

# BOOKNEWS from

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

*Please look for pop up book chats with authors and editors and who knows what from time to time on our Home Page and then moved to our Facebook.*

## MONDAY MAY 18 5:00 PM

### Virtual Book Launch

**Liv Constantine** chats about [The Wife Stalker](#) (Harper \$27.99)  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours  
View a [video trailer](#) for the book

## TUESDAY MAY 19 5:00 PM on Instagram Live

**Jessica Knoll** chats about [The Favorite Sister](#) (\$16.99)  
**Sara Sligar** chats about our April First Mystery Book of the Month [Take Me Apart](#) (FSG \$27)  
Signed copies of Sligar's debut are again available  
Those of you on Instagram can watch this program

## TUESDAY MAY 19 5:30 PM

### Virtual Book Launch

**Ivy Pochoda** chats with Patrick about [These Women](#) (Ecco \$27.99)  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

## THURSDAY MAY 21 5:00 PM

**Editor Keith Kahla** chats with his author **Jennifer Hillier**, winner of the 2019 Best Thriller Award, about her new novel [Little Secrets](#) (St Martins \$26.99)  
Jennifer lives in Canada so Signed Bookplates it is for our copies

## SATURDAY MAY 23 2:00 PM

### Virtual Book Launch

**Robin Burcell** chats about her last full collaboration with Clive Cussler in [The Wrath of Poseidon](#) (Putnam \$30)  
Sam & Remi Fargo #12  
Books Signed only by Burcell available. Please order quickly to secure yours

## MONDAY MAY 25 12:00 PM

**Martin Walker** chats about [The Shooting at Chateau Rock](#) (Knopf \$25.95)  
Bruno, Chief of Police  
Our copies include a wonderful photo postcard from Walker who hopes to visit from the EU in September

## TUESDAY MAY 26 5:00 PM

### Virtual Book Launch

**Michael Connelly** chats about [Fair Warning](#) (Little Brown \$29)  
Jack McEvoy #3  
Signed books available. Our copies come with an exclusive interview with Mike.

## WEDNESDAY MAY 27 5:00 PM

**David Baldacci** chats about [Walk the Wire](#) (Grand Central \$29)  
This is a Father's Day special so while supplies last we include a free Father's Day card already stamped for you with US postage

## THURSDAY MAY 28 5:00 PM

**Laird Barron** chats about [Worse Angels](#) (Putnam \$27)  
Isaiah Coleridge  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

## THURSDAY MAY 28 6:00 PM

**Mike Lupica** chats with **Joe Ide** about his new Sunny Randall, [Robert B. Parker's Grudge Match](#) (Putnam \$27)  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

## THURSDAY MAY 28 7:15 PM

**Hardboiled Crime Discussion Club** meets with Patrick on Zoom. Email [Patrick@poisonedpen.com](mailto:Patrick@poisonedpen.com) for details and an invitation to join if you wish.

## SATURDAY MAY 30 2:00 PM

**Kristen Ashley** chats with John about [Dream Maker](#) (Grand Central \$7.99)  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

## MONDAY JUNE 1 5:00 PM

**Francesca Serritella** chats about her debut [Ghosts of Harvard](#) (Random \$27)  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

## TUESDAY JUNE 2 7:00 PM

**JA Jance** chats about her new Ali Reynolds investigation [Cred-ible Threat](#) (Gallery \$27.99)  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours.  
Books will arrive from Jance a bit delayed

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 3 5:00 PM**

**David Pepper** chats about his terrifying political thriller [The Voter File](#) (Putnam \$27)  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

**SATURDAY JUNE 6 1:00 PM**

**Francine Matthews** chats about [Death on Tuckernuck](#) (Soho \$27.95), her new Merry Folger Nantucket Mystery  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

**SATURDAY JUNE 2 2:00 PM**

**Laurie R. King** chats about [Riviera Gold](#) (Bantam \$28), her new Russell/Holmes mystery set in Monaco, as they search for Mrs. Hudson  
Signed books available. Please order quickly to secure yours

**OUR MAY BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

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

Forry, Lauren A. [They Did Bad Things](#)

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

Whishaw, Iona. [A Match Made for Murder](#)

**First Mystery Book of the Month Club** One Signed First per month

Wright, Lawrence. [The End of October](#)

**The Crime Collectors Book of the Month Club** One Signed First per month

Turow, Scott. [The Last Trial](#)

**Historical Fiction Club** One Signed First per month

Quick, Amanda. [Close Up](#)

**Fantastic New Fiction** One Signed First per month

Farmer, Jordan. [The Poison Flood](#)

**NEW SIGNED BOOKS**

⌘Atkins, Lucy. [Magpie Lane](#) (Mobius \$40). When the eight-year-old daughter of an Oxford College Master vanishes in the middle of the night, police turn to the Scottish nanny, Dee, for answers. As Dee looks back over her time in the Master's Lodging—an eerie and ancient house—a picture of a high achieving but dysfunctional family emerges: Nick, the fiercely intelligent and powerful father; his beautiful Danish wife Mariah, pregnant with their child; and the lost little girl, Felicity, almost mute, seeing ghosts, grieving her dead mother. But is Dee telling the whole story? Is her growing friendship with the eccentric house historian, Linklater, any cause for concern? And most of all, why is Felicity silent? Roaming Oxford's secret passages and hidden graveyards, *Magpie Lane* is "Spellbinding and spooky...a dazzling high wire act, superbly absorbing."—*Sunday Mirror*. We have only ten Atkins and cannot reorder.

Baldacci, David. [Walk the Wire](#) (Grand Central \$29). This is a Father's Day special so while supplies last we include a free Father's Day card already stamped for you with US postage. I've reviewed this newest thriller by Baldacci before so here's a customer's take: "Amos Decker—the FBI consultant with

a perfect memory—is working with his partner Alex Jamison to solve a murder that is so much more than just a small town murder. There's so much going on, you could get whiplash just reading, but to say it's edge of the seat exciting is an understatement. And – spoiler here – Will Robie and his sidekick Jessica Reel make their appearances at just the right time. This foursome makes for an awesome problem-solving team. There are so many bodies, so many people, and so many different crimes happening concurrently, it's hard to track, but track we do. And it adds up to Baldacci having hit a home run again. So what's Decker up to next? Only time will tell." Our first shipment to Baldacci sold out so he kindly signed a big new batch for you.

Barron, Laird. [Worse Angels](#) (Putnam \$27). We first met Isaiah Coleridge in [Blood Standard](#) (\$9.99) and are treated to rugged remote Alaska where Isaiah is a hitman for hire and the Chicago Outfit is a player. Then in [Black Mountain](#) (\$9.99) we switch to the Hudson River Valley, more beautiful country marred by violent deeds, where Isaiah is newly established as a PI housed in a body that has taken a ton of punishment. And an unusual and unwelcome new client. Ex-NYPD cop Badja Adeyemi had been the bodyguard for Gerald Redlick, a businessman who's now a U.S. senator. When Redlick's company came under scrutiny for corrupt doings, Adeyemi too became a suspect. Now, before he gets sent to prison, Adeyemi wants to ease his sister's mind by having Coleridge investigate the death of her son at a supercollider project site several years earlier. A death ruled to be a suicide. This will lead Coleridge and his equally tough associate, Lionel Robard, to small towns and people with big egos, bigger payrolls, and absolutely zero scruples about doing whatever it takes to win. Plus a cabal of locals who may actually be dangerous. And to a super collider built into the caves-ridden landscape Isaiah now calls home. Barron fills this investigation with unlikely juxtapositions so you have to pay close attention to its development. I like the landscapes, Alaska and the Upper Hudson Valley, more than the people or the crimes.

Bolton, Sharon. [The Split](#) (Transworld \$33). 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. [The Split](#) (St Martins \$27.99).

✂Bradby, Tom. [Double Agent](#) (Bantam \$32). As we move towards the Spies of Summer reading I'm thrilled to see a new novel by British journalist/novelist Bradby who won my heart years ago with his bestselling the *Master of Rain* about 1920s Shanghai. But we here we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Kidnapped in Venice by a Russian defector, Senior MI6 officer Kate Henderson knows she's in trouble. But all is not as it seems. The spy offers her conclusive evidence that the British Prime Minister is a live agent working for Moscow. Kate's holiday quickly becomes the start of her next mission. With proof of the PM involved in a sordid scandal and a financial paper trail that undeniably links him to the Russians, the evidence seems bulletproof. But the motives of the defector are anything but clear. And, more worryingly, it seems that there are key people at the heart of the British Establishment who refuse to acknowledge the reality in front of them. Kate can trust no one, and this mission will push her dangerously close to the edge... but is that the price to pay for the truth? Think LeCarre with more edge. We have one copy left of [Secret Service](#) (Random UK \$32) as well as this new book.

Connelly, Michael. [Fair Warning](#) (LittleBrown \$29). **NEW: Our copies come with an exclusive printed interview with Mike.** Veteran reporter Jack McEvoy has taken down killers before, but when a woman he had a one-night stand with is murdered in a particularly brutal way, he realizes he might be facing a criminal mind unlike any he's ever encountered. Jack investigates – against the warnings of the police and his own editor – and makes a shocking discovery that connects the crime to other mysterious deaths across the country. Undetected by law enforcement, a vicious killer has been hunting women, using genetic data shared by the victims themselves to select and stalk his targets. Uncovering the murkiest corners of the dark web, Jack races to find and protect the last source who can lead him to his quarry. But the killer has already chosen his next target... “*The London Times* writes, “He’s stumbled on an amazing story. From a murdered young woman to a mind-boggling extrapolation of the dark destinations that DNA testing might lead to”

Constantine, Liv. [The Wife Stalker](#) (Harper, \$27.99). Piper Reynard has moved to Westport after the mysterious deaths of her husband and stepdaughter on the West Coast, and actually he was dead husband No. 2. Now she has changed her name, erased her internet footprint, and opened Harmony Healing Arts on the premises of a failed recovery center. “In short order, Piper fixes her gaze on a handsome married lawyer named Leo Drakos. Leo has “always been a loyal and faithful husband,” so his wife, Joanna, is taken by surprise when he responds to Piper’s charms and almost immediately kicks her out of the house and cuts her off from their children. Neither her therapist nor her awful mother seems very sympathetic as Joanna’s whole life goes up in smoke. As Piper ruthlessly maneuvers her way into the family, having hot sex with Leo on her sailboat and forcing the children to drink green smoothies, Joanna turns private investigator in order to find out who this creepy platitude-spouter really is. A woman who hates children was a strong element of the author’s first book, the very successful [The Last Mrs. Parrish](#) (\$16.99). A hit for fans of the unreliable narrator(s) as the story is told by two voices. Who do you believe as you twist and turn to the kind of ending that is a hallmark of this genre.

Cussler, Clive/Robin Burcell. [The Wrath of Poseidon](#) (Putnam \$30). **This is her last full collaboration with Clive Cussler, and**

**Signed only by Burcell.** Ten years ago, a chance meeting at the Lighthouse Café in Redondo Beach led Sam Fargo and Remi Longstreet on the adventure of a lifetime, hunting the legendary riches stolen from the Persian King Croesus in 546 B.C. But they weren't the only ones. Someone else is after the gold, and he's willing to kill anyone who gets in his way. When Sam and Remi run afoul of a criminal drug-running operation, their hopes of finding the treasure are dashed. But with Sam's ingenuity and Remi's determination, they survive their confrontation with the drug runners, and manage to send one of the key players to prison. Though the cache of gold is never found, life goes on. Sam and Remi marry—and years later return to Greece to find the one treasure that got away. Time becomes their enemy when the kingpin they helped send to prison over a decade ago is released—and he has two goals in mind. Find the legendary hoard of King Croesus, and kill Sam and Remi Fargo!

Davis, Lindsey. [The Grove of the Caesars](#) (Hodder \$46). A Starred Review: “Set in Rome in 89 CE, Davis’s engrossing eighth mystery featuring private investigator Flavia Albia finds Flavia in charge of her husband Tiberius’s construction business while he’s away dealing with a family illness. As part of her job, Flavia visits gardens bequeathed to the people of Rome by Julius Caesar, to check on the progress of a contract to dismantle a small grotto, where workers have unearthed some old scrolls, a find that may have some financial value. But Flavia’s look into whether the writings are legitimate is put aside after the grisly discovery of the nude, strangled body of Victoria Teria, who disappeared during a birthday celebration held for her husband, Cluventus, in the gardens a short time before. Cluventus’s subsequent doubts about the official inquiry’s effectiveness lead him to hire Flavia to find the murderer, who she learns has been preying on women in the gardens for years. The author’s trademark dry wit leavens the gruesomeness of the central plot. Davis convincingly sets a hunt for a serial killer in ancient Rome.” I truly loved Davis’ Marcus Didius Falco series to which the last two sentences clearly apply.

Deaver, Jeffery. [The Goodbye Man](#) (Putnam \$28). Deaver’s outstanding sequel to 2019’s [The Never Game](#) (\$9.99) takes career reward seeker Colter Shaw into wilderness in Washington State where he battles an unscrupulous fellow hunter, a corrupt sheriff’s department, and the Osiris Foundation touting its ability to turn lives around into happy and productive futures. I had fun discussing cults with Laurie R. King in our Book Chat (view it on Facebook or our You Tube). Laurie, a doctor of religious studies, wrote a long ago book to explore cults as cults, a form of religion, and its hold. Deaver kicks this excellent thriller off with what looks like a hate crime and sends Shaw into a cult that is.... I can’t say without a spoiler but this is Deaver, right? And nothing is what it seems. I think in fact writers like Thomas Perry or the late Donald E. Westlake would applaud Deaver for this one. And he sets up a nifty hook, again with action beginning a few hours after that of the current book ends, to propel you into the third for Shaw. **Watch my [interview with him](#) for a fuller discussion.** It’s clear why he has been an international bestseller and winner of countless awards across the arc of his career and that of The Pen.

✂Edwards, Martin. [Mortmain Hall](#) (Zeus\$42). England, 1930. Grieving widows are a familiar sight on London’s Necropolis Railway. So when an elegant young woman in a black veil boards

the funeral train, nobody guesses her true purpose. But Rachel Savernake is not one of the mourners. She hopes to save a life – the life of a man who is supposed to be cold in the grave. But then a suspicious death on the railway track spurs her on to investigate a sequence of baffling mysteries: a death in a blazing car; a killing in a seaside bungalow; a tragic drowning in a lake. Rachel believes that the cases are connected – but what possible link can there be? Rich, ruthless and obsessed with her own dark notions of justice, she will not rest until she has discovered the truth. To find the answers to her questions she joins a house party on the eerie and remote North Yorkshire coast at Mortmain Hall. Her inquiries are helped – and sometimes hindered – by the impetuous young journalist Jacob Flint and an eccentric female criminologist with a dangerous fascination with perfect crimes... Edwards adds, “This story offers, among other things, a classic whodunit puzzle, complete with map of the crime scene and a ‘Cluefinder’. Cluefinders were popular during the Golden Age between the wars; they highlight the clues in the story to the solution of the mystery. It was all part of the fun of the game, the battle of wits between the reader and the great detective. As far as I know, the Cluefinder in Mortmain Hall is the first to have appeared in a novel for almost seventy years.”

**Our June Historical Fiction Pick** comes from London later this month. Club members will receive their copies in June. We have only 5 extras so please act quickly.

Farmer, Jordan. [The Poison Flood](#) (Putnam \$27). Our **May Fantastic New Fiction Pick** combines an unconventional lead with a sobering portrayal of an environmental disaster’s impact on a small community. Though Hollis Bragg is a gifted songwriter, paid for writing lyrics for a popular singing group without attribution, his self-esteem is diminished by the hunchback he’s had most of his life, which has made him an object of derision. Environmental protests in his hometown of Coopersville, W.Va., which has been economically depressed since the closing of the local coal mines a few years earlier, prompt him to launch a new creative project, a concept album featuring songs “performed by a sick minstrel... who travels a wasteland version of America.” He puts that endeavor on hold after a leak from a chemical tank pollutes the area’s water, driving the residents to extreme measures to survive. Bragg gets involved in a murder related to the crisis, but the crime subplot is secondary to the lead’s struggles to come to terms with his past and himself. Farmer is especially good at making the despair of Coopersville palpable.” Think of John Billheimer and Julia Keller.

Hallinan, Timothy. [Street Music](#) (Soho \$26.95). This final for expat Poke Rafferty living in Bangkok with the new family he has created is not yet scheduled for a virtual event with Tim. Please check with us while we work out shipping books to him and a conversation about Poke.

Hillier, Jennifer. [Little Secrets](#) (St Martins \$26.99). **Jennifer lives in Canada so Signed Bookplates it is for our copies.** As I said in April, *Little Secrets* is “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. I look forward to discussing it with her editor Keith Kahla, whom many of you have met at The Pen, on May 21 8:00 PM ET.

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*.

Jance, JA. [Credible Threat](#) (Gallery \$27.99). Jance and The Pen have been together since 1989! For all of her books but one when she wrecked her shoulder and couldn’t travel. So here we are breaking new ground with a virtual discussion of her 15<sup>th</sup> Ali Reynolds, a series that highlights Northern Arizona and metro phoenix just as her Joanna Bradys focus on Bisbee and Cochise County and JP Beaumont is mostly Seattle-based. Her event is June 2 but as our supply of Signed Firsts will be limited, I encourage you to order now so you can enjoy how Ali Reynolds and her team at High Noon Enterprises race against the clock to save an archbishop who faces mysterious death threats.... Until I read it I won’t know if there is a nod to Willa Cather’s esteemed *Death Comes for the Archbishop* here....

Jonasson, Ragnar. [The Mist](#) (Joseph \$44). What has D.I. Hulda Hermannsdóttir got to do with a remote farmhouse in eastern Iceland, where a couple shut in by a blizzard has foolishly let in a stranger? Read up to find out, but know that not everyone emerges alive, and this scenario will trouble Hulda for the rest of her career. Iceland’s premier crime writer wraps up the “Hidden Iceland” series with this final chapter. The US edition of [The Mist](#) (St Martins \$27.99) publishes late in June when we will stage a virtual conversation with Jonasson.

King, Laurie R. [Riviera Gold](#) (Bantam \$28). It’s summertime on the Riviera, and the Jazz Age has come to France’s once-sleepy beaches. From their music-filled terraces, American expatriates gaze along the coastline at the lights of Monte Carlo, where fortunes are won, lost, stolen, and sometimes hidden away. When Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes arrive, they find their partnership pulled between youthful pleasures and old sins, hot sun and cool jazz, new affections and enduring loyalties. Russell falls into easy friendship with an enthralling American couple, Sara and Gerald Murphy, whose golden life on the Riviera has begun to attract famous writers and artists—and some of the scoundrels linked with Monte Carlo’s underworld. The Murphy set will go on to inspire everyone from F. Scott Fitzgerald to Pablo Picasso, but in this summer of 1925, their importance for Russell lies in one of their circle’s recent additions: the Holmeses’ former housekeeper, Mrs. Hudson, who hasn’t been seen since she fled

England under a cloud of false murder accusations. Then, when a beautiful young man is found dead in Mrs. Hudson's front room, she becomes the prime suspect in yet another murder.... Fans will recall that other murder detailed in [The Murder of Mary Russell](#) (\$17)—and if not, this is a good time to order it and bone up.

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B. Parker's Grudge Match](#) (Putnam \$27). I am almost through my Advance Reading Copy (one of the few that mailed in Before...) and can say that Lupica has not just nailed Parker's voice for Sunny Randall but taken it up a notch. Love a scene where Sunny visits her shrink (Susan, of course) and speculates about who Susan's clearly fabulous man might be. The plot posits Tony Marcus, upgrading his prostitution business (in the face of strong and sometimes amateur/bored housewives competition) and facing the mysterious disappearance of the woman who not only shares his bed but most of his business secrets, hiring Sunny to find her. The hook: doing the job will cancel out Sunny's welshing on a gun deal that turned them over to the Feds rather than to Marcus. Meanwhile Richie's ex returns from London with their son Richard which spells stepmother (and competition) to Sunny. I have no idea where either of these plot lines is going but enjoying the ride. You will too. Lupica will be writing Jesse Stone as well so we may see him in September, or....

Mathews, Francine. [Death on Tuckernuck](#) (Soho \$27.95). This gem published earlier this month but in hopes of a live event we postponed doing one. We're now booked for virtual on June 6 at 1:00 PM ahead of Laurie R. King's virtual book launch for [Riviera Gold](#) (Random \$28) same day at 2:00 PM. So yay, you can schedule a delightful couple of hours on a summer Saturday with Francine, Laurie, and me.

I had never heard of Tuckernuck, an enclave for a few privileged newcomers and many longtime Nantucket local families, before this excellent book. Steven Axelrod, a PPP author, tells me "it's like a time machine out there. Nantucket before tourists and town water ... and electricity."

Here's a Starred Review: "Much of the action of Mathews' gripping sixth Merry Folger mystery occurs on Tuckernuck, 'the small island trailing like an afterthought off the western end of Nantucket.' At the end of September, most of Tuckernuck's inhabitants have departed, leaving the island's caretakers, Dionis Mather and her father, Jack, to evacuate the remaining residents as a hurricane approaches, though Jack has to abandon the task after suffering a heart attack. Meanwhile, Nantucket police detective Meredith Folger is getting married soon, but the discovery of two gunshot victims aboard a yacht that runs aground on Tuckernuck during the storm ensures she'll be on the job right up to her wedding day. A Coast Guard team is able to rescue the victims, but one dies on the helicopter flight to Nantucket, and the other remains in a coma in the hospital. At the peak of the hurricane, Dionis is trapped alone on Tuckernuck, until she meets a stranger with a gunshot wound in his hand. Readers will keep turning the pages to see what happens next. Mathews once again displays her storytelling powers." The Merry Folger series introduced me back in the 1990s to Mathews by my much loved late mother, known to you old timers as the legendary critic MM. She who also writes as Stephanie Barron and I'm so glad she has returned to it.

McCann, Colum. [Apeirogon](#) (Random \$28). Bassam Aramin is Palestinian. Rami Elhanan is Israeli. They inhabit a world of

conflict that colors every aspect of their lives, from the roads they are allowed to drive on to the schools their children attend to the checkpoints, both physical and emotional, they must negotiate. But their lives, however circumscribed, are upended one after the other: first, Rami's thirteen-year-old daughter, Smadar, becomes the victim of suicide bombers; a decade later, Bassam's ten-year-old daughter, Abir, is killed by a rubber bullet. Rami and Bassam had been raised to hate one another. And yet, when they learn of each other's stories, they recognize the loss that connects them. Together they attempt to use their grief as a weapon for peace—and with their one small act, start to permeate what has for generations seemed an impermeable conflict. From the National Book Award-winning and bestselling author of *Let the Great World Spin* comes an epic novel rooted in the unlikely real-life friendship between two fathers. And thus our small supply of Signed copies would make a memorable Father's Day gift.

McMillan, Terry. [It's Not All Downhill from Here](#) (Ballantine \$28). Loretha Curry's husband Carl whisks her away for a weekend getaway in Palm Springs, Calif., to celebrate her 68th birthday, only to die of a heart attack while they are staying at the resort. Loretha's friends rally around her as she tries to recover from the devastating loss. Loretha also contends with her own health issues after her doctor diagnoses her with diabetes. Though Loretha is filled with loneliness after Carl's death, the wit and candor of her friends lessens the blow as Loretha weathers the angst of a difficult relationship with her alcoholic daughter Jalecia and considers selling her beauty products business. News of Jalecia's attempt to book herself into a seedy shelter leads Loretha to reckon with her own life choices. "McMillan writes with a staggering depth of feeling, credibly capturing the characters' emotions as she unpacks their interpersonal conflicts. This delightful novel balances inspiration for renewal with the hard facts of aging," says one Starred Review. We have a limited supply of Signed copies.

Moore, Christopher. [Shakespeare for Squirrels](#) (Harper \$28.99). This is Moore's third riff on Shakespeare after *Fool* and *The Serpent of Venice*. When you get to the Afterword you will see that Moore is a serious student of Shakespeare and uses Pocket the Fool as the lens with which he focuses our view, bolstered by Pocket's sidekick Drool and Jeff, the monkey. Prepare for the scholarly and the seriously rowdy, not to mention profane, as Moore creates his own amazing version of *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*—Shakespeare tinged with Dashiell Hammett. Moore signed these copies for our virtual launch of this much anticipated treat.

Panowich, Brian. [Hard Cash Valley](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Dane Kirby is a broken man and no stranger to tragedy. As a life-long resident and ex-arson investigator for McFalls County, Dane has lived his life in one of the most chaotic and crime-ridden regions of the south. When he gets called in to consult on a brutal murder in a Jacksonville, Florida, motel room, he and his FBI counterpart, Special Agent Roselita Velasquez, begin an investigation that leads them back to the criminal circles of his own backyard. Patrick adds, "While comparisons to southern stylists such as Daniel Woodrell and Larry Brown are inevitable, Panowich is carving out a terrain all his own. *Hard Cash Valley* is that rare kind of novel that combines spare, poetic writing, emotional weight and a rocking, propulsive narrative." And Tom Nolan goes all in: "Mr. Panowich, as he did in his previous novels, depicts

his Southern terrain well. He deftly sketches the tension between Dane, the rural lawman, and Roselita, who seems ‘completely uncomfortable out in the country’ and who doesn’t care much, as she sees it, for ‘running around with the Dukes of Hazzard.’ The pair must transcend their prejudices to make headway in the Blackwell case (while Dane does what he can for Ned). There is more mayhem to come, as well as jaw-dropping twists...”

Pepper, David. [The Voter File](#) (Putnam \$27). Investigative reporter Jack Sharpe is down to his last chance. Fired from his high-profile gig with a national news channel, his only lead is a phone full of messages from a grad student named Tori Justice, who swears she’s observed an impossible result in a local election. Sharpe is sure she’s mistaken...but what if she isn’t? Sharpe learns that the most important tool in any election is the voter file: the database that keeps track of all voters in a district, and shapes a campaign’s game plan for victory. If one person were to gain control of an entire party’s voter file, they could manipulate the outcome of virtually every election in America. Sharpe discovers this has happened—and that the person behind the hack is determined to turn American politics upside down. Now what? Sharpe has surely painted a large target on his back.... Here’s a twisty, one-step-ahead-of-the-headlines political thriller (we hope will not come true) featuring a rogue reporter who investigates election meddling of epic proportions by cyber sabotage. And it points out the danger of highly concentrated ownership of traditional media operations.

Pochoda, Ivy. [These Women](#) (Ecco \$27.99). This will be Patrick’s event with Pochoda on May 19 so he has the galley and will say more. Meanwhile here is a Starred Review: “Fish shack owner Dorian Williams, one of several working-class women at the center of this heartbreaking novel, has done little to fill the void in her life in the 15 years since her teenage daughter, Lecia, was murdered in 1999—the 13th and presumed final victim of a serial killer who was never caught. Then one evening, near her fish shack in South Central L.A., a woman’s body is dumped exactly as Lecia was, throat slit and a plastic bag over her face. Without sacrificing narrative drive, Pochoda (Wonder Valley) lets her story unfold organically and impressionistically, through the eyes of her distinctive female characters, who include Julianna, now a hard-partying cocktail waitress but once the child Lecia babysat the night she died; undersized Hispanic LAPD detective Essie, who knows all too well what it’s like not to be taken seriously; and former hooker Feelia, left for dead back in 1999 after Lecia’s murder, whose potentially critical information the police repeatedly ignore. This deep dive into the lives of women too often unseen in the shadows makes them vividly unforgettable.”

LJ adds another Star: “Pochoda stuns with this disquieting literary thriller rife with descriptive street language and violence. It is complex, intense, and enthralling. Fans of Rachel Kushner’s *The Mars Room* will experience a similar sense of feeling both captivated and bereft.” And Michael Connelly endorses it.

Qiu, Xiaolong. [Hold Your Breath, China](#) (Severn \$30). *PW* Stars the 10<sup>th</sup> in this series featuring a talented poet/cop and graphically portraying the pollution sickening a swathe of China: “Qiu’s outstanding 10th novel featuring Chief Inspector Chen Cao of the Shanghai Police Bureau finds Chen shelved for vigorously investigating corruption involving high-ranking Communist Party officials. But the capable Chen is soon back in action, along with

his partner, Detective Yu Guangming, after the Special Case squad fails to make progress on a serial killer case; someone has murdered three people by shattering their skulls, apparently with a hammer. The victims share no obvious connections, and the Party Secretary himself requests Chen and Yu’s involvement. Chen is later pulled away from the case by the retired first secretary of the Party Central Discipline Committee, who wants him to spy on a group of antipollution activists bent on forcing the government to address China’s air quality. That the group’s leader is a woman Chen knows well complicates his task. Qiu’s execution matches his ambition. Fans of mysteries about honest cops working for compromised regimes won’t want to miss this one.” I have been a fan from the beginning of this award-winning series where “Xiaolong writes with both urgency and grace about modern China.”—*Booklist* Starred Review. He includes his own poetry as well as translations.

Roth, Veronica. [Chosen Ones](#) (Hodder \$35). Roth made her name by writing bestselling YA action/adventure novels like the *Divergent* series, so it makes sense that she can so expertly deconstruct those tropes for adult audiences. There’s a lot of magic and action to make for a propulsive plot, but much more impressive are the character studies as Roth takes recognizable and beloved teen-hero types and explores what might happen to them as adults. Roth makes a bold entrance to adult fantasy.”—*Kirkus* Starred Review. Author Charles Yu adds, “Roth somehow manages to make universe-building look easy. She sets it all up—world, characters, premise—so smoothly that you hardly notice until you’re a hundred pages in and hurtling down the tracks. An insightful exploration of desire and ambition that also touches on broader societal topics, including celebrity, social media, trauma and recovery. A thought-provoking novel with ample emotion and a sense of playfulness... And one more thing: when the inevitable adaptation of *Chosen Ones* hits the screen someday, I just hope it captures Roth’s fascinating and original theory of magic.”

**Why, you ask, is this a UK signed edition? And the answer is publishers give Barnes & Noble exclusive Signed copies to bolster their sales and keep them afloat at the expense of independent bookstores. It infuriates me. So to get signed copies we import UK editions where they are available to independent bookstores.**

Serritella, Francesca. [Ghosts of Harvard](#) (Random \$27). I wrote this Indie Next recommendation back in March when I did have a review copy in hand: Francesca Serritella’s fiction debut is a book as generous in size as in the richly drawn characters in the dramatic, slow-burning story that leads to a stunning revelation (actually two) against a backdrop of Harvard University. While the sadness of Eric Cady’s suicide while a student and his battle with unexpected illness permeate the story—informing his sister Cady’s decision to attend Harvard despite the challenges and the heightened trauma to her parents—here is a story of hope and renewal. Bonus: *Ghosts of Harvard* has a real mystery in play, nothing supernatural, and secrets to be uncovered. Serritella is Lisa Scottoline’s daughter and has co-authored a number of nonfiction books with Lisa. I was hoping to get her to The Pen at last but it will be virtual instead on Monday June 1 at 8:00 PM ET instead. Maybe Lisa will pop in.

Sligar, Sarah. [Take Me Apart](#) (FSG \$27). Our **April First Mystery Book of the Month** sold out but we have a new batch

incoming to go with an interview I am hosting with her. The story 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).

Reviewing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Tom Nolan writes about this book you should not miss: "Kate Aitken, the ex-journalist at the forefront, seems, at age 30, a burnt-out case. Forced to leave her newspaper job in New York after filing a complaint about the sexual harassment she suffered from a colleague, she had a breakdown and then abandoned her Manhattan career for the West Coast. She's accepted the job, in a Marin County town, of archiving the papers of Miranda Brand, a legendary photographer who killed herself in 1993 at age 37. Miranda's grown son Theo has returned to the family home to prepare his mother's effects for sale. Before long, Kate is sucked into the maelstrom of Miranda's chaotic biography. ... Ms. Sligar's debut is by turns an art-world satire, an erotic romance and a descent into madness. Its gratifying conclusion proves well worth the digressive journey."

✦Taylor, Andrew. [The Last Protector](#) (Collins \$34.99). I've been a Taylor fan for decades. While he has written all sorts of books, historical fiction is mostly where he works. With no copy at hand, I quote a British reader: "James Marwood is occasionally required to act as a spy for the King. His master, Joseph Williamson, the Under Secretary of State to Lord Arlington, and Lord Arlington are desperate to find evidence (ie, manufacture it) against the Duke of Buckingham and send James to spy on a duel between Buckingham and Lord Shrewsbury, It leaves one man dead and Lord Shrewsbury seriously injured. Our heroine, Cat Hakesby, is married to an elderly architect and seems to be prospering when she runs across an old acquaintance, Elizabeth Cromwell, a meeting which turns out to be anything but coincidental. Drawn against her will into intrigue involving her husband, Buckingham, and the Cromwells, Cat's world collides with James'. Based on certain historical facts Andrew Taylor has woven a gripping tale of plots, favors and the sheer wretchedness of life for women, servants, and the underclass. Learn about the Bawdy House riots, the half-life of the last Protector, the mazer-scourers, and how absolutely foul people can be to others."

Turow, Scott. [The Last Trial](#) (Grand Central \$29). I can't do justice to all the remarkable things about this splendid book, our **May Crime Collectors Book of the Month**, in this short space. What I highly recommend is [watching Turow's virtual book launch](#) with me which covers a range of topics including his first book, *One L*, and *Presumed Innocent*, the huge bestseller that introduced Sandy Stern, the 85-year-old lawyer here working his last trial and facing all that it entails, much of it a surprise to Stern (and to Turow who lets things develop as his characters will). We talk about Chicago, a Midwest ethic, writing, law school.... One of the best hours I've spent with an author. A truly

magnificent novel I can't recommend highly enough. And now you can enjoy both the talk and the book too.

Bonus: After the conversation with Turow, enjoy [Patrick's hour with Walter Mosley](#) which, similarly, ranges over much of the authors' life and work. If you don't do Facebook you can instead view them on our own [YouTube](#)

Walker, Martin. [The Shooting at Chateau Rock](#) (Knopf \$25.95). As late spring blossoms in the Dordogne, the two children of a Périgordian sheep farmer learn that they have been disinherited, and their father's estate sold to an insurance company in return for a policy that will place him in a five-star retirement home for the rest of his life. But the randy farmer, a man with a dicky heart but a stash of Viagra, never gets his life of luxury—he dies before moving in. His unsurprised doctor rules it a heart attack and the old man is cremated. But the change of his will, the policy, and the convenient death raise doubts for Bruno Courrèges, not just the Chief of Police but with a wider departmental remit. Wielding both French and EU bureaucratic policies to slow down the asset transfer (and question the death), Bruno is led to a new France-based *notaire* (lawyer) and absent insurance agent who may be connected to a Russian oligarch with a Cypriot passport. The companies are based in Cyprus, Malta, and Luxembourg. Interestingly the oligarch is connected to Putin. And more so, his lovely and musically talented daughter has turned up at nearby Chateau Rock on the arm of the equally talented son of its aging rock star owner. The chateau and its vineyard, an asset to the commune, are up for sale as part of the rocker's divorce. In a relatively economical number of pages, Walker weaves these threads together with Bruno's garden and meals, his role as tennis coach etc in village life, and his devotion to his beloved dog Balzac, to his horse Hector, and the rhythms of local life as they withstand intrusion from Paris-based security officials.

As ever, Bruno still makes time for lunch and his friends, two legged and four. The *PW* Starred Review (mine are always starred for this delicious series) concludes: "Francophiles will relish the evocative descriptions of the Périgord region and its cuisine. Distinctive characters complement the intricate mystery. Readers new to this elegant series will feel right at home." But why not start with [Bruno, Chief of Police](#) (\$16) and binge your way through the very best mystery/escape/travel reading?

Walker has been locked down in the Périgord and hopes to visit us in September. Hence the inclusion in the signed book section. And there is an immediate plus to our copies: a postcard from the Périgord featuring Martin's basset hound Balzac enjoying the garden.

White, Kate. [Have You Seen Me?](#) (Harper \$26.99/\$15.95). Ally Linden arrives one morning at her Manhattan office, wet and bedraggled, with a throbbing headache. Her boss approaches her and asks, "What are you doing her... You haven't worked here in years." A stunned Ally realizes she has no idea where she's been or where she lives, or what actions preceded this embarrassing moment. Not sure whom she can trust, Ally hires a private detective who then ends up murdered. One thing's for certain: Someone will go to any lengths to prevent Ally from recovering her memory. *Kirkus Reviews* writes: "In this standalone, White provides the twists and shocks that any reader of domestic thrillers expects and savors, but she also manages to use some of our expectations to create clever dead ends. Ally's need for self-discovery has an immediacy, of course, but also a larger resonance,

as she begins to realize that she hasn't always made choices that are completely authentic or independent. Perhaps recovering her memory will be the first step in a larger quest to find herself. An engaging novel that turns some clichés of recent thrillers on their heads.”

Wright, Lawrence. [The End of October](#) (Knopf \$27.95). Our **May First Mystery Book of the Month** gets this rave: “Wright... applies the magisterial force of his reporting skills into spinning a novel of pestilence, war and social collapse that, given the current pandemic, cuts exceedingly close to the bone. Like Daniel Defoe’s *Plague Year*, much of the book not only reads like nonfiction, it is nonfiction: Wright weaves into the book accounts of historical epidemics, descriptions of Russian cyber- and biowarfare capabilities, the story of the 1803 attempt to save the New World from smallpox, and other curious nonfiction set pieces. In writing the novel, he interviewed scientists, epidemiologists, government officials and military officers. His understanding of world affairs, Middle East gossip, politics and governmental ineptitude is exceptional. Despite the nonfiction scaffolding, this is a novel, and a good one. ...” Douglas Preston concludes his review in the *NY Times* with this: “It has been a surreal experience reading a novel about a fictional pandemic in the midst of a real one.” Note: we have only a few extra Signed Firsts for non-club members to order. Don’t delay.

I add this review from Tom Nolan, the mystery reviewer in the *Wall Street Journal*: “Henry Parsons is the deputy director for infectious diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. ‘Think of him like a policeman,’ his wife tells their two young children. ‘There are times when people have to be protected from danger, and that’s what your father does.’ The doctor is ‘a disease detective’—a very-first-responder to the hot-zone frontlines, often ‘going into the field, alone, in an alien environment, with minimal resources, to confirm and combat an outbreak of virulent disease. Such is the case when, on his way back to the U.S. from a conference in Geneva, Henry stops in Indonesia to inspect an outbreak of illness in an isolated refugee camp. There he confronts a grisly tableau of the dead and dying. He performs an impromptu autopsy: ‘Where there had been lungs, there was a kind of spumy swamp... [The victim] drowned in her own fluids.’ The disease responsible seems flu-like yet unlike any known strain. ‘It could be a coronavirus,’ guesses Henry. Henry and his colleagues scramble to determine how a vaccine can be devised and where the disease came from. Mr. Wright, best known as the author of a number of nonfiction bestsellers, has crafted a swift and all-too-convincing chronicle of science, espionage, action and speculation that moves from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia to the U.S. as it eerily evokes real-life current events. Deeply rooted in factual research, this may well prove to be the most frightening novel of the year.”

#### BOOKS AS PASSPORTS TO KNOWLEDGE

Moller, Violet. [The Map of Knowledge](#) (\$17.99). After the fall of Rome, as civilizations collapsed and libraries burned, ancient knowledge that would eventually fuel the Renaissance was at risk of being lost. This thrilling history tracks three crucial books as they were passed hand to hand through seven cities during a perilous thousand-year journey of survival. After the great library at Alexandria was destroyed, Baghdad, Cordoba, Toledo, Salerno, and Palermo were rare outposts of knowledge in a dark world,

where dedicated scholars collected, translated, and shared texts. Violet Moller’s *The Map of Knowledge* takes us into the sparkling intellectual life that flourished there, highlighting the crucial role played by Arab scholars in improving the cornerstone ideas of Western thought. She shows us how foundational works on math, astronomy, and medicine by Euclid, Ptolemy, and Galen eventually reached Venice, the major center of scientific printing, where their legacy was assured—having been rescued by the passionate curiosity of generations of readers.

Wilson-Lee, Edward. [The Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books](#) (\$17). This is a fabulous book for anyone who loves books, libraries, and even cataloguing for truly every library needs a find-and-retrieve system. Christopher Columbus’ son was a true bibliophile, a linear descendant of those working at the fabled library at Alexandria. Hernando Colón sailed with his father on his final voyage, the one that ended in disaster, mutiny, and shipwreck. Hernando was 18 when his father died in 1506 and sought to continue global exploration by building a library that would collect everything that had ever been printed, possible perhaps then when printing was so new. His goal was all books in all language and covering all subjects and in all forms and genres. Unfortunately another maritime disaster in 1522 put this sublime goal in peril. But this book is also a portrait of adventure, mainly Columbus’ fraught 4<sup>th</sup> voyage, and of the relationship between a famous father and an illegitimate son. I loved it and can’t think of a better book for dad in case you want to do some early Father’s Day shopping.

#### NEW HARDCOVER BOOKS

Allott, Susan. [The Silence](#) (Harper \$27.99). This debut rides the Australian Crime Wave, plus something of the immigrant experience even if it’s England to Australia. London 1997: Isla Green hasn’t been home to Australia in ten years, but a phone call from her father, Joe, makes her return inevitable. The police are searching for a missing woman, a former neighbor of Isla’s parents. Joe is supposedly the last person to have seen her alive and is now a suspect in her murder. Sydney 1967: Mandy says she will give up smoking. She also says she loves her husband, Steve, and wants a baby. But Mandy is a liar. This debut is told in alternating sections that move back and forth in time between 1997 and 1967, building tension to the snapping point. Old misunderstandings are resolved for the reader, and then replaced by new ones, as the author switches between the perspectives of different characters—including, in the book’s early sections, Mandy herself, whom the young Isla adored. The adult Isla sees people in a new light—including her evasive, defensive father—in a community where people say nothing. “It seems left to Isla alone to find the truth about what happened to Mandy. This tumultuous story of two couples contains subplots of alcoholism, domestic violence, and the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal children. Newcomer Allott does a solid job of establishing a vivid sense of place.”—LJ

Bokur, Debra. [The Fire Thief](#) (Kensington \$26). Another book for those missing destination travel. Unread by me, who has spent many happy days in the islands, but I ordered a copy. Meanwhile... Under a promising morning sky, police captain Walter Alaka’i makes a tragic discovery: the body of a teenage surfer bobbing among the lava rocks of Maui’s southeastern shore. It appears to be an ill-fated accident, but closer inspection reveals



something far more sinister than the results of a savage wave gone wrong. Now that Alaka'i is looking at a homicide, he solicits the help of his niece, Detective Kali Mahoe. The granddaughter of one of Hawaii's most respected spiritual leaders, and on the transcendent path to becoming a *kahu* herself, Kali sees evidence of a strange ritual murder. The suspicion is reinforced by a rash of sightings of a *noppera-bo*—a faceless and malicious spirit many believe to be more than superstition. When a grisly sacrifice is left on the doorstep of a local, and another body washes ashore, Kali fears that the deadly secret ceremonies on Maui are just beginning. To uncover a motive and find the killer, Kali leans on her skills at logic and detection. But she must also draw on her own personal history with the uncanny legends of the islands.

Brown, Dale. [Eagle Station](#) (Harper \$28.99). Brad McLanahan and Nadia Rozek. Newly married, the two are just beginning to settle into their new life together when they are called back into action. The Space Force must fight to preserve America's freedom when ruthless enemies forge an unlikely alliance to control not only the earth, but the moon and beyond.

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. So, I'm with Angie about an unusual thriller powered by two women living in very different social and economic strata when we meet them. Nina Ross is a grifter, raised by a mom of chameleon quality who kept them on the move, often one step ahead of disaster. They didn't have much, and now mom has a cancer where expensive treatments, despite Nina's careful preying upon rich LA men to finance them as coached by her wily Irish boyfriend Lachlan, haven't put it in remission. Now what? Vanessa is heiress to a family fortune. Gorgeous and glamorous, she's a famed Instagram influencer with the perks and global travel that come with the sales she boosts. But behind her façade lies secrets and tragedy, sending her into retreat at the family mansion, Stonehaven, at Lake Tahoe. Nina, desperate, plots a long con with Vanessa as the target. But events at the lakeshore do not go as she imagined.... Brown is a gifted stylist and imaginative plotter, sucking you in and delivering surprise after surprise—and never being mean.

Brown, Rita Mae. [Furmidable Foes](#) (Bantam \$28). Right on time with Brown's annual May mystery, spring arrives in northern Virginia. This year, as the ground thaws and the peonies begin to bloom a bright magenta, the women of St. Luke's Lutheran Church prepare for a Homecoming celebration like no other. Harry, Susan Tucker, and their friends are busy planting flowers and trimming hedges to get the church grounds in shape for the big day. But a note of a menace mars the beautiful spring: The brewery owned by Janice Childs and Mags Nielsen, two members of the gardening committee, gets robbed, with hundreds of dollars in merchandise taken off their delivery trucks in the dead of night. Is this the work of a random thief? Or is something more sinister afoot? When Jeannie Cordle drops dead at a charity auction, poisoned by a fatal weed, Harry's worst suspicions are confirmed: a killer lurks in their midst, one with a keen understanding of poisonous plants. Although she can't yet prove it, Harry knows

the murder is related to the thefts at Bottom's Up Brewery. With help from her feline sidekicks, Mrs. Murphy and Pewter, as well as Tee Tucker the corgi and sweet puppy Pirate, Harry sets out to find the lethal weed in St. Luke's garden....

Bythell, Shaun. [Confessions of a Bookseller](#) (Godine \$25.95). I recommended this second memoir by Scottish bookseller Bythell, whose shop is a landmark in Wigtown, for bibliophiles as inevitably it is rich in esoterica. If not in income: his daily tally of the take is, frankly, scary. But the reason I mention it again is that, having read it, I admire his candor and his innate grumpiness, neither an asset in retail. But then this isn't typical retail, nor is this America. I've spent a lot of time in the UK and run into moments like arriving at a shop door, money in hand, only to have it slammed in my face as the salesperson heads to lunch. I add that the French are firm about opening and closing hours but more polite. So if you are a fan of Page Shelton's Scottish Bookshop mysteries set in Edinburgh, Bythell offsets them.

✚Clark, Cassandra. [Hour of the Fox](#) (Severn \$28.99). Friar Rodric Chandler, the hero of this fresh series launch set in 1399 England, inspires fear in those who know of him throughout London, because he's an effective spy for a ruthless political faction. No stranger to violence and lust, he's conflicted about his spying, his religious calling, and his place among the powerful in the kingdom. When Chandler investigates the murder of a young novice found with her throat slit in the Thames, he suspects a cover-up, one that could reach into some scary places. Meanwhile, Richard II has gone to Ireland, and rumors bedevil London that Henry of Bolingbroke, the king's cousin, is poised to invade from his place of foreign exile and try to take the English throne. The story is choppy but gripping with a highly original protagonist, no surprise from the author of the Hildegard of Meaux mysteries. Ordered Upon Request and don't delay as Severn books, intended for the library trade, disappear quickly.

Clark, Tracy. [What You Don't See](#) (Kensington \$26). Wealth. Power. Celebrity. Vonda Allen's glossy vanity magazine has taken the Windy City by storm, and she's well on her way to building a one-woman media empire. Everybody adores her. Except the people who work for her. And the person who's sending her flowers with death threats. As Vonda's bodyguard, off-duty cop Ben Mickerson knows he could use some back-up—and no one fits the bill better than his ex-partner on the police force, Cass Raines. Now a full-time private eye, Cass is reluctant to take the job. She isn't keen on playing babysitter to a celebrity who's rumored to be a heartless diva. But as a favor to Ben, she signs on. But when Vonda refuses to say why someone might be after her, and two of her staff turn up dead, Ben and Cass must battle an unknown assailant bent on getting to the great lady herself, before someone else dies. Cass finds out the hard way just how persistent a threat they face during the first stop on Vonda's book tour. As fans clamor for her autograph, things take an ugly, indeed murderous, turn... Clark's [Borrowed Time](#) (\$26), her second Chicago Mystery, won the 2020 Sue Grafton Memorial Award.

Collins, Suzanne. [The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes](#) (Scholastic \$27.99) is a prequel to the Hunger Games series. It is the morning of the reaping that will kick off the tenth annual Hunger Games. In the Capitol, eighteen-year-old Coriolanus Snow is preparing for his one shot at glory as a mentor in the Games. The once-mighty house of Snow has fallen on hard times,

its fate hanging on the slender chance that Coriolanus will be able to out charm, outwit, and out maneuver his fellow students to mentor the winning tribute. The odds are against him. He's been given the humiliating assignment of mentoring the female tribute from District 12, the lowest of the low. Their fates are now completely intertwined—every choice Coriolanus makes could lead to favor or failure, triumph or ruin. Inside the arena, it will be a fight to the death. Outside the arena, Coriolanus starts to feel for his doomed tribute... and must weigh his need to follow the rules against his desire to survive

Dazieri, Sandrone. [Kill the King](#) (Scribner \$28). More international crime, this one from Italy. *Kirkus* says, "If [Kill the Father](#) (2017) gave us a would-be paterfamilias with whom only Hannibal Lecter would want to exchange Christmas cards and [Kill the Angel](#) (2018) introduced readers to the arcana of Indo-European mythology (\$19;99 each), this concluding volume is a study in PTSD. And for good reason: Colomba Caselli, the enterprising detective heroine, has had just about all she can stand of mass murder, decapitation, and other hallmarks of her trade, and she's taken herself to the Italian countryside to rest. It's quiet—too quiet, since the area is full of little towns 'inhabited only by old people who rounded out their pensions by hunting for truffles.' Yet even there trouble has a way of finding Colomba, in this case in the form of an apparently autistic young man she finds wandering about dazed, covered in blood that is not his own. The lad, she learns, "is perfectly capable of understanding and formulating intent," which makes him a fine candidate for imprisonment. It would be nice if Dante Torre, Colomba's partner in crime-solving, were on hand to figure out what's happened in the quaint confines of Montenegro, but he's been—and on the outskirts of Chernobyl, no less. This is no cozy English countryside whodunit: The doings that are afoot are nasty and exceedingly lethal... That's just a taste of the ugliness that people wage on one another throughout the book, which is decidedly not for sensitive souls. Fans of Larsson and Nesbø will hope that Dazieri changes his mind and extends the Torre/Caselli series." At 498 pages, I have not read this big thriller that *PW* finds, "isn't for the faint of heart and runs too long, but fans of procedurals, conspiracy theories, or serial killer thrillers will be pleased."

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder, She Wrote: The Murder of Twelve](#) (Berkley \$26). Still staying at the Hill House hotel while her beloved home is being rebuilt, Jessica Fletcher finds herself sharing the space for a weekend with a dozen members of a wedding party who have gathered there for a rehearsal dinner. The families of the bride and groom can't stand each other but have agreed to put aside years of long-simmering tension to celebrate the nuptials. Unfortunately, weather forecasters underestimated the severity of a storm that turns into a historic blizzard that dumps nearly five feet of snow on Cabot Cove, leaving everyone stranded. But the hotel guests have bigger things to worry about than bad weather conditions and potential cold feet. In shades of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*, a murderer has shown up uninvited—one who has vowed to take them down one by one, twelve, not ten victims.

✂Forry, Lauren A. [They Did Bad Things](#) (Arcade \$25.99). A reminder of our **British Crime Club Pick for May**, a variation on Christie's *And Then There Were None* set on the remote Scottish island of Doon where a set of university housemates from 1995 Manchester have been reassembled (without their realizing it) for a reckoning...

Gaff, Alan D. [Lou Gehrig: The Lost Memoir](#) (Simon Schuster \$26). At the tender age of twenty-four, Lou Gehrig decided to tell the remarkable story of his life and career. He was one of the most famous athletes in the country, in the midst of a record-breaking season with the legendary 1927 World Series-winning Yankees. In an effort to grow Lou's star, pioneering sports agent Christy Walsh arranged for Lou's tale of baseball greatness to syndicate in newspapers across the country. Until now, those columns were largely forgotten and lost to history. Lou comes alive in this inspiring memoir. It is a heartfelt rags-to-riches tale about a dirt poor kid from New York who became one of the most revered baseball players of all time.

George, Alex. [The Paris Hours](#) (Flatiron \$26.99). Camille Clermont was once the maid of Marcel Proust, and she has a secret: when she was asked to burn her employer's notebooks, she saved one for herself. Now she is desperate to find it before her betrayal is revealed. Souren Balakian, an Armenian refugee, performs puppet shows for children that are nothing like the fairy tales they expect. Lovesick artist Guillaume Blanc is down on his luck and running from a debt he cannot repay—but when Gertrude Stein walks into his studio, he wonders if this is the day everything could change. And Jean-Paul Maillard is a journalist who tells other people's stories, because his own is too painful to tell. When the quartet's paths finally cross in an unforgettable climax, each discovers if they will find what they are looking for. The story unfolds over the course of a single day in 1927. I tried to like this, but it had no pace. However, it will tell you a lot about Proust. And as I said elsewhere in this Booknews, a lost manuscript is always a hook. George has a lot of book community connections so a stir.

Greene, A. Kendra. [The Museum of Whales You Will Never See](#) (Penguin \$25.50). Artist and *Southwest Review* associate editor Greene delivers a delightful one-of-a-kind journey through some of Iceland's, if not the world's, most unusual museums. Greene takes the reader all over the small island nation, from remote Bıldudalur, home of the Icelandic Sea Monster Museum, to tiny Skógar, home to 21 people and to Iceland's largest museum outside of Reykjavík. The institutions visited range from collections of mundane artifacts from Iceland's once-thriving herring industry to the most unlikely of museums, the Icelandic Phallogical Museum, a "kind of mammal-phallus Noah's Ark." Greene turns what easily could have become a mere cabinet of curiosities into a thoughtful and complex work. Insightful meditations on the nature of collecting and writers' role as organizers and curators of their own work complement passages on Icelandic history, and all add color and context to the museums described. Almost as hard to classify as it would be not to enjoy, Greene's expertly assembled blend of travel writing, history, museum studies, and memoir proves as memorable as any museum exhibition

Harrison, Cora. [Death of a Prominent Citizen](#) (Severn \$28.99). Set in early 1920s Cork, Ireland, Harrison's seventh Reverend Mother whodunit stands out as her trickiest yet. For many years, wealthy Charlotte Hendrick has declared that her estate will be divided equally among her seven nearest relatives, including her cousin the Reverend Mother, who intends to donate anything she might receive to her convent. Then Mrs. Hendrick's attorney informs the seven heirs that she has had a change of heart—his client intends to disinherit six of them and leave everything to

the one who proves him- or herself most worthy. The seven agree to make their best case to Mrs. Hendrick at her house, spend the night, and hear her announce her choice the next morning. In the middle of the night, someone slashes Mrs. Hendrick's throat in her bedroom. Harrison adroitly combines the Reverend Mother's clever investigation with a sympathetic portrayal of the plight of Cork's poor. Good for fans of historical puzzle mysteries. Severn titles are very hard to stock and we order them Upon Request only.

Ignatius, David. [The Paladin](#) (Norton \$27.95). In 2016, CIA tech specialist Michael Dunne was given the ultrasecret assignment of penetrating Fallen Empire, a leftist WikiLeaks-like operation that may be linked to the Russians. When the FBI arrests him for running a spy operation against American journalists—really Fallen Empire operatives working under that guise—the CIA abandons him, letting him take the fall. He's also abandoned by his beautiful and pregnant wife, who doesn't take kindly to compromising photos of her husband with a young Swiss beauty, even if it was a setup. After his release from prison, Dunne returns to his hometown of Pittsburgh, where he puts together a private cyberconsulting outfit. Against everyone's advice, he jumps back into the fray to track down those who betrayed him. Ultimately, he must race against time to prevent a hacking plot from wreaking havoc on world financial systems. Lifted by nifty surveillance schemes, the plot hums. "Ignatius...brings his immense skills as a journalist to his fiction, researching the idea and enriching his plot with both the latest spycraft and the arcane workings of, very often, the CIA.... Ignatius's unsettling novel reminds us that we have created a world where facts have 'alternatives' and the 'news' on the social networks can't be trusted. It's a page turner, but it's also a chilling story of the way the Internet has been weaponized."—Chris Bohjalian, whose own low-key spy thriller [The Red Lotus](#) is well worth reading. So, two Spies of Summer, out now.

Kilmer, Val. [I'm Your Huckleberry: A Memoir](#) (SimonSchuster \$27.99). Val Kilmer has played many iconic roles over his nearly four-decade film career. A table-dancing Cold War agent in *Top Secret!* A troublemaking science prodigy in *Real Genius*. A brash fighter pilot in *Top Gun*. A swashbuckling knight in *Willow*. A lovelorn bank robber in *Heat*. A charming master of disguise in *The Saint*. A wise-cracking detective in *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*. Of course, Batman, Jim Morrison and the sharp-shooting Doc Holiday. Read his own take on his creative life with its wild ups and down, in an equally unconventional memoir which includes some poetry and rare photos. And a candid discussion of cancer.

⌘Lawton, John. [Hammer to Fall](#) (Grove \$26). It's London, the swinging sixties, and by all rights MI6 spy Joe Wilderness should be having as good a time as James Bond. But alas, his postings are more grim than glamorous. Luckily, Wilderness has a knack for doing well for himself even in the most unpromising postings, though this has gotten him into hot water in the past. A coffee-smuggling gig in divided Berlin was a steady money-maker but things went pear-shaped when he had to smuggle a spy back to the KGB instead. In the wake of what became an embarrassing disaster for MI6, Wilderness is reprimanded with a posting to remote northern Finland, under the guise of a cultural exchange program to promote Britain abroad. Bored by his work, with nothing to spy on, Wilderness finds another way to make money, this time by smuggling vodka across the rather porous border into the USSR. He strikes a deal with his old KGB pal Kostya,

who explains to him there is, no joke, a vodka shortage in the Soviet Union, following a grain famine caused by Khrushchev's new agricultural policies. But there is something fishy about why Kostya has suddenly turned up in Finland—and MI6 intelligence from London points to a connection to the mining of cobalt in the region, a critical component in the casing of the atomic bomb. Wilderness's posting is getting more interesting by the minute, but more dangerous too. This third Joe Wilderness spy thriller moves from the no-man's-land of Cold War Finland to the wild days of the Prague Spring, and populated by old friends (including Inspector Troy) and old enemies alike. Lawton is a very fine writer whose work from *Blackout* forward I've enthusiastically devoured.

Logan, Kylie. [The Secrets of Bones](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Assembly Day at St. Catherine's dawns bright and cloudless as professional woman gather from all around Ohio to talk to the schoolgirls about their careers ranging from medicine, to NASA, to yoga. Jazz Ramsey has also signed up to give the girls a taste of her lifelong passion: cadaver dog training. Her adorable new puppy Wally hasn't been certified yet, so she borrows the fully-trained Gus from a friend and hides a few bones in the unused fourth floor of the school for him to find. The girls are impressed when Gus easily finds the first bone, but then Gus heads confidently to a part of the floor where Jazz is sure no bones are hidden—at least not any that she's put there. But Gus is a professional, and sure enough, behind a door that no one has opened in ages, is a human skeleton. And Jazz recognizes the necklace the skeleton is wearing.... Cadaver dogs are stars in crime fiction. Start this series with [The Scent of Murder](#) (\$7.99).

Momplaisir, Francesca. [My Mother's House](#) (Knopf \$26.95). A debut described by the publisher as being "For fans of Edwidge Danticat, Mehsin Hamid, Kate Atkinson, and Jesmyn Ward: a literary thriller about the complex underbelly of the immigrant American dream and the dangerous ripple effect one person's damages can have on the lives of others—told unexpectedly by a house that has held unspeakable horrors. When Lucien flees Haiti with his wife, Marie-Ange, and their three children to New York City's South Ozone Park, he does so hoping for reinvention, wealth, and comfort. He buys a rundown house in a community that is quickly changing from an Italian enclave of mobsters to a haven for Haitian immigrants, and begins life anew. Lucien and Marie-Ange call their home La Kay and it becomes a place where their fellow immigrants can find peace, a good meal, and legal help. But as a severely emotionally damaged man emigrating from a country whose evils he knows to one whose evils he doesn't, Lucien soon falls into his worst habits and impulses, with La Kay, *My Mother's House*, as the backdrop for his lasciviousness. What he can't even begin to fathom is that the house is watching, passing judgment, and deciding a course of action....

Mukherjee, Abir. [Death in the East](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). Begun as Mukherjee's homage to Agatha Christie. "She started everything: the unreliable narrator, the idea that everybody could be guilty, the notion that the guilty party is one of those being hunted. Although this book is very much my style and my take on Christie, it morphed very quickly into something else, however." It flips between 1905 London, with Wyndham as a young constable pounding the beat in the murky East End, and Assam in 1922. There are two locked-room murders as well as sinister ghosts from Wyndham's cloudy past. And his Sergeant Banerjee. As

in previous books, Mukherjee interrogates the often violent and shameful shared history of Britain and India. “An [excellent series](#) to order and read your way through.

Parks, Alan. [Bobby March Will Live Forever](#) (Canongate \$26). “Alan Parks’ third tough thriller featuring Glasgow police detective Harry McCoy, takes place (for the most part) in the summer of 1973. The city is sweltering through an oppressive heat wave, and detective McCoy is incensed by workplace conditions. With his boss on leave, McCoy is being persecuted by the man in temporary charge: a vindictive rival who makes sure that McCoy is shut out of the frantic search for a kidnapped 13-year-old girl. Instead, he’s sent to investigate the drug-overdose death of the titular Bobby March, a faded rock star. He’s also put (off the record) on the hunt for his regular boss’s wandering teenage niece. Mr. Parks, who has worked in the music industry, sprinkles his swift narrative with realistic glimpses of the early-’70s pop scene; and his cast of well-drawn characters, from upper-crusters to low-lifers, makes up a lively repertory company. McCoy himself, with his personal vices and criminal contacts, is hardly your run-of-the-mill, cop-shop hero; at one point, even he wonders if he’s lost some vital part of his humanity: ‘Maybe he had stopped caring about people...Maybe he had become like every other polis. The kind of polis he swore he’d never become.’ Not a chance.”—Tom Nolan, *WSJ*. The Signed UK edition is \$34.99.

Schweblin, Samanta. [Little Eyes](#) (Riverhead \$26). We can read comfort books, or we can unnerve ourselves. As here. *LJ* writes, “Battery-driven, camera-equipped stuffed animals with their own chargers, *kentuki* are not toys. From crow to bunny to mole, each is decidedly someone—some mysterious observer—with whom its so-called keeper builds a relationship. As they roll around asserting themselves from Lima to Umbertide to South Bend, *kentuki* unsettle the lives of the various characters whose stories are woven together here, from restless Alina, accompanying her artist boyfriend to Oaxaca on his first big grant, to the divorced Enzo, compelled by an overbearing psychologist to take on one of these creepy critters for the sake of his son, who hates the thing. As situations escalate, readers will be fascinated by the *kentuki*-human interactions, which smartly reveal how hungry we are for connection in a technology-bent world. Of a piece with Schweblin’s elliptical *Fever Dream* and the disturbing story collection *A Mouthful of Birds*, both also nominees for the Man Booker International Prize, this jittery eye-opener will appeal to a wide range of readers.”

This brilliant and disturbing book resembles Margaret Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale* in how it speculates. The parts you think are made up are actually true.... Schweblin unspools a disquieting portrait of the dark sides of connectivity and the kinds of animalistic cyborgs it can make of us, as we walk through barriers that even spirits cannot cross.”—John Freeman, LitHub

Singer, PW/August Cole. [BurnIn: A Novel of the Real Robotic Revolution](#) (Houghton \$28). America is on the brink of a revolution, one both technological and political. The science fiction of AI and robotics has finally come true, but millions are angry and fearful that the future has left them behind. After narrowly stopping a bombing at Washington’s Union Station, FBI Special Agent Lara Keegan receives a new assignment: to field-test an advanced police robot. As a series of shocking catastrophes unfolds, the two find themselves investigating a conspiracy whose mastermind is using cutting-edge tech to rip the nation apart. To

stop this new breed of terrorist, their only hope is to forge a new type of partnership. The publisher says, “*Burn-In* is especially chilling because every tech, trend, and scene is drawn from real world research on the ways that our politics, our economy, and even our family lives will soon be transformed.” And all this before COVID-19, a surefire accelerator.

Sittenfeld, Curtis. [Rodham](#) (Random \$28) is a novel imagining if Hillary Clinton hadn’t married Bill. (Why, I ask?)

Spillane, Mickey/Max Allan Collins. [Hot Lead, Cold Justice](#) (Kensington \$25). Tin-star hero Caleb York returns. A killer blizzard sweeping across the Southwest threatens the livelihoods of everyone in the town of Trinidad. But it’s two gunshots that fell Sheriff Caleb York’s unlucky deputy. As sure as the blood pooling in the snow, York knows it was a case of mistaken identity. The bullets were meant for him. It’s the first nasty step in a plan rustled up by former Quantrill’s Raider Luke “Burn ’Em” Burnham—eliminate the law, corral a team to rob a bank in booming Las Vegas, New Mexico, then lay low. With a treacherous local merchant for cover, and York out of the picture, all they’ll have to do is wait for the calm. Then they get wind of one little hitch: not only is York still alive, but he’s gunning for justice—and revenge. As the winter weather bears down, the stir-crazy outlaws aim to finish what they started—take down York and disappear into the blinding storm. As a chilling cat-and-mouse begins....

Steil, Jennifer. [Exile Music](#) (Viking \$27). “Ten-year-old Orly Zingel’s life is threatened when her musician parents lose their jobs performing operas and symphonies in Vienna after the German occupation, and their months-long wait for visas and passage on an Italian ship overlaps with Hitler’s ominous January 1939 Reichstag speech. Nazi soldiers evict them from their apartment building, and Orly is separated from her best friend, Anneliese, whose family lives there. Though refugee organizations help the Zingels get acclimated once they arrive in La Paz, Bolivia, they endure altitude sickness and a longing for the refinement and familiarity of Vienna. Orly’s youth enables her to embrace Bolivian culture, while her father gives music lessons and plays the viola with ensembles of fellow refugees. As Orly befriends Miguel, she thinks of Anneliese and wonders if the friendship they shared was the prelude for a deeper relationship between them. Steil expertly weaves historical details into this immersive narrative, complete with a focus on the impact of music in the characters’ lives. Steil’s evocative look at a lesser-explored corner of WWII is well worth picking up.” Particularly horrible for the Zingels is the relocation of some surviving Nazis to La Paz.

Straub, Emma. [All Adults Here](#) (Riverhead \$27). **The first dozen copies come with signed bookplates.** 68-year-old Astrid Strick watches an empty school bus plow down Barbara Baker, a fixture in their Hudson Valley town of Clapham. Although Astrid didn’t like Barbara—“not for a single day of their forty-year-acquaintance,” Straub writes in her deliciously withering opener—the death forecloses Astrid’s chance to resolve something with Barbara that happened decades earlier and concerned Astrid’s eldest child, Elliot. Nevertheless, Astrid feels obliged to interpret Barbara’s death as a prompt to forge a less steely persona, and she takes the opportunity of a family brunch to tell her kin that she has been in reciprocal love with a woman for the past several years. “Straub belongs in the company of Cathleen Schine, Tom Perrotta and other fiction writers who understand that the degree

of humor that can be teased from family drama is often directly proportional to the extent of the family's misery." In short, Tolstoy!

In an interview, Straub says: I wanted to write a book about cheese! That's really how it started, though as soon as I started outlining, I realized it wasn't about cheese. (There is cheese in the book, but only a little.) As ever, I'm interested in family dynamics, but with this book, I started from a new place—I now have two kids, and my parents are in their late 70s, and it's a whole different world. Of course, a book is never about what you think it's going to be about. Sometimes I think you don't know what a book is really about until you're finished."

Thomas, Elisabeth. [Catherine House](#) (Harper \$27.99). Catherine House is a school of higher learning like no other. Hidden deep in the woods of rural Pennsylvania, this crucible of reformist liberal arts study with its experimental curriculum, wildly selective admissions policy, and formidable endowment, has produced some of the world's best minds: prize-winning authors, artists, inventors, Supreme Court justices, presidents. For those lucky few selected, tuition, room, and board are free. But acceptance comes with a price. Students are required to give the House three years—summers included—completely removed from the outside world. Among this year's incoming class is Ines Murillo, who expects to trade blurry nights of parties, cruel friends, and dangerous men for rigorous intellectual discipline—only to discover an environment of sanctioned revelry. More like a gilded prison. Then tragedy strikes... What we have is a gothic-infused debut of literary suspense, set within a secluded, elite university and following a dangerously curious, rebellious undergraduate who uncovers a shocking secret about an exclusive circle of students...and the dark truth beneath her school's promise of prestige. The campus mystery, a variation on the country house murder, more Donna Tartt than Agatha Christie.

✚Weir, Alison. [Katheryn Howard, The Scandalous Queen](#) (Ballantine \$28.99). Of all Henry VIII's wives Katheryn was the shallowest (so young, she was a victim of her ambitious relatives), the most indiscreet, and on a direct trajectory for divorce by execution. I've never found her interesting enough to merit a book but....

Woods, Stuart. [Bombshell](#) (Putnam \$28). We're sorry that Woods is not traveling and while he was kind enough to sign [Hit List](#) (\$29) when his April event canceled, this is one written with Parnell Hall and so.... *Desperation at Dawn* has snared Academy Award nominations for writer/director Peter Barrington; his wife, composer Hattie Barrington; lead actress Tessa Tweed; supporting actor Mark Weldon; and Tessa's husband, Ben Bacchetti, who, as head of Centurion Studios, would bask in the award for best picture. Tessa's nomination is nice for her, but it grates on Viveca Rothschild, the blonde bombshell who, determined that her own third nomination will be the charm, resolves to do whatever it takes to undermine Tessa, beginning with getting hired on *Trial by Fire*, Tessa's aptly named new film, and planting snippy items about her in gossip columns. But that's far from the biggest problem lurking beneath the tinsel. Viveca's boyfriend, Iraq War vet Bruce, has PTSD and a much less nuanced approach than his girlfriend to stopping Tessa in her tracks. Even worse, crime boss Gino Patelli, suspecting that his uncle and predecessor, Carlo Gigante, was offed by Centurion producer Billy Barnett, hires a series of variously hapless underlings to find and kill him. As

Billy tells his attorney, Peter's father Stone Barrington, when he's arrested for a rare murder he didn't commit, "It seems to be open season on Billy Barnett." But the predators' job is considerably complicated by the fact that Billy, like Mark Weldon, is an alter ego of former CIA operative Teddy Fay, who effortlessly spots every Patelli employee early on, switches identities in a flash to escape them, and shoots them when he can't... "The perfect bonbon to pick up for distraction during those long production numbers at the actual Oscars," says *Kirkus Reviews*. I think of all of Woods' thrillers as enjoyable distractions from real life and I plan on a couple of hours of fun with this as soon as I complete this Booknews.

## MORE CLASSIC CRIME

Armstrong, Charlotte. [The Chocolate Cobweb](#) (\$15.95). Gifted artist Amanda Garth, the heroine of this superior 1948 mystery from Edgar winner Armstrong (1905–1969), has her world upended after a chance remark from a visiting cousin, Edna Fairchild. When Edna spots a newspaper article about a painting by Tobias Garrison, a celebrated California artist, she connects Garrison with a mix-up at the hospital at the time of Amanda's birth 23 years earlier. Amanda's mother and Tobias's wife both delivered babies at the same facility within a few hours of each other, but when Tobias asked to see his new child, the student nurse held up Amanda by mistake. Thinking she may have been given to the wrong parents at birth, Amanda visits Tobias at his home in L.A., where she learns that his first wife is dead; she is then disturbed to spot his current spouse deliberately break a jug of hot chocolate before it can be consumed. When Amanda, suspicious of what might have been in the jug, has a handkerchief with some of the spilled liquid tested, poison is detected. Readers soon know the culprit, but will Amanda be able to stop the killer in time? Armstrong maintains nail-biting suspense throughout. The Introduction to this new edition is, interestingly, by "AJ Finn."

Simenon, Georges. [Maigret and the Wine Merchant](#) (Penguin \$15). When a wealthy wine merchant is shot and killed in Paris, Inspector Maigret must investigate a long list of family, colleagues and lovers to uncover just who could have committed the crime. Delving into the depths of the man's personality, Maigret discovers that the victim may have made one too many enemies on his way to the top. I've been listing these in New Books for ages but in truth Simenon's Maigrets, of which this is the 71st, belong in Classic Crimes.

Wells, Carolyn. [Murder in the Bookshop](#) (Harper \$15.99). An entry in the Collins Detective Club Crime Classics hardcover reprints. When Philip Balfour is found murdered in a New York bookstore, the number one suspect is his librarian, a man who has coveted Balfour's widow. But when the police discover that a book worth \$100,000 is missing, detective Fleming Stone realizes that some people covet rare volumes even more highly than other men's wives, and embarks on one of his most dangerous investigations. A successful poet and children's author, Carolyn Wells discovered mystery fiction in her forties and went on to become one of America's most popular Golden Age writers. Penning 82 detective novels between 1909 and her death in 1942, she was mourned in 1968 by the great John Dickson Carr as one of mystery fiction's 'lost ladies now well lost', and remains undeservedly neglected 50 years later. *Murder in the Bookshop* is

a story laced with criminality, locked rooms and bookish intricacies that any bibliophile will find irresistible. This Detective Club hardback is introduced by award-winning writer and authority on Golden Age detective fiction, Curtis Evans, and includes ‘The Shakespeare Title-Page Mystery’, a murderous tale of literary shenanigans that was one of the last pieces of detective fiction which Carolyn Wells ever published.

### REVISIT THE WEST

Boessenecker, John. [Shotguns and Stagecoaches: The Brave Men Who Rode for Wells Fargo in the Wild West](#) (\$19.99). The phrase “riding shotgun” was no teenage game to the men who guarded stagecoaches and trains of the Western frontier. Armed with sawed-off, double-barreled shotguns and an occasional revolver, these express messengers guarded valuable cargo through lawless terrain. They were tough, fighting men who risked their lives every time they climbed into the front boot of a Concord coach. Boessenecker presents the true stories of the Wild West heroes who guarded the iconic Wells Fargo stagecoaches and trains, battling colorful thieves, vicious highwaymen, and robbers armed with explosives. Black Bart. Butch Cassidy. Think all those Westerns. Fort Apache. Kansas. Wyoming, etc. And this is a good reminder of the roots of Wells Fargo, a very different corporate entity today. Copious End Notes and a sprinkling of illustrations for you.

DeFelice, Jim. [West Like Lightning: The Brief, Legendary Ride of the Pony Express](#) (\$16.99). As a companion piece: “the first comprehensive history of the legendary transcontinental experiment in mail delivery in sixty years.” —*True West*. On the eve of the Civil War, three American businessmen launched an audacious plan to create a financial empire by transforming communications across the hostile territory between the nation’s two coasts. In the process, they created one of the most enduring icons of the American West: the Pony Express. Daring young men with colorful names like “Bronco Charlie” and “Sawed-Off Jim” galloped at speed over a vast and unforgiving landscape, etching an irresistible tale that passed into myth almost instantly. Equally an improbable success and a business disaster, the Pony Express came and went in just eighteen months, but not before uniting and captivating a nation on the brink of being torn apart with a new version of American Express. Populated with cast of characters including Abraham Lincoln (news of whose electoral victory the Express delivered to California), Wild Bill Hickok, Buffalo Bill Cody (who fed the legend of the Express in his Wild West Show), and Mark Twain (who celebrated the riders in *Roughing It*), *West Like Lightning* masterfully follows the Pony Express from its start in St. Joseph, Missouri—the edge of the civilized world—west to Sacramento, the capital of California, then booming from the gold rush. DeFelice rode the route himself.

Warren, Mark. [Adobe Moon: Wyatt Earp, An American Odyssey](#) (Five Star Western \$25.95). Here’s a narrative of Earp’s formative years presented as a rollicking tale rather than a biography. After his youth on an Iowa farm, Wyatt Earp is ready to seek his fortunes by his wits rather than the sweat of his back. In California he meets a Mexican girl, whose philosophy will haunt him for years to come. It is the prophecy of the “adobe moon,” which reminds a man: If you do not achieve your dreams, you must settle for what you have. After taking menial jobs,

Wyatt settles down as a constable in Missouri. When his wife and child die, he sinks into depression where the lines of ethics blur. Wanted by the law he bides his time for a second chance, until in a Kansas cattle town he encounters his destiny as a lawman. And more. We mostly know Earp’s story from *Tombstone* and the *OK Corral* on, so meet him Before.

### OUR MAY LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

✚Baker, Jo. [The Body Lies](#) (\$16). Still traumatized three years after being assaulted during her pregnancy near her South London home, the unnamed novelist who narrates this lyrical suspense novel leaps at the offer of a university lectureship in rural Lancashire, even though it means she and her toddler son will be separated from her husband, who can’t leave his teaching job in London. The move will indeed change everything—but hardly the way she hopes. For starters, their rose-covered rented house redefines remote. And then there are the unanticipated challenges presented by her creative writing students—in particular, the most talented but also most troubling one, Nicholas Palmer, whose seemingly autobiographical work in progress centers on a young woman who dies under mysterious circumstances. Though Nicholas starts pushing for an inappropriate personal relationship with the narrator, his writing skill makes her loathe to establish firm boundaries—a decision that backfires catastrophically after a Christmas party. Soon she’s fighting to save her job, her marriage, and even her life. All too plausible, Baker’s powerful tale is at times heart-rending to read—and impossible to put down. Baker is the author of [Longbourn](#) (\$16), a 2013 release heaped with literary kudos where servants take center stage in an irresistibly imagined belowstairs answer to *Pride and Prejudice*.

Castillo, Linda. [Shamed](#) (\$16.99). An Amish grandmother takes two small granddaughters to a deserted neighboring farm in November to harvest walnuts as she has for years. Annie is five. Elsie, a child with Cohen’s genetic disease, is seven and special needs. Thinking she spots someone in the deserted farm house, Mary enters it and is butchered—no other word for it—by a man who then kidnaps Elsie. There’s a hint from the dying Mary she knows why, but it dies with her. Painter’s Mill Chief of Police Kate Burkholder is first on the scene when she spots a blood-splattered Annie running down the road, and mobilizes her department and her FBI Agent lover Tomasetti’s to search for Elsie. And preserve the crime scene. It’s a race against time for recovering Elsie and a family is keeping back secrets that impair Kate’s investigation.... Love the voice of Kate, the pace, the relationships, and Castillo’s alarming, unflinching plots.

Constantine, Liv. [The Last Time I Saw You](#) (\$16.99). Blueblood Baltimore pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon Kate English’s enviable life implodes with the shocking murder of her mother, a beloved philanthropist—followed by chilling texts insinuating she’s next. To make matters worse, heiress Kate wants her architect husband—has he been cheating on her?—to move out of the family mansion. Simon digs in his heels, saying he can help protect her and their four-year-old daughter. About the only bright spot is Kate’s unexpected reconciliation after the funeral with longestranged childhood best friend Blaire Barrington, who offers to apply the detective skills she’s acquired writing a bestselling mystery series to the case. Soon the nursery-rhyme-referencing threats mount, leading to a breach despite the round-the-clock security guards Simon’s hired. Plenty of secrets unfold among this

moneyed-set. What happens after a brutal high society murder? From the authors of bestseller [The Last Mrs. Parrish](#) (\$16.99) whose new thriller is found in Signed Books in support of our May 18 virtual event with Constantine.

Ellroy, James. [This Storm](#) (\$17). “The Los Angeles of James Ellroy’s latest historical thriller is the kind of place where rats as big as cats fearlessly scoot across the front porch, where lovers rendezvous in welcoming Tijuana, anonymous among the “child-beggar swarms” and “cat-meat taco vendors,” and where sentiments of pure, undiluted venom (“Hate, hate, hate. Kill, kill, kill”) express the prevailing state of race relations. We’re talking about the Los Angeles of January 1942, when a New Year’s Eve broadcast by Father Charles Coughlin laments that his war-battered listeners must stand shoulder to shoulder with the “rape-happy Russian Reds” in resistance to “the more sincerely simpatico Nazis.” In such a soul-crushing environment, a simple murder comes as a relief. Or so thinks Dudley Smith, a sergeant in the Los Angeles Police Department, currently working for Army intelligence and devising all kinds of war-profiteering hustles on the side. . . . But the repercussions of the case will play out over the next several months.”—*NY Times Book Review*

✎Griffiths, Elly. [The Stone Circle](#) (\$15.99). DCI Nelson has been receiving threatening letters telling him to “go to the stone circle and rescue the innocent who is buried there.” He is shaken, not only because children are very much on his mind, with Michelle’s baby due to be born, but because although the letters are anonymous, they are somehow familiar. They read like the letters that first drew him into the case of *The Crossing Places*, and to Ruth. But the author of those letters is dead. Or not? Meanwhile Ruth is working on a dig in the Saltmarsh—another henge, known by the archaeologists as the stone circle. Then bones are found on the site, and identified as those of Margaret Lacey, a twelve-year-old girl who disappeared thirty years ago. As the Margaret Lacey case progresses, more and more aspects of it begin to hark back to that first case of *The Crossing Places*, and to Scarlett Henderson, the girl Nelson couldn’t save. The past is reaching out for Ruth and Nelson....

✎Horowitz, Anthony. [The Sentence Is Death](#) (\$16.99). These, heard over the phone, were the last recorded words of successful celebrity-divorce lawyer Richard Pryce, found bludgeoned to death in his bachelor pad with a bottle of wine—a 1982 Chateau Lafite worth £3,000, to be precise. Odd, considering he didn’t drink. Why this bottle? And why those words? And why was a three-digit number painted on the wall by the killer? And, most importantly, which of the man’s many, many enemies did the deed? Baffled, the police are forced to bring in Private Investigator Daniel Hawthorne and his sidekick, the author Anthony, who’s really getting rather good at this murder investigation business. The *NY Times* adds, “If you’re going to be bludgeoned to death with a bottle of wine, it might as well be a vintage with a certain cachet. A celebrity divorce lawyer named Richard Pryce is murdered with a 1982 bottle of Chateau Lafite Rothschild, which is not too shabby. Classier still is the metafictional plot construction, which allows Horowitz-the-author to play Horowitz-the-character in his own novel. “I like to be in control of my books,” he says, explaining why he has positioned himself as the lead detective Hawthorne’s sidekick—think Watson to Holmes. Begin by reading [The Word Is Murder](#) (\$16.99).

Jackson, Joshilyn. [Never Have I Ever](#) (\$16.99). Amy Whey is a Florida housewife with a dark secret safely buried in the past until a stranger shows up for her neighborhood book club and starts a game that hurtles her back into her deepest, most hidden secrets. “This story kept me guessing until the very end and still managed to surprise me,” says the Indie Next Pick of a beach read about a diving instructor who enjoys a comfortable life as a devoted wife and mother in Pensacola, Florida. Then one night, a mystifying and charming new neighbor, Angelica Roux, arrives unannounced at Amy’s door to join her book club. Roux takes over the book club and shifts the focus to playing a scandalous version of the game Never Have I Ever, and that’s when Amy realizes that Roux knows her darkest secret. So what do we have here: a friend? A blackmailer? And what will Amy do either way?

Kerr, Philip. [Metropolis](#) (\$17). Bernie Gunther’s skills as a vice cop earn him a place on the Berlin Murder Commission in the summer of 1928. In one of his first cases, Bernie collars a murderer within hours of the crime, but tougher is trying to identify and apprehend a serial killer, nicknamed Winnetou (after a character in a Karl May western), who has been scalping prostitutes. Then another serial killer, who writes taunting letters to the police signed Dr. Gnadenschuss, starts targeting the many maimed WWI veterans who struggle to survive on the streets of Berlin. Bernie has a hunch that the two killers are the same.... Kerr (1956–2018) immerses the reader in the seamy side of Weimar Germany as Bernie crosses paths with such real-life folks as artist George Grosz and scriptwriter Thea von Harbou, the wife of filmmaker Fritz Lang. Completed shortly before the author’s death, *Metropolis* “is also one of Kerr’s most congenial, beautifully controlled, and entertaining works. The banter is priceless. Going against the grain—as usual—by writing an origin novel as his swan song, Kerr leaves his fans happy.” Though immeasurably sad at the loss of an author so willing and adept at upping his game. Here, with a series prequel in keeping with the time hopping nature of the 14 books.

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

Lagercrantz, David. [The Girl Who Lived Twice](#) (\$17). Lisbeth Salander—the fierce, unstoppable girl with the dragon tattoo—has disappeared. She’s sold her apartment in Stockholm. She’s gone silent electronically. She’s told no one where she is. And no one is aware that at long last she’s got her primal enemy, her twin sister, Camilla, squarely in her sights. Mikael Blomkvist is trying to reach Lisbeth. He needs her help unraveling the identity of a man who lived and died on the streets in Stockholm—a man who does not exist in any official records and whose garbled last words hinted at possible damaging knowledge of people in the highest echelons of government and industry. In his pocket was a crumpled piece of paper with Blomkvist’s phone number on it. Once again, Salander and Blomkvist will come to each other’s aid, moving in tandem toward the truths they each seek. In the end, it will be Blomkvist who determines their fate. 6<sup>th</sup> in Stieg Larsson’s bestselling series. Also in small paperback (\$9.99).

Lansdale, Joe R. [Of Mice and Minestrone](#) (Tachyon \$15.95). Hap Collins looks like a good ol’ boy. But even in his misspent youth,

his best pal is Leonard Pine, who is black, gay, and the ultimate outsider. Inseparable friends, Hap and Leonard climb into the boxing ring, visit their families, get in bar fights, and just go fishing—all the while confronting racists, righting wrongs, and eating a whole lot of delicious food in this collection of stories: *Hap and Leonard: The Early Years*. Introduction by Kathleen Kent and favorite recipes assembled by Kasey Lansdale.

Mina, Denise. [Conviction](#) (\$16.99). A true-crime podcast sets a trophy wife's present life on a collision course with her secret past. The day Anna McDonald's quiet, respectable life explodes starts off like all the days before: Packing up the kids for school, making breakfast, listening to yet another true crime podcast. Then her husband comes downstairs with an announcement, and Anna is suddenly, shockingly alone. Reeling, desperate for distraction, Anna returns to the podcast. Other people's problems are much better than one's own: a sunken yacht, a murdered family, a hint of international conspiracy. But this case actually is Anna's problem. She knows one of the victims from an earlier life, a life she's taken great pains to leave behind. And she is convinced that she knows what really happened. Then an unexpected visitor arrives on her front stoop, a meddling neighbor intervenes, and life as Anna knows it is well and truly over. The devils of her past are awakened—and in hot pursuit. Convinced she has no other options, she goes on the run, and in pursuit of the truth, with a washed-up musician at her side and the podcast as her guide.

Miranda, Megan. [The Last House Guest](#) (\$16). Littleport, Maine, has always felt like two separate towns: an ideal vacation enclave for the wealthy, whose summer homes line the coastline; and a simple harbor community for the year-round residents whose livelihoods rely on service to the visitors. Typically, fierce friendships never develop between a local and a summer girl—but that's just what happens with visitor Sadie Loman and Littleport resident Avery Greer. Each summer for almost a decade, the girls are inseparable—until Sadie is found dead. While the police rule the death a suicide, Avery can't help but feel there are those in the community, including a local detective and Sadie's brother, Parker, who blame her. Someone must know more than they're saying....

Petrie, Nick. [The Wild One](#) (\$16). Iceland! This is the superbly realized landscape for Peter Ash's 5th high action involvement in someone else's disaster. It's also a place where, to reach it, Ash first has to fight (OK, drug himself) into beating his PTSD-induced claustrophobia and board a plane, and then given the harsh conditions and brutal encounters he faces, battle the PTSD even harder. It has surged because, Ash feels, he can't figure out what to do in a civilian life without a mission (see Andrew Grant's Paul McGrath above), so in its way this is a coming of age, or to grips, novel. Reacher had it easier. The instigator of all this is a plea from a grieving grandmother to find her eight-year-old grandson who, rumor has it, accompanied his father, the sole suspect in the murder of his mother, back to his native Iceland. Money no object. Of course none of this is as it seems as is clear when a flunky of the US Embassy meets Peter at the airport and tries to deport him immediately.... The conditions are harsh although, Peter points out, no challenge to a man from Wisconsin. You will come to love the missing man and boy's Icelandic relatives, "these Goddamned Vikings." I add there's an Irishman named after the poet Seamus Heaney. Here's what Nick has to say about the location: "Everything about this small island nation

evokes its epic history – the remoteness of the place, its strong, stoic, resilient people, the way every human habitation seems only a temporary encroachment on the vast, wild landscape. Setting a novel in Iceland seemed like the perfect way to push Peter Ash to his limits and beyond...." For more about Iceland see the amazing [The Museum of Whales You Will Never See](#) (Penguin \$25.50) by A. Kendra Greene in Hardcover Books. Only in Iceland would this collection of wildly unusual museums be found.

Robotham, Michael. [Good Girl, Bad Girl](#) (\$17). A 2019 Edgar nominee for Best Novel now in paperback. Evie Cormac is an enigma. No one knew who she was when she was found in a secret room in a north London home, weighing less than a child half her age, which was determined to be 11 or 12. Only a few feet from her hiding place was the decomposing body of a man who had been tortured to death. Given a new name, she ended up in Nottingham's Langford Hall, a high security children's home, after a series of foster homes. Now, six years later, she's eager to be declared an adult, so Cyrus must evaluate her for possible release. Evie is rude, unruly, self-destructive, prone to occasional violence, heartbreakingly naïve, and very, very broken. She also seems to be able to tell, with remarkable consistency, when someone is lying. This intrigues Cyrus, who wrote a thesis on human lie detectors, aka "truth wizards." When Cyrus makes an impulsive choice to temporarily foster Evie, it brings a basket of challenges to his already complicated life. Meanwhile, Cyrus is assisting his mentor, Chief Inspector Lenny Parvel, in the investigation of the suspicious death and possible rape of 15-year-old Jodie Sheehan, who was called the "golden girl of British skating." Some shocking revelations lead Cyrus and the police down a rabbit hole of dark family secrets, and Evie can't help but involve herself in the investigation.

Sager, Riley. [Lock Every Door](#) (\$17). Orphaned and dumped and laid-off 25-year-old Jules Larsen has hit rock bottom. Scarred by the deaths of her parents and the disappearance of her sister years before, she has recently been downsized at work and walked in on her boyfriend screwing another woman on their sofa. She's been crashing on the couch of her best friend Chloe, desperate to reboot her life. And a chance arrives when responds to an ad for an apartment sitter at a Manhattan luxury apartment building, which turns out to be the Bartholomew, the gargoyle-adorned setting for her favorite book, a bestselling novel published in the '80s about a 20-year-old orphan who lives in the iconic building. At the interview, Jules agrees to earn \$1000 a week for three months by living in the vacant 12A and by following a strict set of rules which include absolutely no visitors and refraining from interacting with the other residents, rich, some of them celebrities. Jules leaps at it despite Chloe's reservations. Over the course of five days she breaks some rules and learns the tangled, tragic, and frequent-deaths history of the Bartholomew which many believe to be haunted. Things literally heat up leaving Jules forced to woman up...."Fans of Ira Levin, to whom the book is dedicated, will be delighted by Sager's clever variation on a typical Levin plot."

Walker, Martin. [The Body in the Castle Well](#) (\$16). ). I love the mix of ingredients Walker stirs into his plots... a sort of complementary process to the meals served up by Bruno Courrèges, Chief of Police now for communes in the Vézère valley, for his friends and at occasions in his village of St. Denis. Here we have falconry, echoes of the Algerian war, a musical tribute to Jose-



phine Baker, and both art history and that of Occupied France. The first victim in the story is one you truly mourn, a young American PhD student, wealthy, who was studying with a noted art scholar she wonders might have been engaged in shady dealings related to valuing looted art and to his valuable art collection. She was also seen in the presence of a man recently released from prison. Was her death a simple misfortune, possibly related to powerful painkillers she was taking, or to something more sinister? To read a Bruno is like visiting old friends, such a pleasure. *PW* admires “the intrepid Bruno, a horseback-riding and dog-loving master chef whose calm professional practicality pulls the reader into the well-developed, if familiar, crime story. Whether he’s preparing a gourmet dinner, enjoying a glass of wine, or solving a murder, it’s a pleasure to be in Bruno’s company.” *Bien sur*. Best to read [this delightful series](#) and enjoy life in the Périgord in the order published. See Signed Books for the 2020 Bruno.

☞Ware, Ruth. [The Turn of the Key](#) (\$16.99). When Rowan Caine stumbles across the online job posting for a live-in nanny position with a family in the Scottish Highlands, she should have ignored it. But the money is insanely good, and the family seems perfectly charming (and to be honest, Rowan is not exactly thrilled with her present day underpaid and underappreciated job working in a daycare facility in the city). However, the moment Rowan arrives at Heatherbrea House and begins hearing rumors that the place is haunted, she begins to rethink accepting the position. Then there is the matter of the oddly large number of women who had taken the job before Rowan only to leave under mysterious circumstances. Add into this the warning from one of her new charges that “they won’t like her,” and the house itself, which is a fascinating mix of high-tech luxury (security cameras everywhere!) and old fashioned spookiness (right down to the creepy hidden garden filled with poisonous plants), All of this adds up to recipe for disaster for Rowan. If Ware’s last novel, [The Death of Mrs. Westaway](#) (\$16.99), is a clever take on classic Agatha Christie style mysteries, then here we have one inspired by Henry James’ classic *The Turn of the Screw*. Ware puts her own inventive, ingenious spin on the gothic ghost story, setting it in a cutting edge smart house.

Whishaw, Iona. [A Match Made for Murder](#) (\$14.95). I first visited Arizona in 1950 as a child yet remember well the charm of a mostly undiscovered, thinly populated state not yet part of the coming tourist boom. This novel, while 7<sup>th</sup> in a series set in British Columbia (shades of LR Wright’s mysteries on the Sunshine Coast), is a good starting point for newly married sleuths Lane Winslow, formerly of MI6, and Inspector Fred Darling, arrive in Tucson for a honeymoon. It’s November, 1947, so the lack of modern air-conditioning isn’t a killer. However there is a killer, one who fires shots at poolside of the charming inn where our couple has booked. Meanwhile, back home in Nelson, where Darling has taken up a new post, Sergeant Ames investigates what looks like vandalism at a local garage but turns into something more. The story, our **May Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**, moves along two tracks, the one in Tucson, the other in Nelson, in interesting ways in the kind of meticulous policing that characterizes the work of Steven Havill in his *Posadas*, New Mexico, series.

The bonus here is that you can then go to [A Killer in King’s Cove](#) (\$14.95), when Lane arrives to reboot her life in rustic BC, 1946, and read your way forward to *A Match Made*

*for Murder*. Lane will appeal to Maisie Dobbs fans, and readers of Vicki Delany’s series set in Nelson, and of Louise Penny, will enjoy time spent in Canada.

## MORE MAY LARGE PAPERBACKS

Appanah, Nathacha. [Tropic of Violence](#) (Graywolf \$16). If you are looking for a global voice during this pandemic, here is an author offering one. “Orphaned gang members and desperate refugees live on a machete’s edge in Appanah’s blistering depiction of postcolonial chaos in Mayotte, an island in the Mozambique channel. A carousel of first-person narrators recount the abrupt life story of Mōïse, abandoned as a baby and taken in by Marie, a white nurse in Mayotte. After Marie dies, the teenage Mōïse’s simmering identity crisis leads him into the island’s unforgiving slum, a ‘violent no-man’s land’ called Gaza. There, the book-loving Mōïse, who names his dog after the author Henri Bosco, falls sway to gang leader Bruce, whose child soldiers run Gaza’s economy by drug dealing, burglary, and political graft. Marked as a middle-class interloper, Mōïse is ripe for Bruce’s exploitation. The calamitous chain of events that follows is narrated from beyond the grave by players who are helpless to change it and can only affirm its inevitability....” —*PW* Starred Review

Benjamin, Melanie. [Mistress of the Ritz](#) (\$17). Blanche Ross Auzello doesn’t care for being a proper, quiet wife, much to the dismay of her somewhat stuffy husband, Claude, the manager of Paris’s luxurious Hotel Ritz. In June 1940, Claude returns from military service to find that a host of high-ranking Nazi soldiers have commandeered the hotel as their Paris headquarters. For the next four years, he and Blanche play unwilling hosts to the Germans—and, unbeknownst to each other, both begin working in the French Resistance. They narrowly avoid disaster until immediately before the Americans liberate Paris, when Blanche gets into trouble Claude can’t resolve, and a shocking secret about Blanche’s past is revealed. Benjamin skillfully weaves in a host of historical figures—including Coco Chanel, alleged to be a Nazi sympathizer, and Ernest Hemingway—whose vibrant presences make Benjamin’s protagonists and engaging group of supporting characters shine all the more. You don’t need to be a fan of historical fiction to read this gripping tale.

☞Candlish, Louise. [Those People](#) (\$17). An upscale London neighborhood becomes the setting for escalating class warfare. Candlish’s latest opens with a teaser about the horrific, unexpected death of an unidentified character and then backtracks eight weeks to examine the events that precipitated that death on a quiet little block of Lowland Way.

Castellani, Christopher. [Leading Men](#) (\$17). In July of 1953, at a glittering party thrown by Truman Capote in Portofino, Italy, Tennessee Williams and his longtime lover Frank Merlo meet Anja Blomgren, a mysterious young Swedish beauty and aspiring actress. Their encounter will go on to alter all of their lives. Ten years later, Frank revisits the tempestuous events of that fateful summer from his deathbed in Manhattan, where he waits anxiously for Tennessee to visit him one final time. Anja, now legendary film icon Anja Bloom, lives as a recluse in present-day America, until a young man connected to the events of 1953 lures her reluctantly back into the spotlight after he discovers she possesses the only copy of an unknown play—Tennessee’s last. “Real and imagined lives collide as Tennessee Williams and his longtime lover Frank Merlo befriend a young Swedish woman

named Anja on the glittering Italian Riviera in July 1953. Though entirely fictional, the enigmatic Anja, who goes on to reluctant fame and fortune as an actress, propels this story of desire, ambition, and heartbreak.” —*People*. The lure of a lost work by a well known artist is always a great hook for fiction, no?

Chandler, LA. [The Pearl Dagger](#) (Kensington \$15.95). As we read about NYC today we can go back to the tumultuous Thirties when Fiorella LaGuardia was mayor. Serving as La Guardia’s personal aide guarantees Lane Sanders adventure and danger. La Guardia’s concern for the people of his city, which fuels his hatred of corruption and crime, has won him many enemies. A hot tip to investigative reporter Roarke Channing, Lane’s friend and often her partner in sleuthing, soon has them running from Crusher, a killer who may have targeted the mayor. Lane has had many close calls in the past (*The Gold Pawn*, 2018, etc.), and the love of her life, NYPD detective Finn Brodie, has problems of his own with his family back in England. Even as the murder of a policeman friend heats things up, the police commissioner dispatches Finn and Lane to London to see whether the Red Scroll is still active in Europe and identify its new leader. After five wonderful days aboard the *Queen Mary*, they arrive and are tracked down by Finn’s sister-in-law, Gwen, who tells them that Finn’s father is very ill in the hospital—but evidently not too ill to snub Finn when they arrive to visit him. The accusation that Finn has poisoned his father brings the family feud that’s festered for years to a head. But the problems back in New York demand their attention.... This somewhat frenetic mystery of two unrelated cases is fun and full of historical details, so plot oriented readers should look elsewhere.

Choi, Susan. [Trust Exercise](#) (\$15.99). “Mind-bending... A Gen-X *bildungsroman* that speaks to young generations, a Russian nesting doll of unreliable narrators, and a slippery #MeToo puzzle-box about the fallibility of memory.... [*Trust Exercise* is] a perfectly stitched together Frankenstein’s monster of narrative introspection and ambiguity... It flexes its own meta-existence—as a novel about the manipulation inherent in any kind of narrative—brilliantly.” —*New York Magazine* on the 2019 National Book Award winner for Fiction

Ciment, Jill. [The Body in Question](#) (\$15). With jury misconduct an increasing issue in a Social Media age, here’s an intriguing novel set in the midst of a sensational murder trial—a teenage twin is on trial for murdering her toddler brother, as two jurors engage in a love affair. Moving from jury selection to sequestering, the two jurors spend their days listening to grisly details of the crime, and their nights in furtive lovemaking. Juror Hannah, 52, the protagonist, struggles with her marriage to an 86-year-old. As she continues her torrid affair with Graham, a 42-year-old professor, they vow not to discuss the case. However, when the jury reaches deliberations, Hannah and Graham quickly realize they are on opposing sides, and to make matters worse, fellow jurors are aware of their dalliance. Once the verdict is read, Hannah returns to life with her husband, riddled with guilt over her indiscretion. Unbeknownst to Hannah, things are about to get worse. The case is soon in the headlines again as new information comes to light suggesting the jury convicted the wrong twin. Worse, the judge has received an anonymous note reporting that “two of my fellow jurors had sexual contact,” and suddenly, not only does Hannah face the destruction of her marriage, but public moral outrage over her fling. “Ciment expertly toggles between

the thrilling twists and turns of the courtroom to the private and personal struggles of marriage and aging.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

Everett, Percival. [Telephone](#) (Graywolf \$16). Patrick is a fan of Everett’s work. This one has a Southwest connection. Zach Wells is a perpetually dissatisfied geologist-slash-paleobiologist. Expert in a very narrow area—the geological history of a cave forty-four meters above the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon—he is a laconic man who plays chess with his daughter, trades puns with his wife while she does yoga, and dodges committee work at the college where he teaches. After a field trip to the desert yields nothing more than a colleague with a tenure problem and a student with an unwelcome crush on him, Wells returns home to find his world crumbling. His daughter has lost her edge at chess, she has developed mysterious eye problems, and her memory has lost its grasp. Powerless in the face of his daughter’s slow deterioration, he finds a mysterious note asking for help tucked into the pocket of a jacket he’s ordered off eBay. Desperate for someone to save, he sets off to New Mexico in secret on a quixotic rescue mission.

Gailey, Sarah. [Magic for Liars](#) (\$17.99). When a gruesome murder is discovered at The Osthorne Academy of Young Mages, where her estranged twin sister teaches Theoretical Magic, reluctant detective Ivy Gamble is pulled into the world of untold power and dangerous secrets. She will have to find a murderer and reclaim her sister—without losing herself. The Indie Next Picks call it, “A blend of fantasy and murder mystery. Magic meets noir, throw in some romance and some witty dialog and you have a great pick for summer reading. For fans of Jasper Fforde and the Charley Davidson novels.”

Gudenkauf, Heather. [This is How I Lied](#) (Park Row \$17.99). Twenty-five years ago, the body of sixteen-year-old Eve Knox was found in the caves near her home in small-town Grotto, Iowa—discovered by her best friend, Maggie, and her sister, Nola. There were a handful of suspects, including her boyfriend, Nick, but without sufficient evidence the case ultimately went cold. For decades Maggie was haunted by Eve’s death and that horrible night. Now a detective in Grotto, and seven months pregnant, she is thrust back into the past when a new piece of evidence surfaces and the case is reopened. As Maggie investigates and reexamines the clues, secrets about what really happened begin to emerge. But someone in town knows more than they’re letting on, and they’ll stop at nothing to keep the truth buried deep.

Haddon, Mark. [The Porpoise](#) (\$16.95). “[*The Porpoise*] poses the same questions Pat Barker did in *The Silence of the Girls*, her feminist retelling of the *Iliad*: : What about the women in the stories? What if you gave them voices? What if you gave them agency?...Haddon’s writing is beautiful, almost hallucinatory at times, and his descriptions so rich and lush and specific that smells and sights and tastes and sounds—foam smashing across a boat’s deck; a breakfast of olives and barley bread soaked in wine; a woman trapped alive in a coffin—all but waft and dance off the page...a provocative and deeply interesting work.” —*New York Times* on a novel of a girl abused by her father who may be rescued by a young man in the role of Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Some Homer, some Shakespeare, yet wholly original.

Harris, Charlaïne. [An Easy Death](#) (\$16). Leave it to Harris to write a dystopian yet historical Western. In a fractured United

States, a new world where magic is acknowledged but mistrusted, a young gunslinger named Lizbeth Rose takes a job offer from a pair of Russian wizards. Lizbeth Rose has a wildly fearsome reputation but these wizards are desperate. Searching the small border towns near Mexico, they're trying to locate a low-level magic practitioner believed to be a direct descendant of Grigori Rasputin. As the trio journey through an altered America—shattered into several countries after the assassination of Franklin Roosevelt and the Great Depression—they're set on by enemies. It's clear that a powerful force does not want them to succeed in their mission. Lizbeth Rose has never failed a client, but this job may stretch her to her limits...

✦Herron, Mick. [Joe Country](#) (\$16.95). Inside Slough House, the London outpost for disgraced MI5 spies, memories are stirring, all of them bad. Catherine Standish is buying booze again, Louisa Guy is raking over the ashes of lost love, and new recruit Lech Wicinski, whose sins make him an outcast even among the slow horses, is determined to discover who destroyed his career, even if he tears his life apart in the process. Meanwhile, in Regent's Park, Diana Taverner's tenure as First Desk is running into difficulties. She wants to remake the service to her own vision, ruthlessly; if she's going to succeed, she might have to make deals with a familiar old devil... And with winter taking its grip, Jackson Lamb would sooner be left brooding in peace, but even he can't ignore the dried blood on his carpets. So when the man responsible for killing a slow horse breaks cover at last, Lamb sends the slow horses out to even the score. And sadly, someone pay the ultimate price.

Knoll, Jessica. [The Favorite Sister](#) (\$16.99). Here's sibling rivalry and the twisted—and, in this case, murderous—world of reality TV. Meet the entrepreneurial ladies of the New York City-based reality show *Goal Diggers*. The grisly murder of spin and yoga studio entrepreneur Brett is revealed at the outset; the narrative then flashes back, unfolding the complex how and why from the perspectives of narrators Brett, the overweight sibling; her thin and pretty sister Kelly, who abandoned a high-profile career path to be a single mom and run Brett's growing business empire; and bestselling author Stephanie. All three are contestants on *Goal Diggers*, which hypes the accomplishments of 'unmothers and unwives' and is run by conniving and high-profile network executive Jesse. The characters compete for prominence, audience popularity, and social media buzz. It's off-screen where things take a dark turn: Brett's 'enigmatic gay millennial' persona comes apart and Stephanie's bestselling memoir is exposed as anything but true. "Though the mystery is engrossing enough in its own right, Knoll's novel is most notable as a potent takedown of a reality-show-obsessed culture that seeks out the spotlight rather than harder truths. Knoll explores the pressure society places on women to be everything to everyone and do it all without a strand of hair out of place. There's enough conniving, scandal, and snark to rival the most shocking episodes of *Real Housewives*, and these cutthroat divas play to win even if it means blurring the line between truth and lies. In the end, murder seems inevitable. Season 4 will end with a bang, and there will be blood." This satirical story is a reminder that Reality TV is, in fact, anything but.

✦Mason, Tim. [The Darwin Affair](#) (\$16.95). In 1860, DCI Charles Field, the inspiration for Inspector Bucket in Dickens's *Bleak House*, is part of the added security force for Queen Victoria

and Prince Albert after several assassination attempts. One day, Field is guarding the route the royal couple's carriage is taking through London when he spots 18-year-old pickpocket Stevie Patchen, who appears to be holding a weapon. Field tackles Patchen, only to realize that the youth was a decoy. The actual gunman, Philip Rendell, a former bookkeeper, is able to fire only a few stray shots at the carriage before he's apprehended. In the ensuing confusion, someone cuts Patchen's throat and removes one ear, leading Field to suspect a conspiracy. The intelligent plot features prominent figures of the time, including Karl Marx, who may have a link to Rendell, and Charles Darwin, whose heretical theory of evolution has unsettled some very powerful men.

McHugh, Laura. [Wolf Wants In](#) (\$17). In this intelligent thriller set in the opioid-ravaged town of Blackwater, Kansas, Sadie Keller and her sister, Becca, are desperate to know why their normally healthy brother, Shane, suddenly died. They suspect Shane's new wife, Crystle, and her relatives, the drug-dealing Pettits, are to blame. The Blackwater police have closed the case and are now preoccupied with a missing girl whose skull may have been found in the woods. Across town, 18-year-old Henley Pettit knows she will always be tainted by the "knotted threads of her family's misdeeds" if she stays in Blackwater. She worries her clandestine relationship with the scion of Blackwater's wealthiest man will further trap her. Henley desperately wants to start a new life anywhere else, away from her often-missing opioid-addicted mother and the crimes of her uncles, and to ditch the small town ennui.

✦McKenna, Clara. [Murder at Morrington Hall](#) (\$15.95). "Set in 1905 in Hampshire, England, McKenna's delightful debut and series launch introduces feisty American heiress and horse breeder Stella Kendrick and Viscount Lyndy Lyndhurst, to whom Stella's father hopes to marry her off. Stella is the last to know about her father's scheme, and she's furious when she realizes he tricked her into going to England. When Stella and Lyndy go looking for the Reverend Bullmore, who's to marry them, they discover his dead body in the library of Morrington Hall, the Lyndhurst family estate. This breaks the ice between the two, who decide to investigate the murder together. Stella's longing for Kentucky diminishes as she grows fond of England, and she gradually falls in love with Lyndy, who's already smitten with her. After her stallion, Cicero, shipped over from the U.S. as a bargaining chip to seal the marriage deal, wins the Epsom Derby, its sire, Orson, is stolen. Eccentric, humorous characters add to the intrigue of catching the murderer and rescuing Orson from his captors. Eccentric, humorous characters add to the intrigue of catching the murderer and rescuing Orson from his captors. Fans of historical cozies will be enchanted."—PW

✦Montclair, Allison. [The Right Sort of Man](#) (\$9.99). "In 1946 London, two women have set up a matchmaking business, but turn their hand to sleuthing when one of their clients is found dead. *The Right Sort of Man* is a fantastic historical romp. It mixes the bureau's various clients in search of their perfect spouse with an intriguing case that takes the two women into the underworld of stocking smugglers and other criminals trying to get around strict postwar rationing. Gwen's tragic past and Iris's vim make them a delightfully unusual pair, adding humor to the way they investigate. But when Iris goes undercover, posing as a friend of Tillie, things quickly become dangerous for the ladies of the marriage bureau. Fans of Jacqueline Winspear or Rhys Bow-

en will love first novel by Allison Montclair, and she has created a charming and insightful pair of detectives that will hopefully be featured in many more books.”—Jessica Howard on a book for fans of Maisie Dobbs and Bess Crawford. Sequel comes in June.

Mosse, Kate. [The Burning Chambers](#) (\$18.99) is an epic novel of the French Wars of Religion, packed with historical detail in richly textured stories of love, family, betrayal, faith and war. The first in a planned four-part series, the novel opens with a prologue set in South Africa in 1862—a nod to the eventual 300-year story arc planned for the series. But after this brief tease, the rest of *The Burning Chambers* remains squarely stationed in the late 16th century, starting in the very early days of the violent battles between the Huguenots (French Protestants) and Catholics that wracked France from 1562 to 1598. In the small town of Carcassonne, Minou, the daughter of a Catholic bookseller, works to keep her family afloat as her father grieves the loss of his beloved wife. At the same time, the Protestant Piet Reydon finds himself in Carcassonne to deliver a stolen relic to fellow Huguenot revolutionaries. Piet’s path crosses with that of his one-time friend, now a powerful Catholic priest in the nearby city of Toulouse, and then with Minou’s, setting off a series of events that is both labyrinthine and expertly plotted. Amidst these comings and goings and encounters, diary entries from an unnamed woman suggest there is more than just a relic missing—there is a will and an inheritance at stake.

Patterson, James. [Criss Cross](#) (\$16.99). When a mysterious serial killer known as “M” launches a deranged “investigation”, Alex Cross and his partner must unearth long-forgotten secrets to survive

Regan, Lisa. [The Girl with No Name](#) (\$12.99). Josie Quinn, installed as the Chief of Police in Denton, Pennsylvania in [Vanishing Girls](#) (\$12.99), feels recently that, her fiancé, state trooper Luke Creighton, has been distant and uncommunicative. Then Josie and Lt. Noah Fraley are called to the home of single mother Misty Derossi, who’s been severely beaten. Misty’s newborn baby is missing, and as Josie struggles to put together the scant evidence, she also tries to put aside her feelings—she detests Misty for having had an affair with her late husband, Ray. Meanwhile, Luke has disappeared and a mystery woman who claims to have amnesia is at his house, dressed in his shirt. As the bodies pile up, Josie and Noah widen their investigation, which has myriad twists. A small town police force might well have to let a cop with such a close personal tie to a case investigate, so allow for that...

Treger, Louisa. [The Dragon Lady](#) (\$14). Readers of Rhys Bowen’s Lady Georgie series will want to grab this one. From the glamorous Italian Riviera in the roaring twenties to the Art Deco glory of Eltham Palace in the thirties, from the secluded Scottish Highlands to sultry, segregated Rhodesia in the fifties, *The Dragon Lady* tells the story of the extraordinary life of Lady Virginia Courtauld, so-called for the exotic tattoo snaking up her leg. Ostracized by society for being a foreign divorcée at the time of Edward VIII and Mrs. Simpson, Ginie and her second husband Stephen Courtauld leave the confines of post-war Britain to forge a new life in Rhodesia, only to find that being progressive liberals during segregation proves mortally dangerous. This is fiction...a blend of real history with the author’s imagination.

✂Walker, Harriet. [The New Girl](#) (\$17). Echoes of *The Nanny* here.... Glamorous Margot Jones is the fashion editor at glossy magazine *Haute*. Pregnant with her first child, Margot’s carefully curated life is the object of other women’s envy—who wouldn’t want her successful career, loving husband, beautiful house, and stylish wardrobe? Maggie, a freelance journalist, certainly knows she doesn’t measure up. But when she gets the temp job covering Margot’s maternity leave, Maggie seizes the chance to live a flashier life—even if it’s only for a few months. But the simultaneous arrival of Margot’s baby and a brutal end to her oldest friendship sends Margot into a spiral of insecurity and suspicion; normal preoccupations of new motherhood turn into dark and frightening paranoia. Who is the vicious online troll mocking Margot’s facade of perfection and threatening to expose a dark secret she’s spent years concealing? Are Maggie’s newfound ambitions and plucky enthusiasm as innocent as they seem? And what happens when Margot is ready to return to her old life—especially if Maggie doesn’t want to leave? “Walker nimbly digs into the inner workings of female friendships as they go from good to bad. Furthermore, she aces the spiral of paranoia that can come along when bad memories collide with present day,” says *LJ*.

For a debut with a darker take on inviting a nanny into your home: Stevens, Madeline. [Devotion](#) (Harper \$16.99).

White, Kate. [Have You Seen Me?](#) (Harper \$16.99). A superior psychological suspense drama about a woman who shows up at work one day only to learn she hasn’t been employed there for years.... See Signed Books.

Williams, Paige. [The Dinosaur Artist: Obsession, Science, and the Global Quest for Fossils](#) (\$17.99). Here’s an excellent read for quarantine life. In this *New York Times Notable Book*, Paige Williams “does for fossils what Susan Orlean did for orchids” in her account of one Florida man’s reckless attempt to sell a dinosaur skeleton from Mongolia—a story “steeped in natural history, human nature, commerce, crime, science, and politics.” In 2012, a New York auction catalogue boasted an unusual offering: “a superb Tyrannosaurus skeleton.” In fact, Lot 49135 consisted of a nearly complete *T. bataar*, a close cousin to the most famous animal that ever lived. The fossils now on display in a Manhattan event space had been unearthed in Mongolia, more than 6,000 miles away. At eight-feet high and twenty-four feet long, the specimen was spectacular, and when the gavel sounded, the winning bid was over \$1 million. Eric Prokopi, a 38-year-old Floridian, was the man who had brought this extraordinary skeleton to market. A onetime collegiate-level swimmer who spent his teenage years diving for shark teeth, Prokopi’s singular obsession with fossils fueled a thriving business hunting, preparing, and selling specimens, to clients ranging from natural history museums to avid private collectors like actors Leonardo DiCaprio and Nicolas Cage. But by this time, facing financial strain, had Prokopi gone too far? As the *T. bataar* went to auction, a network of paleontologists alerted the government of Mongolia to the eye-catching lot. An international custody battle ensued, and Prokopi watched his own world unravel. “In the tradition of *The Orchid Thief*, *The Dinosaur Artist* is a stunning work of narrative journalism about humans’ relationship with natural history and a seemingly intractable conflict between science and commerce. A story that stretches from Florida’s Land O’ Lakes to the Gobi Desert, *The Dinosaur Artist* illuminates the history of fossil collecting”—a murky, sometimes risky business.

## OUR MAY SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Baker, Bree. [A Call for Kelp](#) (Sourcebooks \$7.99.) Seaside Café #3. Tea shop owner Everly Swan gets herself in a sticky situation involving a murder and a nosy reporter when an aging actress who was about to appear in her two great-aunt's documentary about bees turns up dead.

*Kirkus* gave this a star saying "A swarm of bee-centric suspects, a bit of sweet romance, and a surprise sting add up to a honey of a tale."

Castillo, Linda. [Shamed](#) (\$9.99). Kate Burkholder #11. Investigating a brutal murder and kidnapping in a once-peaceful Amish community, Chief of Police Kate Burkholder uncovers an Old Order settlement that hides a tragic secret. *Kirkus* gave this a rave saying "Once again, the queen of Amish mysteries uses past events to drive her story. Block out time to read this page-turner at a single sitting."

Goldman, Matt. [The Shallows](#) (\$9.99). Investigating the brutal murder of a Minnesota lawyer, private investigator Nils Shapiro and his partners are unexpectedly overwhelmed by an influx of complicated cases, additional murders and an unknown adversary that would keep the truth hidden. *PW* ended their overview with "Goldman seasons the complicated puzzle with healthy doses of dry wit and meaningful secondary stories for his characters. Hopefully, Nils and company will return soon."

Greaney, Mark. [Red Metal](#) (\$9.99). A Marine lieutenant colonel joins an international group of fighters that includes a French Special Forces captain, and a Polish partisan fighter, to battle a Russian strike against Europe that could change the balance of power in the West. *Kirkus* concluded their review with "Readers will be humming 'The Marines' Hymn' after finishing this paean to the U.S. Marines. Hoorah! As with all of Greaney's work, this is a fun read. If only all our wars were fiction."

Lagercrantz David. [The Girl Who Lived Twice](#) (\$9.99). Lisbeth Salander #6. Determined to confront her nemesis, Lisbeth Salander closes in on her target to settle lifelong scores, while Mikael Blomkvist attempts to track her down and protect her, in spite of the fact that he is powerless against her enemies. Here is *PW's* conclusion "Series fans will be pleased with the thoughtful way Lagercrantz develops the character of their beloved action heroine in this worthy outing."

Reich, Christopher. [Crown Jewel](#) (\$9.99). In this sequel to *The Take*, international spy Simon Riske connects a series of crimes in Monte Carlo's most lavish casinos to a brutal plot by an organization of criminal gamblers. *PW* ended with "Reich infuses his narrative with numerous plot threads that seem separate but end up satisfyingly intersecting for a suspenseful ending. Readers will want to see a lot more of Riske."

Scott, J Todd. [This Side of Night](#) (\$9.99). Texas Border #3. Sheriff Chris Cherry and his deputies investigate the murders of student protesters in the Mexican borderlands and get caught in the crossfire of an escalating cartel war. *PW* again with "Scott, a veteran federal agent, writes with authority and gravitas about complex border issues. Fans of Don Winslow and Cormac McCarthy won't want to miss this one."

Silva, Daniel. [The New Girl](#) (\$9.99). Gabriel Allon #19. When a girl from an exclusive private school in Switzerland is kidnapped in the Haute-Savoie region of France; Gabriel Allon is thrust into

a deadly secret war with an old enemy that will determine the future of the Middle East—and perhaps the world. *PW* gave this their thumbs up saying "As always, Silva delivers sharply drawn characters, a complex plot, and vivid backgrounds that add to the book's realism, even if at times Allon's own abilities seem too good to be true."

Thor, Brad. [Backlash](#) (\$9.99). Scot Harvath #18. Far from home and surrounded by enemies in the wake of an unforgivable betrayal, Scot Harvath tests the limits of his training in an effort to escape and exact revenge.

## NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Alexander, Rebecca. [A Shroud of Leaves](#) (\$8.99). While on her first forensics case—the murder of a teenage girl, archaeologist Sage Westfield is drawn into an investigation that forces her to use her both her modern forensics skills and her historical archeological knowledge to unearth the truth.

Ashdown, Isabel. [Beautiful Liars](#) (\$9.99). As cold-case TV-show celebrity Martha Benn investigates what happened to her missing childhood friend, Juliet, she realizes that her memories may not tell the whole story and someone else may know more about Juliet's fate, and their friendship, than she could ever have imagined.

Belle, Kimberly. [Dear Wife](#) (\$9.99.) A woman on the run from domestic abuse starts a new life, while miles away, another woman goes missing, and soon these two women's lives will connect in unexpected and inextricable ways,

Berenson, Laurien. [The Bite Club](#) (\$7.99). Melanie Travis #23. After agreeing to train a bulldog puppy for a fellow, but introverted and elusive book club member, Melanie finds herself implicated in his sudden murder and now must find a way to clear her name.

Christie, Agatha. [Poirot Investigates: A Hercule Poirot Collection](#) (\$9.99). Agatha Christie's iconic sleuth investigates a host of murders – from the suspicious death in a locked gun room to the curse of the pharaoh's tomb – in this collection of puzzlers from the Queen of Crime.

Connolly, Sheila. [The Killer in the Carriage House](#) (\$7.99). Victorian Village #2. While leading the efforts to recreate her hometown as a Victorian village, Kate Hamilton and local historian Joshua Wainwright discover a dead body in the town library hours before valuable historical documents are scheduled to arrive.

Cussler, Clive. [Dragon](#) (\$9.99).Reissue. Dirk Pitt #10. Adventurer Dirk Pitt matches wits with a group of Japanese nationalist extremists out to establish a new empire as he races against time to recover an atomic bomb lost in the Pacific aboard a B-29 during World War II.

Donlea, Charlie. [Some Choose Darkness](#) (\$9.99). Cleaning out her late father's law office a week after his burial, forensic reconstructionist Rory Moore discovers a cryptic file related to a forty-year-old case involving the disappearance of several women and a convicted murderer who is about to be paroled.

Flower, Amanda. [Marshmallow Malice](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Amish Candy Shop #5. When murder attends her best friend's wedding, Bailey King and her sheriff's deputy boyfriend must clear the groom's name once it turns out the uninvited victim came to dish the dirt on the groom's hidden past.

Iles, Greg. [Third Degree](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. A tale spanning a traumatic single day follows the experiences of thirty-five-year-old Liz Pike, who awakens in her idyllic small-town home to discover her husband frantically preparing for what he claims is an IRS audit, but she soon realizes that he has discovered the truth about her affair with another man.

James, Miranda. [The Pawful Truth](#) (\$7.99). Cat in the Stacks #11. Enrolling in a medieval history course, librarian Charlie Harris bonds with fellow adult student Dixie Bell, who is found dead days later in the aftermath of an angry exchange with the class's charismatic professor.

King, Stephen. [The Colorado Kid](#) (\$8.99). Reissue. A rookie newspaperwoman learns the true meaning of mystery when she investigates a twenty-five-year-old unsolved and very strange case involving a dead man found on an island off the coast of Maine.

Lansing, Kate. [Killer Chardonnay](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Colorado Wine #1. When a food and wine critic dies shortly after drinking her chardonnay, winery owner Parker Valentine finds herself at the center of a social media firestorm and, to save her business, must investigate the murder herself.

Laurence, Michael. [The Extinction Agenda](#) (\$9.99). While searching for his wife's killer, an FBI agent uncovers a network of untouchable elite who are involved in a plot for global financial domination through the release of a deadly virus in the first book of a new series.

Logan, Elizabeth. [Mousse and Murder](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Alaskan Diner #1. Taking over the family diner in Elkview, Alaska, chef Charlie Cooke, while stirring up trouble with new ideas and flavors, is accused of murdering her head cook and must catch the real killer to save her career.

Logan, Kylie. [The Scent of Murder](#) (\$7.99). Jazz Ramsey #1. Volunteer Jazz Ramsey works with a cadaver-dog trainee, and her detective ex, at an abandoned building where she stumbles across the body of a goth teen.

Lustbader, Eric Van. [The Sum of All Shadows](#) (\$9.99). In a conclusion to the best-selling series that includes *Four Dominions*, Bravo and Emma Shaw desperately search for the lost treasure of King Solomon's alchemical gold to stop Lucifer's heaven-destroying infernal army.

Morgan, Alexis. [Death by Auction](#) (Kensington \$7.99). When a bachelor's auction leads to the murder of a radio personality, Abby McCree agrees to help Tripp Blackston prove his ex-wife's innocence and opens her home to this woman who might be a murderer to keep her away from the man she loves.

Smith, Karen Rose. [Murder with Clotted Cream](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Daisy's Tea Garden #5. When the former actress who hired her to provide afternoon tea for her theater group is found dead and covered with clotted cream, Daisy steps herself in this murder mystery and gets some help from a former detective to solve the case.

Woods, Stuart. [Contraband](#) (\$9.99). Stone Barrington #50. While in Florida, Stone Barrington joins forces with a local detective to investigate the disappearance of cargo from a plane crash, and when, by chance, a Manhattan case sheds light on the case, Stone sets out to connect the dots between the crimes.

Wortham, Reavis Z. [Hawke's Fury](#) (Kensington \$9.99). When a film production company investigating human trafficking in the Big Bend region of West Texas is attacked by a brutal drug cartel, Texas Ranger Sonny Hawke is ready and willing to dispense his own brand of justice.

Young, Kate. [Southern Sass and a Crispy Corpse](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Marygene Brown #2. Diner owner Marygene Brown, after discovering two charred bodies, decides to investigate and finds a link between the two victims that leads her down a dangerous path to a killer who likes to play with fire.