

BOOKNEWS from

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September Booknews 2021
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A SPARKLING SEPTEMBER

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.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 2 5:00 PM

Joanne Schaffhausen discusses [Gone for Good](#) (St Martins \$27.99)

Starts a cop series set in Chicago

Signed copies available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 2 6:15 PM

Michelle Richmond discusses [The Wonder Test](#) (Grove \$26)

Our September Crime Book of the Month

Signed copies available

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 4 4:00PM

Margaret Mizushima and Scott Graham

Graham discusses [Canyonlands Carnage](#) (Torrey House \$16.95)

National Park Mystery #7

Mizushima discusses [Stalking Range](#) (Crooked Lane \$27.99)

Timber Creek K-9 Mystery

Signed copies available

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6

Closed for Labor Day

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 7 12:00 PM

Stuart Neville discusses [The House of Ashes](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Northern Ireland thriller

Signed bookplates available

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 7 1:30 PM US Book Launch

Lisa Jewell discusses [The Night She Disappeared](#) (Atria \$28)

Our September British Crime Club Pick

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 8 5:00 PM

Mike Lupica in conversation with Harlan Coben

Lupica discusses [Robert B. Parker's Stone's Throw](#) (Putnam \$28)

Paradise Police Chief Jesse Stone

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 8 6:30 PM

Timothy Schaffert discusses [The Perfume Thief](#) (Doubleday

\$27.95)

September Historical Fiction Book of the Month

Signed books available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 9 12:00 PM

UK's Alice Feeney discusses [Rock Paper Scissors](#) (Flatiron

\$27.99)

Cool signed bookplates with a special bonus available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 9 2:00 PM

Dervla McTiernan in conversation with Catherine Ryan Howard

McTiernan discusses [The Good Turn](#) (Blackstone \$16.99)

Galway Detective Cormac Reilly

Signed copies of Howard's [56 Days](#) (\$24.95) available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 9 5:00 PM

Matthew Hart discusses [Ice Angel](#) (Pegasus \$25.95)

The Sequel to [The Russian Pink](#) (\$25.95) caper

Signed books available

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 10 6:00 PM

Sri Lanka's Amanda Jayatissa discusses [My Sweet Girl](#)

(Berkley \$26)

Debut mystery

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 13 1:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Kyle Mills discusses [Enemy at the Gates](#) (Atria \$28.99)

Each copy comes with a signed bookplate and a signed page of the original manuscript or of Mills' working outline

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 13 5:00 PM

Julia Dahl with Julia Spencer-Fleming

Dahl discusses [The Missing Hours](#) (St Martins \$25.99)

Signed books available

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 14 1:00 PM True Crime!

Hannah Maguire and Suruthi Bala discuss [Redhanded: An Exploration of Criminals, Cannibals, Cults, and What Makes a Killer Tick](#) (Running Press \$27)

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 15 5:00 PM

Hank Phillippi Ryan discusses [Her Perfect Life](#) (Forge \$27.99)

Signed books available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 16 5:00 PM

Janes R. Benn discusses [Road of Bones](#) (Soho \$27.95)

Billy Boyle in 1944 Ukraine

Signed books available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 16 6:30 PM

Debe Branning discusses [Arizona's Haunted Route 66](#) (Arcadia \$21.99)

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 17 7:00 PM

SciFi Friday discuss Silvia Moreno-Garcia's [Mexican Gothic](#) (\$17)

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18 10:30 AM

Croak & Dagger discuss Julia Heaberlin's [We Are All the Same in the Dark](#) (\$17)

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18 4:00 PM

Tori Eldridge with JT Ellison

Eldridge discusses [The Ninja Betrayed](#) (Polis \$16.95)

Lily Wong

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 20 12:00 PM

Denise Mina discusses [Rizzio](#) (Pegasus \$20.95)

The Scottish author will provide Signed Bookplates

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 21 7:00 PM Live Book Launch

Craig Johnson discusses [Daughter of the Morning Star](#) (Viking \$28)

Walt Longmire

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 22 6:00 PM

Anne Perry discusses [A Darker Reality](#) (Ballantine \$28)

Elena Standish

Signed books available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 23 6:00 PM

Jonathan and Jesse Kellerman discuss [The Burning](#) (\$28.99)

Deputy Coroner Clay Edison

Signed books available

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 23 7:30 PM

Hardboiled Crime discusses DL Champion's [Run the Wild River](#) (\$19.95)

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 27 5:00 PM

Archer Mayor discusses [Marked Man](#) (St Martins \$28.99)

Joe Gunther

Signed books available

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 29 5:00 PM

Nancy Goldstone discusses [In the Shadow of the Empress](#) (Little Brown \$32)

Austria's Maria Theresa and her daughters

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30 6:00 PM

Candace Robb discusses [The Riverwoman's Dragon](#) (Severn \$28.99)

Medieval York's Owen Archer

Our October Historical Fiction Book of the Month

Signed books available

FRIDAY OCTOBER 1 6:00 PM

Cadwell Turnbull discusses [No Gods No Monsters](#) (Blackstone \$26.99)

Our October SciFi Book of the Month

Signed copies available

MONDAY OCTOBER 4 12:00 PM

Sweden's Alex Schulman discusses [The Survivors](#) (Doubleday \$25)

MONDAY OCTOBER 4 6:00 PM Virtual Book Launch

Susanna Kearsley in conversation with Diana Gabaldon

To attend: A purchase of Susanna Kearsley's new book from The Poisoned Pen is required to attend this zoom event. You must have zoom to view it.

The link: Will be emailed on Friday October 1 to everyone who has purchased *The Vanished Days* from The Pen by that date.

This event is limited to 500 purchasers.

The reading by Diana will be exclusive content as will the opportunity to ask questions of both authors.

Kearsley discusses [The Vanished Days](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99)

Canadian author Kearsley's book comes with a Limited Edition signed dust jacket and map of Old Edinburgh

Gabaldon will read from Outlander #9, [Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone](#) (Random House \$36), which is on sale November 23. Our Signed copies will be shipping after Thanksgiving and include a special extra.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 5 12:00 PM

Scotland's Val McDermid discusses [1979](#) (Grove \$27)

Allie Burns, investigative journalist

Signed UK [1979](#) (Sphere \$42) available

TUESDAY OCTOBER 5 6:00 PM

Rhys Bowen discusses [God Rest Ye, Royal Gentlemen](#) (Berkley \$26)

Her Royal Spyness with Christmas cheer (and crime)

Signed books available

OUR BOOK SUBSCRIPTION CLUBS

We feel it's time to experiment. We hope you will be excited too. Here's the plan:

Current members of a club, or those who join now for the September selections, will receive the September, October, and November books.

In December, instead of a sending you a book we propose we stage a virtual Christmas party where members meet with me or John or Patrick on zoom to discuss the three fall selections. We can talk about why they were picked, how the stories play out, whether you liked them, etc. So basically a book club discussion. BYOB. Zoom allows us to do this easily.

For the Crime Club Michelle Richmond has agreed to join me for the party. That's a start.

If you like this idea and are not in a club here's the time to join for three months and get set to share your opinions with us all.

Please email Karen@poisonedpen.com to join in. Current club members need do nothing.

SO HERE ARE OUR SEPTEMBER BOOKS OF THE MONTH

The Crime Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month
Richmond, Michelle. [The Wonder Test](#)

British Crime Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Jewell, Lisa. [The Night She Disappeared](#)

Cozy Crimes Book of the Month One unsigned hardcover or paperback per month
Perry, Carol J. [Be My Ghost](#)

First Mystery Book of the Month Club_One Signed hardcover First per month
Winstead, Ashley. [In My Dreams I Hold a Knife](#)

Historical Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month
Schaffert, Timothy. [The Perfume Thief](#)

International Crime Book of the Month
McTiernan, Dervla. [The Good Turn](#)

Notable New Fiction Book of the Month One Signed hardcover First per month
Doerr, Anthony. [Cloud Cuckoo Land](#)

SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month One hardcover or paperback per month signed when possible
Córdova, Zoraida. [The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina](#)

PLEASE BE AWARE...AND THANK YOU

Every day word comes of a delay in publication date. Example: John Connolly's [The Nameless Ones](#) (\$28) just jumped from early October to the end of the month.

Facing this and with thousands of books to pack and ship in the next few months, we will be slower than normal in getting your books out to you. We thank you for your patience as we work to get your books to you as quickly as we can. We promise they'll be worth the wait.

Supply-chain disruptions are rocking companies in the United States and around the world, pushing inflation higher, delaying deliveries and exacerbating economic uncertainty. Lack of paper supply and press time will snarl publishing. Don't be surprised when books run late. A few have jumped into 2022 like the new Spenser [Bye, Bye, Baby](#) (\$28) by Ace Atkins.

It is unclear when the snarls will clear up — and it's possible they will get worse before they get better. The holiday season is right around the corner, American companies are running light on inventory, and early December is projected to be insane along with its shipping price increases. **Emailed Gift cards for a dollar amount or a specific book may well be your very best gift option.**

SIGNED BOOKS FOR SEPTEMBER

Benn, James R. [Road of Bones](#) (Soho \$27.95). The exhilarating opening of Benn's outstanding 16th WWII mystery featuring U.S. Army investigator Billy Boyle finds himself aboard one of 75 Allied bombers under intense anti-aircraft fire as they approach their target, the oil refineries in Chemnitz, Germany, in September 1944. Shortly before the surviving bombers reach Poltava, a Soviet airbase in Ukraine, an attack by German fighters forces Boyle's sergeant and fellow investigator, Mike Miecznikowski, to deploy parachutes. Boyle is found and taken to Poltava; Big Mike is missing. At Poltava, Boyle is partnered with a Soviet secret police agent in a joint operation between the OSS and the NKVD to discover who murdered the unpopular NKVD agent lieutenant Ivan Kopelev and the good-natured American sergeant Boris Morris. Duplicity and mistrust make the assignment more demanding, requiring Boyle to carefully navigate personal hostilities and ideological beliefs in pursuit of the culprit. The hunt for Big Mike raises the tension, as does the possible arrival of their Polish comrade Kaz. Bolstered by vivid, scintillating descriptions of air strikes and dogfights involving the legendary all-female Soviet air force unit known as the Night Witches, Benn's high-intensity storytelling shines alongside his ability to sustain his terrific premise while adding depth to his characters. This long-running

series is a must for those who love WWII crime fiction.

As always, Benn constructs a compelling mystery around a little-known aspect of WWII history, adding delicious detail in the process. The Night Witches were the only all-female unit in the Red Air Force, who flew wood-and-canvas biplanes in the dark, cutting their engines and gliding in to drop their bombs at low altitudes. This reminds me of Stephen Hunter's brilliant thriller [Sniper's Honor](#) (\$9.99), wherein the war's greatest sniper turns out to be Ludmilla Petrova, a Russian soldier who became the most hunted woman on earth.

✂ Bowen, Rhys. [God Rest Ye Royal Gentlemen](#) (Berkley \$26). Christmas 1935 finds murder stalking the British royal family. Lady Georgiana Rannoch is settling into married life with dashing Darcy O'Mara, who for once isn't off on some secret government mission. When the house party she's planned falls apart because almost no one she's invited can come, she accepts an invitation of her own. Darcy's eccentric aunt Ermintrude asks the newlyweds to Wymondham Hall, on the edge of the royal Sandringham estate, and hints that Queen Mary especially wants Georgiana to come. There are enough rooms on offer to allow the inclusion of Georgie's brother, Binky, the Duke of Rannoch, his annoying wife, Fig, their children, and Georgie's mother,

the dowager Duchess, who's suddenly arrived from Germany. Georgie even brings along Queenie, her cook, who has a reputation for causing problems. The biggest surprise is the arrival of Wallis Simpson, whom Georgie's cousin David, the Prince of Wales, wants close by his side while he visits his ailing father. Accidents ensue—or are they attempts at murder. Queen Mary again deploys Georgie to detect while “Britain teeters on the brink of scandal and war in this charming combination of history and mystery.” Order the entire [Royal Spyness series](#) and binge.

This book publishes October 5 but order early.

Everyone who orders one of our Signed copies will be entered into a drawing for an ARC of next March's new Molly Murphy mystery written by Rhys and her daughter Clare Broyles, [Wild Irish Rose](#) (St Martins \$26.99), Signed of course in March.

Brown, Sandra. [Blind Tiger](#) (Grand Central \$20). A critic calls this “her career masterwork and a genuine masterpiece that's rich in detail woven into a sprawling tapestry. This period piece, set in 1920 amid Prohibition, features World War I vet Thatcher Hutton who just wants to get back to his roots busting broncos. Unfortunately, though, fate has other ideas. He's anything but welcome in the small town of Foley, TX, where he crosses paths with would-be moonshiner Laurel Plummer. Hutton is the classic reluctant hero mixing it up with Plummer's wronged woman, finding himself on both sides of the law. Written in a style akin to James Lee Burke's Holland Family Saga, it may sound strange to call an author of Brown's repute 70th or so book groundbreaking, but that's exactly the case here. *Blind Tiger* is an exquisite exercise in storytelling that's as close to perfect as a book can get.” We are offering it at a special price as we somehow acquired extra signed copies.

Burke, James Lee. [Another Kind of Eden](#) (SimonSchuster \$27) “takes place in and around Trinidad, Colorado, in 1962, and is narrated by 26-year-old Aaron Broussard, a self-described ‘failed English instructor’ and would-be novelist. After hopping trains across the country, Aaron takes a job as foreman for a saintly-seeming farmer. Self-reliant and a straight-shooter, Aaron nonetheless is plagued by bad dreams and blackouts. ‘A psychiatrist said I have ...multiple personalities,’ he tells his new boss. ‘I don't trust myself or know who I am.’ To the reader, Aaron says: ‘Altogether too often in my life, I could not distinguish dreams from reality.’ Aaron falls hard for a young art student, Jo Anne, and takes umbrage at her manipulative teacher. He runs afoul of a vile local patriarch and his violent son. He's alarmed by an old school bus, full of vulnerable youngsters in the dubious care of unsavory adults, that rumbles around town. And a police detective tries to enlist Aaron's undercover help in finding a serial killer. One way and another, Aaron, with Jo Anne, makes his way into this territory's heart of darkness. He's guided by warnings from a hooded, eyeless preacher who may or may not be a hallucination, and consoled by dream visits from his best friend, who died in the Korean War. For those who don't mind horror and magical realism mixed into their crime-fiction brew, the veteran Mr. Burke—this is his 41st book—has delivered one hell of a yarn.”—Tom Nolan, *WSJ*, a review I can't resist. We still have signed copies.

Cash, Wiley. [When Ghosts Come Home](#) (Morrow \$28). May be tip-ins. Karen reviews: Sheriff Winston Barnes has a full plate. Elections are coming up and he has a formidable opponent who

just might win. His wife has cancer and his relationship with his adult daughter is fractured. Added to all that is a plane crash and, when found, had no pilot or cargo. Not too far from the site, is a man, whose wounds indicate a murder. Were the two connected? The FBI is called in before Barnes has a chance to begin his investigation. Barnes knows his community and struggles to speak the truth rather than say what works best. The murdered man is the son of a black school teacher who challenges Barnes to do the right thing. Thus begins the sheriff's attempt to navigate the racial issues that have always existed in the community, but not acknowledged. The characters are interesting, flawed, and deal with events as they come their way. The story is reminiscent of Chris Whitaker's [We Begin at the End](#) (Holt \$27.99), a 2021 CWA and Ned Kelly Award winner.

✠ Cleeves, Ann. [The Heron's Cry](#) (Macmillan \$43). The second in Cleeves' Two Rivers Series, set in Devon where the landscape and culture shape the investigations for gay copper Matthew Venn as much as Northumberland shapes the Vera Stanhope series or the Shetlands the Jimmy Perez investigations. Begin with [The Long Call](#) (\$16.99). This series too is headed for serial television.

Cooper, Anderson. [Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty](#) (Harper \$28.99). Tip-ins. Journalist and author Cooper teams up with novelist Katherine Howe to portray the legendary Vanderbilt including his mother, Gloria. When eleven-year-old Cornelius Vanderbilt began to work on his father's small boat ferrying supplies in New York Harbor at the beginning of the nineteenth century, no one could have imagined that one day he would, through ruthlessness, cunning, and a pathological desire for money, build two empires—one in shipping and another in railroads—that would make him the richest man in America. His staggering fortune was fought over by his heirs after his death in 1877, sowing familial discord that would never fully heal. Though his son Billy doubled the money left by “the Commodore,” subsequent generations competed to find new and ever more extraordinary ways of spending it. By 2018, when the last Vanderbilt was forced out of The Breakers—the seventy-room summer estate in Newport, Rhode Island, that Cornelius's grandson and namesake had built in the Gilded Age—the family would have been unrecognizable to the tycoon who started it all.

Cumming, Charles. [Judas 62](#) (Collins \$36). Cumming is one of the best spy novelists around. Check this. 1993: Student Lachlan Kite is sent to post-Soviet Russia in the guise of a language teacher. In reality, he is there as a spy. Top secret intelligence agency BOX 88 has ordered Kite to extract a chemical weapons scientist before his groundbreaking research falls into the wrong hands. But Kite's mission soon goes wrong and he is left stranded in a hostile city with a former KGB officer on his trail. 2020: Now the director of BOX 88 operations in the UK, Kite discovers he has been placed on the ‘JUDAS’ list – a record of enemies of Russia who have been targeted for assassination. Kite's fight for survival takes him to Dubai, where he must confront the Russian secret state head on... Who will prevail in this game of cat and mouse?

Dahl, Julia. [The Missing Hours](#) (St Martins\$25.99). NYU freshman Claudia Castro, the protagonist of this provocative stand-alone from Edgar finalist Dahl of the Rebekah Roberts series has pretty much sailed through her first 20 years—until the day

she wakes up in her nearly deserted dorm during spring break with a black eye, busted lip, bruising hangover, and no idea what happened to her. Too shaken to contemplate facing her family, Claudia uncharacteristically accepts the kindness of fellow student Trevor Barber, a relative stranger from a working-class background. Claudia's starting to get back on her feet when she receives a shattering video showing all too graphically some of what occurred during the time she can't remember, and struggles with whether to go to the police and risk being forever defined as a victim, or seek her own vigilante-style justice with Taylor's help. "A searing tale of sexual assault in the digital age. Dahl is a master at mining the complexities of crime and the urgent issues that arise from it, including the one pulsing at the heart of this harrowing novel: how can victims find justice and reclaim their power when a crime plays out endlessly on the internet? Timely, taut, and gripping—an absolute must-read." —Laura McHugh.

Dahl is a worthwhile read alongside Catherine Coulter's [Vortex](#) (Grand Central \$28.99 Signed), another in her fabulously successful Sherlock and Savage series. This entry, though, features higher stakes and a broader tapestry than usual. That tapestry starts with the efforts of young journalist Mia Briscoe to uncover the truth behind the disappearance of her best friend back in college. Somehow, the events that night at a party are connected to CIA agent Olivia Hildebrandt's efforts to get an operative, whose cover was blown, out of Iraq. Forces seem equally determined to stop both in their tracks for reasons it's left to our stalwart FBI agents to figure out. Coulter is always good but in *Vortex* she uses her considerable talents to spin a complex tale of escalating stakes in a full-bore thriller. Don't miss one of our copies autographed for us by Coulter at her home.

Doerr, Anthony. [Cloud Cuckoo Land](#) (Scribner \$30). These are NOT tip-ins but the real deal Signed for our **September Notable New Fiction Book of the Month** which is also the #1 Indie Next Pick.

Pulitzer winner Doerr, author among other works of the phenomenal bestseller and Pulitzer Prize winning novel [All the Light We Cannot See](#) (\$18), which he also Signed for us in 2014, returns with a deeply affecting epic of a long-lost book from ancient Greece. In the mid-22nd century, Konstance, age 14, copies an English translation of *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Antonius Diogenes with her food printer's Nourish powder while aboard the *Argos*, an ark-like spaceship destined for a habitable planet. She found the book in the *Argos*'s library, and was already familiar with Diogenes' story of a shepherd named Aethon and his search for a book that told of all the world's unknown lands, because her father told it to her while they tended the *Argos*'s farm. Her father's connection to the Diogenes book is gradually revealed, but first Doerr takes the reader farther back in time.

In chapters set in and around Constantinople leading up to the 1453 siege, two 13-year-old children, Anna and Omeir, converge while fleeing the city, and Omeir helps Anna protect a codex of *Cloud Cuckoo Land* she discovered in a monastery. Then, in 2020 Lakeport, Idaho, translator Zeno Ninis collaborates with a group of young children on a stage production of *Cloud Cuckoo Land* at the library, where a teenage ecoterrorist has planted a bomb meant to target the neighboring real estate office. Doerr seamlessly shuffles each of these narratives in vignettes that keep the action in full flow and the reader turning the pages. The descriptions of Constantinople, Idaho, and the *Argos* are each distinct and fully realized, and the protagonists of each are united

by a determination to survive and a hunger for stories, which in Doerr's universe provide the greatest nourishment.

Library Reads adds: "Several main storylines, all connected to a 'lost' ancient Greek manuscript, are set in 15th century Constantinople, present day Idaho, and a spaceship in the future. Much of the beauty of this novel is in watching the pieces slowly come together to tell an eternal story that is both heart-breaking and hopeful. For fans of *All the Light We Cannot See*, and *Cloud Atlas*."

Dugoni, Robert. [The World Played Chess](#) (Lake Union \$24.95). In 1979, Vincent Bianco has just graduated from high school. His only desire: collect a little beer money and enjoy his final summer before college. So he lands a job as a laborer on a construction crew. Working alongside two Vietnam vets, one suffering from PTSD, Vincent gets the education of a lifetime. Now forty years later, his own son is leaving home for college.... "A fearless and sensitive coming-of-age story. With his usual narrative mastery, Dugoni takes on the often-overlooked ordeal of boys becoming men and does so fearlessly and sensitively, chronicling the coming-of-age stories of three different men linked by war, friendship, and family. I loved it." —Mark Sullivan. There is a [paperback edition](#) (\$15.95), not Signed.

Duncan, Dennis. [Index, A History](#) (Lane UK \$45). Most of us give little thought to the back of the book—it's just where you go to look things up. But here, hiding in plain sight, is an unlikely realm of ambition and obsession, sparring and politicking, pleasure and play. This is the secret world of the index: an unsung but extraordinary everyday tool, with an illustrious but little-known past. Here, for the first time, its story is told. Charting its curious path from the monasteries and universities of thirteenth-century Europe to Silicon Valley in the twenty-first, Dennis Duncan reveals how the index has saved heretics from the stake, kept politicians from high office and made us all into the readers we are today. We follow it through German print shops and Enlightenment coffee houses, novelists' living rooms and university laboratories, encountering emperors and popes, philosophers and prime ministers, poets, librarians and—of course—indexers along the way. Revealing its vast role in our evolving literary and intellectual culture, Duncan shows that, for all our anxieties about the Age of Search, we are all index-rakers at heart, and we have been for eight hundred years.

Feeney, Alice. [Rock, Paper, Scissors](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). **Feeney lives in the UK so she can't sign. But she is sending us cool signed bookplates with a special stamp added.**

Things have been wrong with Mr. and Mrs. Wright for a long time. When Adam and Amelia win a weekend away to Scotland, it might be just what their marriage needs. Self-confessed workaholic and screenwriter Adam Wright has lived with face blindness his whole life. He can't recognize friends or family, or even his own wife. Every anniversary the couple exchange traditional gifts—paper, cotton, pottery, tin—and each year Adam's wife writes him a letter that she never lets him read. Until now. They both know this weekend will make or break their marriage, but they didn't randomly win this trip. One of them is lying. Ten years of marriage. Ten years of secrets. And an anniversary they will never forget.

Fiennes, Sir Ranulph. [Shackleton](#) (Joseph \$44). The "world's greatest living explorer," Sir Ranulph Fiennes, is just the man to

write a biography of Ernest Shackleton. Anyone who read [Endurance](#) (\$16.99)—and if you have not, grab one now! It's one of my all time favorite books which I read the first time on a voyage to Antarctica and in a typhoon—will be enthralled by a story of journeying to Hell and making it back, back with all of his team of explorers. To write about Hell, it helps if you have been there.

In 1915, Sir Ernest Shackleton's attempt to traverse the Antarctic was cut short when his ship, *Endurance*, became trapped in ice. What followed became legend. Throughout the long, dark Antarctic winter, Shackleton fights for his life and the lives of his men, enduring freezing temperatures, a perilous life-boat journey through the ice-strewn sea, and a punishing march across the South Georgia glaciers to seek the one slim chance they have of rescue. Their situation is disastrous. Their survival would become one of history's most enthralling adventure. Yet Shackleton's critics have argued that the expedition was always doomed to fail. Fiennes, whose own near-death on the ice, fifty years after his subject's death, provides the necessary proof to silence Shackleton's critics once and for all. **This story will make an amazing gift and as supply is limited we urge you to order it now.**

✉ Freeman, Dianne. [A Fiancée's Guide to First Wives and Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). Agatha Award winner Freeman's lively fourth Countess of Harleigh mystery finds Frances Wynn, Countess of Harleigh, happy in November of 1899 as she contemplates her upcoming marriage to her next-door neighbor and occasional detecting partner, the Honorable George Hazelton. Her thoughts are disrupted by the arrival of a police inspector and Irena Teskey, an attractive young French woman who announces that she is Mrs. George Hazelton. The impetuous fantasist also claims to be the owner of a London theater, the victim of serial abductions, the recipient of menacing letters, and the daughter of a Russian grand duke. Her accusations against George could lead to his and Frances's ostracism from polite society and put a damper on their nuptials, and the situation becomes even worse when Irena is murdered in Frances' back garden. Frances and George investigate with aplomb. Freeman delivers it all: clever plotting, charming characters, plausible suspects, and red herrings galore. This historical is pure unadulterated fun." Why not order the entire award-winning [Countess of Harleigh series](#)?

Goodwin, SM. [Crooked in His Ways](#) (Crooked Lane \$27.99). Goodwin's first historical [An Absence of Mercy](#) (\$26.99), introducing Lightner and Law of pre-Civil War New York City, Lightner being a reluctant British transplant, was a 2020 Historical Fiction Book of the Month... in short, terrific. We are excited about this sequel. Albert Beauchamp disappeared just before Christmas in 1856. When he reappears more than a year later, he's in several pieces, packed in salt in a shipping crate in New Orleans. NYC inspectors Jasper Lightner and his partner, Hieronymus Law, are called in to investigate—but the further they dig into the wealthy financier's background, the dirtier the story gets. On the surface, Beauchamp had a lot of friends. But, as they discover, each had a good reason to hate him. Beauchamp's last will and testament—stashed away in a safety deposit box, along with a king's ransom in jewels—yields few clues, but Jasper and Hy discover something even more valuable: a little black book filled with names, dates, and a cache of damning details. Following a trail of leads that reaches back to the early 1840s, the detectives uncover a sordid litany of high society scandals that still threatens the city's

moneyed establishment. And the shadowy figure who knows their dirtiest secrets re-emerges with a devious new plan that goes far beyond simple blackmail.

Hall, Rachel Howzell. [These Toxic Things](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$24.95). A Starred Review: "Digital archaeologist Michaela Lambert, the narrator of this exceptional thriller from bestseller Hall has scheduled a meeting with Nadia Denham, the owner of an eclectic shop in a seedy Santa Barbara, Calif., shopping mall, who's in the early stages of Alzheimer's. Nadia has paid \$5,000 to Michaela's company, Memory Bank, for the Mega-Memory Package, a holographic "next-generation digital scrapbook that will recall those special places she's visited as well as souvenirs, pictures, and objets d'art that she's acquired." The two hit it off, and an appointment to begin the project is set for later that evening. When Michaela arrives at the shop, she finds that Nadia dead, apparently a suicide. As Memory Bank has already cashed Nadia's check, Michaela decides to proceed with the project, having all the materials she needs and despite the strenuous objections of Nadia's shop manager. Meanwhile, a serial killer is on the loose, Michaela is sure she's being stalked, and disturbing revelations about her own life are surfacing as she delves into her mother's past in order to create a digital scrapbook. This cleverly plotted, surprise-filled novel offers well-drawn and original characters, lively dialogue, and a refreshing take on the serial killer theme. Hall continues to impress" following her multi-award-nominated new take on a Christie classic in 2020's [And Now She's Gone](#) (\$27.99 Signed).

Hall does an event with us in late October but this publishes September 1. **Thus her book becomes our October Crime Book of the Month. Club members need not order it but can request an early shipment by emailing Karen@poisonedpen.com**

Hart, Matthew. [Ice Angel](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). Who knew you could get an adrenaline high from reading a scene in this dark gem of a thriller? Wow! It begins with suicide by *ursus horribilus* (maybe, maybe not) and moves to an aerial and ground firefight with the Mounties cleaning the ground at the lake near Yellowknife. I agree with this review: "The disappearance of renowned American diamond hunter Jimmy Angel, while on an expedition to the Canadian Arctic, drives Hart's page-turning sequel to 2020's [The Russian Pink](#) (\$25.95). Angel allegedly discovered one of the richest diamond fields on the planet in far northwest Canada, the third largest diamond producing country—but when Chinese billionaires with ties to China's military take over control of Angel's business and the remote area he claimed in his absence, US Department of Treasury agent Alex Turner is sent to investigate. As tensions among China, Canada, and America escalate, Turner needs to unravel a complicated tangle of conspiracies, lies, and greed—all of which somehow involves his Russian girlfriend, diamond thief Slav Lily.... Lyrical prose complements the novel's stark setting." I loved *The Russian Pink*, one of our 2020 First Mystery Books of the Month. Start there! And do not miss this one. Definitely for fans of Jack Carr and Brad Thor.

Heller, Peter. [The Guide](#) (Knopf \$26.99). A sequel to 2019's [The River](#) (\$16), *The Guide* evokes a near future in which coronavirus variants have pushed America's leisure class westward in search of open space and outdoor recreation. "Heller's thrillers unfurl like campfire yarns relayed second- or third-hand, his drifting

narratives peppered with question marks and qualifiers. The result is an aw-shucks sort of earnestness in many of his characters like Jack, the 25-year-old title character, who isn't looking to save the world—just his own sanity. Guilt-ridden by the death of his mother in a horse accident and the demise of his best friend in a river mishap, he's retreated into a solitary life centered around fishing. He leaps like a trout at the chance to work as a guide at Kingfisher Lodge, 'a rustic getaway for the rich and famous' that promises 'boutique fishing at its finest' in a glorious canyon near Gunnison, Colorado. The first guest entrusted to him is Alison, a popular singer who fishes well and finds Jack charming. He asks himself: 'What could be better?' What about those off-limits areas where the penalty for trespassing is being shot at? And once Jack didn't find evidence suggesting that his predecessor as guide was murdered. Jack and Alison both wonder: What is Kingfisher Lodge, really, an operation even fishier than the resort's abundant brown trout? "Mr. Heller's descriptions of nature and fishing are Hemingwayesque, and he's also good at writing about people—their passions, impulses and ethical boundaries—even if his book's transition from bucolic mystery to gothic nightmare to action thriller is"... unexpected? (*WSJ*).

Love this one for the glories of the landscape—if Heller shares anything with the Stegners and Harufs of the frontier-lit canon, it's the scale of his landscapes. The scenery cascades in long, panoramic passages other than scenes in Crested Butte. "Fisherman's noir isn't a genre, but maybe it should be... By the time Jack and Alison encounter a young woman running down the road in a hospital gown in a scene right out of the sinister noir *Kiss Me Deadly*, they're in too deep, and they're too curious, to quit the dangerous puzzle before them."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Higgins, Ryan. [Norman Didn't Do It! \(Yes, He Did\)](#) (Disney \$17.99). This astute and endearing story of displacement anxiety starts with an unusual dyad: Norman, a wide-eyed porcupine, and Mildred, a tree. As the story alternates between short narration and speech balloons filled with Norman's heart-on-his-sleeve monologues, it becomes clear that while Mildred neither talks nor moves, Norman feels that he is in a reciprocal, supportive relationship ("Yay! You win!" says Norman after somehow engaging Mildred in chess). But when a seedling springs up nearby, Norman becomes obsessed with the idea that he's no longer Mildred's favorite. "Under the cover of night," he goes to a very dark (and funny) place—transplanting the little tree to a remote island before, soon enough, regretting it. ("What if digging up your friend's friend in the middle of the night and taking that friend very, very far away was NOT the right thing to do?") Digital cartoon vignettes show a keen sense of comic pacing—For the 3 to 5 set but those reading to the kids will enjoy it too. Only a dozen signed copies.

✠ Jewell, Lisa. [The Night She Disappeared](#) (Atria \$28). On a beautiful summer night in a charming English suburb, a young woman and her boyfriend, Tallulah and Zach, disappear after partying at the massive Surrey estate of a new college friend. One year later, Sophie Beck, a successful author of cozy mysteries, moves into a cottage on the edge of the woods that border the same estate to be with her partner who has taken on a job at a local school. Known locally as the Dark Place, the dense forest is Sophie's favorite area for long walks and it's on one such walk that she stumbles upon a mysterious note that simply reads, "DIG HERE."

The Indie Next Pick adds: "Lisa Jewell is indeed a master of suspense. Multiple timelines add to the suspense as the characters' lives began to interweave and the story builds to an unexpected climax." Our **September British Crime Book of the Month** comes with a bonus, a Signed copy. UK and US bestseller [Jewell's backlist](#) is available to enjoy too.

Johnson, Craig. [Daughter of the Morning Star](#) (Viking \$28). Native American women have experienced extreme violence for years, many of them vanishing without a trace. So Absaroka County Sheriff Walt Longmire isn't entirely surprised when a favor he's doing for Chief Lolo Long of the Cheyenne police leads him to a search for a missing teen. Jaya, Long's niece, is a star basketball player for Montana's Lame Deer Morning Stars high school who's gotten more than 20 notes threatening her life; her sister, Jeanie, is among the missing. Along with his friend Henry Standing Bear, Longmire realizes he must travel to Montana to investigate Jeanie's disappearance to have any chance of helping Jaya, who has prodigious athletic talent but no team spirit. Jaya's mother is an alcoholic who's currently in the county jail, and her father, only recently out of jail, is involved with a White supremacy group that provides plenty of suspects. Longmire interviews the people who were with Jeanie when she vanished from a van that was stopped for repairs as well as others who might be connected to the case; the most surprising and useful information comes from Lyndon Iron Bull, a farmer who claims to have seen Jeanie some time later singing in a snowstorm. He introduces Longmire to the concept of the Wandering Without, a spiritual black hole that devours souls, which of course fascinates the sheriff.

We expect Craig to sign this new Longmire at The Pen so you can request inscriptions. If COVID upends that, then it will be just his signature. Nor can we say yet whether we will do a live event with protocols.

Jones, Stephen Graham. [My Heart Is a Chainsaw](#) (Saga Press \$26.99). Shirley Jackson meets *Friday the 13th* in *My Heart Is a Chainsaw*, written by the author of the remarkable horror story and NY Times Bestseller [The Only Good Indians](#) (\$16.99). Some girls don't know how to die. Jade Daniels is an angry, half-Indian outcast with an abusive father, an absent mother, and an entire town that wants nothing to do with her. She lives in her own world, a world in which protection comes from an unusual source: horror movies... especially the ones where a masked killer seeks revenge on a world that wronged them. And Jade narrates the quirky history of Proofrock as if it is one of those movies. But when blood actually starts to spill into the waters of Indian Lake, she pulls us into her dizzying, encyclopedic mind of blood and masked murderers, and predicts exactly how the plot will unfold. Yet, even as Jade drags us into her dark fever dream, a surprising and intimate portrait emerges... a portrait of the scared and traumatized little girl beneath the Jason Voorhees mask: angry, yes, but also a girl who easily cries, fiercely loves, and desperately wants a home. A girl whose feelings are too big for her body.

Here is her story kindly signed for us by Jones for our October Notable New Fiction Book of the Month. Club members should not order it; it will come to you automatically. But if you want your copy, which is in stock now, please email Karen@poisonedpen.com and she will send it on in September.

Kearsley, Susanna. [The Vanished Days](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). **Canadian author Kearsley has ingeniously signed the dust jacket of this special edition which also bears a map of old Edinburgh.**

I am a huge fan of [The Winter Sea](#) (\$16.99) which is a time jump romantic suspense gem set in the Scotland beloved by *Outlander* fans. In it, in the spring of 1708, an invading Jacobite fleet of French and Scottish soldiers nearly succeeded in landing the exiled James Stewart in Scotland to reclaim his crown. When young Sophia Paterson travels to Slains Castle by the sea, she finds herself in the midst of the dangerous intrigue. *The Vanished Days* is a prequel and companion novel to *The Winter Sea*, going back in time to the 1680s and introducing the reader to the Moray and Graeme families. There is some overlap between the two books.

In the autumn of 1707, old enemies from the Highlands to the Borders are finding common ground as they join to protest the new Union with England. At the same time, the French are preparing to launch an invasion to bring the young exiled Jacobite king back to Scotland to reclaim his throne, and in Edinburgh the streets are filled with discontent and danger. Queen Anne's commissioners, seeking to calm the situation, have begun paying out money sent up from London to settle the losses and wages owed to those Scots who took part in the disastrous Darien expedition eight years earlier—an ill-fated venture that left Scotland all but bankrupt. When the young widow of a Darien sailor comes forward to collect her husband's wages, her claim is challenged. One of the men assigned to investigate has only days to decide if she's honest....

Kellerman, Jonathan/Jesse. [The Burning](#) (Ballantine \$28.99). "It's wildfire season in Northern California, a time of 'million-acre fires, killing winds, and weeklong blackouts,' in the Kellermans' intriguing fourth mystery featuring Clay Edison, Alameda County's deputy coroner. Kitted out in a respirator mask, Clay makes his way to a crime scene on the sprawling estate of wealthy Rory Vandervelde, a collector of all things expensive, from sports memorabilia to rare automobiles, who has been shot dead. In the victim's garage, Clay is shocked to find a late-'60s Camaro, painted a searing shade of green, which he identifies as belonging to his problematic younger brother, Luke. His suspicions mount when he can't locate Luke. Faced with the need to protect his brother, Clay decides to run a clandestine investigation of his own. In doing so, he crosses ethical and professional borders, and soon his lies are 'piling up like bad debt.' The troubled familial relationships play an integral part in the unraveling of the whodunit and the why, adding pathos to the riveting finale. Once again, the bestselling Kellermans provide food for thought along with a mystery."—*PW*

Kemmerer, Brigid. [Defy the Night](#) (Bloomsbury \$18.99). The only effective treatment for the lethal fever that plagues Kandala is a potion derived from the rare Moonflower. Medicine is allocated to each sector of the kingdom by the decree of King Harristan, but the supply is limited. Thieves, smugglers, and black marketeers are subject to punishment and execution overseen by the cruel Prince Corrick in his role as the King's Justice. Like many in Kandala, Tessa Cade loathes the king and his younger brother for ignoring the plight of those who cannot afford treatment. With the help of her close friend Weston, the 18-year-old apothecary's assistant steals Moonflower petals from

the wealthy and makes potions to distribute among the poor. "The slow-burn romance-between an idealist with straightforward moral beliefs and a pragmatist trapped by duty-will keep the pages turning, as will the scheming of the king's consuls and the rebellion brewing in the background... The personal and the political intertwine in this engaging series opener." For Teens but....

King, Billie Jean. [All In: An Autobiography](#) (Knopf \$30). Tip-ins." In 1966, 22-year-old King was the number-one tennis player in the world. Using her spotlight, she fought inequities between men and women in tennis and helped create the Women's Tennis Association. Now she has written one of the best sports memoirs ever—it's briskly paced, exciting, honest and reflective. "*All In* is a grand slam. One of the greatest tennis players of all time has written a memoir so revealing, honest and reflective that she has once again set the highest of bars for those who follow

Lupica, Mike. [Robert B. Parker's Stone's Throw](#) (Putnam \$28). What does Lupica do with the Jesse Stone series on his second foray after 2020's [Fool's Paradise](#) (\$9.99)? I did give him some feedback that apparently paid off...can't say what but you may figure it out. Paradise, Massachusetts, Police Chief Stone must work a high-profile homicide case, the shooting murder of Mayor Neil O'Hara. O'Hara's successor, Gary Armistead, insists the death was a suicide, as the weapon was right next to O'Hara's hand and only the dead man's footprints were at the scene. Armistead directs Stone to close his inquiry fast so as not to imperil the imminent sale of the town's most valuable property to a developer intending to build a hotel and casino. When Stone finds clear evidence of murder, he pursues every lead, even probing a former flame of his, O'Hara's ex-wife. Since O'Hara opposed the proposed development, the chief digs into the stories of two men competing to buy the property....

Mayor, Archer. [Marked Man](#) (St Martins \$28.99). I am a forever fan of this Vermont-based series, now at #32. Here is a Starred Review showing that Mayor is nowhere near flagging in inventiveness or stamina.

"Bestseller Mayor expertly juggles four plotlines, which may or may not be related, in his superb 32nd mystery featuring Vermont Bureau of Investigation agent Joe Gunther. A year after the death of affluent food supplier Nathan Lyon from natural causes while under hospice care, a medical student dissecting his corpse determines that Lyon was strangled, prompting Gunther to launch a murder inquiry. The eccentric Lyon had most of his family, and thus most of those with an obvious motive to kill him, living together in a huge home that also housed several stores. As Gunther tries to find clues so long after the murder, a second member of the Lyon clan dies, this time from an apparently accidental fall. Meanwhile, PI Sally Kravitz is retained by the wife of one of Lyon's sons, who suspects an employee is stealing from her fancy food business. Finally, two Mafia hit men are trying to identify who ordered the killing that one of them admitted committing and did time for, but now claims not to have committed, in an attempt to find out who he took the fall for. Mayor matches vivid characters with clever plot twists. This is a perfect jumping-on point for newcomers." I add that Mayor has taught himself and worked the various skills shown in Gunther's VBI team.

Mills, Kyle. [Vince Flynn: Enemy at the Gates](#) (Atria \$28.99). **We are marking the book launch for Mitch Rapp #20 in a very**

special way. Kyle is in Spain so he makes available 1. A signed bookplate and, 2. A signed page of either the manuscript or of his extensive outline for writing the manuscript.

After 20 years in the game, Rapp is seriously banged up, he's got a wife and child to protect, he has no relationship with the new U.S. president, and he sees his beloved America collapsing into extremism. Mitch heads to South Africa, where he has a house and plans to become a long-distance bicycle racer. But shortly after his arrival, Nicholas Ward, the world's first trillionaire, shows up to ask for his help finding missing virologist David Chism. Chism, who was working on a vaccine for any type of coronavirus that exists now and any that might arise in the future, disappeared after his laboratory in Uganda, financed by Ward, was attacked by a local terrorist. Mitch, with his wife's blessing, accepts and joins old pal Scott Coleman's security team to locate Chism. Mills delivers the goods, including a CIA mole, perfidy at the highest levels of the U.S. government, and close-combat with a messianic psychopathic terrorist villain who commands a drug-fueled army.

Mina, Denise. [Rizzio](#) (Pegasus \$20.95). **Signed Bookplates.** Dame Denise vividly recreates a gruesome episode from the Tudor era in this searing novella set mostly over the course of a single day: March 9, 1566. Mary, Queen of Scots, is the target of a conspiracy. Her ambitious husband, Henry, Lord Darnley, joins a plot to have David Rizzio, Mary's personal secretary and close friend, murdered in front of the heavily pregnant queen in the hope the shock will cause her to miscarry, and thus strengthen Darnley's claim to the throne. The first chapter's title, "David Rizzio Plays Tennis with His Assassins," heightens the tension as readers come to dread Rizzio's inevitable fate. Mina interjects well-wrought characterizations into the events that follow the tennis game, which culminate in the invasion of Mary's chambers by 80 armed soldiers, who drag off the helpless Rizzio and stab him 56 times. The author's other judicious choice, to employ some anachronistic phrasing (Mary refers to Darnley as "a waste of space"), creates a sense of immediacy. This superior historical thriller reads like a real-life episode of *Game of Thrones*.

On a visit to Holyrood Palace in 1997 part of the tour was to take us to the scene of Rizzio's murder with a description of the events. I've never forgotten it, in part because the crime scene was such an ordinary small room. Mary had disastrous judgment in her choice of spouses after her first husband, a French Royal, unexpectedly died young, changing the course of history.

Mizushima, Margaret. [Striking Range](#) (Crooked Lane \$27.99). Timber Creek, Colorado, Deputy Mattie Cobb is at last on the verge of interviewing John Cobb, the chief suspect in her father's murder 30 years earlier, in the Colorado state prison where he's serving time for a recent attempt to kill her and other crimes. Before she can do so, Cobb, who also abducted Mattie at age two and gave her his last name, is found dead in his cell. A book of Timber Creek County hiking trails in the cell has handwritten Xs along one trail. Curious about their significance, Mattie decides to visit the spots indicated. The discovery of the body of a teenager who just gave birth interrupts Mattie's quest, and she surmises that the killer may have taken the victim's newborn baby. Her investigations lead her and her valiant German shepherd partner, Robo, into the snowy wilderness and a thrilling face-off with a devious killer. Mattie's veterinarian fiancé Cole Walker remains excellent backup in this engrossing series. Mizushima's husband

is a vet which ups the authenticity.

Nesbø, Jo. [The Jealousy Man](#) (Harvill \$45). Here are twelve page-turning stories from the king of Scandicrime, or Nordic noir as you may prefer. We meet a Greek detective who has become an expert on jealousy thanks to some hard-earned lessons from his private life. Far away, in another country, a taxi driver finds his wife's earring in a car belonging to his boss and sets out to discover how it ended up there. High in the skies above, a woman is on board a plane headed to London, about to end her own life in the wake of her husband's affair with her best friend. But who is the man sitting next to her? Nesbø also takes us to the near future, to a dystopian America, where the upper-class elite is waiting atop a skyscraper to be evacuated while the masses fight for survival in the streets below. We are introduced to two best friends on their way to the running of the bulls in Pamplona when they fall in love with the same girl and, in the epic and vicious finale, we meet a psychologist who also happens to be an assassin.

Not due in until mid-October but please order now to avoid disappointment as our supply is limited.

Neville, Stuart. [The House of Ashes](#) (Soho \$27.95). Not signed. **Our copies come with a Signed Bookplate by the Irish author.**

This gut-wrenching novel of psychological suspense with ghostly undertones from Edgar finalist Neville opens early one morning with social worker Sara Keane scrubbing off the blood stains she often sees on the kitchen floor of the Ashes, the 120-year-old house her father-in-law bought for her and her angry architect husband, Damien, in Belfast, where the couple moved after "things went bad" in England. Damien, who's not yet up, believes Sara is imagining the blood stains. Then Sara hears someone hammering on the front door. Outside is Mary Jackson, a disheveled old woman, who says the Ashes is her house and rants about missing children. Damien appears, recognizes Mary, and ushers her out of the house to take her back to the "care home." Sara and Mary later develop a friendship tempered by shared emotional anguish. Alternating story lines show how Sara's present-day woes intersect with Mary's traumatic past and shed light on how women called Mummies and men called Daddies mistreated children in the house. This unforgettable tale of servitude and subservience, domestic abuse, and toxic masculinity builds to a resolution offering redemption and heartfelt solace. Neville has outdone himself.

✘ Osman, Richard. [The Man Who Died Twice](#) (Viking \$26). We have been allowed 12 signed tip-in US editions...don't ask, I am at war with the publisher about this as well as other titles. One per customer, thus.

Elizabeth, Joyce, Ron and Ibrahim—the Thursday Murder Club—are still riding high off their recent real-life murder case and are looking forward to a bit of peace and quiet at Cooper's Chase, their posh retirement village. But they are out of luck. An unexpected visitor—an old pal of Elizabeth's (or perhaps more than just a pal?)—arrives, desperate for her help. He has been accused of stealing diamonds worth millions from the wrong men and he's seriously on the lam. Then, as night follows day, the first body is found. But not the last. Elizabeth, Joyce, Ron and Ibrahim are up against a ruthless murderer who wouldn't bat an eyelid at knocking off four septuagenarians.

We have also a limited number of [The Man Who Died Twice Signed UK LT Ed](#) (Viking UK \$52). I tried but unfortu-

nately the only signed UK edition we can get is this expensive one for reasons I won't bore you with. It was a decision made without our input.

✦ Perry, Anne. [A Darker Reality](#) (Ballantine \$28). British photographer-turned-spy Elena Standish takes Elena to Washington, D.C., in 1934 to visit her grandparents, Dorothy and Wyatt Baylor, who are celebrating their 60th anniversary with a fancy party. At the party, Standish befriends Lila Worth, an Austrian whose scientist husband's research has been financed by Wyatt. During the party, someone runs over Lila in the parking lot, killing her. Though Elena initially accepts the theory that Lila interrupted a car theft, Elena's MI6 handler reveals that Lila was an operative engaged in stopping valuable scientific information reaching Germany—which suggests Lila was murdered. Elena's investigation becomes personal once Wyatt is charged with the crime when convincing evidence surfaces.... Perry is very much enjoying her time in the 1930s.

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [Bloodless](#) (Grand Central \$29). Thriller writer Jon Land writes, "Decades from now, when discussions are held about this generation's Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot, the name most mentioned will undoubtedly be Aloysius Pendergast. His latest case, involving bodies drained of every drop of blood, challenges even Pendergast's most formidable detective skills. Before you can say 'Dracula,' vampire rumors are running rampant through Savannah, GA. But Pendergast and his semi-partner Armstrong Coldmoon turn their attention toward, of all things, the unsolved robbery and then disappearance of D. B. Cooper fifty years ago. In lesser hands, such a setup would have collapsed under its own melodramatic weight. But Preston and Child, expertly straddling the line between reality and the paranormal, have fashioned a neo-gothic masterpiece." A set of trading cards included.

Qiu, Xiaolong. [Inspector Chen and the Private Kitchen Murder](#) (Severn \$28.99). In the twilight of his career, veteran inspector Chen Cao has been eased out of the Shanghai Police Bureau, put on sick leave, and given the nominal post of director of the Shanghai Judicial System Reform Office. Considering his frequent scrapes with Communist Party loyalists and the outsider status his literary passions have earned him, this ought to be the perfect spot in which to live out his golden years. But when his former colleague "Old Hunter" mentions the plight of young Min Lihua, Chen's professional curiosity is piqued. It doesn't hurt that Min shares Chen's literary soul or that Old Hunter flatters Chen by continuing to call him Chief. Min, whose private dinner parties have made her something of a celebrity, has been arrested for the murder of an attendee. As Chen investigates, he realizes that the juiciest thread in the case involves high-ranking Party official Judge Jiao, whose sex video has turned up on the internet. The Party's fervid desire to transfer Min far away from the public eye also makes the detective suspicious. As in Chen's dozen previous cases, bits of verse and references to favorite writers and books are woven into the tale. Chen's identification with the righteous fictional sleuth Judge Dee fuels his quest for justice. The plot is full of unpredictable detours and sidebars that intensify the pleasure of following Chen's vibrant curiosity. And to wonder what Chen's future will be.

His first investigation, [Death of a Red Heroine](#) (\$15.95), won the 2001 Anthony Award and remains one of my favorite debuts.

Rankin, Ian/William McIlvanney. [Dark Remains](#) (Canongate \$45). With extra pandemic time to write, Rankin stepped up to complete this prequel to McIlvanney's *Laidlaw* (1977) from an unfinished manuscript by Edgar finalist McIlvanney (1936–2015), a foundational writer for Tartan Noir (and think about authors like Simenon as well). We're in 1972 Glasgow where a local mob lawyer is stabbed to death. Everyone, including the lawyer's underworld boss and Jack Laidlaw, newly recruited to the Glasgow Crime Squad, wants to find out who did it. The police are mostly concerned about keeping the peace between rival gangs, but Laidlaw's focus is on where the case began. For readers this is a vivid portrait of the mean streets of a tough city. "The world McIlvanney and Rankin create—there's no indication of who wrote what, and readers will be hard-pressed to tell—is deliciously fluid in its conflicts.... A precious chance to spend a few more hours with a franchise that ended much too soon."—*Kirkus Reviews*. Mark Billingham, in accord with Val McDermid, adds, "The Laidlaw books are not just great crime novels, they are important ones. McIlvanney proved that crime writing could have both perfect style and huge ambition. Most of us writing crime fiction today are standing on the shoulders of giants. McIlvanney is one such giant."

Richmond, Michelle. [The Wonder Test](#) (Grove \$26). For various reasons this unusual thriller delighted me in similar ways to Korelitz's *The Plot* (our May Crime Book of the Month which has turned into a mega bestseller and critical darling and long ago sold out in Signed firsts). **So *The Wonder Test* is our September Crime Book of the Month.** It has had various reviews, *NY Times*, etc. I like this one from Tom Nolan in the *WSJ* the best (besides my own):

"Lina Connerly is having an *annus horribilis*: Her father died, her husband died, and she made a terrible blunder in her job as an FBI agent. Craving a break from stress, she goes on hiatus and moves from New York with her 15-year-old son Rory to her dad's old house in the Northern California town of Greenfield, where things become even more problematic. Kyle, a brand-new Greenfield police officer who was friends with Lina's father, asks for her help with his first case: the two-week disappearance, then reappearance, of a classmate of Rory's, who seems to be suffering PTSD but whose parents won't discuss the matter. His experience is reminiscent of what happened a year before to a pair of twin siblings at the same school. Despite her vow to take a rest from law enforcement, Lina is soon 'embroiled,' in the words of a Bureau colleague, 'in a triple kidnapping case with a side of the seriously weird.' The oddity seems related to the town's obsession with an annual exam assessing high-school students' multi-disciplinary aptitude and knowledge.... Ms. Richmond maintains a creepy sense of dread throughout, even as she explores Rory's coming-of-age and Lina's coming-to-terms." Even better, I did not see the true wonder of the plot twist coming, a twist that owes something to last year's headlines. Richmond's tale poses the question: "Is it better to do the right thing for the wrong reason or the wrong thing for the right reason? Using diacritical logic, chart your answer."

✦ Robb, Candace. [The Riverwoman's Dragon](#) (Severn \$28.99). It's 1375, and long-standing Robb protagonist Owen Archer returns home from London to find York upended by a new physician backed by the new Archbishop who is dead-set against wise

woman Magda Digby, whose skills have helped so many people over the years. But fears of the plague are rampant which he uses to his advantage. Then Magda is accused of murder after she discovers a body floating in the river.

A lovely series for medieval fans of which I am one. We haven't enjoyed a good one for a long time so this will be our **October Historical Fiction Book of the Month**. You will not need to have read the earlier Owen Archers to enjoy this.

Ryan, Hank Phillippi. [Her Perfect Life](#) (Forge \$27.99). Hank is thrilled with this new stellar, i.e. Starred Review, from *PW* so I quote it: "Boston TV reporter Lily Atwood, the protagonist of this superlative thriller from Mary Higgins Clark Award-winner Ryan, has it all—fame, fortune, Emmys, an adorable seven-year-old daughter." Recently, Lily has acquired "a new and unerringly knowledgeable source," known only as Mr. Smith, who has steered her and her longtime producer, Greer Whitfield, to some "slam-dunk stories." Now, Mr. Smith seems to have delved deeper into Lily's own story, in particular the incidents in her life she would prefer to keep hidden. The appearance of the father of Lily's child, who hitherto has shown no interest in the girl, raises the stakes."

No one thrills readers better than this multiple-award-winning author, and her latest might just be her best novel yet. Earning starred reviews from *Publishers Weekly* and *Kirkus*, this story examines a beloved TV reporter who seems to have the perfect life. But when an anonymous source who normally feeds her tips about others suddenly starts telling her secret information about her own life, the tables quickly turn. And through masterful plotting and subtle characterizations, Ryan creates niggling doubts in the reader's mind as to Lily and Greer's motives while keeping the novel's outcome deliciously uncertain. This is a fast-paced, surprise-packed treat. Don't miss this nail-biter.

Schaffert, Timothy. [The Perfume Thief](#) (Doubleday \$27.95). This buzzed-about World War II novel, set in Nazi-occupied Paris, is one of the *Los Angeles Times'* [10 best books for your summer beach reading](#) with its "intoxicating blend of decadence and intrigue." It is our **September Historical Fiction Book of the Month**.

For many gender fluid men and women—such as narrator Clementine—Paris "had been invented for us, inspired by imaginations, but that was before the Nazi occupation. A perfumer, former thief and an American expatriate now in her 70s, Clementine easily moves among Paris's bordellos and cabarets, concocting fragrances based on personal experiences: the memory of an old lover, the ticking of a pocket watch, a field of bluebells. It's dangerous business, as Nazi soldiers often lounge at the bordellos, giving prostitutes luxuries taken from Jewish shopkeepers who have now disappeared; the Nazis' largess could—and will—vanish at any moment. Clementine returns to crime when she's asked to steal the diary of a well-known perfumer that contains formulas that may date back to Cleopatra. The mission is to keep the book from the Nazis, especially bureaucrat Oskar Voss, whose ruthlessness Clementine uses for her own purposes. "For Clementine, perfumes reveal personalities, are useful as codes to military secrets and essential as escapism, allowing one 'to slip away into tranquility, into that part of your brain where all the awful things get hushed.' *The Perfume Thief* lyrically savors the myths and lore of fragrance made of whispers, of secrets written in the cream of your coffee, wrapped in a gripping historical mystery."—Katie Noah Gibson

Schaffhausen, Joanna. [Gone for Good](#) (St Martins \$27.99). It's hard for me to resist a Chicago landscape for a book—actually I am surprised there are so few. Luckily Detective Annalisa Vega of the Chicago PD, daughter of a retired cop on the force, the strong, multilayered protagonist of this exceptional series launch, brings us a vivid portrait of the city. She is called to a crime scene at the home of Grace Harper, who has been strangled by an ingenious system of knotted ropes. On Grace's walls are photos of women in similar poses, killed slowly by ropes, all victims of the Lovelorn Killer, who murdered seven women in the late 1990s, then dropped out of sight. His last victim happens to have been Katie, the mother of Annalisa's childhood friend Colin, who became her lover when they reached their teens, and whom she loves still despite his many years' absence. The police soon discover Grace was part of a group of amateur sleuths called the Grave Diggers who attempt to solve cold cases. Had Grace come too close to identifying the serial killer, or was she the victim of a copycat? Interspersed with gripping chapters focused on Annalisa's detective work are extracts from Grace's journal that offer some tantalizing insights into a murderer's mind. Excellent fair-play plotting, genuine surprises, and convincing characters also make this a surefire winner. If you are watching *Unforgotten* on PBS you will draw an analogy to the costs of raking up of past secrets and crimes, a question also raised by Martin Walker in his new book *The Coldest Case*

Turnbull, Cadwell. [No Gods, No Monsters](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). In the first of a series, the monsters who have always lived among us emerge, endangered by prejudice, doubt, and at least one deadly, ancient cult. Turnbull launches his Convergence Saga series with what one of its four!! Starred Reviews called a "powerhouse contemporary fantasy," an indictment of police brutality and social injustice that begins when the shooting of an unarmed Black man reveals to the world that monsters are real.

"It's been seven years since Laina last saw her brother Lincoln; now she's staring at his dead body. He's been shot and killed by Boston cops, and Laina expects it'll be difficult to find out the truth about his death. A mysterious voice leads Laina to a video, and she's stunned when it reveals the existence of werewolves. Monsters who hid in shadows come into the light, and Laina pieces together another mystery and discovers a secret society. A boy with incredible abilities is forced to choose between two factions that will exploit him; werewolves are silenced with threats; and an anonymous narrator is unmasked, in a story of magic, physics, secrets, and choices that pit friends and family against each other. One thing is certain: after the Fracture, no one will ever be the same. Juxtaposing supernatural scenes with themes of otherness and humanity, this novel leaves some questions to be answered in the next book of the series. It has a multiracial cast of characters with broad LGBTQ representation. Turnbull's sophomore work after *The Lesson* puts him at the top of the field of fantasy literary fiction...."—*LJ* Starred Review

Here is our SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month for October. Club Members should not order it. If you want your copy early please email Karen@poisonedpen.com and she will send it to you.

Whitehead, Colson. [The Harlem Shuffle](#) (Fleet UK \$39). Following up his back-to-back Pulitzer Prize winning novels, Whitehead returns with a vivid, wildly entertaining heist novel that makes you feel as if you're walking down a bustling 125th Street in

1960s Harlem. “Ray Carney was only slightly bent when it came to being crooked...” To his customers and neighbors on 125th street, Carney is an upstanding salesman of reasonably priced furniture, making a decent life for himself and his family. He and his wife Elizabeth are expecting their second child, and if her parents on Striver’s Row don’t approve of him or their cramped apartment across from the subway tracks, it’s still home. Few people know he descends from a line of uptown hoods and crooks, and that his façade of normalcy has more than a few cracks in it. Cracks that are getting bigger all the time. Cash is tight, especially with all those installment-plan sofas, so if his cousin Freddie occasionally drops off the odd ring or necklace, Ray doesn’t ask where it comes from. He knows a discreet jeweler downtown who doesn’t ask questions, either. Then Freddie falls in with a crew who plan to rob the Hotel Theresa—the “Waldorf of Harlem”—and volunteers Ray’s services as the fence. The heist doesn’t go as planned....

Winstead, Ashley. [In My Dreams I Hold a Knife](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). Here is our **September First Mystery Book of the Month**. I base this in part upon the perceptive review in the *NY Times Book Review*, and hugely on the fabulous [conversation between Winstead and Hank Phillippi Ryan](#) you can watch on our FB Videos. If you do you will agree this is, using Hank’s favorite word, STELLAR. The only other candidate for First Mystery is also dark academic and involves an experiment with psychopaths. For me it was in large about shock value.

As I wrote in August, Winstead makes her fiction debut with the edge-of-your-seat dark academic thriller. It’s been 10 years since Jessica Miller graduated from a prestigious North Carolina university. She did well in college both academically and socially, earning good grades and becoming part of an exclusive clique called the East House Seven. The East House Seven’s social status was destroyed during their final semester, however, when one member, Heather, was brutally murdered in her dorm room and another member, Jack, was suspected as the killer. Jessica and Jack, who both live in New York City now, have stayed in touch, but Jessica, who narrates the novel, doesn’t dare tell the other members of their group that she thinks Jack is innocent. Meanwhile, Jack can’t risk showing up at their 10-year reunion, but the rest of them do. Together for the first time in a decade, tensions are extremely high among the five friends. As the reunion weekend progresses, members of the East House Seven begin to reveal shocking secrets that will tear them apart. “Taut and atmospheric, with scenes from Jessica’s childhood and college years interposed with the dramatic events of the present day, *In My Dreams I Hold a Knife* will keep readers guessing until the very last moment. Perfect for fans of dark academia, the well-drawn characters will remind many of their own college days... a twisty, literary thriller not to be missed.” —Jessica Howard.

UNSIGNED EVENT BOOKS

Branning, Debe. [Arizona’s Haunted Route 66](#) (Arcadia \$21.99). Arizona claims one of the longest segments of the famous Route 66. Along the nearly four hundred miles of road are stops filled with legends, history, superstitions and spirits of travelers who experienced untimely accidents and murders. Paranormal historian Branning introduces you to Leorena Shipley, an aspiring actress whose career was cut short by tragedy. Discover how the Apache Death Cave became the haunted site of a mass grave. Visit the Monte Vista Hotel, one of the most haunted hotels in

Arizona. Learn how the Grand Canyon Caverns were discovered and became a favorite attraction. Travel to Oatman, a ghost town with a multitude of spirits. Patrick, our native Arizonan, looks forward to this conversation! As do I who first traveled the Mother Road from Chicago to Flagstaff/Phoenix and back in 1950. La Posada Hotel in Winslow has a small museum celebrating Route 66.

Eldridge, Tori. [The Ninja Betrayed](#) (Polis \$16.95). “The Chinese Norwegian ninja is traveling to Hong Kong with her mother Violet. Long-brewing tensions between her mother and grandfather are Lily’s first clue that this isn’t going to be a relaxing vacation. As Lily watches Violet’s anxiety grow about her position in the family business, her own unease increases when she must fend off attacks on other people in the company. Lily tries not to let these problems interfere with her blossoming relationship with Daniel Kwok, who has arrived in Hong Kong on business. She can’t escape her destiny, however. Between squeezing in dates with Daniel and rescuing a teenage girl caught up in explosive protests that have disrupted Hong Kong, Lily discovers that she’s dealing with dangerous members of a local triad. She will have to figure out whom she can trust before someone dear to her pays the price. Eldridge’s series just keeps getting better. While readers can enjoy this book without having read the first two, a series highlight is Lily’s evolution and the complexity and growth of her relationships. Highly recommended for readers who enjoy strong heroines forging their own paths, like Deanna Raybourn’s Victoria Speedwell, S.J. Rozan’s Lydia Chin.” —*LJ* Starred Review. Start with [The Ninja Daughter](#) and [The Ninja’s Blade](#) (\$16.99 each).

✂ Feeney, Alice. [Rock Paper Scissors](#) (Flatiron \$27.99). See signed book re the bookplates and a nifty bonus from Britain’s Feeney.

Goldstone, Nancy. [In the Shadow of the Empress](#) (Little Brown \$32). Empress Maria Theresa only woman ever to inherit and rule the vast Habsburg Empire in her own name. She and her husband Francis I had three remarkable daughters: lovely, talented Maria Christina, governor-general of the Austrian Netherlands; spirited Maria Carolina, the resolute queen of Naples; and the youngest, Marie Antoinette, the glamorous, tragic queen of France, and perhaps the most famous princess in history. Goldstone evokes their sagas against an irresistible backdrop of brilliant courts from Vienna to Versailles, embracing the exotic lure of Naples and Sicily as well as the disintegrating glory of the French Bourbon monarchy. Marie Antoinette’s story overshadows those of her sisters who were far savvier queens. And none can touch their mother’s history which is also that of their brother Joseph II.

Graham, Scott. [Canyonlands Carnage](#) (Torrey House \$16.95). Graham’s gripping seventh National Park Mystery with archaeologist sleuth Chuck Bender, who is based in Colorado, offers thrills and spills and an insidiously vindictive killer on a white-water rafting trip through notorious Cataract Canyon, “deep in the red rock heart of one of America’s most spectacular national parks. A breathtaking ride,” says author Kevin Fedarko. And indeed the opening scenes in the rapids are heart-stopping. The whole series is tricky to get, not always in print, but you can order it and we’ll do our best. The Grand Canyon; Rocky Mountain National Park; Yosemite; Yellowstone; Mesa Verde; The Arches are the parks so far.

Jayatissa, Amanda. [My Sweet Girl](#) (Berkley \$26). This is Sri Lanka's Jayatissa's debut thriller (the author actually digitally published a science fiction book a few years earlier). Aspects of the novel's plot call to mind several of the Master of Suspense's classics—especially *Vertigo*—but *My Sweet Girl* is neither derivative nor a Hitchcock homage: it's a homespun tour de force.

Critic Neil Nyren writes: "Paloma Evans, now age thirty, adopted at twelve from an orphanage in Sri Lanka by a sweet, rich California couple. Now she's on the wrong end of a blackmail threat and furious at an incompetent bank clerk for not getting her the money to pay him off. It isn't her only problem: she drinks too much, she's on meds, she has nightmares about something that happened back at the orphanage, sometimes she thinks she's being stalked by a Sri Lankan ghost who followed her to the States and she knows she's being stalked here by someone who keeps calling her and ringing her buzzer. But it's this problem she has to solve now. Until she gets back to her apartment and finds she has an even bigger one: her roommate, dead, in a dark puddle of blood. And until she passes out, wakes up the next morning in the stairwell of her building, hysterically calls in the police and finds a bigger problem yet: no body in the apartment, and no blood ... in fact, no evidence that the roommate had ever even existed.

This all happens in the first two dozen pages—and the author's just getting warmed up. What follows is an extraordinary rollercoaster of a story as Paloma tries to fight through the mental fog and figure out what happened; holing up in her parents' house (they're off on a trip), tracking her roommate's identity, examining her increasingly more dire circumstances, fending off strangers and friends who are not what they seem and facts that appear to shimmer and change before her eyes ... before our eyes, too. Because Paloma's right, something has followed her from Sri Lanka, but it's nothing like she, or we, ever expected

"Jayatissa's gift for plotting is matched by her grace with lacing her fleet narrative with rich social themes, among them cultural assimilation and the different values placed on white versus brown bodies. In a canny touch, the novel's plot hinges on the literary classic *Wuthering Heights*."

Maguire, Hannah/Suruthi Bala. [RedHanded: An Exploration of Criminals, Cannibals, Cults, and What Makes a Killer Tick](#) (Running Press \$27). After meeting at a house party in London, where they discovered a mutual obsession for all things true crime, Suruthi Bala and Hannah Maguire drunkenly promised to one day start their own murder podcast. Six weeks later they ordered their first microphones and the rest is history. From the hosts of the hit podcast RedHanded (dubbed by Anna Paquin as her "all-time favorite true crime podcast"), Bala and Maguire have amassed a cult following of "spooky bitches." And now—a book! What is it about killers, cults, and cannibals that capture our imaginations even as they terrify and disturb us? Do we find these stories endlessly and equally compelling and frightening, because they hold up a mirror to society's failings and to the horrors that we humans are capable of? *RedHanded* rejects the outdated narrative of killers as monsters and that a victim "was just in the wrong place at the wrong time." Instead, it dissects the stories of killers in a way that challenges perceptions and asks the hard questions about society, gender, poverty, culture, and even our politics.

McDermid, Val. [1979](#) (Grove \$27). In a way Val goes back to

her crimewriting roots in Manchester reporter Lindsay Gordon with the introduction of Glasgow journalist Allie Burns. It's only January, and the year 1979 has already brought blizzards, strikes, power cuts, and political unrest. For journalist Allie Burns, however, someone else's bad news is the unmistakable sound of opportunity knocking, an opportunity to get away from the "women's stories" her editors at the Scottish daily *The Clarion* keep assigning her. So Allie begins working with aspiring investigative journalist Danny Sullivan. They find big stories, from international tax fraud to a Scottish terrorist group planning to wreak havoc before the devolution referendum. But while they make waves, they also make them enemies. Then Danny is murdered.... This starts a new series for Diamond Dagger winner, Edgar etc nominee McDermid.

McTiernan, Dervla. [The Good Turn](#) (Blackstone \$16.99). McTiernan joins us from Perth, Australia, straddling time zones with me and Catherine Ryan Howard in Dublin so we can discuss Irish crime. McTiernan's award-winning series, bestsellers in Australia, are set in Galway. One fan says, "*The Good Turn* is nearly perfect. It's got crime, corruption, personalities, personal difficulties – and all of Ireland." And perfect for our **September International Crime Book of the Month**.

When Garda Peter Fisher is called to the scene of a supposed prank call, irritation turns to terror when he realizes this is no joke. A young boy says he witnessed a little girl being bundled into the boot of a car, and Peter believes him. DI Cormac Reilly and Peter search frantically for answers, but find obstacles put in their way by the one person who should be helping them: Superintendent Bryan Murphy. Frustrated and severely short-staffed, Peter and Cormac are pushed to breaking point, resulting in a fatal mistake. Cormac is suspended from duty and Peter is banished to a tiny town on the West Coast of Ireland, where's he's tasked with doing the paperwork in a murder investigation that's supposed to have been resolved. But something isn't adding up, including the mysterious appearance of a young woman and her nine-year-old daughter, who hasn't spoke a word in months.... Meet Cormac in Pen bestseller [The Ruin](#) (\$16) and [The Scholar](#) (\$16).

Schulman, Alex. [The Survivors](#) (Doubleday \$25). Schulman is a bestselling author and journalist and the co-host of Sweden's most popular podcast. *The Survivors*, which has sold in over 30 countries, is his fifth novel and marks his international debut in which he brilliantly dissects a mind unraveling in the wake of tragedy, revealing the ways in which our deepest loyalties leave us open to the greatest betrayals. Three estranged brothers return to their childhood lake home only to unearth the dark memories they buried there one summer. This suspenseful family drama is told in dual narratives. The first takes place twenty years in the past at the remote summer home at the edge of a Swedish lake surrounded by a vast forest. There, three young brothers spend their summer days as young boys do: swimming in the lake, venturing a bit too far into the forest and getting into a little bit of trouble. With their often-imbibing parents nearby, the family careens towards the event that will change their lives forever. The second narrative takes place in present day, as the three men return to their summer home in the wake of their mother's death. The now-distant brothers are forced to revisit to the memories of that summer."

“An audacious tour de force, *The Survivors* takes you deep into an emotional labyrinth. You’ll cry for these brothers. For the men they became, for the boys they were, for the innocence they lost. Brilliant, haunting and unforgettable.”—Fredrik Backman. And our **October International Crime Book of the Month**.

CLASSIC CRIMES

Bell, Josephine. [The Port of London Murders](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$14.99). When the San Angelo drifts into port in the Pool of London, telephones begin to ring across the capital and an intricate series of events is set in motion. Beset by dreadful storms in the Bay of Biscay, the ship, along with the “mixed cargo” it carries, is late. Unaware of the machinations of avaricious importers, wayward captains, and unscrupulous traders, docklands residents Harry Reed and June Harvey are thrust together by a riverside accident, before being swept into the current of a dark plot developing on the harborside. First published in 1938, this early novel from one of the great Golden Age mystery writers skillfully delivers a compelling tale of murder set against a gritty portrayal of life alongside the Thames. This British Library Crime Classic edition also includes an Introduction by series editor CWA Diamond Dagger-Award winning author Martin Edwards.

Gardner, Erle Stanley. [The Case of the Borrowed Brunette](#) (American Mystery \$15.95). When Perry Mason stumbles upon a classified ad for a brown haired woman with very specific physical attributes, he takes note of the seemingly suspicious circumstances surrounding the job posting. Then the woman hired for the job gets in touch, describing the strange requests of her new employer—who pays her and her chaperone to stay inside an apartment and answer to another woman’s name—and Mason knows there’s a more knotted plot at play. But by the time he works out the first mystery, a second, with murder, is just getting started, and that’s only the first twist that awaits him as he endeavors to prove the innocence of “the borrowed brunette.” Together with his crime solving team of Paul Drake and Della Street, Mason winds his way through one of the most puzzling cases of his career, now reissued after some 30 years.

Seeley, Mabel. [The Chuckling Fingers](#) (Berkley \$16). “Satin-smooth mystery novel in a family fracas which starts with acts of malignant mischief and leads to murder. Young Ann Gay finds her cousin and closest friend, Jacqui, framed in guilt for diabolical doings and double murder. Ann turns detective and solves the crimes. Ingenuous manner for some ingenious matter — expert timing and mechanics and pleasant romantic asides. Velvet.” —*Kirkus* Starred Review (September, 1941). Stepping into the newly popular classic crimes field where publishers are busily unlocking their vaults, Berkley also republished Seeley’s [The Listening House](#) (\$16) last year.

IT’S ALMOST HALLOWEEN BOOKS

Carson, Scott. [Where They Wait](#) (Atria \$27 SIGNED) “is so readable you’ll be a couple of hundred pages in before you realize you’re terrified...and then you can’t put it down. Mesmerizing.” —Stephen King. Michael Connelly adds, “An atmospheric and haunting thriller perfect for our times, *Where They Wait* proves that horror has a new name and it’s Scott Carson.”

Not out until the end of October but I want to get our Signed copies to your attention early.

Córdova, Zoraida. [The Inheritance of Corquidea Divina](#) (Atria \$27), our **September SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month**, is perfect for fans of Alice Hoffman, Isabel Allende, and Sarah Addison Allen. Cordova presents a gorgeously written novel about a family searching for the truth hidden in their past and the power they’ve inherited, from Zoraida Córdova, the author of the acclaimed and “giddily exciting” per *The New York Times Book Review* Brooklyn Brujas series. “This story sparkles and enchants! It’s a rich and layered multigenerational saga featuring strong women and a mystery veiled in magical realism that will tease and feed your imagination.”

Datlow, Ellen, ed. [When Things Get Dark](#) (Titan \$24.95). A chilling anthology in tribute to the genius of Shirley Jackson, collecting today’s best horror writers. Featuring Joyce Carol Oates, Josh Malerman, Paul Tremblay, Richard Kadrey, Stephen Graham Jones, Elizabeth Hand and more. Due out end of September but Titan books often run late, so maybe October.

Sterling, Erin. [The Ex Hex](#) (Avon \$15.99). A great title, no? And here is the compelling Indie Next Pick: “Looking for a wildly fun Halloween read? Pick this up! Witches, curses, ghosts, sizzling romance, and a swoon-worthy ending — this rom-com has it all.” We all need a feel-good book so when this one publishes on October 5, snatch a copy.

✦ Green, Simon R. [Jekyll & Hyde Inc](#) (Baen \$25). Daniel Carter was a London cop who just wanted to do the right thing. But during a raid on an organ-selling chop shop, he is almost torn to pieces by monsters. And no one believes him. Hurt and crippled, his career over and his life in ruins, Daniel is suddenly presented with a chance at redemption. And revenge. It seems that more than two centuries ago, the monsters of the world disappeared—into the underworld of crime. Guild-like Clans now have control over all the dark and illegal trades, from the awful surgeries of the Frankenstein Clan, to the shadowy and seductive Vampire Clan, to the dreaded purveyors of drugs and death, the Clan of Mummies. And there’s always the Werewolf Clan, to keep order. Only one force stands opposed to the monster Clans: the super strong, extremely sexy, quick-witted Hydes! Now Daniel is just one sip of Dr. Jekyll’s Elixir away from joining their company. At Jekyll & Hyde Inc.

Hamilton, Laurell K. [A Terrible Fall of Angels](#) (Berkley \$28). In a new series start, Hamilton conjures a world where Heaven and Hell are all too active on the mortal plane. Detective Zaniel “Havoc” Havelock is part of the City of Angels’ Metaphysical Coordination Unit, a specialized team dedicated to handling supernatural crimes. As a graduate of the secretive College of Angels and former Angel Speaker, Zaniel is an expert in Heavenly matters. So when an angel feather is found at the site of the rape and murder of a college student, Zaniel is called in—only to be swept up in a dangerous investigation involving a murderous, demon-possessed teenager who represents an unprecedented union between the mortal and the infernal. Meanwhile, Zaniel attempts to piece together his fractured personal life and reunite with his estranged wife and son.

Ireland, Liz. [Mrs. Claus and the Halloween Homicide](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Ghosties and goblins invade the North Pole. Only in Santaland would April Claus, wife of the big man Nick himself, be considered a Southerner. The owner of a bed-and-breakfast in Cloudberry Bay, April has an agreement with Nick to spend four

months of each year in Oregon. Now, as October rolls around, the tourist season in the Pacific Northwest is winding down. So the couple returns to their northern home, Castle Kringle, to prepare for the upcoming Christmas season. April, who misses her hometown traditions, goes all in to recruit the Santaland locals to Halloween celebrations. The protests escalate until Tiny Sparkletoe, leading the protests, is found flattened facedown inside a giant snow monster footprint. Constable Crinkles and his deputy, Ollie, are flummoxed. It isn't until Nick calls on snowshoe gumshoe Jake Frost that Tiny's killer is brought to justice. *Kirkus* finds this book "brings the cozy to dizzying new heights of cuteness."

Jones, Stephen Graham. [My Heart Is a Chainsaw](#) (Saga Press \$26.99 SIGNED). Shirley Jackson meets *Friday the 13th* in *My Heart Is a Chainsaw*, written by the author of the remarkable horror story and NY Times Bestseller [The Only Good Indians](#) (\$16.99). Jones is called "a literary master" by National Book Award winner Tananarive Due and "one of our most talented living writers" by Tommy Orange. Alma Katsu calls *My Heart Is a Chainsaw* "a homage to slasher films that also manages to defy and transcend genre." On the surface is a story of murder in small-town America. But beneath is its beating heart: a biting critique of American colonialism, Indigenous displacement, and gentrification, and a heartbreaking portrait of a broken young girl who uses horror movies to cope with the horror of her own life.

Kristoff, Jay. [Empire of the Vampire](#) (St. Martins \$29.99). The Indie Next Pick: "In the vein of *The Name of the Wind*, a vampire hunter recounts his life to his executioner. This epic dystopian fantasy is dark and seductive. The violence! The expletives! The smut! What's not to love?" Especially this first illustrated volume in a new dark fantasy series.

Meier, Leslie. [Halloween Party Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). Tinker's Cove newest residents Ty and Heather Moon turn their Victorian home into a haunted house to raise funds for charity. But the Halloween fun turns to horrific fright when Heather overdoses on tainted drugs—and Ty finds himself accused of murder. Digging deep into the story, journalist Lucy Stone uncovers some sinister secrets in the Moons' past linked to a conspiracy in her hometown. In Lee Hollis' "Death of a Halloween Party Monster, everyone attending Island Times Food and Cocktail columnist Hayley Powell's Halloween bash is dressed as their favorite movie monster from the *Bride of Frankenstein* and *Jaws* to Chucky and Pennywise the clown. But then partygoers stumble upon Boris Candy's bludgeoned costumed corpse.... Finally, in Barbara Ross' "Scare Off," three teenage girls having a sleepover on Halloween night get spooked when high schoolers crash the house for a party. But no one expected to find a crasher like Mrs. Zelisko, the elderly third floor tenant, dead in the backyard—dressed in a sheet like a ghost

Perry, Carol J. [Be My Ghost](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Our **Cozy Crimes Book of the Month for September** is the first in the Haunted Haven Mysteries. It gets this enthusiastic Starred Review from *PW*: "Maureen Doherty—the smart, forthright protagonist of this exceptional paranormal cozy launch from Perry (the Witch City mysteries)—has worked at a Boston department store for 10 years. Shortly after it goes out of business, Maureen receives a letter from a law firm in Haven, Florida, informing her she has inherited Penelope Josephine Gray's estate, consisting of the century-old, and reportedly haunted, Haven House Inn. Maureen has no idea who Miss

Gray is. However, with no other options, she packs up and heads for Haven. Within hours, she discovers a prominent ghost hunter's lifeless body on the inn's front porch. The police, led by unimaginative Officer Frank Hubbard, target Maureen and several members of the staff as potential murderers. Maureen is a breath of fresh air in the cozy world: no ruminating on her looks or past tragic loves, no drowning her sorrows in cookies and cake. The ghosts, in a refreshing departure from most paranormal cozies, don't take center stage, and entertaining subplots, such as her efforts to discover why Miss Gray left her the inn, keep the pages turning."

Turnbull, Cadwell. [No Gods, No Monsters](#) (Blackstone \$26.99). In the first of a series, the monsters who have always lived among us emerge, endangered by prejudice, doubt, and at least one deadly, ancient cult. Turnbull launches his Convergence Saga series with what one of its four!! Starred Reviews called a "powerhouse contemporary fantasy." "As creatures from myth and legend reveal themselves to be real, we're reminded that people often are the actual monsters. Turnbull's prose is gorgeous and lush, using contemporary fantasy as a lens to examine real-world oppression and injustice. For fans of Victor LaValle and Marlon James."

Turnbull weaves fantasy with current events to reveal how difficult it is to hold onto your humanity when society denies your existence or, worse, systematically erases you." Making it our **October SciFi/Fantasy Book of the Month so Club Members should not order it. If you want your copy early please email Karen@poisonedpen.com**

Vandorn, Kaeti. [Monster Friends](#) (Random House Graphic \$12.99). "This is literally the cutest stinking graphic novel I've read since *Bug Boys*. It's like *Studio Ghibli* mixed with *My Little Pony* and I LOVE IT ALL! Such cute little creatures and a great story about friendship, being honest with yourself and others, and facing your fears." For Ages 4-8 says Library Reads.

Ward, Catriona. [The Last House on Needless Street](#) (Tor Nightfire \$27.99). In a boarded-up house on a remote street live recluse Ted, his daughter Lauren, Dee (sister of a long-missing girl), and Olivia, a Bible-quoting cat. Wonderfully eerie and twisted psychological horror, with an ending you're sure you've read before (until you realize you haven't). For fans of Stephen Graham Jones and Shirley Jackson.

Wendig, Chuck. [The Book of Accidents](#) (Del Rey \$28.99). Long ago, Nathan lived in a house in the country with his abusive father—and has never told his family what happened there. Long ago, Maddie was a little girl making dolls in her bedroom when she saw something she shouldn't have—and is trying to remember that lost trauma by making haunting sculptures. Long ago, something sinister, something hungry, walked in the tunnels and the mountains and the coal mines of their hometown in rural Pennsylvania. Now, Nate and Maddie Graves are married, and they have moved back to their hometown with their son, Oliver. And now what happened long ago is happening again...and it is happening to Oliver. He meets a strange boy who becomes his best friend, a boy with secrets of his own and a taste for dark magic.

The Indie Next Pick: "Despite the classically creepy content of a true horror tale, I found myself devouring these pages before going to sleep at night and seeking them out again first thing in the morning, nightmares be damned."

And Three for Tots:

Adams, Jennifer. [The Odyssey: A BabyLit Monsters Primer](#) (Gibbs Smith \$9.99). The BabyLit series publishes board books for very young readers, taking a classic and making it accessible to the nursery library set. The simple text is illustrated in funny, friendly ways. Featuring moaning, groaning ghosts; a silly Cyclops; goofy lotus eaters; and two colorful sea monsters.

Cummins, Lucy Ruth. [Vampenguin](#) (Atheneum \$17.99). A normal day at the zoo for the Dracula family quickly goes awry when Baby Dracula switches places with a penguin! Definitely a Halloween-adjacent book for Ages 4-8.

James, Eric. [Halloween Scare Arizona](#) (Sourcebooks \$9.99). It's Halloween night, and creatures and critters from near and far are starting to gather outside the front door. And now here comes a whole army of monsters, on broomsticks, buses, and bikes, all clamoring in the darkness. What is it they want? Are they coming for you? A delightfully spooky Halloween adventure featuring iconic locations and landmarks for the ages 4-8 set.

COZY CRIMES

Black, Laura Gail. [Murder By the Bookend](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). Antiquarian bookseller Jenna Quinn sleuths again when a pair of fluttering vintage glass bookends puts an end to a librarian's life. The quaint warehouse district of Hokes Folly, NC, is hopping despite the drizzly November chill. The occasion? The mountain town's beloved antiquarian bookstore, Twice Upon a Time, is throwing a bash for its grand reopening. But Jenna's peace of mind is shattered when the local library's Director of Antique Books turns up dead in the parking lot. As they examine the murder scene, Jenna and her police detective boyfriend happen upon the only witness—the victim's dog, which flees the scene leaving a trail of bloody footprints behind. If only dogs could speak....He is an excellent dog, BTW.

Blackburn, Maggie. [Little Bookshop of Murder](#) (Crooked Lane \$16.99). A Beach Reads Mystery #1 features a charming beachfront setting and collection of book-loving characters. Summer Merriweather's career as a Shakespeare professor hangs by a bookbinder's thread. Academic life at her Virginia university is a viper's pit, so Summer spends her summer in England, researching a scholarly paper that, with any luck, will finally get her published, impress the Dean, and save her job. But her English idyll ends when her mother, Hildy, dies from an apparent heart attack. Returning to Brigid's Island, NC, for the funeral, Summer is impatient to settle the estate, sell her mom's embarrassingly romance-themed bookstore, Beach Reads, and go home. But as she drops by Beach Reads, Summer finds threatening notes addressed to Hildy: "Sell the bookstore or die." Clearly, something is rotten on Brigid's Island. Was Hildy murdered?

✦ Brett, Simon. [An Untidy Death](#) (Severn \$28.99). Edgar finalist Brett's opens with Alexandra Richards asking Ellen Curtis, the kind, empathetic owner of a decluttering company called SpaceWoman in Chichester, England, to visit her mother, a former journalist, as Alexandra believes the woman's apartment has become a fire hazard. It's ironic that Alexandra wants SpaceWoman, Ellen's company, to clean out her mother's home in Brighton because Ingrid Richards herself seems to be the main thing clogging her daughter's life. Ellen sets to work and realizes that the stacks of newspapers and books are merely a "personal filing system,"

as Ingrid is in the throes of writing a new book. Ellen moves on to her next client, who casually informs her that he has murdered his wife, but soon learns that Ingrid has indeed died in a fire in her apartment. Convinced that Ingrid has been murdered, Ellen sets out to investigate....Basically Brett is Marie Kondo-ing....

Ireland, Liz. [Mrs. Claus and the Halloween Homicide](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Ghosties and goblins invade the North Pole... *Kirkus* finds this book "brings the cozy to dizzying new heights of cuteness." See It's Almost Halloween section above for a full review.

Kelly, Sofie. [Hooked on a Feline](#) (Berkley \$26). When a well-liked endodontist and part-time rocker is murdered, a small-town librarian relies on her magical cats and her wits to solve the case. Sure, Kathleen Paulson's always known that Mike Bishop played in Johnny Rock and the Outlaws, but she's never appreciated how good he is until she and her friends see a live reunion concert. It's unbelievable that the endodontist who perfected her smile can also wail on the guitar and truly rock out. Kathleen's boyfriend, Marcus, and her closest friend, Roma, are equally in awe. But Mike's not one to brag, and when Kathleen runs into him after the show, he's more interested in discussing his recent genealogical research than in projecting a rocker persona. In her librarian role, Kathleen's been helping Mike find resources to research his Fynamore family history, and he's finally ready to draft his family tree. Kathleen can even recommend an artist to help Mike turn his research into something beautiful. But before the transition from notes to art can get underway, Marcus calls Kathleen with some shocking information from his role as the Mayville Heights police detective: Mike is dead, and the signs point to murder.

Levine, Laura. [Murder Gets a Makeover](#) (Kensington \$26). Maybe it's her messy curls. Maybe it's her favorite CUCKOO FOR COCOA PUFFS T-shirt. Whatever the reason, shoe salesman Lance Venable is convinced that his neighbor Jaine Austen would be the perfect guinea pig for his Neiman Marcus customer Bebe Braddock's proposed fashion transformation. Jaine agrees, however grudgingly, to take time from working on her ad campaign for Tip Top DryCleaners to go for a tryout to the stylist's posh Brentwood digs, where Bebe is predictably patronizing. But she has limited time to torment Jaine for her frumpiness because on a follow-up visit, Jaine finds Bebe's corpse with a wire hanger wrapped around her throat. Since Bebe was a bitch to everyone, there are suspects aplenty....

Meier, Leslie. [Halloween Party Murder](#) (Kensington \$26). Tinker's Cove newest residents Ty and Heather Moon turn their Victorian home into a haunted house to raise funds for charity.

Perry, Carol J. [Be My Ghost](#) (Kensington \$15.95). Our **Cozy Crimes Book of the Month for September** is the first in the Haunted Haven Mysteries. See It's Almost Halloween section above for a Starred Review.

St James, Dorothy. [A Perfect Bind](#) (Berkley \$26). Upon learning that the town library in Cypress, South Carolina, will be turned into a high-tech center with no physical books, Trudell Becket and a band of like-minded friends manage to save many of the discarded books from the dump and open a library in the basement that they keep hidden from stern library director Lida Farnsworth. When heavy drinker Owen Maynard is found murdered in his truck behind the library, Tru, who's already solved one murder, and her besties, Tori and Flossie, decide to use the

knowledge they gained from all those years of reading mysteries to solve the case before the authorities stumble on the secret library. Tru also has another, perhaps unrelated, problem with someone getting into the room at night and tossing books around. Meanwhile, police detective Jace Bailey, who broke Tru's heart in high school, keeps asking her out. Enjoy the romantic angst and peculiar characters.

Young, Kate. [Reading Between the Crimes](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.99). *PW* reviews: "Young's beguiling sequel to 2020's [On Borrowed Crime](#) (\$26) finds Lyla Moody, who works as a receptionist and PI-in-training at her uncle's detective agency, and other members of the Jane Doe Book Club in Sweet Mountain, Georgia, gathering for their monthly meeting to discuss Agatha Christie's *Crooked House*, about a poisoning murder in which suspicion falls on the victim's much younger second wife. Not at the meeting is librarian Harper Richardson, who's instead attending a black-tie charity party with her husband, Leonard, that Lyla's parents are hosting at their house that same evening. After the meeting, Lyla stops by her parents' house, where she sees Leonard and Lyla quarrel. A short time later, Lyla discovers Leonard dead in the library. The police suspect Harper, who was Leonard's much younger second wife, of poisoning Leonard, and in other respects the case resembles the one in *Crooked House*. In the efforts of the Jane Does to clear Harper, Lyla learns some disturbing secrets about her own family. Flawed, multilayered characters add depth to this cozy."

DARK ACADEMIA

This genre incorporating many elements of the Gothic is a favorite of readers on both sides of the Pond. Classics include Dorothy L. Sayers's *Gaudy Night*; Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*; Carole Goodman's *The Lake of Dead Languages*; Francesca Serritella's *Ghosts of Harvard*...the campus replaces the mansion of, say, DuMaurier's *Rebecca* or Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, or even the library of Diane Setterfield's brilliant *The Thirteenth Tale* or Carlos Ruiz Zafon's *The Shadow of the Wind*. In its way Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* substitutes the monastery for a campus.

Read an article "[Academia Is Even Darker Than We Thought](#)" with more reading recommendations

Cooper, Becky. [We Keep the Dead Close: A Murder at Harvard](#) (\$17.99) "is a brilliantly idiosyncratic variant of generic true crime... While much that Cooper uncovers in her private pursuit of the case is fascinating in itself, not least her interviews with Lamberg-Karlovsky and other 'persons of interest' for whom the case of Jane Britton was never allowed to go cold, it is the revelation of the murderer that is most unexpected."—Joyce Carol Oates, *New York Review of Books*

Kurian, Vera. [Never Saw Me Coming](#) (Park Row, \$27.99). This debut I considered for our September First Mystery Book of the Month, but decided I preferred another stellar entry in this genre: Ashley Winstead's debut, as noted below. You can see this reviewer liked Kurian's tale better than did I who found it too much click-bait. (I add my take may also be about my age as this thriller, which does have a wicked and clever premise, is written for Social Media-ized adults.) "A trio of psychopaths attending a Washington, D.C., college takes part in a study to see if they can be taught to live productively. When a murderer targets campus, they need to work together to determine if they're among the

hunted. This is a jaw-dropping, read-in-one-sitting thriller. For readers of Gillian Flynn and Caroline Kepnes."

Lee, Victoria. [A Lesson in Vengeance](#) (Random \$18.99). And here's one for teens—who may need to read this book most. Unreliable narrator Felicity has returned to Dalloway School, an elite boarding school in the Catskill Mountains, after taking some time off to grieve her girlfriend Alex's tragic death. Unlike Nancy, Felicity can no longer pretend to cling to the narrow status of perfection because her former friends and social circles have shunned her. Upon returning to school, Felicity wants nothing more than to put the trauma of the previous year behind her and focus on her thesis. But new student and prodigy novelist Ellis Haley, who's living in Alex's old room, pulls Felicity in with a request to help her research the Dalloway Five, five girls rumored to be witches who died in mysterious circumstances on the grounds of their dormitory. Though Felicity knows that delving too deep into the Dalloway Five might be the reason why Alex is dead, she can't resist.

Winstead, Ashley. [In My Dreams I Hold a Knife](#) (Sourcebooks \$26.99). Here is our **September First Mystery Book of the Month**. See Signed Books. Winstead has a compelling view of Southern universities with an ingrained chip of rivalry, and jealousy, of the Ivy League colleges.

Wynne, Phoebe. [Madam](#) (St Martins \$27.99). Wynne takes Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* and DuMaurier's *Rebecca* to an extreme level (add in *Jane Eyre*) at a very exclusive boarding school for girls in Scotland housed in a kind a baronial manor called Caldonbrae Hall. It's 1993. Into its illustrious midst steps Rose Christie: a 26-year-old Classics teacher, Caldonbrae's new head of the department, and the first hire for the school in over a decade. At first, Rose is overwhelmed to be invited into this institution, whose prestige is unrivaled. But what Rose finds in her new post is a claustrophobic, regressive atmosphere filled with secrets and the simmering tension one expects in a gothic novel.—at odds with her commitment to educating "girls for the future." It also doesn't take long for Rose to suspect that there's more to the secret circumstances surrounding the abrupt departure of her predecessor—a woman whose ghost lingers everywhere—than anyone is willing to let on. In her search for this mysterious former teacher, Rose instead uncovers the darkness that beats at the heart of Caldonbrae, forcing her to confront the true extent of the school's nefarious purpose... Class, cruelty, repression, and grooming the girls. This twisty take on patriarchy, education and consent, set at an elite boarding school for girls in 1990s Scotland, will appeal to fans of classic gothic novels.

SOME ARRESTING WOMEN'S STORIES

I can't read crime all the time so I dove into these for an end of summer break

✦ Joel, Alexandra. [The Royal Correspondent](#) (Harper \$16.99). Breaking into the newspaper business in 1960s Sydney—a competitive world dominated by hard-edged men—isn't easy for a woman. But Blaise Hill is far from ordinary. The only female in The Clarion's newsroom, her long-held dream of being a reporter has come true. Blaise isn't chasing stories just to make a name for herself; she's helping support her family and her beloved sister Ivy, whose life has been transformed by polio. But the ambitious young journalist's confidence is shaken when she secretly witnesses the murder of a top crime boss—a death that rocks the

Sydney underworld. Her involvement is hushed, but fear follows her on her surprise assignment to London to cover the wedding of Princess Margaret to Anthony Armstrong-Jones. Events conspire to keep Blaise in London where she is placed when the Christine Keller/Profumo affair breaks. Fascinating stuff for your Royal watchers but I love the evocation of the Sixties when fashion, music, society, and even the royal family rode the waves of change.

Dent, Lizzie. [The Summer Job](#) (Putnam \$16). Who hasn't wondered what it would be like to have a different life for a stretch? To step outside of one's own day-to-day existence and be someone else? That's exactly what Birdy does in Dent's fun summer read when she pretends to be her best friend Heather and heads off to work as a sommelier in a recently refurbished boutique hotel in Scotland (despite knowing nothing about wine). Birdy quickly learns that impersonating someone else is no easy feat, as she builds lie upon lie to keep up her ruse. King's remarkably candid and meditative memoir captures the excitement of her high-profile career and human rights advocacy in a brisk and nimble memoir.

✦ Paul, Gill. [The Collector's Daughter](#) (Morrow \$16.95). This thoughtful and well researched novel is a must for fans of *Downton Abbey*, aka Highclere Castle, owned by the Earls of Caernarvon. And for those who thrill to archaeology, the legend of King Tut and the discovery of his tomb, and of British 1920s society, travel, and all that could go wrong as well as legendarily right. The focus is Lady Evelyn Herbert, daughter of the Earl known to his family as Pups and his Countess Almina, illegitimate daughter of a Rothschild and thus supplied with some of the Rothschild riches. Lady Evelyn, entranced with her father's passion for tomb hunting in the Valley of the Kings led by Howard Carter, is present at the stealth entry the three made into the tomb. The story moves back and forth from 1920s Egypt to 1970s Britain as we follow fascinating lives.

✦ Sampson, Freya. [The Last Chance Library](#) (Berkley \$16). A debut bands quirky residents of a small English village band together to save the local library. The story orbits around a shy, small-town Brit, June Jones, 28 years old and suffering protracted grief after the death of her mother, who was the local librarian of Chalcot, a residential area. June is content continuing to live in the home she shared with her mother and working as an assistant librarian in the same library. There, June is privy to fascinating books and interacts with a host of quirky locals who depend on the library and all it has to offer. Sampson offers a refreshingly feel-good first novel "about the sustaining power of books and how libraries unite communities and forge lasting relationships that improve lives."

Taylor, Liza Nash. [In All Good Faith: A Novel](#) (Blackstone \$27.99). May Marshall Craig, the protagonist of Taylor's debut novel, *Etiquette for Runaways*, has returned from Paris to her Keswick, Virginia, hometown, where she's running her family's market and caring for her two young children. When a family tragedy forces her lawyer husband to accept a job in Washington, May takes on even more responsibility at home. But financial worries and a long-distance partnership put a growing strain on her marriage. In Boston's West End, shy Dorrit Sykes is grieving her mother's death, pinching pennies from her seamstress work and wrestling with doubts about her family's Christian Science

faith. Eventually, Dorrit travels with her father to Washington, D.C., for a veterans' march, encountering people and situations wildly different from any in her previous experience. The two women cross paths some months after the march, and their encounter will change both their lives. Here "is both a quiet, unflinching account of daily privations during the Depression and a story of women fighting to have their ideas taken seriously. Ultimately, though, despite tragedy and sorrow, it is an uplifting story of friendship and hope."—Katie Noah Gibson

SOME RIVETING NONFICTION

Charney, Noah. [The Devil in the Gallery](#) (Roman & Littlefield \$45). How Scandal, Shock, and Rivalry Shaped the Art World. In this delightful romp, novelist and Oxford art history professor emeritus Charney makes a thrilling case for how "antagonistic actions, moods, and tendencies... actually helped shape and elevate the course of art." Charney makes his case in often-irreverent prose ("Caravaggio was a major-league asshole") and uses vignettes to demonstrate how his themes of scandal, shock, and rivalry have advanced the careers of artists and changed the trajectory of art from classical times through to the present. Notoriety and the risqué testing of society's boundaries, for example, often accelerated the careers of such painters as Greuze, Manet, and Picasso, while controversy, Charney asserts, is not always bad: Duchamp's Dadaist urinal created shock waves in its day, but seems tepid when compared to the bizarre performance art practiced by contemporary artists Ulay and Marina Abramovic (who "carved a star into her own stomach"). And rivalries—such as those between Italian painters Duccio and Giotto, sculptors Ghiberti and Brunelleschi, and Roman architects Bernini and Borromini—often pushed artists to new heights, yielding famous designs including Florence's Gates of Paradise. Like the topics it addresses, this will undoubtedly add spice to conversations about the meaning and purpose of art.

Duncan, Mike. [Hero of Two Worlds](#) (Public Affairs \$30). The career of the Marquis de Lafayette started with the sort of education typical for a young nobleman with more land than cash in mid-18th-century rural France. After he made a name for himself in the American Revolution, he was involved in the French Revolution and then the overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty in the Revolution of 1830. His adventures in America began with a representative in France who overreached in offering commissions. Lafayette's departure was opposed by his family and the king, but he returned a celebrated hero. Although he is occasionally overly fond of repeating the title of the book, Duncan paints a thorough and nuanced portrait of his subject. He highlights Lafayette's long dedication to abolition and his continued pressuring of George Washington to free those he enslaved, but does not overlook Lafayette's rather more indifferent attitude toward slavery in his early years. Lafayette's principles developed in a rapidly changing era, but once he found them, he clung to them no matter the personal cost. Duncan's absorbing account of Lafayette's life will enthral devotees of United States and French history.

I can recommend a terrific 10-part streaming French 12-episode series on MHZ-TV called *Nicolas Le Floch* set in the later years of Louis XV and the early years of Louis XVI which will illuminate much that shapes Lafayette, like rampant corruption. Le Floch is a police detective working for the Lieutenant General of Police Antoine de Sartine. Mostly set in Paris, but the look at Versailles is... gorgeous. And the cast is fantastic.

Fiennes, Sir Ranulph. [Shackleton](#) (Joseph \$44). See Signed Books for a review of today's legendary explorer's take on the legend of a century ago.

Lehrer, Jonah. [Mystery: A Seduction, A Strategy, A Solution](#) (Avid Reader \$28). So... there is a science of suspense! Mystery captures a person's attention and is the key principle in how humans see and learn to understand the world. "Whenever patterns are broken, we are hard-wired to find out why." Lehrer unlocks the secrets of mystery's allure, putting together recent discoveries in the fields of psychology, neuroscience, and anthropology and shining a new light on everything from the formulas of our favorite detective shows to the tricks of successful advertising campaigns and the calculated risks of the stock market. Read this and wash away any guilt you might feel as you dive into the great books in this *Booknews!* Maybe give it to friends to quash any negative comments they might make about your reading habits?

Philbrick, Nathaniel. [Travels with George](#) (Viking \$30). When George Washington became president in 1789, the United States of America was still a loose and quarrelsome confederation and a tentative political experiment. Washington undertook a tour of the ex-colonies to talk to ordinary citizens about his new government, and to imbue in them the idea of being one thing—Americans. In the fall of 2018, Nathaniel Philbrick embarked on his own journey into what Washington called the infant woody country to see for himself what America had become in the 229 years since. Writing in a thoughtful first person about his own adventures with his wife Melissa and their dog Dora, Philbrick follows Washington's presidential excursions and argues for Washington's unique contribution to the forging of America by retracing his journey as a new president through all thirteen former colonies, which were now an unsure nation.

Ricca, Brad. [True Raiders: The Untold Story of the 1909 Expedition to Find the Ark of the Covenant](#) (St Martins \$29.99). 1981's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was an over the top and fun adventure movie, but not entirely fiction. Here we can think of [The Lost City of Z](#) or [The Lost City of the Monkey God](#) as Ricca tells the untold true story of Monty Parker, a British rogue nobleman who, after being dared to do so by Ava Astor, the so-called "most beautiful woman in the world," headed a secret 1909 expedition to find the fabled Ark of the Covenant. In 1908, Monty is approached by a strange Finnish scholar named Valter Juvelius who claims to have discovered a secret code in the Bible that reveals the location of the Ark. Monty assembles a ragtag group of blueblood adventurers, a renowned psychic, and a Franciscan father, to engage in a secret excavation just outside the city walls of Jerusalem. Using recently uncovered records from the original expedition and several newly translated sources, *True Raiders* is the first retelling of this group's adventures— "in the space between fact and faith, science and romance." I grew up loving stuff by H. Rider Haggard et al and for now vicarious traveling through space and time is our best bet.

Roach, Mary. [Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law](#) (Norton \$26.95). Library Reads reviews: "Roach once again proves that she is one of the best pop science writers out there. From door knobs to divine intervention, with some lasers and effigies thrown in for fun, she chronicles the push and pull of the human/wildlife struggle for co-existence. You will laugh, you will likely cry, and you'll never look at Indian elephants quite the same way.

For fans of Bill Bryson and Sarah Vowell. "Human encounters with wildlife are increasing as land development shrinks wildlife habitat. Roach recounts dangerous engagements, some head-shaking practices, and plenty of laugh-out-loud turf wars."

NEW IN HARDCOVER

Albert, Susan. [Hemlock](#) (Persevero Press \$27.99). It's been too long since we had new China Bayles mystery from Albert. The herbalist and sleuth's latest adventure takes her to the mountains of North Carolina, where her friend Dorothea Harper serves as the director and curator of the Hemlock House Library, a priceless collection of rare gardening books housed in a haunted mountainside mansion that once belonged to Sunny Carswell, a reclusive heiress. But the most valuable book—*A Curious Herbal*, created by Elizabeth Blackwell in the 1730s—is missing and Dorothea is under suspicion. China's search for the thief takes on a new urgency when she discovers Miss Carswell's bookseller, the victim of an attempted murder. Is his shooting connected with the theft? And there are other urgent questions: What is the Hemlock Guild? Who owns Socrates.com? Did Sunny Carswell really kill herself, or does her ghost have a different story to tell? And what is the real truth behind the many tantalizing mysteries of *A Curious Herbal*?

Bernhard, Emilia. [Designs on the Dead](#) (Crooked Lane \$26.95). Having successfully solved two murders in the City of Lights, self-proclaimed private detectives Rachel Levis and Magda Stevens are ready to take on the world. Or at least the 3rd arrondissement. Which is good news when renowned fashion designer Roland Guipure is found lifeless outside his own birthday party in that upscale neighborhood, dead from an apparent overdose. Rachel thinks its murder, and when it turns out the police agree, the two Americans roll up their sleeves for another murder investigation. And there are plenty of suspects: the angry assistant designer promoted to the top spot as a result of Guipure's death; the lovelorn PA who was crushed by the designer's lack of interest in her; the former boyfriend who lost his meal ticket as a result of Guipure's successful stay in rehab. Not to mention that the designer's murder occurred a few days before that of an American tourist who seems to be connected to him in some mysterious way. Paris is beginning to feel crowded with corpses.

I wish this publisher did more paperback reprints of books in series but... [The Books of the Dead](#) (\$26.99) is also available.

✎ Bradby, Tom. [Triple Cross](#) (Grove \$27). "The author reveals a rarely seen facet of secret agents: the domestic side. Not a clichéd Jane Bond, Kate is a mother to two teenagers, daughter to a spiteful mother sliding into dementia, and wife to a civil servant who may be working for a traitor. Ops go sideways, betrayals abound, and good people die. Bradby keeps the reader guessing to the last. Fans of cerebral spycraft in the vein of LeCarre will enjoy this."—*PW* on [Secret Service](#) (\$16).

Kate's story continues after the next, [Double Agent](#) (\$17), with the ongoing search for a suspected Russian mole within the highest ranks of the British government. Kate, a single mother with two teenage daughters and a difficult mother, reluctantly agrees to resume the search for the mole, known only as Agent Dante, after the British prime minister, an old adversary, asks for her help. Kate quickly narrows the suspects to her former boss, Sir Alan Brabazon, and MI6's current chief, Ian Granger.

The case takes Kate across Europe to Turkey and then on to Moscow, where, undercover, she attempts a daring meet-up with a British operative working inside the GRU who can identify Agent Dante. The rendezvous is botched, and Kate has to frantically scramble to escape from Russia.

✦ Casey, Jane. [The Killing Kind](#) (Harper \$26.99). As a barrister, Ingrid Lewis is used to dealing with tricky clients, but no one has ever come close to John Webster. After Ingrid defended Webster against a stalking charge, he then turned on her – following her, ruining her relationship, even destroying her home. Ingrid believes she has finally escaped his clutches. But when one of her colleagues is run down on a busy London road, Ingrid is sure she was the intended victim. And then Webster shows up at her door. Webster claims Ingrid is in danger – and that only he can protect her. Stalker or savior? Murderer or protector? The clock is ticking for Ingrid to decide.

✦ Cleeves, Ann. [The Heron's Cry](#) (St Martins \$27.99). The second investigation with gay copper Matthew Venn who is stationed in Devon. Cleeves invests her new Two Rivers series with the same rich portraits of landscapes and communities as in Vera Stanhope's Northumberland and Jimmy Perez's Shetland Isles. See Signed Books for a full review.

✦ Clements, Rory. [A Prince and a Spy](#) (Pegasus \$26.95). “At the start of Clements’s outstanding fifth spy thriller featuring American professor Tom Wilde, the first to be published in the U.S., Prince George, the Duke of Kent and brother to George VI, embarks on a covert diplomatic mission to Stockholm, Sweden, in 1942. There, the duke meets a German cousin, Prince Philipp von Hessen, who suggests an accommodation that would preserve the British Empire while Germany protects a federal Europe against “the Asiatic hordes.” The duke is skeptical but agrees to continue the dialogue privately. Back in London, Wilde, an OSS operative, is approached by former student, Peter Cazerove, who admits he betrayed his employers at the War Office by revealing the details of an Allied raid in France to the Nazis, leading to its disastrous failure. Before taking poison, Cazerove says, without specifics, that he also did something even worse. After Wilde learns the Duke of Kent has just died in an airplane crash, he suspects the crash was no accident and Cazerove was involved. Clements, author of the John Shakespeare series, makes the details of the era’s tradecraft plausible, and his characters, both fictional and real, fully realized. Ken Follett fans will be engrossed.”—*PW* Starred Review. I am delighted to see a US edition for this talented author.

Córdova, Zoraida. [The Inheritance of Orquídea Divina](#) (Atria \$27). Here is a gorgeous work of magical realism that follows the Ecuadoran and Ecuadoran-American Montoya family on a spellbinding journey as they fight for their home and their future against dangers from an obscured past. Orquídea Divina, *bruja* matriarch of the Montoya family, has outlived several husbands, built an unusually productive farmstead and raised a large family of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The novel begins as she summons the entire family back to Four Rivers to “collect” as she prepares for death, with short cinematic chapters following various family members as they receive invitations. The author juxtaposes scenes from Orquídea’s early life with present-day events... But life for the Montoya family has never been simple, and seven years after the family disperses, people

start dying and a mysterious, menacing figure appears to each of the three cousins. Desperate for answers, they reunite and travel to where it all started—Orquídea’s first home in Ecuador. As the cousins unearth long-buried secrets and connect with their ancestors, Córdova gives readers Orquídea’s experience of the events that would shape her life and that of the Montoya family for decades to come.”You have to focus all of your energy on that connection every family has. It’s in our bones, our blood. More than that, it’s in the questions we need answered. The secrets, traumas, and legacies that we don’t know we’ve inherited, even if we don’t want them.”

Eskens, Allen. [The Stolen Hours](#) (LittleBrown \$28). Lila Nash is poised to land her dream job as a prosecutor for Hennepin County (Minnesota) once she passes the bar. But Lila has a secret that threatens to undo her: eight years earlier she was drugged and attacked while attending a party in high school, an attack so brutal it led to her being institutionalized and estranged from those who care about her. Meanwhile, photographer Gavin Spencer, a serial killer, has identified his latest victim, Sadie Vauk, a bridesmaid who slighted him at a wedding where he recently worked. When Sadie survives Gavin’s attempt to kill her, she’s able to identify him because of his severe speech impediment. Soon, Lila is forced to face her own demons as she matches wits with Gavin while building a case against him. This author is a favorite of Karen’s.

Ferris, Joshua. [A Calling for Charlie Barnes](#) (Little Brown \$28). A man in pursuit of the American dream keeps running into the same roadblock: himself. Ferris specializes in comic but soulful novels about everymen up against dehumanizing forces: the workplace, illness, technology. In the ceaselessly funny-wistful *A Calling for Charlie Barnes*, the eponymous protagonist’s formidable adversary turns out to be none other than himself. Charlie Barnes, age 68, is a Chicago-area financial planner whose big ideas have always fizzled. He’s not a bad guy, but he’s a lifelong cutter of corners with a checkered employment history, a trail of ex-wives and a complicated relationship with the truth. Case in point: as the novel begins, Charlie has just told his family and friends that he has pancreatic cancer—he’s so sure!—but when the test results come back negative, he feels sheepish about sharing the good news and wonders if maybe he doesn’t have to. As Charlie sets out to try to realize one last great idea, Ferris, a faultless crafter of sentences, imbues him with archetypically American never-say-uncle ambition in the face of grim odds.”—Nell Beram

✦ Goff, Lauren. [Matrix](#) (Riverhead \$28). The #1 Indie Next Pick for September. Cast out of the royal court by Eleanor of Aquitaine, deemed too coarse and rough-hewn for marriage or courtly life, seventeen-year-old Marie de France is sent to England to be the new prioress of an impoverished abbey, its nuns on the brink of starvation and beset by disease. At first taken aback by the severity of her new life, Marie finds focus and love in collective life with her singular and mercurial sisters. In this crucible, Marie steadily supplants her desire for family, for her homeland, for the passions of her youth with something new to her: devotion to her sisters, and a conviction in her own divine visions. Marie, born the last in a long line of women warriors and crusaders, is determined to chart a bold new course for the women she now leads and protects. But in a world that is shifting and corroding in frightening ways, one that can never reconcile itself with her existence.

Graham, Heather. [The Unknown](#) (Mira \$28.99). Sienna Murray was only fourteen when she pulled her neighbors out of a raging house fire. A decade later, she still can't explain what happened that night, how she knew to save them at just the right moment—or why she receives the same mysterious warning when it happens again... New member of the Krewe of Hunters elite paranormal team Detective Ryder Stapleton doesn't believe in coincidences. So when the suspicious fire he's called to investigate reveals a cryptic link to Sienna, he can't help but think the unassuming museum curator has something to hide. But he soon discovers they have more in common than he ever thought—and a growing attraction neither can deny. If they're going to have a future, Sienna and Ryder need to catch a serial arsonist roaming the shadowy streets of New Orleans...before the city burns down around them.

Hambly, Barbara. [Scandal in Babylon](#) (Severn \$28.99). “A sparkling series launch featuring Hollywood hijinks and a clever sleuth.” Set in 1924 Hollywood, this excellent series launch introduces Emma Blackstone, a proper young English widow who's thrust into a world of decadent movie moguls, PIs, bootleggers, and their varied hangers-on. Emma's heart lies in classical archaeology, but after the death of her American soldier husband in the Great War, she faced a dreary penniless future in England as a paid companion. Emma's rescued by her sister, Kitty Flint, a sultry Hollywood sex goddess, who hires her to keep the gossip columnists at bay. When Kitty's unsavory first husband is found shot to death in her dressing room, Kitty becomes the prime suspect. Emma, though sorely tempted to take up her aunt's offer of a home in Oxford, turns ladylike private eye to prove Kitty's innocence. The lurid Hollywood backdrop, as reflected particularly in Kitty's steamy roles in the movie *Temptress of Babylon* and the upcoming *Hot Potato*, contrasts nicely with Emma's elegiac longing for her vanished world. Ordered Upon Request.

Jeffers, Honorée Fanonne. [The Love Songs of WEB DuBois](#) (Harper \$28.99). The Oprah Book Club Pick has made this a very hot book. Ailey Pearl Garfield “is a compelling mélange of intellectual curiosity, scathing observation, and volatile emotion. Though her grandmother may have preferred that she join the parade of medical doctors in their family, Ailey is destined to become a historian. Her journey toward that goal, fraught with heartache, upheaval, and conflict from her childhood through adolescence and collegiate years, is interwoven with the results of her inquiry into her family history. That history is deeply rooted in the Georgia town of Chicassetta, where Ailey's Black ancestors were enslaved and exploited by a “White Man with Strange Eyes” named Samuel Pinchard, who not only brutalized and demeaned his slaves, but also haphazardly procreated with them over the decades before the Civil War. The “songs” interspersed throughout the book, chronicling in vivid, sometimes-graphic detail the antebellum lives of Ailey's forbears, are bridges linking Ailey's own coming-of-age travails in what is referred to only as the City. Precocious, outspoken, and sensitive, Ailey often tests the patience of the grown-ups in her life, especially her parents, Geoff and Belle, whose own arduous passage to love and marriage through the 1950s and '60s is among the many subplots crowding this capacious, time-traversing narrative.”

Houghton, Emma. [The Dark](#) (Mira \$26.99). I like this review from a reader. “I admit to being a sucker for tales set in Antarctica—be they fiction or non-fiction—and this was a good one! Kate

has fled the shreds of her life in the UK to serve as the physician for a group of 12 spending the winter in Antarctica. It's a small station, doing mostly meteorological experiments but there's a lingering problem- a French physician who served there disappeared down a crevasse during an outing. Was he murdered or was it an accident? Kate, who has a drug problem (and who really shouldn't have been approved for this job) finds herself poking around to find answers. And that has consequences. Who can she trust? Who will survive? Great atmospheric, interesting characters and a mystery that's just twisty enough made this a really good read. I too am a sucker for Antarctica as you can tell from my review of the Shackleton book in Nonfiction, above.

Hodge, Rebecca. [Over the Falls](#) (Crooked Lane \$27.99). Bryn Collins has never met 14-year-old Josh Whitman before he turns up at her farm. But he instantly looks familiar to her: He looks just like her former fiancé, Sawyer Whitman, whom she sent packing after he slept with her kid sister, Del. That same sister, Josh's mother, has now gone missing, and Josh has Uber'd across the state from Memphis to beg Bryn to look for her. It won't be an easy search, since Del has abused alcohol and prescription painkiller for so many years—Josh has mostly parented her rather than the other way around—that it's impossible to predict her actions. And it's clear that the downside of failure will be steep once Carl Griffith, a bullying schoolmate of Bryn and Del's who's been Del's supplier, threatens Bryn and Josh with violence if they don't find Del and the 2,000 pills she vanished with within the week. The search for Del takes Bryn and Josh as far as Colorado, where there are few signs of her but a disconcerting number of signs of Sawyer Whitman, who died in a plane crash 12 years ago. Or did he? “Hodge amps up the my-sister, my-frenemy vibe in a tale for everyone who's hated her sister and wondered what it would be like to work out all the kinks.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

Johansen, Iris. [High Stakes](#) (Grand Central \$28). Logan Tanner lives the exhilarating life of a professional gambler, taking risks with nerves of steel. From casinos in Macau to Monte Carlo to Milan, he's racked up a fortune and become a living legend. But all the glitz and glamour hide a dark and violent past as an extractor—a world that comes rushing back to him when the beautiful and innocent Lara Balkon enters his life. Soon Logan is drawn into the conflict between two Russian mafia bosses over Lara, whose life now hangs in the balance. Logan has been offered something more valuable to him than money—information he desperately needs—in exchange for getting Lara out of Russia and to safety. Once together, Tanner discovers that Lara is a force to be reckoned with in her own right. Tanner's search for the truth leads them to the bright lights of Las Vegas. Where the person who was hunting Lara now lies in wait for them.

Klune, T.J. [Under the Whispering Door](#) (Tor \$26.99). “After dying of a heart attack, Wallace ends up in Charon's Crossing Tea and Treats, a shop run by Hugo the ferryman, whose job is to help people come to terms with their death and cross over. Wallace learns and grows, becoming better in death than in life. For readers who enjoy character-driven, humorous, and heartrending stories and fans of *A Man Called Ove*, *This Is Your Life*, *Harriet Chance*, and *Less*.”

Kope, Spencer. [Echoes of the Dead](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Magnus “Steps” Craig is the best “tracker” in the world, renowned for his ability to follow a person's trail anywhere—no matter the terrain

or how old the trail. Steps utilizes his unique talent as part of the elite three-man Special Tracking Unit of the FBI, which is called in on cases that require his unparalleled skills. But there's a secret to his success. Steps has a kind of synesthesia where he can see the 'essence' of a person—which appears to him as a unique color or pattern he calls "shine"—on everything they've touched. It's a secret Steps has shared with a rare few people and could, if revealed, endanger not only himself but the unit that he serves. And now he and his step are pitted against a mysterious killer with a twisted vendetta. When four men disappear during a fly-fishing trip, Steps is called to the Upper Kern River outside of Bakersfield, Calif., to investigate. After one of the four turns up dead in a sadistic scenario, Steps—who can see what he calls "shine," a person's aura left behind on the things they've touched—realizes time is running out to save the remaining men. Steps' task is complicated further by one of the missing men being a divisive politician with more than a few enemies. Steps' partner, Jimmy Donovan, and intelligence analyst Diane Parker provide grounding with their ordinary human capabilities. Though fueled by relentless pacing and an impressively knotty plot, the real narrative power comes from Steps' ability to see shine and the questions raised about death and beyond, which add a philosophical element to this singular paranormal thriller.

McCreight, Kimberly. [Friends Like These](#) (Harper \$27.99). Jonathan Cheung and three friends who attended Vassar College gather at Jonathan's Catskills getaway to stage an intervention for a fifth friend, New York City gallery owner Keith Lazard. Ten years earlier, the five classmates concealed their role in a tragedy at Vassar. Shortly thereafter, Keith's guilt-stricken girlfriend jumped off a bridge. Jonathan and the others hope to talk a still-spiraling Keith into rehab before he loses his gallery, but then Keith's star artist shows up, scotching their plan. Add in menacing contractors owed money by Jonathan's fiancé, impatient mobsters to whom Keith is indebted, and anonymous threatening emails. Then the police find the crashed car of one of the classmates. The driver's seat is empty, and the dead passenger's injuries preclude easy identification. McCreight builds the suspense by shifting among a police detective's investigation and the perspectives of the five friends. Not all the myriad plot twists hold water, but sinuous storytelling, escalating stakes, and an avalanche of bad decisions propel the tale.

Moreno-Garcia, Silvia. [Velvet Was the Night](#) (Del Rey \$28). The author of surprise bestseller [Mexican Gothic](#) (\$17) presents a classic noir with a side of romance based on the Mexican government's suppression of dissent in the '60s and '70s and the involvement of the CIA and KGB. It is an outstanding work, highly recommended. "Cements Silvia Moreno-Garcia's incredible versatility as an amazing writer who moves between genres effortlessly. A lush, magnificent trip into a world of danger and discovery. Not to be missed!"—SA Cosby

Moriarty, Liane. [Apples Never Fall](#) (Holt \$28.99). If your mother was missing, would you tell the police? Even if the most obvious suspect was your father? This is the dilemma facing the four grown Delaney siblings. Stan and Joy Delaney are fixtures in their community, the envy of all of their friends. They're killers on the tennis court, and off it their chemistry is palpable. But after fifty years of marriage, they've finally sold their famed tennis academy and are ready to start what should be the golden

years of their lives. So why are Stan and Joy so miserable? One night a stranger named Savannah knocks on Stan and Joy's door, bleeding after a fight with her boyfriend. The Delaneys are more than happy to give her the small kindness she sorely needs. If only that was all she wanted. Later, when Joy goes missing, and Savannah is nowhere to be found, the police question the one person who remains: Stan. But for someone who claims to be innocent, he, like many spouses, seems to have a lot to hide. Two of the Delaney children think their father is innocent, two are not so sure—but as the two sides square off against each other in perhaps their biggest match ever, all of the Delaneys will start to reexamine their shared family history in a very new light....

Oates, Joyce Carol. [Night, Neon: Tales of Mystery and Suspense](#) (Mysterious \$25.95). Abuse, madness, confinement, and flight are prominent themes in this strong collection of nine varied, dark, and disquieting stories from the erudite and prolific Oates.

✎ Osman, Richard. [The Man Who Died Twice](#) (Viking \$26). In case we sell out our signed copies I list this one here. It reads the same, signature or no. Library Reads recommends: "The competent senior quartet of the Thursday Murder Club returns, this time tracking down stolen diamonds while dealing with a troublesome ex-husband, a local drug queen pin, the arrival of the mafia, and a growing number of murders. An utter delight. For fans of *The Postscript Murders* and the Flavia de Luce mysteries by Alan Bradley."

Parnell, Sean. [Left for Dead](#) (Harper \$27.99). Ai Liang, the director of a secret Chinese biological warfare laboratory, has developed a coronavirus variant, Gantu-62, that can kill a person within minutes. Stricken by conscience, Liang plans to destroy the Gantu-62 stock, but before she can do so, the Swords of Qing, a dissident paramilitary group aiming to overthrow the Chinese government, attack the facility. Liang barely escapes with her life, and the deadly viral weapon falls into the hands of the group's mad leader, who considers himself the hereditary rightful emperor of China. Meanwhile, special operative Eric Steele, who has returned from an unapproved mission in Russia to avenge a comrade's death, is surprised to find himself not clapped in irons but tasked with reviving the Program, a disbanded special operations unit, to counter a Chinese government plot to attack the U.S. The mission winds up with his confronting the Swords of Qing. Military fiction written by a combat veteran joins with the most recent Matthew Hart and Brad Thor thrillers in pitting their protagonists against the Chinese.

Patterson, James/Nancy Allen. [Jailhouse Lawyer](#) (LittleBrown \$28). In picture-perfect Erva, Alabama, the most serious crimes are misdemeanors. Speeding tickets. Shoplifting. Contempt of court. Then why is the jail so crowded? And why are so few prisoners released? There's only one place to learn the truth behind these incriminating secrets. Sometimes the best education a lawyer can get is a short stretch of hard time. Patterson and team do Grisham as a young lawyer takes on the judge who is destroying her hometown—and ends up in jail herself.

✎ Penrose, Andrea. [Murder at the Royal Botanic Gardens](#) (Kensington \$26). If you've been following this romantic Regency mystery series, you will be pleased to learn that Lady Charlotte Sloane has finally agreed to marry the Earl of Wexford. For their first outing as an engaged couple, Charlotte and the earl attend a lecture by American botanist Josiah Becton at London's Royal

Botanic Gardens. Becton has made a momentous scientific breakthrough, but before he can share his discovery, he's found dead in the solarium. The head of Becton's American delegation believes the botanist was murdered for his formula and asks Wrexford to investigate. The earl is reluctant, until he and Charlotte learn their young ward, Hawk, was in the solarium when Becton died and may have seen—or been seen by—the killer. You can order the pair's [earlier investigations](#) too.

Rankin, Ian/ McIlvanney, William. [Dark Remains](#) (Worldwide \$27). The generous Rankin has finished a prequel to the groundbreaking policing series written by the late McIlvanney. See Signed Books for a review.

Robb, J D. [Forgotten in Death: An Eve Dallas Novel](#) (St Martins \$28.99). Lt. Eve Dallas of the New York Police and Security Department and her team are at a Manhattan construction site where a homeless woman's body has been sloppily wrapped in a tarp and stuffed in a dumpster. While still at the crime scene, Eve gets a report of skeletal remains of a woman unearthed at a nearby demolition site, along with the bones of what appears to be a fetus. This second site happens to belong to Roarke, Eve's sexy, devoted husband, who heads up a vast business empire. Eve calls on the support of Roarke and a friend of hers, a bestselling true crime author, to investigate the two murders. In both cases, the villains and their motives are easy to spot. The book's real pleasure lies in watching Eve stride into danger and triumph over evil. That Roarke is happy to support his wife's desire to go out and kick butt adds to the appeal for me and Eve's many fans.

Rooney, Sally. [Beautiful World, Where Are You](#) (Farrar \$28). The four main characters in Rooney's excellent, well-realized novel are all 30-somethings, or thereabouts (Millennials, though that's not a term Rooney applies to her characters, or her characters to themselves). Alice is a writer, retreated to the Irish countryside to live by the sea after publishing two successful novels and having a breakdown vaguely attributed to stress or depression or a breakup with her girlfriend or some combination of them all. In her new town, she meets a local man named Felix on Tinder; the two share a mostly unsuccessful first date before slipping into a relationship that flits between friendship and romance. Alice's longtime best friend, Eileen, lives in Dublin, where she can barely afford the rent despite her job with a literary magazine. The fourth of this magpie collection of friends is Simon, who has known Eileen since childhood, and has always had a crush on her. That civilization, though, is on the cusp of collapse, a fact that is at once a vague and fleeting idea to each of Rooney's characters and also central to their identities. Against the backdrop of a failing world, Eileen asks: How is one expected to live? To work and pay bills and think about sex and friendships? She posits that the "problem of the contemporary novel" is the same as the "problem of contemporary life," tending toward a "vulgar, decadent, even epistemically violent [investment of energy] in trivialities of sex and friendship when human civilization is facing collapse."

✦ Rowe, Rosemary. [A Dreadful Destiny](#) (Severn \$28.99). Political tensions are high in Rowe's exceptional 19th mystery set in Roman Britain (after 2019's *A Prisoner of Privilege*) after the assassination of Emperor Pertinax in 194 CE and the succession of Septimus Severus, whose wife is a powerful force in ruling the empire. Anonymous denunciations of public officials as traitors to Septimus are rampant in Glevum (today's Gloucester), where

Libertus, a Celtic nobleman who has become a Roman citizen, serves on the city council. Against this fraught background, Libertus and his patron, Marcus, are put in a tight spot after Druscilla Livia appears in Glevum. Claiming to be a relative of the empress, Druscilla seeks help in avoiding marriage to a sadistic but influential senator, who has followed his runaway fiancée from Rome to Glevum. Several murders follow, providing considerable challenges for Libertus in his pursuit of justice. Rowe's mastery of the period, including the Roman laws governing marriage, enable her to provide a vivid backdrop, and the riveting plot delivers more than one emotional gut punch. Readers who miss Steven Saylor's Gordianus whodunits.

Schlink, Bernhard. [Olga](#) (HarperVia \$27.99). Karen reviews: Prior to World War I, in a small Prussian village, Olga is being raised by her grandmother. Olga's insatiable appetite to learn everything she can wherever she can, however she can, is not encouraged by her grandmother who continues to live by the idea that such things are not for women. Herbert is a member of a well-to-do family and pursues periodic adventures, showing little interest in taking over the family wealth. The two meet and begin an unlikely relationship. Each is patient with the other's pursuits. After consistent study, Olga finds a teaching position, hoping to instill her class with the same intellectual curiosity that has brought her such satisfaction. Herbert comes and goes with his adventures and, being a dedicated German, inches closer to the Nazi philosophy. His final journey is to the Arctic where his ship disappears and, although some of the men are rescued, Herbert is never found. Olga creeps slowly toward accepting the idea that the love of her life is permanently gone as reflected by a series of letters she continues to write to him. Olga and Herbert are likeable characters and the story is surrounded with German history.

Stewart, Amy. [Miss Kopp Investigates](#) (Harper \$26). Life after the war takes an unexpected turn for the Kopp sisters, but soon enough, they are putting their unique detective skills to use in new and daring ways. Winter 1919: Norma is summoned home from France, Constance is called back from Washington, and Fleurette puts her own plans on hold as the sisters rally around their recently widowed sister-in-law and her children. How are four women going to support themselves? A chance encounter offers Fleurette a solution: clandestine legal work for a former colleague of Constance's. She becomes a "professional co-respondent," posing as the "other woman" in divorce cases so that photographs can be entered as evidence to procure a divorce. While her late-night assignments are both exciting and lucrative, they put her on a collision course with her own family, who would never approve of such disreputable work. One client's suspicious behavior leads Fleurette to uncover a much larger crime, putting her in the unlikely position of amateur detective. There is a paperback release of this too, see below.

✦ Sykes, SD. [The Good Death: A Somershill Manor Mystery](#) (Pegasus \$25.95). Along with a new medieval York mystery from Candace Robb, we get a new one in Sykes' excellent series. With no reading copy I rely on this Starred PW Review to present it to you:

"In Sykes's superior fifth mystery featuring Oswald de Lacy, the action alternates between 1349, when the 18-year-old de Lacy was a novice at Kintham Abbey, and 1370, when de Lacy, now Lord Somershill, shares secrets from the past with his

dying mother to get her forgiveness. At Kintham Abbey, while on an errand to collect herbs, he spots teenager Agnes Wheeler, who helps with the monastery's laundry, hiding in a bush. Agnes is terrified, and flees into a river, warning "Keep away from me, priest!" before the current sweeps her away, drowning her. When de Lacy retrieves the body, he finds marks of violence on it, including rope abrasions. Blaming himself for scaring Agnes into her fatal flight, he resolves to identify her assailant, who may have also been responsible for the disappearances of several other girls. That task becomes more complex after he learns the truth about Agnes's parentage. The framing device increases suspense, and the author's inventiveness and gift for description serves to deepen an already nuanced lead. Sykes solidifies her standing as a preeminent historical whodunit writer."

Tóibín, Colm. [The Magician](#) (Scribner \$28). Tóibín, one of our most brilliant and beloved novelists, tells the story of Nobel Prize-winner Thomas Mann in a dazzling, epic family saga set across a half-century spanning World War I, the rise of Hitler, World War II, and the Cold War.

Whitehead, Colson. [Harlem Shuffle](#) (Knopf \$28.95). Whitehead's wildly entertaining foray into crime fiction is a pressure-cooker story set in early 1960s Harlem, a love letter to 1960s Harlem that's also a heist novel, a family saga, and so much more. "Read if you want a brilliantly plotted heist novel set in 1960s New York where creeping gentrification is a significant part of the story. For readers who enjoyed *Deacon King Kong* and *Black Bottom Saints*."

OUR SEPTEMBER LARGE PAPERBACK PICKS

Anappara, Deepa. [Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line](#) (\$18). Anappara's witty, resonant debut tracks a series of child disappearances from an Indian slum through the eyes of a nine-year-old boy. Jai lives with his friends Pari and Faiz in a slum next to a rubbish dump and the crowded Bhoot Bazaar, part of an unnamed city constantly beset by smog. An opening tale of a local benevolent ghost named Mental introduces the children's shared magical thinking. When Jai and his friends learn that one of their classmates, Bahadur, has been missing for several days, Jai, a fan of police shows, decides that he and his friends will do their own detective work and find Bahadur since the police show little interest in the matter. Jai's carefree nature lends a lighthearted tone to an increasingly grim tale as more children disappear and his team of sleuths finds evidence pointing to a serial killer. His quest is aided by Pari's voracious reading habits, which make her the better detective, and Faiz's Muslim faith, which helps them stay on course when his community is blamed for the kidnappings. Interspersed with the trio's investigation are single chapters devoted to each of the disappeared children. The prose perfectly captures all the characters' youthful voices, complete with some Hindi and Urdu terms, whose meanings, if not immediately obvious, become clear with repetition

The *NY Times Book Review* praises this 2021 Edgar Winner: "Warning: If you begin reading the book in the morning, don't expect to get anything done the rest of the day.... In Jai, Anappara has created a boy vivid in his humanity, one whose voice somersaults on the page.... Her storytelling genius, it might be assumed, must be rooted in her reporter's eye for detail. But that handy formula misses the heat and mystery of what Anappara creates."

Camilleri, Andrea. [Riccardino](#) (\$17). In an amusing metafictional twist, Camilleri (1925–2019) plays a part in his elegiac 28th and final mystery featuring Sicilian police inspector Salvo Montalbano. Just shy of five o'clock in the morning, Montalbano's phone rings. The caller identifies himself as Riccardino and says, "We're all here already, outside the Bar Aurora, and you're the only one missing!" Peeved at being disturbed, Montalbano tells the stranger he'll be right there, hangs up, and goes back to bed. A second call comes an hour later—from his police colleagues, who ask him to come to the Bar Aurora to investigate the murder of Riccardo Lopresti. Montalbano feels "strangely certain—with a certainty as absolute as it was inexplicable—that the poor bastard who was shot was the same person who had called him on the phone before dawn by dialing a wrong number." As motives begin to multiply, Montalbano's investigation is muddled by phone calls from "the Author" spouting far-fetched suggestions on how to proceed. "Incisive wit colors this insightful and intriguing farewell. The sad, poetic ending is perfect."

If you have never watched *Montalbano* on MHZ-TV you have missed one of the truly great crime series, brilliantly cast and with fabulous Sicily as a star. Plus you can learn a lot of Italian effortlessly. A final episode aired in July. Sob.

Carlyle, Rose. [The Girl in the Mirror](#) (\$16.99). Australian heiress Iris Carmichael, the narrator of Carlyle's assured debut, has always envied her identical twin sister, Summer, who's considered perfect by everyone and is also Iris's mirror image. When Iris looks in the mirror, she sees Summer. Their complicated relationship changes after their father dies and his will stipulates that his \$100 million fortune go to the first of his six competitive children—by his three wives—to produce a grandchild. Meanwhile, Summer, who's married to "wealthy, handsome, charismatic" Adam Romain and a few weeks pregnant, needs Iris, an expert sailor, to help her sail the family yacht from Thailand to the Seychelles. During the trip, Summer accidentally falls overboard and is lost at sea. To secure the inheritance, Iris resolves to "step into" Summer's life, get pregnant, and beat her closest rival. Iris, who tells Adam she lost the baby during the voyage, convinces Adam and her mother that she's Summer, but the suspense grows as her lack of knowledge about her sister threatens to expose the imposture. Carlyle has fashioned a brilliant, intricate plot which became our October 2020 International Crime Book of the Month.

Carr, Jack. [True Believer](#) (\$17). In this follow-up to *The Terminal List*, former navy SEAL James Reece hides out in Mozambique with the family of his estranged best friend and former SEAL colleague as multiple terrorist attacks shatter the holiday season in the West. The CIA flushes him out with a presidential pardon, then persuades him to go after the mastermind of the attacks. "Lots of new characters have been compared to Vince Flynn's Mitch Rapp, but James Reece is one of the very few who actually deserves such praise.... a perfect fit for fans of Flynn, Brad Thor, and Daniel Silva... Once the bullets start flying, you better hold on tight, because the action never lets up for a second—with Carr delivering the kind of adrenaline-inducing action sequences you'd expect from someone who knows that life intimately."—*The Real Book Spy*. I am going to add Matthew Hart to this group of political thriller writers as I am blown away by his prose style, pace, and plotting—see *Signed Books* for more.

Child, Lee, ed. [Mysterious Bookshop Presents the Best Mystery Stories of the Year: 2021](#) (Penzler \$16.95). The 20 entries in this superior anthology exhibit the storytelling gifts of authors both familiar and not. In David Morrell's "Requiem for a Homecoming," a masterpiece of suspense, two college friends reunite at the scene of a decades-old unsolved murder at their campus's library in an effort to finally find the truth. Joyce Carol Oates takes readers on an unsettling journey inside the mind of a murderer in "Parole Hearing, California Institution for Women, Chino, CA," which imagines the thoughts of a fictional disciple of Charles Manson as she appears before a parole board. David Marcum's "The Adventure of the Home Office Baby," a convincing Sherlock Holmes pastiche, masters the challenge of centering its plot on espionage rather than homicide. Members of a Manhattan jury become crime victims in Jacqueline Freimor's ironic and moving "That Which Is True." In Sue Grafton's tense "If You Want Something Done Right," an unpublished story found after her death, a wife is horrified to find that her purse, containing notes about doing away with her husband, has fallen into the wrong hands. This volume is a must for mystery readers

Clarke, Susanna. [Piranesi](#) (\$17). One of various plaudits: "Clarke wraps a twisty mystery inside a metaphysical fantasy in her extraordinary new novel, her first since 2004's Hugo Award-winning [Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell](#) (\$19). The story unfolds as journal entries written by the eponymous narrator, who, along with an enigmatic master known as the Other (and 13 skeletons whom Piranesi regards as persons) inhabits the House, a vast, labyrinthine structure of statue-adorned halls and vestibules. So immense is the House that its many parts support their own internal climates, all of which Piranesi vividly describes.... Meanwhile, the Other is pursuing the "Great and Secret Knowledge" of the ancients. After the Other worriedly asks Piranesi if he's seen in the house a person they refer to as 16, Piranesi's curiosity is piqued, and all the more so after the Other instructs him to hide. In their discussions about 16, it becomes increasingly clear the Other is gaslighting Piranesi about his memory, their relationship, and the reality they share. With great subtlety, Clarke gradually elaborates an explanatory backstory to her tale's events and reveals sinister occult machinations that build to a crescendo of genuine horror."

✎ Hannah, Sophie. [The Killings at Kingfisher Hill](#) (\$16.99). And this one too gets a Starred Review: "Bestseller Hannah displays her superior ability to devise mind-blowing setups in her fourth authorized continuation of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot series. In 1931, Poirot agrees to come to Kingfisher Hill, the country estate of the Devonport family in Surrey, at the request of Richard Devonport. The previous year, Richard's older brother, Frank, died from a fall at Kingfisher Hill, and Frank's fiancée, Helen Acton, who confessed to intentionally pushing him, has a date with a hangman. Richard, who's Helen's current fiancé, believes she's innocent, and has arranged for Poirot and Scotland Yard's Inspector Edward Catchpool to visit the estate and investigate under the pretense of being interested in a board game Richard's father has invented. On the luxury motor coach from London to Kingfisher Hill, the pair encounter a distraught woman, who, when forced to sit in the one available seat, declares that a man told her that to sit there would mean her death. Then another passenger confesses to a murder. Hannah provides logical and reasonable answers to every oddity. Fans of classic fair-play puzzle mysteries will clamor for more."

✎ Herron, Mick. [Slough House](#) (\$16). At Slough House—MI5's London depository for demoted spies—Brexit has taken a toll. The "slow horses" have been pushed further into the cold, Slough House has been erased from official records, and its members are dying in unusual circumstances, at an unusual clip. No wonder Jackson Lamb's crew is feeling paranoid. But are they actually targets? With a new populist movement taking hold of London's streets and the old order ensuring that everything's for sale to the highest bidder, the world's a dangerous place for those deemed surplus. Jackson Lamb and the slow horses are in a fight for their lives. Herron, "the le Carré of the future" (BBC), offers an unsparing look at the corrupt web of media, global finance, spycraft, and politics that power our modern world. "This is a darker, scarier Herron. The gags are still there but the satire's more biting. The privatization of a secret service op and the manipulation of news is relevant and horribly credible."—Ann Cleeves

Hoffman, Alice. [Magic Lessons: Book #1 of the Practical Magic Series](#) (\$17). The Indie Next Pick: "No one tells a story like Alice Hoffman, and I only hope she finds a way to bring the magical Owens family back to us in the future. I simply loved this book — a great story of love and magic!"

Johnson, Craig. [Next to Last Stand: A Longmire Mystery](#) (\$17). One of the most viewed paintings in American history, *Custer's Last Fight*, copied and distributed by Anheuser-Busch at a rate of over two million copies a year, was destroyed in a fire at the 7th Cavalry Headquarters in Fort Bliss, Texas, in 1946. Or was it? When Charley Lee Stillwater dies of an apparent heart attack at the Wyoming Home for Soldiers & Sailors, Walt Longmire is called in to try and make sense of a piece of a painting and a Florsheim shoebox containing a million dollars, sending the good sheriff on the trail of a dangerous art heist. For Johnson's 2021 dazzling Longmire, see Signed Books.

Lovett, Charlie. [Escaping Dreamland](#) (\$16.99). When I was a young reader the Oz Books ruled, along with Narnia, Black Beauty, and some of the Syndicates like Nancy Drew. My mom still had some of The Bobbsey Twins which were fun and my uncle had preserved his Little Big Books including the amazing adventures of Flash Gordon on the Planet Ming. Lovett, who has written earlier books for book lovers, delves into the reading history of a blocked writer—The Hardy Boys, Tom Swift, some superheroes—who holds in some secret demons, one in particular that paralyzes him. He may lose his wife, his career. Can the way forward be to crack the mystery surrounding his favorite childhood series, The Tremendous Trio (fictional)? To do so he is guided by the fragment of a story back to 1906 Manhattan and a terrible steamboat tragedy. His efforts mesh with the stories of three youngsters sorting out their place at the dawn of the 20th Century. Magda, Gene, and Tom author The Tremendous Trio books as they explore the city from the Polo Grounds to Coney Island's Dreamland. It's a time jump structure, not time travel, marvelously atmospheric and nostalgic while at the same time not shirking hard truths and hard times. It's a wonderful, somewhat nostalgic depending on your age, read.

Preston, Douglas/Lincoln Child. [The Scorpion's Tail](#) (\$16.99). A mummified corpse, over half a century old, is found in the cellar of an abandoned building in a remote New Mexico ghost town. Corrie is assigned what seems to her a throwaway case: to ID

the body and determine cause of death. She brings archaeologist Nora Kelly to excavate the body and lend her expertise to the investigation, and together they uncover something unexpected and shocking... And that's only the beginning of a complex tale.

Missing Tony Hillerman? This fabulous book, slightly more of a drama than a typical Hillerman but deeply delving into New Mexico, the Navajo, all sorts of wonderful stuff, is now out in paperback. **But we have a stash of first prints of [The Scorpion's Tail](#) signed by both authors we can offer at \$20.** Coming on February 15, the third book of Nora Kelly, Santa Fe archaeologist, and the FBI's Corrie Swanson, is [Diablo Mesa](#) (Grand Central \$29). So don't miss out on *The Scorpion's Tail*, truly one of my favorite adventure thrillers of the year.

✦ Winspear, Jacqueline. [This Time Next Year We'll Be Laughing](#) (\$16.95). A 2021 Edgar Award Nominee for Best Critical/Biographical Work. "Jacqueline Winspear has created a memoir of her English childhood that is every bit as engaging as her Maisie Dobbs novels, just as rich in character and detail, history and humanity. Her writing is lovely, elegant and welcoming."—Anne Lamott

NEW IN LARGE PAPERBACKS

✦ Archer, Jeffrey. [Hidden in Plain Sight](#) (\$17.99). William Warwick has been promoted to Detective Sergeant, but his promotion means that he and the rest of his team have been reassigned to the Drugs Squad. They are immediately tasked with apprehending Assem Rashidi, a notorious drug dealer, who operates his extensive network out of South London. As the investigation progresses, William runs into enemies old and new: Adrian Heath, from his school days, now a street dealer who he convinces to turn informer; and financier Miles Faulkner, who makes a mistake that could finally see him put behind bars. Meanwhile, William and his fiancée Beth enjoy making preparations for their upcoming wedding, though an unpleasant surprise awaits them at the altar. As William's team closes the net around a criminal network like none they have ever faced before, he devises a trap they would never expect, one that is hidden in plain sight....

On Saturday October 16 at 10:30 AM PDT Lord Archer joins me for a discussion of William's next case: [Over My Dead Body](#) (Harper \$28.99). Order early to secure this Signature Limited Edition.

Baldacci, David. [A Gambling Man](#) (\$16.99). WW2 vet Aloysius Archer needs a fresh start after a close scrape in Poca City, so he hops a bus heading west to California. But he stops in Reno where he gains a wad of cash, an aspiring actress called Liberty for the road trip, and a blood-red 1939 Delahaye convertible to drive. When they arrive in Bay Town where Archer hopes to apprentice with legendary PI Willie Dash, he lands the job but is plunged into a drama around a rich and connected man politician running for mayor. Bodies start falling.... Meet Archer in [One Good Deed](#).

Banville, John. [Snow](#) (\$16.99). On a pitilessly snowy December morning in 1957, a body is found in the library at Ballyglass House, owned by the aristocratic Osborne family and located in southeast Ireland's County Wexford. The corpse, which has been worked over with a knife, is that of Father Tom Lawless, a parish priest and frequent visitor to Ballyglass House, where the elements forced him to spend the night before his body was discovered. As Strafford and his junior officer conduct the business of

interviewing the Ballyglass House residents and staff, they find that no one has an alibi for the night of the murder, nor is there evidence of forced entry. Snow represents the first time that Banville has wrested credit for a mystery novel from his crime-writing alter ego, Benjamin Black, possibly because he's enjoying winks at the reader and his "good running joke about its unmistakable resemblance to an old-school mystery. Yet it can't be said that the introspective and self-doubting Strafford is a familiar sort of literary detective. And since this is set in 1950s Ireland working out what must be the base crime and the perp is no stretch. Enjoy the language. Writing under his own name now rather than as Benjamin Black, Banville brings back 1950s Dublin pathologist Quirke next month in [April in Spain](#) (Hanover \$27.99).

Barbery, Muriel. [A Single Rose](#) (Europa \$22). Recommended to me, but not read, but Kyoto is a favorite city I've visited. "Set against the backdrop of Kyoto, Japanese temples and blossoms of flowers and cherry trees, this short novel is full of melancholy, loss and death, yet transformed by love on every page." Rose has turned 40, but has barely begun to live. When the Japanese father she never knew dies and she finds herself an orphan, she leaves France for Kyoto to hear the reading of his will. In the days before Haru's last wishes are revealed, his former assistant, Paul, takes Rose on a tour of the temples, gardens and eating places of this unfamiliar city. Initially a reluctant tourist and awkward guest in her late father's home, Rose gradually comes to discover Haru's legacy through the itinerary he set for her, finding gifts greater than she had ever imagined.

✦ Bradby, Tom. [Double Agent](#) (\$17). In the sequel to 2019's [Secret Service](#) (\$16), MI6 agent Kate Henderson rides point on a career-jeopardizing investigation of Prime Minister James Ryan. The case centers on a Mikhail Borodin, Russia's former intelligence chief's son, who has offered Kate a lurid tape showing Ryan molesting underage girls in Kosovo 25 years earlier, evidence that the Russians are supposedly using as blackmail. In exchange for the video and accompanying record of bribe payments, Borodin wants to be allowed to defect, along with his family. But is the video authentic? And what might be the political consequences of a British leader being taken down in such disgrace? Meanwhile, Kate must navigate a slew of personal problems—issues with her two teenage kids, a difficult mother, and a new junior agent, Suzy Spencer, whose bold behavior is suspiciously well-meaning. The tantalizingly ambiguous ending will leave the reader wondering what's in store for Kate. And the answer can be found in the New in Hardcover section. I believe UK journalist Bradby is a superb spy story writer.

Bruen, Ken. [Callous](#) (Mysterious \$14.99). Brooklyn resident Kate Mitchell, who's struggling to kick a heroin habit, wakes up from an alcohol-induced bender to find a letter from an Irish lawyer informing her that her 79-year-old aunt, Mary Casey, has died and left Kate a cottage in the Galway village of Claddagh. Hoping for a fresh start, Kate leaves Brooklyn with her two surviving brothers: one a priest and former police officer, the other a hotheaded ex-Marine. In Galway, they learn their aunt was murdered. "The Mitchells soon find themselves on the receiving end of a campaign of intimidation. Lively characters and the author's trademark wit compensate for the convoluted plot."

Engberg, Katrine. [The Butterfly House](#) (\$16.99). Detective Anette Werner is holed up at home, having just had a baby. Not that this

stops her from doing what her more rule-abiding partner, Jeppe Kørner, dubs “rogue maternity-leave sleuthing”: when Werner learns of a new case from the police radio she has neglected to return to headquarters, she’s off and running. Early one October morning, a corpse is found in Caritas Fountain, in Copenhagen’s Old Market Square. Before she was dumped there, the victim—a middle-aged health-care aide—was cut and left to bleed to death. When another body is discovered in a different fountain the following day, it’s determined that the victims have more in common than just their killer. Engberg nimbly integrates two subplots into her main story, which leans on psychological analysis without being ponderous about it. Not Nordic Noir but for fans of Scandinavian crime.

Ferrante, Elena. [The Lying Life of Adults](#) (\$18). The Neapolitan literary sensation whose identity is one of bookworld’s most closely guarded secrets gets this review in the *NYTBR* for her most recent novel: “What a relief it is when an author who has written a masterpiece returns to prove the gift intact... Adolescence remains rich territory for Ferrante. Here as in her past work, she captures the interior states of young people with an unflinching psychological honesty that is striking in its vividness and depth. We share in Giovanna’s embarrassments, the tortured logic of her self-soothing, her temptations and decisions that accrete into something like experience. How easy it is, in retrospect, to have belittled those years of our lives—how much harder to recall, with the full strength of the limbic system, the feelings of privation and loss that attended our departures from childhood. Ferrante’s genius is to stay with the discomfort. With the same propulsive, episodic style she perfected in the Neapolitan quartet, she traces how it is that the consciousness of a girl at 12 becomes that of a young woman at 16.”

Freeman, Brian. [Funeral for a Friend](#) (\$16.99). Life hasn’t been easy for Duluth Police Lt. Jonathan Stride or his family. His best friend is now dying. On his deathbed he reveals to Stride that years back he buried a body in order to protect Stride. Stride immediately informs his superiors, knowing if it turns out to be the body of reporter Ned Bauer he’ll be implicated in Bauer’s death, since the police know he was the last person to see Bauer before everyone thought the man had drowned. The police then dig up Bauer’s remains in Stride’s yard. Bauer, who came to Duluth seven years earlier to investigate 30-year-old anonymous rape accusations against a prominent politician, has a bullet hole in his skull. Meanwhile, Cat Mateo, a teenage runaway Stride and his wife have taken under their wing, has been receiving a lot of unwanted attention resulting from the publicity surrounding her surviving an assault attempt by a Hollywood celebrity, who came to town to shoot a movie in the previous book. Grateful #MeToo survivors have sent Cat messages, but she’s unnerved when someone local sends her a threatening picture of herself. Surprising connections between her case and Stride’s soon emerge and test all the players in this dark story, the 10th in an excellent policing series.

Heywood, Claire. [Daughters of Sparta](#) (\$17). Helen of Troy and her sister Klytemnestra are reimagined in this gorgeous retelling of the classic Greek myth—not as women defined by their husbands and lovers but as battle-weary survivors of a patriarchal society who take control of their own destiny.

Katsu, Alma. [The Reckoning](#) (\$17.99). The second book in Katsu’s supernatural thriller trilogy picks up where her well-received

debut, *The Taker* (2011), left off. The chance freeing of immortal alchemist Adair from his secret tomb in present-day Boston, nearly two centuries after immortal Lanore McIlvrae imprisoned him, disrupts Lanore’s comfortable life with her mortal lover, Luke Findley. Marooned in an unfamiliar world, the amoral alchemist soon recovers lost treasures and rebuilds his fortunes, allowing him to focus on the goal that truly matters to him—tracking down the woman responsible for imprisoning him, to break her to his will, and possess her forevermore. Lanore’s desire to abandon her wicked ways, doomed as it is, may mark her as unique among the immortals, but it also makes her uniquely vulnerable to her stalker.

Kemprescos, Paul. [Killing Icarus](#) (Suspense Publishing \$14.95). I noted this in the second August *Booknews* but want to give it another recommendation. I am partial to art mysteries and here we get one in part, set in Truro on Cape Cod Bay. Art historian Abi Vickers personal life and professional as a gallerist have both crashed. With no money or prospects, she accepts a mentor’s offer to use his cottage in Truro and sort out his messy files. This leads her into a complicated set of events including a lost Edward Hopper drawing (he was a local artist), the re-enactment of a historic aviation event from the community’s cliffs, a lost WWII secret, and a murder. There’s even more. Kemprescos loves this part of the world and writes fascinatingly about it.

Khan, Vaseem. [Midnight at Malabar House](#) (Hodder \$15.99). As India celebrates the arrival of a momentous new decade, Inspector Persis Wadia stands vigil in the basement of Malabar House, home to the city’s most unwanted unit of police officers. Six months after joining the force she remains India’s first female police detective, mistrusted, sidelined and now consigned to the midnight shift. And so, when the phone rings to report the murder of prominent English diplomat Sir James Herriot, the country’s most sensational case falls into her lap. As 1950 dawns and India prepares to become the world’s largest republic, Persis, accompanied by Scotland Yard criminalist Archie Blackfinch, finds herself investigating a case that is becoming more political by the second. Khan’s mysteries are hugely popular in the UK, hard to get here.

✧ LaPlante, Linda. [Unholy Murder](#) (Zaffre \$16). A coffin is dug up by builders in the grounds of an historic convent—inside is the body of a young nun. In a city as old as London, the discovery is hardly surprising. But when scratch marks are found on the inside of the coffin lid, Detective Jane Tennison believes she has unearthed a mystery far darker than any she’s investigated before.

Of writing the book, La Plante says, “...research came from me being privy to a post-mortem, when I noticed a large metallic coffin with ornate brass handles that had been placed to one side. The pathologist declined to give me any details as he said it was not his case—all he knew was that it had been brought in from unconsecrated ground. The seeds were in some ways sewn with the discovery of a similar coffin in *Unholy Murder* and the inquiry that follows into a murdered nun who, from the scratches and torn satin lining inside the lid, appears to have been buried alive. It depicts terrible cruelty.”

Maltman, Thomas. [The Land](#) (\$16). A story of violence at the heart of a pastoral landscape, from the author *Little Wolves*. Recovering from a terrible auto accident just before the turn of the millennium, college dropout and hobbyist computer-game

programmer Lucien Swenson becomes the caretaker of a house in northern Minnesota. Shortly after moving in, Lucien sets out to find a woman with whom he had an affair, who vanished along with money stolen from the bank where they had worked together. His search will take him to Rose of Sharon, a white supremacist church deep in the wilderness, where a cabal of outcasts awaits the end of the world at a place they call The Land. Lucien is visited at the house by a mysterious guest, who may not be who she claims, as well as a vast flock of violent ravens out of an apocalyptic vision. Think of this as spiritual noir.

Manchette, Jean-Patrick. [The N'gustro Affair](#) (NY Review of Books \$15.95). Mean, arrogant, naive, sadistic on occasion, the young Henri Butron records his life story on tape just before death catches up with him: a death passed off as a suicide by his killers, French secret service agents who need to hush up their role—and Butron's—in the kidnapping, torture, and murder of a prominent opposition leader from a third-world African nation in the throes of a postcolonial civil war. *The N'Gustro Affair* is a thinly veiled retelling of the 1965 abduction and killing of Mehdi Ben Barka, a radical opponent of King Hassan II of Morocco. But this is merely the backdrop to Manchette's first-person portrait (with shades of Jim Thompson's *The Killer Inside Me*) of a man who lacks the insight to see himself for what he is: a wannabe nihilist too weak to be even a full-bore fascist.

✦ Mitchell, Sheila (Keating). [HRF Keating: A Life of Crime](#) (Level Books \$15.95). The 2021 Macavity Award winner for Best Biographical/Critical work is the 96-year-old widow of the wonderful late Harry Keating, author of the Inspector Ghote and other mysteries, a reviewer for *The Times* (London), President of the Detection Club, phenomenal critic.... To read of Harry is to revisit the Golden Age. I reflect that if he were writing Inspector Ghote of Bombay today, he'd be criticized for cultural appropriation, so I'm glad he was of a different era. He was a lovely man I admired and often visited in London. He was the keeper of the Detection Club's library for many years and one memorable night I slept in the Keating guest room and stayed up all hours reading a signed copy of Sayers' *Gaudy Night!* It's a wonder Harry didn't frisk me as I departed.

Mills, Kyle. [Vince Flynn Lethal Agent](#) (\$17). A toxic presidential election is underway in an America already badly weakened by internal divisions. While politicians focus entirely on maintaining their own power, ISIS kidnaps a brilliant French microbiologist and forces him to begin manufacturing anthrax. Slickly produced videos chronicling his progress and threatening an imminent attack are posted to the internet, intensifying the hysteria gripping the United States. ISIS recruits a Mexican drug cartel to smuggle the bioweapon across the border, but it's really just a diversion. The terrorist organization needs to keep Mitch Rapp and Irene Kennedy distracted long enough to weaponize a deadly virus that they stumbled upon in Yemen. If they succeed, they'll trigger a pandemic that could rewrite the world order. This 18th Mitch Rapp thriller, written in 2019, is terrifying in its premise... almost prescient.

Moretti, Kate. [The Spires](#) (Thomas & Mercer \$15.95). This psychological thriller will make you keep the lights on. Twenty years ago, Penelope, Willa and three friends lived together in a converted church where wild parties gave way to jealousy, resentment, unrequited love and obsession until tensions

boiled over and ended in a deadly fire. Now Willa shows up at Penelope's house seeking refuge from an abusive husband. She seems to be the perfect houseguest, but Penelope suspects there's more to the story

✦ North, Alex. [The Shadows](#) (\$16.99). The *PW* Starred Review: "The pseudonymous North follows up his sensational debut, 2019's [The Whisper Man](#), with another terrifying spine-tingler set in Featherbank, England. When Paul Adams was 15, his school playground was the scene of the murder of one of his friends. The alleged killer, teenager Charlie Crabtree, was another friend of Paul. Charlie disappeared and was never seen again. After going away to college, Paul doesn't return to Featherbank until, as a 40-year-old English teacher, he decides he must come home to tend to his dying mother. To his dismay, history appears to be repeating itself with a series of copycat killings of teenage boys. Det. Amanda Beck, from the previous novel, investigates as the bodies pile up and suspects accumulate. Ghosts (real and imagined) continue to haunt Paul, whose senile mother fears something strange is in the house. The complex plot shifts smoothly between past and present with numerous unexpected twists. An overwhelming atmosphere of doom and disaster hovers over the perennial darkness of the nearby woods. This heart-pounding page-turner is impossible to put down." The Indie Next Pick adds, "Highly atmospheric and emotionally gripping, *The Shadows* is best read with all the lights on."

Palumbo, Dennis. [Panic Attack](#) (Poisoned Pen Press \$15.99). A professional-style execution in front of 20,000 witnesses kicks off a sixth walk on the wild side for Pittsburgh psychologist Daniel Rinaldi, a consultant to the Pittsburgh PD. a sniper kills the Teasdale College mascot during a football game at the college. Rinaldi, who's watching the game, soon discovers the victim isn't Jason Graham, the student who was supposed to be wearing the tiger costume. Graham, fearful he was the intended target, hides at a nearby motel, where he says he'll speak only to Rinaldi, who he remembers is a consultant with the Pittsburgh PD from the commencement speech Rinaldi gave at Teasdale. After Rinaldi helps Graham through a panic attack and gleans information that will help the case, all hell breaks loose as the sniper claims more victims....

✦ Perry, Anne. [A Question of Betrayal](#) (\$17). Britain's secret intelligence service, MI6, has lost contact with its informant in northern Italy, just as important information about the future plans of Austria and Nazi Germany is coming to light. And young Elena Standish, to her surprise, is the only person who can recognize MI6's man—because he is her former lover. Aiden Strother betrayed her six years before, throwing shame on her entire family. Now, with so much to prove, Elena heads to Trieste to track down Aiden and find out what happened to his handler, who has mysteriously cut off contact with Britain. As Elena gets word of a secret group working to put Austria in the hands of Germany, her older sister, Margot, is in Berlin to watch a childhood friend get married—to a member of the Gestapo. Margot and Elena's grandfather, the former head of MI6, is none too happy about the sisters' travels at this tumultuous time, especially when a violent event at home reminds him that even Britain is growing dangerous. Start the Standish series with [Death in Focus](#) (\$17) and see Signed Books for the new and third in this 1930s series.

Picoult Jodi. [The Book of Two Ways](#) (\$17). I haven't been a big Picoult fan for some years although I [think My Sister's Keeper](#) is a tremendous novel on many levels, one of them ethical. But I truly recommend *The Book of Two Ways*. Dawn Edelstein is on a plane when the flight attendant makes an announcement: prepare for a crash landing. She braces herself as thoughts flash through her mind. The shocking thing is, the thoughts are not of her husband, but a man she last saw fifteen years ago: Wyatt Armstrong. Dawn, miraculously, survives the crash, but so do all the doubts that have suddenly been raised. She has led a good life. Back in Boston, there is her husband, Brian, her beloved daughter, and her work as a death doula, where she helps ease the transition between life and death for patients in hospice. But somewhere in Egypt is Wyatt Armstrong, who works as an archaeologist unearthing ancient burial sites, a job she once studied for, but was forced to abandon when life suddenly intervened. And now, when it seems that fate is offering her second chances, she is not as sure of the choice she once made. After the crash landing, the airline ensures the survivors are seen by a doctor, then offers transportation wherever they want to go. The obvious option for Dawn is to continue down the path she is on and go home to her family. The other is to return to the archaeological site she left years before, reconnect with Wyatt and their unresolved history, and maybe even complete her research on *The Book of Two Ways*—the first known map of the afterlife

Pyper, Andrew. [The Residence](#) (\$16.99). Pyper pens a supernatural thriller steeped in the melancholic and macabre, the kind of ghost story that will keep you up at night. This horror story is based on true events of 1853. President-elect Franklin Pierce is traveling with his family to Washington, DC, when tragedy strikes. In an instant, their train runs off the rails, violently flinging passengers about the cabin. When the great iron machine finally comes to rest, the only casualty is the Pierces' son, Bennie. The loss sends First Lady Jane Pierce into mourning, and casts Franklin's presidency under a pall of sorrow and grief. As the Pierces move into the White House, Bennie haunts it, breaking the spirit of what remains of the First Family and the divided America beyond the residence's walls. "A skilful blend of horror, science fiction and family drama..."

✠ Robinson, Maggie. [Farewell Blues](#) (Poisoned Pen \$15.99). Murder hits all too close to home for Lady Adelaide Compton in Robinson's sparkling fourth and final paranormal mystery set in 1920s England. One morning, in a suite at a fashionable London hotel, Addie's formidable mother, Constance, Lady Broughton, is discovered "wearing only a bloodstained peignoir," standing over the body of Edmund Moreton, the Duke of Rufford; in her hand is the murder weapon engraved with her exalted family's monogram. Lady Broughton is promptly arrested and put in jail to await trial. While Rupert Compton, Addie's dead but not departed husband, uses his ghostly abilities to infiltrate stately homes on the trail of gossip and clues, Addie turns to tall, dark, and handsome Scotland Yard Detective Inspector Dev Hunter for help in finding the real killer. Charming characters and spirited dialogue propel a plot in which the course of the gently simmering romance between Addie and Dev matters more than the sleuthing. Cozy fans will be sorry to see the last of Addie and company. I too am sad this series is ending; I acquired and edited the first three and hoped it would run to many episodes. [Order them all](#) for a delightful 1920s experience, somewhat akin to the [Miss Phryne Fisher](#) mysteries set in Australia.

Seeck, Max. [The Ice Coven](#) (Berkley \$17). Six months have passed since Jessica's encounter with the mysterious serial-killing coven of witches in [The Witch Hunter](#) (\$17), Helsinki Detective Jessica Niemi's first case, and the death of her mentor. Her nightmares about her mother and the witchcraft that undid her have only gotten worse, but she's doing what she can to stay focused. Her homicide squad, now under new leadership, has been given a murder case and a new series of disappearances to investigate. A young woman's corpse has washed up on an icy beach, and two famous Instagram influencers have gone missing at the same time. The missing influencers and the murdered woman all have ties to a sinister cult. Jessica finds an eerie painting—of a lighthouse on a remote island—as she investigates, and under the picture is a gruesome poem detailing a murder. The nightmares about her mother suddenly seem all too real...

Smith, Alexander McCall [How to Raise an Elephant](#) (\$16). Precious Ramotswe loves her dependable old van. Yes, it sometimes takes a bit longer to get going now, and it has developed some quirks over the years, but it has always gotten the job done. This time, though, the world—and Charlie—may be asking too much of it, for when he borrows the beloved vehicle, he returns it damaged. And, to make matters worse, the interior seems to have acquired an earthy smell that even Precious can't identify. Hmmm.... They say it takes a village to raise a child, but can Mma Ramotswe and the rest of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency come together to raise a pipsqueak pachyderm? As they debate the usefulness of men and the benefits of bush tea? The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series is a real delight.

Straley, John. [What Is Time to a Pig?](#) (\$16.95). **Shamus Award-winner Straley writes of one man attempts to save his town from nuclear annihilation.** It's been seven years since Gloomy Knob landed in the Ted Stevens High-Security Federal Penitentiary and five years since the end of the war, the one North Korea started when they sent a missile to Cold Storage, Alaska. Serving a life sentence for the murder of his sister, Gloomy spends his time trying to forget the past. Then one day, Gloomy is snatched from his off-site work station. Instead of celebrating his newfound freedom, Gloomy comes unmoored—he feels he belongs in prison. But his kidnapers believe Gloomy knows where a second nuclear warhead is hidden and demand to know where it is. The clock is ticking, and Gloomy knows that unless he finds the missing warhead fast, or his wife, his friends, and the entire town of Cold Storage will be obliterated. The only problem? He has no idea where it is. As Gloomy struggles to escape, the memories he fought hard to repress begin to creep out from the strange corners of his mind...

Stewart, Amy. [Miss Kopp Investigates](#) (\$15.99). Life after the war takes an unexpected turn for the Kopp sisters, but soon enough, they are putting their unique detective skills to use in new and daring ways. See New in Hardcover for more on this simultaneous hardcover/paperback release.

Tursten, Helene. [Snowdrift](#) (Soho \$16.95). Tursten's latest Swedish thriller follows Detective Inspector Embla Nyström as she gets close to the truth about the cold case that has long haunted her—the disappearance of her best friend

OUR SEPTEMBER SMALL PAPERBACK PICKS

Clark, Mary Higgins. [Piece of My Heart](#) (\$9.99). Under Suspicion #7. This high-suspense follow-up to the best-selling *You Don't Own Me* finds the nuptials of television producer Laurie Moran and investigative host Alex Buckley nightmarishly upended by the sudden disappearance of Alex's seven-year-old nephew. "A fitting sendoff that modulates as smooth as butter from celebration to shock to detection to ticking-clock suspense." (*Kirkus*)

Delany, Vicki. [Deadly Summer Nights](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Catskill Summer Resort #1. In the summer of 1953 at Haggerman's Catskills Resort, daring young widow Elizabeth must solve the mystery surrounding the death of a reclusive guest whose body was found in the lake on the grounds in order to save the business from going under. *Kirkus* loved this series debut saying "Pitch-perfect period descriptions, a likable heroine, and a surprising conclusion will leave readers yearning for the sequel."

Hannah, Darci. [Murder at the Christmas Cookie Bakeoff](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Beacon Bakeshop #2. Going up against self-appointed Christmas know-it-all Felicity Stewart in the town-wide cookie bake-off, Lindsey Bakewell finds everything falling apart when a judge is found dead covered in crumbs from her signature cookie. Hannah continues to perfect her recipe for the ultimate in cozy culinary crime fiction.

North, Alex. [The Whisper Man](#) (\$9.99). Mourning the death of his wife, a father moves with his young son to Featherbank for a fresh start but finds their new town has a dark past involving a serial killer named "The Whisper Man. "A terrifying page-turner with the complexities of fatherhood at its core." (*Kirkus*)

Tracy, P J. [Deep into the Dark](#) (\$9.99). Margaret Nolan #1. Framed for the murder of a friend's abusive ex, war veteran Sam Easton turns for help to up-and-coming LAPD detective Margaret Nolan, a fallen soldier's sister who would prove Sam's innocence. Here is *PW*'s take "The suspense rises as the plot takes some unexpected twists and turns. Readers will want to see more of Maggie, a complicated woman determined to succeed in a profession dominated by men, and the troubled Sam, who does his best to do the right thing."

Tremblay, Paul. [Survivor Song](#) (\$9.99). When Massachusetts is overrun by a rabies-like virus that is incurable an hour after infection, a soft-spoken pediatrician navigates apocalyptic obstacles to get a vaccine to her eight-month pregnant friend. *Kirkus* gave this a rare star saying "A cinematic scope, scenarios grounded in the real world, and a breathless pace make this thriller one of the must-read titles of the summer. A prescient, insidious horror novel that takes sheer terror to a whole new level."

Turow, Scott. [The Last Trial](#) (\$9.99). Kindle County #11. A brilliant octogenarian defense lawyer on the brink of retirement seeks to prove the innocence of a long-time friend, a former Nobel Prize winner who has been charged with murder. "While this entry lacks the gut punches of the author's best books, it's still a page-turner that makes a trial centered on fraud and insider trading fascinating. Turow remains in a class of his own in conveying the subtleties of criminal defense work while also entertaining his readers." (*PW*)

Wingate, Marty. [Murder is a Must](#) (Berkley \$7.99) First Edition Library #2. Busily preparing for an exhibit at Middlebank House,

curator Hayley Burke hires her difficult former boss, Oona Atherton, to help with things only to discover a one-page letter alluding to a priceless book lost somewhere in the First Edition Library. Here is *Kirkus*' rave "Hayley's struggles to keep the exhibition afloat in a sea of setbacks, with the ever present threat of a killer still on the loose, make Middlebank House the place to go for puzzles past and present. Lively and engaging."

NEW IN SMALL PAPERBACKS

Abbott, Jeff. [Never Ask Me](#) (\$9.99). After their neighbor from two houses away is found murdered on a park bench, the Pollitt family becomes embroiled in a whirlwind of distrust and intrigue as they each begin to suspect the unimaginable of each other.

Andrews, Donna. [Gift of the Magpie](#) (\$7.99). Mycroft #3. When the magpie, which has been bringing her bits of tinsel and costume jewelry, arrives with a gift that may be the clue to solving a crime, Meg Langslow finds her hopes for a relatively peaceful holiday season dashed.

Childs, Laura. [Egg Shooters](#) (\$7.99). Cackleberry #9. Interrupting an emergency room shooter at the local hospital, Cackleberry Club Café owner Suzanne teams up with Petra and Toni to find the escaped killer before he tracks them down instead.

Coco, Nancy. [Here Comes the Fudge](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Candy-Coated #9. When her best friend's fiancé Shane, a crime scene investigator, is accused of murder, Allie vows to find the truth before the nuptial ceremony turns into a jailhouse wedding.

Conroy, Vivian. [The Glitter End](#) (Sourcebooks \$8.99). Stationary Shop #3. Stationary shop owner Delta Douglas and her faithful Paper Posse must save her shop's reputation when a well-known Montana artist, whose work was on display, is accused of murder.

Danna, Jen J. [Exit Strategy](#) (Kensington \$9.99). A heavily armed gunman has taken hostages at City Hall, and Gemma Capello, one of NYPD's elite hostage negotiators, fears the mayor may be among them. But as they search for answers and struggle to gain control of the circumstances, it becomes clear that the mayor *is* at the center of it all, just not in the way they initially believed.

Fluke, Joanne. [Christmas Cupcake Murder](#) (\$9.99). Hannah Swensen #26. Firing up the Cookie Jar's ovens to attend a lengthy holiday checklist, Hannah Swensen helps loved ones manage seasonal doldrums before she is challenged to identify a skilled antique restorer found near death outside her bakery.

Granger, Mimi. [Death of a Red-hot Rancher](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Love Is Murder #1. When her aunt is implicated in the murder of a swoon-worthy rancher, romance bookshop owner Lizzie Hale must leaf through a lengthy list of lovers to solve this crime of passion.

Griffin, Laura. [Last Seen Alone](#) (Berkley \$7.99). Austin homicide detective Brandon Reynolds and an up-and-coming attorney Leigh Larson must help each other solve a brutal crime involving a high-profile client and a ruthless criminal who is out for vengeance.

Haines, Carolyn. [Garland of Bones](#) (\$7.99). Sarah Booth Delaney #22. Southern PI Sarah Booth Delaney and her friends find their Christmas cheer turning to fear when strange accidents befall them during holiday festivities and are determined to catch the wrong-doers, who deserve nothing but coal in their stockings this year.

Henry, Julia. [Wreathing Havoc](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Garden Squad #4. When the town's beloved theater owner's sudden death brings about drama and murder as the autumn leaves fall, Lilly Jayne and her Garden Squad must rake through the clues to catch a killer.

Howard, Linda. [Kill and Tell](#) (\$9.99). Re-issue. Targeted for murder after she takes custody of a mysterious notebook, Karen Whitlaw is protected by detective Marc Chastain, with whom she begins a passionate relationship while they seek to uncover the mystery behind the notebook's past.

Innes, Louise R. [Death at Holly Lodge](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Daisy Thorne #3. Hair salon owner Daisy Thorne and DCI Paul McGuinness must comb through the clues of Christmases past when the body of a local father, who disappeared two years ago, is found inside the chimney of the historic Holly Lodge.

Patterson, James. [The 19th Christmas](#) (\$10.99). Women's Murder Club #19. A peaceful San Francisco holiday season is shattered by a criminal mastermind's ominous threats for Christmas morning, prompting Detective Lindsay Boxer and her friends to prepare for an attack by a commissioned army of criminals.

☞ Penney, Elizabeth. [Chapter and Curse](#) (St Martins \$8.99). Chapter and Curse #1. Arriving in Cambridge, England to help run the family bookshop, librarian Molly Kimball must sift through secrets past and present to untangle a web of blackmail, deceit and murder as she tries to keep the struggling shop afloat after a literary event ends in murder.

Pressey, Rose. [Murder Can Frost Your Doughnut](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Haunted Craft Fair #4. After stumbling upon the dead body of an Elvis impersonator during the celebrity impersonating contest, psychic painter Celeste Cabot is "all shook up," and she, with the help of his spirit, sets out to find the real killer among all the fake celebrities.

Rawlings, H. Ripley. [The Kill Box](#) (Kensington \$9.99). In an America occupied by Russian forces, Marine Corps officer Tyce Asher, who will never surrender, assembles a ragtag team of long-haul truckers and citizen soldiers to stop the invaders from seizing cargo that will bring the country to its knees.

Sennefelder, Debra. [The Corpse in the Gazebo](#) (Kensington \$8.99). Food Blogger #5. The lead suspect in her troublemaking neighbor's murder, successful food blogger Hope Early must find the truth before the lifestyle brand she's created—and her whole life—are destroyed.

Stuart, Amy. [Still Here](#) (\$9.99). When her colleague and fellow private investigator Malcolm disappears, Clare is certain she can find him, as she holds the key to his past. She arrives in the oceanside city where he last lived and starts digging around only to discover that not only is Malcolm gone without a trace, so is his wife, Zoe.