

# BOOKNEWS from

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March Booknews 2021 part 1  
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## MARCH MYSTERY AND MORE

Open Hours: M-F 2:00-6:00 PM; Sat. 10:00 AM-6:00PM  
Sun. Curbside pickup only

Note: All the event times are Mountain Standard Time

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.

### MONDAY MARCH 1 7:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

CJ Box discusses [Dark Sky](#) (Putnam \$27.99)  
Joe Pickett and Nate Romanowski  
Signed books in stock

### TUESDAY MARCH 2 6:00 PM Victorian Crime

Tasha Alexander and Deanna Raybourn in conversation  
Alexander discusses [The Dark Heart of Florence](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Lady Emily

Raybourn discusses [An Unexpected Peril](#) (Berkley \$26)  
Veronica Speedwell as a female Rudolph Rassendyll  
Signed books available for both

### WEDNESDAY MARCH 3 6:00 PM

Don Bentley in conversation with Jack Carr  
Bentley discusses [The Outside Man](#) (Berkley \$27)  
Signed books available

### THURSDAY MARCH 4 7:00 PM

Denise Hamilton in conversation with Ben Winters and Duane Swierczynski  
The editor and authors discuss [Speculative Los Angeles](#) (Akashic \$16.95).

### FRIDAY MARCH 5 1:00 PM

Elly Griffiths discusses [The Postscript Murders](#) (Houghton \$25)  
A standalone gem, our March British Crime Book of the Month

### FRIDAY MARCH 5 6:30 PM

Arkady Martine in conversation with Pat King  
Martine discusses [A Desolation Called Peace](#) (Tor \$26.99)  
Teixcalaan # 2

### SATURDAY MARCH 6 1:00 PM Virtual US launch

The UK's Chris Whittaker in conversation with Hank Phillippi Ryan  
Whittaker discusses [We Begin at the End](#) (Holt \$27.99)  
Signed bookplates available

### SATURDAY MARCH 6 2:15 PM

Lauren Willig in conversation with Karen White and Beatriz Williams  
Willig discusses [Band of Sisters](#) (Morrow \$27.99)  
Smith College women go to France in WWI  
Signed books available

### MONDAY MARCH 8 1:00 PM Virtual US Book Launch

SJ Bennett in conversation with Lesa Holstine  
Bennett discusses [The Windsor Knot](#) (Morrow \$27.99)  
Our March Cozy Crimes Pick of the Month

### MONDAY MARCH 8 6:00 PM National Book Launch

Graham Brown discusses [Fast Ice](#) (Putnam \$29), his last full collaboration with Clive Cussler  
Signed books available, short personalization requests due End of Day March 6

### TUESDAY MARCH 9 1:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Donna Leon discusses [Transient Desires](#) (Grove \$27)  
Commissario Guido Brunetti of Venice  
Signed books still available  
The purchase of the book is required to attend, or a \$5.00 fee  
To join by the \$5.00 fee [CLICK HERE](#)  
The UK Signed edition: [Transient Desires](#) (Heinemann \$42)

### TUESDAY MARCH 9 5:00 PM Baseball!

Emily Nemens in conversation with baseball columnist John Shea and Larry Siegel  
Nemens discusses [The Cactus League](#) (\$17)  
Shea discusses Willie Mays "24: Life Stories and Lessons from the Say Hey Kid" and Rickey Henderson's autobiography "Off Base: Confessions of a Thief"

### WEDNESDAY MARCH 10 6:00 PM

Phillip Margolin discusses [A Matter of Life and Death](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Robin Lockwood legal thriller  
Signed books available

### THURSDAY MARCH 11 6:00 PM

Joel Rosenburg in conversation with Kyle Mills  
Rosenburg discusses [The Beirut Protocol](#) (Tyndale House \$27.99)  
Military fiction

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS ON MARCH 14  
OUR TIMES ARE NOW BASICALLY PDT

### MONDAY MARCH 15 5:00 PM/8:00 EDT Virtual Book Launch

Harlan Coben discusses [Win](#) (Grand Central \$29)  
Books signed for us by Harlan available

**TUESDAY MARCH 16 6:30 PM**

**Australia's Candice Fox in conversation with Adrian McKinty**

Fox discusses [Gathering Dark](#) (Forge \$27.99)

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 17 1:00 PM**

**St. Patrick's Day Party**

**Carlene O'Connor** discusses [Murder in an Irish Bookshop](#) (Kensington \$27)

Irish Village Mystery #7

Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 17 2:15 PM**

**The Pen presents debut authors Julie Carrick Dalton, Nancy Johnson, Sarah Penner**

**Dalton** discusses [Waiting for the Night Song](#) (Forge \$26.99)

Signed books still available

**Johnson** discusses [The Kindest Lie](#) (Harper \$27.99)

Signed bookplates available

**Penner** discusses [The Lost Apothecary](#) (Park Row \$27.99), our March Historical Fiction Book of the Month

Signed books available

**THURSDAY MARCH 18 5:00 PM**

**Mark De Castrique** discusses [Fatal Scores](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99)

Sam Blackman, Asheville, NC, private eye

**THURSDAY MARCH 18 7:00 PM**

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses another story in Arnold Han's [3 Steps to Hell](#) (Stark House \$23.95)

**FRIDAY MARCH 19 7:00 PM**

**SciFi Friday** discusses Leigh Bardugo, [The Ninth House](#) (\$17.99)

**SATURDAY MARCH 20 10:30 AM**

**Croak & Dagger** discusses John Le Carré, [The Spy Who Came in from the Cold](#) (\$16)

**SATURDAY MARCH 20 4:00 PM Virtual book launch**

**Lisa Scottoline** discusses her first historical, [Eternal](#) (Putnam \$28)

WWII Rome

Signed books available

**MONDAY MARCH 22 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch**

**Jacqueline Winspear** discusses [The Consequences of Fear](#) (Harper \$27.99)

Maisie Dobbs

And her Edgar nominated memoir, [This Time Next Year Well Be Laughing](#) (Soho \$20)

Signed books available for both titles

**TUESDAY MARCH 23 5:00 PM**

**Alma Katsu in conversation with Michael Koryta**

**Katsu** discusses [Red Widow](#) (Putnam \$27)

A Le Carré style spy story, USA style

Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 24 5:00 PM**

**Nicola Derobertis-Theye** discusses [The Vietri Project](#) (Harper \$27.99)

Signed bookplates available

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 24**

**Australia's Sulari Gentill and Emma Viskic**

**Gentill** discusses [Shanghai Secrets](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99)

Rowland Sinclair

**Viskic** discusses [Darkness for Light](#) (Pushkin \$14.95)

Deaf PI Caleb Zelic

**FRIDAY MARCH 26 1:00 PM**

**Jillian Cantor in conversation with Nuala O'Connor**

**Cantor** discusses [Half Life](#) (Harper \$28)

Our March Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month

Signed books available

**O'Connor** discusses [Nora: A love Story of Nora and James Joyce](#) (Harper \$16.99)

**MONDAY MARCH 29 5:00 PM Virtual Book Launch**

**Allison Brennan in conversation with JT Ellison**

**Brennan** discusses [Tell No Lies](#) (Mira \$27.99)

**Ellison** discusses [Her Dark Lies](#) (Mira \$28.99)

Signed books available for both

**MONDAY MARCH 29 6:15 PM National Book Launch**

**Will Staples** discusses [Animals](#) (Blackstone \$27.99)

Our March Crime Book of the Month

Signed books available

**TUESDAY MARCH 30 4:00 PM**

**Cara Black in conversation with Rhys Bowen**

**Black** discusses [Three Hours in Paris](#) (\$16.95)

**Bowen** previews her April novel [The Venice Sketchbook](#) (Lake Union \$24.95/\$14.95)

Signed books in April for Bowen

**TUESDAY MARCH 30 5:15 PM**

**Ellen Crosby** discusses [The French Paradox](#) (Severn \$30)

Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 31 5:00 PM**

**Erica Ruth Neubauer** discusses [Murder at Wedgefield Manor](#)

(Kensington \$26)

Signed books available

**THURSDAY APRIL 1 Virtual Book Launch**

**Paula Munier in conversation with Margaret Mizushima**

**Munier** discusses [The Hiding Place](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Signed books available

**SIGNED BOOKS**

Alexander, Tasha. [The Dark Heart of Florence](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Lady Emily and her intelligence agent husband, Colin Hargreaves, travel to Florence to investigate a break-in at the Palazzo di Vieri, the home of Colin's daughter, along with Emily's friend Cécile du Lac, an elegant Parisian with a passion for champagne and bohemian sensibilities. Meanwhile, the body of an informant associated with Darius Benton-Stone, Colin's fellow agent, has been discovered broken and bleeding in the palazzo's courtyard. While Colin and Darius investigate, Emily and Cécile, kept out of the men's confidence, keep themselves busy visiting the sights and doing some digging of their own into the dead man's background. They also discover that the Palazzo di Vieri is believed to contain a secret treasure. Could the man have been searching for it? The story tick tocks from 1903 to 15<sup>th</sup> Century

Florence when the Medicis reigned and Savonarola rose, linking the quests rooted in the occupants of the palazzo. “Alexander effortlessly slips an enormous amount of Florentine history into a narrative that offers a loving portrait of the city and just the right amount of dashing derring-do.” I’m glad that Alexander is advancing slowly from the Victorian into the Edwardian era.

Andrews, Alexandra. [Who is Maud Dixon](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Is it really possible to shed one’s history “as easily as a coat slips off the back of a chair” and walk away? And if so—what might one walk into? That’s the puzzle posed by Alexander’s cunningly plotted debut. Part Elena Ferrante, part Patricia Highsmith—the themed thriller *Who Is Maud Dixon?* is set to be one of the buzziest debut novels of the year. I had it scheduled for our March **First Mystery Book of the Month** but it has switched to February since Sarah Pearse’s *The Sanatorium* is running late from the UK. This book is so much fun! And delivers such a twist (I half saw it)—“Identity theft takes on a new meaning in this fresh and arresting thriller, a Hitchcockian mashup about egos in every sense of the word”—that I ordered extra copies. Do not miss out. It has excellent gift potential as well.

Florence Darrow has dreamed of being a writer since childhood. But her mother has always pushed her to excel and thus Florence, her judgment terrible, self sabotages. Plus she has nothing to say and so faces continual block. She has written a number of stories but no novel. Working at a low level position in a prestigious NY publishing house she unwisely falls into bed with a senior executive. Then worse, surveils him and his family, imagining herself in his life. When he brushes her off she emails all the photos to his wife and is fired. With no prospects, no job, about to lose her renter bedroom, she gets an offer from the literary agent to the bestseller Maud Dixon, whose debut novel has been a phenomenon and which Florence admires. There are stringent requirements to becoming literary star Maud’s live-in personal assistant in a ramshackle upstate estate, but Florence leaps in. Maud, the pseudonym of Helen as it turns out, is severe. And fanatically private. One day she announces they must go to Morocco for research for her second book. Off they go....and it goes from there. It’s a darkly comic ride and delightfully snide on contemporary publishing all the while exploring identity, deceit and extreme measures through two women’s shape-shifting lives.

Bentley, Don. [The Outside Man](#) (Berkley \$27). Bentley pits former Defense Intelligence Agency operative Matt Drake, who’s living with his wife in Austin, Tex., against an old nemesis known as the Devil, a ruthless crime lord profiting from the chaos in Syria and Iraq. After an assassination attempt in broad daylight on the streets of Austin, Drake—still suffering from PTSD and struggling to find a sense of normalcy in his life—attempts to locate the Devil to enact vengeance. In his search, he stumbles across a sex trafficking operation run by the Middle Eastern crime boss and vows to kill him and free the enslaved women

Box, CJ. [Dark Sky](#) (Putnam \$27.99). You fans of Nate Romanowski are going to love this thriller. We learn right away when Joe Pickett’s daughter Sheridan, who is employed by Nate, rappels down a cliff where falcons nest and uncovers bow traps, indicating that a poacher is at work. Thus we also get to learn a lot more about Nate and his birds than ever. But the main plot kicks off when the governor of Wyoming gives Joe Pickett the thankless task of taking a geeky tech baron who wants to experience harvesting his own food by bringing down an elk with a

bow and arrow, on a hunt. Under threat that the governor will defund his entire department if Joe’s high-profile charge, Steve-2, isn’t persuaded to bring a huge server farm to Wyoming, Joe agrees. But as Joe, Steve-2, the man’s body guard and assistant, and a local provider of the horses for the hunt, venture into the woods, they are stalked by a father and two sons bent on revenge—Steve-2 is the target. Finding himself without a weapon, a horse, or a way to communicate, Joe must rely on his wits and his skills for his party’s survival. Meanwhile, Nate and Sheridan, despite their own situation, fear for Joe and follow him into the woods... “Into the woods” is a very scary Brothers Grimm trope repeated by many authors before Box like Tana French and Harlan Coben. And why Steve-2? Think Steve Jobs.... Steve-1.

Brennan, Allison. [Tell No Lies](#) (Mira \$27.99). Something mysterious is killing desert wildlife in the Santa Rita Mountains. When Emma Perez, a college-intern-turned activist, sets out to collect her own evidence despite the pleas of her boyfriend Billy that it is dangerous. For Emma, it’s not dangerous—it’s deadly. Such a promising young life lost, dismissed as accidental drowning in a seasonal pond on Mount Wrightson. With local law enforcement slow to get involved, the FBI’s Mobile Response Team goes undercover to infiltrate the town of Sonoita and the local copper refinery in search of possible leads. Agents Costa and Quinn find themselves scouring the desolate landscape, eventually chasing clues to something much darker than pollution. As the body count steadily increases, it’s clear that the case at hand is an elaborate high stakes operation. Now they must figure out who is at the heart of the mayhem and how they can stop them before more innocent lives are lost. Meet them first in [The Third to Die](#) (\$26.99/\$9.99). This is an excellent series for fans of JA Jance, especially her Joanna Brady series.

Cantor, Jillian. [Half Life](#) (Harper \$28). Cantor deconstructs the life of Nobel Prize-winning scientist Marie Curie with a fascinating premise: what if Maria Skolodowska had never left Poland in 1891 to go to Paris and reinvent herself as Marie Curie? The narrative tick tocks back and forth between the imagined life of Mme Curie and her actual life. Our **March Fantastic New Fiction Book of the Month** begins with Marie, 66 and dying, wondering what would have happened if she had married mathematician Kazimierz Zorawski. Alternating narratives explore parallel realities of two fiercely independent women. Marya Zorawski’s world is dominated by domesticity and a Russian culture that denies women the right to an education. In the world of Marie Curie, her failed engagement to Kazimierz propels her to Paris, where she marries Pierre and has a “phosphorescent” public life. Occasional crossovers underscore how both versions of Maria are dedicated to work, love, and family. Cantor’s vivid historic background features the first Tour de France and Marie’s mobile X-ray units on the WWI front, and her fundraising visit to the U.S. adds enriching historical details. Strong secondary characters contribute to the lively story lines. Fans of Kate Atkinson’s *Time After Time*. I think this is a better effort than the popular bios of celebrated women who made history by Marie Benedict.

Coben, Harlan. [Win](#) (Grand Central \$29). FBI agents ask sports agent Myron’s wealthy blueblood sidekick, Windsor “Win” Horne Lockwood III, to accompany them to the Beresford, “one of the most prestigious buildings in Manhattan,” where an unidentified older man has been found in one of the Beresford’s tower rooms, dead of either strangulation or a slit throat. Win tells

the agents he doesn't know the victim, but the cluttered room includes a Vermeer that was stolen from the Lockwood family 20 years earlier and a suitcase with Win's initials. The mystery deepens when the body is identified as the leader of a radical left group responsible for the accidental deaths of seven people. A connection to Win's cousin Patricia Lockwood's traumatic abduction, abuse, and captivity as a teen raises more questions. [Great interview with Harlan about his characters](#). Excellent points. Harlan signed our copies at his home.

Crosby, Ellen. [The French Paradox](#) (Severn \$30). Here we find several plot strands. One, Lucie Montgomery, owner of her family's Virginia estate, is puzzled as to why some of the vines are dying. Is it related to climate change/some parasite? Two, she's hired world famous landscape designer Parker Lord to insure the estate's garden is glorious for her upcoming wedding to Quinn, her winemaker. Time is somewhat tight given the pervasive cold and the May wedding. Three, perhaps most unsettling, Lucie has just discovered letters preserved in the attic revealing her French grandfather enjoyed an *affaire de coeur* with Jacqueline Bouvier during Jackie's 1949 junior year abroad in Paris. A time when it appears the future First Lady bought several inexpensive paintings of Marie Antoinette by an 18<sup>th</sup> Century artist who was famed in her time but fell into obscurity. Mme Vigée Le Brun's reputation has lately risen and her work soared in value. Cricket Delacroix, Lucie's nonagenarian neighbor, who owns the paintings along with a manuscript Jackie left behind about the French queen and her portraitist, is now donating them to the women's arts museum in DC. And Cricket's daughter Harriet, a washed-up journalist, is rewriting the manuscript Jackie wrote into what she hopes will be the bestseller a lucrative book contract anticipates. The paintings will be shown at an exhibit for Cricket's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at her estate, and Harry plans to post details about the very private Jackie as wall text. Lucie is appalled. And more appalled when Parker Lord is found dead among her vines, a death ruled a poisoning.... Yes, it all comes together. Crosby does a deep dive into Jackie's career as an editor and an author as well. Crosby's Wine Country mysteries move to a new publisher with a limited supply chain, so please order ASAP or risk disappointment.

Cussler, Clive/Graham Brown. [Fast Ice](#) (Putnam \$29). National book launch. Brown is signing it at The Pen so short inscription requests are welcome if made by March 6.

In the "gripping 18th NUMA Files novel, climate expert Cora Emmerson, while doing research in Berlin, comes across references to a 1939 German expedition to Antarctica that discovered a lake heated by geothermal energy containing a strange green algae that seemed to cause water to rapidly freeze. Cora goes to Antarctica, where she collects ice core samples containing the algae. She alerts the National Underwater and Marine Agency, for which she once worked, that she has made a find that has the power to "remake the world." Weeks later, as Cora heads home, a vessel disguised as an iceberg crashes into her ship. Unknown attackers kill the crew and steal Cora's samples. Cora survives to join the subsequent investigation by NUMA's Kurt Austin and sidekick Joe Zavala, which leads them to Ryland Lloyd, an environmentalist who believes climate change actually benefits the planet in the long run. No surprise, Lloyd turns out to have a hidden agenda related to the ice. The suspense builds as the NUMA team races to avert global catastrophe. This is another classic Cussler action thriller."—*PW*.

Dalton, Julie Carrick. [Waiting for the Night Song](#) (Forge \$26.99). I urge you to grab one of our last signed copies of our January First Mystery Book of the Month. Forestry research and all-around environmentalist Cadie Kessler has one of those secrets you just know is going to catch up with her someday, which it does when an old friend resurfaces in her life. Not that Cadie needs any more problems, what with wildfires and local foreclosures battling for which can spread faster. Those wildfires become a metaphor for her own tortured psyche as past and present converge in shattering fashion. *Waiting for the Night Song* hums with the lyrical echoes of John Hart and masterful characters reminiscent of Pat Conroy. And an environment conjured to life as did Delia Owens in *Crawdads*....

Duckworth, Tammy. [Every Day is a Gift: A Memoir](#) (Grand Central \$30). Duckworth tells amazing—and amazingly true—stories from her incomparable life. In November of 2004, an Iraqi RPG blew through the cockpit of Tammy Duckworth's U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter. The explosion, which destroyed her legs and mangled her right arm, was a turning point in her life. But as Duckworth shows, that moment was just one in a lifetime of extraordinary turns. The biracial daughter of an American father and a Thai-Chinese mother, Duckworth faced discrimination, poverty, and the horrors of war—all before the age of 16. As a child, she dodged bullets as her family fled war-torn Phnom Penh. As a teenager, she sold roses by the side of the road to save her family from hunger and homelessness in Hawaii. Through these experiences, she developed a fierce resilience that would prove invaluable in the years to come in politics. She is the only sitting Senator, elected in 2016, to give birth, another first.

Ellison, JT. [Her Dark Lies](#) (Mira \$28.99). When Nashville artist Claire Hunter, the narrator of this mesmerizing romantic suspense novel, and her fiancé, Jack Compton, the son of a computer company magnate, arrive on Isle Isola, off Italy, for their wedding at the Compton family villa, Claire is alarmed to hear that skeletal remains were dug up at the villa during restoration work the day before. She feels better after Jack reassures her that such finds are common on an island with a long history, but it turns out to be a harbinger of more sinister things to come, such as hacking of the Comptons' private servers and discovery of the body of a family employee. Convinced that someone is trying to sabotage their wedding, Jack and Claire unite in an effort to identify the culprit before more lives are lost. Characters with secrets to hide and mysterious deaths, including that of Jack's first wife, who died in a sailing accident a decade earlier, add to the menacing atmosphere. Squarely in the rise of the modern Gothic, this suspenseful story reminds me of Daphne du Maurier's classic, [Rebecca](#) (\$16.99)—with one major difference. There is a simultaneous paperback release. This is fun to get lost in, not to mention experience vicarious travel.

✻Epstein, Allison. [A Tip for the Hangman](#) (Doubleday \$28). Our February Historical Book of the Month earns this review in the *NY Times*, with which I obviously agree: "The brief life and mysterious murder of the Elizabethan poet and playwright Christopher Marlowe is well-trod fictional territory; Anthony Burgess's last published novel, *A Dead Man in Deptford*, Louise Welsh's moody novella "Tamburlaine Must Die" and Ros Barber's novel-in-verse *The Marlowe Papers* rank among the most superior depictions. Such illustrious efforts, thankfully, did not deter Allison Epstein, whose debut presents Marlowe as supremely capable,

something of a trickster, a consummate liar, a fiendish lover — and someone capable of murder well before his own disputed demise. Her Majesty’s spymaster, Francis Walsingham, finds Kit at Cambridge and, coldly impressed with the young man’s intellect (arguing both sides of the celibacy question with equal effect naturally turns heads), assigns him to infiltrate the household of Mary, Queen of Scots. Epstein, in modern prose mixed with period research, conveys Kit’s horror at watching Mary and others hang, and the base thrill he feels at being part of dangerous games that supersede his official duty to country.” We sold out our first shipment to Epstein but we have one additional carton arriving, so ten left to buy.

Finlay, Alex. [Every Last Fear](#) (St Martins \$28). After a late night of partying, NYU student Matt Pine returns to his dorm room to devastating news: nearly his entire family—his mom, his dad, his little brother and sister—have been found dead from an apparent gas leak while vacationing in Mexico. The local police claim it was an accident, but the FBI and State Department seem far less certain—and they won’t tell Matt why. The tragedy makes headlines everywhere because this isn’t the first time the Pine family has been thrust into the media spotlight. Matt’s older brother, Danny—currently serving a life sentence for the murder of his teenage girlfriend Charlotte—was the subject of a viral true crime documentary suggesting that Danny was wrongfully convicted. Though the country has rallied behind Danny, Matt holds a secret about his brother that he’s never told anyone: the night Charlotte was killed Matt saw something that makes him believe his brother is guilty of the crime. When Matt returns to his small hometown to bury his parents and siblings, he’s faced with a hostile community that was villainized by the documentary, a frenzied media, and memories he’d hoped to leave behind forever. Now, as the deaths in Mexico appear increasingly suspicious and connected to Danny’s case, Matt must unearth the truth behind the crime that sent his brother to prison—putting his own life in peril. This debut is getting big buzz. I have one large problem with it and will be curious to see what your reactions are.

Goddard, Robert. [The Fine Art of Invisible Detection](#) (Random UK \$44). Tokyo’s Umiko Wada has had enough excitement in life. With an overbearing mother and her husband recently murdered, she just wants to keep her head down. As a secretary to a private detective, her life is pleasantly filled with coffee runs and paperwork. That is, until her boss takes on a new case. A case that is surrounded by shadows. A case that means Wada will have to leave Tokyo and travel to London. In London, Nick Miller never knew his father, and was always told he wasn’t missing much. But when an old friend of his late mother says there are things that Nick needs to know about his parents, he can’t ignore it. When a chance encounter brings Wada and Nick together, they couldn’t know the series of violent events their investigations have set off. Then they discover Nick’s father might have been the only witness to a dark secret....

Katsu, Alma. [Red Widow](#) (Putnam \$27). Lyndsey Duncan, one of two female CIA officers at the center of this quiet but gripping espionage thriller more in the spirit of the late John Le Carré than, say, Alex Berenson, has just returned to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, her reputation tainted by an affair she had with a British intelligence officer in Lebanon. Nonetheless, she’s assigned to check out rumors of a mole in the CIA’s Moscow operation. Lyndsey’s investigation eventually leads her to analyst

Theresa Warner, who’s still reeling from the apparent death of her husband, an agency spy handler who disappeared in Russia two years earlier while on a mission. Will a suspicious Theresa discover that her husband is still alive, in a Russian prison, and the CIA has been lying to her? And if so, what is she to do? “Katsu, a former intelligence analyst, captures the thorny but oddly intimate alliance between two CIA officers who share an adversarial relationship with their employer, while providing an intriguing look at the day-to-day office politics and jostling that goes on behind Langley’s walls. Best known for her novels of psychological terror, Katsu shows a sure hand at a new genre.” I am very impressed, being also a fan of Joseph Kanon’s wonderful work. Alan Furst, too.

Kendal, Joe. [Killer Triggers](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Kenda, host of the TV series *Homicide Hunter*, details a series of brutal crimes that he solved as a Colorado Springs detective in the 1980s through the early 1990s. Full of sensationalist dialog that feels straight out of a procedural drama, the book offers an insider’s look at criminal cases, from the 911 call to the sentencing of the convicted. Kenda is unquestionably confident in his opinions, which, along with his interjections and asides, may raise eyebrows, especially given recent Black Lives Matter protests shining a light on an inequitable criminal justice system....[yet] he discusses a criminally neglectful slumlord, argues for the importance of investigative print journalism, and highlights the role therapy and talking can play in healing those who regularly see the worst of humanity.”—*LJ*. Our true crime buff Patrick will schedule a conversation with Kenda—with policing part of a national dialogue it’s good to listen to various perspectives.

Leon, Donna. [Transient Desires](#) (Grove \$27). Can it be the 30<sup>th</sup> for Commissario Guido Brunetti? Yes. And it reflects the Venetian policeman’s weariness with his job and his city. The focal point is the culture of the Giudecca, its insularity, and a kind of local boss with an iron grip that may be hard to break. It begins when two young American tourists are dropped off at the hospital’s dock, one of them seriously injured. Cameras reveal two young men in a boat (naturally) ferried the women there. They are soon identified as a well-to-do young lawyer and his childhood friend, a boatman. Patient and persistent inquiry ensues ringing in the coast guard and naval commandos, yet despite the high action finale the pace is a slow burn and in the end, what is accomplished? Leon increasingly goes for ambiguity, reflecting her view I think of a broken city government, maybe of Italy’s government. I have to agree with a reviewer who writes, “an aging Brunetti, who blames his tightening trousers on the dry cleaners rather than his eating habits, goes about his day: meeting with informants, lunching with colleagues, and dining with his erudite wife and opinionated children. Brunetti feels disillusioned with his retired friends, who can talk of nothing but grandchildren, and mournfully accepts that tourism will eventually destroy his beloved Venice.” We also offer the Signed UK edition: [Transient Desires](#) (Heinemann \$42).

Mallery, Susan. [The Vineyard at Painted Moon](#) (Harlequin \$27.99). Mackenzie Dienes seems to have it all—a beautiful home, close friends and a successful career as an elite winemaker with the family winery. She’s brilliant at her job and has even won the approval of her ruthless mother-in-law, widowed owner of the whole estate, who has effectively been Mackenzie’s mum for years. Everything in Mackenzie’s life is centered on her

husband, a companion since childhood, plus her best friend is his sister, and her home is owned by the family. Then as her mother-in-law announced her own engagement at a blow-out party, Mackenzie and her husband recognize their marriage is dead and they should split. And all of a sudden Mackenzie is poised to lose, her job, her home, and worse, what she thinks of as her family. Can she strike out on her own as a winemaker? Only if she gets financial support. And if she does, what then? This is no light women's fiction, it's a thriller about upending lives and tough choices and has a particularly ruthless antagonist. I wonder if naming Mackenzie is a conscious nod to the former Mrs. Bezos? I read this gripping story straight through, so leave yourself uninterrupted time to enjoy it.

Margolin, Phillip. [A Matter of Life and Death](#) (St Martins \$29). Former professional boxer Joe Lattimore, who's now homeless and desperate to provide for his wife and young child, accepts an offer to participate in an illegal no-holds-barred fight. When Joe's opponent dies during their bout, he finds himself at the mercy of the fight promoter, who pressures him into robbing the home of circuit court judge Anthony Carasco and the judge's wealthy wife, Betsy. Joe enters the house only to find Betsy's battered body. Despite the massive evidence piling up against Joe, Portland, Oregon, defense attorney Robin believes his claim that he's been framed. Prosecuting attorney Vanessa Cole, who views the "high-profile, sure-winner, death penalty case" as a way of keeping her position come election time, provides a perfect foil for Robin. Chicanery, sexual peccadilloes, and plenty of two-fisted action keep the plot moving steadily along the road toward justice. Those who like to see despicable people get their comeuppance will be more than satisfied.

Mizushima, Margaret. [Hanging Falls](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). This latest Timber Creek K-9 mystery set in rugged Colorado high country features heavy rains that flood the high ground and lead officer Mattie Cobb and her canine partner Robo to discover a body floating at the edge of a brimming lake... This excellent series is a PP staff favorite. Mizushima pairs up with Paula Munier and her K-9 on April 1<sup>st</sup>, no fooling....

Montgomery, Jess. [The Stills](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Ohio, 1927: Moonshining is a way of life in rural Bronwyn County, and even the otherwise upstanding Sheriff Lily Ross has been known to turn a blind eye when it comes to stills in the area. But when thirteen-year-old Jebediah Ranklin almost dies after drinking tainted moonshine, Lily knows that someone has gone too far, and—with the help of organizer and moonshiner Marvena Whitcomb—she's determined to find out who. Soon Lily's nemesis George Vogel reappears in town, and to the bootlegging business. So too does her no-good brother-in-law Luther Ross, now an agent for the newly formed Bureau of Prohibition. Lily must choose to help her community and peel back the layers of deception shrouding the town of Kinship, even while everyone around her seems to be betraying those they hold dear. This excellent series is based on a real life person and is recommended to those who enjoy Amy Stewart's Kopp Sisters mysteries.

Munier, Paula. [The Hiding Place](#) (St Martins \$27.99). When the man who killed her grandfather breaks out of prison and comes after her grandmother, Mercy Carr must unearth the long-buried scandals that threaten to tear her family apart. And she may have to do it without her beloved canine partner Elvis, if his former

handler has his way... Munier will celebrate April Fool's Day with us and her conversation partner Margaret Mizushima., by which time I will have acquired a reading copy. I liked Munier's first two Mercy Carrs...and the K-9.

Neubauer, Erica Ruth. [Murder at Wedgefield Manor](#) (Kensington \$26). England, 1926: Wedgefield Manor, deep in the tranquil Essex countryside, provides a welcome rest stop for war widow Jane Wunderly and her matchmaking Aunt Millie before their return to America. While Millie spends time with her long-lost daughter, Lillian, and their host, Lord Hughes, Jane fills the hours devouring mystery novels and taking flying lessons—much to Millie's disapproval. But any danger in the air is eclipsed by tragedy on the ground when one of the estate's mechanics, Air Force veteran Simon Marshall, is killed in a motorcar collision. The sliced brake cables prove this was no accident, yet was the intended victim someone other than Simon? The house is full of suspects—visiting relations, secretive servants, strangers prowling the grounds at night—and also full of targets. The enigmatic Mr. Redvers, who helped Jane solve a murder in Egypt in [Murder at the Mena House](#), arrives on the scene to once more offer his assistance.

Nguyen, Viet Thanh. [The Committed](#) (Grove \$27). Tip ins. "The sequel to Nguyen's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Sympathizer* is an exhilarating roller-coaster ride filled with violence, hidden identity, and meditations on whether the colonized can ever be free. The fractured, guilt-ridden narrator, a veteran of the South Vietnamese Army, where he was a mole for the communists, goes by his assumed name Vo Danh, which means "nameless." He has survived reeducation and a refugee camp and is now living in early 1980s Paris, along with his devoutly anti-communist "blood brother," Bon, who doesn't know he was a double agent. Vo Danh starts selling hashish for a Viet-Chinese drug lord called the Boss, whom he and Bon met in their refugee camp. The gig has him more vexed about the crime of capitalism than that of drug dealing, and he's not expecting a turf war. Indeed, he's chagrined to discover his rivals, French Arabs who share with him a legacy of colonization, want him dead. Meanwhile, there are opportunity for socializing, revenge, and reunions at the Vietnamese Union. The book works both as sequel and standalone, with Nguyen careful to fold in needed backstory, and the author's wordplay continues to scratch at the narrator's fractured sense of self ("I am not just one but two. Not just I but you. Not just me but we"). Pleasures abound, such as the narrator's hair-raising escapes, descriptions..."—*PW* Starred Review

O'Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Bookshop](#) (Kensington \$27). What better cozy read for March? The opening of a bookshop in Kilbane, Ireland, is cause for celebration in Irish village Kilbane until its residents learn the shop is stocking only good literature and the co-owners, Oran and Pdraig McCarthy, will let in only customers who can quote James Joyce or Seamus Heaney. When elderly Margaret O'Shea is found dead near the shop, gardaí Siobhán O'Sullivan is sure she died of natural causes, but when Siobhán tries to speak to Oran, his behavior strikes her as odd. She later wonders whether Oran's antipathy to any fiction he doesn't view as literary might be connected to Margaret's death—and to the subsequent death of Deirdre Walsh, the self-published author of a dense literary novel, who collapses during a bookshop event. Deirdre's tree nut allergy could have been the cause, but a power outage shortly before might have provided cover for a killer. Aided by a gardaí trainee, Siobhán pursues a

puzzling investigation full of misdirection and enlivened by the input of her five rambunctious siblings....

✦Penner, Sarah. [The Lost Apothecary](#) (Park Row \$27.99). Modern Caroline travels alone to London. Looking for a distraction, she finds one while mudlarking along the Thames: a small glass vial. Inspired to research its origins, Caroline uncovers a dark tale of poison and murder in the 1700s, where an apothecary owner with a unique talent, a dark past, and a keen sense of revenge meets a young girl with a curiosity that might lead her astray. The narrative flips between 17<sup>th</sup> Century Nella's story of helping to liberate women by secretly supplying them with poison to murder men who have wronged them and Caroline's quest to solve the centuries-old apothecary murders while going solo on her 10-year anniversary trip to London after discovering her husband's infidelity. Penner's fierce, imaginative, and inspiring debut is a great choice for book clubs."

Qui, Xiaolong. [Becoming Inspector Chen](#) (Severn \$29). Qiu deepens his Dalgliesh-like series lead in his superior 11th novel featuring Shanghai policeman and poet Chen Cao. Chen's latest investigation embarrassed the Beijing Communist Party leadership, and he's fallen out of favor. Despite suspecting that he'll soon lose his chief inspector position, Chen's curious about a new case involving an anti-party poem posted on the country's most popular social media platform, which reminds him of a previous inquiry. Flashbacks detail Chen's first case, which centers on an old gourmet's murder and involves "a piece of blood-speckled gauze, and a gray lizard with a strange name he failed to recollect." That intriguing plotline is enhanced by an account of Chen's painful childhood as the son of an academic deemed hostile to Mao's regime and the events that led to Chen's joining the Shanghai PD. While series fans will be delighted at the background Qiu provides, this is an accessible starting point for newcomers interested in a dogged, honest cop who must battle his own government to do his job. Just 3 left as I write this.

✦Raybourn, Deanna. [An Unexpected Peril](#) (Berkley \$26). This is so much fun. How I loved *The Prisoner of Zenda* when Rudolph Rassendyll nobly takes the place of the King of Ruritania at his coronation while the real king is being drugged by the villain. Anthony Hope wrote this adventure in 1894. Now here we have Veronica Speedwell in a similar role. Why is the lepidopterist bored with life in London? After all, she and her lover, the Hon. Revelstoke Templeton-Vane, better known as Stoker, are living on a lovely estate while they work on a vast collection of objects of natural history and help design an exhibit to honor Alice Baker-Greene, an intrepid mountaineer and feminist, who died in a climbing accident in a tiny mountain kingdom. Princess Gisela of the Alpenwald herself comes to open the exhibit. All goes smoothly until Stoker finds Alice's climbing rope among the exhibition items and notices that it wasn't frayed but cut with a knife, turning her fatal accident into murder. Veronica, who'd met and admired Alice, is keen to investigate, but Stoker's not interested in expanding their case files. Their differences are rendered moot when members of the Alpenwald delegation beg Veronica to pose as the wayward Princess Gisela, who often goes off on little trips on her own, in order to avert the scandal that would surely arise if she did not show up for her engagements. The two women look remarkably alike because both are related through Queen Victoria's large family. Now that she has entree to all the Alpenwalders, Veronica, her boredom decisively ended,

sets to work sleuthing with the reluctant Stoker. Their discoveries soon put them at odds with a clever killer. This well wrought and entertaining [Veronica Speedwell series](#) is best read in order.

FYI the 1937 movie of *The Prisoner of Zenda* starred Ronald Coleman, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and Madeleine Carroll with Raymond Massey, Mary Astor, and David Niven in supporting roles. The 1952 remake starred Stewart Granger, Deborah Kerr, and James Mason and was nearly word-for-word in the screenplay.

✦Robinson, Peter. [Not Dark Yet](#) (Hodder \$46). The gruesome double murder at an Eastvale property developer's luxury home should be an open and shut case for Superintendent Banks and his team of detectives. There's a clear link to the notoriously vicious Albanian mafia, men who left the country suspiciously soon after the death. Then they find a cache of spy-cam videos hidden in the house—and Annie and Gerry's investigation pivots to the rape of a young girl that could cast the murders in an entirely different light. Banks' friend Zelda, increasingly uncertain of her future in Britain's hostile environment, thinks she will be safer in Moldova hunting the men who abducted, raped and enslaved her than she is Yorkshire or London. Her search takes her back to the orphanage where it all began—but by stirring up the murky waters of the past, Zelda is putting herself in greater danger than any she's seen before. And as the threat to Zelda escalates, so does the danger for Banks....

Scottoline, Lisa. [Eternal](#) (Putnam \$28). "Set in Italy during the Fascist regime and subsequent Nazi involvement, this historical fiction, a departure for the author, is a solid dose of history told through the lives and loves of characters, personally affected by the politics. The impact of decisions and the efforts of individuals to change the course of their country and their lives are vividly portrayed. This is my own Indie Next nomination: *Eternal* is the perfect title for a novel that is as much a love story between the author and the Eternal City, Rome, as it is an unusual love story triangulated between three childhood friends navigating Mussolini's Italy and the Italian Holocaust. Written with passion by an author who "really likes sentences" and takes pride in crafting them, *brava* to this first historical novel by Poisoned Pen favorite Scottoline.

Shannon, Samantha. [The Mask Falling](#) (Bloomsbury \$28). Shannon's gripping fourth Bone Season novel picks up where *The Song Rising* left off, with Paige Mahoney on the run after escaping imprisonment and torture. It's the year 2060, and Paige is hiding out in the Scion Citadel of Paris, recovering both physically and mentally from her trauma. Paige finds work with the Domino Programme—a top-secret organization that seeks to overthrow the Scion branch in Paris—using her gift of dreamwalking to infiltrate the government and discover devastating secrets. Accompanying her is Warden, her former enemy turned bodyguard. Paige's arc is deeply emotional as she works through painful memories, encounters fresh betrayals, and maintains her sense of duty to complete her missions no matter the cost. Shannon expertly blends genres to create a story that is at once a political thriller, a dystopian epic, and a paranormal adventure.

Staples, Will. [Animals](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). Screenwriter Staples, creator of the Disney+ drama series *The Right Stuff* and the *Mission Impossible* and *Jack Ryan* franchises and the video game

*Call of Duty*, makes the tragedy of animal trafficking vivid in his impressive debut. South African Cobus Venter, a ranger who has lost colleagues in shoot-outs with rhino horn poachers, embarks on a perilous mission to Southeast Asia to try to stop the powerful criminals behind the slaughter of wildlife and people. Venter's path eventually crosses that of dodgy American insurance investigator Randall Knight, who has found evidence that tiger breeding to create an exotic animal could cause a pandemic via an adorable tiger cub whose arrival triggered the deaths of the other tigers in a commercial wildlife park—a park insured heavily. Staples doesn't shy away from the shocking cruelty accompanying the poachers' trade—at one point, poachers shoot a baby elephant in the stomach so that its terrified wails will lead adult elephants to gather and make them easier to kill. And he skillfully weaves together multiple plot strands—including CIA efforts to combat terrorism funded by poachers—with well-developed characters, none of them with firm moral compasses. "His extensive research pays off in this moving, multifaceted tale," avers the *PW* Starred Review. For me, who has been on photo safari in Kruger National Park in South Africa, an additional reason to make this our **March Crime Book of the Month** is not only raising awareness of how terrible animal trafficking is and how it is funding terrorism and the drug trade, but Staples is donating all his royalties to non-profit organizations dedicating to protecting wildlife. Nice to think that your purchase of the book is thus a contribution, no?

Swanson, Peter. [Every Vow You Break](#) (Harper \$29). What are the consequences of entering a marriage with a guilty secret? As Abigail Baskin faces her approaching wedding to wealthy Bruce Lamb, she's wracked with guilt over sleeping with someone else during her bachelorette party weekend. Her situation becomes even more fraught when that one-night stand guy, whom she only knows as Scottie, starts stalking her. After Scottie sends Abigail an email suggesting they share a deep connection and she should cancel the nuptials, she goes ahead with the wedding, but fears Scottie's continuing obsession with her. She hopes for a respite when Bruce spirits her away for their honeymoon on a Maine island, but that's dashed when Scottie appears there as well, setting in motion a deadly series of events that imperils her life. Swanson, author of the huge hit [Eight Perfect Murders](#) (\$16.99), is crafting his own male-oriented niche in the Trust No One genre. Swanson joins us on May 4 with Linwood Barclay for a double event. But I am doing a book chat with him in mid-March you can watch on our home page.

Willig, Lauren. [Band of Sisters](#) (Harper \$29). Leave it to the imaginative and resourceful Willig to draw upon the real experiences of the Smith College Relief Unit—in World War I, a change up from the flood of WWII novels we are experiencing. "In 1917, Smith graduate Kate Moran joins fellow alumnus Emmie Van Alden to travel to France and help villagers whose lives have been upended by an earlier German occupation. The unit, composed of 17 women, resides in army barracks near an abandoned chateau in Greccourt, where they provide locals with food, medical care, and education. The villagers' lack of bare necessities is eye-opening for the Smith women, many of whom have led privileged lives. Kate, meanwhile, remains sensitive about her humble beginnings—she gained admission to Smith through a scholarship—and becomes upset when she discovers that Emmie paid for her trip to France. (Emmie had told her they

were funded by donations from Smith alumnae). As the war rages on and the German army once again advances on Greccourt, Kate and Emmie's friendship grows stronger when they reveal their deepest insecurities to one another. Willig expertly uses historical details in her seamless, well-plotted tale. This will entice readers from the very first page."—*PW*, a review that says it as well as I can. This gem is a generous read at 500+ pages.

Library Reads adds, "Prepare to fall in love with these intrepid women and all their faults and foibles. When the Smith College graduates went off to aid the war effort in France, they learned as much about themselves as they did about the hardships of the war-torn country. Lauren Willig has crafted a story that will thrill readers' souls and warm their hearts. *Band of Sisters* is the best kind of historical fiction—a saga that sweeps you away to another time and place and leaves you all the better for the experience. Glorious."

✦Winspear, Jacqueline. [The Consequences of Fear](#) (Harper \$29). In late 1941 London, Freddie Hackett, a young message runner for the government, hides in a bombed-out house as he witnesses a murder and is then shocked to encounter the killer when he does his next delivery. The police don't believe him—a cursory inspection shows no sign of a body—so he seeks out a woman to whom he once delivered a message: Maisie Dobbs. While Maisie believes the boy and wants to help, she must maintain extreme caution: she's working secretly for the Special Operations Executive, assessing candidates for crucial work with the French resistance. Work that inevitably results in death to some of the operatives. Her two worlds—British Intelligence operations in France and the work of French Free agents—collide when she spots the killer in a place she least expects.... and meanwhile she is enjoying her romance with an American diplomat assigned to the British embassy. While momentous events are the larger canvas for Winspear's Maisie Dobbs mysteries, it's the ordinary lives and details playing out against the extraordinary that capture readers. Winspear reveals that Freddie Hackett was inspired by her own father's work as a runner during the war.

Winspear's memoir of, mostly, her parents and thus her childhood as well as her adult life, has been nominated for a 2021 Edgar. We still have Signed firsts at a special low price: [This Time Next Year We'll Be Laughing](#) (\$20). I can't think of a better Mother's Day gift!

## UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

✦Bennett, SJ. [The Windsor Knot](#) (Harper \$27.99). It is the early spring of 2016 and Queen Elizabeth is at Windsor Castle in advance of her 90th birthday celebrations. But the preparations are interrupted when a guest is found dead in one of the Castle bedrooms. The scene suggests the young Russian pianist strangled himself, but a badly tied knot leads MI5 to suspect foul play was involved. The Queen leaves the investigation to the professionals—until their suspicions point them in the wrong direction. Unhappy at the mishandling of the case and concerned for her staff's morale, the monarch decides to discreetly take matters into her own hands. With help from her Assistant Private Secretary, Rozie Oshodi, a British Nigerian and recent officer in the Royal Horse Artillery, the Queen secretly begins making inquiries while she carries out her royal duties with her usual aplomb. A great cast of characters and a wonderful sense of setting make a fun and entertaining read.



Black, Cara. [Three Hours in Paris](#) (\$16.95). In October 1939, American Kate Rees, the heroine of this riveting standalone from bestseller Black (the Aimée Leduc series), is living with her naval engineer husband and baby daughter at Scapa Flow, the Royal Navy base in Scotland's Orkney Islands. After her husband and daughter die during the German U-boat attack on the battleship Royal Oak, Kate becomes obsessed with defeating Hitler. Her rifle skills, learned as a girl hunting in Oregon, earn her a place in a British intelligence operation to assassinate Hitler. In June 1940, with little training, she parachutes into Paris, where Hitler is making a brief visit. Kate gets Hitler in her crosshairs, but her shot misses and she goes on the run. Hitler orders the regular German police and the Gestapo to catch the sniper within 36 hours. Despite numerous obstacles and the realization that no plan was made for her safe return, Kate is determined to make her way to London. Black keeps the suspense high throughout. Fans of *The Day of the Jackal* won't want to miss this heart-stopping thriller. Lauren Willig wrote of last April's hardcover release: "Wow. It's so good. Like a girl power *Eye of the Needle*."

Cantor, Jillian. [Half Life](#) (Harper \$16.99). Cantor deconstructs the life of Nobel Prize-winning scientist Marie Curie with a fascinating premise: what if Maria Skolodowska had never left Poland in 1891 to go to Paris and reinvent herself as Marie Curie?... See Signed Books above for more. This is a simultaneous hardcover/paperback release. I add that Kate Moore's [Radium Girls](#) (\$17.99), set in the dark years of WWI when radium dial factories shone along with the addition of radium to beauty aids like lotion and to wonder drugs until women began to speak out about symptoms, and to die, is a good companion read to Cantor.

De Castrique, Mark. [Fatal Scores](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). During opening day at the local baseball stadium, Asheville, NC, PI Sam Blackman and Nakayla Robertson, his no-nonsense partner in love and detective work, hear an argument between Ken Stokes, a volunteer environmental activist, and Luke Kirkgate, son of the CEO of a paper mill, whose toxic runoff in the 1950s fouled a nearby river and caused cancer deaths. Stokes calls for public recognition of real-life environmentalist Wilma Dykeman in the 2020 Asheville Luminaries Festival, a move Kirkgate opposes. When Stokes is found dead near a water-sample collection site monitoring the Pigeon River, it's unclear whether it's an accident or a murder... For more see our March Large Paperback Picks.

Derobertis-Theye, Nicola. [The Vietri Project](#) (Harper \$27.99). Signed bookplates. A search for a mysterious customer in Rome leads a young bookseller to confront the complicated history of her family, and that of Italy itself, in this "achingly intimate debut with echoes of Lily King and Elif Batuman. Working at a bookstore in Berkeley in the years after college, Gabriele becomes intrigued by the orders of signor Vietri, a customer from Rome whose numerous purchases grow increasingly mystical and esoteric. Restless and uncertain of her future, Gabriele quits her job and, landing in Rome, decides to look up Vietri. Unable to locate him, she begins a quest to unearth the well-concealed facts of his life. Following a trail of obituaries and military records, a memoir of life in a village forgotten by modernity, and the court records of a communist murder trial, Gabriele meets an eclectic assortment of the city's inhabitants. Each encounter draws her unexpectedly closer to her own painful past and complicated family history—an Italian mother diagnosed with schizophrenia and

institutionalized during her childhood, and an extended family in Rome still recovering from the losses and betrayals in their past. An interesting read along with the Scottoline historical, *Eternal*, below.

Ellison, JT. [Her Dark Lies](#) (\$16.99). A simultaneous paperback release. See Signed books above for a review of this Gothic thriller set on an isolated island off Italy.

Fox, Candice. [Gathering Dark](#) (Forge \$27.99). Ned Kelly Award-winner Fox elects for Dr. Blair Harbour not to report the battered, distraught teenage girl who robbed the L.A. gas station where Blair works and stole her car. Recently paroled after a murder conviction, Blair feels sympathy for the poor kid. The next day, Blair's former cellmate, Sneak, shows up to beg for help in finding her missing daughter, who happens to be the young thief. Meanwhile, Detective Jessica Sanchez becomes a pariah in the LAPD after a grateful citizen bequeaths her a Brentwood mansion for outstanding performance, making Jessica the target of real LAPD enmity. Blair and Sneak's quest brings them into the orbit of Ada Maverick, a stone-cold crime boss who's willing to help them in their search for her own reasons, just as Jessica begins to realize that there was something hinky about the case that sent Blair to prison. Vividly drawn characters and striking individual scenes, such as Jessica's visit to a dealer in murderabilia (killers' personal artifacts) or Blair watching M13 gangsters happily play with her pet gopher, help make this brutal but ultimately hopeful tale of desperate women a standout.

Gentill, Sulari. [Shanghai Secrets](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). I adore the Rowland Sinclair 1930s mysteries (I edit them, such a pleasure) and their window on this turbulent decade from not just Down Under but All Over. *PW* agrees with me: Set in 1935, Gentill's rousing ninth Rowland Sinclair takes Rowly, on his brother Wilfred's instructions, to Shanghai for trade talks involving the family wool business. "Just listen and be pleasant. For God's sake, don't sign anything," Wilfred tells him, adding, "Take your unemployed lefty friends with you, if you must." Thus self-proclaimed poet Milton Isaacs, landscape painter Clyde Watson Jones, and nascent filmmaker Edna Higgins accompany Rowly to the "Paris of the East," where they rub shoulders with English lawyers, Chinese gangsters, Russian nobility, Japanese businessmen, and Indian taxi drivers. Rowly runs afoul of the police when Alexandra Romanovna, a beautiful Russian dancer, is found with her throat cut in his hotel suite, leaving him with no choice but to investigate. Rowly and his pals soon discover any number of people with motive to murder Alexandra. Eccentric but authentic characters bolster a cracking good plot. Gentill captures in telling detail a political, moral, and cultural milieu." Between war Shanghai is a fascinating city, one taking in refugees from Europe even as the threat of Japan escalates. And this excellent story propels Rowly and friends on to their next crime scene: Boston!

Griffiths, Elly. [The Postscript Murders](#) (Houghton \$25). Our **March British Crime Book of the Month** is a standalone mystery replete with the delightful humor that characterizes Edgar winner Griffiths' Ruth Galloway Mysteries which I adore—she won the Edgar for an earlier standalone: [The Stranger Diaries](#) (\$15.99). Here she takes a leaf from Anthony Horowitz, (and even Agatha Christie) in a clever plot that begins with the death of a 90-year-old woman with a heart condition in Shoreham-by-

Sea, that should not be suspicious, right? But her devoted associates—home healthcare worker Natalka, café owner and ex-monk Benedict, and former broadcaster Edwin residing in the same elder care facility as Peggy—suspect foul play when they find mystery novels dedicated to Peggy, references to her as a “murder consultant,” and a postcard with a disturbing note that has been sent to the novelists as well. Peggy’s son, Nigel, who seems too eager to dispose of his mother’s belongings, also is of interest. Much to Detective Sergeant Harbinger Kaur unease, the trio head to a literary festival in Aberdeen to buttonhole the postcard recipients and learn more about Peggy’s relationship to them. Soon writers wind up dead, and Kaur is forced to continue her investigation to find out how these writers keep dying and how they’re able to dream up such imaginative deaths in their novels alongside the enthusiastic amateur sleuths in Scotland. Bibliophile genre fans will enjoy the insider’s look at publishing and relish the intoxicating, often intoxicated, milieu of the festival. “All readers will devour the cleverly constructed story, replete with Griffiths’ trademark engaging prose, well-placed humor, and always-endearing characters.” —*Booklist* Starred Review. There are some parallels to Richard Osman’s bestselling 2021 Edgar-nominated [The Thursday Murder Club](#) as well.

Hamilton, Denise, ed. [Speculative Los Angeles](#) (Akashic \$16.95). Patrick hosts a book he recommends: The debut title in a new city-based anthology series featuring 14 all-new stories with speculative, sci-fi, and paranormal themes—each using distinct neighborhood settings as a launching pad. “Speculative Los Angeles is a thrill ride of grand ideas and warnings. Take a place that already defines the future of culture, add fourteen unbound minds, and you get a collection that wows the imagination like no other.”—Michael Connelly. LJ adds, “Many [stories] have a distinctly gritty and postapocalyptic flavor that takes advantage of a uniquely L.A. vibe.”

Johnson, Nancy. [The Kindest Lie](#) (Morrow \$27.99). Signed bookplates available. It’s 2008 and the birth of new hope in Chicago for its Black community. Ruth Tuttle, an Ivy League educated engineer, is married to a successful man who wants to start a family. Before she can face pregnancy, Ruth has to reconcile with having given up the baby she birthed as a teen....which means returning to the Indiana factory town where she grew up and where family secrets remain buried. “It takes tremendous talent to seamlessly combine social commentary with a powder keg of a plot, and Johnson accomplishes just that in her gripping debut novel, addressing issues of race, class, privilege and upward mobility.... A fictional callback to Isabel Wilkerson’s *Caste*, *The Kindest Lie* also brings to mind Brit Bennett’s *The Vanishing Half*, in which another young Black woman returns to her hometown to try to reconcile her past, present and future. Don’t miss this powerful debut.” The *Washington Post* adds, “*The Kindest Lie* is a layered, complex exploration of race and class.... Johnson is particularly adept at drawing the dividing lines between African Americans and working-class Whites, while at the same time illuminating the things they share... It is a tale of how lies and omissions can shape and warp us. It is a story about reconciliation, set against a backdrop of racism and resentments. But more than anything, it is a meditation on family and forgiveness.”

Martine, Arkady. [A Desolation Called Peace](#) (Tor \$26.99). “Martine spins a dizzying, exhilarating story of diplomacy, conspiracy, and first contact in the powerhouse sequel to her

Hugo Award–winning debut, [A Memory Called Empire](#) (\$18.99). Mahit Dzmare has returned home to Lsel station after a brief, eventful stint as ambassador to the empire of Teixcalaan, but now Teixcalaanli warships are moving into formation against the terrifying aliens that live beyond a nearby jumpgate. When Nine Hibiscus, the leader of the warships, requests a trained diplomat to aid in alien relations and avoid conflict, Mahit’s former liaison and love interest, Three Seagrass, assigns herself the job—and drags Mahit along with her. But there are factions on Lsel and in Teixcalaan who would benefit from an endless war and who work to undermine their negotiations. Martine effortlessly balances several points of view—including the idealistic 11-year-old imperial heir, Eight Antidote—to provide a vivid window into a struggle over the question of who gets to be counted as a person. Martine’s aliens are viscerally unsettling and utterly believable, and she deploys them masterfully to underscore themes of colonization, assimilation, and cultural violence. This complex, stunning space opera promises to reshape the genre.”—*PW* Starred Review

O’Connor, Nuala. [Nora: A love Story of Nora and James Joyce](#) (Harper \$16.99). O’Connor expands on her Granta Award-winning short story, “Gooseen” in this poignant, comprehensive portrait of Galway gal Nora Barnacle as a young woman, mother, and literary inspiration for the Molly Bloom character in *Ulysses*. Nora and James Joyce’s inseparable attachment begins in Dublin on June 16, 1904 (forever remembered as Bloomsday for the setting of Joyce’s masterpiece) and stretches to 1951. Narrated in Nora’s robust voice and carried by details saturated in filth, the narrative traces Nora and Joyce’s nomadic life from Ireland to Trieste, Zurich, London, Rome, and Paris, and details their constant money worries, health concerns, struggles with two difficult children, and emotional despair. Despite their personal and professional achievements, and a circle of friends that includes Sylvia Beach, the Guggenheim sisters, Samuel Beckett, Ezra Pound, and other literati, the couple suffers loneliness and ‘mutual melancholy.’ An inscription on a bracelet that Joyce gives Nora underscores their commitment to one another: “love is unhappy when love is away.’ O’Connor’s admirable accomplishment adds to the abundant Joyceana with a moving examination of an unforgettable family and of a woman who held it and Joyce’s career together.

Rosenberg, Joel C. [The Beirut Protocol](#) (Tyndall \$27.99). A game-changing peace treaty between Israel and the Saudis is nearly done. The secretary of state is headed to the region to seal the deal. And Special Agent Marcus Ryker is leading an advance trip along the Israeli-Lebanon border, ahead of the secretary’s arrival. But when Ryker and his team are ambushed by Hezbollah forces, a nightmare scenario begins to unfold. The last thing the White House can afford is a new war in the Mideast that could derail the treaty and set the region ablaze. U.S. and Israeli forces are mobilizing to find the hostages and get them home, but Ryker knows the clock is ticking. When Hezbollah realizes who they’ve captured, no amount of ransom will save them—they’ll be transferred to Beirut and then to Tehran to be executed on live television. Marcus Ryker finds himself in the most dangerous situation yet.

Viskic, Emma. [Darkness for Light](#) (Pushkin \$14.95). A new case for deaf PI Jacob Zelic, a series earning multiple awards in Australia. See our March Large Paperback Picks below for a review.

Whitaker, Chris. [We Begin at the End](#) (Hanover \$27.99). When his childhood friend is paroled from prison after a 30 year sentence, Walk, the sheriff of the coastal California town where he grew up, must confront a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma: what happened all those years ago and why? He's aided in his quest by Duchess, a savvy 13-year-old. This #1 Indie Next Pick for March, set largely in 2005, examines the repercussions of a fatal accident decades earlier on the residents of Cape Haven, a tourist town on the California coast. At 15, Vincent King was sent to a men's prison for hitting and killing seven-year-old Sissy Radley while joyriding. Now, 30 years later, Vincent is being released. His childhood friend, Walker — Cape Haven's police chief—hopes that Vincent, and the town, can finally begin healing. But soon after Vincent's return, Star Radley—a single mother and Sissy's older sister—is found murdered in her home. With Vincent as the prime suspect, Chief Walker and Duchess, Star's 13-year-old daughter and self-proclaimed outlaw—with the moxie of Harriet the Spy—each launch their respective quests for the truth. “Powered by extraordinarily deep character development and an impressively intricate plot, this novel is simultaneously a murder mystery, a love story, and a heartbreaking tragedy. The existential agony is palpable throughout, but so, too, is the hope at the end. Whitaker has upped his game with this emotionally charged page-turner. This is dramatic storytelling at its best, full of layers of intrigue and complex personalities. Whitaker's ravishing, pulse-raising suspense illuminates how we fall prey to our own fierce desires for connection.” The UK's Whitaker is the award-winning author of *Tall Oaks* and *All the Wicked Girls*.

## OUR MARCH BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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

Staples, Will. [Animals](#)

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

Griffiths, Elly. [The Postscript Murders](#)

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

Bennett, SJ. [The Windsor Knot](#)

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

Cantor, Jillian. [Half Life](#)

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

Andrews, Alexandra. [Who Is Maud Dixon?](#)

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

Penner, Sarah. [The Lost Apothecary](#)

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

Sten, Camilla. [The Lost Village](#)

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

Neuvel, Sylvain. [A History of What Comes Next](#)

## CELEBRATE SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

*There are many authors' works to recommend including that of Maeve Binchy, Benjamin Black/John Banville, Patrick Taylor.... and if you can find them the truly fabulous Superintendent McGarr mysteries by the late Bartholomew Gill as well as a kind of Golden Age mystery trilogy by Ellis Dillon. And the Matt Minogue mystery series by John Brady. Also the Sister Fidelma medieval Ireland mysteries by Peter Tremayne, currently out of print. Plus the now dated The Marching Season by Daniel Silva and some of the thrillers by the late Jack Higgins.*

Bruen, Ken. [A Galway Epiphany](#) (Grove \$26). This latest and 17<sup>th</sup> for Galway cop now turned private eye Jack Taylor finds Jack's new life on the farm with a Rolling Stones roadie friend and a falcon named Maeve disrupted by three mysteries that prove to be dangerously linked.

Connelly, Sheila. [Fatal Roots](#) (\$7.99). This Cork County Mystery, Boston's Maura Donovan has been getting accustomed to Irish living, complete with an inherited house and a pub named Sullivan's. But now, her mother has returned—and she's brought Maura's half-sister in tow. To make matters more confusing, a handful of Cork University students are knocking on Maura's door asking about a mystical fairy fort that happens to be located on Maura's piece of land. The lore indicates that messing with the fort can cause bad luck, and most everyone is telling Maura not to get too involved for fear of its powers, but Maura is curious about her own land, and she definitely doesn't buy into the superstition. Then one of the students disappears after a day of scoping out the fort on Maura's property. Maura treads carefully, asking the folks around town who might have an idea, but no one wants anything to do with these forts. She has to take matters into her own hand—it's her land, after all. But when she uncovers a decades-old corpse buried in the center of the fort, nothing is for certain.

French, Tana. [In the Woods](#) (\$9.99). The first in the internationally bestselling Dublin Murder Squad series (a 2007 First Mystery Book of the Month) is now a Starz TV series. The *NY Times* calls it “Required reading for anyone who appreciates tough, unflinching intelligence and ingenious plotting.” As dusk approaches a small Dublin suburb in the summer of 1984, mothers begin to call their children home. But on this warm evening, three children do not return from the dark and silent woods. When the police arrive, they find only one of the children gripping a tree trunk in terror, wearing blood-filled sneakers, and unable to recall a single detail of the previous hours. Twenty years later, the found boy, Rob Ryan, is a detective on the Dublin Murder Squad and keeps his past a secret. But when a twelve-year-old girl is found murdered in the same woods, he and Detective Cassie Maddox—his partner and closest friend—find themselves investigating a case chillingly similar to the previous unsolved mystery. Now, with only snippets of long-buried memories to guide him, Ryan has the chance to uncover both the mystery of the case before him and that of his own shadowy past. I recommend [all of French's work](#), in series or not,

Hardiman, Rebecca. [Good Eggs](#) (Atria \$27). He Indie Next Pick: “Filled with warmth and hilarity, this book reads like a mix of *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Frye* and a Maeve Binchy novel. The Irish setting is especially welcome on this side of the pond, and of the three plotlines following different generations, the absolute best paints 83-year-old pistol of a grandma Millie as

a delightfully quirky and determined soul. A charming, offbeat novel — perfect to savor as we emerge from this particular winter.”

Meier, Leslie. [Irish Parade Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). The only thing Irish in this latest for Tinker’s Cove, Maine, reporter Lucy Stone is the annual St. Patrick’s Day parade.

Murphy, Catie. [Dead in Dublin](#) (Kensington \$7.99). Starts a cozy Dublin Driver series. Ferrying tourists around Dublin for the Leprechaun Limo Service makes quite a change after years in the military. Still, Megan Malone is enjoying her life in Ireland. She likes the scenery, the easy pace, the quirky, quick-witted locals. Everything—except having one of her clients drop dead at the statue of fabled fishmonger, Molly Malone. Most restaurant critics notch up their share of enemies. Elizabeth Darr, however, was a well-loved international star. She and her husband, Simon, had just had dinner when Elizabeth collapsed, and spoiled seafood is the first suspect. The restaurant’s owner, worried her business is doomed, begs Megan to look into it. Between her irate boss and a handsome Garda who’s both amused and annoyed by her persistence, Megan has her hands full even before she’s cajoled into taking care of two adorable Jack Russell puppies.... IMHO possibly one of the highest energy canines there is. The sequel is [Death on the Green](#) (\$8.99).

Neville, Stuart. [The Ghosts of Belfast](#) (\$9.99). John Connolly calls this first of Neville’s Belfast Novels, winner of the LA Times Book Prize, “One of the best Irish novels, in any genre, of recent times.” Northern Ireland’s Troubles may be over, but peace has not erased the crimes of the past. Gerry Fegan, a former paramilitary contract killer, is haunted by the ghosts of the twelve people he slaughtered. Every night, at the point of losing his mind, he drowns their screams in drink. But it’s not enough. In order to appease the ghosts, Fegan is going to have to kill the men who gave him orders. From the greedy politicians to the corrupt security forces, the street thugs to the complacent bystanders who let it happen, all are called to account. But when Fegan’s vendetta threatens to derail a hard-won truce and destabilize the government, old comrades and enemies alike want him dead. You can order the whole [Belfast Novels](#) series.

And out last fall, [The Traveller and Other Stories](#) (Soho \$27.95), a darkly compelling collection of Northern Irish Noir which concludes with his long-awaited novella, “The Traveller,” the companion piece to *The Ghosts of Belfast* and *Collusion*.

O’Connor, Carlene. [Murder in an Irish Bookshop](#) (Kensington \$27). What better cozy read for March? The opening of a bookshop in Kilbane, Ireland, is cause for celebration in Irish village Kilbane until its residents learn the shop is stocking only good literature and the co-owners, Oran and Padraig McCarthy, will let in only customers who can quote James Joyce or Seamus Heaney.... See Signed Books above for more. We recommend this whole cozy [Irish Village Mystery](#) series, all available but this new one in small paperbacks.

O’Connor, Nuala. [Nora: A love Story of Nora and James Joyce](#) (Harper \$16.99). O’Connor expands on her Granta award-winning short story, “Gooseen” in this poignant, comprehensive portrait of Galway gal Nora Barnacle as a young woman, mother, and literary inspiration for the Molly Bloom character in *Ulysses*....

## CLASSICS

Hughes, Dorothy B. [Ride the Pink Horse](#) (Penzler \$15.95). Originally published in 1946, this standout noir from Hughes (1904–1993) opens with Sailor, a Chicago gangster, arriving in Santa Fe, NM, where he has learned former Illinois senator Willis Douglass now lives. Back in Chicago, Douglass hired Sailor to murder his wife, but failed to pay Sailor the agreed-upon amount. To complicate matters, McIntyre, the head of Chicago’s homicide bureau, is in Santa Fe, apparently also on Douglass’s trail. Just how the crossing of paths of the politician, the cop, and the hit man will play out generates a high level of suspense. Though Sailor has many unappealing qualities, including his racism, Hughes manages to make him sympathetic. Evocative prose is a plus (“The bus traveled further across the wasteland; miles of nothing, just land, empty land. Land that didn’t get anywhere except into more land, and always against the sky the unmoving barrier of mountains”). Readers familiar with Hughes only from *In a Lonely Place*, filmed with Humphrey Bogart, will want to check out this entry in the American Mystery Classics series.

Symons, Julian. [The Progress of a Crime](#) (Poisoned Pen \$14.99). A confrontation during a dance between a gang of young hooligans and landowner James Corby in the English village of Far Wether drives this taut mystery from MWA Grand Master Symons (1912–1994), first published in 1960. After vowing to return, the gang members show up on Guy Fawkes Night when the residents of Far Wether burn an effigy of a legendary wicked local, Squire Oldmeadow, and set off fireworks. The night ends tragically with Corby’s fatal stabbing. Overheard cries of “Get him, King” before the murder lead the police to Jack Garney (aka King), the head of a group of coworkers in a canning factory. After Scotland Yard gets involved, Garney and a follower, Les Gardner, are charged with killing Corby and a related murder. Much of the action focuses on their trial, which is viewed from the perspective of journalist Hugh Bennett, who identified Gardner as being present on the fatal night. Symons excels at conveying the wide impact Corby’s murder has on multiple people. Fans of realistic, downbeat crime fiction will welcome this British Library Crime Classic reissue with an Introduction by Martin Edwards, the series’ editor.

## SOME NEW HARDCOVERS

Barry, Ava. [Windhall](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). Ready for a trip back to Hollywood’s golden age? This debut revolving around an unsolved murder, has Sunset Boulevard’s curdled-glamour *mise-en-scène*, *All About Eve*’s backstage intrigue and *The Day of the Locust*’s crushing disillusionment with Tinseltown. Windhall’s narrator, Max Hailey, a journalist with the *Los Angeles Lens*, would gladly swap modern-day L.A.’s artisanal coffee-drinking hipsters for the impeccably dressed sidecar-swilling swells of the 1940s. He has long been captivated by the unsolved 1948 murder of movie star Eleanor Hayes: as the story goes, one night at a party at Windhall, the Benedict Canyon mansion belonging to A-list director Theodore Langley, he fatally stabbed the actress in his garden. Theo was arrested, but evidence tampering foiled the case against him. After he was released from all charges, he seemed to vanish. Windhall has been unoccupied ever since. Sixty-nine years later, the body of a young woman is found in a garden near Windhall; she’s wearing a green silk dress like the one that Eleanor was killed in and, like Eleanor, she has been stabbed. Spurred

by the media's flogging of the two deaths' parallels, Max decides to write a story about Theo and prove that the director killed Eleanor. Still, even Max has to wonder how logical it would have been for a director to murder his star when they were in the middle of shooting a movie. The mystery's reverse time travel vibe intensifies as Max, whom you may imagine wearing a fedora and trench coat, reads from Theo's journals, which include scenes involving some of the era's big names: the actor Errol Flynn goes on a boozy spree with Theo; Hedda Hopper on the hunt for juicy gossip.

✂Bauer, Belinda. [Exit](#) (Grove \$26). In this alternative selection for the British Crime Club for March or April members who may have purchased a signed UK edition of the pick, we find that after his wife's death, 75-year-old Felix is waiting for his own exit from this world. In the meantime, he volunteers with a clandestine group called the Exiteers, whose members show up to witness—not assist—people who want to take their own lives because of terminal illness. And so, Felix arrives at Skipper Cann's house and staying by the man's bedside until the fellow finally expires from a self-administered lethal dosage of nitrous oxide. But as Felix and his volunteer partner, Amanda, leave the house, he hears a loud bang and encounters an old man in another bedroom. Turns out Felix and Amanda just witnessed the wrong man dying, and realize they might have been set up as accessories to murder. "*Exit* contains Bauer's trademark blend of poignancy, dark humor and vivid characters. The right to die is a controversial notion—and illegal in many places—but Bauer shines a humane light on it and the story is more uplifting and funny than the subject matter implies. Though Felix starts out as a lonely septuagenarian who believes his life is mostly over, he finds new purpose by befriending the old man who originally hired the Exiteers and poking into who might have set up the wrong person to die. The story's other viewpoints include that of a police officer named Calvin, who's determined not to make detective; Felix's partner, Amanda; and Skipper Cann's nephew, Reggie. Gold Dagger winner Bauer keeps readers in the dark about her characters' motivations and level of guilt all the way up to an ending that's moving and bittersweet."

Boulley, Angeline. [Firekeeper's Daughter](#) (Holt \$18.99). A YA debut would be a good read for Kent Krueger fans too for its suspenseful tale filled with Ojibwe knowledge, hockey, and the politics of status. Daunis is trying to balance her two communities: The Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, teen is constantly adapting, whether she is with her Anishinaabe father's side of the family, the Firekeepers, or the Fontaines, her White mother's wealthy relatives. She has grand plans for her future, as she wants to become a doctor, but has decided to defer her plans to go away for college because her maternal grandmother is recovering from a stroke. Daunis spends her free time playing hockey with her Firekeeper half brother, Levi, but tragedy strikes, and she discovers someone is selling a dangerous new form of meth—and the bodies are piling up. While trying to figure out who is behind this, Daunis pulls away from her family, covering up where she has been and what she has been doing. While dealing with tough topics like rape, drugs, racism, and death, this book balances the darkness with Ojibwe cultural texture and well-crafted characters. Daunis is a three-dimensional, realistically imperfect girl trying her best to handle everything happening around her. The first-person narration reveals her internal monologue, allowing readers

to learn what's going on in her head as she encounters anti-Indian bias and deals with grief.

Charlier, Marj. [The Rebel Nun](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). Charlier's tale is based on the true story of Clotild, the daughter of a sixth-century king and his concubine, who leads a rebellion of nuns against the rising misogyny and patriarchy of the medieval church. At that time, women are afforded few choices in life: prostitution, motherhood, or the cloister. Only the latter offers them any kind of independence. By the end of the sixth century, even this is eroding as the church begins to eject women from the clergy and declares them too unclean to touch sacramental objects or even their priest-husbands. Craving the legitimacy thwarted by her bastard status, Clotild seeks to become the next abbess of the female Monastery of the Holy Cross, the most famous of the women's cloisters of the early Middle Ages. When the bishop of Poitiers blocks her appointment and seeks to control the nunnery himself, Clotild masterminds an escape, leading a group of uncloistered nuns on a dangerous pilgrimage to beg her royal relatives to intercede on their behalf. But the bishop refuses to back down, and a bloody battle ensues. Will Clotild and her sisters succeed with their quest, or will they face excommunication, possibly even death? This is, so far, the only historical novel written about the incident and this truly remarkable heroine.

Childs, Laura. [Haunted Hibiscus](#) (Berkley \$26). Charleston's queen-of-teas Theodosia Browning and her tea sommelier Drayton are attending a fundraiser for the Heritage Society held at decrepit Bouchard Mansion the society just—now gussied up as a literary- and historically-themed haunted house for Halloween—a murder occurs. Willow French, the grandniece of Heritage Society bigwig Timothy Neville, was using the fundraiser to promote her book on true crime and low-country legends, which seemed like a perfect match for the haunted venue until someone hanged the author from a high window. When Theodosia's boyfriend, police detective Pete Riley, checks out Willow's apartment, an intruder shoots him, spurring Theodosia in her investigation. The valuable yellow diamond earrings Willow was wearing have vanished, as well.

Edgarian, Carol. [Vera](#) (Scribner \$27) is a grand adventure set in 1906 San Francisco—a city leveled by quake and fire. Meet Vera Johnson, the uncommonly resourceful fifteen-year-old illegitimate daughter of Rose, notorious proprietor of San Francisco's most legendary bordello and ally to the city's corrupt politicians. Vera has grown up straddling two worlds—the madam's alluring sphere, replete with tickets to the opera, surly henchmen, and scant morality, and the violent, debt ridden domestic life of the family paid to raise her. On the morning of the great quake, Vera's worlds collide. As the shattered city burns and looters vie with the injured, orphaned, and starving, Vera and her guileless sister, Pie, are cast adrift. Vera disregards societal norms and prejudices and begins to imagine a new kind of life. The Indie Next Pick: "Experience the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 like never before — from inside the family of one of the most famous brothel madams. In this story, Edgarian combines lyrical writing and a cast of unforgettable characters, both real and imagined, with themes of love, rejection, graft, and economic disparity, all sprinkled with racism and misogyny. You won't be able to visit the City by the Bay ever again without looking for Rose and her descendants. I couldn't put this down."

Evanovich, Janet/Steve Hamilton. [Bounty](#) (Atria \$28). FBI agent Kate O'Hare and charming con man Nicholas Fox face their most dangerous foe yet—a vast, shadowy international organization known only as the Brotherhood. Directly descended from the Vatican Bank priests who served Hitler during World War II, the Brotherhood is on a frantic search for a lost train loaded with \$30 billion in Nazi gold, untouched for over seventy-five years somewhere in the mountains of Eastern Europe. Kate and Nick know that there is only one man who can find the fortune and bring down the Brotherhood—the same man who taught Nick everything he knows—his father, Quentin. As the stakes get higher, they must also rely on Kate's own father, Jake, who shares his daughter's grit and stubbornness. Too bad they can never agree on anything. From a remote monastery in the Swiss Alps to the lawless desert of the Western Sahara, Kate, Nick, and the two men who made them who they are today must crisscross the world in a desperate scramble to stop their deadliest foe

Ford, Richard Thompson. [Dress Codes](#) (Simon Schuster \$30). Law professor and cultural critic Ford presents an insightful and entertaining history of the laws of fashion from the middle ages to the present day, a walk down history's red carpet to uncover and examine the canons, mores, and customs of clothing—rules that we often take for granted. Dress codes are as old as clothing itself. For centuries, clothing has been a wearable status symbol; fashion, a weapon in struggles for social change; and dress codes, a way to maintain political control. Merchants who dressed like princes and butchers' wives wearing gem-encrusted crowns were public enemies in medieval societies structured by social hierarchy and defined by spectacle. In Tudor England, silk, velvet, and fur were reserved for the nobility and ballooning pants called “trunk hose” could be considered a menace to good order. The Renaissance era Florentine patriarch Cosimo de Medici captured the power of fashion and dress codes when he remarked, “One can make a gentleman from two yards of red cloth.” Dress codes evolved along with the social and political ideals of the day, but they always reflected struggles for power and status. In the 1700s, South Carolina's “Negro Act” made it illegal for Black people to dress “above their condition.” In the 1920s, the bobbed hair and form-fitting dresses worn by free-spirited flappers were banned in workplaces throughout the United States and in the 1940s the baggy zoot suits favored by Black and Latino men caused riots in cities from coast to coast. Even in today's more informal world, dress codes still determine what we wear, when we wear it—and what our clothing means. People lose their jobs for wearing braided hair, long fingernails, large earrings, beards, and tattoos or refusing to wear a suit and tie or make-up and high heels. In some cities, wearing sagging pants is a crime. And even when there are no written rules, implicit dress codes still influence opportunities and social mobility. Silicon Valley CEOs wear t-shirts and flip flops, setting the tone for an entire industry: women wearing fashionable dresses or high heels face ridicule in the tech world and some venture capitalists refuse to invest in any company run by someone wearing a suit.

I think you will enjoy this review by Dana Stabenow who, while spending winters at our home, critiques loads of books for me: “This book is well researched, representing fashion in history from the toga to the t-shirt, and I was happy to see multiple references to Thorstein Veblen, as his chapter on women's fashion in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* was a revelatory read for teenage me. But I find myself puzzled by what

Ford leaves out. Where is the maxi skirt, which revolutionized the way Boomer women looked at high fashion? Where is Cher's closet in *Clueless*? Where is Lady Gaga's meat dress? In a book that includes Donald Trump's scotch-taped tie, it feels insulting for these other iconic fashion moments to be ignored. My couturier is Eddie Bauer so really I have no dog in this fight. The illustrations are great, and I wish there had been more of them, and this is probably an important reference text for Anna Wintour et al.”

Isaacson, Walter. [The Code Breaker](#) (SimonSchuster \$35). Nobel Prize winner Jennifer Doudna and her colleagues developed the CRISPR gene-editing science which by unlocking (some of) our genetic code (DNA) can transform life in many ways. Doudna says she was inspired by Watson's wonderful book *The Double Helix* when she was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I have not read this book but I did read a long piece by Isaacson in the *Wall Street Journal* about Doudna's work in which he displays ambiguity about whether procedures that would prevent illnesses and deformities are welcome in that they might dispel diversity in human life. I have zero sympathy with this: why let someone be born with Tay-Sachs or spina bifida or perhaps some mental illnesses and the burden of life and care that goes with? I hope this is not in the book. What you do get per the publisher is “Using charts, analogies, and repeated warnings for readers to pay attention, the author describes a massively complicated operation in which humans can program heredity.”

Ishiguro, Kazuo. [Klara and the Sun](#) (Knopf \$28). In his first novel since winning the Nobel Prize in Literature, Ishiguro presents a parable about love in a futuristic world. Klara is a human-like robot designed to provide companionship to a young child. Spending her days in the store, watching the humans that come and go, the solar-powered A.I. reveres the sun as a godlike figure. When Klara is purchased by a teenager named Josie, she continues to learn about humans through her new relationships with her owner. Yet it is Klara's relationship with the sun that is tested when she begs the entity to save Josie after her human falls ill.

Kayode, Ferni. [Lightseekers](#) (Mulholland \$28). Dr. Philip Taiwo is a Nigerian criminal psychologist who doesn't solve crimes but investigates the why once a perpetrator has been identified. When a powerful politician asks him to investigate a curious case of the torture and murder of three students in a far-away town, he doesn't feel as though he can say no, Taiwo travels to the remote southern border town of Port Harcourt to investigate the murder of the Okriki Three. But as soon as Philip begins looking into the disturbing case of three college kids who were tortured and murdered, depending on his savvy diver to help him navigate the unfamiliar territory, he realizes what happened to them isn't as straightforward as it first appeared.

Noor, Rozlan Mohd. [DUKE: Inspector Nislan and the Expressway Murders](#) (Arcade \$25.99). Early in Noor's impressive second whodunit featuring Inspector Mislan Latif of Kuala Lumpur's Special Investigations Unit, Mislan and his loyal assistant, DS Johan Kamarudin, are called to a crime scene on the Duta-Ulu Klang Expressway. Two business executives have been found shot to death inside a locked Mercedes, which came to rest on the road's divider in light traffic. Since the car's doors and windows are locked, a murder-suicide is the obvious explanation for the fatalities. With no apparent motive for the crime, Mislan

suspects the truth is more complicated, and begins considering how a third person could have been inside the Mercedes to commit two murders while leaving the automobile sealed after escaping. Mislan's boss advises him to tread carefully, because one of the victims had some contact with the city's anti-corruption commission. That someone later tries to frame the inspector for graft complicates his investigation. The combination of clever plotting and portrayal of life in Malaysia is a winner. Noor brilliantly integrates an unusual impossible crime into a gritty procedural story line as he did in his debut, [21 Immortals](#) (\$25.99). Noor is compared to Jo Nesbø and Keigo Higashino and to Michael Connelly who says, "Inspector Mislan Latif is my kind of detective. Harry Bosch would ride shotgun with him any time."

Paradee, Glenda Sue. [Tinkerbelle: The Long-haired Chihuahua](#) (Thanks for the Music Press \$15). I seldom recommend a self-published book but this charmer has colorful water colors, unusual illustrations for a children's book. Based on a true story of a dog with long front legs and a fluffy coat who is, surprisingly, a male, his travels as he narrates them highlight the Grand Canyon, Flagstaff, Sedona, Apache Junction, and Rocky Point. The author lives in Gilbert.

Patterson, James/David Ellis. [The Red Book](#) (LittleBrown \$27.99). In their sequel to [The Black Book](#) (\$10.99), Patterson and David Ellis see Chicago Detective Billy Harney and his adrenaline junkie partner Kate Fenton investigating a drive-by shooting that quickly turns political. With all eyes on them and the public eager for Harney to solve the case fast, Harney is discovering that the fast answers might not be the correct ones. And the deeper Harney gets into this case, the closer he gets to uncovering dark mysteries of the city and his own troubled past.

Patterson, James. [The Palm Beach Murders](#) (Grand Central \$30). Why buy a suspense book with just one story when you can have three? And set against the backdrop of Florida's wealthiest zip code. In "The Palm Beach Murders," a first date turns into an intense game of make believe that goes too far. In "Nooners," a popular advertising executive notices that everyone close to him keeps getting murdered. And in "Stingrays," a teenager goes missing on a Caribbean beach, and it's up to the Stingrays—a world class team that specializes in solving unsolvable crimes—to find him.

☞Quinn, Kate. [The Rose Code](#) (Morrow \$27.99). The Indie Next Pick: "While many WWII stories have been told in triplicate, Kate Quinn presents a new angle on the Bletchley Park/code breaker part of the war. She gives us three magnificent main characters who must navigate the turbulent waters not only of the war, but of a new puzzle to solve shortly before the royal wedding of Princess Elizabeth (Queen Elizabeth II) and Prince Philip." For more see comments on the simultaneous paperback edition under Our March Large Paperback Picks below.

Siegal, Nina. [You'll Thank Me for This](#) (LittleBrown \$28). A psychological thriller based on the Dutch tradition of blindfolding and dropping teens and pre-teens in the middle of a forest. But what happens when this tradition goes terribly wrong? Twelve-year-old Karin is blindfolded and dropped into the Hoge Veluwe National Forest with three other children, and they are tasked with working together to find their way out. But soon Karin finds herself alone in the forest, unable to find the other children, and she realizes something sinister might be lurking in the woods.

☞Robinson, Peter. [Not Dark Yet](#) (Harper \$28.99). When property developer Connor Clive Blaydon is found dead, Detective Chief Inspector Alan Banks and his Yorkshire team dive into the investigation. As luck would have it, someone had installed a cache of spy-cams all around his luxurious home. The team hopes that they'll find answers—and the culprit—among the video recordings. Instead of discovering Connor's murderer, however, the grainy and blurred footage reveals another crime: a brutal rape. If they can discover the woman's identity, it could lead to more than justice for the victim; it could change everything the police think they know about Connor and why anyone would want him dead. Meanwhile, tensions are rising between Banks and his friend, Zelda. A super recognizer—able to recognize faces significantly better than most people—Zelda is determined to bring the men who abused her to justice. But stirring up the murky waters of the past will put her in far greater danger than ever before. See Signed Books for the UK edition.

Singh, Nalini. [Quiet in Her Bones](#) (Berkley \$27). In her second column for the *NY Times Book Review*, Sarah Weinman, who has replaced the retired Marilyn Stasio, writes: "In a nervy and unsettling noir, the mother-son bond has been in suspended animation for 10 years. That's when the willful, fiercely complicated Nina Rai disappeared from her home in a wealthy New Zealand enclave, a night when her teenage son, Aarav, heard her scream and then — nada. He's moved forward, if transforming inner turmoil into a slow-burn best seller about an unreliable psychopath counts as progress. The Porsche, the royalties and the model girlfriend say yes. The car accident, the fractured memory and the move back to his childhood home say otherwise. Then Nina's body is found in her car in a densely wooded forest, clearly there since her vanishing, and Aarav's frozen emotional state flips to boiling hot. The subsequent investigation he conducts, interrogating his cold, abusive father, neighbors with divided loyalties, and especially his own motivations and inconsistencies, unfolds with a heady mixture of heart and dread. Aarav is a legitimately and believably unreliable narrator; the cracks in his neurological foundation are healing in asymmetrical fashion, the better to shield him from the truth about what loving his mother actually meant, and how many other lives — including his own — it cost." Singh scored a bit hit with her first fabulous NZ mystery [A Madness of Sunshine](#) (\$9.99).

Sten, Camilla. [The Lost Village](#) (St Martins \$26.99). A debut, our **March International Crime Book of the Month** gets, among others, this enthusiastic review from *Kirkus*: "An aspiring TV producer and her skeletal crew of four head deep into the Swedish hinterland to make an underfunded documentary series about a village that vanished overnight 60 years ago. What could possibly go wrong? One day in 1959, Silvertjärn was a mining village of 887 inhabitants. The next day, its population was down to two: Birgitta Lidman, bound to a post and stoned to death in the town square, and a baby girl left in a schoolroom. Alice Lindstedt has been haunted all her life by the mystery of the vanished citizens, whose numbers included her grandmother, retired nurse Margareta, and most of her relatives. In the years since, there have been remarkably few clues. The infant, adopted long ago by a couple who raised her as Hélène Grimelund, knew nothing about the fate of her birthplace, but now Alice, who's fought through poverty, temp jobs, and clinical depression, is resolved that "The Lost Village is my ticket out of all that." Things go badly from the begin-

ning. Co-producer Tone Grimelund sprains her ankle while she's exploring one of the deserted houses and then disappears herself. Someone sets the crew's vans on fire, and Alice's college friend Emmy Abrahamsson, cameraman Robert, and financial backer Max eye each other warily even as they agree that the culprit must have been someone else. All the while, debut novelist Sten is counterpointing their adventures with a series of flashbacks to 1959, bringing *Silvertjärn* closer and closer to the brink of annihilation. A memorably creepy newcomer to the crowded field of Nordic noir that's worth a miniseries itself."

✂Stonex, Emma. [The Lamplighters](#) (Penguin \$27). **Our April British Crime Club Book of the Month**, out in late March, gets a rave: British author Stonex's spectacular debut wraps a haunting mystery in precise, starkly beautiful prose. In 1972, a boatman arrives at the desolate Maiden Rock lighthouse off the coast of Mortehaven, Cornwall, to pick up one of its three keepers for a scheduled break. Instead, he finds the trio—principal keeper Arthur Black; Black's junior, Bill Walker; and third-in-command Vincent Bourne—gone. The tower is locked from the inside, the log chronicles strange storms that never happened, and the clocks are stopped at 8:45. Twenty years later, a writer determined to crack the unsolved mystery contacts the women the lighthouse keepers left behind. Now living in Bath, Helen Black returns to Mortehaven twice a year to commemorate her husband. She writes regularly to Bill's wife, Jenny, hoping to be forgiven for Bill's onetime obsession with her, but Jenny discards the letters in anger. Now in a troubled marriage, Vince's former girlfriend, Michelle Davies, is sure that he played no role in the disappearance, despite his earlier brushes with the law. Seamlessly marrying quotidian detail with ghostly touches, the author captures both the lighthouse's lure and the damage its isolation and confinement wreak on minds and families.

Verdon, John. [On Harrow Hill](#) (Catapult \$28). Verdon's brilliant seventh mystery featuring retired NYPD homicide detective Dave Gurney showcases a nifty impossible crime variant. Gurney's former partner, Mike Morgan, who once saved his life, is now the police chief of the affluent village of Larchfield, N.Y., where Gurney now lives and crime is low. Then an intruder slashes the throat of Angus Russell, Larchfield's main power player, in his home. The killer's identity appears to be obvious, as the fingerprints of Billy Tate, a local ex-con who threatened Russell, are found in Russell's bedroom, but it's impossible for Tate to be guilty. The night before, Tate was pronounced dead after being struck by lightning and falling from the roof of a church he was vandalizing in front of multiple witnesses, including Morgan. Gurney joins the inquiry, which gets even weirder after a video shows Tate breaking out of the coffin where his body was stored. The surprises keep coming as the plot builds to an impressive reveal. Verdon has never been better at crafting a bizarre setup and resolving it in a satisfactory way.

Woods, Stuart. [Double Jeopardy](#) (Putnam \$28). Stone Barrington, the superrich New York lawyer, is pitted against two psychopathic relatives, twins Eben and Enos Stone, who have been paroled from prison in Maine, thanks largely to the influence of the state's newly elected governor, who was their late father's best friend. The governor apparently doesn't mind that the two Yale Law School grads were convicted of murdering their parents—they claimed their father, Stone's first cousin, abused them and their mother knew but did nothing. Stone is sure the

pair has killed other family members, crimes with which they were never charged, but lacks the evidence to prove it. The twins get part-time teaching jobs at Yale Law and return home to Islesboro, Maine, where they buy a house near Stone's summer place, setting the scene for a showdown. Stone's latest paramour and a Yale Law School student, whose boyfriend the twins recently murdered, concoct a plan to take them down.

## OUR MARCH LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Killing Tide: A Brittany Mystery](#) (\$17.99). A particularly tough day begins for Commissaire Georges Dupin in Bannalec's superb fifth Brittany mystery when a fisherwoman from the Île de Sein is found in a container full of rotting fish with her throat slit. The discovery of two more people with their throats cut—one a dolphin researcher, the other a retired professor—launches a fast-paced investigation that puts perennially seasick Dupin, a former Paris police detective who's a fish out of water in western Brittany, in headlong pursuit of a killer across the islands off the port of Douarnenez—and that exposes the seamy underside of commercial fishing. The dramatic conclusion leaves Dupin to reflect on the shadowy notions of justice, ambiguous endings, and the many mysteries of Brittany, where Celtic legends and Breton folklore are accepted as matter of fact parts of modern life. Bannalec (the pen name of Jörg Bong) has concocted the perfect blend of police procedural and travelogue. We all love this [Brittany Mystery](#) series: best to start at the beginning with *Death in Brittany* and read forward. Then preorder [The Granite Coast Murders](#) (St Martins \$26.99). I do not love the German-produced TV series made from the books you can see on MHZ-TV but you can revel in its landscapes. In this land of oysters, tragically Dupin only eats *steak frites*.

Black, Cara. [Three Hours in Paris](#) (\$16.95). See Unsigned Event Books above for a review of this nerve-wracking WWII tale of a woman sniper in Paris to take out Hitler on his only known visit to the city.

De Castrique, Mark. [Fatal Scores](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). During opening day at the local baseball stadium, Asheville, NC, PI Sam Blackman and Nakayla Robertson, his no-nonsense partner in love and detective work, hear an argument between Ken Stokes, a volunteer environmental activist, and Luke Kirkgate, son of the CEO of a paper mill, whose toxic runoff in the 1950s fouled a nearby river and caused cancer deaths. Stokes calls for public recognition of real-life environmentalist Wilma Dykeman in the 2020 Asheville Luminaries Festival, a move Kirkgate opposes. When Stokes is found dead near a water-sample collection site monitoring the Pigeon River, it's unclear whether it's an accident or a murder. The subsequent killing of prime suspect Kirkgate leads Sam and Nakayla into investigating infidelity, embezzlement, fraudulent sports memorabilia, and even musical rivalries via Paul Clarkson, a Moog synthesizer expert. I love this PI series that incorporates real NC, and especially Asheville, history and significant persons in the arts and sciences. It is disappointing the new publishers of Poisoned Pen Press have dropped hardcover editions in favor of paperbacks only.

✂Feeney, Alice. [His and Hers](#) (\$16.99). I completely agree with this Starred Review, the book is a knockout. "Bestseller Feeney surpasses the dexterous deviousness on display in her 2018 debut, *Sometimes I Lie*, in this cunningly constructed psychological thriller centered on a bitterly divorced couple who are forced



to cross paths again by a murder in Blackdown, Surrey, their hometown. Despite London BBC News correspondent Anna Andrews's best efforts, she's has been dispatched to the sleepy village to cover the case, whose investigation her former husband, DCI Jack Harper, is leading. Both have conflicts of interest concerning the victim—Anna's seductive former schoolmate, Rachel Hopkins—which, if known, would subject each of them to scrutiny. But before Jack and his crack second-in-command, DS Priya Patel, can make much headway, another body is discovered—by Anna—and potential links to the pair prove impossible to ignore. At this point, the plot quickens and thickens, and Feeney does a masterly job of folding in layers of several characters' troubled shared pasts and explosive secrets. The breathtaking finale is sure to blindside readers. This is a masterpiece of misdirection." The hardcover was our July 2020 British Crime Club Book of the Month.

✠Harris, CS. [Who Speaks for the Damned](#) (\$17). In June 1814, as royalty from Austria, Russia, and the German states gather in London at the Prince Regent's invitation to celebrate Napoleon's defeat with a sumptuous round of parties, exhibits, and celebrations, the dissolute third son of the late Earl of Seaford is found fatally stabbed at a no longer fashionable London tea garden. Sebastian St. Cyr, Viscount Devlin, is astonished to learn from Jules Calhoun, his valet, that the dead man is Nicholas Hayes, an old friend of Calhoun. Like most of Society, St. Cyr believed that Hayes had died a few years after he was convicted of murder and transported to Australia 18 years earlier in 1796. In fact, Calhoun reveals that Hayes, who managed to return to England by stealing a dead man's identity, got in touch with him and asked for his help. But for what? St. Cyr delves into the related questions of why Hayes took the step of coming to London at the risk of summary execution and who was responsible for his murder, which inevitably require probing the crime that led to Hayes's being sent to Australia—the killing of the wife of a French count. Figuring into the plot is St. Cyr's wife Hero and her powerful father and, in time, ties to the East India Company, by now an exemplar of capitalism run rampant. This is truly one of my favorite series, historically accurate and respectful, cannily plotted, fabulous characters, plus a cliff hanger at the end of every entry. Best to read it from [book one](#). And it's not too soon to order this April's St. Cyr: [What the Devil Knows](#) (Berkley \$27 Signed).

Jones, Stephen Graham. [The Only Good Indians](#) (\$16.99). The Blackfeet tribe author earned this Starred Review: "The hunters become the hunted in this taut horror thriller. Ten years ago, on Thanksgiving, Gabe, Cass, Lewis and Ricky violated tribal regulations when they gunned down nine elk on hunting grounds reserved for Blackfeet Nation elders. When the game warden caught them, the young men forfeited their hunting rights in lieu of paying a fine none of them could afford. Months later, Ricky died in a bar fight after fleeing life on the Blackfeet reservation... Friends and family accept the story at face value. No one knows Ricky saw an elk damage the other bar patrons' pickup trucks and run away, leaving Ricky looking guilty as sin. No one knows that before the vehicles' owners beat him to death, Ricky saw the 'sea of green eyes' of the herd of elk blocking his escape route. In the present day, Lewis has surprised himself by making it to age 36 with an intact marriage, no serious medical conditions, no 'car crashes and jail time and alcoholism on his cultural dance

card.' However, his carefully constructed life begins to unravel when he sees the young, pregnant elk cow he shot 10 years ago on his living room floor. Told largely from the perspectives of the four Blackfeet men and the spectral elk creature stalking them, the story hits its stride when following Denorah, Gabe's teen daughter. Her 'finals girl' nickname comes from her basketball skills, but 'if the only good Indian is a dead one, then she's going to be the worst Indian ever.' Her strength and attitude carry this introspective but brutal narrative into a well-earned redemption arc."

Penman, Sharon Kay. [The Land Beyond the Sea](#) (\$20). Here we are in 1172 Outremer or the Kingdom of Jerusalem and it is (was) a real life Game of Thrones. When Pope Urban II called up a military expedition in 1095 to head east to bolster the Christian Byzantine Empire, he did not foresee the consequences which included Europeans establishing kingdoms and warring among themselves and everyone else. The legacy of the Crusades is still with us, the good and the bad.

Penman follows up her Plantagenet series with an engrossing saga of King Baldwin IV and his threatened Crusader state. When Baldwin is 10 years old, his tutor, William of Tyre, discovers that the boy has no feeling in one of his arms. Fearing Baldwin might have leprosy, William consults a Syrian doctor, who confirms the diagnosis, drawing wrath from Baldwin's father, King Amalri, who resolves that Baldwin will become a fierce warrior against the Saracens. As Baldwin comes of age and receives treatment, his resilience defies his court's expectations. "Baldwin's success in keeping the would-be Mediterranean and Muslim invaders at bay makes the novel a riveting page-turner, and Penman's well-honed skill for weaving deeply researched details into epic tales is on full display. Fans of medieval historical fiction won't want to miss this." True. It's the characters the late and much loved author brings back to life, all the dynastic, matrimonial, etc squabbles, and the role of the women, that speak to me. How we will miss her.

✠Quinn, Kate. [The Rose Code](#) (Harper \$17.99). Quinn returns to WWII and the secretive world of Bletchley Park in this immersive saga. Debutant Osla Kendall meets fellow Bletchley Park recruit and London East End resident Mab Churt on the train in 1940. While working at Bletchley, they share a room at the home of Beth Finch, a young woman beaten down by her demanding mother. After discovering Beth's talent for solving crosswords, Osla helps Beth get a job interview at Bletchley Park. Though Beth is shy and reclusive, she shines in her work on breaking codes. But when she discovers someone at Bletchley is likely a traitor, no one believes her. Soon, she winds up the suspected traitor and is committed at Clockwell Sanitarium after having a mental breakdown. In 1947, almost four years later, Beth contacts Osla and Mab, who help Beth escape from Clockwell. Together, the women work to crack a code that will help them find the traitor. Quinn's page-turning narrative is enhanced by her richly drawn characters, who unite under the common purpose of Britain's war effort, and by the fascinating code-breaking techniques, which come alive via Quinn's extensive historical detail.

Steinhauer, Olen. [The Last Tourist](#) (\$17.99). Reluctant CIA agent Milo Weaver, a decade late than first we met him, is hiding out in Western Sahara when a young CIA analyst arrives to question him about a series of suspicious deaths and terrorist chatter linked

to him. Their conversation is soon interrupted by a new breed of Tourists intent on killing them both, forcing them to run. “A decade ago, the CIA’s Department of Tourism, a corps of highly trained assassins, went defunct, but now something similar has emerged from its ruins in bestseller Steinhauer’s stunning fourth thriller featuring ex-CIA operative Milo. As chief of the Library, a stealthy espionage operation buried within the UN’s bureaucracy, Weaver has been attempting to serve as a reasonably honest broker of sensitive information, but a series of increasingly violent assaults drives him into hiding in the Western Sahara. Milo eventually figures out that he’s being pursued by a darkly plausible, utterly ruthless assassins corps created by multinational corporations acting beyond the reach of any country’s laws to lock down global dominance. No dummies survive in this twisty shadow realm, and Weaver’s wits keep him alive as the complex, layered plot reaches a shrewd, nuanced climax at the World Economic Forum, leaving the reader with the hope that global elites can’t rig the rules of every game. The author does a masterly job of evoking dingy desert cities and the rarified air of Davos, Switzerland.

Viskic, Emma. [Darkness for Light](#) (Steerforth \$14.95). After a lifetime of bad decisions, not all related to his deafness, PI Caleb Zelic is finally making good ones. He’s in therapy, his business is recovering and his relationship with his estranged wife Kat is on the mend. But soon Caleb is drawn into the tangled life of his troubled ex partner Frankie, which leads to a confrontation with the cops. And when Frankie’s niece is kidnapped, she and Caleb must work together to save the child’s life. But can Caleb trust her after her past betrayals? The Australian author came to visit us in November 2019 and thoroughly hooked us. Her debut novel, [Resurrection Bay](#) (\$14.95), won the 2016 Ned Kelly Award for Best Debut, and an unprecedented three Davitt Awards: Best Adult Novel, Best Debut, and Readers’ Choice. It was also iBooks Australia’s Crime Novel of the year, and was shortlisted for both the CWA Gold and New Blood Daggers in the UK. Emma studied Australian sign language (Auslan) in order to write the character of Caleb Zelic.

Wrobel, Stephanie. [Darling Rose Gold](#) (\$17). Up for the 2021 Edgar for Best First Novel, this 2020 Poisoned Pen First Mystery Book of the Month was hugely anticipated...and paid off. Lee Child says the two complex characters “power the story like a nuclear reaction,” They are Rose Gold, now in her twenties, and her mom, Patty Watts. For the first eighteen years of her life, Rose Gold Watts believed she was seriously ill. She was allergic to everything, used a wheelchair and practically lived at the hospital. Neighbors did all they could, holding fundraisers and offering shoulders to cry on, but no matter how many doctors, tests, or surgeries, no one could figure out what was wrong with Rose Gold. Turns out her mom was a really good liar, sustaining Munchausen’s Syndrome by Proxy at great cost to Rose Gold. After serving five years in prison, Patty gets out with nowhere to go and begs her daughter to take her in. The entire community is shocked when Rose Gold says yes. Patty insists all she wants is to reconcile their differences. She says she’s forgiven Rose Gold for turning her in and testifying against her. But Rose Gold knows her mother. Patty always settles a score. Unfortunately for Patty, Rose Gold is no longer her weak little victim....

## SOME NEW MARCH LARGE PAPERBACKS

Adler-Olsen, Jussi. [Victim 2117](#) (\$16). In Adler-Olsen’s eighth Department Q novel featuring Copenhagen’s cold-case division, journalist Joan Aiguader hopes to revive his reputation with coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis by focusing on an unidentified woman whose corpse washed up on Cyprus; the victim was the 2,117th person to drown in the Mediterranean that year. Those aspirations are dashed when Joan’s editor reveals that the woman was actually fatally stabbed, a missed detail that embarrassed the newspaper that ran his story. Photos of those nearby at the time the body reached land leads Department Q mainstay Assad to believe that family members he thought dead are still alive. Meanwhile, a recluse has fixated on an image of Victim 2117 and begins calling the squad to announce that, once he’s killed his 2,117th person in his violent online game, he will murder for real, triggering a desperate race to avoid bloodshed. Series fans will relish Assad’s gripping backstory. Adler-Olsen does a masterly job juggling plotlines,” and doesn’t spare the dark stuff.

Blackwell, Juliet. [Off the Wild Coast of Brittany](#) (Berkley \$17). In yet another entry into the women in WWII genre, Blackwell sets two contemporary American sisters contend with their lives on a tiny, historically rich French island....Natalie Morgen, the 30-something author of a bestselling memoir about learning to cook and finding love in France, is finding it hard to write a promised sequel and to gratify her many Facebook followers with details of her glamorous life, now that her lover has run off with their money, leaving her in the ancient guesthouse they had planned to renovate together. Natalie is unexpectedly joined by her older sister, Alex, from whom she’d been estranged, and Blackwell unspools their stories alongside that of Violette, the former owner of the guesthouse, who as a young woman coped with the German occupation. “Blackwell moves smoothly between the two time periods, and if Natalie and Alex’s problems are less extreme than Violette’s dangerous adventures in the Resistance, there’s plenty of drama in a leaky roof, a slowly evolving love affair, and the reconciliation between sisters as they learn about Violette through a series of handwritten recipes....”—*Kirkus Reviews*

Boyle, William. [City of Margins](#) (\$16.95). Patrick recommends a book that earned a Starred Review: “Set in South Brooklyn in the early 1990s, this outstanding novel from Boyle focuses on a group of people whose lives seem fated to collide with often tragic consequences. Donnie Parascandolo, a disgraced ex-cop, now works as an enforcer for a local mobster, Big Time Tommy Ficalora. Widow Rosemarie Baldini struggles to repay a gambling debt that her late husband owed to Ficalora. Rosemarie’s son, Mikey, has dropped out of college and is back in the neighborhood, possibly destined for the kind of strong arm work that got his father murdered. A disturbing note leads Mikey to Donna Rotante, Donnie’s ex-wife, who lives a quiet monastic life with her turntable and records following the suicide of her teenage son. Revenge and retribution follow. Battered by loss and unrealized dreams, Boyle’s characters are vividly drawn and painfully real.” Fans of literary crime novelists such as George Pelecanos and Richard Price will relish this.

Buchanan, Paul. [City of Fallen Angels](#) (Legend Press \$14.95). Set in 1962 Los Angeles, Buchanan’s terrific debut and series launch introduces Jim Keegan, a journalist turned private investigator.

Keegan is in a funk. His mother has just died, and the death of Marilyn Monroe is very much in the news. He won't accept a secretive new client offering a suspiciously fat fee for finding a young woman somewhere in L.A. with only a set of photographs to go on. The next day, Keegan spots the woman in the property neighboring his mother's Hollywood home: she's Eve Ormsby-Cutler, the niece of actor Nigel Ormsby, who owns the house. It turns out Eve also wants to hire Keegan—to protect her from some kind of stalker—but he helps her for free, and gives her his pistol for protection. When she kills Nigel when he arrives home unexpectedly, Keegan helps Eve cover up her involvement, and the police quickly, and reasonably, point the finger at the PI. Noir fans will recognize the *femme fatale* trope and the outlines of the plot (think *Double Indemnity*), but Buchanan has fully reimagined a classic private eye story.

Collette, Abby. [A Game of Cones](#) (Berkley \$16). Bronwyn Crewse is delighted that Crewse Creamery, the ice cream shop her family has owned for decades, is restored to its former glory and serving sweet frozen treats to happy customers in the picturesque small town of Chagrin Falls, Ohio. But when a big city developer comes to town intent on building a mall, a killer with a frozen heart takes him out. After literally stumbling across the body, one of Win's closest friends becomes the prime suspect, and to make things worse, Win's aunt has come to town with the intention of taking command of Crewse Creamery....

✚Drysedale, Pip. [The Sunday Girl](#) (\$16.99). Twenty-nine-year-old Taylor, a research analyst, thought London banker Angus Hollingsworth was her dream man, and wedding bells were ringing for Taylor from the beginning of their 18-month relationship. Being with Angus was like living in a fairy tale, complete with luxurious trips to Paris. After Angus unceremoniously dumps her right before a ski trip, Taylor is heartbroken and then discovers Angus has posted a video online of a threesome she participated in with him and another woman. The humiliated Taylor gathers up her wits and the shards of her heart and decides she'll take revenge on Angus if it's the last thing she does. Well, after some rebound sex with her friend-with-benefits, Jamie, that is. When Taylor spots Jamie's copy of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, she builds a revenge plot (loosely) around its tenets.

Katsu, Alma. [The Deep](#) (\$17). The way Katsu weaves the true story of the *Titanic* and her sister ship, *Britannic*, with this dark, terrifying tale of possession and haunting is phenomenal. "Katsu does for the *Titanic* what she did for the Donner party, bringing a dark supernatural twist to history in this gripping tale of the ship's doomed first voyage, and one survivor's efforts to deal with resurging terrors four years later, in the middle of war." – *Locus Magazine*. Katsu's meticulous historical research and vivid imagination braid together "into a chilling paranormal story that blurs the lines between fact and fiction while exploring the deep divides that existed between social classes at the turn of the 20th century." Interestingly but not surprisingly, former intelligence analyst Katsu switches from the supernatural/horror to the spy story in her new novel *Red Widow* as shown in Signed Books above.

King, Stephen. [Later](#) (Hard Case Crime \$14.95). A new story by King presents Jamie Conklin, the son of a struggles single mother, a kid who wants an ordinary childhood. But he has to reckon with the supernatural ability he has—the ability to see the

dead—and the danger he finds himself in when he agrees to use it to help the police to pursue a serial killer. Even though it will bomb Jamie and his mother keeping his abilities a secret. It's a gripping, touching, and occasionally terrifying story with some echoes to *It*, King's classic novel.

## OUR MARCH SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Deaver, Jeffery. [The Goodbye Man](#) (\$9.99). This sequel to [The Never Game](#) (\$9.99) finds Colter Shaw investigating a mysterious organization in Washington State that is either a therapeutic healing colony or a dangerous cult under the sway of a charismatic leader. *PW* concluded their starred review with, "Deaver balances suspense and plausibility perfectly as he depicts Shaw's efforts to infiltrate Osiris and learn the truth. This is a perfect jumping-on point for readers new to one of today's top contemporary thriller writers." A third Colter Shaw comes our way in May.

Griffin, Laura. [Flight](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Texas Murder Files #2. When she stumbles upon two dead bodies on the beach, former forensic photographer Miranda Moore teams up with Detective Joel Breda to find the truth and together they uncover a terrorist plot of a merciless serial killer who has set his sights on them. *PW*'s take on this included, "Griffin takes care to develop a satisfying and complex mystery without sacrificing time for Joel and Miranda to build trust and chemistry as their partnership moves from professional to personal. "

Hamilton, Glen Erik. [A Dangerous Breed](#) (\$9.99). Van Shaw #5. An invitation addressed to his long-dead mother sparks Van Shaw's curiosity about the woman he barely knew. As he digs into young Moira Shaw's past, he uncovers startling details about her life, including her relationship to a boy named Sean Burke: a boy Moira may have been seeing when she became pregnant. Although Van knows all too well that some doors shouldn't be opened, he decides to investigate the man; only to discover that Burke has an even darker family history than Van's own. *PW* had this to say: "Action sequences nicely balance planning and surveillance scenes, and plenty of surprises keep readers guessing. Hamilton makes the connections among his satisfyingly realized characters seem so natural that the whole feels like something that might actually happen."

Hepworth, Sally. [The Mother-In-Law](#) (\$9.99). Exquisitely polite and friendly, Lucy's mother-in-law Diana has nonetheless always kept her at arm's length. Now, Diana is suddenly dead, a suicide note found near her body claiming a cancer that the autopsy report says doesn't exist, and Lucy finds herself in the center of a murder investigation. "Hepworth's short, punchy chapters keep the pages quickly turning while effortlessly deepening her characters. Readers will race to the end of this clever novel to find the truth." (*PW*)

Lustbader, Eric Van. [The Nemesis Manifesto](#) (\$9.99). Evan Ryder #1. Dedicating her life to protecting her country after surviving an unspeakable tragedy, DOD black-ops field agent Evan Ryder investigates a hostile cabal behind the assassinations of her fellow agents. *PW* concluded its review with, "Credible action and often lyrical prose support the complex, intelligent plot. A series of twists and an extended fight sequence at the end will leave readers amazed and pleasantly exhausted. Lustbader is at the top of his game."

✚Paris, BA. [Bring Me Back](#) (\$9.99). Ten years after his wife Layla's disappearance. Finn gets a phone call that she's been

seen, he begins receiving messages from strangers who seem to know too much, and long-lost items from the past begin showing up around the house. “Fans of intelligent psychological suspense will be richly rewarded,” said *PW*.

Perkins, S C. [Lineage Most Lethal](#) (\$7.99). Ancestry Detective #2. This sequel to *Murder Once Removed* finds Texas genealogist Lucy Lancaster investigating a bizarre death and the origins of a mysterious pen that she traces back to her grandfather and a circle of World War II spies. “Perkins neatly intertwines history, mystery, espionage, and revenge. Cozy fans will be well satisfied.”

Sandford, John. [Masked Prey](#) (\$9.99). Lucas Davenport #30. When a Senator’s daughter discovers that an unknown extremist has been posting politician kid photos online beside vicious but legal ideological rants, Lucas Davenport is summoned by influential Washington leaders to prevent dangerous attacks on their children.

Shelton, Paige. [Stolen Letter](#) (\$7.99). Scottish Bookshop #5. While on her way to the Cracked Spine, Delaney Nichols and another woman collide. Delaney’s hapless victim’s name is Mary, and the two women can’t help but notice that they bear an uncanny resemblance to one another. According to Mary, they both also look like the long-beheaded Mary Queen of Scots. Even stranger, Mary believes she is the reincarnation of the Scottish queen. “Vivid descriptions of Edinburgh enhance the well-crafted plot. Cozy fans will look forward to the further adventures of smart and intuitive Delaney” is how *PW* wrapped up their review of this Poisoned Pen favorite author’s latest.

#### NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS FOR MARCH

Anderson, Kevin J. [Kill Zone: A HighTech Thriller](#) (Forge \$9.99). Tasked with performing a high-level security review of a Cold War weapons facility-turned-nuclear waste storage site, a small team of experts becomes trapped on an overextended site on the brink of a radioactive meltdown.

Bokur, Debra. [The Fire Thief](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Dark Paradise #1. Maui detective Kali Mahoe investigates when the body of a teenage surfer bobbing among the lava rocks of Maui’s southeastern shore raises suspicions of foul play.

Bruns, David. [The Pandora Deception](#) (St Martins \$9.99). Don Riley of the U.S. Cyber Command and his team of naval officers uncover a new terrorist group who are planning to release a hugely destructive bio-weapon and must use everything at their disposal to stop them.

Carcatera, Lorenzo. [Payback](#) (\$9.99). This sequel to *Tin Badges* finds former NYPD detective Tank Rizzo and his partner, Pearl, tackling two corruption cases involving a dirty cop who is sending innocents to jail and the money-laundering accounting firm behind his brother’s mysterious death.

Carl, Joanna. [The Chocolate Shark Shenanigans](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Chocoholic #17. A dispute involving house flipping, a land developer and a mysterious gun finds Lee Woodyard risking her life to investigate dark secrets surrounding a local murder.

Cass, Laurie. [Checking Out Crime](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Bookmobile Cat #9. Witnessing a deadly hit-and-run, Minnie and her rescue cat Eddie but their bookmobile in park to discover who was behind the wheel, which is no easy task as many complications to reading the killer his rights arise.

Chien, Vivien. [Fatal Fried Rice](#) (St Martins \$7.99). Noodle Shop #7. When her cooking instructor is found murdered after class, Lana Lee falls under suspicion and launches her own investigation that results in odd, threatening packages sent to Ho-Lee Noodle House from the killer.

Cornwell, Patricia. [Flesh and Blood](#) (\$9.99) Reissue. Scarpetta #22. Discovering a row of pennies outside of her home just before receiving word that a neighbor has been murdered by a highly skilled sniper, Kay Scarpetta begins a nightmarish pursuit involving seemingly unrelated victims and a shipwreck off the coast of Florida.

Davis, Krista. [Big Little Spies](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Paws and Claws #7. When a pet detective winds up dead after offending a group of wealthy pet moms, Holly and her super-smart Jack Russell terrier must sniff out the clues to catch a killer among the elite.

Day, Maddie. [Murder at the Taffy Shop](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Cozy Capers #2. When her friend Gin, the owner of a taffy shop, is accused of murdering a wealthy genealogist, Cape Cod bicycle shop owner Mac Almeida must unwrap the clues with the help of the Cozy Capers crime solvers to solve this sticky case.

Doyle, Carrie. [Death on Bull Path](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Hamp-ton #4. Antonia Bingham, chef and proprietor of the Windmill Inn, is looking forward to baking goodies for her customers and relaxing after a busy summer. But when a Labor Day visit by two slick Wall Streeters ends with their gruesome deaths in a summer rental house, Antonia gets pulled into the investigation!

Ehrhart, Peggy. [Knitty Gritty Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Knit and Nibble #7. When Jenny, a farm-to-table enthusiast, is found strangled by a circular knitting needle, cutting her blossoming career short, Pamela and her neighbor Bettina must unravel the clues to catch a crafty killer among a crop of suspects.

Elliott, Lauren. [Under the Cover of Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Beyond the Page #6. When her best friend’s wedding, which is being held on the groom’s family’s yacht, is marred by murder, maid of honor Addie Greyborne vows to catch a killer before someone else goes overboard.

Hillier, Jennifer. [Creep](#) (\$9.99) Reissue. Attempting to end her affair with graduate student Ethan Wolfe, Professor Sheila Tao is horrified to discover Ethan’s mental instability, a situation that is complicated by his knowledge of compromising information about her personal life.

Hooper, Kay. [Hidden Salem](#) (\$9.99) Special Crimes Unit #19. Investigating three disappearances amid a rise in local occult activities, Salem FBI Special Crimes Unit Grayson Sheridan searches for his missing partner, while a woman who has been enduring unexplained nightmares risks her life to rescue a stranger.

Innes, Louise R. [Death at the Salon](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Daisy Thorne #2. When Ooh La La regular Mel Haverstock left the hair salon that morning, no one expected it would be her final parting. But when Daisy closes shop Saturday night, she finds her client dead as the mullet cut. Homicide is back in style in the quiet village of Edgemoor in Surrey, England. But who would want to harm a hair on poor Mel’s head?

Logan, Kylie. [The Secrets of Bones](#) (St Martins \$7.99). Jazz Ramsey #2. While Jazz Ramsey is giving a cadaver dog demonstration at a school career day, her canine companion uncovers

the body of a former teacher who went missing under suspicious circumstances.

Mofina, Rick. [Search for Her](#) (Mira \$9.99). When 14-year-old Riley Jarrett vanishes from her family's RV at a truck stop near Las Vegas, investigators set out to find the truth only to discover that each family member has something to hide – and that their secrets could prove deadly.

Musso, Guillaume. [Central Park](#) (\$9.99). Alice, a fierce and respected Parisian cop, wakes up on a Central Park bench with no memory of the night before, handcuffed to a complete stranger: a musician named Gabriel. Disoriented, dazed, and with someone else's blood on her shirt, Alice works furiously to connect the dots that may lead to a murder.

Ness, Lucy. [Phantoms and Felonies](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Haunted Mansion #2. The manager of the Portage Path Women's Club, Avery Morgan discovers that it's curtains for a millionaire banker with many enemies and, to keep the club open, relies on her ghostly detective friend Clemmie Bow to expose a killer before the final act.

Patterson, James. [Killer Instinct](#) (\$9.99). This sequel to *Murder Games* finds the suspicious death of a professor reuniting Dr. Dylan Reinhart and Detective Elizabeth Needham against a terrorist plot targeting New York City. C

Penney, Elizabeth. [Bodies & Bows](#) (St Martins \$7.99). Apron Shop #3. While helping her friend Sophie plan a wedding, apron shop owner Iris Buckley must also clear her best friend Bella's name in the murder of her latest who met his untimely demise while jogging.

Roberts, Nora. [Under Currents](#) (\$8.99). One brutal night finally reveals cracks in the façade of Zane Bigelow's family's perfect life, and Zane escapes for college without a thought of looking back. Years later, Zane returns to his hometown, where he meets a gifted landscape artist named Darby, who is on the run from ghosts of her own. Zane and Darby come together to build a new life, but will the past set them free or pull them under?

Sims, Laura. [Looker](#) (\$9.99). An unhappy woman, childless and recently separated from her husband, becomes fixated on a beautiful actress who lives on her block, but after a disastrous interaction at the annual block party, an innocent preoccupation becomes lethal madness.

Spindler, Erica. [The Look-Alike](#) (\$7.99). A decade after stumbling on a murdered classmate in college, a woman caring for her mentally ill mother begins receiving threatening phone calls before spotting a white van outside her home.

Wilton, Traci. [Mrs. Morris and the Sorceress](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Salem B&B #4. When a prop gun fires an all-too-real bullet, killing the star – a notorious drama queen – of the Independence Day play, Salem, Massachusetts B&B owner Charlene Morris and Detective Sam Holden must stop a killer from further rewriting the script.