

BOOKNEWS from

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NOVEMBER IS THE NEW DECEMBER

Please enjoy this very long Booknews with its NonFiction Section, Cooking and Wine Books, and expanded SciFi/Fantasy list, and then order early!

Note: All the times are Scottsdale time, 2 hours later than EDT

Watch these virtual events on [Facebook Live](#) or on our [YouTube](#) channel and any time thereafter at a time that suits you. You don't have to belong to Facebook to click in. You also can listen to our [Podcasts](#) on [Google Music](#), [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), and other popular podcast sites.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 29 6:00 PM

Richard Paul Evans discusses [The Noel Letters](#) (Gallery \$21.99)
Our **December Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month**
Signed books available

FRIDAY OCTOBER 30 4:00 PM

Chris DeRose discusses [The Fighting Bunch](#) (St Martins \$28.99)
with Larry Siegel
Signed books in stock. Can be personalized by this local author

MONDAY NOVEMBER 2 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Janet Evanovich discusses [Fortune and Glory](#) (Atria \$28.99)
Books signed for us by Evanovich in stock
Our copies come with a special holiday card plus 10 purchasers
will each get a \$10 gift card to spend as desired

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5 5:00 PM

Asha Lemmie in conversation with **Lisa See**
Lemmie's debut is [Fifty Words for Rain](#) (Dutton \$26)
Our **November Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month**
Signed Books in stock for Lemmie

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 5 6:30 PM

Anne Perry discusses her latest in her Christmas Series,
[A Christmas Resolution](#) (Ballantine \$20)
Comes with a holiday good wishes letter signed by Perry

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 6 4:00 PM

Michael McGarrity discusses [Head Wounds](#) (Norton \$26.99),
the final chapter in the storied career of New Mexico lawman
Kevin Kerney
Signed books in stock

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Jacqueline Winspear discusses [This Time Next Year We'll Be Laughing](#) (Soho \$27.95)
A memoir/autobiography
Signed books available and a special bookmark. A great gift for
Maisie Dobbs fans

MONDAY NOVEMBER 9 4:00 PM

Australia's JP Pomare chats with **Betty Webb**
Pomare's new novel is [In the Clearing](#) (Mulholland \$28)

MONDAY NOVEMBER 9 5:00 PM

Isabella Maldonado discusses her new series start [The Cipher](#)
(Thomas & Mercer \$15.95)
Signed books in stock. Can be personalized by this local author

MONDAY NOVEMBER 9 6:00 PM

Isabella Maldonado welcomes fans to a masked walk-by signing
for [The Cipher](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95)

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Michael Connelly discusses [The Law of Innocence](#) (Little
Brown \$29)
Lincoln lawyer Mickey Haller
Signed Books available
Jeffrey Fleishman makes a cameo appearance to chat with Mike
about writing the magic and the tragic of Los Angeles
Fleishman's [Last Dance](#) (Blackstone \$25.99) is our **November
Crime Book of the Month**
Signed copies available

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 11 6:00 PM

Boyd Morrison in conversation with **Don Bentley**
Morrison discusses **Clive Cussler's** [Marauder](#) (Putnam \$29),
Morrison's last full collaboration with Clive Cussler
Books signed by Morrison available

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 12 6:00 PM

Nev March in conversation with **Sujata Massey**
March discusses her debut mystery [Murder in Old Bombay](#)
(Minotaur \$26.99)
Our **November Historical Fiction Book of the Month**
Signed Books available

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14

We will post on FB and in a podcast a recorded conversation
made this morning with **Martin Edwards, Elly Griffiths, Aline
Templeton and Andrew Taylor** all discussing [Howdunit](#) (Harper
\$27.99)
Learn crime writing from the masters who belong(ed) to The
Detection Club

MONDAY NOVEMBER 16 1:00 PM

Lynn Truss discusses [Murder by Milk Bottle](#) (Bloomsbury \$27/\$17)

A Constable Twitten Mystery

Signed bookplates

MONDAY NOVEMBER 16 6:00 PM

Marc Cameron and H. Ripley Rawlings in conversation with Mark Greaney

Cameron discusses [Tom Clancy: Shadow of the Dragon](#) (Putnam \$29.95)

Jack Ryan, Sr. #20

Our copies come with a letter to you signed by Cameron

Rawlings discusses [Assault by Fire](#) (Kensington \$8.99)

Tyce Asher

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 17 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

David Baldacci discusses [Daylight](#) (Grand Central \$29)

An Atlee Pine Thriller

Signed books in stock from Baldacci

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 19 7:00 PM

Hardboiled Crime Discussion Club discusses Mark Bowden's [The Last Stone](#) (\$17)

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discusses Tasmyn Muir's [Gideon the Ninth](#) (\$17.99)

SIGNED BOOKS

Baldacci, David. [Daylight](#) (Grand Central \$29). I give Baldacci big points for a story that starts small and builds to a wildly complicated narrative. In the background FBI Agent Atlee Pine is continually searching for her missing twin sister Mercy, gone since age six. The Bureau is sympathetic to Atlee's search. Her boss in her Arizona station gives her a few more days to pursue a new lead, one Ito Vincenzo, brother of a crime boss and last seen in Trenton, NJ. Ito may have plotted to avenge his brother who was brought down by Atlee's mother acting undercover. With her assistant Carol Blum Atlee races to NJ only to crash into military investigator John Puller as she blows up an arrest planned for weeks as part of Puller's investigation of a drug ring in a military installation. Remorseful but determined, Pine joins up with Puller and it all spirals on from there. I enjoyed Pine and Puller working together.

For those looking for extra reads, here is a [short list by Baldacci](#) to peruse...and order.

Brosh, Allie. [Solutions and Other Problems](#) (Gallery \$30). Looking for something unusual for yourself or as a gift? You can't go wrong with this colorfully illustrated book by Brosh, author of the #1 bestseller *Hyperbole and a Half*. She's a recluse living in Bend, Oregon, nocturnal, curious. Self-educated, and earning praise from the likes of Bill Gates who says: "I love her approach—looking, listening, and describing with the observational skills of a scientist, the creativity of an artist, and the wit of a comedian." Brosh has ideas to present but "you can't just say your ideas, so I did stories with my ideas secretly lurking inside them. I hope it was not too sneaky of me to do this. I promise

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21 9:30 AM

Carlene O'Connor discusses [Murder at an Irish Christmas](#) (Kensington \$26)

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discuss Anthony Horowitz's [The Magpie Murders](#) (\$16.99)

TUESDAY DECEMBER 1 12:00 PM

Swedish author Lars Kepler discusses [Lazarus](#) (Knopf \$28.95)

TUESDAY DECEMBER 1 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Thomas Perry discusses [Eddie's Boy](#) (Grove/Mysterious \$26)

Michael Shaeffer aka The Butcher's Boy is back

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2 1:00 PM

Caz Frear in conversation with Patrick

Frear discusses [Shed No Tears](#) (Harper \$26.99)

London cop Cat Kinsella

Signed bookplates

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2 6:00 PM

SJ Rozan discusses [The Art of Violence](#) (Pegasus \$25.95)

PIs Lydia Chin/Bill Smith

Signed books available

they are real stories." And she drew 1678 pictures here, not all of them good....

Cameron, Marc. [Tom Clancy: Shadow of the Dragon](#) (Putnam \$29.95). Comes with a letter to you Signed by Cameron. "A sonar buoy in the Arctic Ocean relays to a scientist aboard a research vessel what sounds to her like 'Banging metal. Screams. Human screams.' After this attention-getter, the scene shifts to Ho Chi Minh City, where John Clark, the director of operations of the secret organization known as the Campus, is training his director of transportation in the finer points of spycraft. Elsewhere, the rest of the Campus team, including Jack Ryan Jr., is investigating an industrial espionage case that connects to a Chinese attack on an offshore drilling rig. Meanwhile, a top Chinese scientist, Liu Wangshu, who has invented groundbreaking developments in submarine technology, has gone missing, and no one—Chinese or American—knows where he is. Various plots and subplots, along with the usual stories about weapons, geography, and history, plus a few romantic entanglements, keep the pages turning. This is classic Clancy—only new and improved." I think Cameron has done ace work in the Ryan, Sr. series as Maden has done in the Ryan, Jr. series.

Chabon, Michael. [Awesome Man: The Mystery Intruder](#) (Harper \$18.99). We have a limited number of this superhero tale for ages 4-8. Awesome Man's secret identity has stayed safe, and he's still the coolest superhero around. He loves protecting the people of Awesome City from evildoers, like the giant Plutonian octolizard, with his trusty sidekick, Moskowitz. But there have been reports that a new hero is coming to town soon. What if the people of Awesome City no longer need Awesome Man?

Connelly, Michael. [The Law of Innocence](#) (LittleBrown \$29). Feeling good about a verdict, defense attorney Mickey Haller drives away only to be pulled over by a traffic cop who says the Lincoln is missing a rear license plate. Visual inspection shows body fluids dripping out of the trunk and the next thing you know the trunk is open, there is a body, that of a career con artist, and Haller is arrested for murder. He knows he's been framed. But by whom? And why? And what will he be able to do about it from the confines of the Twin Towers Correction Center in downtown LA? Haller assembles his trusted team and they—including Haller's half-brother Harry Bosch—investigate different leads while Haller, who chooses to represent himself, navigates the legal system as an accused rather than a lawyer. Luckily he knows it well for his eventual day in court. But first, the unusual case leads to the port of Los Angeles and a biofuel company run by a recidivist criminal with mob ties whom Haller put away years earlier. Bosch suspects that the company is running a complex scam and double dipping on government subsidies payouts. Meanwhile, 2020 is off to a strange start with reports of a deadly virus in China that threatens to spread worldwide.....

Cussler, Clive/Boyd Morrison. [Marauder](#) (Putnam \$29). Signed by Morrison. Morrison says this novel's origin—his last as co-author—came from several ideas that conflated into another action-adventure plot for the sequel to 2019's [The Final Option](#) (\$29/\$9/99). The present-day shenanigans interlace with an ancient mystery. Cussler's books always do. "At the Battle of Carrhae in Syria, an entire Roman legion of 10,000 soldiers was taken captive by the Parthian Empire—in present-day Iran. There is no definitive answer about what happened to that lost legion," Morrison says. "Of course, an unsolved mystery like this got my mind churning, and I developed an alternative theory." That theory became a major turning point in the plot along with the need to launch a new and improved *Oregon* in this book—a process that has been done before. "Readers will race through the pages to see what happens next," says a reviewer. Yay.

DeRose, Chris. [The Fighting Bunch](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Lives here so this can be personalized. In a remarkable feat of dogged fresh reporting, historical research and narrative aplomb, DeRose breathes new life into the little-remembered saga of the 1946 Battle of Athens, Tennessee, when a force of angry men, led by recent World War II veterans with the "stamp of combat in their eyes," mounted a successful armed rebellion against entrenched municipal corruption and police brutality. Bestseller DeRose brings you the never-before-told story of the men who brought their overseas combat experience to wage war against a corrupt political machine in their Tennessee hometown. To restore true democracy, McMinn's veterans formed the nonpartisan GI ticket. On Election Day, August 1, 1946, deputies took the ballot box to the jail in Athens, violently assaulting anyone who dared to stop them. White and his fellow GIs, men who fought and survived action in the Bulge and Normandy, armed themselves and laid siege to the prison, demanding the ballot box. For more than six hours, gunfire and dynamite blasts rocked the community until the deputies surrendered. With an official and legitimate vote count, the GIs won the election.

Our event is over, but it will air on C-Span's Book TV as well as staying our our FB Events page, plus the podcast.

Doyle, Glennon. [Untamed](#) (Random \$27.99). Tip ins. The activist, speaker, bestselling author, and "patron saint of

female empowerment" (*People*) explores the joy and peace we discover when we stop striving to meet others' expectations and start trusting the voice deep within us. "*Untamed* will liberate women—emotionally, spiritually, and physically. It is phenomenal."—Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *City of Girls* and *Eat Pray Love*

✠Ellis, Bella. [The Diabolical Bones](#) (Hodder \$42). It's Christmas 1845 and Haworth is in the grip of a freezing winter. Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë are rather losing interest in detecting until they hear of a shocking discovery: the bones of a child have been found interred within the walls of a local house, Top Withens Hall, home to the scandalous and brutish Bradshaw family. When the sisters set off to find out more, they are confronted with an increasingly complex and sinister case, which leads them into the dark world of orphanages, and onto the trail of other lost, and likely murdered children. After another local boy goes missing, Charlotte, Emily and Anne vow to find him before it's too late. But in order to do so, they must face their most despicable and wicked adversary yet—one that would not hesitate to cause them the gravest of harm....

Evanovich, Janet. [Fortune and Glory](#) (Atria \$28.99). Signed by Janet, not tip ins, and our copies come with an exclusive holiday postcard. Plus five purchasers selected at random will each receive a \$10 PP Gift Card. This is the 27th Stephanie Plum and the title signals a bit of a new direction for her. When Stephanie's beloved Grandma Mazur's new husband died on their wedding night, the only thing he left her was a beat-up old easy chair...and the keys to a life-changing fortune. But as Stephanie and Grandma Mazur search for Jimmy Rosolli's treasure, they discover that they're not the only ones on the hunt. Two dangerous enemies from the past stand in their way—along with a new adversary who's even more formidable: Gabriela Rose, a dark-eyed beauty from Little Havana with a taste for designer clothes. She's also a soldier of fortune, a gourmet cook, an expert in firearms and mixed martial arts—and someone who's about to give Stephanie a real run for her money.

Evans, Richard Paul. [The Noel Letters](#) (Gallery \$21.99). Signed by Evans just for us—and this beautifully packaged little book is so perfect for a gift all you have to do is slap a bow on it. The inside pages are lovely too. I thought it would be a Christmas story, maybe with religious themes, but it's really a sharp and often acerbic look at publishing, authors (some behaving badly), the role of an editor, a wonderful community bookstore called Bobbooks, a bookseller, and his estranged daughter. She's called Noel Book (formerly Post but she's newly divorced). After nearly two decades, Noel, an editor for a major New York publishing house, returns to her childhood home in Salt Lake City to see her estranged, dying father. What she believed would be a brief visit turns into something more as she inherits the bookstore her father fought to keep alive. Reeling from loneliness, a recent divorce, and unanticipated upheavals in her world, Noel begins receiving letters from an anonymous source, each one containing thoughts and lessons about her life and her future. She begins to reacquaint herself with the bookstore and the people she left behind, and in doing so, starts to unravel the reality of her painful childhood and the truth about her family. As the holidays draw near, she receives a revelation that changes not only how she sees the past but also how she views her future. This book—I read every word—is about many things. Memory. Perception. Self discovery.

The poison of anger. Forgiveness. “A lovely read that beautifully contrasts the mistruths of memory and the redemptive power of new beginnings.” – *Booklist*. And is our **December Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month**.

☞ Fellowes, Jessica. [The Mitford Trial](#) (Sphere \$40) is inspired by a real-life murder in a story full of intrigue, affairs and betrayal. It's former lady's maid Louisa Cannon's wedding day, but the fantasy is shattered shortly after when she is approached by a secretive man asking her to spy on Diana Mitford—who is having an affair with the infamous Oswald Mosley—and her similarly fascist sister Unity. Thus as summer 1933 dawns, Louisa finds herself accompanying the Mitfords on a glitzy cruise, full of the starriest members of Society. But the waters run red when a man is found attacked, with suspects everywhere. Back in London, the case is taken by lawyer Tom Mitford, and Louisa finds herself caught between worlds: of a love lost to blood, a family divided, and a country caught in conflict.

Fleishman, Jeffrey. [Last Dance](#) (Blackstone \$27). I'm feeling a need to go different for November and not settle for an obvious choice for our **November Crime Book of the Month** such as Baldacci, Connelly, etc. And I am struck by Fleishman's astonishing verbal portraits of Los Angeles, contemporary culture, and more: “a metropolis of spirits and distant lights, a cool, dark place of lies that spin along the coast and blow across the desert.” His depiction of the world of ballet and how performing genius is fleeting and isolating translates to other artists. Patrick reminds me that he selected the first Sam Carver, [My Detective](#) (\$27 Signed), for the 2019 Hardboiled Crime Club. We still have Signed copies.

Here's one review: “Detective Sam Carver of the LAPD is on the case of Katrina Ivanovna, a famous Russian ballerina who was poised to reclaim her former glory on stage [in *Giselle*] before being found dead of an apparent overdose in her apartment. Carver suspects foul play, but when the ballerina's body is stolen from the morgue, the cause of death may never be determined. Was it an accidental overdose, or suicide, or did someone kill her? Carver gets on the trail of mysterious Russians who were threatening her and wanted her now missing diaries, in which she might have revealed family connections to KGB agents and Russian interference in the 2016 election.... A hard-boiled, world-weary hero in the classic tradition of Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer, Carver will also appeal to fans of Michael Connelly's Harry Bosch. Fleishman is on his way to becoming a master of contemporary L.A. noir.” Patrick recommends *Last Dance* highly along with me.

Goodwin, S.M.. [Absence of Mercy](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). I wanted to find an historical for December's Historical Fiction Book of the Month that was in the Christmas spirit but no joy. Instead this rather dark series start set in Pre-Civil War New York City caught my eye. The aristocratic Englishman on the outs with family and father is not an original concept, but here Jasper Lightner, decorated hero of the Crimean war subject to PTSD, and a rising star in the Metropolitan Police, is sent to America by his enraged father the Duke to banish his exploits from the London headlines. Jasper is to train NYPD detectives. But what he gets is a corrupt and armed force and a tricky partner in his assignment to investigate the murder of philanthropist reformer Stephen Finch. This is a good choice for readers of Lyndsay Faye's Timothy Wilde series.

Hart, Matthew. [The Russian Pink](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). I was wild about Hart's 2001 nonfiction gem called *Diamond* for its adventurous expeditions, wealth of knowledge, and true fascination for diamonds, where to find them, how to cut them and bring them to market, how to value them, and the trouble as well as joy they cause. Also the curses. So I am delighted that Hart has turned his lifetime love of diamonds into a high concept, pulse-racing thriller involving betrayals, murders, high and low level politics, gamesmanship, even a presidential election. And scenes running across the globe including Namibia, Capetown, Jersey, Washington DC, and more. I think we should end the year on if not a high at least a huge fun note and so this debut is our **December First Mystery Book of the Month**—but we should have copies for non-club members in sometime in November. Not many so again, I urge you to think about signing up for a 2021 club so you don't lose out.

Lemmie, Asha. [Fifty Words for Rain](#) (Dutton \$26). This astonishing debut is our **November Fantastic New Fiction Pick**. I so agree with this comment: “From page one, I was rooting for Nori, the illegitimate daughter of a Japanese aristocrat and an African-American soldier. Shackled by family condemnation and the prejudices of post-WWII Japan, Nori must transform from docile young girl into fierce, unapologetic heroine. A wholly immersive coming-of-age epic from a talented young writer—Asha Lemmie pours her passion onto the page.” —Mira T. Lee, author of *Everything Here is Beautiful*. I am a devoted fan of Lisa See's work and find parallels, especially in some of the themes in *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* where mothers and grandmothers visit their own trials on the next generation. So Lisa will be joining Asha and me to discuss the book on November 5. Meanwhile you should 1. Snag a signed first print from The Pen as they are rare; and 2. Read a long piece in the [NY Times](#) on the book.

Lethem, Jonathan. [The Arrest](#) (Ecco \$27.99). This isn't post-apocalypse. It isn't a dystopia. It isn't a utopia. It's just what happens when much of what we take for granted—cars, guns, computers, and airplanes, for starters—quits working.... Before the Arrest, Sandy Duplessis had a reasonably good life as a screenwriter in L.A. An old college friend and writing partner, the charismatic and malicious Peter Todbaum, had become one of the most powerful men in Hollywood. That didn't hurt. Now, post-Arrest, nothing is what it was. With the world's inhabitants now forced to be locavores—“the Arrest,” as it's called, also caused other technologies to cease—Sandy makes his way from Los Angeles to Maine to help deliver food grown by his sister, Maddie. When Peter arrives in town and starts pursuing Maddie, the situation becomes tense. Here is speculative fiction that “crackles and hums with witty dialogue and engaging ideas” and is much admired by Patrick and thus our **December SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**.

Macfarlane, Robert. [The Lost Spells](#) (House of Anansi \$26). The decision of Oxford University Press some years ago to cull words associated with the natural world from its dictionaries for young people inspired naturalist Robert Macfarlane and artist Jackie Morris to create one of the most exquisite books of the decade. Published in 2018, [The Lost Words](#) (\$35)—one of my hottest gift recommendations then—combines acrostic verse with gorgeous illustration to evoke the wild, distinctive beauty of animals and plants banished by the lexicographers. Elegiac and uplifting, the book has an expansive layout that makes it a thing to share, ideal

for a family setting. In a companion volume small enough to slip into a jacket pocket, they team up again. *The Lost Spells*, a book that is kindred in spirit and tone, continues to re-wild the lives of children and adults. It evokes the wonder of everyday nature, conjuring up red foxes, birch trees, jackdaws, and more in poems and illustrations that flow between the pages and into readers' minds. Robert Macfarlane's spell-poems and Jackie Morris's water color illustrations are musical and magical: these are summoning spells, words of recollection, charms of protection. To read *The Lost Spells* is to see anew the natural world within our grasp and to be reminded of what happens when we allow it to slip away. The pair makes a truly beautiful, thoughtful gift or a treat for you.

Maldonado, Isabella. [The Cipher](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Can be personalized. FBI Special Agent Nina Guerrero escaped a serial killer's trap at sixteen. Years later, when she's jumped in a Virginia park, a video of the attack goes viral. Legions of new fans are not the only ones impressed with her fighting skills. The man who abducted her eleven years ago is watching. Determined to reclaim his lost prize, he commits a grisly murder designed to pull her into the investigation...but his games are just beginning. And he's using the internet to invite the public to play along. His coded riddles may have made him a depraved social media superstar—an enigmatic cyber-ghost dubbed “the Cipher”—but to Nina he's a monster who preys on the vulnerable. Partnered with the FBI's preeminent mind hunter, Dr. Jeffrey Wade, who is haunted by his own past, Nina tracks the predator across the country, clue by clue, victim by victim.... “A heart-pounding novel from page one, *The Cipher* checks all the boxes for a top-notch thriller: sharp plotting, big stakes, and characters—good and bad and everywhere in between—that are so richly drawn you'll swear you've met them. I read this in one sitting and I guarantee you will too. Oh, another promise: You'll absolutely love the Warrior Girl!” —Jeffery Deaver.

March, Nev. [Murder in Old Bombay](#) (Minotaur \$26.99). This debut makes our **November Historical Fiction Book of the Month**. Mumbai-born debut novelist Nev March raises the specter of a real unsolved case from then-Bombay in this action-filled and richly detailed historical mystery, set in India 1892, under British colonial rule. When two young ladies from a prominent Parsee household fall to their deaths from a university clock tower, an investigation fails to prove whether the disaster stemmed from a suicide pact or foul play. Anglo-Indian Captain James Agnihotri of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons, convalescing in a Poona military hospital after Afghan soldiers ambushed his regiment in Kirachi, finds the case as captivating as the new Sherlock Holmes novel, *The Sign of the Four*. After Adi Framji, the husband of one victim and brother of the other, publishes an impassioned letter in the *Chronicle of India* insisting neither woman would have killed herself, Jim offers his services as a novice investigator to the bereaved family to ease “the sharp burn of his grief.” He believes that, by using the Holmesian strategies of disguise and deduction, he can ferret out the truth behind the tragedy. The orphaned bastard son of a high-caste mother and an unnamed British father, the captain swiftly becomes attached to the kindly Framjis, seeing them as a surrogate family. However, his investigation becomes more dangerous and difficult than anticipated as Jim navigates the labyrinth of high society in British India, faces attackers sent to scare him off the case and falls

hard for Adi's beautiful sister Diana. A strong case of survivor's guilt and residual wartime trauma play counterpoint to his genial personality. The author sets an immersive scene, creating a detailed representation of the vibrant religious and cultural tapestry of Colonial India and the rigidly structured interlocking hierarchy of British rule and the Indian caste system. The story's resolution paves the way for further adventures.

Library Reads says, “James Agnihotri has recovered from a war injury when he reads about the ‘suicide’ of two ladies. His first interview as a new journalist is with the husband of one of the women, who wants to know who murdered his wife and sister. Jim follows clues, interviews observers of the tragedy, and travels through India. For readers who like intrigue, other cultures, and romance, along with fans of Kate Atkinson and Laurie R. King.” And Sujata Massey who hosts our November 12 conversation with March.

Martin, Steve. [A Wealth of Pigeons](#) (Celadon \$28). We only have ten signed copies of this collection of cartoons drawn by Harry Bliss with captions by Martin. My favorite is one featuring Santa emerging from a chimney, and calling Uber.

✎McDermid, Val. [Christmas Is Murder](#) (Sphere \$22). A gifty hardcover filled with a festive collection of chilling tales, perfect for dipping into on a cold winter night. From an irresponsible baron whose body is discovered beneath a silver birch tree, to an author who is haunted by the spiteful presence of a jealous writing partner, the characters McDermid conjures are enigmatic and dangerous, never above suspicion. Follow Tony Hill and Carol Jordan as they track a deadly killer who is preparing to strike on Christmas Day, and lose yourself in a festive exclusive—a recently unearthed case for a classic detective duo, set as the lights are going out across Europe.

McGarrity, Michael. [Head Wounds: A Kevin Kerney Novel](#) (Norton \$26.95). Given a chance to salvage his law enforcement career, Dona Ana County Sheriff's Detective Clayton Stee catches a bizarre late-night double homicide at a Las Cruces hotel. Both victims, a man and a woman, have been scalped with their throats cut. The murders show all the signs of a signature hit, but national and state crime databases reveal no similar profiles. Digging into the victims' backgrounds, Clayton discovers that six months prior the couple had walked out of a nearby casino with \$200,000 of a high-stakes gambler's money. He also learns the crime had been hushed up by an undercover federal DEA agent, who resurfaces and recruits Clayton for a dangerous mission to seize the Mexican drug lord responsible for the killings. Thrust into a nightmare world, Clayton duels with a cunning assassin poised to kill him and his family in a ferocious climax to the Kevin Kerney series, all set in NM and one of the most popular series sold at The Poisoned Pen over the years.

✎Parris, SJ. [Dead of Winter](#) (Collins \$34). Perfect for the holidays, a trio of adventures—dip into them when you take a break—for Bruno Giordano, just the sleuth for readers of CJ Sansom's Matthew Shardlake. *The Secret Dead*: During the summer of 1566, a girl's body is found within the walls of a Neapolitan monastery. Novice monk Giordano Bruno has a habit of asking difficult questions, but this time his investigations may lose him his place in the Dominican Order – or deliver him into the hands of the Inquisition. *The Academy of Secrets*: An invitation arrives from a secret society of enlightened

philosophers, led by the eccentric Don Giambattista della Porta. Bruno is captivated – even more so when he meets della Porta’s beautiful niece. But keeping these new heretical secrets soon becomes a matter of life or death... And *A Christmas Requiem*: When Giordano Bruno is told the pope wants to see him, he fears he may be walking into a trap. The pope is intrigued by Bruno’s talent for complex memory games, but Rome is a den of intrigue, trickery and blood, and Bruno will be lucky to escape the Eternal City alive.

✠Perry, Anne. [A Christmas Resolution](#) (Ballantine \$20). Comes with a holiday good wishes letter signed by Perry. An unexpected betrothal threatens the peace and sanctity of Christmas 1872 in a village near London. It’s December 1872. John Hooper of the Thames River Police find that his new wife, Celia, last seen in 2018’s [Dark Tide Rising](#) (\$17), is distressed to learn that Clementine Appleby plans to wed Seth Marlowe, a prominent member of their church. Though the impoverished Clementine is grateful for the chance to make a respectable marriage, Celia finds Marlowe cruel and controlling. Marlowe, meanwhile, has been receiving anonymous letters that suggest he helped drive his first wife to suicide. It goes from there in this novella where Perry spreads kindness, love, and forgiveness generously.

Perry, Thomas. [Eddie’s Boy](#) (Grove \$26). While the action begins in and propels us through the present, this is an origin story for the Butcher’s Boy showing us how the orphan informally became the ward of a small-town butcher whose sideline was contract killer. Eddie taught Michael Shaeffer both trades and a set of life skills that has allowed Michael to survive for some 30 years in retirement with his aristocratic English wife. He easily defeats the first wave of hit men, then the second, in England, and on Meg’s advice jets to Australia to work out what is going on. That proves even worse so Michael flies to the States. “In the U.S., he seeks out Justice Department bigwig Elizabeth Waring, who once used him as an informant, and suggests a trade for info about his hunters. It soon becomes clear that the likely instigator is a Mafia don Michael helped send to prison years earlier by framing him for a murder. An immensely clever cat and mouse game he engineers involving Waring and various mob factions ensues.” Perry won the Best First Novel Edgar for [The Butcher’s Boy](#) (\$17) whom he revisits here for the third time and may yet again.

Rozan, S J. [The Art of Violence](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). A rewardingly savvy tour of Manhattan’s demented art scene is led by PI Bill Smith whose turn it is in this long-running series to be the lead. His partner in all things, Lydia Chin, takes the role every other book. Lucky for her it’s Bill this time as Sam Tabor, a recent darling of the art world, is definitely their most wacko client. Recently given a release from prison where he was serving heavy time for stabbing a young woman—he claims he was drugged by the punch served at the fatal party scene. Sam drinks too much. He’s wildly unstable. His memory such as it is is unreliable. And thus he comes to Bill believing he has killed two women, maybe more, and wants Bill to prove he did it. He’s willing to make a preemptive confession of guilt to the NYPD’s Angela Grimaldi. You have to go with this set up and ride along with Bill who reluctantly agrees to check into the new murders, with an assist from Lydia. In its Starred Review, *PW* says, “As always, Rozan’s intelligent, witty prose is a treat, and she justifies a choice made in the previous book regarding the relationship between her two leads.” Don’t miss [Paper Son](#) (\$25.95), their last case, led by

Lydia and taking the pair to Mississippi—simply brilliant and IMHO one of the best of 2019.

Simpson, Rosemary. [Death, Diamonds, and Deception](#) (Kensington \$26). Fall 1889: Lady Rotherton has arrived from London intent on chaperoning her niece Prudence through a New York social season to find a suitable husband. It’s certainly not her niece’s devilishly handsome partner in Hunter and MacKenzie Investigative Law. Aunt Gillian’s eye for eligible suitors is surpassed only by her ability to discern genuine gems from nearly flawless fakes. At the Assembly Ball at Delmonico’s, she effortlessly determines that the stones in the spectacular diamond waterfall necklace adorning the neck of the wife of banker William De Vries are fake. Insisting on absolute discretion to avoid scandal, the banker employs Prudence and Geoffrey to recover the stolen diamonds pried out of their settings—priceless stones acquired by Tiffany, originally purchased for Marie Antoinette. Their search for a possible fence rapidly leads to a dead end: a jeweler brutally killed in his shop during an apparent theft. The jeweler’s murder is only the first in a string of mysterious deaths, as Prudence and Geoffrey pursue their elusive quarry. But the clues keep leading back to duplicity on the part of the De Vries family...

Thane, James. [South of the Deuce](#) (Moonshine \$15.99). Patrick reviews: “A terrific read. Thane knows how to write a convincing police procedural with realistic, nuanced characters. He’s also a natural historian and packs his books with just the right amount of Phoenix history and insider lore. Thane has really come into his own with his Sean Richardson novels and *South of the Deuce* is his best yet. The books are a great contribution to the literature of Phoenix.” I add that Jon Talton fans should enjoy this.

✠Winspear, Jacqueline. [This Time Next Year We’ll Be Laughing](#) (Soho \$27.95). Not just signed but with a bookmark designed by Winspear for this her memoir, a must for Maisie Dobbs readers. Jackie candidly describes the lives and characters of her grandparents and parents through two wars into post-war Britain when Jackie was born, the way they and their stories shaped her, her own experiences, especially with the constraints of class, and touches more lightly upon her 30 years of living in California, her success as an author, her love of riding and her horses, and caring for aging parents from across the Atlantic. I’ve walked her literary career with her but this book was rich in events and insights new to me. The photos are fabulous, too. Join us for the virtual book launch on November 7 at 5 PM Central Time. Our copies, signed for us by Jackie, also come with a bookmark she has designed.

Library Reads adds, “The author of the beloved Maisie Dobbs novels shares both madcap and poignant stories of her nuclear and extended family, giving insight into the humor and hardships that shaped her imagination and work. For readers who enjoyed *Where the Past Begins: A Writer’s Memoir* and *How to Write an Autobiographical Novel*.”

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

✠Edwards, Martin, ed. [Howdunit](#) (Harper \$27.99). Learn crime writing from the masters who belong(ed) to The Detection Club. There are so many familiar and beloved names here from the Golden Age forward that any serious fan of crime fiction will want this volume whether you are an aspiring writer, a published one, or an avid reader.

Edwards tells me, “ This is a book I’ve edited on behalf of the Detection Club, with contributions from ninety of the Club’s past and present members (such as Kate Ellis and Ann Cleeves) covering all aspects of the art and craft of crime writing. More than that, the authors give unique insights into the ups and downs of the writing life. Contributors include Ian Rankin, Val McDermid, Elly Griffiths, Sophie Hannah, Andrew Taylor, Len Deighton, Peter Lovesey, Alexander McCall Smith, Peter Robinson, and John Le Carré. From the past, there are fascinating pieces by G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and many more. *Howdunit* is a book I’m hugely proud of – not least because there’s nothing else quite like it.

✦Frear, Caz. [Shed No Tears](#) (Harper \$26.99). Signed bookplates. The discovery in a remote area of Cambridgeshire of a missing woman’s remains reignites a cold case. In 2012, in what was dubbed the Roommate Case, the confessed killer, Christopher Masters, lured four women to his house by advertising a room for rent and killed three of them. The fourth, Holly Kemp, escaped and went missing. Six years later, DC Cat Kinsella and her partner, DS Luigi Parnell, investigate Kemp’s murder now that her body’s been found. Because Kemp was killed in a different manner than the other victims, and her body was found miles away from Masters’ house, the London-based partners suspect that someone else murdered her.... Join Patrick to discover if the partners are right....

Kepler, Lars. [Lazarus](#) (Knopf \$28.95). “Kepler combines explosive action with masterfully developed tension. Readers already on board with this standout series will find a bar-raising entry here, and reassurance that the door is open for Joona’s return. Strongly recommended for fans of Nicci French, Stieg Larsson, and Jussi Adler-Olsen.”—Booklist, Starred Review. “One of the best thrillers of the year! Kepler treats us readers to a nonstop roller coaster of suspense, taking us deep into the hearts and minds of perfectly realized characters. And, oh, what a villain! Lazarus is the definition of a one-sitting read!”—Jeffery Deaver

O’Connor, Carlene. [Murder at an Irish Christmas](#) (Kensington \$26). Our **November Cozy Crimes Book of the Month** visits the O’Sullivan clan in County Cork where Garda Siobhán O’Sullivan’s holiday plans hit a sour note when murder rearranges the Yuletide carols into unexpected eulogies.... This long running cozy series is a treat for fans of say Rhys Bowen, not Tana French!

Pomare, JP. [In the Clearing](#) (Mulholland \$28). *Kirkus* reviews: “Freya Heywood lives about an hour outside of Melbourne with her young son, Billy. She can fit in with the other school moms well enough: She teaches yoga, drives a Land Rover. But nearly 20 years ago, Freya was involved in an incident that caused her to permanently lose custody of her first child. And this isn’t her only secret, either. Freya manages to keep her past at bay with panic buttons and top-notch security, but there are signs that danger is encroaching on her life with Billy: strangers near her house, tokens left on her doorstep. Near Freya’s property, Amy is one of almost a dozen children and teens living at the Clearing as part of a New Age group modeled closely on the chilling case of The Family, a cult active in Australia in the 1960s and ‘70s. Amy and her “siblings” are given little food, punished in horrific ways, and sexually abused. But they believe in the power of their leader, Adrienne, and they will do anything to help her “liberate a child

from the world outside” to complete their circle. Pomare runs Amy’s and Freya’s narratives in parallel until, little by little, they begin to intersect in increasingly spine-tingling ways.... Pomare’s deft plotting tempers the difficult-to-bear passages of cult life, and in keeping his narrative cards close to his chest, Pomare is able to pull off red herrings galore and crafty, satisfying twists.” We’ll see what our resident cult expert author Betty Webb thinks when she engages in conversation with the NZ author now living in Australia on November 9.

Rawlings, H. Ripley. [Assault by Fire](#) (Kensington \$8.99). The Colonel who coauthored [Red Metal](#) (\$9.99) with Mark Greaney writes his own thrillers. US Marine Tyce Asher finds himself living out one of the world’s greatest nightmares: a Russian invasion of the Homeland. To say that the reinforcements he summons to beat back enemy forces converging from everywhere at once on American soil are out of the ordinary would be an understatement. Good thing Asher’s Magnificent Seven times several thousand or so proves up to the task. *Assault by Fire* reads like *Red Dawn* for a more seasoned and jaded audience; it’s powerful thriller writing that’s not afraid to flex its muscles. Fans of mind snacks by the likes of Tom Clancy and Web Griffin, not to mention more modern masters of the genre like Brad Taylor, Mark Greaney and Jack Carr, will find plenty to chomp on here. And Mark and Marc Cameron will join Rawlings on November 16.

✦Truss, Lynne. [Murder by Milk Bottle](#) (Bloomsbury \$27/\$17). Signed Bookplates. Truss faithfully re-creates both the ingenious appeal and the formulaic limitations of golden-age puzzlers in her new investigation for Constable Twitten. “In her ability to blend crime and farce, Truss is in a class of her own.” A bonus for me: I love Brighton and the Royal Pavilion, so well described in a 1957 context. Here’s *Kirkus* in an apt review: “In the space of one eventful evening, three locals are bashed and sliced to death with milk bottles. Sergeant Jim Brunswick, who’d looked forward to dating dead Barbara that very evening, is properly outraged; Inspector Geoffrey Steine, now that he’s finished his own brief stint on *What’s Your Game?* is mostly focused on the ice-cream sundae competition he’ll be judging; and Palmeira Groynes, the police station’s observant and efficient charlady, is preoccupied with the summit meeting of crime lords she’s arranging for her ex-lover Terence Chambers. So it falls mainly to Constable Peregrine Twitten to figure out what the victims had in common that would make someone attack them with a bizarrely unlikely weapon. Guided partly by the very different clues he picks up from Mrs. Groynes, whom nobody else believes is a master criminal, and Milk Girl beauty Pandora Holden, who had eyes for him years ago, and partly by his cocksure sense of his own abilities, but never by any sense of decorum that would lead him to filter his monstrously tactless remarks to others, Twitten presses on as the body count rises to impossible heights before he finally identifies a killer who’s both unguessable and, well, unnoticeable.”

OUR NOVEMBER BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The Crime Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month

Fleishman, Jeffrey. [Last Dance](#)

British Crime Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Macmillan, Gilly. [To Tell You the Truth](#)

Cozy Crimes Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder at an Irish Christmas](#)

Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month

Lemming, Asha. [Fifty Words for Rain](#)

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

Selfon, Brian. [The Nightworkers](#) (signed copies sold out)

Historical Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month

March, Nev. [Murder in Old Bombay](#)

International Crime Book of the Month One Unsigned hardcover or paperback per month

Seeck, Max. [The Witch Hunter](#)

SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month One hardcover or paperback per month signed when possible.

Sapkowski, Andrzej. [The Tower of Fools: The Hussite Trilogy Book One](#)

SOME 2020 BEST BOOKS

Akhtar, Ayad. [Homeland Elegies](#) (Little Brown \$28). This year's Great American Novel, a masterpiece of autofiction, confronts a series of contradictions, reversals, and enigmas among the author-protagonist's family members, friends, and lovers. The most affecting—and occasionally the funniest—is the story of Ayad's complicated relationship with his father, an immigrant from Pakistan who once served as Donald Trump's doctor, leading him to support Trump in 2016.

Bennett, Brit. [The Vanishing Half](#) (Riverhead \$27). This deeply felt multigenerational story of a Black family from Louisiana surpasses Bennett's benchmark debut. Twin sisters Desiree and Stella, 16, flee their hometown in the 1950s, then take very different paths. As each embarks on a series of surprising turns, Bennett makes this a powerful novel of Black women's will toward self-determination

Carr, Matthew. [Black Sun Rising](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). When an English explorer dies in a terrorist bombing in 1909 Barcelona, his widow sends a private detective from England to investigate. Meanwhile, a blood-drinking murderer is terrorizing the people of Barcelona. This blend of early-20th-century Spanish history with a baffling plot is as intelligent as it is thought-provoking.

Dionne, Karen. [The Wicked Sister](#) (Putnam \$27 SIGNED). Rachel Cunningham voluntarily committed herself to a mental institution after a family tragedy that occurred 15 years earlier at her family's estate. Some new information about the tragedy prompts Rachel's return to the estate to unearth the truth. Psychological suspense doesn't get any better than this unforgettable thriller.

Engel, Amy. [The Familiar Dark](#) (Dutton \$26). When two 12-year-old girls are murdered in their impoverished hometown in the Missouri Ozarks, one girl's mother becomes enraged by what she sees as a less than vigorous probe by the local police and begins asking questions of dangerous people. With this dark thriller Engel joins the top writers of the genre.

Hall, Rachel Howzell. [And Now She's Gone](#) (Forge \$27.99 SIGNED). L.A. PI Gray Sykes, who grew up in the foster care

system and escaped an abusive relationship, looks into the mysterious disappearance of Isabel Lincoln, who may not want to be found. Gray soon discovers that she and Isabel have a lot in common. Hall brilliantly explores themes of Blackness, abuse, and mirrored identities.

Hart, Elsa. [The Cabinets of Barnaby Mayne](#) (St Martins \$26.99 SIGNED). The stabbing murder of Sir Barnaby Mayne, an avid plant collector, drives this fair-play whodunit set in 1703 London. Botanist Cecily Kay, who was staying at Sir Barnaby's home, is unconvinced by the confession of the alleged killer and turns sleuth. Hart has outdone herself with this historical. This was our August Historical Fiction Book of the Month.

Kay, Elizabeth. [Seven Lies](#) (Viking \$26). Jane Baxter, the unreliable narrator of Kay's excellent debut, tells an unknown listener how an unlikely friendship she made at 11 evolves over two decades into a lifeline she can't give up. The devastating reveal of the listener's identity makes this a standout among the crowded psychological thriller field.

Lackberg, Camilla. [The Golden Cage](#) (Knopf \$26.95). Devoted wife and mother Faye thinks she has it all, until she catches her husband cheating on her and vows her revenge. Läckberg, already a leading author of Scandinavian thrillers, achieves a new height with this sexy, glitzy tale of a smart, talented woman who has sacrificed everything for a man who betrays her.

Morrow, Bradford. [The Forger's Daughter](#) (Grove \$26 SIGNED). After an old enemy blackmails erstwhile literary forger Will into forging a copy of Edgar Allan Poe's *Tamerlane and Other Poems*, Will's 20-year-old daughter puts her life at risk to assist. This smart look at the dark side of the book trade is an exceptional blend of literary homage and crime.

Nesbit, Tarashea. [Beheld](#) (Bloomsbury \$26). Nesbit mines a trove of primary sources from Plymouth Colony for a riveting story of a murder amid religious hypocrisy and inequities between indentured servants turned rebels and prominent Mayflower colonists. The author's in-depth portrayal of the female characters imagines a vital history of women's voices and day-to-day activity in the colony, unrecorded in the archives

Pulley, Natasha. [The Lost Future of Pepperharrow](#) (Bloomsbury UK \$46 SIGNED). Pulley pulls off an impressive feat with this sophisticated work of speculative fiction. In an alternate 19th-century Japan, clairvoyant watchmaker Keita Mori uses his knowledge of the future to manipulate the lives of the people around him. The resulting plot is just as intricately constructed and delightful as one of Mori's clockwork creations.

Swanson, Peter. [Eight Perfect Murders](#) (Harper \$27.99). Bookstore employee Malcolm Kershaw once posted a list of eight mysteries, each with a perfect murder, on the blog of a Boston bookstore. Years later, an FBI agent tells him she's investigating multiple killings that she believes may have been influenced by his blog post. Swanson does a superb job updating Agatha Christie. This was our March Crime Book of the Month.

Turton, Stuart. [The Devil and the Dark Water](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99; Raven UK \$40 SIGNED). In 1634, famed investigator Samuel Pippis is aboard a ship bound from the Dutch East Indies to Amsterdam, where he's to face trial for an unknown crime. Odd phenomena plague the voyage, including weird symbols that

appear on the sails. With his ingenious explanations for all the strange goings-on, Turton shows he's the modern master of the classic impossible crime mystery.

Walter, Jess. [The Cold Millions](#) (Harper \$28.99 SIGNED). Walter's sweeping epic, set in the early 20th century, follows two Montana brothers as they search for work and get involved in the free speech riots among miners looking to organize a union in Spokane, Wash. The vivid human drama cuts across the rigid social strata of the time, invoking the best of 1930s social realism.

Weiden, David Heska. [Winter Counts](#) (Ecco \$27.99). In this outstanding debut, Virgil Wounded Horse acts as an unofficial lawman on South Dakota's Rosebud Indian Reservation. After Virgil's nephew overdoses on heroin, he goes after those who brought heroin to the reservation. Weiden matches strong prose with equally strong characterizations as he takes an extraordinarily revealing dive into contemporary Native American life. This was our August Crime Book of the Month.

Wright, Lawrence. [The End of October](#) (\$27.95). In this timely thriller, a World Health Organization doctor investigates the outbreak of a deadly disease in an Indonesian refugee camp. The virus soon spreads around the world. Pulitzer Prize winner Wright, best known for his nonfiction, shows he's a master of fiction as well. This was our May 2020 First Mystery Book of the Month

CLASSICS

☞Carnac, Carol. [Crossed Skis](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). Set in 1951, this intriguing entry in the British Library Crime Classics series from Carnac (1894–1958) centers on the case of a fatal fire. When Mabel Stein returns to her London neighborhood after a weekend visiting her sister in another part of the city, she runs into her delinquent son, Syd, on the street near the boarding-house she owns. Mabel is anxious to get home, but Syd says, "Better not go home yet." He goes on to admit that he arrived at their house a little earlier to find it ablaze and decided to let it burn, believing it to be vacant, so they could profit from an insurance payout. Meanwhile, the firefighters at the scene find a man's charred corpse in a room. Fingerprints on the coins used in the room's gas meter provide Scotland Yard's Det. Chief Insp. Julian Rivers, Carnac's series lead, with an important clue. Another clue implicates a skier, which suggests a link to a party of 16 men and women who just left England for a skiing holiday in the Alps. Carnac keeps the reader guessing to the end. Fans of clever literate murder mysteries will hope for more Carnac reissues.

Freeling, Nicolas. [Van Der Valk: Love in Amsterdam](#) (\$17.99). I'm so glad that PBS's *Masterpiece Theater* chose to make a three-part production based (very loosely!) on Nicolas Freeling's iconic cop (the Amsterdam PD team all had British accents). The Van der Valk's were in print when I opened The Pen in 1989; in fact Freeling, a British author, was still writing them (he died in 2003) for his big audience. So here is the first Van der Valk back in print. A woman, Elsa, is brutally murdered in her Amsterdam apartment. Her ex-lover, Martin, is seen outside the building around the time of the crime. The witness who saw him? A policeman. It looks like a straightforward case—but police inspector Van der Valk is not convinced. Despite all the evidence—and the fact that Martin originally denied he was at the apartment—he believes Martin is not guilty of murder. Instead of charging him, Van der Valk takes him on a tour: a tour

of the investigation, a tour of Martin's own past and a tour into the darkly obsessive world of Elsa....

☞Hill, Reginald. [Death Comes for the Fat Man](#); [Death's Jest Book](#) (Harper \$16.99 each). One of my very favorite British authors gets some reissues. Diamond Dagger winner Reg wrote mysteries set in Yorkshire (mostly Dalziel and Pascoe), in the Lake District, novels and stories.... An amazing body of work produced until his death in 2012. So it's early to call his work classics but as they truly are exemplars of fine British crime writing, I think of them as such. Enjoy, and hope for more from the vaults of Collins.

Hodgson, William Hope. [House on the Borderland](#) (Haunted Library/Poisoned Pen \$14.99). In a ruined house at the edge of an abyss lies the diary of a madman... Two friends, Tonnison and Berregnog, stumble upon an old house in rural Ireland and discover the journal of "the Recluse," an unidentified man who recorded his last days in the house before its destruction. The journal recounts strange visions that dogged the Recluse—terrifying creatures that crawl up from below the house to torment him. But the journal is unfinished, and the friends are left to speculate on the man's fate—and their own.

Maclean, Alistair. [Breakheart Pass](#); [Golden Gate](#) (Harper \$15.99 each). This British author died in 1987 so again it's early to include his work in classics. Nonetheless they are gems of adventure writing with such stirring stuff as *The Guns of Navarone* and *Ice Station Zebra*. Here are two more to add to a growing list of republications. [Check them out](#) and dive in, especially those of you missing Clive Cussler although happily Clive's co-authors are still producing work. See the Cussler/Morrison *Oregon* collaboration in Signed Books.

Queen, Ellery. [The Egyptian Cross Mystery](#) (Penzler \$15.95). This stellar 1932 mystery from Queen (the pen name of Frederic Dannay and Manfred B. Lee) takes Manhattan amateur sleuth Ellery Queen to Arroyo, West Virginia, to look into the murder of schoolmaster Andrew Van, who was crucified and beheaded on Christmas morning. Van's headless corpse was nailed to a signpost in a posture that resembled the letter T, and the dead man's blood was used to paint the same letter on the door of his nearby home. The motive for the killing is obscure, given that Van led an unremarkable life, apart from an indulgence in gourmet food. Queen and the locals get nowhere, until six months later when millionaire rug importer Thomas Brad is murdered in a similar fashion. The case gets even weirder before Queen provides a logical solution that highlights the author's genius at misdirection.

NONFICTION FOR NOVEMBER

Acho, Emmanuel. [Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). Acho's guide to truths Americans need to know to address systemic racism. You British mystery fans know that class is to Brits as race is to Americans—a so far indelible legacy.

☞Amore, Anthony. [The Woman Who Stole Vermeer](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). I can never resist an art heist, fictional or, as here, real. "Amore charts in this engrossing account the transformation of Rose Dugdale from a privileged English debutante into a committed radical and fighter for the liberation of Northern Ireland from British rule. During Rose's childhood in Devon,

her authoritarian mother demanded her compliance with social class expectations, but Rose's political beliefs shifted to the left at Oxford and led her to participate in revolutionary action. In 1974, she and three others pulled off one of the most spectacular art heists ever: they stormed the home of Conservative MP Alfred Beit, stealing 19 paintings in less than 10 minutes, one of them Vermeer's *The Lady Writing a Letter with Her Maid*. Amore vividly describes how Rose was identified as the leader of the heist and the subsequent hunt for the perpetrators, as well as the circumstances of her capture and details of the trial, which she used as theater to advocate IRA ideas, though the group never recognized her as a member. Sentenced to nine years in prison, she was released in 1980. Thorough research is matched by prose that keeps the reader turning the pages. True crime and history buffs will revel in the saga of this truly fascinating woman."

Attenborough, David. [A Life on Our Planet. My Witness Statement and A Vision for the Future](#) (Grand Central \$26). "I am 94, I've had an extraordinary life. It is only now that I appreciate how extraordinary." Sir David has travelled widely and produced a number of documentaries outlining his observations, over the years, of how the world has changed. He cites ten different years noting the changes in world population, carbon in the atmosphere and remaining wilderness. The erosion of a healthy world is subtle, changes coming in small increments. Photographs complement the conclusions and ideas expressed by the author. The conclusions are dismal. But, Sir David has hope, looking to the future for what lies ahead and articulating and offering the reader a path to a better planet for our children and grandchildren. His final section is "Our Greatest Opportunity". The book is "engaging, inviting and educational" says Karen, this being her review and recommendation.

Blom, Onno. [Young Rembrandt](#) (Norton \$30). With over 100 color plates, Blom, awarded the Dutch Biography Prize, not only brings the young artist and the milieu that helped shape him to life but paints a brilliant picture of Leiden, a Dutch city on the Rhine that in the 16th Century was caught in the wars between the Catholic Hapsburgs and the Dutch Protestants led in time by William of Orange. So not just Leiden but of Europe in upheaval as well after the abdication of Charles V in 1555. His son Philip as you readers of Elizabeth era fiction and nonfiction know was Catholic to his core and a constant threat to her kingdom. This a truly wonderful book on many levels including a psychological study of the artist as well as a factual tracing.

Bythell, Shaun. [Seven Kinds of People You Find in Bookshops](#) (Godine \$18.95). You can tell from the title that Bythell is a UK bookseller and thus the people he describes are of that ilk. From behind the counter, Bythell catalogs the customers who roam his shop in Wigtown, Scotland. There's the Expert (divided into subspecies from the Bore to the Helpful Person), the Young Family (ranging from the Exhausted to the Aspirational), Occultists (from Conspiracy Theorist to Craft Woman). Then there's the Loiterer (including the Erotica Browser and the Self-Published Author), the Bearded Pensioner (including the Lyrca Clad), and the The Not-So-Silent Traveller (the Whistler, Sniffer, Hummer, Farther, and Tutter). Two bonus sections include Staff and, finally, Perfect Customer. Bythell's observational eye and dry wit, the same that made his acerbic but delightful [Confessions of a Bookseller](#) (\$25.95) so entertaining, make this

perfect for anyone who loves bookshops. Perhaps each of us will recognize him or herself? And Bythell is perfect reading for fans of Paige Shelton and Mollie MacRae and their Scottish bookshop mysteries.

Cooper, Becky. [We Keep the Dead Close: A Murder at Harvard and a Half Century of Silence](#) (Grand Central \$29). The Indie Next Pick: "As much a journey for the writer as it is for the reader, this book solves a murder but leaves us with many unanswered questions. We Keep the Dead Close challenges us to question our assumptions as well as the paths we use to arrive at those assumptions. Delving into the academic culture of Harvard, the misogyny of the 1960s, and the burgeoning women's rights movement, the story follows several threads, all of which have a significant impact on the life of Jane Britton, whose story is told with empathy, compassion, and five decades of curiosity.

DK. [Remarkable Diaries](#) (DK \$30). Here's a wonderful and colorful read for anyone who is passionate about history and literature. Bringing together historical and literary diaries, artists' sketchbooks, explorers' journals, and scientists' notebooks, *Remarkable Diaries* provides an intimate insight into the lives and thoughts of some of the most interesting people of the last two thousand years. Discover what it was like to build a pyramid, sail the seas with Magellan, travel into the heart of Africa, or serve on the Western Front. Find out how writers and artists planned their masterpieces, and how scientists developed their groundbreaking theories. Arranged chronologically, *Remarkable Diaries* takes you into the pages of the world's greatest diaries, notebooks, and letters, including those of Samuel Pepys, Henry-David Thoreau, the Goncourt brothers, Virginia Woolf, and Anne Frank. Stunning reproductions of the original notebooks and manuscripts are complemented by extracts and quotations, and illustrated features set the diaries in their cultural and historical context. A good choice for a YA reader as well as an adult and one that might encourage journaling or keeping a diary.

DK. [USA National Parks: Lands of Wonder](#) (DK \$30). With our magnificent park system under threat by climate and politics, this gorgeous book replete with maps and atlases as well as photographs is, one hopes, not a memory but a celebration as well as encouraging us to responsibly travel and support them. For young readers on up to adults. Seniors, don't forget you can get a National Parks Pass.

Gong, Tina. [Tarot](#) (DK \$25). Looking for distraction? Or for insights, even hope? In this guide to the Tarot, discover how tarot readings can illuminate your unique path and lead to tangible, positive actions that you can apply day to day. Get to know each card in detail—meet The Magician, who encourages you to trust in your abilities; connect with the nurturing instincts of The Empress; feel the confidence of The Chariot—and explore the meanings of each card for you. If you are a fan of historicals or romance or fantasy the Tarot sometimes plays a role so this illustrated guide will add to your reading enjoyment.

Groom, Winston. [The Patriots: Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and the Making of America](#) (National Geographic \$30) chronicles three of the founding fathers.

Hartnell, Jack. [Medieval Bodies](#) (Norton \$29.95). Just like us, medieval men and women worried about growing old, got blisters and indigestion, fell in love, and had children. And

yet their lives were full of miraculous and richly metaphorical experiences radically different from our own, unfolding in a world where deadly wounds might be healed overnight by divine intervention, or where the heart of a king, plucked from his corpse, could be held aloft as a powerful symbol of political rule. In this richly illustrated and unusual history, Jack Hartnell uncovers the fascinating ways in which people thought about, explored, and experienced their physical selves in the Middle Ages, from Constantinople to Cairo and Canterbury. Unfolding like a medieval pageant, and filled with saints, soldiers, caliphs, queens, monks and monstrous beasts, this book throws light on the medieval body from head to toe—revealing the surprisingly sophisticated medical knowledge of the time. Bringing together medicine, art, music, politics, philosophy, religion, and social history, Hartnell’s work is an excellent guide to what life was really like for the men and women who lived and died in the Middle Ages.

✠Holmes, Elizabeth. [HRH: So Many Thoughts on Royal Style](#) (Holt \$35). Having examined medieval bodies, turn now to the 21st Century and the styles of Queen Elizabeth, Duchess Kate, plus Meghan and Diana. The thoughts on what their clothes were intended to say, do say, and how their choices represent them are insightful. The copious color photos underline them. For me the real reason to peruse this volume is the way it tracks the life of the Queen from childhood to bride to throne. It’s an interesting way to absorb the history. Also true of Diana and her very short life. For Kate and Meghan, their stories are evolving rather than yet historical.

Koval, Wally. [Accidentally Wes Anderson](#) (Little Brown \$35). For fans of Anderson or anyone missing travel, a visual adventure of Anderson proportions, authorized by the legendary filmmaker himself: stunning photographs of real-life places that seem plucked from the just-so world of his films, presented with fascinating human stories behind each façade.

Krznaric, Roman. [The Good Ancestor. The Radical Prescription for Long-Term Thinking](#) (The Experiment \$25.95). The front cover of this book quotes Jonas Salk, creator of the polio vaccine. “The most important question we must ask ourselves is ‘Are we being good ancestors?’”. Thus begins Krznaric’s evaluation of how we are treating our world and what we are leaving for those who follow. The author suggests our short-term thinking is an obstacle to moving forward. He is, however, hopeful, devoting a section titled – ‘Six Ways to Think Long,’ an answer to Drew Dellinger’s statement “...my great great grandchildren ask me in dreams what did you do while the earth was unraveling?” Krznaric writes about the power of ideas and has won high praise from his colleagues. With all of the chaos coming our way, Krznaric offers some gymnastics to overcome/confront our challenges. “A readable, engaging book,” says Karen in this her review.

Luong, QT. [Treasured Lands](#) (Terra \$65). Want to flee the country, or at least flee to the countryside? One need travel only as far as the coffee table with *Treasured Lands: A Photographic Odyssey Through America’s National Parks*, a vast and verdant journey across all 62 national parks—from Gates of the Arctic in northern Alaska to Dry Tortugas in the westernmost Florida Keys. There are more than 600 of Luong’s large-format landscape photographs, 60-plus maps and details on where and

when to re-create Luong’s gorgeous views. Luong is the only photographer known to have visited every single national park and was the only living artist featured in Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan’s 2009 miniseries *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*.

Mars, Roman. [99 Percent Invisible City](#) (Houghton \$30). A beautifully designed guidebook to the unnoticed yet essential elements of our cities, from the creators of the wildly popular 99% Invisible podcast, a big-ideas program about small-seeming things, revealing stories baked into the buildings we inhabit, the streets we drive, and the sidewalks we traverse. The show celebrates design and architecture in all of its functional glory and accidental absurdity, with intriguing tales of both designers and the people impacted by their designs. Revealing “A Hidden World of Everyday Design,” host Roman Mars and coauthor Kurt Kohlstedt zoom in on the various elements that make our cities work, exploring the origins and other fascinating stories behind everything from power grids and fire escapes to drinking fountains and street signs. Beautiful line drawings throughout.... I think this is a fine gift idea for Preteens and up: Why are chairs this height? Tables? So many great discussion questions.

MacFarlane, Robert. [Underland](#) (\$17.95). Macfarlane, whose beautiful new book is reviewed in Signed Books, is also the author of *Underland*, an epic exploration of the Earth’s underworlds as they exist in myth, literature, memory, and the land itself. Traveling through the dizzying expanse of geologic time—from prehistoric art in Norwegian sea caves, to the blue depths of the Greenland ice cap, to a deep-sunk “hiding place” where nuclear waste will be stored for 100,000 years to come—*Underland* takes us on an extraordinary journey into our relationship with darkness, burial, and what lies beneath the surface of both place and mind.

Minoui, Delphine. [The Book Collectors](#) (Farrar \$25). I’m a fan of [The Bad Ass Librarians of Timbuktu](#) (\$17) and their race to save precious manuscripts before Al Qaeda showed up. Here’s the true story of a band of young Syrian rebels, a besieged Syrian town, and an underground library built from the rubble of war.

Obama, Barack. [A Promised Land](#) (Crown \$45). In the highly anticipated first volume of his presidential memoirs, Barack Obama tells the story of his improbable odyssey from young man searching for his identity to leader of the free world, describing in strikingly personal detail both his political education and the landmark moments of the first term of his historic presidency—a time of dramatic transformation and turmoil. Obama takes readers on a compelling journey from his earliest political aspirations to the pivotal Iowa caucus victory that demonstrated the power of grassroots activism to the watershed night of November 4, 2008, when he was elected 44th president of the United States, becoming the first African American to hold the nation’s highest office. Reflecting on the presidency, he offers a unique and thoughtful exploration of both the awesome reach and the limits of presidential power, as well as singular insights into the dynamics of U.S. partisan politics and international diplomacy. Obama brings readers inside the Oval Office and the White House Situation Room... and beyond. There are no review copies so I can but quote the publisher on this fall’s biggest book.

Sander, Jennifer Bay. [The Little Book of Puppy Love](#) (Hanover \$16.99). A heartwarming collection of stories about the dogs,

cats and pets that have touched the lives of those around them, affirming that sometimes, animals come into our lives just when we need them most. A thoughtful gift for those on your list with beloved pets.

Sedaris, David. [The Best of Me](#) (Little Brown \$30). For more than 25 years, Sedaris has been carving out a unique literary space, virtually creating his own genre. A Sedaris story may seem confessional, but is also highly attuned to the world outside. It opens our eyes to what is at absurd and moving about our daily existence. And it is almost impossible to read without laughing. Now, for the first time collected in one volume, the author collects memorable various pieces from magazines and prior books. About the dynamics of the author's family—he has five siblings—the book showcases Sedaris' "brilliant knack for observational humor."

Shive, Ian. [Refuge: America's Wildest Places](#) (Earth Aware Editions \$50). Shive, recipient of the Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography, partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to capture the beauty of these protected areas. Including essays from leading conservationists and environmental leaders, *Refuge* offers a breathtaking look at these remote and, in many cases, inaccessible areas. Featuring hundreds of stunning images, *Refuge* represents the greatest of America's landscapes and wildlife, from the windswept outposts of the Aleutian Islands to the majestic prairies of Colorado, where buffalo roam wild. *Refuge* also provides useful resources, including a nationwide map of every location, including those open to visitors. As our world changes, these wild icons of America must persevere; this book gives us a clear view of what we stand to lose and why there is hope for the future.

Snider, Grant. [I Will Judge You by Your Bookshelf](#) (Abrams Comic Arts \$16.99). This colorful hardcover is an ace gift for the readers on your list. The cartoons are first rate and funny as well as thoughtful, and embrace all manner of things from being stuck in a book to following plot lines for Vonnegut to reader's bloc to writers—their styles, routines, etc. I absolutely love what Snider has put together.

Stanton, Brandon. [Humans](#) (St Martins \$35). #1 bestseller Stanton goes global with a full-color photo essay presenting original images and stories from people in 40 countries. One way to connect even if we are socially distanced... and another excellent gift idea for the November Is the New December shopping trope.

Thompson, Wright. [Pappyland: A Story of Family, Fine Bourbon, and the Things That Last](#) (Penguin \$27). An astoundingly "hot book" for you or for gifts. Here's why. It's the story of how Julian Van Winkle III, the caretaker of the most coveted cult Kentucky Bourbon whiskey in the world, fought to protect his family's heritage and preserve the taste of his forebears, in a world where authenticity, like his product, is in very short supply. As a journalist said of Pappy Van Winkle, "You could call it bourbon, or you could call it a \$5,000 bottle of liquefied, barrel-aged unobtanium." Julian, the third-generation head of his family's business, is now thought of as something like the Buddha of Bourbon—Booze Yoda, as Wright Thompson calls him. He is swarmed wherever he goes, and people stand in long lines to get him to sign their bottles of Pappy Van Winkle

Family Reserve, the whiskey he created to honor his grandfather, the founder of the family concern. A bottle of the 23-year-old Pappy starts at \$3000 on the internet. As Julian is the first to say, "Things have gone completely nuts." And it's an example of how people flock to collect "signed"—authenticated—anything....

Wilkinson, Toby. [A World Beneath the Sands](#) (Norton \$30). "In the 19th century, Egyptomania raged first across Europe, then the United States, eventually infecting the Egyptians themselves. Its symptoms included the development of comparative linguistics; delusions of imperial grandeur; the destructive application of dynamite, bribes and forced labor; and the rediscovery of the lost history of the pharaohs. "A World Beneath the Sands: The Golden Age of Egyptology" is the dramatic, detailed and eccentric-packed story of the century between the decoding of the Rosetta Stone in 1822 and the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922. It was a golden age for grave robbers, but also for scholarship, for it was in Egypt that the methods of modern archaeology were developed. A golden age for empires, too: The British and French, and then the Germans and Americans, carted off Egypt's monuments to their capitals as the Greeks and Romans had done before them. But, as Toby Wilkinson shows, the discovery of lost monuments, grave goods and mummified corpses also stimulated the emergence of their true inheritors, the modern Egyptian nation."—*WSJ*. This is SO a book for me after a lifetime in museums around the world and a research trip with Dana Stabenow to Egypt last December in Before. And as a devoted reader of Elizabeth Peters' Amelia Peabody mysteries set in the golden age of empires and archaeology. I reread three of them while looking out over the Nile from the Winter Palace hotel in Luxor.

TURNING TO FOOD...

Cavallari, Kristin. [True Comfort](#) (Polygon \$27.99)

Cobbs, Katherine. [Tequila & Tacos: A Guide to Spirited Pairings](#) (Tiller Press \$19.99)

Curry, Ayesha. [The Full Plate: Flavor Filled, Easy Recipes](#) (LittleBrown \$30).

Decker, Jessie James. [Just Feed Me](#) (Harper \$25.99). Jessie shares down-home and simple-to-make recipes for drinks, appetizers, and full dinners—many Italian, Southern and Cajun dishes which were handed down to her from her mom.

Doocy, Steve. [Happy in a Hurry Cookbook](#) (Harper \$29.99). 100+ recipes.

Gerard, Tieghan. [Half Baked Harvest Super Simple: 150 Recipes](#) (Polygon \$29.99).

Goldman, Duff. [Super Good Baking for Kids](#) (Harper \$21.99).

Haedrich, Ken. [The Pie Academy: Master the Perfect Crust and 255 Amazing Fillings](#) (Storey\$35). The founder of the The Pie Academy website delivers a substantial and highly informative volume on the popular dessert. Writing in a conversational tone, he provides detailed instructions for each aspect of pie making and includes suggestions for acquiring basic equipment ("My one beef with heavy ceramic or stoneware pans is that they're often so thick that the crust doesn't brown quickly enough") and troubleshooting techniques.

Hoffman, Brian Hart. [The Bundt Collection: Over 128 Recipes](#) (83 Press \$16.95). If all else fails us this dreadful year....BAKE!

Homolka, Gina. [Skinnytaste Meal Prep](#) (Polygon \$32.50). Simple, smart solutions for healthy freezer meals, ready-to-serve dishes, grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches, ingenious “planned-overs,”

Jarden Home Brands. [The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving](#) (Oxmoor \$22.95). Our 350 canned, jammed, pickled, and preserved recipes from the makers of Ball canning products. It’s a comprehensive guide for home cooks ranging afield into salsas and such and a must for quarantine life and those who’ve taken to today’s version of the Victory Garden.

Keller, Thomas. [The French Laundry, Per Se: The Art of Finesse](#) (Artisan \$75). Special order. A magnificent gift for any foodie in your gift list. And a treat while not travelling or dining out much.

Kimball, Christopher. [Milk Street: Cookish: Throw it Together](#) (LittleBrown \$35).

Matheson, Matty. [Matty Matheson Home Style Cookery](#) (Harper \$35).

Mazza, Samuele. [Sicily: The Wine Route](#) (Riverhead \$65). Discover Sicily’s wineries in its farmhouses, historic residences, traditional estates, and large rural complexes located in a magnificent region renowned for its beauty. The book is organized into wine-growing areas and offers the opportunity to explore the whole island, passing through natural parks and visiting the island’s many art destinations. This stunning book is perfect for those who love to daydream and travel to seek out unusual places characterized by beauty, hospitality, and fine wine. This book could just as well go into our Travel section as with the Veseth world tour below.

Preciado, Kelsey. [Unbelievabowl Paleo: 60 Wholesome One Dish Recipes](#) (Oxford \$21.99).

Reichl, Ruth. [Garlic and Sapphires: The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise](#) (\$18). Critic, editor, author Reichl reveals the comic absurdity, artifice, and excellence to be found in the sumptuously appointed stages of the epicurean world and gives us—along with some of her favorite recipes and reviews—her remarkable reflections on how one’s outer appearance can influence one’s inner character, expectations, and appetites, not to mention the quality of service one receives, based on disguises she used to preserve anonymity while dining in epicurean establishments.

Veseth, Mike. [Around the World in Eighty Wines](#) (Rowan \$16.95). I love this, a wonderful treat for travelers who wish they were rounding the world, and for wine lovers.

OUR NOVEMBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Armstrong, Kelley. [Alone in the Wild](#) (\$17.99). Armstrong had an ace idea for her Casey Duncan series, creating a hideaway town for criminals and victims seeking refuge deep in the Yukon, financed by some kind of corporation. Duncan is Rockton’s only detective in its police force of three, and in her 4th investigation she’s facing a US Marshal who has shown up demanding the release of one of Rockton’s residents. Not just Casey but her lover, Sheriff Eric Dalton, is skeptical about this, and when the Marshal is shot dead and the only possible suspects are the townspeople (so Agatha Christie), it’s up to them and Casey’s estranged sister who’s been smuggled into Rockton to help with a medical emergency, to figure out who would kill to keep the Marshall from getting his man, or woman, before the killer strikes again. I like this offbeat thriller series; best to [order all four](#) and read in them in order.

Bruen, Ken. [Galway Girl](#) (\$16). Jack Taylor has never quite been able get his life together, but now he has truly hit rock bottom. Still reeling from a violent family tragedy, Taylor is busy drowning his grief in Jameson and uppers, as usual, when a high-profile officer in the local Garda is murdered. After another Guard is found dead, and then another, Taylor’s old colleagues from the force implore him to take on the case. The plot is one big game, and all of the pieces seem to be moving at the behest of one dangerously mysterious team: a trio of young killers with very different styles, but who are united their common desire to take down Jack Taylor. *LJ* sums it up thus: “Prolific Bruen is at the top of his inimitable form here with typical first-person narration, one-line paragraphs, free-flowing Jameson, and almost as much blood... For fans of the series and its protagonist, and readers who admire Jack’s devious ways of making things right.” *Sláinte*.

Coben, Harlan. [The Boy from the Woods](#) (\$16.99). Found as a feral child running free in the Ramapo Mountain State Forest near the suburb of Westville, NJ, with no memory of his past but able to speak English, the boy appropriately named Wilde has returned to the woods to live as an adult after being raised in foster care. He’s happiest by himself, innocent of his own history. Then a child, Naomi Pine, goes missing. Not even her father takes this seriously, but celebrity TV lawyer Hester Crimstein has learned through her grandson that Naomi was relentlessly bullied at school. She insists that Wilde put his unique skills to work to find Naomi. As another teen goes missing, journalists and creepy security experts soon come calling, and Wilde, navigating his return to Westville, must uncover—and survive—a terrible secret. Coben fans spend a lot of time in suburbs, not all of them in NJ, with his characters but from time to time he enjoys leading us all into a more primal landscape as in his 2008 novel *The Woods*.

✦Crombie, Deborah. [A Bitter Feast](#) (\$16.99). Crombie explores the back kitchens of village pubs and posh London restaurants to examine the cut throat world of fine cuisine and the unique hierarchy and gender politics involved. Salivate over the imagined dishes created while wondering if Scotland Yard DS Duncan Kincaid and his wife, DI Gemma James, can unmask a killer. It begins with a Cotswolds weekend at fancy Beck House, ancestral home to Gemma’s assistant at the cop shop. It appears the food will be sublime as offered at the village pub where a formerly celebrated London chef has established a top notch local restaurant. But the arrival of Kincaid driving himself down alone from London is derailed by a car smash leaving him somewhat injured but the other driver dead. And a dead man in her passenger seat—a man it turns out was already dead! With her hostess hosting a glittery charity luncheon at the estate cooked by the crew at the pub, and her husband not in top form and the local police set to arrest the chef, Gemma converts her country weekend into a high pressure murder inquiry. I’ve always loved Upper and Lower Slaughter and those picturesque villages. You will too...plus you can feed your inner foodie.

✦Dennison, Hannah. [Tidings of Death at Honeychurch Hall](#) (Constable \$15.99). It’s ten days before Christmas at Honeychurch Hall and Kat Stanford has persuaded the Earl of Grenville to open the Museum Room to the villagers in an effort to raise money for rooftop repairs. For the price of a ticket visitors will be able to view an unusual display of antiques—including the legendary Bleeding Hawk of Honeychurch Hall. When an ob-

noxious young couple drive 200 miles from London to view the treasures it's not just Kate who is suspicious of their intentions; Mr. Chips, the estate's feisty Jack Russell, makes his feelings plain by taking a bite out of the man's trousers. But then a suit of armor inexplicably falls on the ancient butler, killing him, and a second body is found near a quarry.... So, an English Christmas Cozy. Delightful.

✠Grimes, Martha. [Old Success](#) (\$16). Superintendent Richard Jury of the Yard is joined by two other quirky sleuths – former CID detective Tom Brownell and Brian Macalvie of the Devon-Cornwall police. There's been a weird murder on Macalvie's turf, but when two others follow in quick succession, things get even more mysterious. Are they related or not? It will take all three of these erstwhile crime solvers to get to the bottom of this one. What fun!"

Lindsey, Erin. [The Silver Shooter](#) (St Martins \$17.99). "In Lindsey's exceptional third Rose Gallagher mystery, set in 1887, Theodore Roosevelt once again turns for help to Rose, who saved his life twice in 2019's *A Golden Grave*, and wealthy Thomas Wilshire, her partner in the special branch of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency that deals with crimes with supernatural aspects. "Something evil" is going on at Roosevelt's ranch in the Dakota Badlands. Over the winter, the ranch lost about two-thirds of its cattle herd. Before the cattle losses, locals spotted the ghost of a murdered gold prospector. In addition, a group of Sioux hunters came across a clearing littered with the eviscerated carcasses of missing cattle, horses, and other animals, which had been torn apart in a manner inconsistent with any known predator. The two operatives travel from New York City to the Dakotas, where Rose proves herself an admirably capable and forceful investigator in the effort to solve these and other odd mysteries. Lindsey keeps the suspense at a high pitch throughout. Fans of Preston and Child's Pendergast series will be enthralled."—*PW Starred Review*

Seeck, Max. [Witch Hunter](#) (Berkley \$17). A hair-raising English-language debut by Finnish author Seeck is a police procedural with paranormal activity at its black heart—and our **November International Book of the Month**. Seeck has written a genre twofer: it gives crime-novel enthusiasts a satisfying puzzle to logic out, and it offers fans of supernatural tales a look at the world of, as one character puts it, 'amulets, rabbit feet, you name it.' Following an anonymous phone call, the Helsinki police find the body of Maria Koponen seated at the dining table in her waterfront home. She's wearing a black evening gown and a peculiar expression; Detective Sergeant Jessica Niemi sees it as 'more reminiscent of Jack Nicholson's Joker than anything else.' There are no signs of a break-in in this upscale Helsinki neighborhood, but Maria's husband, Roger Koponen, the author of bestselling novels of the paranormal, couldn't have a tighter alibi: he's halfway across Finland in Savonlinna, talking about the latest book in his bestselling Witch Hunt trilogy. Still, Roger may bear some responsibility for his wife's death, albeit inadvertently: it seems to have been staged to mimic a murder in one of his books. It won't be the last death such death. Nordic noir fans will find familiar obstreperous weather and meticulous plotting plus a cast of "of avid detectives who often lapse into amusingly agitated squabbling. While the novel is an ensemble piece, Seeck most frequently hands the storytelling reins to Detective Niemi."

Sutton, Hailey. [The Lady Upstairs](#) (Putnam \$16). An intricate blackmail scheme goes off the rails in Sutton's sizzling debut. When Jo met a woman named Lou three years ago, she was drowning in heartbreak and self-loathing. Her boyfriend (and co-worker) had not only dumped her, but he'd also gotten her fired. Lou showed Jo a way to make him pay and reclaim her life, and Jo has never looked back. Now Jo is running her own jobs for the Lady Upstairs' Staffing Agency, a front for elaborate sexual blackmail schemes designed to entrap some of the wealthiest and most morally bankrupt men in Los Angeles. Only Lou knows who the mysterious Lady Upstairs actually is, but as long as the cash keeps flowing, Jo tries not to sweat the small stuff. Then a grift goes wrong....To recoup that cash before the Lady resorts to distasteful collection tactics, Jo prepares to run a con on one of the biggest fish in the city. In Sutton's sweltering LA, where grit and glamour entwine, nothing is free and life is cheap, so a few dirty cops, lots of double dealing, and maybe a little murder are only to be expected.... Sutton's assured and moody prose often channels the best classic LA noir, but this deliciously tawdry and twisty tale is entirely her own."—*Kirkus Reviews* on a debut I hope to get to read soon.

Turner, Nancy E. [Light Changes Everything](#) (17.99). Turner is a wonder. This comment sums up her latest novel for me: "I was captivated from the start by Mary Pearl's independence and grit, and I loved the strong thread of family loyalty that knits together her far-flung adventures throughout the Arizona territory, up to Chicago for art school, and down to Mexico for revenge. I was thrilled by her moments of bravery and moved to tears by her losses. As I turned the last page, I felt I was saying goodbye to a real friend rather than closing the book on a fictional character, so vividly did Nancy Turner portray her remarkable heroine."

STORY COLLECTIONS

Box, CJ, ed. [Best American Mystery Stories](#) (Houghton #). *Kirkus* reviews: Box's selections are surprisingly sunny considering the monster 2020 has turned into. Many of them celebrate human ingenuity. The title character in David Dean's "The Duelist" bests a formidable opponent with scant bloodshed. An ambitious woman outwits a sleazy politician in Jeffery Deaver's "Security." A wily Texas Ranger rescues undocumented immigrants in James Lee Burke's "Deportees." A budding musician foxes her dead neighbor's rapacious grandchildren in John Sandford's linguistic tour de force, "Girl With an Ax." Other tales highlight the strength of family ties... Family ties don't always mean blood ties. Tom Franklin shows a policeman going to the mat for his late girlfriend's daughter in "On Little Terry Road." And a surprising stepmom helps Sheila Kohler's worried schoolgirl in "Miss Martin." As Rick McMahan demonstrates in "Baddest Outlaws," however, blood is still thicker than water, and a variety of other substances. The good guys aren't always good guys, as Richard Helms suggests in "See Humble and Die." And the bad guys aren't always bad guys, as Robin Yocum's aging mobster proves in "The Last Hit." All in all, this year's installment inspires hope that right will triumph, as it does in Pamela Blackwood's aptly named "Justice." A stellar collection for a year that hardly deserves it."

Gabaldon, Diana, ed. [Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy](#) (Houghton \$16.99). Signed by Gabaldon who also writes the Introduction. The contributors include Ken Liu, Charlie Jane

Anders, Victor LaValle, Elizabeth Bear, E. Lily Yu, Rebecca Roanhorse and many many more.

NY Times. [The Decameron Project](#) (Scribner \$25). What better for holiday reading than dipping into stories? Here is a collection of new short stories originally commissioned by *The New York Times Magazine* as the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world, from 29 authors including Margaret Atwood, Tommy Orange, Edwidge Danticat, and more, in a project inspired by Boccaccio's *The Decameron*. When reality is surreal, only fiction can make sense of it. FYI, in 1353, Giovanni Boccaccio wrote *The Decameron*: 100 nested tales told by a group of young men and women passing the time at a villa outside Florence while waiting out the gruesome Black Death, a plague that killed more than 25 million people. Some of the stories are silly, some are bawdy, some are like fables. And so it is again....

SOME NEW BOOKS

Alexander, Kwame. [Light for the World to See](#) (Houghton \$14.99). "A book in the tradition of James Baldwin's *A Report from Occupied Territory* from black poet Alexander is a rap session on race. A lyrical response to the struggles of Black lives in our world, to America's crisis of conscience, to the centuries of loss, endless resilience, and unstoppable hope. Includes an introduction by the author and a bold, graphically designed interior."

✦Archer, Jeffrey. [Hidden in Plain Sight](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Newly promoted, Detective Sergeant William Warwick has been reassigned to the drugs squad. His first case: to investigate a notorious south London drug lord known as the Viper. But as William and his team close the net around a criminal network unlike any they have ever encountered, he is also faced with an old enemy, Miles Faulkner. It will take all of William's cunning to devise a means to bring both men to justice; a trap neither will expect, one that is hidden in plain sight.... Meet William Warwick in *Nothing Ventured*. Archer is also publishing stories in [The Short, the Long, and the Tall](#) (\$32.50).

Baxter, Cynthia. [Game of Cones](#) (Kensington \$26). In the fourth Lickety Splits Mystery, ice cream shoppe owner and amateur sleuth Kate McKay doesn't waffle around scooping up new clientele at a historic hotel, but her hopes of becoming the Hudson Valley's reigning ice cream queen melt fast when murder checks in!

✦Beaton, MC. [Hot to Trot](#) (St Martins \$26.99). When Private Detective Agatha Raisin learns that her friend and one-time lover Charles Fraith is to be married to a mysterious socialite, Miss Mary Brown-Field, she sees it as her duty to find out what she can about the woman. Coming up empty, Agatha—out of selfless concern for Charles, of course—does the only sensible thing she can think of: she crashes their wedding, which ends in a public altercation. Nursing a hangover the next morning, she gets a phone call from Charles, with even more disturbing news: Mary has been murdered. Agatha takes on the case, and quickly becomes entrenched in the competitive equestrian world, in which Mary had been enmeshed—as well as the victim's surprisingly violent past. Meanwhile the local plod sees Agatha as a viable suspect.

✦Bradby, Tom. [Double Agent](#) (Atlantic \$26). Senior MI6 Agent Kate Henderson, head of MI6's Russian desk, has reason to believe James Ryan, the British Prime Minister, is a Russian sleeper

agent, but she has been unable to prove it. In her investigation of him, however, she does discover that her husband, Stuart, is a Russian agent who's betrayed her. In this sequel to *Secret Service* (which has TV executives in hot pursuit), Henderson has to evaluate the intentions of the Russian defector who has offered her evidence of Ryan's betrayal—after kidnapping her in Venice? And is there another mole in her department (she's already scotched one)? From CWA Steel Dagger and Historical Crime short-listed novelist/screenwriter Bradby whose *The Master of Rain* set in 1926 Shanghai remains one of my favorite novels.

✦Brightwell, Emily. [Mrs. Jeffries Demands Justice](#) (Berkley \$16). Inspector Nigel Nivens is not a nice man or a good investigator. In fact, he's terrible at his job and has always done everything he can to make life difficult for Inspector Witherspoon. But even his powerful family can't help him after he maliciously tried to hobble Witherspoon's last homicide investigation. He's been sent to a particularly difficult precinct in the East End of London as penance. When a paid informant is found shot in an alley, Nivens thinks that if he can crack the case, he'll redeem himself and have a much-needed chance at impressing his superiors. But there's one big problem with his plan—Niven's distinct antique pistol is found at the scene of the crime and even more evidence is uncovered that links the Inspector to the murder. Despite their mutual dislike for Nivens, Mrs. Jeffries and Inspector Witherspoon know the man isn't a cold-blooded killer. Now they'll just have to prove it.

Bruen, Ken. [Galway Epiphany](#) (Grove \$24). Former Garda and Galway PI Jack Taylor is struck by a truck and ends up comatose in a hospital. Upon awakening weeks later, he finds Galway obsessed with miracles after the Virgin Mary seems to have appeared to a pair of refugee children on the city's waterfront. (That Jack comes out of his coma with no mental confusion or lasting physical damage is deemed another miracle.) When the "miracle children" disappear, the resulting public clamor leads a skeptical representative of the Vatican investigating the miracle to commission Jack to find the children. Meanwhile, a number of other cases—a California con artist, a cyberbully, a homicidal serial arsonist, and more—demand his attention. Throughout it all, Jack, disillusioned and angry at the world, struggles to pull himself together after the dark events in the previous [Galway Girl](#) (\$16). Read it first. See our November Large Paperback Picks above.

Bunce, Elizabeth C. [Premeditated Myrtle](#) (Algonquin \$17.95). "Myrtle can give Sherlock Holmes a run for his money! This audacious and bright young detective will stop at nothing to discover what happened to her neighbor. She's wicked sharp, but that will only take her so far. Luckily, she's assisted by the invincible Miss Judson, governess and mentor. I flew through this exciting mystery." Ages 9-12.

✦Brooks, Karen. [The Lady Brewer of London](#) (Morrow \$17.99). The daughter of a merchant flouts 15th-century English convention to start a brewery in Brooks' illuminating epic after [The Chocolate Maker's Wife](#) (\$16.99). At 19, Anneke Sheldrake is devastated when her father's ship goes missing at sea. His employer, Lord Rainford, agrees to give Anneke six months to come up with the lease money for her home in the village of Elmham Lenn. Anneke uses recipes handed down from her deceased mother, whose family brewed ale, to start a business, but after a fire at the brewery, Anneke flees to London in 1406,

where she sets up another brewery, and the next year is reunited with Lord Rainford's son, Leander Rainford, and tries to avoid the scrutiny of an officer of the crown who unfairly declares her ale substandard, forcing her to dump barrels into the Thames. When Leander helps Anneke get an audience with King Henry to taste her ale, Anneke is hopeful for the continued success of her business. "Brooks' attention to historical detail instills the novel with authenticity by including many historical figures and events, while Anneke's lively voice keeps a strong grip on the reader as she works to overcome societal prohibitions against women in business and find happiness and contentment. Brooks' immersive page-turner does not disappoint." I used to love historicals by Rosalind Laker that dealt with women in interesting professions, so Brooks' work is welcome.

✠Carver, Will. [Nothing Important Happened Today](#) (Orenda \$15.95). "In the prologue to this second for London Detective Sergeant Pace, a man's corpse is discovered a year after he apparently committed suicide by handcuffing himself to a tree in a remote forest and throwing away the key. In the main narrative, nine nameless individuals who call themselves "The People of Choice," each movingly describe their lives. Another unidentified narrator ruminates about the psychology of cults and the mistakes made by notorious serial killers. In due course, the nine all turn up at Chelsea Bridge and hang themselves in full view of horrified bystanders. Meanwhile, Pace is undergoing psychotherapy to be cleared for a return to duty, but he's not sharing his belief that he's the epicenter of "bad things." When Pace learns of the group suicide, his professional curiosity moves him to investigate. The gut-punch ending explains the death in the prologue. Fans of classic downbeat noir from Cornell Woolrich and the like will find Carver has brilliantly translated their themes for the 21st century."

✠Clements, Oliver. [The Eyes of the Queen](#) (Atria \$27). This is a very good Elizabethan thriller highlighting the role of Walsingham and the spy network he created. Love the last sentence.... Only one nation can fight the black shadow cast by Spain that threatens this new age of Enlightenment in Europe, and that is Britain, now ruled by a brilliant young Queen Elizabeth I. But although she may be brave and headstrong, Elizabeth knows she cannot win this war simply by force of arms. Elizabeth needs a new kind of weapon forged to fight a new kind of war, in which stealth and secrecy, not bloodshed, are the means of warfare. In this tense situation, Her Majesty's Secret Service is born with the charismatic John Dee at its head. A scholar, a soldier, and an alchemist, Dee is loyal only to the truth and to his Queen. And for her, the woman he's forbidden from loving, he is prepared to risk his life. This is the first addition to Clement's new Agents of the Crown series.

Clark, Mary Higgins/Alafair Burke. [Piece of My Heart](#) (Simon-Schuster \$26.99). Television producer Laurie Moran and her fiancé, Alex Buckley, the former host of her investigative television show, are just days away from their mid-summer wedding, when things take a dark turn. Alex's seven-year-old nephew, Johnny, vanishes from the beach. A search party begins and witnesses recall Johnny playing in the water and collecting shells behind the beach shack, but no one remembers seeing him after the morning. As the sun sets, Johnny's skim board washes up to shore, and everyone realizes that he could be anywhere, even under water. A ticking clock, a sinister stalker, and fresh romance power the last

full collaboration between the late Clark and Edgar-nominated, bestseller Burke.

Coelho, Paulo. [The Archer](#) (Knopf \$19.95) features a boy who asks questions about the life of Tetsuya, a famous archer who has withdrawn from public life. Tetsuya uses his bow and arrow to illustrate his answers, showing that thought and action must be linked. Backlit by illustrator Niemann's art.

✠Cornwell, Bernard. [War Lord](#) (Harper \$28.99). It's hard to beat Cornwell for sword-flashing and rousing historical adventure. England, Uhtred of Bebbanburg stars in Cornwell's long-running "Saxon Tales" series—and the popular Netflix series *The Last Kingdom*, based on the books. (Uhtred is named for a historical figure from whose family Cornwell is descended.) Northumbria, in fact the last kingdom, is under attack. Chaos reigns. The warrior king is caught in a vise of loyalty vs. sworn oaths—stuff taken seriously then. This is the concluding volume in The Last Kingdom series... #13! And just out in paperback: [Sword of Kings](#) (\$16.99).

Cox, Susan. [The Man in the Microwave Oven](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Fleeing from a murder and family tragedy in her native England, where she was the scandal du jour for the tabloid press, Theo Bogart changed her name and built an undercover life in a close-knit San Francisco neighborhood. She didn't expect to find love and friendship there, and now she doesn't know how—or if—to reveal the truth. After a confrontation with a difficult neighbor, Theo fears her secrets are about to be uncovered after all. When the woman who threatened to expose her is murdered, Theo is embroiled in the kind of jeopardy she crossed an ocean to escape. Worse yet, dangerous family secrets have followed her. Theo's grandfather unveils a glimpse of the shadowy world he once inhabited as an agent for the British Secret Service, bringing an even bigger breed of trouble—and another death—to Theo's doorstep. She finds herself fighting to protect herself, her family, and her new friends, aware that one of them might be a murderer.

Crichton, Michael/Daniel Wilson. [The Andromeda Evolution](#) (\$16.99). Published in hardcover in 1969 on the 50th anniversary of Crichton's iconic *The Andromeda Strain*. So I'm quoting a long Kirkus review: "Over 50 years after an extraterrestrial microbe wiped out a small Arizona town, something very strange has appeared in the Amazon jungle. The microparticle's introduction to Earth in 1967 was the disastrous result of an American weapons research program. Before it could be contained, Andromeda killed all but two people in tiny Piedmont, Arizona; during testing after the disaster, AS-1 evolved and escaped into the atmosphere. Project Eternal Vigilance was quickly set up to scan for any possible new outbreaks of Andromeda. Now, an anomaly with "signature peaks" closely resembling the original Andromeda Strain has been spotted in the heart of the Amazon, and a Wildfire Alert is issued. A diverse team is assembled: Nidhi Vedala, an MIT nanotechnology expert born in a Mumbai slum; Harold Odhiambo, a Kenyan xenogeologist; Peng Wu, a Chinese doctor and taikonaut; Sophie Kline, a paraplegic astronaut and nanorobotics expert based on the International Space Station; and, a last-minute addition, roboticist James Stone, son of Dr. Jeremy Stone from *The Andromeda Strain*. They must journey into the deepest part of the jungle to study and hopefully contain the dire threat that the anomaly seemingly poses to humanity. But the jungle has

its own dangers, and it's not long before distrust and suspicion grip the team. They'll need to come together to take on what waits for them inside a mysterious structure that may not be of this world. Setting the story over the course of five days, Wilson (*Robocalypse*, 2011, etc.) combines the best elements of hard SF novels and techno-thrillers, using recovered video, audio, and interview transcripts to shape the narrative, with his own robotics expertise adding flavor and heft."

Danforth, Emily M. [Plain Bad Heroines](#) (Morrow \$27.99). The Indie Next Pick: "I have never read a book that was this much fun. This was a roller coaster of a read, hitting all the notes from beginning to end. Gothic elements intermingled with the current time period will keep the reader so engrossed that they won't realize they've stayed up all night reading this book, one that's the kind of book you don't want to read in the dark but you just can't put down. The ride through history that meets the present will keep you entertained, on your toes, and peeking between your fingers as you cover your eyes.

✚Duncan, Elizabeth J. [On Deadly Tides](#) (Crooked Lane 26.99) sends watercolorist Penny to the picturesque Welsh town of Beaumaris on the island of Anglesey for a painting course taught by Bill Ward, a TV personality turned artist. In a bar on her first night in Beaumaris, Penny meets Colin Campbell, a charming Canadian wildlife photographer, and Jessica Graham, an enthusiastic young reporter from New Zealand, who tells Penny she's on assignment to interview Ward, as well as research a New Zealand man's disappearance in Beaumaris seven years earlier. After Penny finds Jessica's body at the bottom of a cliff the next morning, the police decide it was an accidental fall. But Penny suspects foul play, and when Jessica's grief-stricken mother shows up to claim her daughter's body, Penny feels compelled to get involved. Penny's subsequent inquiries uncover a link between Jessica's death and the missing man. The romance that develops between her and Colin complements the sleuthing. Duncan skillfully takes her classic village mystery series in a new direction."Fans of this long-running series will delight in both the mystery and the romance that bids to change the heroine's life." I enjoy the Welsh landscapes.

✚Ellicott, Jessica. [Murder Comes to Call](#) (Kensington \$26). "In Ellicott's diverting fourth mystery set in the post-WWI English village of Walmsley Parva, glamorous American Beryl Helliwell and her practical British friend, Edwina Davenport, stumble across the body of Gordon Faraday, an unpopular local magistrate, at the foot of his staircase. The fledgling private inquiry agents find no shortage of potential perpetrators, including Faraday's widow and stepdaughter, who seem relieved at his death; his half-brother, who has a history of gambling and family estrangement; and an indigent Irish laborer who faces a jail sentence if he does not pay a fine. Faraday also may have surprised a burglar, as a rash of peculiar thefts has occurred in the village, including the snatching of completed census forms. Beryl and Edwina juggle the questioning of suspects, pumping of local gossips, hunting for the missing census materials, and jousting with their nemesis, Constable Doris Gibbs. This is a treat for readers who enjoy following the adventures of disparate yet complementary sleuths."—*PW*

Eriksson, Kjell. [Night of the Fire](#) (St Martins \$27.99). "Eriksson's exceptional eighth ensemble police procedural to be

published in the U.S. spotlights Ann Lindell, who has quit the Violent Crimes Unit in Uppsala, Sweden, and started a new career as a cheese maker in the village of Rasbo. Then an unknown man calls Lindell's former office and insists on speaking with her. He says she's "the only one who listens," adding, "someone may die." Before a former colleague can pass on the message to Lindell, a woman dies in a fire that burns down an old school in Rasbo being used to house political and war refugees. Though the investigators don't find conclusive proof, the consensus is that it was arson. Lindell is drawn to the case, even as she's the target of an unknown enemy, who leaves a dead badger in her bed, its belly slit open. When she finally listens to a tape of the caller, the voice sounds familiar. Eriksson adeptly teases whether there's a connection between the call and the fire, even as violence claims more lives. This artful blend of mystery and psychology is sure to please Scandinavian noir fans."—*PW* Starred Review

Fletcher, Jessica. [Murder She Wrote: Murder in Season](#) (Berkeley \$26). With work on the reconstruction of her beloved home almost complete, Jessica Fletcher is in high holiday spirits, spearheading the annual Christmas parade and preparing for her nephew Grady and his family to come to town. The only thing dampening the holiday cheer is the discovery of two sets of bones on Jessica's property: one set ancient, the other only about a year old. It's concluded that they were both placed there during the reconstruction, and Jessica suspects that, despite the centuries between them, the remains might be connected. Soon tabloid reporter Tad Hollenbeck arrives in Cabot Cove to write a story about what he calls "the murder capital of the country." Then Tad himself is murdered....

Fox, Sarah. [The Malt in Our Stars](#) (Kensington \$26). Sadie is delighted to have booked famous romantic suspense novelist Linnea Bliss for an event at The Inkwel, her literary-themed pub, housed in a renovated grist mill. The author and her personal assistant Marcie are staying at Shady Creek Manor, a grand historical Vermont hotel that was once a private mansion and is rumored to still hold hidden treasure somewhere within its walls. But the hotel's storied past is nothing compared to its tragic present when Marcie plummets to her death from an open window on the third floor. After Sadie discovers signs of a struggle in the room, it's clear that someone assisted the assistant out the window. But Marcie is new in town—who would have a motive to kill her? In between pulling pints and naming literary-themed cocktails, Sadie takes it on herself to solve the case, wondering if the crime is connected to the vandalized vehicles of a film crew in town to do a feature on local brewer Grayson Blake, with whom Sadie shares a strong flirtation. Or could the poor woman's defenestration have anything to do with the legendary treasure?

Grossman, Lev. [The Silver Arrow](#) (Little Brown \$16.99). Kate and her younger brother Tom lead dull, uninteresting lives. And if their dull, uninteresting parents are anything to go by, they don't have much to look forward to. Why can't Kate have thrilling adventures and save the world the way people do in books? Even her 11th birthday is shaping up to be mundane — that is, until her mysterious and highly irresponsible Uncle Herbert, whom she's never even met before, surprises her with the most unexpected, exhilarating, inappropriate birthday present of all time: a colossal steam locomotive called the Silver Arrow. Kate and Tom's parents want to send it right back where it came from. But Kate and Tom have other ideas —and so does the Silver Arrow —and soon

they're off to distant lands along magical rail lines in the company of an assortment of exotic animals who, it turns out, can talk. With only curiosity, excitement, their own resourcefulness and the thrill of the unknown to guide them, Kate and Tom are on the adventure of a lifetime...and who knows? They just might end up saving the world after all.

Gentill, Sulari. [A House Divided](#) (Poisoned Pen \$12.99). This is a reissue of the first Rowland Sinclair called *A Few Right Thinking Men* and gets this 1930s series set in Australia and internationally with an eccentric cast and a lead similar to Sayers' Lord Peter Wimsey off to a flying start. I love the Sinclairs and urge you to try this if you haven't yet read one. You can find the rest [here](#).

Giang, Kristen Mai. [Ginger and Chrysanthemum](#) (Levine Querido \$17.99). Ginger is excitable; she leaps into action, throwing herself headfirst into any project. Chrysanthemum is cooler-headed; she likes to plan, she's organized. She makes lists. Yet they are cousins, close as two beans in a pod. But planning Grandma's birthday together is a pretty huge challenge. There are presents to buy, decorations to pick, and a special birthday cake to bake. Together. How they manage it is a testament to affection being stronger than differences. Ages 4-7.

Gilligan, Ruth. *The Butcher's Blessing* (Tin House \$25.95). Wow, if you want the darker side of Ireland as compared to say, the Carlene O'Connor cozy noted in *Unsigned Event Books*, this one is for you. Beauty and brutality braid together in a "seamless literary thriller. With plot twists worthy of Tana French and language reminiscent of Tea Obreht, this young Irish writer has crafted a story that is dark, wild, mythic, unsuspecting, and absolutely compelling," says Colum McCann. I am in no mood right now for dark but despite that, I read every word and found the Butchers, whether legend or real, a fascinating evocation of "the old ways." They kill cattle, not people....

Haddam, Jane. [One of Our Own](#) (St Martins \$27.99). A Starred Review: "The excellent 30th and final series whodunit from Edgar winner Haddam (1951–2019) featuring the brilliant but all too human Gregor Demarkian, who frequently consults for the Philadelphia PD, finds him still dealing with the fallout from 2014's *Fighting Chance*, in which he was shot by someone he trusted. Senator John Jackman and Police Commissioner Bill Jefferson ask Demarkian to help investigate an attempted murder. Someone bludgeoned an elderly woman into unconsciousness and placed her in a garbage bag, which accidentally fell out of the back of a van onto a Philly street, an incident witnessed by Demarkian's close friend, Father Tibor Kasparian. Jackman and Jefferson suspect the assault may be connected to Cary Alder, an unscrupulous real estate magnate believed to have bribed "the mayor and half the building inspectors in the city," because the woman had a gold coin in her possession that's accepted as legal tender in some of Alder's properties. As always, Haddam cleverly integrates political issues such as illegal immigration and affordable housing into an intricate and gripping plot. This is a fitting coda to the career of one of America's best contemporary fair play authors."

Hand, Elizabeth. [The Book of Lamps and Banners](#) (Mulholland \$27). "If this book had a playlist, it would feature Patti Smith and the Ramones. The fourth thriller in Elizabeth Hand's Cass Neary series finds photographer Cass—'an aging punk jonesing for a drink and a handful of black beauties'—hunting for a rare

book. Her recklessness leads her into trouble at every turn. Cass is in London looking for Quinn, her lover, when she sees an ancient book that 'might contain not just ancient knowledge, but forgotten knowledge.' The book is soon stolen, an event that is followed by murders and disappearances of those in the book's orbit. When Cass realizes the book's value, she's determined to chase it down and sell it. She finds Quinn, and Cass, with an addict's confidence, convinces him to help her, hoping 'the two of us would finally have enough money to get away someplace safe.' The high-speed narrative, jittery and swift, mirrors Cass's addiction. She and Quinn follow the book's trail to Sweden, where the black-and-white landscape is a sinister background to Cass's growing obsession...."

Harris, Robert. [V2: A Novel of World War II](#) (Knopf \$28.95). In 1944, the Nazis know they're losing the war. They'd developed the V1, a pilotless drone bomb its targets could hear coming, and now its successor, which strikes without warning. The Nazis call it *Vergeltungswaffen Zwei*, Vengeance Weapon Two. The V2 rockets are notoriously unreliable, though. Although they're aimed at Charing Cross Station in the heart of London, any strike within five miles is considered a success. Many hit English neighborhoods, killing dozens of civilians, while others explode at launch or veer off into the sea. "In this relatively short historical, the reader sees life in London, Oxfordshire, the Netherlands and recently occupied Europe. It is a marvelous novel enabling the reader to understand some of the complexities of war."

✚Horowitz, Anthony. [Moonflower Murders](#) (Harper \$28.99). The Indie Next Pick: Horowitz has done it again! He has crafted another superlative, page-turning, cunning, book-within-a-book mystery chock full of clues (and red herrings), featuring the appealing former editor Susan Ryeland from [Magpie Murders](#) (\$16.99). Terrifically engaging, smart, and fun, this book is practically impossible to put down. Don't miss it!" **And you won't if you subscribe to our British Crime Book of the Month as this is our December selection.** Extra fun: The reader gets to try to untangle the puzzle of the current mystery by finding the clue in the second complete novel embedded in its center. In this meta tour-de-force, author Horowitz deftly moves from the modern voice of the Ryland's world to the Christie-esque voice of the book she edited and back again.

The story? Susan Ryeland has retired from publishing and is running an inn on a Greek island, but secretly longs for the literary world and the bustle of London. Then, a most intriguing family comes to stay at her inn. The Trehearnes, owners of Branlow Hall, an upscale Suffolk hotel, have a story about a murder that took place in a hotel their daughter Cecily was married in—Frank Parris, a hotel guest, was bludgeoned to death in his room—and that murder has connections to Alan Conway, Susan's author. One of the staff, Stefan Codrescu, was convicted of the murder based on powerful circumstantial evidence. Cecily told her parents on the phone she was convinced of Stefan's innocence after reading a mystery inspired by the Parris murder by the now deceased Alan Conway, one of Susan's authors. And when Cecily goes missing, Susan knows that something is afoot. "Horowitz, who matches a baffling puzzle with a sympathetic, flawed lead, has never been better at surprising the reader and playing fair. This is a flawless update of classic golden age whodunits."

Kaplan, Philip. [Night in Tehran](#) (Melville House \$26.99). In the style of Alan Furst, this suspenseful thriller—based on real events—places an idealistic American diplomat in a turbulent, US-hating Tehran in the days leading up to the Iranian Revolution. Backed by the CIA, and trailed by a beautiful and engaging French journalist he suspects is a spy, David Weisman’s mission is to ease the Shah of Iran out of power and find the best alternative between the military, religious extremists, and the political ruling class, many of whom are simultaneously trying to kill him. Kaplan dramatically shows how competing interests, foreign manipulation, and domestic brutality led to the violent overthrow of the last Persian monarch and one of the longest hostage crises on record. In fact, Alan Furst says this: “This taut and fast-paced novel has a particularly compelling feature: Philip Kaplan, after a career in the State Department, brings to his book a sharp political and international sophistication—rare in thrillers, abundant in *Night in Tehran*.” For fans of spy fiction it’s cool to venture into a less familiar setting.

Manning, Kirsty. [The Lost Jewels](#) (Morrow \$16.99). I have always enjoyed books where the heroine has an unusual expertise/occupation and here the woman is American jewelry historian Kate Kirby. She’s thrilled to receive a call about the mysterious hoard of Cheapside jewels found in London where she travels to learn more including a tie with her own family. Back in Boston she confirms through a set of sketches that her great-grandmother Essie, an Edwardian-era suffragette, then immigrant, was closely tied to the Cheapside treasure. The jewels hark back to the Great Fire of London. They are fabulous and the way Kate unwinds their history fascinates. But the picture Manning paints of working class life in early 20th Century London is chilling rather than romantic and will appeal to Jennifer Ashley’s *Below Stairs* fans and readers of Rhys Bowen’s *Molly Murphy* novels.

Martell, Dominic. [Kill Chain](#) (Dunn \$14.99). We last saw Pascual Rose twenty years ago in a three-book series beginning with *Lying, Crying, Dying*. He’s finally back, only this time it’s personal. A former terrorist until he saw the light, he finds himself flirting with darkness again, only for the (questionably) “good” guys. Living outside Barcelona now, Rose is lured back into his old world, this time populated by a host of German and Russian bad guys with a plot to destabilize the world order.

McPherson, Catriona. [The Turning Tide](#) (Möbius \$26.99). It’s summer, 1936. Dandy Gilver and her inquiry agent colleague, Alec Osborne, receive a series of letters from a Scottish minister begging for their help. Vesper Kemp, the ferry operator for the town of Cramond, on the Firth of Forth, has abandoned her post and seems to be losing her mind. A young man accidentally fell into the river and drowned, but Vesper insists she murdered him. Dandy and Alec dismiss the case as more appropriate for a doctor than for detectives, until they discover the victim was Peter Haslett, whom Dandy has known since he was a child. Once in Cramond, Dandy and Alec find Vesper in a sad state, and their investigation takes several odd turns involving an old Roman fort, two unhelpful spinsters, four threatening millers, and a couple of students with a hidden agenda growing a particular strain of potato. “MacPherson does a masterly job capturing the feel of rural Scotland and the mores of pre-WWII Britain” in a series I’ve always enjoyed.

Melinek, Judy/TJ Mitchell. [First Cut](#) (Hanover \$26.99). While reorganizing my advance reading copies I came across one I missed back in January. It’s ideal for fans of Kathy Reichs and “fans of *CSI* and *Forensic Files*” says Karin Slaughter. Kathy herself agrees. Or maybe you enjoyed Melinek’s memoir of her career as a forensic pathologist in [Working Stiff](#) (\$17). Anyway, we’re in San Francisco where a former LA ME, Dr. Jessie Teska, there to make a fresh start escaping her problems in LA, makes a discovery: an overdose case may instead be part of a drug lord’s murderous cover-up. A tense story with good pacing.

Menuhin, Karen. [Murder at Melrose Court](#) (Independent \$14.99). Set in 1920 mostly at an English country house, Menuhin’s winning debut and series launch blends a golden age whodunit with dry Wodehousian humor. The Jeevesian butler sets the tone by announcing to the house’s owner, Maj. Heathcliff Lennox, “I must inform you, sir, that a body has been discovered on the front doorstep.” Though the unidentified corpse has no marks of violence on it, the police suspect foul play—and that Lennox may have been responsible. On a slip of paper Lennox finds on the dead man and turns over to the police is the name of Countess Sophia Androvich Zerevki Polyakov. The plot thickens after the countess, a White Russian, who has become engaged to Lennox’s uncle Charles, is shot dead in Charles’s home. Lennox is caught holding the murder weapon, and he must turn investigator to exonerate himself and get to the bottom of both murders. The brisk pacing and capable prose are impressive. Nice for fans of lighthearted British historical cozies like Maggie Robinson’s *Lady Adelaide Mysteries*.

Moretti, Kate. [The Girls of Brackenhill](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). In 2019, Hannah Maloney, the heroine of this riveting thriller from bestseller Moretti of [The Vanishing Year](#) (\$17), is living in Virginia with her fiancé, Huck, when she receives a phone call letting her know that her aunt Fae has been in a car accident. Though Hannah hasn’t spoken to Fae in 17 years, she’s listed as Fae’s emergency contact. After Hannah and Huck arrive at Brackenhill, her aunt Fae and Uncle Stuart’s castle home in the Catskills, Hannah learns that Fae has died from her injuries, and Stuart is gravely ill with cancer. Hannah and her sister, Julia, used to spend summers at Brackenhill, until the summer 17 years earlier that Julia disappeared. When Hannah’s dog uncovers a human bone on her aunt’s property, the police, led by police officer Wyatt McCarran, who was Hannah’s first boyfriend in their teens, investigate, though Hannah is sure the bone is her sister’s. Meanwhile, Hannah has disturbing dreams and episodes of sleepwalking, and she’s again attracted to Wyatt. Flashbacks to the summer Julia vanished heighten the suspense for fans who like a Gothic mystery.

Nesbø, Jo. [The Kingdom](#) (Knopf \$28.99). In a rural village deep in the mountains, mechanic Roy leads a quiet, simple life, but when his little brother Carl, an entrepreneur, returns with a proposal for a grand hotel to revive the struggling town, dark secrets from their childhood threaten to resurface. As children, Roy defended his little brother against schoolyard bullies and vicious rumors, but his loyalty to family is tested when greed and betrayal saturate Carl’s plans—not to mention when Roy’s sister-in-law Shannon catches his eye. The farther he goes to protect Carl, the more Roy finds himself dredging up the town’s shocking past. And when the town sheriff starts looking into Roy and Carl’s parents’ tragic deaths, Roy will have to reckon with how far he will go to protect his brother.

Ng, Neiko et al. [The Nutcracker: An Enchanting Pop-Up Adaptation](#) (\$29.95). A fun and beautiful way to enjoy the story. And it's not too early to think about your holiday table. This luscious pop-up book could be your centerpiece or a predinner delight.

Patrick, Jonelle. [The Last Tea Bowl Thief](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95). A three-timeline story centers upon a masterpiece of a tea bowl created in 1743 by a blind potter in Kyoto. It begins in today's Tokyo where two women are floundering, the one, the American Robin, in a dead end job in an auction house while her dissertation sits stalled and she sits alone; the other Nori Okuda facing the ruin of her family's business as she sells rice bowls and tea cups to restaurants. Fate leads them both to the elusive cultural treasure that is the Hikitoru bowl and, while we readers learn the Hikitoru's history, so do they. Righting the terrible wrong poisoning its legacy changes their lives.

Patterson, James. [Deadly Cross](#) (LittleBrown \$29). **We have the virtual launch on December 7 of Patterson's true crime depiction of [The Last Days of John Lennon](#) (\$30).** At this point I don't know if we will have signed books or bookplates or similar for both the Lennon and this new Alex Cross. Check back with us, please, for information and registration for Jim's event with Lee Child on December 7 when we get it set up.

The story: Kay Willingham led a life as glamorous as it was public—she was a gorgeous Georgetown socialite, philanthropist, and the ex-wife of the vice president. So why was she parked in a Bentley convertible idling behind a DC private school, in the middle of the night, with the man who was the head of that school? Who shot them both, point blank, and why? The shocking double homicide is blazed across the internet, TV, newspapers — and across Alex Cross's mind. Kay had been his patient once. And maybe more. While John Sampson of DC Metro Police investigates the last movements of Christopher Randall, the educator killed along with Kay Willingham, detective Alex Cross and FBI special agent Ned Mahoney find unanswered questions from Willingham's past, before she arrived in DC and became known in DC society as someone who could make things happen. They travel to Alabama where Kay lived before she arrived in DC, and where she left a lot of secrets behind in a community closed to outsiders like Cross and Mahoney. New in paperback from Patterson: [Texas Outlaw](#) (\$16.99).

Phillips, Lou Diamond. [Tinderbox: Soldier of Indira](#) (Aeron \$24.99). Phillips goes from *Longmire* and *Prodigal Son* to penning a YA science fantasy/space opera retelling of the Hans Christian Anderson tale of the same name. In this YA novel, we meet Everson. He didn't want to be a soldier but his parents forced him to serve, as all good Indiran men should. The only problem? His first battle against their mortal enemies goes horribly wrong and he winds up stranded on the enemy planet. Now, Everson has to survive in this strange new land where everyone is out to get him. Not to mention that the planet Mano is covered in an unforgiving desert. And he's the target of traitors who want to use him in a dastardly plot to overthrow their mad king, Xander the Firm, by having him retrieve a piece of mysterious and powerful ancient technology known as the Tinderbox. But everything changes during a chance encounter with the king's daughter, Allegra. Despite her station, she's in as grave of danger from her own people as Everson is. And though their peoples have been at odds for centuries, an unlikely spark forms between them. As their worlds come crashing down around them, their

forbidden love might be the only chance to end this war forever. And if not, it might just be the doom of everyone. Introduction by Craig Johnson. Ordered Upon Request.

Pressfield, Steven. [36 Righteous Men](#) (\$15.95). "Set in 2034, when global warming has pushed humankind to the brink of extinction, this un-put-downable apocalyptic thriller from Pressfield is steeped in Jewish eschatology—specifically the legend of the Thirty-Six Righteous Men, whose existence justifies the purpose of humankind in the eyes of God and prevents God from destroying the entire race. But when a serial killer begins murdering the Righteous, New York City police detectives James Manning and Covina "Dewey" Duwai set out to stop the killer before he triggers an end-of-the-world event of biblical proportions. While many narrative elements are noteworthy—the character depth, the powerful political and social commentary, the nonstop action, the breakneck pacing—it's the author's meticulously described and alarmingly realistic near-future Earth that will chill readers to their core. This dystopian cautionary tale stands as Pressfield's most ambitious work to date," says the *PW* Starred Review.

Schine, Cathleen. [The Grammarians](#) (\$17). Laurel and Daphne Wolfe, identical, inseparable redheaded twins who share an obsession with words. They speak a secret "twin" tongue of their own as toddlers; as adults making their way in 1980s Manhattan, their verbal infatuation continues, but this love, which has always bound them together, begins instead to push them apart. Daphne, copy editor and grammar columnist, devotes herself to preserving the dignity and elegance of Standard English. Laurel, who gives up teaching kindergarten to write poetry, is drawn, instead, to the polymorphous, chameleon nature of the written and spoken word. Their fraying twinship finally shreds completely when the sisters go to war, absurdly but passionately, over custody of their most prized family heirloom: *Merriam Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition, in this comedy of sisterly and linguistic manners underlining how language shapes lives.

Schultz, Emily. [Little Threats](#) (Putnam \$26). A woman who served fifteen years in prison for murder...and now it's time to find out if she's guilty. In the summer of 1993, twin sisters Kennedy and Carter Wynn are embracing the grunge era and testing every limit in their privileged Richmond suburb. But Kennedy's teenage rebellion goes too far when, after a night of partying in the woods, her best friend, Haley, is murdered, and suspicion quickly falls upon Kennedy. She can't remember anything about the night in question, and this, along with the damning testimony from a college boy who both Kennedy and Haley loved, is enough to force Kennedy to enter a guilty plea. In 2008, Kennedy is released into a world that has moved on without her. As she returns home and tries to pick up the pieces of her life, a crime show host begins asking questions, not convinced the murder panned out as Kennedy described.

Smith, Alexander McCall. [How to Raise an Elephant](#) (Knopf \$25.95). They say it takes a village to raise a child, but can Mma Ramotswe and the rest of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency come together to raise a pipsqueak pachyderm? We may find out in this novel. We may not. Who can say?

Swallow, James. [Ghost](#) (Forge \$27.99). "Swallow's high-octane third spy thriller featuring former MI6 agent Marc Dane opens in Malta, where Lex Wetherby, a hacker-for-hire, is shot dead

while fleeing assassins. Marc's employer, the Rubicon Group, which operates in part as "a private military, security and intelligence contractor," dispatches him to Malta to investigate. Marc confirms Rubicon's suspicion that Wetherby was targeted by the Combine, "a gathering of power brokers, industrialists and old money types who worked with the common interest of enriching themselves still further," because he had information they wanted. Marc then travels to France, where he infiltrates the compound of media mogul Celeste Toussaint, a Combine leader. Marc and his partner, Kara Wei, end up following the trail of a possible traitor, who betrayed Marc and Rubicon, to South Korea. Meanwhile, in the U.S., the suspense rises as former Delta Force sniper Lucy Keyes aims to shut down a terrorist group run by the mysterious Madrigal before Madrigal can knock out San Francisco's power grid. Swallow's action scenes compel, but his detailed descriptions of technology sometimes slow the narrative. Tom Clancy fans will want to check this one out."—*PW*

Tursten, Helene. [Winter Grave](#) (\$16.95). When a little girl disappears a few weeks before Christmas, suspicion falls on the last person she was seen with: the teenage loner who gave her a ride home after school. Complicating the matter is the fact that detectives can hardly get a word out of him. When a second child disappears and a police officer is found dead, tensions in the small rural Sweden town of Strömstad reach an all-time high. Meanwhile, 28-year-old Detective Inspector Embla Nyström has just returned to work and is still recovering from her recent brush with a killer, which left her unable to get back in the ring to defend her title of Nordic light welterweight champion. As she hunts for the missing children, Embla can't help but think of the case that has been haunting her for years: the disappearance of her childhood best friend. Could the incidents be linked? Look for the sequel, [Snowdrift](#) (Soho \$27.95), in December.

White, Loreth Anne. [In the Deep](#) (Montlake \$12.95). The *PW* Starred Review: "This stunning thriller opens in February 2021 at the New South Wales, Australia, supreme court, where Ellie Cresswell-Smith is about to stand trial for the murder of her real-estate mogul husband, Martin. Flash back 16 months to the Agnes Basin, New South Wales, where senior constable Lozza Bianchi retrieves Martin's stabbed, mutilated body from the sea. In another flashback, to early 2019, Ellie and Martin meet in Vancouver, Canada. Wealthy Ellie, who's recovering from the drowning of her three-year-old daughter and a divorce, is smitten. Ellie marries Martin in Las Vegas, Nevada, and they move to New South Wales, where she invests heavily in his resort development there. Meanwhile, she must deal with giant bats, poisonous jellyfish, and spiders, as well as Martin's physical abuse and probable infidelity. The trial, Lozza's investigation, and the events leading up to Martin's murder are told in superbly imagined alternating narratives. Convincing character development and a denouement worthy of Agatha Christie make this a winner."

Wilde, Darcie. [A Lady Compromised](#) (Kensington \$26). Although, as the daughter of a baronet, Rosalind owns a place among England's elite, her father, a forger, and her sister, a courtesan, have abandoned her. She survives by making herself useful to others in her social set and living on the small change they offer for solving their problems. But some problems are too weighty even for Rosalind. Her friend Louisa Winterbourne begs her to discover the truth behind the death of William Corbyn, killed on his way to a duel with Peter Mirabeau, his sister Helen's

fiancé. The circumstances are murky. No one knows why Corbyn would have challenged his friend to a duel, how he came to be killed before the two contestants even met, or what happened to his second, Bartolemew Vaughn, who was supposed to protect him. Another puzzle lies with Rosalind's relationship with Louis's very eligible brother, a courtship derailed by the Thorne family scandal. So how will she navigate the intricate world of the British haut ton?

Yang, Susie. [White Ivy](#) (Simon & Schuster \$26). Raised outside of Boston, Ivy's immigrant grandmother relies on Ivy's mild appearance for cover as she teaches her granddaughter how to pilfer items from yard sales and second-hand shops. Thieving allows Ivy to accumulate the trappings of a suburban teen—and, most importantly, to attract the attention of Gideon Speyer, the golden boy of a wealthy political family. But when Ivy's mother discovers her trespasses, punishment is swift and Ivy is sent to China, and her dream instantly evaporates. Years later, Ivy has grown into a poised yet restless young woman, haunted by her conflicting feelings about her upbringing and her family. Back in Boston, when Ivy bumps into Sylvia Speyer, Gideon's sister, a reconnection with Gideon seems not only inevitable—it feels like fate. Slowly, Ivy sinks her claws into Gideon and the entire Speyer clan by attending fancy dinners, and weekend getaways to the cape. But just as Ivy is about to have everything she's ever wanted, a figure from her past appears. Her choices from there are, how shall I say it without spoilers, controversial. For fans of *You and Gone Girl*."

FANTASTIC WORLDS

Cline, Ernest. [Ready Player Two](#) (Random \$28.99). Days after winning OASIS founder James Halliday's contest, Wade Watts makes a discovery that changes everything. Hidden within Halliday's vaults, waiting for his heir to find, lies a technological advancement that will once again change the world and make the OASIS a thousand times more wondrous—and addictive—than even Wade dreamed possible. With it comes a new riddle, and a new quest—a last Easter egg from Halliday, hinting at a mysterious prize. And an unexpected, impossibly powerful, and dangerous new rival awaits, one who'll kill millions to get what he wants. Wade's life and the future of the OASIS are again at stake, but this time the fate of humanity also hangs in the balance. "Lovingly nostalgic and wildly original," says the publisher.

Cline's 2011 sci-fi novel *Ready Player One* (\$17) was among the most successful debuts in the history of publishing, largely by dint of being turned into a Steven Spielberg movie about 15 minutes after it dropped. This cleverly titled sequel is among the most anticipated books of the fall with fans hoping for the return of major characters from the first book as well as the usual cascade of pop culture references.

Hearne, Kevin. [Ink and Sigil with Signed Bookplate](#) (Random \$28). Just a reminder we were able to snag a few more of this spin-off series from the Iron Druid chronicles about an eccentric master of rare magic solving an uncanny mystery in Scotland.

Kiernan, Denise. [We Gather Together](#) (Dutton \$25). "The exceptional third supernatural thriller in Kiernan's Tin Foil Dossier evokes Frank Belknap Long's 1929 story "The Hound of Tindalos" (regarded as the first contribution by another writer to H.P. Lovecraft's *Cthulhu Mythos*) to deliver an audacious tale of

earthshaking cosmic espionage. Los Angeles-based ‘occult assassin’ Ellison Nicodemo has become a dysfunctional drug addict after harrowing experiences in the field. Still, the Signalman, an enigmatic officer of a shadow government security agency, taps Ellison to take on Jehosheba Talog, a Welsh woman with prodigious supernatural powers. Kiernan builds on the cosmic horrors of previous installments as Jehosheba’s activities on behalf of the monstrous Mother Hydra unleash a tidal wave of uncanny phenomena that tears at the very fabric of reality. Ellison’s episodic attempts to stop this tide provide tantalizing glimpses into a deliciously dark world, inviting the reader to envision the broader, more terrifying context in which the events of the story unfold. With this chilling work, Kiernan again proves her mastery of the genre.”

Kuang, RF. [The Burning God](#) (Harper Voyager \$26.99). “In this satisfying finale to the Poppy War series, Kuang beautifully weaves in much Chinese history while maintaining a distinct storyline. Rin’s similarities to Chairman Mao are fully realized by this third book, yet she remains a unique character with complex emotions of both rage and empathy. For fans of series fantasy such as Chakraborty’s Daevas trilogy and Liu’s Dandelion Dynasty.

Legrand, Claire. [Lightbringer](#) (Sourcebooks \$18.99). Here is the final chapter in the Empirium Trilogy that started with the instant bestsellers *Furyborn* and *Kingsbane*! Two queens, separated by a thousand years, must face their ultimate destinies. Queen Rielle, pushed away from everything she loves, turns to Corien and his promises of glory. Meanwhile, whispers from the empirium slowly drive her mad, urging her to open the Gate. Separated from Audric and Ludivine, she embraces the role of Blood Queen and her place by Corien’s side, determined to become the monster the world believes her to be. In the future, Eliana arrives in the Empire’s capital as a broken shell of herself. Betrayed and abandoned, she fights to keep her power at bay—and away from Corien, who will stop at nothing to travel back in time to Rielle, even if that means destroying her daughter. But when the mysterious Prophet reveals themselves at last, everything changes, giving Rielle and Eliana a second chance for salvation—or the destruction their world has been dreading. This is a strong series for teens as well as for adult readers.

Mondo. [Batman Animated Series The Phantom City Creative Collection](#) (iBook \$60) is a visually breathtaking celebration of the Emmy Award-winning series from 1992 and is chock-full of gorgeous pieces of art.

Morgan, Louisa. [The Age of Witches](#) (Orbit \$16.99). *LJ* reviews: “In Gilded Age New York, Harriet Bishop, her cousin Frances Allington, and Frances’s stepdaughter Annis Allington are all witches of varying ages and knowledge of the power. The central theme is the struggle between light and dark magic, called *malefecia* by Morgan. This *malefecia*, handed down the Bishop ancestral line, corrupts everyone who uses it. Frances uses it to evil ends by trying to force Annis into a marriage with an English duke, while Harriet and Annis work to destroy Frances’s dark agenda. Morgan portrays witchcraft as freedom for the practitioners, with Harriet saying witch “should be a beautiful word” that’s instead “been perverted.” The author continues building mystery and intrigue with her impressive vocabulary, weaving a compelling tale of love and magic in historic America

and England. Fans of Deborah Harkness’ “All Souls Trilogy” or Ken Follett’s *The Pillars of the Earth* will enjoy reading this.”

Neill, Chloe. [The Bright and Breaking Sea](#) (Berkley \$16). Neill launches a high-stakes-on-the-high-seas historical fantasy series full of political intrigue, naval battles and well-drawn characters. As with the urban fantasy series she’s known for—the Chicagoland Vampires and others—Neill drops readers directly into the action with a daring escape aided by heroine Captain Kit Brightling’s water magic. The world is roughly mapped onto historical Europe during the Napoleonic Wars, complete with a fictional exiled dictator named Gerard, recently ousted from Gallia (France). Brightling and her allies hail from the Isles, a fictional Great Britain that appears to have eschewed colonization in favor of international trade and diplomacy. The queen, a Black woman named Charlotte, sends Brightling on a series of missions to save a spy captured by pirates, to hunt down an enemy ship and more in order to thwart Gerard’s attempt at a comeback. The action is continuous, with brief stops along the way to repair the ship, re-provision and receive new orders. As an Aligned person, Kit can tap into the natural magic of the sea. So, when an air-Aligned colleague confirms her sense that something is off, Kit’s ordered to solve a mystery only she can: What’s happening to the magic? And what does it have to do with Gerard? This sounds like a lot of fun for fans of Patrick O’Brian and Horatio Hornblower willing to stretch a bit, and of course of Naomi Novik readers.

✂Nix, Garth [The Left-Handed Booksellers of London](#) (Harper \$19.99) delivers a fantastic journey through a 1983 England where mythic beings from the Old World threaten the safety of the New. When Susan Arkshaw turns 18, she leaves her mum and the family farm behind and goes to London to find a father she’s never known. She meets the gloriously dressed, “shape-shifter” Merlin as he is executing her mother’s old friend with a pin made of “silver-washed steel.” (Apparently “Uncle” Frank was a crime boss and a blood-drinking “Sipper”—said to be the basis for the vampire legend.) When the police arrive, Susan finds there’s a special branch devoted to covering up “the ancient weird sh#t” that sometimes bubbles to the surface of her world. Merlin is part of the St. Jacques family, booksellers all with the mission of making sure “most Old World entities are bound” and thus unable to interfere in the “prosaic human world”—that is, “reality.” Merlin is left-handed and deals with, in his words, the more “active stuff,” while his sister, Vivien, is a right-handed researcher sort who can “weigh the truth.” Susan, Merlin and Vivien set off to find Susan’s father before the supernatural activities escalate any further. Fans of Garth Nix’s other works, such as the Old Kingdom series or Angel Mage, should enjoy this exhilarating volume.

Robinson, Kim Stanley. [The Ministry for the Future](#) (Orbit \$28). “Bestseller Robinson again tackles climate change head-on in this gutsy, humane view of a near-future Earth careening toward collapse. Mary Murphy, head of the Ministry for the Future, a UN watchdog agency created as a result of the Paris Agreement, takes to heart the ministry’s mission “to advocate for the world’s future generations.” Mary spends her days promoting relief for the afflicted and wrestling with the financial powers-that-be to change the carbon balance before it tips too far. She must also be on the watch for ecoterrorists, even as she plans to use their attacks in her pitch for a carbon sequestration cryptocurrency

to a group of influential bankers. Then Mary is abducted by the traumatized survivor of a heat wave that killed 20 million in India, who furiously cuts through the political weeds to demand change. Galvanized by his demands, Mary attempts to start a ‘black wing’ working in secret within the Ministry for the Future to make larger changes than she can aboveboard—only to discover that such a group already exists. Robinson masterfully integrates the practical details of environmental crises and geoengineering projects into a sweeping, optimistic portrait of humanity’s ability to cooperate in the face of disaster. This heartfelt work of hard science-fiction is a must-read for anyone worried about the future of the planet.”—*PW* Starred Review

Sanderson, Brandon. [Rhythm of War](#) (Forge \$34.99). In the sequel to *Oathbringer*, the Knights Radiant have spent a year fighting a brutal war of attrition against the enemy invasion. At the same time that Kaladin Stormblessed must come to grips with his changing role within the Knights Radiant, his Windrunners face their own problem: As more and more deadly enemy Fused awaken to wage war, no more honorspren are willing to bond with humans to increase the number of Radiants. New technology could change the math, but at what cost to the ideals and principles of the resistance coalition? Sanderson’s work has been compared to George R.R. Martin in its deep and detailed world-building elements.

Sapkowski, Andrzej. [Tower of Fools](#) (Orbit \$28). The author of the bestselling Witcher saga sets a sharply detailed fantasy of magic, lust, and mayhem, the first in a new series, against the backdrop of the religious wars of the Renaissance as Czech Husite reformers battle Catholic Inquisitors across Central Europe. Caught up in the cross-crusades, Reinmar of Bielawa, a scholar of medicine and magic, unwisely woos a married noblewoman, Adèle of Stercza, and must flee her husband’s kin when their tryst is discovered. When his pursuers realize they cannot catch him, they murder his brother instead and Reinmar swears vengeance. To the constant dismay of his companions—stoic Scharley, a paroled rebel, and hulking Samson, a supernatural creature trapped in a human body—Reinmar is impulsive, loyal to the point of foolishness, and frequently smitten (moving on from his infatuation with Adèle to an obsession with “the fair Nicolette”), making their plans to escape to Hungary less and less likely to succeed. Sapkowski’s love for the period is clear as he touches on notorious historical events and figures, including the Defenestration of Prague and printing press inventor Johannes Gutenberg. The carefully painted landscapes and intricate politics, meanwhile, effortlessly draw readers into Reinmar’s life and times. This is historical fantasy done right,” and our **November SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**.

Ward, Matthew. [Legacy of Steel](#) (Orbit \$17.99). The outstanding second fantasy in Ward’s Legacy trilogy keeps the drama rushing along at an exciting clip through a fiendishly complicated plot. First and foremost, there’s the war between the Tressian Republic, championed by Josiri Trelan and Viktor Akadra, and the Hadari Empire, led by Prince Kai and his ambitious daughter, Melanna Saranal. Simultaneously, supernaturally powerful kernclaw assassins threaten both realms. But there are over 50 characters on the novel’s list of dramatis personae, and 10 of them are “divinities” who enjoy meddling in human affairs. Ward’s experience as a game designer serves him well as he shifts focus frequently, mixing massive battles with intimate personal moments, as in the

moving scene in which Josiri’s sister realizes she is not the person she had imagined herself to be. The human struggles mingle with conflict between semimortal gods as the threat of the Third Dawn, or the end of the world, looms. Ward presses all the right, well-worn buttons with enough vigor to make them feel fresh. The result is a ripping yarn that more than earns its length.

OUR NOVEMBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Carlisle, Kate. [Premeditated Mortar](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Fixer-Upper #8. Plagued by strange events at a construction site, including the discovery of a dead body, Shannon wonders if someone wants to stop the renovations on an old asylum and vows to complete the project even if it kills her. *Kirkus* had this to say “Like the Fixer Upper movies it’s spawned on the Hallmark Channel, this popular series hits just the right notes: mystery, romance, historical detail.”

Delany, Vicki. [There’s a Murder Afoot](#) (\$7.99). Sherlock Holmes Bookshop #5. Traveling to London with her friends to attend a Sherlock Holmes convention, Gemma Doyle is astonished by a surprise encounter with an in-law who disappeared decades earlier after stealing a valuable painting. *PW* concluded with “The smart Gemma, the steadfast loyalty of her circle, and the intriguing art milieu keep the reader turning the pages. Cozy fans who are Sherlockians will have fun.”

DeMille, Nelson. [The Deserter](#) (\$9.99). A year after a trained assassin with classified Army intelligence disappears under suspicious circumstances, an Army investigator’s efforts to capture the man alive are complicated by his partner’s inexperience and suspected role as a CIA spy. *PW* raved about this collaborative effort saying “DeMille and son provide it all in this rumble through the jungle—authentic detail, lively dialogue, a vividly drawn setting, and an exhilarating plot.”

Hood, Joshua. [Robert Ludlum’s Treadstone Resurrection](#) (\$9.99). When he receives a mysterious email from a former colleague and is then attacked by an unknown hit team at his job site, former Treadstone agent-turned-carpenter Adam Hayes is forced to come out of retirement to discover who wants him dead. The start of a new series based on Ludlum’s fictional world.

ÆInnes, Louise R. [Death at a Country Mansion](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Daisy Thorne #1. When overly dramatic opera star Dame Serena Lavante – and her best friend’s mother – is murdered, Surrey, England hairdresser Daisy Thorne must get to the root of the case with the help of a handsome Detective Inspector *Kirkus* said “A promising debut with scads of interesting characters, a spirited heroine, and a hint of romance.”

Preston, Douglas. [Old Bones](#) (\$9.99). Nora Kelly #1. Young curator Nora Kelly leads a team in search of the “Lost Camp” of the Donner Party, but as they expose the real truth of what happened, those ancient horrors lead to present-day violence in a case assigned to rookie FBI agent Corrie Swanson. *PW* ended their starred review with “The two strong female protagonists share a dynamic reminiscent of that between Pendergast and his friend on the NYPD, Vincent D’Agosta. Preston and Child have recaptured some of their old magic.”

Swanson, Peter. [Before She Knew Him](#) (\$9.99). Finding some peace in her new life in a house outside of Boston, Hen’s calm begins to dissipate after she meets a new neighbor and spots an object in his home that once belonged to the victim of an

unsolved murder case that has been an obsession for her. *Kirkus* summed this up with “Swanson is at his best in exploring the kinship—or what some see as the kinship—between artist and killer, one of the themes of Swanson’s great model and forebear, Patricia Highsmith. Swanson isn’t quite up to Highsmith’s lofty mark, and he succumbs toward the end to a soap opera-like plot-twist-too-far...but for the most part, this novel delivers. A dark, quick-moving, suspenseful story stuffed full of psychological quirk and involution.”

St James, Simone. [Broken Girls](#) (\$9.99). More than 60 years after one of four friends in a reputedly haunted boarding school goes missing, journalist Fiona Sheridan resolves to learn her sister’s fate before a harrowing discovery is made. LJ concluded their review with “This modern gothic tale by the author of *The Haunting of Maddie Clare* is a real page-turner and just creepy enough to keep readers satisfyingly on edge. Perfect for a dark and stormy night” Also perfect for readers who miss the classic Gothics of Barbara Michaels.

NOVEMBER SMALL PAPERBACKS

Brown, Sandra. [White Hot](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. Returning to her Louisiana steel mill hometown after the suicide of her younger brother, Danny, Sayre Lynch examines the turbulent relationship between her younger brother and their favored older brother and begins to suspect that Danny may have been murdered, a situation complicated by her father’s corrupt attorney.

Collins, Kate. [Big Fat Greek Murder](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Goddess of Greene Street #1. When her sister is accused of seducing and stabbing the fiancé of their client, single mom Athena Spencer, to save her family’s reputation and garden center business, must dig up the dirt on the suspects and unearth the truth.

Collins, Max Allan. [Skim Deep](#) (Forge \$10.95). Frank Nolan #9. When onetime world-class thief Nolan, who has gone straight, arrives in Las Vegas to get married, he is spotted by an “old” friend who sees him as the perfect patsy for a scheme to heist the weekly skim haul. This is the first new Nolan novel in 33 years from one of the masters of the genre, Max Allan Collins, award-winning author of *Road to Perdition*

Doyle, Carrie. [Death on West End Road](#) (Sourcebooks \$7.99). Reissue. Hamptons Murder #3. Despite a busy high-season schedule and an inn booked to capacity, Antonia has agreed to investigate a cold case in her beloved adopted hometown, East Hampton, NY: the killing of Susie Whitaker, whose brutal 1990 slaying on a tennis court in the poshest part of town was never solved.

Flower, Amanda. [Courting Can Be Killer](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Amish Matchmaker #2. When young Ben Baughman, who was courting Tess Lieb, tragically dies, Millie, with the help of her quilting friends, pieces together the clues to discover who wanted Ben out of the wedding picture altogether.

Griffo, JD. [Murder at Veronica’s Diner](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Ferrar Family #4. Alberta Scaglione thinks her cooking is better than anyone’s in Tranquility, New Jersey—but she doesn’t mind an occasional visit to Veronica’s Diner. However, when their waitress Teri Jo rushes back to their table—not with a check in her hand but with a knife in her back, the Ferrar family quickly finds there are plenty of potential murderers on the menu.

Ivy, Alexandra. [Don’t Look](#) (Kensington \$7.99). With a serial killer targeting the women of Pike, Wisconsin, veterinarian Lynne Gale must place her trust in the son of the town’s late sheriff who believes she will be the killers’ next victim.

Jackson, Lisa. [Morning After](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Reissue Determined to make a name for herself, Savannah journalist Nikki Gillette begins following Pierce Reed as he investigates the serial killer known as The Grave Robber, who is burying women alive, but her quest for fame and fortune turns deadly when the killer sets his sights on her.

James, Miranda. [Careless Whiskers](#) (\$7.99). Cat in the Stacks #12. When his lead-actress daughter is wrongly accused of poisoning a fading, drama-prone actor during a local stage production, Charlie teams up with feline sidekick, Diesel, to identify the true killer.

Klein, Libby. [Wine Tastings Are Murder](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Poppy McAllister #5. When one of their guests, an older man on a honeymoon with his much younger wife, is poisoned at a Cape May winery, B&B owner Poppy McAllister and her aunt Ginny must catch a killer with a lethal case of sour grapes.

Lillard, Amy. [Murder Between the Pages](#) (Sourcebooks \$7.99). Main Street Book Club #2.

Inspired by a book called *Missing Girl* to solve a 50-year-old cold case, Ario and her Friday Night Book Club sleuths soon discover that the recent murder of a young girl is connected to their investigation, and, with Ario’s help, they may book an old suspect for the crimes.

Logan, Elizabeth. [Fishing for Trouble](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Alaskan Diner #2. Chef Charlie Cooke is eager for a busy yet relaxing summer season in Elkview, but when a young man working a summer job at the local fish processing plant dies moments after walking into the Bear Claw Diner, she’s quickly swept into the investigation.

O’Brien, Kevin. [Terrified](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Reissue. When her sadistic ex-husband is released from prison, Megan Keeler, who staged her death years earlier to escape him and save their unborn child, is plunged into a deadly nightmare when a cold-blooded killer abducts her son.

Ross, Rosemarie. [Finished Off in Fondant](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Courtney Archer #2. When her co-host of The American Baking Battle, which has a wedding theme, is accused of murdering a woman in a bridal gown, Courtney must work through layers of deception to find the real killer.