

# BOOKNEWS from

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## MORE OF MARCH....

**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 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 3 Debuts

**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 Spy Story

**Alma Katsu in conversation with Michael Koryta**

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

A Le Carré style spy story, USA style

Signed books available

### NEW: THURSDAY MARCH 23 6:15 PM

**Dean Koontz in conversation with Michael Koryta**

**Koontz** discusses [The Other Emily](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99)

A Koontz style Orpheus and Eurydice tale

Signed books available

### WEDNESDAY MARCH 24 2:15 PM

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

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

1930s gentleman sleuth Rowland Sinclair

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

Deaf PI Caleb Zelic

### WEDNESDAY MARCH 24 5:00 PM

**Nicola Derobertis-Theye in conversation with Melissa Rivero**

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

Signed bookplates available

### 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)

A Southern Arizona police procedural

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

Fabulous modern Gothic set on an Italian isle

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

Screenwriter Staples' profits all go to animal conservation

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)

Virginia Wine Country Mystery

Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 31 5:00 PM**

**Erica Ruth Neubauer** discusses [Murder at Wedgefield Manor](#) (Kensington \$26)

Golden Age Mystery tinged with Phryne Fisher

Signed books available

**NEW: WEDNESDAY MARCH 31 6:15 PM**

**Dennis Lehane** discusses the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition of *Mystic River*

This is last minute so check our web calendar for price and order information

Signed copies available, great news if you missed it in 2001

**THURSDAY APRIL 1 Virtual Book Launch**

**Paula Munier in conversation with Margaret Mizushima**

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

K-9 assisted investigation

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).

Our **First Mystery Book of the Month—only 4 left**—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. Just 5 left as I write this. Here are a couple of interview questions and Andrews' answers: What sparked the idea for your book? AA: Perhaps not surprisingly, given the subject matter of my novel, the idea was sparked by two literary preoccupations: rereading *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and watching the world obsess over the true identity of Elena Ferrante. But on a more basic level, I just set out to write the kind of book I wanted to read: fast-paced and fun without ever underestimating the reader's intelligence. GR: What's your definition of a perfect mystery? AA: The perfect mystery is one that convinces you that you know what's going to happen, only to take you entirely by surprise. And if we're really aiming for perfection, let's throw in sharp dialogue, multifaceted characters, and a richly drawn setting as well. Oh, let's go wild: a sense of humor, too. GR: Who are some of your all-time-favorite mystery and thriller writers? AA: Patricia Highsmith, Gillian Flynn, Jane Harper, Joseph Kanon, Sarah Waters, Eric Ambler, and John LeCarré.

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. Meanwhile Joe Pickett is pressured into leading a Silicon Valley party into the Bighorns to hunt elk with a bow and arrow. Joe finds himself moving from hunter to prey!

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*. A perfect read for Women's History Month.

Coben, Harlan. [Win](#) (Grand Central \$29). **NEW REVIEW**. What fun. Sports Agent Myron Bolitar's wealthy blueblood sidekick, Windsor "Win" Horne Lockwood III, gets an investigation of his own. And you Bolitar fans get to see Myron, as he is and some of what he was, through Win's eyes, a different perspective. Win has led a life cushioned by immense wealth and thus privilege so he's used to carving his own path with few consequences. Think of him as Batman with no moral compass, a Caped Crusader who is skilled at and enjoys hand-to-hand combat. Then the FBI arrives at his door to ask this blueblood 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. And we're off into Win's orchestration of an inquiry into who the dead hoarder is, why does the Vermeer hang in his apartment, how did an unemployed recluse afford the apartment, and can it tie to Win's cousin Patricia Lockwood's traumatic abduction, abuse, and captivity as a teen? Win makes a deep dive into a past era's radical history and his own family's amazing dysfunction as viewed through the product of generations of privilege. 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). **NEW REVIEW**. The [video](#) of my conversation with Graham is the best way to preview your purchase for this splendid book. You need to [watch the second video](#) too since FB cut out for some reason so the second one completes the program. We begin with a 1939 Nazi expedition to Antarctica (actually happened) that demonstrates how the pole's fresh water can unexpectedly and rapidly freeze thanks to a weird green algae. Then we move to today when scientist Cora Emmerson, collecting core ice samples that contain the algae, grapples with an apparent iceberg that rams her research vessel. The National Underwater and Marine Agency, for which she once worked, sends Kurt Austin and his man Joe Zavela to Cora, too late. But she has made sure the vessel stayed afloat. Clues lead 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. In his last full collaboration with Clive Cussler, Brown produces a Cussler classic.

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*....

Dean, Abigail. [Girl A](#) (Collins \$36). **NEW REVIEW**. Can a book about a child's kidnapping really be "profoundly entertaining?" Yes, according to Jenny Colgan, who describes *Girl A* as "a lovely, precision-tooled piece." Abigail Dean is a lawyer, and the "Girl A" in her novel is Lex, who was held captive by her parents as a child. When she and her siblings inherit the childhood home, they are confronted again with their past. Dean drew from a number of infamous legal cases, including those of English child killers Rose and Fred West, and the California couple David and Louise Turpin, who in 2019 were convicted of sexually abusing 12 of their 13 children. The sensationalist framing hides a thoughtful and deeply felt commitment to confront and conquer ugly deeds.

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. Recommended!

Estleman, Loren D. [The Eagle and the Viper](#) (Forge \$28). **NEW.** We know Estleman for his Amos Walker PI novels, his western fiction, his old Hollywood mysteries, etc. Who knew he would pop up late this month with a deep dive into Paris, Christmas Eve, 1800? It's a time of improvised explosive devices, terrorist training camps, international assassins, and war on civilians. And then an "infernal machine" explodes, destroying buildings and killing civilians. It is not the first attempt on the life of Napoleon, that upstart Corsican made First Consul in the newly minted French Republic.... It's fun to go somewhere different with our **April Historical Fiction Book of the Month**

Finlay, Alex. [Every Last Fear](#) (St Martins \$28). **NEW REVIEW.** New York University student Matt Pine thought he had a terrible night when his girlfriend dumped him, until FBI agents show up to give him even worse news: his family has been found dead in Tulum, Mexico. His dad, mom, kid sister and six-year-old brother—all gone. With no signs of struggles, the scene appears to show the family perished in an accidental gas leak, but is it too neatly staged? And what were the Pines doing in Mexico anyway? The only other surviving member of Matt's immediate family is his older brother, Danny, who's in prison for a murder made famous by a gone-viral Netflix documentary. Thrust back into the media spotlight, Matt is now the only Pine left who can uncover the truth about his family's demise, which may be linked to the killing Danny was convicted of seven years earlier. Before long, Matt learns someone is trying to terminate him, too when he returns to his small hometown to bury his parents and siblings. The small town is hostile, having been villainized by the documentary suggesting Danny was framed

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. This is Katsu's 6<sup>th</sup> novel and she is under contract to write another—such excellent news. **I love the way she draws upon her career in intelligence to craft this elegant and ultimately poignant and human story of spy tradecraft.**

Kendal, Joe. [Killer Triggers](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). Kenda, host of the TV series *Homicide Hunter*, earns a Starred Review: In this exceptional memoir, Kenda chronicles the highlights of his 21 years as a Colorado Springs, Colo., homicide detective. Kenda investigated or oversaw 387 cases, and here uses them to offer insights into why killers kill. The cases cover a wide range, involving such elements as mental illness (a demented man fatally shot his wife, daughter, and grandson before shooting himself in the head) and greed (a slumlord lied about fixing a heater and a family of five subsequently died of carbon monoxide poisoning in his rundown rental property). Kenda also dealt with drug runners and gangs, and solved the case of a teen mob killing. In addition, he worked the first homicide in Colorado to be solved with DNA evidence, using the technology to identify the murderer of a lowlife drunk in 1994 nine years after the crime. Finally, Kenda throws in a few entertaining tales from his nine seasons as the star of the Discovery Channel's *Homicide Hunter*. His Colorado cowboy cop humor and compassionate voice help make the dark stories he tells easier to bear. This is must reading for true crime fans."

Koontz, Dean. [The Other Emily](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$28.99). **NEW.** A decade ago, Emily Carlino vanished after her car broke down on a California highway. She was presumed to be one of serial killer Ronny Lee Jessup's victims whose remains were never found. Writer David Thorne still hasn't recovered from losing the love of his life, or from the guilt of not being there to save her. Since then, he's sought closure any way he can. He even visits regularly with Jessup in prison, desperate for answers about Emily's final hours so he may finally lay her body to rest. Then David meets Maddison Sutton, beguiling, playful, and keenly aware of all David has lost. But what really takes his breath away is that everything about Maddison, down to her kisses, is just like Emily. As the fantastic becomes credible, David's obsession grows, Maddison's mysterious past deepens—and terror escalates. Is she Emily? Or an irresistible dead ringer? Either way, the ultimate question is the same: What game is she playing? Whatever the risk in finding out, David's willing to take it for this precious second chance in a tale drawing upon the Orpheus and Eurydice myth.

Lamott, Anne. [Dusk, Night, Dawn: On Revival and Courage](#) (Riverhead \$20). **NEW.** Lamott explores the tough questions that many of us grapple with. How can we recapture the confidence we once had as we stumble through the dark times that seem increasingly bleak? As bad news piles up—from climate crises to daily assaults on civility—how can we cope? Where, she asks, “do we start to get our world and joy and hope and our faith in life itself back...with our sore feet, hearing loss, stiff fingers, poor digestion, stunned minds, broken hearts?” As with her other bestselling books, Lamott explores the thorny issues of life and faith by breaking them down into manageable, human-sized questions for readers to ponder, in the process showing us how we can amplify life's small moments of joy by staying open to love and connection. “I got Medicare three days before I got hitched, which sounds like something an old person might do, which does not describe adorably ageless me.”

Leon, Donna. [Transient Desires](#) (Heinemann \$42). 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, leading to a rousing finale. Look for the video of our March 9 conversation with Donna to post on April 1.

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. Jane can’t help but make you think of Miss Phryne Fisher, especially when she takes to the air, yet Neubauer maintains the traditions of the Golden Age mystery as she did in Jane’s first outing. As Jane is American it remains to be seen what the scene of her next investigation will be.

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 Pádraig 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). A brand new *NY Times Bestseller* in its first week out. 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.”

The Indie Next Pick for this debut, our **Historical Fiction Book of the Month for March**: “A wonderful melding of two timelines told by a trio of female voices. Each woman is standing at a crossroads; one is just becoming a woman, one is anticipating the end of her life, and one the end of her marriage. A

small, blue apothecary bottle links the women and the timelines together. Penner skillfully guides us along the path each woman chooses. I could hardly bear to put the book down, such was the need to know the choice each woman makes and the consequences of that choice.” A good choice for fans of *The Clockmaker’s Daughter*, *Once Upon a River*, and *The Essex Serpent*.”

✂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). **NEW REVIEW**: Here is the published Indie Next review: “*Eternal* is an exhilarating, sweeping novel from the beloved Lisa Scottoline. Fans of *The Nightingale* and *All the Light We Cannot See* will instantly fall in love with this beautiful WWII novel. With a dash of everything you want in your next favorite read plus everything we have ever loved about Scottoline’s writing.” 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. Events that make you realize Abigail was too smitten with the prospect of marriage to a swanky guy to take a closer look behind the scene. 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). **NEW REVIEW.** Prolific author and historian Willig smelled drama” when she read about Smith College alumnae who volunteered to aid civilian victims in World War I France. *Band of Sisters*, based on letters from these 18 women, pays faithful homage to their bravery as well as their friendship. “It was like college again—college with the threat of impending destruction, that was,” Kate Moran thought as the Smith College Relief Unit left a war-weary Paris for the rubble of the French countryside and their assigned village, Grécourt. Memories of July's festive dockside sendoff in New York had faded as fast as their smart gray uniforms soiled in the mud. With Kate and her former roommate Emmie Van

Alden as the novel's lead protagonists, the women's talents and personalities emerge. A harrowing denouement leads to a postwar epilogue, a well-deserved farewell to the brave “Smithies.” Prepare to fall in love with these intrepid women and all their faults and foibles.

✠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. Signed copies noted above.

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*.

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 and other Aussie Awards-winner Fox elects that Dr. Blair Harbour not report the battered, distraught teenage girl who robbed the dodgy L.A. gas station where Blair works and then stole her car. Re-

cently paroled after a murder conviction, Blair, stony broke, 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, the cop who sent Blair to prison ten years earlier, has become 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—and worse. It's ugly. 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 Blair's case and conviction. 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 and their interplay 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 replete with the delightful humor that characterizes Edgar winner Griffiths' Ruth Galloway Mysteries which I adore—she won the Edgar for her first Harbinder Kaur investigation: [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. NEW REVIEW:** OK, the summary below makes this sound like an agenda book but I add two things now that I have read it: 1. Johnson's narrative voice is rich, funny, personal, and amazing! I loved it, it's like she's talking just to you. 2. It's really a love story and, joy, Johnson avoids the cliché I feared she was heading towards. So I highly recommend this debut.

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."

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). **Signed bookplates. NEW REVIEW.** Watch the [mesmerizing zoom conversation](#) between the UK's Whitaker who spend some 20 years writing this and Hank Phillippi Ryan. 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. Duchess will remind you of Boo Radley. “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? Only 4 left](#)

**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](#)

## 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). The murder, a brutal stabbing, definitely took place on Guy Fawkes Night. It was definitely by the bonfire on the village green. There were definitely a number of witnesses to a row between a group of Teddy Boys. And yet, was it definitely clear

to anybody exactly what they had seen? Based on a real case and exhibiting characteristically thorough research and skillful plotting, Julian Symons’ phenomenal 1960 novel is a searing drama of wrongful accusation, gripping police work and a sharp portrait of English village tensions. This edition also includes the short story “The Tigers of Subtopia.” Introduction by Martin Edwards, the series’ editor.

## MORE NEW MARCH BOOKS

Ackerman, Elliot. [2034: A Novel of the Next World War](#) (Penguin \$27) presents a novel about a hypothetical future war with China that is largely determined by actual decisions already made. It describes in detail how a single technological leap forward by an adversary, in this case China, could destroy our ability to communicate, resulting in a blind, hapless military. It also demonstrates how today’s military policies will leave a future United States without adequate resources to wage a high intensity conventional war and be forced to resort to a first strike nuclear response and its horrific consequences. “A real page-turner, 2034 is a novel about a conflict we hope never happens. Drawing on their deep operational and diplomatic backgrounds, Admiral Stavridis and Elliot Ackerman have conjured a nightmare we desperately need to avoid. A sobering, cautionary tale for our time.

Charlier, Marj. [The Rebel Nun](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). **NEW REVIEW.** I’ve now had time to read this and I will say it is catnip for your medieval history fans. You can tell from the imaginatively drawn family tree for the nun Clotild presented before the opening pages that the story, set in 6<sup>th</sup> Century Gaul kingdoms, will be a mosaic of competing candidates for political power. What it doesn’t show is the leaders of the Catholic Church and their brand of misogyny and patriarchy that lead by the end of the century to ejecting women from the church and from marriages to clergy. Clothild, the real-life daughter of a king and his concubine, is a bastard craving some sort of legitimacy. Her path is towards becoming the next abbess of the all women Monastery of the Holy Cross, the most famous of women’s cloisters. The Bishop of Poitiers, seeking to control the nunnery and clamp down on women in general, blocks her appointment. Clothild’s response is to mastermind the escape of a group of uncloistered nuns bent on seeking her royal relatives to intercede. The Bishop refuses to back down and a bloody battle ensues. Charlier, author of ten novels, pens her first historical here, diving into history to highlight a daring heroine one could say anticipates Jeanne d’Arc. *The Rebel Nun* is movingly and elegantly written and a standout for fans of Peter Tremayne, Priscilla Royal, Alys Clare’s medieval mysteries....

Downing, David. [Wedding Station](#) (Soho \$27.95). Here is the prequel to Downing’s bestselling *Station* series. John Russell is an Englishman with a political past who must keep his head down as the Nazis solidify their power. February 27, 1933. Russell is on a train when he and other passengers spot a raging fire in the distance. It’s the historic Reichstag fire; a moment later, the new chancellor, Adolf Hitler, and his information chief, Joseph Goebbels, emerge from a black Mercedes at the scene. Russell’s journalistic investigations play out against a backdrop of escalating violence and oppression.”Divorce looms, meanwhile, for Russell and his estranged wife, Ilse, threatening his right to live in Germany. Although their relationship is amicable, Russell worries about Paul, their 6-year-old son. Through Ilse’s new partner,

Russell meets war veteran Wilhelm Zollitsch, whose rebellious daughter, Lili, has disappeared. Is this the latest kidnapping by the SA, the Nazi paramilitary arm? A third provocative story that Russell is chasing involves the hit-and-run death of Konrad Mommsen, judged an accident by jaded Detective Kuzorra. Gaining access to Mommsen's American widow, Donna, by serving as a translator in her police interview, Russell presses for more information." I think the Station series is brilliant, akin to Alan Furst's wonderful novels—the books center of Germany as the titles, taken from Berlin train stations, indicates. I recommend you [read them all](#).

Flynn, Laurie Elizabeth. [The Girls Are All So Nice Here](#) (SimonSchuster \$27). Thirty-one-year-old Ambrosia Wellington's job as a PR flack for a Manhattan firm isn't the acting career she had aspired to when she started her freshman year at Wesleyan University. But she's married to genuine nice guy Adrian, who adores her. When her comfortable, if not quite perfect, life is disrupted with emails from Wesleyan's alumni committee announcing the upcoming reunion, she ignores them, but then she gets an anonymous message that changes everything: "You need to come. We need to talk about what we did that night." A reckoning is inevitable, and it won't be pretty. "Amb's her self-aware narration, which alternates between past and present, illustrates how a vulnerable psyche can be twisted into something exceedingly ugly. The ever rising tide of dread will keep readers hooked" into "a sharp, pitch-black thriller that takes the mean-girls trope to another level."

Fox, Lauren. [Send for Me](#) (Knopf \$26.95). "Lauren Fox's newest novel is a quiet, heartbreaking, intergenerational story that highlights the insidious racism against Jews in World War II and the lingering effects of family trauma... Fox's writing is so deft, the story so subtle and sad, flipping seamlessly from World War II Germany to modern-day Milwaukee. It doesn't put you smack dab in the center of Nazi violence or concentration camp nightmares, but flits around the edges of that brutal history to tell a new, altogether different tale—a story of lucky ones who escaped, and the guilt that haunts them... a richly imagined, lyrically written story that belongs among novels such as *The Book Thief* and *All the Light We Cannot See*. The year is still young, but I'll guarantee this will be on my list of favorites from 2021."—NPR

Evanovich, Janet/Steve Hamilton. [The Bounty](#) (Atria \$28). **NEW REVIEW.** A starred *Booklist* review says, "The duo of Evanovich and Hamilton, each best-selling authors in their own right, start the action on page one and keep up the pace throughout. The dynamic, often-humorous storytelling won't let readers out of its grip, and there's a compelling romantic subplot, to boot. Fans of Evanovich won't need any convincing here, but also offer this one to fans of *The Da Vinci Code*, as ancient symbols and academic sleuthing play a strong part in the unraveling of the mystery." I keep quoting as I have yet to get a copy to read. I add that we expect to see Evanovich in late June with a spinoff character from the Plums, and in November with the new Plum.

Freeman, Brian. [Infinite](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95/\$15.95 paperback). "Chicago events manager Dylan Moran, the protagonist of this imaginative psychological thriller from Thriller Award winner Freeman (Thief River Falls), is haunted by the recent death of his wife, who drowned when he accidentally drove their car into a river on a weekend away from the city. When Dylan

begins to catch unexplained glimpses of himself wherever he goes, he's initially convinced they're merely side effects of the accident. He decides to consult a psychiatrist and self-help guru, Eve Brier, because her picture looks vaguely familiar. Eve claims to have been treating him with an experimental therapy based on the theory that every choice a person makes creates an alternate universe where events follow a different path. She suggests he's encountering his doppelgänger from an alternate reality. Then people close to Dylan turn up dead, and he realizes his double is a serial killer. Assisted by Eve, he sets out to stop him. The result is a tense, fast-paced chase through alternate realities. Clever plotting matches the well-developed characters."—*PW*

Ginsburg, Melissa. [The House Uptown](#) (Flatiron \$26.99). Ava, fourteen years old and totally on her own, has still not fully processed her mother's death when she finds herself on a train heading to New Orleans, to stay with Lane, the grandmother she barely remembers. Lane is a well-known artist in the New Orleans art scene. She spends most of her days in a pot-smoke haze, sipping iced coffee, and painting, which has been her singular focus for years. Her grip on reality is shaky at best, but her work provides a comfort. Ava's arrival unsettles Lane. The girl bears an uncanny resemblance to her daughter, whom she was estranged from before her death. Now her presence is dredging up painful and disturbing memories, which forces Lane to retreat even further into her own mind. "Ginsburg's page-turner is a devastatingly simple trap: characters so beguiling you settle in for a charming coming-of-age fable before realizing the spring is snapping shut on an inexorable and satisfying calamity. The theme is the-past-isn't-dead-it-isn't-even-past, but painted not with Faulkner's heavy hand so much as with the crisp ingenuity of Ross Macdonald."—Jonathan Lethem

Graham, Heather. [Danger in Numbers](#) (Mira \$27.99). 29-year-old special agent Amy Larson of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and John Schultz, her FDLE partner of two years, look into a young woman's ritualistic murder at a remote site on the edge of the Everglades. Amy's knack for making sketches at crime scenes that have proved useful has earned her the respect of 50-year-old John, a career FDLE agent. The case, one that involves several similar murders, attracts the attention of FBI special agent Hunter Forrest, who specializes in ritualistic killings, extremists, and the occult. When a heart attack sidelines John, Amy joins forces with Hunter to investigate the odd murders, and her sketches lead the agents to a chilling cult. The pair makes a vivid trek through rural Florida while heat rises between the two of them....

Harris, Joanne M. [Honeycomb](#) (Gallery \$28). Here is a mosaic of a novel of original fairy tales from Harris and legendary artist Charles Vess in a collaboration that's been years in the making. I love this Starred Review (and have always been drawn to fairy tales): "Floating somewhere between story collection and novel, this extraordinary work transports readers to the enchanting, dreamlike Nine Worlds. Most of these bite-size fairy tales chronicle the life of the Lacewing King, the leader of the Silken Folk, "who live in the shadows and cast none themselves," beginning with his birth in "The Midwife," and tracking his heartless actions as ruler in "The Lacewing King and the Spider Queen." "Penance of the Lacewing King" and "Travels of the Lacewing King," reveal his moving change of heart, and his story culminates in the kingdom of death in the title story. He is aided in his

many misadventures by his mother, the Honeycomb Queen; a nameless builder of boats; and others he meets along the way. But he is also hunted by both the Spider Queen and the Harlequin. Some stories run parallel to this central narrative, allowing readers glimpses into a farm of troublesome animals (“The Bull and the Snail”) and showing the actions of the other leaders of this dark, magical world (“The Prince”). Several also feature caged singers, both birds (“The Sparrow”) and women (“The King’s Canary”). The effect is magical, poignant, and wholly transporting. Supplemented by evocative line drawings, this strange, wondrous mosaic is sure to delight any lover of fairy tales.”

Hollis, Lee. [Poppy Harmon and the Pillow Talk Killer](#) (Kensington \$26). Retiree-turned-PI Poppy Harmon likes the anonymity of working behind the scenes for the hottest names in Palm Springs. Now cast in her first role since the 1980s, Poppy has never been more rattled or unprepared on a film set. It’s an embarrassing but necessary cover to keep an eye on client Danika Delgado, a rising starlet and social media influencer with a large following—including a dangerous stalker who won’t disappear. The leading lady’s fame is growing, and so are the threats against her life. Unfortunately for Poppy, there’s more to fear than flubbed lines. When she finds Danika smothered to death in her trailer at Joshua Tree National Park, the horrifying crime stirs up memories of a man known as the Pillow Talk Killer during her time as a young actress, bringing unsolved murders up. And a trail of clues urges Poppy, hunky sidekick Matt Flowers, and the rest of the Desert Flowers Detective Agency gang on a frantic chase after Danika’s crazed #1 fan. 3<sup>rd</sup> in a cozy series.

Lang, Essie. [A Deadly Chapter](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Shelby Cox, co-owner of Bayside Books in Alexandria Bay, N.Y., and a bookshop in a historic castle-cum-museum on nearby Blye Island, discovering a dead body wedged between her houseboat and the dock. The victim’s identity is unknown, but Shelby recognizes him as a man who recently visited one of her bookshops in search of a woman who moved to town seven years earlier. He didn’t know the name the woman might be using, but he did know that she loved books and reading. Shelby once again turns sleuth while helping out at a mystery book event and mulling over her relationship with boyfriend Zack Griffin, a Coast Guard Investigative Service agent.

Loeb, Avi. [Extraterrestrial: The First Sign of Intelligent Life Beyond Earth](#) (Houghton \$27). NEW REVIEW: I would not have imagined I’d be writing you a rave about astrophysics but this imaginative book, and very personal to a man I would absolutely love to meet, so hooked me I read every word. The ostensible narrative power derives from a small object spotted with today’s telescopes zipping into and out of our planetary system, an object whose shape and trajectory suggests it is not a natural but rather a manufactured one...and thus also suggests intelligent life besides that on earth. Loeb, with superb credentials and fascinating personal history, writes neither up nor down for dummies but in a friendly style that makes what he has to say accessible. He reminds me a bit of Carl Sagan but as a family man and faculty stalwart. His eloquence underlines what an innovative, risk-taking thinker he is and serves to open your mind to possibilities. His curiosity is infectious.

Lovering, Carola. [Too Good to Be True](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Winsome, wealthy Manhattan book editor Skye Starling is con-

fidant she’s finally found a man able to look past her occasionally paralyzing OCD, in this Machiavellian drama. Ignoring her friends’ pleas to take things slower, Skye instead leaps into the arms of much older, somewhat mysterious financial consultant Burke Michaels. Skye’s mistake becomes clear as the perspective switches from the besotted young woman to that of her beau, whose description in a diary entry of their first meeting on a Montauk beach reveals him to be married and broke. But that’s just a glimpse of the head-spinningly devious plot permutations that emerge as the narration, frequently unreliable, ping-pongs between the couple and a crucial third character, who’s initially introduced in chapters set three decades earlier as Burke’s high school sweetheart. Though the true shape of the main con seems to become apparent about halfway through, many twists lies ahead. This novel is stronger on the plotting than on developing characters so liking it depends on what you are in the mood to read for.

Miksa, Matt. [13 Days to Die](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Unread by me, I quote *PW* as I think all debuts are worth attention: “Former FBI intelligence analyst Miksa’s energetic debut opens with a pair of teasing, overheated scenes: a delirious man stumbles into a teahouse in a Tibetan village, vomits blood into his cup of tea, and dies; a week later in Vienna, an American businessman called Big Tex pays an Austrian geneticist for the formula for a virulent avian influenza. The real action gets underway in Beijing, where virologist Zhou ‘Jo’ Weilin explains in a briefing to China’s Politburo Standing Committee that a foreigner has been identified as Patient Zero in a deadly viral outbreak in Tibet. He’s believed to be a Taiwanese spy on a mission to use a bioweapon to undermine the rulers of Mainland China. Big Tex, who’s in fact Olen Grave, an intelligence officer in a Pentagon agency that specializes in protecting America from biological agents, is given a cover as a journalist and sent to accompany Jo to Tibet. Olen and Jo must do what they can to prevent a world war. The twisty, complex plot makes up for purple prose that sometimes slows things down.” I remain a confirmed fan of Elliot Pattison’s fabulous and Edgar-winning thrillers set in Tibet and so have ordered myself a copy. When things return to normal in publishing I hope to have more advance reading copies and thus more informed opinions.

Pressfield, Steven. [Man at Arms](#) (Norton \$27.95). Jerusalem and the Sinai desert, first century AD. In the turbulent aftermath of the crucifixion of Jesus, officers of the Roman Empire acquire intelligence of a pilgrim bearing an incendiary letter from a religious fanatic to insurrectionists in Corinth. The content of this letter could bring down the empire. The Romans hire a former legionary, the solitary man-at-arms, Telamon of Arcadia, to intercept the letter and capture its courier. Telamon operates by a dark code all his own, with no room for noble causes or lofty beliefs. But once he overtakes the courier, something happens that neither he nor the empire could have predicted. In his first novel of the ancient world in thirteen years, the best-selling author of *Gates of Fire* and *Tides of War* returns with a rousing saga.

Ryan, Annelise. [Dead Even](#) (Kensington \$26). In her previous career as a nurse, Sorensen, Wisconsin’s Mattie Winston’s job was to keep death at bay. Now, as a medicolegal investigator, she’s required to study death intimately—to figure out causes and timing, and help deduce whether it was natural or suspicious. In the case of Monty Dixon, a well-to-do realtor, there can be little doubt: he’s been skewered with a pool cue. Monty’s body is found in the

game room of his lavish house, the walls adorned with photos of Monty and various celebrities. The first suspect is Monty's wife, Summer, who claims to have been at a cooking class at the time. When that alibi proves fake, Summer moves to the top of the suspects list, but is soon joined by Monty's ne'er-do-well son, Sawyer, who has racked up gambling debts he hoped his dad would pay off. Monty's twin brother is engaging in shady financial deals. An affair, a Ponzi scheme, a disputed inheritance...there are as many motives as suspects, and soon Mattie and Hurley have turned up other, possibly related deaths. Balancing a high-profile case with the demands of their increasingly stressful household is rough, but Midwestern grit smooths their path. It's refreshing to read a procedural in such a setting.

Tan, Sandi. [Lurkers](#) (Soho \$27). The residents of LA's Santa Claus Lane do their best to stay out of each other's way, but desire, fury and mischief too often propel these suburban neighbors to collide. Precocious Korean American sisters Mira and Rosemary find their world rocked by a suicide, and they must fight to keep their home; a charismatic and creepy drama teacher grooms his students; a sardonic gay horror novelist finds that aging is more terrifying than any monster; and a white hippie mom and her adopted Vietnamese daughter realize that their anger binds them rather than pushes them apart. Filmmaker Tan, director of the acclaimed documentary *Shirkers*, crafts a mosaic of the many aspects of Los Angeles.

#### OUR MARCH LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Killing Tide: A Brittany Mystery](#)

Black, Cara. [Three Hours in Paris](#)

Camilleri, Andrea. [The Cook of the Halcyon](#) ✨new, see review below

De Castrique, Mark. [Fatal Scores](#)

Feeney, Alice. [His and Hers](#)

Harris, CS. [Who Speaks for the Damned](#)

Jones, Stephen Graham. [The Only Good Indians](#)

Penman, Sharon Kay. [The Land Beyond the Sea](#)

Owens, Delia. [Where the Crawdads Sing](#) ✨ new for March 30 release

Quinn, Kate. [The Rose Code](#)

Steinhauer, Olen. [The Last Tourist](#)

Viskic, Emma. [Darkness for Light](#)

Wrobel, Stephanie. [Darling Rose Gold](#)

#### NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACK

✨Brooks, Elizabeth. [The Whispering House](#) (Tin House \$16.95).

Brooks cooks up a spellbinding gothic story featuring a sinister country house. Aspiring poet Freya Lyell, 23, mourns the apparent death by suicide of her mercurial older sister, Stella, at 21, who jumped from a cliff not far from stately Byrne Hall in England's West Country. Five years on, Freya and her father attend a cousin's wedding on the grounds of the imposing house. After a few drinks and the glimpse of a mysterious man emerging from the cliff path, Freya wanders into the house's front hall to discover a portrait of a girl who appears to be Stella. When she returns to inquire about the picture, she is lured into a web of dark intrigue spun by the house's inhabitants: artist Cory Byrne, who remembers having Stella pose for him a week before her death, and Cory's enigmatic mother, Diana.... This is an exquisitely creepy page-turner.

Brown, Sandra. [Thick as Thieves](#) (\$16.99). Twenty years ago in the dead of night, four seemingly random individuals pulled the ultimate heist and almost walked away with half a million dollars. But by daybreak, their plan had been shot to hell. One of them was in the hospital. One was in jail. One was dead. And one got away with it. Arden Maxwell, the daughter of the man who disappeared all those years ago, presumably with the money, after murdering his accomplice, has never reconciled with her father's abandonment of her and her sister. After countless personal setbacks she decides to return to her family home near mysterious Caddo Lake, and finally get answers to the many questions that torment her. Little does she know two of her father's co-conspirators—a war hero and a corrupt district attorney—are watching her every move.

Camilleri, Andrea. [The Cook of the Halcyon](#) (Penguin \$16). You either love Andrea Camilleri or you haven't read him yet. Each novel in this wholly addictive, entirely magical series, set in Sicily and starring a detective unlike any other in crime fiction, blasts the brain like a shot of pure oxygen. Aglow with local color, packed with flint-dry wit, as fresh and clean as Mediterranean seafood—altogether transporting. Long live Camilleri and long live Montalbano." AJ Finn. How true, and especially true if you watched the fabulous TV series *Montalbano* and *The Young Montalbano*. Here in a posthumous tale, Giovanni Trincanato has brought ruin to the shipyard he inherited from his father and when a worker he fires hangs himself on the construction site, Inspector Montalbano is called to the scene. In short order, the inspector loses his temper with the crass Giovanni, delivers a slap to his face, and unfortunately, it won't be the last he sees of Trincanato. Meanwhile, a mysterious schooner called *Halcyon* shows up in the harbor, seemingly deserted except for just one man. With its presence come even more mysteries, another death, and the arrival of the FBI. Alongside Sicilian-American Agent Pennisi, Montalbano and his team must attempt a suspenseful infiltration operation.

Duncan, Emmeline. [Fresh Brewed Murder](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Portland is famous for its rain, hipsters, craft beers...and coffee. Barista Sage Caplin has high hopes for her coffee truck, *Ground Rules*, which she runs with her business partner, Harley—a genius at roasting beans and devising new blends. That's essential in a city where locals have intensely strong opinions about cappuccino versus macchiato—especially in the case of one of Sage's very first customers. Sage finds the man's body in front of her truck, a fatal slash across his neck. There's been plenty of anger in the air, from long-time vendors annoyed at *Ground Rules* taking a coveted spot in the food truck lot, to protestors demonstrating against a new high-rise. But who was mad enough to commit murder? Sage is already fending off trouble in the form of her estranged, con-artist mother, who's trying to trickle back into her life. But when Sage's very own box cutter is discovered to be the murder weapon, she needs to focus on finding the killer fast....

Engel, Amy. [The Familiar Dark](#) (\$16) is a blistering rural noir set in the Missouri Ozarks and brimming with dark secrets and the harsh realities of survival in a hardscrabble town. As Eve Taggart seeks vengeance for her daughter's murder and descends into the depths of her own jagged past, we are reminded that a mother's love is a fearsome thing

Fredericks, Mariah. [Death of an American Beauty](#) (\$17.99). Jane Prescott is taking a break from her duties as lady's maid for a week, and plans to begin it with attending the hottest and most scandalous show in town: the opening of an art exhibition, showcasing the cubists, that is shocking New York City. 1913 is also the fiftieth anniversary of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation speech, and the city's great and good are determined to celebrate in style. Dolly Rutherford, heiress to the glamorous Rutherford's department store empire, has gathered her coterie of society ladies to put on a play—with Jane's employer Louise Tyler in the starring role as Lincoln himself. Jane is torn between helping the ladies with their costumes and enjoying her holiday. But fate decides she will do neither, when a woman is found murdered outside Jane's childhood home—a refuge for women run by her uncle. Deeply troubled as her uncle falls under suspicion and haunted by memories of a woman she once knew, Jane investigates. "Ms. Fredericks's tour of old New York—from a seedy Bowery dive to the gilded palace of a department store—is eye-opening, and her mystery well-spun. But what makes this book a stand-out is its affecting depictions of interactions that transcend race, creed, gender and generations." —*Wall Street Journal* on this 2021 Edgar nominee.

Goble, Steve. [Pieces of Eight](#) (Seventh Street \$15.95). 1723—Spider John is almost home, free of the horrors of the pirate life, free of the violence, free of the death. The wife and baby he left behind almost a decade ago are almost within reach. But then a murder aboard Minuet uncovers a deeper conspiracy, and soon Spider and his friends—curmudgeonly Odin, swashbuckling young Hob and alluring Ruth Copper—find themselves in the midst of flintlock smoke and bloodshed. The violence follows Spider ashore to Nantucket, where the loving reception he'd dreamed of turns out to be something utterly unexpected. Soon, Spider is running for his life and confronting cutthroats and thieves — while hiding from islanders who think he left a man dead on a widow's front step. Why not a swashbuckler to pep things up?

Jones, Darynda. [A Bad Day for Sunshine](#) (\$17.99). A missing girl, a flasher named Doug, and an old flame that refuses to burn out. What else could go wrong on newly sworn-in sheriff Sunshine Vicram's first day? She finds her cup o' joe more than half full when the small village of Del Sol, New Mexico, becomes the center of national attention for a kidnapper on the loose. Del Sol is known for three things: its fry-an-egg-on-the-cement summers, its strong cups of coffee—and a nationwide manhunt? The Del Sol native has returned to town as the elected sheriff—an election her meddling parents entered her in—and she expects her biggest crime wave to involve an elderly flasher named Doug. But a teenage girl is missing, a kidnapper is on the loose, and all of it is reminding Sunny why she left Del Sol in the first place. Add to that trouble at her daughter's new school and a kidnapped prized rooster named Puff Daddy. Then enter sexy almost-old-flame Levi Ravinder and a hunky US Marshall, both elevens on a scale of one to blazing inferno, and the normally savvy sheriff is quickly in over her head.

Kidd, Sue Monk. [The Book of Longings](#) (\$17). Raised in a wealthy family with ties to the ruler of Galilee, Ana is rebellious and ambitious, with a brilliant mind and a daring spirit. She engages in furtive scholarly pursuits and writes narratives about neglected and silenced women. Ana is expected to marry an

older widower, a prospect that horrifies her. An encounter with eighteen-year-old Jesus changes everything. Take it from there....

Lecoat, Jenny. [The Girl from the Channel Islands](#) (Graydon House \$17.99). I mentioned this last Enews and repeat it for its landscape and for the positive outcome in a new entry in the deluge of WWII women's stories: "A beautiful love story unfolds between a German officer and a Jewish woman amidst the horror and atrocities of World War II. Set in Jersey in the Channel Islands, this historical novel, with its many twists and turns, will keep you on edge. Secrets and lies become the norm for survival along with crafty plans to evade discovery. The bravery of the characters keeps the reader focused on the triumph of the human spirit against all odds. Lecoat has turned a personal connection and a family history into an engaging, touching novel!"

Luna, Louisa. [The Janes](#) (\$16). In Luna's sequel to 2018's [Two Girls Down](#) (\$16), what starts as a straightforward, if extremely challenging, assignment—figuring out who killed two barely teenage Latina Jane Does and dumped them in the San Diego, Calif., area—quickly turns treacherous for PIs Alice Vega and Max Caplan, plunging the now-rogue team into a perilous sprint to stay one step ahead as they race to unravel a plot as dark and twisted as one of the tunnels [used] for smuggling between Mexico and the U.S.

Marple Kalb, Kathleen. [A Fatal Finale](#) (\$15.95). Swashbuckling opera singer Ella Shane is an Irish-Jewish Lower East Side orphan who finds fame and fortune singing male "trouser roles" in NY's Gilded Age. But Ella's flair for the dramatic takes a terrifying turn in 1899 when an overacting Juliet to her Romeo drinks real poison during the final act of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. Weeks after the woman's death is ruled a tragic accident, a mysterious English duke arrives in Greenwich Village on a mission. He's certain someone is getting away with murder, and the refined aristocrat won't travel back across the Atlantic until Ella helps him expose the truth....

Owens, Delia. [Where the Crowdads Sing](#) (\$18). Releases March 30 after 2 ½ years on the hardcover bestseller list. A 2018 First Mystery Book of the Month here at The Pen, it's a coming of age story, a mystery, and survival tale set in a North Carolina coastal marsh. Painfully beautiful well describes this landscape.

Palmer, DJ. [The New Husband](#) (\$16.99). 30-something Nina Garrity thinks she has found Mr. Right after her unfaithful husband vanished, presumed drowned during a solo fishing trip, more than a year earlier. And most probably dead given that the boat's deck was covered in blood and no amount of searching, even with dogs, has revealed Glen—or his body. Mr. Right, one Simon Fitch, rescued the family's runaway dog and spared them further heartbreak. But Nina's 13-year-old daughter, Maggie, is hostile to Nina's now live-in relationship with widower Simon and resolves to do everything possible to sabotage it. Tension mounts as mother and daughter independently snoop into Simon and his past. Twists proliferate. The challenge for Palmer, son of the late bestseller Michael and brother to thriller writer Matthew, is to make Nina's pivot from Glen to Simon in such a short time convincing. Then... who can resist a dog rescuer?

Patterson, James. [The House of Kennedy](#) (\$17.99). Now with an all-new bonus chapter, "James Patterson applies his writerly skills to real-life history...re-telling the political clan's rise and fall and rise again (and fall again) with novelistic style"—*People*

Slatter, AG. [All the Murmuring Bones](#) (Titan \$14.95). Set in a fantasy world reminiscent of 19th-century Ireland, this stunning gothic adventure shimmers with fairy tale enchantment. Miren O'Malley has lived her 18 years under the thumb of her overbearing grandmother, Aoife, the matriarch of the once powerful O'Malley dynasty, now paupers in a crumbling coastal mansion. Miren grew up with stories of her family sacrificing children to the sea-queen in return for their prosperity. But their line has been diluted—Miren's mother married an outsider and had only one child, leaving none to be sacrificed. To revive the family wealth, Aoife plans to marry Miren off to her rich and brutal cousin. But when Miren learns that her mother was a witch and that her supposedly long-dead parents are still alive, she finally takes control of her life and sets out to find them. While navigating the greed and arrogance of man and the magic of kelpies and merfolk, Miren vows to right her family's generations of wrongs. In lyrical prose, Slatter evokes the decay and dread that surround her strong characters. Anyone who likes gutsy heroines, beautiful language, and well-wrought worlds won't want to miss this."

Szymiczkowa, Maryla. [Karolina and the Torn Curtain](#) (Houghton \$15.99). One night in 1895 Cracow, the body of 17-year-old housemaid Karolina Szulc is found on a river bank, in the pseudonymous Szymiczkowa's entertaining sequel to 2020 hits [Mrs. Mohr Goes Missing](#) (\$15.95). Karolina worked for Zofia Turbotynska, a respectable member of the bourgeoisie, who's incensed by the police assuming the victim was a harlot, given the body's location in a dubious district of the city. Keen to defend Karolina's reputation, Zofia sets out to discover the truth. Her investigations put her in contact with every level of society, including prostitutes and socialists, and she even gets a glimpse of visiting Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. "The excitement she gained from her daring quest for the murderer," Zofia realizes, "was far greater than the joy of sedately caring for the domestic hearth." Szymiczkowa (the pen name of writing duo Jacek Dehnel and Piotr Tarczynski) brings Cracow vividly to life and presents the period's views on women with sly wit. This mystery will please readers looking for an unusual amateur sleuth and a picturesque setting.

Wallace, Kali. [Dead Space](#) (Berkley \$17). "Hester Marley was once a part of a cutting-edge research team, but a devastating terrorist attack left her injured with several prosthetics and huge debt to Parthenope Enterprises for her medical support. Now serving as a safety officer far away from the memories of her personal and professional losses, Hester receives a surprising and strange message from another survivor of the attack—only to discover he was murdered shortly after sending it. Integrating herself into the investigation on a secluded mining outpost, Hester begins to uncover her friend's actions, along with the secrets being kept by both his coworkers and his employers. The story moves at a fast clip, and readers will enjoy the twists that are presented, along with the character developments and interactions. This immersive story is led by a flawed—physically and emotionally—protagonist who is nonetheless determined to discover the truth no matter where it leads. Wallace showcases themes of xenophobia, corporate profit, and AI evolution in this absorbing space thriller."—LJ

James Rollins, whose next Sigma Thriller [Kingdom of Bones](#) as yet has no firm publication date for those asking, adds,

"Kali Wallace, the world needs you—and this book is a taut thriller, a near-future look at where we're headed next, a mirror reflecting the best and worst of humanity. It is all that, and so much more. I'd follow the rebellious heroine Zahra anywhere—especially into another nail-biter of a story like this."

Wright, Julie. [A Captain for Caroline Gray](#) (Shadow Mountain \$15.99). I am a fan of the Regency period as you longtime readers know. I like this one, written much in the spirit of Lauren Willig's Pink Carnation series but set wholly within the historical period, and propelled by an Austen-type dilemma: what is a young woman past her first seasons to do when she does not attract a proposal and, much worse, her father dies, his estate goes to a cousin, and she and her mother are thrust out with few funds and no future income? Caroline, well educated by her well-meaning father, independent, courageous but often silenced by convention, and unable to fit the mold of girls fluttering on the marriage market, is the despair of her mother. A proposal does arrive: a couple will pay half her passage to India if she agrees to meet their son three times with a view towards marriage. Her mother, going to live with her brother, can eke out the other half of the fare. And so Caroline very reluctantly goes to sea. She finds she loves it but she's infuriated by the vessel's attractive if autocratic captain, and the object of backbiting and scorn from other young women sailing with the hope of attracting a mate—women known as The Fishing Fleet. The ship's arrival in Bombay interrupts a rocky romance leaving you to read on in hopes Caroline's life will come right. Wright pens a realistic portrait of the cruelty women faced from familial and economic circumstances and from other women, and of a long sea voyage. Highly recommended. The one false note I found was referring to Bombay as Mumbai.

Young, Tom. [Silver Wings, Iron Cross](#) (\$15.95). World War II Lieutenant Karl Hagan earned his wings the hard way. But when his plane is shot down behind enemy lines, he's forced to make the hardest decision of his life: trusting the enemy. Oberleutnant Wilhelm Albrecht wore his Iron Cross with pride. But when his U-boat is attacked in a devastating air raid, he abandons ship and finds an unlikely ally: the pilot who bombed him. From the smoke-filled skies over Europe to the fire-blasted waters of a Nazi naval base to the battle-scarred German countryside, the American and the German must form an unlikely alliance if they hope to survive. It is November of 1944. The tides of war have turned. Allies have taken back France, and German troops have retreated. But Karl and Wilhelm are on the run...and it ends for them in a POW camp. A WWII story about men is a standout in the flood of those telling about heroic women.

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