the disappearance of three strangers to the town are what brought Salem to the attention of the SCU, and when Gray arrives to find his undercover partner vanished, he knows that whatever's hiding in the seemingly peaceful little town is...what?

Howard, Linda/Linda Jones. [After Sundown](#) (Morrow \$26.99). This is a tense, well paced, and dramatic thriller premised on the idea of a solar storm knocking out much (maybe all) of the world's power grid. Urban areas are unprepared for a shift in 21st Century living, but in Wears Valley, Tennessee, a small community butting up to the wilds of Cove Mountain, they are better positioned to live off local resources, hunting, fishing, small crops, canning... even horses. Older technologies. Which may

mean fending off outsiders. There's a love story, a murder, suspense, envy, a power struggle, and coming of ages even for older residents like Sela Gordon, shy owner of the general store. This book was written well before the COVID-19 pandemic but here is much of the behavior and circumstances surrounding us now without the apocalyptic background. Strong characters, a good story, and in its way a manual for living without amenities we are used to. Recommended.

Huber, Anna Lee. [A Stroke of Malice](#) (Berkley \$17). It's 1832, and the hopes of Lady Kiera Darby and her husband, Sebastian Gage, for a relaxing stay at a Scottish castle belonging to the Duchess of Bowmont are dashed during a tour of the castle's lower level. There, in a chamber that once housed prisoners awaiting torture, the couple come upon a male corpse with a fatal head wound. The man may be Lord Helmswick, the duchess's son-in-law, who was believed to have left for Paris a month earlier, but damage to the man's face from animals feeding on the body prevents positive identification. Gage, who carries out discreet private inquiries for members of the nobility, and Kiera are convinced Helmswick was murdered, evidently weeks before the corpse's discovery. An attempt on Kiera's life bolsters their belief that a killer is afoot. This is an excellent historical mystery series I recommend to fans of CS Harris and Stephanie Barron.

Jackson, Aaron. [The Astonishing Life of August March](#) (Harper \$27.99). Abandoned as an infant by his actress mother in her theater dressing room, August March was raised by an ancient laundress. Highly intelligent, a tad feral, August is a true child of the theater—able to recite Shakespeare before he knew the alphabet. But like all productions, August's wondrous time inside the theater comes to a close, and he finds himself in the wilds of postwar New York City, where he quickly rises from pickpocket street urchin to star student at the stuffiest boarding school in the nation. To survive, August must rely upon the kindness of strangers, only some of whom have his best interests at heart. As he grows up, his heart begins to yearn for love—which he may or may not finally find in Penny, a clever and gifted con artist. This is an enchanting story. Like *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *The World According to Garp*, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, this razor-sharp debut—a classic tale of a young innocent who finally finds his way, reminds us that everyone can find love. Even August March.

Jennings, Luke. [Killing Eve: Die for Me](#) (LittleBrown \$15.99). Need some cat-and-mouse-thrills in your life? The premise of both the book series and the TV adaptation is that a psychopath assassin, Villanelle, is taking out the rich and powerful and finds herself in a cat-and-mouse game with a former MI6 operative, Eve, who was tasked by the national security services to find Villanelle and stop her. The TV series strayed from the novels, so you can play spot-the-differences if you marathon both, and this is a fun pick. Season 3 dropped on April 12th

Jiles, Paulette. [Simon the Fiddler](#) (Harper \$26.99). Simon Boudlin has avoided conscription to the Confederate army for the last time. The young fiddler had been making his way through the South playing his music until the fateful day when he was rounded up and sent to an encampment on the Rio Grande. There, at the war's end, he sets his eyes on a beautiful Irish girl indentured to a Union colonel. She captured his heart and then is gone.

So begins Simon's long and treacherous journey working and playing music across the postwar Texas landscape to find her. Hope and yearning rise off every page, along with characters and an unforgettable story crafted in exquisite detail.

Jingfang, Hao. [Vagabonds](#) (Saga Press \$28.99). A science fiction epic uses a cold war between Earth and colonized Mars in the 23rd century as a stage for philosophical debate. In an attempt to thaw relations between Mars and Earth, a delegation of young Martians was sent to live on Earth for five years. *Vagabonds* begins with their return to Mars, many of them unmoored by their experiences in a very different culture. Luoying returns unsure of her place in either world, disturbed by assertions on Earth that her grandfather, the consul of Mars, is a dictator. Meanwhile, Eko, a documentarian from Earth, finds Mars a utopia of artistic expression, unconstrained by the demands of capitalism. As Eko attempts to follow the footsteps of his old teacher, and Luoying learns more about her deceased parents, the author unfolds revelations and complicates each of their perceptions of Mars. *Vagabonds* is sometimes reminiscent of old-school sci-fi. Hao thankfully avoids the all-too-common habit of making one character her obvious mouthpiece; instead, it's often unclear who is right and who is wrong.

Johnson, Maureen. [Truly Devious](#); [The Vanishing Stair](#) (\$10.99); [The Hand on the Wall](#) (Harper \$18.99). So if we can binge watching serial TV programming, why not binge on this terrific trio embracing Agatha Christie and Sherlock Holmes for YA readers (and older, like me). Here's *Kirkus Reviews* on the three book story arc: The initial incident in the series, *Truly Devious*, involved the 1936 abduction of newspaper tycoon Albert Ellingham's wife and daughter; the present volume probes several unsavory events that transpired afterward, including Ellingham's own death in 1938, in a sailing accident on Lake Champlain, and the recent immolation of University of Vermont history professor and Ellingham mystery enthusiast Dr. Irene Fenton. Fenton was introduced to protagonist and contemporary "Ellingham Sherlock" Stevie Bell in *The Vanishing Stair* (2019). As Stevie gets closer to making good on her resolution to solve the Ellingham case's past and present riddles in *The Hand on the Wall*, Johnson makes the most of the exclusive institution's remote, wooded mountain locale, provocatively setting the climax of Stevie's investigations during the throes of a cataclysmic blizzard. Stevie and her motley crew of misfit high school geniuses are stranded à la Agatha Christie with members of the Ellingham Academy administration, who may have a stake in the revelations of several secrets linking the Ellingham kidnappings with present-day murders. Throughout this intricately woven, fast-paced whodunit, Johnson demonstrates how proximity to wealth and power can mold and bend one's behavior, whether with good or—here largely—devious intent. The brainy secondary characters' quirky talents and interests complement Stevie's sleuthing skills; while mostly white, they include diversity in socio-economic background, mental health challenges, physical disability, and sexual orientation. This is a richly satisfying, Poirot-like ending for Johnson's inspired and inspiring teen sleuth. OK, I am hooked and ordered all three.

Jurjevics, Juris. [Play the Red Queen](#) (Soho \$27.95). The posthumous masterwork by author, storied publisher, and Viet Nam veteran Juris Jurjevics—the story of two American GI cops caught in the corrupt cauldron of a Vietnamese civil war stoked red hot

by revolution. This Starred Review underlines its impact: "In this outstanding mystery set in 1963 Saigon from the late Jurjevics, two agents for the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, sergeants Ellsworth Miser and Clovis Robeson, have the daunting task of stopping an assassin known as the Red Queen, who leaves a "playing card bearing a red female figure" at the scene of her crimes. Maj. James Furth, her third victim in less than two weeks, is shot through the heart at an outdoor cafe. The shooter, according to a witness, was an attractive Vietnamese woman of about 20 on a motorbike. One of the playing cards is found nearby. The woman's murderous campaign opens a new front in the conflict, as Saigon has been a mostly safe city for Americans. Miser and Robeson's boss, Captain Deckle, reveals that a Vietcong deserter has reported that the Red Queen has an additional objective beyond taking out seemingly random targets—the "liquidation of a major player." Jurjevics, the publisher and cofounder of Soho Press, maintains a page-turning pace and captures the tense atmosphere of the time and place with evocative prose. This is a tour-de-force that will make fans of Martin Limón and James Benn sorry that there will be no more from this gifted writer, who died in 2018.

Kahn, Michael A. [A Bad Trust](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). I've been a mad fan of attorney Michael Kahn's always surprising St Louis attorney Rachel Gold from the beginning when we met Rachel, working then in Chicago for a huge law firm, involved in a pet cemetery dispute and murder. Now here we are with *Bad Trust*, #11, and a pair of cases that illustrate how small and even civil disputes can quickly spiral out of control: the one, a falling out over a family trust ending in murder among siblings; the other, a suit filed by a rich and spoiled St Louis socialite when a couturier refuses to refund the price of the dress he claims she had worn that ends in a courtroom showdown. Rachel, having few strategic options for the defense, concocts a gutsy courtroom bluff. I add that if the dress dispute seems implausible, I remember rumors of this kind of thing being tried by ladies of the North Shore who attempted to return gowns they'd obviously worn to Marshall Field's, the famed Chicago department store, when I was young. Apparently things haven't moved on, or not in St. Louis. Lots of fun, more social satire than legal thriller.

Kalb, Kathleen Marple. [A Fatal Finale](#) (Kensington \$26). New York City, 1899. When it comes to show business, Gilded Age opera singer Ella Shane wears the pants. The unconventional diva breaks the mold by assuming "trouser roles"—male characters played by women—and captivating audiences far and wide with her travelling theatre company. But Ella's flair for the dramatic takes a terrifying turn when an overacting Juliet to her Romeo drinks real poison during the final act of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. Weeks after the woman's death is ruled a tragic accident, a mysterious English duke arrives in Greenwich Village on a mission. He's certain someone is getting away with murder, and the refined aristocrat won't travel back across the Atlantic until Ella helps him expose the truth....

Kamal, Sheena. [No Going Back](#) (Harper \$16.99). Nora Watts, a human lie detector who has survived some traumatic events and started out by learning that the daughter she'd placed for adoption years before was now missing and the adoptive parents needed Watts to find her. But that was book one, and this is book three, and Watts has made quite a few enemies since—that silly "past is always gonna come back" thing—so she needs some

reinforcements in the form of an eccentric billionaire and an ex-cop to fight back! If you want to follow a PI and read some thriller-level scenes, here you go!

☞ Kelly, Erin. [Stone Mothers](#) (\$16.99). “The Victorians used to call their mental hospitals stone mothers. They thought the design of the building could literally nurse the sick back to health.” Marianne grew up in the shadow of the old asylum, a place that still haunts her dreams. She was seventeen when she fled the town, her family, her boyfriend Jesse and the body they buried. Now, forced to return, she can feel the past closing around her. And Jesse, who never forgave her for leaving, is finally threatening to expose the truth. Marianne will do anything to protect the life she’s built; the husband and daughter who must never know. Even if it means turning to her worst enemy.... But Marianne may not know the whole story. For those interested in how Parliament works the 80-ish Helen is a good guide to a complicated story that demands you pay attention all the way through.

Kelly, Martha H. [Lost Roses](#) (Ballantine \$17). It is 1914, and the world has been on the brink of war so often, many New Yorkers treat the subject with only passing interest. Eliza Ferriday is thrilled to be traveling to St. Petersburg with Sofya Streshnayva, a cousin of the Romanovs. The two met years ago one summer in Paris and became close confidantes. Now Eliza embarks on the trip of a lifetime, home with Sofya to see the splendors of Russia: the church with the interior covered in jeweled mosaics, the Rembrandts at the tsar’s Winter Palace, the famous ballet. But when Austria declares war on Serbia and Russia’s imperial dynasty begins to fall, Eliza escapes back to America, while Sofya and her family flee to their country estate. In need of domestic help, they hire the local fortune-teller’s daughter, Varinka, unknowingly bringing intense danger into their household. On the other side of the Atlantic, Eliza is doing her part to help the White Russian families find safety as they escape the revolution. But when Sofya’s letters suddenly stop coming, she fears the worst for her best friend.

Kelly’s earlier published [The Lilac Girls](#) (\$17). “Inspired by actual events and real people, Martha Hall Kelly has woven together the stories of three women during World War II that reveal the bravery, cowardice, and cruelty of those days. This is a part of history—women’s history—that should never be forgotten.”—Lisa See, no slouch at this sort of fiction if focused on Asia.

Kidd, Sue Monk. [The Book of Longings](#) (Viking \$28). The Indie Next Pick: “Ana is Jesus’ wife and a force in her own right. Monk does not sensationalize her writing about a fictional marriage for Jesus, but rather goes into great historical detail and imagines what it would be like to be a woman in that time. If you have been waiting for a book like *The Red Tent* for the past 20 years, this is it. Give to fans of Anita Diamant and Marilynne Robinson.”

King, Stephen. [If It Bleeds](#) (Scribner \$30). The novella is a form King has returned to over and over again in the course of his amazing career, and many have been made into iconic films, including “The Body” (*Stand By Me*) and “Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption” (*Shawshank Redemption*). Like *Four Past Midnight*, *Different Seasons*, and most recently *Full Dark, No Stars*, *If It Bleeds* is a collection of his longer short fiction

Klune, T.J. [The House in the Cerulean Sea](#) (Tor \$26.99). Here it is, the feel good fantasy of April. You get: a magical island, a dangerous task, a burning secret, a gentle queer romance. Linus Baker is a by-the-book case worker in the Department in Charge of Magical Youth. He’s tasked with determining whether six dangerous magical children are likely to bring about the end of the world. Arthur Parnassus is the master of the orphanage. He would do anything to keep the children safe, even if it means the world will burn. And his secrets will come to light in this “enchanting love story, masterfully told, about the profound experience of discovering an unlikely family in an unexpected place—and realizing that family is yours.” Charlaune Harris calls it, “A modern fairy tale about learning your true nature and what you love and will protect. It’s a beautiful book.”

Lawhon, Ariel. [Code Name Helene](#) (Doubleday \$27.95). A thriller based on the life of Nancy Wake, an Australian expat who worked as a reporter for Hearst in Paris just before WWII and later as a spy for the British. Lawhon throws readers into the middle of the action, as Nancy, under the alias Hélène, prepares to parachute from an RAF plane into France to help the Resistance in 1944, carrying in her head memorized lists of vital data, including bridges targeted for destruction and safe house addresses. After she lands, the story flashes back eight years, as Nancy struggles for respect and recognition as a journalist; despite her firsthand observations of Nazi brutality in 1930s Vienna, her editor is reluctant to publish a story about what she’s seen. Frequent jumps in time draw out the arc of Wake’s remarkable life; despite her statement early on that women’s weapons of warfare were limited to “silk stockings and red lipstick,” by the end she’s proven herself skillful at physical combat as well. “Lawhon’s vivid, fast-paced narrative will keep readers turning the pages, and a detailed afterword makes plain how much of the account is factual.” Women power in the war keeps coming in one zinger of a novel after another.

Lebbon, Tim. [Eden](#) (\$14.95). An eco-horror adventure set in the near future. Desperate to avert a climate disaster, the world’s governments declared 13 “Virgin Zones” closed to human access, hoping they would revert to their pristine condition. Instead the flora and fauna have evolved in terrifying ways. Despite the armed patrols protecting the Virgin Zones’ borders, teams of adventurers enter the Zones illegally to race across their reaches for sport and glory. Dylan and his daughter, Jenn, are part of an elite team planning to cross Eden, the oldest of the Zones, when Jenn learns that her estranged mother, Kat, has entered Eden ahead of them. Desperate to locate Kat, Dylan’s team plunges into Eden. Once inside, they realize the Zone hides a valuable resource, but the land will protect itself from their intrusion at all costs. Lebbon excels at building a world that is both wondrous and deeply unsettling, and overshadows his characters.

L’Engle, Madeline. [A Moment of Tenderness](#) (Grand Central \$27). A deeply personal, genre-bending short story collection.

☞ McFarlane, Mhairi. [If I Never Met You](#) (Morrow \$15.99). I seldom get to read romantic comedy but luckily made time for this one. It’s not a cozy but honest and somewhat satirical as we watch the characters navigate a difficult contemporary Britain. When biracial British lawyer Laurie Watkinson’s domestic partner of 11 years tells her he doesn’t want children and leaves her for another woman, she’s blindsided. At 36, she worries she

won't ever have a family now, and their breakup becomes hot gossip at the firm where they both work. The last straw comes when his new girlfriend turns up pregnant. Unwilling to play the scorned woman, Laurie strikes up a deal with unlikely ally Jamie Carter, a gorgeous and ambitious coworker five years her junior. Jamie wants to move up at their firm, but the traditionally minded bosses have told the monogamy-averse playboy he lacks stability. If he and Laurie appear to fall in love, he'll gain a veneer of respectability. Capturing the heart of an infamously untamable bachelor will up Laurie's desirability factor. As their fictional relationship begins to reveal Jamie's hidden depths, Laurie realizes the hardest part of this ruse will be pretending not to fall for her fake boyfriend. McFarlane gives her heroine realistic hurdles, including workplace sexism and finding herself after a decade in a stifling relationship, all balanced with the author's trademark dry humor. Watching Jamie and Laurie step up and support each other time and again is soul-queenching, and readers wanting a romance with emotional heft need look no further.

McKevett, GA. [And the Killer Is](#) (Kensington \$26). The murder of nonagenarian Lucinda Faraday, a former screen siren whose hoarder mansion in San Carmelita, Calif., has literally become a deathtrap. Hollywood heart throb Ethan Malloy, who discovered the body, hires his friend PI Savannah to find the killer just as Savannah's policeman husband, Det. Sgt. Dirk Coulter, gets the call to investigate Lucinda's death. Lucinda's only living relative is her dirtball great-grandson, but her longtime housekeeper says she's the sole beneficiary in Lucinda's most recent will. Meanwhile, Dirk's arrest of a druggie mom leads to the woman's six-year-old son being temporarily placed with Dirk and Savannah until a place in foster care becomes available. Savannah and the rest of her transplanted Georgia family assist, including her feisty Granny, as well as everyone considered part of Savannah's Moonlight Magnolia Detective Agency. "McKevett tempers coldhearted murder with heartwarming relationships as she highlights serious social issues. Cozy fans will rejoice," says a Starred Review for the 25th in this series.

☞Meek, James. [To Calais in Ordinary Times](#) (Canongate \$27). England, 1348. A gentlewoman flees an odious arranged marriage, a Scots proctor sets out for Avignon, and a young plowman in search of freedom is on his way to volunteer with a company of archers. All come together on the road to Calais. Coming in their direction from across the English Channel is the Black Death, the plague that will wipe out half of the population of Northern Europe. As the journey unfolds, overshadowed by the archers' past misdeeds and clerical warnings of the imminent end of the world, the wayfarers must confront the nature of their loves and desires.

I am not finding comfort in reading apocalyptic or dystopian fiction but perhaps a novel set in the past will work because survival is clear. This version of *The Canterbury Tales* is "a tremendous feat of language and empathy; it summons a medieval world that is at once uncannily plausible, utterly alien, and eerily reflective of our own."

Meyer, Deon. [The Last Hunt](#) (Grove \$27). In Meyer's superb sixth novel featuring Captain Benny Griessel, Griessel and Captain Vaughn Cupido, his police partner in South Africa's elite Hawks investigative unit, are handed a "hot potato," the possible murder of Johnson Johnson, a private security guard who was

hired to protect a wealthy Dutch tourist on a luxury train from Cape Town to Pretoria. Johnson never made it to Pretoria. Nine days after he boarded the train, his body was found beside a railway line in the Northern Cape with a massive skull fracture. Griessel and Cupido's attempts to learn the truth aren't welcomed by everyone in the government. Meanwhile, Daniel Darret, a native South African who has settled in Bordeaux, France, rescues a female stranger from a gang of assailants with fighting skills that suggest he's a trained killer. An old friend from South Africa soon has an important job for Darret. "Meyer keeps the suspense high as the reader tries to figure out how the two plotlines connect. This may be the breakthrough book this author deserves." Patrick agrees with this Starred Review.

Moloney, David. [Barker House](#) (Bloomsbury \$26). Here is a series of linked stories that pivot between the perspectives of nine officers who work at a bleak New Hampshire jail—including veterans such as Leon, who works in the kitchen; Big Mike, who moonlights as a strip club bouncer; and rookie Brenner, the only female recruit—the narrative tracks the events of a year as characters endure family tragedy, romantic entanglements begin and fade, marriages crumble, and officers die. But no matter what's going on outside the jail's walls, it's the workplace frustrations and power struggles within that dominate everyone's attention and inescapably shape them. The author, himself a veteran corrections officer, anchors the stories with quotidian details of prison life and a viscerally drawn setting that leaps off the page.

Morgan, Louisa. [The Age of Witches](#) (Orbit \$28) tells the tale of three women descended from Bridget Bishop, a witch hanged in Salem in 1692. In *Gilded Age* New York, Harriet Bishop, her cousin Frances Allington, and Frances's stepdaughter Annis Allington are all witches of varying ages and knowledge of the power. The central theme is the struggle between light and dark magic, called malefecia by Morgan. This malefecia, handed down the Bishop ancestral line, corrupts everyone who uses it. "A compelling tale of love and magic in historic American and England.... This is a must-read for those who like magic, love and a little bit of feel-good feminism." — *Library Journal*

Nesbit, TaraShea. [Beheld](#) (Bloomsbury \$26) plunges you into "a story of the Pilgrims and Puritans, the beginning of the Plymouth colony, and the first murder that occurred there. It's a fascinating look at family, love, the importance of friendship, corruption, and human behavior. I have not read many books that take place during this time period but this one, which is primarily told from the voices of two women, is just fantastic!" says a Library Reads recommend. I made Nesbit's earlier fine novel [The Wives of Los Alamos](#) (\$18.50) a Book of the Month back when it published it was so good.

☞Noon, Jeff. [Creeping Jenny](#) (Angry Robot \$14.95). In his third to feature British PI John Nyquist, it's 1959. Nyquist receives an envelope of photographs from an unknown sender, one of which depicts Nyquist's long-lost father. Seeking answers, Nyquist travels to the village of Hoxley, where the photos seem to have been taken. Hoxley's residents are largely hostile to his visit and unhelpful in his investigation. Their community is bound by bizarre traditions, and every day they honor a different saint. On Saint Meade's Day, for example, Hoxleyans refrain from speech, and on Saint Edmund and Saint Alice Day, they all wear masks and answer only to the names of Edmund or Alice. As Nyquist

attempts to find out more about his father, Noon piles on the disquieting oddities, including a sinister plant called the Creeping Jenny, to build a palpably foreboding atmosphere. This creepy tale will delight fans of weird, understated horror from authors like Arthur Machen and Algernon Blackwood.

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Blonde 20th Anniversary Edition](#) (Harper \$19.99). The legend of Marilyn Monroe—aka Norma Jeane Baker—comes provocatively alive in this powerful tale of Hollywood myth and heartbreaking reality. Nominated for a National Book Award and now in an anniversary edition.

Paretsky, Sara. [Dead Land](#) (Harper \$28.99). VI Warshawski's goddaughter, Bernadine "Bernie" Fouchard, persuades her to attend a meeting of the South Lakefront Improvement Council (SLICK), a Chicago community group. On the group's agenda is the Chicago Parks District's plan to fill in part of the lake to create a beach. The meeting erupts in protest, led by the mysterious Coop. Later, Warshawski and Bernie seek to help Lydia Zamir, a former famous singer-songwriter now living on the streets and suffering from the aftershock of the murder of her lover, Hector Palurdo, in a mass shooting. Warshawski looks into who killed Hector while also investigating the actions of SLICK after two of its speakers are murdered. Could Coop be involved?

Here is the *Washington Post's* take: "Sara Paretsky's gloriously kick-ass private eye, V.I. "Vic" Warshawski, is back for the 20th time in a political-rot thriller that's the definition of perfection in the genre. Vic is feeling her (unspecified) age in this one — creaky and "mildewed" — but that barely slows her down in her search for a missing singer-songwriter who'd been living under a Chicago railroad viaduct. The novel's robustly flavorsome cast of characters includes a semi-deranged land preservationist, a corrupt Nobel Prize winner, a Chilean Ayn Rand disciple and several wonderful dogs. "This is Sara's first book written without her late husband's support and her sadness is part of the fuel for the story"

Phillips, Julia. [Disappearing Earth](#) (\$16.95). One August afternoon, two sisters—Sophia, eight, and Alyona, eleven—go missing from a beach on the far-flung Kamchatka Peninsula in northeastern Russia. Taking us through the year that follows, *Disappearing Earth* enters the lives of women and girls in this tightly knit community who are connected by the crime: a witness, a neighbor, a detective, a mother. We are transported to vistas of rugged beauty—open expanses of tundra, soaring volcanoes, dense forests, the glassy seas that border Japan and Alaska—and into a region as complex as it is alluring, where social and ethnic tensions have long simmered, and where outsiders are often the first to be accused. **Jack Carr fans, ALERT!** This is the same Kamchatka Peninsula where James Reece goes on the hunt in [Savage Son](#) (Atria \$28 Signed Firsts), his third thriller.

Ruff, Matt. [88 Names](#) (Harper \$27.99). One of the most playful of novelists, the inveterate genre-hopper Ruff follows up the chipper, revisionist cosmic horror of *Lovecraft Country* with an online techno-thriller whose plot hook gets roasted by one of its own pop-savvy gamers as "Ready Player One meets *The King and I*." But this brashly inventive story can't be broken down to formula. After establishing a crackerjack set-up—a down-on-his-luck guide to the online role-playing games of the near future takes a contract to "sherpa" a mysterious plutocrat through the world of MMORPGs, drawing the ire of the CIA—*88 Names*

proves predictably unpredictable, especially as the author seizes every chance to toy with the conventions and possibilities of computer role-playing. "The digital espionage at times seems like a formal excuse for Ruff's loving parodies of gamer trolls, dungeon crawls, Grand Theft Auto-like crime sprees and old-school Infocom text adventures, all rendered in the breezy, geek-positive, charmingly profane mode he established in his 1988 debut, *The Fool on the Hill*. But Ruff is clever enough to make *88 Names'* many apparent detours crucial to the revelations of his final chapters. While he's sufficiently steeped in the milieu of gamers to satirize, Ruff also persuasively celebrates the pastime of adopting a fictional persona to embark on monster-stomping quests. Unlike most stories involving VR, all-powerful corporations and the possibility of catfishing, *88 Names* never verges into the cynical or dystopian. Instead, Ruff invites readers to play."

Scott, Anika. [The German Heiress](#) (Harper \$16.99). Clara Falkenberg, the former heiress to the Falkenberg Iron Works in Essen, Germany, has been living under an assumed name in the 18 months since the war ended. Having fled Essen during the war out of fear of reprisal from the Nazis for sneaking extra rations to foreign workers transported by the Nazis from the Soviet Union and Poland to work for them, Clara now sets out in search of an old friend back in Essen. On her way, she is detained and interrogated by British Captain Thomas Fenshaw about the workers who starved to death. Clara escapes and soon meets black marketeer Jakob Relling, who agrees to help Clara find Elisa. As Jakob uses his connections to gather information, Fenshaw, knowing Jakob is in contact with Clara, offers him extra rations in exchange for information about her whereabouts, and Jakob is forced to decide between betraying a well-connected woman he might benefit from, and providing for his family in the moment. Scott's narrative is embellished with realistic depictions of rubble-filled German cities, scavenging residents, and moral questions about Clara's family ties to the Nazi regime. Fans of WWII fiction will be intrigued by Scott's exploration of how war changes the moral compass of its victims.

Smith, Alexander McCall. [The Talented Mr. Varg](#) (Knopf \$24.95). The Department of Sensitive Crimes, renowned for taking on the most obscure and irrelevant cases, led by Ulf Varg, their best detective, is always prepared to take on an investigation, no matter how complex. So when Ulf is approached by the girlfriend of Trig Oloffson, who claims her beau (the infamous bad boy of Swedish letters) is being blackmailed, Ulf is determined to help. It turns out that this wild bear of a man may be more of a teddy. And while Swedes are notoriously tolerant, finding out that their beloved rough and tumble ink slinger is more likely to use a pen than a sword...well, there are limits. Even for the Swedish. The case requires all of Ulf's concentration, but he finds himself distracted by his brother's questionable politics and meteoric rise within the Moderate Extremist Party and by his own constant attraction to his married co-worker Anna. When Ulf is then tasked with looking into a group of dealers exporting wolves that seem decidedly domestic, it will require all of his team's investigative skills.

Souza, Joseph. [The Perfect Daughter](#) (Kensington \$26). Shepherd's Bay has been home to generations of lobstermen and their families. Lately, affluent newcomers have been buying up waterfront property and mingling uneasily with the locals. Tensions are high, especially since Dakota James, a teenage boy from

the wealthier side of town, disappeared weeks ago. But another disturbing incident soon follows. When high school junior Katie Eaves and her friend, Willow Briggs, fail to come home after a night out, Katie's mother, Isla, is frantic. Two agonizing days go by before Katie is found, bruised and bloodied, yet alive. Isla is grateful. But Willow, a wealthy newcomer from Los Angeles, is still missing. And Katie can't remember anything about the night of their disappearance. What can Isla do to penetrate this small town's (deadly) secrets?

Spielman, Lori. [Star Crossed Sisters of Tuscany](#) (Berkley \$16). Two second-born daughters hope to break a curse that has been in their family for generations. Twenty-nine-year-old Emelia Antonelli works in her grandmother's Brooklyn bakery and is happily single, or so she tells herself. After her great aunt Poppy, also a second-born daughter, invites Emelia and her cousin Lucy to join her on an eight-day, all expenses paid trip to Italy, Poppy claims that on her upcoming 80th birthday she will meet the love of her life, Rico, on the steps of the Ravello Cathedral, breaking the Fontana Second Daughter Curse, which dooms all second-born daughters to a life without love, once and for all. Emelia isn't sure she believes in the curse, but she's ready for adventure, and soon she and Lucy (also a second-born daughter) are off to Tuscany. And there....

Stone, Jonathan. [Die Next](#) (Grand Central \$16.99). In a crowded coffee shop, Zack Yellin swaps identical-looking cell phones with the businessman next to him. It's an honest mistake—and a deadly one. Because the “businessman” is actually a professional—and highly volatile-hit man named Joey Richter, and his phone is filled with bombshell evidence. If Zack takes Joey's phone to the police, will they believe his swapped cell phone story? Would they even be able to protect him? Because the hit man now has Zack's phone with the phone numbers and addresses of Zack's new girlfriend Emily, his best friend Steve, and all the texts and information from Zack's life. Whether Zack keeps the phone or ditches it, Joey will kill him for what he now knows. And so a cat and mouse game begins with Zack fighting to stay off Joe's hit list.

Struzan, Dylan. [A Bloody Business](#) (Forge \$15.95). Dylan Struzan has delivered a soaring treat for those of us who love mobster history, a sprawling saga drawn not from rumor or recycled myth, but directly from the horse's mouth. Her exploration of mob life and the shadow empires the bootleggers built is an exhilarating rush, a must-read.”—Frank Darabont, director of *The Green Mile* and *The Shawshank Redemption*, on a book timed to Prohibition's 100th anniversary.

Taylor, Elena. [All We Buried](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Yet another compelling small town drama, this one in a remote lakeside town in Collier, Washington. The lake is compelling to the characters and the story. The lead is a gutsy sheriff, Elizabeth Rivers, called Bet, serving an interim position in the shoes she does not want to fill from her deceased sheriff father. She gets her case when a visiting scientist spots a body floating in the lake which is fed by streams flowing down the Cascade Mountains through the surrounding forests. No one can identify the body, a Jane Doe for sure. So that's the starting point in a case challenging Bet and the tiny town.... Starts a series which is good news as this is well worth reading.

Thompson, Victoria. [Murder on Pleasant Avenue](#) (Berkley \$26). PI Frank Malloy and his partner, Gino Donatelli, are approached by Donatelli's sister-in-law, Teo, who's distraught over the kidnapping of Jane Harding. Miss Harding, who worked at the Daughters of Hope Mission, an East Harlem settlement house with which Malloy's wife was once involved, disappeared after being stopped by an unidentified man on the street. Teo fears that the Black Hand, a notorious early 20th Century criminal organization, has abducted Miss Harding for ransom. The gang recently kidnapped the wife of the employer of Teo's husband, only releasing her after a month in captivity when the extortionate payment was raised. The efforts to rescue Miss Harding lead to a murder under circumstances that implicate Donatelli, forcing his friends to solve the crime to absolve him. Thompson makes effective use of real-life figures, such as Joseph Petrosino, one of the NYPD's first Italian officers. Of interest to fans of husband-and-wife sleuthing partners such as Thomas and Charlotte Pitt. Sadly, Thompson's May event has fallen victim to the pandemic so we are not offering signed copies.

Tilghman, Christopher. [Thomas and Beal in the Midi](#) (Picador \$18). “Lushly written... A recurring theme of innocent, even naïve Americans coming to understand worldly Europe recalls Henry James, as do the novel's astute psychological insights. Tilghman's prose can be seductively lovely, and he creates engaging, often surprising characters. This historical novel's evocative descriptions of *fin de siècle* France and skillfully drawn characters add up to a sensitive and satisfying portrait of a marriage.” —*Kirkus Reviews* on the third book in a series I have missed, but now am intrigued to read.

✦Torjussen, Mary. [The Closer You Get](#) (Berkley \$17). Personal assistant Ruby Dean and her boss, Harry Sheridan, decide to leave their spouses after an 18-month affair and start a life together. Ruby tells her emotionally abusive husband, Tom, it's over and moves out, but Harry never meets her as planned. At first, Ruby is sure there's a good explanation for why Harry didn't keep his word. Perhaps Harry's wife, Emma, caused a scene or he had an accident. But when she returns to work, she's fired, and Harry is off on a romantic holiday with Emma to celebrate her pregnancy. Devastated, Ruby questions her choices and even considers returning to Tom, but ultimately forges ahead. In her search for a new job, she goes to an interview that turns out to be a hoax. The tension rises as more mishaps and threatening messages unsettle Ruby. What is going on? A good choice for fans of Jeff Abbott and David Bell, neither of them British but apropos.

✦Tyce, Harriet. [Blood Orange](#) (\$16.99). Alison Wood is a London lawyer, deeply flawed, complex, and ambitious, so she welcomes her first murder case. Her client, Madeline Smith, who was arrested for stabbing her husband to death, wants to plead guilty. But Alison tries to persuade Madeline to consider other options. Meanwhile, Alison's personal life is in shambles. She must deal with a failing marriage and a nearly abusive affair with another lawyer. To make matters worse, she begins receiving threatening texts, tied to her affair, from an unknown source. Soon, her husband wants a divorce, and custody of her six-year-old daughter is at stake. As Alison prepares for Madeline's case, she begins to see disturbing similarities between her client's life and her own. Tyce signed the hardcover here and we had an interesting discussion about the cynical tone of her debut. She's a talented writer so I look forward to seeing what she does next.

✂Waters, Martha. [To Have and to Hoax](#) (Atria \$17). John's take on this debut Regency room-com: "Five years ago, Lady Violet Grey and Lord James Audley met, fell in love, and got married. Four years ago, they had a fight to end all fights, and have barely spoken since. Their once-passionate love match has been reduced to one of cold, detached politeness. But when Violet receives a letter that James has been thrown from his horse and rendered unconscious at their country estate, she races to be by his side; only to discover him alive and well at a tavern, and completely unaware of her concern. Wanting to teach her estranged husband a lesson, Violet decides to feign an illness of her own. James quickly sees through it, but he decides to play along in an ever-escalating game of manipulation, featuring actors masquerading as doctors, threats of Swiss sanitariums, faux mistresses; and a lot of flirtation between a husband and wife who might not hate each other as much as they thought. Will the two be able to overcome four years of hurt?" An excellent question in an age when divorce was rare and difficult to obtain but couples did wind up living apart. Enjoy the ways the feuding couple weaponize Regency manners for their own ends.

White, Elle Brooke. [Dead on the Vine](#) (Crippen \$26.99). "After Charlotte Finn, the heroine of the pseudonymous White's lighthearted series launch, is fired from her high-powered job at a Chicago advertising firm, she heads for Little Acorn, California, with high hopes of managing the produce farm that she recently inherited from a great-uncle. "I've been to a farmers market, so how hard can this be?" she reasons. Her optimism flags when she learns that the farm is barely breaking even. While showing a real estate agent the property, she and the agent discover the body of a young man with a pitchfork driven through his neck. "I can't sell the farm without taking a loss, and I can't raise money from it while this murder is fresh in people's minds," concludes Charlotte, so she decides to investigate the murder herself. Though she's surrounded by well-meaning friends, Charlotte's real ally is a small, impossibly cute, and intelligent pig she names Horse (because he eats like one). Never mind that the culprit is pretty obvious. Animal lovers won't want to miss this playful cozy."—*PW*

Zacheim, Victoria. [Private Investigations](#) (Basic Books \$28). Here is an anthology where a bunch of mystery writers share the real-life mysteries they've encountered. From the exploration of genre tropes like haunted houses and elusive perps to real-life medical mysteries and crimes of war, there's something for all types of readers, and it's a great way to sample a little writing from a lot of writers at once to find your next favorite mystery author. Ones you know include Anne Perry, Jacqueline Winspear, Tasha Alexander, Rhys Bowen, Robert Dugoni, Cara Black, Jeffery Deaver, and more.

Zhang, C. Pam. [How Much of These Hills Is Gold?](#) (Riverhead \$26). A Starred Review: "Zhang's extraordinary debut, a beautifully rendered family saga, centers on a pair of siblings, Lucy, 12, and Sam, 11, who are left orphaned in the wake of the American gold rush. When their father—a former prospector and coal miner whom they call Ba—dies after a short, hard life of toil and drink, Lucy and Sam want to bury him properly, according to Chinese burial traditions. This means two silver dollars to cover his eyes, but it's two silver dollars the two don't have. Clever Lucy attempts to appeal to the townspeople's sympathy, but it's hotheaded Sam, armed with their father's pistol, who understands that it takes force to make things happen. With their father's decompos-

ing body, the pistol, and a stolen horse, Lucy and Sam disappear into the hills. As they search for a burial site and look forward to a future for themselves, Lucy and Sam reckon with how gold, ambition, and desire shaped the lives of both their Ba and their beautiful, beloved, and long-departed Ma, whose womanhood never dampened her hunger and ambition, and how that greed has been passed down to them. Gorgeously written and fearlessly imagined, Zhang's awe-inspiring novel introduces two indelible characters whose odyssey is as good as the gold they seek."

OUR APRIL SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Barclay, Linwood. [Elevator Pitch](#) (\$9.99). When an outbreak of fatal elevator crashes in Manhattan coincides with a sinister drop in emergency response services, two seasoned New York detectives and a straight-shooting journalist race against time to find answers. Barclay's latest thriller does for elevators what *Psycho* did for showers and *Jaws* did for the beach. *LJ* summed it up in the same terms saying "Fans of psychological thrillers and the author's previous books will love this. Warning: it might leave some readers a bit uncomfortable next time they enter an elevator."

Barron, Laird. [Black Mountain](#) (\$9.99). Ex-mob enforcer Isaiah Coleridge investigates the suspicious murder of a small-time criminal and becomes immersed in a tangled case involving a cabaret dancer heiress and a serial killer. *PW* concluded their rave with "Barron peppers the text with literary references and philosophical reflections that provide rich counterpoint to the violent bashing and bloodletting. Fans of hardboiled crime fiction and wise guy vernacular will be well satisfied."

Box, CJ. [The Bitterroots](#) (\$9.99). Cassie Dewell #4. Private investigator Cassie Dewell agrees to take a case involving the assault of a young woman, but as she tries to uncover the truth, Cassie finds herself fighting an influential family as well as ghosts from her own past. Here is *PW* again saying "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."

Cavanagh, Steve. [Thirteen](#) (\$9.99). A defense lawyer and former conman defends his movie-star client in a high-profile murder trial and discovers that the actual killer is sitting on the jury, in the third novel of the series following *The Plea*. *PW* concluded by saying "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."

McKinlay, Jenn. [Pumpkin Spice Peril](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Signed. Cupcake Bakery #12. When one of their most valued cupcake connoisseurs ends up dead, Fairy Talk Cupcake bakers—Melanie Cooper and Angie Harper—find their lives and bakery at stake when it is discovered that the victim was poisoned by their pumpkin spice cupcakes.

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in Galway](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Home to Ireland #1. To honor her mother's final request, Tara Meehan arrives in Galway, Ireland, where she becomes immediately drawn into her mother and uncle's troubled past when a dead body is found in her missing uncle's cottage.

Robotham, Michael. [The Secrets She Keeps](#) (\$9.99). A seemingly chance friendship between a successful parenting blogger and an unmarried grocery store clerk, both of whom are expecting babies the same month, is shattered by obsession, terrible secrets and a shocking kidnapping plot.

PW ended their review with “Despite the disturbing subject matter, Robotham’s narrative is intimate and insightful. Brilliantly rendered characters, relentless tension, and numerous plot twists make this a winner.”

Singh, Nalini. [A Madness of Sunshine](#) (\$7.99). This small paperback is not after all available in April. Rats.

APRIL SMALL PAPERBACKS

Adams, Ellery. [Murder in the Storybook Cottage](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Book Retreat #6. While holding the Peppermint Press children’s book conference, Jane Steward must track down a killer, who fashions his crimes after fairy tales, when two murders occur during a scavenger hunt.

Calder, Eve. [Sugar and Vice](#) (Forge \$7.99). Cookie House #2. When a skeleton is found in the backyard behind her best friend Maxi’s flower store, Kate McGuire dressed in a pirate’s outfit and clutching a rose, must follow the clues to find a killer and clear Maxi’s name before the last cookie crumbles.

Carlisle, Kate. [The Book Supremacy](#) (\$7.99). Bibliophile #13. Newlyweds Brooklyn and Derek find their post-honeymoon return to San Francisco overshadowed by two murders that are linked to Derek’s past and a valuable first-edition James Bond novel.

Child, Lee. [Blue Moon](#) (\$9.99). Jack Reacher #13. Jack Reacher offers aid to an elderly couple only to be confronted by the most dangerous opponents of his career.

Elliott, Lauren. [Proof of Murder](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Beyond the Page Bookstore #4. Bookstore owner Addie Greyborne is faced with a real-life murder mystery when the body of an insurance appraiser is found in a room locked from the inside with a rare book valued at \$150,000 missing.

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: A Time for Murder](#) (\$7.99). Jessica Fletcher #50. When a colleague winds up dead during their high school reunion, Jessica Fletcher discovers a link to her very first murder case and embarks on a quest to find out what really happened all those years ago.

Gudenkauf, Heather. [Before She Was Found](#) (Park Row \$9.99). For twelve-year-old Cora Landry and her friends Violet and Jordyn, it was supposed to be an ordinary sleepover; movies and Ouija and talking about boys. But when they decide to sneak out to go to the abandoned rail yard on the outskirts of town, little do they know that their innocent games will have dangerous consequences that shake up a quiet Iowa community.

Haines, Carolyn. [Game of Bones](#) (\$7.99). Sarah Booth Delaney #20. When a ritually murdered body is discovered at a newfound Native-American temple site in Sunflower County, Sarah Booth, Tinkie and resident ghost Jitty investigate a growing list of suspects, including a flirtatious archaeologist.

Lindsey, Julie Anne. [Pulp Friction](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Cider Shop #2. When a groom is found dead after arguing with her dotting ex, Hank, cider shop owner Winona Mae Montgomery must peel back the layers of a juicy scandal to find the truth before the real killer puts the squeeze on her.

Linskey, Howard. [Ungentlemanly Warfare](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Captain Harry Walsh, one of Britain’s most effective and unorthodox Special Operations Executive agents, must lead his squad

behind enemy lines to infiltrate Nazi-occupied France and assassinate a German scientist who is working on a machine that could change the tide of the war.

Logan, T M. [Lies](#) (\$9.99). Six days ago, Joe Lynch was a happily married man, a devoted father, and a respected teacher living in a well-to-do London suburb. But now Joe’s life is unraveling. His wife has lied to him. The man she met at the hotel has vanished. And as the police investigate his disappearance, suspicion falls on Joe.

Martin, Kat. [The Deception](#) (Harlequin \$8.99). This sequel to *The Conspiracy* finds a woman devastated by the death of her runaway addict sister before partnering with a bounty hunter to track down a killer in the dark world of human trafficking.

Parks, Adele. [I Invited Her in](#) (Mira \$9.99). When Mel receives an unexpected email from her oldest friend, Abi, who is looking for a place to stay for a few days, it brings back memories she thought she had buried forever.

Pressey, Rose. [Murder Can Confuse Your Chihuahua](#) (Kensington \$7.99). When her Chihuahua, Van Gogh, leads her to a dead body, artist Celeste Cabot, who has a touch of paranormal talent, sets out to draw the brazen killer onto her canvas with the help of a handsome fellow artist

Spence, Gerry. [Court of Lies](#) (\$9.99). Judge John Murray, an incorruptible judge, is overseeing a murder trial and prosecutor Haskins Sewell, consumed with political ambitions, has a plan to frame the defendant and destroy Murray’s reputation, but Sewell may be underestimating Murray.

Spillane, Mickey. [Mike Hammer: Killing Town](#) (Titan \$8.99). Mike Hammer steals a ride on a train upstate to Killington. But he arrives to a nasty surprise; he is accused by police of raping and murdering a young woman near the freight yards. Roughed up by the cops and facing a murder charge, Hammer’s fate looks bleak until a beautiful blonde, Melba Charles—daughter of Senator Charles—gives him an unexpected alibi. But there is a price for clearing his name: he is to marry her.

Tata, Anthony J. [Double Crossfire](#) (\$9.99). After the attempted murder of the CIA Director, Jake Mahegan uncovers a vast, insidious conspiracy to seat a losing candidate in the Oval Office through any means necessary, in the latest addition to the series following *Dark Winter*.

Wilton, Traci. [Mrs. Morris and the Witch](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Widowed B&B owner Charlene Morris, after discovering the body of a local Wiccan on Halloween, must catch a crafty killer with the help of the local coven and her ghostly partner.