

# BOOKNEWS from

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## THERE IS MUCH TO CELEBRATE IN JUNE

Opening Hours M-Sat 10 AM-6 PM; Sun 12-5 PM

Note: All the event times are Pacific Daylight 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.

### TUESDAY JUNE 1 7:00 PM National Book Launch

**JA Jance** discusses [Unfinished Business](#) (Gallery \$27.99)  
Sedona's Ali Reynolds  
Signed book available

### WEDNESDAY JUNE 2 6:00 PM

**Michael Punke** in conversation with **CJ Box**  
**Punke** discusses [Ridgeline](#) (Holt \$27.99)  
A novel of the western frontier 1866  
Signed books available

### SATURDAY JUNE 5 4:00 PM National Book Launch

**Laurie R. King** discusses [Castle Shade](#) (Random \$28)  
Russell & Holmes in Romania  
Signed books available

### MONDAY JUNE 7 5:00 PM

**James Patterson** and **President Bill Clinton** in conversation with **Lee Child**  
They discuss [The President's Daughter](#) (LittleBrown \$30)

### TUESDAY JUNE 8 5:00 PM

**The Brad Taylor Book Discussion Evening**  
**Taylor** discusses [American Traitor](#) in its entirety  
Email [patrick@poisonedpen.com](mailto:patrick@poisonedpen.com) to join in the free event

### TUESDAY JUNE 8 6:00 PM

**Don Bentley** in conversation with **Brad Taylor**  
**Bentley** discusses [Tom Clancy Target Acquired](#) (Putnam \$29)  
Signed books available

### WEDNESDAY JUNE 9 5:00 PM

**Sujata Massey** in conversation with **Nev March**  
**Massey** discusses [The Bombay Prince](#) (Soho \$27.95)  
Signed books available

### THURSDAY JUNE 10 6:00 PM

**David Swinson** discusses [City on the Edge](#) (LittleBrown \$28)  
Signed books available

### FRIDAY JUNE 11 4:00 PM

**Kristan Higgins** discusses [Pack Up the Moon](#) (Berkley \$27)  
Signed books available

### FRIDAY JUNE 11 6:00 PM

**Ben Percy** discusses [The Ninth Metal](#) (Harper \$25)  
Signed books available  
This will be our July SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month

### MONDAY JUNE 14 5:00 PM Antiques Mysteries

**Connie Berry** in conversation with **Jane Cleland**  
**Berry** discusses [The Art of Betrayal](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99)  
Signed books available for Berry

### TUESDAY JUNE 15 12:00 PM

**Sir Roderick Floud** discusses [England's Magnificent Gardens](#) (Knopf \$40)  
An economic historian looks at a billion dollar industry from Charles II to today

### WEDNESDAY JUNE 16 5:00 PM

**John McMahon** and **David Ricciardi**  
**McMahon** discusses [A Good Kill](#) (Putnam \$27)  
**Ricciardi** discusses [Shadow Target](#) (Berkley \$27)  
Signed books available for both

### FRIDAY JUNE 18 7:00 PM

**SciFi Friday** discusses **Nnedi Okorafor's** [Who Fears Death](#) (\$17)

### SATURDAY JUNE 19 10:30 AM

**Croak & Dagger** discusses Peter Swanson's [Eight Perfect Murders](#) (\$16.99)

### MONDAY JUNE 21 1:00 PM

**Clare Mackintosh** discusses [Hostage](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99)  
Signed UK Edition available: [Hostage](#) (\$35)

### MONDAY JUNE 21 5:00 PM

**Leonard Goldberg** discusses [The Abduction of Pretty Penny](#) (St Martins \$26.99)  
The Daughter of Sherlock Holmes  
Signed books available

### MONDAY JUNE 21 6:30 PM

**Taylor Adams** in conversation with **Craig Johnson**  
**Adams** discusses [Hairpin Bridge](#) (Harper \$27.99)  
Our June Crime Book of the Month  
Signed books available

### TUESDAY JUNE 22 5:00 PM

**Encore Event**  
**David Baldacci** in conversation with **Jake Tapper**  
**Tapper** discusses [The Devil May Dance](#) (Little Brown \$28)  
Allow for Spoilers—this book has been out since early May

### TUESDAY JUNE 22 6:15 PM Debut

**Fabian Nicieza** discusses [Suburban Dicks](#) (Putnam \$27)  
Our June First Mystery Book of the Month  
Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 23 1:00 PM**

**Jamie Brenner** discusses [Blush](#) (Putnam \$26)  
Three women, a failing winery, and a scandalous book club  
Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 23 6:00 PM**

**Joe R. Lansdale** discusses [Moon Lake](#) (LittleBrown \$28)  
Signed books available

**THURSDAY JUNE 24 5:00 PM**

**Sarah Stewart Taylor in conversation with Carlene O'Connor**  
Taylor discusses [A Distant Grave](#) (St Martins \$27.99)  
Signed books available

**THURSDAY JUNE 24 7:00 PM**

**Hardboiled Crime** discusses George Benet's [The Hoodlums](#) (\$9.99)

**SATURDAY JUNE 26 4:00 PM**

**Kate Carlisle** discusses [Little Black Book](#) (Berkley \$27)  
Signed books available

**MONDAY JUNE 28 1:00 PM**

**UK's Elly Griffiths** discusses [The Night Hawks](#) (Houghton \$27)  
Ruth Galloway Archeological Mystery

**MONDAY JUNE 28 5:00 PM**

**Paul Doiron in conversation with Luanne Rice**  
**Doiron** discusses [Dead by Dawn](#) (St Martins \$29)  
Maine Game Warden Mike Bowditch  
Signed books available

**TUESDAY JUNE 29 6:00 PM National book launch**

**Steven Saylor** discusses [Dominus](#) (St Martins \$29.99)  
Signed books available

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 30 4:30 PM National Book Launch**

**Hilary Davidson** discusses [Her Last Breath](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95/\$15.95)  
Signed books available

**SIGNED BOOKS**

Adams, Taylor. [Hairpin Bridge](#) (Harper \$27.99). **We haven't had a good serial killer thriller in a while for the Crime Book of the Month so here is the June Pick.** It has an unusual structure—skillfully entwined third-person narrative, posts from Lena's blog, and passages from the book she's writing about her dead identical twin Cambry reveal the sisters' past and Cambry's final hours as Lena's investigation, a truly unorthodox one, moves along. Here is part of a Starred Review: "Adams follows his debut, 2019's [No Exit](#) (\$9.99), with another dazzling thriller. Cambry Nguyen, 24, was wrapping up a yearlong odyssey across America when highway patrolman Raymond Raycevic found her dead beneath Hairpin Bridge, a derelict structure off a now-closed road 60 miles from Missoula, Mont. Unconvinced by the verdict of suicide, Cambry's identical twin, Lena, drives from her home in Seattle to Montana. Raycevic reluctantly leads Lena to the bridge and begins to answer her increasingly pointed questions. Was it coincidence that Raycevic pulled Cambry over for speeding only an hour before her death? Why did her last text to Lena read "Please Forgive Me. I couldn't live with it. Hopefully you can, Officer Raycevic?" Though Lena tells the outsized Raycevic

**WEDNESDAY JUNE 30 6:00 PM**

**Riley Sager in conversation with May Cobb**  
**Sager** discusses [Survive the Night](#) (Dutton \$28)  
Cobb's book is [The Hunting Wives](#) (Berkley \$26)  
Signed books available for both

**HAPPY FOURTH**

**We are closed July 4 and 5 to celebrate**

**WELCOME BACK!**

We are thrilled to host our first post-COVID live event. We have more coming up in July and August. Don Winslow appears live on September 20.

**So, Tuesday July 6 7:00 PM**

**TJ Newman** discusses and signs our July First Mystery Book of the Month, [Falling](#) (Avid Reader Press \$28)

Newman, who worked as a bookseller in Phoenix and as a flight attendant, is making a big splash. We are delighted to meet her. Here's how it will work:

The first 25 to purchase a (signed) copy of *Falling* will get a ticket to the event. Our space is limited so we offer limited seating.

**Rather than step into the controversies around vaxxing, we are making it simple: attendees must be masked. The author and I will be distanced, and unmasked. You must wear your mask in the signing line as well.**

We recognize this won't suit everyone, but we are a small business with our own basic rules. Masking is no different a hygiene requirement than our rule you must wear shoes in the store, and a shirt/pants/shorts or a dress. And masking is just as courteous to fellow readers as muting your cell phone.

Those not attending may order a signed copy in the usual way.

that she wants revenge as well as answers, he assumes the small minimum-wage electronics store worker poses little threat." And he's so wrong.... This isn't one of those gore-spattered gruesome SK books, it's more of a cat-and-mouse game that worms into your imagination.

Bentley, Don. [Tom Clancy Target Acquired](#) (Putnam \$29). Jack Ryan, Jr. would do anything for Ding Chavez. That's why Jack is currently sitting in an open-air market in Israel, helping a CIA team with a simple job. The man running the mission, Peter Beltz, is an old friend from Ding's Army days. Ding hadn't seen his friend since Peter's transfer to the CIA eighteen months prior, and intended to use the assignment to reconnect. Unfortunately, Ding had to cancel at the last minute and asked Jack to take his place. It's a cushy assignment—a trip to Israel in exchange for a couple hours of easy work, but Jack could use the downtime after his last operation. Jack is here merely as an observer, but when he hastens to help a woman and her young son, he finds himself the target of trained killers. Alone and outgunned, Jack will have to use all his skills to protect the life of the child. This is Bentley's first thriller in the Clancyverse....

Berry, Connie. [The Art of Betrayal](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Antiques dealer Kate Hamilton is filling in for the recuperating Ivor Tweedy at the Cabinet of Curiosities, Ivor's shop in the Suffolk village of Long Barston. Kate's Ohio operation isn't enough to hold her back from the company of the magnetic Suffolk DI Tom Mallory whom she met on two previous investigations, so Ivor's shop is the perfect busman's holiday. Almost immediately, reclusive manor house owner Evelyn Villiers asks her to handle the sale of an ancient Chinese funerary jar worth thousands of pounds. No one has seen Evelyn for some 18 years, so it causes a stir. A bigger one arises when the jar is stolen from the shop and Evelyn is stabbed to death. After police engage Kate to prepare an estate inventory, she finds more questions than answers. Why was Evelyn living like a recluse, and why are jewelry and photos missing from the house? Where is Evelyn's estranged daughter, Lucy? We veer towards the Gothic here. This is the third in the Kate Hamilton British cozy series wherein you will enjoy much about the antiques trade and dive deeply into an English village and family dynamics both English and American. I recommend you read [the first two](#) as well.

Brenner, Jamie. [Blush](#) (Putnam \$26). Taking a break from crime, I look forward to wine, cheese, and a scandalous book club—all taking place at the Hollander family winery on Long Island's North Fork. It's also a look at declining family fortune and how that plays. Here's a review summing this treat up: "Brenner's lovely latest begs to be read with a view and a glass of wine as three generations of Hollander women—and the men who orbit them—come together at their family's struggling winery, each fighting their own inner battles. Vivian, the matriarch, doesn't have faith in her son's ability to run the business, and resents her husband's unwillingness to include her in decisions. Leah, Vivian's daughter, harbors anger that her father doesn't trust her to run the winery and frustration that her usually supportive husband has lately become pushy. College student Sadie has lost her position working with a professor she idolizes and can't find the inspiration to work on her thesis. These three women find a way to reclaim their power by starting a "trashy" book club, reading romance novels from the 1980s that they discover in the winery's library. In the process, they learn secrets about the family and the estate that could mean the end of the winery—or new beginnings in both business and love. Brenner tackles complex issues including gender inequality and the devaluation of women's interests with a light hand, balancing heavy topics with copious descriptions of wine, cheese, and classic romances." This is a scrumptious summer read.

Carlisle, Kate. [Little Black Book](#) (Berkley \$27). Brooklyn Wainwright and her husband, security expert Derek Stone, have just returned from a delightful trip to Dharma, where the construction of their new home away from home is well underway, when a little black book arrives in the mail from Scotland. The book is a rare British first edition of *Rebecca*, and there's no return address on the package. The day after the book arrives, Claire Quinn shows up at Brooklyn and Derek's home. Brooklyn met Claire when the two women worked as expert appraisers on the television show *This Old Attic*. Brooklyn appraised books on the show and Claire's expertise was in antique British weaponry, but they bonded over their shared love of gothic novels. Claire reveals that during a recent trip to Scotland she discovered her beloved aunt was missing and her home had been ransacked.

Among her aunt's belongings, Claire found the receipt for the package that wound up with Brooklyn and Derek. Claire believes both her own life and her aunt's are in danger and worries that her past may be coming back to haunt her. But just as Brooklyn and Derek begin to investigate, a man who Claire thinks was following her is found murdered, stabbed with a priceless jeweled dagger. With a death on their doorstep, Brooklyn and Derek page through the little black book, where they discover clues that will take them to the shadows of a medieval Scottish castle on the shores of Loch Ness. Under the watchful gaze of a mysterious laird and the irascible villagers who are suspicious of the strangers in their midst, Brooklyn and Derek must decode the secrets in *Rebecca*....

Cobb, May. [The Hunting Wives](#) (Berkley \$26). Some people aren't aware they are in a toxic relationship until they are well out of it. That's not the case with lifestyle journalist Sophie O'Neill who, with her architect husband, Graham, and preschooler son, Jack, moved seven months ago from suburban Chicago to slower paced Mapleton, Texas. There, Sophie finds a honeycomb of society women oozing with noxious gossip and backbiting—and Sophie desperately wants in. So we see that Cobb compellingly explores toxic female friendship in her second novel. Sophie becomes infatuated with queen bee Margot Banks and her three women friends. Sophie trolls them on social media and wangles invitations to parties where they will be. She's finally invited to join their "Hunting Wives" club, which involves a lot of drinking and shooting skeet at Margot's remote lake house. Then comes barhopping, which moves from flirting with strangers to adultery. Sophie's fascination with Margot puts her marriage in jeopardy, ignoring that she isn't a pal but a pawn in their risky games—until a fatality occurs. Cobb plumbs the depths of Sophie's ennui as she realizes that this small-town life that she craved begins to feel oppressive. Sophie sees the manipulative Margot as a "glamour fix," an outlet for her restlessness. Cobb intelligently imbues *The Hunting Wives* with unexpected twists, accented by witty dialogue, leading to a surprising finale. I found this a fascinating look into two generations below my own and the societal (and literary) expectations that the sexual revolution and social media have created.

Davidson, Hilary. [Her Last Breath](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95/\$15.95). When her beloved sister Caroline dies suddenly, Deirdre is heartbroken. However, her sorrow turns to bone-chilling confusion when she receives a message Caroline sent days earlier warning that her death would be no accident. Long used to being a pariah to her family, Deirdre covers her tattoos and heads to Manhattan for her sister's funeral. The message claimed Caroline's husband, Theo, killed his first wife and got away with it. Reeling from the news, Deirdre confronts Theo on the way to the cemetery, and he reveals both his temper and his suspicion that Deirdre's "perfect" sister was having an affair. Paranoid and armed with just enough information to make her dangerous, Deirdre digs into the disturbing secrets buried with Caroline. But as she gets closer to the truth, she realizes that her own life may be at risk...and that there may be more than one killer in the family. "Hilary Davidson brings her A game in this stand-alone thriller about a woman's search to find her sister's killer. With a twisty Agatha Christie plot, complex psychological threads, and deep, dark family secrets, *Her Last Breath* is a genre-bending page-turner!" —Wendy Walker

Davis, Lindsey. [A Comedy of Terrors](#) (Hodder \$46). Flavia Albia's husband, Tiberius Manlius, a magistrate in charge of the ancient Roman equivalent of consumer protection, is drawn into his own inquiry. Nuts being sold in honor of the Saturnalia festival have made several Romans sick. Tiberius's assistant believes that organized criminals, seeking to eliminate competition by sabotaging rivals in the nut trade, are responsible. Soon after Tiberius begins to investigate, the severed head of their pet sheep is left on their doorstep. With characteristic humorous disdain, Flavia takes the threat in stride. After she teams up with Tiberius, they uncover a wide pattern of racketeering that includes murder, public corruption, extortion, and tax fraud. Davis convincingly depicts first-century mobsters, an aspect of ancient Roman criminality that's been underutilized by authors writing about this period

Doiron, Paul. [Dead by Dawn](#) (St Martins \$29). After being ambushed on a dark winter road, his Jeep crashed into a frozen river, trapped beneath the ice in the middle of nowhere, having lost his gun and any way to signal for help, Maine Game Warden Mike fights his way to the surface of the icy Androscoggin River. But surviving the tire-shredding is only the first challenge. Whoever set the trap that ran him off the road is still out there, and they're coming for him—but hypothermia may get him first. Flash back to earlier that morning. Mariëtte Chamberlain asks Bowditch, who has a reputation for solving cold cases, to reinvestigate her father-in-law's death. Four years earlier, Professor Eben Chamberlain, formerly of the British Foreign Service, was duck hunting on the Androscoggin when he apparently fell out of his boat and drowned. Since Chamberlain, according to Mariëtte, never would have taken off his life vest, she suspects foul play. Bowditch agrees to do a little digging and is soon headed for trouble. As Mike faces a nightlong battle to stay alive, he must dissect the hours leading up to the ambush and solve two riddles: who desperately wants him dead, and what has he done to incur such wrath? Doiron builds tension by alternating between his lead's battle to survive and the inquiry into Chamberlain's death, which he effectively doles out in small segments. This [Maine-based series](#) deserved to be ordered and read from the beginning.

Ellroy, James. [Widespread Panic](#) (Knopf \$28). Patrick reviews: "If you're a fan of classic Ellroy, as I am, you'll love this devious side trip into the life of Fred Otash, notorious Hollywood fixer and private eye. When the book opens, Otash is stuck in purgatory, where he's spent the last thirty years after dropping dead of a massive heart attack in 1992. Now, he's been given a way out of eternal damnation by giving a full confession of his many indiscretions. It's a crazy set up that only Ellroy could pull off, but what follows is a salacious trip back into 1950s Los Angeles, as Otash transforms himself from crooked cop to even sleazier private eye. Working for the notorious tabloid *Confidential* and dishing out the dirt on Hollywood celebs and prominent political figures caught in compromising positions, Otash excels at his job. That is, until LAPD Chief William Parker, his old nemesis, puts together a righteous case against Otash that could put the ex-cop behind bars for a long time. Parker works out a deal with Otash: he'll make those charges disappear if Otash helps Parker put *Confidential* out of business. You'll meet an array of notables here, from Rock Hudson, Liberace and James Dean, to Jack Kennedy and an array of Hollywood starlets. This novel is good, unwholesome, voyeuristic fun, and Ellroy's absolute command of the language is on full display." I add there are some interesting

parallels with the Jake Tapper 1962 foray into Hollywood below, our June Historical Book of the Month.

Goldberg, Leonard. [The Abduction of Pretty Penny](#) (St Martins \$26.99). One 1927 morning Joanna, the daughter of the late Sherlock Holmes, receives a visit at 221B Baker Street, which she shares with her husband, Dr. Watson's son, from Emma Adams, a playwright and the owner of a pub and a theater in Whitechapel. Mrs. Adams persuades Joanna to find Penny Martin, the star of her current play, who has gone missing. Meanwhile, the commissioner of Scotland Yard asks Joanna and both Watsons to help investigate a series of murders of prostitutes. The mutilation of their bodies is similar to that inflicted by Jack the Ripper. However, 28 years separates the Ripper's killing spree from the current deaths. Is it the same man? Joanna believes it is and is sure that Penny will be the next to die....

Green, John. [The Anthropocene Reviewed](#) (Dutton \$28). In a remarkable symphony of personal essays, Green reviews different facets of the human-centered planet—from Canada geese and QWERTY keyboards to Diet Dr Pepper and Halley's Comet—on a five-star scale. Open-hearted, not ironic, this moving collection is a celebration of falling in love with the world. A few Signed copies remain.

Harris, Joanne. [Honeycomb](#) (Gollancz \$60). The beauty of stories is that you never know where they will take you. Full of dreams and nightmares, *Honeycomb* is an entrancing mosaic novel of original fairy tales from bestselling author Harris and legendary artist Charles Vess in a collaboration that's been years in the making. Dark, gripping, and brilliantly imaginative, these magical tales will soon have you in their thrall. Each original tale is a small piece of the larger picture—a clue or a message, a theme, or a warning—interwoven with the tale of the Lacewing King as he travels the Worlds and encounters a multitude of characters: a toymaker who wants to create the perfect wife; a princess whose heart is won by words, not actions; a tiny dog whose confidence far outweighs his size; and the vengeful Spider Queen, and deadly Harlequin.... Turn the page, and be swept up in the adventure. Perfect for fans of *Sandman*, *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye*, *Piranesi* and *The Midnight Library*, this tour de force is a beautiful achievement, from two exceptional creators.

Harris, Zakiya Dalila. [The Other Black Girl](#) (Atria \$27). Harris debuts with a dazzling, darkly humorous story about the publishing industry. Twenty-six-year-old editorial assistant Nella Rogers is tired of being the only Black employee at Wagner Books. Fed up with the isolation and microaggressions, she's thrilled when Harlem-born and bred Hazel starts working in the cubicle beside hers. They've only just started comparing natural hair care regimens, though, when a string of uncomfortable events elevates Hazel to Office Darling, and Nella is left in the dust. Then the notes begin to appear on Nella's desk: LEAVE WAGNER. NOW. It's hard to believe Hazel is behind these hostile messages. But as Nella starts to spiral and obsess over the sinister forces at play, she soon realizes that there's a lot more at stake than just her career. Named a Most Anticipated Book of 2021 by *Time*, *The Washington Post*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Marie Claire*, *BuzzFeed*, *Parade*, *Goodreads*, *Fortune*, and BBC, and our **June Notable New Fiction Book of the Month**.

Higgins, Kristan. [Pack Up the Moon](#) (Berkley \$27). Joshua and Lauren are the perfect couple. Newly married, they're wildly in love, each on a successful and rewarding career path. Then Lauren is diagnosed with a terminal illness. As Lauren's disease progresses, Joshua struggles to make the most of the time he has left with his wife and to come to terms with his future—a future without the only woman he's ever loved. He's so consumed with finding a way to avoid the inevitable ending that he never imagines his life after Lauren. But Lauren has a plan to keep her husband moving forward. A plan hidden in the letters she leaves him. In those letters, one for every month in the year after her death, Lauren leads Joshua on a journey through pain, anger, and denial.... I can't help but wonder if this plot is inspired by reports of a real New York woman's actions as she was dying as written up in the *NY Times*.

Jance, JA. [Unfinished Business](#) (Gallery \$27.99). Mateo Vega, a one-time employee of broadcast journalist-turned-cybersecurity expert Ali Reynolds' husband, B. Simpson, at High Noon Enterprises, has spent the last sixteen years of his life behind bars near Seattle. His public defender had encouraged him to take a plea deal rather than risk life over a charge of murdering his girlfriend. But Mateo, undervalued son of a large family, loved her and knows that her real killer is still on the loose. After years of keeping updated on tech in the prison library, the first thing he will do when paroled is track him down. When released and assembling a basic life, a wary Mateo approaches his former boss Stu Ramey of High Noon for a reference letter for a job application. But Stu, eager to hire more help for B, offers Mateo a full time position at High Noon—just in time for chaos to strike. On the one hand a dead beat tenant in the building has skipped. On another, their Chinese American tech expert Cami Lee has gone missing. And Ali is distraught over the discovery that her beloved father is sliding rapidly into dementia. Still she's on board enough to ask a friend to help Mateo clear his name. Enter Seattle PI JP Beaumont.... I truly warmed to Mateo and his well developed story, to Ali's and her mother's care giving, and to Cami Lee whose parents are some trip. Jance weaves all this together with the back and on-going story of the real criminal in their midst, juggling all the balls in play with empathy and finesse. She has a true gift for characterizations (love the border guard).

King, Laurie R. [Castle Shade](#) (Random \$28). Marie of Roumania is the doubly royal granddaughter of Victoria, Empress of the British Empire, and Alexander II, Tsar of Russia. A famous beauty who turned away from marrying the prince who became George V of England to wed, at age seventeen, Crown Prince Ferdinand of Roumania's young dynasty, she survived WWI and beguiled the Paris Peace Conference into returning her adopted country's long-lost provinces, singlehandedly transforming Roumania from a backwater into a force. Her favorite residence is Bran Castle, a tall, quirky, ancient structure perched on high rocks overlooking the border between Roumania and its newly regained territory of Transylvania. The castle was a gift to Queen Marie, a thank-you from her people, and she loves it as she loves her own children. But now, in 1925, shadowy figures, vague whispers, and dangers that may be only accidents circulate in a land that had known Vlad the Impaler, a land from whose churchyards the shades creep. And so Queen Marie calls on Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes for aid. They are as dubious as they are reluctant. But a young girl is involved, and a beautiful

queen. Surely it won't take long to investigate what would seem to be *strigoi*? Or, as they are known in the West—vampires. King researched this book while traveling with me in Transylvania, Romania, and up the lower Danube to Budapest and Vienna. So we have photos to share at our June 5 conversation.

Lansdale, Joe R. [Moon Lake](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Daniel Russell was only thirteen years old when his father tried to kill them both by driving their car into Moon Lake. Miraculously surviving the crash—and growing into adulthood—Daniel returns to the site of this traumatic incident in the hopes of recovering his father's car and bones. As he attempts to finally put to rest the memories that have plagued him for years, he discovers something even more shocking among the wreckage that has ties to a twisted web of dark deeds, old grudges, and strange murders. As Daniel diligently follows where the mysterious trail of vengeance leads, he unveils the heroic revelation at its core. You can depend upon Edgar winner Lansdale, so prolific a writer, to deliver a great read.

Here is a bit of an interesting interview with Lansdale apropos to his work and *Moon Lake* in particular. He says, “For me, having grown up in small towns, I know that underneath that bucolic calm there is sometimes a raging river. Pass through a small town, population 4000, maybe up to 40,000, see the nice houses on the short, clean streets, it's easy to think of the place as quiet as the grave, but pleasant as sitting on a well-roofed porch during a sweet spring rain, the wind gently blowing and lifting your hair. And you'd be right. I love the mixture of sweet and sour, and for me small towns provide that kind of taste for a crime writer. In truth, the good outweighs the bad, but for a crime writer, what fun is there in that? A prize for the biggest tomato at a tomato festival hasn't the charm of a body found in the tomato patch. My research for writing novels about small towns and small-town murder is simple. I know these people. I am one of these people. My wife was a campus police officer, worked for the fire department as a dispatcher. My son was a dispatcher. I hear things. I listen to things. Stories are sometimes literal, or almost, and sometimes sewn and created from ragged cloth, a quilt constructed of numerous patches, all of those patches shades of gray and degrees of black, like the shadows in Hell. And so he writes *Moon Lake*, an unexpected tale of a lost town and the dark secrets that lie beneath the glittering waters of an East Texas lake.”

Lippman, Laura. [Dream Girl](#) (Harper \$28.99). In Lippman's tense fantasia, novelist Gerry Andersen, injured in a freak fall, is trapped in a hospital bed in his glamorous high-rise apartment and dependent on two women he barely knows, as he fears he is losing his mind. Then late one night, the phone rings. The caller claims to be the “real” Aubrey, the alluring title character from his most successful novel, *Dream Girl*. But there is no real Aubrey. She's a figment born of a writer's imagination. Why does no one believe that the call even happened? Isolated from the world, drowsy from medication, Gerry slips between reality and a dreamlike state in which he is haunted by his own past. Is he the victim of a cruel prank—or is he actually losing his mind. There is no record of the calls according to the log on his phone. Could there be someone he has wronged? Then comes the morning he wakes up next to a dead body—and realizes his nightmare is just beginning.

Mackintosh, Clare. [Hostage](#) (Sphere \$35). An unnerving thriller provides the airborne equivalent of a classic country house mystery that earns raves from Lisa Jewell, Karin Slaughter, Lee Child, and me. I was lucky enough to read this in manuscript. See Unsigned Event Books below for a Starred Review.

Massey, Sujata. [The Bombay Prince](#) (Soho \$27.95). “Perveen Mistry is much more than a sari-clad Miss Marple: she’s Bombay’s first female lawyer as well as a keenly intelligent sleuth, a trail-blazing woman balancing the weight of family tradition with her own dreams. Perveen’s investigation into the mysterious death of a young university student coincides with the imperial visit of the future Edward VIII, and the resulting trail of breadcrumbs through royal receptions, street riots, squalid jails, and lavish hotels makes for a deliciously satisfying read!” —Kate Quinn on a series I too think is terrific. Start reading with the first two [Perveen Mistry novels](#), excellent stories.

McMahon, John. [A Good Kill](#) (Putnam \$27). McMahon opens his third for the Edgar-nominated PT Marsh series with an apparently motiveless crime: an out of work journalist (with good credentials) shows up at a school where he has no connections, with a gun, and ends up with Marsh taking him out. In the years since his wife and child were run off the road and died, Marsh, a police detective in the small Georgia town of Mason Falls, has faced demons—both professional and personal. And now they become intertwined. As Marsh and his partner Remy investigate the dead man Harrington, and as both Marsh’s own department and the governor’s office play roles, they are led towards unmasking a conspiracy at the highest levels of local government—including within the police force. McMahon has constructed a real puzzle with a credible solution. And it closes the circle around Marsh which may pave the way for something new from McMahon.

Michaelides, Alex. [The Maidens](#) (Weidenfeld \$36). Edward Fosca is a murderer. Of this Mariana is certain. But Fosca is untouchable. A charismatic Greek Tragedy professor at Cambridge University, Fosca is adored by staff and students alike. Particularly by the members of a secret society of female students known as The Maidens. Mariana Andros is a brilliant but troubled group therapist who becomes fixated when one of The Maidens, a friend of Mariana’s niece Zoe, is found murdered. Mariana, who was once herself a student at the university, suspects that behind the idyllic beauty of the spires and turrets, lies something sinister. And she becomes convinced that, despite his alibi, Edward Fosca is guilty of the murder. But why would the professor target one of his students? And why does he keep returning to the rites of Persephone, the maiden, and her journey to the underworld? When another body is found, Mariana’s obsession with proving Fosca’s guilt spirals out of control, threatening to destroy her credibility as well as her closest relationships. But Mariana is determined to stop this killer.... Michaelides debut [The Silent Patient](#) (\$17.99), about a famous artist’s act of violence and the forensic psychotherapist determined to understand her motive, is a huge international bestseller His work is catnip for fans of Lucy Foley, *The Guest List*, Gillian Flynn, *Sharp Objects*, Dennis Lehane, *Shutter Island*, Clare Mackintosh, *I See You*, William Landay, *Defending Jacob*... and interestingly, will be with Riley Sager’s new novel of June 28, noted in Signed Books.

Newman, T.J. [Falling](#) (Avid/Simon Schuster \$28). Out July 1, live event here July 6. Flight attendant Newman, the author of our **July First Mystery Book of the Month**, who only quit flying as of 2019, opens with quintessential family man Bill Hoffman, a Coastal Airways pilot who’s missing his son’s Little League game to steer a transcontinental flight as a favor for his boss. As he prepares to leave town, his wife, Carrie, isn’t happy with him, but, alas, he’s too focused on the task at hand to give her more than a guilty excuse. In a rather dramatic karmic response, as Bill launches his plane into the sky, he quickly learns his family has been taken hostage by the Internet repairman he passed without a thought earlier that morning. The repairman-turned-terrorist sends Bill a picture of his family, bound and strapped with explosive devices. Through a live video stream, he presents the pilot with a choice: crash your plane when and where I instruct or watch your family die before your eyes. Bill refuses to make such a choice and hatches a plot to rescue both his loved ones and the souls on board his vessel. For that, he’ll need to rely on his flight attendants...

Nicieza, Fabian. [Suburban Dicks](#) (Putnam \$27). Our **June First Mystery Book of the Month** earns a Starred *PW* Review: “The murder of a gas station attendant in West Windsor, N.J., propels this outstanding debut novel from Nicieza, the co creator of the comic book superhero Deadpool. Andrea Stern—mother of four with a fifth on the way—stumbles across the victim while looking for a bathroom for her kids. The perpetually exhausted Andrea, who gave up her dreams of becoming an FBI profiler when she first became pregnant, decides to investigate and, after finding glaring inconsistencies in the sloppy police work, vows to track down the killer. Meanwhile, disgraced investigative reporter Kenneth Lee is attempting to resurrect his career with a story that uncovers the criminal behind the first murder in the West Windsor–Plainsboro area in more than 30 years. Together Andrea and Kenneth uncover a grand-scale conspiracy driven by racism and institutional bigotry that has lasted generations and continues to plague the township. Nicieza delivers a wildly entertaining blend of high-octane snark and brass-knuckle social commentary, but it’s the courageous Andrea and her group of soccer moms, whom she privately dubs the Cellulitists, who steal the show. Mystery fans looking for something different won’t want to miss this quirky crime novel.”

Offutt, Chris. [Killing Hills](#) (Grove \$26). Out end of June, event with Ace Atkins July 14. Offutt’s brooding and bloody country noir takes readers to the hollers of rural Kentucky, where meth and Oxycontin ravage the population, and havoc is wrought by long-festering family feuds. The focus is on an Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran named Mick Hardin who now works as an Army Intelligence agent. Hardin winds up joining his sister, who’s a sheriff, to solve a local murder—the death of a woman named Nonnie Johnson, whose body was discovered deep in the woods. Set in a community ravaged by drug abuse—where meth and Oxycontin addiction have run rampant—the novel sees Mick and his sister having to navigate innumerable nuisances, from a meddling FBI agent to a local coal tycoon, as they try to close the case. “The lean prose elicits more than a hard-boiled style, and while the brisk yet gnarled atmosphere is reminiscent of Woodrell’s *Winter’s Bone*, the dime-store crime novels of Jim Thompson, or even William Faulkner’s *Sanctuary*, Offutt

brilliantly evokes the body and soul of his wounded hero. It adds up to a mesmerizing and nightmarish view of what lurks just over the hills. This is sure to be Offutt's breakout book."

Patterson, James/Bill Clinton. [The President's Daughter](#) (Little-Brown \$30). After the success of their first political thriller, [The President Is Missing](#) (\$17.99), Patterson and Clinton team up again. When the daughter of former President Matthew Keating is kidnapped, he draws on all his experience — as a global leader, parent and Navy SEAL — to embark upon a one-man ops mission and bring her home. We sold out our original shipment but we hope to have located a few more double-signed copies, one per customer. For extra fun [read this interview in People](#) with both Mr. Patterson and Mr. Clinton.

Percy, Benjamin. [The Ninth Metal](#) (Harper \$25). Making a host of best-of lists, including the *New Scientist's* [10 of the best sci-fi books that you should read in 2021](#), this novel, our **JULY SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**, launches a new series, called the Comet Cycle. Percy here offers a "wildly entertaining and highly original mélange of northern Minnesota lore and slam-bang near-future SF action in a novel which begins a year after a comet called Cain flew so close to the Earth that it left a mass of debris in its wake. With a new energy-rich "omnimetal" now available, various groups—ranging from a cult to a cadre of individual wealth-seekers—are chasing the substance in a kind of gold rush that is sending them to Northfall, Minnesota. The influx of outsiders consider the locals "flannel-wearing loon-loving Lutherans" to be taken advantage of in an all-out war between the locally founded Frontier mining corporation and Texas-based Black Dog Energy, both pursuing control of the town's rich omnimetal sites. Amid all of this, the book's hero, John Frontier, who has been transformed into a superhero-like figure after being covered by omnimetal debris, sets about redeeming his prodigal youth by transforming into a knight-errant bent on atonement. "Percy's dead-on local color, strong central characters, and well-integrated flashbacks into the making of a modern samurai will delight and entertain both comics fans and serious science fiction readers." SciFi Club Members can email [Karen@poisonedpen.com](mailto:Karen@poisonedpen.com) asking to ship this July selection early.

Punke, Michael. [Ridgeline](#) (Holt \$27.99). From the author of bestseller [The Revenant](#) (\$16), the astonishing story of real-life trapper and frontiersman Hugh Glass, comes a new novel that begins in 1866 in a country still divided by war. And a new one breaks out in the West, a clash of cultures between a nation pushing west and the Native tribes who have lived on the land for centuries. Colonel Henry Carrington arrives in Wyoming's Powder River Valley to defend a new road for settlers and gold miners. Red Cloud, a Lakota Chief, and Crazy Horse, a young and visionary warrior, push back against the US Army...and off it goes. CJ Box calls this book "terrific" and is our host for Punke's June 2 event. "In his kaleidoscopic telling of a little-known battle on the sacred Lakota hunting grounds of Wyoming, Punke has created a modern classic.... Brave, thrilling, and heartbreaking, *Ridgeline* brings the history of conquest in the American West to unforgettable life."

Ricciardi, David. [Shadow Target](#) (Berkley \$27) opens with the crash of a small commercial plane in the French Alps, and only Jake Keller, a member of the CIA's Special Activities Center, walks away. Before a rescue helicopter can whisk him to

safety, Jake observes two armed men looking for something or someone—maybe him. Jake's survival is bad news for Russian oligarch Nikolai Kozlov, who wants him dead because he might cause problems for a planned assassination of a national leader in London. Fears that someone is after him along with a suspicion that a higher than normal number of his colleagues are dying prompt Jake to investigate in a high action thriller. I'm a fan of the well-crafted [Jake Keller Thrillers](#) and recommend you order all four.

Sager, Riley. [Survive the Night](#) (Dutton \$28). "Thriller Award finalist Sager elevates a standard suspense trope—a young woman trapped in a car with a stranger she fears is a serial killer—in this stellar nail-biter set in 1991, the Grunge era. Charlie Jordan blames herself for the death of Maddy, her best friend and roommate at New Jersey's Olyphant University. A day after Charlie let Maddy walk back from a bar to their dorm on her own after an argument, Maddy's corpse was found. She was stabbed multiple times and one of her teeth was removed, the hallmark of a two-time murderer dubbed the Campus Killer. Wracked with guilt and self-loathing, Charlie resolves to leave in the middle of the semester, and finds a ride home to Ohio with Josh Baxter, a janitor employed by Olyphant driving to the state to tend to his ill father. Charlie soon suspects Josh has been lying to her about who he is. Her tendency to create movies in her mind makes her perceptions unreliable, even to herself. Sager excels at playing with reader expectations and in concocting plausible, gut-wrenching twists. Fans of Ira Levin's *A Kiss Before Dying* will be pleased."

Saylor, Steven. [Dominus](#) (St Martins \$29.99). A.D. 165: The Empire of Rome has reached its pinnacle. Universal peace—the *Pax Roma*—reigns from Britannia to Egypt, from Gaul to Greece. Marcus Aurelius, as much a philosopher as he is an emperor, oversees a golden age in the city of Rome. The ancient Pinarius family and their workshop of artisans embellish the richest and greatest city on earth with gilded statues and towering marble monuments. Art and reason flourish. But history does not stand still. The years to come bring wars, plagues, fires, and famines. The best emperors in history are succeeded by some of the worst. Barbarians descend in endless waves, eventually appearing before the gates of Rome itself. The military seizes power and sells the throne to the highest bidder. Chaos engulfs the empire. Through it all, the Pinarius family endures, thanks in no small part to the protective powers of the *fascinum*, a talisman older than Rome itself, a mystical heirloom handed down through countless generations. But an even greater upheaval is yet to come. On the fringes of society, troublesome cultists disseminate dangerous and seditious ideas. They insist that everyone in the world should worship only one god, their god. They call themselves Christians.

Swinson, David. [City on the Edge](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Patrick reviews: The author of the wrenching Frank Marr novels returns with a terrific coming-of-age story informed by his own experience traveling the world as the son of a Foreign Service officer. The setting is 1972 Beirut, Lebanon, where 13-year-old Graham moves with his family. He quickly makes friends with two other boys whose fathers work government jobs. The city on the edge of the sea also teeters on the precipice of violence, and Graham begins to suspect that his father is in fact a CIA operative. When the young man and his new playmates witness a murder, things take a decidedly darker turn. Equal parts thriller, espionage novel and powerful coming-of-age, Swinson takes readers on an unfor-

gettable journey through the eyes of a child living in a country about to slip into war.

Tapper, Jake. [The Devil May Dance](#) (Little Brown \$28). 1962 was a busy year in Washington, DC, and in Los Angeles' studios and circles of stars, notably here, the Rat Pack headed by Frank Sinatra. Political stars Charlie and Margaret Marder are sent into this world as undercover agents of Attorney General Bobby Kennedy who postulates a threat to his brother's presidency and to US Security. War veteran Charlie, who suffers from PTSD and drinks to conceal it, wrestles with the internal and external missions while Margaret is the more focused. Before you know it their late night adventures with the stars lead to a body in the trunk of their car, pursuit by sinister figures from stages and screens, and maybe from the newly founded Church of Scientology, while Sinatra, already shattered by his divorce from Ava Gardner, learns JFK will let him down too. This engrossing book is our **June Historical Fiction Book of the Month**.

✚ Taylor, Andrew. [The Royal Secret](#) (Collins \$40). London, 1670. Two young girls plot a murder by witchcraft. Soon afterwards a government clerk dies painfully in mysterious circumstances. His colleague James Marwood is asked to investigate – but the task brings unexpected dangers. Meanwhile, architect Cat Hakesby is working for a merchant who lives on Slaughter Street, where the air smells of blood and a captive Barbary lion prowls the stables. Then a prestigious new commission arrives. Cat must design a Poultry House for the woman that the King loves most in all the world. Unbeknownst to all, at the heart of this lies a royal secret so explosive that it could not only rip apart England but change the entire face of Europe.... I always think that Charles II failed England and his dynasty by sprinkling bastards everywhere but refusing to divorce his sterile wife, a princess of Portugal's royal house of Braganza.

Taylor, Sarah Stewart. [A Distant Grave](#) (St Martins \$27.99). The man shot in Bay Shore Manor Park, the man whose back is covered with gruesomely distinctive scars, is identified as international aid worker Gabriel Treacy, an Irish national whose boss, Global Humanity CEO Gillian Gleeson, calls him a saint. Suffolk County DA John J. Cooney Jr. is certain that it's a gang killing, especially when the bullet that killed Treacy turns out to have been fired by the same gun that killed presumed MS-13 victim Juan Bollina last year, and he can't imagine why Maggie and her partner, Detective Dave Milich, haven't made an arrest. But Maggie, who thinks the answer lies across the sea, packs up her teenage daughter, Lilly, who's still traumatized by the suicide of Maggie's ex-husband, and takes her on a working vacation in Ireland, where she hopes to spend some serious time with her sweetie, Conor Kearney. Their idyll, punctuated by the news that Treacy's family solicitor, Noel Thomason, has been killed in an apparent burglary, is cut short by Cooney's summons demanding her return to Long Island. It's there that Maggie will finally connect the dots between the two darkest episodes of Treacy's life: his kidnapping and torture in Afghanistan and his search for the brother his unmarried mother gave up years before Treacy was born. Taylor pulls out all the stops—subplots, threats, red herrings, warning bells—to keep the pot boiling till the end. See our June Large Paperback Picks for the first in this series.

Williams, Beatriz. [Our Woman in Moscow](#) (Harper \$27.99). Beatriz writes a Cold War spy story replete with real players like Guy Burgess. It was a time when being a Communist for some was like a religion. And it played hell with lives. Those of Iris and her sister Ruth Macallister are ensnared from the time they join their diplomat brother Harry in Rome in 1940 and Iris is captivated by Sasha Digby, a colleague of Harry's at the embassy. The narrative switches back and forth from 1940 to 1952 and time inbetween as family rifts, complicated loyalties, and double agenting consume the players. It comes to a head four years after the Digbys defected to Russia in 1948. The KGB now suspects Sasha of working as a double agent. In New York, the FBI's Sumner Fox devises a plan to have Ruth travel to Moscow to help Iris during her 4<sup>th</sup> and dangerous pregnancy. Fox will accompany Ruth as her spouse and extract the Digbys. Ruth and Sumner's efforts to rescue the Digbys from the Soviet Union, however, are complicated by the KGB, operative Lyudmila in particular, whose story we have also been following. Williams sharply limns the simmering suspense of the Cold War and difficult roles forced onto women.

*And some Retro Raves for summer reading:*

Carter, Mary Dixie. [The Photographer](#) (St Martins \$29). In this debut thriller, a sought-after children's photographer in Brooklyn named Delta Dawn has a creepy habit of insinuating herself in the wealthy families that hire her. Hungry for a connection she never got from her own parents, Delta, who narrates the book, becomes attached to the Straubs. After offering to babysit for 11-year-old Natalie, Delta soon finds herself with easy access to all the secrets, as well as the large brownstone, kept by interior designer wife Amelia, and her handsome architect husband Fritz. As Delta's obsession with the Straubs deepens, Carter ratchets up the suspense making this our May First Mystery Book of the Month. Only half a dozen signed copies are left.

Harrison, Mette Ivie. [The Prodigal Daughter](#) (Soho \$27.95). "Harrison is no stranger to highlighting the complicated intricacies of the Utah Mormon communities in which she lives. Her bestselling Linda Wallheim mystery series unmasked domestic abuse in *The Bishop's Wife*; anti-LGBTQIA doctrines in *His Right Hand*; polygamous patriarchy in *For Time and All Eternities*; immigration injustice and race-based inequity in *Not of This Fold*. By now, Linda remains very much the titular bishop's wife, but her marriage is struggling—her five sons are grown, her feminism unwelcome and her role a 'wayward, unrepentant wife.' When their eldest son calls for her assistance in locating his daughter's beloved babysitter—15-year-old Sabrina, whose parents seem strangely unconcerned about her disappearance—Linda won't refuse. She quickly sleuths why Sabrina left home; locating her proves surprisingly easy. Keeping Sabrina safe will be a different challenge. Throughout the series, 'Mormonism [becomes] a dividing line.' Harrison, who has distanced herself from formal church affiliation but considers herself Mormon in 'a broader, cultural sense of the term,' has followed a seemingly untraditional path: she finished her Princeton Ph.D. at 23, she's a former professor and Huffington Post blogger, and a nationally ranked triathlete. She imbues her tenacious protagonist with her independence, and her own conflicts with religious dogma give her fiction indelible nuance. Readers won't find easy answers or



even satisfying resolution here: that reality check continues to enhance her series with enduring authenticity.”

Klingborg, Brian. [Thief of Souls](#) (St Martins \$27.99 Unsigned). “Brian Klingborg magnificently channels Martin Cruz Smith’s *Gorky Park* in his terrific debut with the action moving from the former Soviet Union to China. In place of Arkady Renko, we have Inspector Lu Fei of the Chinese police. Lu Fei had been in the midst of a promising career before politics waylaid it and effectively exiled him to obscurity in the north. The brutal, ritualistic murder of a young woman becomes a game changer, returning him to the limelight which comes with its own problems when he runs afoul of his former antagonists, threatening him with far more than just banishment this time. *Thief of Souls* is one of those rare thrillers to bring us inside a world we’ve never seen before. Klingborg’s mastery of Chinese politics and culture rings true on every page, as much a reason to delve in as Lu Fei’s tortured underdog character. The book’s sprawling ambition is exceeded only by its pitch-perfect plotting by an author we’re destined to see lots more of”—*PW* Starred Review.

✎ Pulley, Natasha. [The Kingdoms](#) (Bloomsbury \$50). The *NY Times* raves: “Pulley’s latest genre-bending feat masterfully combines history, speculative fiction, queer romance, and more into an unputdownable whole. In 1898, Joe Tournier finds himself in Londres—a city in the French Republic, which colonized England in the Napoleonic Wars—without any memory of his life before that moment. All he has are hazy images that come to him in dreams and an unshakable sense that something is wrong. And he’s not the only one: others in the city are feeling the same strange amnesia. When a postcard arrives for Joe bearing clues to his identity—mailed in 1805 but somehow depicting a recently built Scottish lighthouse—Joe resolves to find a way to reach that lighthouse and search for answers—but the mystery only grows more complicated from there, leading Joe down a rabbit hole that sends him from Scotland to Spain on a time-bending journey that spans more than a century. Pulley doesn’t shy away from the story’s sharp edges, exploring the devastating effects changes in the past can have on the future and shining a light on the ambiguous moral choices made by characters under duress. These dark, challenging moments are bolstered by the action-packed and intricate plot and leavened by the rich emotional entanglements of the makeshift family that Joe stumbles into along the way. This is a stunner.”

#### UNSIGNED JUNE EVENT BOOKS

✎ Floud, Sir Roderick. [England’s Magnificent Gardens](#) (Knopf \$40). There is so much to learn from “the detective work of the English economic historian Roderick Floud. This eminent academic, who received a knighthood for his achievements in 2005, has pursued a novel approach to the study of the history of gardens, by concentrating his attention on how much they cost, where the money came from, and what impact that money had, and continues to have, on English society and landscapes. Even today, the importance of gardening to the economy is much understated, because it is largely excluded from GDP. As he puts it, ‘Gardens...are far more important to the UK’s economy and society than even their greatest devotees have realized....’ In the past, Sir Roderick’s professional studies have focused on the health and welfare of populations over centuries. But he and his wife are, we are told, also avid garden lovers, and it is that love

which has prompted him to research and write this book.” [Read the rest](#) of this detailed and well researched review in the *WSJ*.

✎ Griffiths, Elly. [The Night Hawks](#) (Houghton \$27). A new chapter in one of my favorite British crime series begins when archaeologist Ruth Galloway returns to the Norfolk coast from Cambridge. Ruth is back as head of archaeology at the University of North Norfolk when a group of local metal detectorists—the so-called Night Hawks—uncovers Bronze Age artifacts on the beach, alongside a recently deceased body, just washed ashore. Not long after, the same detectorists uncover a murder-suicide—a scientist and his wife found at their farmhouse, long thought to be haunted by the Black Shuck, a humongous black dog, a harbinger of death. The further DCI Nelson probes into both cases, the more intertwined they become, and the closer they circle to David Brown, the new lecturer Ruth has recently hired, who seems always to turn up wherever Ruth goes.... If by some evil chance you have not yet discovered the joys of Griffiths’ work, then order [all the Galloways](#) and binge.

Mackintosh, Clare. [Hostage](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). England’s Mackintosh goes a new direction and earns a *PW* Starred Review: “A 20-hour, nonstop plane flight from London to Sydney provides the claustrophobic backdrop for this terrifying thriller from bestseller Mackintosh. Flight attendant Mina Holbrook trades shifts to join the crew of World Airways Flight 79, preferring to contend with sometimes demanding business class passengers than to face her rapidly deteriorating marriage to police detective Adam Holbrook. Mina is sure Adam has been sleeping with their Ukrainian au pair, who recently quit her job caring for their five-year-old daughter, Sophia. A few hours into the flight, Mina receives a note demanding she help an unknown terrorist group divert the plane. If Mina refuses, Sophia will die. What starts as a domestic drama focused on the Holbrooks’ marital problems becomes the airborne equivalent of a classic country house mystery. The suspense builds as Mina, whose co-workers think she’s shirking her duties, tries to determine who among the 353 passengers are part of the terrorist plot. Surprising twists propel the story to an unexpected finale. Mackintosh has raised her game with this one.” Signed UK Edition available: [Hostage](#) (\$35)

#### OUR JUNE BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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

Adams, Taylor. [Hairpin Bridge](#)

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

Michaelides, Alex. [The Maidens](#)

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

Gardner, Tracy. [Ruby Red Herring](#)

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

Nicieza, Fabian. [Suburban Dicks](#)

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

Tapper, Jake. [The Devil May Dance](#)

**International Crime Book of the Month**

Porter, Anna. [Deceptions](#)

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

Harris, Zakiya Dalila. [The Other Black Girl](#)

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

Buehlman, Christopher. [The Blacktongue Thief](#)

## A SPECIAL EVENT

### Virtual Writers' Weekend

24 – 27 June, 2021 with online writing groups

Keynote speakers: **Diana Gabaldon and Chris Riddell**

Diana's talk will be live, followed by Q&A, on **26 June at 7:00 pm BST, 2:00 pm EDT, 1:00 pm CDT, Noon MDT, 11:00 am MST and PDT**

Tickets cost £15 (approx. \$20) and include access to view a recording of her talk until 31 August, 2021. To book:

[www.writersweekend.uk/booking](http://www.writersweekend.uk/booking)

Autographed copies of her books, including her ninth in the 'Outlander' series, [Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone](#) (\$36 plus shipping), can be purchased from [The Poisoned Pen](#). International customers: please note that the cost of shipping a book to you will likely equal the cost of the book itself. Please email [sales@poisonedpen.com](mailto:sales@poisonedpen.com) for a quote BEFORE you order, especially if using PayPal which is best, or a credit, not a debit card.

## WHAT TO GIVE DAD?

First, sign him up for our [Enews](#). It's free and fun to read.

Second, buy him a [Poisoned Pen Gift Card](#) he can redeem as he likes.

Third, I haven't got space to list all these, with the comments, but here's a yummy roundup of [summer barbecue books](#) you can order from The Pen

Fourth, and similarly, here's [a roundup of books on golf](#). If you were fired up by Phil Michelson's historic win at Kiawah Island (and don't overlook rewatching the movie *The Legend of Bagger Vance* filmed on the course), this is the shopping venue for you.

**Fifth, for in store shoppers, and excluding our Poisoned Pen Tees**, our various tee shirts are on sale during June at \$20 each. We will run out of some sizes but give it a shot. Every dad needs a new shirt.

*Here are a few more and varied ideas for Dad:*

Bannalec, Jean-Luc. [The Granite Coast Murders](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Here's a terrific beach book filled with a clever murder, fabulous Breton food, descriptions of a special rose-hued coastal landscape along northwest Brittany where lolling on the sand with local food can fill a day. And, amusingly, the efforts of Commissaire Georges Dupin to conceal his boredom-driven involvement in a case outside his jurisdiction from his partner, Clare, who is determined Georges will have a "real vacation." The male/female dynamic is a delight any guy will enjoy. Dad can read this as a standalone or, lucky him, you can buy him the whole [A Brittany Mystery](#) series for superb summer reading. It's refreshing to "travel" to France outside of Paris, and into its most ancient land.

Barbarisi, Daniel. [Chasing the Thrill](#) (Knopf \$28). Journalist Barbarisi pens this captivating account the exploits of an eccentric community of treasure hunters who scoured the Rocky

Mountains from 2010 to 2020 in search of New Mexico art dealer Forest Fenn's hidden chest of gold and jewels. They all think they're Indiana Jones—but several died. And one did in fact capture the treasure. See New Hardcovers below for more.

Christy, Bryan. [In the Company of Killers](#) (Putnam \$20)—a special price for a Signed first edition during June)—by "the immensely talented Bryan Christy, who in his previous life was an investigative reporter for *National Geographic*, finds Klay traveling to South Africa on his most dangerous assignment yet. It involves shadowy alliances, corrupt politicians, dark-hearted mercenaries, ruthless billionaires whose reach extends to every industry and people who might say, to an admiral in the U.S. Navy, 'So, starting today, this little sex ring of yours is over.' Christy's muscular, vivid writing and John le Carré-esque talent for thrusting us deep into unfamiliar territory ensure that what could lapse into cliché instead sounds fresh and exciting...Klay is a great, flawed hero, in the vein of the classic hard-drinking, hard-living, hard-loving loner. As his erstwhile boss says to him, over a Scotch on a Sunday morning, 'We're survivors, you and me.'" The *NY Times* reviewer adds, "As an investigative reporter for *The Sovereign*, a *National Geographic*-ish magazine in Washington, D.C., Tom Klay swashbuckles across continents exposing malfeasance, eluding romantic commitment and spending eye-watering amounts of money courtesy of his seemingly bottomless expense account. He is also a spy for the C.I.A., reporting to his handler, Vance Eady, who is also the magazine's top editor. (Note: Here at the *Book Review*, we are not allowed to discuss our covert jobs with the intelligence services.)"

Crown, Jonathan. [Sirius](#) (\$16). An international bestseller—"an elegant, charming, and heartwarming fable...one part *Zelig*, one part *Siddhartha*, and one part *Rin Tin Tin*" (*Vogue*)—about an extraordinary fox terrier who helps his Jewish family escape from Nazi Germany, becomes a Hollywood star, and ultimately contributes to Hitler's downfall. Levi, a fox terrier, lives with his family in a grand townhouse in Berlin. Each day he enjoys a walk through the neighborhood, where people greet him by name. But the year is 1938, and Berlin is no longer safe for Levi or the Liliencrons, his Jewish owners. They rename him Sirius, after the constellation, to protect him. One night, Nazi troops storm the city and begin to search houses. Sirius alerts the family, and they manage to flee to California. In his new home, Carl Liliencron becomes a chauffeur and Sirius befriends everyone from Humphrey Bogart and Cary Grant to Rita Hayworth and Jack Warner. He is renamed Hercules and becomes a canine movie star. Little does Sirius know that he'll soon have to perform his most difficult acting role yet, when through a series of exceptional events as World War II unfolds, he winds up at the right hand of Hitler himself. Can Sirius help the German resistance, derail the Führer, and reunite with his family? Or is the cost of peace too high? In theory this is in print, but if not it is an E-book.

Fagan, Kate. [All the Colors Come Out](#) (LittleBrown \$26). Fagan and her father forged their relationship on the basketball court, bonded by sweaty high fives and a dedication to the New York Knicks. But as Kate got older, her love of the sport and her closeness with her father grew complicated. The formerly inseparable pair drifted apart. The lessons that her father instilled in her about the game, and all her memories of sharing the court

with him over the years, were a distant memory. When Chris Fagan was diagnosed with ALS, Kate decided that something had to change. Leaving a high-profile job at ESPN to be closer to her mother and father and take part in his care, Kate Fagan spent the last year of her father's life determined to return to him the kind of joy they once shared on the court. *All the Colors Came Out* is Kate Fagan's completely original reflection on the very specific bond that one father and daughter shared, forged in the love of a sport which over time came to mean so much more. Studded with unforgettable scenes of humor, pain and hope, Kate Fagan has written a book that plumbs the mysteries of the unique gifts fathers gives daughters.

McLean, John N. [Home Waters](#) (Custom House \$25.99). For all who fell in love with [A River Runs Through It](#) (\$15) by McLean's father Norman, or with the marvelous movie made from the book with Robert Redford and Brad Pitt, this memoir is a must-read. It is my top pick for a gift for any Dad as it speaks to family, fathers (and grandfathers) and sons, and values, on so many levels. Plus—fishing! And the glories of Montana. Be sure to recommend Dad queue up the movie too.

Rushnell, Squire/Louise DuArt. [Dogwinks](#) (Howard \$19.95) presents an “uplifting and riveting collection of canine-centered true tales...not just because the seminal opening entry “Ruby” is bound for Netflix, but also because it's set in Rhode Island. Having never heard this incredible story before, I had to pinch myself to remember that it really happened. Involving a stray dog just minutes away from being put down who lives on to save a child's life, this is only one of the stories that make *Dogwinks* ‘a must read’ for all the dog lovers out there—pretty much everyone, in other words. Here is a book that tugs at our heartstrings, even as it leaves us shaking our heads in amazement.”—Jon Land

## A CLASSIC CRIME

Here's a link to the [Library of Congress Crime Classics](#) published with Poisoned Pen Press. You can order any of them from us.

Hitchens, Dolores. [The Cat Saw Murder](#) (American Mystery Classics \$15.95). Here is a prototypical “cat mystery” such as so successfully later done by Lillian Jackson Braun. When Rachel Murdock and her sister Jennifer receive a call for help from their favorite niece, Lilly, in Breakers Beach, CA, they quickly hop a train from Los Angeles to see her — but not before collecting their prized cat Samantha in a picnic basket and bringing her along for the ride. Samantha, it turns out, is an heiress, the inheritor of a fortune left by a wealthy relative, and so the attempt at the cat's life, made right after they arrive, comes as a shock. The cat survives, but unfortunately, Lilly, murdered soon thereafter, is not so lucky. By the time the police arrive, the clues are already falling into place. The source of Lilly's trouble is revealed to be a gambling debt incurred during an attempt to cheat at bridge, and the suspects in her slaying quickly pile up. But then another corpse is discovered, buried in the nearby sand, and it becomes clear that this is a killing spree.... Introduction by Joyce Carol Oates.

## THE COZY CORNER

Berenson, Laurien. [Pup Fiction](#) (Kensington \$26). With a new litter of Standard Poodles on the way and her sons enrolled at the Graceland School's summer camp, it's shaping up to be a vibrant July in Greenwich, Connecticut for dog show champ and amateur

sl sleuth Melanie Travis. Then the arrival of three rambunctious Dalmatian puppies sets off a series of mysterious events... and the discovery in the nearby woods of the body of her estranged ex-husband.

Berry, Connie. [The Art of Betrayal](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Antiques dealer Kate Hamilton is filling in for the recuperating Ivor Tweedy at the Cabinet of Curiosities, Ivor's shop in the Suffolk village of Long Barston. Kate's Ohio operation isn't enough to hold her back from the company of the magnetic Suffolk DI Tom Mallory whom she met in previous investigations, so Ivor's shop is the perfect busman's holiday. Almost immediately, reclusive manor house owner Evelyn Villiers asks her to handle the sale of an ancient Chinese funerary jar worth thousands of pounds. See Signed Books for more on this British cozy series which pairs very well with Jane Cleland's New Hampshire-based antiquing mysteries.

Delany, Vicki. [Tea & Treachery](#) (\$15.95). In the launch of a new series, former Manhattan pastry chef Lily Roberts has opened Tea by the Sea next door to Victoria-on-Sea, the bed-and-breakfast owned by her 85-year-old British grandmother, Rose Campbell, in North Augusta, a town on Cape Cod. Slimy real estate developer Jack Ford wants the town council to rezone nearby land for a major resort development, but spunky Rose lets him and the council members know exactly how she feels. When Ford sues Rose and winds up dead on her property, Detective Chuck Williams, of the North Augusta PD, regards the aggrieved Rose as the sole suspect. Refusing to be put out of business or bamboozled by a slippery small-town detective, Lily and Rose start their own investigation, aided by Lily's friend.

Gardner, Tracy. [Ruby Red Herring](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). A series launch finds an antiques appraiser hunts a missing gem while probing her parents' deaths. Avery Ayers takes over the family business, Antiquities & Artifacts Appraised, from the home office in Lilac Grove and a branch in Manhattan. Now living back at home with her younger sister Tilly and their newly moved-in, eccentric Aunt Midge and her Afghan hound, Avery's life is filled with jewels, tapestries, paintings, and rare finds. But their world is rocked when Avery learns that the theft of a priceless ruby may be connected to her parents' demise. The trouble starts when the Museum of Antiquities hires Avery to appraise a rare, resplendent ruby. It bears a striking similarity to a solitary stone in the museum's prized Xiang Dynasty bejeweled dragon medallion exhibit, which has long been missing one of its ruby eyes. Now, Avery and her colleagues—ostentatious Sir Robert Lane and fatherly Micah Abbott—suspect they may have the missing gem. But facets of the case remain cloudy.... This lively combination of mystery, romance, and gemology will appeal to fans of Jane K. Cleland and Paige Shelton and is our **June Cozy Crimes Book of the Month**.

Gerber, Daryl Wood. [A Glimmer of a Clue](#) (Kensington \$15.95). “In Agatha Award winner Gerber's delightful sequel to 2020's [A Sprinkling of Murder](#) (\$15.95), Courtney Kelly, the owner of Open Your Imagination, a fairy gardening shop in Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., breaks up a brawl between her best friend Meaghan Brownie's mother, Wanda, a prominent art representative, and Lana Lamar, a hypercritical art critic, outside the art gallery Meaghan part owns. According to Wanda, the fight started because Lana denigrated one of Wanda's artists whose work was

on display in the gallery. After Lana winds up stabbed to death at the Beauty of Art Spectacular benefit, Wanda is arrested because she's found holding the murder weapon, a letter opener that served as a sword in one of Courtney's fairy garden displays at the benefit. Courtney and her righteous friend, Fiona, a fairy-in-training on probation from fairy school, are determined to find the real culprit and free Wanda. Courtney's cat, Pixie, lends a helping paw. Lively characters and plenty of action keep the pages turning. Paranormal cozy fans will have a ball," believes *PW*.

Gilbert, Victoria. [Reserved for Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). This cozy earns a Starred Review: "Gilbert's captivating sequel to [Booked for Death](#) (\$16.99—this paperback does not publish until August 10) finds former teacher Charlotte Reed hosting famous romantic fantasy author Amanda Noble at her inn, Chapters Bed-and-Breakfast, in Beaufort, N.C., where Amanda is doing a signing at the local bookstore. The event has drawn a large crowd, including Lisette Bradford, the head of Amanda's biggest fan club. When Lisette's body is pulled from the water near the Beaufort docks, trauma to her head indicates she was murdered. The prime suspect is Lisette's ex-husband, who's been stalking her, but inquisitive Charlotte asks around and soon realizes several attendees might have had a motive for murder. Charlotte and her neighbor, retired spy Ellen Montgomery, join forces to uncover the truth. A tantalizing subplot involves Ellen's mysterious visiting "cousin," Gavin Howard, who's actually a spy on a mission, and the growing attraction between Charlotte and Gavin provides some romantic heat. Well-rounded characters match the finely crafted plot."

✚ McKenna, Clara. [Murder at Keyhaven Castle](#) (Kensington \$26). With her wedding to Viscount "Lyndy" Lyndhurst just days away, strong-willed American ex-pat Stella Kendrick is the talk of Edwardian society. Between ornate bridal gown fittings and meetings with Lyndy's distant relatives, Stella finally feels less like an out-of-place American and more like a respected aristocrat. Everything changes as the arrival of an anonymous gift and return of her overbearing father cast a dark shadow over the festivities, conjuring difficult memories and new fears... Tensions intensify when a daytrip to Southampton ends with a suspicious stranger getting trampled by a horse-drawn cab. Before anyone can explain why the victim possessed a newspaper clipping about the upcoming ceremony at Morrington Hall, tragedy strikes again, this time resulting in a murder that turns Stella's world completely upside down while implicating one of Lyndy's well-regarded family members... Facing loss, postponed nuptials, and uncertain threats, Stella and Lyndy rush to connect two very different crimes and identify the guilty culprit hiding among elite wedding guests. This is the third in [McKenna's historical British cozy series](#).

Walker, Laura Jensen. [Deadly Delights: A Bookish Baker Mystery](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). A cooking contest goes kaput when the lecherous head judge is dispatched. Teddie St. John loves sharing her baked goods with others. So, naturally, she's determined to win the Lake Potawatomi Bake-Off championship this year even though she also loves sharing tips with her competitors, who really put the friendly in friendly competition. But all that friendliness can't make up for the ick factor of bake-off judge Lester Morris' overfriendliness. Les thinks he's Wisconsin's answer to Paul Hollywood, but the only thing the two have in common is their age. Teddie isn't about to let Les distract her from

showing off her prize cherry pie, but she loses that choice when Les is found dead in the competition tent with Teddie's family heirloom rolling pin conveniently by his side.... Begin with [Murder Most Sweet](#) (\$26.99—no paperback exists at this time).

## NEW IN HARDCOVER BOOKS FOR JUNE

Barbarisi, Daniel. [Chasing the Thrill](#) (Knopf \$28). Journalist Barbarisi chronicles in this captivating account the exploits of an eccentric community of treasure hunters who scoured the Rocky Mountains from 2010 to 2020 in search of New Mexico art dealer Forest Fenn's hidden chest of gold and jewels. Following the nine clues in Fenn's cryptic poem ("Begin it where warm waters halt...."), Barbarisi started searching for the treasure in 2017. Interweaving his own search efforts with profiles of fellow hunters, Barbarisi documents how the "Fenn blogosphere" helped turn the treasure hunt from a "lark" into a "community hazard." One man spent \$30,000 digging holes in a state park, and at least five people died searching for the treasure, including a Colorado pastor who was looking in an area Barbarisi had explored the week before. Barbarisi eventually dropped out of the hunt, but he interviews the searcher who discovered the treasure chest in a Wyoming forest in June 2020 and gets an up-close look at its contents. Shot through with dramatic plot twists, colorful personalities, and insights into the nature of obsession, this rollicking account will appeal to fans of *The Orchid Thief* and *Born to Run*. To read a larger review, here's the [Washington Post's](#). I find this fascinating as my first visit to Santa Fe took me to the Fenn Gallery, a landmark with gardens, and a welcome by Fenn. It's now absorbed into another gallery.

Buehlman, Christopher. [The Blacktongue Thief](#) (Tor \$25.99). Our **June SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month** is set in a world of goblin wars, stag-sized battle ravens, and assassins who kill with deadly tattoos. Kinch Na Shannack owes the Takers Guild a small fortune for his education as a thief, which includes (but is not limited to) lock-picking, knife-fighting, wall-scaling, fall-breaking, lie-weaving, trap-making, plus a few small magics. His debt has driven him to lie in wait by the old forest road, planning to rob the next traveler that crosses his path. But today, Kinch Na Shannack has picked the wrong mark. Galva is a knight, a survivor of the brutal goblin wars, and handmaiden of the goddess of death. She is searching for her queen, missing since a distant northern city fell to giants. Unsuccessful in his robbery and lucky to escape with his life, Kinch now finds his fate entangled with Galva's. Common enemies and uncommon dangers force thief and knight on an epic journey where goblins hunger for human flesh, krakens hunt in dark waters, and honor is a luxury few can afford.

Burton, Jeffrey B. [The Keepers](#) (St Martins \$26.99). Mason "Mace" Reid lives on the outskirts of Chicago and specializes in human remains detection. He trains dogs to hunt for the dead. And now three separate murder investigations preoccupy Mace Reid, a cadaver dog trainer who assists the Chicago police and various sheriffs' departments, and his pack of five working dogs, notably Vira, an exceptionally sensitive golden retriever, who "takes the art of human remains detection to the next level... the Sherlock Holmes level." Vira is literally able to sniff out the guilty parties, leaving her wily human companions the job of figuring out how to bring the killers to justice. The murder cases—those of a union organizer, a former one-hit-wonder rock star,

and the head of the Special Prosecutions Bureau inside the Cook County State's Attorney's Office—eventually entwine, and draw Mace and the dogs into a disturbing web of political corruption at the highest level.

In [The Finders](#) (\$16.99), Reid's coming off a difficult year—mourning the death of a beloved Springer spaniel as well as the dissolution of his marriage. He adopts a rescue dog with a mysterious past—a golden retriever named Vira. And when Reid begins training Vira as a cadaver dog, he comes to realize just how special the newest addition to his family truly is... For suddenly, Reid and his prize pupil find themselves hurled into a taxing serial murder hunt.

✦ Clark, Cassandra. [Murder at Beaulieu Abbey](#) (Severn \$28.99). February, 1390. The Church seethes with rebellion. Newly elected Pope Boniface faces a challenger: the anti-pope Clement, who sows discord from his power base in France. The quarrel threatens the very survival of the Cistercian Order. So when suspicions grow that distant Beaulieu Abbey may turn traitor, Hildegard of Meaux's prioress summons her with a mission she can't refuse: travel to the isolated royal abbey and spy out their true allegiance. The public reason for Hildegard's trip is more prosaic. A young Cornish heiress, promised in marriage to the son of local aristocrat Sir William, needs escorting to her new home. It's not often Hildegard joins a betrothal party, and she's looking forward to meeting the girl. Death and danger wait at Beaulieu—and even the protection of her travelling companions, the monks militant Brother Gregory and Brother Egbert, may not save them all.

Clark, Tracy. [Runner](#) (Kensington \$26). Clark's fourth Cass Raines novel, set in the dead of winter, finds the tough and determined Black Chicago P.I. on the trail of runaway foster teen Ramona Titus, who has secrets that are explosive enough to get her and Cass killed. Clark has a unique voice in the P.I. genre, one that is “articulate, daring and ultimately hopeful.”

Dare, Laura. [The Last Thing He Told Me](#) (SimonSchuster \$27). I confess I got to reading this late, and meanwhile it vaulted to the top of the bestseller list thanks to a Reece Book Club Pick. So first prints evaporated. I liked it very much. The concept is not new—a loving new family in excellent circumstances is suddenly blown up when the husband disappears leaving new wife and stepmother Hannah Hall with nothing but an ominous note and a request to protect his daughter—the daughter who bitterly resents Hannah. So Hannah has to navigate a new reality alongside a hostile teen while reframing her love and loyalty to her missing spouse Owen, the love of her life. “There's so much to love about this thrilling, roller coaster of a novel—mysterious identities, unreliable friendships, dubious loyalties, and terrifying chase sequences through the streets of Austin, Texas. Hannah and Bailey alone believe there's more to the story than the authorities suggest, and they quickly realize that if there are answers to be found, they will have to search for them—together.” The story unfolds much like a private eye investigation to a heart clutching destination.

✦ Deakin, Roger. [Waterlog](#) (Tin House \$27.95). Originally published in 1999, *Waterlog* was the only book released in Roger Deakin's lifetime; he died in 2006. It recounts his journey swimming through Britain starting from his home in Suffolk, through its seas, rivers and lakes, as well as moats and quarries. And as he navigates towns, private property, and sometimes

dangerous waters and inclement weather, Deakin finds himself in precarious situations: he's detained by bailiffs in Winchester, intercepted by the coast guard at the mouth of a river, and mistaken for a dead body on a beach. The result of this surprising journey is a deep dive into modern Britain: its people, culture, its laws and customs, its communities, and especially its wild places. His account helped start the wild swimming movement and inspired nature writers like Helen MacDonald and Robert Macfarlane. Now his new publishers plan to swim, wild, from Portland, Oregon, to San Francisco, saying “It's a great British nature writing book” that they want to highlight with their own efforts. Introduction by Robert Macfarlane whose beautifully illustrated books I love.

Frankel, Laurie. [One, Two, Three](#) (Holt \$26.99). Karen reviews: Bourne is a town that has changed since, seventeen years ago, a chemical plant moved out, leaving behind polluted water causing a decline in the town's lifestyle. Nora Mitchell has been fighting for almost two decades to prove the company knew the dangers and has dedicated her energy to finding proof of negligence. During her efforts Nora gave birth to three girls – triplets, Mab, Monday and Mirabel. Their names were chosen according to syllables – one, two, three. (This provides an interesting way of showing chapter headings). Their talents vary. Mab is assigned to get good grades, go to college and get out of Bourne. When the town library closes, Monday procures the books and stores them in every space of their small home, the microwave, a dresser drawer, etc. She passes them out to anyone who wants a good read. Mirabel is the smartest, confined to a wheelchair, speech is a challenge. When their variety of skills is put together, they are fierce and everyone should get out of the way. There are subtle clues that something suspicious is coming (returning?) to Bourne. The triplets join together to find what it is and what needs to be done to protect their town. The triplets are delightful, relatable, and intelligent. The setting could be any number of towns going through similar challenges. Frankel balances the seriousness of the pollution issue with humor from Nora and her girls.

Galchen, Rivka. [Everyone Knows Your Mother is a Witch](#) (Farrar \$26). Widow herbalist Katharina gets slapped with an accusation of witchcraft in 1618 Germany by a neighbor whom she calls “the Werewolf.” This is “a vibrant, provocative story based on real events that astutely holds up life in a small town in 17th-century Europe as a mirror for the present day. Galchen's novel is set in the duchy of Württemberg, then part of the Holy Roman Empire, just as the Thirty Years War is beginning. Most of its action takes place in the town of Leonberg, near Stuttgart, and focuses on the prosecution of Katharina Kepler, mother of famed mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler, for witchcraft. A claim by fellow townswoman Ursula Reinbold that Katharina served her a poisoned cup of wine provokes Katharina to file a slander suit that's soon met by a formal accusation of witchcraft against her. What follows is a Kafkaesque legal proceeding that at one point lands Katharina in prison, where she must pay the guards hired to watch her. To describe the ordeal, Galchen employs various narrative techniques, including an account dictated by the illiterate Katharina to her neighbor and friend. In the story of Katarina Kepler one can reflect on contemporary issues that include feminism, social class, ageism and the ways in which people demonize those who don't conform to society's norms, while at the same time pondering the alien atmosphere of a world

drenched in religious fervor and a pervasive belief in the supernatural.”—Harvey Freedenberg

Greenwood, Kerry. [Death in Daylesford](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). Set in 1929, Greenwood’s charming 21st Phyrne Fisher mystery (after a six year gap) takes the well-to-do Australian sleuth from Melbourne to the country district of Daylesford, where a retired army captain has opened a spa to treat WWI vets suffering from shell shock that he hopes Phyrne will support financially. In Daylesford, Phyrne witnesses what first appears to be a tragic mishap. Kenneth McAlpine, the spa’s bouncer, is demonstrating his prowess at tossing a log the size of a medium-size telephone pole, when it slips out of his hands, flies through the air, and fatally strikes a bystander, farmer Donald MacKay. After confronting the officious local sergeant with evidence that someone used a blowpipe to shoot McAlpine in the neck with a sliver of steel in a deliberate attempt to murder MacKay, Phyrne investigates. Humorous prose (a police officer’s stubble is described as looking “as if he had just gone three rounds with a cheese-grater and been defeated on a technical knock-out”) remains a series strength. If you’ve missed Greenwood’s delightful series in books or film, you can revel all summer in them: Previews at [Miss Fisher’s Murder Mysteries](#) and [Ms. Fisher’s Modern Mysteries](#) and watch them in full on Acorn.

Harkness, Andy. [Wolfboy](#) (Bloomsbury, \$17.99). “*Wolfboy* is an edge-of-your-seat suspense story fueled by the all-too-common feelings associated with being hungry. It is a fantastically fun read-aloud with incredible images. The detail of color, texture, and light in the clay sculptures make for amazing spreads. Best enjoyed right after snack time!” —*Library Reads*. For ages 4-8.

✦ Harris, Robert J. [A Study in Crimson, Sherlock Holmes 1942](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). Inspired by the classic film series from Universal Pictures starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, which took Sherlock Holmes to the 1940s and WWII, this imaginative new thriller confronts the world’s greatest detective with a killer emulating the murders of Jack the Ripper. London, 1942. A killer going by the name of “Crimson Jack” is stalking the wartime streets of London, murdering women on the exact dates of the infamous Jack the Ripper killings of 1888. Has the Ripper somehow returned from the grave? Is the self-styled Crimson Jack a descendant of the original Jack—or merely a madman obsessed with those notorious killings? In desperation Scotland Yard turn to Sherlock Holmes, the world’s greatest detective. Surely he is the one man who can sift fact from legend to track down Crimson Jack before he completes his tally of death. As Holmes and the faithful Watson tread the blacked out streets of London, death waits just around the corner

Howarth, Paul. [Dust Off the Bones](#) (Harper \$26.99). “Howarth’s sequel to [Only Killers and Thieves](#) (\$16.99) is as searing and savage as the Australian frontier setting that both novels share. After a brief recap of the massacre of the aboriginal Kurrong tribe that ended the first novel—set in motion by 16-year-old Billy McBride and his reluctant 14-year-old brother, Tommy, seeking vengeance for the killing of their parents, which they believed was done by an aboriginal man—the story moves ahead five years to 1890. The brothers have gone their separate ways, both trying to forget the massacre of a tribe of indigenous people they witnessed as boys. Billy is forced to relive the nightmare with the appearance of an ambitious young lawyer, who is determined

to see that Native Police Inspector Noone, an arrogant villain of epic proportions, is brought to justice for ordering the mass killings. The new novel, like its predecessor, vividly recalls an era in Australia when it mirrored the lightning bolt violence that was prevalent in the Old West in America. The prose is, by turns, beautiful and brutal.

Hummel, Maria. [Lesson in Red](#) (Catapult \$27). Hummel is going to do an event for us later in the summer so I just note that here is the sequel to her fabulous novel [Still Lives](#) (\$16.95), an art thriller embedded in the private Roque Museum, part of the Los Angeles art scene, wherein an exhibition of twelve shocking paintings is tied to eleven famous murders. *Lesson in Red* ushers you into what comes next.

Johansen, Iris. [Bullet](#) (Grand Central \$28), Eve Duncan has known more than her fair share of unhappiness and loss. Now she stands to lose even more: her new marriage is strained by the sudden appearance of her husband’s ex-wife, who brings with her a deadly discovery and a slew of enemies determined to kill her for it. Eve’s life and love are on the line in the twenty-seventh book in the series.

Lauren, Christina. [The Soulmate Equation](#) (Gallery \$26). “Lauren has created a novel with a fascinating blend of modern science and old-fashioned attraction in *The Soulmate Equation*. Jess Davis is a struggling single mom, raising her precocious seven-year-old daughter, Juno, with the help of her grandparents. When Jess’s best friend whimsically signs up for a new matchmaking service, GeneticAlly, that promises to scientifically match you with your soul mate based on your DNA, Jess is unconvinced. But, on a dare, she submits a sample—only to discover that she’s a 98% match with Dr. River Peña, the founder of GeneticAlly. GeneticAlly’s claims must be nonsense, because Jess already knows Dr. Peña—he’s the grumpy man at the coffee shop where she does her freelance accounting work. But after one of those accounting jobs dries up, and GeneticAlly offers to pay Jess to date River, to see if they truly are a match, Jess can’t turn down the offer. And slowly, as she gets to know him, Jess discovers that maybe she and River are a match after all. Sweet and thoughtful, *The Soulmate Equation* explores what makes people click, and whether there is indeed a genetic component to attraction. Jess and River’s cautious relationship, and the funny wrench in things that Juno creates, are completely believable, despite the initially farfetched premise.”—Jessica Howard

Lin, Tom. [The Thousand Crimes of Ming Tsu](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Lin, born in China and arrived in America at age four, reimagines the classic Western—well maybe Cormac McCarthy’s West spiked with the Coen brother’s *True Grit*, and some phantasmagorical shades of Ray Bradbury, so not really a classic but “a fierce new vision of the Westward Dream” (Jonathan Lethem). Ming Tsu, son of Chinese immigrants, is orphaned as a baby and raised by the head of a California crime syndicate to be an enforcer. But Ming falls in love with Ada, daughter of one of the post-Civil War railroad tycoons, and they elope. Soon after the tycoon’s henchmen kidnap Ada and conscript Ming into service for the Central Pacific. Heartbroken yet defiant, Ming partners with a blind clairvoyant and they set out to rescue Ada and take down the tycoon. They get an assist from a troupe of magic-show performers, some of whom possess supernatural powers. It’s a violent and unswerving quest with a high body count, yet tem-

pered by romance. And is 24-year-old Lin's first novel. Expect to hear more from him.

Mangan, Christine. [The Palace of the Drowned](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). I have a mixed reaction to this, probably in part because I was so bowled over by Jean Hanff Korelitz's [The Plot](#) (Celadon \$28—our May Crime Book of the Month, Signed copies sold out) that any other plot constructed on appropriating someone else's work, with dire consequences, pales. We see it also in early July with David Bell's [Kill All Your Darlings](#) (Berkley \$27 Signed). On the plus side Mangan writes evocatively of an older Venice, 1966, where English novelist Frances Croy flees after a public meltdown and assault at the august Savoy Hotel in London.

Here's Tom Nolan's thoughtful analysis in the *WSJ*: "Staying alone at an heiress friend's empty palazzo, she plans on keeping a low profile while starting a new manuscript. No sooner has she moved into her Venetian refuge, though, than she's accosted near the Grand Canal by Gillian 'Gilly' Larson, a much younger Englishwoman who claims to be the daughter of a London editor Frankie knows. The two have coffee, and Frankie is alternately put off and charmed by Gilly's spontaneous manner. Gilly professes great admiration for Frankie's fiction. It seems she herself is writing a novel! Would Frankie be so kind as to read and comment upon it?... Ms. Mangan creates a convincing fugue state in which her protagonist is ever at odds with her own perceptions: 'Just when she thought she had determined what had and had not happened, it changed, shifting in her mind once more, until she was no longer certain of anything but her uncertainty.' For those willing to stick with Frankie through all that follows—a torrential flood, a problematic death, an English inquest—her saga wends its way to an effectively Gothic conclusion." Mangan is the author of [Tangerine](#) (\$15.99), set in 1950s Tangiers and optioned for film by George Clooney, so perhaps her forte is evoking the glamour of faded fabled cities.

McHugh, Laura. [What's Done in Darkness](#) (Random \$27). I agree with CrimeReads: "McHugh has been reinventing the rural noir to tell women's stories." Her latest is a harrowing venture into a deeply religious community hidden in the Ozarks. Abducted from her found-religion parents' isolated Arkansas homestead and returned unharmed yet still treated as damaged, teenage Sarabeth gladly makes her exit, but in International Thriller Writer Award winner McHugh's latest, she gets called back five years later to help with a copycat crime. "As incredible as the plot's harrowing twists may seem, any number of true crime accounts testify otherwise. Fortunately, there's a light amid all this darkness—courageous, determined Sarabeth Shepherd," our narrator.

McLean, John N. [Home Waters](#) (Custom House \$25.99). For all who fell in love with [A River Runs Through It](#) (\$15) by McLean's father Norman, or with the marvelous movie made from the book with Robert Redford and Brad Pitt, this memoir is a must-read. Even if you don't know the Norman McLean classic, this is a wonderful narrative of family, ancestry, murder (Norman's brother Paul, the Brad Pitt character, a reporter who died one night in Chicago), fishing, and the magic of Montana's landscapes and cultures. It's also splendid history of an America gone by, a 20<sup>th</sup> Century America with its values and cultures good and bad. I love it and recommend it highly as a Father's Day gift that works on many levels.

⌘ Michaelides, Alex. [The Maidens](#) (Celadon \$27.99). Our **June British Crime Club Pick** is "A Trust No One" set in Cambridge and the university, which is lovingly and vividly portrayed, and filled with references to, and actual, classical Greek. After a Cambridge student is found dead, Mariana, a grieving psychotherapist in London, is drawn into the murder investigation. The dead woman was one of the Maidens, a group of female students in thrall to a charismatic professor who is Mariana's prime suspect. Pick up this novel if you're after a bookish thriller with stunning backdrops — Cambridge's rarefied campus, Aegean seascapes — scattered with clues in Ancient Greek. I will say that the plot is baroque and far-fetched with an ending that zings in from the ether much as if carried by the god Mercury, but for those who love English academia, this is pure cat nip. Comparisons to Donna Tartt are inevitable.

⌘ Montclair, Allison. [A Rogue's Company](#) (St Martins \$26.99). This gem is our belated **May British Crime Club Book of the Month**—I truly tried to find a British novel in May for the club but none worked for me on a high enough level. The object isn't to just paste in a book for you club members, but to give you something worthy. The first two in this well conceived and researched series are [A Royal Affair](#) and [The Right Sort of Man](#), written with panache and humor by the pseudonymous author (the reason we have not offered you signed books by "Montclair" is the author's ID is very closely guarded but may well be the wonderful Alan Gordon of the Fool's Guild historicals). The second one has been made poignant by the death of Prince Phillip.

So we have Iris Sparks, savvy and streetwise, having spent time during the war doing things she still can't (or won't) discuss. The aristocratic Gwendolyn Bainbridge was married to an officer in the Royal Fusiliers who was killed in the war; the shock of his death sent her to a sanatorium, and when she got out, she found out that her in-laws had assumed custody of her young son. She needs something to keep her occupied (and out of the house she shares with her domineering mother-in-law). Thus—The Right Sort Marriage Bureau, a joint venture. Montclair really takes you into the world of postwar London, where desperate women scheme to buy nylons on the black market and bulldozers are busy scooping up the rubble left behind by the German air assault. The two lead characters are exceedingly well-drawn; Gwen must cope with her still-overwhelming grief and also try to fight for her son, while Iris lives in an apartment paid for by her married lover and sometimes has a penchant for acting recklessly (she carries a knife in her purse, and she's not afraid to brandish it if she feels threatened). It's 1946. Lord Bainbridge—the widowed Gwen's father-in-law and legal guardian—returns from a business trip to Africa and threatens to undo everything important to her, even sending her six-year-old son away to a boarding school. But there's more going on than that. A new client shows up at the agency, one whom Sparks and Bainbridge begin to suspect really has a secret agenda, somehow involving the Bainbridge family. A murder and a subsequent kidnapping raise the stakes.

Moore, Kate. [The Woman They Could Not Silence](#) (Sourcebooks \$27.99). 1860: As the clash between the states rolls slowly to a boil, Elizabeth Packard, housewife and mother of six, is facing her own battle. The enemy sits across the table and sleeps in the

next room. Threatened by Elizabeth's intellect, independence, and outspokenness, her husband of twenty-one years is plotting against her and makes a plan to put her back in her place. One summer morning, he has her committed to an insane asylum. The horrific conditions inside the Illinois State Hospital in Jacksonville, Illinois, are overseen by Dr. Andrew McFarland, a man who will prove to be even more dangerous to Elizabeth than her traitorous husband. But most disturbing is that Elizabeth is not the only sane woman confined to the institution. There are many rational women on her ward who tell the same story: they've been committed not because they need medical treatment, but to keep them in line—conveniently labeled “crazy” so their voices are ignored. No one is willing to fight for their freedom, and disenfranchised both by gender and the stigma of their supposed madness, they cannot possibly fight for themselves. But Elizabeth is about to discover that the merit of losing everything is that you then have nothing to lose...

Porter, Henry. [The Old Enemy](#) (Grove \$26). Paul Samson is living in London and picking up some extra work for a private security company when he is almost killed by a thuggish assassin while tailing a mysterious and gifted young employee of a powerful environmental NGO. The murder of legendary spy Robert Harland, the poisoning of billionaire philanthropist Denis Hisami with a neurotoxin in the United States House of Representatives, and a second attempt on Samson's own life send him on the run to Estonia to figure out who is trying to kill him, and why. Anastasia leaves her comatose husband Denis in the US to join Samson in Estonia and help him get to the bottom of things. Soon it becomes clear that Denis and Harland were running an investigation into a spectral former Stasi agent and her sprawling network of assets across industry and government in the US and the UK when they were attacked. Samson and Anastasia must tap into their research and expose the spymaster before any more people are killed or agencies compromised. Here is “An astonishing and timely thriller examining the penetration of Russian assets into all levels of western life...”—*Financial Times*

Power, Chris. [A Lonely Man](#) (Farrar Strauss \$27). Power's debut, like the best noir fiction, manages to be both suspenseful and cosmically destabilizing. Nothing and no one are what they first appear to be. The plot bears more than a passing resemblance to the classic film “The Third Man,” diving into the story of a struggling novelist who finds his way out of writer's block by taking inspiration from a ghostwriter who's convinced that Russian assassins are after him.

Prose, Francine. [The Vixen](#) (Harper \$25.99) provides a “dazzling take on America's tendency to persecute, then lionize, its most subversive figures.” Set in 1953, and the backdrop of the Red Scare, the book follows Harvard grad Simon Putnam who, despite his Wasp-y sounding name, is from a liberal, Jewish family. The Rosenbergs have just been executed, and Simon has just landed a job at a prestigious, but financially wobbly, publisher, where he's handed a manuscript, a bodice ripper, that sensationalizes the trial. With the publisher desperate for a bestseller, the house's owner says it has to publish the book, even though it further vilifies the Rosenbergs. Prose's recreation of the 1950s—and the paranoia replete in the era—shows the novelist working at the top of her game..

Redman, Eric. [Bones of Hilo](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Here's a debut taking a very deep dive into Hawaiian landscape and native culture along with the mystery, and also painting a sympathetic portrait of a cop struggling with his own identity. A young, inexperienced detective from Hilo in the wet, working-class side of Hawaii's Big Island, Kawika Wong faces an uphill battle to gain the respect of his more seasoned colleagues. And he has the chance of a lifetime when Ralph Fortunato, the Mainland developer of an unpopular resort on the island's western tourist side, is found murdered on a luxury golf course, an ancient Hawaiian spear driven through his heart. With the other detectives desperately trying to solve another string of grisly killings, Captain Terry Tanaka has no choice but to send Kawika to investigate. As Kawika joins forces with his father and girlfriend to help read the signs and make sense of the ritualistic murder scene, they uncover a cache of secrets reaching far back to the Island's ancient past. And the journalist who found the body has her own theories about Fortunato's demise—but do they line up with the evidence? Kawika's investigation send him around the Big Island and back to his earlier career in law enforcement in rural Washington where his Chinese ethnicity worked against him. Fortunato had roots there, so did his mainland life follow him to Hawaii? This is fascinating stuff, if overburdening the narrative. Recommended for the story but also for a travel and learning experience. I hope Redman writes a follow up so we can see how Kawika matures.

✦ Ripley, Mike. [Mr. Campion's Coven](#) (Severn \$28.99). “It's 1971 in Ripley's exceptional eighth outing for Margery Allingham's sleuth Albert Campion. The yacht belonging to Dame Jocasta Upcott, a force in the British theatrical world, has been found abandoned on an Essex mud bank, with the only sign of life the boots of the yacht's captain, Francis Jarrold, stuck in the mud 50 yards away. Dame Upcott wants Campion to search for her dog, Robespierre, who was aboard the vessel, not Jarrold. Since finding Robespierre will benefit his actor son, Rupert, Campion agrees. He winds up having to solve a murder that may be linked to an Essex witches' coven that sailed to Massachusetts in 1692 and landed in Salem at the time of the witchcraft trials. Ripley skillfully injects humor into the twisty plot, and elements reminiscent of the classic horror film *The Wicker Man* add to the creepy atmosphere. Both old and new Campion fans will hope for many more exploits.”—*PW* Starred Review. Ordered upon request.

Sanderson, Brandon. [Dark One, Book One](#) (Vault Comics \$24.99). In this first in a series of original graphic novels from Vault, a 17-year-old faces his destiny in a divided and distant land. Paul Tanasin seemingly has a tenuous grip on reality. He sees visions of an unreal, fantastic land, and Nikka, a blue-tinted hallucination of a girl who claims to be his sister, insists on keeping him company. Living apart from his mother, with whom he has a strained relationship, Paul, destined to become a fearsome destroyer, tries to keep up a normal life with frequent visits to his therapist. When a sword-wielding warrior disrupts a session, Paul is flung into Mirandus, the world of his visions. With a clear flow between panels, the implication of time passing in a montage of wide, epic scenes of Mirandus; brilliant and emotive color schemes; and a cleanly minimal drawing style provide a strong visual aspect to the story. Inexperienced graphic novel readers will easily be able to follow the flow of dialogue and the clear depiction of speech and narrative bubbles provide further visual literacy cues.



Shipstead, Maggie. [Great Circle](#) (Knopf \$28.95). Shipstead combines a soaring work of historical fiction about a “lady pilot” in the mid-20th century with the tale of a famous modern-day actress trying to save her career after some highly publicized debauchery. This is a long one — about 600 pages — but the novel makes full use of its length to explore parallel stories about powerful women who rise from tragedies to forge their own way. And it is getting a lot of attention, which is why I call it to your attention again.

Steadman, Catherine. [The Disappearing Act](#) (Ballantine \$28). The day that London actor Mia Eliot learns she’s on the shortlist for the prestigious BAFTA award, she also discovers her live-in actor boyfriend has accepted a role in a major film and is leaving her for his nubile young costar. Mia’s agent quickly arranges a trip for her to Los Angeles to “drum up some studio interest.” In an audition waiting room in L.A., Mia hits it off with the woman sitting next to her, Emily Bryant. When Emily asks Mia to feed her parking meter so she doesn’t miss her turn, Mia agrees. Mia returns to the room to find Emily gone. The sordid tale of murder and blackmail that follows builds to a climactic battle atop the iconic Hollywood sign. The authentic movie business details and nicely developed characters more than compensate for some confused plotting and Mia’s at times breathtakingly naive behavior.

✦ Taylor, Andrew. [The Royal Secret](#) (Harper \$26.99). Two young girls plot a murder by witchcraft. Soon afterwards a government clerk dies painfully in mysterious circumstances. His colleague James Marwood is asked to investigate – but the task brings unexpected dangers. Meanwhile, architect Cat Hakesby is working for a merchant who lives on Slaughter Street, where the air smells of blood and a captive Barbary lion prowls the stables. Then a prestigious new commission arrives. Cat must design a Poultry House for the woman that King Charles II loves most in all the world. See Signed Books for a review of this new entry in an elegant 17<sup>th</sup> Century London series.

Wahrer, Caitlin. [The Damage](#) (Penguin \$27). This is one of two June novels focusing on gay male rape and damage flowing from it. I disliked PJ Vernon’s [Bath Haus](#) (Doubleday \$26.95) with its self-centered “victim” for whom I could summon up neither interest nor compassion. But I did care about both the victim and the family painted by Wahrer in this debut. “Beaten unconscious and bloodied, 20-year-old college student Nick Hall survives what he describes to the police as a brutal sexual assault by the deceptively charming older man who picked him up at a bar in Salisbury, Maine. Neither Nick nor those closest to him—his fiercely protective big brother, who rescued him from abuse by their alcoholic father, and his supportive sister-in-law, a lawyer in their rural community—quite anticipates the devastating emotional toll the slow-moving justice system will take on them, especially once the accused rapist’s family and friends unleash an aggressive PR smear campaign,” a tactic used to discredit women who have been raped. “Telling the story largely in flashbacks helps the author, herself a Maine attorney, maintain suspense and tease several major plot twists. Wahrer offers an illuminatingly different slant on many of the stereotypes surrounding rape cases by making her survivor a gay man. Readers can expect thought-provoking, well-plotted psychological suspense from a bracingly fresh voice.”—*PW*. I add that the attorney sister-in-law is a brilliant tactician who thoroughly understands the dynamic of her marriage.

Wecker, Helene. [The Hidden Palace](#) (Harper \$28.99). SciFi/Fantasy fans can rejoice. After years of waiting, readers can finally return to the Wecker’s New York in *The Hidden Palace*, which picks up immediately following the events of [The Golem and the Jinni](#) (\$16.99). Chava, a golem made of clay, and Ahmad, a jinni, a restless creature of fire imprisoned in the shape of a man, both passing as human in 1900s Manhattan and, in this chapter, the Middle East, have eliminated their greatest threat, but now must confront an even greater one—the passage of time. Readers will be delighted to see the return of not only the principal characters but also the many humans that populated this world. Wecker weaves strands of Yiddish and Middle Eastern literature, historical fiction and magical fable, into her work.

✦ Williams, Olivia. [The Secret Life of the Savoy](#) (Pegasus \$27.95). For the gondoliers-themed birthday dinner, the hotel obligingly flooded the courtyard to conjure the Grand Canal of Venice. Dinner was served on a silk-lined floating gondola, real swans were swimming in the water and, as a final flourish, a baby elephant borrowed from London Zoo pulled a five-foot high birthday cake. In three generations, the D’Oyly Carte family and London’s Savoy Hotel pioneered the idea of the luxury hotel and the modern theater, propelled Gilbert and Sullivan to lasting stardom, made Oscar Wilde a transatlantic celebrity, inspired a P. G. Wodehouse series, and popularized early jazz, electric lights, and Art Deco. The hotel was opened in 1889 by theater impresario and talent agent Richard D’Oyly Carte, who financed the hotel project with profits earned from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas he staged at the theater next door. Williams drops plenty of names (Claude Monet painted the view from his hotel room; Bob Dylan was denied entry for not wearing a tie), folds in colorful anecdotes (one maid’s sole job was picking beads from flappers’ dresses off the dance floor), and incisively analyzes real estate deals and other business matters through three generations of the D’Oyly Carte family. When I was a child an annual treat was being taken by my parents to a D’Oyly Carte Gilbert & Sullivan operetta staged in Chicago by the touring company, where Martyn Green won my heart in *The Mikado*, *Pinafore*, and *The Gondoliers*. Fans of the film *Chariots of Fire* will recall there is a production of *The Mikado* running during much of the action.

Woods, Stuart. [Jackpot](#) (Putnam \$28). Woods and Bryan Quermous’ fifth Teddy Fay takes the former CIA operative to Macau, where Centurion Studios owners Peter Barrington and Ben Bacchetti, who employ Teddy in his guise as movie producer Billy Barnett, need his help. Someone is threatening to blackmail Peter and Ben, who are in Macao for a film festival, with a fake video showing them cheating at a local casino. In his search for the culprit, Teddy crosses paths with American billionaire Arrow Donaldson, the head of a casino conglomerate in China; Li Feng, the CFO of China’s largest telecom company, whose testimony could affect an impending trade deal between China and the U.S.; and CIA agent Millie Martindale, who’s been part of “a task force in one of Arrow’s Chinese casinos to identify Chinese government workers with gambling problems and recruit them as U.S. spies.” Keeping track of the many players and their various schemes isn’t easy, and Teddy has fewer opportunities to use his disguise skills than in his previous outing.

## OUR JUNE LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

✦ Boyd, Damien. [Dying Inside](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). Newly promoted DCI Nick Dixon is stuck behind a desk when the peace of the Somerset countryside is shattered by a spate of sheep killings. Dixon recognizes a sinister pattern: the animals have all been slaughtered with a crossbow, the power increasing with each kill. It seems whoever is responsible is practicing, but for what? Then the owner of a yacht that capsized on a suspected drug run is found dead, pinned to a tree by four crossbow bolts. Convinced that the killing is a gangland execution, the organized crime unit takes over the investigation. Dixon is sure the motive lies elsewhere, but is forced to watch from the sidelines—until another body is found. And the he is leading a major investigation team at Avon and Somerset Police headquarters with internal politics threatening to thwart him at every turn. This is the 9th in an ace policing series that should appeal to fans of TV's *Vera* or *Scott and Bailey*. I recommend all the [Nick Dixons](#).

Burke, James Lee. [A Private Cathedral](#) (\$17). Dave Robicheaux “is on a mission to shake up the two leading crime families that uneasily share the local territory. One of these mob bosses — either Mark Shondell or Adonis Balangie, but which one? — ordered the hit on two journeyman hoods whose bodies were found in the same barrel floating in Vermilion Bay. Like families everywhere, these powerful clans are troubled by domestic headaches that are getting in the way of business. For one thing, two of their children are in love, ‘Romeo and Juliet’ style, and have run away to cut a record at a famous studio in Muscle Shoals. More worrisome to Robicheaux and his sidekick, Clete Purcel, the mobsters have been dabbling in human trafficking. From these ingredients, Burke has concocted his usual gumbo of thrills and chills, stirred it with gusto and seasoned it with plenty of local superstition and rumor. What makes these books so enduring (this is the 23rd Robicheaux novel) and the storytelling so seductive is that Burke has the voice to do justice to the region’s ancient curses and its modern crimes.”—*NY Times*

Cosby, SA. [Blacktop Wasteland](#) (\$16.99). The winner of the 2021 *LA Times* Book Prize (Mystery) and awards nominee is reviewed by Patrick: “Mechanic Beauregard ‘Bug’ Montage is determined to keep things on the straight and narrow, working hard and doing his best to keep his garage open. With an economy that’s in the tank, however, Bug’s bills are piling up. His ornery, chain-smoking mother is about to get kicked out of her nursing home, his business is about to go into foreclosure, and Bug’s prospects aren’t looking too good. So, when a slick-talking grifter approaches Bug to take the wheel as the getaway driver in a jewel heist caper, our man reluctantly agrees. It is the classic noir set-up: a good man who wants to put the past behind but is lured back into the game. Can he redeem himself and get back on track, or is there a part of his own nature that wants him back in the driver’s seat, consequences be damned? I sure wish I’d been aware of Cosby when I was putting together *The Highway Kind*, my anthology of car-related crime stories. I definitely would have hit this terrific author up for a story. Don’t miss this one, folks.”

Cussler, Clive/Boyd Morrison. [Marauder](#) (\$17). Morrison says this novel’s origin—his last as co-author—came from several ideas that conflated into another action-adventure plot for the sequel to 2019’s [The Final Option](#) (\$29/\$9/99). The present-day shenanigans interlace with an ancient mystery. Cussler’s books

always do. “At the Battle of Carrhae in Syria, an entire Roman legion of 10,000 soldiers was taken captive by the Parthian Empire—in present-day Iran. There is no definitive answer about what happened to that lost legion,” Morrison says. “Of course, an unsolved mystery like this got my mind churning, and I developed an alternative theory.” That theory became a major turning point in the plot along with the need to launch a new and improved *Oregon* in this book—a process that has been done before. “Readers will race through the pages to see what happens next,” says one reviewer.

Dionne, Karen. [The Wicked Sister](#) (\$17). Rachel Cunningham, the protagonist of this devastating, magic realism–dusted psychological thriller has been guilt-ridden for 15 years since a twin tragedy she can’t remember—her mother’s murder and father’s apparent suicide—when she was 11 at her family’s vast wilderness estate on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. She has voluntarily confined herself to a decaying mental institution, where one day she gains access to the original police report, obtained somehow by a fellow patient’s brother, that sparks the faint hope she’s not responsible for her parents’ deaths—and sends her back to the family estate, where her brilliant but scary older sister, Diana, and their aunt still live, to try to figure out what really happened. But Rachel’s mission soon becomes far more perilous than she anticipated. Dionne paints a haunting portrait of a family hurtling toward the tragic destiny they can foresee but are powerless to stop.” Not sure I agree about powerless to stop. What is devastating is the ruthless portrait of a true psychopath and an unwillingness to recognize one.

Doiron, Paul. [One Last Lie](#) (\$17.99). Let me start by saying that any reader of CJ Box and Randy Wayne White should order this book immediately. You can explore the wilds of the Everglades (the python!) and the wilds of northern Maine where poachers run rampant back and forth over the border which is heavily patrolled now (think Joe Pickett here). And Maine Warden Investigator Mike Bowditch, with police powers, is working a cold case off the grid. It arises unexpectedly while Bowditch is doing a new hire evaluation down in Florida and has time to join his ex, Stacy, on a python hunt. Wheelchair-bound Ora Stevens calls to say that Bowditch’s mentor and father figure, her elderly husband Charley, is missing. Without explanation or contacts. Catching a flight back to Maine, Mike begins an off-the-radar-from-the-Warden-Service investigation. It takes him into the state’s northern riverside border where Acadians of the St. John Valley, separated by the artificial national border, form a closed community. A Warden went undercover there 15 years back, infiltrating a ruthless gang of poachers, mostly run by a father and two sons. Charley ended up killing the father in the manhunt that followed the officer’s exposure. Is a badge Charley spotted very recently at a flea market what touched off his disappearance? And does it connect to that old situation? And if so, who besides the villagers is covering up secrets? Doiron artfully blends a whodunit plot with superior characterizations. See signed books.

Greenwood, Kerry. [Death in Daylesford](#) (Sourcebooks \$15.99). When a mysterious invitation for a spa holiday arrives for Miss Phryne Fisher from an unknown retired Captain Herbert Spencer, Phryne’s curiosity is piqued. Spencer runs a retreat in Victoria’s rural spa country for shell-shocked veterans of World War I. It’s a cause after Phryne’s own heart, but what can Spencer want from her? It’s not... See Some Hardcover for June above for more.

Miranda, Megan. [The Girl from Widow Hills](#) (\$17). The hospital administrator who now calls herself Olivia Meyer has put as much distance as possible between her and the drama that riveted the country two decades earlier when, as sleepwalking six-year-old Arden Maynor, she was swept away during a storm into the drain pipes of her hometown of Widow Hills, Kentucky. The only trace of her, a small shoe, until she is miraculously rescued three days later before a storm would surely have killed her. There was a charitable outpouring of funds as well as fame for her and her single mother. Olivia has never been able to remember much of her ordeal, but she hates the notoriety and grows distant from her mother. As an adult, Liv restarts her life in Central Valley, NC, with a job she loves. But she's traumatized still and one night out sleepwalking, she stumbles over a dead body. As Liv tries to keep Detective Nina Rigby at bay while she investigates further herself, a succession of suspects emerges....

✎ Montclair, Allison. [A Royal Affair](#) (\$16.99). In Montclair's stellar sequel to 2019's [The Right Sort of Man](#), former British intelligence operative Iris Sparks and widow Gwen Bainbridge, who teamed up after WWII to run a business seeking to match up prospective spouses, are offered a highly sensitive assignment in 1946 London. Gwen's titled cousin, Lady Patience Matheson, who works for Queen Elizabeth, the consort of George VI, wants the partners of the Right Sort of Marriage Bureau to vet Prince Philip, the intended of the heir apparent, the future Elizabeth II. The then-princess has received an anonymous letter, intercepted by her protectors and referring to what, documents in Corfu?, stating there will be a price for returning "them" to Alice, Prince Philip's mother. Iris and Gwen agree to investigate what the message is referring to, so that Lady Matheson can assess whether the prince is a suitable mate for the princess. This sounds like an improbable (and annoying) set up but the pseudonymous Montclair delivers a clever plot with a twist and a witty investigation. The pseudo precludes us shipping to this author, alas, one who "successfully combines the insightful characterizations of Jacqueline Winspear with the witty banter of Hammett's Nick and Nora Charles." Truly this is a very amusing, often satirical, gem.

Parish, Stan. [Love and Theft](#) (\$16). Our August 2020 First Mystery Book of the Month, now in paperback, is a superb caper—sophisticated, ice-cold, endlessly surprising. I love capers, such fun. This is a good gift idea for dad. Why? "A dark jewel, polished and precision-cut, beloved faces reflected in each glossy facet. Don Winslow, Elmore Leonard, Nelson DeMille—*Love and Theft* pays tribute to classic capers by these authors — and rivals the best of them for verve and ingenuity. A breathless adventure both starry-eyed and cool-blooded, both charming and diabolical. More, please."—A.J. Finn

Penny, Louise. [All the Devils Are Here](#) (\$17.99) takes "Chief Inspector Armand Gamache, the head of homicide for the Sûreté du Québec, to Paris for the anticipated birth of a grandchild to his daughter, Annie, who moved to France with her husband, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, Gamache's longtime number two, after they both got jobs there. The happy reunion includes Gamache's son, Daniel, also lured to Paris by a job, and Gamache's godfather, billionaire Stephen Horowitz, who supported Gamache after he was orphaned. Tragedy strikes when Stephen, who made a career of exposing corporate wrongdoing, is hit by a delivery van while crossing the street, leaving him at death's door. Gamache, who witnessed the attack, tries to persuade the Prefect of Police, an

old friend, that the hit-and-run should be treated as attempted murder, only succeeding after he finds the corpse of a stranger, who was shot twice, in Stephen's ransacked apartment. The tension rises as Gamache tries to investigate both crimes in a jurisdiction where he has no authority, and vital secrets about his family come to light...."—*PW* Starred Review

Porter, Anna. [Deceptions](#) (Ecco \$16.95). I love this "sprawling, fast-moving fine-art thriller" so much it's our **June International Crime Book of the Month**. Much of it takes place in Strasbourg which is a lovely French city. "Former Budapest cop Attila Feher has been hired to help protect a Hungarian diplomat named Vaszary, representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France. Vaszary and his wife are divorcing, and arguing about whether a large painting is a genuine Artemisia Gentileschi or not. To help end the divorce stalemate, Attila calls in his friend and former lover, Helena Marsh, an art appraisal expert and investigator. Helena is surprised to discover that the painting may be an unknown Gentileschi work that could be worth massive amounts of money, since the pupil of Caravaggio is rising in popularity. Then a range of shady characters show up—mysterious Russian oligarchs, corrupt Hungarian officials and a murderous man who seems to be stalking Helena. Helena and Attila are now in a race for their lives, attempting to stay one step ahead of the gangsters as they change identities and move from Budapest to Paris to Strasbourg and back, in a quest to identify both the painting and who has it out for them. Fast-paced and funny, *Deceptions* captures kleptocratic vibes in modern Hungary, police corruption, money laundering in the art world and much more. Helena is a kick-ass heroine—brilliant and strong, who can hold her own with the bad guys both physically and mentally."—Jessica Howard. Perfect for fans of Alan Furst.

Young, Heather. [The Distant Dead](#) (\$16.99). A body burns in the high desert hills. A young boy, Sal Prentiss, walks into a fire station in Lovelock, Nevada, a remote community ravaged by poverty and the opioid epidemic, pale with the shock of a grisly discovery. Nora Wheaton, a local social studies teacher, worries when her colleague is late for work. By day's end, when the body is identified as the middle school's new math teacher Adam Merkel, a small town will begin its reckoning with a brutal and calculated murder. Adam had moved there seeking sanctuary only to die a terrible death seven months later. Nora is trapped there, a caregiver for the father she loves but can't forgive. And so, with her ex a cop and Jake, the fire department crew in nearby and tinier Marzen, Nora keeps digging. As part of it, she tries to gain the wary boy's trust and she finds he holds not only the key to Adam's murder, but an unexpected chance at the life she thought she'd lost. "[A] second stunning piece of redemptive fiction... [Nora Wheaton's] search for the truth amid passages of almost unbearable poignancy makes this an ideal recommendation for fans of Kate Atkinson and Jodi Picoult." — *Booklist*

#### NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACK FOR JUNE

✎ Arlen, Tessa. [In Royal Service to the Queen](#) (Berkley \$17). Fans of *The Crown* will enjoy this poignant look behind the royal curtain, and will celebrate and mourn with Marian Crawford, tutor to the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, as they navigate expanding lives. Crawfie's relationship with Queen Elizabeth, their mother, is fraught and a flashpoint arises when Princess Elizabeth falls in love with Prince Philip....

Atleework, Kendra. [Miracle Country](#) (\$16.95). An Indie Next Pick in hardcover and winning the Sigurd F. Olson Nature Writing Award earlier this year, *Miracle Country* joins the likes of modern nature classics like [Braiding Sweetgrass](#). In her debut, Atleework weaves the history of the land where she grew up (the Eastern Sierra mountains) into her family's moving story, along with galvanizing writing about climate change and a universal message about the meaning of home. For fans of Annie Dillard, Rebecca Solnit, and Terry Tempest Williams.

Baldacci, David. [Daylight](#) (\$16.99). In this third in a series starring [FBI Agent Atlee Pine](#), Atlee's continuing search for abducted twin sister Mercy puts her in the path of a big-deal investigation being conducted by military detective John Puller (calling in from his own series). And that shoves them both into the arms of organized crime. Grab the first two Pines... enjoy.

Bostwick, Marie. [The Restoration of Celia Fairchild](#) (Morrow \$16.99). Actually new back in March, but I chanced upon this gem just recently. One thing to love is the scene is Charleston, SC, a beautiful and historic city. Another is the reinvention of Celia, turfed out of her beloved job as gossip columnist "Dear Calpurnia," and endlessly disappointed in her quest to create a family, by adoption if possible after her marriage dissolves and she becomes more or less homeless. Enter her great aunt Calpurnia, deceased, who leaves Celia her home in Charleston. It turns out when Celia arrives, hoping for a quick sale and a reboot of her life, that Calpurnia was a hoarder, the house is a wreck requiring a drastic and rapid makeover to get on the market, and Celia has no real idea how to renovate. Enter new neighbors, an unlikely sisterhood of creative women/entrepreneurs, and some help from old friends. This is an energizing, cheering story I recommend for perfect summer day reading.

Chouinard, MM. [The Dancing Girls](#) (Grand Central \$12.99). A small leafy Massachusetts town. A murdered woman posed like a ballerina. A stolen wedding band off the corpse. Newly promoted Detective Jo Fournier is shocked to her core. Hungry for answers, Jo questions Jeanine's husband, but the heart-breaking pain written on his face threatens to tear open Jo's old wounds. It's the same pain she felt when her boyfriend was cruelly shot dead by a gang in their hometown of New Orleans. She couldn't get justice for him, but she's determined to get justice for Jeanine's devastated family. But before Jo can get answers, another woman is found, wedding ring stolen, body posed in the same ritualistic way.... So here's a serial killer chase to thrill you on a hot summer day.

✎ Ellis, John R. [The Whitby Murders](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). The plus here is a depiction of the Yorkshire town of Whitby, made famous by Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and unsurprisingly here host to a Halloween Goth festival. Ellis presents cutting-edge contemporary characters and crafts a clever plot for Whitby DCI Jim Oldroyd to solve involving a murder in an escape room. It's a crime with three witnesses—but can any of them deliver reliable testimony? The minus is Ellis' style which is filled with adjectives and overwritten. And the book has poor production values (small type). Still, for you British crime fans, it delivers something different....

Farrell, Richard. [The Falling Woman](#) (\$16.95). First, it's just a barely believable rumor: one person may have survived the mid-air explosion of a passenger jet on a cross-country course from

Washington, D.C., to San Francisco. But soon she becomes a national media sensation when "the Falling Woman," as the press dubs her, is said to have been taken to a Wichita hospital—and then to have disappeared without a trace. As a dedicated National Transportation Safety Bureau agent joins the search for clues, he becomes drawn into the woman's moving and personal fight to keep secret the story of her survival. Farrell reveals what happens when a plane crash survivor doesn't want to be found as an investigator grapples with the question of whether the survivor has a right to her privacy, presenting a very personal and emotional story in the framework of an investigative thriller. A former pilot himself, he brings an exciting perspective to the novel. This makes three thrillers on topic: see Mackintosh and Newman above in signed books for their takes.

✎ Follett, Ken. [The Evening and the Morning](#) (\$20). It is 997 CE, the end of the Dark Ages. England is facing attacks from the Welsh in the west and the Vikings in the east. Those in power bend justice according to their will, regardless of ordinary people and often in conflict with the king. Without a clear rule of law, chaos reigns. In these turbulent times, three characters find their lives intertwined. A young boatbuilder's life is turned upside down when his home is raided by Vikings, forcing him and his family to move and start their lives anew in a small hamlet where he does not fit in.... A Norman noblewoman marries for love, following her husband across the sea to a new land, but the customs of her husband's homeland are shockingly different, and it soon becomes clear to her that a single misstep could be catastrophic.... A monk dreams of transforming his humble abbey into a center of learning that will be admired throughout Europe. And each in turn comes into dangerous conflict with a clever and ruthless bishop who will do anything to increase his wealth and power in this prequel to [The Pillars of the Earth](#).

✎ Freeman, Dianne. [A Lady's Guide to Mischief and Murder](#) (\$15.95). Frances, the widowed Countess of Harleigh, needs a venue for her sister Lily's imminent wedding, away from prying eyes. Risings, George Hazleton's family estate in Hampshire, is a perfect choice, and soon Frances, her beloved George, and other guests have gathered to enjoy the usual country pursuits—shooting, horse riding, and romantic interludes in secluded gardens. But the bucolic setting harbors a menace, and it's not simply the arrival of Frances's socially ambitious mother. Above and below stairs, mysterious accidents befall guests and staff alike. Before long, Frances suspects these "accidents" are deliberate, and fears that the intended victim is Lily's fiancé, Leo. Frances's mother is unimpressed by Lily's groom-to-be and would much prefer that Lily find an aristocratic husband, just as Frances did. But now that Frances has found happiness with George—a man who loves her for much more than her dowry—she heartily approves of Lily's choice. As Frances and George search for the culprit among the assembled family, friends, and servants, more victims fall prey to the mayhem.... If you like British historicals on the cozy side this is [a great series](#) to binge.

✎ French, Nicci. [What to Do When Someone Dies](#) (Harper \$16.99). This excellent standalone opens as London furniture restorer Ellie Falkner learns that her husband, Greg Manning, has died in a car crash that also killed his female passenger, married party planner Milena Livingstone, who's unknown to Ellie and Greg's friends, family, and colleagues. Others conclude he was having an affair, but Ellie needs to know for sure. When she stops

by Milena's offices hoping to glean more information, Ellie impulsively introduces herself to the firm's co-owner, Frances Shaw, as a casual acquaintance of Milena's, Gwen Abbott (actually the name of a friend) and offers to help. Shaw soon trusts "Gwen" to be alone in the office. Though her search of Milena's papers and emails neither proves nor disproves Greg's fidelity, it suggests the car crash was no accident. Obsessed, embroiled in deception, and unable to move forward, Ellie may destroy her own life before she understands Greg's.

Galligan, John. [Bad Moon Rising: A Bad Axe County Novel](#) (\$17). Rural Wisconsin Sheriff Heidi Kick has a dead body on her hands, a homeless young man last seen alive miles from the Bad Axe. Chillingly, the medical examiner confirms what Sheriff Kick has been experiencing in her own reoccurring nightmares of late: the victim was buried alive. As the relentless summer heat bears down and more bodies are discovered, Sheriff Kick also finds herself embroiled in a nasty reelection campaign. As her family troubles become public, vicious rumors threaten to sway the electorate and derail her investigation. Enter Vietnam veteran Leroy Fanta, editor-in-chief of the local paper, who believes Heidi's strange case might be tied to a reclusive man writing deranged letters to the opinions section for years. With his heart and liver on their last legs, Fanta drums up his old journalistic instincts in one last effort to help Heidi find a lead in her case, or at least a good story. 3<sup>rd</sup> in [an interesting series](#) and an infrequently deployed location.

✎ Hall, Araminta. [Imperfect Women](#) (\$17). When Nancy Hennessy is murdered, she leaves behind two best friends, an adoring husband and daughter, and a secret lover whose identity she took to the grave. Nancy was gorgeous, wealthy, and cherished by those who knew her—from the outside, her life was perfect. But as the investigation into her death flounders and her friends Eleanor and Mary wrestle with their grief, dark details surface that reveal how little they knew their friend, each other, and maybe even themselves. "Hall turns her close attention to women—how complicated their lives are; the Faustian bargains they make when they get married and raise children, or not; the complicated nature of their friendships; how hard they are on each other and themselves... The book creeps on you slowly, like a fog, until you find yourself enveloped in this tangled skein of relationships, eager to see how all this is going to play out, who is going to betray whom and in what way. *Imperfect Women* is not a conventional detective story, but an investigation into character and motivation."—Sarah Lyall, *NY Times Book Review*

Lende, Heather. [Of Bears and Ballots: An Alaskan Adventure](#) (\$16.95). Lende, whom the *Los Angeles Times* calls "part Annie Dillard, part Anne Lamott" now brings us her quirky and compassionate account of holding local office. She was one of the many women inspired to run for political office recently. And she won! As an assembly member for the tiny, breathtakingly beautiful Haines, Alaska, she shows us how both the lofty ideals of our republic and the polarizing politics of our time play out—including a recall campaign targeting her—in one small town. Here's an inspirational tale about what living in a community really means, and what we owe one another. A great conversation starter for a meaningful, civil discussion of politics. Reader's guide included.

✎ North, Will. [Murder on the Commons](#) (Northstar \$22.95) Like the John R. Ellis mystery above, this was a candidate I read for

the May British Crime Club Book of the Month. It's a pricey paperback (being independently published), but with an easy to read typeface. The setting is richly atmospheric—Bodmin Moor, Cornwall. Most of the land is controlled by very old families, mostly of agricultural bent, living with a blend of rural and more modern lifestyle. It's a spectacular place to find a body, a body mired in the boggy ground, its head, the only protruding part, a feast for crows. How did it get there is part of the mystery on land close to Rough Tor and Brown Willy Tor, the highest spot in the duchy. The Cuthbertsons—daughter Jen discovered the gruesome head on their land—have been Lords of Poldue Manor since Queen Elizabeth I granted the Scottish clan the estate for their loyalty to her rather than to Mary, Queen of Scots. DCI Arthur Penwarren, once married to a Cuthbertson, must deploy his Major Crimes team to investigate. Recusing himself he puts DCI Morgan Davies, Crime Scene Manager Calum West, and two DSs on the case. An intriguing investigation ensues, spiraling into surprising directions despite the tight-knit Cornish and police communities. The resolution is surprising. Fans of Daphne DuMaurier will lap up the Cornish landscape and those who like the characters in Ann Cleeves' Vera series and TV will be pleased. I ultimately turned this down for a book of the month for the pricing. And because this is book four in the Davies & West Mysteries. Ordered upon request.

✎ O'Farrell, Maggie. [Hamnet](#) (\$16.95). This imaginative story that argues and speculates about Shakespeare's life is winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award—and gorgeously written by an author with many fine books under her belt. England, 1580: The Black Death creeps across the land, an ever-present threat, infecting the healthy, the sick, the old and the young alike. The end of days is near, but life always goes on. A young Latin tutor—penniless and bullied by a violent father—falls in love with an extraordinary, eccentric young woman. Agnes is a wild creature who walks her family's land with a falcon on her glove and is known throughout the countryside for her unusual gifts as a healer, understanding plants and potions better than she does people. Once she settles with her husband on Henley Street in Stratford-upon-Avon, she becomes a fiercely protective mother and a steadfast, centrifugal force in the life of her young husband, whose career on the London stage is just taking off when his beloved young son succumbs to sudden fever.

✎ Holton, India. [The Wisteria Society of Lady Scoundrels](#) (Berkley \$15). A prim and proper lady thief must save her aunt from a crazed pirate and his dangerously charming henchman in this fantastical historical. Cecilia Bassingwaite is the ideal Victorian lady. She's also a thief. Like the other members of the Wisteria Society crime sorority, she flies around England drinking tea, blackmailing friends, and acquiring treasure by interesting means. Sure, she has a dark and traumatic past and an overbearing aunt, but all things considered, it's a pleasant existence. Until the men show up. Ned Lightbourne is a sometimes assassin who is smitten with Cecilia from the moment they meet. Unfortunately, that happens to be while he's under direct orders to kill her. His employer, Captain Morvath, who possesses a gothic abbey bristling with cannons and an unbridled hate for the world, intends to rid England of all its presumptuous women, starting with the Wisteria Society. But Ned has plans of his own....

✎ Jewell, Lisa. [Invisible Girl](#) (\$17). The disappearance of a teenage girl disrupts the lives of her former therapist, his family, and a lonely neighbor—providing an array of characters set in a posh London neighborhood. Seventeen-year-old Saffyre Maddox has been in therapy with Roan Fours, a child psychologist, for three years for self-harming after the deaths of her parents. When Roan suggests Saffyre is ready to move on, she feels betrayed and begins following Roan and spying on his wife, Cate, and two teenage children. She learns Roan is having an affair but also that multiple sexual assaults are taking place in his neighborhood. When Saffyre disappears, Owen Pick, one of Roan and Cate’s neighbors, is arrested and jailed based on his browsing history after having been placed on leave from his job following sexual misconduct complaints. At the same time, Cate becomes suspicious of Roan’s lies....

✎ Jones, Sandie. [The Half Sister](#) (\$16.99). Kate is a celebrity gossip journalist who desperately wants to have a baby. Her hug-close sister Lauren is a mother of three with an abusive husband. At their widowed mother’s obligatory Sunday lunch get-together, an unexpected visitor arrives, claiming to be their half-sister....

Moriarty, Liane. [Nine Perfect Strangers](#) (\$17.99). Nine people gather at a remote health resort. Some are here to lose weight, some are here to get a reboot on life, some are here for reasons they can’t even admit to themselves. Amidst all of the luxury and pampering, the mindfulness and meditation, they know these ten days might involve some real work. But none of them could imagine just how challenging the next ten days are going to be.... From 2019, and soon to be a HULU TV series.

Neville, Stuart. [The Ghosts of Belfast \(Deluxe Edition\)](#) (\$16.95). A *New York Times* Notable Book and Winner of *The Los Angeles Times Book Prize*, Neville’s debut remains “a flat-out terror trip” (James Ellroy) and “one of the best Irish novels, in any genre, of recent times” (John Connolly). Northern Ireland’s Troubles may be over, but peace has not erased the crimes of the past. Gerry Fegan, a former paramilitary contract killer, is haunted by the ghosts of the twelve people he slaughtered. Every night, at the point of losing his mind, he drowns their screams in drink. But it’s not enough. In order to appease the ghosts, Fegan is going to have to kill the men who gave him orders. For those of you who have missed Neville’s compelling work, here’s your chance to dive in at the beginning.

✎ Paris, BA. [The Dilemma](#) (\$16.99). A woman plans—and experiences—the long-awaited 40th birthday party of her dreams. But to ensure the party is a success, both she and her husband have decided to keep unexpected news from each other that will derail their lives. The unusual structure of this novel may derail the suspense for you.

Patterson, James/Brendan DuBois. [The Summer House](#) (\$16.99). Once a luxurious southern getaway on a rustic lake, then reduced to a dilapidated crash pad, the Summer House is now the grisly scene of a nighttime mass murder. Eyewitnesses point to four Army Rangers—known as the Night Ninjas—recently returned from Afghanistan. To ensure that justice is done, the Army sends Major Jeremiah Cook, a veteran and former NYPD cop, to investigate. But the major and his elite team arrive in sweltering Georgia with no idea their grim jobs will be made exponentially more challenging by local law enforcement, who resists the Army’s intrusion and stonewall them at every turn....

Serritella, Francesca. [The Ghosts of Harvard](#) (\$18). Cadence Archer arrives on Harvard’s campus desperate to understand why her brother, Eric, a genius who developed paranoid schizophrenia took his own life there the year before. Losing Eric has left a black hole in Cady’s life, and while her decision to follow in her brother’s footsteps threatens to break her family apart, she is haunted by questions of what she might have missed. And there’s only one place to find answers. As Cady struggles under the enormous pressure at Harvard, she investigates her brother’s final year, armed only with a blue notebook of Eric’s cryptic scribbles. She knew he had been struggling with paranoia, delusions, and illusory enemies—but what tipped him over the edge? Voices fill her head.... Does she share Eric’s illness, or is she tapping into something else? “Every time I thought I knew where *The Ghosts of Harvard* was heading, I turned out to be wrong. Part mystery, part ghost story, part psychological thriller, this novel is all entertainment.”—Jodi Picoult

Tate, Christie. [Group](#) (Avid Reader \$17). Therapy may be helpful as we deal with the rapid changes and fissures in society. This memoir is a “refreshingly original memoir of a guarded, over-achieving, self-lacerating young lawyer who reluctantly agrees to try group therapy—and in turn finds human connection, and herself. *Group* is a deliciously addictive read, and with Christie as our guide—skeptical of her own capacity for connection and intimacy, but hopeful in spite of herself—we are given a front row seat to the daring, exhilarating, painful, and hilarious journey that is group therapy—an under-explored process that breaks you down, and then reassembles you so that all the pieces finally fit. “Often hilarious and ultimately very touching.” —*People*

Vuong, Ocean. [On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous](#) (\$17). Written when the speaker, Little Dog, is in his late twenties, the letter unearths a family’s history that began before he was born — a history whose epicenter is rooted in Vietnam — and serves as a doorway into parts of his life his mother has never known, all of it leading to an unforgettable revelation. At once a witness to the fraught yet undeniable love between a single mother and her son, it is also a brutally honest exploration of race, class, and masculinity.

Yu, An. [Braised Pork](#) (\$16) is, per a 2020 Indie Next Pick, “an astonishing look at a new widow’s attempt to make sense of her husband’s death and her newfound independence, through which she rediscovers her love of painting, forms new and profound bonds, rekindles previously dormant familial relationships, and ultimately finds peace in uncertainty. Set in Beijing and Tibet, *Braised Pork* is a poetic reflection on life and all of its meandering, unpredictable messiness.”

#### OUR JUNE SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Bardugo, Leigh. [Ninth House](#) (\$9.99). Surviving a horrific multiple homicide, a girl from the wrong side of the tracks is unexpectedly offered a full scholarship to Yale, where her mysterious benefactors task her with monitoring the university’s secret societies. *PW* gave this their coveted star saying “Bardugo gives Alex a thoroughly engaging mix of rough edge, courage, and cynicism, all of which are required to get things done. Fantasy readers, particularly those who love ghosts, will hungrily devour this novel.”

Coben, Harlan. [The Boy from the Woods](#) (\$9.99). A man with a past shrouded in mystery searches desperately for a missing

teenage girl whose disappearance is triggering disastrous consequences throughout her community and the world. *Kirkus* ended their review with “Coben’s latest darkest-suburbs thriller sets a decidedly offbeat detective on the trail of a crime with overtones unmistakably redolent of once and future presidential elections.”

Hollis, Lee. [Death of an Italian Chef](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Food and Cocktails #14. When Chef Romeo, who just opened up a new restaurant in town, dies from complications after having a heart attack, Hayley Powell, whose hospitalized brother swears it was murder, must find the person who had no reservations about killing the chef. *Kirkus* loved Hollis’ latest saying “An enjoyably twisty mystery laced with the heroine’s equally entertaining food-centric newspaper columns.”

Kellerman, Jonathan/Jesse. [Half Moon Bay](#) (\$9.99). Clay Edison #3. When the decades-old skeleton of a child is discovered at the site of a park demolition, Deputy Coroner Clay Edison unearths devastating community secrets surrounding the long-ago disappearance of his sister. Strong setting, interesting profession for Edison.

Land, Ali. [Good Me Bad Me](#) (\$9.99). This debut novel follows the experiences of the 15-year-old daughter of a serial killer who, in spite of a new identity and placement in an affluent foster family, wrestles with the decision not to follow in her mother’s violent footsteps in the face of bullies, a teacher’s discovery, and threats against a vulnerable friend.

Murphy, Catie. [Death of an Irish Mummy](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Dublin Driver #3. When her boss Olga at Leprechaun Limos becomes the number one suspect in the murder of a brash Texan who came to Ireland, believing herself to be an heir to an old Irish earldom, Megan attempts to steer the investigation in a new direction.

Penny, Louise. [All the Devils Are Here](#) (\$9.99). Gamache #16. Horrified when his billionaire godfather is targeted in a near-fatal accident, Chief Inspector Gamache follows clues deep within the Paris Archives to uncover gruesome, decades-old secrets.

Steadman, Catherine. [Mr. Nobody](#) (\$9.99). Treating a man found on the beach with no memory of his identity, a neuropsychologist who would hide her own past is confronted by her patient’s mysterious knowledge of her secrets. *Kirkus* concluded the latest from Steadman is “A spellbinding thriller perfect for those dark and stormy nights.”

Taylor, Sarah Stewart. [The Mountains Wild](#) (\$9.99). A series debut set in Dublin and New York introduces homicide detective and divorced mom Maggie D’arcy, who in the wake of a disappearance and new clues reopens the investigation into her cousin’s disappearance 23 years earlier. *Book Page* summed this up with “*The Mountains Wild* makes for perfect summer reading. Maggie is a first-class protagonist—an ace investigator and appealing everywoman with smarts and heart. Suspense fans are sure to welcome her to the crime scene.”

#### NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACK

Alexander, Ellie. [Mocha She Wrote](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Bakeshop #13. During the prestigious West Coast Barista Cup, Jules cheers on her star barista Andy, who has been selected to compete, until one of the judges is found dead clutching Andy’s creamy latte and she must clear his name.

Andrews, Donna. [The Falcon Always Wings Twice](#) (\$7.99). Meg Langslow #27. Volunteering at her grandmother’s craft-center Renaissance Faire, Meg is challenged to prove the innocence of her grandfather when he is wrongly accused of murdering a fairgrounds performer who was suspected of mistreating a rare falcon.

Bell, Ted. [Dragonfire](#) (\$9.99). Alex Hawke #11. Dispatched on a sensitive mission by the Queen, a recuperating Alex Hawke uncovers ties between the disappearance of a modern royal and a plot dating back to World War II.

Belle, Kimberly. [Stranger in the Lake](#) (Pantheon \$9.99). A newly married woman questions her husband’s involvement with a woman murdered in the lake behind their home and how it connects the unsolved case that shook the town decades before.

Blaedel, Sara. [The Third Sister](#) (\$8.99). The funeral home Ilka Jensen has inherited after her estranged father’s death is bankrupt. Then, just as Ilka learns a shocking revelation about her father, two menacing strangers turn up at the funeral home: dangerous men who mean to draw her further into a world of secrets, betrayal, and murder.

Doyle, Carrie. [It Takes Two to Mango](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Trouble in Paradise #1. Taking a job as a villa broker on the beautiful Caribbean island of Paraiso, Plum Lockhart finds her reputation at stake when a client is found dead in the Jacuzzi of Casa Mango, a property she manages, and now she must wade through the clues to catch a killer.

Freeman, Brian. [Robert Ludlum’s The Bourne Evolution](#) (\$9.99). Bourne #15. Going rogue to investigate suspicions that the agency that trained him is responsible for his lover’s murder, Jason Bourne teams up with journalist Abbey Laurent to identify who set him up for the assassination of a congresswoman.

Gardner, Lisa. [The Neighbor](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. A young mother, blond and pretty, disappears without a trace from her South Boston home, leaving behind her four-year-old daughter as the only witness and her handsome, secretive husband as the prime suspect.

Gilstrap, John. [Stealth Attack](#) (Kensington \$9.99). Jonathan Grave #13. When his teammate’s son and friend are kidnapped while on a school trip to El Paso, Texas, Jonathan Grave leads his covert operatives down unexpected paths where he ends up in the crossfire of a deadly vendetta.

Grisham, John. [Time for Mercy](#) (\$9.99). Jake Brigance #3. Court-appointed lawyer Jake Brigance puts his career, his financial security, and the safety of his family on the line to defend a sixteen-year-old suspect who is accused of killing a local deputy and facing the death penalty.

Hollon, Cheryl. [Draw and Order](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Paint & Shine #2. When she discovers a skeleton while taking a close-knit group of rock climbers up the mountain to paint and sample moonshine, Miranda is shocked to discover the bones belong to her cousin and that his death may be linked to a member of the group.

Johansen, Iris. [Bonnie](#) (\$9.99). Reissue. When her beloved 7-year-old daughter disappears during a class trip, forensic sculptor Eve Duncan dedicates her talents to protecting other children and helping families to find closure while searching for her own

daughter's killer, in a conclusion to the trilogy that began with *Eve* and *Quinn*.

Kent, Kathleen. [Burn](#) (\$9.99). A Dallas detective struggles to adjust at work and home after a run-in with an apocalyptic cult while trying to track down crooked cops and the cult leader who had taken her hostage.

King, Stephen. [The Institute](#) (\$10.99). Abducted youth Luke Ellis is imprisoned in an inescapable institute, where children with the abilities of telekinesis and telepathy are subjected to torturous manipulation.

Klass, David. [Out of Time](#) (Dutton \$9.99). A conflicted young agent brings a unique combination of skills to an FBI task force's effort to halt a series of attacks by a self-styled "eco-terrorist" who begins bombing targets throughout America.

Klein, Libby. [Beauty Expos Are Murder](#) (Kensington \$8.99.) Poppy McAllister #6. While selling her paleo muffins and keto cookies at the Health and Beauty Expo, gluten-free baker Poppy McAllister must sift through the clues to unmask a killer when a prominent cosmetic surgeon is murdered right after revealing his breakthrough anti-aging technology.

Lloyd, Amy. [One More Lie](#) (\$9.99). A recently paroled woman finds her efforts to leave the past behind complicated by haunting memories, bad choices, and the return of the person who contributed to her imprisonment.

McDonald, Christina. [The Night Olivia Fell](#) (\$9.99). When her pregnant daughter is rendered brain dead from a fall and placed on life support, a grieving mother notices other suspicious injuries and sets out to uncover the truth.

McKevett, GA. [And the Killer Is](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Savannah Reid #25. When a nonagenarian movie star is found murdered in her derelict 1920s mansion, private investigator Savannah Reid, Dirk and the Moonlight Magnolia gang search for answers dating back to Hollywood's golden era.

Patterson, James. [NYPD Red 6: With the Bonus Thriller Scott Free](#) (\$9.99). Detective Kylie MacDonald of NYPD Red is submerged in a PR nightmare when reality star Erin Easton is kidnapped from her wedding reception and every A-lister on the guest list becomes a target of suspicion – or just a target.

Swallow, James. [Ghost](#) (Forge \$9.99). Sundowners #1. Reissue. As devastating attacks unfold across the globe, Marc Dane must call on all his skills and ingenuity to track down the mysterious figure behind it all—a faceless criminal known only as Madrigal.